

BURIED IN THE BAHAMAS

by:
Aaron Adair

BURIED IN THE BAHAMAS

Players:

NIKKI, a bright young woman wearing a sunny yellow hat.

BARBRA, Nikki's mother.

JOE, a stranger wearing in a blazer with a carnation pinned to the lapel.

The play takes place in Chicago.

AT RISE: Three unusually tall stools are placed in a row, facing the audience. A good amount of space separates each stool.

Seating order, stage left to right: Barbra, Nikki, Joe

If spotlights are available, each character should have their own. The players should be illuminated simultaneously with a loud clank and a receding hum, as if an industrial light switch has been pulled.

The players do not leave their stools throughout.

NIKKI

I guess you could say I'm damaged goods. A bruised peach. That's how I see myself. But, if you can get past first impressions, I'm really very sweet inside. No, *really*.

It's snowing today and I couldn't be happier. I hold out my hand to catch a single flake and look, really look at what I've caught. The snowflake quickly melts and I think: I've just killed a beautiful thing.

JOE

Nikki was a loon.

NIKKI

I mean, it would have lived, if I'd let it fall to the ground. Then again, it would have disappeared into a bank of snowflakes.

JOE

A nut-job.

NIKKI

So. You tell me. Which is worse? Melting in my palm or disappearing into a snow bank?

JOE

A whack-job.

NIKKI

It's snowing today and I look from the Michigan Avenue Bridge up the Chicago River. The skyscrapers look like rotted teeth. Beige, brown, black.

Beautiful... [*Cheerfully yells*] Beautiful!

BARBRA

[*Like a receding echo*] Beautiful. Beautiful. Beautiful.

NIKKI

Listen. Last summer, I jumped from this bridge. I was airborne for an eternity. I leapt into a river of reflections. Buildings, flags, sailboats, pigeons and the faces of tourists looking down.

People from downstate Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and even farther flung took note. They saw me. They saw me *flying*.

JOE

I try not to think about her.

NIKKI

But, now it's snowing, and I catch and kill snowflakes with the same joy. I feel warm inside. Winter cheers me, shearling drapes my body and a sunny cap tops my head.

BARBRA

I bought her that shearling on sale. It's cocoa brown with gold stitching. Nine hundred dollars at Mark Shale. A steal. Nobody buys shearling in the summer.

NIKKI

But when they fished me out of the river last summer, I was cold and miserable. And I'd failed... I forgot I could swim.

BARBRA

She never escaped that chill. It leached into her bones, making her teeth chatter until winter came. In the winter, she warmed up.

NIKKI

I met Joe in the winter. No, the fall. Late November. I caught his eye, as I did many people's, in my coat, scarf and mittens on an unseasonably warm 60-degree day.

JOE

She was dressed for a blizzard.

NIKKI

I noticed him because he was wearing a yellow carnation in his lapel. Who does that?

BARBRA

They stopped in the street to talk. To make a date. Thoughtless.

It was windy and my shopping bags were ripping. One more gust and a taxi would drive off wearing my new de la Renta. Such a pretty dress. Marigold with floral appliqués at hem. One hundred percent silk faille.

JOE

I should have seen the clues. Her mother, for one, struggling with all those bags.

NIKKI

Joe had a jovial quality about him.

BARBRA

He needed a shave.

JOE

But, Nikki was beautiful and quirky.

NIKKI

I asked Joe about the carnation.

BARBRA

He said it was in memory of his dog, a Labrador that had died the previous week.

[Sarcastic] Quite the line.

NIKKI

O, poor doggie.

BARBRA

I mean, who has a big dog like that in the city? But, she fell for it.

JOE

I told Nikki about Yatzee's collision with a laundry truck.

NIKKI

I wondered, who loses a dog that way? Was it an act of carelessness or was the dog suicidal?

JOE

She was sympathetic.

BARBRA

She was putty.

JOE

We agreed to meet at eight for a drink.

BARBRA

She made the date and the bags held. To this day, I look remarkable in that dress. Thank you, Oscar. Kisses! Kisses!

NIKKI

Later I regretted it. Did I really want to spend an evening with a guy who was still in mourning for his retriever?

BARBRA

At home, she seemed sullen. It occurred to me that I hadn't bought her anything.

NIKKI

Could I handle his emotions? What if he broke down?

BARBRA

So I gave her my new Louis Vuitton clutch.

NIKKI

What if he cried? What if I couldn't? I like to appear empathetic.

BARBRA

But, that didn't help... What's a mother to do? I let her sulk.

NIKKI

Then I remembered. It was a yellow carnation. Yellow is a very life-goes-on kind of color. Jaunty in a scarf, daring in gloves, crisp in a hat.

It's a cheerful, defiant color.

JOE

At home, I took the carnation out of my lapel and dropped it in Yatzee's water bowl. It floated. The steel glowed. A beautiful yellow glow.

BARBRA

There was a draft in the house. So, I checked in on Nikki.

She was in her bedroom, wearing yellow from head to toe. Her windows wide open.

My God. Shut those windows. You look ridiculous. Windows wide open. Chiffon in the fall. What were you thinking?

NIKKI

I was thinking about how quickly summer had passed. How I hadn't worn any of these things.

BARBRA

But, it's not the season. [*Scolding*] You mustn't be so frugal that you feel compelled to wear everything I buy. Honestly. Imagine that dress topped by your shearling.

Hideous. Dreadful. Atrocious.

JOE

Horrific. Horrendous. Morbid.

We met at the Coq d'Or at eight o'clock for drinks.

NIKKI

He asked the maitre'd for a dimly lit booth in the corner.

JOE

The dimmer, the better. She looked like a cattle herder in Dior.

NIKKI

When our drinks arrived, I gave his knee a gentle squeeze.

JOE

She clawed me. I jumped.

NIKKI

He knocked over our table and our martinis flew. Whoosh! Crash! Bang!

Earthquake, everybody, earthquake! [*Shrill laughter*] Get down! Under the tables!

[*Elated*] We were the center of attention!

JOE

[*Irritated*] The very center.

BARBRA

I heard about it the next morning from an acquaintance. *An acquaintance.*

NIKKI

That's when it dawned on me. [*With joy*] Yes. Winter was coming, and I was in love.

I climbed back up into the booth.

JOE

She lunged. I panicked.

NIKKI

Listen, Joe. Let's sip our martinis and reel in their wake. Who knows what might happen?
Who knows where the night might go!

JOE

Driven by self-preservation—

BARBRA

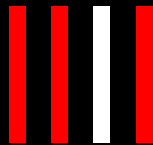
She left her in the Coq.

JOE

I got the hell out of there.

NIKKI

And poof. He was gone.



**FIND OUT HOW
THIS PLAY ENDS.**

E-MAIL
aaron@jellobox.com