

A Lovely Day Outside

A 10-minute play

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

SHEREEN, 25, an exhausted new mom

TAMMY, 40, a heartbroken woman

SETTINGS

The Park.

SETTING: A busy park in the middle of a sunny day. A park bench sits at the center of the stage.

AT RISE: An empty bench on stage. We hear birds chirping, people laughing, dogs barking, etc.

SHEREEN ENTERS carrying a baby in a blanket and lugging a large diaper bag. She HUMS a lullaby as she carries the baby back and forth across the stage.

ENTER TAMMY. She is clearly upset on the verge of tears or punching a wall or both. She needs a moment. TAMMY spots the empty park bench.

TAMMY and SHEREEN look at each other then look to the bench. TAMMY rushes to the bench and sits down.

TAMMY puts her purse in the middle of the bench to create a border between them. SHEREEN does the same with her giant diaper bag.

THEY sit.

SHEREEN

Hi.

TAMMY fake smiles at SHEREEN and then stews in her seat.

PAUSE.

SHEREEN

It's a lovely day today.

TAMMY

Hm?

SHEREEN

It's a lovely day outside.

TAMMY

Yeah.

PAUSE. TAMMY pulls out her phone
and begins scrolling.

SHEREEN

I haven't been outside in a while.

TAMMY

Yep.

SHEREEN

I've been stuck inside for like six weeks now. No that can't be right. She's ten weeks old. I barely know what day it is. I haven't slept in months. And I haven't been outside in months.... I almost made it outside twice. But then she started crying and then I started crying. And neither of us could figure out why. It wasn't pretty. But this is pretty. I like this park.

TAMMY

Mmmhmm. Trying to enjoy the park.

SHEREEN

Oh right. Yes.

PAUSE.

SHEREEN

There are so many people here today. It's nice to be around other people. Yeah.

The BABY starts to CRY.

SHEREEN

Oh no. Baby girl, it's OK. Sh sh sh. Please. Oh god. I'm so sorry.

The CRIES escalate.

SHEREEN

Come on, baby girl. People are starting to stare. What do you want??

TAMMY watches a helpless SHEREEN.

SHEREEN

You can't be hungry. You just ate! Sh sh sh sh. Maybe I should go. This was a bad idea. I don't know what I was thinking. This is obviously too much.

SHEREEN stands up.

SHEREEN

No, you're right. I should stay. I'll never get used to being out if I can't even sit here on this bench. I'll stay.

SHEREEN takes her seat.

TAMMY

I didn't say anything.

SHEREEN

It's just this postpartum stuff is crazy. You read about all these horror stories about the blood and the hormones and the night sweats and leaky boobs. I just smell like breast milk all the time. Can you smell it on me?

TAMMY

I am not going to smell you.

SHEREEN

Right. Well it's gross. And you can read other stories on the web but you really don't know until you're in it.

TAMMY

Can't you talk to one of your mom friends about this? And leave me alone.

SHEREEN

Yeah, I guess I could... if I had any. I'm the first of my friends to have a baby, so...it's been interesting. They tried to get it. In the beginning. I would still get invited out until they realized I couldn't stay up to three anymore. Or just make spontaneous plans. Jessi even said to me one time that I was the type that wouldn't change after having the baby. She thought it was a compliment. I did too. I believed her when she first said it. So naive. I don't think anyone can go through this and not change. And not just the body stuff or the sleeplessness. I'm not young anymore and I don't know if I can go back.

TAMMY pulls out her phone.

SHEREEN

Even my husband doesn't get it. He gets the new parent thing or whatever. And we wanted this. But he still thinks I'm just experiencing hormones and not some life altering event. This irreversible choice that I made that will affect me forever. You probably don't understand. No one understands. Unless you have kids. Do you have any kids?

TAMMY

Jesus, lady. If you can't handle it then you shouldn't have had a baby in the first place. You knew what you were signing up for. You chose to do this now so now you have to deal with it.

SHEREEN is stunned.

SHEREEN

You don't mean that.

TAMMY

Look, lady. I'm just trying to sit here on this bench. You made this choice. I think you need to talk to a professional if you need therapy.

SHEREEN

I think you are being really bitchy right now and it needs to stop.

TAMMY

You have been harassing me since the moment you sat down. I am the victim here.

SHEREEN

Oh really? Who's the one yelling at a woman with baby? Why don't we ask all these people in the park.

TAMMY

Yes, please go. Anything to get you off this bench.

SHEREEN

I don't know what your deal is but frankly I don't need to stay here for your abuse.

SHEREEN stands up and gathers her things in silence.

TAMMY starts to cry.

TAMMY

Oh god. I've become my mother. I'm sorry. Don't go. You're right. I'm such a bitch.

SHEREEN sets the diaper bag on the floor next to her and takes her seat again.

SHEREEN

I did not say that! I would never call another woman a
(whispers the word "bitch")
bitch! But your behavior was definitely bitchy.

TAMMY

I'm just going through something right now.

SHEREEN

Do you want to talk about it?

TAMMY

I don't! I want to just sit here in the fucking park and watch people be happy.

SHEREEN

You obviously need to get something off your chest. Look, I have no stakes in this. Why don't we do a Strangers on a Train thing?

This interests TAMMY.

TAMMY

You would kill someone for me?

SHEREEN

Oh god, no! Is that what happens in that movie?

TAMMY

Yes.

SHEREEN

Ohhhh. That makes so much more sense. I thought it was like that one with Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy.

TAMMY

No, very different movie.

SHEREEN

Wait. You're so angry with someone you could murder them?

TAMMY

No. And I mean, if you were offering. And it wouldn't come back to me. And it wasn't expensive. And I couldn't get caught.

SHEREEN

I'm not going to kill anyone.

TAMMY

Well. Then.

TAMMY shifts her body away from
SHEREEN.

TAMMY

He deserves it though, trust me.

SHEREEN

Not gonna kill him. But I can listen. I'm a very good listener.

TAMMY

You seem more like a talker.

SHEREEN

Ask anybody! Let me do this for you please.

TAMMY shifts in her seat.

SHEREEN

And then if it's bad enough I might Strangers on a Train for you. Please. The floor is yours.

TAMMY

It's just my life was in place, you know? I was doing everything right and I committed to this relationship that just ended out of nowhere. It's over in a fucking blaze. He's already moved on before I even had the chance to move out. He's convinced he's met "the one". Such bullshit. I committed to this life for almost eight years and it's not like it wasn't without sacrifice. And at the end of the day he just "wasn't feeling it". Of course not! The chemicals fade. And trust me they faded a long time ago, but you commit.

SHEREEN

Break ups are hard.

TAMMY

Yeah well now I'm starting to change so that's that. I gave the best years of my life to this shit bag and I've got nothing to show for it. He even kept the Netflix account. Changed the password and everything. Prick!

SHEREEN

You can have a girls night or something with your friends. That always helped me.

TAMMY

I can't. I didn't like to admit it at the time but we had a lot of problems. My friends kept telling me to dump him so I stopped hanging out. What an idiot, right?

SHEREEN

It can be really hard to go through these changes without your friends.

They sit in a sad silence.

TAMMY

I hate to admit this, but I think I needed this. Thank you for being so nurturing. You're probably a great mother.

SHEREEN starts to CRY.

SHEREEN

I'm not! I don't know what I'm doing and I made a huge mistake. I just want my relationship back how it was. And my friends to come over to hang out and not get scared away by a crying baby. I used to be the one they all came to, you know? I gave the best advice and could solve all the problems. Give me a messy break up and I could get you through it in my sleep! But now I can barely take care of myself. I haven't brushed my teeth. And I can't help everyone anymore and I know that's why they think I'm different.

TAMMY

Aww, I'm sure that's no it. Things just change. Friendships evolve.

SHEREEN

Yeah, well where's my me? I need someone to swoop in and solve my problems but they're all gone. Probably at brunch - together - and I didn't get a fucking invite!

The BABY starts to CRY again.

SHEREEN

Oh god! Look what I've done. She just always needs something and I don't know what you need, baby. Can't you just tell me what you want from me?

TAMMY

It's okay. Babies cry. It's completely natural.

SHEREEN

I don't know how to do this and everyone is watching. Please, baby girl. Please just shhhh sh sh.

TAMMY grabs the bags between them and sets them on the ground. She scoots closer to SHEREEN.

TAMMY reaches out for the baby.

TAMMY

Can I?

SHEREEN

You....you want to hold the baby?

TAMMY

Yes. Can I take her?

SHEREEN hands TAMMY the baby. TAMMY gently rocks her. She starts humming the "Golden Girls" theme song like a lullaby.

The BABY stops crying.

SHEREEN

That's beautiful. What is that?

TAMMY

(to the baby in baby voice)

Just the greatest theme song for the greatest show in the history of television. You're just a beautiful baby girl. Look at you. Are you enjoying your day outside?

The BABY starts cooing.

TAMMY

(to SHEREEN)

She's just precious.

SHEREEN

Thank you. You're a miracle worker. I can take her-

TAMMY

No, I can give your arms a break for a bit.

TAMMY and SHEREEN sit in calm
silence.

SHEREEN

For what it's worth, this was fun.

TAMMY

It was. We should do it again sometime.

SHEREEN

Tomorrow? Same time, same place?

TAMMY

That sounds lovely. I'm Tammy.

SHEREEN

Shereen.

TAMMY and SHEREEN smile and
continue to sit on the park bench.
TAMMY gently rocks the baby.

LIGHTS FADE.

END OF PLAY.