

IMMERSION THERAPY

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EXT. MARINA - DAY

TED, 60s, a graying professional in casual wear, holds a plastic cooler while he stands beside DAN, 40s, a comb-over nerd, and PETE, 30s, a buzz cut burn-out.

All three raise hands for the attention of ANN, 30s, a buxom butterface, whose head pirouettes about the parking lot looking for someone. Them.

All three wave their hands in the air.

DAN

Ann! Ann!

PETE

I don't think she can hear you, man. Maybe if she'd stop snapping her head back and forth she'd--

TED

Now, now, Pete. Just give her a moment.

Ann looks left and right, left then right, tip-toe looks to the right, then to the left.

PETE

Jeezus, Ann. ANN!

She FINALLY sees them and dashes forward; a toothy face of smiles, giddy ecstatic she bounces.

ANN

Hi, boys! Dr. T! I'm here! Ready for more group therapy! Sorry I'm so late! Got lost.

PETE

Have you been drinking?

ANN

Only a little wine. It helps my nerves. Where's Ian?

Before Ted can admonish her a phone rings, all four grasp for their cells.

ANN

Speak of the devil!

(to phone)

Ian! I'm here! Where are you? Yes! No! Ian, you promised! Dr. T, Dan and um...

PETE AND DAN

Pete.

ANN

Pete are here! You can't--

She hands her phone to Ted.

TED

Ian? Are you okay?

Dan, Pete, and Ann look around amid measured "ahems" and "I understands" from Ted.

Ted hands the phone back to Ann.

TED

As per our all-or-none agreement to the established group therapy guidelines today's aquaphobia desensitization trip around the bay is canceled.

PETE

Ian's an asshole.

TED

Pete, please be understanding.

PETE

I understand Ian's an asshole.

TED

Now, that's not fair. We all have our own issues, and Ian--

ANN

Is an asshole.

PETE

Well, you dated him!

Ted and Dan look to Ann, Pete's eyes deride.

ANN

Twice. How do you think I know he's an asshole, huh? Look, I moved heaven and earth at work to make it here today, I've made a lot of progress, I wanna get this done, and really don't have time for this bullshit.

Ted raises an eyebrow.

ANN

Can we just have a... rider agreement on the agreement that we go on our...

TED

Aquaphobia desensitization--

ANN

Trip around the bay, bask in our achievement, praise Dr. T, and just lie to Ian, tell him we didn't go and simply plan on another trip?

TED

Ann. Ann, that's not how this group therapy program works. Trust in our fellow group members is key to the process of overcoming our fear of water. Breaking that trust will destroy--

DAN

I'll go with you, Ann.

PETE

Me, too. With Dan. Ian's an asshole. Fuck him.

The three chuckle while Ted disapproves.

ANN

Dr. T, you can go on home. I think the three of us can wing it from here.

Dan followed by Pete stands beside her in supportive solidarity. Dan makes repeated furtive peeks down Ann's blouse.

Ted pauses, considers them and the situation, looks about the beautiful bay, the perfect weather...

TED

Screw it. This is supposed to be the last day of class, I've no more spare time than the rest of you, and the boat reservation's already been paid for. Let's go. And not a word to that asshole Ian.

The three therapy patients cheer as the smiling Dr. Ted leads them down the dock's gangplank.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

The three stand and stare at a small boat with an outboard motor. Ted steps in, puts down the cooler, and extends his open hand to Ann.

Ann pauses.

PETE

What is that, a ten footer?

TED

Twelve! C'mon. Get in.

ANN

Wow, Dr. T. You went all out, didn't ya?

TED

We're just going on a short trip about the bay. Not a three hour tour. And how much are you paying for this class?

She capitulates with a new perspective and a smile.

ANN

It's darling, Dr. T.

He smiles, Ann takes his hand to descend into the boat followed by the skeptical Dan and Pete.

EXT. OCEAN BAY - DAY

Outboard motor running like a pony, the four leave a gentle wake behind as they putt away from the marina docks.

Sunglassed Ted pilots the motor tiller from the stern with all the pride of fictitious naval generations before him.

Dan, Pete, and Ann, tucked like stuffed pigs in blankets beneath their dull orange life jackets, squint as they look about with confidence that erodes with the distance from shore.

TED

Think of our classroom training and last week's trip to the beach where nothing bad happened. Remember your breathing.

Ann makes vicious breaths in and out.

ANN

Who-who-hee-hee. Who-who-hee-hee...

TED

Ann. You're not delivering a baby.
In through your nose. Out through
your mouth. In with the good. Out
with the bad.

Ann complies. Dan twiddles his rosaries as if to start a
fire, mumbles to himself.

DAN

Nothing's gonna happen. Nothing's
gonna happen.

TED

That's right, Dan. Nothing bad *is*
going to happen. We're going to
just enjoy this beautiful day in
the bay. Pete. How're you doing up
there?

Pete's become a human statue that sweats at the brow faster
than the ocean breeze can carry it away.

TED

Pete?

PETE

I'm okay. Who-who-hee-hee.
Nothing's gonna happen. Nothing's
gonna happen.

Dan turns to his fox hole buddy.

PETE AND DAN

Nothing's gonna happen. Nothing's
gonna happen.

Ted turns the motor off and his face into the breeze.

DAN

Turn that back on!

TED

Let's just enjoy the--

DAN

Please, Dr. T. Turn the motor back
on.

TED

Dan, let's focus on one phobia at a time, please. The motor is fine.

Ted gives a deft pull to the starter cord and the motor sputters back to life.

DAN

Thank you, Jesus.

Ted turns off the engine.

TED

Jesus has nothing to do with with me pulling this cord, or the spark plug, or the fuel system, or the prop turning. The motor is as fine as this day. How about you concentrate on overcoming your fear of water, work on your breathing and relaxation techniques, and stay focused on your goal?

ANN

Oh, look at the little fish!

All others look overboard where small fish dart about the small boat.

DAN

I'm going to throw up.

ANN

Well, don't throw up in the boat!

PETE

Yeah, man. Don't chunk in the boat. Feed the fish.

TED

Speaking of which...

Ted opens the cooler and tosses out chopped fish.

From nowhere dozens of small fish blossom into hundreds of large fish.

Ted merrily tosses out more chopped fish off port and starboard, Ann giggles in delight, Pete is mesmerized by the animal display, and Dan leans way overboard to spew lunch and breakfast amid "Eww..."s.

All the fish vanish as an enormous dark shadow well over the length of the twelve foot boat races past beneath them.

All in the boat are silent. Small waves lap against the hull.

DAN

I now have another phobia

With rattled calm Ted closes the cooler and reaches for the starter pull cord.

TED

How about we call it a day, shall we? Okay, then!

Ted pulls the cord, but halfway through the boat makes a huge lurch from an impact, Ted falls overboard with the pull cord's handle in his firm grip. The loose pull cord itself zips back into the starter housing.

DAN, PETE, AND ANN

Doctor T!

Ted bobs to the surface, sputters and gasps.

TED

I'm okay. I'm okay. I'm o-OH, GOD!

As Dan, Pete, and Ann reach out for Ted the twenty foot monster shark consumes him whole.

His floating sunglasses twirl in the eddies left behind.

Moments later their collective silent shock snaps.

Ann reverts back to her who-who-hee-hee labor breathing.

Dan joins her.

Pete scrambles to the motor and removes the top cover shell.

PETE

Nothing's gonna happen. Nothing's gonna happen. Nothing's gonna happen my ass! Something bad definitely *DID* happen, Dr. T!

Water pours inside the boat from a crack in the hull.

ANN AND DAN

Who-who-hee-hee. Who-who-hee-hee...

Pete claws at assorted parts and nuts and bolts of the exposed motor.

PETE
 Something definitely *DID* happen,
 Dr. T! Something definitely *DID*
 happen, Dr. T!--

DAN
 SHUT UP, PETE, AND FIX THE GODDAMN
 MOTOR!

PETE
 I'M TRYING TO FIX THE GODDAMN
 MOTOR, DAN, BUT I NEED A GODDAMN
 SCREWDRIVER TO GET TO THE GODDAMN
 FLYWHEEL!

DAN
 WELL, I DON'T HAVE ONE!

PETE
 WELL, I DIDN'T ASK YOU FOR ONE!

ANN
 Who-who-hee-hee. Who-who-hee-hee...

Pete returns to his aggressive futile claws at the exposed motor parts. Dan joins Ann in labor breathing.

The five gallon puddle of bay water collected in the stern has grown into a fifty gallon pool.

ANN
 Phillips or flathead?

PETE
 Wha... ? Flathead.

DAN
 I'm sorry I cursed at you.

Ann holds out to Pete her car keys, a bizarre collection of a keys, charms, and talismans.

PETE
 Wha... ? Forgiven. Thank you.

Pete takes them, fumbles through the mass for a multi-tool, fiddles with a screw driver on a screw head.

PETE
 I can't get a good angle on this...

With a groan he leans forward over the open motor, his red face pinched, knuckles blanched.

DAN

I wouldn't lean over that--

Pete leans forward a wee more for leverage.

PETE

Why?! Nothing *BAD* is gonna happen!

All laugh at the gallows humor before the monster shark lunges out of the water and bites off Pete's head.

A fountain of blood spews an arc into the air as Pete's body flips backwards into the boat.

Dan and Ann are sprayed red without mercy as Pete's body twitches to a stop while they recoil into the boat's bow.

As Pete's decapitated body slips beneath the ever-growing pool of water Ann climbs to the gunwale to vomit outside the boat.

DAN

Don't--

Off the starboard bow Ann wrenches port wine.

Another hull cracking bump to the boat behind her sends Ann head over heels into the bay water.

When she resurfaces the look in her eyes says it's just as well.

DAN

Ann!

Perched atop the boat's ill-turned bow Dan reaches out to her.

DAN

Take my hand, Ann!

She makes no attempt to reciprocate, then plops beneath the waves with confidence like a small fishing float and line tied to a brick.

DAN

ANN!!

Beneath Dan the boat has all but sunk away.

MOMENTS LATER

Dan wears Ted's sunglasses, clutches the floating cooler, and dog paddles amid the gentle waves of the bay toward the nearest shore.

DAN

Nothing's gonna happen.
Who-who-hee-hee. Nothing's gonna
happen. Who-who-hee-hee...

Beneath the beautiful sky above, behind him the open ocean spans wide.

FADE OUT: