

SCENE ONE

A desert. A rusty water fountain. A Colonial Soldier limps on.

SOLDIER

Oh thank God.

He crawls toward it. A little Girl from an unrecognizable time and place enters.

GIRL

That's my fountain!

SOLDIER

I'm so sorry. I didn't know.

GIRL

It's mine!

SOLDIER

It's a lovely fountain.

GIRL

Do you want to drink from it?

SOLDIER

Yes.

GIRL

Well, then, go on. You may.

(He starts to pull himself up to the water fountain. As he is about to sip:)

I said "may" because it's different from "can". My mom taught me that. Where are you from? Why are you dressed so funny?

SOLDIER

Funny?

(Pause.)

I've been crawling through the desert for a very long time. My clothes ripped on the wind and sand.

GIRL

I'm waiting here for my mom. She said if we ever got lost, we should meet by the water fountain in the middle of the desert in the middle of nowhere in the middle of America. How long have you been crawling through the desert?

SOLDIER

Seven hundred and forty-six years. How long have you been waiting for your mom?

GIRL

Like six minutes. It's kind of lonely. I don't think she's ever going to come for me.

SOLDIER

It is very lonely. I have lost my General and my... My General has left me. Alone in the dark.

GIRL

I'm not scared of the dark.

SOLDIER

I never was before. But when I went home, there was nothing there. Pure and total absence of. Suddenly, I was scared of the dark. I heard muskets firing in the distance- BANG, BANG, BANG-- and I went to find my General. To ask him. I passed through strange cities and strange times. Suddenly, the world shook, and then it stopped spinning. It grew strange and hot. And I need to find him to ask him what it all was for, now the world has grown so dry and lonely.

GIRL

Did you see my mom?

SOLDIER

I don't think so. No.

GIRL

She's probably dead. I'm an orphan, now.

SOLDIER

Oh.

(Pause.)

I have lost everyone so I'm an orphan, too.

(Pause.)

And I'm very thirsty.

GIRL

Would you like to sip from my fountain? It can't bring back your General but it can make you less thirsty.

SOLDIER

I'd really like that.

As he is about to start drinking:

GIRL

What's that on your back?

SOLDIER

It's a musket.

GIRL

Musket is a funny word.

SOLDIER
It's a gun.

GIRL
Gun is a scary word.

SOLDIER
It's a tool.

GIRL
Tool is an ancient word.

SOLDIER
It's a last resort.

GIRL
Last resort is two words.

SOLDIER
It's a thing that I needed.

GIRL
(Counting)
A, thing, that, I, needed.

SOLDIER
Sometimes we need scary things.

GIRL
5 words.

(Pause.)
Can I hold your funny musket?
(Pause.)
Please?

SOLDIER
Yes. Here.

(He hands her the gun. She holds it delicately.)
But be careful, please. It's not a toy. It's very dangerous, so be careful, little girl. Whatever you do, never point it at your--

(She points the gun at herself and pulls the trigger. A very realistic gun shot is heard and she falls to the floor, limp.)
Oh... No. No, no, no. Why did you do that? No, little angel, come back please.

(He tries to help her. She seems to be dead.)
I can't drink your water now. Now we will both die here. Me of thirst and you of shooting yourself in the face.

(He lays down next to her to die. Several moments of silence. The Girl sneezes.)

God bless you.

GIRL

Thank you!

She sits up.

SOLDIER

You're alive!

GIRL

Of course I am! Why wouldn't I be?

SOLDIER

You shot yourself!

GIRL

No, I didn't!

SOLDIER

I heard the gun shot!

GIRL

No, you didn't!

SOLDIER

Yes I did!

GIRL

That was me. I made that noise. With my mouth.

She opens her mouth and "makes the noise." The same gun shot is heard.

SOLDIER

Wow.

GIRL

I'm good at making noises with my mouth. Wanna see?

(The soldier nods yes.)

K. Hold on.

The Girl inhales deeply. Silence. She opens her mouth to exhale.

*As she does, we hear, very loudly:
Rapid machine gun fire, inaugural
addresses, planes soaring above,
wedding toasts, a city exploding, a
mother crying, tranquility, the
collapse of the Twin Towers, Star Wars,
Hitler speaking, pop songs, war, chaos,
violins, the genesis of the universe
and more. It lasts for a great deal of
time. She finishes. Awkwardly, she
curtsies.*

SOLDIER

That was incredible. That was extraordinary. That was abnormal. That was very, very strange. That was terrifying. You are a terrifying girl.

GIRL

I can't whistle, though. See? I try, but I can't. I hate it. I wish I could whistle.

SOLDIER

No! You are an amazing girl who can do *amazing* things. Can I shake your hand? Or kiss you?

GIRL

You may kiss me with your hand.

He does.

SOLDIER

Who are you?

GIRL

Me!

SOLDIER

And where are we?

GIRL

The water fountain in the middle of the desert in the middle of nowhere in the middle of America. Where I'm supposed to meet my mom if we get separated.

SOLDIER

How did you get separated?

GIRL

I can't remember. It happened sooooo long ago.

SOLDIER

Six minutes.

GIRL

It's probably been eight or nine, now. Oh no!

SOLDIER

Don't be afraid! Though it has stopped spinning, the world changes so quickly! I've spent centuries crawling, alone, looking for water and for my General. And now, suddenly, I'm not alone. And now, suddenly, out of the blue, there is water.

(Pause.)

Water! My goodness. I almost forgot. Water! And then soon...

*(As if calling to the universe
in celebration)*

I WILL FIND YOU, MY GENERAL. I WILL, I WILL, I WILL!

(Suddenly urgent and violent.)

AND I WILL HAVE AN ANSWER.

(Pause.)

May I drink?

GIRL

Um.. You may.

*(He is preparing to drink
until:)*

Please don't drink. Please. Oh please. Please don't drink. I'm begging you, sir. Please don't drink. Pretty please!

SOLDIER

... Why not?

GIRL

Because then you'll leave. You'll leave me to go find your General.

SOLDIER

My Gener--

GIRL

You'll leave me alone, because you will have found the water and then you'll want to find your General. And I'll be alone again. I'll be so scared, waiting for my mother, who may never come.

(Pause.)

And I'm not sure, but I'm a little girl, and I think I might need you more than your General does right now.

(Pause.)

But fine. Just go ahead and drink and leave.

She goes and sits down far away. The Soldier looks back and forth between her and the fountain. He sits by her side.

SOLDIER

Little girl. I'll make you a promise. Let me drink, and I will stay with you. I don't know if we'll find your mother and we may never find my General, but I will stay with you until...

Silence.

GIRL

Until the world starts spinning!

SOLDIER

At the very least.

(Pause.)

I have left before, but I won't leave you.

GIRL

Pinky promise?

SOLDIER

What's a pinky promise?

GIRL

It's like a kiss, but with your hands.

She shows him how and nods towards the fountain. He goes to it. He takes in a great deal of water and then spits it all out. He tries to drink more, and throws up all over the sand.

SOLDIER

... that's not water.

GIRL

It's not? I didn't know.

SOLDIER

Well, it's not. It's not water.

(Pause.)

It's not. It's not. It's not water. It's not water. It's not water.

GIRL

... what is it?

SOLDIER

Gasoline. It's gasoline, of course.

GIRL

Are you sure?

SOLDIER

Mhmm.

GIRL
I thought it was water. I'm sorry.
(Pause.)
I'm very sorry.

The Soldier lies on the ground.

SOLDIER
There are three kinds of things you know in this world.
First, there are things you know because your mother told
them to you. Second, there are things you know because you
read them in a book. Last, there are things you know because
you have a heart.

GIRL
Like that my mother will never find me.

SOLDIER
Like that my General has been dead and forgotten for
centuries.

GIRL
Yeah.

SOLDIER
Like that I will die from thirst in three minutes if I don't
get any water.

GIRL
Die?

SOLDIER
Die.

GIRL
Like, completely?

SOLDIER
And totally.

GIRL
You can't!

SOLDIER
Why not?

GIRL
Because you pinky promised.

SOLDIER
I'm sorry, little girl. I will have to break your pinky
promise.

I forgive you.

GIRL

The little Girl lies down next to the Soldier.

Hi.

SOLDIER

Hi. Can I die with you?

GIRL

If you'd like.

SOLDIER

They lie on the ground in silence. Occasionally, they shift to get comfortable, as if trying to fall asleep. The Girl sighs deeply and a whistle comes out.

Oh my Goodness! Did you hear that? I can whistle. Neat.

GIRL

They continue to die.

Almost there.

SOLDIER

Almost there.

Wow. Look at how much time there is in the Universe.

GIRL

Almost there.

SOLDIER

Little girl. I can't die yet.

(Almost there.)

Of course you can!

GIRL

I am falling.

SOLDIER

(Pause.)
I don't understand the sand. And I don't understand the sun.
And I don't understand why I ever left.

(Pause.)
I have looked for so long and found nothing.

(Pause.)
And now I will close my eyes to find more of the same.

The Girl sits up.

GIRL

I just remembered something! I know where some water is!

SOLDIER

Where?

GIRL

In my veins!

SOLDIER

In your...

GIRL

When I was little, my mommy told me I was really special, because my heart was a storm cloud and I always had rain water going through my veins instead of blood. And if I ever got thirsty, I could prick my thumb and drink the rainwater.

SOLDIER

That's... That's the most amazing thing of all.

GIRL

Would you like me to prick my thumb so you can drink my rainwater and we won't have to die?

SOLDIER

Yes.

GIRL

And we will wait for my mom. And we will look for your General. And even if we have to look under every grain of sand, maybe we will find something.

(Pause.)

Would you like to drink?

SOLDIER

Can I?

GIRL

You *may*.

She takes the bayonet from his musket and pricks her thumb with it. He sucks on it. After a few moments, he rises, a new man, totally reenergized.

GIRL

How do you feel?

SOLDIER

I feel.. Amazing. And alive.

GIRL

Good. Is that it?

I feel something else. SOLDIER

Yes? GIRL

I feel something in my stomach. Coming up my throat. SOLDIER

Me too! Let it come out. GIRL

Hold my hand. SOLDIER

They hold hands. They both open their mouths. Like before, a massive volume of sound comes out. Yankee Doodle mixed with Ave Maria. Playing beautifully and loudly. The world shakes. After a few moments, they close their mouths.

And I can whistle. GIRL