

STYX – A ONE ACT PLAY BY JAMES M. KEMP

**STYX**

A Play in One Act

by

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**CAST**

HIS: A male in his early 20s.

HERS: A female in her early 20s

**TIME**

The point at which the first two human beings became aware of each other.

**SETTING**

aA mythical river outside the doors to Eternity.

The stage is bare except for two piles of twigs situated opposite others but at the extremes of downstage left and right. The twigs might best appear to have shapes like a DNA helix. HIS twigs have a bluish cast to them. HERS twigs have a pinkish cast to them.

At curtain open, lights come up to full with gels supporting the idea of a pink morning light. The light will become brighter (bastard yellow), darker (dark orange, and then darkest (blue) during the duration of the play. HIS can be seen sitting cross-legged in front of his blue twigs. HERS can be seen sitting cross-legged in front of HERS' pinkish twigs.

They both wear animal skin material in one-piece togas.

The sounds of wild animals can be heard as background noises.

ACT I

Scene 1

HIS

*(Stands upright and picks his teeth.)*

That was nice.

HERS

*(Stands upright and pulls a mandarin orange from behind HERS back and begins to peel it.)*

Was it nice?

HIS

*(Picking his teeth.)*

It was very nice. I think it was nicer than yesterday's.

HERS I

don't recall yesterday's.

HIS

No? Well, it was the same thing, but somehow, today's is better.

HERS

*(Pops a wedge of mandarin orange into HERS mouth. HERS response is distorted due to its being filled with an orange wedge.)*

Maybe yesterday's was better but you forgot about it.

HIS

*(Holds out his hand.)*

I don't know. Give me one of your orange wedges and I'll try to recall what yesterday's was like.

HERS

No! Do you think I'm a fool? Besides, you tried that one on me the other day. You ate two of my orange wedges while I wasn't looking.

HIS

I was just testing to see if yesterday's was better than the day before's.

HERS

You could have told that with one wedge.

HIS

See? That's all I'm asking for today. One little wedge of orange.

HERS

*(Quickly devouring the entirety of HERS orange, she places the peel in HERS toga.)*

There. It's gone. I ate it all.

HIS

*(Gradually, HIS flexes his biceps.)*

But you just couldn't spare one little wedge so that I might gain...uh.. peace of mind. After all, I do have all of these hard things on me. I think they need more food than yours do.

HERS

*(Flexing HERS own biceps.)*

Mine may be a bit smaller. But I have these other things that also need to be fed. Besides, we were given equal amounts of food. Don't you trust the Creator to make all things good?

HIS

*(Cupping his mouth to sound more intimate.)*

But listen, what if the reason we are here is to make things better by ourselves. In our own way, so to speak? What if that was the Creator's plan for us in the first place?

HERS

I don't have any idea. Why don't you ask the Creator yourself, the next time the Creator comes strolling through here? Until then, what's yours is yours and what's mine is mine.

HIS

Oh yeah? I thought we were equals. One...uh...two-eth... of mine is yours and one two-eth of yours is mine.

HERS

*(Pulls one of the larger twigs from the pile and places it center stage between the two of them.)*

Let's make it simple. Whatever is on your side of my twig is yours. Whatever is on my side of my twig is mine. Period.

HIS

*(Moves to the rear extreme of the imaginary line made by the twig at center downstage.)* What's this back here?

HERS Mine.

HIS

*(Walks to the front of the imaginary line made by the twig at center upstage.)*  
And what's this way up here in the front?

HERS

That is also mine. Look, do you want me to make it even simpler? Watch this.

HERS (continues)

*(HERS gradually takes twigs from her pile and arranges them along the imaginary line between her side and his side.)* Do you see this? Look! The line goes from all the way back there to all the way up there. Mine. Yours.

HIS

*(Sits cross-legged on his side as at curtain rise.)* OK. Alright. I see that. I have my one two-eth over here. You have your one two-eth over there.

HERS

*(Sits cross-legged on her side as at curtain rise.)* Exactly! Mine. Yours. One two-eth. One two-eth. Neighbors.

HIS

*(Affecting shyness.)*

So...uh...neighbor...

HERS

*(Annoyed.)* Yes, neighbor?

So, neighbor...what did you do with that orange peeling?

HERS

*(Pulls some orange peelings from her toga and throws them at HIS.)*  
Take it! I hope you choke on it.

HIS

*(Scrambling to pick up the peelings and then chewing on them with his words muddled as he chews.)*

Thank you neighbor. These things make my mouth tingle. Thanks.

HERS

*(Folding HERS arms in disgust.)*

I am so glad to bring some...some zest into your life.

HIS

*(Gulping down the last bite, and looking skyward.)*

Neighbor, it's getting darker again.

HERS Yes.

Every day. No big surprise.

HIS

You know what happens when it gets dark?

HERS

It always gets dark. Then, after a while, it gets light again. So what?

HIS

*(HIS reaches back for his pile of twigs and pulls on it. We see that his twigs have been woven into a sort of blanket covering.)*

Well, if you recall, neighbor, when it gets dark, it also gets cold.

HERS

*(Angry.)*

Of course it gets cold. That's why you have always let me under your covering where it is warmer. My twigs were always too cold.

HIS

*(Coyly.)*

Well now, neighbor. Things have changed today, haven't they? Yours. Mine.

HERS You

mean I can't crawl under your covering?

HIS Yours.

Mine.

HERS

*(Comes to a standing position.)*

That is NOT what I meant. Not what I meant at all.

HIS

*(Crawling under his twigs and peering out.)*

But THAT is what you said. Of course, you could use your own cold, old twigs to make your own covering...



HERS

My twigs are doing exactly what I want my twigs to do.

HIS

*(Crawling deeper into his covering and disappears as he says...)*

Yours. Mine. Fine!

HERS

*(By this time, the stage lights have faded to blue. HERS sits cross-legged on the floor again. As the moments pass, she begins to shiver. Finally HERS teeth chatter.)*

HIS?

HIS

*(Speaking from under his covering.)*

Yours. Mine. What?

HERS

*(Pulling a small piece of orange peeling from HERS toga.)*

HIS, I still have a little orange peeling left.

HIS

*(Peeking slowly from beneath his covering.)*

And?

HERS

Well, I was thinking that if you let me under your covering, I could give you this piece of peeling.

HIS

*(Crawling back inside his covering.)*

No thanks. I can wait for another orange to appear when it gets light.

HERS

*(Pouting.)*

Well, I was thinking...uh...when it does get light, I could also give you a wedge from my orange. That is, if you let me under your warm twigs.

HIS

*(Suddenly, wild animal sounds are heard and HIS pokes his head out with a slightly frightened expression on his face.)*

Two wedges and it's a deal.

HERS

*(HERS climbs over HERS own wall of twigs. HIS lifts his covering to allow HERS inside. The two of them listen as the wild animal sounds increase.)*

HIS? Your warm twigs are just now starting to get warm. They must have been cold while you were in here alone.

HIS

They weren't cold. They weren't just as warm...as when you crawl under my covering with me.

HERS

Really?

HIS

Really!

HERS

*(As she crawls deeper under the covering.)*

I think when it's light again, one wedge from my orange will be enough for me to give to you.

HIS

*(Staring out with an expression of dismay which then becomes one of puzzlement.)*

I wonder what would happen if I rubbed two of her twigs together really hard and really fast?

*(HIS rubs tow sticks together. Nothing happens. HIS withdraws deeper under the covering taking the sticks with him, until his head disappears.)*

HERS

*(Heard from within the covering.)*

Move over! And stop poking me with that thing!

**LIGHTS OUT**



