

Yellow Tail

A play by Zoe Etkin

Early evening. A studio apartment in a big city. A bedroom is set on one side and a living room on the other. The bathroom is implied off stage right and the kitchen implied off stage left. Books and stacks of paper litter the room. There are two laptops sitting on the coffee table.

DANIEL, 29, an aspiring journalist, rushes around, half dressed.

MORGAN, 27, post-grad student, sits on the couch reading.

DANIEL

They'll be here any minute. (Pause) You're not wearing that, are you?

MORGAN

What's wrong with what I'm wearing?

DANIEL

I thought you'd want to look nice when they get here.

Morgan goes to closet.

MORGAN

I'll be your Stepford wife in no time, darling.

Beat.

DANIEL

I can't believe you invited her.

MORGAN

I didn't. I mentioned Richard and

DANIEL

This is going to be fun&

Dan exits to bathroom and Morgan

dresses. Dan begins to sing
Dylan's Thin Man offstage.

DANIEL
(singing)

And somebody points to you and says
It's his
And you say, What's mine?
And somebody else says, Where what is?
And you say, Oh my God
Am I here all alone?

MORGAN
You know, I'm really starting to hate that song.

Knock at door.

MORGAN
(quickly finishes dressing)
Coming!

Enter: JUDY, 35, successful
journalist and writer, Daniel's
sister; RICHARD, 57, wealthy
magazine editor; and CORA, 54,
Richard's wife. All laughing and
conversing. They greet Morgan.

MORGAN
Can I take your coats?

The three dump coats in Morgan's
arms. She tosses them onto the
bed.

JUDY
So where's Danny?

MORGAN
Bathroom.

RICHARD
No desk, I see. Notice that, Judy? I distinctly remember
you keeping a desk in here.

JUDY

Well you can't control things when a place changes hands,
can you?

Dan enters, put together, shaved.

Judy and Morgan chat quietly.

RICHARD

Ah, there you are. You remember my wife, Cora.

They shake hands. Dan glares at
Judy and Morgan.

DANIEL

Nice to see you again.

CORA

Was it Daniel who wrote that essay on the Diane Arbus
retrospect, honey?

RICHARD

Why yes, it was.

DANIEL

You read that?

CORA

The writing style quite reminded me of you, Judy.

DANIEL

I

JUDY

Oh, did I hear my name?

CORA

Remember the piece you wrote on that show at Bradshaw?

JUDY

The one with the avant garde hats?

Judy gesticulates the hats.

RICHARD

(laughs)

Classic Judy. You could have had us shut down!

Beat.

Daniel sits on the coats. He shifts uncomfortably.

MORGAN

Well, I'm not sure if you've heard yet, Judy. But Dan's working on a really awesome project and

JUDY

Oh, is that so? Richard? What's this about?

RICHARD

Just a little hot topic piece on the mayor.

MORGAN

(Defensive)

It isn't little!

DANIEL

Morgan

JUDY

Intriguing. Isn't he a lame duck?

DANIEL

No, actually. We anticipate his re-election.

JUDY

Hah! What an optimist you are, Danny. (Pause) I'm proud. Sounds worthy.

DANIEL

Never said I liked the guy, just on assignment.

MORGAN

Well, Dan's worked really hard on it.

RICHARD

Perhaps a toast is in order, to all of Daniel's solid work this year?

JUDY

I think so.

CORA

Let's do have some wine.

MORGAN

(to Daniel)

Help me in the kitchen?

DANIEL

(softly to Morgan)

With pleasure.

They exit stage left.

CORA

You know, we really must have Judy come to the Hamptons one weekend.

JUDY

I was just thinking of inviting myself up there! We haven't been sailing in ages.

CORA

It was so fun at the old house, wasn't it? The new one is just too big. I keep losing Richard!

JUDY

Better hold tight to this one, I'll tell you&

RICHARD

It's so good to have you back, Judy. We'll plan a trip for the end of the month.

JUDY

Marvelous! (Pause) Perhaps we should invite Danny and Morgan?

Daniel and Morgan enter both carrying wineglasses, Daniel holds the bottle.

JUDY

(noticing label on the bottle)

What in God's name is Yellow Tail?

MORGAN

Perfectly good wine, Judy.

CORA

Just open it. I'm sure it's fine.

JUDY

I thought our parents taught us better, Danny, than to drink something with English on the label!

Daniel ignores and pours wine.
Hands it out. Recipients give
thank you's.

RICHARD

Well, to Daniel, for his first featured story.

ALL (Except Daniel)

To Daniel!

Morgan hugs Daniel. He smiles at
the recognition.

JUDY

And how about a toast to me?

DANIEL

For what?

RICHARD

Judy, let's not do that now.

CORA

You didn't tell him the good news?

DANIEL

What good news?

JUDY

No.

DANIEL

What the hell are you

RICHARD

Daniel, I

JUDY
(laughs)

Why do you think I came back, Danny?

DANIEL

Excuse me?

JUDY

For my old job? Richard wouldn't do that, would you?

RICHARD

Well, no.

DANIEL

What's going on?

JUDY

I realize I've been absent for quite some time, but I offered Richard my talents and

RICHARD

And well, I was going to tell you at the office but I've asked your sister to co-edit the magazine.

Daniel stares, unmoving.

JUDY

I'm surprised you're in the dark on this one.

DANIEL

Should I not be?

JUDY

What's the big deal, Danny?

DANIEL

The proposal. What about my proposal?

RICHARD

You're a great writer but Judy's got the experience.

DANIEL

Oh aren't we all so proud of Judy's experience? Judy's been

published, Judy edited a collection of erotic poetry.

MORGAN

Dan, our guests don't want to hear&

JUDY

Oh no, let him continue. Reminds me of his college days,
always a little jealous.

DANIEL

Judy's novel can be found at the check out aisle of grocery
stores nation wide! You are a fucking joke.

JUDY

I'm going to pretend you didn't say that. Or do you want a
little character assassination of your own?

MORGAN

You've done enough, Judy.

JUDY

Because I've got plenty to fire the cannon with.

DANIEL

Get out.

JUDY

(to the room)

His submission to the New Yorker was an absolute disaster.
Not only did they send him a rejection letter, but they
asked him not to submit any further work.

DANIEL

I said get out!

JUDY

(satisfied)

And look at you now, Danny. This is your shining fucking
moment, and this is how you're behaving?

DANIEL

Get the fuck out of my apartment!

JUDY

(collected)

Don't forget whose name is on the lease.

DANIEL

You're going to pull that on me, again?

JUDY

I'm quite capable.

MORGAN

Judy, please—he's just upset.

DANIEL

You want me out? Fine.

MORGAN

Dan, don't go!

Daniel exits slamming the door.

MORGAN

Come on! (To Judy) And you wondered why I asked you not to come.

JUDY

Little Danny will get over it.

RICHARD

I should have told him. Come on, Judy. Let's go talk to him.

JUDY

Must we?

RICHARD

Oh suck it up.

Richard and Judy exit leaving Morgan and Cora on the couch.

MORGAN

Well this isn't really how I planned the evening. At all.

CORA

I'm sure.

Beat.

MORGAN

I, um, really like your dress. Where d you get it?

CORA

Bergdorf Goodman. (Forced) Yours is very nice as well.
Where did you find it?

MORGAN

This? Got it when I went to visit my cousins, upstate.
Targét.

CORA

Ohhh! French!

Beat.

MORGAN

Perhaps we need more wine.

CORA

Oh yes. Definitely.

Lights fade.

Exeunt.