

“And”

A play by Scott Bronson

This play is one of eight short works that collectively make up a full-length work entitled *Every Day a Little Death*.

(He is sitting by himself. He is in his pajamas. Pause. She enters, quickly, to get ... something to take out of the room. Or she comes in to leave ... something behind, so that, basically, she can get in his way before she exits ... quickly.)

HIM: We can't keep them.

(She ignores him as she makes her escape. Beat. She enters, stops in front of him, wants to say something but can't quite.)

We can't keep them.

HER: Why not?

HIM: It's thirty-six gold fish!

HER: Thirty-one.

HIM: Okay.

HER: Five were dead this morning.

HIM: Great.

HER: How can you say that?

HIM: They're gold fish. Little twenty-five cent trash fish.

HER: That is just cruel, and ... mean.

HIM: We can't keep them.

HER: We have to.

HIM: How?

HER: What do you mean, how?

HIM: In what manner will we keep them—store them?

For instance, are we going to get a big fish tank and put 'em all in there together, or are we going to leave them all in their little fish globes, two by two?

HER: I don't know.

HIM: 'Cause this is a tiny apartment. There's not room in here for either one of those scenarios.

HER: Well, we've got them here now in those little globes.

HIM: Yeah, oh yeah, all over the teeny little counter in the teeny little kitchen, and the teeny little vanity in the teeny little bathroom, and the teeny little dresser in the teeny little bedroom, and—,

HER: I get it.

HIM: And who's gonna clean out eighteen little glass globes when they start getting all cloudy with gold fish poop?

HER: I said I get it.

(Pause.)

HIM: I'd like to take a shower without Fred and Ethel watching me.

HER: I get it already—

HIM: I can't believe you named them all.

HER: What's wrong with that?

HIM: Makes it impossible to get rid of them. You can't kill an animal with a name.

HER: Exactly!

HIM: I can't believe you didn't know they were going to be ... discarded after the reception.

HER: I thought people were going to take them home.

HIM: Well, that woulda been just grand if they had but they didn't so now we've got to get rid of them.

HER: Just ... get rid of 'em, huh?

(Beat.)

And, how are we supposed to do that?

HIM: And, I figured we'd just flush them down the toilet.

HER: Flush? Flush? Are you—? That's, that's just ... sick.

HIM: Haven't you seen *Finding Nemo*? All plumbing leads to the ocean.

HER: Okay, first—gold fish are fresh water fish, so, the ocean would kill them. Second—all plumbing does not lead to the ocean. All plumbing leads to a sewage plant, which leads us to, third—do you know what's in the plumbing? Huh? Did little Nemo show you that? Huh? Do you know what's in the plumbing? Do you?

(Beat.)

Huh?

(Beat.)

HIM: Pythons, alligators and gold fish.

(Stunned silence. Then:)

HER: Hm.

(Pause.)

HIM: So ... what are we going to do?

(Pause.)

HER: I don't know.

(Pause.)

What are we going to do?

HIM: I don't know.

(Pause.)

HER: Thank you ... by the way.

HIM: For what?

HER: Last night.

(He looks at her.)

Getting the fish food.

HIM: Oh. Yeah. That.

(Beat.)

Good thing Super Wal-mart is open twenty-four hours.

(Pause.)
HER: Probably not how you thought you'd spend your wedding night.
(Beat.)
HIM: No. No, you're right. I never imagined that.
HER: Well, it was very sweet of you.
HIM: It was my pleasure.
(Pause.)
HER: Liar.
(He laughs. A bit.)
HIM: Yeah. Another thing I never imagined.
HER: What?
HIM: Lying to my wife so soon in the marriage.
(She laughs. A bit.)
HER: Wait. "So soon?"
HIM: Hm?
HER: So soon? What does that mean?
HIM: What?
HER: Lying so soon. This means ... ?
HIM: What?
HER: That you knew that at some point you were going to lie to me.
(Beat.)
Right?
(Pause.)
HIM: Well, yeah.
(Open-mouthed stunned silence.)
HER: Why?
HIM: Oh, there has to be a little lying.
HER: Has to be?
HIM: Oh yeah.
HER: Again, I say, Why?
HIM: Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries. There will be lying.
(Pause.)
And Mother's Day.
(Pause.)
And if you ever ask me if any article of clothing makes you look fat, I will lie. Unless, of course, it doesn't make you look fat. In that case, I won't be lying when I say "no."
HER: Oh.
HIM: And I fully expect you to lie to me. I hope that you will. I don't want to know what I'm getting for Christmas. Spoils the magic.
(Pause.)
HER: Okay. But you just better not ever come to me and say, "Does this dress make me look fat." Because I will not lie about that.

HIM: Deal.
(Pause.)
What are we going to do with your fish, dear?
HER: I don't want them to die. I will not kill them. And I won't let you kill them either.
HIM: Okay.
(Pause.)
(And pause again.)
Okay. I have an idea.
(Beat.)
HER: What?
HIM: I'll find a pond ... somewhere. Or, a few ponds, depending on size. And we'll put them all in ponds. How does that sound?
HER: Fine. I guess.
HIM: Will it make you happy?
HER: Yeah.
HIM: Really?
HER: I think so.
HIM: Well, be sure, 'cause ... I haven't got anything else up my sleeve.
(Pause.)
HER: All of them?
HIM: Absolutely. How ever many ponds it takes, how ever many days it takes, I'll save all your little fishes.
HER: But ...
HIM: Yes?
HER: Can I keep some?
HIM: How many?
HER: Just one pair.
HIM: Well, we've got plenty of food for them.
(Beat.)
I mean—, of course. Listen, I'm not—. I'm not trying to be some kind of tyrant here. It's not like I'm the king and you're my subject, or anything like that. I just want to be practical, that's all. I was just arguing for the side of practicality.
(Pause.)
HER: Do you think it will be practical for us to keep a couple of fish?
HIM: Which couple?
(As she sits on him and nibbles his ear, or something suggestive like that.)
HER: Adam and Eve.
HIM: Oh yeah. Very practical.

(Blackout.)