

IN THERAPY

a play
by

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CHARACTERS

ADAM - a healthy looking man in his middle ages

LYNN - a healthy looking woman also in her middle ages

DR. SORENSON - adult (gender ambiguous at best)

SETTING

A conference room in any suburban hotel. Stripped of most the amenities leaving only two chairs and a table.

TIME

Seemingly the present

A NOTE ON THE DIALOGUE:

1. A slash “ / “ indicates the character with the next line of dialogue begins his or her speech (overlapping dialogue).
2. Dialogue in brackets “ [] ” is unspoken, although the character is thinking it.
(please note these passages will also be highlighted in grey in this script)
3. Dialogue in parenthesis “ () ” is spoken aloud but is an aside.
(also note that these passages are NOT highlighted and SHOULD BE read aloud)
4. Grammatical errors; sentences beginning in lower case; or UPPER CASE; used in place of common punctuation (even a few misspellings), were, indeed, intended.

SCENE 1

(At rise:

A non-de-script room, could be anywhere. A single door leads in and out of the room. No windows, no clocks. A table complete with a phony white table cloth supports two pads of paper, two pencils, two water glasses, a pitcher of ice water and napkins. A set up you might find in the conference room of any suburban hotel, often rented out for sales meetings and self help seminar gurus who travel through town to town in hopes of alleviating the townsfolk a few bucks from their retirement savings in trade for a better life, a better marriage, a better income. These aren't the first things we notice however. The first thing to catch our attention is probably the fact that there are two chairs, set facing each other almost centered in the room. But what we actually notice most of all is that on the two seats are a man (ADAM) and a woman (EVELYN aka LYNN) who are dressed in nothing but their underwear. Nothing suggestive in their underwear choices, in fact, their choices here are modest at best but underwear all the same. ¹ ADAM And LYNN face each other uncomfortably for what may actually be as long as two minutes but what feels more like a lifetime.)

ADAM

(Finally breaking the silence:)

How long're we supposed to do this?

LYNN

Can you just take this seriously, please?

ADAM

Hardly.

(Pause.)

ADAM

We were supposed to do this naked, you know.

LYNN

Yeah, well... maybe next time.

¹ The choice of undergarments will be addressed later in the script.

ADAM

(Like there's gonna be a next time.)

(LYNN just stares at him—obviously having heard what he had to say.)

ADAM

What?

LYNN

If you ever want to see me naked again, you're going to commit to this. OK?

ADAM

Whatever you want.

LYNN

OK?

ADAM

Fine.

LYNN

OK?

ADAM

OK.

LYNN

OK.

ADAM

OK. (jesus.)

(Pause.)

ADAM

I'm doing this for you, alright?

LYNN

Are you?

ADAM

I'm here, aren't I?

LYNN

Are you?

ADAM

Oh, please can we just skip the innuendo for a change?

LYNN

Can we?

(They both stare at each other a beat: they both begin to laugh—she more than him.)

LYNN

OK, I'm sorry, I had to [you just set it up to well, you know?]

ADAM

Glad to be of service.
Those new?

LYNN

What?

ADAM

Your..ensemble.

LYNN

..whaddo *you* think?

ADAM

I think you could've worn a thong.
And why did you sew my underwear shut?
(Alright then)...

(Another pause.)

ADAM

Is someone supposed to come in here or something? We could've done this at home.
Why aren't you saying anything, Chatty Cathy? Did I do something wrong...again?

LYNN

We're supposed take each other in and reflect.

ADAM

I could do that better with the clothes off.

LYNN

Did you even read the literature?

ADAM

(Of course he didn't:)

Of course I did. Did you?

LYNN

Did I what?

ADAM

Read the literature?

You *actually* read the—It was like an inch thick.

LYNN

They said we'd get out of this what we put into it. You put nothing in you get nothing out.

ADAM

(Looking around:)

(Yeah, story of my life.)

So.. why are the doors locked? You think they're locked from the outside or just to us?

This is a hotel—Why didn't they just get us a normal room with a bed?

LYNN

It isn't about sex.

ADAM

Then why are we dressed in nothing?

LYNN

We're not in nothing.

ADAM

We're supposed to be in nothing.

LYNN

We're supposed to be reflecting.

ADAM

Don't let me stop you: reflect away.

LYNN

[How can I if you won't shut up?]

ADAM

I'll be good.

(There is another silence as LYNN tries to reflect and ADAM just tries.)

ADAM

What're you thinking about?

LYNN

Really? What about silent reflection doesn't connect with you?

ADAM

Fine. Let's improve our communication by not talking. (makes perfect sense to me)...

You want to know what I'm thinking?

LYNN

That you're missing a game.

ADAM

Now that you mention it...

Go ahead, ask me.

LYNN

(Looks at him again to ask for silence but...finally gives in:)

Ask / you—

ADAM

Ask me what I'm thinking.

LYNN

(if only to end the nagging:)

What're you thinking about?

ADAM

What you look like with your clothes off.

LYNN

(oh my god)...

I'm not taking my clothes off. And you are not taking your clothes off, either.

OK?

ADAM

(Debates other responses but settles on:)

"OK".

LYNN

Good.

(Slightest of pauses.)

ADAM

Good thing it's not cold in here.

LYNN

Oh grow up, already—you see this is why—this is why we're here because you can only think with one part of your anatomy and this—

(Referring to the whole room)

—is supposed to get us beyond that.

ADAM

Which is why we're supposed to be naked. Because if we were naked I wouldn't be picturing you naked because you'd already be naked. As would I.

LYNN

And then nature would take its course.

ADAM

Possibly. I guess we'll never know.

LYNN

(Beating him to the punchline:)

Because we're not naked.

ADAM

Because we're not naked.

(Slight beat.)

LYNN

You're an idiot.

ADAM

How long are we supposed to be here, do you know?

LYNN

They said to leave the afternoon open—into the evening and through to the next day.

ADAM

What page was that on? And shouldn't there be a bed—?

(Clarifying:)

For sleeping.

Are they going to feed us? 'Cuz all I see is a pitcher of water there.

LYNN

I don't know.

ADAM

'Cuz [I'll get hungry.] Do they know you don't eat fish?

LYNN

I eat fish. I don't eat red meat.

ADAM

That's what I meant.

LYNN

But that's not what you said.

ADAM

So I made a mistake.

LYNN

And that is the essence of / why we're here.

ADAM

So, sue me. No better yet, torture me—I've got it: why don't you take off all my clothes and leave me, half naked with my wife in a Holiday Inn conference room with no bed, no food and no phones. Have you noticed there's not even a phone in here?

(Gets up and starts moving around checking the walls etc.)

You want some water (please, god, let it be Vodka).

LYNN

We're supposed to stay seated.

ADAM

We're supposed to be naked. You cheat the way you want—I'll cheat the way I want.

LYNN

What're you looking for?

VOICE (over speakers:)

Please return to your seat, Mr. Godson.

(Both LYNN and ADAM stop silent; LYNN instinctively crosses her legs closed—if they weren't before. ADAM stays standing where he is but scans the room for a camera or microphone. The pause continues.)

VOICE

Please return to your seat.

LYNN

(Whispering to ADAM:)

(That's why we're wearing underwear.)

VOICE

No need to whisper, Mrs. Godson, we can hear you clearly.

LYNN

Dr. Sorenson? Is this—

ADAM

(You knew about this? You read it?)

LYNN

(No.)

ADAM

(You said you read it.)

LYNN

(No, I asked you if you read it.)

ADAM

(Of course, I didn't read it. You said you did.)

LYNN

(I skimmed it. You said you read it.)

ADAM

(But in a way that obviously said I didn't—I was being sarcastic.)

LYNN

(Oh, well, there's a new day.)

ADAM

(And that's why we're wearing underwear. You knew.)

LYNN

(No. But I wasn't going to take any chances.)

ADAM

(To the voice:)

What's—what is—what is going on here?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

Please, Adam, return to your seat.

ADAM

Somebody tell me what's going on first.

LYNN

Doctor?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

Yes, Evelyn?

ADAM

(To the voice:)

Like just who are you?

LYNN

(Simultaneously:)

Why...

(Searches for the right words.)

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

(Responding to Lynn:)

"Why are we doing this"? To help you. To help your relationship.

LYNN

Wha—

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

I'm not in the room so you can feel free to be yourselves. Be who you are with each other; not as you would with a third party looking on.

ADAM

But you *are* looking on.

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

From time to time. We just ask you to keep to your seats at this juncture. Later on we'll add mobility. It's all part of the process. It's *your* therapy.

ADAM

What do you mean "we"? How many of you are there?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

It's complicated.

ADAM

Simplify it for me; give me a number.

LYNN

Do you have a name—what should we call you?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

Call me..Ishmael.

ADAM

Cute.

LYNN

It's a literary reference.

ADAM

Yeah, I got that. So, if you're Ishmael: which one of us Ahab and which one the whale?

(To Lynn:)

Don't answer that.

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

If you would, please, return to your seat.

LYNN

(To Adam:)

Babe?

ADAM

(Holds his hand up politely—signaling her to give him just a moment more:)

Since we have your attention: can you tell me just what exactly are we doing here? I mean, [what's the point of all this]...?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

Didn't you receive the literature?

ADAM

You've been listening: you know we did.

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

And did you read it?

(Allows time for an answer—after receiving none:)

That's alright—you don't have to answer that.

ADAM

In all due respect, *Ish*, it was over an inch thick.

LYNN

What do you want us to do next?

ADAM

In real small type, too.

LYNN

Come back and sit down.

ADAM

So, you're not going to answer me—just, “If you didn't read it: ha-ha”?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

I want you to try to forget we're here and resume—

ADAM

When you say “we”...?

LYNN

(Adam?)

ADAM

..(fine.) What are we doing here?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

Can you clarify your question for me?

By “*doing here*”: do you mean, “*what're we doing here*”, “what are *we* doing here”, or “what are we *doing* here?”

ADAM

Surprise me: answer any of 'em you like.

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

Well, first: “here” is a neutral territory, void of any other distractions but yourselves.

ADAM

And “we”...?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

Just myself. And yourselves.

ADAM

That's not the / context you used—

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

Are we really going to turn this into a lesson in semantics? Or are you here for another reason?

ADAM

Fine: so, what are we “*doing*” here?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

You tell me.

ADAM

Really? How old are you?

LYNN

Adam.

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

(Matter of factly:)

Is that of importance to you?

ADAM

By that, I mean, just how long’ve you been doing this?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

(Matter of factly:)

So, now you’re questioning my credentials?

LYNN

Please?

ADAM

Hello, no, you can have as many PhDs behind you name as you want. I’m questioning your track record.

LYNN

Honey—

ADAM

Hold on.

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

No, Evelyn, it’s perfectly fine. I encourage the questions. I want you to feel free to question me and then to question each other as well.

ADAM

And why aren’t we seeing you face to face?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

It’s easier for you to respond to each other naturally if I’m not in the room.

ADAM

Naked?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

But you're not naked.

ADAM

So, you can see us, right? So, why are we *supposed* to be naked?

LYNN

Adam, enough, OK—Enough with the third degree.

ADAM

I'm embarrassing you? Me? Not ...“them”? We're here with no clothes on in front of...a voice. They could be broadcasting this anywhere, you thought of that?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

To answer your question, Adam, we are attempting to strip away at several layers here. For you. Layers that took time for both of you to build up. Clothing is simply the obvious and easiest layer to first remove. Now, would you mind sitting back down?

ADAM

And then what?

LYNN

Do it and then we'll find out.

ADAM

How can I be sure we're not being taped?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

Life is full of risks.

(Pause. ADAM waits. Nothing. He and LYNN share a look. The silence continues. ADAM reluctantly returns to his seat.)

LYNN

(Glad I sewed 'em up now, aren't you?)

ADAM

(Shuddup.)

(And notice how he never said, “no, we're not being taped?”)

(A beat.)

LYNN

What now, Doctor?

(No reply.)

ADAM

Are you even a “Doctor”?

LYNN

We're supposed to pretend he's not there, remember?

ADAM

Right.

(They both sit in silence becoming more and more aware of their undressed state. Pause. LYNN smiles. ADAM shakes his head at the ridiculousness of their situation. The pause continues as they look at each other and become more acutely aware of each other in the process. ADAM's attention is turned to one of Lynn's shoulders. LYNN becomes aware of his attention to her shoulder and looks to see if something's on her shoulder. There isn't. They share another look. The silence continues.)

ADAM

This is stupid.

LYNN

Please just try. For me.

(Pause. Adam just stares at things. The walls. The table. The door. And finally Lynn.)

LYNN

Can you give us a launching point here,—

ADAM

(Finishing her sentence for her:)

—oh mighty voice we're pretending isn't here?

LYNN

(With dual purpose: To the voice for a topic of discussion AND to Adam in innuendo [to shut up]:)

Please.

ADAM

...I'm sitting, aren't I?

DR. SORENSON'S VOICE

Look at each other and tell us what you see. Tell each other.

(ADAM shakes his head. LYNN does her best to try to comply.)

ADAM

So, we can talk now? This is when we can...actually—

LYNN

Because up to now, I take it, all the conversation has been cheated in, as it is. Do we lose points for cheating?

ADAM

Is that what this is about? You think...? Because I have never—

LYNN

I know.

ADAM

No, I mean it, I have not once—

LYNN

I know.

ADAM

Do you know?

LYNN

I know.

ADAM

You know?

LYNN

I know.

ADAM

You know what?

LYNN

That you haven't cheated.