

# The Pillow

A ten-minute play

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Characters:

Tom - 30s

Marcy - 30s

Sheila - no specific age (voice only)

Setting:

Now

*The Pillow*

*Lights rise on a living room. TOM is seen putting things into a moving box. After a couple of moments, he takes one look around, and then sees the pillow on the couch. He thinks about it for a moment, looks around, and quickly stuffs it into his moving box. He moves things around so that the pillow is covered up inside the box.*

*From another room, MARCY enters.*

MARCY:

So...

TOM:

Yeah...

MARCY:

You got everything?

TOM:

Everything except what I've forgotten.

MARCY:

Right..

TOM:

Not like I don't know where to come if I am missing something.

MARCY:

Please call first.

TOM:

Right. *(Beat.)* I better get going. I only have the U-Haul until 2.

MARCY:

Don't let me stand in your way..

*TOM picks up his box and starts to move towards the door, which is where MARCY is standing. They do an awkward shuffle as they try to move around each other.*

MARCY:  
Hold on.

TOM:  
What?

*MARCY looks into the box that TOM is holding, digs around a moment, and pulls out the pillow.*

MARCY:  
You're taking this?

TOM:  
Well, I mean...yeah, it's in the box.

MARCY:  
Why?

TOM:  
I didn't think you'd mind.

MARCY:  
But it's my pillow.

TOM:  
I mean, technically, I guess.

MARCY:  
I paid for it, Tom

TOM:  
If by "paid for it" you mean the money traveled from your hand to the cash register, then yeah..

MARCY:  
Is there another way to pay for things?

TOM:  
I mean....the money came from me. Originally.

MARCY:

Oh boy, here we go again.

TOM:

You asked.

MARCY:

Let me get this straight. Even though, yes, I was not at the time earning money because I was home after birthing our twins, and I needed this pillow for some modicum of comfort due to the excruciating pain I was feeling...you deserve this pillow?

TOM:

Yes?

MARCY:

Oh boy.

TOM:

You want to get into this?

MARCY:

Yes!

TOM:

*(putting box down)*

Fine. Let's get into it.

MARCY:

Let's.

TOM:

You're keeping the house.

MARCY:

The house that needs a new roof and water heater, and so our children do not need to upend their lives, yes.

TOM:

You're keeping the brand-new car.

MARCY:

It's a minivan, Tom. Not like I'm driving a Lexus.

TOM:

MAN-ivan.

MARCY:

Trust me, whatever that whale is, it's not the kind of car I was hoping to be driving at this point in my life.

TOM:

Don't make fun of it. It's an amazing machine.

MARCY:

I'll gladly switch with you, but first you have to tell me how I'm going to fit all the soccer equipment and two car seats into your SmartCar.

TOM:

I try to do a good thing for the environment, and this is the thanks I get.

MARCY:

Can we get back to the pillow?

TOM:

Sheila.

MARCY:

Pardon me? Who's Sheila?

TOM:

The pillow is.

MARCY:

*(Trying to stifle a laugh.)*

You've named a pillow? What are you, Tom Hanks in *Cast Away*?

TOM:

People name cars and boats, why not name a pillow?

MARCY:  
Jesus Christ superstar.

TOM:  
We've gotten very familiar with each other.

MARCY:  
I don't think I want to know what you mean by that.

TOM:  
Ugh, don't be gross. All I mean is, with all the sleeping on the couch you've made me do recently--

MARCY  
So it's my fault you snore like a rusty chainsaw and I want some sleep so I can work a full-time job and cook, clean, and take care of all the things that need to be done to keep our lives running smoothly?

TOM:  
My point is, Sheila has conformed to my head, been molded into just the right shape. That's not just something that happens overnight. It takes time!

MARCY:  
Wait a minute. Why'd you name her Sheila?

TOM:  
I don't know. Just came to my mind. Sounded right.

MARCY:  
Not because of our new, gorgeous neighbor.

TOM:  
What? Who? No! I don't even know her name.

MARCY  
It's Sheila.

TOM:  
Well, I mean, I know it *now*.

MARCY:

So when you said to me last week, "Hey honey, did you meet our new neighbor, Sheila? Wow!" you didn't know her name was Sheila?

TOM:

I mean, I might've, but that played no part in my naming of the pillow. And anyway, why are you so attached to her?

MARCY:

It. The pillow is an it.

TOM:

You're avoiding the question.

MARCY:

Um, because it's the most comfortable pillow in the history of the world.

TOM:

So go get a new one just like it!

MARCY:

*(Snidely.)*

But then I'd be spending your money on it, wouldn't I?

TOM:

I see what you did there. Look, what if I let you keep the 72 inch TV and I get Sheila?

MARCY:

So I can watch what? I don't think I've watched anything except your shows since we got married. I would have no idea what's on TV these days.

TOM:

I'll buy it off you, then. What'd you pay for it, like \$20? I'll give you \$40.

MARCY

Oh, Tom, you're going to need all the money you can get once the alimony payments kick in.

*Suddenly, SHEILA's voice is heard.*

*The Pillow*

SHEILA:  
Will you two stop bickering?

TOM:  
Who said that?

SHEILA:  
Me. Sheila.

*The pillow/SHEILA is thrown into the air, then landing on the floor.*

SHEILA:  
It's a good thing I'm soft or that really would've hurt.

MARCY:  
Is the pillow speaking to us?

TOM:  
I think so?

MARCY:  
And I thought you were the crazy one, naming a pillow.

SHEILA:  
Well, my real name is Nadine, but that's not why I finally spoke up. I just couldn't hold my tongue anymore.

TOM:  
You have a tongue?

SHEILA:  
It's an expression. Listen, Tom isn't being completely truthful with you, Marcy.

MARCY:  
You're not?

TOM:  
I'm not?



SHEILA:

No. You're not. You haven't told her the real reason why you want to keep me.

MARCY:

What's the real reason, Tom?

SHEILA:

C'mon, Tom. She deserves to know. If you don't say it, I will.

TOM:

Fine. It just...

MARCY:

Just what?

SHEILA:

Go on.

TOM:

*(Moved to couch.)*

Well, it's just...it's the only thing I'll have that really reminds me of you. Of us. Before all this happened.

MARCY:

Tom...

TOM:

Do you remember the day we got it? We were at the mall, and you were so pregnant you were about to burst. And we went into JCPenny because our car was parked right outside of it, and we walked through the bed department. And you crawled up onto this one big, poofy bed, where Sheila was--

MARCY:

Nadine.

SHEILA:

Thank you.

TOM:

Right, Nadine. And you laid down there with her under you, and you closed your eyes, and I thought to myself, "Damn, I'm lucky to have her. Don't screw this up." But I did.

MARCY:

*(Sits beside him on the couch.)*

We both did.

TOM:

No, stop. Don't do that. It was all me. But Sheila, or Nadine, or whatever you want to call this pillow...it reminds me of how beautiful you looked in that moment, and how happy we were then. I guess I wanted to take that happy memory with me.

MARCY:

Ok. Joint custody. You take her on the weekends.

TOM:

What?

MARCY:

I'm kidding! That was very sweet. That's the Tom I remember. The one I married. The one I fell in love with.

TOM:

Does that mean we can work this out? That I don't have to leave?

MARCY:

No. I'm sorry. But you can keep the pillow.

TOM:

Oh. Thanks.

*TOM gets up, picks up the pillow, and places it in the box. He starts to head to the door to leave.*

MARCY:

Tom?

*TOM turns back around.*

*The Pillow*

MARCY:  
It was Lord & Taylor. Not JCPenny.

TOM:  
*(Smiling.)*  
Right. That's right.

*He exits.*

*Lights fade as MARCY sits on the couch, alone.*

End of play