

(LEIF goes to CONNIE.)

LEIF. We don't have to give up, pumpkin.

(CONNIE shakes her head. She takes a deep breath.)

CONNIE. It's time we stopped trying. It's time we turned the page, Leif. I'm going to get ice cream. I feel like eating lots of van-choc-straw. Mostly straw, but let me have a taste of your van and your choc, and I'll be a happy member of the - what was that name we gave ourselves?

ALTHEA. "Puzzle Platoon."

CONNIE. (To ALTHEA.) Permission to procure some VCS, Sergeant?

ALTHEA. Permission granted, Private.

(They exchange salutes. CONNIE exits.)

LEIF. (Calling after her.) I still vote for "Gondolier Brigade."

(Lights go down. A narrow pin spot comes up on CONNIE elsewhere on stage. She holds a plastic bag which, by the shape of it, appears to contain a box-shaped object that could very well be a carton of ice cream. She addresses the audience.)

START

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CONNIE. I've never worked a jigsaw puzzle before. You have to believe this, although it seems too strange, doesn't it? I missed the boat on that one. I've never seen *Casablanca* either. Or visited the Grand Canyon or Disney World. I don't like to fly, and when I was little, I would get deathly carsick. I mean, so carsick that I couldn't go ten miles without revisiting everything I'd eaten since I got up that morning. Okay, T.M.I., right? Anyway, that makes me the last person to be giving you advice on the best way to put together a ridiculously

large jigsaw puzzle. Although I *have* been at this one long enough to offer a *couple* of pointers. First, it helps if you don't concentrate *too* closely on the task at hand. The brain's a funny organ; it doesn't always need every synapse of attention to its job. Sometimes it works best when switched to automatic pilot. The second thing I've noticed about working puzzles is that it helps to have people working it with you. It helps a lot. You draw from one another. It's hard to describe.

(*Beat.*)

It's funny.

(*Beat.*)

I don't want this night to end.

END

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(*Lights fade out. In the darkness we hear a loud female yelp. When the lights come back up in the basement, we see the aftermath of a little accident. MATTIE's stool is overturned. The ping pong table has buckled slightly in the middle. There is a scattering of puzzle pieces on the floor, which have spilled through the gap in the middle of the table. ALTHEA, LEIF, and MATTIE stand, surveying the damage. CONNIE is at the door, bag in hand.*)

CONNIE. What happened?

MATTIE. (*Distraught.*) I was too heavy. I was sleeping and I was too heavy and the weight of me – of my big head – it was too much for the table – and then the table – and then the table –

ALTHEA. (*Calmly.*) It's really not that bad, dear.

(*LEIF starts to adjust the legs of the table so that the top sits flat again.*)