

Plank

A Play

By

John Greiner-Ferris

Happy and content, Potpee is adrift in the middle of the ocean after a shipwreck. Then she's "rescued." Plank uses a mix of traditional theater and under-represented, nontraditional, experimental theatrical forms such as movement, magical realism, and poetry to address some compelling issues including climate change, refugees, individual rights and the importance of the individual in today's society, the TSA, social media, and nature vs. society.

The Glass Eye Theater, New York, New York

LiveWire Theater, Chicago, Illinois

The 2015 Providence (RI) Fringe Festival, OUTLoud Theater/Alley Cat Theater

2016 – 2017 curriculum at Concord Academy, Concord, Massachusetts

2017 Further developed at Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, Vermont

Plank

Characters: (in order of appearance)

The Ocean: FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME: any age and gender

POTPÉE: female: age: timeless

MERCEDES: female, but could be played by a man in drag, or by a Kellyanne Conway look-alike

THIMBLE: female

The roles of MERCEDES and CHOP are double cast, as are THIMBLE and SPUME.

Chronological age for all of the characters isn't as important as how "old" they are in terms of their experience with the world.

The playwright encourages a diverse cast.

Time:

Now. Or what could be now.

Setting:

A plank floating out in the middle of the ocean.

Land.

Note:

Let the actors take their time. Probably more time than you would be initially comfortable letting them take. It takes a long time to count the stars, read Moby Dick, or for a sandwich or a bottle to float up to a plank of wood floating out in the middle of the ocean, and a lot of things can happen during the interim.

During the play, the light circles the stage in the same way the sun circles the earth: morning, noon, night, new day/new scene. Not all days are the same length; time is fluid. Light reflecting off the water, whether by sunlight, moonlight, or cloud cover, is always present.

Each character playing the Ocean is draped with the life in the ocean: seaweed and crustaceans and fish. Their colors are the blue and green of the water, the white of the froth, the black of the deep. It would be really cool if their costumes shimmered in the moonlight, and sparkled in the sun.

To the actor playing MERCEDES. You might have the inclination to play MERCEDES as a mean and strict person. Fight that instinct for all that it's worth. MERCEDES truly believes in her world and there is no reason for her to fight or be angry because she believes her world is unassailable.

Nor should POTPÉE or THIMBLE be portrayed as being children, childish, or deficient. They are grown, mature adults. Also, POTPÉE's name comes from the acronym for Person on the Plank. Do with that information what you wish.

The plank is just that: A plank of wood, or that could be dressed up a bit with an oar for a mast with a torn sail, ripped fishing nets, and barnacles and green slime: a lifeboat for the planet.

Finally, let the audience members keep their phones on, telling them you want them to use them during a special time in the play to take selfies and to Tweet, share on Facebook, Instagram, etc. They'll know when (when Potpee is "rescued".)

Plank could never have been written without the continued support and encouragement of Susan Fearnley, for whom this play is lovingly dedicated.

Plank

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Plank

In the middle of the Ocean. Daylight. A single plank floats in sparkling water. POTPEE breaches the surface of the water, gasping. She looks around, and the Ocean pulls her back under. Maybe this happens a few times. She resurfaces, looks around, sees the plank and struggles to get to it. FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, and SPUME, by turns, help, hinder, and toy with POTPEE.

FETCH

(Pulling POTPEE down) Turn around. You're going the wrong way, silly!

CHOP

What is it? It's not fish or fowl.

FETCH

Silly.

SWELL

The slippery is getting away! Catch it!

SPUME

You're scaring it.

FETCH

Look! It's making bubbles!

CHOP

So strange. So interesting. So new. I've never seen anything like it.

SPUME

I've heard tell of this creature. It lives on land.

FETCH, CHOP, & SWELL

Gasp! Land! Ewww!

FETCH, CHOP, & SWELL let go.

SWELL

Eww! I touched it! Get it away! Get it away!

CHOP

Gross!

SWELL

Get it off me! Get it off!

Pause

SPUME

I think it's cute.

POTPÉE grabs the plank and hangs on. She climbs aboard, maybe with a boost from CHOP—whoosh!!— and collapses on the plank. The Ocean is always right there, always present. lapping at POTPÉE's toes, tickling her legs, bobbing the plank.

Ocean/water sounds. POTPÉE catches her breath. It takes a while. Maybe even 24 hours.

She sits up and straddles the plank.

POTPÉE

(After a while.) Look on the bright side, you always wanted time to yourself. All those times you wished everyone would just shut up and leave you alone? Well, they did. After they stopped screaming. Not even a seagull. Kaa-kaa.

Pause.

POTPÉE

(Quietly) On the good ship, Lollipop...

Doesn't remember the words.

POTPÉE

...shoot...On the good ship, Lollipop...(sings words again, this time silently) On the good ship, Lollipop. (Aloud) Something something to the candy shop, where bons bons play...something something peppermint da-di da-da...Shirley Temple. That I remember. The curls. The dimples. (Pokes cheeks with index fingers to make dimples, mimes Shirley Temple smiling and head wagging, almost falls off plank.) Whoa. Whoa. Okay. Steady. Steady. No more singing. No more singing.

Pause

POTPÉE

Ok. Let's get cracking.

She starts paddling.

POTPÉE

Paddle. Paddle. Paddle paddle paddle.

Drifts. Looks around, wondering...

Hawaii? POTPEE

Looks another way.

Tahiti? POTPEE

Looks all over.

England? France? Spain? This way. POTPEE

Starts paddling, a little desperately.

POTPEE
Paddle paddle paddle. Paddle paddle paddle. Paddle paddle paddle. Paddle paddle paddle.

Stops paddling. Looking around.

Portugal? Madagascar? India? No, this way.

Changes direction.

POTPEE
Paddle paddle paddle. Paddle paddle paddle. Paddle paddle paddle. Paddle paddle paddle.

Stops paddling. Looks around.

Australia? The moon? Alpha Centauri?

She slows and drifts.

POTPEE
Paddle paddle. Paddle paddle. Paddle paddle. Man, I am sooooo lost.

The lights slowly change to night.

Night. Comfortable creaking of the plank. POTPEE looks at the stars.

POTPEE
I had no idea. So this is the universe ancient mariners gazed up into. And with this, made predictions on their wanderings, on the route of planets and comets, and the course of their lives.

Rummages through pockets: A waterproof marker! Where did this come from?

Writing on the plank.

POTPTEE

Oh gallant hunter
Chasing bulls through the night.
Striding bold in spite of
Or is it because of
The cold.
You have gained obvious strength since I last saw you
Carrying twins on your shoulders light
Faithful Sirius trots at your heel trusting
His Master's guidance on your heavenly journey
That will continue long after I've completed mine.

Day. Drifts. Comfortable creaking of the plank. Time.

POTPTEE

Am I talking? Or am I just thinking I'm talking? How do I know I'm not thinking but I'm actually talking, but since no one to answer me there is no way of verifying that I'm talking? I mean, I could just be thinking, like, really loud.

She thinks.

POTPTEE

Okay, that was thinking.

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah...

And that was talking.

She thinks.

POTPTEE

Thinking.

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And talking.

She thinks.

POTPTEE

Thinking.

Blah, blah, blah. And talking.

Comfortable creaking of the plank. POTPEE listens.

Comfortable creaking of the plank. Something's different.
Something small that might portend doom.

Comfortable creaking of the plank. Something's different.
Something small that might portend doom.

Comfortable creaking of the plank.

Comfortable creaking of the plank.

Comfortable creaking of the plank.

POTPEE stays vigilant.

Night. Then day.

A Ship (the Ocean) holds a book.

Has anyone seen my book?	FETCH
My book. My book.	CHOP, SWELL, SPUME
I left it on deck.	FETCH
Well that was a mistake.	CHOP
Probably a sea gull took it.	SWELL

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, and SPUME have a laugh together.
Their laugh is other-worldly. Whoosh: A book is swept off of the
deck of Ship by one of the Ocean.

A book bobs in the water.

POTPEE sees the book. It's tantalizing. The Ocean toys with her,
and maybe POTPEE eventually swims out to get it. POTPEE
finally gets the book. Swims back. Looks at the book. It's a big
book: many pages. How will I read all of this?

POTPTEE

(Reading aloud) Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world.

POTPTEE laughs like a seal barks: Aarrh, aarrh, aarrh, aarrh, aarrh. Omigod! Did that noise come out of me?! POTPTEE practices her laugh, modulating it until it's a nice, ironic laugh about the title of the book. She settles in for a good read.

Drifts.

The sound of a distant foghorn of a ship, this time a bigger ship. Salvation! POTPTEE looks up from book. Considers signaling the ship. Thinks otherwise. Goes back to reading.

Drifts

A sandwich and a pop bottle float in the water. They drift up to the plank. The pop bottle knocks against the plank like it's knocking on a door. POTPTEE takes the sandwich and pop bottle and eats lunch, continuing to read. Lights slowly fade.

She reaches the end of the book.

POTPTEE

Sigh.

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME

(as an echo) Sigh.

POTPTEE puts down book.

Sits alone in the dark. Very cold. Very lonely. Her teeth chatter. She shakes violently.

Whale songs echo. Bubbles. Underwater sound.

WHALE and BABY WHALE surface from beneath the Ocean: a spout: They startle POTPTEE. The mother is curious. She rolls on her side and investigates POTPTEE with an ancient eye.

POTPTEE

Well, call me Ishmael.

WHALE exhales—a deep cavernous sound: Give me a break.

POTPÉE

Oh, right. I can see why you might not think that wasn't funny.

Pause

WHALE exhales—a deep cavernous sound.

Pause

WHALE exhales—a deep cavernous sound.

Pause

WHALE exhales—a deep cavernous sound.

POTPÉE

Is this your baby? He's...

WHALE: Not a "he".

POTPÉE

She...?

WHALE: Not a "she".

POTPÉE

If your baby's not a he...and it's not a she...

WHALE: My baby will have babies someday.

POTPÉE

Your baby's not a boy. It's not a girl. Your baby will have babies someday.

WHALE: That's correct.

POTPÉE

How old is your baby. Who will have babies.

WHALE: Old? What is old? I don't understand.

POTPÉE

Old. You know: age. How old is...your baby who will have babies?

WHALE: I still don't understand.

POTPÉE

How long has the little whale been on earth?

WHALE: Long? This long.

POTPÉE

No. Yes, your baby is that long. From the tip of your baby's beautiful nose to the end of your baby's gorgeous tail. But.....how long has...your little one...been on earth? You know: How much time?

WHALE: Time?

POTPÉE

Yes, time.

WHALE: I don't know.

POTPÉE

You don't know how long your baby's been on earth?

WHALE: I don't know time.

POTPÉE

You don't know time? Ah, you don't know time! Got it. Time. Yeah. I guess you're right. It's weird. Time is very weird. (pause) Is your baby in school?

WHALE: Give me a break.

POTPÉE

Just a joke! It's a joke. Whales don't swim in schools. I know that. Um, what's your baby's name?

WHALE: Tell the weird life form your name.

BABY WHALE is reluctant.

WHALE: Go ahead. Don't be shy.

POTPÉE

That's right. You heard your mommy. I won't hurt you.

BABY WHALE says its name.

POTPÉE

How cute. (POTPÉE repeats its name.) Can I pet...uh, I mean, can I touch your baby?

WHALE says, yes. BABY WHALE's not so sure about this.

WHALE gives BABY WHALE a little nudge.

POTPTEE pets the BABY WHALE; maybe scratches the baby whale under the chin. BABY WHALE likes this. This goes on for a while. WHALE and BABY WHALE start to swim away.

POTPTEE

Wait! Don't go.

WHALE: They're coming!

POTPTEE

Who? Who's coming?

WHALE: We have to go.

POTPTEE

Who's coming?

WHALE: They round us up and they put us in pens.

POTPTEE

Who? Who rounds you up...?

WHALE: They round us up.

POTPTEE

...and put you in pens?

WHALE: They strip us and murder us.

POTPTEE

Strip you? Murder you?

WHALE: They hack off our flesh. They grind our bones. They boil our flesh.

POTPTEE

Who did this to you? Who? Who did this to you!?

WHALE: We have to go.

POTPTEE

Go! Hurry! Good bye.

A spout, then WHALE dives. BABY WHALE splashes POTPTEE before diving. POTPTEE stares in wonder.

POTPÉE

Good bye. They hack off our flesh. They grind our bones. They boil our flesh.

Daytime. Flotsam including a broken umbrella, a fishing pole with the bones of a fish on the end of the line, and anything else the theater may have in its prop room roll past the plank in the current. POTPÉE fishes out as much as she can.

POTPÉE is happy: She has new possessions.

POTPÉE

On The Good Ship Lollipop.
It's a sweet trip to a candy shop
Where bon-bons play...

The song crumbles into random sonic noises.

POTPÉE

What are the words! Why can't I remember the words?!

She drifts.

Passes her hand back and forth in front of her eyes. She stares. She listens. She feels. Repeats passing her hand back and forth in front of her eyes, as if trying to get someone's attention. (Note: To find the heart of this scene, remember how the world looked when you were a child and wore a paper bag over your head with two holes cut out for eyes. Extra points if you did this as an adult. Now think of your body as the paper bag. That is what POTPÉE is seeing.)

POTPÉE

Oh my God. There's somebody in there.

More rapid passing of the hands.

POTPÉE

How did you get in there?

Feels the presence of a person inside her.

POTPÉE

You come out of there right now.

Maybe she tries to hack them out like a cat coughing up a hairball.

She feels the presence, this time even more.

POTPÉE

Wait a minute. You're...you're...I know you!

POTPÉE thinks/daydreams...what she thinks about makes her smile/happy.

POTPÉE

I can't believe it's true. It's not a dream.

Drifts. Dozes. Wakes. Smells the air. Looks around.

POTPÉE

I'm going in circles.

The wind rises. Waves. Then big waves. Big wind. Thunder. Lightning. Violent storm. The Ocean spins and rocks POTPÉE's plank violently. POTPÉE holds on for dear life. It's a hurricane.

POTPÉE

(To the Ocean) Why are you doing this to me?

POTPÉE gains tentative security.

POTPÉE

Watch. See. Evaluate. See. Evaluate. Anticipate. Yes!

POTPÉE rides a wave like a surfboard.

POTPÉE

See. Respond. Reevaluate. Yes!

She rides another wave.

The hurricane continues, but POTPÉE rides it out, the way a well-made sloop, no matter the size, is designed to ride out a storm without the help of a pilot.

POTPÉE

Become one with the maelstrom. Understand its power and anger. Don't fight against it.

The Ocean dies down. A bedraggled POTPÉE. POTPÉE is ecstatic that she is still alive, to the point of being erotically orgasmic.

POTPÉE

I'm alive! I'm alive!

She hugs her plank. She and the Ocean are one.

SEAGULL alights on the plank. SEAGULL and POTPÉE consider one another.

POTPÉE

Kaa-kaa.

SEAGULL

Kaa-kaa.

SEAGULL flies off: Kaa-kaa.

POTPÉE

Shit. You better not tell.

SEAGULL

Kaa-kaa.

On land: Big reception: A hero's welcome. Break down that fourth wall: Audience participation: Selfies. Tweets. Celebrate in the aisles. Loud music. Cheering. POTPÉE holds her treasures from the plank.

The tide goes out; the Ocean exits.

MERCEDES and THIMBLE

She's alive! She's alive! Potpee's alive!

MERCEDES

Remarkable.

THIMBLE

How did you survive? All alone.

MERCEDES

You didn't drown? But everyone else did.

THIMBLE

What did you live on? You haven't lost weight. You look great.

MERCEDES

The sun didn't bake your brains? You weren't attacked by sharks?

THIMBLE

Killer whales?

MERCEDES

Sea monsters?

THIMBLE

Jellyfish?

MERCEDES

Giant squid?

THIMBLE

The salt water didn't pickle your skin?

MERCEDES

Cause excruciating, oozing, running sores all over your body?

THIMBLE

You didn't resort to cannibalism? What about your period?

MERCEDES

You didn't go mad?

Pause

POTPEE

No.

THIMBLE

(Pointedly) How did you go to the bathroom?

MERCEDES

There's a story here. America will want to meet you.

THIMBLE

You're not on Facebook. I checked.

POTPEE

(To the audience) Ohhhhh shit.

MERCEDES

What's your favorite TV show?

I don't watch TV.	POTPÉE
She doesn't watch TV. She doesn't have any favorite shows.	MERCEDES
No favorite shows?	THIMBLE
No favorite shows. No Game of Thrones? No Mad Men? No Orange is the New Black?	MERCEDES
No Grey's Anatomy? No Family Guy? No Gilmore Girls?	THIMBLE
No Louie? No Mr. Robot? No Breaking Bad?	MERCEDES
No Sponge Bob? That's crazy.	THIMBLE
No X-Files?	MERCEDES
No Big Bang Theory?	THIMBLE
I don't own a TV.	POTPÉE
What? What do you do?	MERCEDES
What do I do about what?	POTPÉE
When you come home. What do you do?	MERCEDES
What do you do?	THIMBLE
What do you do?	MERCEDES

POTPEE

I just want enough that will fit on a shelf. A wooden board attached to a wall. A book. Some flowers. A radio.

MERCEDES

A radio?

THIMBLE

What's a radio?

MERCEDES

Who listens to the radio anymore?

THIMBLE

What's a radio?

POTPEE

I do. I like the radio.

THIMBLE

What's a radio?

MERCEDES

Radios are bogus. I have, like, twelve thousand songs on my iPhone.

POTPEE

Did you ever say to yourself, boy did I walk into the wrong room? It's like, you see this door, and it's closed, but there's something very tantalizing about it. It's like it's saying to you, open me. Open me. And so you open the door and in this room there are all these people and as soon as you open the door all conversation stops and all these heads suddenly swivel in your direction and you see all these faces...all these faces!...and you realize, boy, did I walk into the wrong room. Cause you know everyone in there can't stand you or you make them really uncomfortable. Or disgusted. Something. And you're like, oh excuse me and the people are like...what the fuck? Or they're angry, like you just interrupted something really important, like a demonic worship ceremony, and it was just at the most important part where they're going to call forth Beelzebub and you ruined the whole thing and now they have to start over. That used to happen to me...a lot.

POTPEE starts to climb off her plank.

MERCEDES

Hold on there, Missy. I just have to ask you a few questions first. This is just a formality.

MERCEDES

Take off your shoes.

She's not wearing shoes. THIMBLE

I'm not wearing shoes. POTPEE

Empty your pockets. MERCEDES

She doesn't have pockets. THIMBLE

I don't have pockets. POTPEE

Fingerprint her. MERCEDES

THIMBLE fingerprints her fingers and toes while...

Name? MERCEDES

Potpee. POTPEE

Surname, Pee. First name, Pot. Are you a citizen? MERCEDES

Sure. POTPEE

Sex? MERCEDES

Occasionally. POTPEE

Could I see your ID? MERCEDES

I don't have one. POTPEE

She doesn't have one. THIMBLE

MERCEDES

You don't have one? What about a visa?

POTPEE

I've been adrift on a plank for...well...forever. Everything I had was washed overboard. My ID. My clothes. My shoes. My memories. My regrets and hopes, my dreams, my fears. My preconceived notions about everything. About people and places and things. Everything I ever had was stripped away and washed overboard.

MERCEDES

Well then, how do we know you are who you say you are?

THIMBLE

Yeah, Ms. Pee. How do we know? Hmm?

POTPEE

But you know me. You shouted my name. Remember? It's Potpee! She's alive! She's alive. You welcomed me.

THIMBLE

That's true.

MERCEDES

Your ID, please.

POTPEE

Your own two eyes aren't good enough for you? You need some form of validation from a government-approved piece of paper before you believe your own eyes?

MERCEDES

If I used my own eyes I'd say the sun traveled around the globe and the earth was flat. Our senses are useless without clarification. Besides, if you're not who you were when you started, how do I know who you are now? ID please.

POTPEE

The fact that I spent countless days adrift on the open ocean on a plank of wood should tell you more about who I am than any government form could tell you. But instead you want...

MERCEDES

Three forms of ID, two with pictures: Yes, that is what I want. Given the circumstances, let's just move on. Was your trip for business or pleasure? How much cash are you bringing into the country? Have you been on a farm? Been around cattle? Have you walked in cattle poop?

POTPEE

No. No, no cattle poop. Just a whale. Whale poop. But I didn't walk in it.

How old are you?
MERCEDES

(surprised) I don't know.
POTPEE

You don't know how old you are.
MERCEDES

I know how old I *was*, but I don't know how old I am now.
POTPEE

Take a guess.
MERCEDES

I wouldn't know where to start. I feel like a newborn baby. That's ridiculous though. After all, I can walk and talk. A newborn couldn't do that. I don't know? Two?
POTPEE

Two?
MERCEDES

Two years old? Interesting. Very interesting.
THIMBLE

Height?
MERCEDES

POTPEE indicates her height.

Width?
MERCEDES

POTPEE indicates her width.

Shoe size?
MERCEDES

What's with the shoes?
POTPEE

It's a long story.
THIMBLE

MERCEDES

Hair color? Eye color? Skin color? Temperature? Blood pressure? Heart rate? Cholesterol? Are you bringing any foodstuffs into the country? Liquor? Tobacco?

POTPÉE

No.

MERCEDES

Our duty-free shop is right over there, if you care to browse. Thimble, we'll need to scrape the bottom of her...her, uh...

THIMBLE

Shoes?

MERCEDES

No.

THIMBLE

Soul?

MERCEDES

No.

THIMBLE

Plank?

MERCEDES

...plank!...the bottom of her plank...for any invasive plant, animal life, or contraband. And stowaways. Don't forget about stowaways this time.

POTPÉE

Stowaways? Under there? Are you kidding me? They would have drowned.

MERCEDES considers this.

MERCEDES

Check for snorkels, too.

THIMBLE

Righto. Will do. Operation Desert Schnorkel is about to commence.

THIMBLE exits, returns wearing diving gear—swim fins, goggles.
She dives under the plank.

MERCEDES

Creams? Gels? Ointments? Do you have any?

POTPÉE

I told you. I don't have anything. Everything was washed overboard.

MERCEDES

What countries did you visit while you were away? How long were you away?

POTPÉE

I'm not sure. It's pretty open out there.

MERCEDES

Do you have anything to claim?

POTPÉE

I have this umbrella. And this fishing pole.

MERCEDES

You can keep those.

POTPÉE

Thank you.

MERCEDES

Touch your nose with your finger. Stand on one foot. Now the other one. Very good. Hop around. Now the other way. Recite the alphabet backwards. Now the Pledge of Allegiance.

POTPÉE begins reciting the Pledge of Allegiance backwards.

MERCEDES

Forwards is fine. Now Itsy Bitsy Spider. Let's see your high beams. Hit your horn. Brakes.

THIMBLE resurfaces. She's covered in slime and seaweed.

THIMBLE

No stowaways. But there was this.

Holds up something: Kilroy was here. Alfred E. Neuman, something.

MERCEDES

I've very sorry, but I can't let you...uh, let you...let you...

THIMBLE

De-plank?

MERCEDES

De-plank. I'm very sorry but I can't let you de-plank. You'll have to stay onboard until further notice. You're quarantined.

MERCEDES and THIMBLE exit.

Night begins to fall. MERCEDES has forgotten her phone, and THIMBLE her purse. POTPEE investigates both items. THIMBLE's purse contains money. MERCEDES' phone? What the heck is this thing anyway? POTPEE hides them both among her treasures on the plank. POTPEE watches the moon rise.

Night.

The tide comes in. One by one the Ocean enters. The Ocean is not as clean as before. It has taken on the flotsam that might be in a small harbor: plastic six-pack rings, oil, sludge, etc.

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME each enter with different emotions. One is still proud, despite the garbage clinging to her. Another is humiliated. One remains true to herself. One is annoyed. One of the Ocean is weeping. Another comforts her.

What happened to you?	POTPEE
Bastards!	FETCH
Look at me!	CHOP
What happened?	POTPEE
They are going pay. I swear!	FETCH
Is she all right?	POTPEE
No, she's not all right! Look at her!	FETCH

POTPÉE

Omigod.

POTPÉE tries to comfort the Ocean, to hold it, but it slips through her fingers like water.

SWELL

They did it to all of us.

POTPÉE

You too?

SWELL

Yes, me too.

POTPÉE cleans the Ocean the best she can.

POTPÉE doesn't sleep this night. Subtle threats: Distant sirens. A car alarm. Then rain. Then thunder. Then lightning. She hides under the remnants of her umbrella.

A few days pass...

Day: POTPÉE rations what little there is left of a sandwich. She swats at bugs. Sounds of civilization.

Night. POTPÉE swats at more bugs.

Day: POTPÉE has to pee. She does so discretely. She begins to reread Moby Dick.

Night.

POTPÉE

Where did the stars go?

Morning. POTPÉE takes her fishing pole, and she has a net. She's going fishing, because she misses the Ocean.

The tide is still low, but it's running in, i.e. the Ocean enters one by one. POTPÉE takes a deep breath. She reacts as if she's caught the sudden whiff of the smell of an old lover in a crowd. There's a shell, maybe snagged in the netting on her plank or offered up to her by one of the Ocean, and she picks it up and smells it greedily, as if its salt, its stink, is something she's famished for. Perhaps she kisses it hungrily.

She takes her fishing pole and drops the line in the Ocean. She bobs the line up and down—boink, boink—on the Ocean’s head. The Ocean doesn’t want any part of this.

POTPÉE takes a coin out of THIMBLE’s purse and drops it in the Ocean. Plunk. Ripples. It’s fun. She does it again.

POTPÉE

Make a wish.

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME

(as an echo; as an echo) Make a wish. Make a wish.

POTPÉE throws a few coins into the Ocean. It has an effect on the Ocean. Ripples, ripples, ripples.

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME

(As ripples) Make a wish. Make a wish. Make a wish. Make a wish.

POTPÉE

Look how pretty. The way they glisten on the bottom. Sparkle and shine.

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME

(as an echo; as an echo) Sparkle and shine. Sparkle and shine. Sparkle and shine.

THIMBLE enters.

THIMBLE

Hi.

POTPÉE

Aaah! Don’t sneak up on me like that!

THIMBLE

Sorry.

POTPÉE

S’okay. It’s just that I’m not used to people doing that.

THIMBLE

Mercedes lost her phone and is wondering if you saw it. Hey, is that my purse?

POTPÉE

Is it?

THIMBLE

Yeah. And you're taking all the money out and throwing it in the ocean?

POTPÉE

I guess, yeah.

THIMBLE

Oh. Ok.

POTPÉE

So, what happened to the Ocean?

THIMBLE

What do you mean? Nothing happened to it. It's right there.

POTPÉE

I mean, it's polluted.

Coin toss. Ripple.

THIMBLE

Is it?

POTPÉE

Yes!

Coin toss. Ripple.

THIMBLE

Looks the same to me.

POTPÉE

It's not supposed to have garbage in it. Or oil. It's just supposed to have water in it. And fish. And whales. God, what's wrong with you people?

Coin toss. Ripple.

THIMBLE

I didn't do it.

POTPÉE

Well, you should know it's really upset. Angry. Trust me, you don't want the Ocean angry with you. I know what I'm talking about: My legs straddling this meager plank, a toothpick really, no more, and I felt the Ocean more than once come up through me and fill me and threaten me. I did. And just like the tide, it flowed back out of me, but it would rise up in me again, only to

leave me again, unscathed. Yet, I felt it, and I know its power: It made itself known. But one thing you always must remember. One thing you must never forget: The Ocean does not care if we live or die. It...does...not...care.

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME

(as an echo) No. No. We do not care...do not care...do not care.

THIMBLE

Ok, ok.

POTPEE

Remember that.

THIMBLE

I don't know what you're so upset about. If it were really bad for us the government wouldn't let it happen. Sheesh. They do seem to like change. May I?

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME

Give us change. Change. Change.

THIMBLE takes some coins and drops them into the Ocean.

THIMBLE takes a big wad of paper money and throws it to the breeze.

THIMBLE

Wheee!

It flutters down, and floats on the Ocean like little toy boats.

MERCEDES enters.

MERCEDES

Poppy! Thimble! What are you doing?

POTPEE jumps.

POTPEE

Don't do that!

MERCEDES

You don't throw away money like that.

POTPEE

Potpee.

What? MERCEDES

My name is Potpee. POTPEE

It's her name. Potpee. THIMBLE

Oh don't be ridiculous. What kind of name is...(she struggles)
Pap...pa...pah...peepda...popey...Pappy? MERCEDES

Potpee. POTPEE

Paypee. Pepi. From now on you're Poppy. And don't throw good money away like that. MERCEDES

Money is for things that give you enjoyment. POTPEE

That's right. MERCEDES

Doesn't it make you happy to see it floating on the water like a little fleet of boats? Like little planks of wood. POTPEE

Ooh, look! Boats! THIMBLE

Don't be ridiculous. You threw away good money. MERCEDES

Good money. Good money. Good money. Good money. FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME

Quick. Hand me that net. MERCEDES

MERCEDES takes the net and tries to fish out the money.

That smell. MERCEDES

Of course the Ocean makes her attempt frustratingly difficult. The money drifts just out of her reach, and finally MERCEDES loses the net to the Ocean, too.

MERCEDES

Well, that's gone for good.

POTPÉE

No it isn't. It'll show up somewhere. For someone who needs it.

MERCEDES

As if the world just dishes up whatever you need.

POTPÉE

When I was lost at sea sandwiches and soda pop and even a book floated right up to me.

MERCEDES

Did they? So money just grows on trees, is that what you're saying? Just for the picking.

POTPÉE

No, that's silly. Leaves grow on trees.

MERCEDES

That's right. Leaves grow on trees. Not money.

POTPÉE

And apples and oranges and peaches and pears and grapefruit and...

THIMBLE

Nuts. What? Nuts grow on trees. Bananas.

MERCEDES

But money doesn't. You have to work for money, Poppy. Work. You work hard and you save it and invest it and you're rewarded so you can acquire things like a house and a nice car and then another nice car and clothes so you have a comfortable life and that...and that!...is how you become successful. A wealthy person is a wise person; he must be, otherwise, how else could he have attained so much wealth? A wealthy person is a fair, moral, and deserving person. It's a blessing to have money; there is so much goodness in our country that if you can't transcend poverty, well Poppy, you're just lazy. It's shameful to be poor. Degenerate. Which is why we don't throw money into the ocean. Ok?

POTPÉE

Ok.

MERCEDES

Now, I've misplaced my phone.

THIMBLE

You didn't throw it in the ocean, did you?

MERCEDES

Have you seen it?

POTPEE

No.

MERCEDES

Are you sure? The last time I remember having it is when you arrived.

POTPEE

I haven't seen a phone.

MERCEDES

Shoot, I can't believe I can find it. I'm simply lost without it. Simply lost at sea.

MERCEDES rummages through a comically large, very expensive bag.

MERCEDES

I know it's here someplace, and if I keep looking for it I'll find it. I keep looking for it in the same place, knowing it's not there.

Rummage, rummage, rummage.

MERCEDES

Let's see. Mirror. Mints. Make up. Moisturizer. Chocolate. Credit cards. Change. Pepper spray. Sunglasses. Dental floss. Pink lipstick. Red lipstick. Plum lipstick. Black lipstick. Pen. Doesn't work.

MERCEDES throws the pen into the Ocean.

MERCEDES

Nail file. Gum. Perfume. Keys. Old movie ticket. Tissue.

THIMBLE

Gesundheit.

MERCEDES

Metro card. Safety pin. Wallet. Reading glasses. Hair tie. Tampon. Hairbrush. Cigarettes. Don't judge me. Lighter. I.D. card. Ear buds. Emory board. A bobby pin. Ticket stub to the Sox. Burt's Bee Balm. Change of underwear. Eye drops. Nope, not here. Oh well, it will show up somewhere.

THIMBLE

Just like money doesn't.

POTPTEE

That's a lot of stuff to be carrying around.

MERCEDES

Just the normal things.

POTPTEE

The more stuff you carry around, the harder it is to find what you really need.

MERCEDES

Oh, Poppy, just look at your hair. And when are you going to take a bath?

POTPTEE: Don't touch my hair: I rather like my hair just the way it is, thank you very much. MERCEDES touches her hair.

MERCEDES

We'll just have to do something about that, won't we?

POTPTEE

No!

MERCEDES does something with POTPTEE's hair that POTPTEE doesn't like.

MERCEDES

Do you know, when I look at someone like you, I think to myself, just what would Jesus do? What would Jesus do if he came across you?

POTPTEE

Like me?

MERCEDES

Oh come on: You know: Peculiar. Quirky. Tell the truth: You try extra hard to be different, don't you?

POTPTEE

How am I different from the wind? Or the ocean? Or the waves? I'm no different from them...

MERCEDES

See! That's what I'm talking about!

POTPÉE

...and neither are you.

MERCEDES

It's all so unnecessary, Poppy. How am I different from the wind! The ocean! The waves!

POTPÉE grabs MERCEDES' mouth, peers in, and...

POTPÉE

Hello in there. Is anyone in there?

MERCEDES remains remarkably in control of herself.

MERCEDES

Well, maybe you are a little different.

About POTPÉE's hair: maybe now there's a big bow in it...

MERCEDES

There. Much better. What's the matter? You look so sad.

THIMBLE

She's upset about the Ocean.

MERCEDES

Why, whatever for?

THIMBLE

It's polluted.

MERCEDES

Don't you worry your pretty little head about the Ocean, Poppy. It's fine.

THIMBLE

No it's not. There's garbage in it, Mercedes.

MERCEDES

You're overreacting. The Ocean is big. It's more than big; it's huge. It's not just huge; it's very, very huge. Bigly even. There's garbage there today...yes...yes there is. But tomorrow, the tide will go out, and the garbage will be gone. All gone. That's how it works.

THIMBLE

(Aside) Careful, she knows a little bit about the Ocean.

POTPÉE

There's not supposed to be any garbage in the Ocean.

MERCEDES

You know what? You're absolutely right. Garbage is not supposed to be in the Ocean. But guess what? It happens. Just like sometimes an egg turns up in my underwear drawer. It's not supposed to be there, but what am I going to do?...

THIMBLE

Don't look at me. I don't put them there. Nope. Nope, not me.

MERCEDES

...Deny the egg is there?

POTPEE

We're not talking about a few stray gum wrappers, or, did you say, an egg?

MERCEDES

You know, I love people like you. You sit on your little plank there, like a little queen, you've got your book, what's left of your umbrella, you don't bathe...

POTPEE

Where am I supposed to bathe? You won't let me off my plank.

MERCEDES

I'll bring some towelettes next time I visit. And you expect everyone else to live like you do. Well, get over yourself.

POTPEE

The Ocean is polluted!

MERCEDES

Well, so what if it is? So are a lot of things, in case you haven't noticed, Poppy.

POTPEE

Potpee.

MERCEDES

Things wear out. Sweaters. Shoes. Just last month, I had to replace my Vulcan ten burner 60-inch natural gas range with its standard oven. You can't expect things to last forever. You can't expect the ocean not to wear out a little bit. You can't keep it as pristine as it was on the first day of creation. And, here's the thing—are you ready for this? We're all going to die. You. Me. Thimble.

THIMBLE

Wait. What? I'm going to die?

MERCEDES

Even that Ocean there. What makes you think the Ocean is immortal when nothing else is?

POTPÉE

I guess.

THIMBLE

I don't want to die!

MERCEDES

You can't even drink the water. So, so what if it's a little polluted?

POTPÉE

Things live in the Ocean. Fish.

MERCEDES

Then eat chicken. Listen, Poppy...

POTPÉE

Potpee.

MERCEDES

...I understand. I really do.

POTPÉE

Do you?

MERCEDES

Yes.

POTPÉE

You can't.

MERCEDES

I can't? Well, that's a little presumptuous, don't you think? These sandwiches that you say the Ocean magically provided you when you were lost—did you refuse them? Did you turn them away? No, of course you didn't. Your soda pop? Your book? When God gives you an oil field, or a uranium mine, are you supposed to just say, 'Uh, no thank you, God, I'll just sit here in the dark?' God takes care of the little birds in the fields.

POTPÉE

What if I told you that I know for a fact that the Ocean is alive? That it is as alive as you and me? Not just alive, but probably has a spirit akin to our soul.

MERCEDES

Hmm. Well, I would say that many people, who are more intelligent, more schooled, and more established than a little girl sitting on a plank of wood would say otherwise.

POTPÉE

But we're all too small. Most of us lack perspective because we've never been beyond our own limiting boundaries.

MERCEDES

Oh. Oh, we lack perspective. I've never ventured beyond my own "limiting" boundaries. Tell me, just what's it like to be so smart?

POTPÉE

It's all right.

THIMBLE

Smart looks fun.

MERCEDES

Thimble, please. You spent God knows how long deprived of everything a human being needs to stay alive—food, water, sleep...

THIMBLE

Cable.

MERCEDES

... You were probably hallucinating half of the time, and the other half you were petrified from fear. No wonder you're telling me the ocean is alive. The next thing you're going to tell me is that—oh, I don't know—that whales can talk.

POTPÉE

Well, not like this. But it is possible to communicate with them.

MERCEDES

With their souls, I imagine.

POTPÉE

Kind of.

MERCEDES

It's a miracle you were saved. Just in time.

POTPÉE

You know, maybe it wasn't such a good idea to leave the ocean.

THIMBLE

Don't be silly. You would have died. Eventually. When the sandwiches stopped coming.

POTPEE

I mean ever.

THIMBLE

Ever, like never?

POTPEE

In the long run. Millions and millions of years ago. Maybe it was a mistake when that mutant fish flopped out of the water and lay gasping in the mud, establishing a beachhead for...all this. Maybe in the long run we should have stayed in the Ocean and developed a civilization there, in the water.

THIMBLE

(Aside) Huh. Interesting.

POTPEE

I honestly can't think of any other place I'd rather be than on the Ocean.

MERCEDES

Poppy. What an absolutely idiotic and sacrilegious notion. We belong on land. Solid land. Immovable land. Unchanging. Perpetual and stable throughout the centuries.

THIMBLE

Discounting plate tectonics, of course.

MERCEDES

It's a place where you can make a decision and stick to it because what you decide today will still be there tomorrow. When that first little fish flopped on land, he knew exactly what he was doing.

FETCH

Turn around. You're going the wrong way, silly!

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME

Come back, little fish. You're going the wrong way. Come back.

FETCH

Silly.

MERCEDES

Out of the Ocean and onto dry land. The Ocean? It's so inconsistent. Constantly changing. Never the same. Not even from one moment to the next: It can't stay still. Up and down. Round and round. Just saying those words makes me dizzy. And all of those ugly creatures. Nothing warm

nothing furry. But bulging eyes. Slimy scales. Swimming out of the gloom, in and out of echoing wrecks, filigreed with rust, to snatch you and hold you forever with their spines and needle-point teeth. Something as deadly as a snake or a tiger is familiar, at least, but what are those things in the Ocean? Who can tell the difference between a cod and a halibut?

POTPÉE

If you would just consider it. You'd see the human form and all its elements. The swell of a shoulder. The rippling muscles of chop. The flowing hair of spume and a fetch of the lower back, as complacent a place to rest your hand as any. Illuminated by the grinning skull of the full moon, as bald as space itself.

MERCEDES

No.

POTPÉE

Can I ask you a question?

MERCEDES

Of course. You can ask me anything, Poppy.

POTPÉE

Have you always been this sure of yourself?

MERCEDES

Oh yes. Rock solid. As a child I would reprimand my parents for waffling when they disciplined me. I like both my feet on solid ground. Terra firma.

POTPÉE

Can I ask you another question? It's kind of personal.

MERCEDES

Go ahead.

POTPÉE

It's something I've been wondering about.

MERCEDES

What is it, Poppy?

POTPÉE

Are you talking? Are do you just think you're talking?

MERCEDES

I'll choose to forgive you that remark. Let me give you a little bit of advice. Now that you're here? Just fit in, Poppy. It's for your own good.

I'll try. POTPEE

Everyone wants to fit in and be liked. MERCEDES

They do? POTPEE

Yes! Of course they do! MERCEDES

Oh. I'll try. POTPEE

Try very hard. Personally, and I don't mean to brag, but I have 228 friends. MERCEDES

Wow! Two-hundred... POTPEE

...twenty-eight. Yes. A modest number, really. MERCEDES

How do you know the exact number? POTPEE

Here I'll show you...Oh, shoot. I could show you if I had my phone. This is so annoying. MERCEDES

Were you going to call them? Ask them to come here? POTPEE

Call them! You are adorable. There's nothing better for the soul than the warm embrace of friendship, Poppy. When you're feeling alone, when you look around and there isn't another soul in sight, what are you going to do? MERCEDES

Read a book? POTPEE

Watch a movie? THIMBLE

MERCEDES

How are you any different from the rest of us? From me? That's the question. You have two arms. Two legs. A head. And a body in between. Maybe I don't have your dreams. But neither do I have your nightmares. There's comfort in a crowd. There is strength in numbers and a shared view of the world. Do you like sports, Poppy? Team sports I mean.

POTPÉE

Uh...I...uh.....no...

MERCEDES

You should. Everyone should follow a team. If professional sports are not your cup of tea, pick a college team. The excitement and enthusiasm is contagious. Contagious! There's the controlled violence of football. Marching down the field in three yards and a cloud of dust. Or the bomb!

POTPÉE

It sounds like warfare.

MERCEDES

It's not Poppy. We have actual war for that. But if that's not to your liking, there's basketball for its speed and agility. Of course, there's nothing akin to the ballet of a 6-4-3 double play in baseball. Tinker to Evers to Chance! But basketball. That's your sport, if you don't mind my saying, Poppy. Basketball! A three-on-one fast break. The futility of the lone defender guarding his goal against the onslaught of the charging hoard. He hasn't a chance, yet he still tries—the height of human nobility—but always ultimately fails. Yes, Poppy. I think you should start following basketball.

POTPÉE

Ok.

MERCEDES

Fish swim in schools, birds fly in flocks. They do it for a reason. You? The individual? The lone wolf howling in the night? Not so much. Remember: The lone nail gets hammered down, Poppy, and you best learn that. Otherwise, you're doomed for unhappiness. We're your friends, Poppy. Remember that. It's so nice to see you.

POTPÉE

It's nice to see you too, Mercedes.

MERCEDES

Remember, if you see my phone let me know, won't you? Oh, and I wouldn't try leaving. Paddling out of here at midnight on your little plank. Stay with us for a while, won't you? Coming Thimble?

THIMBLE

I'll catch up later.

MERCEDES

Fine. Ta.

MERCEDES exits. THIMBLE watches her go, then, a beat.

THIMBLE

She's gone.

THIMBLE pulls out a pack of cigarettes and lights one up. She takes a long drag. THIMBLE has taken a 180 degree turn.

THIMBLE

You might want to ixnay on the whole Ocean having a soul thing. If she had her phone she would have tagged you then and there. As it stands, you've got a little time, at least until she gets home and finds it.

POTPÉE

What's she going to do?—turn me in?

THIMBLE

Yeah.

POTPÉE

So, I should expect the Inquisition?

THIMBLE

Nobody expected the Inquisition. Their chief weapon was surprise.

POTPÉE

And fear.

THIMBLE

And fanatical devotion to the Pope.

POTPÉE

Don't forget bright red robes.

POTPÉE & THIMBLE

Nobody expects the Inquisition!

THIMBLE

Don't worry. It hasn't come to that. Yet. Listen, they've got boats, planes, and helicopters. They've got satellites. They've got their network of spies, snitches, and busy bodies. They could track you down before you can say, first amendment rights. Don't worry. Mercedes basically is a big fish in a little pond. The very worst you'll get is some alt-right Christian conservative who wants to save your soul and take your money. Just play along and they'll eventually leave you

alone. Better yet, just fake being gay, then after a bit, pretend you're cured. That'll get them off your back.

POTPEE

You're joking. She seems harmless. A little whacky, but harmless.

THIMBLE

Yeah, she's harmless all right. Harmless like a Mexican killer bee. Remember what she said about the crowd. Individually they're harmless. It's when they swarm they're vicious. They're quick to swarm, and they attack in numbers and pursue their victims relentlessly for miles and miles. They do it all in the name of Jesus and patriotism so they think whatever they do, no matter how cruel, is justified because they'll achieve immortality in heaven. It's all very self-serving.

POTPEE

So, you don't go in for her Jesus stuff?

THIMBLE

Not every Christian is a rabid lunatic any more than every Muslim is a terrorist. I just play along. It's better to just go along and not make waves.

The Ocean makes waves; THIMBLE gets wet.

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME

We make waves.

THIMBLE

(To the Ocean) Cute. Ha-ha. Very funny.

POTPEE

Wait. Do you see...?

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME: wink, wink, nudge, nudge.

THIMBLE

(To POTPEE) She clings to her religion like a drowning person clings to a piece of driftwood. No offense.

POTPEE

None taken.

THIMBLE

I'm surprised you're not more of a Jesus freak. He's kind of in your wheelhouse, isn't it? Jesus was a fisherman. Jesus calmed the seas while his disciples crossed over to the other shore. From this life to the afterlife. She's rife with these simplistic stories about pulling nets in loaded with fish, walking on water, feeding thousands with a couple of fish and loaves of bread.

POTPÉE

But she doesn't believe sandwiches can float up to a plank.

THIMBLE

Ironic, I know. They're good stories about how to live a good life, they really are. She thinks the bible can fix society.

POTPÉE

Society needs fixing, huh?

THIMBLE

It's a work in progress. Like I said, it's better to just play along. So. Fish. After millions of years, one very special fish broke away from the school, after throwing itself out of the water onto land, lay gasping on the land, exhausted, but alive. Are you that fish?

Long pause.

POTPÉE

No. I am not that fish.

THIMBLE

But you are a fish? Maybe one who's taking two breaths before dying?

POTPÉE

I never thought about it. Why? Do you think I am?

THIMBLE

It's like Mercedes said: There's something a little different about you.

POTPÉE

That's not a good thing, is it?

THIMBLE

I didn't say that. But right now? You might want to watch yourself.

POTPÉE

Ok.

THIMBLE

Just trying to be a friend.

POTPÉE

Ok. I will. Thank you.

THIMBLE

You have to ask yourself, though, why did they do it? What made them do it?

POTPÉE

Are we talking about fish again? Or killer bees?

THIMBLE

What made them leave an environment where they knew they could at least survive, and instead throw themselves into an unknown world where not even basic survival was guaranteed?

POTPÉE

Maybe they just saw an open door, said what the hell, and walked through it. Or in their case, swam through it.

THIMBLE

Maybe they saw a glimpse. Something. Through a crack.

POTPÉE

Maybe.

THIMBLE

Just a sliver of light coming through.

POTPÉE

Could be.

THIMBLE

Or maybe with practice...

POTPÉE

Practice?

THIMBLE

You know: Practice.

POTPÉE

I'm just trying to imagine a fish practicing anything. The scales? Joke. Sorry. My humor didn't work with whales, either.

THIMBLE

There was just a sliver of pure light glinting through a crack in the door. And the fish couldn't always see it. Only at certain times. Or maybe in a dream.

Quick pause.

POTPÉE

Go on.

THIMBLE

But with practice, maybe the fish...maybe the door opened just enough for the fish to leap through. And it found itself on dry land. Do you believe that?

POTPÉE

It's plausible.

THIMBLE

Why didn't every fish swim through the door, too?

POTPÉE

Maybe some did see it, maybe they all saw it but ignored it. Maybe it just took a certain kind of fish to see the door and actually go through it.

THIMBLE

Where did that certain fish come from? What did it look like? How did it act? Did the other fish shy away? Reject it? Call it strange or crazy or different? To the point where the fish had no choice but to take a flying leap at the crack in the door—when that sliver of light finally made itself appear again for that split second—and fling itself through the door? What precipitated that climactic point in its life where it threw itself through the open door and surprise! found itself lying in the mud unable to breathe, but the last seconds of its life revealed a new world? That's what I want to know.

POTPÉE

Good question.

THIMBLE

Do you believe it?

POTPÉE

Mercedes believes Jesus is her savior, but she would say she knows he is.

THIMBLE

Do you know it then? About the fish.

POTPÉE

I don't know what I know. No one does.

Beat

POTPÉE

I think first you have to see something. Then you have to believe that you're actually seeing what you're seeing. Only then will you know that thing.

THIMBLE

So what was it like out there?

POTPEE

Ah. I see where you're going here. You wouldn't understand.

THIMBLE

Try me.

POTPEE

How do I know you're not one of Mercedes' little snitches? (pause) It was...not like this. Not in the least.

THIMBLE

Sounds pretty good so far. And how did you go to the bathroom? Kidding. But wasn't it frightening?

POTPEE

Sometimes.

THIMBLE

Just sometimes?

POTPEE

Look, I really don't want to talk about it.

THIMBLE

I can understand why. Something traumatic like that. It's hard to process. You're trying to get back into normal life.

POTPEE

You're very perceptive.

THIMBLE

You say that like I'm not.

POTPEE

Then you are more perceptive than I thought. I mean, yeah, there was this little piece of wood between me and the bottom of this vast, deep, great Ocean. I could feel the depth, its vastness filled me up inside. It was so big, and I was so small. But, at some point I realized it wasn't any different than being on the Earth. Being on a piece of wood floating out in the middle of the Ocean is exactly the same as being on the Earth as it zooms through the universe. They both spin and bob. They twirl and twist on currents and eddies. One in water, the other in gravity, but they're really the same. The Earth is as fragile as any piece of wood in the middle of the Ocean, with all of us clinging to it. We just don't perceive it. But even when I was so frightened, when I

was experiencing heart throbbing, paralyzing fear right on the edge of death, afterwards it became crystal clear that I was alive. So alive. And after that happens enough times, that feeling of being alive became very normal. Not like before.

Before what? THIMBLE

Pause

I don't know. I honestly don't remember. POTPEE

When your life takes on even greater value, it seems to me you'd fear death even more. THIMBLE

Once you've lived—really lived—you're not afraid of dying so much. POTPEE

Oh come on. THIMBLE

Are you afraid to die? POTPEE

Of course I am. Who isn't? THIMBLE

What are you afraid of? POTPEE

What do you think? THIMBLE

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

What else? Darkness. Disappearing forever, without a trace of ever having existed. That there is more than this, after, but I'll fuck up the transition. THIMBLE

The transition? POTPEE

The transition. THIMBLE

Long pause.

POTPÉE

Why don't you simply believe in God like Mercedes and achieve immortality that way?

THIMBLE

I tried. It doesn't seem to work. For me.

POTPÉE

People fear dying because they fear they haven't lived a meaningful life.

THIMBLE

Fuck you.

POTPÉE

That's what I think.

THIMBLE

Fuck you again.

POTPÉE

Then why else would that fish fling itself on dry land? If it wasn't looking for meaning?

THIMBLE

Because it was a fish. Nothing but a fish.

POTPÉE

That eventually turned into a person.

THIMBLE

Meaning what? Put my money on reincarnation?

POTPÉE

That maybe it's possible that there's something else for people, just like there was something else for that fish. And the fish knew it. And was willing to risk everything for a better world.

THIMBLE

I noticed you didn't say things were better for the fish. Just something else. Were you lonely?

POTPÉE

Are you?

Pause.

POTPÉE

Maybe I was at first. Not as lonely as I feel here, but I quickly got used to it. But I really didn't see it as being alone. I was with myself.

THIMBLE

Yourself. Interesting.

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME

(as an echo; as an echo) Yourself.

POTPÉE

Exactly as I am with you right now. And as you are with me. Just as Mercedes is with her two thousand friends. There is absolutely no difference between me sitting alone on a plank of wood in the middle of the ocean and me standing here with you. They're exactly the same.

THIMBLE

And you don't find that frightening?

POTPÉE

No. Should I be frightened of myself?

POTPÉE

Maybe. Do you ever get scared? Of yourself, sometime?

POTPÉE

I learned not to live with fear. Any fear. I didn't even accept its existence. When I said everything was washed overboard, I meant everything. I had no constraints. What did time matter to me? Or religion or politics or silly social mores like burping or farting are impolite? What time did you get up today?

THIMBLE

Seven o'clock, like I usually do.

POTPÉE

Why?

THIMBLE

That's what time breakfast is served.

POTPÉE

And you ate again at noon?

THIMBLE

Yes.

POTPEE

You drive on the right because that's what you are told...

THIMBLE

Oh come on: You need rules. Otherwise we'd run into each other.

POTPEE

Still. You drive on the right because that's what you are told and you do as you're told. You go to work at a certain time, leave work at a certain time. You follow society's rules, for fear of being ostracized over the simplest things. I bet you wouldn't even wear socks for mittens for fear of being made fun of. Right or wrong, fair or not, you're not deciding what you really want to do. The next thing you know you're taking off your shoes. Touching your nose. Reciting the alphabet backwards and you do it without question because you are not free and you never have been. You may think they're small things, but the Grand Canyon was eroded away one grain of sand at a time. You'll never experience real freedom until every constraint is washed away with the tide until nothing is left but the waves.

THIMBLE

That's pretty radical.

POTPEE

After a certain length of time, I don't know how long it was really, I suddenly and miraculously had my very first original thought since I was about six years old. Which, coincidentally, was right about the time I entered the school system, another of this world's more powerful constrictors.

THIMBLE

What was that thought?

POTPEE

I'd be embarrassed to tell you. But eventually the thoughts got better. Like the fish, with practice.

THIMBLE

Would you go back? If you could?

POTPEE

I thought I could spend the rest of my life out there. But it just sort of happened; it's not like I planned anything. I was so lucky. The conditions were perfect for me to survive. There just happened to be a plank for me to cling to. The air and water were the perfect temperature. Not too cold or hot. There were storms, but just bad enough to keep me alert. If things had been different one degree either way, I would have perished.

THIMBLE

Like that fish. Perfect conditions.

POTPÉE

I guess. Life survives on a knife's edge.

THIMBLE

On a plank in the middle of the ocean.

POTPÉE

On a blue-green marble zooming through space.

POTPÉE falls into a reverie. It lasts awhile, almost as long as it takes a book to float up to a plank of wood in the open ocean. A long, very uncomfortable silence that THIMBLE is clearly not comfortable with. Finally, THIMBLE waves her hand in front of POTPÉE's face.

THIMBLE

Hello. Anyone home?

POTPÉE

What did you say?

THIMBLE

I said, Hello in there. Anyone home?

POTPÉE

Oh my God!

POTPÉE pries open THIMBLE's mouth.

POTPÉE

Hello in the there.

THIMBLE

Hello in there.

POTPÉE

Hello in there.

THIMBLE

Hello in there.

POTPÉE

Hello in there.

THIMBLE

Hello in there.

Laughter gives way to seriousness.

THIMBLE

If you do go, someday, take me with you.

POTPTEE is silent, clearly uncomfortable with the request.

POTPTEE

I don't know why, but despite everything, I never slept better in my life than when I was at sea. I never worried about falling overboard. It didn't enter my mind that I would roll off that narrow plank of wood. I felt the Ocean would catch me. But here, I feel like I'm walking a narrow plank, high in the air, so in danger of falling and without a net. And I'm not disappearing, but I feel already that I'm beginning to fade.

THIMBLE

Do you know what I do? I just say to myself, I can do this.

POTPTEE

I can do this?

THIMBLE

Yes. Just say it.

POTPTEE

I can do this?

THIMBLE

Well...maybe with a bit more enthusiasm.

POTPTEE

I can do this.

THIMBLE

Better. (no it isn't)

POTPTEE

I can do this. (gives up.)

THIMBLE

You just have to pace yourself. Don't look at the whole thing. Otherwise you'll never make it. It will overcome you, and topple you, and bury you. That's inevitable. So, here's what you do. Ready? Monday morning. Do not look over the whole week. Just concentrate on Monday. Close your eyes. Don't look down. That's a big mistake. Monday, you just have to push through the day and get some momentum going. Just push push push push push and...hey! you're moving! Yay! And at the end of the day you're kind of happy because, you're moving. Tuesday. You're

moving some more. And if you're lucky—really lucky—you just keep moving and kind of get up to speed. Wednesday? Well, they don't call it Happy Hump Day for nothing, sister. Thursday. Thursday I say to myself, I can do this. I feel so...powerful. I can do this. And Friday is pretty much just a cruise. You can see the finish line. And you just keep doing that over and over and over and over. Do it four times, and there's a month. Then you repeat that twelve times and the next thing you know you've gotten through a whole year. And then a couple of years. And then...wow, yeah. You say, where has all the time gone? My life? (pause) But, that's how you do it.

POTPEE

Wow.

THIMBLE

Yeah.

Uncomfortable pause. THIMBLE pulls out her phone and scrolls.

POTPEE

What is that thing? Everybody seems to have one.

THIMBLE

This? It's my phone.

POTPEE

That's a phone? It looks like a garage door opener.

THIMBLE

It's that too.

THIMBLE slides through her apps. Pulls up the OpenSesame app.

THIMBLE

Ok. Let's see. Uh, here we go: OpenSesame. Ok. So, see that house over there? Across the water? With the weather vane?

POTPEE

With the whale on top? With the spout?

THIMBLE

Yes.

POTPEE

Very accurately rendered, I have to say.

THIMBLE

That's where I live. Now watch this.

Garage door rumbles opens.

POTPÉE

Whoa. A phone can do that? What did it do?—call the house?

THIMBLE

Kinda.

POTPÉE rummages through her stuff. She retrieves Mercedes' phone.

POTPÉE

Is this what Mercedes was looking for?

THIMBLE laughs with a seal bark.

THIMBLE

Yep, that's it.

POTPÉE

What's the big deal?

THIMBLE

You hold in your hand pretty much everything that makes up Mercedes' world. You're pretty lost without it.

POTPÉE

Everyone has one of these?

THIMBLE

It's a long story. If you don't have one of these you're basically screwed. Like you need the GPS because of the austerity measures, (although that's not really what they called them but that's what they were,) but the government privatized the roads and stopped making street signs. You need one if you want to eat out because restaurants have to be on the network to get a license. The same with bars. Everything that's manufactured—like my garage door—has to use it or else the company can't sell it. That's part of the government's program on integrated business growth. Apple paid a lot of money to the government for that contract, they call them public sponsorship programs, and they're still paying for it. It's crazy. Yeah, this has been going on for a while.

POTPÉE

I remember mobile phones, but nothing like this.

THIMBLE

It was all part of the government taking control after this series of big economic crashes. Part of the Greater Government & Corporate Business, Banking, & Social Alliance? Yeah, you were floating around out there on the ocean. Some people say it was a scourge. Others the best thing to happen to the human race. It's probably somewhere in the middle.

POTPÉE fiddles with the phone. Can't figure it out.

POTPÉE

How does it work?

THIMBLE

Give it here.

THIMBLE tries a few passwords. She easily hacks into MERCEDES' phone.

THIMBLE

Got it. Mercedes is so lame. It's either John114 or PotteryBarn123. So here...

THIMBLE hands the device to POTPÉE.

THIMBLE

... 'k...so here...are your apps. You scroll, or slide ...

THIMBLE demonstrates.

THIMBLE

Tap.

THIMBLE

News. GPS. Weather. Here are all the friends she was talking about. Two hundred and twenty-nine. She added one.

POTPÉE

They're all her friends?

THIMBLE

More like people who don't want to get on her bad side.

POTPÉE

So what's all this? Pictures and stuff.

THIMBLE

Cats. Pictures of cute cats. Pictures of kids. Just stuff people post. More cats.

POTPÉE

It's stupid.

THIMBLE

Yeah, I guess. I don't know. Two thousand, two hundred twenty-nine people like her. It's a good thing when people like you, and a bad thing when they don't.

POTPÉE continues to scroll, fascinated.

POTPÉE

So, it's really a popularity contest. What are these?

THIMBLE

Oh, those are comments people write.

POTPÉE

(reading) Adorable. Adorable. How adorable. How cute. Interesting. Mercedes, I don't know how you do it. You're amazing. (To THIMBLE) This is stupid. There's nothing interesting about any of this.

THIMBLE

It's what friends do.

POTPÉE

They tell each other they're interesting when they're not?

THIMBLE

It makes people feel good. And the more interesting you are, the more people will like you. You can add a few exclamation points if you want. It shows you're enthusiastic, which is almost as good as being interesting.

POTPÉE

Do you have this many friends?

THIMBLE

Me? No. I have like twelve. And they're more like strangers. Total, random strangers. I think one's in prison. I'm not sure. If she's not, she should be.

POTPÉE

Aren't you interesting?

THIMBLE

No, I'm not interesting at all.

POTPÉE

What about me? Do you find me interesting?

THIMBLE

Yeah, you're interesting.

POTPTEE

You're just saying that, aren't you? Because that's what "friends" do.

THIMBLE

No. No, really. I think you're interesting. Honest.

POTPTEE

I think the fact that you don't think you're interesting makes you very interesting.

THIMBLE

Really?

POTPTEE

Yeah. Different. Judging from this, everyone thinks they're so interesting, which interestingly, makes them all alike, which is really uninteresting. But you don't think you're interesting. So that makes you different. Which makes you interesting. As a matter of fact, you're probably the most interesting person I've met since I landed here.

THIMBLE

Really? Wow.

POTPTEE

So. Do you want to be friends?

THIMBLE

Really?

POTPTEE

Sure. Since you're so interesting.

THIMBLE

Ok. Friends. Wow. I got a friend. A real friend.

THIMBLE types.

THIMBLE

Hanging with my bestie, Potpee.

Two friends enjoy the silence. POTPEE continues to investigate MERCEDES' phone.

POTPÉE
Wait, so what's this?

THIMBLE
Oh, he's the president. He got elected and just never left.

POTPÉE
Huh. Wow, Mercedes sure likes him.

THIMBLE
Oh yeah.

POTPÉE
Do you?

THIMBLE
He's ok, I guess. Some people...

POTPÉE
What?

THIMBLE
Nothing.

POTPÉE
Didn't he used to be, like a...kind of like a...

THIMBLE
Yeah. He still is.

POTPÉE
And he's the president?

THIMBLE
Uh-huh.

POTPÉE
Huh.

POTPÉE continues scrolling.

POTPÉE
It looks like he's good for the country. Jobs. Economy is strong. No war.

THIMBLE
Yeah. It's all pretty good.

Time.

POTPÉE

Uh. Weird.

THIMBLE

What's weird?

POTPÉE

Nothing. No. Yeah, it's probably nothing. Weird.

THIMBLE

Hey, did you see any whales when you were out there?

POTPÉE

Yes, as a matter of fact. I saw a whale and her baby. A little whale baby girl.

THIMBLE

Are they as big as they say they are?

POTPÉE

Yeah, they're pretty big. But they smell. They smell horrible.

THIMBLE

Really? I didn't know that? They smell that bad?

POTPÉE

It's the spout. Think about where it comes from. Deep inside the whale. Think about what it must smell like...deep inside the whale.

Pause

WHALE exhales—a deep cavernous sound.

Pause

WHALE exhales—a deep cavernous sound.

Pause

WHALE exhales—a deep cavernous sound.

POTPÉE

Ever wonder what it smells like, deep inside us. Deep inside our dreams. And our thoughts.

THIMBLE

Hey, are you okay?

POTPEE

What do your thoughts and dreams smell like, Thimble?

THIMBLE

Um...I...I'm not sure my thoughts smell like anything.

POTPEE

Do your dreams smell like a new day after a rain? Your hope like dirt newly turned over? Like new mown grass? Or is it more like the funk of low tide? Fish rotting in the sun? Fly covered and putrid?

THIMBLE

No! No. My dreams don't smell like that.

POTPEE

How do you know? Have you ever given them a whiff? What's your deepest, nastiest thought, Thimble? Tell me.

THIMBLE

I don't have one!

POTPEE

Of course you do, Thimble. We all do. What is the one thing you would do if you knew you could get away with it? Who—or what?—would you fuck up, Thimble, and not tell anyone that you had? Mercedes?

THIMBLE

No!

POTPEE

Who would you put naked before the world? What would you say if you had absolutely no worry of repercussions? What are you hiding from your friends?

THIMBLE

Nothing! I'm not hiding anything.

POTPEE

Where is that line that you'd have to cross to have this happen? Because that line is in all of us, and you only need a little nudge to get pushed across. To be set free.

The sun is setting.

THIMBLE

I gotta go.

POTPÉE

Would you mind if I kept this a while? Our little secret. Between friends.

THIMBLE

Sure. And maybe some of the things I said about fish? Maybe it's better not tell anyone I said those things. They might be...misinterpreted. Sleep tight. Don't let the bed bugs bite.

POTPÉE

Not when there's this many sand fleas.

THIMBLE exits.

Day turns to night.

POTPÉE scrolls.

POTPÉE scrolls.

POTPÉE scrolls.

POTPÉE

Unbelievable.

POTPÉE scrolls.

POTPÉE

What the fuck??

POTPÉE scrolls.

POTPÉE

You're fucking kidding me.

POTPÉE scrolls.

POTPÉE

Jesus H. Christ.

POTPÉE puts down MERCEDES' phone. She contemplates what she just saw. She thinks.

FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, & SPUME swirl.

FETCH

It wasn't just one fish. It was the culmination of millions and millions of fish throwing themselves on land.

CHOP

One was lucky enough to suck one breath of noxious air and die, until after millions more fish, one took two breaths before dying.

SWELL

And after millions of years and millions more fish, another one took three breaths, until that one very special fish lay gasping on land, exhausted, but alive.

SPUME

Are you that fish?

Pause

POTPTEE

God, why can't you see the stars around here? Where are the fucking stars?! That's why these people are so lost: They can't see the stars!

POTPTEE picks up MERCEDES' phone and begins reading and typing.

POTPTEE

Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Very stupid. God, look at this guy: I'm humbled to have been chosen by the chairman to serve as... The fact that you put this out on the Internet is the exact opposite of humility, you moron. Jerk. Stupid. Stupid. This guy's just trying to impress women to get laid. Oh, that's so interesting. Not. Fucking exclamation point.

POTPTEE continues to type until...

POTPTEE

Oh my...fucking...You liar. You fucking liar. Post. Word. Truth.

Early morning. POTPTEE is exhausted...from all of her typing. She picks up her fishing pole and drops in a line...for some relaxing fishing.

The Ocean considers POTPTEE and her situation. The Ocean concocts a plan. One of the Ocean seizes her fishing line and gives it a good, hard tug...

POTPTEE

Whaa!

...and another and another and another.

POTPÉE fights the “fish”.

POTPÉE

Hey! Hey hey hey, I could a little help here, people! Whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa. Somebody!

POTPÉE continues to fight the “fish”: she reels it in, it runs out line, she reels it in, it runs out line....

POTPÉE

Aaaaaaaaaahhhhh!

The line goes quiet. The line goes slack. POTPÉE searches the universe for the fish, then—SNAP!—the Ocean gives a mighty tug, launching POTPÉE into the arms of the Ocean.

POTPÉE

Aaaaaaaaahhh!

The “fish” takes off, pulling POTPÉE along in a Nantucket sleigh ride.

POTPÉE

Aaaaaaaaahhh!

POTPÉE zooms around the harbor on her stomach...

POTPÉE

Aaaaaaaaahhh!

...POTPÉE starts having fun, finally getting to her feet, water skiing as she’s pulled by the “fish”. POTPÉE is a witch riding her broom, dancing naked around a fairy ring. She chases MERCEDES and THIMBLE who have come to see what all the noise is about.

POTPÉE

Whoo-hee! Look at me!

The Ocean slows down, and POTPÉE is gently deposited back on shore.

MERCEDES

What is going on!? Look what you’ve done!

POTPÉE

Sorry about that. Things got a little carried away.

MERCEDES

Things got a little carried away? You were quarantined! You were explicitly told not to...
disem...disem...

THIMBLE

Plank.

MERCEDES

Disemplank.

POTPÉE

Oooh...yeah. Oops. Sorry.

MERCEDES

You disobeyed. You don't care, do you? You think it's funny. Hand it over. I know you have it.
Now, give it to me.

POTPÉE relinquishes MERCEDES her phone.

MERCEDES' phone starts beeping like a house on fire. There
clearly are lots of things happening.

MERCEDES

What? No. No. No. What did you do? Oh my God. You posted...

POTPÉE

The truth.

MERCEDES

This is fake. All fake. Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my God. (reading) Traitor! I
knew it all along!

MERCEDES types.

MERCEDES

I've been hacked. Someone stole my phone. This isn't me. This isn't me.

POTPÉE

You've been such a help to me, Mercedes. Your advice. Your concern. I wanted to return the
favor. You should step off land and into the Ocean.

MERCEDES: rage

POTPEE

The truth was there, but you ignored it.

MERCEDES

Twenty-two friends. Twenty-...Twenty measly friends. And this one should be in prison. Sailors were made to walk the plank for mutinous acts.

THIMBLE

Arrrrr...Avast ye, matey.

POTPEE

All right, all right, you got me. I'll conform. Just let me live.

THIMBLE

(Breaking the fourth wall) You call this living?

MERCEDES

(Considers THIMBLE) So you decide: Does she live or die?

THIMBLE

Me?

MERCEDES

Yes, you. Don't pretend, Thimble. I know all about your two. I'll take care of you later. But for now, what you decide will affect your fate. Does she walk the plank? Or...

THIMBLE

Or...?

MERCEDES

Not.

THIMBLE

I...I...well, it's not really my decision.

MERCEDES

If it's not yours, then whose is it?

THIMBLE

Uh...uh...maybe we should vote.

MERCEDES

Okay. Let's vote.

Secretly. THIMBLE

There's only two of us. MERCEDES

Right. (beat) How are you going to vote? THIMBLE

(Whispers) It's a secret. MERCEDES

Come on. Come on. I said I'd do what you wanted. POTPEE

We don't believe you. Do we? MERCEDES

Well, there might be a speck of truth in what she says. THIMBLE

(To THIMBLE) Hey you. Yeah, you. You know that crack in the door? Of course you do, because you see it too, don't you. Don't lie? You see them all the time. POTPEE

No, I don't see anything. She's lying. THIMBLE

Thimble? What's she talking about? MERCEDES

I don't know. She's obviously talking nonsense. I don't know anything about a door. THIMBLE

Not completely opened doors. Just cracks. But I've learned—I've been taught, through practice—to understand their significance and not ignore them or take them lightly. And I was looking on your phone. I saw one of those cracks. But this time I didn't see light coming through the crack. I saw darkness. As dark as any moonless night at sea. And I used your little device, as a key. There are more doors there. Did you know that? Closed doors, lots of doors, and behind them are secrets. And your little phone opened those doors. POTPEE

See, Thimble. They bring it on themselves. MERCEDES

POTPÉE

Oh yeah, blame the victim. I'm just trying to make it easier for you. Assuage your guilt.

MERCEDES

I'm not guilty of anything. You, on the other hand...

POTPÉE spits on MERCEDES.

POTPÉE

Better? You want to know what it was like out there? I survived. It was as simple as that. I was spit out of a spiraling vortex where there was no consciousness of this reality, where cause and effect had no meaning or nothing else had meaning for that matter. Nothing had meaning, nothing had value, nothing was named. All that existed...was nothing. There were no rules, no numbers, logic, systems, processes, ethics, morals, or principles. No religion. No system of commerce or government. No armies, kingdoms, or empires. Everyone else drowned and was wiped clean and I was all that remained. What saved me, if that's even the correct term, wasn't a god. Perhaps it was a mutated gene. I don't know. But the sun did bake my brains. I was hunted by sharks and killer whales. Attacked by sea monsters and jellyfish and giant squid. I was in no position to diagnose or evaluate or ascertain. All I could do was live—stay alive. Breathe in and breathe out. Pump blood through my veins. Replace nourishment to my vital organs. I learned to kill with my bare hands and I learned to like it. I could fashion weapons from anything around me. A rock. A stick. My tears. I survived. I did resort to cannibalism and I ate myself. Don't even ask me about my period, or how I went to the bathroom. I guess I did go mad...slightly. I focused all of my energies on devising ways to kill, and in doing so, I realized that, the more life I snuffed out, the safer I became. No other life became more important than my own. Social interactions became...problematic. I stopped bathing; it was no longer important. I masked my smell with a musk, of a sorts. I embraced everything that was toxic and harmful to me. I ate shit. Breathed water. Inhaled noxious gas. Still I didn't die. I grew stronger.

MERCEDES

We commit your body to the deep, to be turned into corruption. Walk.

POTPÉE walks the plank, but just before she steps off, she turns.

POTPÉE

(To THIMBLE) You can only get there on your own. Don't be afraid if you see a chance.

POTPÉE drops into the ocean, and disappears. There a few moments, then:

THIMBLE

Whoa. Did you have to do that?

THIMBLE looks down in the water, around the plank. POTPÉE surfaces with a roar like a breaching great white shark and grabs THIMBLE by the neck and drags her under.

MERCEDES

Thimble!!!!

POTPÉE resurfaces, spits a stream of water from her mouth, and remounts the plank. THIMBLE struggles with the Ocean and is pulled under. POTPÉE paddles back out to sea.

MERCEDES, scared shitless, exits.

Lights shift. It is a dim, dark, blue day.

POTPÉE straddles the plank in the middle of the Ocean. She's crying uncontrollably. THIMBLE breaches the water—she's not a very good swimmer—making noises like a dog with its muzzle too deep in its water dish. POTPÉE is astonished. THIMBLE splashes around for a second or two, then sinks under the water.

POTPÉE's not sure she just didn't hallucinate, but then THIMBLE breaches the water again, snorkels around in the water, then sinks again. POTPÉE processes this.

THIMBLE breaches the water again. She grabs onto the plank. She clings to the plank.

She struggles to climb aboard.

THIMBLE

Help me up.

POTPÉE

You're alive.

THIMBLE

Barely.

POTPÉE

I'm so sorry.

THIMBLE

That's ok. Just help me up. What are you waiting for? Take me with you.

POTPÉE

I'm so sorry. There's no room.

POTPÉE bangs on THIMBLE's knuckles causing her to again slip below the surface of the water, this time for good. The Ocean embraces THIMBLE.

POTPÉE looks down at THIMBLE, on the bottom of the Ocean.

POTPÉE

Sparkle and shine. Sparkle and shine.

POTPÉE paddles away.

POTPÉE

One two three four. One two three four. One two three four. One two three four. ...

The theater goes dark.

POTPÉE exits.

SEAGULL

Kaa-kaaa. Kaa-kaaa.

Lights slowly go up.

In the middle of the Ocean. Daylight. A single plank floats in sparkling water. THIMBLE breaches the surface of the water, gasping. She looks around, and the Ocean pulls her back under. Maybe this happens a few times. She resurfaces, looks around, sees the plank and struggles to get to it. FETCH, CHOP, SWELL, and SPUME, by turns, help, hinder, and toy with THIMBLE.

FETCH

(Pulling THIMBLE down) Turn around. You're going the wrong way, silly!

THIMBLE struggles and makes it to the plank. She hauls herself up on the plank, and lies there gasping, exhausted but alive, like a fish that has flung itself out from of the primordial soup onto land.

Lights fade.

End of Play