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A One Act Play

written by

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Characters:

Joy (aged 32)

Sam (aged 35)

ACT ONE

Scene One

Ext. Lake - Day

Joy (32), petite with very big eyes that seem to see all, and Sam (35), tall with big, comforting hands that will catch you when you fall, two strangers, are sitting on opposite sides of a bench at the lake.

Joy. I don't know.

Sam. But did you feel at home?

Joy. I've always wondered what it would feel like to feel at home.

Sam. Do you mean to say you've never felt at home?

Beat.

Joy (*very matter of fact*). No, I don't think I have. Maybe I felt at home in the womb ... I think there was a man who claimed that he could remember what it was like in his mother's womb ... He's probably crazy, though. But at the same time, I envy him. I'm sure, we must have felt secure in our mother's belly. Unless, of course, our mothers were addicts.

Sam. Was your mother an ... ?

Joy. No, I don't think so. Although I was a nervous baby. So I was told anyway. My mother might have done a substance of some kind. I don't know. I never asked her. And now I can't anymore.

Sam. Oh, I'm sorry.

Joy. She's not dead. But she could be. I haven't seen or talked to her in a while ... I think it's ten years ago today that I spoke with her.

Sam. Do you miss her?

Joy. I don't know. Maybe sometimes.

Sam. What happened? Sorry, If I may ask. You don't have to tell me.

Beat.

Joy. I think she got tired of me and I got tired of her.

Sam. I don't think I've ever heard anyone admitting to that.

Joy. Why shouldn't I?! It is the truth after all. And aren't we all yearning for truth?

Sam. I suppose that's true ... Although in the end, we almost always wish we hadn't found it ...

Joy. In my case, the truth doesn't give me much.

Silence.

Joy. The lake is quite beautiful. I hadn't really noticed before. Strange how we sometimes just don't notice things. Why I'm noticing it now, I don't know. Maybe because I'm here with you.

Beat.

Joy. Do you come here often?

Sam. I used to come here a lot with my big brother. He taught me how to bounce stones on the water.

Joy. I always wanted to be able to do that. Will you teach me?

He gets up and picks up a few stones. He hands her one.

Joy. I want to watch you do it first.

He makes the stone jump five times.

Joy. I think you're the man I will marry.

He looks at her questioningly.

Joy. As a little girl, I always wanted to marry the man who could make a stone jump at least five times.

He smiles.

Joy. Okay, so what's your secret?

Sam. It's all in the legs, the arm and in the wrist. You have to kneel down a little and let your arm go. Your wrist has to be flexible. If you do all this, you'll get the speed you need. And it always helps to envision how many times you want your stone to fly.

Joy. Flying stones ... I like that.

Sam. Try it.

She kneels down and relaxes her arm and her wrist. The stone just bounces twice, but her face lights up. She is over the moon.

Joy. It's never done that before. Thank you.

She beams at him. He returns a shy smile.

Joy. I want to do it again. Let's do it together.

They both get in position and throw the stones. His jumps further than hers.

Joy. Again. I have to beat you.

They go again. His still goes further than hers, but her stone is catching up to his.

Joy. Okay, one more time.

This time her stone only jumps twice, like the first time.

Joy. I should have stopped when I was ahead. Oh well ...

She checks her watch.

Joy. Oh, my. Is it so late already? I need to go ... Thank you.

Joy turns to leave.

Sam. Will I see you again?

Beat.

She turns around again.

Joy. I don't know ... think so. I haven't beaten you, yet.

She leaves and he gazes after her.

The lights go down.

Scene Two

Ext. Lake – The Next Day

Sam is sitting on the bench at the lake, waiting. He turns around to look at the path several times and he keeps checking his watch. Sam is getting restless. He gets up, picks up a few stones and lets them jump on the water. But just as the life seems to have gone out of Sam, the life has gone out of the stones. They all do not jump very far. Sam sinks to the ground and shakes his head. His gaze falls on a particularly beautiful stone that is at his feet. Sam picks it up, looks at it and gently plays around with it. Sam is lost in thought and mumbles to himself. We can only make out the words “safe haven”. Sam has not noticed that Joy has come up behind him.

Joy. Who are you talking to?

Sam. Hey, I didn't hear you coming.

Joy sits down next to him.

Joy. So?

Sam. What? ... Oh. No one really. Myself, I guess.

Joy. I do that sometimes. I used to do it a lot when I was younger.

Sam. You came back.

Joy. I told you, I haven't beaten you, yet.

Sam. I didn't think you would ... come back, I mean.

Joy. Why shouldn't I?

Sam. People rarely do what they say. Or mean what they say.

Joy. I'm not like that.

Sam. I've noticed ... and I don't hate it.

Joy. Lucky me.

They share a smile. But Sam's smile fades quickly. Joy notices.

Joy. Ready for another round?

Sam. I don't think so. Sorry.

Joy. What is he like, your brother?

Sam. I'm sorry?

Joy. You told me you used to come here with him.

Sam. Oh, yes ... He always was a mystery to me. But he always had my back. I miss that.

Joy. You asked me if I felt at home. Do you?