

AND THEN THERE WERE THREE

by
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OPEN: LIGHTS UP.

The stage is set with a couple of chairs and scattered bits of debris and garbage.

Sitting on a block center stage is LYDIA. She is wearing layers of rags for clothes and fingerless gloves. Her face is stained and dirty. She writes in a tattered journal. She reads as she writes.

LYDIA

Day 188...The nightmare continues. I still can't believe this is all really happening. Just a few months ago I was one of a million happy, carefree, fun-loving New Yorkers; going cheerfully through life without a care in the world...Then it happened...The devastation...The holocaust...We all knew annihilation was possible, but it was so unexpected. That's the grotesque beauty of terrorism. Who could know that NBC Today Show weatherman Al Roker was really a sophisticated thermonuclear robot just waiting to detonate. All he needed to hear was the word "cross-stitch" from an audience member on the street, and the horses of hell would be unleashed. Damn those treacherous Swedes...Now, Manhattan is completely deserted...except for the three of us...The last of us.

Enter OTTO PONARD. He wears a tattered parka and mukluks. He carries an ice fishing bucket containing fishing rods and various gear. He is followed by a similarly attired KYLE, Otto's assistant and buddy. Kyle also carries a bucket. They are both dim, north woods ice fishermen.

OTTO

I says orange.

KYLE

Well I says chartreuse.

OTTO

Orange, pal.

KYLE

Chartreuse.

OTTO

Hey Lydia, settle a bet here. If you're a spawn-filled crappie waiting for prey under a hollowed out log, you gonna be more likely to hit on an orange or chartreuse jig? Now be honest.

The men freeze. Lydia looks at Otto, then continues writing.

LYDIA'S VOICE

Otto Ponard, world champion ice fisherman from Lower Squeegie, Minnesota. He and his assistant Kyle were here for the *Land The Lunker Ice Fish Expo* at Madison Square Garden. How they survived was truly a miracle.

Otto and Kyle come downstage and address the audience, solemnly.

OTTO

See, Kyle and me was demonstrating the new Iron Bass Ice Shanty at the Expo. We're the Midwest distributors.

KYLE

Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Upper Michigan and Illinois.

The look at one another and laugh scornfully.

OTTO

Illinois...yeah, right. Anyways, we had the side flaps all the way down.

KYLE

All the way down.

OTTO

All the way down to the floor...and that's when Al Roker went ballistic.

KYLE

That was a shit-load of plutonium, I tell ya'.

OTTO

Well, granted, he was a big weatherman.

(MORE)

OTTO (cont'd)

What saved us is that the new Iron
Bass Shanties are lead lined.

KYLE

Up to three inches on the Fisher
King 5000.

OTTO

We were lucky.

KYLE

Very lucky. Not like...the others.

Kyle begins to sob weakly.

OTTO

(To Kyle.)

There, there, little soldier.

(To the audience.)

When we came out of the
shanty...well, it was horrible, to
say the least. Burnt flesh and
melted Rapalas and Zebcos as far as
the eye could see.

(He starts to choke up.)

The horror...the horror.

They immediately snap to, happy.

KYLE

Well, let's get back at it, huh?

OTTO

Fish ain't gonna catch themselves,
pal.

They grab their buckets and gear and start to head off.

KYLE

I still say chartreuse is your best
bet.

OTTO

I'm sorry, I can't hear ya' when
you talk with your head up your
ass.

They exit. Lights out.

Lights up.

Lydia sits writing in her journal again.

LYDIA

Day 215...I see the cracks in the wall. The frustration is starting to build. The stress of being the last humans alive is a burden that's crushing us all.

Enter Otto and Kyle with their buckets. Otto throws his down, disgustedly.

OTTO

Well jeeppers creepers, I'm stymied.

KYLE

It's a puzzlement, all right.

OTTO

No fish in over four months.

KYLE

Not even a nibble.

OTTO

We tried waxies, mousies, red worms, leaf worms...

KYLE

...helgramites, chubs, crawlers...nothin'.

OTTO

Nothin'.

KYLE

Nada.

Otto pulls a wad of loose baloney from his pocket. He holds it out to Lydia.

OTTO

I did find some baloney, though. Don't smell too rank. I found it in the pocket of a decaying priest, so I figure it's probably okay.

KYLE

You think maybe we're using the wrong colored jigs?

OTTO

Or did we jig too much? Or not enough? That is the question.

KYLE

It's a puzzlement, all right.

OTTO

I'm stymied. I'm beginning to think there ain't a fish in that lake.

Lydia gets up and approaches them.

LYDIA

You idiots! Of course there's no fish! This isn't just a winter, it's a *nuclear* winter...*nuclear*, do you get it?! Hundreds of millions of tons of radioactive waste and debris has been shot into the atmosphere, completely blocking out the life giving powers of the sun and turning our planet into a desolate, lifeless hulk! There are no fish! There is no life left whatsoever!

Otto and Kyle turn and look at one another.

OTTO

Well...someone sounds like a Negative Nellie.

KYLE

You know, they don't guarantee you'll catch a fish every time...

OTTO & KYLE

...otherwise they'd call it Catchin' instead of Fishin'.

They nod at one another and pick up their buckets.

KYLE

Well, back at it.

OTTO

Fish wait for no man.

They exit. Lights out.

Lights up.

All three sit on stage, bored. Lydia continues writing.

LYDIA

Day 264...The boredom has set in. The day to day routine of foraging and scrounging for our meager existence has taken it's toll. One day now bleeds into another in an endless, gray void...Oh yeah, no fish yet, either.

They all sit in silence.

OTTO

So...anybody know any good jokes?

They all think.

KYLE

Oh, yeah...no...wait...yeah...yeah.
(He points at Otto.)
Pull my finger.

OTTO

(Shaking his head.)
Nah, I heard that one.

Lights out.

Lights up.

Lydia sits writing again.

LYDIA

Day 305...There is a stirring in the air. Thick and palpable. Otto has become more attentive, more attuned to my needs. I'm beginning to notice a connection between us that goes beyond rods and jigs and wax worms. But he's shy, reclusive. I don't know if he will ever really open up to me and tell me how he truly feels. Today we ventured out to explore the ruined city.

Otto enters. Lydia puts down her journal and walks downstage with him.

OTTO

Cripes almighty, what is this place?

LYDIA

It's the Planetarium. They'd just finished it last year.

(MORE)

LYDIA (cont'd)

I always wanted to see it. Guess I don't have to fight the crowds, now.

Lydia pushes an invisible button, the lights dim. MOTOR NOISES are heard. They look up and out. They are awestruck. A spotlight hits them.

OTTO

Holy-moly, look-it there.

LYDIA

I can't believe it still works! Do you know the stars?

OTTO

Sure. My Grampa used to take me out at night on Lake Waubahatchee. He taught me to read the stars like a road map.

She points, gleefully.

LYDIA

What's that star there?

OTTO

Oscar, The Great Northern Pike.

LYDIA

And that?

OTTO

Murray, The Lesser Southern Pike.

LYDIA

And that?

OTTO

Durwood, The Jolly Old Carp.

LYDIA

And that one there?

OTTO

Galen, The Disgruntled King of The Fishes.

LYDIA

And what about that constellation that stretches across the sky?

OTTO
The Heavenly School of the Hungry
Walleyes.

LYDIA
Oh, it's beautiful!

OTTO
(Looks at Lydia.)
It sure is. You got nice eyes.
Green. As green as a Bass' lower
jowl at spring spawn.

LYDIA
Really?

OTTO
Lydia? Would you...Would
you...breed with me?

LYDIA
Oh, Otto!

They move in to kiss, but--

Enter Kyle.

KYLE
What in the Holy Brother of Moses
is going on here?!

LYDIA
Kyle!

OTTO
What's the idea, pal?! You spying
on us?!

KYLE
Maybe I am! Maybe I ain't!

OTTO
Well maybe you should mind your own
business!

KYLE
Well maybe this is my business!

OTTO
Well maybe I should kick your
flycasting little ass!

KYLE
Well maybe you should try it!

Lydia steps in between them

LYDIA

Stop it! Stop it, both of you!
Don't you see it doesn't have to be
like this?! A horrible thing has
happened! It's hard on all of us,
but that doesn't mean you have to
fight over me! We're all adults
here! We can work something out!

Kyle and Otto look at one another, confused.

KYLE

What are you talking about? I'm not
fighting over you. I'm fighting
over him. That's my husband!

Lydia is shocked.

LYDIA

What?! You mean, you're...
you're...you're not a man?

Kyle and Otto exchange, "*What, is she nuts?*" looks.

KYLE

Well, no. Duhhh...

LYDIA

But, I mean, the clothes...the
hat...the moustache is a fake?

She tugs at Kyle's moustache. She reacts painfully.

KYLE

Owww!

OTTO

Hey, now that ain't nice.

KYLE

No, it's not! Geeze! I happen to
have a surplus of facial follicles
in my DNA.

OTTO

Her Mom's half Italian.

KYLE

Otto, how could you do this to me?
With all the Muskie tourneys, the
endless hours of bucket sitting we
been through together.

(MORE)

KYLE (cont'd)

To treat me like a...a dried leech
on the bottom of your boot.

Kyle sobs quietly.

OTTO

You're right, pal. I was blinded by
the beauty of her Bass-green eyes.
But together, we have a larger,
deeper beauty. The beauty of a
perfect ice-hole. The beauty of a
long, stiff rod in a warm bucket. I
caught my limit with you, pal. And
I ain't never throwin' you back.

They hug and kiss. They turn to look at Lydia.

KYLE

Well, seems like three's a crowd
now, eh?

OTTO

I guess so.

LYDIA

What are you talking about?

OTTO

Well, I mean, we got everything we
need right here. We're like Adam
and Eve in a great, radioactive
Eden.

KYLE

Together we'll breed us a whole
mess of champion hook baiters. A
big, happy, self-sufficient family
of fishermen.

OTTO

So what do we need you for? You
don't know a snelled hook from a
hole in the ice.

Kyle smacks her lips.

KYLE

But you know...I sure am overdue
for a good fish fry.

They look hungrily at Lydia. She turns in horror. They
freeze. Lights out.

Lights up.

Kyle sits holding her rotund, pregnant belly. She is full and satisfied. Otto sits writing in Lydia's journal. He speaks as he writes.

OTTO

Just finished off the last of Lydia. Let me tell ya', she wasn't just good lookin' on the outside. Man-o-Manfred she sure fried up nice. Just dipped the fillets in flour, egg, and rolled her in some cracker crumbs. Then pan fried her real slow in some olive oil till she's golden brown. Classic recipe. Some slaw and potato pancakes... man, that's eatin'. Kyle's lookin' real good these days. The baby should be here any day now. We pray that it's healthy and strong...and only has one head. Not like the last one. Tomorrow, we hit the ice again. And who knows? Maybe Kyle was right after all...maybe them crappies will go for that chartreuse jig better this time around.

Otto reaches out to Kyle. They hold hands.

KYLE

I love you, Otto.

OTTO

I love you, too, pal.

They freeze. Lydia enters.

LYDIA

We hope you enjoyed our presentation. If this story has frightened or affected you in any way, please take action. Send your tax deductible donations to: KILL ALL THE FISHERMEN - PO Box 1919- Glendale, California. With your help, we can stamp out the blight of these flannel wearing, worm-stained degenerates before they weaken the gene pool and pan fry us all. Thank you.

BLACK OUT

THE END

