

(An older woman is sitting on a park bench throwing breadcrumbs from a shopping bag to pigeons that do not come. A man in his thirties enters stage right, crosses downstage of the bench muttering to himself while looking at his feet. As he passes her he comments out loud.)

MAN Pathetic!

(She looks up and yells at him.)

WOMAN Say that to my face!

(He turns to look at her.)

MAN Excuse me?

WOMAN Say it to my face. Go ahead.

MAN I wasn't speaking to—

WOMAN Pathetic, I heard you. You said pathetic. I may not have the best eye sight anymore but I do have twenty-twenty hearing.

MAN I was referring to myself.

WOMAN Just because I'm sitting alone on this park bench throwing bread crumbs to pigeons that don't want anything to do with me does not mean I'm pathetic.

MAN I didn't notice you.

WOMAN You're making it worse.

MAN Believe me you did not enter my thoughts.

WOMAN That's supposed to make me feel better?

MAN I wasn't trying to—

WOMAN A cold gray day in the city is lonely enough as it is. No one comes in to the park on a day like this.

MAN Except you and me.

WOMAN Usually I get to watch humanity close up.

MAN Well I hope you find some humanity.

(He continues to walk to stage left as she calls after him.)

WOMAN Wretched, worthless, pitiful!

MAN You're trying to make me feel guilty.

WOMAN I'm judging you the way you judged me.

(He returns to the bench and points to his shoes.)

MAN Pathetic! I was referring to myself.

WOMAN Your shoes don't match.

MAN Exactly.

WOMAN You just exposed your humanity.

MAN I don't walk around the park exposing myself to older women.

WOMAN Does that suggest that you expose yourself to younger women?

MAN Only in private.

WOMAN Well I hope your shoes match when you do. Nothing is more unattractive than a naked man in unmatched shoes.

MAN I never leave my shoes on when I'm naked. What the hell am I saying? You are not going to con me into continuing this conversation.

(He continues to stage left.)

WOMAN Not even the pigeons have respect for tradition anymore.

MAN Why is it that older people always hit you with a guilt trip?

WOMAN I put out bread for them but they prefer Macdonald's or Thai food.

MAN This is the kind of thing my mother used to do. She'd just sit there looking forlorn, making comments about the world no longer paying attention to her.

WOMAN I even talk to them but they still don't come.

MAN You can't expect the world to come to you.

WOMAN I'm not asking for the world, just an occasional pigeon.

MAN Well I hope you find one.

(He walks stage left to exit.)

WOMAN Sometimes they line up on the other side of the path looking at me. But they never come.

MAN Then you have to advertise.

WOMAN Do I look like a fast food chain?

MAN You really do sound just like my mother.

WOMAN I'll bet if she needed to attract some pigeons you'd be—

MAN Ok, ok, just give me the bag.

(He walks to the bench and takes the bag from her, moves downstage left, sprinkles breadcrumbs from stage left to right while they converse.)

MAN You need to put your samples everywhere, give them a little taste, and then direct them back to the source.

WOMAN I've tried that and I'm still living alone.

MAN Maybe your samples were too generous.

(She points to the pigeon in the audience which he also sees.)

WOMAN A pigeon!

MAN On one leg.

MAN AND WOMAN - Pathetic.

MAN You can't make it in the city on one leg.

WOMAN Not with that attitude. Give me my bread crumbs back.

(She takes the bag and throws crumbs to the pigeon.)

Come on little birdie. Come and get it, you poor little thing.

MAN You don't hold out promise to a one legged pigeon when there's no chance of survival.

WOMAN Try hopping on one of those mismatched shoes and say that.

(He hops on one leg as he speaks.)

MAN You don't hold out promise to a one legged pigeon when—

(She hits him with the bread crumbs throwing him off balance. He falls and she stands over him.)

Cut it out lady!

WOMAN The world teases you along, promises the future but when the time comes, you discover you're a one legged pigeon. Where the hell is God and how the hell did you end up with a brown loafer and a black lace up?

MAN I didn't have time to tie two lace ups.

WOMAN No one should be in that much of a hurry.

MAN Her husband was coming in the front door so I slid on his loafer and slipped out the back window.

WOMAN Slipping and sliding, that's how my husband died.

(She returns to the bench and ignores him. He gets up and sits next to her on the bench. He removes the loafer and rubs his foot.)

MAN The man has great taste in women but terrible taste in shoes.

WOMAN Slipping and sliding down a fire escape.

MAN That's what women like about me. I've got style.

WOMAN He didn't have any shoes on when they found him, just one red sock.

MAN Normally I wouldn't be caught dead in a shoe like that.

WOMAN Don't be so sure.

MAN I know how to handle a bad situation.

WOMAN Is that why you're sitting on a park bench talking to a forlorn replica of your mother?

MAN I just need a moment to recover from your vicious breadcrumb attack.

WOMAN Pathetic, you definitely were referring to yourself. But it is me too, throwing bread crumbs to disdainful pigeons.

MAN Well this little guy is interested. I can tell by the way he's tilting his head.

WOMAN It's just his commentary on our existence, his way of calling us wretched, useless, dejected—

MAN He's just hungry.

WOMAN Pigeons see the futility of our struggle to change things.

MAN You really believe that decrepit little bird is hopping around on one leg thinking about the futility of life?

WOMAN Can't you see the spirituality in his eyes?

MAN Oh sure, how could I miss it? If it was a sunny day he'd have groupies sitting around him on the grass waiting for a sign.

WOMAN Make fun all you want but sooner or later you'll realize that we're all one legged pigeons.

MAN Lady I still have both my legs and when you and I have gone home that pitiful bird will still be standing alone in the park on that one boney stick of a leg.

WOMAN You should talk? You're already handicapped, walking around in another man's shoe.

MAN I am not handicapped.

(He waves the shoe, which she grabs and throws off stage right. He limps off stage after the shoe. She then throws more crumbs to the pigeon continuing to speak as the man enters still limping.)

What the hell are you doing?

WOMAN I'll bet you know birds that act just like him, flapping their wings about, letting you know just how important they are. My husband was the same till they found him face down in his underwear with one red sock on a pile of garbage bags at the bottom of a fire escape. Oh don't be so timid, they're very tasty bread crumbs and we need each other. That's something my husband didn't understand, flapping his feathers and puffing himself up, like he was the center of the universe. But he went way too far running off with a twenty-three year old. If he left me someone my age or even a little younger, I'd still be devastated but I'd deal with it. But the fool had delusions of grandeur chasing perky breasts and a tattooed rear end.

MAN Who are you talking to?

WOMAN The pigeon, why'd you come back?

MAN You owe me a pair of shoes.

WOMAN You didn't have a pair of shoes.

MAN I had two shoes, one on the left foot and one on the right till you threw one away.

WOMAN Talk about handicapped, you can't even retrieve a shoe.

MAN A very nasty Cocker Spaniel ran off with it.

WOMAN You didn't chase him? I'm sure he wanted to be chased.

MAN I hurt my foot running after him.

(He sits on the bench.)

WOMAN This is my bench.

MAN Well it's mine now too until you get my shoe back from the ferocious dog or buy me another pair of shoes.

WOMAN Now look what you've done. You've frightened that poor bird away.

MAN He can't go far on one leg.

WOMAN Neither can you.

MAN You're really enjoying this aren't you?

WOMAN Conversation and revenge all in one, it's the kind of park moment one hopes for.

MAN Well when you stop gloating, that pooch was definitely running in a circle around this bench.

WOMAN With a shoe between his teeth.

MAN If you wait behind a tree you can catch him as he passes.

WOMAN It's too late. I'm sure the pigeon has informed him that we're plotting an ambush.

MAN Lady all I want is my shoe so I can go home.

WOMAN Ok, I will attempt to retrieve your shoe. In the meantime if you take off the other one you can rest both feet.

MAN That's a good idea.

(He removes the shoe, which she immediately throws off stage right.)

MAN What the hell! You are really nuts!

WOMAN Getting emotional won't solve a thing.

MAN You even act like my mother.

WOMAN A mommy complex, that's why you're running out of married women's
apartments in the—

MAN I'm asking you nicely, will you please get both my shoes.

WOMAN And ruin this moment?