

## HOW'S THE WEATHER TODAY?

By: Ho Yee Cynthia Lam

### CAST

JACK: A soft-spoken, sensitive young man.

SARA: A wistful, dreamlike woman in her early twenties.

TIME: A warm, balmy afternoon in early May.

PLACE: A quiet park on the outskirts of suburbia.

*The scene opens in a small park. There is a lone park bench slightly off center of the stage. Next to it is a scraggly, pathetic-looking pine tree, which has lost most of its needles, leaving bare patches of bark and branch randomly exposed. It is a warm, lazy spring afternoon, and gentle rays of sunlight glow softly in the distance.*

*JACK enters. He walks slowly, as if in deep thought, stopping every few moments in quick, sudden bursts of movement.*

JACK. Maybe... [*Stops abruptly and turns around.*] No, wait... [*Spins around and starts walking in opposite direction.*] But what if...? [*Stops again, right in front of bench.*] Arghh...! [*Sits down on bench, exhausted, and holds his head in his hands.*]

*There is a long pause as he sighs heavily, shaking his head and rubbing his temples in distress. Finally, he reaches into his pocket and takes out an apple. He polishes it on his jacket and takes a bite out of it, then stops and stares at it.*

JACK. [*To apple.*] Oh, what I am going to do with you? Why do you have to be so confusing? How can I ever figure out what you want?

*He puts the bitten apple back into his pocket and gets up, as if preparing to leave. He looks around from side to side, then sighs and sits down again.*

JACK. Okay, let's try this again. [*Clears throat and grins broadly.*] Hi Sally! I'm Jack! How are you? You probably don't remember me, but we met at the Christmas party last year! [*Stops, frowns.*] No, no, no, that's too much. [*Takes a deep breath.*] Oh. It's you. Sammy – no, Sherry – right? What was your name again? [*Scratches head and pretends to look confused.*] Gah, she'll see right through me! Why isn't this working? [*Continues to talk to himself, muttering and gesturing wildly.*] Hey, you look awfully familiar. Do I know you from somewhere...? No? Are you sure...?

*SARA enters, whistling a cheery tune. She plops down on the bench, sighs comfortably, and stretches her arms out.*

SARA. What a beautiful day, huh?

JACK. [*Ignores her and continues mumbling.*] Sally, I think about you every day, while walking to work, buying a salad at lunch, taking a shower – no, not while taking a shower. Maybe while making a sandwich?

SARA. Great breeze.

JACK. [*Talks very quickly, without stopping.*] The truth is, I really, really like you. I love your hair – it's so long and soft and *brown* – and your smile, oh man, when you smile, the whole room lights up and all I see is you, illuminating everything with a soft glow, and it's just incredible. [*Gazes dreamily into the distance.*] And that's just the beginning. You're so smart and funny and outgoing, and the best part is you do everything – even kickboxing! Which is so cool, because you're a girl, but you're also really strong without being too manly - not that there's anything wrong with being strong and manly, but I just personally prefer girls who are strong without having all those bulky muscles, you know what I mean? It would be strange if my girlfriend had a six-pack and I didn't – not that I have a girlfriend – because I don't. Have a girlfriend, that is. I really don't. Which means I'm single right now, and that's nice and all, but sometimes you just need to talk to someone, right? Don't worry though, I normally don't talk this much because I like to listen – oh yes, I'm a very good listener – and if I ever have a girlfriend, I would promise to listen to her talk the entire time. Because I really could just listen to your – I mean, her – voice all day – and do you want to go and grab lunch sometime?

*JACK turns expectantly to SARA, and then suddenly freezes, as if noticing she is there for the very first time.*

SARA. Nice sun, too. Don't you agree?

JACK. [*Embarrassed.*] Er, yes. Very nice sun. It's so warm and... nice.

*There is a long, awkward pause as JACK wipes his brow nervously, while SARA closes her eyes and takes a deep breath, inhaling the sweet spring air, seemingly oblivious to JACK'S humiliation.*

SARA. [*Murmurs softly; eyes still shut.*] Such fresh air.

JACK. [*Beat.*] Right.

SARA. I can practically taste the flowers on my lips – all those stunningly beautiful roses and violets and tulips emerging from the rich soil – do you smell it?

JACK. Uh... sure.

SARA. And then before you know it, there's a sudden explosion of colors, a wild flurry of reds, oranges, greens, and purples everywhere you look. You've seen it before, haven't you?

JACK. Oh. I suppose so.

SARA. And the daffodils – don't get me started on the daffodils –

JACK. What about them?

SARA. Oh, they're gorgeous!

JACK. I thought so, too.

SARA. The bright, electrifying bulbs of yellow and the tender petals so soft to the touch... it's absolutely dreamy!

JACK. [*Sighs.*] That's why I bought them.

SARA. Every time I see those daffodils, my heart just melts.

JACK. Not when your heart belongs to Sally Matthews.

SARA. [*Opens eyes.*] Sally Matthews?

JACK. [*Glumly.*] She took one look at them and tossed the whole bouquet into the trash.

SARA. She didn't!

JACK. [*Nods bitterly.*] Said they were too yellow.

SARA. [*Gasps.*] Not the daffodils!

JACK. Apparently yellow is just for friendship. Only friendship and nothing else.

SARA. What? That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard!

JACK. It's true. Which means there's no hope for me. No hope at all.

*JACK pauses as he starts bawling uncontrollably, heaving and sniffling loudly, making a terrible racket. SARA hands him a tissue, and he stops crying for a moment to blow his nose, then resumes his weeping.*

SARA. [*Rubbing his back.*] There, there, now. It's just a girl. There are many more fish in the sea.

JACK. You don't understand –

SARA. She's a big fish in a small pond. Right now, she seems great, but once you move on, I'm sure you'll find many more girls who are better and prettier than her.

JACK. That's very nice of you, but –

SARA. You need to stop blaming yourself. It's not you, it's her. She's the one with the problem.

JACK. Look, I appreciate your sympathy –

SARA. Just because she's pretty on the outside doesn't mean she's pretty on the inside. You should never judge a book by its cover. Looks can be deceiving, you know. She could be a lion disguised as a lamb, if you get what I'm saying.

JACK. [*Rolls his eyes.*] Really, now –

SARA. You need to get over her, and stop dwelling on the past. There's no time like the present – that's why they call it a gift. Trust me, never put off until tomorrow what you can do today. You won't regret it!

JACK. Enough!

SARA. [*Sheepishly.*] Sorry. I really am. [*Beat.*] From the bottom of my heart.

JACK. [*Sighs.*] It's fine –

SARA. I promise to stop. Cross my heart and hope to die –

*JACK glares at SARA, and she trails off. After a moment, she looks up again and speaks very slowly, carefully considering every word she says.*

SARA. I've had this problem for a while now.

JACK. You know –

SARA. [*Holds up her hand to continue.*] It's hard for me to talk. But it hasn't always been this way. When I was younger, I would talk nonstop, saying all sorts of crazy nonsense. [*Laughs softly to herself.*] I was a little chatterbox back then.

JACK. What happened?

SARA. [*Shrugs.*] Nothing. That was the problem. Everyone would always say so much and make so many promises, but in the end, they would always back out on their vows and do so little. Our words were meaningless. Empty.

JACK. Listen, I know you're upset –

SARA. [*Shakes her head sadly.*] There was no point in saying anything. That was when I decided to stop speaking and turn to clichés to fill my words.

JACK. But why?

SARA. [*Angrily, as if awakened from her passive, dreamlike state for the very first time.*] Why should I waste my energy coming up with original thoughts that would never be fulfilled? I would just be polluting our minds with –

*SARA suddenly stops talking. She spins around, a bewildered look on her face.*

JACK. What's wrong?

SARA. Do you feel that?

JACK. Feel what?

SARA. *That.* The feeling that someone's watching you.

*SARA and JACK move closer and closer together on the bench.*

JACK. Right now?

SARA. As we speak.

JACK. [*Turns head slowly and stares directly at the audience.*] You mean the feeling that you're on a stage where people are watching your each and every move?

SARA. [*Hushed.*] Exactly.

JACK. [*Beat.*] Nope.

*JACK snaps awake and straightens himself up, as SARA blinks rapidly, a look of surprise on her face. They quickly push each other away and move to opposite ends of the bench, even though both are clearly flustered.*

SARA. Where were we again?

JACK. Weren't we talking about your –

SARA. No, no, no, that wasn't it.

JACK. It wasn't? But –

SARA. We were talking about the weather – ah yes, the weather – that's it.

JACK. The weather? I thought it was –

SARA. What a beautiful day, huh?

JACK. [*Beat.*] Well, yes. I suppose it is.

*SARA smiles and closes her eyes, leaning back against on the bench. JACK reaches into his pocket and takes out the same apple from before. He makes a motion to give it to SARA.*

JACK. Do you want –

*JACK stops, because he has just noticed the rotting brown patch on the apple, where he had taken a bite out of it. He does not see SARA turning her head expectantly, her forced smile gone, replaced by a look of hope.*

JACK. Oh, never mind.

*JACK looks down as SARA turns away, crestfallen.*

SARA. [*Beat.*] Great breeze.

JACK. Nice sun, too.

CURTAIN