

PROVE IT

by

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Commissioned by and developed with Green Carnation Theatre Company.

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CHARACTER

SHE: Female, mid 30's.

SETTING

The Home Office - Interview room.

INTERVIEW ROOM, HOME OFFICE – 13:15

A clock on the wall.

INTERVIEW ROOM, HOME OFFICE – 13:15

SHE sits at the interview desk facing us. Jacket on. Arms crossed. A plastic cup of water in front of her. A camera is set up to record the interview.

SHE'S nervous..

SHE: O.K...

(beat)

So you... Do you want me to just, just tell you what I wrote in my statement?

She looks past the camera and nods.

O.K. Ummm...

She fidgets. Pulls at the ends of her sleeves.

I wrote, that, urmm...

(beat)

I'm sorry. I've never had to talk about this. Except with the lawyer.

She clears her throat. Takes a sip of water.

When did I know? Ummm... Well I don't think there was an exact moment...

(beat)

I suppose I knew I liked, I really liked, other girls - women, when I was small.

(beat)

Not that I understood it.

(beat)

My mother, she urmm... She caught me kissing my best friend. It was just that one time. We can only have been eight or nine, maybe...

(beat)

God. She was so angry. I said we were practicing for boys, but... She knew. She told me I wasn't to see her anymore. And she said I could never, I was never to talk about it...

(beat)

So I, I knew I'd done something wrong. I just didn't understand what.

(beat)

But how could I at that age? How could I understand any of it?

INTERVIEW ROOM, HOME OFFICE – 13:50

The water in the plastic cup is lower. SHE leans on the desk, her head on her hand.

SHE: How did it feel? What? You mean, growing up there knowing?

(beat) She leans back as she thinks.

I don't know.

(beat)

I mean, I don't, urmmm...

She fidgets. She's getting flustered.

I think I tried to ignore it. I think, I just figured that one day I'd start to like men. Like I was supposed to – No, not like I'm supposed to. I don't mean it like that, I'm sorry. I don't think I'm saying it right. I've just never had to explain...

Ummm... Anyway, the older I got I realised that wouldn't happen. I mean, I tried to like men. I'd watch T.V and I, I tried to like the boys my sister liked. But I just didn't.

(beat)

And I knew I could never, I could never tell anyone.

(beat)

Sorry. How, how did it feel?

(beat)

Well how do you think it felt? How would you feel? Scared, obviously. I was scared all the time. Scared someone would find out. Scared of what would happen. What they'd do...

(beat) She deflates.

And lonely. Having to keep it all...

(beat)

Not having anyone.

INTERVIEW ROOM, HOME OFFICE – 14:35

The clock on the wall.

The cup nearly empty.

SHE: We met in high school.

SHE smiles. Relaxes in her chair.

It wasn't like urmm... We weren't a thing at first. We were just friends. But then...

(beat) More smiles. She takes a breath. Her smiles fades...

God, it was, it was so hard though. We both lived at home with our families and my mother, she was always suspicious. She hardly ever left us alone...

(beat)

But sometimes we were. Alone. Just her and me.

(beat)

And it was... it was so nice.

She clears her throat.

Anyway. Then she got married and moved away and that was it.

Her voice wavers...

I never saw her again.

Clears her throat again. Takes a drink.

I'm sorry.

(beat)

I mean, we messaged sometimes - the ones I submitted already, with my application. I know they don't sound like much. You probably think we're just friends, but we couldn't risk anyone reading them. Like her husband, obviously. Same with the photos - I know we're not hugging or kissing or anything but...

She stares past the camera.

I know how it looks. But we could never do that. Risk getting caught. So how could I... Why would I have photos? Or messages?

I don't know what you were expecting.

INTERVIEW ROOM, HOME OFFICE – 15:20

The clock on the wall. SHE'S stretched forward over the desk. Jacket off. Empty cup.

SHE: YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! THEY DIDN'T TELL ME!

(beat)

I just got home one day and he was, he was there. At my house. My future husband. I didn't have a choice! It was arranged. I couldn't, I, I didn't have time. I couldn't get away.

She takes a breath. Slumps back.

And I'm still... I mean, I know my mother knew.

(beat)

She'd tell me how lucky I was that he came from a good family. How proud I was making my father. But I promise, I absolutely did not want to marry him. I hated it. I mean not him, not then. He wasn't horrible then. Not at the start. Not at first.

A blank stare.

But urmm... On the wedding night...

(beat)

I cried and cried. I couldn't stop. He thought I was just nervous. That I'd never...

But after a few weeks I wasn't allowed to cry anymore.

(beat)

She gathers herself. Sits up and looks past the camera.

I know what you're thinking. Maybe I just didn't like it with him. Maybe I just wasn't attracted to my husband. But I swear, I swear to you, I've never found *any* man attractive.

(beat)

Just because I was married to a man, that, that doesn't mean I'm not gay. You can't judge me on that. And you can't send me back to him. Not after...

She stares past the camera.

You can't.

INTERVIEW ROOM, HOME OFFICE – 15:50

SHE'S slumped in her chair, rubbing her forehead. A fresh plastic cup of water beside an empty one.

SHE: It's like I already said. I wrote it in my statement! Why do you keep making me explain this?

(beat)

I tried to get away. I tried to get away so many times.

(beat)

I went to my sister, more than once. I thought maybe she'd understand. We were so close. But her husband caught me. I said I had to leave because of the... because of how he was. But my father, he said it was my duty. To stay with him.

She rolls her eyes.

I'm sure you think I could just go back and pretend, right? Move away? Start over? I know what people say. I don't 'look' gay. I could just hide it.

(beat)

But I'm done. I'm done pretending. I don't want to hide. Or be scared. I mean, this is, it's, the thing you don't get. It's not like it was my dream to come here. I'm sorry but it wasn't. It's not like this is the way I want it. To leave my home.

Her voice wavers.

My mother. My sister.

She gathers herself.

But now...

(beat)

I can't go back.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM, HOME OFFICE – 16:40

The clock on the wall. The plastic cups on the table are empty.

Beat. SHE'S deep in thought.

SHE: Ummm...

(beat)

I don't really know...

(beat)

I've never really thought about it. My identity.

(beat)

Ummm...

Do you want to know about the pride march? I went to my first one here. I submitted the photos - The ones with the face paints. Obviously.

(beat)

It was, urmm...

(beat)

Honestly... Really weird. It was so strange to be around people like that - oh, well, I mean, not 'like that', like me, like that, I mean.

(beat)

To tell you the truth my lawyer suggested it. She said it would look, it would look good for my application. If I made the effort.

(beat)

Go to pride to *show* them you're gay!

She rolls her eyes.

But it was fun. Everyone was happy and nice.

(beat)

It was just, urmm... It was really strange for me. I mean, I've avoided that my whole life. Being like that in public. I don't think I'm a shy person, but... That was really a lot.

(beat)

But then, back home I couldn't even hold hands with a girl. Here you have marches! Not that I think it's perfect here. I saw that attack on the news. The two women on the bus? I know I'd still have to be careful.

She smiles.

But then, I did have a date last week. One of the girls from work. We were just stacking shelves and chatting - about this actually.

(beat)

She was the first person I told. I mean, that I've told since I've been here, that urmm... About who I like.

(beat)

I'm sorry, I think I went off. What was the question? How do I identify?

(beat)

Well I keep telling you... I like women.

(beat)

I don't really know how else I can prove it?

THE END.