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PREVIEW: I’M NOT AFRAID

By

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Cast of Characters

Becky: a promising dancer in her early 20s

Synopsis

Becky, a talented dancer, has fallen for a cute guy named Joseph at Bible College. In the middle of the semester Joseph has a breakdown and is hospitalized. When the doctors diagnose his schizophrenia, Becky is at his bedside. Joseph wants to be healed by faith alone while Becky encourages medical treatment.

When

The present.

Props (1)

A simple set. A single chair. The hospital bed and Joseph need not appear.

Act 1

Scene 1

Becky sits in the dark beside Joe’s hospital bed. Both the bed and Joe are not on stage, only suggested by lighting.

Becky

You know, Joe, I’ve been thinking. A lot lately. Just about…things. Life. About us. I’ve had a lot of time to be alone this week, since they admitted you to the hospital.

When I'm not here. I just go, and I walk. Sometimes for a couple of hours, usually at night, after class. I like to walk that long road that’s lined on both sides with lampposts, out to the park, you know, the road we always walk. And I go sit on the bench that we like to sit on to talk.

The girls on my floor think I’m crazy to walk there alone in the dark. But I’m not crazy. They’re just afraid. That’s what I’ve been thinking about, Joe. How everyone’s afraid.

Of what? That’s just it. Of shadows in the dark? Things we never see?

I like to walk that whole road, just up and down it, up and down, to clear my head, to think or not think. Sometimes [*giggles*] I dance there, alone, right on the street, as a way to stop thinking, I just dance.

I’ve had a few cars sort of slow down and watch me. I guess I am a bit crazy, but no one has ever stopped. They slow down to look, but no one ever stops. ‘Cause they’re afraid too! But of what? A *girl*, alone at night dancing out on the street?

And it’s all so lame, Joe. I’m tired of it. I’m tired of people being afraid. I mean, we’re at a Bible college, Joe, and we’re still so afraid. What happened to that verse they used to throw at us in Sunday School: *If God is for us, who can be against us?*

Listen to me. I’m starting to sound like you, dropping Bible verses. I’m kidding.

Somehow those words, they’ve stuck with me, for a long time, since I was a little girl. And I’ve been thinking of them in the last few days as something really – I don’t know – as something really real.

I mean, if God is for us, if he’s really for us, Joe, if he’s real and here with us right now, then what the hell are we so afraid of?

Look at the board of trustees. They’ve dragged their feet over letting students come here to the psych ward to visit you and the other patients because they’re afraid it’s a dangerous spiritual place.

Or think of my parents. They’re so worried that I’m squandering talent, that every day I stay here the opportunity I have as a professional dancer is slipping away. They’re so afraid of that.

And look at me. Even I’m afraid.

It’s like walking on that road, just thinking through all this stuff, and suddenly I realize how far I am from the school, and I’m between lampposts, and it’s really dark.

So I start walking faster and breathing harder and start kicking myself for being so careless out alone at night. And all the voices that have warned me and told me to be afraid my whole life are shouting loudly in my head. And I have to force myself not to panic, not to just flip out right there to run from some imagined killer who’s on the loose waiting for me there in the

dark to rape me and slit my throat and cut my body into pieces.

And then I step closer into the light of the next lamppost, and my heartbeat slows down, and the fear subsides. It sort of melts away, and I feel embarrassed with myself.

I'm pissed off that we’re always just one thought away from that kind of fear! Who can be against us, Joe? I’m sick of people wanting to believe those words but not really believing them and then just living in fear. I’m waiting for someone to stop their car, and just get out, and start dancing with me! I mean, why not? Wouldn’t that be something?

Becky quiets herself, looks around the room.

The other night, ah, it was so neat, Joe. I was walking between the lampposts. I don’t understand how it works, but I was walking and depending on where I was the light cast different shadows. I don’t know why I noticed this, but I did.

Becky moves from the bed to mime her discovery, stepping between imagined lampposts and pointing at imagined shadows.

When I walked past the lamppost, at a certain distance I had two shadows. The light from behind cast a small shadow and a really long one, but both shadows were mine. And it was weird, because I was like, “This is *me!*”

And it was like I had a picture of my life. The little shadow, the one cast just beyond my feet, was how I felt about my life right now. It seems so small, so tiny – so new. But the other shadow, the big one, it was just huge, over twelve feet long, and it felt like I was seeing the person that I was going to be,

and all the things I want to grow into, you know?

When I got closer to the next light, between lampposts where it was a bit darker, the shadows changed. Before I got to the next lamp my shadow split into three. Like there were three Beckys. All of a sudden the vision of what I am and who I want to become disappeared, like it was ripped away, and I saw something I couldn’t make sense of, like…

Like I was split.

It wasn’t just now and then, Joe. It wasn’t just the vision of a future life. I’ve probably been thinking too much about all of this. And sometimes thinking can be so – so frightening. But that shadow made me wonder if that’s sort of like what’s happening with you, Joe.

But it didn’t last for long, those three shadows, because I stepped right under the lamppost and they all disappeared!

Becky looks up into the imaginary lamppost, then around at the ground.

There was nothing, no other Becky shadowed on the ground. Just me. Finally, it was just *me*.

Becky looks at her hands, closes her eyes. She returns to his bedside.

I’m not supposed to be in here for very long, but the nurses wanted me to come in to talk to you before your next treatment.

Becky returns to Joseph’s bedside.

You’re so close to the light, Joe. So close.

End.



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