

Sick

by

Erik Patterson

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CHARACTERS

Pamela: A twenty-eight-year-old woman.

David: Her husband.

Michael: Their ten-year-old son.

Brown: His doctor. Handsome, charming.

Gary: Pamela's brother.

Carla: His wife.

Jeannie: A sales clerk.

SCENE ONE

A street corner, outside an apartment building.

PAMELA and DAVID sit on a bench. Their 10-year-old son, MICHAEL, sits on the ground a few feet away from them. Michael's transfixed by GARY, a drunk man pacing in front of the building.

Gary looks like shit: black eye, bloody mouth, his shirt ripped at the neck. Pamela and David ignore him as he repeatedly yells up at a window on the second floor of the apartment building.

PAMELA

I think I'm dying, David.

GARY

Fuck you!

PAMELA

I don't want to be a waitress anymore.

GARY

You motherfucking...fucker!

PAMELA

The restaurant's giving me cancer.

GARY

You fucking...*fucking*...

(Beat. Gary looks for the right word.)

GARY

...FUCKER!

PAMELA

And besides, I hate it so much. I mean, do you know how long I've been there? I've been—oh my god—I've been at the same place for ten years now. Ten years ago, if you told me I was gonna be a waitress for the rest of my life, I probably would've killed myself.

GARY

Why do you have to be such a fucker?!?

PAMELA
I wish I could start over. You know what I mean?

DAVID
Yeah.

PAMELA
So what should I do?

DAVID
(trying to help)
You could find another job.

PAMELA
Just like that? Just find another job?

DAVID
If that's what you want.

PAMELA
But what would I do?

DAVID
We've talked about this a hundred times.

PAMELA
Who would hire me? I can't do anything.

DAVID
Then take a class. Learn something.

PAMELA
That's good. I could take a class.

GARY
You...fucking—
fuck!

PAMELA
But when am I gonna find the time to take a class?

DAVID
I don't know, Pamela.

PAMELA
I don't have any time.

Then don't take a class.

DAVID

GARY

You...stupid, fucking—
fuck!

(Gary takes off one of his shoes.)

PAMELA

What do you mean?

GARY

I mean, if you think I'm gonna leave, then just—

(He throws his shoe at the window.)

GARY

...You're a fucker!

DAVID

(frustrated)

Don't quit the restaurant. Don't take a class. Don't do anything. Just keep complaining about it. Since that's what you do so well.

PAMELA

(hurt)

Sorry.

(beat, then justifying)

My day just kinda sucked, that's all.

GARY

You fucking fucker!

PAMELA

There was this guy who sent his food back twice.

GARY

Fucking fuck-face fuck-breath!

PAMELA

And this big party that tipped really bad.

GARY

I'm not leaving!
 If you think I'm leaving—
 I'm not!
 I'm staying—
 Right.
Here.

PAMELA

And then I had this really weird poop.

(David just looks at Pamela. He can tell she wants him to ask about her poop...but he decides not to. Beat.)

DAVID

That sucks. I'm sorry to hear you had such a bad day.

PAMELA

Yeah, it totally sucked.

(Gary makes a point of shutting up and ignoring Carla's window.)

DAVID

My day didn't suck.

PAMELA

It didn't?

DAVID

No.

(beat)

You gonna ask me about it?

PAMELA

I'm distracted.

DAVID

Is that a yes or a no?

PAMELA

How was your day?

DAVID

I finished the Fischer account, I left the office early, and then I went to Michael's game.

Oh no...

PAMELA

Yeah.

DAVID

I forgot his game.

PAMELA

Yep.

DAVID

I was wondering how he got so dirty.

PAMELA

He had a game.

DAVID

Right.

PAMELA

How'd he play? *(beat)*

DAVID

He's getting better.

PAMELA

Did he score a goal?

DAVID

He hit a double.

PAMELA

So you think he'll play football when he grows up?

DAVID

He doesn't play football.

PAMELA

Don't they call it football in England?

DAVID

We're not in England.

PAMELA

I know, but—

DAVID

And that's soccer. He plays baseball.

PAMELA

You know I get all those ball games confused.

DAVID

They're completely different.

PAMELA

But they use the same ball.

DAVID

Two of the balls are round and one of them isn't.

PAMELA

I don't see what that has to do with anything.

DAVID

He plays baseball.

PAMELA

I know.

DAVID

Not football.

PAMELA

I said the wrong word. It's not a big deal.

DAVID

Pam, it is a big deal. It's what our son does. He plays baseball. He had a game today. And you weren't there.

PAMELA

(changing the subject)

Can we talk about my poop?

DAVID

(dumbfounded)

Your poop.

PAMELA

It was really weird.

Weird how?
DAVID

I don't know. Just different.
PAMELA

How do you know it was different?
DAVID

Because I know my poop. I know when it's normal. And I know when it's not. Today it was weird. I think it's because of the restaurant.
PAMELA

(Beat.)

David?
PAMELA

I'm listening.
DAVID

You're giving me that look.
PAMELA

I just thought we weren't gonna do this anymore.
DAVID

Do what?
PAMELA

I can't do this anymore.
DAVID

Do what?
PAMELA

I thought we were over this.
DAVID

Over what?
PAMELA

Fine.
DAVID
(a decision)

PAMELA

Over what, David?

DAVID

Tell me why you think your job is making your poop weird.

(Gary breaks his silence.)

GARY

I'm still here, you know!

PAMELA

Never mind, you're mad at me now.

GARY

And I'm not your fucking tool!

DAVID

No, you wanna talk about poop, let's talk about poop.

GARY

'Cuz *I'm* not fucked up!

PAMELA

Not if you're gonna be like that.

GARY

You are. You're fucked up!

DAVID

What do you want me to say? I'm listening. Talk.

PAMELA

Okay.

GARY

Fucked up on coke!

PAMELA

People are mean at the restaurant.

DAVID

They're mean?

PAMELA

Yeah.

GARY

Maybe you're clean now, but you're gonna be fucked up again soon!

PAMELA

You know how people get.

DAVID

I guess.

PAMELA

When they're hungry, they get mean.

GARY

I mean, *Jesus!*

PAMELA

And they take their frustration and hunger out on me because I'm their "server."

GARY

Yeah, I said "Jesus," you heard me!

PAMELA

So I start to resent them.

GARY

Fuck Jesus!

PAMELA

I start getting mad at them. But I can't let them know I'm mad at them because the customer's always right. So I just smile. And I keep that anger inside.

GARY

Jesus didn't die for *my* sins. So if you want him, you can have him!

PAMELA

And I keep thinking that pretending I'm not angry all the time must be doing something to me.

GARY

But that's fucked up! You should want *me*—not *Jesus!*

PAMELA

I mean:

GARY

I mean:

PAMELA

It must be doing something to my body.

GARY

I'm your fucking husband!

PAMELA

Right?

GARY

Be—!

My—!

Fucking—!

Wife—!

You—!

Fucker—!

PAMELA

It must be doing something to my body.

GARY

(almost to himself, defeated)

Fuck.

PAMELA

And then I had this weird poop today and it made me realize that maybe all of that anger is manifesting itself in my poop.

DAVID

Your poop was *that* weird?

PAMELA

You should've seen it David. It wasn't just weird poop. It was angry poop.

DAVID

Then you should quit your job. Find something else.

PAMELA

I don't know.

(Beat.)

PAMELA

I'm hungry. What are we gonna do for dinner?

DAVID

We should get something. Take-out.

PAMELA

Give him a few more minutes. Then we'll go.

DAVID

Okay.

(Impotent and frustrated, Gary starts punching the building with his head and his fists.)

(David turns to Michael.)

DAVID

Michael?

(No response. Michael's staring at Gary.)

DAVID

Michael, are you hungry?

(Michael continues to stare at Gary.)

DAVID

(more forceful, getting his attention)

Mike.

MICHAEL

What?

DAVID

Are you hungry?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

DAVID

What do you want?

MICHAEL

I don't know.

McDonald's?
 DAVID

Yeah.
 MICHAEL

DAVID
 Okay, we'll go to McDonald's. You think you can wait a couple more minutes?

MICHAEL
 Yeah.

GARY
(a final outburst)
 Just let me back in, you Goddamn
 Motherfucking
 Cunt-bag
 Cocksucking
 Shitfaced
 Douche-machine!

(Beat. We see the fight drain out of Gary's body. He makes one last attempt at connection...)

GARY
 I LOVE YOU!

(And then he finally gives up. He lies on the ground for a moment, motionless.)

(Beat.)

MICHAEL
 Mom, I think he's done.

PAMELA
(yelling towards him)
 Gary, are you done?

GARY
(to Pamela)
 Fuck you.

PAMELA
 Just tell me if you're done. Are you done, Gary?

No. GARY

I want to go home. Let's go home. PAMELA

I am home. GARY

Gary... PAMELA

Now leave me the fuck alone. GARY

I'm tired and I'm hungry. PAMELA

So? GARY

So can we go? Are you done yet? PAMELA

No. GARY

Come on, Gary. Carla's not gonna let you back in. Just tell her to fuck off one more time and then let's go home. PAMELA

No. GARY

Why not? PAMELA

I don't have a home anymore. GARY

You're coming home with us. PAMELA

(Beat. Gary doesn't move.)

PAMELA

Okay.

(to David)

You try.

DAVID

Gary, your sister has a headache, let's go.

(No response.)

DAVID

You wanna go to McDonald's, Gary?

(David walks over to him.)

DAVID

Are you hungry, Gary?

GARY

No.

DAVID

It's just past seven-thirty. When was the last time you ate?

GARY

I don't know.

DAVID

Why don't you come to McDonald's with us and then we can take you home and wash your face.

GARY

I don't want to wash my face.

DAVID

You'll feel better.

(Beat. David touches Gary's face. Looks close at his bruises.)

DAVID

Gary, you look terrible.

GARY

Shut up.

DAVID

Let's go home so we can wash your face.

(David helps Gary up off the ground.)

GARY

I don't have a home.

DAVID

I know, but are you hungry?

GARY

Yeah.

DAVID

Then let's get some McDonald's.

GARY

I hate McDonald's.

DAVID

Michael wants McDonald's.

GARY

(to Michael)

You like McDonald's?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

GARY

I hate that crap.

(Michael looks at him, like: so?)

GARY

So would you do your Uncle Gary a favor and tell your parents you wanna eat at fucking Del Taco?

(Lights shift.)