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NOT WAVING

DRAMA BY ELLEN MELAVER



NOT WAVING

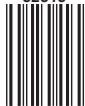
Drama. By Ellen Melaver. Cast: 3m., 3w. It's a bright sunny day at the beach, and three couples pitch their umbrellas, towels and lounge chairs and settle in for the day, as we settle in for the intertwined stories of a young married couple, two teenagers, and a mother with her grown son. But just as this beautiful stretch of beach gives no hint of the drowning that took place here last summer, so are these couples touched by fears and shadows that we don't see on the surface. Matt and Lizzie hope to escape the pain of their two recent miscarriages, but Lizzie also has a secret from Matt. Peter has just proposed to his girlfriend and wants his mother's ring, but his mother has other plans. And Cara finds, to her great surprise, that her boyfriend, Bo, is not eager to join her in her plan to lose their virginity on the beach that night. In each dyad, one person is in danger of drowning. Quietly and often comedically, the stories unfold until all the fears have come to the surface, each troubled character finds the strength to call for help, and each finds the help they need right there on the beach with them. *Unit set. Approximate running time: 90 minutes. Code: N60.*

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Please note: this excerpt contains adult content.



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(NOT WAVING)

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PRODUCTION HISTORY

Not Waving was originally presented off-Broadway at the Summer Play Festival, July 31, 2007-August 5, 2007. The director was Douglas Mercer and the cast was: Peter (Jacob Fishel), Patsy (Mary Stout), Matt (Kevin O'Donnell), Lizzie (Nadia Bowers), Bo (Brandon Espinoza), Cara (Aya Cash).

Not Waving was presented at the Nikos Stage of Williamstown Theatre Festival, Williamstown, Mass., August 6-17, 2008. Artistic director was Nicholas Martin. It was directed by Carolyn Cantor; sets, David Korins; costumes, Jenny Mannis; lights, David Weiner; sound, Bart Fasbender; production stage manager, Matthew Silver; production manager, Jim D' Asaro; casting, Mel Cap casting. The cast was: Patsy (Harriet Harris), Peter (Dashiehl Eaves), Matt (Nate Corddry), Lizzie (Maria Dizzia), Bo (Will Rogers), Cara (Sarah Steele).

Not Waving But Drowning

by Stevie Smith

Nobody heard him, the dead man,
But still he lay moaning:
I was much further out than you thought
And not waving but drowning.

Poor chap, he always loved larking
And now he's dead
It must have been too cold for him his heart gave way,
They said.

Oh, no no no, it was too cold always
(Still the dead one lay moaning)
I was much too far out all my life
And not waving but drowning.

From Collected Poems of Stevie Smith.

Copyright © 1972 by Stevie Smith.

NOT WAVING

CHARACTERS

PETER . . . 32. Angry, articulate, ironic. Scared underneath
all that.

PATSY 58. Peter's mother. Perky, a little batty,
controlling and wise.

CARA Teenager. Sarcastic but easily hurt.

BO Cara's boyfriend, same age as Cara. A joker, a
skateboarder. Covering up a trauma.

LIZZIE. . . 30. Mischievous, funny, quick. Married to Matt.

MATT 30. Supportive, sensitive, stubborn.

TIME: This summer.

PLACE: A beach.

NOT WAVING

(IN DARKNESS we hear the sound of water splashing, maybe some muffled shouts. Pause.)

LIGHTS UP on a bright sunny morning at the beach. An empty lifeguard chair is upstage. Sounds of seagulls, waves and kids. CARA and BO are lying on towels. PATSY and PETER look for a place to sit. MATT and LIZZIE look for a place to sit.)

PATSY *(calling to PETER)*. Here?

PETER. WHAT?

PATSY. HERE?

MATT. Yeah.

LIZZIE. Are you sure?

MATT. Yeah.

LIZZIE. You're absolutely sure.

PETER. No, it's too close to the water.

PATSY. It's cooler down here.

PETER. The tide's coming in.

PATSY. What about—

(BO touches CARA's nose.)

BO. Here.

CARA. Hawaiian Tropic. 24.

MATT. This is good.

LIZZIE. You're sure?

MATT. Yeah.

LIZZIE. Absolutely sure.

MATT. Yeah.

LIZZIE. 'Cause I'm not moving again.

MATT. No, this is good.

LIZZIE. Thank God.

(They put their stuff down.)

MATT. Wait.

LIZZIE. What.

MATT *(overlapping)*. I can't sit here.

PETER *(overlapping)*. I can't sit here.

PATSY. This is perfect.

PETER. It's too close to the water.

PATSY. It's cooler by the water.

PETER. When the tide comes in, we'll have to move.

PATSY. Well. What about—

(BO touches CARA's chest.)

BO. Here?

CARA. Banana Boat. 15.

LIZZIE *(warning)*. Matthew...

MATT. I know, but I just wanna be comfortable...

LIZZIE. Honey. It's sand. It's all sand. Just pick some sand.

MATT. Okay. Maybe—

(BO pulls at CARA's bikini bottom.)

BO. Here?

CARA. Where?

BO. Here.

CARA. Oh. Zero.

(BO lets go of her bikini, snapping the elastic. Lights shift to MATT and LIZZIE, setting up their chairs.)

MATT. Wait.

LIZZIE. No, we're not moving again. This is great.

MATT. But isn't this—

LIZZIE. There has never been such a great piece of sand.

In the history of sand, this sand.

MATT. No, but. Lizzie. Isn't this the place?

LIZZIE. What place?

MATT. Where that guy. Last year.

LIZZIE. What guy?

MATT. Remember? They said he was swimming here, and that tide came in and he—?

LIZZIE. Oh. It wasn't here.

MATT. Yes. That's what the guy said. At the CVS.

LIZZIE. He didn't mean right here.

MATT. Yeah, he said. In front of the lifeguard stand.

LIZZIE. Jesus. It was right in front of the lifeguard stand?

MATT. There wasn't a lifeguard.

LIZZIE. Where was the lifeguard?

MATT. I don't think we should sit here.

LIZZIE. Because of that?

MATT. It's weird.

LIZZIE. Okay, no, you're being ridiculous.

MATT. I have a bad feeling.

LIZZIE. That was last year. Some random guy. It has nothing to do with you.

MATT. Well no. Not rationally. But.

LIZZIE. Besides. It can't happen twice. In the same place.

MATT. What, like lightning?

LIZZIE. Yeah. It doesn't strike twice.

MATT. You still think that?

LIZZIE. What.

MATT. After this year. You still think lightning doesn't strike twice?

(She looks at him. Lights shift to PATSY and PETER.)

PATSY. What a gorgeous day.

PETER. We shouldn't be here.

PATSY. Look at those clouds. I could just eat 'em.

PETER. Ten to two is the worst. Ask any dermatologist.

PATSY. Like vanilla something, vanilla mousse, is there vanilla mousse? They look like vanilla mousse.

PETER. What number do you have on?

PATSY. What number? I have no idea. What number?

PETER. Sunscreen.

PATSY. Oh! I had no idea what you meant. I thought—
how interesting. What is that? A musical term, or—

PETER. Mom. What kind of sunscreen do you have on?

PATSY. Umm...the pink one.

PETER. The pink one.

PATSY. Yeah, it's pink.

PETER. What's pink?

PATSY. The bottle.

PETER. What bottle?!

PATSY. You know. In the downstairs shower.

PETER. That huge thing, that squirts?

PATSY. No, not pink—peach. No, more peachy-pink.

Pinky-peach.

PETER. Mom, that's been there since the late '70s.

PATSY. No. Well, maybe. The very late '70s.

PETER. They expire. They have that date. On the side. The date?

PATSY. They just say that. So you have to buy more.

PETER. Mom, it's a chemical.

PATSY. Everything's a chemical. If you think about it.

PETER. I mean, it's a chemical formula, that expires.

PATSY. I know, but there's so much of it. So some of it would still work, don't you think?

PETER. No. It doesn't work. You're baking right now.

PATSY. You think? I don't feel like I'm baking. Well, I've never been baked, I mean, how do you know what that feels like, exactly?

PETER. You're like a slab of meat. Or toast. You're like a piece of toast right now.

PATSY (*getting hungry*). Toast. Mmm. D'you have breakfast?

PETER. Yeah.

PATSY. Really?

PETER. Yeahh...

PATSY. I mean, a real breakfast.

PETER. I had breakfast.

PATSY. It's just that sometimes what you call breakfast is not what I'd call breakfast.

PETER. I had breakfast. (*Pause.*)

PATSY. Was there fruit?

PETER (*tensely*). What.

PATSY. In your breakfast. Was there fruit?

(PETER folds his arms over his chest.)

PETER. I'm not itemizing my breakfast.

PATSY. For heaven's sake, Peter, no one's asking you to—

PETER *(overlapping)*. You want an audit of my breakfast, and I'm not going to.

PATSY. But it's important to have something fresh first thing—fruit, or even vegetables, but fresh, like an orange or a grapefruit, did you have an orange?

PETER *(robotically)*. No, I didn't have an orange.

PATSY. Or juice, what about juice?

PETER. I hate juice.

PATSY. Really? You hate it? I didn't know people could hate juice. Well, it doesn't have to be juice. Kiwi, kiwi's very high in Vitamin C, or bananas! Bananas are marvelous.

PETER. Clarissa has muffins.

PATSY. Oh, she bakes? I didn't know that.

PETER. No, she gets them. From Dunkin' Donuts.

PATSY. Oh.

PETER. It's two blocks from her apartment. They're good. You microwave them.

PATSY. I would love to have muffins for breakfast.

PETER. She has them every morning.

PATSY. But then I would think, how does this differ from cake? Am I not just eating cake for breakfast?

PETER. They're bran.

PATSY. Oh! You know what I discovered? Shredded Wheat. I just discovered it. I feel like I should plant a flag in it.

PETER. Shredded Wheat?

PATSY. Do you ever have Shredded Wheat?

PETER. Yuck. No.

PATSY. But some kind of cereal.

PETER. I'm not telling you what I had.

PATSY. Okay, okay, I'm just—

PETER. I told you I'm not telling you, and I'm not.

PATSY. —making conversation, that's all—

PETER. You keep doing this, you're—

PATSY (*very innocently*). What? What am I doing?

PETER. —trying to wear me down. But I'm not going to do it. You can't make me tell you what I ate for breakfast. You can't. I'm 32.

PATSY. Peter. Honey. Don't get so upset.

PETER. I'm not upset.

PATSY. Your face gets so—flushed. It's red.

PETER. Because it's too fucking hot out here.

PATSY. That's why I said we should sit down there.

PETER. I'm not sitting down there.

PATSY. It's cooler by the water.

PETER. See? First it was the water, now it's breakfast. You keep doing this, you keep asking, or hinting, or trying to trick me into—

PATSY. Trick you? I didn't trick you.

PETER. And if I don't answer, it just keeps going, on and on, the whole day I'm gonna hear these little breakfast hints, I won't get any peace until I—

PATSY. I won't, that's ridiculous, Peter—

PETER. Yes you will! I'll never hear the end of it, all day,

PATSY. I don't know what you're—

PETER. So HERE—are you ready? Are you taking notes??

BRAN MUFFIN. MICROWAVED. WITH LITE
CREAM CHEESE. AND AN ORANGE GATORADE!
Okay?!?

PATSY. Okay.

PETER. Okay. (*Beat.*)

PATSY. Gatorade? For breakfast?

(*Lights shift to LIZZIE and MATT.*)

MATT. The newspaper?

LIZZIE. Yep.

MATT. Mail?

LIZZIE. Yep.

MATT. Renata?

LIZZIE. Yep.

MATT. You told her not to come for two weeks?

LIZZIE. Yep.

MATT. 'Cause it's gonna be two Fridays, even though it's
only eight days, it's two Fridays.

LIZZIE. I told Renata.

MATT. What about the water cooler guy?

LIZZIE. This is not relaxing.

MATT. D'you cancel him?

LIZZIE. It's unrelaxing. It's de-relaxing.

MATT. Just tell me about the water guy—

LIZZIE. In a thesaurus, for the antonym of “relaxing,” it
says “racking your brains for every little household item
you forgot to take care of before you went on vacation.”

MATT. You didn't cancel the water guy, did you?

LIZZIE. Yes.

MATT. If he comes and we're not there, they'll charge us for the visit.

LIZZIE. Your mother can let him in.

MATT (*accusing*). You didn't cancel him.

LIZZIE. I did. I'm just saying, if I didn't, your mother can let him in.

MATT. What if she's not there? What if he comes when she's out?

LIZZIE. She never goes out.

MATT. She could go out.

LIZZIE. No, she just stays there. She's always there,

MATT (*overlapping*). Well, she doesn't know the neighborhood.

LIZZIE (*overlapping*). like monitoring our answering machine, and cleaning our shower curtain, and

MATT (*overlapping*). So? She's house-sitting, that's where she's supposed to be—

LIZZIE (*overlapping*). snooping through our things.

MATT (*remembering something*). Shit!

LIZZIE. What.

MATT. Lizzie.

LIZZIE. What?

MATT. You hid your thing, right?

LIZZIE. Yeah. What thing?

MATT. Your thing.

LIZZIE. Oh.

MATT. You hid it?

LIZZIE. Yeah.

MATT. Good.

LIZZIE. I think.

MATT. What.

LIZZIE. No, I did. I think I did.

MATT. Lizzie. Please tell me you hid your vibrator.

LIZZIE (*automatically*). I hid my vibrator.

MATT. DID you??

LIZZIE. I'm not sure.

MATT. What?! How could you not be sure? Didn't I say,
when we were packing,

LIZZIE (*overlapping*). I don't know. Yeah. Maybe.

MATT. I said, where's the Gap bag, and you said,

LIZZIE. I don't remember this.

MATT. I did. I did. And I said, remember, I said, maybe
we shouldn't keep it in the Gap bag, because somebody
might think it's stuff from the Gap—

LIZZIE. I thought that's the point.

MATT. We had this whole conversation. How can you not
remember this conversation?

LIZZIE. Because we were packing, and the office kept
calling, and you kept going, "30% increase in traffic ev-
ery fifteen minutes"—

MATT. So all that stuff's just loose in the apartment?

LIZZIE. No, it's in the bag.

MATT. Where? Where's the bag?

LIZZIE. Umm... Prob'ly in the kitchen.

MATT. In the kitchen??

LIZZIE. Yeah.

MATT. Why would it be in the kitchen?

LIZZIE. 'Cause—it's an appliance?

MATT. You—you don't, use it? In the kitchen.

LIZZIE. I—possibly.

MATT (*intrigued*). Really.

LIZZIE. Yeah.

MATT. Hunh. How come I didn't know this?

LIZZIE. You never asked.