

Groundlings Sketch Writing Workshop A – Beat Sheet Assignment

Character Sketch – Title: Getting to Know You – Julia Roberts

Story

Five women who barely know each other are trying to settle down and sleep in a hostile environment – under the 5 freeway, in a homeless encampment, as part of a challenge on their first night in a reality competition show.

They are scared, nervous and emotionally drained, and just want to get to sleep. Tanya is an oversharer – and wants to continue telling her stories into the night. The MCs try telling her to shut up, put a pillow over their heads, beg her to be quiet, and finally give up and drag their cots over to the men’s tent to sleep.

Set up

MC are a group of normal women, trying to make the best of a bad situation – sleeping away from home, in a tent, in a homeless encampment – and they just want to sleep.

One woman, Darby is a suburban mom has a baby, with her, whom she is desperate not to wake.

Two young women, Sasha and Tanya are urban, and not willing to put up with Tanya’s “old white lady stories.”

Another, Cathy is 50ish, overweight, hasn’t said a word, seemingly asleep on her cot. No one pays her any attention.

Tanya is 71, wiry, a little quirky, has red glasses, cropped white hair, and she keeps talking, just as others are about to drift off to sleep. “I got another one,” she says with glee. And tells a ridiculous story. “Does that ever happen to you?” she asks at the end.

Comedic Beats/Escalations

“Does this ever happen to you? You’re about to fall asleep and then, ooh, that one thing you said that is embarrassing comes back. It could be today or 10 years ago. But it pops into my mind, and I’m thinking about what I shoulda said, and, ...well... I can’t sleep. Does that ever happen to you?”

Responses: Shut up. Groan. Pillow over head. Darby, the mom with the sleeping baby, shoots silent daggers at her.

“I got another one, just keeping me awake. You know my late husband, Roger. He was a card. Roger gambled when we needed money. He had a knack for it. Saved us from the poor house. Anyways, he liked me to go look at other people’s hands. Not tell him. He wasn’t a cheat. But just think about the cards, and then he would know what to play. He could just read my mind. You ever have that sort of connection to a person?”

Responses: “He was looking at your glasses,” Sasha said. MCs are grumpy, angry and want to sleep. They tell Tanya to shut the fuck up. The mom angrily mouths, *Stop Talking!* Gestures angrily to the sleeping baby.

I got another one,” Tanya says after a long pause. Everyone startles awake. “Yeah but you said he wadn’t reading my mind,” Tanya defended. “And he was. When he was dying, we agreed to meet for one last time 24 hours after his passing. He was so ill by then we couldn’t have fucked anyway. Well, I’m just saying, that’s a strong mind connection. He showed up. And, I’m telling you, he made me come, just with his mind. Did that ever happen to you?”

Resolution

Women get angry. Sasha goes get one of the men to help pull out her cot and sleep in the men’s tent. Zia does the same, pulling her own cot.

The baby wakes up, crying, and the mom gives up. “Thanks a lot. Tanya.” She leaves. Dragging her cot, the crib, the baby and the diaper bag all together. Practically taking the tent pole down with her.

After a while, in a quiet tent, Tanya talks to Roger, her late husband.

“hey Roger, Can you believe it? You’re just trying to be friendly, and everyone huffs off? did that ever happen to you?”

Cathy, the zombie, gets out of bed. Rolls her eyes, and pulls her cot out of the tent, too.