Don Zolidis
donzolidis@gmail.com

Zoodate

A Comedy in One-Act

By Don Zolidis

©2021 Don Zolidis ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright Protection. This play is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States of America has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

Reservation of Rights. All rights to this play are strictly reserved, including, without limitation, professional and amateur stage performance rights; motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video, and sound recording; rights to all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction now known or yet to be invented, such as CD-ROM, CD-1, DVD, photocopying, and information storage and retrieval systems; and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments. Amateur and stock performance rights to this play are controlled exclusively by Don Zolidis. No amateur or stock groups or individuals may perform this play without obtaining advance written permission from Don Zolidis.

Restriction of Alteration. There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the play unless directly authorized by Don Zolidis. The title of the play shall not be altered.

Author Credit. Any individual or group receiving permission to produce this play is required to credit Don Zolidis as the sole and exclusive author of the play.

AI training. For avoidance of doubt, Don Zolidis reserves the rights in any manner for purposes of training artificial intelligence technologies to generate text, including without limitation, technologies that are capable of generating works in the same style or genre as the play.

Zoodate by Don Zolidis
© Don Zolidis

One-Act Comedy
10-27 actors

Dating is wild, especially if you're a praying mantis and your date might bite your head off. Or a ram and you have to fight another ram on your first date with an ewe. Or a lobster discovering falling in love means molting. (Beavers have nothing to worry about though; they pair-bond forever and raise children equally.) Luckily there's Zoodate, the first-ever dating app for animals. Zoodate: When animal instincts just aren't enough. Not responsible for terrible dates with bad animals.

Cast of Characters

Pandas:
LING-LING, a female panda
ANNOUNCER, any gender

Praying Mantis:
STEVE, a male praying mantis
DAN, another male praying mantis
LINDA, a female praying mantis

Birds of Paradise:
LIAM, a male bird of paradise
JASMINE, a female bird of paradise
DINA, another female bird of paradise

Lobsters:
HERMAN, a male lobster
FRANCIS, a female lobster

Sheep:
MOLLY, a ewe
SIMON, a modern ram
ANDREW, another modern ram

Fish:
ELSA, a female parrotfish (at the beginning)
BRANDI, a female parrotfish (at the beginning)
MARLON, a male clownfish
LANCE, a male clownfish (at the beginning)

Platypi (or Platypuses)
SUE, a female platypus
GEMMA, a female platypus

DELILAH, a female beaver
CHARLES, a male beaver
BILL, a male platypus

Manakins:
ANDRE, a male manakin
LORNA, a female manakin
ANGEL, a female manakin
SAMANTHA, a female manakin

Strange Companions:
SHIRLEY, a female antelope
LEONA, a female lion

Bonus Scenes:

Octopi:
SHERMAN, a male octopus
BIBI, a female octopus

A note on the gender of the animals: An actor of any gender may play any role, but please have them play the gender of the animal as indicated. Parrotfish and clownfish change gender throughout their lives, so if there are members of your community that have an issue with that, they can take it up with God.

Doublecasting: Feel free to doublecast any of the roles as needed. A group could do this show with 10 actors or fewer if they had quick costume changes.

Lights up on a restaurant.

LING-LING, a panda, is sitting at a table, clutching some flowers. Occasionally taking a bite of them.

A well-dressed ANNOUNCER steps out.

ANNOUNCER

It's been said that there are plenty of fish in the sea. But what happens when you're an endangered species? Not so many fish then, are there?

Ling-Ling sighs, unhappily. The Announcer approaches her.

What's the matter, friend?

LING-LING

Stood up again. Sad panda.

ANNOUNCER

Sad panda indeed. Dating in captivity is hard, and even for animals in the wild it can be tough. Habitat destruction, predators, climate change, poor social skills, and some really gross mating habits can doom you to a life alone.

LING-LING

Is it me? Why do the other pandas prefer playing on the swing to being with me?

ANNOUNCER

Simple: Because those other pandas are trash.

LING-LING

I knew it.

ANNOUNCER

But fear not! Because we have the solution: the first ever dating app for animals: Zoodate.

LING-LING

Zoodate? How does it work?

ANNOUNCER

Ha ha ha how doesn't it work? Using our patented animal matching technology, Zoodate scours your nearby habitat to discover appropriate romantic matches! Tired of being alone? Tired of thinking there's no other animal out there for you? Try it today! Zoodate. When Animal Instincts just aren't enough.

quickly

Zoodate not responsible for terrible dates with bad animals.

LING-LING

I'm gonna try it!

Ling-ling rolls off her chair.

Also, does it come with a phone?

Lights change.

2.

STEVE, a male praying mantis, settles into the other table, adjusting his look in the mirror. He puts his hands in front of him like he's praying.

DAN, another male praying mantis, swings by. Also praying.

DAN

Steve!

STEVE

Oh hey man. What's up?

DAN

What are you doing here?

STEVE

I got a date. Got this new app – Zoodate. Matches you up with a lady.

DAN

Are you kidding me?

STEVE

Nope! Gonna get my love on. Woo hoo.

He rubs his hands together like he's praying.

DAN

Steve you can't do this.

STEVE

I feel like things are finally starting to happen for me. I've got a job now, I got in shape, I feel like the time is right to fall in love. Maybe this girl Linda is the one.

DAN

The one?

STEVE

The One.

DAN

You're a praying mantis, Steve.

STEVE

And my prayers are finally about to be answered. Axe body spray don't fail me now.

He spritzes himself with Axe body spray.

Oh yeah. Smells like… victory.

DAN

Steve, get out. Get out now.

STEVE

Just because you haven't found love –

DAN

I don't want to find love. Do you know what happens? Do you have any idea?

STEVE

I've got some hunches. We gaze into each other's eyes. Her mandibles start to click. I click my mandibles back. Maybe a little dancing. She tells me about her mother, her hopes, her dreams, and then I let her know about my goal to be a professional skateboarder. We buy a bungalow on the outskirts of the zoo, settle in to a long but emotionally fulfilling relationship –

DAN

She bites your head off, Steve.

STEVE

I'm sorry?

DAN

She bites your head off. She eats your entire skull.

STEVE

Why would she do that?

DAN

For calories, dude. Your head contains a lot of calories that she will need to create eggs.

STEVE

What happens to the rest of my body?

DAN

Who cares? She discards it like the broken husk that it is! It doesn't matter BECAUSE YOUR HEAD IS BEING DIGESTED IN HER STOMACH.

STEVE

What if she's nice?

DAN

No no no it doesn't matter if she's nice! This is what females do, man! They sweet talk you and they look all pretty and THEY EAT YOUR ENTIRE HEAD. They rip it from your body and consume it like a piece of cranial candy.

STEVE

That's really misogynistic.

DAN

That's truth! That's science!

STEVE

I think you just don't like women.

DAN

Do you remember Barry?

STEVE

Our friend Barry who was mysteriously decapitated?

DAN

Do you remember Paul?

STEVE

Our friend Paul who was also mysteriously decapitated?

DAN

LADIES ATE THEIR HEADS.

STEVE

I don't believe this.

DAN

What happened to your father, man?

STEVE

Daddy went on a long trip before I was born.

DAN

He went on a long trip inside your Momma's stomach! Get out! Get out before she gets here!

LINDA, a female praying mantis enters. She seems nice.

LINDA *(waving)*

Skipping Forward

JASMINE

Oh wow you're really dressed up.

LIAM

I'm a bird of paradise, I look like this all the time. I'm Liam, by the way.

JASMINE

Jasmine.

LIAM

Okay, you ready?

JASMINE

Maybe we can just look at the menu first? I hear they've got great grubs here.

Liam backs up. Stretches a bit.

Seriously I just want a nice dinner and some conversation. I don't need you to do the whole thing.

LIAM

Time to take you to paradise.

JASMINE

You don't need to use the lines –

Liam backs up and cleans his display area some more. Kicks things out of the way with his feet. Wiggles a bit.

Come on, dude. We're in public.

LIAM

Moves don't fail me now…

Liam shimmies to the side, cocks his head back and forth, then shimmies back in the other direction. He bounces up and down and wiggles at her.

Jasmine looks around, embarrassed.
She calls out to the other customers.

JASMINE

I just met this guy, so…

Liam's dance intensifies.
He shimmies back and forth and now shows her his wings again and again.
He uses his wings to create a face – bouncing his head back and forth.

Come on just have a seat. You don't need to do this.

LIAM

HEY BABY HEY BABY HEY BABY HEY BABY

Liam bounces up and down again, flashing his wings at her.

He starts shaking his butt.

HEY BABY HEY BABY HEY BABY HEY BABY

JASMINE

This is embarrassing. He's not with me, everybody. I don't know who this bird is.

She turns around.

Liam tries to get her attention more, waving and stomping and shaking back and forth.

LIAM

HEY BABY HEY BABY HEY BABY –

JASMINE *(interrupting him)*

Can you stop can you stop please?

Liam stops.

I am seriously not interested in the courtship dance.

LIAM

I thought that's what girls liked.

JASMINE

Where did you learn that?

LIAM

I watched nature videos on the internet.

JASMINE

Those are all staged.

LIAM

Oh.

JASMINE

You don't honestly believe that's what happens in the wild, do you?

LIAM

It seemed logical.

JASMINE

It seems logical for a bird to shuffle back and forth and squawk and shake their tail feathers and like whatever it was that you were doing with your wings? That makes sense to you?

LIAM

The narrator spoke with a British accent so I assumed it was factual.

JASMINE

Nothing you see on the internet is true, okay? Like let's just have a conversation. Talk to each other. Bird to bird. Do you have hobbies?

LIAM

I like to dance.

JASMINE

Hobbies that don't involve trying to pick up chicks.

LIAM

I like to groom my head plumage.

JASMINE

I gotta be honest with you, it's really kinda over the top.

LIAM

It makes me feel special.

DINA, another female bird of paradise, swoops in.

DINA

Hey.

JASMINE

Um, excuse me, we're in the middle of something?

DINA

I saw your display from over there at the bar.

JASMINE

Yo, chick, I'm already talking to this bird.

DINA

I like the way you move, bird.

LIAM

You do?

DINA

In fact…

Dina backs up and starts her own, less intense, version of the courtship dance.

LIAM

Oooh.

Liam gets up, goes into his dance again.

JASMINE

All right I'm leaving.

LIAM

HEY BABY HEY BABY HEY BABY HEY BABY –

DINA

YEAH BABY? YEAH BABY? YEAH BABY?

JASMINE

I guess I'll leave you guys to it. Word to the wise: don't expect any help building the nest. I know all about birds like this.

Lights change back to the other side.

4.

On the other side of the stage, FRANCIS, a female lobster, scuttles to the table and sits. HERMAN, a male lobster, enters shortly.

FRANCIS

You must be Herman.

HERMAN

Guilty as charged. I look like my profile pic.

FRANCIS

You're like the only lobster that actually looks like their profile pic.

HERMAN

And you look kinda like yours.

FRANCIS

I used a little mood lighting. Sue me.

HERMAN

No no – you look really nice.

FRANCIS

Thank you.

HERMAN

I like your claws.

FRANCIS

These little things? They get the job done. You've got some great claws.

HERMAN

I know. I work on them a lot.

FRANCIS

That must be a lot of time in the gym.

HERMAN

Yeah. But you know – you gotta put in the effort.

FRANCIS

So true.

HERMAN

Oh man this is great. I was so nervous about this date.

FRANCIS

You were nervous?! *I* was nervous! I kept thinking, what if he just attacks me for invading his territory?!

HERMAN

No I don't do that. Some guys –

FRANCIS

It happens.

HERMAN

I know. Some guys are horrible. But I'm a nice lobster.

FRANCIS

That is so good to hear.

HERMAN

Can I just say that um… I feel really comfortable with you right now?

FRANCIS

Wow.

HERMAN

No I'm serious. I feel safe sharing my emotions. Like I don't even need this protective shell.

FRANCIS

I love a guy who can share emotions.

HERMAN

It's just… I've been having a hard time since my Mom was caught in a lobster trap… and I thought that maybe I would never be able to get out there again, you know, without being scared that I was going to get trapped too. So it's a really big deal for me to actually go outside my lair and meet someone – this is the first time I've done it. But… I feel like it's worth it, because you seem wonderful.

FRANCIS

That's so beautiful.

HERMAN

Oh man I'm gonna cry.

FRANCIS

You can cry if you want. I want to have an emotionally mature relationship.

HERMAN

Yeah. Especially since…

FRANCIS

Since what?

HERMAN

I was watching this popular television show called Friends. And they said it was a known fact that lobsters fall in love for life – and old lobsters walk around holding claws. So… what if you're my lobster?

FRANCIS

I think I am your lobster.

They have a moment.

Let me just take a moment to check on my phone whether or not that television show was accurate.

HERMAN

Television would never lie to us.

Francis is googling lobsters on her phone.

FRANCIS

Oh.

She looks at it.

Oh boy.

HERMAN

What does it say?

FRANCIS

Um…
She scrolls.
Ew. Oh no.

HERMAN
What's it say about lobsters?

FRANCIS
So uh… if we fall in love –

HERMAN
Which I think we're totally doing.
**(If the realties of lobster reproduction are too horrifying for your community, you may skip the next few lines and jump right to the molting. But these are facts. #facts)*

FRANCIS
Yeah. Um… so the first thing that happens is that uh… the lady lobster…

HERMAN
That's you.

FRANCIS
She urinates on the male lobster's face.

HERMAN
I'm sorry what now?

FRANCIS
And then she runs away. And then comes back the next day.

HERMAN
With flowers and a note of apology?

FRANCIS
Nope she um… she urinates on his face again.

HERMAN
Are you serious?!

FRANCIS
It's google! It's not lying!

HERMAN
I am not doing that! We're going to fall in love and we're going to be together forever and we're going to grow old together and –

FRANCIS

Ew.

HERMAN

What?!

FRANCIS

I don't think I want to fall in love.

HERMAN

What happens next?!

FRANCIS

Well first I gotta molt.

HERMAN

What's that?

FRANCIS

That's where I shed my outer shell and become like a fleshy blob that can't move.

HERMAN

That's not cool!

FRANCIS

You don't have to go through it!

HERMAN

Well I am not into fleshy blob people!

FRANCIS

If you really loved me, you would love me when I'm a fleshy blob unable to support myself!

HERMAN

I'm not into any of this! This is super gross!

FRANCIS

Love is gross!

HERMAN

Do I need to feed you?

FRANCIS

No I'm totally able to feed myself when I'm a gelatinous beanbag creature. YES YOU NEED TO FEED ME.

HERMAN

Oh man.

FRANCIS

Then you feel me with the end of your legs. Which is actually where your taste buds are.

HERMAN

On my legs? We are weird, man.

FRANCIS

So you're kind of like… tasting me, I guess?

HERMAN

GROSS. NOPE that's a big bag of NOPE RIGHT THERE. Not doing it!

FRANCIS

I didn't make these rules!

HERMAN

Well I'm not doing any of this!

FRANCIS

And then afterwards the female lobster just leaves.

HERMAN

What.

FRANCIS

I just go on and find a new dude.

HERMAN

WHOAH. So we're not together forever!? I have to feed you and taste you when you're all gross and slimy and you leave as soon as you look nice again?!

FRANCIS

We're together for a couple of days. That's it.

HERMAN

That's not the commitment I'm looking for! I want you to be my lobster!

FRANCIS

Well being your lobster is super gross!

Short pause.

HERMAN

Maybe we can just hold claws and not do any of the other stuff?

FRANCIS

I don't think I'm ready to molt anyway.

HERMAN

I would still love you if you molted.

FRANCIS

Really?

HERMAN

But I'm not gonna taste you with my feet.

FRANCIS

That's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me. And you know what? I'm not even gonna pee on your face.*

**This line can be cut.*

HERMAN

I'd like that.

They scuttle off, claw in claw.
Lights change.

5. Sheep

MOLLY, a ewe, is having a drink at the table.
SIMON, a ram, enters, looking for a chair.

SIMON

Are you Molly?

MOLLY

I am.

SIMON

Hi. I'm Simon. Can I… can I sit?

MOLLY

Oh sure yeah. I'm loving your horns.

Skipping Forward

ANDREW

That is messed up!

MOLLY

Well how am I supposed to pick one of you then?

SIMON

What if I make you laugh? Or we have stuff in common? Or we have a deep emotional connection?

ANDREW

I'm a great communicator! I've been in therapy for a while now –

MOLLY

HEY SHUT IT. Fight. That's how we do this.

SIMON

You are really encouraging toxic masculinity right now –

ANDREW

I got nothing against this guy – he seems nice honestly – we could hang out -

MOLLY

Smash him in the head. Do it. Do it now I want to watch.

SIMON

You seem really nice at first BUT YOU'RE NOT NICE AT ALL.

MOLLY

MAMA WANTS TO SEE SOME BRUISED CRANIUMS! Woo! Come on do it!

ANDREW

This is very unhealthy!

MOLLY

Less talk more smack!

Simon and Andrew prepare to bash heads.

SIMON

All right um… okay… look I'm sorry man she wants to see us do this. Maybe we can hang out after this.

ANDREW

No doubt, dude. I'm a Buddhist by the way I don't really believe in violence.

MOLLY
You're RAMS! RAM IT! RAM EACH OTHER!

SIMON
Oh my gosh can you please be quiet so we can focus?!

ANDREW
It's really hard to ram somebody when you're shouting at me!

MOLLY
Come on!

SIMON
This is why a lot of males have brain damage, honestly.

MOLLY
Newsflash: I'm not interested in you for your brains.
Andrew and Simon prepare to charge at each other.

SIMON
I'm gonna stretch first.

ANDREW
Good idea.
They both stretch.
Molly makes an annoyed sigh.

MOLLY
I'm getting bored! Fight you losers!
Simon and Andrew take a deep breath.

SIMON
And one… and two…

ANDREW
For the record I respect you as a person and not just a rival.
Simon charges very very slowly.
They bonk horns lightly.

SIMON
Ow my head! Oh my gosh!

ANDREW
Oh man that hurt! Why are we doing this?! Oh no!

MOLLY

KEEP GOING!

SIMON *(crying)*

I'm losing my vision! I'm seeing stars right now! This is like a lot of pain!

ANDREW *(crying)*

I don't even want to do this anymore! These horns are just for show!

SIMON

I know man!

MOLLY

FIGHT MORE! You have to keep doing this until one of you gives up!

SIMON

I give up!

ANDREW

I give up too!

A moment.

SIMON

Oh man that feels so much better.

ANDREW

I know. What are we doing?

SIMON

You want to go hang out?

ANDREW

Oh my gosh yes! I can tell you all about my religious beliefs.

SIMON

I love it.

They walk off together.

MOLLY *(complaining)*

Men.

Lights shift.

6. Fish

ELSA, a brightly colored female parrotfish swims in and waits at the table.

BRANDI, a differently colored female parrotfish, enters and swims up to her.

ELSA

Are you waiting for someone?

BRANDI

I think it's you.

ELSA

Brandi?

BRANDI

Yup!

ELSA

Your markings are different than your profile photo.

BRANDI

Oh yeah I changed them.

ELSA

I love it. They're really striking. You're a beautiful parrot fish.

BRANDI

Thank you. And your markings are amazing. You are so pretty.

ELSA

Oh thanks. I got them from my Mom. She left before I was born though, so I'm just guessing.

BRANDI

Mine too.

ELSA

I guess it's just a cool breeding strategy to vomit eggs onto the reef and hope they survive.

BRANDI

It's brutal.

ELSA

No wonder we're all in therapy.

BRANDI

I know.

ELSA

I shouldn't get into it. My therapist says I shouldn't unload all my problems on the first date. No one wants to hear that. Yes fine all your sisters died. Happens to everybody.

BRANDI

Right.

ELSA

So um… what do you do for fun?

BRANDI

Mostly I just like to excrete a mucosal sack and surround myself in gelatin. Then I float to the bottom of the ocean to make predators think I'm a blob of lifeless goo.

ELSA

Girl, same. Every Saturday night. Excrete a glob of goo, float to the bottom, Netflix.

BRANDI

So fun. You know what's also great about being a parrot fish?

ELSA

Pooping sand!

BRANDI

I was gonna say that!

ELSA

I love pooping sand! The whole beach is basically my poop and nobody knows it!

BRANDI

Oh it's so great. All right… so…

ELSA

So…?

BRANDI

I'm kinda nervous.

ELSA

Do you want to be the dude or should I be the dude? I think you're older.

BRANDI

Yeah I'm just a little freaked out by it.

ELSA

There's no reason to be freaked out. It happens to every lady. You spend your life as a female, you have a great life, you work hard, you give birth to a bunch of eggs you don't care about… and then you retire. And become a man.

BRANDI

Yeah I know.

ELSA

Think about it: You get to relax all day, you get paid 30% more for doing the same amount of work… you get to have opinions about everything.

BRANDI

I know that all sounds super nice.

ELSA

And you'll get like a ton of credit for doing like a minimal portion of the parenting. Oh he's so great he's actually watching the minnows!

BRANDI

Let's be real, I'm not gonna watch the minnows.

ELSA

Neither am I.

BRANDI

It just feels… unnatural to switch genders.

ELSA

What?! Girl, that's crazy. Everybody switches genders. Check out that clownfish.

MARLON, a male clownfish, enters.

MARLON

Nemo? Nemo are you out there? Hello? I'm coming for you! Have any of you seen my little boy Nemo?

BRANDI

Haven't seen him.

ELSA

Him? That doesn't make any scientific sense.

MARLON

He was in school, and then there was a –

ELSA

No I mean immature clownfish don't have gender. Nemo is technically "undifferentiated."

MARLON

Is that right?

Elsa hands her phone over to Marlon.

ELSA

Google it.

MARLON

Huh. Here I was misgendering him the whole time.

ELSA

First you're going to have ask Nemo what Nemo's pronouns are.

MARLON

I guess. I've had such a hard time of it since my wife Coral was eaten by a barracuda.

ELSA

Wife?

BRANDI

What kind of fish has a wife?

ELSA

Well, you know what happens to male clownfish when there aren't any females around, don't you?

MARLON

Um… they get sad?

ELSA

Ha ha ha you're funny.

MARLON

What happens?

ELSA

Well if there aren't any females around, the biggest, most masculine alpha male becomes the new female.

MARLON

I'm sorry what.

BRANDI

I feel like being in an animated film hasn't prepared you very well for reality.

LANCE, a very dominant male clownfish, enters.

LANCE

What's up, bros?!

BRANDI

I'm not a bro for at least a couple of minutes yet.

LANCE *(very manly, to Marlon)*

Up top, Dude!

He gives a massive high-five to Marlon.

Check out these guns! OOOOH.

He flexes.

MARLON

Wow you're really manly.

LANCE

I know it. I'm probably the manliest fish around here!

He burps impressively. Scratches himself.

So I overheard you saying that you lost your lady.

MARLON

Barracuda attack. I also lost my undifferentiated gendered child.

LANCE

No problem, dude! I'll be your lady.

MARLON

Oh. Wow. Uh… this is awkward –

LANCE

Nah it's the most natural thing in the world. Somebody's gotta man up and become a woman around here. Looks like it's me.

MARLON

I'm actually in a mourning period right now –

LANCE

No worries, bro. I'm gonna be your new lady.

Lance hulks out. Flexes. Someone throws him a dress or perhaps a wig from off-stage. He puts it on, becoming female.

Aaaah. That's better. All that manliness kind of makes it hard to think.

MARLON

You'll really help me find Nemo?

LANCE

Of course! I'm already very empathetic

MARLON

Let's go sweetie!

They head off, hand-in-hand.

ELSA

It's so beautiful. Always brings a tear to my eye.

BRANDI

Yeah.

ELSA

Ready?

Brandi nods and stands up.
She changes outfits to a very different color pattern.
Slaps on a fake mustache.

BRANDI

Ohhh this feels weird.

ELSA

You look very handsome.

BRANDI

Thank you.

ELSA

Are you sure the transition's complete?

BRANDI

I don't know. Talk about something you're an expert in.

ELSA

So the best places to lay eggs are on hard surfaces so –

BRANDI

Well, actually, the best surfaces are semi-porous.

Brandi is shocked.

I did it! I totally mansplained to you! Yes! Dudes rock! I'm totally retired now. Yes!

ELSA

This is so wonderful! Being with someone who knows what it was like to be female! We can have a deep emotional connection!

BRANDI

Yes.

ELSA

Oh here comes the waiter.

BRANDI *(to off-stage waiter)*

She'll have the salad.

Lights change.

7. Platypi (or Platypuses, or Platypodes) and Beavers

*SUE and GEMMA, two female platypi, are hanging out at the other table. Sue looks around anxiously.**

**If possible, it would be wonderful if they had Australian accents.*

GEMMA

Would you stop?

SUE

I'm not doing anything.

GEMMA

He's not coming, Sue.

SUE

He said he would on the app -

GEMMA

He's not coming. Typical male. He's gonna bite your tail and chase you around and then leave. What you need to do is get over it.

SUE

He said he loved me.

Gemma groans.

GEMMA

They all do that. But let me tell you about male platypuses -

SUE

Platypi.

GEMMA

Don't police my language. Platypuses. Males are garbage, okay? Sure, when they're courting you they're all like sensitive and spraying musk and saying I'm not like the other mammals –

SUE

But we're not like other mammals.

GEMMA

Don't you think I know that? I laid four eggs last month! Big surprise. I'm a mammal and I'm laying eggs! My Mom never told me anything. And then I'm supposed to nurse my young? What the heck.

SUE

Well that's why I thought he was different.

GEMMA

You need to respect yourself, okay? You are a strong, beautiful platypus.

SUE

I look like somebody glued a duck's bill onto a muskrat. I'm so weird-looking. That's why he doesn't love me –

GEMMA

Stop that! You are gorgeous! Look at me. Look at me with your beautiful face!

Gemma grabs Sue's bill.

This is incredible. Okay? You have retractable webbing. That's awesome. And you know what? You don't even have a stomach –

SUE

I've been dieting –

GEMMA

I mean literally you do not have a stomach your gullet connects directly to your intestines and that is AMAZING. You are just a gorgeous, furry duck-billed egg-laying aquatic queen and any male would be LUCKY to date you. I am crying right now because you are so special –

SUE

I wish I could be like a beaver –

GEMMA

Would you shut up about beavers?! We're not beavers!

SUE

You know what beavers do? They pair-bond for LIFE.

Skipping Forward

They're so amazing.

They take a photo of themselves.

CHARLES

Let's put a photo of us on Instagram, my dear, so that everyone else can bask in our perfect love.

SUE

Oh I'm gonna follow them on –

Delilah rips Sue's phone out of her hand.

GEMMA

Don't you dare!

JACQUELINE

And I think of all the young we've raised together – equally –

CHARLES

Yes of course equally –

JACQUELINE

Thanks to a very generous maternity and paternity leave system for beavers -

CHARLES

I would have it no other way. Also, studies have shown that I will never cheat on you.

JACQUELINE

I know. Oh how I know.

CHARLES

I will chew down all the trees for you.

Gemma groans, but Sue swoons.

JACQUELINE

You complete me.

CHARLES

I believe it is time.

JACQUELINE

Oh yes.

Charles points and a romantic song like the love theme from Titanic (My Heart Will Go On) plays.

The beavers start doing a romantic ballet, dancing around each other emotively. They lip synch the words as well.

GEMMA

Do you guys mind?!

JACQUELINE

Did you hear something?

CHARLES

Only my heart beating in perfect unison with yours because our bodies will regulate together – to protect each other from the cold.

GEMMA

GET A DAM, LOSERS.

Sue jumps up.

SUE

Teach me! Teach me how to love!

The beavers stop dancing. They look at Sue.

JACQUELINE

What happened to you?

SUE

This is how I look.

CHARLES

There's like a beak on your face –

SUE

It's a bill.

GEMMA

They won't understand you, Sue!

JACQUELINE

You are a duck, yes?

CHARLES

No no my love she is muskrat of some kind that glued something onto her face.

JACQUELINE

Oh… plastic surgery is so sad. You don't need to do that.

SUE

No I'm a platypus! And our males don't help raise young –

BILL, a male platypus, enters, holding flowers

BILL

SUE! SUE I'M SORRY!

SUE

IT'S TOO LATE, BILL! I'M GOING WITH THESE BEAVERS NOW!

JACQUELINE

Um, we never said…

BILL

I WAS WRONG I NEVER MEANT TO LEAVE YOU IT'S JUST MY NATURE!

SUE

YOU'RE A JERK!

BILL

I LOVE YOU!

SUE

WILL YOU HELP RAISE BABIES WITH ME?

BILL

NO BABIES ARE TOTALLY GROSS.

SUE

Come on.

Sue grabs Jacqueline and Charles and exits.
Bill is sad. He looks to Gemma.

BILL

So hey…

GEMMA

You bit my tail last week.

Lights change.

8. Manakins

ANDRE, a male Manakin, enters dramatically. He has a striking red head and has yellow legs.

ANDRE

Ladies. It is time for the dance of the Manakin. Which is me.

He stills himself.

As Andre dances he beat-boxes for himself and adds little noises – breaking occasionally to say his lines.

Andre moonwalks back and forth (if your actor can do it)

Ah ah aha ha legs legs legs legs look at my pretty legs ooh look at them look at them I am such a pretty bird I am such a pretty bird yah yah yah yah

More beat-boxing

Oooh oooh ooh look at my legs look at my legs pretty bird pretty bird pretty –

LORNA, a female Manakin (rather plain-looking) flaps in and watches.

LORNA *(clapping along)*

Let me see it let me see it let me see it –

Andre stops.

ANDRE

Do you mind?

LORNA

I'm just watching.

ANDRE

I require total silence and concentration.

LORNA

Oh.

ANDRE

I am an artist not a piece of meat.

LORNA

I just thought you were dancing so I could watch.

ANDRE

I dance like no one is watching, okay?

LORNA

Whatever works for you.

ANDRE

One moment.

Andre gathers himself again.

And thus… I dance.

He starts moonwalking and beat-boxing again – Lorna watches, very much into it.

Ah ah aha ha legs legs legs legs look at my pretty legs ooh look at them look at them I am such a pretty bird I am such a pretty bird yah yah yah yah

ANGEL, another female manakin, drops in next to Lorna.

ANGEL

Oooh! Yeah let me see them legs! Let me see them legs!

Andre stops, upset.

ANDRE

I cannot work like this.

ANGEL

Less talk more dance!

LORNA

I wasn't even saying anything, I was just watching.

ANGEL

You were leering at him.

LORNA

I was not! I was appreciating the artistry of his moves!

ANDRE

Look, ladies, this is not some salacious dance show –

ANGEL

Dance show! I wanna see it!

ANDRE

I am not here for your amusement.

ANGEL

Um well yes you are. Because if I'm gonna pick you afterwards I want to see the moves –

LORNA

Too late, I already picked him.

ANGEL

You can't pick him before the dance is over!

End of Excerpt.
To purchase this play, please visit www.concordtheatricals.com