

Monologue adapted from *The Journey* by William R. Duell

ABENA OKAI is a young Nigerian woman who emigrated to the U.S. with her parents at the age of seven. She is in a bar on the most recent of one too many blind dates, this one with a romantic young American man. Abena is very smart, but she does not trust or believe in romance.

Her date returns to their table with drinks.

ABENA

(nods thanks)

Thank you for the drink. There are six things you need to know about me before this so-called date goes any further: I like to drink. Occasionally, I get drunk. If a rare bender annoys or offends you, say so now. No? Good.

(beat)

I can't stand small talk. Entertain me with tall tales, read me an epic, divulge your innermost hopes and fears, or keep your mouth shut, and we'll do just fine. Chit-chat with me and I'll slap you.

(beat)

Three: I like to talk shop. Why is my talking shop not small talk? Because my work is actually interesting. I'm an anthropologist - I study other cultures. Unlike many navelgazing Americans, I haven't made it my life's project to study myself. If my shop talk is over your head, ask me to explain it and I'll gladly oblige you. If it bores you - then you'll bore me.

(beat)

Four: You said you're a technical lead for an internet start-up. Hooray. I say we live in the age of the tyranny of technology. I don't admire your medium - it proliferates a lot of bad information. Take it from an anthropologist, a lot of what you read on it about cultures and people is insipid, overly simplistic and-slash-or incorrect. If the technology itself is your god, worship it with some other believer. You still listening? I really thought that would have infuriated your inner geek. Five: I'm not a monogamist - and probably wouldn't be with you. I'm ending a relationship, yes, still weaning my pathetic ex of sex. But even if I were not in this relationship - and were in a relationship with you - I would not promise you monogamy. Why is that? Six: I don't believe in love. It's a concept Renaissance Europeans created to help get themselves through the long night. And I mean after coitus - after a couple fucked their brains out and held one another in bed afterward and wondered oh-my-god, is this all there is? And what is the meaning of it all? I sympathize with them for their fear of the emptiness. But hey, life's a bitch, isn't it? "Yes it is," is my philosophy, and living an honorable life means accepting reality and moving on. I accept reality, I know my fate. I'm becoming an expert at moving on.

(beat, looks him in the eye)

(MORE)

ABENA (CONT'D)

But you - you've got "romantic" written all over you. So here's fair warning that no weak-kneed romantic wants to tread down this path. This path's not strewn with rose petals.

(beat - he's staying)

Not moving on?

(smiles as he affirms he's staying)

Wow. Great, that's nice. What I hate about life is that it's always time to move on. But not you, not now, you're not moving on yet. I like that.

(beat)

I admit, I'm surprised, you're the first man who's stayed.

Abena picks up her glass and toasts him.