

The Day Ophelia Drowned

by

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OPHELIA

F | 20s/30s

A kind young writer without a voice

HER BOYFRIEND

M | 20s/30s

Ophelia's controlling boyfriend

HER BROTHER

M | 20s/30s

Ophelia's sweet, yet naive brother

HER FATHER

M | 50s/60s

Ophelia's late father

Time

Now

Place

Ophelia's Apartment

Notes:

"The Mourners" are all the men speaking in unison.

Any lines side by side with Ophelia should be spoken in unison, but don't have to be tonally the same.

After "Ophelia drowns" -- any lines that are said to be spoken by her, should be mouthed by Ophelia, blankly.

AT RISE:

HER BOYFRIEND, HER FATHER, and HER BROTHER (THE MOURNERS) stand. While OPHELIA sits by their feet.

THE MOURNERS

The Day Ophelia drowned

HER BOYFRIEND

It was exactly 67 degrees Fahrenheit.

HER FATHER

The pansies on the trees were almost in full bloom

HER BROTHER

And the sky filled with smoke and pollution from the neighboring ExxonMobil factories

HER BOYFRIEND

Coffee stains embedded in her nails

HER FATHER

From working the night shift at Applebees in Times Square.

HER BROTHER

Ophelia Marie Smith was also a writer

HER BOYFRIEND

A poet known only to herself

HER FATHER

As she would fill notebook upon notebook with stories

HER BROTHER

And store them away in her desk-side drawer

HER BOYFRIEND

A collection that built up higher than she could handle

HER FATHER

She resorted to stuffing selections in secret spaces hidden within her bedroom walls

HER BROTHER

Poems that sung tales of ...

OPHELIA

Grief for those she lost
Grief for those she hadn't
And grief for the world

HER BOYFRIEND

Ophelia Marie Smith wasn't known as a writer.

HER FATHER

She was more often known as

HER BROTHER

A sister

A sister

OPHELIA

HER BOYFRIEND

A girlfriend

A girlfriend

OPHELIA

HER FATHER

A daughter

A daughter

OPHELIA

HER BOYFRIEND

A beautiful gift to all three men

HER FATHER

Who centered her as the meaning of their lives

HER BROTHER

And she who centered them back.

HER BOYFRIEND

After her shift, her boyfriend would come over and sleep in the room of a million words.

HER FATHER

They had been together for as long as she could remember

HER BOYFRIEND

As she laid in bed next to her boyfriend, he asked what she was thinking about

THE MOURNERS

"Everything"

OPHELIA

"Everything"

HER FATHER

She replied

HER BOYFRIEND

“Well, you don’t have to worry about anything”

HER BROTHER

Her boyfriend said, caressing her arm

HER BOYFRIEND

“Nothing is in our control. You only concern yourself with the things that make you weak. Think about nothing and we will be happy”

HER FATHER

Ophelia went to dispute, but only an:

HER BOYFRIEND

“Alright.”

OPHELIA

“Alright.”

HER FATHER

Trickled out of her mouth.

HER BROTHER

Her boyfriend smiled, rolled over

HER BOYFRIEND

And instantly fell asleep.

HER FATHER

Ophelia sprang up and ran to her writing desk

HER BROTHER

She clicked a pen

HER BOYFRIEND

Opened her journal

THE MOURNERS

And started writing

OPHELIA

She wrote about indifference

And women

And how she would miss the sky when it turned to day

THE MOURNERS

The phone rang.

HER FATHER

It was her brother.

HER BROTHER

“Ophelia, hello! I’ve missed you.”

HER FATHER

“I’ve missed you too. How are you?”

OPHELIA

“I’ve missed you too. How are you?”

HER BROTHER

“Has anything odd occurred today?”

HER FATHER

“Like what?”

OPHELIA

“Like what?”

HER BROTHER

“Nothing. Nothing. Something I’d rather not ruin.”

HER FATHER

“Tell me”

OPHELIA

“Tell me”

HER BROTHER

“All I’ll say is father would’ve been very happy. “

HER BOYFRIEND

Before he passed, all Ophelia’s father wanted was for her to get married. He’d often say:

HER FATHER

“You’re better off with someone.”

HER BOYFRIEND

“I am fine alone.”

OPHELIA

“I am fine alone.”

HER FATHER

“You deserve someone, sweetheart. Someone who makes things better.”

HER BOYFRIEND

“I make things better. For myself.”

OPHELIA

“I make things better. For myself.”

HER FATHER

“As you wish”

HER BROTHER

her father would reply.

The day Ophelia drowned
 THE MOURNERS
 she walked to the bathroom
 HER BROTHER
 Starred in the bathroom mirror
 HER BOYFRIEND
 Placed a piece of toilet paper on her head
 HER FATHER
 And contorted her face until it looked correct sitting beneath her makeshift veil
 HER BROTHER
 THE MOURNERS
 But it never felt right.
 HER BOYFRIEND
 Wrecked with nerves
 HER FATHER
 Ophelia returned to the living room to finish her poem
 HER BROTHER
 She looked to her phone for someone to call about the matter
 HER BOYFRIEND
 But the only numbers in her phone were
 HER FATHER
 Her boyfriend's
 HER BROTHER
 Her father's
 HER BOYFRIEND
 And her brother's
 HER FATHER
 She returned to pen and paper
 THE MOURNERS
 And wrote

OPHELIA

About how she missed the way the world was
 Grieving her innocence
 Grieving the world of possibilities that was once open to her

HER BOYFRIEND

“Ophelia!”

HER BROTHER

Her boyfriend called from the other room.

HER FATHER

Ophelia stiffened. Waiting for the moment to come.

HER BROTHER

She looked to the door.

HER FATHER

Millions of possibilities waiting for her.

HER BROTHER

She could escape

HER FATHER

Leave

HER BROTHER

Go to college

HER FATHER

Study art

HER BROTHER

Study poetry

HER FATHER

Travel the world

HER BROTHER

Give flowers to strangers

HER FATHER

Love with her whole heart

HER BROTHER

Meet interesting people from interesting places

HER FATHER

Leave everything that was wrong behind

HER BROTHER

Memories

HER FATHER

Jobs

HER BROTHER

People

HER FATHER

And go off to grieve properly

HER BROTHER

And come back stronger

HER FATHER

Better

HER BROTHER

More alive

HER FATHER

More herself

OPHELIA

More --

HER BOYFRIEND

“Ophelia!”

HER FATHER

She looked to the door once more, sighed and headed off to her bedroom.

HER BROTHER

And upon one knee was her boyfriend, scouring through her bedroom side table.

HER BOYFRIEND

“What are these?”

HER FATHER

He accused, holding up her notebooks

HER BOYFRIEND

“Letters and poems about things that are not to do with me.”

HER FATHER

Ophelia stared at the man.

OPHELIA

“Yes. I wrote about grief. I wrote about love. I wrote about loss.”

HER BROTHER

Ophelia stood scared for what was to come next.

HER FATHER

But all that did was laughter.

HER BOYFRIEND

“Wait a moment. I am so foolish -- are we not intrinsically bound? You are mine and I am yours. Therefore it is all about me. Everything you write is about me.”

HER FATHER

He chuckled.

HER BOYFRIEND

“I am your sky. I am your earth. I am your air and your cosmos.”

HER BROTHER

He held her hand

HER BOYFRIEND

“I apologize for getting so worked up.”

OPHELIA

“No. I am my own sky. I am my earth. I am my air and cosmos and moon and birds and trees and flowers. You are you, but I am so much more.”

HER BROTHER

Ophelia’s boyfriend stared at her. Never had he faced a challenge like her.

HER FATHER

He quietly stood up. Then started ripping the boards off the wall

HER BROTHER

Discovering the thousands of poems beneath it.

HER FATHER

He yelled to her,

HER BOYFRIEND

“You betrayed me.”

HER BOYFRIEND

Gathering up all the notebooks

HER FATHER

All the pages

HER BROTHER

All the tiny scraps of paper he could find

HER BOYFRIEND

He ran towards the bathroom.

THE MOURNERS

The day Ophelia drowned

OPHELIA

The day Ophelia drowned

HER BROTHER

He filled the bathtub to the brim

HER FATHER

And plunged all her pages into the water

HER BOYFRIEND

The ink slowly spreading and dispersing down the drain

HER BROTHER

With her soul right alongside it

HER BOYFRIEND

“Isn’t that better?”

HER FATHER

“Yes”, Ophelia responded

HER BOYFRIEND

“Now I know all your secrets, I know who you are from your heart to your soul.”

HER BROTHER

And once again, he bowed to one knee, next to the withered beauty of what she loved

HER BOYFRIEND

“Will you marry me?”

HER BROTHER

“Yes, I will marry you”.

HER FATHER

“Yes, I will marry you”

HER BROTHER

They were wed in the spring.

HER FATHER

With rue flowers spread about

HER BOYFRIEND

Ophelia never picked up a pen again. And she was happy.

HER FATHER

Ophelia smiled and agreed.

THE MOURNERS

“I was happy.”

END OF PLAY.