

Fat Pig

Written by Neil Labute

COMEDY/DRAMA

Characters: TOM (*Late 20s to early 30s, he is a stereotypical man for his age group*)

HELEN (*A quite heavy, though self-confident librarian, Tom's girlfriend*)

TOM and HELEN sit on a picnic blanket by the beach. A work party is thriving off in the distance...

HELEN: Ummm, weird vibe here. Tom. Are you sure that you're ...

TOM: What? Of course.

(Beat.)

It's all set and everything.

HELEN: That's not really the same as just saying yes.

TOM: Jesus, fine ... yes. Better? *(Beat.)* Food looks good.

Thanks for going down there...

HELEN: Figured we should grab some before it was gone...

TOM: Sorry, I should've -

HELEN: No, it felt nice, to walk through the surf like that. Fun.

TOM: Good. Glad you could make it ...

HELEN: It wasn't that far.

TOM: No, I'm ... I meant, switch days or whatever.

HELEN: I know. Kidding. *(Beat.)* Are you?

TOM: Sure, of course. Why?

HELEN: I'm ... nothing. Let's eat.

TOM: No, Helen. What?

HELEN: Same ol' stuff. Doesn't matter.

TOM: Of course it does. Of course ... tell me.

HELEN: Look where we're at. I mean, Tom, it's ... forget it.

(Holds up a hot dog.) Ketchup?

TOM: This isn't ... Helen, I just wanted to get us near the dunes here, so we'd have a little protection from the wind.

HELEN: Tom ...

TOM: I'm serious!

HELEN: But we haven't ... we didn't hardly talk to

TOM: I introduced you to people...

HELEN: In the parking lot! As you and I were unloading stuff out of the car. That's not an introduction.

TOM: Shit. I knew this would happen!

HELEN: You knew it would happen because you know who you are, Tom. I don't think you're ready for this.

TOM: Come on, I don't wanna ... Just eat something, all right? We shouldn't fight.

HELEN: It's not fighting, Tom. When you and I talk, that's not fighting. It's talking. That's what people do.

TOM: Whatever.

HELEN: *Tom ... what's going on?*

TOM: Nothing.

HELEN: I told you ... weeks ago I said to you that you needed to be honest. More than anything else.

TOM: I know. I know that ...

HELEN: But you're ... this isn't-

TOM: Helen, come on, stop now! Shit ... this is my company picnic, okay? We're supposed to be having some fun.

HELEN: "Fun." Okay . . . *(She slowly stands.)* Let's go join in the big game.

HELEN jumps up and down a few times, miming a few shots as TOM Watches. He looks over to where his friends are.

HELEN: Come on, Tom! It's fun!!

TOM: Stop it! Stop!! *(Grabs her.)* Helen, please stop that.

HELEN: Fine. Then let's chat, okay? *(She sits again.)* Because it's pretty damn hard to sit out here with a smile plastered on my face...

TOM: All right.

They sit in silence for a moment. Then Helen reaches over and grabs a Ball Park frank. She starts to eat.

HELEN: I can't help it. I eat when I get stressed out ...

TOM: It's fine. Me, too. Sorta.

TOM sits and watches HELEN eat. She slowly devours a hot dog. Bit by bit.

TOM: ... Come on, slow down a little bit, honey ...

HELEN: Right. Okay ... *(Beat.)* Tom, you are aware that I like you. You already know that.

TOM: Yes.

HELEN: But I get the feeling ... I mean, it is now pretty obvious that there are some problems here. Issues, or

whatever. And we need to get over them or ... well, you know. Things that I don't wanna think about.

TOM: I guess.

HELEN: Please, you need to stay in this. Focused on it, so don't drift off or anything. I love you so much, I really do, Tom. Feel a connection with you that I haven't allowed myself to dream of, let alone be a part of, in so long. Maybe ever. But I can't be with you if you're feeling something other than that same thing that I am ... completely and utterly open to that other person. I don't know what to say here, Tom ... I'm worried sick. Look at me ... when did you ever see me not eat a hot dog that was placed in front of me? Huh? *(Tries to chuckle.)* I know you hate those jokes, sorry, but I'm ... Tom, tell me about it. I know you're thinking something, so we might as well just ... one more thing. Just this. And I've never said this to anyone, not any other person in the world. Ever. My parents or a... no one. I would change for you. I would. I don't mean Slim-Fast or that one diet that the guy on TV did ... with the sandwiches from Subway. That guy ...

TOM: Helen ... that ... that's not ...

HELEN: I'll do something radical to myself if you want me to. Like be stapled or have some surgery or whatever it takes-one of those rings because I do not want this to end. I'm willing to do that, because of what you mean to me. The kind of, just, ecstasy that you've brought me. So... I just wanted you to know that.

TOM sits there, taking it all in. Looking off. She nudges him with an elbow.

HELEN: This would be an excellent time to say something sweet to me. If you at all care about my feelings.

TOM: I know I'm... *(Beat)* Helen, that was such a nice thing to offer.

HELEN: Oh-my-God...

TOM: What?

HELEN: I just ... the way you worded that right then, in the past tense. It scared me.

TOM: No, I just it is. Really. And I appreciate it so much.

HELEN: But what?

(Beat)

TOM: *(Tries to smile)* Look, Helen ... I've been thinking ...

HELEN: Okay.

TOM: I think you are an amazing woman, I honestly do. And I really love what we have here. Our times together ... but I think that maybe, you know, some time would be good here, or if you were to, I'm not sure ... maybe take that job. It might tell us if we're ... I dunno ...

HELEN: Tom.. Stop talking. Don't do this okay? Please don't, we can.. I dunno -

TOM: - I'm just not gonna be able to do this, on like, a daily basis. *(Starts to cry.)* God ... look at me! It's ... I'm sorry about this and I wish that I was saying what you wanna hear. I do. That would make me really happy, to please another person right now. I mean, a person that I'm feeling this ... love for. Yeah, *love*. But sometimes it just isn't enough. You know? All this love inside and it's not nearly enough to get around the shit that people *beave* at you...! feel like I'm drowning in it--shit-and I don't think I can... I don't wanna fight it anymore. I am

just not strong enough for that, so I'm gonna lie on my back for a while and float. See if I can keep my head above the surface. (*Beat.*) I guess that's what I needed to say to you. That I'm not brave. I'm not. I know you want me to be ... always believed that I can be, but I'm a weak and fearful person, Helen, and I'm not gonna get any better. Not any time soon, at least ...

They sit quietly, not touching. Tom is still tearful.

HELEN: But that's ... it's something we could work on, right ... can't we, Tom? Right?

TOM: ... No. I don't think I can.

HELEN begins to cry. TOM continues to cry as well. Big, rolling tears as they both stare out to sea.