

Fig Tree

Written by

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INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - VANCOUVER, BC

MICHELLE (20s, red-head, anxious, sincere) sits on a soft chair in the kitchen. The remains of SUSHI and CHOPSTICKS sit in front of her, and directly across, NADJA (20s, dark hair, tired, caring).

MICHELLE
Mm. This was good.

NADJA
I never regret buying sushi. Will I die of mercury poisoning? Maybe. Do I care? Mm, no.

MICHELLE
Have we reinforced the neurological pathways in our brain to always crave it, therefore allowing no room for novelty or change in our diets? Mm, yes.

NADJA
I'm glad we went today.

MICHELLE
To the thing?

NADJA
I think we both had to get out of our own heads. Be around other people.

MICHELLE
It was nice seeing someone so passionate about their dreams, to be honest. When you're stuck in your room and all you listen to is Glenn Yarbrough, things don't look so good.

NADJA

How was therapy today?

MICHELLE

Good, I guess. I cried, like always. I didn't want to call and I did anyway and then I told her I felt like a failure and she said I didn't have to pay her anymore but we need more regular sessions. So either I did something really wrong or really right.

NADJA

I feel that. But that's good...you needed that. Your mind is obviously telling you something and you need someone - a professional - to listen. I listen too but we're the same person and I kind of get everything that you say all the time so I'm not sure I'm the best person to take advice from.

MICHELLE

No, you are. Of course you are. I just-

NADJA

Tell me.

MICHELLE

What if I like, woke up tomorrow, and had amnesia.

NADJA

You don't want to remember who you are?

MICHELLE

I want to see who I would be when I don't have myself to contend with. You know?

NADJA

No, I get it.

MICHELLE

Like I want to know who I would be when I'm not...dragged down by the lack of validation I felt as a kid because no one seemed to like me. Or I didn't know we grew up poor so I spend my money in a way that a "scarcity mindset" wouldn't. Maybe I'd actually invest in myself because I believe I can do it – whatever doing it is.

NADJA

You'd feel free to do things that scare you right now.

MICHELLE

Yeah, like, what if I just didn't know that I haven't accomplished anything so far in my life? I wake up tomorrow feeling...confused, because, you know, amnesia, but also happy? I wonder what that would feel like. I wonder what it would feel like to feel...light. Like my mind isn't a prison and it's more of a, uh, friend.

NADJA

Michu...you've accomplished so much. You just don't see it because we're told there's a certain path we need to take in order to give ourselves a label of success.

MICHELLE

Have you ever read any Sylvia Plath?

A BEAT. MICHELLE knows that NADJA has, but she continues on anyways, fiddling with the CHOPSTICKS in front of her. The point still needs to be said. NADJA waits patiently, cupping her own MUG of herbal tea.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Well, I think I kind of understand
why she put her head in an oven.

Michelle backtracks after seeing her friend's face, and tries to save the situation a little bit.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I know, I know. She just, she had this analogy called The Fig Tree and...basically, she sits underneath this Fig Tree and every fig is a different person that she could become, you know, one's a doctor, one's a philanthropist, a pirate, a Geologist, and she just sits and she just cannot choose which one to pick so she just watches them all shrivel up and die and she just sits there.

I wish I could wake up tomorrow and pick a fig. I wish that was my to-do list tomorrow. Not pay my credit card and apply to jobs and cry for 10 minutes in the bathroom before going into work. I wish it was TO-DO LIST: TODAY - PICK A FIG and run with it. Just pick a fig.

And because I have amnesia, you know, I'm not gonna be bogged down by any sort of idea that I'm a failure or that I have no place in this world and that I'm just now kinda trying to fit into the cracks of other people's puzzle pieces. I wouldn't know that so I would just pick a fig. I'd PICK A FIG and I would be fine, and I'd go with it. That's all I want, I just want a fig that's mine...and instead I'm eating sushi, and hoping that my credit union doesn't call me yet.

NADJA

Michu.

MICHELLE

I'm sorry. Sometimes I feel like I
deserve to get into Juilliard.
Other days I feel like I don't
deserve to be alive.

MICHELLE breaks down, rubbing the hollows of her eyes, tired of crying, tired of rehashing the same thing over and over again with no real gain from it. But it feels good to say it.

NADJA gets up, drags the chair over, and hugs her sideways.

Neither say a word. MICHELLE cries, and NADJA waits for the moment she is home alone to cry over her lost figs too.