

©TRUDY QAYE

By Joe Hoover

Scene 1—DANNY standing outside a cafe. The kind of place which, if you knew DANNY, you think he'd probably go.

DANNY

I need a girlfriend. Why? Because I don't have one. And people who go by me will be like, *Hey, see that guy?* "That guy?" *No that guy.* "Oh, you mean the guy without the girlfriend." *Yeah.* "Man. I don't need to be around this disaster zone". "*Let's scram!*"

(Pause)

So I need a girlfriend so that kind of thing won't happen. But I don't want just any girlfriend. I'm not desperate. You want, like, a girlfriend you *actually want to be with*. Her being someone you want to be with is a highly important quality for her to have. Someone you could go out with in public spaces. And you can sit there and be two people sitting there. *In public*. And she'd be thinking what I'm thinking. And I'd be thinking what she's thinking. And if she's not thinking what I'm thinking then I'd tell her what I'm thinking. We'd pretty much be thinking the same thing all the time. That's what it is when you have a girlfriend. Someone where you're pretty much just like each other. And she'll listen to everything I say, with *active listening skills*. Nodding her head. *Uhuh, uhuh*. Repeating key phrases.

(Quickly clarifying)

I'm not saying she'll *just* listen. As in, she never gets a word in edgewise and it's all about me. I mean she talks. Talks! Talks! Talks, this girl! And then *I* listen. But when I talk, *she* listens. And when I pick her up to go out--because that's what you do, you pick her up to go out--she'll come out of the house with her hair a certain way. Obviously. And I'll look at her and she'll know exactly how to read the look. Regarding her hair. And if I don't like her *coiffure*-- that is a great word--she'll go right back in and adjust her hair into exactly the kind of *coiffure* I like but don't know the name of. That's what it is when you have a girlfriend.

(Pause)

So I actually did meet a girl, and we set up a date for today. We met on these apps. You know apps, right? Like, a camel, but with longer hair? Late 90s everyone's meeting each other on apps. So I was on a trail ride going this way on my app and her group was going that way on their apps and I saw her and I was like, "Hey! Let's meet up sometime so we can have a date!" And she was like, "Sure." And I said "What kind of food do you like?" And she said, "I'm game for anything!" So I said, "What's your name?" And she said "Trudy. Trudy Qaye!" "Qaye with a Q?" I said. "Of course!" she said. So I gave her the name and address of this restaurant--we actually had quite a long conversation passing each other, these were some pretty slow apps. So, to make a short story finish, here we are.

(Musing)

Trudy. Trudy. Trudy.

(Pause)

I just want her to be the right kind of girl. Compassionate. Kind, empathetic. So my plan is to say to her: "Trudy, hey, I'm sorry I'm late, but my mom died." And then see how she reacts to that. It will say a lot about whether she's the kind of girl I wanna go out with. You know, like if she really cares. Makes all the right sounds. Like a sharp intake of breath. Or just fakes like she cares. So, I'll get a fix on what Trudy's like real quick. And we'll go from there. Now, you might say, "Oh, Danny hold on. Aren't you setting yourself up? Because what if she is all compassionate and kind in a way you approve of and does start to go with you and then eventually finds out that, you know, *your mom didn't die*." Because actually my mom is not dead. "Won't she feel kind of set up and disillusioned and lied to and angry for wasting her kind words and loving compassion and sharp intakes of breath on something that didn't need all that in the first place?" Well, here's the deal, voice in my head. That's not gonna happen. Because she won't end up going out with me in the first place. Because why would you go out with the type of person who lies to people about their mom dying? I've thought through all of this.

(HE goes into the cafe and sits down.)

SCENE 2– Enter TRUDY, standing outside the cafe.)

TRUDY

I want to meet a guy. Because I don't want anything to do with guys. So if I have a guy in my life other guys will stay away from me. Who wants to be surrounded by a bunch of guys all the time? They're loud and sweaty and weird and have billfolds and are like horses that skitter away from you if you, like, breathe wrong in their presence. They swarm around me like bees on a licorice tree. So I need one guy to fend off all these other guys.

(Pause)

That's why I went on an app ride. To meet someone. Not like I told anyone that's why I went. Because they'd be shocked. That I'm trying to meet someone. Because I'm a Rules Girl. And Rules Girls don't go around asking guys out. They wait till a guy has the decency to ask them out. Till he decides he wants to be with you enough that he's gonna hitch up his trousers and go over to you and walk over to you and go over to you and ask you on a date. He's got trousers! And if he asks you out for a date and only gives you one day's lead time--no way! Or even two days lead time, or three days. Sorry. Has to be FOUR DAYS before the date that he pops the question *do you want to go on a date*. Those are the Rules. Even if he meets you on say Tuesday at 4:49pm and says, *Hey you're fun, could we go out this Saturday at 5pm*. A legit four days later. Great! But then, he says, "I remembered my mother is having an appendectomy and I have to pick her up at the hospital Saturday evening—so could we get some coffee at like 3pm?" You have to say *no*. Because it's only 3 days and 22 hours since the request. Not the legit full four [days](#). He's assuming you'll just suddenly drop all your Saturday afternoon at 3pm

plans and just fall all over yourself just to go out with him. And is that really the kind of guy you want to be with? No, it's not. And would *you* be the kind of girl *he* wants to go out with? No.

So anyway I met this really sweet guy Danny on an app yesterday and he asked me to go out today and I said hell yeah.

(SHE enters cafe and spots DANNY seated at table)

TRUDY
Danny? Hi!

(DANNY gets up)

DANNY
Trudy! Hi!

TRUDY
How are you?

DANNY
I'm good. Sorry I'm late.

(THEY both sit)

TRUDY
It's okay. Wait, you were here first.

DANNY
That's nice of you to say.

TRUDY
Oh, thanks.

DANNY
My mom died.

TRUDY
Oh.

DANNY
So that's why I'm late.

(He stands up and shouts across the room to the waiter.)

Hey, can we get some chips?...Yes. Chips....As in they come in a bowl and when you eat them they're not there anymore. What other kind is there? Thank you.

(He sits back down.)

DANNY

They're bringing chips.

TRUDY

Danny, how sad.

DANNY

Huh?

TRUDY

That your mom died.

DANNY

What?

TRUDY

How sad that your mom's dead.

DANNY

My mom's dead?

TRUDY

Yes! I think so.

DANNY

How do you know?

TRUDY

You just told me.

DANNY

Then I must know what I'm talking about. This is terrible!

TRUDY

It's awful!

DANNY

I don't even know what to do. She's never died before.

TRUDY

Never?

JOE

No.

TRUDY

This is new for you. What did she die of?

DANNY

I certainly need to find that out.

(SHE leans in, quietly)

TRUDY

It wasn't an issue of the appendix was it?

DANNY

I don't think so.

TRUDY

What can I do for you Danny?

DANNY

I'm in shock. I'm numb.

TRUDY

I'm here.

DANNY

You've been here for me ever since you showed up.

TRUDY

I'm just doing what anyone would do.

DANNY

She and I were like mother and son.

TRUDY

That makes it hard!

DANNY

It's unbearable.

TRUDY

Did you know her middle name?

DANNY

I never asked.

TRUDY

This will be important for the funeral card.

DANNY

The things I'll have to think about!

TRUDY

Did you ever fish Danny?

DANNY

No. You?

TRUDY

Yes. Here's what you do when you fish. You get a pole. And a long string of some kind.

DANNY

Go on.

TRUDY

You put some random worm on a hook fixed to the line. You throw it in the water. You wait till a fish grabs the worm. The fish grabbing the worm is also grabbing the hook around the worm. This is a cruel lesson for the fish. A real teachable moment. But then it's wasted because he's, uh...well, deceased.

DANNY

You can say that. It's okay.

TRUDY

Then you take it out of the water, the fish, and you cook it on an open fire on the shore and eat it and maybe you like it and maybe you don't depending on the kind of fish. They're not all good.

DANNY

You're right, they're not all good!

TRUDY

That's exactly it Danny. The delights of fish are multiple and reckless. Did you know your mom long?

DANNY

As long as I can remember. Do you think she's already had her funeral?

TRUDY

Oh Danny.

DANNY

Of course she did. It probably ended in cremation. She was a fire person. Or maybe she wasn't cremated and she's just out there waiting.

TRUDY

My mother died twelve times in three years. Came back every time. Two of the times she came back after we buried her. You couldn't get away from that lady.

DANNY
I am sad!

TRUDY
(calling across the room.)
Can I get some water over here?

DANNY
Thanks.

TRUDY
Oh, you want some too?

DANNY
Huh?

TRUDY
Old joke, Danny, old joke! I'm sad too. What a lady. She had the decency only to die once. Do you ever play tennis Danny?

DANNY
No.

TRUDY
You get a racket, which is a wood thing with catgut on it. Can you believe it! Catgut! And you get this round yellow ball and you--

DANNY
Wait, this is all familiar. I have played tennis. I must have buried the memory in my grief.

TRUDY
We need to consider these things in these times. Nothing is out of range. Catgut! I still can't get over it.

DANNY
Now I can't get over it either!

TRUDY
I've got a lot to offer you Danny in your time of need. So. Shall we?

DANNY
Go?

TRUDY

No. "Shall we?" It's a vast existential question.

DANNY
What's my next step?

TRUDY
Let's go to your mom's house and deal with this.

DANNY
Let's go to my mom's house and deal with this.

SCENE 3--THEY are still at the restaurant.

DANNY
It's times like these when I need something bigger in my life. Something more lasting. Like, like...

DANNY
A pile of bricks!

TRUDY
Jesus!

DANNY
Right, Jesus!

TRUDY
Let's talk about Jesus!

DANNY
Let's get real.

TRUDY
Let's get serious.

DANNY
I mean there's things to consider.

TRUDY
Eternal things!

DANNY
Big eternal things.

TRUDY
Like...

DANNY
Like, what's the message for today?

TRUDY
How does it...

DANNY
Apply!

TRUDY
Exactly!

DANNY
Exactly.

TRUDY
This is so refreshing.

DANNY
Yeah. Because-

TRUDY
Because--

DANNY
All the people who usually talk about this stuff, you know, they're like--

TRUDY
Oh, they're like--

DANNY
They're just--

TRUDY
They're all just---

DANNY
They're not--

TRUDY
You don't wanna--

DANNY
Even just being around the "Eternity people," it's like--

TRUDY
You know?

DANNY

Ahhh!

TRUDY
Criminy!

DANNY
But this is different! This is real. This is practical. Some serious business just went down in my life and I need to deal with it!

TRUDY
Oh, right. I said we should go confront this. Didn't I say that?

DANNY
That's right. You did. We should just head over to my mom's house and confront the heck out of this!

TRUDY
Okay!

DANNY
Okay!

(Long pause)

DANNY
Or we could just keep talking about it!

TRUDY
We could just keep talking about it!

DANNY
We could talk about...

TRUDY
Jesus.

DANNY
Right!

TRUDY
Like, what really happened with him?

DANNY
The water, the sheep.

TRUDY
The sheep and the water and the--

DANNY

Leopards.

TRUDY

Those damn leopards. Let's get into this.

DANNY

Aren't we all, in some way, those leopards? He wasn't afraid to heal them.

TRUDY

Their claws.

DANNY

I laugh at your claws!

TRUDY

Teeth.

DANNY

You call these teeth! Come! I heal your teeth!

TRUDY

He was always like--

DANNY

Bring me your poor, your tired.

TRUDY

Your manic, your depressed.

DANNY

Everything is so shallow out here. My mom's kicking off has got me thinking the bigger thoughts.

TRUDY

Who knows what could happen. To any of us.

DANNY

We could all get shut out, like that.

TRUDY

We could lose certain privileges.

DANNY

It could all vanish. Poof!

(pause)

TRUDY

Look, there's a church over there! Let's go in and see what's what.

(They leave the restaurant and go into a church.)

SCENE 4- A Church (?)

DANNY

Hey, anyone in here?

TRUDY

Danny! Don't yell like that!

DANNY

Sorry.

TRUDY

Yell like this. HEY! ANYONE IN HERE?? WE'RE HERE! LOST SOULS! WE GOTTA LOTTA QUESTIONS FOR YOU!

(There is no response)

Vicars! Cardinals! Princes of the church! Front and Center! We've got a very concerning young man here!

DANNY

Why aren't there any crosses or altars or candles or saints or pews or organs or bibles or people swimming in deep shame? Hey, this isn't a church. This is a gas station. You brought me to a gas station, not a church.

TRUDY

I think you're getting very particular young man. Okay, we'll make the best of things. No priests, only wiper fluid. I'll be the priest.

(Sits him down, as in a confessional)

So, what's on your mind young fella?

DANNY

Well, uh, I gotta lotta problems.

TRUDY

What's going on?

DANNY

My mom died. She's departed. She died and now she's dead and departed.

TRUDY

Okay.

DANNY

Yeah....uh...I don't have any more problems than that one. Should I have more? I should have more problems. I'm not perfect!

TRUDY

None of us are perfect!

DANNY

Okay. So, I am a sinner. Here's one of my sins. When I was in high school, I slept with this girl...

TRUDY

You slept with a girl?

DANNY

Yes, and--

TRUDY

That is reserved for the ironclad borders of the marital--

DANNY

No no, you misunderstand. We both fell asleep in Geometry class. She was halfway across the room. It was as non-sexual as you can get.

TRUDY

Oh.

DANNY

I mean, later on we slept together, and we were both awake that time. But that's beside the point.

TRUDY

I see.

DANNY

The point is because we fell asleep in geometry class I didn't get the notes from her and I failed the midterm exam the next day, which is like a sin, right? You shouldn't fail a test in a class that's based on *how do you make a triangle*.

TRUDY

Terrible sin, terrible! Okay, your confession is over. Good job. I absolve you and so and so on. For your penance, never study geometry again. How do you feel?

DANNY

Free! Unburdened!

TRUDY

Good. The tension's gone. Soul is limber. You're ready to take care of things at home.

DANNY

Okay, okay. This time for real.

TRUDY

Yes.

DANNY

I hope my mom won't too be upset to find out she's, you know...

TRUDY

Not alive?

DANNY

'cause she just made a bunch of soup.

(He shakes his head and sighs.)

(TRUDY sighs)

(They both sigh..)

SCENE 5--At the door of DANNY's mother's house.

DANNY

(psyching himself up)

I've got this. I've got this!

TRUDY

You've never once let me down Danny. Let's get in there. I can see your mother inside.

DANNY

She's reading McCalls. Like nothing's happened.

(THEY enter. MRS. FISH puts down her magazine and stands up sprightly.)

MRS. FISH

Hello there!

TRUDY

Hello Mrs. Fish. Don't you look so alive!

MRS. FISH

Why, thank you. I feel so alive!

TRUDY

Completely understandable. We all have a hard time letting go. You should meet my mother. Twelve times. It's a mental block or something. How are you doing there Danny?

DANNY

O God, this is harder than I thought. It's hard to grieve for your mom when she's standing right in front of you.

TRUDY

I understand. Mrs. Fish, could you step into the next room?

MRS. FISH

Why certainly.

(SHE starts to leave)

MRS. FISH

Who are you, by the way? I don't mean to be rude, I just--

TRUDY

Oh, sorry. I'm Trudy. I'm with Danny.

MRS. FISH

Oh, how lovely! Danny, you never told me you had a girl--

DANNY

This is our first date.

(pulling her aside)

Although it's going pretty well. I wanted you to meet here before we buried you.

MRS. FISH

Well, no time like the present is what I always say.

TRUDY

I'm sorry Mrs. Fish. If you could just...

MRS. FISH

Oh, not at all. Assertive, Danny! Takes the situation in hand!

(SHE exits)

TRUDY

We'll call you if we need you.

(pause)

Danny, it's good that you're here. You need to be in this place, the place where she was, to properly mourn her. Here, touch the piano. Run your fingers along the keys. Remember the days when she made you practice piano while the other kids were out there playing stickball.

DANNY

I never took piano and no one played stickball.

TRUDY

Gaze upon these shelves of hummels and precious moments. Feel what you need to feel. Don't hold back pal.

DANNY

Pal? Are we pals? They say you should date someone who's your pal first!

TRUDY

Mrs. Fish! Do you have any other memorabilia?

MRS. FISH

I can come out now?

TRUDY

No, just yell from where you are.

MRS. FISH

Let me see! Well, we went to Arkansas once! And we got a plate! We never eat off it! I don't know why we have a plate we never eat off of! That plate upsets me!

TRUDY

Where is it?

MRS. FISH

In the--

TRUDY

Found it! Here Danny. Look at this plate. Remember Arkansas? The state capitol. A famous tree. A statue of a cast iron guy. Feel Arkansas, Danny. Let Arkansas take you over. The joy, the pain. All those hot springs. Bubbling up. Geysers. The Old Faithful of the Southern Midwest. Take it in Danny.

DANNY

I can't feel anything.

TRUDY

You're numb. Just try. Feel that water. It's hot. It's boiling! It bubbles up from the earth! It makes a pool! You sit in that pool! You were in there.

DANNY

We never even made it to the springs. In fact, I'm not even sure if they took me on that trip.

TRUDY

This is just you being contentious. Which I allow for.

DANNY

Because I'm in my grief, right?

TRUDY

Because you're in your grief. Feel the water coursing over you. Can you feel it Danny?

DANNY

Okay, yeah, I think I can feel it now. It feels nice. It feels like--

TRUDY

Mrs. Fish! Come out! He's done grieving!

(She re-enters)

MRS. FISH

Oh, okay. Thank you. It was getting very stuffy in that closet.

TRUDY

You didn't have to go into a closet.

MRS. FISH

I don't do anything halfway young lady.

TRUDY

Now, what do you want to wear in your casket?

MRS. FISH

Oh, what a delightful question!

TRUDY

It is? Why?

MRS. FISH

Well, other people usually decide these things for you. The old get no respect. We're just set off in the corner and told to dream about Model A's. So. I'd like to wear my black pumps.

TRUDY

What else?

MRS. FISH

Well, my dusty rose blouse, and the neckerchief that goes with it. You know the one, Danny. With the gray skirt.

DANNY

That's what you wore in 1984 when you worked. For like six months. Do you really want to wear that?

MRS. FISH

Those were wonderful days. I operated the switchboard at an architect's firm. I had lunch with the gals at the Red Lion. I wore pince-nez glasses and had a nasally voice.

DANNY

You volunteered at a hospital gift shop and your voice was not--

MRS. FISH

Oh Danny. Who invited you over?

TRUDY

I think we need to move things along. We'll get you what you need Mrs. Fish. Time to get to the cemetery!

MRS. FISH

Excuse me. I don't mean to interrupt. But from what I'm hearing by way of this conversation is that I'm having a funeral and then being buried in a casket?

TRUDY

Yes.

MRS. FISH

Oh.

(pause)

Why?

TRUDY

Because. You're deceased.

MRS. FISH

Oh.

(pause)

I am?

TRUDY

Yes.

MRS. FISH

Oh my.

(pause)

Danny, is that true?

DANNY

Yeah mom. 'fraid so.

(HE goes to hug her)

I've been here looking at pictures, trying to deal with my grief.

MRS. FISH

You're grieving?

DANNY

Yes.

MRS. FISH

Then it must be true. You wouldn't be grieving my death if I wasn't dead.

DANNY

It's been a hard day. I've known you were...passed, for a while, but only deep down. Trudy just awakened it for me.

MRS. FISH

(to TRUDY)

You are a catch! I have been feeling a little piquish lately. But I thought it was just the Coriolis effect. How did it happen? Do you know?

TRUDY

Forest for the trees, Mrs. Fish. Forest for the trees. We can't get caught up in these details. Life is about action. What you do in the here and now.

MRS. FISH

She is something else! Okay, well, can I invite people to my own burial? Or would that be untoward?

TRUDY

The news of death travels fast. They'll be there.

MRS. FISH

Okay. Well, at least I'll see Stanley again.

TRUDY

Who's Stanley?

DANNY

My dad.

TRUDY

Oh, did he die?

DANNY

No, he just likes going to funerals.

TRUDY

Silver lining to every cloud. Now, a word to the wise. When you get down in the ground, stay there. You'll be much more peaceful. My mom came back twice after her burial and it wasn't very warmly received. By anyone. Accept your condition. You'll be fine. Danny, you've dealt enough with this?

DANNY

Uh, yeah. I guess. You being here makes it a lot easier for me Trudy. You've been a real asset today.

SCENE 6--The Cemetery.

MRS. FISH, TRUDY AND DANNY stand somberly in an open section of a graveyard looking at the ground. There is no hole dug and no casket in sight.

DANNY

Okay, time to go in.

MRS. FISH

Oh, really? Now?

DANNY

Yes! I'm trying to be nice about this, but...

MRS. FISH

Okay. Um, where?

DANNY

In the casket.

MRS. FISH

But...

DANNY

Oh, there is no casket.

(HE looks around the graveyard)

Where's the....Tru, there's no casket.

TRUDY

Can we please focus here!

DANNY and MRS. FISH

Sorry!

TRUDY

If it's not one thing it's another.

DANNY

You're right, you're right.

TRUDY

Did you call me Tru?

DANNY

Yeah.

TRUDY

As in shorthand for someone you've known a long time and feel entirely comfortable with?

DANNY

Is that okay?

TRUDY

(smiles, blushing)

No!

DANNY

But you smiled.

TRUDY

Dime a dozen!! On with the proceedings!

(Enter a Groundskeeper)

GK

Can I help you folks?

DANNY

No, we are doing just fine, thank you.

GK

What are you doing?

DANNY

It's private.

GK

You're not hiding it very well.

DANNY

In theory. Could you please just go back to your...shed.

GK

I'm in charge of this cemetery.

DANNY

I thought God was or something.

TRUDY

Danny, you're not being very nice.

DANNY

He started it with all these Stasi questions.

GK

Is this a funeral? Are you trying to have a funeral?

DANNY

What gave you that idea? There's not even a casket. Someone forgot the casket.

(He freezes)

Because we're not having a funeral.

GK

You can't have a funeral.

DANNY

We know.

GK

There are many steps you have to go through. There's a whole diocesan thing you have to go through.

DANNY

Do we look like the kind of people who don't know about going through diocesan things? Do you think we are not well acquainted with the ecclesial regulations? But for now, can we just be left alone to mourn alone, in private? With the personage who is already dead.

GK

And who would that be?

(Pause. Danny turns to Trudy)

DANNY

No one gets it Trudy. No one gets it.

TRUDY

It's okay Danny. It's okay sir. We are just going to finish up here. Someone died and even

though they aren't here we wanted to be at a cemetery to be around death to feel what that is like, for people who are here. Beneath us. Dead. Dead beneath us. We won't be long.

GK
Okay

TRUDY.
Thank you.

GK
I didn't mean to interrupt your mourning.

DANNY
We accept your apology.

GK
I wasn't apologizing

DANNY
And let us mourn!

(Groundskeeper looks at them for a strange minute, then goes off.)

DANNY
Alone at last!

MRS. FISH
So. Can I take something with me in the...casket?

DANNY
Like what?

MRS. FISH
I don't know. Maybe some bran muffins.

DANNY
Uhhh...

TRUDY
Of course you can! You can get a lot of mileage out of those things.

MRS. FISH
Wonderful.

(DANNY looks around)

DANNY
Are they just around? Or do we have to bake them first?

TRUDY
What a question.

MRS. FISH
You know, and, again, I don't mean to be difficult, but may I know just how I met my maker?

TRUDY
Revisiting it will get you all worked up.

DANNY
Mom, let's just get this over with. Can you do this for me?

MRS. FISH
Danny, you are my son and I would do anything for you. I would even die for you. And actually, I already did. I'm sure it was very heroic. I just don't know the exact details.

DANNY
Well, it doesn't matter. It happened and now it's time to seal the deal.

MRS. FISH
But I guess I'm saying...well, I'm not saying I haven't expired. I'm just saying, maybe we should do it again--just so I really know it. That I've given up the ghost. Oh, that gives me chills. I mean, there's one thing to know something. But that doesn't necessarily mean you *know it* know it.

TRUDY
Hmmm, interesting. I guess we could try to make that happen.

MRS. FISH
Good! How should we do this?

DANNY
Oh, Gosh. Let's see. Ending your life again. Well. What way would be the most...

TRUDY
The most...

DANNY
Exciting!

TRUDY
Painless!

DANNY
(quickly)
Painless! Yes! The most painless way!

TRUDY
Not that you'd necessarily feel it anyway, Mrs. Fish, because you're already in the realm of the departed. But just in case there are, you know, contingencies.

DANNY
How shall we make this happen?

TRUDY

Actually, I've got a gun.

DANNY

You do?

MRS. FISH

You are dynamite.

TRUDY

It's right here.

(SHE pulls hand out of her pocket in the form of a gun)

DANNY

Holy moly. Where'd you get that?

TRUDY

It's a certain configuration of my fingers.

DANNY

It's quite aerodynamic.

(looking at his own hand he all but involuntarily makes into a gun)

Oh, I have one too!

MRS. FISH

Well, if you two aren't just two plums in a plum pie.

DANNY and TRUDY

(together, overlapping, improvising)

Thanks, that's sweet, what can we say, we appreciate it.

MRS. FISH

Where do you want to shoot me?

DANNY

A question I never thought I'd hear in my life. Wherever we hit you will probably do the trick.

MRS. FISH

That's sweet. But I meant where in the graveyard are you going to shoot me?

DANNY

Oh. I guess we could do it under those birch trees over there. A pastoral setting

(Pause)

Wait, why are we doing this again Trudy? Didn't she already...?

TRUDY

We must observe the rituals Danny! Can you not honor this woman as she gives way to the “who knows what”?

(softly)

Are you afraid?

DANNY

No, it's just I've never fired a gun before. I'm afraid I'll mess up.

MRS. FISH

Come on Danny, you can do it. I'm a big target these days. I've been letting myself go the last few months.

DANNY

Oh mom, don't say that.

MRS. FISH

No, really, look at this.

(Pats her backside)

DANNY

Oh, I see—

(TRUDY furtively smacks him on the arm and gives him deadly look)

...that you've got a new hairstyle--magenta...beehive...modern.

(Everyone looks confused.)

MRS. FISH

If I already died and missed it, well, you know: death is sort of a big milestone in a person's life. And you want to really have been there. You want to have, I don't know if *enjoyed* it is the right term but....

DANNY

Gotcha. Stand over there. I can do this. I can shoot you.

TRUDY

Atta boy Danny. You got this.

DANNY

Okay, okay. You ready mom?

(He points gun.)

I'm gonna really do it.

MRS. FISH
Well that's just fine.

DANNY
(looking down at gun)
I like the handle on this baby. Fits perfectly in the hand.

TRUDY
Oh for Pete's sake.

DANNY
All right.

(pause)

Should we say some words first? Like a meaningful poem? Maybe an acrostic?

TRUDY
DANNY!

DANNY
Okay, okay.

(He aims the gun at her.)

MRS. FISH
(calling out)
Honey. You have to put your left hand--

DANNY
What's that?

MRS. FISH
I said put your left hand--

DANNY
I'm sorry, I don't--

MR. FISH
Here.

(SHE hurries over to him.)

Let me show you. Extend your hand. Now put your left hand on the right hand with your one hand like that and your thumb like so. Got it?

DANNY
I think so.

MRS. FISH
Are you sure?

DANNY
Uh, yeah. Sure.

MRS. FISH
No you don't. Let me demonstrate. Here. How about this. I'll put you down first. And then when I'm done you can return the favor.

DANNY
Oh. Okay! Great idea.

(DANNY goes over to birch tree.)

TRUDY
Watch and learn Danny! Watch and learn!

MRS. FISH
Young lady, you have got some pipes! Get ready Danny!

(SHE takes aim. Pause. Turns to TRUDY)

Did you take voice lessons?

TRUDY
No, my voice has always been like that. People get nervous around me. I sang in my church choir.

MRS. FISH
Oh, church!

(puts the gun down)

I used to like church! So quiet. You could hear the air conditioner hum.

TRUDY
I'm not really a church person anymore.

DANNY
Are you guys ready!

TRUDY
Hold your horses! We're going over some important logistics here!

MRS. FISH
We'll be right with you Danny.

(to TRUDY)

You're not a church person?

TRUDY

Nope.

MRS. FISH

I learned a lot in church. I just sat there under the air conditioning and dreamed of that wonderful man who would come down from on high and fix everything for everybody.

TRUDY

Jesus is pretty cool.

MRS. FISH

I meant the roofer. He could fix anything.

TRUDY

Right. (beat) Who did your hair?

MRS. FISH

Oh, do you like it? I'm not sure what I think. He said he wanted to try something new and I said, Well let's just go for it! I'll close my eyes and wake up and I'll be fine with whatever happens. I've been trying to be more devil-may-care. Oooh, I don't like saying that word.

TRUDY

I go to this guy my mom always goes to and he's like, "The usual?" Like it's a drink. "The usual?" Like he's a bartender and my hair's a cocktail. "What's your poison pal?" I'm cool with it though. I'm actually pretty conservative, hair wise. It's the same hairstyle I've had since I was 14 and won the Junior League Fly Fishing competition.

MRS. FISH

(sizing up her hair)

It looks very recreational.

TRUDY

Thank you.

(pause)

MRS. FISH

So, should we go ahead and shoot this young man?

TRUDY

Yeah. I guess so.

DANNY

Are we on?

(MRS. FISH turns immediately and shoots him)

Blam!

(DANNY ducks.)

MRS. FISH

For crying out loud Danny, don't duck. Did you even see how I did that?

DANNY

I saw it! The whole thing!

TRUDY

Are you sure?

DANNY

Yes. I used peripheral vision.

TRUDY

I'm suspicious!

(ENTER Groundskeeper)

GK

Hey, hey, hey, what is going on out here?

DANNY

That was a 21 gun salute. Minus 20.

GK

With what guns?

DANNY

No one gets it Trudy. No one gets it.

TRUDY

(to GK)

It's okay sir. It's really just fine. These are uncertain times we are living in aren't they sir. And everyone is hearing things that aren't there and shooting things that they're not shooting and just hoping for a little piece of the appetite.

GK

Appetite? What?

(She just looks at him. He ever so slightly backs down)

I don't want to see any more gun salutes. Of any kind. If that's okay.

TRUDY

Okay, no more.

(Pause)

GK

There's other cemeteries you know.

TRUDY

Oh, we know. We just heard this one had the best groundskeepers and was the most well-cared for. And they were right!

GK

Why thank you. Okay, I'll be off. Thank you.

(He turns to leave and stops)

You might check out the hydrangeas by the mausoleums. People say they're the nicest they've ever seen. That's just what people say.

TRUDY

We will!

(HE exits)

MRS. FISH

All right Danny. Now it's your turn.

(THEY switch places. Danny turns and points gun at his mother)

DANNY

Ready?

MRS. FISH

Yes, go ahead.

DANNY

Don't you want to be blindfolded?

TRUDY

Oh for crying out loud Danny.

DANNY

Okay. Mom. I'm sorry. But it's for everyone's good!

(He aims the gun)

BLAM!

(MRS. FISH falls to the ground)

Mom!

(DANNY runs to her but she gets up immediately.)

MRS. FISH

That was wonderful! How about how I felt? Did that look right? I think I could've been more expressive.

TRUDY

I think you could have been more expressive.

DANNY

I'm not doing this again!

TRUDY

Fine, fine. It's okay. We gotta get this funeral going anyway...

(SHE trails off, distractedly)

DANNY

Trudy. I know that look. What are you thinking?

TRUDY

I just wonder. Shouldn't she have a last meal?

MRS. FISH

YES! I WOULD LOVE A LAST MEAL!

TRUDY

I mean, *another* last meal. Just to do this right.

MRS. FISH

How about a Bronco burger.

DANNY

A burger from Bronco's?

TRUDY

Burger from Bronco's coming right up. We'll leave right now.

(Calling off in the distance)

Sir, we're leaving. No need to worry or call the funeral police. Everything will be just fine!
(to Ms. Qaye) Do you want us to bring it here or meet you at home?

MRS. FISH

Oh, I'll go home. Try on my jewelry one last time.

TRUDY

Okay, Mrs. Fish, we'll get a Bronco burger and bring it to you and then you'll eat it and then we'll bury you and we can all move on with our lives.

MRS. FISH

Danny, this girl has got some moxie.

TRUDY

You know, come to think of it. Why are we rushing this? We don't need to race through this whole thing. Society is so obsessed with going so rickety rack rick. Get everything done immediately! Bam whack boom! Someone dies: BURY EM! NOW!

DANNY

Is this a delaying tactic?

TRUDY

I'M JUST TRYING TO BE A MORE SERENE PERSON!!

DANNY

Okay.

TRUDY

You go home Mrs. Fish. We'll bring you a Bronco Burger and then we'll just all meditate on the next step. Don't worry—we'll put you in the ground. But we don't need to be all madcap about things! Do it, now now now! America! America! America! Go go go! Cook, bake, chew, eat, clean up, take out the trash, watch St. Elsewhere! Let's just slow down, why don't we?

MRS. FISH

I can drive home. I like my burger's very rare by the way--still kicking. If that's okay. If not, whatever they have is fine. Danny, if this one would like to do my eulogy, I'd be okay with that.

DANNY

Mom. What's your middle name?

MRS. FISH

Samantha.

DANNY

Oh. That's nice.

(MRS. FISH exits)

(TRUDY sidles over to DANNY and playfully tugs at his shirt.)

DANNY

You're not enjoying this date are you? It would make me nervous to be around someone who actually wanted to be with me. I would seriously question their judgement.

TRUDY

Look kid....

(SHE fakes punching him. DANNY ducks and laughs.)

DANNY
Hah! Fake punch!

(He fake punches her back. Her head snaps back and she grabs her jaw.)

TRUDY
Ow! Good God DANNY!

DANNY
Oh my God! I'm so sorry! Oh my God. I didn't even think I got close! I am so sorry!

(After a few moments she takes her hand off her face.)

TRUDY
Ahhh, it's okay. 'Twere nothing.

DANNY
Really? You sure?

TRUDY
Yeah, it's like you didn't even touch me.

DANNY
Oh, okay good.

TRUDY
You didn't touch me. I was just faking it.

DANNY
Oh. I didn't touch you.

(They walk off.)

TRUDY
No. You didn't.

(SHE slips her hand into his. After a moment he takes his hand out and scratches his head.)

DANNY
My head itches.

(THEY exit)

SCENE 6--DANNY and TRUDY sitting in a parked car. He is eating a Bronco burger. An unopened bag of burgers sits on her lap

DANNY

Senior Skip Day. I'd been waiting for it my whole life. The one day when you can do something wrong and nobody can do anything about it. Because everyone's doing it.

(TRUDY holds up the bag of burgers)

TRUDY

Shouldn't we drive over to your mom's and deliver this?

DANNY

Oh, she'll be fine. Actually I think she wouldn't mind extending this whole last meal thing a bit longer. (beat) Senior Skip Day.

TRUDY

But Danny we've got to finish things up!

DANNY

I gotta talk this through!

TRUDY

I'm sorry. This means a lot to you doesn't it.

DANNY

Yes.

TRUDY

Go ahead. I'm here Danny.

DANNY

It'll be quick.

TRUDY

You go ahead Danny. Take all the time you need.

DANNY

Thank you. Senior Skip Day. You get to break the rules but they can't kick you out of school, because then they'd have to kick all the seniors out of school.

TRUDY

And there would be no one to graduate.

DANNY

Exactly! Plus they'd already made the plaque with all our names on it. If they kicked everyone out they'd have to remake the plaque with like no names on it. "Class of 1987: No one." So for once in my life I can get away with doing something bad.

TRUDY

Danny! I'm so excited for you back then!

(Languidly wiping sweat from her brow, sweat which may or may not be there.)

It's a little, uh, warm in this car, huh? Kinda...sultry like? Do you feel that?

DANNY

No. And in the school, before Senior Skip Day, there's always this secret. But one that everyone knows about. Making its way through the building. Down the hallways, into the teacher's lounge, over to the new Science and Math Wing. Or really, the new Science and Math *extended hallway*. They called it a "wing" but it was basically just one new room with like a big closet for extra protractors. And into the principal's office and over to the janitor's closet. *They're gonna skip*, everyone's whispering! *Seniors are going to skip!* But no one can really talk about it openly. It's like, it's like...some metaphor.

TRUDY

Like lava. Everyone knows it's down there but no one speaks its name.

DANNY

Senior Skip Day is like lava.

TRUDY

Speaking of lava. I'm sweating Danny. Look at my arms. The sheen upon my brow! The heat is really something in here. It's enough to make a gal swoon.

DANNY

I don't notice weather. So our year the secret was let out that it was gonna be on Friday. Psssst, Senior Skip Day is gonna be on Friday! DON'T TELL ANYONE!

TRUDY

You're all like, "Listen up! But pretend you can't hear!" And the other kids were all confused. But happy to just be involved. Look at us Danny! All agitated and perspired! Windows getting foggy. What must people think we're doing in here!

DANNY

They probably think I'm talking to you about small town Americana high school rites of defiance. What else?

TRUDY

Nothing else!

DANNY

So everyone thought it was Friday. But actually, what we did--we skipped two days before. On Wednesday. We said we were going to skip one day but we skipped another day. We did a, uh...a uh, football thing. You know. A football thing. What's that football thing? We did that football thing. Where the line pulls this way and the I-Back goes that way.

TRUDY

Misdirection.

DANNY

We did a misdirection and skipped on Wednesday,

TRUDY

I love you guys!

DANNY

Except it was totally dumb. To have it on Wednesday. We could have had a three day weekend if we'd done it on Friday. Why didn't we do a misdirection that Senior Skip Day was going to be on, like *the next Tuesday* but then actually do it on the Friday before?

TRUDY

You should have done that. Dammit! I'm angry now.

DANNY

I mean, what genius thought up that one? That is just so--

TRUDY

It's like the planners of wars. They never get it right. Oh Danny! Why is the world the way it is!

(SHE somewhat dramatically **lays her head on his shoulder**)

DANNY

Do you have a neck problem?

(SHE straightens back up)

TRUDY

Uh, no. Sorry.

DANNY

You know, I don't think you're really into this. You're probably right, let's just take this food over to her. I don't want to leave her alone. These are hard moments for her. She might be afraid to own up to, uh, things.

TRUDY

No, no! Go on! I'm sorry! Go on!

DANNY

Okay, okay. So Wednesday comes. None of the seniors go to school. Instead we all go to this quarry like a few miles away and hang out and swim and drink.

TRUDY

Illicit!

DANNY

Except we didn't drink. Because Walker forgot the beer and Tatum forgot the Schnapps and Deeter thought Stinson was bringing the wine coolers and Stinson thought Deeter was

bringing--these are the kinds of people I went to high school with. So we just sat out there *not drinking* at this quarry.

TRUDY

I'd like to talk about my interesting high school experiences...

DANNY

And we couldn't even swim in the quarry--

TRUDY

...when you're done.

DANNY

--because the quarry didn't have any water in it.

TRUDY

Oh no!

DANNY

The quarry was like *still in use*. As a quarry! There were like trucks going in and out, *mining the stone*, or whatever. It was all loud and dusty and trucks and conveyor belts and guys yelling, "Hey, get that stone!" "Hey! Get that other stone!"

TRUDY

Danny! I want this to have been different for you!

DANNY

Join the club. The entire senior class, collectively, forgot that it was a working quarry. God! So we're all sitting there under this tree--there were only about 25 people in my class, really small town.

TRUDY

Everyone knew everyone! I'm visually there right now!

(peering as if in a crystal glass)

Look at you! 18 years old. Feathered hair. I can practically ruffle it from here.

DANNY

And no one even thought to leave even though it was all noisy and dusty and hot and you couldn't swim and we didn't have anything to drink and we were all super annoyed and angry. But no, we didn't leave. Because we'd all decided to go to the quarry and no one was, like, able to *dislodge it from their minds* that this wasn't a good idea anymore. And that we could actually do something different. That never occurred to anyone. What a dumb bunch of seniors. It's a miracle they even gave us our degrees.

TRUDY

You were all under the spell of Senior Skip Day and it would not cut you loose of its vise-like grip.

(SHE grabs his arm and doesn't let go.)

Like this vice-like..

(HE looks at her hand, looks at her)

...Grip.

(SHE takes her hand away)

DANNY

Anyway it goes on. Why was I telling you all that?

TRUDY

A cigarette.

DANNY

Oh, right. Do you have a cigarette?

TRUDY

I don't smoke.

DANNY

I don't either.

(pause)

TRUDY

I really like your mom. She just doesn't quit does she?

DANNY

No sir. She'll have to though. Right? She'll have to?

TRUDY

Yessir. No doubt about it.

(pause)

TRUDY

Danny, this has been really nice.

DANNY

It has been nice.

(pause)

TRUDY

So, uh...

DANNY

So we probably shouldn't see each other anymore.

TRUDY

What? (beat) Oh right. I get it.

DANNY

You do?

TRUDY

Of course. Makes total sense.

DANNY|

It does?

TRUDY

Yeah. It's been nice and we shouldn't see each other.

DANNY

Really?

TRUDY

Yes.

DANNY

Okay. Good. You understand! Great! That's it.

TRUDY

That's it!

DANNY

That's it.

TRUDY

Yep.

DANNY

So, I should take this food over...

TRUDY

Yep.

(pause)

DANNY
I can walk...

TRUDY
Yep.

(He doesn't move)

DANNY
Well, it's been nice meeting you.

TRUDY
You too.

DANNY
Thank you.

TRUDY
You're welcome.

(He doesn't move. They sit in silence.)

DANNY
Do you wanna make out?

TRUDY
Yes.

Scene 6--TRUDY and DANNY walking through a sewer tunnel. DANNY carries a water bottle and a flashlight.

TRUDY
Why are we down in this dark tunnel?

DANNY
It's a short cut to my mom's.

TRUDY
We could just drive.

DANNY
I want to give her time. As she goes through these moments.

TRUDY
We could drive slowly.

DANNY
There's a sewer tunnel right down the street from her. I thought it would be cool if we went into

her house with our shirts and faces all greasy like we were underground in the French resistance and she was a country woman in the country waiting for the French resistance uh...

(She pulls him close)

And..uh...she'd laugh it would help her get through,

(She kisses him.)

...uh...uh...

TRUDY

I think you took me down here in this dark sewer tunnel so you could hold my hand and kiss me.

DANNY

No I didn't. I mean, yes, but no, the shortcut. But yes. But actually, no, what the thing is is that I used to walk these tunnels as a kid. And I wrote something on the wall down here that could have some, uh, significance for this evening.

(HE continues to walk ahead. SHE has stopped. Finally HE stops and looks back at her.)

TRUDY

Well?

DANNY

Oh, you want me to tell you what it was?

TRUDY

I mean, you know, if you have time.

DANNY

I wrote "I heart...a girl's name" on the side of the tunnel. And I think it was--and totally no pressure--but I think it was "Trudy." I think I wrote "I heart Trudy" in this tunnel. And I'm not saying that if *I did* write "I heart Trudy" and that your name was Trudy--which it actually is—I'm not saying you have to "that" me *back*. Or that you have to feel anything for me at all. You don't. You could be totally and completely disgusted with me every time you ever see me. Which would be fine. I'm just saying, if it was your name that I wrote back then, well, it's *interesting* that sixteen years later I'm here with your name, but in human form.

TRUDY

(rasping voice)

Danny, I'm speechless.

DANNY

That's sweet.

(She hits him, patting her chest and trying to speak)

DANNY

Oh, you're literally speechless! Oh my God. Here!

(HE hands her the water bottle. SHE drinks thirstily.)

TRUDY

Thank you! My throat was like a desert! My mother told me a girl should never eat in front of a boy. I thought I'd go a step further and not drink in front of him either. Live and learn Danny! Now, let's go and find this—THERE'S A RAT!

(DANNY jumps up)

DANNY

WHERE!!

TRUDY

There isn't one. My mother also told me that when a girl was with a boy to shout every so often THERE'S A RAT!...

(HE jumps higher)

DANNY

WHERE?!!

TRUDY

...and see how the boy reacts. You're not doing so hot Danny.

DANNY

You know, your mom is maybe not the world's all-time dating expert. A different tunnel! Let's go down it!

TRUDY

Why?

DANNY

Because it's different!

TRUDY

You're aces kid. Now, this thing you wrote. Is it down this different tunnel?

DANNY

No, it's down that one.

TRUDY

How about we keep going down the first tunnel, and see the thing with maybe someone named Trudy's name on it, and then we can circle back to this other one.

DANNY

Okay, fine.

(THEY continue walking)

DANNY

So, one day I was playing with the guys and they were saying stuff about me and then they all ran away and I couldn't catch up with them because they were all fifty-yard dash field day champions. And they didn't run away and then come back and say "Just kidding!" They ran away and went to, like, hammer caps without me.

TRUDY

Caps? The low-rent fireworks for 10-year-olds that are basically a string of paper stretched defeatedly out on the sidewalk?

DANNY

And so I went into my fort, which was this sewer tunnel. That no one knew about. Except the guys who dug it. And the water that ran through it--if the water was a really long, narrow and confusing-looking person. And I walked way deep into here and dreamed of someone who would take me away from all this stuff. Someone I could meet in the future who would make things all better. And I would love that person, and they would love me. And so I wrote on the wall, as like a wish for the future: "I heart...someone's name." And then when I met you on the app and your name was Trudy and I told you the address of the restaurant and you said you were game to eat whatever and we talked for a while because we were riding some pretty slow apps and then we just drove by here I was like, *Oh My God*. And that day with those kids came back to me. And so I wanted to show you where it all started. And that maybe all that stuff with those kids and feeling the way I did was *meant* to happen. Because eventually it kicked off a subordinate chain of events which led to meeting you.

TRUDY

(bravely)

Well, let's see what's on the wall.

(THEY continue forward)

DANNY

My last girlfriend--she always wanted to be with me alone. Are you sure you want to hear about my last girlfriend?

TRUDY

I never asked to hear about your last girlfriend.

DANNY

I think she was ashamed of me! Either that or she didn't know any public places to go. So we'd hang out at her apartment all the time. We met when my car broke down--are you really sure you want to hear about this?

TRUDY
No!

DANNY
And someone came by to help me fix the car...

(TRUDY rattles the flashlight)

TRUDY
Danny! The batteries are running out.

DANNY
It was the carburetor.

TRUDY
I mean the flashlight battery.

DANNY
Just take them out and put them back in the other way.

(SHE does. It lights up)

TRUDY
That's not supposed to work. Who are you?

DANNY
So the car's broken down and another car pulls up to help.

TRUDY
The future girlfriend. Fixes the car's carburetor. And then yours. Haha. Danny, look--

DANNY
And a guy gets out of the car. He can't get it fixed, but this guy and I get along and he tells me I should meet his sister.

TRUDY
Believe it or not how you met your last girlfriend is not exactly--

DANNY
We're almost there. So, to make a long story continue, turns out his sister was married. Which he didn't know. Until he happened to pull a wedding program out of his coat pocket. Weird. Anyway, so we left there and went and got a drink. And at the bar there was this super nice cocktail waitress...

TRUDY
A cocktail waitress? You? Really?

DANNY

...who said she had a sister--everyone I met that day had some desperate sister I guess....Wait!

(Suddenly DANNY runs ahead)

DANNY

This is it! I see it! Right over there!! Will you hang back for a sec? I'd like to have a private moment with this wall. It's gonna be kind of emotional.

TRUDY

Okay Danny. Hang in there. What will be will be.

(He walks slowly over to the wall. He shines a flashlight on the writing.)

DANNY

(slowly)

I...

(pause)

...Love...

(pause)

...Mr. Mister.

(pause)

I love Mr. Mister? What the...

TRUDY

How's it going there Danny?

DANNY

I love Mr. Mister? Did I really? Why? Did they even write their own songs?

TRUDY

What are you saying?

DANNY

Oh, ummm...yeah, it's fine. It's cool! Amazing!

TRUDY

Can I see it?

DANNY

We should go. You've probably had enough of me for one day. Besides, it's getting dark.

TRUDY

We're in a tunnel.

DANNY

True.

TRUDY

I wanna see it! Was it my name?

DANNY

I think I'll keep it private. You know, one of those special things, like a diary, or a...jar.

TRUDY

Private? This is the big moment. The big thing! For both of us!

DANNY

So, anyway, it's been nice meeting you.

TRUDY

Nice meeting me? Again?

DANNY

Let's go.

TRUDY

Breaking up all the time is not a necessary ingredient for the health of our relationship.

DANNY

No, no. This time is different.

TRUDY

What happened over there?

DANNY

It's not important.

TRUDY

What was on that wall?

DANNY

Never mind! Look! There's a light at the end of the tunnel!

(pause)

DANNY and TRUDY

Oh, that's where they get that phrase!

DANNY

Speaking the same thoughts at the same time! Another reason this won't work!

TRUDY

Quite the opposite Danny!

(pause)

DANNY

I bet you like this t-shirt don't you?

TRUDY

No I in fact do not like it.

DANNY

I do not like it either. Disliking the same things. Reason number three.

TRUDY

Danny!! (beat) Then why did you wear it if you don't like it?

DANNY

Because I...

TRUDY

Because you what?

DANNY

Well, it was just sitting there in the dresser drawer and I hadn't worn it in a long time and...

DANNY

I felt sorry for it.

TRUDY

You felt sorry for it!

DANNY

Because it hadn't been picked out forever.

TRUDY

While it was watching all the other shirts get worn.

DANNY

So I take the shirt out gingerly.

TRUDY

With the care it deserves after having been neglected and left behind for so long.

DANNY

And I put it on and I wear it. But whatever good feeling I get from affirming the existence of this shirt is outweighed by--

TRUDY

—how much you don't like having the actual shirt on. I do that all the time. I have a shirt made of dry leaves.

DANNY

And frankly, I don't think the shirt would want to be outside of my dresser anyway. It's a Days of the New t-shirt from their concert at Peony Park in 1995.

TRUDY

Who's Days of the New?

DANNY

Days of the New is:

TRUDY

DANNY

A band called Days of the New.

DANNY

We're just not clicking Trudy.

TRUDY

Are you kidding...

DANNY

And here I am, wearing the shirt anyway and feeling all sad. But pulling it outta the drawer because I'm thinking I gotta do the right thing by this piece of black fabric. I'm sick of doing the right thing. I'm getting rid of this shirt.

(He takes it off and starts to throw it back into the tunnel)

TRUDY

Well don't throw it away.

(She takes the shirt and puts it on. It fits. It fits well. It is unreal the way it fits and the way it looks on her. It is almost too much.)

DANNY

You're wearing my tight black mid-90s rock concert t-shirt.

TRUDY

The mid-90s were last year.

DANNY

Jesus.

TRUDY

I don't know why you're saying that.

DANNY

Look, here's the truth. The reason I can't go out with you is because I'm only into Rules Girls. Rules Girls are the only ones with the kind of—

TRUDY

`Danny! I'm a Rules—

DANNY

(cutting her off)

DON'T SAY IT!!! I'm done Trudy! This is absolutely not working out!

(HE runs out of the tunnel)

SCENE 8—DANNY and MILES at a bar.

DANNY

Trudy's coming over.

MILES

Who's Trudy?

DANNY

A girl I met, went on a date with. It didn't work out though.

MILES

Who are you?

DANNY

A guy that things didn't work out with with Trudy!

MILES

So, why are you meeting up with her?

DANNY

Uh, obviously, to get a bunch of my stuff I had at her house.

MILES

You had stuff at her house like when people who live with each other for a long time break up and then they have to awkwardly or even tragically make an exchange of that stuff? Even though you went on only one date with her?

DANNY

Wow. I wish I could know so little about so many things as you do. There she is! Hide!

MILES
Me?

(DANNY dives under table. He is hidden by table cloth. In a stage whisper)

DANNY
No, me. I had to motivate myself.

(TRUDY enters)

TRUDY
Hi. Have you seen Danny? You're Tab aren't you?

DANNY
I'm Miles.

TRUDY
We had a picture of you two on our bureau.

MILES
I kind of doubt it was me. Wait, you guys shared a bureau? After one date?

TRUDY
How much longer are you going to pry into my life?

MILES
Danny's under the table.

DANNY
(a voice from under the table)
Shut up!

MILES
Why are you hiding under the table?

DANNY
I'm not!

TRUDY
Well, if you see him...

MILES
He's under the table.

TRUDY

He said he's not. I take people at their word. But if you see him, tell him I brought his penknife, some gummy worms, his Joyce, his Dostoevsky, the collected works of Encyclopedia Brown. His passport, a hot water bottle...

MILES

That's sweet.

TRUDY

And this: Why shouldn't you play poker in the jungle?

DANNY

(still under the table)

It's full of cheetahs.

(TRUDY looks over to the hostess station)

TRUDY

Good answer Madam Hostess.

MILES

That was this guy Danny.

TRUDY

She looks nothing like Danny. I gotta go.

MILES

Who are you?

TRUDY

The SAT's are over. Enough with the questions Mills.

MILES

Miles.

TRUDY

Aren't you picky. See, we had a swell time Danny and I. Real swell. He took me down this dark passage. And he thought my name was down there. And then, he just gave me the kaboot. I got his Days of the New t-shirt, and it was over. Maybe my name wasn't there. Anyway, it's all for the best. I'm meeting up with this guy later.

DANNY

A guy?

(He sits up and bangs his head on the bottom of the table)

Oww!

TRUDY

Yes, Ms. Hostess. A guy. I'VE MOVED ON. You got a problem with that? She's just looking at me all weird. I think she might be regretting she let me in. I guess she doesn't like a little class at her place, does she?

DANNY

What guy?

TRUDY

None of your business! Wow, jealous girl.

(SHE leaves. DANNY crawls out from under table and watches desperately as she goes.)

DANNY

You gonna let her get away with this?

MILES

Me?

DANNY

If I was you.

MILES

What?

DANNY

Exactly.

(DANNY rushes out)

SCENE 8--A restaurant. TRUDY and LODEN seated at a table. She fawns over him.

TRUDY

Oh, Loden Loden Loden! You are just...Loden!

(Enter DANNY. HE comes over to the table. HE stands there.)

TRUDY

Danny. Uh, hi. This is my date, Loden.

DANNY

"Loden"? You have got to be kidding me. "Loden." Please. Where did they get that name from? A color?

LODEN

Yes.

DANNY

What do you see in this guy that you don't see in me?

TRUDY

Excuse me, Loden. Danny, we are trying to have a nice quiet civilized meal. We've been talking about many things. Like... "Oh, I see that our table's ready." Didn't I say that, Lode?

DANNY

Lode?

LODEN

And other things. Like, "cloth napkins!"

TRUDY

We said that too!

DANNY

TRUDY!

LODEN

Is there a problem?

DANNY

Yeah. You, *Loden*.

TRUDY

DANNY!

DANNY

You fool, you clown, you three ring...

LODEN

Circus?

DANNY

I was going to say Olympics. But circus is much more fitting.

LODEN

You wanna take this outside?

DANNY

We're at an outdoor restaurant.

TRUDY

I never thought you could get so low Danny.

DANNY

Just give me five minutes Trudy.

(LODEN gets up)

LODEN

Look pal.

DANNY

I'm not your pal.

LODEN

Sorry. I didn't mean to imply that we were farther along in a relationship than we actually are.

DANNY

Just sit down.

LODEN

Strangely enough I am going to do that.

(HE sits)

DANNY

Thank you.

(DANNY takes TRUDY aside)

DANNY

Trudy how could you do this to me?

TRUDY

You knew the game Danny. It was good for a couple laughs, shooting your mom, sticking her in the ground.

DANNY

We never even finished that.

TRUDY

Danny, just let go. You made your choice. You ended it. And I can live with that.

DANNY

But that doesn't mean I want you to go off and date someone else! I thought you'd sit around on orange shag carpet playing moody records and dreaming about me in my Lee jean jacket for hours on end.

TRUDY

My mom turned my record player into a rabbit trap.

DANNY
Does it work?

TRUDY
Beautifully. Danny, everything is the way it should be. I finally realized that you were right. We're not meant for each other. That sewer told the truth. They usually do. It's okay. We'll be fine.

(SHE goes back to her table).

Loden! Look! People!

DANNY
Oh God!

(He EXITS)

SCENE 9--Later that evening. Foggy. Danny wanders the streets

DANNY
Aaaaagh!

(HE strolls onto a romantic-looking bridge)

This could've been me and her on this bridge.

(An Imagined TRUDY appears)

DANNY
Hey Trudy, what do you think of this bridge?

TRUDY
How nice! It goes from one side of this stream to the other and you can walk over it!

DANNY
And if you stay on it you won't fall in!

TRUDY
The things that exist!

(A field at night)

DANNY
We'd look up at the stars together.

DANNY
Do you know what that one is?

TRUDY
That white one?

DANNY
Yeah.

TRUDY
The white one to the right of that white one?

DANNY
No, to the left of that white one.

TRUDY
To the upper left or the lower left?

DANNY
Center left.

TRUDY
The one in the sky you mean?

DANNY
Yeah. I mean...wait. Are there other stars not in the sky?

TRUDY
Well Danny it's your lucky day. Time to learn something.

DANNY
I want to!

TRUDY
There's stars in the trees. They fell down and got tangled up in the branches. Very sad. But they still give off a little light. Just enough so that if you ever got lost in that particular tree you could find your way back down.

DANNY
Wow! Is there one of those around here?

TRUDY
Go get a binoculars, a shoe horn and a couple pancakes and we can find one.

(A baseball game.)

DANNY
Hey batter batter batter batter batter...

TRUDY
Who's playing?

DANNY
The guys on the field against the guys in the dugout.

TRUDY
Do you know any of them?

DANNY
No. You?

TRUDY
No.

DANNY
What are we doing here?

TRUDY
Good question!

DANNY
I don't care about any of these players.

TRUDY
Me neither!

DANNY
This team could be down fifteen runs in the last inning and come back to win and I wouldn't feel one single thing.

TRUDY
I would feel something. I would feel outraged that I've sat here watching a team that I don't care about all the way to the last inning.

DANNY
I would be angry about that too!

TRUDY
I'm getting angry right now just being here!

DANNY
Me too!

TRUDY
What the hell!

(DANNY stands up)

DANNY

You guys! Hey! Listen up!

TRUDY

Batters! Throwers! Catchers! And you: Portly Men in Grim Black Outfits! We don't care about you!

DANNY

Not one bit!

TRUDY

You could win and you could lose...or you guys could win and you guys could lose...or you could both lose...somehow...and we wouldn't give a rat's--

DANNY

--assess the situation! Play your little game! Throw your little baseballs, swing your little bats. We're not interested!

(DANNY turns to TRUDY)

DANNY

This is awesome. You wanna a hotdog?

TRUDY

I want three!

(THEY are riding a carousel.)

DANNY

We'd ride a carousel.

(to Trudy)

What'd you name your horse?

TRUDY

Tinderbox. What's yours?

DANNY

Danny.

TRUDY

Danny? You can't use your own name.

DANNY

It's not my name.

TRUDY
Hey, Danny!

DANNY
Yeah?

TRUDY
See! It's your name.

DANNY
I must've forgot. I never greet myself. Hi Tinderbox.

(pause)

DANNY
But no, she's not here.

(TRUDY disappears)

It's just me, Tinderbox. I mean me, Danny. I'm back where I started. Alone. I don't like being alone! I had a girlfriend...or a date person...or something...and now I don't. I had someone to help my mom get through her death, and now I don't. People are gonna go by me and say "Hey, see that guy?" "The one without the girlfriend?" "Yeah, that guy." And then they'll say... Okay, I've already gone over this before.

(Real Life TRUDY enters. DANNY does not see her.)

TRUDY
Loden, you know more than one Mike and the Mechanic's song? What is wrong with you!

(SHE sees DANNY)

It's Danny!

(SHE hides.)

DANNY
(speaking to the stars)
Trudy! Why did you do this to me! Why did you come into my life! Why did you let me reject you!

TRUDY
Not taking responsibility for his actions! Brilliant!!

DANNY
All right. I'm really doing it. My head is unclouded by overthinking things. I'm joining the army. It's the only sensible response to my heartbreak! Why? Because I just thought of it!

(HE exits)

TRUDY

The army! That kid. He doesn't have anyone to think things through with. You don't have to do something drastic you'll regret!

SCENE 8--DANNY goes up to an army recruiting station. TRUDY is at the window disguised in an army uniform.

DANNY

Hi. I'd like to join the army.

TRUDY

Good. Name?

DANNY

Danny

TRUDY

Rank?

DANNY

Uh...

TRUDY

Serial number?

DANNY

Dammit. I don't know!

TRUDY

You're starting off on a bad foot aren't you, soldier. You sure you want to join?

DANNY

How do I get a rank?

TRUDY

Usually you do something brave and then they promote you.

DANNY

Maybe I could swear in front of a teacher.

TRUDY

Still need that number.

DANNY

How do I get it?

TRUDY

I think you're just born with one. You're supposed to have it memorized by the time you're done teething.

DANNY

Those days were a blur.

TRUDY

Sorry. Next!

DANNY

Hold on! Maybe you can give me a serial number....

TRUDY

Okay. Let's see. You'll have to memorize it. Right now. Or you can't get in. How about 555.

DANNY

I like that. It's got a certain repetitive quality.

TRUDY

And then 555 backwards.

DANNY

Gotcha.

TRUDY

And then another 5, just to pick up the theme again. And then a 7.

DANNY

I like this.

TRUDY

And then 14 but spelled out. In Latin.

DANNY

Yep.

TRUDY

And then your mother's maiden name. In Morse Code.

DANNY

Sure

TRUDY

And then a couple numbers I'll whisper that you won't be able to hear.

(SHE whispers)

DANNY
Didn't get it.

TRUDY
Good.

DANNY
(writing this down, mumbling)
Great. 555, squared, 17 Q One Latin Fourteen. Januzeak-Gadamer I don't know-I don't know-
(shows her paper)

TRUDY
Dammit! You nailed it. I mean, Yay!

DANNY
But won't this give people the wrong idea about me? That I'm kind of, you know, difficult?

TRUDY
Why do you want to join my army? It's not for everybody.

DANNY
Well, I told myself if I couldn't find a girlfriend by now I'd join the army. I had one but then she...
then she...

TRUDY
She? She? It was her fault? Hers? You have got to be kidding me. Oh, this is rich, this is really rich!

DANNY
Wait a minute. How do you—

TRUDY
Ahhh, who cares! Broads. They come and they go, right? What do you want to do in my army?

DANNY
I want to work on the landmine team. I think I'd be really good at that.

TRUDY
No! That's too dangerous!

DANNY
I'm talking about emotional landmines.

TRUDY
Emotional landmines! Danny! That's even worse!

DANNY
Wait, how did you know my name?

TRUDY
You told me.

DANNY
People don't usually remember my name.

TRUDY
What if that girl you went out with was secretly a fake army recruiter you didn't recognize? What would you say?

DANNY
I'd say who are you?

TRUDY
What if she wants you to know something?

DANNY
What's that?

TRUDY
That you shouldn't join the army! Or at least start with Cub Scouts and build your way up!

DANNY
No, I'm going to go serve my country by defusing symbolic explosives. And then I'm going to go AWOL. How do you go AWOL?

TRUDY
Well obviously you'd have to apply for that first. Two rounds of interviews, a stress test, an essay question on the history of badminton.

DANNY
In cursive?

TRUDY
No, keep it clean. What'll you do after you go AWOL? Since that girl is gone, who supposedly UP AND LEFT YOU. is there any little lady you have your eye on?

DANNY
No. Trudy was the only...I mean I wanted...but she...it didn't...I'm sorry, do you have any tissue?

TRUDY

Oh, sure, here Danny. Here.

(HE wipes the corner of his mouth)

DANNY

Thanks. I had a mayonnaise sandwich before I came here.

(Pause)

TRUDY

DANNY! IT'S ME!

DANNY

Of course it's you. Every person who says "it's me" is themselves.

TRUDY

No, I mean it's me, Trudy!

DANNY

Oh right. Yeah I see that.

TRUDY

That's not the greeting I was imagining.

DANNY

What do you want?

TRUDY

I just want you to--I don't know...be...not...what you're trying to be!

DANNY

How's Loden?

TRUDY

Loden. Whatever, Loden. I dumped him. He was clearly not a yeoman type man with yeo about him. I told him he had a turnip stain on his collar and he started to cry.

DANNY

Oh.

TRUDY

And he's obsessed with the B-Sides of 1980s one hit-wonders. Here comes the General. He doesn't like anyone joining the army. Gives him more work to do. Hide!

(HE hides behind TRUDY. Enter General)

TRUDY

Hi General.

(Pause)

Isn't that weird. You'd never say to someone, "Hi Specific."

GENERAL
Who is this?

TRUDY
Who, where?

GENERAL
The person standing behind you.

TRUDY
What?

(SHE turns around)

Oh, him. He's just a visitor, wanted to walk the grounds. Take in the sights. Ropes. Rocks. Jeeps. Wheels on jeeps.

GENERAL
You're sure this isn't your boyfriend? We don't allow those kinds of visits here, soldier.

TRUDY
Heck no. I'm already married.

(shows GENERAL a ring on her finger.)

DANNY
What?

TRUDY
And then we got divorced, thank God.

(SHE takes ring off and throws it to the ground.)

TRUDY
I like to do that a couple times a day to remind myself what a louse he was.

(pause)

But then I got remarried...to a bandolier from the Scottish highlands. He was tall, smoky, languid, superated. A black cigarette dangling from his cruel avian mouth. He rode a stallion

named Stallion. He took me to fairs in the low villages along the Yangtze. We danced under strings of electric lights until we collapsed in a sweaty heap and he carried me off to a cozy bedroom in a little cottage run by a sweet old couple that was...disgusting: rodents, filth, muffins that tasted like pine cones. It was awful. And every other weekend we got on that mother bleeping horse and went to that crappy fair until I remembered that I wasn't raised by my parents to be treated like a girl who went to crappy fairs and eats wood in the shape of bread until she remembers that she wasn't raised by her parents to be the kind of girl who goes to crappy fairs and eats wood in the shape of bread until she realizes she wasn't raised by her parents to be the kind of girl who goes to crappy fairs and eats wood in the shape of--will one of you please stop me!

DANNY
Stop!

TRUDY
Thank you. So I got the hell out of that relationship and became a pastry chef in Bonn where I--

GENERAL
Say, you're not a possible recruit are you?

DANNY
Well, I uh--

GENERAL
Because we've got enough soldiers. We're all full up.

DANNY
Well, I was actually, I mean, yes, I was thinking of joining, but then going AWOL, after I defused all the interior explosives and heck maybe even get everyone else to go AWOL with me and start a men's acapella group.

GENERAL
Get everyone else to leave the army? You could be just the kind of soldier I'm looking for. Maybe we should sign this fellow up.

TRUDY
No!

DANNY
Really?

TRUDY
Don't do it Danny.

DANNY
Why not?

TRUDY

They'll send you away to boot camp! And they don't give you thrasher boots. Run Danny, run!

GENERAL

Miss, you are exactly the kind of recruiter I want. But I think we can let this one in.

TRUDY

Danny. Please. Don't.

DANNY

Why do you care if I go into the army?

GENERAL

(to TRUDY)

Have I even seen you before? When did you join us?

TRUDY

This morning. I just showed up, took out a staff sergeant and put on his uniform.

GENERAL

One more down. This is shaping up to be a very good day.

DANNY

Are you saying you want me back Trudy? I'll stay if you'll have me back.

TRUDY

This is not on me. You were the one! I am not taking responsibility here!

DANNY

Okay, then I'm going in.

TRUDY

It'll be too much for you!

DANNY

Well then...?

TRUDY

You have to say. You have to decide.

DANNY

You're playing games.'

TRUDY

I'm playing games? Really? What do you want Danny. What do you want?

DANNY

I want....

(pause)

I want....lots of things.

TRUDY

Goodbye. Just. Goodbye.

DANNY

Trudy!

TRUDY

Be careful with the emotional landmines. They especially show up during bathtime.

Silence.

Danny with resignation finally turns to the general

DANNY

Do you want my serial number General?

GENERAL

Yes.

DANNY

It's 5--

GENERAL

Good enough for me.

DANNY

(to TRUDY)

Goodbye Trudy.

(He exits.)

GENERAL

(to TRUDY)

Do you want to be General for a while? I'd like to go off and be a hobo for a few months. Ride the rails, wear a paper hat, play the mouth harp.

TRUDY

I'm sorry. I have to go wander the streets.

SCENE 10--TRUDY forlornly wandering the streets

TRUDY

I'm fine with it! I'm fine! I'm not going to run back to him. I have a little self respect! Besides, imagine if Danny and I were together. It would be a disaster! Being on a bridge.

(TRUDY starts to cross the bridge and spies DANNY in the middle of the bridge leaning over the rail.)

TRUDY

Don't jump you idiot!

DANNY

Oh, wow! Thanks! You saved my life!

TRUDY

Were you actually going to jump?

DANNY

No!

TRUDY

INFURIATING!

(THEY are at a baseball game)

We're at a baseball game.

DANNY

Is this golf?

TRUDY

No, it's baseball.

DANNY

Where's the flag? Where's the green?

TRUDY

It's not golf. It's baseball.

DANNY

That's a putter. Don't tell me that's not a putter. Or a wedge iron. A mashie.

TRUDY

It's a fricking bat!!! Wait. Hold on. Is that a bat? Maybe it is a putter. Hey! You! Over there! Yeah, you! With the thing! Is this baseball or golf? (Pause) Billiards? Are you kidding me? See Danny, nothing's working out.

(They are on a carousel)

TRUDY
On a carousel

DANNY
Trudy, this is so romantic.

(HE nuzzles her.)

TRUDY
Who do you think is running this thing?

DANNY
Who cares?

TRUDY
I just like to make sure things are *sympatico* with everything.

DANNY
We're *sympatico*.

(SHE spies someone)

TRUDY
Hey, kid, are you running this show? What? Yes?

DANNY
I'm sure he's fine.

TRUDY
What kinda money you make doing this kid?

(DANNY pulls her closer)

DANNY
Come here Trudy.

(SHE wiggles out of his grip, continues talking to the kid we can't see)

You ever lose a finger in there?...No? You sure?...Hold up your hand....Nine fingers. That's good.

DANNY
Trudy...

TRUDY
But keep a watch out. The horses may look cute, but they are man eaters.

DANNY

Tru...

TRUDY

Are you in a union? "Which one?" Imaginary Horse and Goat Workers Local 405, of course. Here. Take this piece of bark.

DANNY

Hey....

TRUDY

You write down all your workplace grievances..

(DANNY finally gets off his horse, gets off the carousel.)

TRUDY

...and send it to me at this address.

(scribbles on a piece of paper)

(HE stands looking at Trudy, and then walks away.)

TRUDY

And I'll go to this gypsy I know, really mystical and wise, and see if he has any money, so I can go to this even better gypsy

(Finally Trudy looks around.)

TRUDY

DANNY? Hello! DANNY! Where'd you go? DANNY!!

(pause)

See, he just wanders off! That says everything!

(Loden ambles in)

Loden! What are you doing here?

LODEN

Oh, hey Trudy!

TRUDY

Are you for real?

LODEN

A lot of people say I'm too good to be true. Hahaha. Sorry Trudy. I'm not really that way. I don't really deserve the name Loden. Are you okay? You seem a little stressed out.

TRUDY

Yes, I was just with...well, that guy. Danny. Or at least a dream of... I don't know. Loden, I'm sorry. I got a little crazy there last night. I've been all over the place. You didn't deserve to be treated like that.

LODEN

Yeah, you did leave me a little abruptly. That was my brother's shirt by the way. A turnip stain. Amazing you could pick up a white stain on a white shirt.

TRUDY

Never underestimate a woman surveying her date.

LODEN

Mike and the Mechanics just *has another song*. Do I actually like it? That's another question.

TRUDY

It's okay.

LODEN

So, you're just all alone out here?

TRUDY

I don't even know. I mean, yes. Alone. I just don't know where "here" is. I'm sorry.

LODEN

I don't mean to be, uh, you know, to assume...but, uh...would you like to try to...hang out...again?

TRUDY

Oh, sure. Sure! I'm in a much better place now. Yes, that would be lovely.

LODEN

Great!

TRUDY

So, what shall we do?

LODEN

Well, we could just sit here. And talk.

TRUDY

Yes! Yes, let's talk. We don't need anything else. Well. So. Loden.

LODEN
Trudy.

TRUDY
Lode. Lodestar!

LODEN
Yep.

(Silence.)

TRUDY
I'm not too cold. Amazing. The sun is gone, but I'm not cold.

LODEN
Yeah, that's an interesting observation. Sometimes in summer it is hot at night.

TRUDY
I'm not hot. I'm just not cold.

LODEN
Yep. So.

TRUDY
So.
(pause)

Do you have a mom Loden?

LODEN
Yes.

TRUDY
Oh, sorry. Of course you have a mom.

LODEN
Why?

TRUDY
Oh, I was just thinking of someone's mom I met recently.

LODEN
Whose?

TRUDY
No one! Never mind! Who cares! Danny's.

LODEN
Okay.

TRUDY
She's fine, okay? Just need the dust to settle. Then we'll wrap things up with her.

LODEN
What?

TRUDY
Eternity Loden, eternity.

LODEN
I don't...

TRUDY
Oh, sorry. I don't...sorry.

(Silence)

TRUDY
So.

LODEN
So.

TRUDY
Loden, do you have an opinion?

LODEN
About what?

TRUDY
Anything

LODEN
Yes. Why?

TRUDY
No, just thinking of someone else who has an opinion. About anything.

LODEN
Who?

TRUDY
Danny. But it doesn't matter. Just things to notice. Big deal. You have a shirt?

LODEN

As a matter of fact...

TRUDY

Danny has a shirt, just like you. Danny drinks water, just like you! Danny uses letters to form words to say things like you do. Danny was a person like you're a---oh Loden let's skip to the part where this isn't working out no matter how hard we try and you finally you tell me with great nobility I should go be with the other man. I mean, I do, eventually, but...

LODEN

Go Trudy. It's okay. Go back to him.

TRUDY

Thank you Loden. Thank you. Thank you!

(SHE quickly exits)

LODEN

Huh. I've never been noble before.

SCENE 11--The army barracks at night.

(TRUDY enters the barracks. DANNY is asleep in a bunk. SHE tiptoes quietly around until she finds him.)

TRUDY

HEY!!!!

(DANNY shoots straight up.)

DANNY

WHAT???

TRUDY

I'm a mouse. I need your help.

DANNY

Who? Where?

TRUDY

Me. Here. I'm a mouse.

DANNY

You're a mouse? Are you kidding me? Mouses have way higher voices.

TRUDY

I'm more authoritative in a lower register.

DANNY

What do you need help with?

TRUDY

It's my babies. They've got the croup.

DANNY

What am I supposed to do about it?

TRUDY

Heck if I know. I just need a man to stand over me during this crisis situation in my family and pretty much do nothing. It'll be comforting.

DANNY

Say...mice don't wear spangles on their jackets!

TRUDY

Can't I just feel nice once in a while? Are you coming with me or not?

DANNY

Let me get my gun.

TRUDY

They gave you a gun! Danny!

DANNY

Did I say gun? I meant water pic. How did you know my name?

TRUDY

I guessed, starting with the first letter of the alphabet. If the alphabet started with D.

DANNY

You know. I had a girlfriend...or, a...I don't know... a *something*...who looked kind of like you.

TRUDY

She looked like a mouse? That's offensive!

DANNY

Where are we going?

TRUDY

To my nest.

DANNY

This is exciting!

TRUDY

It's a complete mess, dirt everywhere, twigs, old hair, bits of paper, bugs, mice. But then again, it is a mouse nest.

DANNY

It's fine. I want the real thing!

TRUDY

The real thing. Right. Okay Danny. The real thing. Right right. So I may or may not be a mouse. I may actually be your ex--whatever.

DANNY

Hockey coach?

TRUDY

"DOWN THE FROZEN POND MY LADS! SKATE LIKE THE WIND!" No, I don't think I've ever said that. I'm your ex-girl...something. You know. Trudy.

DANNY

Trudy? What are you doing here? Hold on, this whole time I knew you, you were a mouse?

TRUDY

No, the mouse was me the whole time.

DANNY

Oh.

TRUDY

I've broken you out of this extremely insecure army barracks because...I don't know Danny. I realized, I just....well...I still have that t-shirt you gave me. And it fits really nice. You know? And I thought we could hang out a little bit.

DANNY

Really? But I didn't say for sure...I didn't say I wanted..I am still not...

TRUDY

It's okay. You don't know. I can take it.

DANNY

You can?

TRUDY

Yes.

DANNY

Trudy...

(Pause)

TRUDY
Well?

DANNY
So just to be clear: you're not a mouse? Because I really enjoy speaking with little animals.

TRUDY
Oh, Danny.

DANNY
They're nurturing. They really know how to listen. I don't always know how to talk to people because I don't think people really listen.

TRUDY
I listen to you. I hear everything you say.

DANNY
My mom doesn't really believe she's gone. She needs someone to help her. Like you.

TRUDY
Danny?

DANNY
Yes?

TRUDY
I'm here.

THE END

