

ACT I, SCENE I: WARM UP

It is the morning or early afternoon, I can't tell. The time seems to bleed together these days, doesn't it? Anyway. I digress. It is a gorgeous, cloudless, 78° day. The low-level hum of the filter and intermittent bubbling from the Jacuzzi gets louder and louder over the course of the scene until it drowns out all the voices. The pool should be the color of Gatorade Glacier Freeze®. Everyone looks slightly haggard, tired, hungover, but relaxed, as though there was nothing their bodies wanted more than to sit half-reclined in plastic chairs, avoiding eye contact either through closed eyes or sunglasses, and delivering lines as though each breath was a boulder being pushed up a hill over and over and over again. Someone should break the silence by cannonballing into the pool.

It is clear something happened last night. It is clear sacrifices were made, flesh was ripped. There was too much wine and greasy food ordered at 3 am. Voices were raised a few decibels higher than usual. It is clear we have entered this scene after some sort of shift. No, tectonic plates haven't moved. But, there has been a rupture. We may never know the details but bear with me. Try to stay in the present. I hear that is important.

Three intimidating women and HONEY, our bride and central figure, enter the pool in spandex workout clothes in various neons in a single line. They all have rolled-up mats under their arms. In synchronicity, they unfurl their mats and stand facing the leader, a male YOGA INSTRUCTOR. The YOGA INSTRUCTOR turns his back to the audience. He raises his arms like a conductor.

Deep breath, holding the breath for much too long.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR. Hello everybody! [*repeats "Hello everybody!" in decrescendos until he can't go any slower or deeper in voice*]

Everybody laughs in various tones. The YOGA INSTRUCTOR begins to lead them in harmonious laughter. Ha ha ha ha ha ha....

YOGA INSTRUCTOR. Okay ladies, enough of this. Let's get going. We'll start with our warm up, then we'll move to the cardio with some classic boot camp moves, and then the cool-down and stretch-out. Let's begin in first position, arms in fifth.

Leads everyone through a warm up aerobic routine. Heels touch, toes turned out, bodies lifted, arms in front of bodies like hugging a large rubber ball, arms to the side like an awkward hug.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR. [*in a calm self-help-y voice*] Whew! Nice, ladies! Stay with me! Think of your bodies as slinkys! Think about discerning between your lefts and your rights. Think about kneading bread; think about avoiding laser beams. We are all square roots! Everyone be wall-like, now be pin-like, now be as a bell opening and closing and pausing.

The four women act this out:

YOGA INSTRUCTOR. Open your palms all fingers latched, separate and turn your hands to face one another, and turn them slowly back until all your fingers are touching. Now your bent hand touches your flat left palm, facing up. Your right palm arcs and the fingertips touch your left palm. Flick your pointers away quickly. Open your palms on your chest, one below the other, and open them away from your body, and close them in, and open them out, and close them in, and open them out, and close them in, and open them out, and close them in...

His voice fades away.

Everyone walks to the pool and begins to descend into the water in the way that most people who have learned about fear descend into

water—faces twisted like raisins, knees lifted just a little bit too high, like they are lifting their limbs out of thick mud, rather than cool, crisp liquid.

Eventually, they make it in, submerge and reemerge merged in an embrace. They twirl in that sea lion way. They blow their bubbles, they let water run down their hair, their necks arch backwards, eyes closed in blissful reverie. All of that.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR. [*clapping hands*] Girls! Stay with me! We're almost there! Demonstrate a shiver.

ALL WOMEN TOGETHER. Shoulders tense, wiggle forward, bones creak, chest wanes, neck convulses up and out. There is a quick flick, like a flirt, of shoulders.

SOMEONE. CRAMP!

Everyone gasps and stares but does not move.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR. [*breaking the much too long silence*] Okay girls! Last set. Describe a spasm.

MAENAD 1. It is a wrenched raisin curled into itself breached body bent knees taut to chest in the way of holding oneself like a lima bean.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR. And how about the 50 seconds before a sigh?

MAENAD 2. Your synapses snap.

MAENAD 3. Heat enters your calves.

MAENAD 1. Heat enters your kneecaps.

HONEY. Heat enters your belly.

MAENAD 1. Heat enters your torso.

MAENAD 2. Your chest balloons outward.

MAENAD 3. Your belly balloons outward.

MAENAD 1. Your ribs move vertically.

HONEY. [*aside*] Is that God-ward?

MAENAD 1. Your throat constricts.

MAENAD 2. The inner corners of your eyes widen.

MAENAD 3. Your cheeks harden.

MAENAD 1. Your belly hardens.

HONEY. A sharpness appears.

MAENAD 1. You think of worms.

MAENAD 2. You think of floods.

MAENAD 3. You think of mazes.

MAENAD 1. You hold on.

HONEY. Then you let go.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR. [*aside*] Nothingness.

MAENAD 1. Nausea sets in.

MAENAD 2. Fear returns.

MAENAD 3. You struggle to find your lungs.

MAENAD 1. But they were never there.

HONEY. You struggle to unbury your throat.

MAENAD 1. Pry it open with the jaws of life.

MAENAD 2. Down the esophagus, surgically, with all your strength.

MAENAD 3. Eyes squinted.

MAENAD 1. Teeth gritted.

HONEY. You manage a grunt.

MAENAD 1. Your arm muscles tense.

MAENAD 2. You can't quite break through.

HONEY. So you break down.

MAENAD 3. Pour acid on your soft mouth flesh.

MAENAD 1. Tickle and sway, move that hot liquid around.

MAENAD 2. With a muscular tongue.

MAENAD 3. A light will appear.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR. It will pull the hole open wider.

HONEY. [*aside*] Wholer?

MAENAD 1. More light comes out of your mouth.

MAENAD 2. Your belly softens.

MAENAD 3. Your kneecaps soften.

MAENAD 1. Your calves soften.

MAENAD 2. Everything softens.

HONEY sneaks away.

MAENAD 1. There is a rumble in your vocal cords.

MAENAD 2. All the light in the world bursts through.

MAENAD 3. Your lips part.

MAENAD 1. Your eyes stumble.

ALL. A relief.

All sigh.