

WRITING SAMPLE

FLIGHT OF THE DOVE

A Play in Two Acts

by

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## CHARACTERS

### PETER

Forties to sixties. Highly intelligent, insightful, overly analytical, emotional, a poet and writer who holds a meaningless job he hates.

### BELINDA

Forties to sixties. Highly intelligent, overly emotional, seeks fantasy more than reality but not delusional, feisty, starving sexually.

## TIME

Now.

## THE SCENE

The play takes place in Peter and Belinda's home, and inner minds, as well as other locations that are represented using a bare stage, simple costumes, mimed and real items, and simple lighting effects.

There is a huge pile of old baggage stage right. The pile consists of large and small memorabilia from a life spent together.

## EXCERPT 1

*In the opening of the play Belinda is fantasizing, and Peter comes home blasting his horn outside to get her to open the door.*

*The car horn is one continuous blast. Belinda jumps up pissed off and moves to the front door. The car horn stops.*

### BELINDA

**...WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAT WHAT WHAT WHAT IN MY ONE AND ONLY PRECIOUS LIFE DO YOU WANT YOU GODDAMNED PERSISTENT PAIN IN THE ASS?!**

*She mimes pulling the door open fast. Peter steps into what would be the door frame and stands in the doorway holding 2 very heavy grocery bags (actual props without food in them.) He's a mess - his shirt is torn to shreds, a sleeve hanging off and his bare arm showing and scratched, his face dirty, hair disheveled, his face bleeding from a punch to his lip, panting and tired almost unable to move leaning on one leg, seeming to be tilting over.*

*He gives her a dirty look, she backs away opening the door wide as Peter comes stumbling in, limping, grumbling and groaning having difficulties holding two filled grocery bags. He hands one with difficulty to her, it's very heavy, and she follows him in dragging behind. He throws them down on the table huffing.*

PETER

It's a disaster out there. Wild beasts. Worse than yesterday. We're DOOMED!

*He moves almost as if drunk with exhaustion down stage right and peeks out at the audience looking at the street through the (invisible) large window. She stands behind him looking out at the audience.*

PETER

(screams right over the audience)

MANIACS! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU I WAS JUST SHOPPING EVER HEAR OF THAT - SHOPPING, AS OPPOSED TO STEALING? LOOTING - YOU MANIACS!

BELINDA

Calm down you're OK now. You're home. You're not as beat up as last time. Things might be improving.

PETER

MANIACS - A WORLD OF MANIACAL MANIACS. THE WORLD IS TURNING TO SHIT - DELUSIONAL BEINGS WALKING AROUND AS IF THEY WERE INTELLIGENT, WHEN THEY'RE JUST - MANIACS!

BELINDA

I know. Calm down it's not good for your health.

PETER

Getting more dangerous - since they outlawed reason, facts and common sense, legalized lying, alternative facts, genocide, and made it a law that to run for President you have to be indicated at least fifty times.

BELINDA

I thought they revised it to one hundred and fifty Indictm...

PETER

...you can't even go shopping without someone trying to rip the shirt off your back.

BELINDA

Who tore your shirt like that?

PETER

Some woman at the checkout counter, pissed off I took my time piling things neatly. I should have punched her right in the nose - I tried to reason with her but she jumped on my back hitting me with a box of cheerios. Then ripped my shirt off with her teeth. She apologized when she came to her senses, and said she had a bad day her car was stolen and someone ate her dog while alive. I'm sorry?! She malled me like a wild fucking bear in the woods - I'm sorry? FUCK YOU I'M SORRY!

(out the window again  
raising fists)

I SHOULD HAVE PUNCHED YOU RIGHT IN THE NOSE YOU MANIAC!

*He takes his shirt off, throws it on the pile,  
takes another shirt off the pile and starts putting  
it on. Then picks up a towel and wipes his face  
and arms.*

BELINDA

Maybe we need to get some guns.

PETER

Tanks! It's a shit storm of stupidity out there. DOUBLE THE MILITARY BUDGET AND WE STILL HAVE MANIACS OUTSIDE OUR WINDOWS? WE'RE DOOMED!

BELINDA

Why don't you go back out and buy some automatic weapons.

PETER

(putting on his fresh shirt)

Nice try. We're stocked up with food for now. I did the shopping. What took you so long to answer - you have to help we have to share responsibil...

BELINDA

...I was in the middle of someth...

PETER

...We're always in the middle of someth...

BELINDA

...you must have forgotten something...

PETER

...I had the list...

BELINDA

...You always forget something...

PETER

...What were you doing that was so life-threateningly important?

BELINDA

Dreaming.

PETER

And you wanted me to lug in...

BELINDA

...Yes.

PETER

I could have had them delivered. I gave you some space. I needed time away too. I'm never shopping again!

*He begins to unpack. She is distant. Belinda reluctantly helps him put things away dreaming.*

PETER

You're doing it again you know.

BELINDA

We're always doing something, again, you know.

PETER

Not what I meant.

BELINDA

DOING WHAT DOING FUCKING WHAT PETER NOW WHAT IS IT THAT I'M DOING AGAIN?

PETER

(calm, quiet, direct)

Aloof.

BELINDA

ALOOF?!

PETER

Aloof!

BELINDA

I'm not ALOOF.

PETER

Worse, your Aloofness is coupled with Aloofness Denial.

BELINDA

Do you ever even listen to yourself or is it just one abstention masked by random endless meaningless irritating expurgated incorrect analysis?

PETER

Abstention is not a word.

BELINDA

Yes it is and if its not then I made it up which means it exists.

PETER

Don't divert with clever semantics.

BELINDA

Couldn't leave it alone couldya.

PETER

You're being aloof drains my energy sucking me dry and not the way you used to.

BELINDA

My hearts deflated. My mind's in a fog. I need to cum hard.

PETER

So masturbate who's stopping you.

BELINDA

You drain my energy far more than I drain yours.

PETER

And how do I drain your energy?

BELINDA

(calm, quiet, direct)

Badgering.

PETER

Badgering.

BELINDA

Over analyzing every little unimportant trivial detail.

PETER

Over analyzing?

BELINDA

And interrupti...

PETER

...Analyze everyth...

BELINDA  
...Pushy Neurosi...

PETER  
...What is a PUSHY Neurosi..?

BELINDA  
...YOU JUST INTERRUPTED ME AGA...

PETER  
...I'M NOT NEUROTIC OR PUSHY YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT YOURSE..

BELINDA  
...YOU EVEN OVER ANALYZE ANALYZING WHEN YOU'RE NOT INTERUP...

PETER  
...I never analyze analyzing. I don't even like analyzing. I don't even like talking. I'm just trying to figure out what the fuck is going on because I have no idea what the fuck is going on, about anything anymore, especially with you.

*She grabs the list.*

BELINDA  
Soup?

PETER  
Five cans.

BELINDA  
Dog food?

PETER  
Dog's dead.

BELINDA  
Then why is it on the list?

PETER  
Nostalgic.

BELINDA  
Condoms?

PETER  
For what?

BELINDA  
Who knows you might come back to life - booze?

PETER

No booze no more booze I forgot the booze.

BELINDA

You forgot my drugs too go back to the store.

*Short pause. They stare.*

PETER

I won't fall for your intricate web of defensive avoidance manipulations I know why you want me to go back and I'm not going back I'm tired of your tactics...

BELINDA

...OK Enough Stop...

PETER

...So you can be alone to masturbate...

BELINDA

...FUCKING STOP...

PETER

...You can masturbate in the bedroom, or bathroom, or balcony or in front of me, but I'm staying right here where it's safe. It's terrifying out there...

(out the window)

...MANAIACS!

(he stares outside terrified)

You need to stop trying to be tricky, Belinda, that won't work anymore because I know what's going on "underneath" all your bullshit.

*Belinda turns her back on him.*

BELINDA

All MY bullshit?

PETER

Yes. One hundred percent of your shit is out in the open like a naked platypus can't mistake it for anything else.

*He stops in front of the huge pile of baggage.*

PETER

It's like a pile of baggage.

*Pause. Belinda watches him looking at the baggage.*



PETER

(referring to the baggage)

Why is all this shit in the middle of my living room?

BELINDA

Spring cleaning.

PETER

It's Winter.

BELINDA

There was so much baggage I had to start a season early.

PETER

You're throwing out my stuff? That how you plan on divorcing me?

BELINDA

Divorce you, why do that and finally find some fulfillment I wouldn't know what to do with myself if I didn't have you to torment me.

PETER

Because your father attacked you verbally and criticized you, with a TONE, and whenever I come on tooooooo strong, you, being overly sensitive...

BELINDA

...I'm not overly sensitive you're overly insensitive..!

PETER

...all of our manipulative, neurotic, paranoid behavior is just a unique way of sucking energy from the other because that's what human beings do...suck.

*Belinda grabs an empty grocery bag, puts her thumb in her mouth, covers her head with the empty grocery bag and drops to the floor into a fetal position facing the audience. Peter turns as he hears her thud, walks over to her and stands directly over her looking down trying to control himself.*

*Long pause.*

*End Of EXCERPT 1*

## EXCERPT 2

*Later in the play, Belinda is going to leave Peter, and he is trying to get her to stay. This is mid-scene where she sadly confronts her feelings and expresses them to him, which triggers a cascade of poetic memories, born from a poem he wrote for her when young, and which is the foundation of their seemingly lost love. She has been reading from an old notebook of Peter's writing, directly to him and stops.*

BELINDA

I look at you, and see that tired, middle aged face attached to your worn-out body, and behind it I see a twenty five year old man standing on a park bench smiling ear-to-ear, with a rose in his hand, reciting a poem about a dove in flight, that he wrote just for me. And I know it was just a superficial quest to get into my pants, but lovely all the same. And that smile...

*Peter smiles that smile.*

BELINDA

...like the sun was shining through you.

PETER

The title was Flight of the Dove - I loved that poem.

BELINDA

I did too. It made me fall in love with you.

PETER

I have a very fond memory of it. I wrote it on toilet paper while taking a shit in a dive dinner on an old muddy highway on the way home from college somewhere in Kansas.

BELINDA

Why would you be thinking of a Dove while taking a shit?

PETER

Why wouldn't I? That diner was across from a dead cornfield with an old American Indian statue carved from an ancient tree trunk, at the foot of its entrance. The statue was half rotted away and his face looked like it was sobbing or in pain or both. Next to it was another wood carving out of another ancient dead tree trunk of a slave hanging from a chain. There was blood stains all over both. I wanted to send the poem to you so I would get laid when I returned. I had just read Cyrano de Bergerac.

BELINDA

Do you remember that bench? And that young, optimistic, beautiful young man jumping off that bench like he was trying to fly, then kissed me forever in the sun?

PETER

That kiss was like a tsunami and we just stood there as the thousand foot wave hit us, and as it subsided, everything on earth was destroyed, but we were still kissing in the sun.

BELINDA

A kiss is a lifeboat in the storm.

PETER

Then what happened?

BELINDA

That idealistic boys face grew older. Day by day by day. A line here. A small, almost undetectable droop of your skin there. Our dreams not coming true.

PETER

Still kissing?

BELINDA

Your stomach slightly falling outward. Your beard getting some gray in it. Eating the same meals.

PETER

Still kissing?

BELINDA

Your shoulders just a tiny bit smaller. Your bouts of impotence when you see me naked more frequently. Your dick too limp in the lamplight to lick.

PETER

Still kissing?

BELINDA

And your nervousness feeling it all slipping away, and trying to prop it up again, without poetry. Replaced by burps and farts.

PETER

It was lust.

BELINDA

It was love.

PETER

Love is what we want to believe exists.

BELINDA

If we believe it exists, it exists. Or we couldn't believe it.

PETER

It was both. It was neither. But it "was".

BELINDA

Even the fantasy of love is better than a reality without it.

PETER

When did the poem turn into a hot fuck?

BELINDA

After you bought that million-dollar life insurance policy.

PETER

Insurance did it for you - I'll buy some more.

BELINDA

(remembering this passage)

"The poem, the poet, the dreams of a life well failed. Maybe if something feels wonderful, it actually is. It sinks deeper and deeper inside of you somewhere. Until you forget it's there."

PETER

You can't see inside of me or I you. We cannot know what it is like to be the other. Sadly. It's almost impossible to know ourselves. Sadder.

BELINDA

(growing pain)

I need your love but I can't touch it, Peter. I can't smell it anymore. I've forgotten its taste. The rose you held up while reciting The Flight of the Dove to me, has wilted and died. In you. In me. And I hate that about us because we had it - we held it in our hands and hearts together. We gazed into one another's eyes for hours and didn't want to move. The many poems you recited to me have been buried under years of pain and resentment and anger and hostility and boredom...

PETER

...Replaced by fantasies to keep what's lost alive...

BELINDA

...poetry is a beautiful dream...I wanted our love to be like poetry...

PETER

...layered with infinite textures and scents and sounds and sights - beautifully layered and deep and freeing and dangerous...

BELINDA

...life and passion.

PETER

Poetry and fantasy reveals the possible in the unbearable. And anything is better than the unbearable.

BELINDA

Even the beauty is unbearable because we know it will only become a memory and one day end. But it feels so right to care deeply. For as long as you can.

PETER

Caring is messy and dangerous. All that effort and those you care about - either don't care, or die. Leaving you with a mess of memory.

BELINDA

(reading)

"With any loss, what is left is an emptiness begging to be filled surrounding your heart. And in the darkness of it all, you reach out desperately for a kiss from the sun."

PETER

The Flight of the Dove seeking a Kiss from the Sun. I like both as the title of an individual work, that no one will produce. To remain on a disk, like a memory waiting to be discovered. As usual.

BELINDA

(reading)

"Some things are never discovered. Like truths hidden because they ruin the deceptions we've worked so hard to obtain."

PETER

Yes. You cannot challenge fear-born delusions. I'm leaving...this house...this town...my job...everything. If you leave. Throwing it all over the cliff. I'm starting a new life, too.

BELINDA

That's what you always say.

PETER

It's what you're doing - tonight. Is it that terrible for you to remain here with me, than to risk your life to leave me?

BELINDA

I have a bus ticket, it's safe. I don't want to disappoint the bus.

*Belinda places the notebook back on the pile, and lifts a hot red dress off it, as Peter speaks below.*

PETER

It's exhausting - this humanity we were born with.

*She displays the red dress in front of her with a mischievous sexy smile.*

BELINDA

Do you like it?

End of WRITING SAMPLE