

A Quick Swim

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A ten-minute play

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## “A Quick Swim”

### Characters

Liz..... Middle-School female. Camper trying to swim.  
Asphodel..... Middle-School female. Liz’s best friend. Trying to coax Liz into getting into the water.

### Setting

By the water at summer camp. Late night / early morning.

### Synopsis

Liz has been at camp for the past seven weeks, and has been miserable. She’s wanted to go swimming, but has been afraid to go near the water. The night before she is to be picked-up by her parents, she enlists Asphodel’s help, but maybe a quick swim is harder than she realizes.

### Other Notes

Asphodel is Liz’s stuffed-animal, and only friend.

The stuffed-animal that Asphodel is holding is meant to be the embodiment of her, which Liz has thrown into the water to encourage herself.

“A Quick Swim”

LIZ is standing on the edge of the water. ASPHODEL is already in, holding a stuffed-animal.

LIZ

I want to swim. I want to swim. I want to swim.

ASPHODEL

Come on. No one else is watching. It's hours before the jerks use the lake for the morning swim. Think of how surprised they'll be that you actually left your tent, and swam.

LIZ

They've been teasing me for weeks.

ASPHODEL

They think you're afraid of the water. But come in, and you won't be teased anymore. The campers'll come-around. And when you get out of the water, your parents won't be worried about you anymore. Because you were brave and took that first step.

LIZ

That's what I want.

ASPHODEL

It starts by taking one step. Just a step, and coming to me.

LIZ

I'm afraid.

ASPHODEL

And I'm afraid that you're not going to come and get me.

LIZ

I am.

ASPHODEL

I'm not staying here all night.

LIZ

I'm going to get in. I promise.

ASPHODEL

I don't think you are.

LIZ

I'm really going to do it tonight!

ASPHODEL

Liz. You read romance novels, how can I take you seriously?

LIZ

I read sci-fi.

ASPHODEL

Same thing. It's sex in a bed, or sex in a spaceship.

LIZ

There's a subtle distinction.

ASPHODEL

A bed, or a spaceship?

LIZ

In a romance pulp, the sex is the culmination of pages of foreplay.

ASPHODEL

Bed, or spaceship, Liz?

LIZ

But in sci-fi literature, sex is a manifestation for a comment that the author is making about the world. It means something more than two bodies hitting each other repeatedly. It's high-order understanding, a deeper meaning.

ASPHODEL

I'm not listening! Stop talking! Get in the water!

LIZ

Don't yell at me!

ASPHODEL

You're going to stop me?

LIZ

I'll come over there!

ASPHODEL

Try me!

LIZ

I just don't want to right now.

ASPHODEL

It's for the best. You'd probably just cry on me, like you did on our first night here.

LIZ

Shut up!

ASPHODEL

And the second night, after they stole your book at the dining table. Wait, did I say night? This has happened all week.

LIZ

I'll come over there!

ASPHODEL

Come in and stop me! (ASPHODEL waits for LIZ to do something) And the third: shoes filled with water. And the fourth: stealing your pillowcases. This sure has built-up your confidence, huh? Go camp!

LIZ

I don't need to listen to you anymore. You can just stay there forever. Freezing! My parents are coming to pick me up tomorrow!

ASPHODEL

Are you negotiating for more time? How will it feel when they pick you up, and take you home. They'll know you looked at the water, but were too scared to go in.

LIZ

No they won't.

ASPHODEL

They know that you failed, that you tried but you couldn't even take one step. That you failed every day for seven weeks, until you were finally tired of failing and you had to call them to take you home. So you can fail there, too.

LIZ

I'm not a failure!

ASPHODEL

Liz, at least be a little wet when they pick you up, so they know that you left your tent! Let your fingers be a little pruny from the water! Come on! Do something that your parents can be proud of you for!

LIZ

You're supposed to like me and take-care of me!

ASPHODEL

I'm taking care of you by pushing you!

LIZ

But I don't want to die!! I'm scared!

ASPHODEL

(softens)

It's scary taking that first step. But do you know what's scarier?

LIZ

What?

ASPHODEL

That you had to stop using your locker at school because you always found a broken-egg in it. That you had to walk home, because if you waited for the bus, you'd get hit with gravel. That you eat every lunch in the library. That you went to camp to find friends, but you only found me. That you realized that everyone in the world is the same, and you're the one who sticks-out. That you're the problem, not them.

LIZ

Please...

ASPHODEL

That's scarier, isn't it?

LIZ

It is.

ASPHODEL

So come on out to me. It'll be like leaving a day early. Like your parents bought you a blizzard on the way home. Like you never have to go to school again. Like the only hard decision you have to make is whether or not you want to read a book where they have sex in a bed or a spaceship.

LIZ

Can I hold you for a little, first? Before I go further?

ASPHODEL

As long as you need. I'll always be beside you.

LIZ goes into the water.

LIZ

It's cold.

ASPHODEL

You won't notice it. Swim out to me. Take a deep breath, swim as deep as you can, and exhale.

LIZ holds the stuffed-animal, as ASPHODEL leaves.

LIZ

You'll always be with me?

ASPHODEL

Until you let me go.

LIZ

I'll never do that. (pause - she prepares) I'm ready.

END OF PLAY

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