

SMACK IT TO THE MOON

Rob and Catrina, both seventeen, meet unexpectedly in their senior year of high school. Rob is the introspective quiet newcomer with a melancholy bent on life. Catrina is the loud, outgoing, know-everyone-in-the-class type whose obsessive and spontaneous nature scares most peers away from getting too close. For some reason, these two characters just click. They go together like peanut butter and bananas.

CHARACTERS

Rob: 17, high school student

Catrina: 17, high school student

SETTING

Various locations; mostly Columbus High School

TIME

The present

ROB: *(To audience.)* When my father dragged us from Cherry Hill, New Jersey, to Columbus Junction, Iowa, two months before I was to graduate from my high school of nearly four perfect years, there was no way that I thought I could ever find happiness in this rotten, disgusting, pitiful world again.

CATRINA: *(To cafeteria lady.)* Apples are perfect and pears too. We need to eat more apples. I read that last night. *(Gesturing.)* And eggs! We need a pear, apple, and egg vending machine in here. And figs. Did you know that figs have fiber and protein, Maggie?

ROB: Until the bleak and dire day in which I met Catrina.

CATRINA: *(Nodding and pointing with her finger at Maggie as if to emphasize.)* Fiber. *(Shouting to her friend in the lunch line as she scoops up a bag of chips.)* Hey Mikey!

ROB: *(To audience.)* That's not really her name but in third grade she took it on as her pseudo name until college when

she will adopt a brand new name of particular significance like Eleanor R., Armstrong N., or Yum Yum Dumpling.

CATRINA: Hey Mikey! He likes it! He likes it! *(Throwing up her fist.)* Ho, ho, ho! Eat a donut for me, Mikey!

ROB: She was everything I ever wanted in a woman. Outgoing, funny, sweet.

CATRINA: *(Speaking to someone else, with her own unique hand emphasis.)* Smack it!! Smack it to the moon!

ROB: And right from the start, I could tell she was attracted to me

CATRINA: *(Talking to another friend, looking back at him.)* Did you see that wacko talking to me in line?

ROB: It was instantaneous raw attraction on her part.

CATRINA: *(Pointing.)* The really funny-looking one. And he has that eye thing, that lazy-eye-potential-stalking-person eye thing. It's disgusting. But he has really good teeth.

ROB: We just, you know, clicked.

CATRINA: Did I spit at you?

ROB: I felt comfortable right from the start. I knew just what to say. *(To Catrina.)* No. *(To audience.)* And she was quite articulate herself.

CATRINA: I spit when I yell.

ROB: I wouldn't care if you did spit. My brother spits all the time and he does this really gross thing with mashed potatoes.

CATRINA: Cool! Big tip: Don't eat those here. They make the tater tots in reused lard grease. I'm not kidding. I have witnesses. *(Reciting mantra, covering eyes as she walks by the pudding.)* I hate chocolate pudding. It's disgusting. It's disgusting. I hate chocolate pudding. It's disgusting. It's disgusting. I hate chocolate pudding. It's disgusting. It's disgusting. *(To Rob.)* Am I past it?

ROB: Yes. *(To audience.)* It's like conversation just flowed from me, from us. More than any other woman I've known. Around her, profound thoughts flowed from me. *(To her.)* So do you like those Cruncha Cruncha Chips?

CATRINA: What chips?

ROB: The bacon-and-onion flavored Cruncha Cruncha — the stuff you're eating.

CATRINA: (*Looking down. Gasps.*) Oh my lands!

ROB: Oh my lands?

CATRINA: I'm not eating these. (*Handing him the bag.*) I'm not supposed to eat them. Take them.

ROB: Why can't you eat them?

CATRINA: Because they're not written in my notebook and today is not a whatever day.

ROB: Whatever day?

CATRINA: It's not an eat-whatever day! (*To cafeteria lady.*) How much, Ruby?

ROB: (*To audience.*) For some reason, she knew everyone everywhere. All the cafeteria staff, the school gardener, the religion teacher with the mentally retarded son, and I soon found out that she managed to be on a first-name basis with the principal of the school, his wife, and their pet dog, Sassy.

CATRINA: Put the open bag of chips on my tab even though I will not be eating any more of them. Ever. In my lifetime. (*To Rob.*) I have to warn you that I am on caffeine again. You have nice eyes.

ROB: Thanks.

CATRINA: (*Digging through her purse.*) I have a problem. Inadvertent eating. That's what I do. So I have to write things down. You'll eat my chips?

ROB: Well, I don't really like onion-and-bacon.

CATRINA: But you have to eat them. Eat them. Go on, eat them!

ROB: One sec. (*He hands the cafeteria lady money.*)

CATRINA: I wish I had a hand cream. Do you have any hand cream? (*He shakes his head no. To others.*) Does anyone have any hand cream?! (*To him.*) I refuse to be an inadvertent eater anymore. I refuse. It's a ninety-day plan. Do you think that's too long?

ROB: Well . . .

CATRINA: This cafeteria promotes inadvertency. Inadvertently,

nonintended, accidental, involuntary, not part of the plan. We should have fig, pear, and apple vending machines. That's the definition, by the way, for inadvertent eating so mark me with an *I* and put me in a starving country. I think the cheese flavor's much better.

ROB: What?

CATRINA: The cheese-flavor Cruncha Cruncha Chips.

ROB: Yeah, I don't like mixing my flavors. If they were onion or bacon that would be fine, but onion *and* bacon well, that's just, you know, disturbing.

CATRINA: (*Taking him in.*) Yeah, I know what you mean. Do you talk to God or some like higher something?

ROB: I guess.

CATRINA: Well I already opened the bag. I've got to find someone to take them.

ROB: We could just throw them out.

CATRINA: (*Appalled at the idea.*) No, we could not. That would be wasting food.

ROB: Well, they aren't nutritionally sound anyway.

CATRINA: Yes, but pigs were killed for the bag. The bacon. I love your shirt. I love royal blue. It goes with your eyes. I can't deal with pigs being killed.

ROB: Well, not pigs with an *s*. I don't even think one pig. Maybe it's just bacon flavoring from a small portion of the —

CATRINA: Ahhh! I can't think about it. I'm a vegetarian from this time forward. I'm a vegetarian. (*Raising her hand to bear witness.*) I'm a vegetarian. Everything else, (*Snaps her fingers.*) out of here.

ROB: Just like that?

CATRINA: Well, sure because I can't deal with the pigs and the rabbits and things.

ROB: Where did the rabbits come from? There's no rabbit anything in these chips.

CATRINA: Yes, but there could be. And then we'd throw them out without regard. I can't think of the pigs anymore. I'm a vegetarian. I'm going to fill my notebook with broccoli

and turnips and cantaloupe as soon as I sit down. Where are we sitting?

ROB: I, I . . . here? *(He throws away the bag of chips.)*

CATRINA: I saw you throw away the bag. *(Smacks her leg.)* I know, garlic-and-onion!

ROB: Garlic-and-onion —

CATRINA: Cruncha Cruncha Chip flavor.

ROB: Oh. Oh, well, yeah that might be OK — probably pretty good because they're complimentary.

CATRINA: Complimentary? They're giving them out for free?

ROB: No, I meant they go together. Like cheese and tomato. That's passionate. Like hot dog and mustard is classic. Like spaghetti and meatball. It's just natural.

CATRINA: Right. I'm sorry I'm thinking of the pig. And I can't eat the pig-free anyway. It's still fattening. So how often?

ROB: How often?

CATRINA: Do you speak to strange girls in cafeterias about God or higher beings or pigs or meatballs and mustard?

ROB: Well, I — I don't know. I guess just when taken off guard.

CATRINA: That's cool. I want to dive into the garbage and fish out the bag. Do you have urges like that?

ROB: Well, I guess. Look, the pig wouldn't have been fed at all if we hadn't bought the bag in the first place. He would be a wild pig and might have died in the cold far from the mud and good friends. Instead he led a nice, long, squeally pig life in the mud.

CATRINA: *(Beat.)* Do you mind if I leave?

ROB: What? Why?!

CATRINA: It's not you. It's the pudding and the tater tots and the pig bag. It's all just too much. I know you're new and probably insecure and all that, but I have to go.

ROB: Insecure? I'm from Cherry Hill, New Jersey! It's sophisticated and very wealthy

CATRINA: Meet me in the library by the Monet painting under the clock, three-thirteen PM after chemistry before oatmeal

break. We can look at it — the painting. *(She starts to go, but turns around.)* Can I have one of your carrots? *(He nods.)*

ROB: *(To audience.)* Our compatibility was apparent immediately.

CATRINA: But I don't date guys under any circumstances. Ever! Uh! That's just a whole 'nother ball of wax. You have nice teeth by the way. *(She starts to leave.)*

ROB: *(To Catrina.)* Wait! What's your name? Three . . . ?

CATRINA: Thirteen. Catrina. Later, Rob.

ROB: *(To audience.)* I still don't how she knew my name. Once she left my presence, the Technicolor cafeteria blurred into a mass of gray. I admit that hearing, "I don't date guys under any circumstances. Ever!" may have sounded a bit disheartening, but I ignored it. I was distracted in my Values in Media class with the exception of making a small derogatory comment about the insensitive use of cows in milk commercials. Then I raced out of my final class — torturous swimming with our sadistic instructor, Mr. Toadstank who whipped each of us across the butt with a whistle. In order to properly impress, I was in the library at three-oh-six, quietly browsing the massive book *Impressionistic Painters of the World* under the Monet painting trying to look properly casual yet fairly fascinated in a cool way. She approached me and I was about to start expressing my delight of the colors and light emphasis in the Monet when —

CATRINA: *(Angrily, hitting him in the back hard.)* Son of a gun! *(Throws up her hands.)* You know what you made me do? I spent my entire chemistry class writing down flavors I felt were complimentary and flavors that were not. I put it in my notebook and you have to fill it out. You can mark your opinion in the boxes next to them.

ROB: Some people have said that Catrina is obsessive.

CATRINA: I made five columns. Super complimentary, somewhat, not at all complimentary, not sure, and sounds gross.

Use X's in the boxes, not checks. And do it in pencil, not pen because I don't expect you to be definite on the first try.

ROB: I just considered her thorough.

CATRINA: Put a plus in the super complimentary column if you think they cannot be separated under any circumstances. *(Grabbing his hand.)* Now, come on, we have to break into the cafeteria.

ROB: I was beginning to believe that "under any circumstances" was one of Catrina's standard expressions. But not one she created. Unlike . . .

CATRINA: *(To a friend in the distance.)* Smack it, Mr. Monet! To the moon!

ROB: *(To Catrina.)* What did you say?

CATRINA: *(Taking his hand.)* Come on. We're breaking into the cafeteria.

ROB: That's what I thought you said.

CATRINA: Don't worry. I'll do the breakin' in part, but I need you to watch. If anyone comes just start coughing. So you liked it, huh?

ROB: What?

CATRINA: The Monet?

ROB: Well, sure I — *(To audience.)* I didn't have the heart to tell her I was more like a Diane Arbus fan or a Salvador Dali type. I don't know why. I just felt more at home looking at art that was weird or depressing: melting clocks, purple stubs, contorted freaks of a downtrodden circus. *(Beat.)* Maybe they reminded me more of my relatives. Or maybe it's because I never met someone who enjoyed life like Catrina.

CATRINA: *(Picking the lock of the cafeteria.)* Do you ever want to jump into a painting or a book? I'd like to be in Monet's garden — the flowers are so brilliant. Just act like you're sick as dog if she comes by.

ROB: She?

CATRINA: Well, it could be a he too. Or it could be a them.

ROB: Why are we doing this?

CATRINA: To get the bag. *(Looks up as she's fiddling with the*

lock.) I think talent is attractive. A lot more attractive than being really handsome.

ROB: *(To audience.)* Was I glad to hear this. Because though I am not ugly, I would rarely be considered really handsome. Cute sure, but never really handsome. But I am not without talents. I have many, many, many talents. None of which I can think of at the moment, but if need be I would be prepared to provide a Shakespearean performance of a sickened dog as good as any at Stratford.

CATRINA: Monet would be so attractive to me. He was really talented. So was Dr. Seuss.

ROB: Dr. Seuss? I thought it an odd pairing and I had never thought of Dr. Seuss's sex appeal. But it made sense. Monet and Dr. Seuss were both whimsical. I figured I could be whimsical too. I was whimsical — I am — in a male-Sylvia-Plath-Jerseysque sort of way.

CATRINA: Ooooooh. Got it!

ROB: We broke in with no need for my Oscar-worthy performance. *(To Catrina.)* Why are we getting the bag anyway? Are you that hungry?

CATRINA: Please! *(Playing with the lock.)* It's for the birds.

ROB: Oh. *(To audience.)* I pretended as if this all made perfect sense. It turns out we were to feed the chips to the birds in an abandoned field nearby, giving everything back to nature and in doing so, absolving any guilt about pigs. She headed immediately to the plastic garbage cans propped near the back door of the cafeteria.

CATRINA: *(Trying to do an accent.)* We're like on a magic quest to return the Cruncha chips to the snacking place on the fairy grounds.

ROB: *(To Catrina.)* Are you saying you want me to dig through the garbage?

CATRINA: Right.

ROB: *(To audience.)* I had visions of us throwing Cruncha Cruncha chips to the wind and the beautiful chirping birds floating sweetly down to gently catch them all around us. There

Catrina and I would be in the gorgeous green field that extended as far as the eye could see and suddenly we would be staring at each other. Her shirt whipping in the wind revealing the curve of her bosom and we would, in that moment, move into —

CATRINA: I did not break into the cafeteria to steal anything, Jerry — Mr. Holden! The truth has to do with my problem with inadvertent eating and a bag of chips because —

ROB: I'm a diabetic, sir. I needed something. Everything was put away. I could feel my blood sugar dropping rapidly. *(To audience.)* I couldn't believe I was saying any of this. I'd never lied so well in my life. Using the word *rapidly* was nearly genius. *(To Mr. Holden.)* Catrina was just trying to find something sweet for me. We apologize and will not ever do it again. *(To audience.)* It turns out the surveillance cameras did us in. Mr. Holden, our principal, believed every word I said.

CATRINA: *(Looking at Rob.)* Wow! Wow, you totally lied.

ROB: *(To Catrina.)* Yeah.

CATRINA: Son of a gun. You really lied! You seem all shy and then you lied!

ROB: *(Proudly.)* Yeah.

CATRINA: You shouldn't do that.

ROB: What?

CATRINA: Now I'll doubt everything you say.

ROB: No, no. I just didn't want to risk us getting in trouble in our senior year. It was a good cause. Doesn't that justify it? I've never done that before.

CATRINA: See, but how do I know that? Hmmm? So are you coming?

ROB: What?

CATRINA: To the field? I still have the chips. Then maybe you could come over for noodles and grapefruit juice.

ROB: *(To audience.)* And that's how it began. Noodles and grapefruit juice led to —

CATRINA: We can go swimming at the community center and

then we'll have peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, but it has to be low-fat peanut butter and you can only stay for a half an hour because I have to study and I have a play date with my cat Puppy.

ROB: Until we began doing homework together, which led to . . .

CATRINA: You can stay to help me with chemistry and we can watch *Animal Planet* and then you have to go home but you can call me at nine-twenty-five before I go to bed.

ROB: Which led to a few movies and lots of talk all which got progressively slightly longer. I even got to . . . well, you know. Not sex.

CATRINA: *(To audience.)* Sex does not happen at this age under any circumstances. *(Turning around in dress. To Rob.)* I'm afraid my dress is falling down. I knew I couldn't do this strapless thing. Is it falling? My stomach sticks out in this. I don't want to look sleazy. Do I look sleazy? Don't answer that. Oh fiddlesticks! I forgot to get you a flower thing and I look ugly. I can't do these things right!
(Rob kisses her.)

ROB: You look beautiful.

CATRINA: *(Pause.)* You too. I mean handsome. I brought the list. *(She hands it to him.)*

ROB: Don't you think you can stray from the list for the prom?

CATRINA: No, because if I stray, I could get into a straying habit. I can't stray, Robbie. I told you that. You know I think I love you. I hope I'm not going to have gas.

ROB: What?

CATRINA: I can't stray from the list because it becomes a habit.

ROB: No, I . . . I — the other thing. I do too.

CATRINA: You have gas too?

ROB: No. I love you.

CATRINA: Oh, I thought you meant the gas thing. Oh my stars! I'm glad it's the other thing. Though it would be nice to not have gas alone. OK. So. Good. So we'll be late.

ROB: Did you hear me?

CATRINA: Sure. We've got to meet up with Page and Harry in front of the fountain at five-oh-four. *(Beat.)* Don't look that way. So . . . you call me every day at college but only once a day and we are not committed to each other unless we keep wanting to be. And e-mails are permitted as long as they are no longer than six sentences long. Now, stick that flowery thing on me and let's go have fun.

ROB: *(To audience.)* I never said the love you thing before to anyone in my whole life, minus my mother. And father and grandmother. And my sister Peggy when she had this wart removed. I relish the day that Catrina comes to visit my new college cafeteria this fall. We have both pears and apples in our vending machines. No figs yet, but there's always hope.

CATRINA: *(On the phone.)* OK, you won't believe this, Yum Yum. I'm putting on the swimsuit — it's this total . . . OK, I met this guy, Stewart, through this girl, Lee, who works at the aquarium and I talked to some big guy with a mustache and told him my lifelong dream is to go to the moon and swim with dolphins and maybe make friends with a gorilla and be a movie star. So, in exactly two minutes, I'm swimming with a dolphin! *(Talking to someone else.)* Get the bathing cap going. Smack it up! Do you want to talk to the dolphin?

ROB: That's fantastic! That's great — oh, before swimming off to paradise — “complimentary flavors of the day”?

CATRINA: Chocolate and potato chips?

ROB: Somewhat complimentary.

CATRINA: Tea and pretzels?

ROB: Umm, not-sure category.

CATRINA: Are you kidding? Tea goes with everything. So do pretzels.

ROB: Catrina N. Armstrong and Robert Yum Yum Dumpling?

CATRINA: Definitely complimentary. X in super to the moon complimentary.

ROB: *(Defiantly.)* In pen!

CATRINA: *(Beat.)* OK. Purple ink.

FAÇADE FACE-OFF

Nearly six months ago, Alexander, a Russian immigrant and a sculptor, moved from New York City to Seattle and bought a condo in Inez's building. The very organized Inez, an administrative assistant at a prestigious firm, is president of the condo association and a commanding force there. For the last few months, Inez and Alexander have been at each other's throats. At the monthly association meetings, the other residents hear how Alexander keeps Inez up at night with his music and his women. Alexander laughs it off, telling everyone she is too strict. Alexander is not happy with Inez, either. First, she is preventing him from building a new window that would give him a fabulous view of Alki Beach and, second,, she called the pound on his barking dog, Little Chekhov. Several of the other condo owners are now threatening to throw both of them out. Alexander and Inez have each responded to the other with a memo. In this scene, Inez confronts Alexander.

CHARACTERS

Inez: early 30s, the condo president

Alexander: 30s, a Russian painter

SETTING

Alexander's condo

TIME

The present

INEZ: *(Furious, but maintaining her cool.)* I received your memo about my abilities, Mr. Kurchov.

ALEXANDER: I got your memo about throwing me out, Ms. Busybody, and I don't like.

INEZ: You didn't like it? Well, I didn't exactly like being called a crazy lady either.