

MEETING MERYL

by Jim Curtis (c)2011

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FADE IN:

INT. DAY.

An ordinary suburban living room. There is a couch on one wall and a wet bar next to it.

SHE, 20s, lies on the floor as though laid out in a casket.

JIM, 40s, enters. SHE gives no sign that SHE has heard him.

SHE

Hi, Dad.

JIM

Hi yourself.

SHE

What are you doing here?

JIM

I came to see you.

SHE

But you've been dead for ten years.

JIM

I'm sorry that I haven't been there for you.

SHE

You never were here, there or anywhere for me--even when you were alive.

JIM

And now you're dead, too.

SHE

What makes you say that?

JIM

If I'm dead, and you can hear me, you must be dead, too.

SHE

I have an appointment to audition with Meryl Streep for a part in a movie.

JIM

Oh, honey, that's great news! I'm so proud of you!

SHE

I'm not going.

BARRY, 20s, comes in through the opposite door. He carries a cup of coffee in a cardboard container, and takes sips from time to time.

SHE doesn't react.

BARRY

That's what you said when we were supposed to go see The Devil Wears Prada.

Barry puts the ear buds from his iPod into his ears and fiddles with the controls.

BARRY (CONT'D)

And you went anyhow. You must be the only person in the world who cried while watching that movie.

SHE

Meryl was so great that it brought tears to my eyes.

(Beat)

SHE (CONT'D)

Barry, meet my dad. Dad, meet Barry. Barry provided some assistance when I wanted to lose my virginity.

BARRY

Who are you talking to?

SHE

My dad.

BARRY

Your dad died ten years ago.

SHE

He's here, and he's as alive as I am. Which is not very.

BARRY

Why are you not alive?

SHE

I'll die when Meryl rejects me, so I might as well get it over with.

JIM

Is he the best you could do?

SHE

He served his purpose.

BARRY

No wonder it seemed like you were barely there when I finally got you into bed. You've never been very alive, have you?

Barry turns to leave.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Call me when you're ready to go out.

JIM

Do men come and go in your life?

SHE

I take after Mom.

HER mother, Barbara, 40s, comes in. She goes to the bar and takes down a glass.

BARBARA

Where's Jim?

She looks for ice, doesn't see any, and goes out again.

SHE

Right here.

Barbara comes in again carrying an ice bucket.

BARBARA

I can't see him.

SHE

What's new about that? You could never see him for what he was even when he was alive.

Barry fiddles with the controls on the iPod, finds the song he wants, and smiles.

BARBARA

Don't start with me, young lady.

She pours ice in a glass, pours scotch over it, and takes a sip.

SHE

You're the one who's starting--you're starting drinking a little early, even for you. And anyhow I'm not starting anything--I'm ending.

BARBARA

Ending what?

SHE

Yes...Ending what? What do I have
that I can end? Let me see...

She sits up.

SHE (CONT'D)

There must be something that I can
end.

LINDA, 30s, and stylishly dressed, comes in. She comes from
a different reality, so nobody ever reacts to her, no matter
what she says or does.

LINDA kneels behind SHE. Linda lovingly smooths HER hair
and strokes HER arms.

BARBARA

You have so much to live for.

SHE

That must be what Lindsay Lohan's
mother tells her.

SHE pounds on the floor with her fists.

SHE (CONT'D)

So even Lindsay Lohan, screwed up as
she is, could sort of hold her own
with Meryl in A Prairie Home
Companion...

BARBARA

So?

SHE

So I could never do that.

SHE gets up and Linda smiles broadly. Linda stands up, dusts
off her hands, and turns as if to leave.

SHE stalks around the room. SHE walks past JIM without seeing
him.

Linda follows HER actions intently.

Barry fiddles with the controls of his iPod again.

SHE (CONT'D)

It's not just that I'm not Meryl. I
mean, my God, nobody is Meryl....I'm
not even Lindsay God-damned Lohan.
I'm nobody.

Barry starts break dancing in the corner.

SHE picks up a pair of scissors.

BARBARA

No!

Barbara rushes for SHE. They WRESTLE, and Barbara GRABS the scissors from SHE. She puts them in her pocket, straightens her hair, and returns to the bar.

She drains her glass and immediately refills it.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

It's been...oh, I don't know...a month or so since the last time you tried that.

SHE

I was afraid I was getting out of practice.

Linda opens her arms and looks at SHE lovingly.

JIM

Is that all you're afraid of?

SHE

I wish.

Jim wanders over to the other side of the room.

JIM

What happened to the couch I died on?

Barbara picks up a fashion magazine and looks through it.

SHE

Mom got rid of it.

Jim tests the cushions on the couch.

Barry stops doing break dancing and sits down on the floor. He gets lost in his music.

JIM

Not as comfortable as the couch I died on.

SHE

(to Barry)
Who are you listening to?

BARRY

The Beatles.

SHE
That's so uncool.

Jim FLOPS down on the couch.

JIM
I wouldn't want to die on this couch.

SHE
The Beatles were popular like a
thousand years ago.

Barry shrugs.

SHE (CONT'D)
Okay. What song?

BARRY
"She Loves You."

Linda smiles at this. She walks over and puts her arms around SHE.

LINDA
You hear that? The Beatles know
everything. They know how I feel
about you.

Linda's cell phone rings.

LINDA (CONT'D)
I mean, I was talking to John Lennon
just the other day and he said the
funniest thing...l

She takes out her cell phone and looks at the screen.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Hey lover! How is my lovely bride
this afternoon?

Linda listens for a moment and nods.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Of course I'll be home for dinner,
but I may be a little late. I'm in
the middle of something here at work,
so I can't talk now.

JIM
The other couch was better for dying.
More colorful, too.

Barry plays air guitar.

SHE

New song?

Linda frowns at her phone.

LINDA

Don't start with your paranoia. How many times do I have to tell you that I love you? Now be a good little housewife and get dinner started. I'll be home soon.

BARRY

The greatest guitar riff ever.

SHE

Must be "Satisfaction."

BARRY

What else?

SHE

I don't have any more satisfaction than Mick does.

BARRY

I guess he has satisfaction now.

(beat)

BARRY (CONT'D)

The thing is, though...

SHE

What's the thing?

BARRY

The thing is, everybody's playing synthesizers now, so I guess rock and roll is dead.

Jim sits up on the couch.

JIM

I'm dead!

SHE

Elizabeth Taylor is dead. I'm dead, too, so I guess I have something in common with a movie star...

Barbara refills her glass.

SHE (CONT'D)

Finally!

BARBARA

Okay, look...I can keep you from cutting off your fingers...

SHE

...And toes. Last year it was toes.

BARBARA

...Fingers and toes. But I can 't meet with Meryl and audition for you. You have to do that alone. Alone, do you hear?

SHE

That's the story of my life.

Linda looks around and sees HER purse. She dashes over to get it.

SHE (CONT'D)

Where's my purse?

Linda picks up HER purse, and holds it out. SHE walks over and takes it.

SHE (CONT'D)

What else do I need?

Linda walks to the coat closet and opens the door.

SHE looks around the room.

SHE (CONT'D)

A coat! I need a coat!

Linda takes HER coat out the closet and holds it so that SHE can put it on.

Linda's cell phone rings again. She takes it out and looks at the screen while still holding the coat.

SHE wanders around the room looking for HER coat.

SHE (CONT'D)

Dad, is my coat under the cushions on the couch?

JIM

Coat, cushions, couch. That has a ring to it.

LINDA

Now what?

She listens for a moment and nods.

SHE

Well, is it?

SHE looks under the cushions and doesn't find her coat.

LINDA

Homemade pizza by candlelight sounds fine. I'll be home soon. Love you!

She closes the phone.

SHE

The coat isn't under the cushions. What should I do?

CHORUS (O.S.)

Go! GO! GO!

Only Linda can hear the chorus. She grins and pumps her fist in the air. She joins in.

LINDA

GO! GO!

SHE

Okay--Mom, Dad, Barry. I'm going now. This is going to be the day of the living dead.

SHE takes HER coat from Linda without looking at her.

SHE (CONT'D)

That's a good movie title, don't you think?

Linda opens the door and walks out.

BARBARA

Thank God that's over.

She takes a drink of scotch.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Even if she doesn't get the part, it'll be a good experience for her.

Linda looks at her watch and turns to open the door when she sees a script lying on the floor. She picks it up and stands expectantly at the door.

SHE FLINGS open the door and rushes in.

SHE

The script! Where's the damn script?

Linda puts it in HER hands. SHE SPINS around and rushes out the door.

FADE OUT