

**FleshEatingTiger**  
by  
**Amy Tofte**

# FLESHEATINGTIGER

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# FLESHEATINGTIGER

*For those with the wisdom to know the difference.*

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

*FleshEatingTiger* was originally produced by CalArts Festival Theater's Venue 13 at The Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Directed by Amy Tofte and featuring the following cast:

MAN.....Sam Breen  
WOMAN.....Gabriela Trigo

*FleshEatingTiger* later received its Los Angeles Premiere at Highways Performance Space in Santa Monica, CA. Directed by Vincent Paterson and featuring the following cast:

MAN.....Sam Breen  
WOMAN.....Gabriela Trigo

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

*An adaptation of The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous is recited in this play. The Twelve Steps as approved by the Fellowship of A.A. is as follows:*

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

*The version of the Twelve Steps recited in this play does not mean that A.A.W.S., Inc., has approved this adaptation.*

*A.A.W.S. has neither reviewed nor approved the contents of this play or its publication, nor does A.A.W.S. necessarily agree with the views expressed herein. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism only—use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems, or in any other non-A.A. context, does not imply otherwise.*

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

CAST: 1 M / 1 W

MAN - M, 30s – 60s, any ethnicity; addicted to alcohol

WOMAN - F, 30s – 60s, any ethnicity; addicted to the MAN

(They should be similar in age and look like a good couple.)

PLACE: The MAN's apartment that also transforms into a neutral space.

TIME: The time is the present, the unknown future and the hypothetical.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE: The action includes impressions of events and fantasies from a tumultuous affair over the course of a year. It is often physical and chaotic. It is intended to bleed into off stage spaces. Absurdity is encouraged.

The script references the actors Meryl Streep and Robert DeNiro. The idea is that these respected, famous actors resemble the ethnicity of the actors playing Man and Woman. The names of the famous actors being referenced can be altered if it makes more sense after casting the production. Once the famous actors are determined, they should be used throughout and replace the Streep/DeNiro references. *Or* the production may decide to keep the Streep/DeNiro references regardless of who is cast. This is at the discretion of the production.

The original production included a “writer” on stage providing props, sound/light effects and moving furniture. This person also prompted lines, if needed, to the actors. If you go this route, the “writer” should always be played by a woman.

\*\*This play should always be presented with literature or program notes informing audiences of local resources for addiction and depression.\*\*

# FLESHEATINGTIGER

## SCENE ONE The False Start

*A naked space. A sturdy table that can hold two bodies and also be used as a bed. Some chairs. Anything else you like, maybe a ladder or theater cubes. Use what's there. An undressed WOMAN in bed. An undressed MAN looks through stacks of books. (In the original production we used giant sheets of naked newsprint rather than books. It's cheaper. And the crumpled paper makes a nice, noisy mess.)*

**WOMAN.** Do you think Meryl Streep gives blow jobs?

**MAN.** What?

**WOMAN.** Does Meryl Streep get dirty?

**MAN.** You can't say that. Meryl Streep is a great actress.

**WOMAN.** But does she go down.

**MAN.** Not if you say it like that. (*Holds up a book.*) Have you read this?

**WOMAN.** No. She wouldn't do that. Too refined. Too dignified.

**MAN.** So you're not dignified?

**WOMAN.** I'm not refined.

**MAN.** (*Holds up a book.*) Have you read this?

**WOMAN.** Yes. I don't think she'd do it.

**MAN.** Maybe you don't want to think of her doing it.

**WOMAN.** Come to bed.

**MAN.** I'm looking for something.

**WOMAN.** Come look for it in bed.

**MAN.** I thought you wanted to be refined?

**WOMAN.** I want to be like Meryl Streep.

**MAN.** A great actress?

**WOMAN.** No. Yes. But an actress who doesn't suck your...you know.

**MAN.** I thought you liked it.

**WOMAN.** I do like it. I love it.

**MAN.** Then why do you want to be Meryl Streep?



## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**WOMAN.** Because you don't think of her as someone who does that sort of thing.

**MAN.** Sure I do.

**WOMAN.** No, you don't.

**MAN.** Meryl Streep is a great actress...

**WOMAN.** Exactly. What are you looking for?

**MAN.** Something to throw at you.

**WOMAN.** I love you.

**MAN.** No! You don't! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! *(He throws five books at her.)*

### **SCENE TWO**

#### **The Beginning**

*Woman reads. Man plays with her foot.*

**MAN.** Do you think Robert DeNiro is gay?

**WOMAN.** I love Robert DeNiro.

**MAN.** You love people too easily.

**WOMAN.** I don't want to marry him.

**MAN.** Then why do you say you love him?

**WOMAN.** I don't wanna have his babies! I am not that predictable! You have NO IDEA what I'll do next! *(She finds a bottle of beer and a towel.)*

**MAN.** Where'd you get that?

**WOMAN.** I'm washing my hair with it. *(He chases her, trying to get the beer.)*

Hey! What are you doing? I want to wash my hair. Stop freaking out!

**MAN.** I'm not freaking out!

**WOMAN.** You're acting like a crazy person!

**MAN.** You make me a crazy person!

**WOMAN.** That's not fair!

**MAN.** Then it's not fair! *(He throws the beer to get rid of it.)*

**WOMAN.** Wow. That was one scary beer. *(They laugh and come together. The books are a mess. She covers him with kisses.)*

**WOMAN.** Oh, let's get married! Let's get married and have babies!

**MAN.** Okay! *(He kisses her. They dance.)*

**WOMAN.** Let's get married!

FLESHEATINGTIGER

**MAN.** And have a house!

**WOMAN.** And be like normal people! (*They kiss and kiss and kiss. He stops.*)

**MAN.** No. We can't.

**WOMAN.** Why not?

**MAN.** Because we're acting in a play.

**WOMAN.** We are?

**MAN.** (*To the audience.*) We're actors. We don't really love each other.

**WOMAN.** It feels like love.

**MAN.** (*To the audience then her.*) The characters love each other. Not us.

**WOMAN.** Do they get married?

**MAN.** I don't know. I didn't read to the end.

**WOMAN.** Oh.

**MAN.** But you should know. You're writing it.

**WOMAN.** The play?

**MAN.** Yeah, dummy. You're writing the play.

**WOMAN.** I'm writing as we go.

**MAN.** You'll make me into a jerk.

**WOMAN.** (*To the audience.*) I'll be objective.

**MAN.** Do we fall in love?

**WOMAN.** (*To the audience then him.*) I don't know. I'm writing as we go. Does it work out for us?

**MAN.** (*To the audience then her.*) I don't know...I'm acting as we go. You're married, anyway.

**WOMAN.** I am?

**MAN.** You are.

**WOMAN.** Oh, my god! I'm married! I don't feel married.

**MAN.** And I don't love you. I'm not even sure I like you.

**WOMAN.** Maybe if I stay you'll like me.

**MAN.** It could be a really long play.

**WOMAN.** Hamlet is five acts.

**MAN.** Maybe longer. (*Man addresses the audience.*) No relationships in the first year. "Don't do it. It will mess you up." I've dated girls with boyfriends before-

**WOMAN.** What?

**MAN.** Nothing. (*Back to the audience.*) Here's what's going to happen. This is a story with two beginnings and three endings.

FLESHEATINGTIGER

**WOMAN.** It is?

**MAN.** Yes. We're beginning again because that's the problem, isn't it? Who knows when things start with another person?

**WOMAN.** We've started-

**MAN.** But when do they really start? And you think it's over but then it's not over. That's why... No relationships in the first year. Don't do it. You'll never know the beginning and you'll struggle with the end. So, no relationships. But see, for me, there's more. There's a big tin can starts rattling around, banging in my head and keeping me up nights. Is everything a big distraction? What is this keeps knocking in my head? *(To Woman.)* You're gonna have to go now.

**WOMAN.** Why?

**MAN.** You're not in the next scene.

**WOMAN.** Will you miss me?

**MAN.** Doubtful.

**WOMAN.** Can I read my book? I'll be quiet as a mouse.

**MAN.** No.

**WOMAN.** A very small mouse. Please, pretty, please?

**MAN.** You have to leave the play for a while.

**WOMAN.** I've been told fantasies are dangerous. *(To the audience.)* Have you heard that? Fantasies trap us. Nail us into submission. We become lost. Watching the world, looking for ourselves. Passive. Next thing you know, you've lost a year of your life. Or five. Ten. *(He gathers her things and guides her toward the door.)*

**MAN.** You have to leave the play.

**WOMAN.** I don't want to! I'm having discourse here! We were talking! *(She wails.)* Why do I have to cry all the time?

**MAN.** Meryl Streep cries in all her movies. Can you go now?

**WOMAN.** What if I don't?

**MAN.** Then I get angry.

**WOMAN.** DeNiro gets angry in all his movies. You never cry over me.

**MAN.** I cry about other things.

**WOMAN.** About whether or not DeNiro is gay?

**MAN.** Get out. *(She leaves.)*

FLESHEATINGTIGER

**SCENE THREE**

**Alcohol 101**

*Woman addresses the audience. Man loiters in the space.*

**WOMAN.** A word of advice on falling in love with an alcoholic...

**WOMAN & MAN.** DON'T.

**WOMAN.** Absolutely...

**WOMAN & MAN.** DON'T.

**WOMAN.** *(To Man.)* Hey. Do you mind?

**MAN.** Go ahead.

**WOMAN.** Listen up! Pay attention! Take notes! Because, believe me, you won't get anything right the first time around.

**WOMAN & MAN.** You will SCREW UP repeatedly.

**WOMAN.** You will ask yourself what were you thinking and what's the easiest way to commit suicide because death would be more pleasant...

**WOMAN & MAN.** ...than being IN LOVE with an alcoholic.

**MAN.** Amen!

**WOMAN & MAN.** STEP ONE...

**WOMAN.** Make a list. A list of all the things you love about your alcoholic. *(Man unfolds a list.)*

**MAN.** I am fun and easy to be around. Oh, goody.

**WOMAN.** Small things.

**MAN.** I like to eat healthy, but I'm not a freak about it.

**WOMAN.** Mundane things.

**MAN.** She loves my hands...my ears. *(To Woman.)* You love my ears? What's wrong with you?

**WOMAN.** Things that make you smile when you think of them.

**MAN.** I laugh at her jokes and her silliness. I give the best hugs. I do. She's right about that.

**WOMAN.** Write it down. You will need to remind yourself why this person is important in your life.

**MAN.** She loves me.

**WOMAN.** They will often do and say things that will, instead, make you wish they were DEAD.

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**MAN.** Hey!

**WOMAN.** STEP TWO: 12 Step Meetings. To understand and manage the mood swings, the ego mania and the constant self-doubt... If you are STUPID ENOUGH to fall in love with him...

**MAN.** Deep breath.

**WOMAN.** Please, don't be completely mental.

**MAN.** Yeah, I know. You're right.

**WOMAN.** STEP THREE: Another list. This will be your OATH. (*Man opens another list.*)

**MAN.** She will not allow me to create anger and anxiety. She will be patient and honest. She will forgive.

**WOMAN.** Because face it, the alcoholic will eventually blame you, hate you, accuse you, and judge you...harsher than any critic on earth.

**MAN.** She will not let me manipulate her.

**WOMAN.** Moments of tenderness will fuctuate.

**MAN.** Did you say fuctuate?

**WOMAN.** No. Shut up. Fluctuate...

**MAN.** You did. I heard you. You said fuctuate...

**WOMAN.** No.

**MAN.** She will keep her expectations flexible. I like that.

**WOMAN.** Keep your sanity... Make your lists and read them daily so you...

**WOMAN & MAN.** DON'T FORGET.

**WOMAN.** And, believe me, dimwits, you will forget. You will fail miserably again and again...and you will get up and start over...

**MAN.** And over and over...

**WOMAN.** ...again, and again...

**WOMAN & MAN.** ...from the beginning.

### **SCENE FOUR**

#### **The 12 Steps**

*They push against each other or against something.*

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**MAN.** I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out.

*(Switch.)*

**MAN.** I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in.

*(Switch.)*

**MAN.** I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out.

*(Man works out rigorously as he moves through the Steps. He builds momentum. Woman watches.)*

**MAN.** Step 1. We admit we are powerless over alcohol -- that our lives have become unmanageable.

**WOMAN.** ...and yet here I am.

**MAN.** Step 2. We have come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

**WOMAN.** ...and give us what we want.

**MAN.** Step 3. We have made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him.

**WOMAN.** ...and our lives will be peaceful.

**MAN.** Step 4. We will make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

**WOMAN.** ...and we will have answers.

**MAN.** Step 5. We admit to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

**WOMAN.** ...and never hurt each other.

**MAN.** Step 6. We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

**WOMAN.** ...and keep us sane.

**MAN.** Step 7. We humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings.

**WOMAN.** ...and give us faith.

**MAN.** Step 8. We will make a list of all persons we have harmed, and are willing to make amends to them all.

**WOMAN.** ...without question.

**MAN.** Step 9. We will make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

**WOMAN.** ...without fail.

**WOMAN.** I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in.

**WOMAN.** I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out.

**WOMAN.** I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in.

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**MAN.** Step 10. We will continue to take personal inventory and when we are wrong promptly admit it.

**WOMAN.** ...without doubt.

**MAN.** Step 11. We will seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.

**WOMAN.** (*Quietly overlapping.*) I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in... I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out...

**MAN.** Step 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we will carry this message to other alcoholics, and practice these principles in all our affairs. (*Taking it in.*) I admit I am powerless, and my life has become unmanageable.

**WOMAN.** ...my life has become unmanageable.

### **SCENE FIVE** **2nd Woman**

*Man hangs out with his beer. Knock at the door.*

**MAN.** Come in. (*Woman enters. She looks great.*)

**WOMAN.** (*Sexy-cool, an exotic accent.*) Here I am. Handsome. Where you taking me tonight?

**MAN.** (*Ignoring her.*) I'm not taking you anywhere...

**WOMAN.** We have a date.

**MAN.** No... I have a date. You better leave, she's gonna be here.

**WOMAN.** Who?

**MAN.** My date!

**WOMAN.** I AM your date!

**MAN.** No, you're not-

**WOMAN.** (*Aside to him.*) I'm double cast. I'm playing both roles.

**MAN.** Oh.

**WOMAN.** So. Here I am. Handsome. Where you taking me tonight?

**MAN.** I'm not going.

**WOMAN.** So, we're not going?

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**MAN.** I don't care what you do.

**WOMAN.** I'm different. You'll like me in this role much better.

**MAN.** I can't tell the difference.

**WOMAN.** I'm a good actress! I can play anything!

**MAN.** Can you disappear?

**WOMAN.** I love you!

**MAN.** Oh, brother.

**WOMAN.** I bought this to surprise you!

**MAN.** Waste of money.

**WOMAN.** You said you liked my hair this way.

**MAN.** Who cares? It's stupid hair! Go away! Why do you make me do this to you?

You have no self-respect!

**WOMAN.** Maybe I hope you'll...

**MAN.** Hope I'll what?

**WOMAN.** Maybe you'll...

**MAN.** Change?

**WOMAN.** No! I don't know! *(He throws up his hands in desperation.)*

**MAN.** There it is! "I DON'T KNOW!!" Can you please write one original line?

*(Man starts re-arranging the set.)*

**WOMAN.** What are you doing?

**MAN.** I'm taking over. *(He shoves the table and other stuff. CRASH!!)* You can write this crap! But I'm taking over! I'm directing!

**WOMAN.** You can't direct the play.

**MAN.** You're writing it! I'm directing! I'm taking over! I am a sexual being! HA!

*(He pushes the set around and tosses books. SCRAPE!! His confidence builds.)*

**MAN.** I hate this set! All this is changing! And then re-casting. *(He points an accusatory finger.)* You're gone! *(She cries.)*

**MAN.** Oh, great! Open the flood gates!

**WOMAN.** *(Dropping the accent.)* You're re-casting me?

**MAN.** I'm the director!

**WOMAN.** Can I audition?

**MAN.** No. You're fired. Don't come back.

**WOMAN.** But I'm still the writer!

**MAN.** Fine! Go write! But stay AWAY from my production! *(She leaves. He war-cries and beats his chest.)*



# FLESHEATINGTIGER

## SCENE SIX New Addiction

*Man speaks to the audience.*

**MAN.** There's this girl. Wait, I mean, woman...I've been seeing off and on for quite a while. Okay, maybe a week or so. I've seen her twice, alright? Fooled around in my car. Oh, man, like high schoolers. Nothing serious. She's gorgeous. Perfect skin, great rack. Perfect. And she knows it. Wears little skirts that come down and show every move as she walks. These big full lips that- I can't believe she's with me. I see the guys in the restaurant turning to check out her ass, her soft tan legs. She's a goddess. An absolute goddess. Dumb as a stump. I'm sitting across from her and can barely keep from leaping over the table and strangling her. The stupid, idiotic, shallow, boring CRAP that comes out of her mouth. WHO CARES?? And she doesn't eat! She sits there picking at her side salad I paid \$18 bucks for and guzzles her Napa Valley chardonnay right in front of me like a damn sieve. And all I'm thinking is...please be more interesting when you're drunk. Please develop a PERSONALITY. I'd really like to get laid, so please, be someone I can laugh with, so I don't feel like a complete loser getting you drunk, screwing your brains out and never calling you again. Deep breath. (*Woman appears.*)

**WOMAN.** I have a personality.

**MAN.** I know you do.

**WOMAN.** I don't drink.

**MAN.** That's good. That's very good.

**WOMAN.** Can I come over?

**MAN.** Why?

**WOMAN.** I love you.

**MAN.** No.

**WOMAN.** (*Glowing.*) I do. Yes, I do... (*Woman disappears.*)

**MAN.** But I can't shake this feeling. This tin can rattling in my head. I've dated a guy before. And I fooled around with a few guys. But only when I was drunk. I did everything drunk. (*Woman appears again.*)

**MAN.** I like your hair like that.

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**WOMAN.** You do?

**MAN.** You look beautiful.

**WOMAN.** I feel beautiful.

**MAN.** Because you are.

**WOMAN.** No. Because of the way you're looking at me... *(She disappears.)*

**MAN.** And when I feel it... It will be like walking together in the rain and not feeling the drops. Not like this. I won't feel like this anymore. I won't feel like drinking anymore.

### **SCENE SEVEN**

#### **Role Reversal**

*Knock at the door. He opens the door to Woman dressed very cool, like no one can fucking touch her.*

**MAN.** Hi.

**WOMAN.** Hey.

**MAN.** Wow. Great jacket. Nice to meet you, in person.

**WOMAN.** *(Aloof. The set is still a mess from Man's tantrum.)* Interesting set.

**MAN.** Yeah. It's a, uh, work in progress. *(Woman fusses with her phone.)*

**MAN.** Ummm...when we spoke you said you were filming today?

**WOMAN.** Yeah. On set this morning. But I'm cool now.

**MAN.** Good for you. Getting the work.

**WOMAN.** My agent says I need to do more theater. So.

**MAN.** Theater is a great way to keep up the craft. Uh, that's stupid. Filming can be so...contrived. Oh, God. Um... Can I get you anything?

**WOMAN.** I could really use a glass of wine. I'm pretty tense.

**MAN.** Oh, uh...how about water?

**WOMAN.** I guess. But only a bottle. You give me a dirty glass I'll puke. *(Man scrambles for bottled water.)*

**MAN.** So... What's the film?

**WOMAN.** Some Meryl Streep/DeNiro nonsense. I mean what's the big deal about Meryl Streep? She's old looking, too.

**MAN.** It must be exciting... Involved in something that big...

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**WOMAN.** I fell into this acting thing. Could take it or leave it. 5am calls suck.

**MAN.** Any screen time with DeNiro?

**WOMAN.** Yeah, the mistress. Ha! But God, he's a drag. So quiet all the time. Big fancy movie star.

**MAN.** Wow. So cool.

**WOMAN.** Oh, I'd screw the guy. Or blow him, you know, 'cause he's famous and all...but he's so DULL. Always in his script and, like, reading it...

**MAN.** I'm a DeNiro fan. Maybe after this we could-

**WOMAN.** Speaking of. Could we get on with it? 'Cause I gotta be somewhere.

**MAN.** Oh, sure. You have the sides?

**WOMAN.** Yeah. Oops. Forgot. (*Man finds a script for her.*) This script's a real head trip.

**MAN.** Isn't it? Kind of a play-within-a-play idea. A relationship becomes clouded with the disease of alcoholism-

**WOMAN.** "Disease." ...ha!

**MAN.** Yeah. Uh-huh. It's a basic dilemma: How can we truly love someone when we don't fully love ourselves? Especially when the two people are attracted by reasons they don't understand. It's an existential love poem. It's like emotional expressionism. Nothing to be taken literally.

**WOMAN.** Whatever. Where do'ya want me to do it?

**MAN.** Right there is fine. (*She takes her time finding a completely different spot. She delivers the following speech as terribly as possible.*)

**WOMAN.** Who says I can't love you? You hide behind your therapy and your books. You sweep me in but won't be accountable for MY FEELINGS you swirl and arouse. You hate me because I don't settle for your cool, flippant tone. I don't want beauty on the surface; I want to wrestle with the beast underneath! He's part of you. And I love all of who you are. You despise me for saying it. You loathe me for reasons you don't even know. So, HATE ME with your silence and distance. I only know how to love. That's my rule: To love you—it's the only rule I know!

**MAN.** That was so good.

**WOMAN.** (*Back to aloof.*) I don't know if I'd be interested in this.

**MAN.** It's a great part. The emotional range-

**WOMAN.** She's pathetic. I'm not into that.

**MAN.** No, no... She's not pathetic. She's married. But she's empty. Then she meets this man... He's unpredictable but clever and decent. He's abrasive then kind and

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

generous. But he's in recovery and it's too much. She loves like a- Like a tidal wave. Whoosh! Then he pushes her away. Because he's not some crush or a roll in the hay...he's more-

**WOMAN.** So, I'm the hot chick who's great in bed and you're the loser?

**MAN.** Um... No.

**WOMAN.** I'm not into this.

**MAN.** The writer is doing interesting work.

**WOMAN.** You know him?

**MAN.** Her. Actually. She's amazing. Funny, smart. A good actress...

**WOMAN.** Sounds like you're the one with the crush.

**MAN.** No! Oh, no, no, no. We're friends. I don't feel that way about her.

**WOMAN.** Yeah. I'm gone.

**MAN.** I'd like to see you. Even if this- If the play doesn't work out. I'd like to see you again.

**WOMAN.** You want me for the part?

**MAN.** I'd love you for the part.

**WOMAN.** Even if I'm not interested?

**MAN.** Yes.

**WOMAN.** I'm not interested. *(She leaves. He speaks to the audience.)*

**MAN.** What I want and what I can get. Scattered images. Littering my brain. I'm speaking this way, so you'll like me, so you'll think I'm literary and likeable. Educated. I hate every one you, but I really need you to like me right now. I'm a nice guy, I really am. And I- It's one thing to stop. But to quit, to...never again. I can't stop thinking about her. She's a tidal wave, a boulder down a mountain—this thing set in motion. I want it to stop. But then I don't. But then I do. And then I don't. I do. No, I really, really do. But I don't. And then she shows up. And I don't. And then *whoosh*. And I can't.

## SCENE EIGHT

### Therapy

*Man and Woman push against each other or something.*

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**WOMAN.** I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out.

*(Switch.)*

**WOMAN.** I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in.

*(Man and Woman talk to separate people.)*

**WOMAN.** ...of course, I'm not going to keep seeing him...

**MAN.** ...because it's not that serious...

**WOMAN.** ...and I don't trust him...

**MAN.** ...because it's a one-time thing...

**WOMAN.** ...but you don't plan these things...

**MAN.** ...if it's there, I can't ignore it. I woke up and one day there she was...

**WOMAN.** ...and there was nothing I could do about it...

**MAN.** ...I don't know I've never...

**WOMAN & MAN.** ...felt something quite like this. *(They come together in a cheerful therapy session.)*

**WOMAN.** It's a team effort. Right, honey?

**MAN.** We're in this together.

**WOMAN.** We're very open about that and owning our actions...

**MAN.** ...our part in what we do for each other...

**WOMAN.** ...and with each other.

**MAN.** Let's face it...

**WOMAN.** ...a relationship really starts to go downhill...

**MAN.** ...when we start to psycho-analyze...

**WOMAN.** ...each other.

**MAN.** Yes.

**WOMAN.** Of course. Why? What were you thinking? *(They laugh cheerfully, then back to their separate people...)* It's not serious.

**MAN.** Not serious at all.

**WOMAN.** It's physical...

**MAN.** That's all.

**WOMAN.** ...and I can end it anytime I want...

**MAN.** ...of course, I can.

**WOMAN.** *(Overlapping.)* I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out...

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**MAN.** It's not my fault. Sometimes I'm living my life and the next thing I know, it's there. Like someone forcing it on me. I got rid of it, every last drop. I know I did. I swear it. But it's that one bottle I forgot about. My emergency stash. I forgot to empty out that flask I always take to the game. Okay? What am I gonna do?

**WOMAN.** *(To him.)* Get rid of it.

**MAN.** I know what I should do, but what am I gonna do?

**WOMAN.** *(To him.)* Get rid of it.

**MAN.** It's like it's got arms and legs and crawls up from the liquor store and into my bed and before I know what's happening, there we are and I'm-

**WOMAN.** I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out...

**MAN.** ...you know...

**WOMAN & MAN.** You can't possibly understand.

**WOMAN.** I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out.

**MAN.** I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in.

**WOMAN.** I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in. I want in.

**MAN.** I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out. I want out.

### **SCENE NINE** **The Other Man**

*Woman is alone. Man reads a book or something in the shadows.*

**WOMAN.** Imagine a man...no, a prince. Handsome. Intelligent. Compassionate. He showers you with love. The sex is great. And still, it gets better than that. Can you imagine? Better than that? He lights up a room. He always says the right thing, does the right thing. His knowledge of the world is insightful, but he never makes anyone feel awkward or out of place. He makes me laugh, my God, he can make me laugh. That's it, right? Can you believe such a man exists? Can you imagine? I don't have to. I married him. He is still all those things. But this is what I want? Open wide and bleeding... Love. The time we waste in fiction. How about a post-apocalyptic world that is de-constructed. Because that's what we do as artists when we don't know what else to do with a story. Because it's been told ten million times and it's still the same. How about that? How about something completely unoriginal like that? I'm sorry. This is not who we grow old with. This is not the person who will cherish me

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

when I am old, barely walking or hearing what's been said. I know this. I'm something he's already skinned and left in the sun. I'm drying up here. I'm terrified. But I'll climb back onto my bones and try again because I... Because I... I... I've loved people. I have. I can't stop myself from feeling and it was always real. I felt it with no expectations and no harm in it. I believe we are all good people. Even when we don't mean to be. Hope and fantasy are- If I could only stop myself in that moment. You know? That moment that changes everything and throws you off course? If I only knew where it was. I could stop myself from feeling so sucked into it all. I could stop myself. When we find ourselves stranded on a desert island it does not matter how we got there. It only matters what we're willing to do for survival. My life has become unmanageable.

### **SCENE TEN** **Negotiating Affection**

*Woman makes herself at home in the space as Man reads.*

**WOMAN.** Do you ever feel like you're living a certain way because that's what everyone expects you to do? And if you stopped what you were doing the world would DIVE into chaos...

**MAN.** Dammit!

**WOMAN.** No sense, no order, no reason for existence! And the world would be plunged into despair because I can't be happy with him...NO! I have a moral obligation to regulate the Universe. I must suffer a life without pure happiness so the world will know there is commitment and stability! I have to make it work!

**MAN.** We, the world, could care less if you stay with your husband.

**WOMAN.** You don't care.

**MAN.** I'm sick of hearing about him.

**WOMAN.** No, you're not. He's your out. I still love him.

**MAN.** Then why are you here?

**WOMAN.** I'm a terrible person.

**MAN.** No. You're a good person. You're a terrible wife.

**WOMAN.** I haven't left him yet. You don't own me.

**MAN.** Here's some free advice-

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**WOMAN.** Advice is always free; otherwise, it's therapy.

**MAN.** Don't write the play while you're living it.

**WOMAN.** Why not?

**MAN.** You don't have perspective.

**WOMAN.** Maybe I don't write ENOUGH what I'm living. Maybe that's where genius lies. Maybe perspective throws us off and we forget how wonderful or horrible something really was. Because we're too scared to live it! Instead, we paint pretty pictures of the past!

**MAN.** Deep breath.

**WOMAN.** When you think about all the things there are to be happy or angry about or sad about—when you decide to choose the battle you really want to fight-

**MAN.** I asked you to leave-

**WOMAN.** Then begged me to come back. I'm writing that in.

**MAN.** I don't want you here.

**WOMAN.** I know.

**MAN.** Then why do you stay?

**WOMAN.** Because you oscillate like a fan!

**MAN.** Do you know what it means to be an alcoholic?

**WOMAN.** It means you desperately want something you can never have.

**MAN.** Yes.

**WOMAN.** I don't know what that's like. But I think I'm learning. (*Seducing him.*)

Maybe we should focus on what you can have.

**MAN.** You're not my type.

**WOMAN.** It's quite clear you feel nothing.

**MAN.** I feel nothing.

**WOMAN.** That's the way it is.

**MAN.** That's the way it is. (*They make-out, rolling around together. She ends up on top of him. Woman pulls away a moment...*)

**WOMAN.** We don't have that spark, that zing. We don't have any magic. I met someone else. I'm not over my ex. I need to get my life, my career, my house in order. I'm married. I'm divorced. I'm separated. I'm not ready. I'm not capable. It's never you, it's always me. I'm not... I'm not... I'm not really listening at this point. I'm not listening. (*They go back to making out.*)



## FLESHEATINGTIGER

### **SCENE ELEVEN** **Scientific Evidence**

*Woman wears a lab coat and gives her presentation. Man is on the table or somewhere to be used as her prop.*

**WOMAN.** The brain of a healthy sixteen-year-old boy. Advanced problem-solving skills developing. Moral attitudes forming. Self-esteem, personal ethics and daily habits emerging. The hormones are RAGING.

**MAN.** OH, yeah!

**WOMAN.** Our young man of sixteen embarks on a rocky road with the introduction of a foreign substance. The substance...is alcohol. Lots of it.

**MAN.** I could really use a beer.

**WOMAN.** The alcohol stops his emotional development, or at least hinders it. Scientific research shows severe emotional under-development in young people struggling with chemical dependency.

**MAN.** I want a BEER!

**WOMAN.** Between the ages of fourteen and twenty-three higher functions, including healthy relationships, organization, goal-setting and personal hygiene...

**MAN.** What?

**WOMAN.** ...and personal hygiene can fall by the wayside.

**MAN.** I wash. I'm clean. What do you mean by that?

**WOMAN.** The victim of the disease—also called the insanity—has outward signs of a fully developed, rational man. But inside he has the emotional capability of an adolescent. He now escapes into his addiction instead of facing challenges, hardships and conflicts.

**MAN.** I'm working on it!

**WOMAN.** Such challenges are particularly difficult in the areas of career. A career requires goals and risk-taking. Making sometimes difficult choices and sticking to a plan. Advanced problem-solving...

**MAN.** I've made decisions! I'm directing the play now! I don't like the way you're doing this speech-

**WOMAN.** Shut up!

**MAN.** Okay.

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**WOMAN.** The man reverts to childlike behavior... No confidence in decisions. Changing his mind with each introduction of new data...

**MAN.** I'm a good director.

**WOMAN.** Often questioning his own abilities...

**MAN.** Don't you think I'm a good director? (*She kisses him gently, pats his head.*)

**WOMAN.** You're a wonderful director, darling. Now sit still so I can talk.

**MAN.** (*Little boy.*) Okay.

**WOMAN.** The paradox is set: He constantly questions his own abilities...but has no confidence in the conclusions he reaches. His desire to resolve anxiety simply leads to more anxiety. Like a hungry tiger chasing its own tail.

**MAN.** Like a tiger...I like that. Grrrr...

**WOMAN.** Or maybe...more like a snake.

**MAN.** A snake? I'm not a snake.

**WOMAN.** Another difficulty for the emotionally un-developed alcoholic is the personal relationship. Specifically: love relationships.

**MAN.** I love people.

**WOMAN.** And although he claims to have loved people...

**MAN.** I've loved people!

**WOMAN.** We, in the scientific community, strongly doubt this claim.

**MAN.** I LOVE PEOPLE! YOU BITCH!

**WOMAN.** He is an egomaniac with an inferiority complex. He wants the whole world to love him, but he's too ashamed to speak for fear he'll look stupid, un-cool and be rejected. He wants to have sex with ALL the women in the world...

**MAN.** Oh, yeah!

**WOMAN.** His fantasies involve beautiful, tanned, hot babes with enormous breasts and dripping wet beavers like honey sitting on his face...

**MAN.** (*Overlapping.*) Oooohh...yeah!

**WOMAN.** ...crawling all over his body worshiping his engorged, throbbing...

**MAN.** (*Overlapping.*) Oh, yeah! Yeah!

**WOMAN.** But when it comes down to it, all he really wants from a woman is...

**MAN.** Ride me, you whore!

**WOMAN.** ...a blow job.

**MAN.** Huh?

**WOMAN.** A blow job.

**MAN.** Oh, yeah!

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**WOMAN.** See what I mean?

**MAN.** No. Really. Come on.

**WOMAN.** The blow job is impersonal. An act of subservience on the part of the woman, or man, who performs it. The receiver is granted sexual satisfaction without true emotional commitment. You see, unless he has the alcohol surging through his veins—his liquid courage, his spine in a bottle—he is unable to perform sexual intercourse. Now, we can assume a drunk ka-dunk is not the most wonderful moment between two people—who am I to judge—but at least he can GET laid when he's drunk. (*Cheerful and excited.*) However, there is no risk-taking involved for the receiver of a good, old-fashioned hummer! Our alcoholic can sit back and receive sexual affirmation without exposing his fragile inner self. It is bliss for our chemically dependent, emotionally despondent man.

**MAN.** I thought you liked it?

**WOMAN.** I do like it. I love it.

**MAN.** Then what are you saying?

**WOMAN.** I'm saying...you have a lot of stupid problems! (*Woman leaves.*)

**MAN.** Don't leave me! I hate this play! I hate this fucking play!

### **SCENE TWELVE** **The Gift of Alcohol**

*Man addresses the audience. (This might be the only time Man expresses true hostility toward them.)*

**MAN.** There are people who can drink. People who stop whenever they want. Just a few beers, just one glass of wine. “No, no... I'm driving that's it for me.” And those who GIVE it away. Coming for dinner? Here's an idea: Why not bring a bottle of wine? That I can NEVER DRINK! That would be LOVELY. The GIFT OF ALCOHOL! What better way to say I love you! How about a rare bottle of bourbon to give your favorite drunk? The more expensive the better! Because YOU CARE! Why not! It's the GIFT OF ALCOHOL! What could be better? Screw all you one-glass-of-red-wine-no-thanks-on-the-beer jerks! Screw you! (*Woman runs in. They tell the following story together, exuberantly.*)

**WOMAN.** Yesterday was a perfect day.

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**MAN.** I woke up and wanted to see her.

**WOMAN.** He called me at the last minute...

**MAN.** I really wanted to see her.

**WOMAN.** Couldn't wait to see him. Couldn't wait...

**MAN.** I was under the clock tower.

**WOMAN.** I started running...couldn't wait...

**MAN.** She looked beautiful.

**WOMAN.** No! I didn't.

**MAN.** Cute and sexy in her sweatpants.

**WOMAN.** Oh, God! Sexy? What's wrong with you?

**MAN.** She jumped into my arms.

**WOMAN.** Into his arms!

**MAN.** It was raining.

**WOMAN.** A light drizzle. Barely.

**MAN.** I tucked her into me...

**WOMAN.** And we walked in the rain.

**MAN.** We walked in the rain.

**WOMAN.** And didn't feel the drops.

**MAN.** And this feeling swelled my chest.

**WOMAN.** (*Embarrassed.*) I told him I was his girl.

**MAN.** She said she was my girl.

**WOMAN.** And we walked in the rain...

**MAN.** And didn't feel the drops.

**WOMAN.** I was flying. I could see the world below me.

**MAN.** I pulled you down.

**WOMAN.** No! Don't pull me down! I love it! I want to fly-y-y-yy!

**MAN.** Look down there! The tiny people! Look at the rain!

**WOMAN.** I love weather!

**MAN.** And we walked in the rain...

**WOMAN.** And didn't feel the drops.

**MAN.** I feel sober. But in a good way.

**WOMAN.** It's in my toes. Creeping through my veins. Into my stomach and heart...out the tips of my fingers. I can walk through walls.

**MAN.** I can move mountains.

**WOMAN.** I think I'm in love.

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

**MAN.** I think I'm...oh, God-

### **SCENE THIRTEEN**

#### **Snuff Lover**

*Man wears a black ski mask. Woman enters. He is somber and methodical, an executioner. She is perky as can be. (Woman should not stop talking until key pauses. She may have to improvise or repeat lines for timing.)*

**WOMAN.** Sorry, I'm late! I was at my meeting and got caught in conversation with this interesting woman. Ooooo...I like that hood. Black is such a nice color on you! What are we doing? Oh, okay. *(He leads her center stage and binds her hands behind her back.)* You know her husband's been sober fifteen years and spent the first five feeling like he had the flu. Can you believe that? *(He motions her to kneel.)* Oh. Okay. *(She kneels.)* Anyway...those ladies are so re-assuring—they say to draw on the strength of the group. Some women have been with their alcoholics for YEARS. I feel like a fraud...like I'm forcing it, aren't I? We've only started making this work and- *(He takes out a baseball bat.)* Oh, my! That's a beautiful bat, honey! Did you polish it up all by yourself? I love it! You did such a good job! *(He motions her to bow her head.)* Oh, okay. *(He raises the bat as if to strike her.)* Oh, wait! No! *(He stops.)* Sorry, I'm thinking...maybe it would be better if my head were turned this way. What do you think? I've read about blunt objects to the head, and this is a much better way... *(Man considers, lowers the bat.)* Oh, I know how strong you are. I love that about you. One of many things. I made a list, you know. Strong and handsome. I wouldn't dream of telling you what to do but... *(He repositions her head.)* Oh. Okay. There we go! Now. Let's have a nice big swing, honey! You can do it... *(He raises to strike.)* Oh, no! Wait. Stop! *(He stops and lowers the bat again.)* I know you're doing what you have to do, and I need to stay out of the way, but maybe, ummmmm... Is this really how we want things? *(Motions with her head.)* Honestly...it could get messy. Don't you think? *(Man considers the situation.)* Let's face it, all that blood rushing to my head? I don't think you'll want the bloody deluge when it's all over. *(Man steps away.)* Now we're listening to reason. *(He drops the bat and slumps.)* Oh! I took the wind right out of your sails. *(He perks up. Woman stands.)* Oh! You have an idea? I bet you do. What

## FLESHEATINGTIGER

is it? What is it? (*Man reveals a noose.*) Ah! So clever! You're so resourceful! They told me you would be...that you'd have all these ways of doing things like this. I can't wait to tell those ladies stories about YOU! And I will! You know I will! (*He positions her and puts the noose around her neck.*) Look at you with your black. So professional; so grown up. I love your black mask with the little eye holes. You have such nice eyes. I love it when they narrow and glare at me. (*Suddenly tightens the noose.*) Oh! Tight! You do such a good job with the noose! You know exactly how to make it fit around my neck. I love that about you! Time for a great big PUSH! (*He pushes her; she lands on the floor.*) Aww... (*Her bound hands come undone.*) Aww... (*She pulls the rope down.*) Awww... Of all the dumb luck! I'm sorry, honey. Darn it! You don't deserve this. But come now, you will think of something. You can do it! I know you can do it... I love you! I love you so much!! (*He chokes her with his bare hands. She dies violently. He takes off the mask to look at her lifeless body.*)

**THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS—  
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