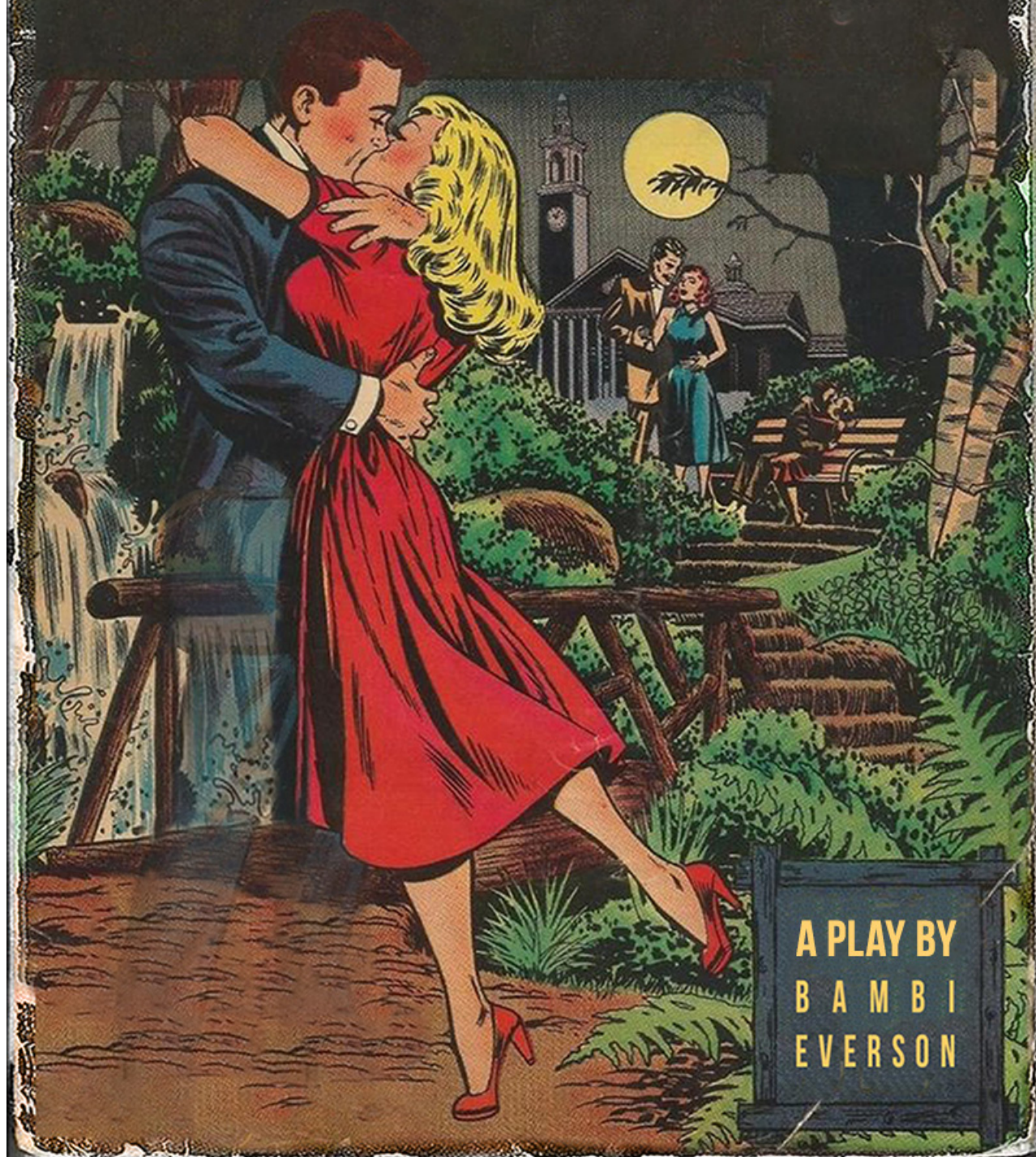


EVERSON
COLEMAN

APR.

NO.
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Never Can Say Goodbye



A PLAY BY
BAMBI
EVERSON

NEVER CAN SAY GOODBYE

One act, approx. 35 min.

CHARACTERS:

SHANE - Boyfriend of **ELIZABETH**, age consistent with person playing **ELIZABETH**, but I am thinking late 20s-early 30s. Any race.

ELIZABETH (20's-30s) - Grief riddled cinephile. The movies are her greatest comfort.

TIME: The present.

PLACE: New York City or Anytown USA

SYNOPSIS: With nowhere to channel her grief, Elizabeth strikes up an unusual relationship with her recently dead boyfriend.

SCENE ONE

ELIZABETH's Home. On her laptop, maybe...

ELIZABETH

I know what I promised. I'm trying. I swear. I'm not some Glenn Close in Fatal Attraction chick. Most times when a guy tells me he's not interested, I say "Thank you. Thanks for the heads up. Thanks for not wasting my time," but with you, it's different. Call it an addiction, or a self-esteem issue if you want. It always seems to come down to self-esteem right?, Mine has always been a few notches below Kafka. What if I was right this time? Or... Maybe we were both wrong and, like in math, two negatives multiplied equals a positive. I know shit happens and relationships end, but without you... I have this fist sized hole in my chest... No, it's more than that. I feel like Sigourney Weaver in Aliens. That scene where she is writhing in pain as the creature pushes its way through her belly. No. Worse. In Alien Resurrection, when they cut the alien out of her and just leave her with that gaping hole in her chest. And she feels that emptiness. Those are really good movies, you know. We should watch them again. We don't have strong female heroines like Ripley very often. *(pause)* I'm hurting, Shane. I take comfort in movies when I'm hurting. Mutated and defective genes, I guess. You know me. You know I don't handle goodbyes well. Who sobbed for hours after Toy Story 3? Casablanca? Iron Giant. It's not death that upsets me. I couldn't wait for Debra Winger to die in Terms of Endearment. She was so damn annoying. Watching Peter Pan's anguish when Wendy tells him she can't fly with him anymore because she grew up? She tried not to, but she couldn't help it... Buckets. You knew this going in. You used to say my sensitivity was one of my better qualities. Aside from... You know... The obvious. I tried it without you. Every breath hurts. I just want you... I need you back. I'm sorry. Shane, Come back.

SHANE enters.

SHANE

You and your movie references. This can't go on.

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry. Honestly. I just can't seem...

SHANE

We have to stop meeting like this.

ELIZABETH

Why?

SHANE

I'm dead!

ELIZABETH

Every relationship has its ups and downs.

SHANE

You have got to let go.

ELIZABETH

Why? Have you found somebody else? I guess there are some pretty good options where you are.

SHANE

I wouldn't know. You haven't given me any time to acclimate to my new surroundings, much less socialize.

ELIZABETH

I need to know. Is it like the movies?

SHANE

Well, I am not sitting around playing strip poker with Marilyn Monroe and Jane Mansfield. I am not doing much of anything, because you keep conjuring me up. It's relentless. You are stalking my soul. You conjure, I materialize. I don't seem to have any say in the matter.

ELIZABETH

I'm just happy it works. When I was a little girl my favorite movie was "The Bluebird."

SHANE

Never heard of it.

ELIZABETH

It was Twentieth Century Fox's answer to The Wizard of Oz, with Shirley Temple. It came out the year after. My dad always preferred it. Anyway, there is a scene where Shirley Temple and her brother are lost in the woods, and she thinks of her grandparents and they just appear. The theory behind it is "when you think of somebody, they are alive again." That has always stuck with me.

SHANE

If that was the case, wouldn't I be turning up everywhere? My own funeral, maybe? My son's bedroom?

ELIZABETH

I'm not an expert in the paranormal. I don't know how these things work. There was this other movie - Dead of Night, where a guy cheats at golf and...

SHANE

Enough with the movies. Whatever you did... can you undo it?

ELIZABETH

Are you saying you want to break up?

SHANE

I'm already broken up. I am... well, I should be... elsewhere... wherever that is. You're a great person. Elizabeth. We had a lovely time together when I was alive. I have no regrets, but this... this is not right.

ELIZABETH

But I wasn't there when you... I wanted to hold your hand. They wouldn't let me into the ICU... Your wife...

SHANE

Ex-wife... Well, soon to be...

ELIZABETH

She's your widow now.

SHANE

Yeah. Guess so. That's so weird. It was complicated. I know this is hard for you...

ELIZABETH

Hard? I had no one. Nobody to share my grief with. I am the invisible woman. Have you even seen your wife's GoFundMe Page?

SHANE

How could I?

ELIZABETH

Lemme show you.

ELIZABETH pulls it up on her laptop.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

It's quite something. She's raised \$13,628 out of the \$5000 she was asking for.

SHANE

But she had money. My life insurance...

ELIZABETH

She wanted a memorial bench in the Shakespeare Garden. I thought that was our place.

SHANE

Central Park is for everyone. That's a sweet idea really. For Jonah. Much nicer than going to a grave. Do I even have a grave?

ELIZABETH

Cremated. You were pretty burnt up after the accident. I guess it was just easier to go all the way. I don't even know where you're scattered. Somewhere uniquely special to your son, I guess.

SHANE

That would be the LEGO store.

ELIZABETH

Not even funny. It's like we both turned to ash. Tributes to you. They keep pouring in. Everybody loved you. They loved you and your wife, individually and collectively. I am sad for Jonah, of course. Losing his dad at such a young age. I wonder how that's gonna play out later in life. I wanted to post. Share my pain somewhere. But I didn't. Not even on my own page. I'm not out to hurt anyone. You never know who's gonna see what... All secrets come out on the internet sooner or later. Did Judith even know about me? Did anyone?

SHANE

Is that was this is all about? You couldn't have me all to yourself in life, so you are haunting me in death?

ELIZABETH

I loved you. I still love you.

SHANE

I know.

ELIZABETH

That doesn't end with death.

SHANE

I appreciate that.

ELIZABETH

I should have left you when I found out you were still married, but by that point...

SHANE.

I know. I didn't outright lie to you. We were separating. Judith and me. It was amicable. We had Jonah to consider. Children first. Always. Jonah is only 4, but smart as a whip. We never fought in front of him, or anyone. We were trying to do it right.

ELIZABETH

You were living in the same house.

SHANE

Am I doomed to keep having this conversation with you, even in death? For the last time, it was financial. Neither of us could afford to move. I told you, it was complicated. I thought you and I were just having fun. A rebound relationship for us both. I didn't know where it would have led. No one could have expected this.

ELIZABETH

No one ever expects a Mack truck. Except maybe on Grey's Anatomy. Worst death in television history. Didn't make any sense. Derek would have been too smart to leave his car in the middle of the road. The streets would have been blocked off. And Meredith behaved so badly..

SHANE

I can't follow you into pop culture world, Elizabeth. I need to go back.

ELIZABETH

Why? Does God have a plan for you? Are you going to be late for your materialization course?

SHANE

I have not seen anyone yet, much less God. Am I really dead? Maybe this is some crazy ass nightmare I am having while in a coma.

ELIZABETH

Nope. Dead. Trust me. If you were still alive, even in a coma, we might have had a chance. They had you on life support for a day, but there really wasn't any hope. Your wife pulled the plug. Very Meredith Grey of her. She might have waited a couple days, so your sister could have flown in...

SHANE

Carlie wouldn't have wanted to see me like that. Those images stay with you always. You were the lucky one. You get to remember me... like this.

ELIZABETH

I don't remember you being so argumentative. Have you seen her?

SHANE
My sister?

ELIZABETH
Your wife.

SHANE
She doesn't believe in ghosts. I'm wondering through...

ELIZABETH
What?

SHANE
Maybe you could get a message-

ELIZABETH
I'm not your secretary.

SHANE
To Jonah...

ELIZABETH
Oh. That's different, but how? He doesn't know me. Some stranger comes up to a kid in the playground with a message from his dead daddy? I am liable to get arrested, or beaten up.

SHANE
Right. Dumb idea.

ELIZABETH
This is all your fault, you know. All those months we were dating. You could have introduced me to Jonah. Just as a friend, you know. I love kids. Kids love me. But no. I had to be your little side piece while you worked out your shit. Where does that leave me now? *I* am the ghost. Not you. I'm left crying into my pillow. Screaming at the walls. No one understands. I told no one, because you wanted it that way. And honestly, when I was with you, I didn't need anyone else. I am the one abandoned, companionless, and forsaken. Your wife has everything. Jonah, your friends, your parents, your co-workers. Everybody rallying around her, showering her with love, food, comfort, and support. She has all the memories, the photos. It's like the opposite of that Patsy Cline song. The only thing different, the only thing new, she's got all the things, but now... I've got you.

SHANE
You've got good memories, I hope. I certainly do. Can't you hold on to that? Let my memory be a blessing, as they say?

ELIZABETH

No. The memories...They were strangling me. We didn't have enough time. I guess everyone says that when they lose someone, whether it's 4 months or 40 years. I just know I can't let you go before this relationship has a chance.

SHANE

Again, no offense, But I am dead. What chance do we have?

ELIZABETH

All my relationships have been doomed in one way or another. This one, at least, I have some control over. It's perfect. Someone I can come home to. Like *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*. I love that film.

SHANE

Is there a psychological disorder for someone who can't tell the difference between fantasy and reality?

ELIZABETH

If I were mentally ill, you wouldn't actually be here, would you? If it were all in my mind, I certainly wouldn't waste time arguing. I saw a British TV show once where a woman claimed she got pregnant by her ghost lover.

SHANE

The British are nuts. Is that what you want? Ghost babies?

ELIZABETH

Maybe. I'm beginning to think anything is possible. Immaculate conception. Spiritual relationships. People laughed when Dan Aykroyd got some "action" in *Ghostbusters*, but I started researching spectrophilia. There are documented cases. I mean, not scientifically documented, but you are here, right? How do you explain that? I can feel you, the warmth of you when you are near me. You are not a delusion or a hallucination.

SHANE

You miss me. I recognize that. We have time now for closure. Can we do that? Say our goodbyes properly. It'll be alright, Elizabeth. You'll be alright. Here, take my hand. Can you feel it?

ELIZABETH

I can.

SHANE

What we had was real, Elizabeth, but it's time to go our separate ways, with love. Keep my memory close to your heart, but move on. You deserve happiness, Elizabeth, with a living breathing human. Don't be frightened. Close your eyes, and say goodbye, Elizabeth.