

CHARACTERS:

EILEEN: Age 25-30. Plain-looking. Wears mismatched clothes. No make-up

SKIP: Age 25-30. Gangly, messy hair. Mismatched clothes.

(Both characters are awkward in their movements and socially backwards.)

SETTING: EILEEN'S messy living room; a beaten-down brown sofa with an assortment of pillows, a coffee table with a few poetry books, a waste paper basket and a portable CD player with CDS piled next to it. Scattered on the floor are newspapers and magazines. On the wall, is a print of abstract art which is off-center.

TIME: The present. Fall. Sounds of rain and gusts of winds. Occasional bursts of thunder.

**ACT ONE
SCENE ONE**

AT RISE: EILEEN is scurrying around the living room, picking up newspapers and magazines from the floor. Uncertain as where to put them, she tosses them behind the sofa. She rearranges the pillows several times, paces the floor, and after a few moments, plops herself onto the sofa. Trying to reduce her tension, she breathes deeply. The doorbell rings. She walks slowly and deliberately toward the door, nervously brushes her hair, straightens her pants and opens the door. SKIP is standing with a newspaper over his head, protecting himself from a driving rain. His clothes are wet and he is carrying a large, grungy-looking gym bag. He meets EILEEN, shakes her hand and enters. Noticing the waste-paper basket, he flips the wet newspaper into it. Water drips onto the floor from his shoes.

EILEEN is flabbergasted by his behavior.

SKIP

Oh hi. Ah... I'm Skip. (He is oblivious to dripping water on the floor or to the fact that his entrance is rather unceremonious.)

EILEEN

I'm Eileen. *(She shakes his wet hand and wipes hers on her pants.)*
No umbrella?

SKIP

Inside out. The wind. I dumped it.

EILEEN

You're soaking wet!

SKIP

(lightly)
That's what rain does.

EILEEN

(sarcastically)
Really? *(Beat)* Let me get you a towel or something.

SKIP

If it isn't too much?

EILEEN

It's free.

SKIP

I mean, if it's not too much trouble.

EILEEN

What's the alternative, dying from pneumonia?

SKIP

That's considerate of you.

EILEEN

Don't mention it.

SKIP attempting to be humorous, places his hand over his mouth. EILEEN is obviously not amused. She exits. SKIP studies the off-centered art print, measures the print by framing his hands and re-positions it several times before leaving it even more askew than before.

EILEEN enters with a roll of paper towels and a mop. She drops the roll, picks it up and hands it to him. SKIP rips off several pieces and wipes his face and hair vigorously. She clumsily mops the floor, stepping on it and trips. Regains her balance. Want to stay until the rain lets up and go to the movies later?

SKIP.

Why not?

EILEEN

Can I take your bag? *(She tugs at it. He holds onto it tightly.)*

SKIP

No... I have stuff inside it to change into.

EILEEN

You're kidding!

SKIP

My code... "semper paratus."

EILEEN

On dates too?

SKIP

Weddings...funerals...all the time! *(EILEEN purses her lips as if she has tasted something sour.)* Want to see what I have inside?

EILEEN

Not particularly.

SKIP *ignoring her statement, empties the contents from the bag onto the floor; shorts, T-shirt, sneakers, flashlight, jack-knife, toilet paper, band-aids, iodine, crackers, cans of tuna fish and bottles of water.*
In case of a terrorist attack.

EILEEN

No gas mask and bullet-proof vest?

SKIP

In the trunk. *(stuffs the contents back into the bag.)* Can I use your bathroom?

EILEEN *nods and points the way. He exits. She places the mop against the wall and the roll of paper on the table. Shouts to SKIP.*
You can hang your wet clothes over the shower rod to dry a bit.

SKIP

I'll just slip them into my bag.

EILEEN

Notices that the print is off center and re-positions it. Still askew. Bangs her knee on the edge of the table. Rubs her knee. Sits uncomfortably at the end of the sofa. SKIP enters wearing shorts, T shirt and sneakers. He stands self-consciously.

Sorry. No heat yet.

SKIP

No problem! When we had to go...

EILEEN

Go?

SKIP

You know, "GO". We headed for the out-house, between the barn and the farm-house. Our only toilet. Now that could be cold! We had a three-seater. Handy, in case my brothers and I had the urge at the same time And we had a deep pit underneath, filled with lime to dissolve the...

EILEEN

Ugh!

SKIP

You get used to it. *(Beat)* Do you mind seeing me like this?

EILEEN

Why should I mind?

SKIP

I thought you might think it's inappropriate.... for a first date.

EILEEN

I can take it.

SKIP

It's like being at the beach. Right? *(looks around the room.)* Interesting apartment.

EILEEN

I hate the hot sand.

SKIP

Your apartment....great. A little messy, though. *(Beat)* I don't mind it.

EILEEN

Housekeeping can be an awful bore. Some people love it. Fills up their life. Me, I have more important things to do. So once in a while I let things fall behind.

SKIP

I guess it is a matter of priorities.

EILEEN

You could say that.

SKIP

I did.

EILEEN

Forget it! (*Beat*) Could you go for some coffee?

SKIP

What kind?

EILEEN

Espresso.

SKIP

No kidding?

EILEEN

Surprised?

SKIP

I didn't expect...

EILEEN

...expect that from ...ME?!

SKIP

No. No (*Beat*) I ...I usually don't get treated so nicely...by anyone.

EILEEN

I guess I overreacted.

SKIP

Are you always that touchy?

EILEEN

You're being awfully personal!

SKIP

Do you mind?

EILEEN

Yes!

SKIP

At least you're truthful.

EILEEN

At least?!

SKIP

Sorry. When I was a kid, they said I had some kind deficiency picking up social cues or something like that.

EILEEN

But now you've outgrown that?

SKIP

Mostly history. *(Beat)* Don't you screw up once in a while?

EILEEN

I wouldn't exactly call it a screw up, but kids thought I was screwed up. I would keep saying, "what?" Actually, my ears were clogged with wax. My grandmother figured it out and rinsed the junk out.. Used her enema bag with a nozzle or syringe. Whatever.

SKIP

That's a great story. *(Beat)* When I was in kindergarten, I was scared of my teacher. Hardly spoke. Couldn't even ask to use the toilet.

EILEEN *unconsciously sniffs and wipes her*

nose.

You're over that?

SKIP

Most of the time. *(Laughs.)* What do you think of me?

EILEEN

That's a funny question.

SKIP

Humorous?

EILEEN

Peculiar. *(Beat)* How do you like your coffee?

SKIP

Hot.