

SIDES

Shelly - 2

BILL

Or people who like to stare at artists. Nah – sometimes I’ll take the boat up the Chesapeake – just to have a look – seems like more people and the people seem like assholes. I stay down this way – still they’re coming from every direction.

SHELLY

They put up a bunch of condos down on the point and a dock full of boats – nearly yachts.

BILL

They’re not yachts.

SHELLY

They are big – not fishing boats. Anyways, people retire here now – they think they are getting away from it all, but they just bring their shit with them.

BILL

You think your shit’s not yours but where ever you go it follows you.

SHELLY

Newcomers keep voting against the school bonds, say ‘I don’t have kids, what do I care?’ I wanna go up there and wring their necks – who do they think is going to grow up and take care of them? Huh? Who do they think is going to be burglarizing them? Huh? Morons.

BILL

I vote against the school bonds.

SHELLY

Daddy!

BILL

What? What good’s it do? School’s are turning out assholes.

SHELLY

Would you stop saying that?

BILL

What?

SHELLY

You know what.

BILL

I have a right to my opinion.

SHELLY

Not your opinions – that word. I'm sick of hearing that word.

BILL

Assholes.

SHELLY

Daddy you need to stop. We do have a guest, you could try to be civilized. Fischer, would you like something to drink? We've got beer or Kool-aid – I think it's red.

DARYL/BILL -2

DARYL

Grocery store's mobbed. I just got them those fake dogs. That what she wanted right? Couldn't get into selecting vegetables this late in the day.

When did Fischer turn up?

BILL

Bout an hour ago.

DARYL

He inside?

BILL

Talking to Mai.

DARYL

Huh. What do you think he wants?

BILL

Someone to tell him he's not an asshole.

DARYL

Hah! I'm sure you obliged.

BILL

Kid just drops in after everything?

DARYL

Maybe he'll help - he's harmless.

BILL

Exactly. The worst kind. Shelly's gone and invited him to stay.

DARYL

Uh-huh.

BILL

Like he's a member of this family.

DARYL

Used to seem like that's where things were headed.

BILL

Shelly know something?

DARYL

You think Mai talks to Shelly?

BILL

Huh. Guess not. Shelly on the other hand -

DARYL

She'll tell you what she's thinking.

BILL

You think? Cause I think she's got some idea in her head about my place and she's just dancin' around it.

DARYL

Yeah?

BILL

Don't act like you're in the dark on this - got your scheming all over it.

SHELLY 1

FISCHER

Have you seen Mai?

SHELLY

She's passed out on the porch.

FISCHER

Seriously?

SHELLY

Don't worry 'bout her. That's what she does. That's what we do! Hah – not me though. I haven't slept for weeks. Weeks. And I'm not going to. I'm not. Really. Huh – no way no how – sleepin' you gotta worry. You gotta worry about something happening – long as I'm awake I'm watching. I'm watching and I know nothing's gonna happen.

FISCHER

Nothing's going to happen Shelly.

SHELLY

You don't know – anytime – poof! That's just how it is. At any time you could be stricken – something inside of you starts to go wrong – or something outside of you. Anything. Any minute.

FISCHER

Sure. But you can't do anything about it.

SHELLY

I can watch.

FISCHER

Watch everyone stumbling around here? Seems like getting some sleep isn't such a bad idea.

SHELLY

She died in the middle of the night. I was there. Right there. Right beside her the whole time. And Mai? I don't even know where she was – brooding somewhere. Or just sleeping. Letting her pass without being beside her. And dammit if momma didn't call out for her – she's losing her air – she's losing her strength you can see it draining from her and she's calling for Mai saying Mai! Mai! – over and over and over - like that's all that's in her mind and there I am - weeks of changing the bedpan, cleaning her, listening to her rattle in her throat – a rattle – every breath this trembly shaky pain - her chest collapsing in on her. Does she thank me? No. Well –

it's over now. Thank god. They don't tell you how long it takes. It takes a long time. You think you're ready then it just goes on.

BILL 1

BILL

You can't just walk away from things.

MAI

What?

BILL

I didn't raise you like that. You say you're doing something you do it.

MAI

You say that.

BILL

You have commitments. You got your work - your painting. You got that boy. You just left him? Left your work? You don't just quit. I don't care what's happening.

MAI

He told you that?

BILL

I asked him. He answered. Straight forward. More than I get from you. Just get this looking at the floor shit. Just get this no answer. I want an answer Mai. You lived with that man. That's not nothing. Never been nothing. Then you just leave him? That's no way to live Mai. That's nothing right for anybody. Not for you or the people who bother with you.

MAI

I needed to come home.

BILL

So you come home. But your shit comes with you.

MAI

I thought you wanted me here.

BILL

Sure. Sure I do. I want you here - but that doesn't mean you gotta ditch everything else.

MAI

Fischer's fine.

BILL

What choice does he have? A man's gotta take care of himself.

MAI

And he did.

BILL

Provin' he's more than I thought he was.

MAI- 1

MAI

What? I thought leaving you was the best thing I could do. I thought - I thought I'd just - move aside a minute, step out of my life. I thought I was so noble - self-sacrificing. Set you free, tend my dying mother, rescue my father - fuck. I was wrong. Okay?

FISCHER

I'm sorry.

MAI

Should be. And the worst thing is - and I know I should be happy for you but I'm not. I am not - and I don't want to say it, but your work is better. It's hard to look at but - it's so much better than what you were doing when you had me to deal with, I think I knew. I think I knew I had to leave you be. Leave you to your life.

FISCHER

Mai.

MAI

No - it's true - I didn't fit anymore. I was - I was here, anyways, in my head. It was better to just call it. I did it right. That one thing - that one thing that I didn't even know I was doing. Cause I was dumb enough to think you'd wait for me -

FISCHER

Mai - if you'd asked I would have -

MAI

And that would have deprived you of whatever you've got going on now.

FISCHER

I'm sorry. I'm sorry you found out like that. Okay? I wanted to tell you before but -

MAI

But what? You couldn't get your mouth around the words - I'm fucking my beautiful, talented teacher and she is making life easy for me?

FISCHER

She's helped me a lot.

MAI

Her idea to stop drinking?

FISCHER

Yes.

MAI

Well, it's a regular self-improvement marathon isn't it - I bet you're doing Yoga and meditation now?

FISCHER

Yes.

MAI

Great. Go. Have a wonderful life.

MAI - 2

They're happy. MAI

They should be. BILL

You just decided this? MAI

Thought about giving it to you. BILL

Just to piss off Shelly? MAI

Pretty much. BILL

I couldn't - MAI

I know. But, it would keep you here. BILL

Shelly going to kick me out? MAI

Nah - I'll put in a stipulation for you. The garage in perpetuity - BILL

That'll be legal. MAI

Sure it will. BILL

Got it almost the way I want it. Good light. MAI

Thought you were packing. Making plans. You've been on the phone this week - BILL

MAI

Spying on me?

BILL

Just noticing. Different sort of activity.

MAI

Starting a series - painting the lake at different times of day - like saturated pastel water-colors, like the Monet's waterlillies or Notredame - then I'm going to do a glowing digital time stamp on it - what time of day it was painted -

BILL

Huh.

MAI

Or not. I don't know.

FISCHER - 2

FISCHER

Sure. Of course you'd take a break.

MAI

Not a break - I just. I just haven't. Haven't even wanted to.

FISCHER

At all?

MAI

It's like I forgot. And nobody really cares. You know?

FISCHER

That's not true.

MAI

No. Not now. So, did you really give up drinking?

FISCHER

Yes. I did.

MAI

Like completely?

FISCHER

Completely. And I started this thing where I accepted any invitation from anybody.

MAI

Anything?.

FISCHER

Yup. Any invite. I said yes. And I met people, did stuff, just, went along, it was good. I moved my studio into the apartment - I started painting again and things started to click - I started getting that feeling you described - of being ten and contemplating infinity and feeling yourself plummet into a void, disappearing into it all.

I'd forgotten, that long stretch that I loved. Just getting lost in something, no matter what it is. Not second guessing yourself, just working then resting then doing it again.

FISCHER - 1

FISCHER

Look I'm sorry.

MAI

For what?

FISCHER

For thinking I could come down here and reach you Mai.

MAI

Never asked you to.

FISCHER

Course not. No. Course you didn't. You know exactly what you're doing.

MAI

And so do you.

FISCHER

You think I'd have anything if Alex hadn't helped me? If she hadn't picked me up after you left me and dusted me off and told me that I was going to be alright. If she hadn't organized the show – if - fuck it, if she hadn't gotten her patrons to buy my work and kick off the buying? I'd just be slogging through without her – I'd be toiling away hoping to get through and land a steady teaching job that'd allow me to pay off my \$80,000 student debt that's not even through piling up yet cause there's the credit cards on top of that.

MAI

You could've without her.

FISCHER

No. And you know what – it was both things. It was you leaving and her coming along. I couldn't do anything with you there. Daryl, I'm sure she's a peach to have around here, but there – everything would set her off.

MAI

You. You would set me off.

FISCHER

I was trying to make sure that you ate. That you slept. That you met deadlines.

MAI

You were trying to make my mother go away.

FISCHER

I wasn't. I wasn't Mai. I was just trying to keep you with me.

DARYL / SHELLY - 1

Time for bed.

DARYL

It is you know? Not to say.

SHELLY

Alright honey – and when you're dying – you tell me.

DARYL

I will. No secrets. I don't want any secrets.

SHELLY

Nope. All our shit'll be out in the open.

DARYL

Good.

SHELLY

Hear that! Everything wrong – blood and guts and tumors – we'll be shouting about all of it.

DARYL

Good. That's good. You think Mai's okay?

SHELLY

She's fine.

DARYL

Poor thing.

SHELLY

She's fine.

DARYL

She's all alone.

SHELLY

Not while she's here.

DARYL

You look at her. Fischer's a nice boy. She should make it right with him.

SHELLY

DARYL

You don't know what's between them.

SHELLY

She needs somebody though.

DARYL

Shell. She's fine.

SHELLY

Momma worried about her so much.

DARYL

No. You worry.

SHELLY

Course I worry. She's my sister and she's here drinking with daddy all day and what's that going to help?

Nothing.

DARYL

Come to bed?

SHELLY

In a minute.

DARYL

Want company?

SHELLY

Sure.