

And then I was in the Shark's Mouth

by Megan Tabaque

Characters

LINDSEY, 20-40/F

A woman bitten almost in two

DIVER, 20-40s,/M

A faceless father in a 1940s diving suit

GREGORY, Any age/M

A dolphin

Setting

The dark bottom of the ocean

Time

Forever

SCENE 1:

*DIVER, stands rooted in the ocean floor
LINDSEY is lying down, her side bloodied.
Their first meeting :*

LINDSEY

And THEN
I was in the sharks mouth.

DIVER

Ouch.

LINDSEY

And inside the sharks mouth were my kidneys
then my small intestine
then my *latissimus dorsi*

DIVER

I've never had *latissimus dorsi*--

LINDSEY

But I didn't die in the shark's mouth.
I died right here with you.
I died from the drowning.
Not from the biting.

It makes me wonder if all those statistics you hear about shark attacks are true.
Like, it's not 100 deaths from biting.
It's 100 deaths from sinking and not breathing for a long long time after.
Subsequent to the nosh.

DIVER

Look at my watch.

DIVER plus a pocket watch up out of the ocean floor.

LINDSEY

Is it late?

DIVER

It is.
By five minutes.

LINDSEY

10 already?
Oh.

Oh no.
The fireworks will be starting too.
Malcolm will be so disappointed to watch them alone.
I wonder what the colors will be.

DIVER

I like golden.

LINDSEY

Does it become difficult to tell time down here?

GREGORY enters carrying a bag of Chinese food. He delivers it to DIVER.

DIVER

I mark the days by the delivery of my mushu.
Thank you, Gregory.

GREGORY salutes DIVER and exits.

*DIVER opens the Chinese food bag and prepares to eat. Meticulous.
He lifts his chopsticks, but then, smacks his diving helmet.
It echoes, like a gong.*

DIVER

I always forget my helmet is not removable.

LINDSEY

Forever?

DIVER

Forever in barnacles.

LINDSEY

Forever in blue jeans.

DIVER

Forever underwater.

LINDSEY

Forever. Is that where we are now?

DIVER

That's one thing to call it.

LINDSEY

Oh dear.

PAUSE

LINDSEY

Do you mind if I make a pancake?

DIVER

Not one bit.

*LINDSEY makes a mushu pancake and then places it in her bloody side.
The shadow of a whale crosses over head. The tide shifts. Time moves.*

SCENE 2

DIVER

I never liked sponges.
In fact, I hate sponges.
Masquerading as fluffy rocks when really
they are creatures who might want something from me.

So many creatures wanting so many things.

The going price for sponges when I started was tin cans.
But I was desperate and so was Kostas, so I joined his diving business on the docks.
At first it was only buyers like Scotch Brite and Clorox, but later
Our neighbors ordered batches to turn into dioramas and Christmas ornaments for southern
tourists.

And later it was less and less
And less and less
And less and less wanters-of-sponges.
But more and more
and more and more sponges we'd have to collect to make ends meet.

I know sponges don't have eyes, but when I'm diving for them
I swear they're staring at me
A million desperate pores boring into my soul.

Did you know that if you cut a sponge in half it will continue to grow?
And then if you cut those two
Then four
and on and on.

Lights rise to reveal an endless sea of sponges covering the ocean floor behind DIVER.

DIVER

They are relentless.

My son Nikos must have grandchildren by now.
Grown grandchildren even.
And they must have...

Pause

DIVER

Can ghosts have babies?
Do you want ghost children, Lindsey?

LINDSEY

I didn't think so.

DIVER

Oh.

Pause

LINDSEY

But if we could
Then I would for you.

DIVER

Want to try?

LINDSEY

Your suit is—

DIVER

Touch my helmet.

*LINDSEY drags herself up off the ocean floor.
She touches DIVERS helmet, a soft caress. Like she's holding his real cheek.
They gaze at each other.
A few moments.
And then the sponges begin to vibrate.
The sponges rise up, growing, into shelves and shelves, taller and taller, a jungle.
They glow with pockets of neon pinks and purples.
A chord rises, like a choir of mermaids and sea creatures singing under water.
LINDSEY and DIVER stay locked in their gaze, her hand still on his cheek.
They are buried in sponges.
They disappear in the sponge jungle.*

END OF PLAY