

Semifera

by

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## CHARACTERS

PYGMALION

VICTOR

MARY

APRHODITE

ODYSSEUS

## SETTING

Somewhere just off the coast of reality.

## TIME

Probably now. Maybe not.

## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

- The set should be minimal; most of the scenic changes should be done with lights and sound
- Ideally, only three actors should be cast.
  - Actor 1: Male. Plays Pygmalion.
  - Actor 2: Male. Plays Victor.
  - Actor 3: Female. Plays Mary/Aphrodite/Odysseus.

SEMIFERA

(PYGMALION enters.)

PYGMALION

Women are disgusting.  
They're disgusting in a way that is bad and wrong and I hate it.  
If a woman ever comes close to me I think I'll probably scream and throw a hammer at her.  
Once I saw some prostitutes on a street corner.  
That's disgusting.  
Honestly, who would ever fuck a woman?  
They have bodies, and those bodies have lumps, and crevices, and finger-shaped indentations in the thighs from previous male lovers.  
They can't keep it together for any length of time.  
Women just go outside, wearing clothes, and expect men to keep their hands to themselves?  
All women want to be prostitutes but none of them are ready to be.  
Why would you offer to fuck me with your eyes and say no with your mouth?  
That's why I built Galatea. She's perfect because she's never wearing any clothes which means that she isn't keeping any secrets from me.  
I have given her all the features I want her to have, and if I ever don't like any of them, I can chip away at her body until I'm satisfied.  
When you do that to women in real life they get mad.  
I don't know why. I'm an artist. I know what's beautiful.

(PYGMALION exits. MARY enters.)

MARY

I can put a lot of pain in my body.

MARY (Continued)

I put all my pain right here, in my left breast. Sometimes, my husband will squeeze it too hard while we are having sex and all the pain will expand into my chest and it becomes very hard not to punch him. Sometimes, my husband will cry while we are having sex and all the pain will expand into my feet and it becomes very hard not to kick him. Sometimes, my husband will recite poetry while we are having sex and all the pain will expand into my head and it becomes very hard not to tell him that he has no grasp of pacing. He always reaches the climax before I'm ready.

(MARY exits. VICTOR enters. He addresses the audience like an educational board.)

VICTOR

I am Victor Frankenstein, and for my senior thesis I'm going to reanimate a corpse.

(He pauses, as if hearing a question.)  
Yes, I think it's a good idea.

(pause)

I am aware that no one has ever reanimated a corpse before, but that doesn't mean I can't do it. I don't think it will be too hard.

(pause)

What's my motivation? Well, I think that the world would be a lot better if we were all reanimated corpses. I think reanimated corpses would have a lot in common with each other. For example, we would have all been dead before. It's hard to argue over little things when you've been dead. That's the biggest problem a person can have. If you're a reanimated corpse, you've already been through that. I think that would give you a lot more compassion.

(pause)

No, I don't think it matters that I'm working on my senior thesis as a freshman. I've read a lot of books.

(pause)

VICTOR (Continued)

Here's my annotated bibliography.

(VICTOR holds up a copy of the *Bible*.)

In this book, two whole people come back to life from being dead.

(PYGMALION enters.)

PYGMALION

Hey. Hey, Victor. Why do you really want to reanimate a corpse?

VICTOR

Because I want to be picked up by a giant man with his giant hands, and I want him to hold me in his arms and tell me that it will all be okay.

PYGMALION

Where are you going to find a corpse with big enough hands?

VICTOR

I'm not going to find one. I'm going to build one.

PYGMALION

From scratch?

VICTOR

Yes.

PYGMALION

Wow. When I built a person I just found her inside a block of marble.

VICTOR

But your person was a girl. Girls are easier to find. They're all hidden in blocks of marble. Men are stronger, and more compact, and less delicate, and they can reach up to the sky with their arms and their tongues and they can hang stars next to the moon.

PYGMALION

Why can't girls do that?

VICTOR

They're not tall enough. My person is going to be so tall. So tall that he can't even fit into a house.

PYGMALION

Oh.

VICTOR

My person is going to be huge. I'm going to go around and I'm going to find him all the best parts. I'm going to take the best parts from every person I can find, and I'm going to use them to create a new person. And that person will be made up of all the good things in the world and none of the bad ones. He will be perfect. He will be the most perfect person in the whole wide world made up of every good thing there is, and I am going to love him with all of my heart.

PYGMALION

That's nice.

VICTOR

Did you love your girl? The one you found inside the block of marble?

PYGMALION

No. I don't think so.

(VICTOR exits. PYGMALION remains.)

PYGMALION

I didn't eat for weeks when I was finding Galatea in her stone block. What was the point? She didn't have a mouth by which I could feed her, and it would be selfish if I ate and she couldn't. Someone asked me why I chose to make a woman when I hate them so much. It's simple. I had to make a woman. If I made a man, it would have been too easy to love him.

(PYGMALION exits. ODYSSEUS enters.)

ODYSSEUS

I wasn't made until after I was born. That's what it's like, we humans. We can make things, but we aren't allowed to become something until we've already been born, until we're almost to our deaths, because it's only in death that we know what our meaning is.

ODYSSEUS (Continued)

I never wanted to become what I am now. All I wanted was to sit by the fireside with my wife and my son and my dog. Instead, I left home, and when I came back, my dog was dead.

(VICTOR enters.)

VICTOR

Your dog is dead?

ODYSSEUS

Yes.

VICTOR

That's very sad. But I don't really care.

ODYSSEUS

Why not?

VICTOR

There are too many other things going on. I have to get back to work. I'm very busy.

ODYSSEUS

I'd appreciate it if you would give me a hug. I'm very sad. My dog died, you see.

VICTOR

A hug?

ODYSSEUS

It's where you wrap your arms around the other person and that tells them it will be okay.

VICTOR

I don't want to do that.

ODYSSEUS

Why not?

VICTOR

The world is cruel and harsh and unfair. The sooner people learn this, the better.

ODYSSEUS

I know that.



VICTOR

I don't think so. You want there to be a space for you to feel safe, and that's just not realistic. You should be more like me. I feel safe in the world.

ODYSSEUS

That's because the world was made for you.

VICTOR

That's not true. I've had to struggle to get to where I am now. Did you know that once a girl said she didn't like me? It was really hard. Now I don't trust girls because of that one girl. She ruined everything.

ODYSSEUS

I sailed all around the world and I fought in wars and I watched people I loved die. I know the world isn't safe. I know this. I know. How can you think that I don't know?

VICTOR

Because you asked for something to make it better.

ODYSSEUS

Sometimes it gets too hard to take on by myself. It would be nice for someone to look at me and see that and say, "You don't have to do this alone. We will fix it together."

VICTOR

I'm not in the world to make it easier for people. I'm not in the world to fix it. I'm in the world to build a person, and that's what I'm going to do.

ODYSSEUS

I don't think the world needs another person.

VICTOR

It needs my person.

ODYSSEUS

I still would like a hug.

VICTOR

You'll have to find someone else. It's not my responsibility to make you feel safe.

ODYSSEUS  
I fought in a war.

VICTOR  
Did you? That's nice.

ODYSSEUS  
No, it's not.

VICTOR  
Why not?

ODYSSEUS  
People died.

VICTOR  
That was their choice. If they didn't want to die,  
they shouldn't have gone into the war.

ODYSSEUS  
Sometimes the whole world is made of war.

VICTOR  
There's no war that I can see.

ODYSSEUS  
That's because you're not the one fighting.

(ODYSSEUS exits.)

VICTOR  
People don't understand me.

(VICTOR exits. APHRODITE enters.)

APHRODITE  
Once I made a man fall in love with a woman he  
couldn't have. It was a reward.

(APHRODITE exits. VICTOR and PYGMALION  
enter.)

PYGMALION  
... And so I said, "You can't catch the mouse without  
the pussy!"

VICTOR  
What did she say?

PYGMALION  
She slapped me.

VICTOR  
Why are women so uptight?

PYGMALION  
High heels.

VICTOR  
What?

PYGMALION  
High heels. Women's feet are so stuffed inside their shoes. And feet is where rage goes. That's why people stomp their feet when they're mad. So when you're mad all your rage goes into your feet but if you're wearing high heels it gets all squished up and then your feet hurt and you have to expel the energy somehow so it comes out through your hands.

VICTOR  
Wow.

PYGMALION  
That's why I only sculpt women with no hands. Hands are dangerous.

VICTOR  
You're so smart.

PYGMALION  
Thank you.

VICTOR  
And beautiful.

PYGMALION  
What?

VICTOR  
What?

PYGMALION  
I'm not gay.

VICTOR  
No, yeah, of course not, I'm not either, I just/

PYGMALION

Just because I'm not attracted to women doesn't mean I'm gay.

VICTOR

No, I know/

PYGMALION

Just because I think men are superior in all ways doesn't mean I'm gay. Men may be smarter and more beautiful and more wondrous and everything that I ever want inside the flesh of a human being, but that doesn't mean I'm attracted to men. It could just be misogyny.

VICTOR

You're right. I'm sorry.

PYGMALION

Do you want to kiss me?

VICTOR

I'm sorry?

PYGMALION

I can kiss people without being attracted to them. Do you want to kiss me?

VICTOR

I... Yes. I think I do.

(PYGMALION stands very still as VICTOR works up the nerve to kiss him. It takes a very long time. He might not do it. Finally, VICTOR gathers his courage, and kisses PYGMALION across his knuckles.)

PYGMALION

You're welcome.

VICTOR

Thank you.

PYGMALION

You're welcome. Now it's my turn.

VICTOR  
What?

PYGMALION  
It's only fair.

VICTOR  
... Okay.

(VICTOR stands very still. PYGMALION doesn't take nearly as much time for the windup, grabbing VICTOR by the face and kissing him hard on the mouth.)

PYGMALION  
There. Wasn't that nice?

VICTOR  
I suppose it was.

PYGMALION  
Girls don't kiss like that.

VICTOR  
How do you know?

PYGMALION  
I've kissed some girls.

VICTOR  
I thought you hated girls.

PYGMALION  
I do. That doesn't mean I don't kiss them sometimes.

VICTOR  
Oh.

PYGMALION  
The world is not made for people like us, Victor.

(They stand, staring at each other, for a long moment as the lights fade to black.)

END OF PLAY