**GONE FISHING**

(A One Act Play for Youth Groups)

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bookerplays@yahoo.co.uk

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**CHARACTERS**

Some roles may be played by the same actor if necessary.

Tim Raglan (m): A 21 year old unemployed graduate.

Robert Raglan (m): His father. A City solicitor.

Salesperson (m/f): An overbearing salesman.

Shop assistant (m/f): A timid work-experience placement.

Kate Raglan (f): Tim's mother.

Jackie (f): Tim’s girlfriend.

Angelica de Silva (f): Daugher of the Raglan’s neighbours.

Karen (f): Party guest.

Sharon (f): MacDonald’s employee.

**SET**

An open-plan set where lighting and props convey most of the locations. Stage right there is a table and chairs to denote a kitchen/dining area. Down stage left is a bedroom area, raised slightly to indicate it is on a floor above the kitchen. The bedroom is represented by teenage paraphernalia, plus a door with door frame (real or implied). Front of stage is kept free for a variety of locations.

**PROPS**

An ironing board and breakfast food are needed in the first scene. Drinking glasses and bottles are used during the party scene. A fish tank is needed in some scenes and may be conveyed by lighting, sound and mime, or be literally present. A hands-free phone is required, but doesn’t have to be functional. A duvet, rucksack and electric kettle are required in the final scene.

EXCERPT

Mum [*bangs on the outside of his door*] Hurry up, Tim. You'll be late for work.

Tim *[aside*] I wish she wouldn't do that. Fish are easily traumatised. [*pause*] I sometimes think I must have been a fish in a previous life. There's something awfully comforting about all that water. [*gets fish food and starts to feed Jackie*] She’s got a great little personality, haven’t you, Jacky? Look at her go! Loves her food. Loves poetry too. A few lines of John Masefield and some fishy flakes is her idea of paradise.

Mum [*She knocks again and listens*] Tim? What are you doing in there?

Tim Nothing! (*picks up book and whispers to the fish*) Sorry about this, Jackie, but the snooper’s outside. [*recites*] ". . . and the wheel’s kick and the wind’s song and the white sails shaking, And a grey mist on the sea’s face, and a grey dawn breaking . . ."

Mum Tim.

Tim I'm getting dressed.

Mum I thought I heard something . . .

Tim [*opens the door ajar*] I'm getting dressed.

Mum [*shoves a pair of pants through the door*] Clean underpants. You're a sales executive, remember. [*she returns to the kitchen*]

Tim Status. That's all women ever think about. Status and the state of your underwear. Whereas a fish? There's something very spiritual about a fish. They don’t seem to realize they’re in a tank at all. [*to Jacky*] You think you're in the middle of some great ocean, don’t you? Every bit of gravel's a new adventure to you, floating around in your own little Nirvana.

(*lighting dims and Mum and Dad exit. Tim starts changing into his MacDonald's uniform*]

I miss her when I'm out, you know. Stupid, isn't it? I keep wondering what she's doing, which rock she's nestling under. I want to feel that little scaly little back rubbing against my fingers. I hope she likes the new food I bought her. It's got re-inforced vitamins. She was looking a bit peaky. [*he finishes dressing and moves up stage right and Sharon joins him*]

Sharon [*brightly lit*] Three filet of fish, three large fry, two cola, one root beer!

Tim [*busy at the counter, aside*] I just can’t feel the same way about filet of fish these days. I keep thinking of Jacky stuck inside a sesame bun with tartar sauce smeared all over her. Jacky the fish, that is. Jackie the girl smeared with tartar sauce would be quite something.

Sharon [*to Tim*] Get me twenty quids’ worth of silver will you?

Tim Have you seen Jackie?

Sharon [*to customer*] That'll be £10.95, please. (*to Tim*) I've got no more 10ps.

Tim She's supposed to be on the till.

Sharon Will you get me some silver!

Tim [*sorting out the cash, aside*] It's been three weeks now, and I haven't got much further than one lousy French kiss and a not very spicy text.

Sharon [*Tim hands her the cash*] Jackie’s over there by the way. Behind the frier. With Winston.

Tim With Winston?

Sharon Oh look. He's got his hand up her jumper.

Tim I can see he's got his hand up her . . .

Sharon Jill's baby was conceived up against the frier.

Tim How could she?

Sharon They're going to call it 'Chip'.

Tim [*disgusted*] Winston.

Angelica [*enters, slickly dressed*] One regular coffee to go please.

Tim Bastard!

Angelica I beg your pardon? [*recognizing*] Tim?

Tim [*horror*] Angelica?

Angelica Tim, what on earth are you doing here?

Tim [*aside*] Angelica da Silva. Let me die, dear God. Let me die right now.

Angelica Your mother said you were a senior sales executive.

Sharon [*mocking*] A senior sales executive? Him?

Jacky [*walks past adjusting her clothes, to Tim*] Now that’s what I call a snog.

Tim [*aside*] A big hole. Just a big black hole to swallow me up. Is that too much to ask?

Sharon He’s a chippy.

Angelica She’s told everyone you were being fast-tracked.

Tim No. [*starts jogging on the spot, ripping off his uniform*] Mum'll never live it down. It’ll kill her.

Angelica A chippy? At MacDonalds?

Sharon Yes, a chippy.

Tim [*still jogging*] I'm killing my own mother!

Angelica He’s a chippy.

Sharon A chippy.

Jacky A chippy.

(*They gather around him shouting 'chippy' louder and louder. Tim rips off his uniform and jogs frenetically. Black Out*)

**SCENE NINE**

The lights rise on Tim hastily packing in his bedroom. The fish tank is lit prominently. All round him are scattered sheets of paper.

Tim I'd like to take you with me, Jacky, honestly. But it's a rough old life, huddled in a cardboard box. I'll probably get hypothermia. Just one more statistic in a bureaucrat’s database. [*picks up a handful of paper*] All those trees had to die just to let me know I'm a failure. So now, I’m not just a failure, I’m an ecological disaster too.

[reads from a few letters] "Dear Tim Raglan, we read your application with interest, but do not feel able on this occasion to invite you to interview." Pigs. [*he hoinks like a pig, and punctuates the following letter with grunts*] "Dear Tim Raglan, Thank you for your interest in our company, but we are unable . . . ." [*he starts to howling like a monkey, and reads the following letter chattering like a chimp*] Dear Mr Raglan, Thank you for sending us your c.v . . ." [*he lies on the floor and starts howling like a wolf*] Dear Mr Raglan, it is with the greatest regret . . . Dear Mr Raglan, having given much thought to . . . Dear Mr Raglan . . . Dear Mr Raglan . . . Dear Mr Raglan . . . [*he collapses into silence then peers into the tank*] I wish there wasn't all this glass between us, Jacky. [*he lets his arms soak*] Mmm. Lovely and warm. Floating about in all that silence. [*A blue/green light fades up in the bedroom. Mr and Mrs Raglan enter the kitchen*] And all you have to do is open your mouth and let the water in.

Dad Tim!

Mum Your ulcer, darling.

Dad [*livid*] Damn my ulcer. [*shouts up*] Tim!

Tim [*afraid*] Angelica must have told them. They must know

Dad [*moving towards his room*] Tim. You’re up there, I know it.

Tim I've got to get out of here.

Dad Come out and face me like a man!

Mum [*banging on his door*] Tim? Have you got a woman in there?

Tim Go away!

Dad [*banging on door*] Tim!

Mum [*to Dad*] He must be doing drugs.

Dad Tim, are you snorting cocaine?

Mum I can hear bubbling.

Dad I'm going in.

Mum No, Robert. Don’t. He might think you're a triple-headed monster and rip your head off with a Black and Decker. I know all about drugs, darling. I've read the leaflet. Tim? Are your pupils dilating?

Dad Leave this to me, Kate.

Mum Daddy wants a friendly word with you.

Dad Open up, you good for nothing junkie! [*Tim starts to take off his clothes, item by item. He lets them fall to the ground. The sound of bubbling gets louder*] I'm your father, damn it. I’ve paid for this door.

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