

Whispers of Trees

by

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Cast of Characters

<u>SHELLY</u> :	17
<u>NATE</u> :	17
<u>MAX</u> :	19

Place
Woods

Time
Afternoon

2.

Setting: The play takes place inside a wooded area behind a row of houses.

At Rise: The play opens up with girlfriend and boyfriend, Shelly and Nate sitting on a tree stump, waiting for Max to show up.

NATE: He said to meet him here.

SHELLY: I have to be back for dinner soon.

NATE: I thought you were gonna hang out?

SHELLY: I want to but my dad came at me with how we never have dinner together as a family anymore, so...

NATE: But we're getting the new shit.

SHELLY: We'll have to do a quick hit and I'm out.

NATE: Hit and run.

SHELLY: If he ever gets here.

NATE: He'll get here.

(pause.)

SHELLY: You gonna apply to that water tower job?

NATE: Yeah, my uncle said he can get me in...never thought I'd wanna do any form of engineering, but...

SHELLY: That's good though.

NATE: Yeah...

SHELLY: Gotta do something.

NATE: No shit.

SHELLY: I'm just saying.

NATE: I'm not gonna end up a loser, alright?

SHELLY: I wasn't saying that.

NATE: Your tone implied that. I'm freaking seventeen and everyone expects me to know the rest of my life. I'm still trying to figure things out and ya'll want me to have answers, answers. Cause I have an all-star brother...that's why. Captain of the football team, tournament winner at chess, he did those stupid plays for school and wins the best actor award...I didn't even know the guy could act and he's actually good, but how the hell do you pack that much talent into a single dude? And I'm supposed to follow all that? Me? I'm the no good scrawny younger brother who doesn't fit in the system of what my parents want. My brother took all the good shit before I was born and I'm left criticized for even thinking that I could achieve anything.

SHELLY: Don't say that.

NATE: It's true, Shell.

SHELLY: It's true if you believe things like that are true.

NATE: So my brother didn't get a scholarship?

SHELLY: He did but it's wrong for you to compare yourself to him. You're two entirely different people. He's an awkward overachiever, perfectionist in everything he does and you're just keeping it real.

NATE: I don't want to keep it real. That's not good enough. That's my problem, don't you see?

SHELLY: What do you want then?

NATE: I don't know. If I knew, I wouldn't be in this stupid situation.

SHELLY: What situation?

NATE: Applying to that water tower job, which I don't even wanna do.

SHELLY: Why not?

NATE: Cause it's being forced on me. Nobody is giving me my space to figure things out for myself. With my brother, everything is easy for him, he gets heard, he's given time. When he speaks my parents hang on every word he says, with me they laugh, mock any ambition I've got and I'm sick of it.

SHELLY: Forget your brother.

NATE: He's made everything so hard for me. I'm looked down on because of him. Everything's so unreachable. I need freaking super powers to catch up.

SHELLY: Nobody's perfect.

NATE: He is.

SHELLY: No, he's not.

NATE: He is, he's got a perfect track---

SHELLY: NATE! I'm trying to tell you something.

NATE looks at SHELLY.

Your brother might be perfect to some but not to everyone.

NATE: What you talking about?

SHELLY: Yeah. Your bro did something really strange. I bumped into him at Frank's Hardware store. Well, he didn't see me or anything, but for some reason I decided to spy on him. Don't ask me why, but I did. Anyway, I was watching him comb the isles and I had a clear view of him standing in front of the hammer and nail section or whatever it's called and I saw him grab a hammer and stick it inside his coat. He stole it.

NATE: No.

SHELLY: He walked right out of the store with it. Waved to Mr. Frank like nothing happened.

NATE: He did?

SHELLY: Yep.

NATE: Are you sure you saw him do that?

SHELLY: One-hundred percent.

NATE: Why didn't you ever tell me before?

SHELLY: I don't like talking shit about people behind their backs.

NATE: Yeah, but still.

SHELLY: It's your brother.

NATE: ...Wonder why he took the hammer.

SHELLY: No idea.

NATE: He has money.

SHELLY: I thought it was the weirdest thing ever, especially because it was Chester.

NATE: Haha, my brother is a thief!

SHELLY: Why is that funny?

NATE: Cause I never woulda thought he'd do a thing like that!

SHELLY: No kidding.

NATE: Mr. Perfect is a thief.

SHELLY: Don't say anything. Don't say I ever told you.

NATE: I won't.

MAX enters.

MAX: What's up losers.

NATE: Yo, what's up late arrival?

MAX: Am I late?

NATE: Yeah

SHELLY: I actually need to start heading back.

MAX: You don't like me Shelly?

NATE: We've been waiting for you man.

MAX hands NATE a small bag of weed.

NATE slips MAX twenty dollars.

SHELLY: I really need to get back home.

NATE: Wait a second. Max, we'd chill but we need to get back.

MAX: Leavin' me out in the cold people.

NATE: Next time.

MAX: It's all good.

MAX give the finger and leaves.

NATE and SHELLY walk.

NATE: Few puffs?

SHELLY: Alright, quick though.

NATE puts weed in one hitter and
hands it to SHELLY. She smokes it, coughs.
Hands it back to NATE, he packs it, smokes,
doesn't cough.

NATE (strained voice): Shit is tight.

SHELLY: That's all I can have right now. Dinner is gonna be fun.

NATE: (laughs)

SHELLY: Great.

NATE: Good luck.

SHELLY: Just what I need.

NATE: I'll hold on to this for us.

SHELLY: Don't smoke it all like last time!

NATE: Nah, I won't.

SHELLY: Listen, I wasn't trying to talk shit about your brother. He's not perfect, none of us are and you should be thankful that you are nothing like him because you are *you*. That's what makes you *Nate*, that's why people like you, you're real, you're just on another path, finding yourself, you know? There ain't nothing wrong with you.

Shit...we all just tryna find our way right now, if you wanna know what I think, I think your bro grew up too soon, he's one of them kids that get successful too early and doesn't know what the hell to do with the rest of life, you know? But we, look at the times we've had, I wouldn't trade them for shit, would you? Come on, Nate, we might not be scholar kids, we've barely gotten through these years, but we've had some damn good times and I don't see any kind of grand success bigger than those moments.

I'm not saying dreams aren't important, yeah they are, ambition, dreams, what we wanna become, blah blah...it's all important, alright but life and living is too, can't forget that. You're gonna hit your mark, Nate, might not be right now but you're the kind of man that, that if you wanna do something, you will, just in your own time, on your own terms and that's, that's alright...

NATE: Yeah...gonna find that hammer and return it to Franks though.

SHELLY: You can't do that.

NATE: I'll just say I found it outside or some shit.

SHELLY: Don't make it such a big deal.

NATE: I can't imagine my brother ever doing that. I'm not saying I don't believe you, but that I find it hard to believe based on knowing my brother. I mean...as much as he overshadows me, I've still always admired him and I...I'm just realizing this now but I think part of me is happy he is so good at everything, takes pressure off me in some ways, not all ways, but there are some perks. Like you said, I don't have to excel at everything *right now*, I kinda got more freedom, in a way. I just wanna find that thing I want to do, you say I can do anything I put my mind to, I just don't know what that thing is but you're right, I'm gonna find it.

SHELLY: You will. Nate, you think I have any talent at anything?

NATE: Yeah, you got plenty...

SHELLY: Anything that comes to mind?

NATE: No, actually...but I'm sure you'll find something too. Well I know you'll find something, ain't worried about that one bit..

SHELLY kisses NATE, he kisses her back.

SHELLY: Thanks. See you later on...don't smoke the bag.

NATE smiles. SHELLY runs off.

END OF PLAY