

# **Me & George**

**A solo play**

**by**

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I'm trying to get to work. They're shooting the movie "The Perfect Storm" in our town of Gloucester, Massachusetts. There's no parking!

I've been driving around this quaint seaside fishing town of 35,000 for over half an hour and there's no parking because the movie has taken over the town, the newspaper, the restaurants, the conversation and the dock down where I work, where I park.

"Excuse me, Officer, I'm late. I have to get to work. I have to. You see that dark stone house up there on the hill. I work up there. I've got to get up there. I don't care if it's in the middle of the movie set. I don't care about the movie or movie people. I know about movies. I was in some. I was an actress until I turned 50 and there was nothing for me anymore. Now all I've got left is a part-time job in that dark stone house, and if I can't park then I can't get up there, and if I can't get up there then I can't work, and if I can't work then I can't eat, and if I can't eat then I'll die. So where the hell can I park so I can live?"

Oh dear. The policeman is scared. Sometimes these little emotional outbursts happen to me. They say it's the time of life I'm in. I say it's because my life sucks. I find a place to park 10 blocks away.

I begin my climb up the steep hill to work, to the dark stone house where the painter, Fitz Hugh Lane once lived (big deal). Now his ghost or some ghost roams the stairwell. We don't like each other at all. He breaks the Xerox machine, I scream at him. He is also afraid of middle-aged women. Good.

The movie set is all around us. In fact they've taken over our dock where the Adventure, the schooner I work for,

usually sits. She sits at the dock all year long because she cannot sail. Poor thing. I hate boats. They make me sea- sick. Once when they were showing me around the Adventure, I kicked her. Now they've dragged her away to somewhere else so that the special boat from the movie, the doomed Andrea Gail, can sit in her place.

They've also rebuilt the Crow's Nest Bar at the beginning of our dock. The real Crow's Nest, just down the street, is the bar that's featured in the best selling non-fiction book, "The Perfect Storm", which the movie is based on, which I'm not going to tell you about. You have to read it for yourself like I did.

Now they've rebuild this fake Crow's Nest, so it can overlook the dock where the Andrea Gail sits, and so the movie people can control the whole shooting environment around the dock, except for our little dark stone house on the hill where I work.

Inside the house I begin my climb up the three flights of steep stairs. On the second floor I stop. I hear yelling and clapping. I look out the window on the 2nd floor of the dark stone house. Down below in the parking lot, George Clooney is playing basketball. They've set up dressing room trailers in the parking lot, where I normally park, and a portable basketball net for George. He's playing on my parking space! He likes to play between takes, it relaxes him. Dribble, Dribble, shoot - basket.

I can see his dark stubbly beard and the sweat coming through his gray T-shirt. Ah, Ah, suddenly my whole being is riveted. I find myself climbing onto the windowsill and pressing my face against the glass for a closer look. What if, I was walking down there and the ball was thrown too far? I pick it up and toss it back, making a basket.

George says, "Hey good shot." "Thanks" "Want to play?" And I do. I'm fabulous. I'm short but fast. George is trying to keep up. We are panting and laughing.

Suddenly he grips his chest and falls over. He's had a little cardiac arrest. Oh no. I leap across his body before his bodyguard can get there. I'm doing that hit the heart thing, giving him the breath of life, pressing my lips to his. When suddenly he opens his eyes and looks into mine. "You saved my life." "Yes I did." "You are one incredible broad." "Yes I am." I turn away, and walk up the hill, back to work. He looks longingly after me. "Now that's a woman I want. Want." At that moment the crazy guy, who's been lurking around the public urinal on the first floor of our building, takes a shot at George. I stop the bullet and I'm dead.

Why do my romantic fantasies always end in death? There is no answer only the taunting cry of those idiot pooping seagulls. My soul drifts out over the movie set.

Stop soul! Come on back here. You don't have to die for George Clooney. Who's George Clooney to me? I never even watched ER. But he reminds me of something, of someone - the half smile, the tilt of his head - Oh my God, he reminds me of George, my imaginary husband. How could I have forgotten him? Is it possible to imagine someone before they are even born?

It's summer. I'm seven. George, my imaginary husband, and I are sitting in the back seat of the family car counting telephone poles. Sometimes if you count up to 10 and skip every other one you win and get your wish on the tenth pole. George usually wins. He says I don't need to make wishes anyway. Since I have him, what's to wish for? George thinks he's terribly clever.

My parents light up cigarettes in the front seat. We roll down the windows even more and lean our heads out and watch the fence posts go by. I like the telephone poles but I really love those fence posts. The way they twist, the way they're all connected so they're not lonely. George says even during tornadoes they don't blow over because they have each other. Like us.

Suddenly he says, "Would you like to smoke a pencil?"

"Is this one of your jokes George?" I say.

"No, no. Try this. See how good it feels between your fingers. Look what happens to your hand."

"Very graceful." I say.

"Try a long pencil", says George. "Try a short pencil."

I try a long pencil, a short pencil.

"Feel the difference," says George.

"Oh George, yes, this is divine."

The eraser part is the end to put in your mouth. Then you can chew on it a little as you inhale.

George and I lean against each other and blow pencil smoke into the wind and back into each other's faces. Smoking a pencil can change a person in so many ways.

That was the trip I left George in the closet of that motel.