

The Circle of Love

A short play

by
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Bare stage, two chairs. Sounds of a carnival. Midday. Summer. Sun blazing.

Amy and Ken enter. Both in their late 20s. Amy looks like shit.

AMY

I don't want to do this.

KEN

Come on Amy, you said you wanted to.

AMY

Why the carnival? I hate the carnival.

KEN

Nobody hates a carnival.

AMY

You know that thing that spins around? You're inside and it spins around and it spins so fast that you stick to the wall?

KEN

We're not going on that--

AMY

When I was ten I rode that thing with my friend Martin and we were spinning and he looked over at me and his face looked all smooshed out and he just puked all over my face.

KEN

What?

AMY

He puked all over my face.

KEN

Jesus.

AMY

Didn't even have the common courtesy to look away.

KEN

But then he would puke on his own face.

AMY

So? It's his own puke.

KEN

Anyway, this isn't that thing. This is a Ferris wheel.

AMY

I know what it is.

KEN
It doesn't go fast.

AMY
I know. Can we not?

KEN
We already gave the carnie our tickets.

AMY
Don't say that.

KEN
What?

AMY
Carnie. It's offensive.

KEN
What do you call them?

AMY
Carnival worker? I don't know. It's like midget. You don't call them that.

KEN
We're holding up the line.

AMY
I don't want to.

KEN
You promised. Carpe Diem, remember?

AMY
Oh, my god.

KEN
Sorry.

AMY
I'm scraping that fucking thing off the bumper.

KEN
It's not that bad.

AMY
It makes me feel like a soccer mom, Ken.

KEN
At least it's not "Coexist" or "Imagine Whirled Peas."

AMY
I should never let you buy things on your own.

KEN

It's a good saying!

AMY

Yes, to say to someone face-to-face, in Rome, two-thousand years ago.

KEN

Exactly. Carpe Diem! You're Cleopatra, I'm Marc Antony--

AMY

That's not even right--

KEN

Whatever. You're stalling.

AMY

Me? You're the one talking about Cleopatra!

KEN

Get in. You gotta face your fears.

Amy growls at him, but reluctantly sits in a chair. Ken sits beside her. He mimes putting the safety bar across them.

AMY

What is this?

KEN

A safety bar.

AMY

This doesn't look safe at all. Does this thing have doors?

KEN

Nope.

AMY

Airbags?

KEN

Why would a Ferris wheel have airbags?

AMY

I don't know--

The Ferris wheel lurches backward.

AMY

What is happening.

KEN

They're moving us a bit so they can get the next people on.
Don't worry. Calm down. Breathe.

AMY

Why did I agree to do this?

KEN

Because you're amazing.

AMY

No I'm not. I haven't slept in three days, Ken.

KEN

That's not true.

AMY

Yes it is!

KEN

I saw you asleep on the couch this morning.

AMY

Yeah but I had a nightmare the Ferris wheel started spinning
so fast that it spun us into outer space.

KEN

That's awesome.

AMY

We burned up in the sun.

KEN

Still awesome.

AMY

Kennnnnn.

*The Ferris wheel moves again. This time
it keeps moving.*

AMY

Oh shit. Oh shit oh shit oh shit oh shit.

KEN

It's okay honey.

AMY

Don't give me that bullshit, I hate you.

KEN

(laughs)

It's okay.

AMY

Don't you laugh at me! Why are we going backwards?

KEN

I guess so that when we get to the top we will be going forwards.

AMY

Like falling off a cliff.

KEN

Like riding a Ferris wheel.

They ride slowly upward in silence. Amy tries to breathe. Ken watches her.

KEN

Are you scared?

AMY

Yes.

KEN

It's okay. I'm here. I love you.

AMY

I love you too.

Amy suddenly clamps her hands over her eyes.

AMY

I can't.

KEN

You have to.

AMY

No, I'm scared.

KEN

Come on, we're at the peak. You should look at this view, it's beautiful. Come on, open your eyes.

AMY

No.

KEN

Amy, please.

AMY

You're a bastard.

KEN
Open your eyes.

AMY
Are we going down?

KEN
Yes.

AMY
Thank god.
(takes her hands away)
Oh, thank god. Is that it?

KEN
No, it goes again.

AMY
Fuck! Goddammit, Ken.

KEN
I didn't make that happen! They go around a couple of times,
I swear.

AMY
Why didn't you tell me that?

KEN
Because you wouldn't have gone!

AMY
Well, yeah! This is terrifying! Can you tell them to stop?

KEN
It's not that bad.

AMY
Ken, I passed out standing on a balcony that was like ten
feet off the ground.

KEN
I thought that was because you were drunk.

AMY
It was a combination of factors, but mainly height.

KEN
You're so cute when you're terrified.

AMY
That's a rapey thing to say, Ken.

KEN
What?

AMY
God I'm sweating like crazy. My armpits are like little swamps.

Ken laughs.

AMY
What?

KEN
It's funny. You're funny.

AMY
I'm not funny, I'm scared. Don't be such a dick.

KEN
Geez, you give a girl a compliment...
(he takes her hand)
Now don't close your eyes this time!

AMY
I can't!

KEN
You can! I believe in you!

*She puts her other hand over her eyes.
Ken tries to take it off.*

AMY
Stop it!

KEN
We're at the top honey!

AMY
I don't want to open my eyes!

KEN
Amy come on--

AMY
Stop!

KEN
Just open your eyes please!

AMY
Stop it!

She hits him with her eyes closed.

KEN
Ow!

AMY

Don't be a baby. Are we going down?

KEN

Yes.

She slowly opens her eyes. Silence as the Ferris wheel descends.

AMY

Is it going around again?

KEN

I hope so.

AMY

What do you mean you hope so?

KEN

I need you to look!

AMY

Why?

KEN

Because ... you can't want to conquer your fears and then not conquer them!

AMY

We can come back tomorrow! I just need some time--

KEN

No, we can't, it's going to rain tomorrow.

AMY

How do you know?

KEN

I checked the weather forecast!

Silence. The Ferris wheel begins to rise again. Amy keeps her eyes open as long as she can, but fear overcomes her and she shuts them.

AMY

I'm sorry.

KEN

Amy--

AMY

I'm sorry!

The Ferris wheel stops, with them at the top.

AMY
Oh fuck, what happened?

KEN
We stopped.

AMY
We stopped? Why did we stop?

KEN
Open your eyes.

AMY
Why did we stop?!

KEN
Amy, look at me. Look at me.

She turns her head. Waits. Opens her eyes just a bit.

KEN
Hey. Hey there. I love you.

AMY
I love you too.

KEN
I would never do anything to hurt you.

AMY
I know.

KEN
If it makes you feel any better, I'm terrified of roller coasters.

AMY
Really?

KEN
Yeah. That's why I vetoed that trip to Six Flags.

AMY
Why didn't you tell me?

KEN
Because it's embarrassing.

AMY
I hate roller coasters too.

KEN
Why did you want to go to Six Flags then? It's all roller coasters.

AMY
I don't know. I liked the commercials.

KEN
Come here.

She leans in and they kiss.

KEN
Now look.

She stares at him. Then slowly, she turns her head and looks out.

AMY
Holy fuck. Holy fuck.

KEN
Isn't it beautiful?

AMY
Yeah. Yes.

KEN
Now ... can you ... look down?

AMY
No.

KEN
Please?

AMY
Why?

KEN
Please.

AMY
You've got to be kidding me.

KEN
It's important, I promise.

She very slowly looks downward.

AMY
Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god. I'm gonna puke.

KEN
Don't puke on me.

AMY
Don't tempt me.

KEN
Look at the sidewalk.

AMY
Why?

KEN
I wrote something for you.

AMY
On the sidewalk...?

She looks down. A beat as she reads. Her eyes widen. She looks back up at him. He has an engagement ring box in his hand, open.

AMY
You wrote that?

KEN
Fifty bucks worth of pink sidewalk chalk.

AMY
(a little breathless)
You bastard.

The Ferris wheel starts to descend.

KEN
Well?

Beat.

AMY
I'll tell you when we get to the bottom.

Amy shuts her eyes. A brief moment as they descend. Then she holds hands with Ken.

Blackout.

The End.