

FLYING

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Characters

DIANE — at the start of the play, in her twenties.

TOM — the same.

SCENE 1: ONCE, YOUNG.

DIANE

I lived in Central America for two years. Did you know that?

Of course you didn't. I never said.

The stars were beautiful.

I met Josh there.

That's over now. I don't have to tell you that. You know.

I haven't seen the stars like that since.

You and I, we have the wind. With the wind in your face, you can conquer the world.

Remember that?

I'm sorry, I'm talking too much.

It's not all right. You came over to say something, right?

I mean, you said we had to talk.

It's not easy. I know.

We can talk about other things.

Do you know there's a rhythm to the traffic outside?

It never changes. Day and night.

I thought it would change at night, y'know?

I thought it would never change.

That's what you're here about, isn't it.

Stop it. Look at me.

I can't believe...

I love you.

I love you.

That's really, really frightening.

I mean...

I know what you're here for but

I love you.

(Tender.)

Why can't you say something?

DIANE [CONTINUED]

What's wrong?

I know how you feel. Stop it. It's not making this easier.

Can't we discuss this?

Like rational people.

Discuss?

Talk about it?

I can't change your mind, can I.

Will you tell me why? At least?

Can you?

I'll be quiet.

You can talk.

It's not that hard.

Don't kiss me.

I don't mean that.

Do it again?

Please.

Do you mean that?

Why are you doing this?

Stop it.

No, don't.

Tell me you didn't mean any of it.

Please don't stop.

It's not fair.

Why are you doing this to me?

I love you!

No.

You're right.

I don't mean that.

I can't mean it. Not truly.

I feel it. But.

No, don't start that again. Not when I've got it figured out.

I can't love you. I've...

I've forgotten how.

Isn't that awful.

I

I just can't let down my guard.

I'm always afraid.

DIANE [CONTINUED]

Afraid something like this would happen.

I guess it's just as well.

I guess I was right.

Don't look at me like that.

It doesn't matter, right?

Stop it just stop it!

Look at me.

I'm not crying.

(Crying.)

That must mean it's all right.

I didn't care after all.

It's all right.

HOW DARE YOU MAKE ME CARE ABOUT YOU!

I had china picked out. Did you know that?

All picked out.

I almost put down a deposit.

IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO...

It never is supposed to...

That's the mystery.

I'm okay.

I'm okay now.

Don't look at me. It's easier if you...

You know what I loved most about you?

Loved. Love.

Your eyes.

Not just the fact they're the color of the ocean.

The pupils. You just go on and on.

I never knew what I saw in there.

Would see.

Black holes.

Don't look up.

The day we met.

It was the day we met. You know it was.

We went walking along the bay.

It was windy. It was always windy.

Your hair blew back from your forehead.

Mine blew into my eyes.

DIANE [CONTINUED]

It was so unfair.
I fell in love with you there.
On the fishing pier by the cannery.
Do you remember?

You gave me a nickel. For my thoughts.
To remember you by.
It will be hard to forget.
Maybe you should take your nickel back.

Look.
The sunset.
I always put the nickel in the sun, so it can see.
It's been storing up the reds and purples.

I've been afraid this time would come.
It's not quite as frightening up close.

Sshhh.
It's okay.
I understand.

(She kisses him.)

This is goodbye.

(She leaves.)

SCENE 2: AGAIN.

DIANE

I thought blue eyes would make you happy.

TOM

Your eyes aren't blue.

DIANE

They're contacts.

TOM

Does everything have to be fake?

DIANE

Nothing's fake.

TOM

You are. You won't tell me how you feel, you hide your eyes...

DIANE
We share everything.

TOM
You don't tell me anything.

DIANE
What's gotten into you?

TOM
I liked your eyes before.

DIANE
Is that it?

TOM
Yes.

DIANE
I'll take out the contacts.

TOM
No. Why does everything have to be a fight?

DIANE
We never fight.

TOM
You always win.

DIANE
I said I'd take out the contacts!

TOM
It doesn't even matter.

DIANE
You said you didn't like them.

TOM
It doesn't matter.

DIANE
You don't like blue eyes.

TOM
I'm not dating you for your looks.
(Pause.)
(DIANE gives him a look: it's over.)

SCENE 3: AFTER.

DIANE

It's been a while.

TOM

Yes, it has.

DIANE

How have things been going?

TOM

Fine. Is the grass still greener where you are?

DIANE

The grass is always green around me, Tom.

TOM

I was hoping that was still true.

DIANE

Seen any good sunsets recently?

TOM

Fewer than I ought. Work... I'm busy. Too busy, maybe.

DIANE

So how long has it been?

TOM

Since I saw a sunset? Only two days, actually.

Two days ago, I was standing ankle-deep in surf, watching the sun go down over the Pacific. Tasting the salt through my skin.

I always half expect the water to hiss and bubble as the sun touches it. Each time I sigh and think that the sun will boil the ocean away and that will be that.

Adds a certain suspense to the occasion.

DIANE

Every sunset's your last, Tom.

TOM

Each sunset is the last of its kind.

DIANE

And that night in El Salvador?

TOM

Gone.

I'll never forget the gold in your eyes.

DIANE

I can't forget the seaweed in your hair!

TOM
Is it still there?
DIANE
(Amused.)
No.
TOM
I sometimes wonder if . . .
DIANE
You'll find her.
TOM
Actually.
DIANE
A prospect?
TOM
It's been six years now, Diane.
DIANE
Feels like forever.
TOM
I'm starting to feel old. Can you believe it?
I wonder if . . .
Maybe I've been trying too hard. Or not hard enough.
If I've already passed by what I—
I mean, I don't want to be alone forever.
DIANE
Loneliness is no fun.
TOM
So. I thought.
We've known each other a long time.
That's why I'll telling you all this.

So I thought.
It can't be right to trudge alone towards death.
Better to league together to stave off the dark.
I know you have—criteria. You've been waiting for . . .
So have I.
We're not perfect. I know that.
I've always hoped I'd meet another like you.
Maybe . . .

DIANE
No. No. It's just that...

TOM
I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked.

DIANE
It's not that at all...

TOM
Loneliness, it...

DIANE
No, listen...

TOM
You're such a good friend.

DIANE
Tom.
(Shows her hand.)
I'm engaged.

SCENE 4: BACK.

TOM
I'm here.
I don't want to wake you up. I know things have been rough.
You need your sleep.
I'm afraid I'm just going to complicate things anyway.
If Josh finds out...
But you called, and so I came.
My shoulder's always been yours to cry on.
I've been foolish enough during the time we've known each other.
Sometimes I thought you wanted more of me than my shoulder.
Sometimes I thought I was pretty special.
I can't believe I've kissed you.

I guess it's better like this, with you asleep.
I'm not sure I want you to know some of the things I have to say.
I'm glad it didn't work out with Josh.
That's a terrible thing, I'd never say that.
Still.
And you know what?

TOM [CONTINUED]

When I close my eyes, I still dream you love me.
You're not dreaming of me now, I know that.
I hope you've no dreams at all right now.
Lord knows you've been through enough.
You don't need dreams troubling you.
Especially my dreams.
Maybe I shouldn't have come.
But how could I refuse when you asked me?
Crying.
I wish I could make the pain go away.
Take it.
I'm a good shoulder. That's my place.
I hope I can help.
Your parents were very kind.
They've always been kind to me.
They picked me up at the train station and drove me back here.
I couldn't afford a plane. I got here as fast as I could.
They told me you were up here. "In her room," they said.
Showed me the door.
They care a lot for you.
This isn't your room, though, really, is it?
You didn't grow up here.
Did your bedroom before look like this?
I guess it's still home.
Your mom and dad gave me the guest room.
I told my boss I wasn't going to be back for a while.
I can always find a job around here if I need to.

You're beautiful.
I've always thought so.
And your face is so peaceful.
Now.
I'm afraid of the pain I'll see when you awake.
Or won't see, which will be worse.
You can't lock it away. You just have to put it behind you. Somehow.
I wonder if I'll know what to say. Have anything to say.
I never found my true love.

TOM [CONTINUED]

I'm still lonely.

Had my heart broken lots of times.

But not like you.

A kid, too.

What does it feel like to be a parent?

I'll probably never know.

Age slips up on you, you know.

I don't have a clue what I could say.

Nothing, I guess. Just be a shoulder. Support.

I'll be here as long as you need me.

I guess it's wrong to hope it will be a while.