

In Whose Image? By Dawn Gaunt

Cast

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| Young Girl | shy, hesitant, curious. Grows confident as piece progresses. It would be best if this part were filled by a truly young girl, aged 12 or so. |
| Man | smooth talking, jaunty, condescending. |
| Model | Doesn't speak. Should be very pretty and covered in "trendy" makeup and clothes. |
| Woman | overbearing, strong willed, pushy. |

Author's note: The characters of the Man and the Woman should be overplayed and the director should encourage much physical acting. The Young Girl is wispy both in voice and body at opening, but should become more solid as the piece progresses. Props and costumes should be natural and minimal. The lighting cues are merely suggestions. If such resources are unavailable to you, you need not worry about finding them.

Setting

One wooden chair in the middle of the stage. An open Bible sits upon the chair. At open, a spotlight rests on the chair and Bible. (If possible and in lieu of a spotlight, it would be nice to hang one bare bulb above the chair, which would burn throughout the piece.) The rest of the stage is bathed in darkness.

(The Young Girl enters from stage left. A new spotlight should catch her as she walks toward the chair. She picks up the Bible, sits down, and begins to read out loud. It is evident that she is not a good reader.)

Young Girl: *(reading, unconfident, hesitatingly)* "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

(As the Young Girl reads the above lines, the Man approaches from upstage right, carrying a large briefcase. A spotlight should catch his entrance. He watches the Girl bemusedly as he walks. The stage lights go up slowly as he nears the Girl. Stage lights should be full when he gets to the chair.)

Man: *(interrupting, smooth)* Hello there. What are you doing?

Young Girl: *(startled)* I'm ... reading.

Man: Reading, eh?

Young Girl: Yeah. *(hesitates)* Reading the Bible.

Man: How nice. May I ask, why?

Young Girl: I ... *(embarrassed)* I have some questions.

Man: Questions? What sort of questions?

Young Girl: Well ... I want to know more about ... *(feels awkward)* who I am.

Man: Ah! I see. Well, you've come to the right place. *(He snatches the Bible from her hands.)* What would you like to know?

Young Girl: I ... well ... OK. *(shyly)* I want to know more about being a ... a woman. Female. What it means to be female.

Man: *(looks at her for a moment, then smiles)* Of course. Well, missy! Today is your lucky day! I can be of great service to you!

Young Girl: You can?

Man: Why yes! Just allow me to open my briefcase, and you'll have your answers in no time!

(Man pulls Girl from chair, drops Bible on the chair, and seats Girl on the floor. He then makes a great show of opening his briefcase, which contains several bottles and containers, and arranges the products on the floor in front of the Girl. Once products are arranged, the Man whistles offstage right. His Model appears and stands Barbie doll stiff next to the Young Girl.)

Man: Here we are. *ahem* Now, this *(he gestures to the products and the Model)* is what it means to be female.

Young Girl: I'm not sure I understand.

Man: *(looks at her like she's a dolt)* It's not hard, child. Look. *(picks up a bottle from stage. Yells at Young Girl as if she is deaf)* THIS IS CALLED PARFUME. HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF PARFUME?

Young Girl: Ye ... Yes ... but ...

Man: YOU WEAR THIS TO BE FEMININE, A WOMAN. GET IT?

Young Girl: But, I just read ... I thought there was more to it than that ...

Woman: *(from audience)* That's right! There is more to it than that!

(Man and Girl both look amazed as Woman tears onto the stage)

Woman: *(to Man)* You great dolt! What are you trying to do? Confuse the poor girl?

Man: Not at all! I'm merely answering her question!

Woman: You answer the question, "What does it mean to be a woman" with that bottle and that cupie doll? *(Model smiles)* Get out of here.

Man: Well, I suppose you think you can do better?

(Woman looks at Man incredulously)

Man: Then be my guest. *(to Model)* This ought to be good.

Woman: *(takes Young Girl by the arm)* Look, honey. Being a woman isn't about being glamorous or getting all dolled up for the likes of him. *(She gestures toward Man)* It's about being all that you can absolutely be! Women are smarter, kinder, and, well, just plain better than men, by and large. *(Man looks ruffled)* We make better friends, better teachers, better ... well, just about better everything, if you want my opinion. So your job as a woman is to be ... better! You can have it all, honey! You plow ahead and never mind those fools, those men. They don't matter at all.

Young Girl: They don't? But I just read ...

Woman: Nah. They're just here to keep us happy. You go find yourself a nice boy that you can change into the perfect man, and you're life will be just great.

Young Girl: I ... um ... I don't understand ...

Woman: What's there to understand? Look, kid. *(pulls Man up to stand next to Young Girl)* You're a female. This guy's a male. *(slowly, as if talking to a stupid person)* You are better than him. Got it?

Young Girl: But I just read in the Bible ...

Woman: Oh, here we go. *(pushes Man away)* Look, the Bible is just a big book written by a bunch of dead men. Sure, it's a nice story. Believe the nice parts. But all that stuff in there about women, stuff like *(snatches Bible from chair, flips through to 1 Timothy 2:11-12)* "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to have authority over a man" *(drops Bible on chair)* that's just ridiculous. I have yet to meet a woman who couldn't exercise authority over a man. Women are capable of holding authority. So they should. *(to Girl)* You can just ignore what you read in that Bible. *(She smiles very big)*

Young Girl: *(She regards Woman for a beat. Then something clicks)* I don't think that's a good idea.

(Woman's smile fades)

Man: *(stepping up)* That's right. You just ignore this woman. She's radical. Now this woman *(ushers Model up to group)* is the historic ideal of woman. This is what it really means to be female. *(He smiles very big)*

Young Girl: No. I don't agree with you either.

(Man's smile fades)

Young Girl: *(with growing confidence as she speaks)* *(to Man)* It ... it just doesn't make sense, sir, that all it takes to be a woman is a bottle of perfume and a pretty face, *(to Model)* no disrespect intended, miss. *(Model puts up her nose)* And ... and it doesn't make sense that ... that I'm better than all men just because I'm a girl. The Bible says ...

Woman: Now, we talked about that ...

Young Girl: My church tells me that everything in the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Everything, even the parts you don't like. Even the parts that don't make sense. And ... and ... who are you to say which parts are God's Word and which aren't?

Woman: Well! I ...

Young Girl: *(confidently)* No. Please. Thanks for all your ... help. I guess. But I'd really rather do this without you.

(Man and Woman look at one another. Then at the Young Girl.)

Man: Do you really think you'll find any answers without our help?

Woman: You won't make it into next week.

Young Girl: I think I'll be given what I need. I haven't been let down yet.

Man: Well then ...

Woman: *(sarcastically)* Good luck, little girl.

(Man grabs Model's arm and they exit stage right. Woman storms off stage left. As they leave, stage lights dim slowly to darkness. Spotlights remain on Young Girl and on the chair with the Bible. The Young Girl approaches chair, picks up Bible, sits down, and reads:)

Young Girl: "But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!' 'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'You are worried and upset about many things, *(reads next part deliberately)* but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken from her.'"

(Young Girl looks up into the audience. She smiles.)

Young Girl: Now we're getting somewhere!

(She continues to read eagerly as the spotlights dim)

THE END