

The Play About Serious Moonlight, or The Sound Of August Stars  
By  
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*(At the taco bar of Guero's, 1412 S Congress Ave. Austin, TX 78704. Sometime ago.)*

*(A large television screen is located upstage where all of the stage directions can be seen as they occur in real time.)*

*(THE NARRATOR addresses the audience with perhaps a microphone or megaphone or nothing to enhance her voice. The Narrator is a woman around the age of 30 and costumed in the finest dress "The Boy" can find.)*

THE NARRATOR

This is a play. *(She says.)*

This is a play about The Boy. *(She says to the audience.)*

This is a play about The Boy and his mother. *(She says again to the audience.)*

This is a play about The Boy and his mother and the moonlight. *(She says.)*

*(An empty picture frame descends from the sky and hangs in the air. THE BOY enters and steps into the picture frame. He is a man around the age of 30 and is costumed in whatever the actor playing the character desires. Although he is a man, he is still The Boy.)*

*(This is The Boy.)*

THE NARRATOR

This story, excuse me "play", plays are hardly stories anymore, begins when The Boy lived alone with his mother in a big-tall house when he was getting older but not old. Now, "alone" with his mother is a rather odd thing to say because if The Boy did live with his mother, he isn't what most of us would call alone. But he was. And so was The Boy's mother. At one point in time The Boy had a father, a remarkably tall, God fearing man, who worked as a lifeguard on "The Jersey shore." His father was a man's-man, who quoted Hemmingway, and the Bible, and knew how to listen to women, which a skill lacking in most men. He was a champion swimmer, a grand volleyball player, and invented his own tomato sauce, which he canned for the neighbors at Christmas ever December. The Boy's father loved his mother. He would give the mother apples he stole from the neighbor's garden after sex. The Boy's father liked to have sex in the moonlight.

THE BOY

My father was a man's-man.

*(The sound of August stars are heard.)*

THE NARRATOR

One afternoon in August, the first day of high school it was, The Boy came home to his mother laying on the floor of the kitchen holding an apple to her face, crying. His father didn't come home the night before. His father was found dead in the parking lot behind a dumpster of a Mexican restaurant the family liked. His father was having an affair with a waitress from this restaurant, and her boyfriend cut his throat with a soup spoon for this act of sex.

THE BOY

I never knew my father had messed around. And my mother never admitted it.

*(Enter The Mother. She is about The Boys age, dressed for tanning under the moon. The Mother lies on the floor and ignores The Boy.)*

THE NARRATOR

The Boy tried to fill his father's shoes with his small feet. He maintained a steady B average all four year of high school, played catcher on the varsity baseball squad, and joined the Latin club. When The Boy didn't know what to say to some one, he quoted something in Latin...

THE BOY

Aegrescit medendo.

THE NARRATOR

And, in honor of his father, The Boy sharpened a steal guitar string, dipped it in blue ink, and tattooed to the bottom of his left foot "Jesus is Lord" and...

THE BOY

Mom plus dad equals me...

THE NARRATOR

...on the bottom of his right foot. In his free time The Boy would look out the windows of his house and watch all of the people walk down the street. He watched them from his bedroom window. His living room window. His kitchen window. And even his bathroom window when he would brush his teeth, wondering what all the people where thinking as they went about their lives and if they had ever met his father. The Boy never got a camera. He would watch to remember things the way he wanted to remember them.

THE BOY

On occasion, I would watch my neighbor's house, and see a girl watching me back. I would wave to her and she would wave to me.

THE NARRATOR

That girl wished The Boy would think of her, but he never did. He would only think of his father and his mother and at night The Boy would watch his mother until she yelled...

THE MOTHER

You cannot watch my body. My body is for your father.

THE NARRATOR

So The Boy would watch what he called...

THE BOY

“The Cable Television”

THE NARRATOR

And watch his favorite channel he called...

THE BOY

“The Cinemax”

THE NARRATOR

Which featured...

THE BOY

“The Pornography”

THE NARRATOR

...which The Boy enjoyed, as we all do. The Boy watched so much of “The Pornography”; he became something of an expert on female anatomy. The Boy never needed to see a nude woman in the flesh, not even the girl next door, as he knew what her body looked liked with the shape of her jaw, the position of her eyes, the cut of her hair, and the color of her lips. The Boy never touched a real girl before. He did a great deal of thinking about touching real girls, but that always lead to sadness.

THE BOY

You make it sound like I am lonely.

THE NARRATOR

I am sorry, should I clarify?

THE BOY

Yes.

THE NARRATOR

The Boy watched a good deal of “The Pornography” when his mother tanned under the moon, but he was not lonely. How was that?

THE BOY

I don't know why you are taking this tone.

THE NARRATOR

Yes you do. You know damn well why I am taking this tone. Let's continue.

THE BOY

Let's not.

THE NARRATOR

I am the one talking to the audience. Not you. What do you think about that?

*(Soundless silence.)*

*(Then.)*

THE BOY

Cogito ergo doleo.

THE NARRATOR

Then stop thinking. Every morning The Boy would make toast and eggs for his mother to eat before he escaped to school, and every night he would cook tuna noodle casserole with canned peas and broken crackers just so his mother wouldn't die of hunger. But his mother never ate the food The Boy made. She wanted apples. His mother never noticed he was on the baseball team and spoke Latin, and that he tattooed himself. She would only notice the moon and the way it looked on the water. And the image The Boy thought his father would want him to be began to fade like the grooves in a record. Every year, The Boy would know not what to get his mother for her birthday, and his father never taught him how to say...

THE BOY

*(Mouthing the words.)* I. Love. You.

THE NARRATOR

So The Boy would sneak to his neighbor's backyard and steal an avocado...

THE BOY

Your backyard. I snuck to your backyard.

THE NARRATOR

My backyard. The Boy would sneak to my backyard and steal avocados. What many have said to be the only avocado tree on the Jersey shore.

THE BOY

Tell the story right. You said apples earlier. They where avocados.

THE NARRATOR

You were the one who stole avocados. Your father stole apples.

*(The sound of the nasty-heart music is heard.)*

THE NARRATOR

Upon graduation from high school, The Boy had the option to play baseball for Bucknell University, but desired an institution of higher learning near the Texan Hill Country to stay close to his mother. The Boy had convinced himself that his mother needed him. The Mother never let The Boy watch her tan. She would say to him...

THE MOTHER

You can never look at my body. My body is not for you to look at. Your father wouldn't like that; he wouldn't like that at all.

THE NARRATOR

"Your father wouldn't like that..." was one thing The Boy could understand. The Boy chose to attend St. Edward's University and majored in "undecided" and on his first weekend of school he met a girl named...

THE BOY

Whitney...she looked familiar.

THE NARRATOR

Whitney... she was familiar.

*(Everything stops.)*

THE NARRATOR

You liked her name, didn't you? Please tell me you liked her name.

THE BOY

It was simple.

THE NARRATOR

It was simple, or she was simple.

THE BOY

All of the girl was simple.

THE NARRATOR

*(To the audience.)* But he could never recall her last name.

THE BOY

I think it rhymed with "nifty."

THE NARRATOR

It was Jones. Whitney Jones.

THE BOY

She had bleach blonde hair and smooth skin and always wore purple earrings.

THE NARRATOR

Had. She had all those things. The Boy enjoyed college and wrote a letter to his mother on the back of a cardboard box. He told his mother all the fantastic things he was learning. He took an astronomy class, and an anthropology class, and a human sexuality class, and a class about Greek goddesses. He didn't watch people anymore. He talked with them. And when The Boy wrote his mother about this girl named Whitney she said...

THE MOTHER

You will leave college. Now.

THE BOY

Why?

THE MOTHER

The tea leaves tell me you should go for your own good.

THE BOY

I like college.

THE MOTHER

Your father would not want you in college. He would want you to come and take care of your mother.

THE NARRATOR

This was something The Boy could understand.

THE BOY

What will I do?

THE MOTHER

I know a man who knows a man who knows a man who can get you a job at an art gallery.

THE BOY

I am not an artist

THE MOTHER

You don't have to be. You can be a security boy. Just stand in the corner and watch people. Quietly.

THE BOY

I don't want to watch people anymore.

THE MOTHER

If you come home I will let you watch me tan. Son...

THE BOY

Yeah, mom...

THE MOTHER

Please. Come home.

THE NARRATOR

The Boy came home the very next. He didn't say good-bye to any of his professors, or fellow students...or Whitney. He just came home, put his bags on the driveway, walked over to the neighbors yard, and took an avocado to his mother. And his mother never said a word to him.

THE BOY

She would say a few words...

THE NARRATOR

No she didn't.

*(Something happens. Something changes. The world shifts. It's an honest moment, the first one in the play.)*

THE BOY

I didn't realize it was you until it was you.

THE NARRATOR

That is what hurt the most.

THE BOY

You look good in that dress.

THE NARRATOR

It's the dress you bought me when you went to Minneapolis.

THE BOY

I've never been to Minneapolis.

THE NARRATOR

I knew you were going to say that. You always say that when we do this “play.” You got me this dress in serious moonlight. When you went to Minneapolis on a school trip. But you only remember what you want to remember and how you want to remember it.

*(A shift happens. The world changes. It’s the end of the honest moment.)*

THE NARRATOR

The mother never spoke to The Boy when he gave her avocados. She just laid under the moon and let him watch her body. The Boy grew older. But The Mother never aged. Until one day...

THE MOTHER

No more avocados. Just tell me you love me. The way your father would.

THE BOY

I don’t know how he would say that.

THE MOTHER

No! More! AVACODOS! Just be HIM! Just say that you love me.

THE BOY

I don’t know how to say that.

*(Silence.)*

THE MOTHER

Do you think about me?

THE BOY

Cogito ergo doleo.

THE NARRATOR

I think. So I suffer.

THE BOY

Close, but not exactly. I just want to make you happy mother.

THE MOTHER

I lay in the moonlight, waiting.

*(This is the American pastime. The sound of waiting in serious moonlight.)*

THE MOTHER

Please. Look at my body.

THE BOY

I can't do that, mom.

THE MOTHER

The waitress was Mexican. Would he still be here if I was Mexican?

THE BOY

No.

THE MOTHER

Tell me that you love me.

THE BOY

I don't how.

*(The mother walks away.)*

*(Silence.)*

THE BOY

Whitney...

*(The Narrator walks into the picture and softly touches The Boy, who isn't really a boy.)*

THE NARRATOR

The Boy stopped stealing avocados from his neighbor. We walked down the Jersey shore to the Mexican restaurant where his father was murdered. He asked for a table, he did not eat, and drank only water. He looked out into the sea, watching the moonlight bounce off the waves. He thought about his father and uttered the words...

THE BOY

Cogito ergo doleo.

*(The sound of serious music.)*

THE NARRATOR

We can end the play now, if you would like.

THE BOY

The play never ends.

*(The sound of true music is heard.)*

THE NARRATOR

And The Boy sat. Waiting.

*(Lights fade to nothing but serious moonlight.)*

END OF PLAY