

“(W)hole”

By Tracy Shaffer

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303-300-2210 or www.paragontheatre.org**



Photo by E. Tyler Photography

Part nine

The following morning. Canvas is covered with a sheet. The buzzer sounds. Ames comes in from the bathroom wearing the kimono. Crosses to the door, pushes the button, opens the door wide returns to the bathroom, sound of water running. Carla enters.

CARLA

Hello? Hello?

Looks around, crosses to the easel and lifts sheet. Water stops, Ames enters, Carla drops the sheet.

Oops, I broke the rules.

Oh god—.What are you doing here?
AMES

Were you expecting someone?
CARLA

No I— Are we on for today?
AMES

I was “in the neighborhood.” I called, did you get my message?
CARLA

Ames freezes.
AMES

No.
CARLA

The painting looks good.
AMES

It’s not—
CARLA

I have a proposition for you.
AMES

Listen, I’m about to run out the door—
CARLA

You’re still in your kimono.
AMES

Yes— and I— you should—
CARLA

Looks great on you.
Beat.
I knew it would.
AMES

I’ll call you tomorrow.
CARLA

I’m leaving town.

AMES

The following week then—

CARLA

Looks like you're all moved in Ames, that's good. I mean now that you and—

AMES

Are you angry with me?

CARLA

You want my life Ames, we can trade. I mean you're married aren't you?

AMES

Yes.

CARLA

And there are rules. *(Beat.)* My boyfriend's married.

AMES

I didn't know you had a boyfriend.

CARLA

You don't know everything about me Ames, that's rule number one.

AMES

Why don't we talk when you get back?

CARLA

I want to commission the painting.

AMES

No.

CARLA

How much do want?

AMES

No.

CARLA

I've got this boyfriend now who's loaded—

AMES

And married?

CARLA

Yeah.

AMES

It's not for sale.

CARLA

Bullshit Ames, everything's for sale. How much do you want for the painting?

AMES

No.

CARLA

How much do you *need*?

AMES

If you pay me you will own me.

CARLA

And now?

AMES

I pay you.

CARLA

Were paying. Now you can't pay your power bill.

Beat.

I want to own an original *Ames*, but I don't want you. I want what you are with *me*.

AMES

You really have to go.

Carla opens her bag & takes out a wad of cash.

CARLA

I'm going to give you a fat down payment—

AMES

No.

Holding out a roll of bills.

CARLA

And I promise not to peek until we're through.

Ames crosses to the door and opens it for Carla's exit. Hart enters with two cups and a bag of pastries.

HART

I think they gave me decaf—

Beat.

CARLA

Well, well, well, if it ain't the morning weatherman. And what brings you out on this partly cloudy with a chance of thundershowers morning? All scruffy and everything?

HART

I brought Ames a check.

CARLA

Oh and you brought coffee, how sweet.

HART

I bought a painting.

CARLA

Interesting.

Looks at Ames who looks away.

Didn't you wear that shirt yesterday? I think you did. You wore that when you dropped off Sage. That's funny 'cause you never do that.

Beat.

Oh Ames, I think you broke the rules.

Ames quickly slips on her shoes and exits, wearing only the kimono.

CARLA

I'll send you a check.

From off.

AMES

No!

Beat. Carla lights a cigarette.

HART

Why do you always start fires?

Cooly.

CARLA

Because I'm an incendiary device.

HART

What are you doing?

Smoking. CARLA

Carla, you sent the woman out in tears. HART

She was in a kimono. (*Beat.*) I didn't know you were here, honest. CARLA

You are not the center of the universe, Carla— HART

And you know that drives me fuckin' nuts. CARLA

How do you sleep at night? HART

In a king-sized bed. You? CARLA
Puts the cigarette out.
I'm leaving tomorrow; I need to know if you'll take Sage for the weekend.

Oh, I will take Sage, you can count on that. HART

Maybe Ames can help you out, ya know? Drop her off at school in the mornings. CARLA

Drop it. HART

Ames is married you know. CARLA

I know. HART

I'm surprised she'd even fuck you. CARLA

She wasn't a 'fuck'. It was one night. We— HART

CARLA

That's all we had too; one night, and then another and another. All those magical nights with the candles lit or the lights left on, remember?

Beat.

And then ...nothing.

HART

And then you told me to meet you at The Barking Bitch— Walked into the bar and there you were, drinking a Guinness and nursing a baby. My baby.

CARLA

I told you, though.

HART

A year later Carla, it was almost a year. And I showed up. You walked out and I showed up.

CARLA

I didn't know I was pregnant when I left.

HART

You would have left anyway.

CARLA

You said you didn't love me.

HART

I said I wasn't ready.

CARLA

And now, are you ready now?

HART

Leave it alone.

CARLA

I need to know, are you ready now?

Beat.

CARLA

Does she cry when she's with you?

HART

Ames?

CARLA

Sage. Sometimes I'll go into her room at night and she'll be sitting in the dark, crying. Her eyes are open, but she doesn't see me.

HART

She's dreaming.

CARLA

You can never trust a dream. *(Beat.)* She wants a family.

HART

She's got a family.

CARLA

A real family; all of us together—

HART

We tried that Carla, didn't work.

CARLA

Because you turned the fucking lights out.

Beat.

Anyway, I have a new boyfriend.

No reaction.

Did I tell you that? We're leaving for Miami in the morning.

Beat.

Why don't you love me?

HART

I'll pick her up in the morning.

CARLA

Why can't you just love me?

HART

I'll pick her up in the morning.

He exits. Carla crosses to the easel and sits on Ames' stool. Twirls. She lifts the sheet and looks the canvas for a long time. She puts her foot up on the easel's tray, picks up a palette knife and begins a slow spiraling slice along her ankle as Lights shift..