

Something True?

A Short Play

by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

JILL, Mike's lover, a young woman in her 20s. A bit dramatic.

MIKE, Jill's lover, a young man in his 20s. Somewhat immature.

SETTING

Jill's bedroom, afternoon.

*JILL and MIKE lie in bed,
clothes are scattered about.*

MIKE

I'm parched. You want some water?

JILL

Don't get up. I want to stay like this forever.

MIKE

That's a long time. I should definitely get us some water.
And maybe some corn chips. You want chips?

JILL

No. Stay.

She snuggles close.

JILL

Mike?

MIKE

Yes?

JILL

Tell me something true.

MIKE

Something true?

JILL

Yes. Tell me something true.

MIKE

I. Love. You.

JILL

Bullshit.

MIKE

Bullshit? I say I love you, and you say bullshit?

JILL

You hardly know me.

MIKE

It's been three months. I can't love you in three months? Wow. Guess you aren't love-at-first-sight, fairy-tale princess.

Jill smiles. Snuggles closer.

JILL

So... tell me something true.

MIKE

Hmmm. Something True. Something... true. Something.... Aha! The sky is blue.

JILL

Is it? Isn't that just sunlight bouncing around in the atmosphere, or something?

MIKE

I dunno. Maybe you're right.

JILL

Come on. You're not trying. Tell me something true or... no more sex for you.

MIKE

Hey! You're a poet, and you don't even know it.

JILL

Oh, I know it, and you're about to blow it.

She turns away. Mike thinks.

MIKE

Okay. Here goes. Something that is unquestionably true.

She turns back, smiling eagerly.

MIKE

You were born on May 3, 1992.

JILL

Was I? I mean... that's what my mother says, but... well... you haven't met my mother.

MIKE

That's true. Hey! We did it.

JILL

That doesn't count. That was a statement of fact. I asked for something true. Something with weight behind it. It needs to be revealing, or surprising, or devastating, or awe inspiring, or reconciling. It needs to be... true. Undeniably, eye-openingly, heart-stoppingly, edge-of-your-seatingly, butt-cheek clenchingly, no varnish, no bullshit, no blarney, no holds barred, no nonsense, notable, quotable, indisputable, irrefutable, unimpeachable. True.

MIKE

It needs to be all those things?

JILL

Truth is all those things and more. Shall I go on?

MIKE

No. I get the idea.

(Thinks)

Okay, this is my best shot.

(Triumphantly)

Beauty is truth, truth beauty. That is all ye need to know.

JILL

Beauty is truth, truth beauty? That's your best shot?

She holds up a fashion magazine.

JILL

This is truth?

MIKE

That's not what Keats had in mind. He's talking about art, the truth of art. If poetry isn't truth, if art isn't truth, well... what is?

Long pause. Jill prods.

JILL

Come on, Mike. You can do it! One true thing. Something permanent. Something real. Something that stands the test of time. Something I can hang my hat on when I'm old and gray. Something...

MIKE

That's it! Someday, you'll die.

JILL

That's not true. That's a truism.

MIKE

What's the difference?

JILL

A truism is obvious. It adds nothing to the conversation. Add something to the conversation, Mike!

MIKE

So you want something new, not something true?

JILL

I want both! Is that too much to ask?

MIKE

Maybe.

Jill climbs from the bed, wrapping a blanket or sheet around herself.

JILL

That's enough, Mike! Tell me something true. Tell me this instant, or it's over.

MIKE

What?

JILL

I mean it. Tell me something that is unquestionably true, right now, or we're finished.

MIKE

Jill?

JILL

That's it!

Mike jumps from the bed wrapped in a blanket or sheet.

MIKE

I don't understand. What do you want from me?

JILL

What do I want? Oh... get out!

MIKE

(Desperately)

Wha... This... This is insane. Why are you doing this?

JILL

(Tenderly)

Oh, Mike. You really do love me.

(Accusingly)

After three months! It was love at first sight for me. Real fairy tale princess shit, and I've had to watch you fumble around for three months.

MIKE

Oh my god. You're nuts!

JILL

I'm spirited.

MIKE

No. You're nuts. Certifiable. I'm outta here.

He starts to gather his clothes.

JILL

Don't go. Do you have to go? You'll call me later, right?

MIKE

Uh, no.

JILL

And... scene.

MIKE

What?

JILL

That was great. I understand the character much better!

MIKE

You were rehearsing?

JILL

Not really rehearsing. I was exploring my new character. I'm doing this Fatal Attraction thing.

MIKE

So, you're not... we're not... breaking up?

JILL

God no! The opposite.

Jill shoves Mike back on the bed, crawls on top of him.

JILL

Are you ready for something true?

MIKE

I don't think I can, Jill. That was really upsetting. I should go.

He rises again, wrapped in a sheet or blanket, gathers his clothes.

JILL

Mike, I'm sorry. I went too far. I'm really sorry. I've been having trouble with this part, but I never meant to hurt you. Let's start over. Like it never happened.

MIKE

But it did. You... broke my heart.

JILL

Oh... no... Mike.

MIKE

Will this happen every time you get a new part?

JILL

I don't know. Maybe?

MIKE

I'm sorry. I need some time to think.

Jill climbs from the bed, wrapped in a sheet or blanket.

JILL

Don't go. Please. Come back to bed. We'll hold each other and you'll feel better. I know it.

Mike relents. She leads him back to bed. They lie silently. Then...

MIKE

Jill?

JILL

Mmm?

MIKE

Can I ask you something?

JILL

Mmm. Anything.

MIKE

Do you think truth is crazy?

JILL

What?

MIKE

You're playing a crazy woman, and you practiced by asking me to tell you something true? Do you think truth is crazy?

JILL

I guess I didn't think about it like that. I wanted to ask you something... I don't know... unusual? Something that would send us into a crazy spiral, so I could act... crazy.

MIKE

But you picked truth. Is it that unusual for a guy tell you the truth?

JILL

Is it that unusual for a girl to expect the truth? Look, you're missing the point. There's truth...

She sits up, shakes his hand.

JILL

Hi. My name is Jill. I was born on May 3, 1992. Some day, I will die. All true. But then there's... TRUTH. All caps. And yes. I think it would be crazy if a guy told me that. I think it would be great. I could spend my life with a guy like that. Do you know any?... Guys like that?

MIKE

I know one who'll try.

JILL

Oh, Mike.

MIKE

And... scene.

JILL

What?! You're not even an actor.

MIKE

Maybe I should be. That was great. I really got you going.
(Looking at his watch)
I've got time before work. Introduce me to your agent.

JILL

Dammit, Mike.

MIKE

What? You can dish it, but you can't take it?

JILL

That was... mean. I wasn't trying to be mean!

MIKE

I would like to thank the Academy...

JILL

Get out! I mean it this time.

She rises in a blanket or sheet.

JILL

I mean it. I want you to go.

She picks up his pile of clothes
and holds them out to him.

MIKE

Jesus, Jill. Take it easy. Come back to bed. We're even.

Jill walks to the window.

JILL

You. Are. An. Asshole.

(Opening the window)

Do you hear me?

(Throwing his clothes out)

An asshole!

MIKE

What are you...? Jesus!

JILL

Go!

MIKE

I'm not leaving now.

Mike rises, forgetting to wrap himself, walks naked to window.

MIKE

I can't go out there like this. There are kids out there.

Children scream.

JILL

Not any more.

Jill giggles, looks at Mike. They both giggle.

JILL

You should really put something on.

She holds out part of the blanket

JILL

Here. We can share.

Mike puts an edge of Jill's blanket over his shoulders and begins to wrap himself in it, spinning until they are pressed tightly together, face to face.

JILL

Hi. I'm Jill.

MIKE

I'm Mike. It's nice to meet you. Do you come here often?

JILL

I live here.

MIKE

What do you do, Jill?

JILL

I'm an actor. You?

MIKE

I love an actor.

JILL

(After pause)

Is that true?

MIKE

Mmm.

(Kisses her)

I think it is.

CURTAIN

END OF PLAY