

X MARKS THE SPOT
Jonathan Dorf

Cast of Characters

MO, a thirtysomething male

ZIPPY, same age, female, and not quite Mo's wife

(A sign says “Home of the Burning Bush.” Enter MO and ZIPPY, thirtysomethings with rings on their fingers and hiking gear on their backs. They stop and see the sign.)

MO

We’re here.

ZIPPY

I don’t see it.

MO

The sign says we’re here.

ZIPPY

And I’m saying I don’t see it. I see the sign, but I don’t see the “here.”

MO

It can’t be far.

ZIPPY

I think we’re lost.

MO

How can we be lost? We’re standing next to the sign.

ZIPPY

Of course we can be lost. For all we know the bush burned to the ground years ago and nobody bothered to take down the sign.

MO

We’re still . . .

(He takes off his backpack and fumbles inside for a map. He points at a spot and waves it at Zippy.)

here.

ZIPPY

Where?

MO

Here!

ZIPPY

You’re pointing at a blank space on the map.

MO

I am not. There's an "X."

ZIPPY

You put it there.

MO

Doesn't mean it doesn't deserve to be there. This is someone's home—you're telling me these people don't have a right to an X?

ZIPPY

I don't think so.

MO

What!?

ZIPPY

I don't think anyone lives here. I don't see anyone. We walked across what was supposed to be the center of this giant X and there wasn't even a gas station or a place to buy postcards.

MO

Maybe the center's on the other side, and this sign is the border. So maybe if we keep going in the direction we were going, we'll hit it.

ZIPPY

And if we don't?

MO

Why does everything have to be about destinations for you?

ZIPPY

I'm not the one who had to visit the Home of the Burning Bush.

MO

I thought it might be good for us to see a miracle.

ZIPPY

(beat)

What does that mean?

MO

I think you know what it means.

ZIPPY

Maybe we should take a rest.

(Zippy takes off her backpack.)

MO

Maybe we should.

ZIPPY

Do you have the sandwiches?

MO

Aren't they in your bag?

ZIPPY

No, you said you'd take them.

MO

I said I'd *buy* them.

ZIPPY

Did you?

MO

Yeah—tuna on wheat for you, ham and cheese on toasted white for me—I said I would. But I didn't say I'd *pack* them.

ZIPPY

You just assumed I would pack them?

MO

I buy them, you pack them—that seems fair.

ZIPPY

What did you do with them?

MO

If you didn't pack them, then they're probably on the dresser back at the motel.

ZIPPY

I can't believe you didn't pack them.

MO

(beat)

These sandwiches are a microcosm of our marriage.

ZIPPY

If they were really a microcosm of our marriage, then they'd be imaginary sandwiches.

MO

Are you insinuating our marriage is imaginary?

ZIPPY

Jimmy and a pair of rings do not mean we're married.

MO

Don't bring Jimmy into this.

ZIPPY

He's into this whether you like it or not. I'm not the one that insisted we adopt a child to make us look more married.

MO

Why don't you try explaining it to Jimmy that way?

ZIPPY

I'm explaining it to you that way.

MO

I should call my mother and make sure he hasn't killed her.

ZIPPY

There was a reason why he was twelve and no one had adopted him.

MO

He got into the system when he was too old.

ZIPPY

That and a few inexplicably combusted pets.

MO

I am not going to trade one-liners with you. I thought you loved Jimmy.

ZIPPY

I try to love Jimmy. I try to start conversations with him. "Do you need any more black shirts?" or "Is that a dead rat in your pants, or are you just happy to see me?" I think maybe things would be different if we were really married. I don't think he listens to me, because he senses I'm not really the wife, and he thinks of you as the person that actually adopted him. Why couldn't we get married?

MO

I think we're both very hungry right now, and we're saying things we don't mean.

ZIPPY

I don't mean that Jimmy doesn't listen to me or I don't mean that I try to start conversations with him or I don't mean that I'm not really the wife or I don't mean to ask why we didn't ever get married? What don't I mean?

MO

I didn't say you. I said we.

ZIPPY

But you meant me. You always mean me.

MO

I know you don't mean *that*.

ZIPPY

I'm hungry. That makes me meaningful in a mean way.

MO

I'm sorry that I didn't pack the sandwiches.

ZIPPY

(beat)

I moved up my plane flight to tomorrow.

MO

You changed our tickets?

ZIPPY

I changed *my* ticket.

MO

Why?

ZIPPY

You don't need my help to find burning bushes or the largest mule leg in the Midwest.

Want to read the rest of the play? Hit the back button on your browser and follow the instructions for requesting a perusal copy.