

PLAY #24 PANORAMA

by

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CHARACTERS

LISA	A young woman.
ALEX	Lisa's boyfriend. An arborist and landscaper.
SIMON	A fairly well off landowner, and one of Alex's clients.

PANORAMA

(At Rise: ALEX stands on a ladder trimming bushes. Beyond the bushes rises a big beautiful mountain. LISA sits on the ground reading a book, occasionally watching him.)

LISA

Why are you doing that?

ALEX

You know why, Lisa. It's a job. I'm being paid to do it.

LISA

But why does he want you to hack his bushes?

ALEX

He wants to see the mountain.

LISA

Before you started, there was shade here. There were flowers. Butterflies. Bees. Now it's so hot.

ALEX

You didn't have to come.

LISA

But I wanted to. It's our only day off together. We had plans. Remember?

ALEX

We have rent to pay. Remember?

LISA

I know.

ALEX

It's gonna be close this month. Have you looked at the budget?

LISA

It doesn't look good. But, I think we'll be okay.

ALEX

Well... Thanks for hanging out with me today.

LISA

I would have been sitting at home anyway. Waiting for you. So, I came. Maybe I should have stayed home.

ALEX

What are you reading?

LISA

I can't read anything in this heat. It's the usual.

ALEX

Of course.

LISA

I read and read about nature. Can't get enough of it in books. But I'm no better than Simon. Cutting down the brush for a view of the mountain, but never actually going to it.

ALEX

The divorce is weighing heavy on him. She wants to take everything. That's what I heard.

LISA

Who knows, then! Maybe seeing the mountain will help him. It's so old, that mountain. So... Wise...

ALEX

The mountain is wise?

LISA

Okay. Don't laugh. But my books have given me a new perspective. I'm seeing things differently. Maybe more completely.

(Pause.)

ALEX

What do you want to do tonight?

LISA

I don't know. Watch TV I guess.

ALEX

Maybe we should to to the mountain.

LISA

Go where?

ALEX

That's what I said.

LISA

Uh-oh. What have I opened up here?

ALEX

Seriously.

LISA

What would we do when we got there?

ALEX

We could car camp?

LISA

For real?

ALEX

Sure.

LISA

I don't know.

ALEX

Why not?

LISA

It's late in the day. It'll take hours to get there.
We both have work tomorrow.

ALEX

It's a full moon.

LISA

So you want to howl with the wolves.

ALEX

I'm just trying to see you better. You have this rich
inner life.

LISA

Me? Alex!

ALEX

But all I get to is this.

(He indicates the view of the mountain
through the bushes.)

LISA

Oh come on, Alex!

ALEX

I'm serious. The beautiful view from afar. I wanna see all of you.

LISA

What's gotten in to you?

ALEX

Experience all of you.

LISA

It *must* be a full moon.

ALEX

What do you think? I'm almost done here.

LISA

What was that new series we were gonna start watching?

ALEX

Lisa! Lisa... Lisa... We've lived here for years and never been there.

LISA

I know. It's just a big step to take. To actually go... right... there. I'm humbled by it. Even this many miles away.

(SIMON enters from behind.)

SIMON

Hi Alex! Lisa!

ALEX

Simon.

LISA

Hi.

SIMON

It's looking good. Just as I imagined.

ALEX

I'm glad you're happy with it.

SIMON

Happy? I'm ecstatic. In fact I'm wondering if you have any experience taking down trees.

ALEX

A little bit.

SIMON

I've got a tree on the side of the property. Frankly, I'm tired of the shade. And I'm worried it'll fall on the house.

LISA

That big oak tree?

SIMON

That's the one. And... Here's the real clincher. In a year or two it'll block my view from the bedroom window.

LISA

Your view of the mountain?

(LISA looks at SIMON.)

SIMON

I'd pay you double for it. I'd rather hire someone I know over one of those companies.

ALEX

I dunno.

SIMON

It's up to you.

LISA

Doesn't that tree give you any shade on days like this?

SIMON

I suppose. But I've been thinking about putting air conditioning in anyway. It'd be good for the house.

LISA

Well... It probably blocks the wind in the winter I would think. Surely --

SIMON

Look. Lisa. I see the book you're reading. And I think

it's great. Connecting with nature and all. But the truth is, while this is still my house, I need to keep the property value up. And for that reason, I've decided that the tree needs to come down. So, Simon, mull it over. I'll come back and pay you for today. And we can think about tomorrow.

(SIMON exits.)

LISA

Jeez... What an asshole! We can think about tomorrow? Can we? Really?

ALEX

I think this house has become kind of like his new wife.

LISA

Better a house than another human in my opinion.

ALEX

It does belong to him. Tree and all.

LISA

We cannot let that tree come down, Alex.

ALEX

Lisa...

LISA

You're gonna do it?!

ALEX

It's either me or Acme Landscaping Services. You heard him. Either way it's coming down. And we could use a little extra cash this month.

LISA

Fuck rent, Alex!

ALEX

You want to get evicted to save that tree?

LISA

I would happily find a cheaper place to rent.

ALEX

Seriously?

LISA

That tree is not as old as that mountain, but it's still way older than any of us. How could you even think about cutting it? Could you?

ALEX

I don't know. Probably not.

LISA

The sound of that blade cutting into three hundred years of health and wellness and wisdom?

ALEX

No. You're right.

LISA

You wanted a larger picture of me? There's another piece of the panorama, Alex. I can't tolerate ignorance. And I won't be a part of supporting it.

ALEX

But if I don't do it, he'll pay someone else. Either way the tree's gone.

LISA

There's still a chance we could change his mind.

ALEX

It would take a miracle of the gods to change Simon's mind about that tree!

(SIMON enters with a letter in his hand and plops down on the ground.)

LISA

The only worse thing than that tree coming down is for you to be the one to do it.

ALEX

Come on, Lisa.

LISA

Don't you believe in any kind of karma?

SIMON

You can forget about the tree.

LISA

Forget about it?

SIMON

I overheard you arguing.

ALEX

Yeah... Well...

SIMON

As you well know... Betty and I argued a lot. I never thought much of it. People argue. But she never felt seen. She never felt like I could see her side in any of our arguments. And I guess I've always been like that. So, I never really knew her. Not the whole her.

ALEX

What's happened, Simon? Something bad?

SIMON

Oh... Not so bad, really... It could be a lot worse.

LISA

She sent you a letter?

SIMON

It's from her lawyer. She's taking the house.

ALEX

Sorry to hear that, Simon.

SIMON

Yep. No more work here. I had so many plans for this house. I had a vision for it. But maybe it was incomplete. More like tunnel vision. That's what Betty would have said.

LISA

Maybe the house had other plans.

SIMON

I really wish I could believe in all of that, Lisa.

LISA

You mean all of this?

(She indicates the newly manicured view
of the mountain.)

Isn't that what you were clearing a way for? For all of that to come into here? To inspire you?

SIMON

If you put it that way. I suppose.

LISA

Well, maybe it has...

SIMON

Maybe.

LISA

It's time to see this from all sides. The mountain before us, the tree behind us. The mountain behind us. The tree before us. And from this new perspective, we can start anew.

(The moon begins to rise, as they all stare out at the mountain in the distance.)

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

END OF PLAY