

"Conception"

by

Mick Axelrod

© 2012 Mick Axelrod
COnception

Contacty
Contact
Contact
Stuff

CHARACTERS

Jack	A sperm.
Barry	Another sperm.
Betsy	An ovum.
Elizabeth	Another ovum.

SETTING

Inside a cervix.

TIME

Now.

SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1 Inside the cervix Now

"Holy Mother we do believe,
That without sin Thou didst conceive;
May we now in Thee believing,
Also sin without conceiving."

-- A.P. Herbert

ACT I

SCENE 1

(The STAGE is bare. Out upon it run two sperm: JACK and BARRY. They hit marks then jog in place.)

JACK

Bro. How you doin' bro?

BARRY

Holding up, dude. This is a hell of a 5K though.

JACK

(looking back)

Yeah, but looks like we're the last two, man. This race is just between us now. I'm Jack, bro.

BARRY

Barry.

(They fist-bump.)

JACK

(beat)

How much longer do you think?

BARRY

Can't be far now. It's been a couple days already.

(They jog in silence a moment.)

(Nervousness starts washing across Jack's face.)

JACK

What do you think it's gonna be like?

BARRY

What's that?

JACK

The finish line. Do you think it's gonna be, like, cool or what?

BARRY

I dunno. Haven't really thought about it. It's just, like, what we were made for, to try for it, you know? There's only the gold; there ain't no silver or bronze.

(Barry speeds up.)

JACK

Whoa, Barry bro, I get your point. You don't gotta showboat!

BARRY

It's not my doing, man. I just started speeding up. I'unno what's come over me.

(Jack speeds up too.)

JACK

Whoa, I see what you mean. It's like we got a sudden boost. How?

BARRY

We must be getting close. We've been calcified dude!

JACK

What does that mean?

BARRY

I'm not sure, Jack. There was something about it on the spermatozoon Wikipedia page. It was a little too technically for me to make heads or tails of it.

JACK

Ha!

BARRY

What's so funny?

JACK

All we are is a head and a tail.

BARRY

You're right.

(The ovum, BETSY, enters from the opposite WING from the sperm's entrance. She carries an accordion file-folder.)

BARRY

Look, Jack! There she is!

JACK

That's right, swim harder! It's the last leg!

(They do. They're neck and neck, Jack's about to beat Barry.)

BETSY

Whoa, boys, whoa!

(The sperm screech to a halt.)

JACK, BARRY

What?

BETSY

Boys, we live in a positively litigious age. Before one of you fertilizes me, I'm going to need you to fill out some paperwork.

JACK, BARRY

Paperwork?

JACK

What kind of paperwork?

BETSY

Well, there's a standard lease agreement: you can't just move in you know. It's nine months, and includes utilities, water and sewage, food, and entertainment.

JACK

Cable?

BETSY

Well, wifi.

BARRY

That's a pretty good deal, though. What else?

BETSY

You also have to fill a Petition for Person-hood.

JACK

A what now?

BETSY

Petition for Person-hood. It's a law, that as soon as you're conceived, i.e. you fertilize me, we become a fully-righted person. Well, it's not law, and it's probable that it'll never pass but I like to have everything in order, just in case.

JACK

Are you kidding me?

BETSY

No, there's a lot of responsibility that goes into fertilization, mister.

JACK

But what if our host, like, miscarries before then? Or has an abortion?

BARRY

I think that's what this law is supposed to prevent.

JACK

Are you kidding me? So they're just, like, giving embryos rights?

BARRY

Zygotes.

JACK

Gesundheit.

BARRY

They're not giving embryos rights. I mean, they are, but they're giving them rights from the time they're single-celled organisms.

JACK

That's nuts. They can't vote, or, like, own things. It can't even, like, exist on its' own.

BETSY

You think that's bad, wait 'til you hear about Arizona.

JACK

What about Arizona?

BARRY

I heard about this. You go ahead...er...miss.

BETSY

(offering her hand)

Betsy.

BARRY

(taking her hand)

A pleasure. This is Jack. I'm Barry.

JACK

Hey.

BETSY

So, in Arizona they're actually making conception begin two weeks prior to conception.

JACK

What?

BARRY

A woman's last period before a pregnancy is actually her conception date. In Arizona.

JACK

That makes no sense. Why would they even think to do that?

BETSY

I'unno. Probably to limit the twenty weeks wherein an abortion can be done.

JACK

That's insane. I thought I heard everything before. Are we in Arizona?

BARRY

How the hell should I know?

(Betsy turns to Barry, offers him the paperwork.)

BETSY

Listen, your friend's cute and all but frankly he's dumb as a post. You're smart and handsome. You wanna get this paperwork done and co-mingle?

BARRY

Well...

BETSY

You're on the fence on fulfilling your purpose?

BARRY

Honestly? Yes. Yes, I have this urge, almost insatiable really, to bury my head into you. But as a rational creature, everything we've just been talking about really undermines my desire to do it. Like you said, there's a lot of responsibility involved.

BETSY

But it's your biological imperative!

JACK

Bio-whozical what now?

BETSY

Shut up, Jack.

BARRY

Just because we're driven to do it doesn't mean it's right to do. Everything that's going on in the world, all this nonsense about conception and rights for zygotes, it's better to just let it be, you know?

BETSY

Look, I'm gonna be flushed pretty soon. We don't get fertilized right now there's a chance we'll miss the uterine lining entirely.

BARRY

I'm sorry, but I can't in good conscience mix my chromosomes with yours. If it's so important to you, you'll have to ask Jack.

BETSY

(frustrated)

Fine. Jack, you wanna fill out this paperwork?

JACK

Hells no. You wanna do the deed, I'm down. But if you're asking me to make a commitment, you're barking up the wrong tree, honey.

BETSY

Fertilizing me is by definition a commitment, you idiotard!

JACK

You're kinda bitchy. You know what, forget it. I'm not interested - you're not the only egg in the coop.

BETSY

I'm the only egg you'll ever see! Don't you know anything about female reproduction?

(Jack shrugs.)

BETSY

Goddamnit, you two are the only ones that made it; one of you has to fertilize me!

BARRY

No! I won't add to the madness of the world!

JACK

Hell no, get away from me you crazy round snatch!

(Betsy begins chasing the two guys around the STAGE, each of them gracefully avoiding her. Suddenly, THEODORE, a sperm with two tails (and wearing a football helmet) enters from the further WING.)

THEODORE

Hey you guys! I made it!

BARRY

Holy shit, it's Theodore.

JACK

You know that guy?

BARRY

We developed in the same sperm duct. He's one of the mutated sperm, supposed to run interference for us endurance runners. He wasn't supposed to make it this far.

THEODORE

Hey Barry! There's the finish!

(Theodore makes a dash in somewhat slo-mo for Betsy, in an evasive pattern, his two tails steering him in different directions.)

BETSY

Oh my God. One of you, quick, fertilize me! Don't let him rape me!

JACK

It's not rape if you're willing.

BETSY

Do I look fucking willing to you?

BARRY

Well, it definitely wouldn't be "legitimate rape" if that's what you're asking.

BETSY
Fuck you! (beat) Get inside me!

BARRY
No!

THEODORE
I'm gonna make it! I'm gonna make it to the finish!
Here I come!

BETSY
Please!

BARRY
(sighs)
All right.

(Barry buries his head just as Theodore
buries his. Both of them stop moving.)

BETSY
Oh no!

JACK
What?

BETSY
They both fertilized me!

JACK
Is that possible?

BETSY
Clearly it is.

JACK
So what does that mean?

BETSY
It means there'll be too many chromosomes and I'm not
gonna be viable. (crying) I'm going to get flushed!

JACK
It's better than the alternative, you know, having a
Theodore or whatever the hell that thing was.

BETSY
(beat, composing herself)
Yeah, I suppose you're right. I guess it'll be one of
my sisters that gets to mature. (crying again) I'm
destined for a maxi pad!

(Betsy exits. Jack swims about a little, somewhat lost.)

JACK

So what the hell am I supposed to do now? Do I just swim around until I die? What a shitty way to go!
(beat, getting nervous) Is anyone out there? Hello! I don't want to die alone! Hello?

(A VOICE calls from OFF-STAGE, opposite Betsy's exit.)

ELIZABETH

Hello?

JACK

Hello? Over here!

(ELIZABETH (the actor playing Betsy, but with glasses) enters.)

ELIZABETH

Hello there, handsome.

JACK

Betsy?

ELIZABETH

No, I'm Elizabeth, Betsy's sister. Twin sister. She got dropped a little before me and I'm a little clumsy. it took me a bit to get down here. Did she just pass by?

JACK

Uhm, yeah. So,uh, what're you up to? Interested in getting fertilized?

ELIZABETH

Oh, yes please!

JACK

Sweet, stay right there. I'll be right over.

ELIZABETH

(coyly)

Oh. Okay.

(Jack heads toward Elizabeth. BLACKOUT. END.)