

NOT LONG AGO, IN A FOREST NOT VERY FAR AWAY...

A Short Play by Nick Fetherston

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

KENNY: Mid-late 20s. Child at heart. Huge fan of *Star Wars*.

ALEX: 18. Rebellious goth.

SETTING: The woods, late afternoon. April 2020.

KENNY finishes setting up a video camera. He moves to stand in front of it, holding a toy lightsaber. He is dressed in a cheap Halloween store Jedi costume. He is alone.

KENNY:

(To the camera)

Take one.

This next segment of Kenny's performance to the camera can only be described as "really bad acting"

KENNY:

I have sensed a disturbance in the force. The dark side has corrupted this forest. Evil lurks around every corner. I shall defend it at all costs! *(Looks up)* By the force, a group of stormtroopers! They're aiming their blasters right at me! I must defend myself! *(Kenny turns on the toy lightsaber and starts to wildly swing it around "deflecting the blaster fire")*

ALEX enters. She is dressed in all black in a stereotypical goth fashion. She carries a backpack. She notices KENNY. She stares for a moment.

ALEX:

What the hell are you doing?

KENNY:

(Surprised)

Ah! *(Swings the lightsaber at ALEX, he misses)* Oh jeez, sorry. Didn't see you there.

ALEX:

Clearly. What are you doing here?

KENNY:

This is my film set!

ALEX:

Your what?

KENNY:

This part of the woods is perfect for this scene. It looks just like the forest moon of Endor and the lighting is per-

ALEX:

It looks like what?

KENNY:

Endor! It's where the Ewoks live. I'm making my new *Star Wars* fan film. It's gonna be a huge love letter to the series. I'm trying to take it back to how it used to be before Disney bought it and-

ALEX:

Star Wars? That dumb kid's movie?

KENNY:

The film that defined multiple generations!

ALEX:

Whatever you say dude. Is there anybody else with you?

KENNY:

Well, I put up signs all over town advertising the project, I even dropped off copies of the script to the local drama club to get some actors. Nobody got back to me. But it's fine really, I can play all of the roles and work the camera and-

ALEX:

So, no?

KENNY:

No.

ALEX:

Aren't you a little old for this stuff? Hiking out all the way to the middle of the woods to play make believe? Honestly dude, you look ridiculous. What is that, a bathrobe?

KENNY:

Jedi robe.

ALEX:

Okay...

KENNY:

I'm Kenny by the way!

ALEX:

Alex.

KENNY:

So, what are you doing wandering around the woods? Are you lost?

ALEX:

No, I'm not some dumb kid who gets lost.

KENNY:

Sorry.

ALEX:

This is my smoke spot.

KENNY:

Wait, you mean like marijuana?

ALEX:

Sure do. *(She pulls a joint and lighter out of her pocket)*. You got a problem with that?

KENNY:

How old are you?

ALEX:

18.

KENNY:

The legal age for marijuana usage is 21 and even then, I'm not even sure if it's legal for recreational use in this state so I don't think that-

ALEX glares at KENNY

KENNY:

Sorry.

ALEX:

It's fine, I'm used to it. But yeah, you should probably get going. I don't want your bathrobe to smell like weed.

KENNY:

They're Jed- it doesn't matter. I don't mind the smell, and hey, the smoke might lend to the atmosphere of the planet.

ALEX:

But-

KENNY:

Ok! Take two!

ALEX:

(Annoyed)

Oh, come on.

ALEX takes a notebook out of her backpack and begins to write in it. KENNY goes over to the camera, turns it on, and goes in front to begin acting. It's still bad.

KENNY:

I have sensed a disturbance in the force! The dark side has corrupted this forest. Evil lurks around every corner. I shall defend it at all costs.

ALEX:

(Looking up from her notebook)

Seriously?

KENNY:

(Stopping) Ugh. Cut! (He sets down his lightsaber and walks over the camera to cut the film). What's wrong?

ALEX:

That script needs a lot of work, buddy.

KENNY:

Well, what are you writing?

ALEX:

None of your business. *(She goes back to writing)*

KEENY

Jeez, sorry. But hey, if you're gonna stay here, you wanna be in the movie?

ALEX:

(Still writing)

Absolutely not.

KENNY:

C'mon! Every Jedi needs a Sith to fight! I've got a red lightsaber you could borrow, plus you've already got the whole "Dark Lord" look going on! *(indicating her clothes)*

ALEX

(stops writing)

What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

KENNY:

Well I just meant-

ALEX:

Oh, so what, I dress like this so that makes me evil? Jesus, I'm sick of this shit.

KENNY:

I'm sorry I didn't mean it like that!

ALEX:

Whatever. *(She returns to writing)*

KENNY:

(Trying to change the subject.)

Ohhh wait a minute. Is that your diary that you're writing in?

ALEX:

Please leave me alone.

KENNY:

(Reaching over to grab the notebook. Teasing.)

Oh come on, let me see, I won't tell anyone!

ALEX:

(quickly yanking it away from his hand)

Don't touch that!

KENNY:

Jeez sorry. I won't ask about the cute boy you're writing about. It's not like any of that really matters anyway.

ALEX:

(Beginning to tear up)

Look, could you please just go?

KENNY:

I'm really sorry, I didn't mean it in a bad way, I just meant-

ALEX:

Just shut up! Take your shit and get out!

*ALEX grabs KENNY'S lightsaber
and swings it at the camera,
knocking it over, then swings it
at him and misses*

KENNY:

Hey! I'm sorry, please just-

ALEX:

GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE!

There is a tense pause

KENNY:

What are you really doing here Alex?

ALEX:

What?

KENNY:

Something's up. I can tell there's something bothering you. You came out here for a reason.

ALEX:

I just really like this spot.

KENNY:

No. I sense a disturbance in the force.

ALEX:

(Beginning to hide the notebook into her backpack)

Dude, just go away. Please, I'm begging you.

KENNY:

Did you run away from home or something?

ALEX:

Yes, fine. You got me. I ran away from home. Are you happy now?

KENNY:

But why did you come here?

ALEX:

This was my favorite place to come when I was little. It was an escape from all of the bullshit at home.

KENNY:

Is anybody out looking for you? If this was your favorite spot wouldn't they come check this place first?

ALEX:

I wouldn't bet on it. I never told anyone that I used to come around here. I just wanted to see it one last time.

KENNY:

Well, you can always come back to visit.

ALEX:

I don't think you understand.

KENNY:

What do you mean?

ALEX:

There is no "coming back".

KENNY:

You're right, I don't understand.

ALEX:

Think about it.

The two share a look. There is an immeasurable amount of pain in Alex's face. Kenny finally realizes what she means.

KENNY:

Oh my god. You were going to... and you wanted to do it here.

ALEX:

Quickly and painlessly in the only childhood place that didn't make me feel like shit.

KENNY:

You're not serious are you?

ALEX:

Maybe.

KENNY:

(Sitting down next to ALEX)

Hey, I get it.

ALEX:

No, you don't. My life is literal hell. My family sucks, I don't have any friends-

KENNY:

Do I look like I have a lot of friends? Nobody's here helping me. Parents too. Mine split when I was a little kid and it was all downhill from there. I was having these same thoughts when I was your age. I thought the world would be better off without me.

ALEX:

So why didn't you...you know?

KENNY:

You're gonna laugh at me for saying this, but the only thing that made me happy was *Star Wars*. It was all just so hopeful. It taught me that no matter how bad your situation might seem, you can always find the light.

ALEX:

It's just so hard. Everything I do is just a disappointment. *(Imitating her mom)* "don't be so mean to your brother Alexandra, at least he tries to be a good person. He's not a drug addict like you. *(Imitating her dad)* You want to be a writer? Not if you want any of our help you're not, pick a real major and make us proud. If you're gonna dress like that you might as well go to Hell and bow to Satan right now."

KENNY:

You wanna be a writer?

ALEX:

Yeah. I would always come out to this part of the woods and write stories. I figured, my life sucks so maybe I could write a better one. But now...

KENNY:

I think that's really inspiring. If that's what brings you joy, then that's your light through the darkness.

ALEX:

My parents just make it so hard. Like, I try so hard and all I do is disappoint. I'm a fucking failure.

KENNY

You know, Luke Skywalker's father was Darth Vader. Vader told Luke that it was his destiny to go to the dark side and be an evil dictator.

ALEX:

So?

KENNY:

Well, Luke held onto his values and was able to prevail. He overcame the dark side and even managed to bring Vader back to the side of good. He made his own destiny, he didn't let his parent decide it for him.

ALEX:

But I'm not Luke Skywalker! Besides, he's not even real.

KENNY:

What I'm trying to say is, you can't let your voice be silenced because somebody else decided that for you. You have control of your destiny and the power to make an impact on the world.

ALEX:

I guess... why are you helping me? We've barely met.

KENNY:

(Smiles)

It's the Jedi way. Look, I know it all seems hard now. Like the world is closing in on you like the Death Star trash compactor, *(Alex looks at him, this reference is lost on her)* like...walls closing in on you. But you're gonna get through it. It'll be a rocky road and you might not be able to thrive right away, but that hope keeps you moving.

ALEX:

Thank you, Kenny. *(smiles. Beat.)* May the Force be with you.

KENNY:

(excited)

You made a *Star Wars* reference!

ALEX:

Ok, maybe I've seen a little bit of it.

Beat.

ALEX:

Sooo, do you still want some help with your movie?

KENNY:

You really wanna be in it?

ALEX:

Let's not go that far, but maybe I can help you with some of the dialogue. What do you say? You game?

KENNY:

Uh, does a Wampa shit in the snow?

ALEX:

What?

KENNY:

Yes! Yes, I would be honored if you would join me.

ALEX opens up her notebook. She tears out the page she has been writing on and crumples it up. She and KENNY begin to write a new script. Blackout.