

Melancholia

a short play

Penn State University
24 Hour Play Festival
Revisions completed as of August 28, 2021

Characters:

Teresa 18 // 19

Aurora 18 // 19

Time: Summer of 2020. Afternoon. // August of 2021. Night.

Place: Your hometown. // State College, PA.

AURORA and TERESA sit across from each other, distanced by at least six feet on the driveway of AURORA'S house. TERESA sits with her legs crossed, and AURORA sits with her legs to the side.

AURORA

[*With finality.*] I want a Roomba.

TERESA

What, like a vacuum?

AURORA nods in the affirmative. TERESA ponders the statement, nodding slowly.

AURORA

God, it's hot. I can't believe it's eighty-seven degrees.

She fans herself with her hands for a couple seconds. It's futile.

TERESA

Greta Thunberg would disapprove.

AURORA

Climate change.

TERESA

It must be, this is insane. It probably won't even snow next year, like last year. Do you want to go inside? Because I can always come at night or something.

AURORA

Oh, no! No! I love it out here! I'm just happy to be with *you*, spend time with *you*.

They smile at each other. TERESA looks at AURORA; AURORA looks away.

AURORA

Are you okay? I know the driveway's pretty hot to sit on right now, do you want to move to the grass maybe?

AURORA gestures to where she's sitting here, patting the ground around her.

TERESA

Oh, I'm allergic to grass. I'm okay here!

AURORA

Okay!

TERESA

Yeah!

They sit in silence for a few more moments. AURORA looks straight ahead at TERESA. TERESA brushes dust off her lap.

TERESA

It'll be different there. I can meet you in my dorm, or somewhere else on campus. We don't have to sit like this, all apart.

AURORA

Do you think, like, I'd be allowed in, like, your dorm? This year? Or...

TERESA

I dunno, I guess, yeah maybe they probably have stricter rules for that, just for this year then.

AURORA

I wonder if I'll see you even less there maybe.

They linger on the thought.

TERESA

I got your letter.

AURORA

Yeah?

TERESA

It was beautiful, thank you. The closest I can get to a hug.

TERESA stretches out her arm, and AURORA follows. TERESA drops her arm; AURORA quickly follows.

TERESA

It's so funny, these letters back and forth. They're written in one moment in time and are then sent into the future—a little, casual time capsule.

AURORA

I do wish it'd cool down at least a little though.

TERESA

I don't want the time to pass though. Even if it's better then.

AURORA

I'm a flower wilting in the heat.

TERESA

I've been kind of off recently.

AURORA turns from TERESA to the audience.

AURORA

[Facing the audience.] Oh, little did we know back then to see,
The meaning of what was to be and been.

TERESA

I don't know where we are.

AURORA

Time feels elusive and forever.

TERESA

Yeah!

AURORA

It all elided all together 'to
An endless night that sings the morning blues.
It seems endless now doesn't it?

TERESA

The world is and isn't.

AURORA

I found her then, but never got away.
"Oh God, it's hot here," I begin to say.
It reaches more than ninety-one degrees
In dorms now, scorching new a summer heat.
I feel insane.

TERESA

Same! The trees sway to nonsense.

AURORA

The afternoon obscures it all somehow.
The shadow, beat, but sweat in morning brow.

TERESA

Maybe you can get a Roomba for the dorm?

AURORA

[*Gasps.*] My lord! I never did! But maybe now...

TERESA

Or maybe you could just see me more?

AURORA turns to face her. Then, she turns back to the audience.

AURORA

We never did—our wants dropped anyhow.

AURORA looks around, absent-mindedly.

AURORA

Oh, I can't do this 'nymore today.
I'll bow my head and soon begin to pray.

AURORA stoops her head and embodies a solitary moment of silence. She jerks her head up.

AURORA

Oh! A call! Hello?

TERESA continues to look ahead, at left.

TERESA

My darling, hi!

AURORA

Hey babe!

TERESA

Just thinking about you and I.

AURORA

Hey, maybe we'll dream away the time.
We dreamt it, yeah, into an endless night.
I want it now, that soil bleeds in the ground.

TERESA

I know it's just your sorrow
I'll sleep by you and hold forevermore,
But now I'm waiting for you at my door.

AURORA

The heat beats on; hey, how's th'apartment game?

TERESA

Très cool, ma chère—I miss you all the same.

AURORA

T'was deep within the forest green, where first
I saw you in the dark and dwindling grove
The past fades to a melancholic ache
A remnant of the faults that pushed and gave.

TERESA

We met by drownèd rock and ripples red,
At dawn to see our blood begin to spread.
Stand tall and jump, to fly a waterfall
Below the murky surface here withall.

AURORA

I see you now in forests rouge
There, hidden in the banks of truth,
The snow that lies in follies set
Upon the earth where mankind read.

TERESA

And dead lies heroes, angels too.
Beneath our hopes and dreams we've bruised
In setting first beneath the stone
To build the rock into a home.

AURORA

Speak fair! Speak true! Speak soft—hey, you?

TERESA

I'm swaying in the golden hue.

AURORA

Did find you spring and birth anew?

TERESA

Fair not, just rubbles that I rue.

AURORA

Was fire in the heart ablaze?

TERESA

But tragic winter's steely gaze.

AURORA

What sad! What pain! I'm sorry, friend.

TERESA

Be not! For twas my wanted end.

The two pause.

AURORA

I want a Roomba.

TERESA

Like a vacuum?

AURORA

Like a pet.

The two pause.

AURORA

For what is life if not observed,
For what is life if not perceived.

TERESA

We came apart in broke rebirth
But now shall we ourselves deceive.

AURORA

For standing here if I pretend,
I needed you in hand as friend.

TERESA

Then, take my hand and we will smile,
I'll push away the doubts awhile.

AURORA

Is consciousness lone, social, or
But fearfully, a paradox,
Where I need you and I need me
In tandem where I barely breathe?

TERESA

For in your absence, I do find
A slow relief and tragic want
To yearn and push, to lose and bind,
And dance beneath this tortured song.

AURORA

It is Camus's dear heat that I
Find struggling through at sun's white high

TERESA

Dear friend, do you now part from me?

AURORA

Relax, I only solved one rhyme.

TERESA

The summer rain is us and yet
What happened then? Well, I forget.

AURORA

Do rain and wash away the cries

Of anger falling from the sky.

TERESA

I leave you now.

AURORA

You go?

TERESA

I go.

AURORA

You go. I know.

END OF PLAY