

shaw + Dreyfuss 1

THE SHARK IS BROKEN

Scene 1

Darkness. SFX: Ominous theme music, which descends into sounds of a mechanical shark breaking down.

Lights up.

Roy Scheider sits at the table to read his New York Times.

SFX: Launch approaches and bumps the Orca.

Richard Dreyfuss appears and enters.

start
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DREYFUSS. What a god almighty fucking waste of time!

SCHEIDER. Jesus! What's eating you now?

DREYFUSS. The title character has had a cardiac infarction. Bruce is dead!

SCHEIDER. Well, at least it's consistent. They'll just get another one from the boat shed.

DREYFUSS. How many of those things they got, anyway? Three? Four? We've been on this boat, what, five days? None of them fucking work. This whole thing is a disaster.

Dreyfuss grabs the heater and tries to turn it on.

Christ, it's cold. Is this thing working?

SCHEIDER. Let me try.

Scheider turns it on easily.

That should do it.

SFX: Muffled shouting—splash.

What are they doing to it?

DREYFUSS. Don't ask me, man. Why does it take so goddamn long?

SCHEIDER. Well...it's not the time it takes to take the take that takes the time... It's the time it takes between the takes that takes the time to take the take.

Beat.

DREYFUSS. How much time did that take you?

Why are the goddamn things so unreliable? They can put a man on the moon but they can't make a mechanical fish that floats?

SCHEIDER. I was talking with Bob, and as I understand it it's to do with the dynamics of the mechanism. You see, Bruce is powered with pneumatics, right, rather than hydraulics? Because oil and water don't mix.

DREYFUSS. Right.

SCHEIDER. Well, Bruce is designed to be a neutral weight, so he'll float, but pneumatics use compressed air, and the compressed air causes fluctuations in weight. So the longer he's out there and the more he moves the heavier he gets.

DREYFUSS. That's fascinating, Roy. You know, it makes me think it would have been easier to just get a real shark.

SCHEIDER. You serious?

DREYFUSS. Sure, why not? Get a tame shark. How hard can it be?

SCHEIDER. You ever seen a real live shark?

DREYFUSS. I'm from Queens, man! Of course I've never seen a real live shark!

SCHEIDER. Richard, you cannot tame a shark.

DREYFUSS. No?

SCHEIDER. No. Whattya gonna do? He eats someone he gets a tap on the nose, he doesn't eat someone you give him a cookie?

Anyway, the weather guy said there's a warm front moving in. Plenty of sunshine; maybe we can catch a few rays.

DREYFUSS. Yeah? I look to you like the kind of guy who likes to catch a few rays? My skin bypasses "tan" and goes directly to "sunstroke."

SCHEIDER. Hey don't knock it, Richard. It lowers your blood pressure, lifts your mood, gives you vitamin D...

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Pause.

DREYFUSS. Is this the way you saw your career panning out? My first picture was *Valley of the Dolls*.

SCHEIDER. Who were you in it?

DREYFUSS. Ach, I'm in it for all of forty-five seconds. One line. Just an extra really. What was your first one?

SCHEIDER. A little Oscar winner you may have heard of called *The Curse of the Living Corpse*.

DREYFUSS. Really?

SCHEIDER. Not exactly Shakespeare, huh?

DREYFUSS. No. — stop 1.

start 2.

Pause.

You've done Shakespeare, right, Roy?

SCHEIDER. Sure—*Romeo and Juliet*, New York Shakespeare Festival. I was Mercutio.

DREYFUSS. Yeah, I'm gonna do Shakespeare some day. I just can't decide which role I'd be best suited to. Hamlet or Prince Hal?... Hey, you know Robert works all the time with Harold Pinter? I'm gonna ask him to hook me up. Jesus, I never thought I'd miss West Hollywood... That's where I should be, instead of freezing my balls off here. But I guess the film wouldn't work without me.

SCHEIDER. Come again?

DREYFUSS. Hooper's the brains of the operation, the scientist, the rationalist; without him there's no shark hunt! No movie!

SCHEIDER. Well that's one way of looking at it.

DREYFUSS. D'you read the book?

SCHEIDER. Um, yeah.

DREYFUSS. You did? They told me not to read it, said it might confuse me. So...what's it like?

SCHEIDER. Well it's no *Great Gatsby*.

DREYFUSS. Okay.

SCHEIDER. But you know what they say. It's easier to make a good movie out of a bad book than out of a great book.