

Not When You're Around

by

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Cast of Characters

ADA:

20's

BARNEY:

50's

Place
Yard/Cabin

Time
Afternoon

2.

Setting: The play takes place in a yard just outside a cabin.

At Rise: The play opens up with Barney taking looks through the cabin window to see his daughter Ada, until she finally speaks to him.

ADA: You just gonna stand out there looking in?

BARNEY: I wasn't looking.

ADA: What you want Dad?

BARNEY: Come on out here, I don't wanna go in there.

ADA: I'm working.

BARNEY: Just take a minute.

ADA steps out of the cabin.

Why ain't you been around the house?

(pointing to the cabin)

ADA: This is my house now.

BARNEY: It's on my property. That make it mine.

ADA: You want me to pay you for it? That why you can come down the hill?

BARNEY: You could show some appreciation.

ADA: Expect me to jump up and down, praising you like you're some kind of God.

BARNEY: Don't talk to me that way.

ADA: Then what?

BARNEY: I can throw you out.

ADA: Can you?

BARNEY: Yeah.

ADA: Why don't ya?

BARNEY: You keep driving me to it.

ADA: I ain't botherin' you.

BARNEY: Even when you're not around you bother me.

ADA: How's that even possible?

BARNEY: Cause I worry 'bout you.

ADA: Yeah right you do.

ADA (cont'd): Only thing you worry about is how many beers you got left in the fridge. Ha!

BARNEY: I do worry, about things women will never understand.

ADA: Women! You gonna start on that male chauvinism?

BARNEY: I can't talk freely?

ADA: No.

BARNEY: The problem with this world today. You say one thing, anything, they gut you like a pig.

ADA: Learn to evolve your way of thinking. The world's changin' for the better. You wanna stay left behind.

BARNEY: I don't understand this world no more.

ADA: Stay in your house and don't come out. That's about the only guarantee you'll have to stay out of trouble.

BARNEY: I never get into trouble.

ADA (sarcastic): No, not you, not never.

BARNEY: What's eatin' you? Why I gotta feel like I have to walk on eggshells whenever I'm near you?

ADA: You know why.

BARNEY: You still mad over that thing I said?

ADA: You called me a loser. That's like throwing a rock at a lion. Big mistake. You call me a loser? Where do you get your head big enough to think you can give that word any meaning by associating it with who I am? Words liker loser, failure, they don't apply to me, never did and never will. You know why? Cause I am willing to die for what I believe in. Are you? You never had any passion and even if you did you wouldn't even be aware of it cause you haven't got the self-awareness. (exploding) You don't know my life!!! (calming)...You sit in your rocking chair year in and year out, talking about doing something, thinking about doing something, I'm out here day after day *bleeding*. Not once have you ever showed any sort of support. Never come to my art showings. Never look at any of my work and raise an eyebrow. Nothing. Cold as ice on a summer day.

BARNEY: I let you stay on my property, don't I?

ADA: Big deal?! That's not the only kind of support I need from you.

BARNEY: What if I can't give you what you want?

ADA: Why can't you? Something wrong with ya?

BARNEY: There is...I'm built a certain way. Why you gotta be so damn needy?

ADA: I ain't needy. You're just empty.

BARNEY: I ain't empty.

ADA: Why don't you ever show affection or take action on the things that matter most to me? Why you always a ghost?!

BARNEY: I'm standing right in front of you.

ADA: Not literally. I see you, I know you're there. But you ain't there when I need you most.

BARNEY: All I gotta do is show up to one of them art exhibitions in town or wherever and I'm off the hook?

ADA: ...Yeah...Dad...that's all...

BARNEY: Why is everything so difficult with you?

ADA: I shouldn't have to tell you these things.

BARNEY: You know I love you.

ADA: But love ain't enough.

BARNEY: But if you know it, why ain't that enough?

ADA: Don't you wanna have some sort of, I don't know, friendship? Why we always so distant?

BARNEY: I don't know how to be this, this, whatever it is you want. If I did, I would be it but I don't know how to do more than what I'm already doing.

ADA: Forget it, dad...it's fine...

BARNEY: I didn't mean...I came here, if you wanna know the truth of it, I came down the hill cause I wanna apologize for speaking, for saying them things I said to ya...you know...I shouldn't of said it to ya...I know this art thing is what you enjoy doing and I gotta understand that you're not like them other girls and that's fine, you can be who you wanna be in this life, so there, I'm sorry for coming down on ya...is that good?

ADA: Yeah, that's good. I appreciate the effort.

BARNEY: I'm starting on some wings and salad. You want in?

ADA: I already ate.

BARNEY: Okay, just thought I...

ADA: I'm gonna get back to work.

BARNEY: I'll leave you to it.

ADA goes back in the cabin. BARNEY takes a few steps away and then turns to see her through the window.

(quietly) Shit...it's hard for me, Ada. I wanna be that, that person you need but I don't have the stamina, no, that's not the word is it? I'm built not like them others and I'm missing a few parts. I still function but not as good as I might. Problem I had with your mother...she was a saint if there ever was one, putting up with me all them years...no clue why...she'd complain about the same damn thing as you...both of ya'll can't be wrong then. But I know it, inside, I know there's, there's something missing. Trouble is I don't know how to fix it. I was never given, what's that word you used, what was it now...AFFECTION! That's right, never had any of that. My mother was different to me and my father was never around, so...I know *affection* exists, I know that word, I've seen it in those novels I read, but I, I've never been able to participate in its meaning...don't mean I don't want to...

BARNEY turns around and walks back up the hill.

ADA goes back to the front entrance of the cabin and stares out at her father.

ADA (quietly to herself): The window was wide open Daddy...

ADA runs and catches up to her father.

We see the two of them talk and embrace, but do not hear what they are saying. BARNEY rubs his daughter's back as they hug.

They separate.

They slowly make their way back down the hills to ADA'S cabin.

(to BARNEY): It's a portrait of you.

BARNEY: Me?

ADA: First one I ever did of you.

BARNEY: There's gonna be more?

ADA: Hope so.

BARNEY: Don't think I ever stepped foot in your cabin before.

ADA: Never?

BARNEY: Not when you're around.

ADA: You mean you---

BARNEY: I've snuck around the premises. Sort of marveled by the fact that you're my daughter and you have talent.

ADA: Talent?

BARNEY: Ain't that the right word for it? I certainly don't have any. Your mother, maybe you get that from her side.

ADA: Thanks, Dad.

BARNEY: I'm glad that window was open...

ADA and BARNEY enter the cabin together.

END OF PLAY