

HOME

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CHARACTERS:

Katie, 40

Klein, 60

TIME: Now.

PLACE: A living room.

Katie is on the phone, talks to someone. Klein enters. He wants to say Hi to his wife but notices she's on the phone. He sits on the couch. He looks tired.

KATIE:

Of course, of course. I promised, didn't' t? (*Notices Klein*) Gotta go, sweetie. Yes. He is here.
Love ya!

KATIE kisses KLEIN. They share an embrace. Stay with them in that embrace for a few seconds.

KATIE:

How was it?

KLEIN:

You know...

KATIE:

Oh, my God. You look so pale.

KLEIN:

This damn winter!

KATIE (*confused*):
Sweetie, it's April.

KLEIN:

Is it?

KATIE:

Are you alright?

KLEIN:

You know...

KATIE:

What?

KLEIN:

She has been there for ten years ... and ... today... I don't know. It felt ... different.

KATIE:
Is she worse?

KLEIN:
No. I mean I don't think so.

KATIE:
Then I don't understand. What was different?

KLEIN:
She called me by my name.

KATIE (*shocked*):
What???

KLEIN:
I entered her room and she said, "Where have you been, *Klein*?"

KATIE:
Are you sure?

KLEIN:
I know, right? I said, "Mom, what did you just say?"

KATIE:
And...?

KLEIN:
She repeated, "Where have you been, *Klein*?" And I ... I ... (*Wipes his tears*)

KATIE (*Gives him a hug*):
I am sorry... I mean... wait... what??? Did she recognize who you were?

KLEIN:
I don't think so. Because after a minute, she called me different names, so I guess, for a split second I was her Klein. Then I became, Pete, Keith, John. (*Pause*)

KATIE:
But still...

KLEIN:
I know...

KATIE:
Do you think it means something?

KLEIN:
Like what?

KATIE:
Did you speak with her doctor?

KLEIN:
He was on the phone. A nurse said (*dispassionate*) these things happen ... you know?

KATIE:
I am sorry. Do you want some tea? Are you hungry?

KLEIN:
No, thank you. (*Recollecting.*) It was so nice to be recognized by my own mother. I felt alive. I actually kneeled and kissed her on her hands, and she said, “Who are you? Why are you down? Did you drop something?” And then I knew I had to tell her what she wanted to hear. Repeat the story. Katie...?

KATIE:
Yes?

KLEIN:
Let’s say it together...

KATIE:
That’s weird. She is not here.

KLEIN:
Do it for me.

KATIE:
Fine. I mean, where do we start?

KLEIN:
“And that day, on July...”

KATIE:
Gotcha.

KLEIN and KATIE (*In perfect unison because they have said this too many times*):
“And that day, on July 2nd 1937, Amelia Earhart died... I’m sorry, I meant to say, that day
Amelia *disappeared*. No one knew what happened. There is no end to her story.”

A moment. They look at each other. They hold hands. They come closer.

KLEIN:

We had to change the verb. Do you remember when we did that for the first time?

KATIE:

Of course, your mother went berserk when she heard that Amelia had died.... The nurses had to calm her down.

KLEIN:

That's the only thing she wants to hear day in and day out... on repeat, like her days.

KATIE:

Funny... You know, I think that only Amelia is reported as "disappeared" and not dead. She vanished. One day here, next minute in the air, then, gone...

KLEIN:

What are you talking about? Many people are reported as "disappeared"...

KATIE:

Perhaps.

KLEIN:

Wouldn't it be better if we all disappeared than die?

KATIE:

I do not think of *that* at all. When it happens, it happens.

KLEIN:

But what if one day I will be like my mother? Not alive, not dead either?

KATIE:

You scare me.

KLEIN:

It's in my blood... my genes... where would you make me travel?

KATIE:

Huh?

KLEIN:

If I turn like my mother, what story will you tell me on repeat?

KATIE:

That's easy. Our first time.

KLEIN:

In bed?

KATIE:

Our first time when we met.

KLEIN:

Tell me that story.

KATIE:

You know it.

KLEIN:

But from your mouth I am *another*.

KATIE:

Fine. It was a cold day in December.

KLEIN:

No, it was not.

KATIE:

I was testing you.

KLEIN:

Katie, stop!

KATIE:

I knocked on your door. You said, "Come in." I said, "It's locked." You said, "Oh, that's funny."

You open the door. You looked ordinary. I was expecting to find a man in a suit... You said, "Sit down." I sat down. We looked at each other. You asked me, "So, my secretary tells me you are from Europe." I said, "Yes, Ukraine. My name is Katharina. But, please, call me Katie." You said, "Fine. You will be teaching Russian 101. It should be easy." I said, "I hope so. Do students know Russian, or ..." You said, "Some do. Others take it for fun." I said, "Fun? How come?" You said, "Well, you know... the rivalry between us and ..." You stopped. You realized I was *not* from Russia. I smiled. There was a moment of silence. And I had no idea why, but I said, "I hope they find my luggage." You asked, "What, did the airline lose it?" I nodded. You said, "I am sure they will find it. They always do." There was so much calm in your voice, I felt at home with you. After only two minutes spent with you, you were already my home. And this is why I said...

KLEIN and KATIE:

"If they do not find my luggage, I will be without underwear. Imagine that!" (*They giggle*)

KLEIN:

I was smitten. No one was as frank with me as you were.

KATIE:
I was smitten, too.

KLEIN:
And now?

KATIE:
Now I have underwear.

KLEIN:
Katie, ... be serious.

KATIE (*Spreads her hands and imitates an airplane*):
We need to *disappear* from here in 3, 2, 1.... (*Imitates the sound of an airplane at takeoff*)

KLEIN takes his wife in his arms in a pretend like airplane gesture, and they exit the stage.

The End

Bio: Dr. Catalina Florina Florescu holds a PhD in Medical Humanities from Purdue University. She teaches at Pace University. She curates a new play festival at Jersey City Theater Center. She is a published author and playwright. <http://www.catalinaflorescu.com/>