

**AMATEURS**  
**Harmony Nicole DeLeon**  
Phoenix College  
First Place, One-Act Play

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CHARACTERS:   MIRABELLE, a woman, mid-20s  
                  ANTON, a man, early 30s  
                  STARGAZERS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

SETTING:       A park at dusk. A park bench sits at right-center.

*(ANTON, dressed casually, sets up a medium-sized telescope at center stage. He appears unfamiliar with the telescope. Enter MIRABELLE, stage left. She is attractive, stylishly dressed, and wears a name tag that reads 'MIRA'. She carries a pile of flyers on yellow paper. The words 'STARRING VENUS' are visible.)*

MIRABELLE:     Would you care for a sky map?

ANTON:           *(takes a flyer)* Yeah—okay. Sure. *(kneels down to make adjustments on the telescope)*

MIRABELLE:     The sun sets at 8:41 exactly. Venus will be the first to appear. You'll find her in the low Western sky this time of year. *(indicating the map)* She's right here.

ANTON:           She?

MIRABELLE:     Venus was a goddess. I have the habit of calling her a woman. A bit odd though, really. Planets are without sex.

ANTON:           *(looking up)* Without sex?

MIRABELLE:     Do you need help setting up your telescope?

ANTON:           I don't know. I think I got it. You don't need to plug it in or anything, do you?

MIRABELLE:     *(laughs)* No. Telescopes have been around even longer than electricity.

ANTON:           Yeah. I guess so.

*(enter STARGAZERS 1 and 2 stage left)*

STARGAZER 1:   Do you have any more of those maps?

STARGAZER 2:   Sorry. We lost ours already.

MIRABELLE:     Sure. Here you go. Sun sets in at 8:41.

STARGAZER 2:   Thanks.

*(exits stage right)*

MIRABELLE:     Wow. That's a nice one.

ANTON: Yeah. Thanks. My wife buys me useless birthday gifts every year. Says they wouldn't be useless if I tried 'em. Wants me to make something of myself, I guess.

MIRABELLE: That's a pretty nice birthday gift. And so you brought it out tonight?

ANTON: Yeah. She thought of it. Amateur astronomer night. Just my kind of thing.

MIRABELLE: You know—I bet you'll end up loving it. I had a telescope like this one when I started out. It's a good one—you'll get to see the most extraordinary views. The whole globe of Venus. The whole shape of her. She looks like a little gibbous moon this time of year.

ANTON: Gibbous. Yeah. I don't know what that means.

MIRABELLE: Gibbous is the phase between half and full and full and half. Waxing gibbous, waning gibbous. *(pauses)* And—well, waxing is the time when the moon reveals more of itself, more visible, less hidden—

ANTON: *(standing up)* My wife is cheating on me.

MIRABELLE: I'm sorry?

ANTON: *(sits on the park bench)* My wife. I've known forever. Don't have a damn clue what to do about it.

MIRABELLE: *(stepping backward)* Oh—I'm—I'm—

ANTON: I know. You're sorry. Everybody's sorry.  
*(enter STARGAZERS 3 and 4 stage left)*

STARGAZER 3: Hey—you work here?

STARGAZER 4: *(to Stargazer 3)* Where, a park bench? He means are you the instructor?

MIRABELLE: *(cannot look away from Anton)* Kind of. I mean—yes and no. I'm not the instructor. I'm a teaching assistant—

STARGAZER 4: Is there a lecture tonight? Or do we just sort of muddle our way through?

MIRABELLE: We all muddle our ways through. But there is a lecture at sunset. *(glances at her watch)* 8:41 exactly. Dr. Peters. He'll point out Venus.  
*(STARGAZER 3 takes a flyer, folds it up and slips it in his back pocket.  
Both exit stage right)*

MIRABELLE: *(sitting down on the bench)* I'm—I'm—

ANTON: I know. You're sorry.

MIRABELLE: I mean—Are you sure about it? Are you certain? How do you know?

ANTON: *(laughs)* You say the same things ten different ways, you know that?

MIRABELLE: I know. I talk too much. I just blather on. I never shut—I suppose I've done it again.

ANTON: And you talk different. You talk sort of old fashioned.

MIRABELLE: Do I? Oh I'm—

ANTON: Don't say I'm sorry.

MIRABELLE: Alright.

ANTON: No reason to be sorry. It just sounds different, that's all. Not bad or anything, you know.

MIRABELLE: I get myself in trouble sometimes. I mean from talking too much. It's how I ended up working here.

ANTON: Oh yeah? How's that?

MIRABELLE: It's really not worth talking about.

ANTON: Yeah. I know how that is.

MIRABELLE: So...

ANTON: Yeah. So my wife. The one cheating on me. Ha. Like how many do I have, right? Anyway it's a friend of mine. I know that much. I can tell by the way he looks at me. You know that? You can just tell. Guy looks at another guy kinda different like. Guy has a way of looking at me like he knows something I don't know. Like just hoping I'll take a swing. Anyone ever look at you like that?

MIRABELLE: I don't think so.

ANTON: Yeah. Didn't figure you for that. Too nice for stupid—you seem like you got a lot of class.

MIRABELLE: When people say that, I don't know what it means. To have class.

ANTON: When you got class it's like you know how not to say stuff. And like you don't mess around with trash like me. And you seem like you take good care of yourself. That's class. You keep your nose clean. Probably never been in a bar your whole life.

MIRABELLE: Well—you know, not yet. But I mean—I don't think there's anything wrong with it. Maybe I should go to a bar sometimes. I feel like maybe sometimes it's the right place to go.

ANTON: That's what my wife thinks. Only not sometimes. All the damn time. She likes going to the bars. Not the kind of bars you college types go to. She goes to the kind that are all dark inside and you don't see anyone you know. I met her in a bar like that. So I guess I got what's coming to me.

MIRABELLE: Oh—I don't think it works like that—I don't think—you seem like such a kind man. And here you are—waiting for the stars to come out. That's something to fall in love with. I am always falling in love with people who come out and wait for the stars.

ANTON: Oh I seen stars alright. Not the kind you wait for though.

*(enter STARGAZER 4 stage right)*

STARGAZER 4: I'm sorry to keep bugging you. What time did you say it starts?

MIRABELLE: *(still looking at Anton)* When the sun sets. Like 9, 10 minutes or so.

STARGAZER 4: Can I get another one of those flyers from you?

MIRABELLE: *(jumping to her feet)* Oh gosh, I'm so sorry. Here you go.

STARGAZER 4: Thanks.

*(exits stage right)*

ANTON: I keep waiting for it to get better you know. I keep waiting for it to go away and tomorrow everything is back right. It's not gonna happen that way. It just gets worse. *(standing up)* But hey—then you hit the bottom of the bottle and you climb back up. But you do climb back up, right?

MIRABELLE: You definitely do. The stars come out. It gets dark and then the stars come out. You just have to wait for...pin—pinpoints of light.

ANTON: You sound like you know something.

MIRABELLE: Sometimes I do.

ANTON: *(stepping toward her)* Let me see one of those maps again. *(takes one)* 'Starring Venus: Love and Visions in the Summer Sky.' Wow. So this is what I got to look forward to? Constellations, huh? That's like pictures in the sky, right?

MIRABELLE: Oh—uh—right, right.

ANTON: So maybe you can show me 'em all.

MIRABELLE: Well—I'd like to but I can't.

ANTON: *(turning away)* Okay. Sure. I get it.

MIRABELLE: *(following him)* No, it's not like that. Its—there's something wrong with my, well, there's a part of my eyes and my—and my brain that doesn't quite work that way. I don't see stars that way. I didn't mean—

ANTON: *(kneeling down next to the telescope)* It's okay. Don't worry about it. I'll figure it out.

MIRABELLE: I can't see disconnected shapes. I don't see visual patterns. It's me. It's something wrong with me. It doesn't work right. I—it's always been that way. I used to work at the planetarium. I ran the shows. But I—I wasn't very good at it. They let me do it for awhile, but I couldn't keep up. I didn't make it.

ANTON: Oh yeah? Like a lazy eye or something?

MIRABELLE: Maybe. Maybe like that.

ANTON: So what do you see?

MIRABELLE: Just the stars. I see—I see the light. Stars in the sky. Lights in the darkness. (*holds up the flyers and constellation maps*) And on this star chart I see dots. I can read the words. It's just—I don't know. I can still see the stars. I can still see them.

ANTON: That's all you need. They shoulda let you keep your job.

MIRABELLE: You're the first person to ever say that. You're the first person who didn't say how awful it was.

ANTON: Hey, I'm sure it sucks, but you know, it is what it is. What are you gonna do?

MIRABELLE: I think I would like Orion the best.

ANTON: Oh yeah? How you figure that?

MIRABELLE: I like the sound of it. I like the idea. Its supposed to look like someone poised, an arrow aimed. Sometimes I try to imagine what that would look like. A hunter made of stars. You know, sometimes I try to imagine the lines that would connect the glimmer of light. I try to imagine the patterns. Its like—it's like—I try but nothing's there. Just light and darkness. My husband used to say—

ANTON: You got a husband, huh?

MIRABELLE: No. I don't.

ANTON: Yeah. I know how that is.

MIRABELLE: I didn't see enough.

ANTON: I think I see too much. I don't know what's worse.

MIRABELLE: What a pair we would be.

ANTON: Yeah.

*(enter STARGAZERS 5 and 6 stage left. MIRABELLE hands maps to them*

*EXIT stage right)*

MIRABELLE: You never said anything to your wife?

ANTON: No. Sometimes I start to, but I don't know what you're supposed to say, you know? Do you yell, do you cuss her out? Tell her don't go. Sometimes I just wanna slap her face. But I don't because—

MIRABELLE: Maybe you don't have to say anything. Maybe it will just be okay. I could see that.

ANTON: Yeah? Well I can't.

*(ANTON sits down on the ground and puts his face against the telescope, looking toward the audience. MIRABELLE watches him for a moment and then returns to the bench)*

ANTON: So, you said you worked at the planetarium?

MIRABELLE: Yeah. I was fired.

ANTON: Because of the patterns.

MIRABELLE: Maybe because of the patterns. Maybe because—maybe because—

ANTON: What happened?

MIRABELLE: I mean—I like this job, and Dr. Peters is great—and I get to—I don't just grade papers—well I made this flyer. I planned this event. And it's good. It's real good.

ANTON: Good enough?

MIRABELLE: I just loved that planetarium. I knew how to work all the equipment, all the projectors, got all the stars moving across the sky. That's really something, you know. Keeping the stars. Keeping them going. I could move them west to east if I wanted to. And I would give this speech—this one part that wasn't recorded like everything else was. I really had something to say.

ANTON: Let me hear it.

MIRABELLE: Now?

ANTON: Yes, now. I wanna hear it.

MIRABELLE: Well, okay. The music would begin, sort of operatic and grand. That kind they play that lets you know something incredible is going to happen. All kinds of violins and this voice that just rips out your heart—

ANTON: I know that kind. God, I know that kind.

MIRABELLE: I fall apart for music like that. Heard it a hundred times, everyday for two years, and it just pulled—just pulled at my heart. *(desperately)* My heart. And I would say—

*(MIRABELLE stands and clears her throat)*

MIRABELLE: For thousands of years—millions maybe—planets have orbited the sun along this same elliptical path—and stargazers have stared up at the night skies enthralled with the dynamic beauty of our sister satellites, making their first debut a thousand years late in the stage of our sky.

ANTON: That's good. You got a real talent for that. What happened with all that?

MIRABELLE: My husband ran a greenhouse. Kind of the opposite of me. Sees everything in the earth, and turns his back to the sky. He left me.

ANTON: God. I'm—

MIRABELLE: Please don't say you're sorry. Not you.

ANTON: Well then, damn. Just—just damn.

MIRABELLE: I never saw it coming, but he left me in the middle of the week. And I went to work because I didn't know what else to do. And there I was, giving that speech, telling these kids and these old people everything they need to know to see all the things I can't. Telling them about starlight popping in the sky in the shape of rams and fish and crabs. But see, I didn't stop there. I ran the stars backward and I started to talk. *(pauses)* I told them—I told them that I see this. I see all of this. Don't listen to anyone who says that I don't see this! But I don't see stars as bright as the round pinpoints of light in his eyes now. I don't see anything quite like that. I won't see anything like that.

*(ANTON sits next to MIRABELLE on the bench, starts to reach for her hand but hesitates)*

MIRABELLE: Do you know what to do about it?

ANTON: No. I don't. But I believe you. I believe you see that. I believe you see all of that.

MIRABELLE: The sun's going down. I should go.

ANTON: Think sometimes maybe the sun's already set. Like for people like us—the sun went down at ten a.m.

MIRABELLE: Ten a.m. That's a long time to wait for stars.

ANTON: You think your Dr. Peters will be looking for you?

MIRABELLE: Oh bother Dr. Peters.

ANTON: *(laughs)* There you go kid. You tough it up. You look at 'em all like... like you just want them to take a swing.

MIRABELLE: About your wife—what do you think it was? What made her—what made her not see you anymore?

ANTON: I been thinking about that for awhile now. Been thinking about—about how I used to tell her the things I should tell her. And when I come home, I used to come in the door and first thing I did was taste her. Not just her mouth with mine. But her mouth, and her neck, and the top of her shoulders (*his hand hovers over MIRABELLE and then snatches it away*) I used to dream about that. Used to do a lot of things.

MIRABELLE: And now?

ANTON: Now I don't.

MIRABELLE: Why?

ANTON: Because for awhile I just forgot. And now—now I'm afraid I won't taste her. Now I'm scared I'll taste someone else. (*pauses*) What about you? When did he—when did he stop seeing you?

MIRABELLE: When we were together, he used to make these pictures in the gravel of our garden. You know faces or flowers in the different colored rock—and I could see the facets of color. Like I could see lights in the sky. But the picture of it—everything I should see—it just wasn't there. And he worked hard—he worked so hard on all of that. And he—he wanted me to see it. And I don't think I tried. I don't think I tried enough. And he just slipped away.

ANTON: Tell me—tell me what to do. God—I don't know what to do.

MIRABELLE: Tell her. Tell her anything. Tell her you sat out here and waited for the stars. She'll love you, I promise.

ANTON: And then what? And then what?

MIRABELLE: You wait. You just wait.

ANTON: Oh yeah?

MIRABELLE: Yeah.

*(MIRABELLE shifts her body, tucks her feet underneath her. She raises her arm to point at something but does not speak)*

ANTON: I'm Anton, by the way. We never got around to that.

MIRABELLE: Anton. That's a nice name.

ANTON: Named after my uncle.

MIRABELLE: Mirabelle. It's Italian. Sees beauty. Kind of ironic, I guess. (*she glances back at him*) I better go. Dr. Peter's is probably looking for me. I should be doing something. I should be helping people.

*(MIRABELLE rises, grabs up her pile of flyers, turns back to say goodbye)*

MIRABELLE: I'm glad you came. You have a great telescope there. You'll see so much. *(she waits for a moment; when he does not respond, she turns to leave)*

ANTON: It's not ironic.

MIRABELLE: *(turning back)* What?

ANTON: Your name. Sees beauty. It's not ironic. I think you do see. I think you see like—like I've never seen before. And maybe—maybe it's good. Like a good thing you don't see patterns. You don't expect the worst of everybody. You expect the good stuff. You see the best and the bright. You see stars. You never know—you never see how it's gonna turn out.

MIRABELLE: Is that a good thing? Not to see what's coming? Not to see ahead of time?

ANTON: I think sometimes it is. Because you don't expect. You just hope. You hope for what's next. You just hope Venus will be low in the West and—and—

MIRABELLE: And there she is.

