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*Dramatic Publishing*





# Feeding the Moonfish

Drama by  
Barbara Wiechmann

# Feeding the Moonfish

**Drama. By Barbara Wiechmann.** *Cast: 1m., 1w., extras.* On the edge of a saltwater lake in Florida, Martin, a young man, slips away each night to talk to the fish that feed at the end of a dock. Always believing himself to be completely alone in his secret ritual, he is surprised and angry to find one night that he has been spied on by a curious and obsessive teenage girl, Eden, who has hidden herself in his car to see where he goes. As Eden confronts Martin, dark secrets from the past are unearthed, and the unlikely pair of strangers come to understand they are bound together through similar experiences of loneliness and tragedy. Will their new bond be transformative and redemptive, or will it be their undoing? *Feeding the Moonfish* draws on the influence of natural forces, the significance of memory and the power of human connection to weave a ghostly and surreal tale of loneliness, violence and a young man's fear of himself. *Single set. Approximate running time: 45 minutes. Code: FC6.*

Cover photo: kmity/Bigstock  
Cover design: Susan Carle

ISBN 10: 1-58342-754-6  
ISBN 13: 978-1-58342-754-5



9 781583 427545 >

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**Dramatic Publishing**  
311 Washington St.  
Woodstock, IL 60098  
phone: 800-448-7469  
815-338-7170



Printed on recycled paper

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# FEEDING THE MOONFISH

By  
BARBARA WIECHMANN



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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(FEEDING THE MOONFISH)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-754-5

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*Feeding the Moonfish* was first performed at the Nat Horne Theatre, New York City, as part of the About Face Theatre Company's Julyfest, July 1988. Directed by Tony Kelly; set design by Diane Forbes; costume design by Tricia Sarnataro; light design by Dan Kelley; sound design by Tony Kelly; stage managed by Rona Bern; with the following cast:

EDEN: Mary B. Ward

MARTIN: Christopher Rath

*Feeding the Moonfish* has had numerous subsequent productions at amateur and professional theatres, colleges, universities and high schools around the country.

# FEEDING THE MOONFISH

## CHARACTERS

EDEN . . . . . a sixteen-year-old girl

MARTIN. . . . . a young man

PLACE: A saltwater lake in Florida.

TIME: The present.



# FEEDING THE MOONFISH

AT RISE: *Darkness. We hear two or three long whistles and then a series of overlapping voices.*

VOICES. Martin. Martin. Martin. What are you thinking about now, Martin? Did you have a long night at work? Are you tired? What are you thinking about now, Martin? We're so happy you're home.

MARTIN. Can I see him? I want to see him.

VOICES. Talk to us first. Close your eyes first.

MARTIN. I'll close them for you.

VOICES. Tell us we're beautiful.

MARTIN. I want to see him first.

VOICES. Talk to us first. Tell us your dream. Tell us we're beautiful.

MARTIN. You're beautiful. You're so beautiful.

VOICES. He'll be here soon, Martin. He'll be here soon.

MARTIN. I'm dreaming about flying in planes. I want to fly so bad that as soon as I hit the mattress, whammo, some stewardess is strapping me in. Get it? Soon as my head hits the pillow I'm taxiing down some runway. I'm taking off into the blue sky so deep you could just tumble into it and never fall; just float around. I'm up there in blue heaven. Movies, brunettes, cocktail almonds, the whole bit, the life. One long cool glass of

water...flying, zooming through all that space, all that blue distance, all that space, all that distance. I want to leave here. I want to leave this place.

VOICES. Where are you?

MARTIN. Home.

VOICES. What surrounds you?

MARTIN. Trees. The dark.

VOICES. The air.

MARTIN. The air.

VOICES. What's it like?

MARTIN. Hot. Heavy.

VOICES. Hard to breathe.

MARTIN. Bring him to me.

VOICES. Cool yourself. Put your hand in the water.

MARTIN. Cool myself.

VOICES. Put your hand in the water. Cover yourself.

MARTIN. Cover myself.

VOICES. Reach farther. Put your face to the water.

MARTIN. Bring him to me.

VOICES. Face to the water. We'll show him to you.

MARTIN. If I put my face to the water, I can see pieces of him, like white ivory, and pieces of him tangled in the coral like gardens. I can feel back of my neck...currents like wind.

VOICES & MARTIN. Now it is night. We will walk to the end of the pier and watch the moonfish feed. Because it is night. And peering deep into wells of bottle blackness. We will see them.

*(EDEN enters from behind MARTIN on the dock.)*

EDEN. Who are you talking to? (*MARTIN freezes.*) Who are you talking to?

MARTIN. How long have you been standing there?

EDEN. Not long.

MARTIN. You shouldn't spy on people.

EDEN. I wasn't spying. I just woke up and I heard you.

MARTIN. How long you been standing there?

EDEN. I told you.

MARTIN. Where'd you come from?

EDEN. Your car.

MARTIN. You were in my car?

EDEN. I stowed away. I been sleeping under that sleeping bag you got all balled up there in the bag.

MARTIN. You were in my car.

EDEN. Ever since you left the restaurant.

MARTIN. All that time.

EDEN. Yep.

MARTIN. Under the sleeping bag.

EDEN. I told you. Jesus.

MARTIN. Why?

EDEN. I wanted to see where you go when you leave work. I mean, you sweat to death side by side of someone in the kitchen of a Big Sizzler restaurant, a hundred an' eighty fuckin' degrees in the middle of fuckin' Florida for days on end, an' they never speak a word to you, never pass the time of day, never basically even look at you, an' you get curious—you know?

MARTIN. I talk to you.

EDEN. You know what I mean.

MARTIN. You want me to look at you. That's so pathetic. You waitresses are all alike.

EDEN. I'm not a waitress. I'm a sandwich maker.

MARTIN. Whatever. You just want to be told how beautiful you are over and over.

EDEN. That's not it.

MARTIN. So go home. (*She doesn't move.*) Go home.

EDEN. I can't now. This is practically wilderness to me. I don't know how you got here—I was asleep. Anyway I ain't walking in the middle of this swamp an' I ain't hitchin' neither. There are goddamn maniacs in this state. I could get harassed or raped or chopped up or worse.

MARTIN. What's worse than getting chopped up?

EDEN. What's so bad about me staying here awhile. Don't you wanna talk?

MARTIN. I got nothing to say right now.

EDEN. Talk to me. Tell me who you were talking to.

MARTIN. Listen—I wasn't talking to nobody. It's not your place to ask. You know what I mean?

EDEN. It's goddamn creepy here, you know? You like comin' here an' spookin' yourself? I don't think it's safe. Whole place is just rotting away; dock's practically falling into the water. You're gonna fall in too if you keep leaning over that way. (*Pause.*) So what's so fascinatin' down there anyway? What are you lookin' at? Look at all them fish; they're so huge, God. What are they?

MARTIN. Moonfish.

EDEN. Bullshitter. They ain't called that.

MARTIN. They are.

EDEN. There ain't no kind of fish called moonfish.

MARTIN. Whatever.

EDEN. How do you know they're called that?

MARTIN. Dunno.

EDEN. Did you read it? Did you read it in an encyclopedia or somethin'; did you look it up?

MARTIN. Jesus. Yeah, I guess. A long time ago.

EDEN. They're really called that. You ain't kiddin' me?

MARTIN. No. *(Pause.)* It's no big deal what they're called.

EDEN. Oh. They look like big moons with lips. It's nice you got that spotlight shinin' on 'em an' all. What are they doing sucking off the dock like that?

MARTIN. Eating. They feed at night. They come out an' feed off the dock when the moon shines.

EDEN. How can they fucking even see the moon through all that water?

MARTIN. Don't be stupid. They don't see it, they feel it.

EDEN. I ain't stupid.

MARTIN. Natural things are moved by forces, see. Like the moon. The moon's got a force, an' it pulls an' pulls at the insides of these fish an' locks 'em into a way of behaving—one single way of being. They got no minds of their own anymore. Once the moon's got 'em they're helpless beyond all control. All they got is moon minds. Stupid fish.

EDEN. Where are you going?

MARTIN. I'm just getting up off my stomach.

EDEN. Don't go. Don't leave me here.

MARTIN. What?

EDEN. Talk to me.

MARTIN. I been talking to you. Don't you have somewhere to go?

EDEN. What do you think moves people?

MARTIN. Don't you have somewhere to go—'cause I'll take you there.

EDEN. You think human beings' guts are pulled inside out all over the place by forces?

MARTIN. Come on—your mom's probably shitting tombstones somewhere worrying about you.

EDEN. My mom's up north.

MARTIN. Well your dad then.

EDEN. Don't have a dad. My mom killed him.

MARTIN. Right.

EDEN. That's why she's up north now. In Sing Sing.

MARTIN. Your mom's in prison?

EDEN. My mom's in Sing Sing. My grandma'd be there too 'cept she's too sick. They thought she'd croak or something so they got her under twenty-four-hour surveillance in a nursing home.

MARTIN. They wanted to put your grandma behind bars?

EDEN. Sure. She was an accomplice to my dad's murder. She helped my mom kill him.

MARTIN. She did?

EDEN. Yeah.

MARTIN. How?

EDEN. What?

MARTIN. How'd they do it?

EDEN. Frying pans. They beat him to death.

MARTIN. That's not funny. *(She just stares at him.)*