

**PETALWING**

**By Jeremy Jacklin**

## **Part 1: The Meeting**

(In darkness. Suddenly, a light flashes from one end of the stage towards where the boy is, also illuminating a small plant-like form in the puddle.)

**Sprout**

(The voice has a slight echo. It is otherworldly.) ... Hey...

(The lights dim back into darkness. Silence.)

**Henry**

... Hello?

(Light shines again, slightly brighter.)

**Sprout**

Hey there...

(Light dims again.)

**Henry**

... Is someone there?

**Sprout**

(Loudly.) Gee, I don't know, do you hear anybody saying... (Lights up. The plant-like form is now upright) "Hey" to you, right now, in this moment? (Silence. The Boy is stunned.) No? Then I guess nobody is here. (Lights out.)

**Henry**

... This must be a dream...

(Lights up again. The plant-like form is even more upright, with tendrils flailing.)

**Sprout**

Oh no. This is your WORST NIGHTMARE. (Silence. Suddenly, the creature bursts out laughing.) Oh my god! Your face! Nah, I'm just pulling your leg, you silly little meat-sack. (Touches his leg with her "appendage". The Boy is still silent.) I have to say, nice... quaint place you got here. Hope you don't mind if I crash. (Pause.) What, are you just going to stare at me all day or are we going to introduce ourselves?

**Henry**

Oh... uh... Sorry... My name's Henry.

**Sprout**

Hmm. Cute.

**Henry**

... Do you have a name?

**Sprout**

Nope.

**Henry**

... Oh... ok... uh... how are you doing?

**Sprout**

I'm good. How are YOU doing?

**Henry**

... A little freaked out, if I'm honest...

**Sprout**

Ah, dang. I know I'm a bit too forward sometimes, I've been trying to work on that...

**Henry**

No, no, it's not that... I mean, It might be, I'm not sure... (Slight pause. Works up the courage to blurt it out.) What are you?

**Sprout**

Ooh, we're getting personal now, are we? Well, if you must know, I am a princess.

**Henry**

... A princess?

**Sprout**

... What, you've never seen one before? (Melodramatically.) It means I'm royalty. Of the highest decree! From a kingdom stretching far beneath this very soil! But, lo, it seems I have lost my way, and have risen to a land that I know not. I am without safety and comfort, affixed to this pitiful spot. Woe betide, I yearn to be safe from the dangers that beset this forest... Oh, if only a friendly, strong, handsome knight would come and protect me...

**Henry**

... Uh, okay... Well, I'm here...

**Sprout**

Great! So you would do me the royal honors?

**Henry**

Sure... What do I do?

**Sprout**

Oh, you know, just feed me, wash me, keep me protected from the elements, and most importantly, keep me happy. Got all that? (Brief pause.) Nah, I'm only kidding. Well... only a little bit. I am kind of stuck here, so if you could help me out, I'd really appreciate it.

(Blackout.)

## **Part 2: The Initiation**

(In darkness.)

**Sprout**

You know, I appreciate the thought, but I'm clearly not a plant...

(Lights up. Sprout is surrounded by assorted objects, including a blanket. Sprout has her arms crossed. The Boy is holding a watering can.)

**Henry**

Oh, I'm sorry... I just thought... You know, maybe that you'd be thirsty...

**Sprout**

So you looked at me and just assumed that I was some helpless little flower out in the woods?  
Quick to jump to conclusions, aren't you?

**Henry**

Ah, jeez... I'm sorry... I was only thinking...

**Sprout**

(Laughs.) Man, you really need to learn when I'm joking with you! Seriously, give me that, I'm so thirsty! (She rips the can from his hands and begins to drink fiercely from it.)

**Henry**

So... How long do you think you're going to be here for?

**Sprout**

Wow, sick of me already, huh?

**Henry**

No! No, no, not at all... Was just kind of trying to plan it out around my schedule...

**Sprout**

... Well, since we're talking logistics... I'm hoping to get something... That rightfully belongs to me, you know, by rightful decree and all that... And once I have that, you'll never have to deal with me ever again. But for now... (She wraps herself in her appendages.) I'm cold. You wouldn't just let a helpless, defenseless little princess freeze and die out here, would you?

**Henry**

... No, of course not. (Henry approaches and hesitantly attempts to hug the creature. The creature suddenly wraps its' tendrils around him, causing him to scream. The creature laughs.)

**Sprout**

(Dramatically) Got you! Now we freeze together! (The creature laughs. Suddenly, she pauses and stares at Henry.)

**Henry**

... What?

**Sprout**

You know, you have a really nice face. For a meat sack.

**Henry**

... I do?

**Sprout**

Oh yeah. I could look at it all day. I especially like these things. (She grasps his cheeks.) They're so squishy and cute (Henry pulls away.) What? Don't you know that?

**Henry**

Know what?

**Sprout**

That you're squishy and cute.

**Henry**

(Flustered) No, no, I'm not cute.

**Sprout**

Uh, no, no, when an at least half-decent looking princess tells you that you are cute, you don't deny it. It's, like, royal decree or something.

**Henry**

... Well, thank you...

**Sprout**

(Brief pause) You're very welcome!

**Henry**

(Very awkwardly) ... I mean... I don't think you're just HALF decent... I think you're... pretty decent...

**Sprout**

(A pause that lasts too long) So am I pretty, or am I decent?

**Henry**

Oh, uh, pretty... But, also decent of course... You know, like both... I mean, you're a princess, right?

**Sprout**

.... Well, that's one way to put it... A pretty sweet way.

(Blackout.)

### **Part 3: The Confessions... And Concessions**

(In darkness.)

**Henry**

Hey, I-

**Sprout**

Don't come over here!

(Lights up. The creature is cradling something that looks like a huge, rotted leaf. She is clearly emotionally distressed. Henry takes a moment to notice.)

**Henry**

... What is that?

**Sprout**

It's nothing.

**Henry**

(He investigates the object.) ...Was that a part of you?

**Sprout**

(In tears) It's nothing! Don't worry about it!

**Henry**

... What's wrong?

**Sprout**

I don't want to tell you...

**Henry**

Please tell me.

**Sprout**

.... I lied. I'm not a princess. There are no princesses...

**Henry**

What do you mean?

**Sprout**

I mean that none of what I said was true! I'm just some useless... *thing*, whose friends and entire family left her behind because she can't grow her wings!

**Henry**

... Your wings?

**Sprout**

... I don't know. Just forget about it. Just let me die, please. I'm not worth it.

**Henry**

Yes you are.

**Sprout**

No, I'm not. I don't deserve anything.

**Henry**

Yes you do!

**Sprout**

NO, I DON'T! (Suddenly, an intense sound is heard, and the creature sprouts appendages resembling the legs of an insect, which curve and prick Henry. The creature is in a tense, angered daze, while the Boy is surprised yet trying to remain calm.) I'M A MONSTER! LOOK AT ME LIKE I'M A MONSTER!

(Silence. He doesn't move; He simply stares.)

**Henry**

Do you want me to leave you alone? (No response.) I don't think you're a monster.

**Sprout**

Too bad. You should run. Far away from me.

**Henry**

I don't want to... (She angles the legs menacingly.) Are these going to hurt me?

**Sprout**

(Hesitates, then sighs.) ... No... It's not like they're poisonous or anything. It's just... something that happens... I can't control it...

**Henry**

... They're kinda' cool.

(She releases him, but doesn't retract the legs.)

**Sprout**

... Did you just say you didn't want to leave?

**Henry**

Yeah... Whatever this wing thing is, it seems important to you... So, if I can help, I will.

**Sprout**

You don't even know how to help me.

**Henry**

Well, I'm here if you need me.

**Sprout**

(Scoffs.) I don't get you at all... Why are you doing this for me?

## **Henry**

... Because... I... think it's the right thing to do... And, I mean... As far as I would know, you might as well be a princess... to me...

#### **Part 4: The Best Thing Ever**

(In darkness.)

**Henry**

How old are you supposed to be, anyways?

**Sprout**

Would you believe me if I said... 2000 years?

**Henry**

(Brief pause.) Nah, you sound younger.

(Lights up. Henry lies across the creatures' base. She cradles him, almost like a child.)

**Sprout**

Not sure if I should be grateful or offended.

**Henry**

Well, I meant it as a compliment, but, if you are that old, don't feel bad...

**Sprout**

Oh, shush. I don't feel bad about that. I'm basically a baby again, coming outta' the ground, from where I gestated, and seeing the light for the first time-

**Henry**

Are you saying you were birthed from the ground?

**Sprout**

(Sighs.) For the billionth time, I'm NOT a plant! I just... I dunno, came from a little egg planted... I mean PUT, in the soil, with my brothers and sisters, and we all just kinda'... go from there...

**Henry**

What do you mean, 'planted'? Do you have parents or anything like that?

**Sprout**

... Yeah, I do... I've never met them... But, when I get my wings, I might find them... I think that's what I'm supposed to do... I mean, if they even wanna' see me, I guess... I dunno...

**Henry**

(Brief pause.) They must have been good looking. (Awkward silence.) They made the prettiest flower I've ever seen.

**Sprout**

(Snorts.) You're gonna' make me choke.

**Henry**

You don't like that?

**Sprout**

... Well, there's worse things you could say.

**Henry**

Like, maybe, "I love you"?

**Sprout**

(Brief pause.) That's gross. (Giggles a little bit as she cradles him closer.) You're gross... And maybe a little bit perfect...

(The lights change, as if the days go by, while the two continue to cuddle. The creature is content, but starts to appear inquisitive.) You know, I was thinking about something...

**Henry**

I didn't know you could think.

**Sprout**

I just... (Pauses, realizes what he said. Glares, then goes back to what she was talking about) I was thinking... You probably could help me get my wings...

**Henry**

Okay. Just tell me what to do and I'll do it.

**Sprout**

... Not that it matters... But have you ever had sex?

**Henry**

... What?

**Sprout**

... I think you heard me.

**Henry**

... I mean... (Very long pause.) Sure... Maybe... Why? (The creature looks over longingly at Henry. She simply shrugs. He pauses.) How? (She shrugs even harder)

**Sprout**

Just a thought. (Long, awkward silence.) The weather's nice.

**Henry**

... Yeah. It's supposed to be really warm for the next few days... That's what I heard, I'm just telling you...

(Even more awkward silence, painfully long. Eventually, Henry finds it in himself to approach the creature until he is intimately close with her. He reaches down to his pants. The creature's lower half suddenly expands with a huge hole. Henry is taken aback.)

**Sprout**

What is it?

**Henry**

... Nothing, I'm just a little nervous.

**Sprout**

So am I. (Looks down, then back up.) Did I scare you?

**Henry**

No, no, it's just...

**Sprout**

It's too weird, I know. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said anything...

**Henry**

No, I was gonna' say... I'm nervous cause I want to impress you...

**Sprout**

Impress me? (Looks down again.) You don't think I'm ugly?

**Henry**

What? No, actually, I think you're the most beautiful girl I've ever met... And you make me so happy, and I want to make you happy...

**Sprout**

Oh, you do, shut up. (Her hole expands again, consuming his lower half. They have sex.)

## **Part 5: The Half-Proposal**

(In darkness.)

**Sprout**

Did you know that you're a god?

(Lights up. A similar scene to the start of their last encounters, but now the creature is draped across Henry's lap. She appears to have grown what appears to be very small nubs along her back.)

**Henry**

I'm a god?

**Sprout**

Oh yeah. You're a god in flesh-bag form. My little sex demon, you.

**Henry**

Can't say I'd ever hear anybody say that about me.

**Sprout**

... You know that I'm not just saying it, right? I need you. You're my everything. (He looks at her. She hesitates a little bit.) I know that sounds needy, but it's true. You're bringing out the best in me. Literally! See? (She motions to the nubs.)

**Henry**

No... It's not needy, I'm just not sure what to say.

**Sprout**

What to say? What is there to think about?

(The two stare at each other for a moment.)

**Henry**

I think I need you too. When I'm here, everything feels right. I don't have to think about... bad things... You make me feel perfect. And I wish I could feel that way all the time.

**Sprout**

Well, I mean, you ARE here with me a lot as it is...

**Henry**

No, but I need it all the time.

**Sprout**

(Confused.) Well, okay... I'll just give it to you, uh, more, then...

**Henry**

Well, actually, I was thinking, once you get your wings... and, you know, when you're free, you can come live with me. (Brief silence.) You know, I have... other "flesh-bags" like me who I'd have to explain a lot to about you, like my family, but... I don't know, I think they *might* like you... but we'd be together. Forever and always.

(The creature doesn't respond for a long time. She stirs a little, looking up to the sky then back down to the ground, very restrained.)

**Sprout**

That's really sweet of you.

**Henry**

(Awkward pause.) .... So.... What is that?

**Sprout**

What's what?

**Henry**

Is that a yes?

**Sprout**

... I don't know.

**Henry**

... You don't know?

**Sprout**

No. Not right now. Talk to me in a bit.

**Henry**

What's the problem?

**Sprout**

... I... Don't know if I should do it... Live away from here, I mean..

**Henry**

Why? You were just saying that I was your everything.

**Sprout**

Yes, you are... But... I'm just not sure if that'll be the right thing for me to do...

**Henry**

What are you talking about?

**Sprout**

... I guess, what I'm trying to say is, I don't know if that's what I need...

**Henry**

We need each other! We'll look after each other, and make each other happy! That's what I need, and that's what you need!

**Sprout**

(Offended.) You don't know what I need.

**Henry**

You just said you needed me, like, a minute ago.

**Sprout**

I do! I just... (The intense sound occurs. The insect-like legs look like they are about to sprout. She looks tense, but starts to get a hold of herself. Noise stops.) I don't know. Just let me give it time.

**Henry**

... Okay.

(Awkward silence. Then blackout.)

## **Part 6: The Wilting**

(In darkness. A strange sound is heard, resembling a wailing animal, yet more alien. Lights up, revealing the sound is coming from Sprout, who is screaming to the sky. Other sounds can be heard in the distance. Henry is off to the side; she doesn't see him. He approaches.)

**Henry**

Hey.

**Sprout**

(Startled.) Holy- Don't scare me like that.

**Henry**

... Sorry... Were you singing just now?

**Sprout**

Huh?... Oh... Sure, I guess it was...

**Henry**

Are you sad?

**Sprout**

(She snaps.) Okay, stop that.

**Henry**

I'm sorry?

**Sprout**

You're treating me like I'm totally helpless. I'm not helpless.

**Henry**

... I didn't think that-

**Sprout**

Oh no? Here's something for you to think about: If I was to live with you, you wouldn't just coop me up all the time, keeping me for yourself? What, when you're gone, I'm just going to sleep all day, waiting for you to come back?!

**Henry**

... Okay, first of all, I just thought it was a nice thing to offer, considering... you know, everything that we have. Secondly, you're getting to grow wings! You could go wherever you wanted to!

**Sprout**

Yeah, and what's stopping me from flying whenever I want, wherever, and to whatever I *need* to SURVIVE?! Because you have NO IDEA what that is!

**Henry**

Jesus, calm down! Tell me what you need, and I can get it for you!

**Sprout**

You CAN'T! Do you see my wings? They're rotting again, because I'm miserable! That "singing" you heard? That's me calling my family, because they miss me! I heard my mother and she misses me! (Desperation in her voice.) I didn't know that... I didn't know she cared... And they all know EXACTLY what I need! NOT YOU!

**Henry**

Okay. I'm sorry... I'm sorry I'm not good enough to cater to your every whim.

**Sprout**

Fucking Christ... THIS! HAS NOTHING! TO DO! WITH "GOOD ENOUGH"! (The insect-like legs come out again. They grab onto Henry and shake him.) DON'T YOU DARE EVER SAY THAT! ONLY / CAN NEVER BE "GOOD ENOUGH", BECAUSE YOU'LL ONLY EVER SEE ME AS SOME STUPID FLOWER THING! ... I hate this... I hate myself... I hate myself and I want to die...

(Blackout.)

**Part 7: ???**

(Lights up. There is a strange mass where the creature should be. Henry cautiously approaches it.)

**Henry**

... Hello?

**Sprout**

Oh, hey... sorry, I'm still getting used to these... they're really weird...

(She unfurls herself. Her wings are huge and gorgeous.)

**Henry**

Oh my god. You're beautiful.

(She giggles a little.)

**Sprout**

Thank you. Thank you for giving them to me.

**Henry**

Ah, it was nothing, really...

**Sprout**

(With sincerity.) No, it's not just nothing... (Silence.) Look, I need to talk to you about something...

**Henry**

Yeah, I know.

**Sprout**

... You know you've done nothing wrong, right?

**Henry**

... Yeah...

**Sprout**

... I have to leave... I could lose these if I stay... (She motions to her wings.) I can go find my family and my friends now... (No response.) This is what I've been waiting for...

**Henry**

Will you come back?

**Sprout**

... I'm... not sure if I can...

**Henry**

... Okay...

**Sprout**

... Are you okay?

**Henry**

Well, it seems like you've made up your mind pretty quickly. Don't let me stop you.

(Sprout is slightly taken aback, but probably expected that response.)

**Sprout**

Okay... Goodbye... I love you...

**Henry**

(Suddenly.) Please don't go. I don't want you to go.

**Sprout**

Don't tell me not to go.

**Henry**

I don't want you to go. I'll do anything. Please don't go.

**Sprout**

Stop it! ... Just stop. There's nothing you can say. It's over.

**Henry**

Why? What did I do? I thought I made you happy...

**Sprout**

... You did, but... I'm not happy now, or anymore... And I have to do what I need to so I can be happy.

**Henry**

I can make you happy...

**Sprout**

No, you can't. There's a whole life out there that's waiting for me. I'll never get that here.

**Henry**

I need you! You told me you needed me!

**Sprout**

I... Of course I needed you. Listen to me, of course I needed you. Just look at me! I wouldn't have these things without you. And wherever they take me, I'll always be thankful for you being in my life so I could have them. (He nods, but can't bring himself to look at her. She hesitates, then approaches.) I'm going to kiss you now. It doesn't mean I'm going to be here for you. It means I'll always love you. And I'll never forget you...

(She embraces him with her wings. The two are hidden from sight. Blackout.)

## **Epilogue**

(Lights up. The creature is now gone, and Henry is alone. He sits by himself where the creature used to be. There is silence, except for the ambience of the woods. In the distance, the strange wailing sounds from before can be heard. He perks up to listen, but does not sit up to follow them. He just listens. Blackout.)

**FIN**