

ONCE A WEEK

Written By:

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CHARACTERS:

AVA: Nineteen. She is small. She is warm. She loves Sam.

SAM: Twenty-seven. He is tall. He is cold. He loves Ava.

SETTING: Somerset. It is wet and cold. If you listen carefully, you can hear the rain outside. The only source of light are candles.

SCENE ONE

A single table center stage. A purple table cloth. Yellow napkins. Everything is symmetrical. The wine glasses, the plates, the utensils. There is no food on the plates, no wine in the glasses. They sip from their glasses.

AVA

I'm feeling far away.

SAM

Where are you?

AVA

I don't know. Somewhere yellow. Like the sun, or a lemon tree, or inside a dandelion.

SAM

Why not a tulip?

AVA

Tulips aren't always yellow.

SAM

But they're pretty.

AVA

I guess.

SAM

You're pretty.

AVA

I guess.

Ava blushes to herself. She gets up quickly, running to the other side of the table. She kisses Sam's cheek. She sits back in her seat. She sits up straight. They hold up their forks and knives.

Pause. They cut their imaginary meat at the same time.

They put it in their mouths. They chew three times. Swallow.

They sip.

SAM

I wonder what it's like inside a dandelion.

AVA

Very far away. Dandelion mites are a lonely species.

SAM

Yeah?

AVA

They often spend their time chewing on stems, and harvesting pollen for the bees.

SAM

I thought the bees did that themselves.

AVA

Nope. Each flower has its own species mite that harvests the pollen. When the bees land on the flower, the mites help load the pollen onto the bee. The bee says thank you, and goes on its way. Bees don't really like dandelions too much I think. So the dandelion mites spend all spring collecting pollen, but hardly any bees, bumble or honey, come to visit them.

SAM

That's a shame. They must get very lonely.

AVA

Yes, very lonely.

Pause. They sip from their glasses. Sam watches Ava.

AVA

Why are you staring at me?

SAM

No reason.

AVA

There's gotta be a reason.

SAM

No. No reason. I'm just looking.

AVA

Okay...

Sam and Ava wipe their mouths. Left corner. Right corner. They watch each other as they do this. They begin at their food again. They do not look at each other.

SAM

Where did you learn about dandelion mites?

AVA

In my sleep.

SAM

In a dream?

AVA

I dreamt I was one of them.

SAM

What happened in the dream?

AVA

We collected pollen all spring. We waited and we waited for the bees to come and take our gifts. Collecting pollen is no joke, it takes hours and hours and hours.

SAM

I hear there's a small village in China that's had to resort to hand-pollinating because all their bees died.

AVA

The bees don't do it. The mites do.

SAM

Right. The mites died.

AVA

Anyway, we could see their shadows zipping by us going to the tulips, the rose, the geraniums... But they never came to us. It was really quite sad. I started to cry until all I saw was yellow. I wanted to leave that flower so bad. I wanted to run away and find a new one. But I think we were trapped and everything was too far away.

SAM

Why do you think the bees wouldn't come?

AVA

Dandelions aren't *really* flowers.

Ava softens. She lowers her head. Sam continues eating his meat. He sips from his glass.

AVA (CONT'D)

Dandelion mites spend most of their days crying.

SAM

I'm sorry to hear that.

Ava nods. They continue eating. Pause. Ava lifts up the empty bowl. She sips the imaginary soup very loudly. Sam is visibly annoyed. Ava sips and sips. Sam slams his hand on the table. Ava looks up from the bowl. She is startled. He softens. Pause.

SAM

What about cactus mites?

Ava stiffens. She flashes a glare at Sam. They breathe.

SAM

Hm? What about them?

AVA

Sam...

SAM

Ava?

Ava throws her utensils down. She is flustered.

AVA

I didn't mean to!

SAM

Oh come on Ava, you're not a child. You knew what you were doing.

AVA

It wasn't on purpose.

SAM

It was on accident?

Ava nods. She holds the spoon to her lip.

SAM

You killed my cactus!

AVA

I didn't mean it!

SAM

Why would you water it so much, Ava?!

AVA

It looked a bit dry!

SAM

It's a desert plant!

AVA

What are we having for dessert anyway?

Ava giggles. She stops herself. Sam is cold to her.

SAM

Ava?

Ava lifts her head. They watch each other.

SAM

I really loved that plant.

AVA

I know.

SAM

I'm sad.

AVA

I didn't mean to.

SAM

I know.

AVA

I can fix it, if you let me try.

SAM

I don't want to try.

AVA

I'm feeling far away again...

They sip from their glasses.

Lights out.

