

When She Danced

by

Andrew Bailes

CHARACTERS

Bob, early 50's.

Sid, early teens.

SETTING

A back porch.

TIME

Late afternoon.

(Lights up on SID sitting on the back porch listening to his iPod. Wearing black slacks and a white oxford shirt with a loosely knotted black tie, SID covers himself in a black cotton jacket, pulling the hood tightly over his head as if to mask him from the surrounding world. After a moment, BOB enters. BOB is wearing a black suit and he looks rather uncomfortable in it. He looks over to SID, who still hasn't noticed his presence. BOB takes a breath and walks over.)

BOB:

Sid. (Pause.) What are you listening to?

(SID still doesn't notice. BOB taps him on the shoulder. Startled, SID takes out his earbuds and looks up at BOB.)

SID:

Hey, Dad.

BOB:

What are you listening to?

SID:

Neil Young.

BOB:

Nice. *Harvest*?

SID:

After the Gold Rush.

BOB:

Classic. (Pause.) Do you want to go back inside?

SID:

Not really.

BOB:
I know. Me neither.

SID:
Really?

BOB:
Yeah. Funerals kind of bum me out.

SID:
Yeah, me too.

(They look at each other. BOB forces a smile. SID looks at the ground.)

BOB:
Did you know your mom and I met at a Neil Young concert?

SID:
I know, Dad, you told me like a million times.

BOB:
(*Chuckling.*) Yeah, I guess I have. (*Pause.*) Did I ever tell you what my first words to her were?

SID:
No.

BOB:
Well, she'd probably murder me if she knew I was telling you this, but I guess you're old enough to hear it.
(*Pause.*) I wasn't exactly... sober, if you know what I mean.

SID:
You mean you were wasted?

BOB:
Well, I wasn't... (*Pause.*) Yeah, I was wasted.

SID:
I don't think I ever want to see what that looks like.

BOB:

No, no you don't. Anyway, I'm standing in front of her right before the show. *(Pause.)* Hey, did I ever tell you that the tickets were only eight dollars?

SID:

Yes, Dad.

BOB:

(To himself.) And now you have to vomit two hundred dollars to see a decrepit Keith Richards.

SID:

(Rolling his eyes.) I know, Dad.

BOB:

Anyway. So, I'm standing in front of her and I realize that I'm well over a foot taller, so I ask her if she wants to trade spots. And we do. And she is gorgeous. Blonde hair flowing down a perfect neck, green eyes that shined brighter than Neil Young's Gibson on stage. And I notice she has a cup in her hand, so I ask her what she's drinking. She tells me that it's whiskey. And I yell, very loudly, very drunkenly, "Whiskey?! You're not as innocent as you look!" *(Laughing.)* I had never used a pick-up line before, and I wasn't planning on using one then, but, well, it just came out. *(Pause.)* It didn't work. She turns back around without a word. Not even a simple thank you for trading spots. I thought it was all over and that I was never speaking to her again.

SID:

So what happened?

BOB:

Well, the show starts, and it was amazing. *(Pause.)* God, your mom... I mean, when she danced... *(Pause.)* After the last song, Neil Young threw his guitar pick into the crowd. Everyone went wild trying to grab it. It seemed to fall straight towards your mother, and when she caught it, another equally intoxicated but far more aggressive man

BOB (CONT'D):

pushed her over and grabbed the pick out of her hands. Well, I wasn't about to stand there and watch that happen. So I walk over to the guy and punch him in the face. I had never hit another man before, but I just felt so enraged that he would treat a beautiful woman like that. It certainly caught him off guard, and he fell flat on his back. I took the pick out of his hand, picked up your mother, and gave it back to her. Then I heard over the microphone, "Now there's a true gentleman." It was Neil Young. I had no idea that he was watching me the whole time. Your mom and I kind of embarrassingly waved to him up on stage and we left the show together.

SID:

Whoa. I can't believe you punched someone.

BOB:

Like I said, your mother would kill me if she knew you found out.

SID:

And Neil Young saw the whole thing.

BOB:

Yes, sir. (*Pause.*) You know, I remember the first time your mom found out you actually enjoyed listening to his music. She was so upset that you listened to that boy band garbage.

SID:

(*Groaning.*) Please don't remind me.

BOB:

Well, you were younger, and you liked to watch the Disney Channel. What did you think was going to happen?

SID:

I remember she came up to me one day with a mix CD she made me. She told me to listen to it for a week, and if I hated

SID (CONT'D):

it, I could throw it away. I'm pretty sure it's still in my CD player now.

BOB:

(Laughing.) She was so happy that you liked it. She was almost crying when she told me.

SID:

Crazy.

BOB:

Well, music was important to her.

SID:

Dad. *(Pause.)* I miss her.

BOB:

I know, Sidney. I do, too. She's still with us, though. You know that, right?

SID:

I'm trying to feel her, but I can't. And it feels so empty.

BOB:

Well, I guess she's in the music we listen to.

SID:

What is that supposed to mean?

BOB:

I don't really know, actually. It just kind of came out.

SID:

Oh.

BOB:

Yeah, forget about it.

SID:

No, Dad. I think I understand.

BOB:
Yeah?

SID:
Yeah.

BOB:
Thanks.

SID:
Dad?

BOB:
Yeah?

SID:
What was her favorite Neil Young song?

BOB:
(Pause.) When You Dance, I Can Really Love.

SID:
Want to listen to it now?

BOB:
Sure.

(BOB sits down next to SID and takes one of his earbuds. SID puts an earbud in his right ear while BOB puts the other in his left. Together they listen to the song in silence, BOB eventually putting his arm around SID and looking up to the sky. Lights Out.)

END OF PLAY