

Idyll Company

A scene without dialogue
By Adrian Clayton

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2023-07-10
Playwriting, Summer 2023

Characters

AIDAN, 14, male, a young, studious child

BELLA, 12, female, an energetic, social child

Setting

Outdoors, in some sort of field. There is a large tree in the center of the stage.

SCENE 1

AIDAN sits against the trunk of the tree (in a side view to the audience), reading a book. He wears plain, comfortable clothes, and glasses. One leg lies fully extended over the ground, the other bent at the knee.

BELLA enters from stage left, wearing canvas overalls and a T-shirt. She initially skips, then stops as she notices AIDAN. She slows, then tucks her hands behind her waist, standing up straight as she slowly moseys towards him, wearing a playful imitation of a dignified, regal expression.

BELLA arrives behind the tree, peering around to look at the book. Her curious expression turns to boredom, and she lunges out of hiding, jumping in front of AIDAN and raising her hands to scare him.

AIDAN does not react, reaching out to turn a page as if BELLA was not present. BELLA puts her hands on her hips, deflated, and moves to AIDAN's side.

There is a pause as AIDAN continues reading, and BELLA looks at him with mild annoyance. She turns and begins climbing the tree, taking a few beats to scramble her way up the side. BELLA

wraps herself around a thick branch hanging above AIDAN, then suddenly drops, hanging upside-down over AIDAN while holding the branch with her legs. She stares at AIDAN for a moment, then reaches out, tapping her finger to his nose.

AIDAN does not react. She pouts, crossing her arms while remaining upside-down. AIDAN turns the page, then reaches beside him and picks up a bookmark, which he places in the book. AIDAN closes the book, setting it to the side, and finally looks up at BELLA.

BELLA takes on a victorious expression, then abruptly and unceremoniously falls. AIDAN half-catches her, keeping her head from hitting the ground, and she rights herself.

BELLA plants her hands on the ground, looking excitedly at AIDAN. AIDAN tilts his head wordlessly. BELLA rolls her eyes and folds her hands over AIDAN's knee, then rests her chin on top of them.

AIDAN looks at her for a beat before turning his head to his side, exaggeratedly reaching out for his book. BELLA immediately jumps to her feet. AIDAN stops for a beat, then continues reaching. BELLA kicks the ground, sending a

small wave of dirt up at AIDAN, who stops.

BELLA wears a victorious expression as AIDAN stays still for several seconds, then slowly withdraws his hand. He calmly reaches up and takes off his glasses, cleaning them on his shirt.

AIDAN raises his glasses back to his face with one hand, his other trailing out beside him, to the side opposite where he has laid the book. BELLA watches the glasses as AIDAN's other hand closes around a patch of dirt, until he suddenly throws it up at her.

BELLA stumbles back, her hands over her face, as AIDAN jumps to his feet, now smiling widely. BELLA laughs and starts running. AIDAN runs after her, crouching down to gather more dirt, as they both exit stage right.

Laughter comes from backstage, and after a few seconds BELLA, followed by AIDAN, run back on from stage left. BELLA runs up to the tree, then hides behind it, her hands on the trunk. AIDAN slows as he approaches the tree, leaning one way, then the other, as BIANCA moves to remain on the opposite side. AIDAN sighs theatrically, making a show of giving up and dropping the dirt in his hand

as he trudges towards the tree.

BELLA peeks out, then pouts and comes out of hiding. AIDAN offers her a mild smile as he slumps back against the tree. After a few beats BELLA joins him, leaning tiredly against him.

AIDAN's hand once again creeps towards the soil, eyes watching BELLA. BELLA sees the action, very slowly pulling back in time with the hand's movement as she watches it progress. Both prepare for the fight to continue, AIDAN's hand slowly closing around the soil. Tension builds.

AIDAN stops. He turns to look at his hand, then raises it, holding an acorn. BELLA appears momentarily confused, then looks betrayed, giving AIDAN a light punch on his other arm as he fails to continue his assault. AIDAN ignores her, reaching for his book again and opening it, looking between it and the acorn with an expression of focused interest.

BELLA rolls her eyes and continues to nudge AIDAN. After several seconds of unsuccess, she gets to her feet, looking around herself before beginning to stride off stage right. Halfway there, her movement picks up into a skip, and she exits.

Artist as Questioner

- Do these characters feel relatable?
- Does the action of the scene feel like it progresses and transitions naturally?