

TO TREE OR NOT TO TREE

Written by

Isaac Jay

INT. ACTING CLASS - DAY

ROBERT SCOTT paces slowly in front of his students, all of whom sit on the floor. His hands folded in a prayer shape. He is deep in thought. After a moment of pensive silence.

ROBERT

Welcome to acting 101. Journey into the actor's imagination. Do you think you are ready?

CLASS INDIVIDUALS

Yes. I think I am. What is this shit? etc.-

ROBERT

You do want to be an actors, don't you?

CLASS INDIVIDUALS

Yes. No. Absolutely! Etc. -

ROBERT

Shut up! This is not a discussion! Everyone stand up.

Everyone stands.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Now, I want you all to imagine you are trees.

Everyone does. Some students look enthused, others bored. One student in the front row, CHRISTIAN, is trying really hard. Robert walks through the students. He finally settles in front of Christian.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

What are you doing, Christian?

Chris is terrified.

CHRIS

Imagining I'm a tree...

ROBERT

No you're not. You *think* you're imagining you're a tree. Stop trying to imagine and just imagine.

Chris tries to process this.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
 You have to be the tree. That's  
 right, Raquel.

Robert indicates a girl in the yoga tree pose, using her  
 hands. Chris glances at her.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
 BE IT, CHRISTIAN!

Chris tries to use his hands like branches.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
 NO! DON'T USE YOUR HANDS. DID I SAY  
 YOU COULD USE YOUR HANDS?

CHRIS  
 (incredibly confused)  
 No.

ROBERT  
 Don't speak, just do!  
 You can be whatever tree you want.  
 The possibilities are endless. Now,  
 Imagine your bark... Great, Aaron.

Robert indicates a kid standing completely still and upright,  
 hands glued to his sides, staring directly ahead in complete  
 concentration. Chris clocks him and visibly tries to make a  
 mental adjustment.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
 Just imagine it, Chris! Can you see  
 your bark? Can you? Good. Now  
 imagine your leaves, your knots,  
 your marks... Jamie's got it.  
 Great leaves Sean!

Robert points at a girl who is clearly completely zoned out  
 chewing gum. Chris glances at her. He looks confused but  
 wants to get it right. He concentrates really hard. Robert  
 looks into his eyes.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
 Yes. Yes. YES! Now you're beginning  
 to imagine! Can't you feel it?  
 You're becoming the tree! What kind  
 of tree are you?

Silence.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
 I said, what kind of tree are you?

Silence.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
You can speak now, Christian! What  
kind of tree are you?

CHRIS  
(confident)  
Oh, a willow.

ROBERT  
WRONG!!!! YOU'RE AN OAK TREE! AN  
OAK TREE!!

BLACKOUT