Love Is Not an Angry Thing

by
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STORY OF THE PLAY

Tina, a high school freshman, has fallen hard for Greg, an upperclassman. Her best friend, Margie, is happy for her but doesn't like how the relationship is changing Tina. Suddenly Tina has no time for Margie, except to borrow her homework. Greg meets Tina after every class, spends every weekend with her, and is urging her to quit the soccer team because it takes too much time away from him. In fact, Greg wants Tina to do exactly what he wants to do, even going to a deserted cabin in the woods.

Soon his controlling personality leads to violence and Tina's family gets a restraining order against him. But Greg is determined to see Tina one more time. With Margie as our narrator, we see how a girl's youthful dream of love can be as dangerous as it is unrealistic. The poems Tina write lend a mystical beauty to this powerful play.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 w)

TINA MORELLI: A young teenager, perhaps 14, a high school freshman.

MARGIE: Tina's best friend, the same age.

SETTING

An acting area, preferably a bare stage. Two stools: one left, one right.

LIGHTING

The action takes place in three areas, left, center and right. Each area should be able to be lit discreetly, allowing the others to remain dark, if necessary, but combinable to light the entire stage when called for.

SCENES

The first seven scenes open with a poem. Scene 8 ends with one.

A Note from the Playwright

This play is as realistic as I could make it. In the past ten years teen dating violence has grown to epidemic proportions in middle school and high school populations across the country. Blamed on everything from MTV to cable networks to rap music to a generation X gone bad, dating violence has become a normal, almost expected behavior in the eyes of our nation's young people.

Don't think so? Ask any student.

In terms of sexual activity, the fastest growing group is that of high school freshman girls [from 29% to 44% by the time they reach their sophomore year]. The rising rates of STD's in middle school girls only serves to underscore the increase in risky sexual behavior in younger teens.

However, dating violence and underage sex are not necessarily related. Just as domestic violence and rape are demonstrations of power, so is dating violence and obsessive dating behavior a reflection of the need for one person's domination over another. As with Tina, dating violence can happen at any age—as young as 14 or as old as late adult. And, unless they can find ways out, just like Tina, the victims often meet with disaster.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: TINA is sitting, stage left. She is dressed to be pretty, young and innocent. A typical 14 year old about to enter high school. She is writing in a well-worn spiral notebook.)

TINA: I tossed my love
To waves of blue
and green
and white.
Touched the sand,
Took his hand,
And swam into the night. *(SHE closes her book.)*
(BLACKOUT.)

(LIGHTS up right on MARGIE, who crosses to center carrying a stool and eventually sits on it, very relaxed.)

MARGIE: Now here's the thing. Tina was my best friend. She was. We grew up in Middletown together. Have you ever been to Middletown? Do you know the main street in Disneyworld? Where every shop is perfect and the shopkeepers are all perfect and the paint on the storefronts is perfect. That was Middletown except with neighborhoods. To give you an idea: do you know how all the junior highs or, I guess we have middle schools now, well, you know how all the adults are trying to get dress codes to make the kids all dress in that same neat, clean, perfect way? In Middletown Junior, we all dressed that way naturally. We were perfect, we came from perfect houses in perfect neighborhoods with perfect parents, we went to the perfect school—why would we want to look any other way? *Seventeen* magazine was radical to Middletown. We'd never want to look like THAT!

TINA: *(Left.)* You were just as bad.

MARGIE: Absolutely. *(To audience.)* That was Tina. Wasn't she pretty? You were always getting the boys.

TINA: Yeah, only in seventh grade.

TINA & MARGIE: *(Simultaneously.)* Seventh grade.

MARGIE: *(Gets up and crosses to TINA.)* Tina's nose grew before her face had time to grow into it.
TINA: I was an elephant. *(SHE puts on a cardigan draped over the chair back and a very ugly pair of glasses.)* See?
MARGIE: The homecoming dance was a disaster.
TINA: *(Sighs.)* Bruce Simpson.
MARGIE: She had a definite crush on Bruce Simpson.
TINA: My Bruce. My darling Bruce.
MARGIE: Ignored her the whole night.
TINA: Look at me. Wouldn't you?
MARGIE: I tried, but you were my best friend.
TINA: Thanks a lot.
MARGIE: You chased him around the gym. She did. "Brucie ... Brucie." He'd duck behind the stands.
TINA: Is that where he went?
MARGIE: He traded sports jackets with Jeff Wetzel and tried to sneak out in disguise.
TINA: He did not.
MARGIE: Yeah. Only you found him. She stood outside the boys' room until he came out! Do you believe that?
TINA: I did not.
MARGIE: You did too. And when he came out you made him dance with you.
TINA: *(Laughs.)* He was awful.
MARGIE: Which might have been why he didn't want to dance with you?
TINA: *(Laughs.)* He never did again.
MARGIE: He left town after that. Public embarrassment.
TINA: His dad was transferred.
MARGIE: He asked for that transfer. He begged for that transfer just to save his son from being a social outcast for dancing with something that looked like you.
TINA: You're cruel.
MARGIE: Yeah. So what was it that made it all change?
TINA: The summer after 8th grade?
MARGIE: Oh, we had the best summer.
TINA: The beach.
MARGIE: Braces.
TINA: Lifeguards!

End of Freeview

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