

i have found what you are like

By Maddison Nielsen

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[based off the e. e. cummings poem]

Characters:

- Boy, 18. Wears a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt.
- Girl, 16. Wears dark clothes.

Settings:

- Scene One: Public bus
- Scene Two: Cemetery, Grave
- Scene Three: Cemetery, Bench
- Scene Four: Doorstep
- Scene Five: Park

Synopsis:

A boy meets a girl.

SCENE ONE

[A girl sits on a bus looking out the window, and a boy comes and stands by her, gestures to the seat.]

BOY: Can I sit here?

GIRL: I'd rather you didn't.

[The girl doesn't look at him. The boy is taken aback.]

BOY: Sorry?

GIRL: I'd rather you didn't.

BOY: Why?

GIRL: Because I'm not in the mood.

BOY: I don't think I understand.

GIRL: *[Finally looking up]* Do you know who I am?

BOY: I don't know. No.

GIRL: Do you know Jared?

BOY: The kid that-

GIRL: Yeah.

BOY: Yeah. We have Pre-calc together. Or, uh... I mean...

GIRL: I get it.

BOY: Did you know him?

GIRL: We were...

[She turns to the window again.]

BOY: Oh. *[Pause]* Can I sit here?

GIRL: I guess.

[He sits. Silence.]

BOY: Where are you headed?

GIRL: Where are you headed?

BOY: Cemetery.

GIRL: Why?

BOY: *[Pauses again.]* Where are you headed?

GIRL: Nowhere.

BOY: Little cryptic, ya?

GIRL: Sure.

BOY: Do we go to school together?

GIRL: No. I go to Taft.

BOY: Taft?! Ha!

GIRL: Don't laugh, why are you laughing?

BOY: Taft is pretty ghetto.

GIRL: Whatever. It's not, rally.

BOY: That's what I've heard.

GIRL: Well you don't go there, do you?

BOY: No, I guess I don't.

GIRL: You go to Loyola, fancy.

BOY: It's all right. Why are you on this side of the hill?

GIRL: No reason.

BOY: Where'd you get on?

GIRL: Nowhere.

BOY: Stop speaking in riddles. It's not impressive.

GIRL: You're the one who wanted to sit there.

BOY: Yeah, I guess I was. *[Silence.]* What do you like to do?

GIRL: This and that.

BOY: How interesting.

GIRL: You asked.

BOY: You hardly answered.

GIRL: I don't really like to do anything.

BOY: You don't like anything?

GIRL: No, I like things, but I don't really know what I like.

BOY: That makes sense.

GIRL: Don't be cynical.

BOY: There isn't one thing you can think of that you like to do?

GIRL: I like to organize things.

BOY: Oh? Clean?

GIRL: Not clean, organize.

BOY: I see...

GIRL: No you don't.

BOY: You're right.

GIRL: *[Defensive]* Well what do you like to do?

BOY: Me?

GIRL: Is there anyone else around?

BOY: Yes, yes there are.

GIRL: You know what I meant.

BOY: I recite things.

GIRL: You recite things?

BOY: Yes.

GIRL: What, like an actor?

BOY: No. Not like an actor.

GIRL: What do you recite then?

BOY: Oh anything. Stories, essays, poems.

GIRL: Recite a poem.

BOY: What, right now?

GIRL: Yes.

BOY: Why?

GIRL: Just do it.

BOY: Okay... *[he pauses, then begins.]*

a total stranger one black day
knocked living the hell out of me--
who found forgiveness hard because
my(as it happened)self he was
-but now that fiend and i are such

immortal friends the other's each.

[Pause]

GIRL: That's it?

BOY: Yeah.

GIRL: What a stupid poem.

BOY: Stupid?

GIRL: Yeah

BOY: You think Cummings is stupid?

GIRL: Who?

BOY: e. e. cummings. He wrote it.

GIRL: Yes, it's stupid.

BOY: Interesting of you to say.

[The two sit in silence again briefly. The boy then begins to recite another poem.]

BOY: love is a place

& through this place of

love move

(with brightness of peace)

all places

yes is a world

& in this world of

yes live

(skilfully curled)

all worlds

GIRL: It's just like an elongated sentence.

BOY: It is.

GIRL: It's weird you recite things.

BOY: Well at least I enjoy doing something, ya?

GIRL: I said I like to organize, didn't I?

BOY: Why?

GIRL: Because life is easier if everything's neat.

BOY: It's also boring.

GIRL: Is not.

BOY: I wonder why Jared liked you.

GIRL: What?

BOY: Jared was a bit promiscuous, wasn't he?

GIRL: I don't know what you're talking about.

BOY: Did you two...

GIRL: What? No! He said he wanted to wait until he was ready.

BOY: Not what I heard. I heard he was "ready" a lot.

GIRL: Well you heard wrong.

BOY: I suppose he lied then.

GIRL: Excuse me?

BOY: He used to brag about it constantly in calculus.

GIRL: Pre-Calculus.

BOY: Sure.

GIRL: I don't believe you.

BOY: Fine then.

GIRL: You don't know him.

BOY: Probably not. I do know how he used to vividly describe how
he'd—

GIRL: Shut up!

[He does. Another beat passes.]

BOY: Pretty okay weather, ya? I guess this is California so the
weather's always—

GIRL: You're talking about the weather.

BOY: Yes...?

GIRL: Why do people always talk about the weather?

BOY: I don't know, really.

GIRL: It's so common. Why don't people talk about something
interesting?

BOY: Well, people are lazy aren't they?

GIRL: I guess.

BOY: The weather is easy to talk about, ya.

GIRL: Why do you say that?

BOY: What?

GIRL: You say "yeah" at the end of sentences. Are you Swedish or
something?

BOY: No.

GIRL: Why do you say it, then?

BOY: Some people say "no" at the end of sentences, some people say, "eh," some people say, "huh." I say "ya." Is that weird?

GIRL: I guess not.

BOY: It's more positive, ya?

GIRL: You're annoying.

BOY: Annoying?

GIRL: Why are you going to the cemetery?

BOY: I'm going to visit a grave.

GIRL: Who's grave?

BOY: A kid's.

GIRL: Jared's?

BOY: No, I didn't know Jared. I talked to him sometimes, but we weren't really friends or anything. I don't think he's in the cemetery I'm going to, anyway.

GIRL: Then who's?

BOY: Like I said, a kid.

GIRL: What's his name?

BOY: Stanley.

GIRL: Last name?

BOY: Vimes.

GIRL: Stanley Vimes?

BOY: Yes.

GIRL: I don't know him.

BOY: There's three hundred thousand people in this city, I don't expect you would. Plus you live in the valley.

GIRL: What's wrong with the valley?

BOY: It's the valley, that's what's wrong with it.

GIRL: You're a dick.

BOY: Not really.

[Silence yet again.]

GIRL: Who was he? Stanley Vimes.

BOY: Kid I knew.

GIRL: A kid you just knew?

BOY: Yep.

GIRL: Jared was a kid you knew but you're not exactly going to visit his grave.

BOY: So?

GIRL: He has to be more than a kid you just knew.

BOY: Maybe he was.

GIRL: You're being vague.

BOY: I guess we're taking turns.

GIRL: I don't like you.

BOY: Oh. Bummer. *[He pauses again.]* A house in my neighborhood burned down about 6 years ago.

GIRL: Was it Stanley's house?

BOY: No. It was Stanley's friend's.

GIRL: Okay.

BOY: Stanley's best friend Ben.

GIRL: Okay?

BOY: Say you're a kid, ya, and you don't really get along with your folks. Say you stay over at your friends' place most the time.

GIRL: Okay.

BOY: Your friend's house is burning down, along with your friend. Your only friend, might I add. What do you do? *[The girl shrugs, not knowing.]* Stanley hears the sirens, sees the smoke, runs across the street.

GIRL: Okay.

BOY: Fireman tell him, don't go in there, it's not safe.

GIRL: Okay.

BOY: Stanley runs past them and into the house to try and get Ben out.

GIRL: That's stupid.

BOY: Interesting perspective. *[Girl just looks at him, he doesn't respond.]* He runs into the house, into his friend's bedroom and drags him out. They're both burnt to a crisp, but alive.

GIRL: Lucky them.

BOY: Three months later, Ben's out of the hospital with just a couple skin grafts on his torso and arms and legs.

GIRL: His family's dead, though.

BOY: Sure, but he's alive.

GIRL: Fine.

BOY: One month after that, Stanley dies.

GIRL: Oh...

BOY: Stanley's parents don't attend his funeral.

GIRL: That's sad.

BOY: Yes. Yes it is.

GIRL: Were you a friend of Stanley's?

BOY: Kind of.

GIRL: Are you Ben?

BOY: No. I'm not Ben.

GIRL: Then who's Stanley to you?

BOY: He was just a kid I knew.

GIRL: Jared was just a kid you knew, why not visit him?

BOY: We went over this.

GIRL: Not really.

BOY: Because Stanley died for a good reason.

GIRL: You're saying Jared didn't?

BOY: Jared died in a car accident because he was wasted.

GIRL: That's not true.

BOY: Yes it is, there were beer cans all over the debris.

GIRL: Shut up.

BOY: Jared's just another stupid kid who did stupid shit and paid for it. Another example, another statistic.

GIRL: Shut. Up. You don't know anything about him.

BOY: And you do?

GIRL: Well I definitely have more authority on it than you do.

BOY: Anyone who reads a newspaper has authority on anything.

GIRL: I was in the car.

[Silence for almost a minute. The boy opens his mouth to say something, but then closes it. A couple more seconds pass in quiet. Then:]

BOY: Where are you going?

GIRL: *[Sighing]* I don't know.

BOY: You don't know.

GIRL: No. I just had to get out of the house.

BOY: That's why you're so far from home.

GIRL: Sure.

BOY: Feeling bad about Jared?

GIRL: Yeah. I miss him.

BOY: Sorry.

GIRL: That's okay.

BOY: Not really.

[Girl looks at him honestly.]

GIRL: You're right. Not really.

BOY: I have a habit of maybe being... kind of a know-it-all.

GIRL: I noticed.

BOY: Yeah. *[Beat]* What was it like? Being in the car?

GIRL: What was it like?

BOY: Yeah.

GIRL: I don't know. It was fine and then...

[She claps her hands together.]

BOY: How did it happen, then?

GIRL: We were going home from the movies—

BOY: What'd you see?

GIRL: Is it important?

BOY: Yes.

GIRL: Harry Potter.

BOY: So you remember?

GIRL: Yeah.

BOY: How was it?

GIRL: Fine, I guess.

BOY: Okay, continue.

GIRL: We were coming back from the movies and there was a green light so we were going through the green light and then a car came on the left side and smacked into us.

BOY: Damn...

GIRL: We spun right and then slammed into a pole. The left side

of the car slammed into it, anyway.

BOY: Jared's side. *[Looks down in thought for a moment, then up at the girl abruptly.]* Did you close your eyes?

GIRL: Not once.

BOY: And Jared...?

GIRL: His head was smashed. He died immediately. I passed out then, at the sight of it. *[Beat.]* When I woke up there was siren lights on my face. I think before we slammed into the pole he grabbed my hand, because when I opened my eyes his hand was in mine. I didn't even notice. *[Beat again.]* It was still kinda warm.

BOY: That's pretty heavy.

GIRL: Stanley's story is heavy too.

BOY: Yeah. Too heavy for people our age.

GIRL: Yeah.

[Beat.]

BOY: While you're going nowhere, you want to come to the cemetery with me?

GIRL: I guess. Sure. All right.

BOY: Cool.

[Blackout.]

SCENE TWO

[When lights come back up, the boy and girl are standing in front of a headstone. The boy's hands are shoved in his pockets and the girl's hands are together.]

GIRL: Why did you want to sit next to me?

BOY: Because you were pretty.

GIRL: You really are blunt.

BOY: Well I'm not going to lie.

[Silence.]

BOY: *[Reciting another poem:]*

silence

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GIRL: Is that still Cummings?

BOY: Yes.

GIRL: I kind of like that one.

BOY: That was Stanley's favorite, too.

GIRL: I see.

BOY: What was Jared like?

GIRL: He was a good person. *[Sneer:]* He didn't judge me based on where I came from or what I liked to do.

BOY: Oh...

[Silence.]

BOY: Sorry about that.

GIRL: Whatever.

BOY: Do you really not like me?

GIRL: What?

BOY: You said earlier that you didn't like me.

GIRL: I don't know.

BOY: You don't know a lot of things.

GIRL: I guess not. *[Pause.]* You said you didn't like me, either.

BOY: I don't think I did.

GIRL: I think so.

BOY: No, I'm actually certain I didn't.

GIRL: I'm certain you did.

BOY: Huh. Well, if I did, I think you're all right now.

GIRL: I see.

BOY: What's your name?

GIRL: Soren.

BOY: That's a boy's name.

GIRL: So what?

BOY: Just saying.

GIRL: What's your name, then? I'll make fun of you.

BOY: Probably not.

GIRL: I'm sure I can find something to mock you about. Not like
your name is Ben.

BOY: That is my name.

GIRL: ...What?

BOY: Ben. That's my name.

*[She pauses, not understanding. The boy lifts up one of his sleeves
and shows her his grafts.]*

GIRL: Oh... I'm sorr—

BOY: Don't worry about it.

GIRL: But I am—

BOY: Don't worry about it. *[Pause]* I deserve it anyway.

GIRL: I don't know if anyone deserves anything like that. What
happened to you, what happened to me.

BOY: Maybe.

GIRL: Why'd you lie earlier?

BOY: About my name?

GIRL: Yeah.

BOY: I don't know. I don't want you to feel bad for me or
anything.

GIRL: I see.

BOY: Yeah.

GIRL: I guess we're even then.

BOY: I suppose so.

[Silence again.]

GIRL: Sometimes I wonder if I'm a bad person.

BOY: I might be.

GIRL: Maybe we both are.

GIRL: Am I a whiner?

BOY: No.

GIRL: Adults are always telling me that I am. It's just high school, no big deal.

BOY: Your problems aren't very ordinary high school problems, ya. Nor mine, for that matter.

GIRL: I guess not.

BOY: I don't know.

GIRL: I don't know either.

[The girl sighs.]

BOY: Siiiiigh! Haha. *[He smiles, looks at her, and notices she's not. His own smile fades.]* We're too young to sigh.

GIRL: I don't feel young.

BOY: *[Beat.]* Me neither.

BOY: I don't think you're a bad person.

GIRL: You're not a bad person either.

BOY: That's good.

GIRL: Yeah.

BOY: Thanks.

GIRL: Thank you.

[After a moment, the girl grabs his hand. Blackout.]

SCENE THREE

[When the lights come back up they're sitting on a bench together.]

BOY: I think we should run away.

GIRL: I don't even know you.

BOY: Sure you do.

GIRL: Not really.

BOY: You know my name, you know about Stanley, you know I recite things, and that I say "ya" at the end of sentences. That's really all there is to me.

GIRL: Did you know Jared?

BOY: No.

GIRL: Did he really say those things in your Pre-Calc class?

BOY: No.

GIRL: Why did you say they did?

BOY: To get a rise out of you.

GIRL: Why?

BOY: Because you lack passion.

GIRL: You had only spoken to me for five minutes and you thought I lacked passion?

BOY: Yep. It doesn't take that much to tell.

GIRL: Why do you want to run away?

BOY: I don't know. Forget I said it, ya.

GIRL: Well, why?

BOY: Because I don't like people.

GIRL: That's apparent.

BOY: They're stupid and they lie to you. I'm the product of that.

GIRL: I like people.

BOY: Why?

GIRL: Because people do good things.

BOY: No they don't.

GIRL: How can you say that? Especially when your friend died for you.

BOY: Stanley was one in a million.

GIRL: I don't think he was.

BOY: No.

GIRL: Don't just say "no."

BOY: Why?

GIRL: Because it's dumb.

BOY: I don't like people, ya? It's not like I have to.

GIRL: You're a person. Do you not like yourself?

BOY: Not really, no. I don't.

GIRL: Why not?

BOY: It's personal, ya?

[Silence.]

GIRL: Is it because of Stanley? *[No response from Ben.]* It wasn't your fault he died.

BOY: Shut up.

GIRL: I'm not going to shut up.

BOY: You don't know anything about it.

GIRL: I'll bet I do.

BOY: What if I started the fire, ya?

GIRL: You didn't.

BOY: How do you know?

GIRL: Because I just do. *[Ben is silent again.]* It wasn't your fault but you're blaming yourself, right. *[No response.]* You're blaming yourself because if you didn't exist then none of this would have happened. Stanley would still be alive. Well I've been there too, you know. If I didn't exist, Jared wouldn't have gone to see Harry Potter that night, and he'd be alive. That card has been played before, and it's not a viable excuse to hate yourself along with humanity.

BOY: Maybe.

GIRL: You know I'm right.

BOY: Maybe.

GIRL: I don't feel bad for you. *[Beat.]* What do you do, then?

BOY: I go to school and I go to see Stanley and I go home.

GIRL: Where's home?

BOY: Foster parents.

GIRL: Are they nice?

BOY: Yeah, they're alright. Sent me to a good school.

GIRL: Were you sad about your parents?

BOY: Yes.

GIRL: Do you visit their graves?

BOY: No.

GIRL: Why?

BOY: The same reason you won't visit Jared's.

GIRL: I visit Jared's!

BOY: Bet you don't.

GIRL: ...You're right, I don't.

BOY: Hah.

GIRL: But you visit Stanley's.

BOY: Yeah.

GIRL: You're confusing.

BOY: Sorry.

[Silent.]

GIRL: I think I'm gonna go.

BOY: Okay, Soren.

GIRL: It's not your fault.

BOY: Maybe.

GIRL: Will you stop saying "maybe?"

BOY: Maybe.

[The girl stares at him sternly and then heads towards offstage.]

BOY: I like you.

GIRL: Oh.

BOY: Just thought you'd want to know.

GIRL: Um... okay.

[She heads offstage again.]

BOY: Actually, I think I love you.

GIRL: Huh?

BOY: I think I love you?

GIRL: *[Still not facing him.]* No you don't. And that is a strong word.

BOY: Meh, all words are strong, ya.

GIRL: That one holds a bit more weight than others.

BOY: I don't think so.

GIRL: Then you're dumb.

BOY: Why?

GIRL: *[Flipping to face him.]* You're saying that essentially words like... "like," or "the" hold the same weight as... that one.

BOY: Which one? Love?

GIRL: Yeah.

BOY: So?

GIRL: So you're saying that it virtually holds no weight.

BOY: Well... words are words, people just give them meaning, ya?

GIRL: Exactly.

BOY: If the words "pen" and "love" switched meanings, then--

GIRL: That's a retarded argument.

BOY: Says the girl who just said "retarded" as an insult. *[She shrugs.]* Why won't you say it?

GIRL: What?

BOY: Love.

GIRL: What do you mean?

BOY: You don't say the word "love," ya?

GIRL: I avoid it.

BOY: So it is on purpose then.

GIRL: I never said it wasn't.

BOY: Why do you avoid it?

GIRL: Because it's an abused word.

BOY: What do you mean?

GIRL: I mean people use it too much.

BOY: Did you love Jared? *[She doesn't respond.]* Bet you did. *[Still no response.]* I bet you did and that's why you won't say it, ya? *[No response.]* That's exactly right, isn't it? *[Still nothing.]* Isn't it! Ha-ha...

GIRL: You're not as smart as you think you are.

BOY: Haha, sure.

GIRL: I can say it.

BOY: No you can't.

GIRL: Try me.

BOY: Say "love."

GIRL: Well I can't just say it.

BOY: What?

GIRL: I've trained myself not to.

BOY: Wait, what?

GIRL: You have to fool me into saying it.

BOY: Fool you?

GIRL: If you're as clever as you think, then it should be easy.

BOY: Huh. Well, challenge accepted then.

GIRL: Okay.

BOY: ...I'm stumped.

GIRL: That was quick.

BOY: I don't feel like trying.

GIRL: That's different.

BOY: Are you shy?

GIRL: You change subjects really quickly.

BOY: So do you.

GIRL: Oh...

BOY: Are you shy?

GIRL: Somewhat.

BOY: How'd you get Jared to fall for you?

GIRL: I have no idea.

BOY: Where'd you meet him?

GIRL: At an ice-skating rink.

BOY: Huh.

GIRL: What!

BOY: I didn't say anything!

GIRL: He just started talking to me and I talked back and we got along.

BOY: Sounds familiar. Was he your first boyfriend?

GIRL: Yes.

BOY: How old are you, again?

GIRL: You never asked, and I'm 16.

BOY: Right, 16. That's a pretty normal age to be.

GIRL: Oh?

BOY: I'm 18.

GIRL: Oh.

BOY: I graduate in June.

GIRL: Oh...

BOY: Then I go to college.

GIRL: Cool.

BOY: That was somewhat cynical.

GIRL: When did Stanley Vimes die?

BOY: If you had been listening, you would have heard me say "six years ago."

GIRL: So you were twelve.

BOY: Yes.

GIRL: Hmm...

BOY: So you're shy.

GIRL: People tell me I am.

BOY: I don't find you shy.

GIRL: I am about certain things.

BOY: Like what?

GIRL: Well I get... uncomfortable when people get close to me, or when people move my things.

BOY: How is that shy?

GIRL: People just tell me it is.

BOY: Oh.

[The boy gets up and moves in very closely toward the girl, just centimeters away. She freezes in an awkward fear, her hands folded upon her chest.]

GIRL: *[Meekly.]* What are you doing...?

BOY: What's my name?

GIRL: *[Still very quiet.]* B... Ben.

BOY: And what's your name?

GIRL: Soren.

BOY: Ben and Soren. *[His face approaches hers slowly, and he*

speaks very gently.] That kinda rhymes.

GIRL: K...kinda.

BOY: Why are you so nervous?

GIRL: Because I'm shy.

BOY: Why are you shy? We're friends, aren't we?

GIRL: N..no.

BOY: We're not friends? Then what are we?

GIRL: You're a boy I met on the bus.

BOY: Maybe... *[he caresses her neck with the back of his hand.]*

GIRL: What do you want?

BOY: Nothing you don't want, ya?

GIRL: I don't want you to act like this.

BOY: I sort of think you do.

GIRL: No... I don't, stop...

BOY: What's the matter?

GIRL: You're being... a siren.

BOY: A what? *[He takes a few steps back.]*

GIRL: A male siren. It seems *[she takes a deep breath in, nervously]* alluring... but... it will end poorly.

BOY: Huh. What a weird thing to say. *[Goes back to sitting.]*

GIRL: *[Gulps, still nervous.]* So you're done then. *[No Response.]*
I'm going to leave now.

[Ben says nothing. Blackout.]

SCENE FOUR

[When the lights come up, the boy is sitting on a doorstep. He taps his foot impatiently until the girl comes out, looking shocked to see him.]

BOY: Hey there.

GIRL: Ben?! Wh-why are you here?

BOY: I was in the neighborhood.

GIRL: How do you know where I live?!

BOY: I followed you yesterday.

GIRL: Why?!

BOY: Because I thought you might want to talk again, ya?

GIRL: Who says I'd ever want to talk to you again?

BOY: Hmm. I guess nobody.

GIRL: Please get off of my doorstep!

[He steps off the step.]

BOY: Better?

GIRL: Cad.

BOY: I had to ask you a question..

GIRL: If I answer, will you leave?

BOY: Probably.

GIRL: Then get on with it.

BOY: I dated a girl named Sally once.

GIRL: Doesn't sound like a question to me.

BOY: Sally was a nice girl. A great girl. A perfect girl.

GIRL: And what happened to this nice Sally? Do you have another depressing anecdote for me?

BOY: Well, she broke up with me.

GIRL: How shocking.

BOY: I wasn't that sad about it, really. I liked her a lot but I didn't love her, I guess.

GIRL: Cool story.

BOY: I don't think high schoolers are capable of loving.

GIRL: What a dumb thing to say.

BOY: It's not.

GIRL: Yes it is.

BOY: Why? Is it because you were, how you say, in love?

GIRL: Stop bothering me.

BOY: I want to know.

GIRL: Maybe I was.

BOY: But you still won't say it.

GIRL: No.

BOY: Lame.

GIRL: You don't have any feelings, do you?

BOY: Compared to the amount that you have, probably not.

GIRL: Please leave. I have to go to the store.

BOY: What are you getting?

GIRL: Why does it matter?

BOY: Because it does.

GIRL: No it doesn't, weirdo, and I'm not telling you.

BOY: I see.

[The boy sits on the step.]

GIRL: What are you doing!

BOY: Thinking.

GIRL: Do you have to do it right here?

BOY: I'm sorry.

GIRL: You should be.

BOY: I'm just trying to get a rise out of you again.

GIRL: Why?!

BOY: I'm not sure. It helps me think, ya.

GIRL: Me angry helps you think?

BOY: Kinda.

GIRL: Maybe you are a bad person.

BOY: Do you like the theater?

GIRL: I see you still change the subject often.

BOY: I love the theater.

GIRL: Well you memorize things for fun, so that's no shocker.
You're probably gay too.

BOY: Nah. Guys are all right but I like girls.

GIRL: Whatever.

BOY: One of my favorite plays is The Music Man.

GIRL: I don't know what that is.

BOY: Huh. Shame. *[The girl shrugs.]* You remind me of Marian.

GIRL: That's great. Are you going to leave?

BOY: Marian has such a pretty voice. I especially like "'Till
There Was You."

[The girl sighs, giving up. She sits on the step with him.]

GIRL: Greeeat.

BOY: *[Singing]* There were bells on the hill, but I never heard
them ringing, no I never heard them at all, 'till there was
you...

GIRL: Oh great, he's singing now. How irritating.

BOY: *[Still singing.]* There were birds in the sky, but I never
saw them winging, no I never saw them at all, 'till there was
you! *[He stands.]*

GIRL: Shut up!

[She stands. The boy kisses her, causing her to freeze up in complete shock.]

BOY: Sorry. *[She says nothing.]* I couldn't help it. *[Still
nothing.]* That was probably a dumb thing to do, ya?

GIRL: Uh...

BOY: Maybe I'm bipolar or something. Is bipolarity genetic? I
think one of my aunts was bipolar. *[Silence.]* Well, now I'll
leave. Sorry. Um. Your house is really nice, for a house in the
Valley, haha. *[The girl still does not respond.]* Right. Here's a

phone number, that's mine. Just to be clear I'm not into having a girlfriend or anything. I just wanted to try that, I guess, to see what would happen. But we should be friends. Yeah, yeah, friends, definitely. Friends are a good thing to have. And you're all right. You probably don't think so of me, but whatever. There's a number, call if you want to call, if you don't, then I won't be following you back to your house anymore. So yeah. Um. Soren. I guess I'll see you later. Or maybe I won't. I'm kinda rambling, ya? *[The girl looks at him slowly but says nothing.]* Bye, then.

[He exits, leaving the girl onstage. She looks pensive for a moment then pulls out a small sheet of paper from her pocket, and sits on the steps. Then, she begins to recite a poem:]

GIRL: Me up at does

out of the floor

quietly Stare

a poisoned mouse

still who alive

is asking What

have i done that

You wouldn't have

[She folds the piece of paper and puts her hand in her lap.]

[Blackout.]

SCENE FIVE

[When the lights come up, the boy and girl are sitting on the stage, in a park.]

BOY: This is fun.

GIRL: It is a little.

BOY: I'm glad you called.

GIRL: Oh.

[The boy points up.]

BOY: That one looks like a snake wrapped around a palm frong,
ya?

GIRL: You're weird. *[The girl is straight-faced. The boy shrugs and continues looking up. The girl looks up, smiles, and points upward herself.]* That one looks like a hummingbird pecking a cactus. *[The boy smiles and looks at her, and she looks back at him. The girl lies on her back.]* I just love looking at the clouds.

[The boy blinks a couple times, shakes his head slightly, and glances over at her. He mouths the word "Love" as if reassuring to himself that she said it. He then looks back forward, and smiles earnestly. Then, he looks back up as the lights fade to black.]

Fin

Works Cited

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silence © e. e. cummings

a total stranger one black day © e. e. cummings