

BEING YOU

By Abraham McNeil Adams

SHAYELA is seated on the edge of the bed. She has a half empty bottle of scotch on the floor beside her. There is a nightstand with tissues and several unopened pill bottles beside her. There is the sound of a droning TV with an episode of "I Love Lucy" we cannot see but perhaps the light from the images is reflected upon SHAYELA's face. She watches mindless television for a few minutes and takes a few drinks. She begins talking to herself.

SHAYELA

(re: the TV) They seem happy.

beat

That's nice.

beat

Some of that, please. Whatever they got, that makes them happy.

beat

Cheap scotch. Makes me happy. I don't love *you*, Lucy. Bitch.

beat

What time is it?

checks the time, lets out a long groan

IFA enters, at first unseen by SHAYELA.

There should be some physical suggestion of similarity between IFA and SHAYELA either through costumes or behavior.

Shiiitt. This bitch is toasted!

beat

SHAYELA takes a long look at the pill bottles on the night stand. Maybe she holds one for a moment before place it back.

Is tonight the night?

beat

I'm 39 years old. The good die young, right?

beat

I used to be young once.

IFA Used to be?

SHAYELA Holyfuckingshitballs, where did you come from?

IFA You shouldn't curse.

SHAYELA Who the fuck are you?

IFA I'm you.

SHAYELA You're me?

IFA You deaf?

SHAYELA Where did you come from?

IFA From your past.

SHAYELA Am I high or is there really a 3 year old in my room.

IFA I'm 13.

SHAYELA Where is your mother?

IFA *Our* mother would be disgusted. Look at you.

SHAYELA Look, I don't know who you are but you gotta go.

IFA I gave a speech in school about the curse of alcohol and drugs. (*re: the booze and pills*) You remember that?

SHAYELA (*holding the pill bottle again:*) I must have taken some of this shit by accident.

IFA You aren't hallucinating.

SHAYELA I've got little girl talking to me.

IFA I'm not little.

SHAYELA How did you get in here?

IFA The better question is how do I not become you.

SHAYELA You don't want to become me.

IFA I just said that.

SHAYELA Did I?

IFA You don't recognize me.

SHAYELA Should I?

IFA You're in a bad way.

SHAYELA Listen, judge mc-judgerson, I'm drunk. I'm allowed to be drunk because I'm an adult. In my own damn room doing what I damn well please. You are a child.

IFA I'm not a child.

SHAYELA You are clearly a child.

IFA I'm you. Just younger.

beat

SHAYELA *(laughs)* Alright, did Javitz put you up to this? Where is he? Javitz! Very funny dude, you can come out now.

IFA We had dreams, remember? Or did you forget?

SHAYELA Where are your parents? Do they know where you are?

IFA You know what happened to our parents.

SHAYELA Its way past your bedtime.

IFA What happened? I want to know.

SHAYELA Mom died and dad left. Boo-hoo.

IFA I mean what happened to *you*.

SHAYELA *(begins trying to tidy the room/hide the paraphernalia, but really is just moving stuff around)* Look, I don't know what's going on but you need to leave. I've got a big audition tomorrow and I need to get some rest.

IFA Honey Burwell says people who don't want to talk about things always bring up the time.

SHAYELA Honey Burwell?

IFA Do old people forget *everything*?

SHAYELA I'm not old!

IFA You look old.

SHAYELA And how do you know Honey Burwell?

IFA What time is your audition?

SHAYELA Go back to wherever you came from.

IFA Why did you stay up so late if you have something important to do tomorrow? Mom always told me—

SHAYELA I know what mom always told you.

IFA Then why are you still awake?

SHAYELA Because I felt like it.

IFA What are all these pills for?

SHAYELA They are prescriptions.

IFA Why do you drink so much?

SHAYELA Why do you ask so many questions?

IFA I'm trying not to become you.

beat

SHAYELA (*re: the braids in IFA's hair*) I always hated when mom did that to my hair.

IFA She says its easier than going to the salon.

SHAYELA Cheaper. She means cheaper.

IFA People make fun of me.

SHAYELA I'd like to be like you again.

IFA Why? I'm a kid.

SHAYELA Being a kid ain't so bad.

IFA I can't wait to grow up.

SHAYELA Jesus, you really are me.

IFA Yup.

SHAYELA And I'm not hallucinating?

IFA Tell me why you are like this?

SHAYELA I guess I paid too much attention to the Honey Burwell's of the world.

IFA She's so stuck up.

SHAYELA I mean, how she can be. How Honey Burwell can make us feel about... ourselves.

IFA Like we are real small and smell real bad.

SHAYELA She's a VP of Marketing now.

IFA Total baller.

SHAYELA Yeah.

IFA I wanna be a VP of Marketing.

SHAYELA That's what I'm talking about.

IFA What?

SHAYELA I spent too much time there. In that envy place.

IFA I'm not envious.

SHAYELA Yeah you are. Your eyes like diamonds when I said Honey was VP of Marketing.

IFA But that's so cool!

SHAYELA It is, it is cool, but its also a distraction.

IFA I always looked up to Honey.

SHAYELA Me too.

IFA Is that bad?

SHAYELA It is if you don't know what you are looking up to.

IFA There's nothing wrong with being successful.

SHAYELA If that's what you call it.

IFA I mean, you're one to talk.

SHAYELA I'll slap that grin right off your face.

IFA I just don't understand how we lost our way.

SHAYELA I didn't have a way. I was looking for the easy thing, the thing I thought would make me look, I don't know, cool or whatever.

IFA *(re: the bottle and pills)* This isn't cool.

SHAYELA It felt cool. At the time.

IFA And now?

SHAYELA I need to go to bed.

IFA So how do I not become you?

SHAYELA I don't know.

IFA Okay.

beat

Maybe you should stop drinking so much. And get some sleep.

SHAYELA Good idea.

IFA And throw away the pills. They scare me.

SHAYELA I got it. Jesus I was annoying.

IFA But aside from all that, I think you are pretty cool.

SHAYELA Thanks.

IFA So, we're an actor?

SHAYELA Trying to be.

IFA Oooh, what roles have we done?

SHAYELA Lots and lots. Too many to count.

IFA So why are we so unhappy?

SHAYELA I don't know.

IFA I think you might be just like me, feeling small and low but really a pretty

amazing person only right now... you're drunk. And maybe a little lost.

SHAYELA

Thanks for the hot take.

IFA

I'm just saying we all lose our way sometimes.

SHAYELA

Adults are good at that.

IFA

No shit.

SHAYELA

Don't curse.

IFA

I just want you to be happy.

SHAYELA

Me too.

IFA

Stop drinking.

SHAYELA

Only if you stop comparing yourself to the Honey Burwell's of the world.

IFA

Okay.

SHAYELA

Okay.

IFA

Growing up is hard to do.

SHAYELA

You have no fucking idea.

END OF PLAY