

THIRST

A Play in Ten Minutes

SETTING: an island beach. TIME: the end.

(The lights rise on two people stranded on an island. They are seated, leaning onto one another, back to back. Their clothes are weathered and the sea laps onto the shore. They sit for a moment in silence.)

I'm thirsty.	PERSON 1
<i>(Pause.)</i>	
I'm thirsty.	
	PERSON 2
You're a broken record.	
	PERSON 1
As dry as one.	
	PERSON 2
You don't have to tell me.	
	PERSON 1
I don't have to tell you what?	
	PERSON 2
About being thirsty.	
	PERSON 1
I'm not.	
	PERSON 2
You were.	
	PERSON 1
When'd I say that?	
	PERSON 2
You described being dry as a record.	
	PERSON 1
You brought up the record.	

PERSON 2
Never mind.

PERSON 1
You did.

PERSON 2
Shut up.

PERSON 1
Don't tell me to shut up. You shut up.

PERSON 2
You're the one talking.

PERSON 1
We're both talking.

PERSON 2
Shut up!

(They exhale in unison. Pause.)

PERSON 1
I'm thirsty.

PERSON 2
You mean annoying.

PERSON 1
Nope, I mean thirsty.

PERSON 2
It was a joke.

PERSON 1
It was?

PERSON 2
It was supposed to be.

PERSON 1
Oh. It wasn't very good.

PERSON 2
It wasn't supposed to be a laugh riot.

PERSON 1
Then you succeeded.
(Pause.)
Twenty-nine days.
(Beat.)
How long we've been out here. Twenty-nine days.

PERSON 2
Thirty, you mean.

PERSON 1
That's what I said.

PERSON 2
You said twenty-nine.

PERSON 1
I meant thirty.

PERSON 2
Then you should've said that.

PERSON 1
It wouldn't have been a conversation.

PERSON 2
What wouldn't?

PERSON 1
If I had said thirty.

PERSON 2
Sure it would've.

PERSON 1
No, you only talk when you want to correct me.

PERSON 2
I do not.

PERSON 1
You do.

PERSON 2
Do not.

PERSON 1
You're doing it now.

PERSON 2
Shut up!
(Beat.)
So what if I do? This is your fault.

PERSON 1
It must be late afternoon.

PERSON 2
Uh—yes.

PERSON 1
The sun's going to set soon.

PERSON 2
And?

PERSON 1
You always blame me in the late afternoon. Right before the sun sets.

PERSON 2
Well, it's your fault.

PERSON 1
You're blaming me again.
(With great effort, PERSON 2 restrains himself/herself from speaking.)
I'm thirsty.

PERSON 2
I swear to God, I'll kill you.

PERSON 1
That'd be poor taste. Who would you talk to?

PERSON 2
Myself.

PERSON 1
I wouldn't. You don't inspire a lot of hope. God, my throat's dry...

PERSON 2
Then shut up.

PERSON 1

Do you think it'll rain again soon? It's been almost three days.

PERSON 2

It doesn't rain here. It sprinkles.

PERSON 1

Sprinkles! I like sprinkles; they're refreshing.

PERSON 2

We need more than a couple drops. We need food.

PERSON 1

We've made due.

PERSON 2

We've had two beetles. One each. We need to hunt inland.

PERSON 1

Again? Nothing's in there.

PERSON 2

That we know of.

PERSON 1

There are no sounds. No howls, no twig snaps... not even the rustling of leaves.

PERSON 2

We should try.

PERSON 1

We can't now. Besides, the water's out here.

PERSON 2

Oh, yes! Thank you! The water. This glorious beach and shoreline! Beautiful water. Beautiful salt water!

PERSON 1

It looks pretty. Tasty, even.

PERSON 2

It'll kill us.

PERSON 1

There's so much of it!

PERSON 2
Stick to the sprinkles.

PERSON 1
Oh, yes, the sprinkles!
(Pause. PERSON 1 sees a bead of sweat on their forehead.)
Oh!
(PERSON 1 leans forward, causing PERSON 2 to fall slightly.)
Was that a drop?

PERSON 2
No.

PERSON 1
I think it was.

PERSON 2
You're hallucinating.

PERSON 1
I think I felt a drop. Yes, a little drop—a droplet!

PERSON 2
Get a hold of yourself!
(PERSON 2 readjusts and PERSON 1 leans back again, falling farther than expected. PERSON 1's stomach has an obvious bulge.)

PERSON 1
The shell!
(PERSON 1 leans forward again, causing PERSON 2 to fall slightly again.)

PERSON 2
The what?

PERSON 1
The shell!
(PERSON 1 withdraws two coconut halves.)

PERSON 2
Where did you find those?

PERSON 1

When we landed here. They were lying out in the open.

PERSON 2

And you didn't tell me?

PERSON 1

I was keeping them safe. For an emergency.

PERSON 2

Give me one.

PERSON 1

Why?

PERSON 2

I'm thirsty.

PERSON 1

You never said anything before.

PERSON 2

I didn't think we had anything before.

PERSON 1

I don't know...

PERSON 2

Give me one.

PERSON 1

What if we want them later?

PERSON 2

There won't be a later if we don't have them now.

PERSON 1

But they can make music. Listen...

(PERSON 1 begins clip-clopping the halves together to a beat.)

PERSON 2

Give it.

PERSON 1

And horses!

(PERSON 1 begins clip-clopping the halves together to sound like horses galloping. PERSON 2 clasps their hands on top of the shell violently.)

Okay! Okay!

(PERSON 1 gives a shell half to PERSON 2. They look to one another.)

Together!

(They clink their shells together in a toast. Then, they raise their shell halves simultaneously and lick their respective halves. Beat. Something is wrong. They lick desperately.)

Dry. Dry as a bone.

PERSON 2

Of course they are!

(PERSON 2 tosses the shell aside.)

They dried out in your pocket!

PERSON 1

I'm thirsty...

PERSON 2

We both are! And because of you, we're going to die of it!

(Beat.)

PERSON 1

I don't want to die.

PERSON 2

Think I do?

PERSON 1

We need water.

PERSON 2

Pray for rain.

PERSON 1

I will. I will pray. Pray for sprinkles.

(PERSON 1 clings to their coconut half. After a moment, PERSON 1 widens their eyes.)

Cups.

PERSON 2

What?

PERSON 1

Cups. They're cups.

PERSON 2

They're two halves of a coconut.

PERSON 1

Cups. Cups to hold water. Cups to hold the sprinkles.

PERSON 2

I think you've lost your sprinkles.

PERSON 1

We can put out the cups, and when it sprinkles they'll gather the sprinkles for us to drink.

PERSON 2

There isn't a cloud in sight. No sprinkles are coming.

(PERSON 1 looks to the shoreline.)

PERSON 1

Sprinkles.

PERSON 2

That's salt water. We've been over this.

PERSON 1

The sprinkles collect there. In the sea. Like a big cup. The cup is filled with sprinkles, and we can drink the sprinkles. We just needed a small cup!

(PERSON 1 lunges for the salt water. PERSON 2 runs them down and drags them back.

PERSON 1 is struggling and becoming more and more daring.)

The sprinkles! We can drink them!

PERSON 2

We'll die from the salt.

PERSON 1

Cups to hold the sprinkles!

PERSON 2

We'll dehydrate!

PERSON 1

Sprinkles!

PERSON 2

No sprinkles!

(PERSON 2 sets PERSON 1 down with a bit of force. PERSON 2 holds PERSON 1 down and after a moment, PERSON 1 seems to be calmed.)

PERSON 1

No sprinkles.

(PERSON 2 relaxes and lets go of PERSON 1. Beat.)

Sprinkles!

(PERSON 1 lunges for the sea, but is held back by PERSON 2. They roll around the sand, yelling and kicking. Eventually, PERSON 2 grabs a coconut shell piece and hits PERSON 1 in the head with severe force. PERSON 1 collapses, breathing heavily at first. After a moment, PERSON 1 begins breathing much slower than usual.)

PERSON 2

You all right? Hey... Can you hear me?

(PERSON 2, near their physical limit, slowly goes to PERSON 1's side.)

You there?

PERSON 1

Thirsty...

PERSON 2

I know, but—

PERSON 1

I'm so thirsty... Please...

(Beat.)

PERSON 2

Hold on.

(PERSON 2, with great effort, makes their way to the shoreline and fills a coconut shell piece with salt water.)

PERSON 1

Thirsty...

PERSON 2

I'm coming.

(PERSON 2 returns to PERSON 1 with the salt water.)

PERSON 1

Please...

PERSON 2

Yes, yes... Sprinkles. Fresh from the clouds.

PERSON 1

Sprinkles...

(PERSON 2 tips the salt water into PERSON 1's mouth.)

I'm... I'm so...

(PERSON 1 dies. Pause.)

PERSON 2

Oh...

(PERSON 2 struggles to hold themselves upright. They look to the shoreline, but they no longer has the energy to move.)

Old friend—dear friend... I can't get up, and no one is here. I'm so thirsty... Who will fill my cup?

(PERSON 2 looks down at their fallen comrade. The lights fade.)

END OF PLAY