

Girl and Tree

a play in one scene

by
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CHARACTERS

- GIRL Woman, bookish, wearing glasses, early 20s.
- TREE Man dressed up as a tree, expressive face but
static body, green paper leaves of various sizes
pinned to his shirt both front and back, mid-to-
late 20s.

SETTING

A minimalistic park: A bench, perhaps a blue backdrop, but little else.

(GIRL is sitting on a park bench, head down. GIRL is wearing a sweater, and her hands are each inside the sleeve of the other arm, making what appears to be one "U"-shaped uni-arm. Stage left of GIRL is TREE, who has his left arm straight out toward the audience and right arm straight out away from GIRL. GIRL gently bobs her head back and forth for a few seconds before looking at TREE. TREE looks back.)

GIRL

You. You are something, there in your...

TREE

...my what?

GIRL

Your, I don't know, but...tree-ness? You have that, that quality of a monstrosity of, um, those, those California trees, the big ones. Oaks.

TREE

Redwoods.

GIRL

Redwoods, yes, and, and yes, and, but you...

(GIRL lays down on bench, feet toward TREE.)

GIRL (Continued)

...aren't like that. You have this slightity of demeanor, where you aren't Massive Scary Deciduous Kills College Girl in Freak Leaf-Falling Accident. I remember, there was this, I don't know, this oak...

TREE

Pine.

GIRL

...pine, yes, pine tree outside my window, upstairs, right hand-back corner, the house I grew up in, and there was this day...

(GIRL removes arms from uniarm.)

GIRL (Continued)

...this day when I wanted to get out of the place with my parents, and, yeah, the place, and here I go, wanted to go, out the window. And I had never unlocked the window, because why, I had air conditioning, it was never an issue. And I guess the lock was painted shot, and I never went out the window, and I never climbed down the tree, and now I am sad.

TREE

Pines are prickly.

GIRL

Yeah.

TREE

You would have been hurt. Pines are prickly. Have you ever touched a pine needle, I mean really touched a pine needle? Touched it so hard it went through skin and membrane and hemoglobin and red-tinged water and bone and membrane and skin and back out the other side? Have you?

(Pause.)

GIRL

No, I wrote this poem. Would you like to hear it?

(Pause.)

TREE

Do I have a...

GIRL

It's called "The Rain of Poignancy in the Metaphoric Ocean that is Mankind." Would you like to hear it?

(Pause.)

TREE

Well, then.

(GIRL pulls crumbled sheet of notebook paper out of pocket. GIRL clears throat.)

GIRL

"There is a peace, a peace that engages..." Wait, wrong draft.

(GIRL throws old poem on floor, reaches into pocket, and pulls out five Post-It notes.)

TREE

May I put my limbs down whilst you sort this out?

(GIRL nods. TREE puts limbs/arms down. GIRL looks at Post-It notes carefully, and over the period of 15 seconds, and sticks one on another on another on another, vertically.)

GIRL

Up.

(TREE puts limbs/arms in original position.)

GIRL (Continued)

Okay. "There is a love, a love that engages this world, this quiet Earth we know as home. But does this love show its face, its large biceps, its six-pack chest to me? It does not. It sits in a rocking chair, crocheting in a fey style a fey heart on a pink fabric. It sits..."

(GIRL pauses, and scans Post-Its.)

GIRL (Continued)

Sorry. "Where is the massive masculinity of what is ensured as my future husband, the man whom I..."

(Pause.)

GIRL (Continued)

No, sorry, I need to ask this, this. Do you think I'm cute?

(Pause.)

TREE

I'm not sure I'm the best to judge.

GIRL

You are my friend, and you can judge.

TREE

That was sick, by the way.

GIRL

That was sick.

TREE

My comment. The hemoglobin and red-tinged water thing. Five minutes ago. I don't know why I...

GIRL

No, who cares, I don't, am I cute?

(Pause.)

TREE

I suppose, objectively, most heterosexual men would be attracted to you. Of your type.

GIRL

My type.

TREE

The type that convenes in libraries and reads James Joyce: Portrait then Ulysses then Finnegan's then Dubliners then Finnegan's again -- though not because he didn't understand it the first time, because he did -- then Exiles then and...I guess that's it. The library probably doesn't have Exiles. It depends if this hypothetical library is in a large or...

GIRL

But that's not, I don't have a type. Not...not, not, not, I mean, you're my type, but you're not a type.

TREE

I'm a tree.

GIRL

But I don't go for trees.

TREE

But you go for me. You are sexually attracted to me.

(Pause. GIRL quietly sits up.)

GIRL

Why'd you make it? Why'd you make it all blunt and acerbic and crap? That's not all it is. It's not, look, there's this blah blah "sexual attraction," but lust doesn't bring me out here every day, snow, rain, math finals, Abbas Kiarostami film festivals, knicker, knicker, knicker, do you, Jiminy Cricket, do you know everything I've missed for you? Do you?

TREE

You've told me, I do believe.

GIRL

And you're not putting out. You know that you're not putting out, you do, do you?

(Pause.)

TREE

I am vaguely aware of that. I...

GIRL

Because it's not as though you have the whole central nervous system thing going for you. There wouldn't be any kind of sensation for you. I can, wait a minute...

(GIRL gets up and walks over to TREE.)

GIRL (Continued)

...I can take off this leaf...

(GIRL takes off leaf on left arm, throws it in front of TREE.)

GIRL (Continued)

...and then I can tickle you right there, that leaf-taking-off place.

(GIRL remains still, NOT tickling TREE. TREE begins laughing.)

GIRL (Continued)

I am not tickling you.

(Overlapping dialogue.)

TREE

...tickling me! I, yeah, you are not, no, but that's not the...you, you it was the action, the action of taking off the...I could feel your heart, your mind. That is what was tickling me. That is what I could feel: The hands of your soul.

(Pause.)

GIRL

What rubbish.

TREE

I know, but it was the best I could come up with. I am merely a tree.

GIRL

(Whispering.)

You, you are not, you are not, you are not...

(Gradual crescendo.)

...not not not not not merely a tree!

(Immediate drop back to whisper.)

I would not fall in love with a tree, with merely a tree. You are more. I have, we have this relationship, this loving relationship, this one-way, I love you, you humor me, this relationship like blue blood in veins that can only go one direction, and that direction is too the heart, even if it is not this sexual, condoms, birth-control pills crap that is the token symbol of 21st Century love. We are connected, you and I, we are...we are friends, the best of friends...

(In rhythm.)

...you and me, girlie and a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G...

(Normal.)

...which I want, I want to be the I-N-G, and this sounds...but why can't my lips touch your bark? Why won't you allow an innocent kiss? And yet you are...you make us seem sexless lovers, and why did you say that, the hands-of-your-soul crap, that hands-of-your-soul crap you spewed, why say that when you, because I know, because we know, we both know that you do not have these feelings for me. You feel nothing beyond a vague platoniness for me. Why do you lead me on so?

TREE

Because I like to be loved.

(Blackout.)