

THE CLAIRVOYANT WIFE

Players:

BRYAN, a gaunt man in his late 50s.

SARAH, his wife.

AT RISE: *Bryan and Sarah are seated on a navy blue loveseat, facing each other.*

A nearby table hosts a collection of pill bottles and a vase brimming with yellow and orange carnations.

Sarah's eyes are closed.

Bryan speaks with urgency.

BRYAN

Focus on finding me.

SARAH

I'm trying, Bryan, but my mind is filled with other voices, other people. There's a crowd in my head. They're reminding me of things I've forgotten to do, plans I should have made.

BRYAN

Concentrate.

SARAH

I am... Now, I see a child. He's on one knee. He's calling out my name. I think. I think we're in a stadium.

BRYAN

Damn it, Sarah. You're not trying.

SARAH

It's Jimmy. Our nephew, Jimmy.

BRYAN

No, no, no.

SARAH

He's wearing a baseball cap and has a catcher's mitt on his hand. He wants me to take his picture. I can't. I've forgotten my camera.

BRYAN

[*Ugh!*] If you're not going to try—

SARAH

No, no, wait. I sense you. I know where you are... You're in a field of corn again. The stocks are taller than you. You're hidden, but I know you're there.

BRYAN

And?

SARAH

That's all. You're hidden.

BRYAN

Just like last time?

SARAH

Yes.

BRYAN

Can't you talk to me? Can't you ask me what's going on?

SARAH

No.

BRYAN

Why?

SARAH

Because you wouldn't hear me. All you can hear is the roar of the wind as it passes through the field and a harvester in the distance. It's a dull rumble, an engine noise, but it's just slightly louder than the wind and the stocks of corn swaying. Batting at each other.

BRYAN

Tell me more.

SARAH
The sun is bright.

BRYAN
And?

SARAH
The sun is bright, but it's slipping from the sky... It's setting.

BRYAN
And me?

SARAH
[Mildly piqued] I don't know. I told you. I can't see you.

BRYAN
Then stop. Just stop.

Sarah opens her eyes and quietly rearranges herself on the loveseat.

Why am I always in a cornfield? Why is the sun always setting?

SARAH
I don't know.

BRYAN
You must have some thoughts. Some intuition. Is it a bad omen?

SARAH
Really. I don't know.

BRYAN
It's bad.

SARAH
I can't say that.

BRYAN
O, for Christ's sake. Why do we do this?

SARAH
We can stop anytime. You can stop asking me.

BRYAN
Sarah, you have a gift. You need to use it.

SARAH

No. Don't make this about me. This is about you.

BRYAN

But. [*Beat*] Why am I always hidden?

SARAH

Bryan, the harder I look, the less I see. When I let my mind wander, there's clarity. When I try to direct my thoughts, there's—there's—

BRYAN

Cornfields?

SARAH

Yes.

BRYAN

Cornfields.

SARAH

Yes.

BRYAN

Cornfields.

SARAH

Yes. Stop it. You're obsessing.

BRYAN

Yes...

SARAH

There's no use talking to you when you're like this.

BRYAN

I can't help it. It's in my nature.

SARAH

No. It's not. You were made for more than obsession. There's so much more to life than worry and angst. There's life beyond the cornfields. There's life out there, if you're willing to see it. There's beauty and happiness. Friends and adventure—

BRYAN

Death and disease.

SARAH

Bryan.

BRYAN

Am I wrong?

SARAH

No... But, there's more. Much more.

BRYAN

Not for me.

SARAH

Those are your circumstances, not your limitations.

BRYAN

You don't live in this body. You don't know.

SARAH

No... No more than anybody knows what it's like to live a measurable existence. We'll all die, Bryan. But, death is not a good construct for living.

BRYAN

It's not my construct. It was foisted on me.

SARAH

You're not that helpless.

BRYAN

You're not that sympathetic.

SARAH

What good is sympathy, if all you hear is eulogy?

Honestly. You've got to snap out of it.

BRYAN

I can't.

SARAH

You can.

BRYAN

I can't. And if you keep harping on me, there'll be even less to be satisfied with. Less to live for.

SARAH

But, you're not living now. Sometimes I think you might as well be dead.

[*Deep sigh*] O, God. You know I didn't mean that. But, Bryan. Really. You're living in an emotional silo. You're trapped and buried. Unable to move. Unable to be.

It's not natural. It's not constructive.

BRYAN

Constructive?

SARAH

Yes.

BRYAN

You want me to build something?

SARAH

Yes. I guess... Yes, in a manner of speaking.

BRYAN

Knowing that it will all come tumbling down in the end?

SARAH

All lives come tumbling down in the end. But, if we're industrious, if we take care, some things will last.

Your achievements can attain a certain kind of immortality.

BRYAN

What kind of immortality? What kind of achievement outlives a man?

SARAH

One that reminds others of him.

BRYAN

What if I choose to be defined by death?

SARAH

Then, I'll be left with a painful disconnect.

I'll be left with the memory of a defeated man.

BRYAN

Isn't that an achievement?

SARAH

It's pain, Bryan. You'd be leaving me with pain.

BRYAN

A noble construct.

SARAH

Not to the one who's left behind.

BRYAN

So, you want me to *live* in order to provide you comfort after I'm gone?

SARAH

Do you really want to leave this earth knowing that you've left me nothing but pain?

BRYAN

Isn't that what we all leave behind? Isn't every tombstone an invitation to cry and know, really know, that life ends? That our loved ones are gone, or will be gone, and that life is meaningless?

Sarah appears defeated, but she recovers.

SARAH

Bryan, hold my hand.

BRYAN

Why?

SARAH

Because I want to remember something else from this conversation.

Pause.

BRYAN

Holding your hand is one of the few pleasures left in my life.

SARAH

I know.

BRYAN

You do?

SARAH

Yes... Shh. Quiet now.

Sarah closes her eyes.

A moment quietly passes.

BRYAN

[*Whispering*] Sarah?

SARAH

Yes?

BRYAN

What do you see?

What does Sarah see?

**Will her vision bring them together
or move them further apart?**

Will Bryan find a reason to go on?

Find out.

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