

waiting for me

by Trace Turner
March, 2016

Setting: An aquarium.

Time: The present.

Characters

Don.....mid/late twenties. A professional photographer in the city. He's a
real artist but also does some "mainstream" work to pay the bills.

Peter.....mid/late twenties. A grad student. Majoring in Comparative
Literature and Art History.

Open on a circular room of an aquarium with one bench in the center. A blue light dances on the floor from the light of the aquarium tanks. PETER and DON, both in their mid/late twenties walk into the room from the up center entrance. Peter walks without much spring in his step and Don walks in excitedly looking at all the fish. Peter is holding a small figurine of an octopus.

DON

Wow! Look at this one.

Beat.

PETER

Yeah it's great, I guess.

DON

The tank is so big it stretches around the whole room; isn't that so cool?

Don walks over to the glass and looks around. Peter hangs back watching him.

DON

I mean there's so much blue, it's exciting isn't it?

PETER

I think we came in the wrong way.

DON

And the fish are so many colors too! Tropical fish are just so pretty and I don't think they realize that.

PETER

We came in through the gift shop first. That doesn't happen.

DON

Of course they realize the other fish are beautiful because like mating displays or whatever but I don't think they know how beautiful they are as a whole.

PETER

Don, why did we walk the wrong way?!

Don sighs and turns to look at Peter.

DON

This is my favorite room and I knew a shortcut through the gift shop. Why is it such a big deal?

PETER

Because! It's just not the normal way to do things. Remember I've never been here before.

Peter sits down on the bench. Don walks towards him.

DON

Look Peter, I just want to show you the best first. I love this place and I know you'll love it too.

Peter takes a beat staring at his feet. He exhales and looks up at Don.

PETER

OK. So I'm finally at the aquarium. *(Half-heartily)* Yay!

DON

(Laughs) ok well look there are so many different kinds of fish in this tank—

PETER

—including us.

DON

What?

PETER

Oh, nothing. I was just thinking I feel like we're in a fish bowl *with* these fish. Dropped in here to interact for other people just to watch us for no particular reason.

DON

...That's crazy. Can we just focus on the fish?

PETER

That's going to be hard. *(beat)* Don, why did you bring me here?

DON

Well, we always said we wanted to go.

PETER

Yes "said". Past tense. Look, I'm glad that I'm here but it's weird to have your new ex-boyfriend take you to the aquarium. So, why did we come here?

DON

I just thought it would be nice. This place is nice and calming.

PETER

It's weird when no one else is here. It's almost like there's an air of suspense in these tanks. Like the fish are just waiting for a signal to start fighting tooth and nail to the death.

DON

Wow.

PETER

Don I really appreciate the gesture but honestly I think it would just be better if I went home.

Peter stands up from the bench and starts to make his way to the exit.

DON

So that's it, huh? I'm out of your life just like that?

PETER

What?

DON

You just decide that's it and I'm gone. Poof! It's all better. Is that how you think this works, Peter?

PETER

I'm not an idiot, Don. I know how much time this is going to take.

DON

Really?

PETER

Okay, fine! I have absolutely no idea how long it's going to take me to get over you. We dated for *two years*. Will it take me two years to get over you or will it take even longer?

Peter begins pacing

I don't know when I'll be able to look at you again without my stomach curling in on itself. I am afraid of you now. Afraid of what you might say to me or what look you might shoot my way. You don't realize it but you have a direct path to the center of my heart. I am so scared by you and how easily you could break me at any second.

Peter stops pacing and walks to the tank.

It's like when they introduced the normal fish to the shark tank and the sharks didn't immediately attack them; but that fear of attack, of any kind of out lash is still ever present.