

Draft Five

The Dulling of Teeth

written by

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CHARACTERS

Teether - A new addition to the group
Snaps - The group leader
Thrasher - handsome devil
Tank - a feminine and butch powerhouse
Fin - Meek, but kind
Snark - Snarky

SETTING

A shark therapy group in the basement of some kind of office building.

TIME

A couple years in the future

SCENE ONE

A dark room - everyone is in a circle. A dim light makes a poor attempt to lighten the atmosphere.

Teether scuffles outside near the door. They debate coming in.

SNAPS

This is a safe space. You can say anything you'd like here and it will stay in this room.

SNARK

(as Teether enters)

Unless you say something too personal and then he has to report it.

SNAPS

Yea, I mean, I do have to report some things- Teether, why don't you start us off.

Teether panics. Their eyes widen.

SNAPS (CONT'D)

Tee?

He stops the train before it can fully become lost.

TEETHER

Well, okay. I'm Teether. I also go by Tee. Whatever, really. It's fine. Like it's a fine name I mean or like I mean whatever name you call me is fine hell I'd probably answer to Bill and then if there was someone actually named Bill they might be mad maybe I shouldn't answer to Bill-

SNAPS

Why don't you tell us why you're joining us today?

TEETHER

Right.

Okay. Well.

I'm here cuz I mean, I heard this might help. Like I read about this-, um here, and I uh- yea it's like this- maybe- uh- help.

Yea.

I've been struggling with stuff recently. And I've heard- those who are like- goin through- it-

This was a stupid idea.

Snaps wide set eyes lock onto Teether - he calms them for a moment - like a weird kind of hypnosis.

SNAPS

We're proud of you for reaching out.
Everyone-

EVERYONE (W/O TEETHER)

No shark swims alone.

SNAPS

Everyone means you too Teether.

TEETHER

(confused)

I'd never heard-
sorry.
Don't swim alone.

TANK

You fucked it up.

SNAPS

Tank, no one is a fuck up here.

TEETHER

(trying to keep up)

I don't think she was saying I // was a-

SNAPS

// Again.

EVERYONE

No shark swims // alone.

TEETHER

// sharks yea not uh alone

...
Not even an evening stroll?

TANK

Could be nice to have a jaunt around the park.

FIN

Yeah- time to collect your thoughts. Catch up on politics.
Clear you head.

SNAPS

Let's refocus.

*Everyone, except Teether, take a deep breath in and
let out a loud screech in perfect unison.*

They all become incredibly focused.

TEETHER

Uh-?

SNAPS

When we start to lose focus, we all take a moment to let out our reason for losing focus. And we can become still again.

SNARK

Letting the wiggles out.

SNAPS

Well-put Snark. Thank you.

Tank raises her fin.

SNARK

Tank.

TANK

Maybe we could try it again? So that Teether has a chance to get out their wiggles too?

TEETHER

Oh- I'm good on the- the wiggles, but thank you.

SNAPS

Great. So today's theme is-

Tank raises her fin again.

SNAPS (CONT'D)

Yes, Tank.

TANK

I think maybe not all of us got it all out.

SNAPS

I think we'll be okay. Today's theme-

Tank is visibly vibrating.

Snaps sighs to himself.

Tank is doing the best she can but the wiggles are getting the best of her.

This lasts for a painfully long time.

TANK

Permission to wiggle?

SNAPS

Permission to- wiggle.

Tank relieves the rest of her wiggles and screeches.

She sinks into her chair with relief.

SNAPS (CONT'D)

Now that we've taken care of that-
 For our new friends: each week we come here ready to talk
 with a new theme. This week, we're talking about rejection.
 Scary right? I know I've been rejected many a times. Over and
 over.

As a kid, I was never picked first for volleyball. They'd
 taunt me. Mock me. Tell me I would never be able to spike
 because "I don't have bones."

My wife - she rejected me over and over again. I'd ask her
 out and she'd tell me she had to organize the plastic rings
 from her soda bottles or she was menstruating - told me she
 didn't want me to hurt her when really she was the one
 hurting me.

My mom wouldn't come to my birthday parties because they were
 quote "lame" - well you know what else is lame *mom*? **Jeff**.
 That guy didn't even know who Sharkira was and I'm the lame
 one make that make sense *mom*.

Everyone nods with compassion.

SNAPS (CONT'D)

All these things that hurt me - all these rejections in my
 life- I fell into this pattern of letting these little things
 keep me from moving forward.

From ages 8-11 and 13-17 I didn't get myself so much as a
 balloon on my big day.

I was the one who was pushing that away.

If I woulda bought cupcakes, I'm sure even Jeff would have
 had one.

I let the rejection get to me when all I had to do was just
 keep going.

-Everyone-

EVERYONE

No shark swims alone.

SNAPS

Right.

So, why don't we all go around and share some form of
 rejection we've faced recently.

Quiet.

SNAPS (CONT'D)

Snark, why don't you get us started?

SNARK

Okay um- well recently my doctor said she couldn't see me.

SNAPS

Go on.

SNARK

She was walking back from lunch and when took off her sunglasses she jumped a bit. She was like "AH!"

SNAPS`

Okay. Um, good. Fin?

FIN

The other day at school I asked the lunch lady for tater tots, and she said they were all out.

TANK

Hate when that happens.

FIN

I had to take the spinach casserole instead.

SNARK

Bastard.

SNAPS

Thrasher? You wanna go?

THRASHER

I don't get rejected.

SNAPS

I'm sure you've experienced some kind of rejection before.

THRASHER

Have you seen these gills?

Thrasher poses, showing off his features.

SNAPS

I think we need to refocus a bit-

TANK

WIGGLIES

The group goes wiggle and scream.

Snaps dips his head into his fins in defeat.

SNAPS

Rejection is when you are directly asking someone for something and they deny you. Like me with my wife.

TEETHER

You should've backed off.

FIN

Consent dude.

SNAPS

She loves me- Tank you wanna jump in?

TANK

I'm with Tee on this one- if someone says no you gotta respect that.

SNAPS

When was a time you were rejected?

TANK

I'm just saying if I told you no multiple times and you kept going at it I might give in too, but that's not love, that's dulling an annoyance.

SNAPS

Teether, why don't you take this one. When was the last time you were rejected?

They all look to Teether.

TEETHER

I actually thought I'd just listen today-

SNAPS

Maybe not the last time, but a time that still sticks with you.

TEETHER

I'm not super comfortable-

SNAPS

Tell us why you joined this group.

TEETHER

I-

okay-

Well.

Okay. I was walking around school the other day right? And I overheard this guy, Jason. He was talking about how excited he was for his birthday.

He bought a new swimsuit for it.

It's purple with pockets and these little flames that go up the side.

And you know, me and Jason, we're not like super close but we're at the same table for biology and I dunno I kinda- I kinda thought I would get invited.

Or if not invited just not told about it I guess? Like if you know you're not gonna invite someone don't bring it up around them- don't be a dick you know?

Anyway.

He didn't seem to think about that. And he was talking about it pretty loud during class and I asked, ya know, I was like "hey, that sounds fun- I hope you have a good birthday."

And everyone just froze.
 Like they were surprised I knew about the party or even what
 a birthday was. Like I was some kind of demented alien freak
 who had never experienced basic human things crunchy peanut
 butter or tax returns or how to screw in a lightbulb- I know
 I can't physically do that but I understand the concept-
 lefty loosey righty- sorry.
 So they just were like. Surprised.
 And Jason gave me this look. Filled with sadness and pity.
 And he said. "Sorry you can't come."
 And I gave him a look back, but mine was made up of
 confusion-
 and he leaned over to me and said,
 "pool party."

The other members gasp.

THRASHER

I hope you reported that shit.

TEETHER

I tried to, but my teacher- it doesn't matter.

SNAPS

Don't diminish your experience just because someone in a
 place of privilege doesn't understand.

TEETHER

I told my teacher Jason had made me uncomfortable, but all he
 said was-

-

"Can you blame him?"

Silence.

No one can believe what they've just been told.

Silence.

TANK

(quietly)

Permission to wiggle?

Snaps nods.

*They all slowly wiggle and let out a painfully quiet
 scream.*

END OF SAMPLE