

# ATTRACTION, SUBTRACTION, REACTION

by Rosemary FrisinoToohey

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ISBN: 978-1-64479-227-8

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**SYNOPSIS:** Four young people rush through romantic entanglements in warp speed. Carlos pulls Beth into his orbit while Tanya reaches out to the reluctant Greg. But when Beth wants more of a commitment, Carlos backs off. Greg then spots Beth, leaving Tanya alone, while Carlos is confused. But Beth chooses solitude while Carlos goes in a different direction, turning to Greg, who is once again, unsure. Finally, Beth turns to Carlos, Greg turns to Tanya. Perfect. Or then again...maybe not?

**TIME:** Modern day.

**SETTING:** No specific setting.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(2 females, 2 males)*

CARLOS (m)..... teens-20s. *(32 lines)*  
 BETH (f)..... teens-20s. *(37 lines)*  
 TANYA (f)..... teens-20s. *(39 lines)*  
 GREG (m)..... teens-20s. *(36 lines)*

**CASTING NOTE:** Multi-racial casting encouraged.

**COSTUMES:** Casual, nothing outrageous.

**SET:** Bare stage with four chairs or stools that can be easily re-located.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Timing is paramount in this short piece. Aim to have the actors' lines following closely on one another, emphasizing the repetitions. They're not robots but ideally, there is control and precision in the turn of their heads. They are either looking straight out at the audience or specifically fixed on one another. No in-between.

**PREMIERE PRODUCTION**

Premiered at the Baltimore Women Playwrights Showcase at Spotlighters Theatre in Baltimore, Maryland. Produced and directed by Bob Russell with the following cast:

CARLOS .....Richard Peck  
BETH.....Melainie Eifert  
TANYA .....Stephanie Lynn Williams  
GREG .....Omar Robinson

DO NOT COPY

**AT START:** *Lights up on TANYA and GREG, seated on upstage chairs, some distance apart. CARLOS and BETH are seated on downstage chairs, even farther apart. ALL face front. CARLOS turns and regards BETH for a moment.*

**CARLOS:** I... like you. Oh, yeah. I really... like you. So, what do you think?

**BETH:** What am I supposed to think?

**CARLOS:** Well, you might say, you like me. See? Do you? Like me?

**BETH:** It's a little soon for that. I mean, I might. In time.

**CARLOS:** How long you think it'll take?

**TANYA:** *(Turns to GREG.)* Well, I haven't known you long, but I'm really beginning to...

**GREG:** Really?

**TANYA:** Are you seeing anybody? I mean, anybody that—

**GREG:** Oh, just, you know.

**TANYA:** So, do you think we might...?

**GREG:** Maybe if we got to know one another. It's a little soon for me to...

**BETH:** I don't even know if I want to.

**CARLOS:** Can I do anything to hurry you along?

**BETH:** How can you know... right away?

**CARLOS:** It's the way I feel.

**BETH:** Well, it's this way. I need time.

**GREG:** I'm not one to rush into things.

**TANYA:** Of course. I mean, I understand. Totally.

**GREG:** Good, because—

**TANYA:** It's just that being with you, it's the best I've ever—

**GREG:** But I'm the kind of person... I like to take my time.

**TANYA:** I see that, but—

**BETH:** People like me... take it slow.

**CARLOS:** Well, people like me get there fast. I want to—

**BETH:** I know what you want!

**CARLOS:** It's the way I am!

**GREG:** The way I am, I need to—

**BETH:** I have to feel something before we just—

**TANYA:** Oh, come on. Try to trust me!

**BETH:** But I hardly know you.

**GREG:** And before I take the plunge—

**TANYA:** I'm not a tub of ice!

**CARLOS:** I promise you're going to feel better.

**BETH:** Maybe. Maybe not.

**TANYA:** And once we get closer, we'll both feel—

**GREG:** Maybe I won't.

**TANYA:** Just give yourself a chance.

**CARLOS:** Life's all about taking chances.

**BETH:** What makes you so sure of things?

**TANYA:** It just feels so right. And I know. I just know.

**GREG:** Somebody might get hurt.

**TANYA:** Not the way I feel for you.

**CARLOS:** Besides, I think you've got to reach out and, and—

**TANYA:** Just grab hold of what's in front of you and—

**BETH:** Could you please slow down? I cannot go faster.

**GREG:** And now I'm feeling pressured.

**TANYA:** I didn't want that to happen.

**GREG:** Look, just try to understand—

**TANYA:** Anything. I'll do—

**CARLOS:** Absolutely anything—

**BETH:** Don't say it like that.

**TANYA:** We'll just mean what we say and say only what we really—

**CARLOS:** I promise. I really do.

**GREG:** What we really mean?

**TANYA:** Exactly.

**BETH:** Well...

**GREG:** Then I guess...

*ALL rise, each picking up their chair. TANYA and GREG put their chairs together. CARLOS and BETH put theirs together. ALL sit.*

**BETH:** So.

**TANYA:** It's so right.

**BETH:** And now that we are the way we are...

**TANYA:** What about the next step?

**GREG:** The next step?

**CARLOS:** Hold on.

**BETH:** Well, it's obvious, isn't it?

**GREG:** I'm not sure.

**TANYA:** Will you ever be sure?

**BETH:** Clearly, we should say that we are...

**CARLOS:** I'm not ready.

**GREG:** Look, I feel pretty good about what happened, but—

**TANYA:** So, you feel good, but you don't feel good?

**BETH:** Are you afraid?

**CARLOS:** Doggone right.

**BETH:** It's just a word.

**TANYA:** And we should express ourselves. Right?

**BETH:** It's just right to take the next step.

**GREG:** There you go again.

**TANYA:** What does that mean?

**CARLOS:** I'm not ready for your "next step."

**BETH:** It's not just my next step.

**TANYA:** All I said was, it's our time to—

**GREG:** It can't be our time if I'm not ready. And... I'm not.

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