

CHARACTERS (2 female, 1 male)

Woman, 30's-40's; A pediatric oncology nurse, ethnicity open, "other"; fierce, funny, facile

Jason, 30's-40's; An actor, self-loving

Chorus, A young girl from another time; willful, wise

PLACE

The theatre we're in.

TIME

This night.

"Once there was a lion.
He ate everybody up.
He ate himself up."

*By Bart, a pre-schooler making up a
story based on a Rorschach inkblot.*

ACT ONE

The theatre. House lights up, audience seated, waiting, reading their programs.

The stage is set simply: a classical, inviting bed-- slept in. A bedside table, a chair draped with a shawl from another time.

Lights flicker; flash of lightning, and a WOMAN enters the theatre. She is dressed in surgical scrubs and carries an umbrella. She's also carrying a takeout container. Crash of thunder.

WOMAN

(shaking out her umbrella)

Wet out there!

She makes her way down the aisle.

I'm sorry. Bus was late. It hasn't started, good. My sitter called. She had a break-down or a break-up or broke something. There's no telling-- everything with her is huge, tragic, epic. But I really needed a night out, a night off, so I told her, I said Honey, I'm sorry you're upset but I just bought a ticket to a play so you need to get your shit together. No kidding. I don't even know what I'm seeing but I'm not going home until it's over.

Lighting flash.

Thousand and one, thousand and two, thousand and three--

Crash of thunder.

That one was close!

She pauses before some audience member; looks at them, smiles. Looks at her ticket. Looks at them. Waits for them to realize their error. Finally:

WOMAN (cont'd)

Are you in the wrong seat? Did you read the number carefully? No, don't feel stupid, people do that all the time.

(beat)

But can you move?

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)
(gesturing to the audience)
You're kind of holding things up.

The PATRON reads their ticket or shows it to her or simply shakes their head.

Are you sure?

Maybe WOMAN calls the USHER over to clarify-- sure enough, the PATRON is correct and Woman's seat is elsewhere. The USHER points in some vague direction.

Which-- this section? Here? Down? Over?

WOMAN still can't find her seat, the ticket stub isn't matching up with any numbers on the chairs. She addresses a different PATRON.

What seat number are you in? Can I see your ticket?

USHER shakes his/her head "no". Woman's cell phone rings.

I'm sorry, I need to take this.
(on phone)

Sweetie, I can't talk right now. Because I'm busy. I'm with friends.

(gesturing at audience "what do I do?")

We're at a play. A play. At the theatre?

I don't know, sweetie, I just got here.

Yes, I'll be home soon. Not that soon. No, after you're already asleep.

Honey you need to go to bed before that.

(mouthing "sorry" to the audience as she turns her back to them, softly)

Why are you scared? Nothing bad is going to happen to you.

Because I know. Because I'm your mother, I know everything.

I can't honey. Because there are people here.

(she waves at the audience)

You don't know them. No, I don't know them. Yes, they're very nice. Why don't you get Cuddle Bunny and--

Alright. Just two and then you *have to go to sleep.*

Ready?

Why do bees have sticky hair?

(waits a beat)

Because they use honeycombs.

Why do cows wear bells?

Because their horns don't work.

Yes they think it's very funny now go to sleep.

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

No more questions. I love you. Yes. I don't know.
Hang up now. Hang up.

(puts phone away)

It's my night to have her. I should be there, but. You know, sometimes you just need time away. Cool your heels, keep the sanity. Of course they want you all the time. They don't want your rationale, they don't want your money, they want you, 24/7. It's been one of those days.

(indicating her scrubs)

This? Pediatric Oncology. New job. I know, what was I thinking? Hey, a girl's gotta work. Anyway, the hospital's not too far from my apartment, so. But the kiddos. All day I'm with these sick sick kids and their stunned parents. Usually I go straight home and nurse a fat drink, but not tonight. Tonight is about theatre!

She resumes the search for her seat.

Sorry, don't get up. I guess I'm one more row. I am so sorry. I hate people who are late to the theatre. It's just rude. You know? "I got here on time, why can't she manage to get it together?" Right? That's what you're thinking. And then the latecomer tries to act invisible, like if they don't make eye contact no one will see how late they are. So annoying. Or they suddenly become *important*-- "just in a meeting with the secretary of state"-- with this self-conscious *smirk*. *Thank you for gracing us with your worldly presence, sit the hell down.*

She makes her way down the house, checking her ticket, all the way onto the stage.

What a nice-looking bunch.

(singling out someone)

Look at you. Is that a new shirt? Go back and buy ten more of those. Really, a good-looking bunch. Well fed, too.

(singles out someone)

Did you eat someplace nice before you got here?

What did you have?

(in response)

That sounds good. Doesn't that sound good? That sounds good. Did you have a drinky-poo? Yeah, right. Hey I'm not here to judge. No really, every play is better after a drink.

Damn, I love the theatre! Don't you? Don't you love going to the theatre? Getting all dressed up.

(notices a casually-dressed patron)

Well, getting *dressed*. Maybe going out to eat. Arriving, finding your very own seat behind the "Ripley's Believe It Or Not"-sized person located directly in front of you. Those cookies they sell at intermission, love those. The whole shared communal experience, it's so quaint! I don't know about you but I spend way too much time plugged in.

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

That's what is so fantastic about theatre, it's people-powered. It's story-telling around the campfire, without the smoke and dirt and bugs. We're all surrounded by darkness, let's talk about what scares us, what cracks us up. What makes us feel ashamed. What makes us fall in love. You know? It's all here, sometimes all at once, in your face, on the stage, the bared soul of our shared humanity. Full-frontal, no apologies, right?

House lights dim. She's excited.

Oh, it's time for it to start!

She looks around, then screw-it-all she sits in the chair on stage.

What are we seeing tonight?

She looks at a program. Crash of thunder.

Are you fucking kidding me?!

She abruptly stands up.

No way am I going to watch that! What an awful, awful story. And what a sick bunch of bastards you are for wanting to see it-- paying to see it.

(to a patron)

Do you know what happens? Do you? It does not end well my friend. No, do yourself a fat favor and go! All of you, go! I'm not kidding, forget the ridiculous amount of money you just paid and get out. *What is wrong with you people?* Bunch of metropolitan barbarians.

(she looks around in astonishment)

Oh I get it. You think you have to stay, right? You think that by subjecting yourself to this bloody horror show you will be elevated to the ranks of the cultural elite because-- wait-- because watching spousal betrayal, homicide, and child-murder play out *on the stage* is more noble than reality t.v.? Is that what you mean?

No, I get it, I get it. That's *television for godssake*. This is "the theatre". So you show up here in your nice clothes--

(to the earlier referred casual patron)

Except for Ellie Mae-Clampet over here-- and you sit there and you *judge*. You judge every one of these characters, but especially you judge *her* because what she did was *unfathomable*. Beyond redemption. Mind-bogglingly wrong.

Oh. I think I know. Why you're here.

Not because you think the ending will be different-- but that you will be different. That you are different. Somehow.

You would never ever do what *she* did

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

Well you just go on and think that. We *all* want to think that. But then something happens. Something bad. And what you think you would do gets decided by everybody but you.

Her cell phone rings.

Excuse me, I need to take this.

She walks upstage for privacy.

Sweetie? What's wrong?

(looking at Audience)

Yes, they're still here.

I told you there's nothing to be afraid of.

Honey, I can't talk to you about that right now. Not now.

(a firm whisper)

You have to stop asking me that.

(changing to a lighter tone)

How's Cuddle Bunny? Well where did you look? He's there somewhere, he's hiding. I'll find him as soon as I get home. Soon. No honey.

(to Audience)

Sorry.

(into phone)

Now listen to Mommy. I can't call you for a while, okay?

No, you can't call me either. For a while.

Okay, but you have to promise *promise* you'll close your eyes and go to sleep right after. Promise?

(singing softly upstage)

Hush little darling don't say a word
Momma's going to buy you a mockingbird
If that Mockingbird don't sing
Momma's going to buy you a diamond ring
If that diamond ring don't shine
Momma's going to make you a...valentine.

'night 'night. Love you. Don't call. 'Night.

She hangs up and turns to the Audience.

I'm kinda at my wits end. All the questions, it never stops.

Wears you down, you know? I had to get away from her.

That sounds awful doesn't it?

I love my kid and everything, god I swear I do, but I felt like I was going to, I don't know, shatter like a wall of glass.

(big)

Oooo what a wretch am I!

O how miserable in my sorrows.

Ah ah, how I wish I could die!

O accursed children of a hateful mother,
may you perish with your father and the whole house collapse
in ruin!

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

(resorting back to life size)

Yeah, I took Women's Studies. I drank the Greek mythology Kool-aid, all those blood and thunder tragedies. Hells bells, I was in drama club in high school. I was Medea, I know all about it! I was good, too.

Cunning Medea, blood relation to a god, inheritor of powers of black magic. With her charms and ointments and her dark knowledge, love-struck, deceives her father, kills her brother, and follows Jason. Rock-star Jason, father of her children, deceiver. He behaves badly, she behaves worse, and everyone just stands by and watches in horror. Kind of like this.

*Her phone rings. It rings and rings.
She looks at it, doesn't answer.*

It's terrible, I know-- may a flash of lightning pierce my head! But it's not *murder*.

CHORUS calls from OFFSTAGE.

CHORUS

MISTRESS!

CHORUS enters; maybe there is some confusion, some discomfort on both sides.

CHORUS (cont'd)

Mistress--? I beg you come sit. The air will do you favor.

WOMAN

Sweetie, it will take more than air to make me better.

CHORUS

You're sad.

WOMAN

I'm not sad.

CHORUS

We think you are.

WOMAN

No, I'm tired and in the *wrong seat*, so I'll just--

CHORUS

A god has cast you into a hopeless sea of troubles.

WOMAN

Yeah, this was a mistake.

WOMAN gathers her things.

CHORUS

We are your friends, we want you to unburden your spirit!

WOMAN

I don't-- This isn't--

(to Audience)

Look I didn't mean to get in the way of your theatre-going experience.

CHORUS persists, singing the following with a simple, lilting urgency.

CHORUS

(singing)

Hear our words and the sound of our voice.

WOMAN

Really, no thank you.

CHORUS

(singing)

Drop your anger, unburden your burning spirit.

You are wrong to hold onto this weight of madness.

WOMAN

I'm not going to talk to you.
Please, just go do your play
and leave me out of it.

CHORUS (cont'd)

Poor fool, what a
dreadful longing,
you'll hasten your
death.

CHORUS (cont'd)

(singing)

Why do it?

Don't pray for this ending.

WOMAN

I'm done talking, no one listens anyway!
Oh what profit any longer for me in life? Ah, ah! may I find
my rest in death and leave behind my hateful life.

(to Chorus)

Is that it, is that what you want to hear? Her little pity-party speech?

(to Audience)

Poor Medea wanted an end to her personal pain, yeah don't we all, so what? She was a monster.

CHORUS

I have seen your savage glance, your dagger eyes.
May it be your enemies, not loved ones that feel your wrath.

WOMAN

Say whatever you want, darling. You don't know. You do not know.

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)
(to Audience)
Good-night everyone.

*WOMAN steps offstage, then immediately
steps back onstage.*

WOMAN (cont'd)
Why not? Why wouldn't she want to see her husband and his
wretched bride, the whole freaking palace-- destroyed with a
wrecking ball? Crushed into glass splinters. After what he
did to her? Shit, I wish to god I were half that ferocious!

*She makes a huge ferocious noise;
CHORUS, distressed, runs offstage.*

Don't misunderstand, I'm not saying it was right, what she
did. But it was comprehensible, her fury, that's all I'm
saying. You get stuck in it, that kind of toxic hate. But
that's no excuse, not for anything. I'm just saying, you
know. I mean, my husband left me for someone else and yeah,
okay it hurt. Thought I was going to die. A separation he
called it. I call it dating while you're still married. But
hey I'm not bitter.

That spiteful speech, when she's trying to justify?

"Women of Corinth. Women of Athens, of Greece. Do not condemn
me. There is no justice in human eyesight. You can take one
look at a man and hate him before you know his heart, before
he has done anything. My case is the opposite. My husband, I
made him everything to me-- only to wake up to see that he is
the worst of men." She thinks she's the victim, but she was
far from helpless. The things she did even before, you know,
the thing. "I obliterated my family, abandoned myself, and
now I have been rewarded by desertion and outrage. Left with
two young boys, but without a city or a home by my husband!"
You see she just wants to be right. And it's making her
insane. *I am not doing that*. I am not Medea.

Anyway.

Enjoy the show. Eat a cookie at intermission for me.

She starts to exit, stops.

I just want to say one thing and that is this: I am not an
easy person. I was raised on red pepper and blood. But you
know, there's a dark, dark underbelly in all of us, even the
easy ones-- they just don't show it. Doesn't mean it's not
there. The things you do when no one's watching. The places
your mind goes. You know what I'm talking about.

I'm wired tight. I've got some judgment, some anger issues.
My husband, before he skipped out, would tease me saying how
high maintenance I was.

At least I know it.

But you didn't come here tonight to hear about my life.

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

And I sure as hell didn't come to tell you about it. So.
Good-night.

Her cell phone rings.

O dear god, I know what she wants to ask me, it's the same question over and over! I can't tell her. I can't go home. I don't know what to do.

Finally she picks up her phone and looks at the number.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Oh.

(into phone)

Hi.

(to audience, covering phone)

Just a sec.

(into phone)

Just some people I met. Wow, she actually lets you call me, like I'm human? Gee, I kind of liked being a monster, made me feel special.

You have him? She's been looking all over for him.

Well what do you think, yeah she's upset.

Whatever you want to do, I know that's how you roll.

Fine. Okay. Bye.

(to Audience)

My ex. By the way, all of you, turn your damn phones off!
It's disruptive. Don't disrespect the theatre.

A moment, then she tells Audience the following.

She was young, the "other woman". She still had her powers, oh yeah, the gods were smiling on her. Me, I had two kids and a temper. The gods up there just laughing and laughing. Tell me how am I supposed to compete with that?

I did things, said things. Stupid. Should have kept my mouth shut but misery's gotta have lots of attention. That's what got me in trouble.

She fondles the beautiful shawl on the chair.

This is nice. Very Medea.

An ill-fitting mother, tossed aside like an old blouse, yesterday's fashion! The ache in her heart of an uprooted foreigner. She was *other* and a woman. The burn. I feel you.

(a beat)

You can't deny there's something fantastic about the things Medea did.

She drapes the shawl around her shoulders.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Because of her Jason.
The passion.
The passion.

She finds a delicate but dangerous-looking arrow-belt.

Oooh, look at this belt.

She wraps it around her waist and cinches it snugly.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Does this make my ass look big?
(She's into it)

Yeah, we're on strange soil now.
(to Audience)

Have any of you ever contemplated matricide? No, not killing your mattress. Your spouse. For money, for revenge? For one night's sound sleep.

Am I the only one?

(to a female Patron)

Spill it sister. How would you do it? Oh come on, let's have some fun! What about fire? Douse the love-birds in their honeymoon suite as they lay dreaming and watch them burn in hell? Skewer them, like shish-kabobs, *touché!*

A sharp sword through their vitals while they spoon?

Delicious.

She picks up a small vial from the bedside table.

Or the direct route: poison. Why not? Hey, it was good enough for Pelias.

Is this how men feel plotting their wars? The remove, the calculation. The glee?

Let's stop right here.

Why couldn't she have fallen for *Orpheus*? He was like Bono for cornsake! He sailed on that same stupid ship with Jason into stormy Colchis, sweetly playing his lyre. Gentling all those sweaty men, the sea itself.

The lilting sound of a lyre.

But do we fall for the one's who play the lyre? Nooooo.
Spoiler alert: *the gods always have a plan.* That's all the myth you need to know.

A dramatic chord conjures several notes of music; WOMAN captures one of the notes. She tries to listen to it, but it disintegrates like sand.

Oh. Someone will clean that up, right?
(a beat)

Mine was a Jason. My husband-- ex. I mean literally, his name was Jason. He looked like a Jason. He didn't exactly do heroic things, like pulling an imaginary rope tied to a mountain.

JASON enters pulling an imaginary rope.

God I love when men do heroic things. It's so rare.

She watches him strain.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Jason, Jason. Jason the Beautiful. Jason the Two-headed Goat. Eyes lazy and lazier at once. Lips like you want to pluck and suck on. Heaven and poison, honey and salt in the desert. We've all had our Jasons, haven't we?

He stops his impressive hauling and wipes his brow.

The world in your hands, women at your feet. Young women, older women.

JASON

Beautiful woman. Goddess.

WOMAN

Women who know better.

JASON

Do you have any water?

She holds out an umbrella and it rains.

JASON (cont'd)

...to drink?

WOMAN

I...no.

Crash of Thunder.

WOMAN (cont'd)

(to Audience)

Do you remember-- any of you, the precise moment you fell in love? Startling, expansive, strangling love? The kind that hurts and heals and haunts you like a starved spirit. Like you won't survive it. Have you ever known that kind of love? I don't think you have or you wouldn't be alive today.

She takes a cloth cover off a birdcage, which holds a yellow bird. The bird sings vigorously. She gently cups the bird in her hands. It is now red.

WOMAN (cont'd)

(coming on to Jason)

Do you believe birds are beautiful?

JASON

I never really think about it.

WOMAN

I am a bird. As spirited and fragile and zealous and gentle.

She sets the bird in his hands.

JASON

I could crush it right now.

She takes back the bird-- it has turned yellow again.

JASON (cont'd)

How did you do that?

WOMAN

(to Audience)

Everything you do is magic in that wide open window of love.

JASON

Can you do other stuff, like thunder and lightning?

WOMAN

I wasn't a goddess, he made me one.

JASON

Be kind to me.

WOMAN

I gave him the power to do that.

JASON

Please?

I really like your smile.

(MORE)

JASON (cont'd)
Your loveliness surely means you excel in gentle courtesy.
Help me?

He traces her face, her neck.

I was hoping your father would just sort of *give me* the Golden Fleece...

(cupping her face)
God your eyes are an unholy gorgeous green.

WOMAN turns to the audience.

WOMAN
(to Audience)
Why wouldn't she want that? Who could blame anyone for falling hard on that? The guys I settled for because I was lonely or bored or hungry? Then you find one that fills you, fills the room...and your guard drops as fast as your I.Q.

They gaze at one another.

WOMAN (cont'd)
Life. Death. Love. War. The stars. Music. Madness. Infinity. Soup. Pebbles. Saliva. Eyelashes. Breath.

JASON
What else do you like about me?

WOMAN
Just everything.

JASON
God you're amazing.

She kisses him hard, her body ravaging his. They tumble onto the bed, onto the floor, writhing, clawing.

JASON (cont'd)
Do you know how amazing you are?

WOMAN.
(to Audience)
I fell in love with his desire.

They go at it some more. They finally pull apart. WOMAN composes herself.

JASON
Yeah, no, so. Your father says I'll have to do these, um, feats and then he'll hand the fleece over but, I mean it's some crazy shit, you know? I don't know if it's worth it.

WOMAN

My Jason did things, nice things. Renovated the bathroom.

JASON

Yoke two bronze-hoofed, fire-breathing bulls and plow his field? Who does that?

WOMAN

Found my missing cat-- she'd been gone a week.

JASON

Then he wants me to somehow cast the teeth of a dragon like seed into the furrows, and a crop of armed men will spring up and try to kill me. I mean, I respect your father but *what the hell?*

WOMAN

Held my legs when I gave birth.

JASON

I don't know. I don't know.

(running his hand through his exceptional hair)

People are expecting me to do this. A lot of people. Everything, it's bad right now.

WOMAN

His need. That was a big turn-on too.

JASON

My wicked cousin, Pelias, took my father's kingdom from him, left us with nothing.

WOMAN

It's exciting, the power you feel when they *need* you.

JASON

I am the rightful heir, but Pelias sent me to bring the Golden Fleece back to our kingdom to prove my worth. "Go upon this quest and I swear with Zeus as witness that I will give up the kingdom and the sovereign rule to you." I don't even know if I believe him, you know? What am I doing?

WOMAN

I was the well. I wanted to quench him.

JASON

What if I die? That's what everyone will remember: that I failed. That Jason was a failure, nothing more.

WOMAN retrieves the vial from the bedside table and holds it up for him to see.

JASON (cont'd)
What's that? What is that?

She removes the lid and sniffs.

WOMAN
(to Audience)
Mmm, Body Shop, cucumber melon.

She very deliberately pours some of the lotion into her hand. She warms it in her palms, then kneels before him and beginning with his feet, rubs it onto his body. This can take some time.

JASON
Wow. That yeah, that feels...that's...

WOMAN
It's magic.

JASON
Yes it is. You are. Come here.

She continues the task at hand, as it were.

WOMAN
Who ever has this on his body will be safe.

JASON
You can do that-?

WOMAN
Your weapons, too.

JASON
My-- really?

WOMAN
For a day you will be invincible.

JASON
And then?

She rises, mapping her hands along the length of his body until she reaches his face. She puts a finger to his mouth.

JASON (cont'd)
Why are you doing this for me?

WOMAN

(to Audience)

Normally, you go around life, you don't think about your heart beating.

JASON

You get it, don't you? You get me.

WOMAN

But I could feel it in my chest. The power.

JASON

God I want you.

He kisses her, deep and slow, like he is trying to find something inside of her. He eases her down onto the bed or the floor and lays on top of her; there is no time but them and maybe they don't even exist. He fondles her arrow belt.

JASON (cont'd)

I like this. This arrow belt. How do you get it off?

Woman's cell phone rings.

WOMAN

Can you..?

("answer that")

He looks at the strange square, buzzing thing. He doesn't trust it. He doesn't trust the audience. JASON exits. WOMAN answers her phone.

WOMAN (cont'd)

You again?

(suddenly agitated)

What? Why? No, no, don't bring Cuddle Bunny to the house tonight. Because it's-- the sitter, Katie, she's new, she's paranoid. You might scare her. I'm at the theatre. The theatre? Yes, I'm seeing a play, Christ doesn't anyone go see plays anymore? Why don't you bring him here? Just, it's easier. It's around the corner from your apartment, your *girlfriend's apartment*, whatever. Just bring Cuddle Bunny to the theatre.

Bye.

(she hangs up)

The more the merrier, right?

(she turns the ringer off)

What?

(glancing around at Audience)

Which of you geniuses has figured it out?

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)
(pointing at patrons)
Not you? Not you? Really?
There is no sitter at home. Surprise.
Just my little girl. Yeah, I lied. I left her there alone.
Fucked up, right? Yeah, well all of you can think whatever
you want to think, but until you've been in my shoes--

*JASON enters with the golden fleece
draped over his shoulders.*

JASON
Did you see that? I did it!

WOMAN
(putting him off, finishing her thought)
Until you've been in my orthopedic Dansko nursing shoes--

JASON
That was, I don't think anyone's ever done that!

WOMAN
You don't know shit.

JASON
I won back the golden fleece!

WOMAN
Why should I try to defend myself? You're going to judge me
anyway.

JASON
Your father didn't think I could do it. But I did, I did it.

WOMAN
You're like everyone else. No matter what I say--

JASON
God that felt good! Something about you makes me feel--

WOMAN
You already have an opinion about it. About what happened.
Just like with her.

JASON
Sail with me to Corinth, through Scylla and Charybdis. Help
me defeat Talus and deliver the fleece to Pelias. Be my
queen. I need you.

WOMAN
(to Jason)
You don't know yourself.

*She notices that her yellow bird is no
longer moving.*

She reaches into the cage, carefully scooping the lifeless bird into her palm.

JASON

Maybe I held it too tight? Ha, big stupid hands.

She places the bird on an open handkerchief, then folds the handkerchief tightly around it. She wordlessly moves her mouth and traces her fingers over the dead creature's form, then releases the handkerchief--producing a handful of flowers or sapphires or something lovely.

JASON (cont'd)

How do you do that?

WOMAN

(to Audience)

The power. The passion.

JASON

Never by night and never by day will I forget you.
Medea. Nothing except death will ever come between us.

WOMAN

You don't know.

He tenderly lays her on the bed and kisses her. JASON exits.

(re: the bed)

Not as comfortable as you'd think.

I have trouble sleeping. Honestly, I never was a good sleeper, but ever since the, you know, the incident. Accident.

Anyway. I know the names of a lot of fish, you'd be surprised how many different kinds of fish there are. When I can't sleep, I go down my fish list. It's very therapeutic.

She closes her eyes and ritualistically begins to recite the names of fish.

Sardine

Haddock

Pike

Salmon

Sturgeon

It keeps your mind from thinking about other things.

Sole

Things that keep you up. Things you can't do anything about.

Skate

Mackerel

Perch

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

I'm not kidding, you should try this at home tonight.

Smelt

Squid

Sailfish

Flying Fish

Ocean pout

Amberjack

Gilthead

Jason and I were separated when it happened. The accident.

Not yet divorced.

Croaker

Weever

Maybe we would have worked it out, I don't know.

Wall-eye

I think if I had-- maybe if we had talked more or something.

But he wasn't really into talking to begin with. The

girlfriend thing didn't help.

Cutthroat eel

Fly-speckled Hardy Head

That's a good one.

Frogmouth Catfish

Featherfin

Carp

I am guilty of one thing. Of *confiding in him*.

Perch

I already did that one.

It was, I admit, a stupid thing to say. Maybe a little vindictive. Maybe I was trying to get his goat. But it wasn't some vengeful threat, some Medea moment!

Nothing like that.

I was tired, I didn't know what I was saying. It was stupid, nothing more. I only said that there were days where, you know, I could see how someone could murder their own kid.

Under extreme circumstances. Sleep deprivation, depression, boredom, loneliness. You know, *motherhood* on certain days?

That's what I said.

Wimple

Wolf fish

Marlin

Moray

Mudsucker

Monkfish

Raise your hand if you're asleep.

Bluegill

Black Bass

Brown Trout

Bullhead

Flounder

It was a moment of bitterness, that's all. Just an angry aside, which I told to him in confidence. Stupid. I was feeling overwhelmed, you know. Taking care of my girls and working, trying to make it all happen by myself while he was off... And he knew it! He knew I was just spouting. But he had to go and say something to the authorities anyway.

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

Bigeye Chub

White Crappie

Probably to get back at me. For the things I said about his ugly girlfriend.

Cowshark

Goatfish

Spotted Sucker

Loup

(laughing)

That one always makes me laugh, I don't know why.

Sprat

Did I do sprat?

They held it against me, what I said. The authorities. Child Protective Services. Evidence of my "barbaric nature". Put me through hell.

Barracuda

Sand Shark

Seatoad

Because what I'd already been through wasn't hell enough.

Devil Ray

Dogfish

Loach

(pause)

I used to do the fish list with both my girls, when I was trying to get them to settle down and go to sleep. We'd get near the end, whatever I could remember, and--

(in a mommy voice)

"Sssh, here it comes, last one. Don't scare away the Angelfish"...

(a beat)

Sometimes I wonder.

Did I make it happen? Did I curse myself?