

Orange Crush

Written by

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CHARACTERS

Woman #1 - A woman

Woman #2 - Another woman

Todd - A waiter of the mystical variety

Characters should reflect the racial/ethnic make up of the city.

TIME

Now

PLACE

Hipster restaurant in Brooklyn.

AT RISE: WOMAN #1 sits alone at a table for two. She is smartly but casually dressed and looks sexy and intelligent but also the slightest bit nervous. TODD, a waiter, enters with menus and a water pitcher. He is one of those waiters who notices everything and is surprised by nothing.

TODD

Good evening, my name is Todd.
I'll be taking care of you this evening. Will you be dining alone?

WOMAN #1

Someone...well...actually...so/

TODD

Yup, well, that's great. Would you like to begin with a drink?

WOMAN #1

Vodka martini. Stoli. Don't even think about Absolut. Two olives, one green, one black, the former organic, the latter genetically modified. And make sure they're both impaled on one of those sassy little saber toothpicks.

TODD

Very good, Madam.

WOMAN #1

Could you also expound upon the text? Nothing fancy, just some ironic commentary to fill in those awkward pauses when the playwright is unable to advance the plot through action.

TODD

My pleasure, Madam.

WOMAN #1

Could you also employ a variety of headgear?

TODD

I'd be delighted. Would you like your drink now?

WOMAN #1

No!

TODD

(Breezy, unfazed)

Excellent.

(TODD exits then re-enters wearing a tiara and carrying can of AquaNet.

WOMAN #1 pays him no mind. **TODD** sprays her hair in a flamboyant and acrobat manner, stops,, yells "Flip!". **WOMAN #1** bends, flips her hair over, **TODD** sprays the back and underside of her hair. **TODD** yells "Up!", **WOMAN #1** flips her hair back up and returns to normal as if nothing happened. **TODD** exits. **WOMAN #2** enters.)

WOMAN #2

(Tentative)

Hi.

WOMAN #1

(Slightly startled)

Oh--I wasn't--

WOMAN #2

What?

WOMAN #1

No--nothing--

WOMAN #2

(Overlapping with "nothing")

What--wait--did you--?

WOMAN #1

(Overlapping with "you")

Really. It's--

WOMAN #2

Nothing?

WOMAN #1

(Overlapping with "nothing")

Nothing.

(Beat. **Woman #2** is still standing)

WOMAN #1 (CONT'D)

(Flustered)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Sit down. Will you?

(Nervous coughing, fidgeting and quick glances at one another as the two settle in)

So.

WOMAN #2

So.

WOMAN #1 AND WOMAN #2

(Simultaneously)

Well, I--

(Simultaneously, again)

You go--

WOMAN #2

No, please. You go first--

WOMAN #1

Please--

WOMAN #2

(Overlapping with "please")

I insist.

(Beat. Awkward silence ensues. **TODD** enters wearing a beret.)

TODD

Are you ladies ready?

WOMAN #1

Um...I think we'll start with a metaphor to illuminate the arc of the relationship. Any recommendations?

TODD

Well, we've got the gritty, pulsing rhythms of the city, hmmm...looks like David Simon's got that pretty much covered. There's the never-ending cycle of death and rebirth...That's a bit too *Lion King* for you two.

(MORE)

TODD (CONT'D)

Oh, I know, we got a lovely
Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale
of Earthquake Severity in *just* this
afternoon. The 1956 revision.
Veeeeeery nice!

WOMAN #1 AND WOMAN #2

(Simultaneously impressed)

Ooooooooooooooooooooo, Mercalli!!!!

TODD

The Mercalli it is then!

*(TODD takes off beret,
dons lab glasses, white
lab coat and hard hat.
He pulls out pointer--old
school not laser--and a
flip chart with Roman
numerals I through X
printed on it. During
this and all subsequent
readings of the Mercalli
scale **WOMAN #1** and **WOMAN
#2** should freeze and
there should be a
lighting shift)*

When describing Earthquake
intensity, we have, in ascending
order: "Level I: Not felt."

WOMAN #1

I'm glad you could come.

WOMAN #2

Are you? Because/

WOMAN #1

What?

WOMAN #2

Well, you've obviously been...busy.

TODD

Level II: Felt by persons at rest,
on upper floors or by those
favorably placed.

WOMAN #1

Yes. Well--

WOMAN #2

I've been having a hard time--What
I mean is--You've been very hard to
get a hold of/

WOMAN #1

I've been/

WOMAN #2

Busy?

WOMAN #1

Yes.

(Beat)

Busy.

WOMAN #2

I've left messages. You must not
have--i suppose you didn't get them--

WOMAN #1

No, if I had/

WOMAN #2

You would have called.

(beat)

Right.

WOMAN #1

Of course.

TODD

Level III. Felt indoors. Hanging
objects swing. Vibrations like the
passing of light trucks occur. May
not be recognized as an earthquake.

WOMAN #2

Yes. Of course.

WOMAN #1

*(Bracing with a long
inhale)*

Look. I need to--we--need to talk/

WOMAN #2

I knew it!!!

WOMAN #1

What?!

WOMAN #2

I *knew* something was up when you asked me to meet you for dinner.

WOMAN #1

What's wrong with dinner?

WOMAN #2

Nothing! NOTHING is wrong with dinner. Nothing is wrong with lunch! They're all perfectly lovely meals. Or a movie! Movies are EXTRAORDINARY!! But we haven't had *dinner* or *lunch* or a *movie* in weeks! And for some mysterious reason you never seem to get my messages!

TODD

This is followed by Level IV: Hanging objects swing; vibrations like the passing of heavy trucks occur, sensations like the jolt of a heavy ball striking the walls; standing cars rock; windows, dishes, doors rattle; glasses clink; crockery clashes, wooden walls and frames creak.

TODD exits

WOMAN #1

I told you. I've been busy.

WOMAN #2

You've been avoiding me!

WOMAN #1

I have *NOT* been avoiding you!

WOMAN #2

What about last week?

WOMAN #1

Last week?

WOMAN #2

Hah! You don't even remember! Do you know how hard it is to get tickets to *Hamilton*?!!!

WOMAN #1

Oh God, I'm sorry. I forgot. I had this thing at work--

WOMAN #2
 Thing?!!! What *thing*?!!!!
 (*WOMAN #1 begins to explain but WOMAN #2 waves her explanation away in disgust. Return to an angry, sullen silence. Then-*)
 I didn't go.

WOMAN #1
 Where?

WOMAN #2
 To *Hamilton*!

WOMAN #1
 Oh.

WOMAN #2
 I gave the tickets to my trainer.

WOMAN #1
 Well, I'm sure she/

WOMAN #2
 I went for a walk instead. Through the village. Saw some of our old...haunts. You know, places we like to go to/

WOMAN #1
 Oh--

WOMAN #2
 It was a beautiful night. Too beautiful to spend in some dark theater. I went down to the river. Over to Christopher. Past that new Bengali place on Sixth.
 (*Pointedly*)
 You know the place, right?

TODD enters wearing tiny top hat

TODD
 An earthquake of Level V intensity is felt outdoors; direction estimated; sleepers are wakened; liquids are disturbed, some spilled; small unstable objects are displaced or upset, doors swing, close, open;
 (MORE)

TODD (CONT'D)
shutters, pictures move, pendulum
clocks stop, start, change rate.

TODD exits

WOMAN #1
No, I don't think I know that
place/

WOMAN #2
You must! I'm sure you were the one
who told me about it...the place with
the Vegan tandoori.

(Beat)
I could have sworn I saw you there.
But I guess if you say you don't
know the place--

*(The silence has reached
critical mass)*
Whoever it was sure looked an awful
lot like you. Same hair. Same nose.
Same red cashmere v-neck sweater,
just like the one I got you last
year for Christmas--

WOMAN #1
Hanukkah--

WOMAN #2
(Quick and bitter)
Whatever.
*(Beat. WOMAN #1 begins to
speak as if to explain,
but WOMAN #2 cuts her
off)*

This woman. She could have been
your long-lost twin. She was having
dinner with--well, this other
woman. She was--she was really
quite lovely. High cheekbones,
gorgeous skin--the kind an ant
would skid on. Absolutely beautiful
skin. And she was laughing and
laughing--

*(WOMAN #1 cannot meet
WOMAN #2's eyes. Beat.
The jig is up. Suddenly,
sharply)*
How could you?!!!!!!

WOMAN #1
It's not--

WOMAN #2

Oh for God's sake, at least don't lie to me! You owe me that much.

WOMAN #1

You're right. I'm sorry.

WOMAN #2

How long--?

WOMAN #1

(Struggling)

It hasn't been--don't want you to think--we haven't--done/

WOMAN #2

What?!! Haven't DONE anything?!! Is that supposed to make me *feel* better?!!!!!!

WOMAN #1

No, I didn't mean-

WOMAN #2

Are you afraid to say it? Because I'm not. Not anymore! It's over. ISN'T IT?!!! That's what you came to tell me?!!!!!!

TODD enters wearing a toy fireman's hat.

TODD

Level VI. Felt by all; many are frightened and run outdoors; persons walk unsteadily; windows, dishes, glassware break; knickknacks, books, etc. fall off shelves, pictures off walls, furniture moves or overturns; weak plaster and masonry crack; small bells ring; trees, bushes shake visibly, or are heard to rustle.

(On "bushes" WOMAN #1 and WOMAN #2 both look, quizzically, down at their crotches and then back at TODD, then back to their freeze frames)

TODD exits.

WOMAN #1

I didn't mean for it to work out this way, really I--

WOMAN #2

You didn't?!!! Then say it to my face. Say it, goddammit. Say what you really want!

WOMAN #1

ALL RIGHT! All right! I'm sorry. But...I want out! I don't want you to be my imaginary friend. Not anymore.

(WOMAN #2 bursts into sobs, buries face in hands.)

It's over! There! Are you happy? I said it.

WOMAN #2

So. Just like that huh? All those years

(Snaps fingers)

Gone.

WOMAN #1

It's the way it has to be.

WOMAN #2

Not for me! I never wanted this. I **wanted** to make this work!

(WOMAN #1 reaches across the table to touch WOMAN #2's hand, imploring.

WOMAN #2 pulls violently away.)

DON'T YOU TOUCH ME!! I don't even know who you are anymore.

WOMAN #1

I'm still the same person. But I've grown. Grown up. We've grown. Grown apart.

WOMAN #2

Well you won't get any argument from me on that one. But whose fault is that? Huh? I'm not the one who stopped trying. I kept giving and giving. But you? You just starting phoning it in.

WOMAN #1

It was a Fischer Price phone for God's sake. It didn't even really work. That's not fair/

WOMAN #2

You're a fine one to talk about not working! Who's always been there for you, huh? Me!! That's who!!! Who was there in Junior High when that gang of disabled kids roughed you up?

WOMAN #1

You were/

WOMAN #2

Me!! Who was there when no one invited you to the Junior Varsity Chess Club mixer, huh? That ring a bell for you? Huh?! And what about that college jeopardy tournament? Remember that? No? Well, let me refresh your memory. Alex Trebek tried to jam his tongue down your throat! Him and that damn

(Sputtering)

--mustache of his!

(Indicating Trebek's mustache with some sort of wild, obscene gesture)

That oughta bring back some sweet memories, huh?!!!! And when you wouldn't let him get to third base he made sure you got all the hard questions! Remember that? What percentage of the earth's crust that is composed of Potassium? Huh? HUH!???

WOMAN #1

I don't/

WOMAN #2

2.59%--that's how much. I remember! What is the boiling point of tin? WHAT IS IT?!

WOMAN #1

I/

WOMAN #2

2690 degrees Celcius! I remember that too!!! What is the only pure breed dog named after a fictional character?

WOMAN #1

I/

WOMAN #2

The Dandie Dinmont Terrier.

*(Banging on table with
each "fucking" to
emphasize her point)*

The Dandie fucking Dinmont fucking
Terrier!!That's who!! But you've
forgotten about all that, haven't
you?!

WOMAN #1

Of course I haven't. But that was
years ago. Don't you think it's
time we both moved on?

WOMAN #2

Moved on?!! I've built my whole
life around you. You're my world.

(Imploring)

LITERALLY!!!!!!

(Beat)

As in, I-actually-know-what-that-
word-means-and-how-to-use-it--
LITERALLY!!!

(Trying to calm herself)

Look. We're a team. I need you just
as much as you need me. Remember
how it used to be? The good times?
Skipping through the gum drop
forest? Nibbling on the branches of
the licorice trees? Drinking from
the Orange Crush River? You're
never going to have that with
anyone else again. Never.

WOMAN #1

I don't WANT to have that with
anyone else! I'm 32 years old. I go
up for tenure next month. At
Columbia! I drive a mini-Cooper for
crissake--A MINI COOPER! I am
TOTALLY woke about...well, whatever
people are supposed to be woke
about right now!!

WOMAN #2

OK, I may be imaginary but even I
know there's not one damn way in
which you, my dear, are woke.

WOMAN #1

Fine. Whatever. But I have a condo, two Persian cats and a 401 K for crissake. I'm all grown up! I want a girlfriend. Someone alive, in the flesh. Is that a crime?

WOMAN #2 breaks down into a crumple of tears. **WOMAN #1** tries--awkwardly--to console her.

WOMAN #2

(Desperately)

What do you WANT from me?

WOMAN #1

(Tenderly but very specifically)

Corporeal form.

Continuous integument.

Endoskeleton.

(beat))

I want a carbon-based life form.

WOMAN #2

It's all about appearances with you, isn't it?

WOMAN #1

But you don't have ANY appearance!

WOMAN #2

You just can't let go of that, can you? You just gotta keep bringing it up and bringing it up. Are you trying to hurt me? Here!

(Pulling open part of shirt, exposing part of her chest)

Why don't you stick a dagger through my heart? Go ahead! Here! Right here! You'll be doing me a favor.

WOMAN #1

I want love! God, why are you making me say this? I want sex. Real sex with real women.

(TODD enters. Dressed as hard hat scientist again. This is his "character" for the remainder of the play)

TODD

At Level VII you may find it difficult to stand; hanging objects quiver, furniture breaks; weak chimneys crumble at the roofline; there is the falling of plaster, loose bricks, stones, tiles, cornices; waves on ponds, water turbid with mud, small slides and caving in along sand and gravel banks, large bells ring, concrete irrigation ditches are damaged.

TODD exits

WOMAN #2

Look, I know you've been under a lot of stress lately, what with tenure and all--

WOMAN #1

Oh, no, no, no! I HATE it when you guilt trip me like that! And it's not about tenure, or about-

WOMAN #2

(Imploring)

Look, it doesn't have to be this way. I can change. I WILL change. I promise. I'll develop body mass. And shape! And form!! I promise. Integument? I can work on that. I just got the name of this great plastic surgeon over on Park. The man works miracles, honestly he does!

TODD enters

TODD

Level VIII. The steering of cars is affected; there is the partial collapse of masonry, twisting of chimneys, factory stacks, monuments, towers, elevated tanks; frame houses move on foundations if not bolted down.

TODD exits

WOMAN #2

Don't do this to me. Do you know how long it's been since I've been out there? It's a meat market.

WOMAN #1

Don't sell yourself short. There are lots of things you could do.

WOMAN #2

Name one.

WOMAN #1

Well--

(searching, then suddenly)

--mental health! There's a growth industry for you. Those folks are always looking for imaginary friends.

WOMAN #2

The patients?

WOMAN #1

My god no. I was talking about the doctors.

WOMAN #2

Well, I/

WOMAN #1

There's Hollywood!! Or theatre! Theatre people are already living in their own little fantasy worlds anyway.

WOMAN #2

True. True.

WOMAN #1

And what about government work? Witness protection program always needs fake people.

WOMAN #2

You were always so good at making me feel special.

WOMAN #1

You are special.

WOMAN #2

You're just saying that to be nice.

WOMAN #1

No! I mean it!

WOMAN #2

Can I...?

WOMAN #1
What?

WOMAN #2
No, I can't--

WOMAN #1
What?

WOMAN #2
(Sheepishly)
Can I ask you something?

WOMAN #1
You know you can ask me anything.

WOMAN #2
*(Suddenly hardening, back
to aggressive Jeopardy
questions)*
What percentage of the Danish
population is Jewish?

WOMAN #1
No! I'm NOT going to let you do
this to me!

WOMAN #2
I asked you a question.

WOMAN #1
No, I told you. It's over!

WOMAN #2
What percentage--

WOMAN #1
No!

WOMAN #2
--of the Danish population--

WOMAN #1
NO!

WOMAN #2
--is Jewish?!!!

WOMAN #1
NO!!!

WOMAN #2
What is the official language--

WOMAN #1

NO!!!!

WOMAN #2

--of Myanmar??!!!!

WOMAN #1

NO!!!!!!

TODD enters

TODD

Level IX is characterized by general panic. Masonry is heavily damaged, sometimes with complete collapse; conspicuous cracks in ground; in alleviated areas sand and mud are ejected, earthquake fountains, sand craters.

TODD exits

WOMAN #2

When were the Russian serfs emancipated? Answer me. I know you know.

WOMAN #1

No.

WOMAN #2

1861.

WOMAN #1

I won't do this. I *can't* do this!

WOMAN #2

And, your *final* question, what is the motto of The Most Ancient and Noble Order of the Thistle?

(WOMAN #2 pulls out a gun from somewhere)

I'll tell you what it is... *Nemo Me Impune Lacessit.*

(WOMAN #1 looks at her, confused and astonished)

Translation? No one provokes me with impunity.

WOMAN #1

You're crazy.

WOMAN #2
 No, I'm imaginary.
*(TODD enters, completely
 non-plussed)*

TODD
 Are you sure I can't get you ladies
 anything else?

WOMAN #2
 Yes, I'd like a bigger gun.

TODD
 Very good.
*(TODD produces MUCH, MUCH
 bigger gun, hands it to
 WOMAN #2)*
 Shall I take the smaller gun for
 you?

WOMAN #2
 Thank you, yes
(TODD takes gun, exits)

WOMAN #1
 Put that gun away.

WOMAN #2
 Not until you tell me one thing.

WOMAN #1
 What?

WOMAN #2
 What does the acronym GBH stand
 for?

WOMAN #1
 I don't know.

WOMAN #2
 You really don't know?
*(WOMAN #1 shakes her head
 "no")*
 Then I'll just have to show you.
*(WOMAN #2 lunges toward
 WOMAN #1 with the gun.
 They stop in a freeze
 frame and the lights
 shift, casting them into
 shadow. TODD comes to
 center stage in a spot.*

(MORE)

WOMAN #2 (CONT'D)
*As he speaks he strips
off the geek glasses,
hard hat, lab coat.)*

TODD

The final and most severe measure
on the Modified Mercalli Intensity
Scale of Earthquake Severity-1956
revision-is Level X: Damage nearly
total; large rock masses displaced;
lines of sight and level distorted;
objects thrown into the air.

*(TODD begins to turn to
exit, stops, returns to
spot)*

Oh, just in case you were wondering-
GBH? Grievous. Bodily. Harm.

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY