

Whose Dream?

by
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For Ben Sulzbach and Alaina Hammond
Spontaneous Combustion
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INT. OLD WORLD DRAWING ROOM

BEN is standing up stage, facing away from ALAINA, who sits demurely, watching him. As he speaks initially, he is talking to himself, or the audience, not to Alaina.

BEN

You gotta be kidding me. It's a dream, obviously, but I didn't mean to dream about her. This dream is supposed to be about the future. My future. See, me, I got skills.

He concentrates, then looks back at her quickly, as if afraid of what he might see.

BEN (CONT'D)

OK. At least she has some clothes on now. That's progress.

ALAINA

I can make them go away again.

BEN

She'd do it, too. You should have seen her when I first fell asleep. It was lurid.

Alaina gets up and approaches Ben, who promptly goes and sits at the table and starts to scribble notes on a pad. He moves rhythmically, as if trying to put words to a beat.

ALAINA

I'm the one who's dreaming. You're the figment.

BEN

I ain't even playing that.

ALAINA

I knew he would say that. It's the weirdest thing. All day long I'm so shy, it's obvious enough I'm repressed. It's clearly the Apollonian versus the Dionysian playing out the age old drama in my subconscious.

BEN

Stop talking. You're polluting my dream. I'm taking my skills to the next level, baby. I'ma blow up.

Ben keeps working, mouthing some words, tapping his pencil on the paper, etc.

ALAINA

It's my dream and I can do whatever
I want!

Alaina turns to face him (back to the audience), lifts her shirt, and shakes it for him. He looks at her like he's reading an argument he knows by heart, nodding his head.

BEN

Yep. Just as I imagined them.

Alaina suddenly moves as if in reaction to a physical slap across the face.

ALAINA

I can't believe you hit me, you
bastard.

BEN

Let the record show I have not
moved a muscle.

ALAINA

Not any muscle?

They both look at Ben's crotch. Ben crosses his legs.

ALAINA (CONT'D)

In my dreams I always go for the
wrong sort of man. Somebody
completely inappropriate with the
sinewy buttocks of a fine antelope
and the dark eyes of a man on death
row. In real life, I, well, I
dream.

Ben slams his hand down on the table, stands up, and approaches Alaina with his sinewy buttocks and dark eyes.

BEN

OK, baby cakes, time's up. Get it?
You're gone. Poof!

He waits, expecting her to disappear. She's still there. Ben closes his eyes and continues.

BEN (CONT'D)

Poof! Good. Good. There's time
enough for that sort of thing when
a man's work is done.

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

How much greatness has been
sacrificed on the altar of girls
and their special shapes?

ALAINA

I'm still here.

Ben's eyes remain closed.

BEN

Christ. She's nude again, isn't
she? She's just standing there
with those things out again only
this time she's just wearing a
thong. A thong and maybe some high
heels.

ALAINA

Keep going!

BEN

No! Be clothed!

Ben opens his eyes. He is satisfied, pleased that his will
power has made her clothed again.

BEN (CONT'D)

Bingo. Now we're talking.

Alaina grabs his hands in joy.

ALAINA

I'm so glad we're talking again.

Ben takes his hands away.

BEN

That's not what I meant.

ALAINA

You mean what I want you to mean.
Didn't anyone ever tell you that's
how it works? Do you really think
this is your dream?

BEN

It's my dream if I say it is. It's
my nightmare. See, that's life.
You think it's one thing, you turn,
it's another. It flips, see, like a
coin. I have this one dream where
there's this enormous bird. A
crane.

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

Mostly white but with a slate gray crown. It can only be *Bugeranus carunculatus*.

ALAINA

Sounds like something out of the kama sutra.

BEN

No no, the Wattled Crane, it's the largest crane in Africa, second only to the Pakistani Sarus. Males and females are virtually indistinguishable. Some migrate. Others, no. In my dream, they fly.

ALAINA

You can learn from dreams.

BEN

And I see one, in particular, flying, flying, a beautiful bird. And then it just drops. Falls out of the sky like it stopped believing. There's a sound when it hits. Once a week I have this dream. I can't stand it anymore.

ALAINA

In my dream the man is always tortured by abstract fears.

BEN

What are *you* afraid of?

ALAINA

Waking up. How about you?

BEN

Waking up too late. Check my skills.

Ben raps. Preferably about something unhappy.

ALAINA

Let me ask you something.

BEN

Shoot.

ALAINA

What would be so wrong with a happy ending? They happen sometimes. We could dream one together.

BEN
Well that would depend.

ALAINA
On what?

BEN
Whether this dream is a tragedy or
a comedy.

ALAINA
What's the difference?

BEN
The flip of a coin, sweetheart. The
flip of a coin.

Ben produces a coin and flips it. The ending of the play
depends on whether it comes up heads or tails.

HEADS ENDING:

Ben grabs Alaina and kisses her.

LIGHTS OUT.

TAILS ENDING:

BEN (CONT'D)
Sorry cupcake. This bird flies
alone.

LIGHTS OUT.