

A Musical Adaptation of Paula Vogel's *The Baltimore Waltz*

Book, Lyrics, & Melody: Lauren Katz

Accompaniment: Jonja Merck

SCENE 29 - *Waiting Room of a Hospital. ANNA is seated in a row of waiting chairs next to a LITTLE GIRL, around seven years old. ANNA is antsy, fidgety, and restless. She doesn't quite know what to do with herself.*

THE WAITING GAME

ANNA

You begin to hope that the wait is proportionate to the medical expertise. My God.

TILES ON THE FLOOR.
SO STERILE. ANNA—
PERFECTLY PRISTINE.
IN PERIL. ANNA...
ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, SICK—
NO, SIX, ANNA—
FOCUS ON THE CLOCK'S HAND.
IT TICKS, ANNA.

*ANNA notices the LITTLE GIRL,
who is engrossed in playing puppets
with her hands.*

ANNA

Hi, um, excuse me, what are you doing?

LITTLE GIRL

I'm playing The Waiting Game.

ANNA

Oh. *(beat)* Can I play with you?
(The LITTLE GIRL nods)
So what did I miss?

LITTLE GIRL

Well, Mr. Left *(gestures to her left hand "puppet")* and Mr. Right *(gestures to her right hand "puppet")* are having a finger war. All because Mr. Right stole Mr. Left's pinkie.

ANNA

I see. Who has the upper hand?

LITTLE GIRL

Mr. Right - (*whispers to ANNA*) but not for long! (*Left hand speaks*) Sneak attack! I got your thumb, na-na-na-na-na! (*Right hand speaks*) Then I'll take your thumb *and* your pointer finger! (*Left hand speaks*) Oh yeah? Then I'll take *all* of your fingers! (*Right hand speaks*) Well I'll take all of *your* fingers *too*!

ANNA

My gosh, where do they go from here?

LITTLE GIRL

(*pauses to think*)

If Mr. Left has all of Mr. Right's fingers, and Mr. Right has all of Mr. Left's fingers... then Mr. Left is now Mr. Right, and Mr. Right is Mr. Left.

A NURSE enters.

NURSE

Annabelle? The doctor's ready to see you.

The LITTLE GIRL gets up and follows the NURSE out.

ANNA

No, wait! Come back! I need to know how the story ends! How do they switch back? What if they don't want to switch back? Why are you leaving me?

ANNA is back to being alone with her own thoughts.

FOCUS ON THE CLOCK'S HAND.
IT TICKS...
REACH INTO YOUR OLD
BAG OF TRICKS, ANNA...

ANNA tries a new distraction, attempting to play "The Waiting Game" with the audience.

A TRIP TO EUROPE. AND...
WITH MY BROTHER. AND...
NESTLED IN ONE BED,
NOTHING LAY AHEAD
BESIDES EACH OTHER. AND...
HE HOGGED THE COVERS,

AND I DIDN'T CARE.
'CAUSE I WAS RIGHT HERE,
AND HE WAS RIGHT THERE.
AND THEN...AND THEN...
I'M SORRY, WHERE WAS I?
SHOULD I START AGAIN?

WHERE OH WHERE IS MY INNER CHILD?
MY BRAIN FULL OF TALES THAT WOULD BRIGHTEN THE NIGHT.
OH I WISH I MAY, AND I WISH I MIGHT
REMEMBER HOW TO PLAY THE WAITING GAME.
MY WAITING GAME.

WE STOPPED IN HOLLAND. AND...
TOURED PARIS, FRANCE. AND...
SPLURGED ON MOUNTAIN TOPS.
STROLLED THROUGH ANTIQUE SHOPS.
LEFT NOTHING UP TO CHANCE.
EACH MILE FELT SACRED,
EACH SMILE, A PRAYER.
'CAUSE TIME FLIES WAY TOO FAST.
WHY WON'T IT PLAY FAIR?
AND SO... AND SO...
I'M SORRY, I LOST
WHERE I WANTED TO GO...

WHERE OH WHERE IS MY INNER CHILD?
SHE FILED AWAY THE "WHAT IFS" AND "WHY'S."
OH WHY CAN'T I WITNESS THE WORLD THROUGH HER EYES?
WITHIN THEM LIE THE WAY TO WIN THE WAITING GAME.
IT'S NOT THE SAME.

LYING IN WAIT.
WADING IN LIES.
KNOWING WELL IT'S TOO LATE.
I'M NOT GOOD AT GOODBYES.
LESSEN THE WEIGHT
THAT'S DROWNING MY EYES.
IT'S ALL FUN AND GAMES
UNTIL SOMEBODY...

WHERE OH WHERE DID MY INNER CHILD FLEE?
SHE'S FILED AWAY, FORSAKING ME.
SO THEN, WHAT IF THIS GAME CAN'T BE WON?

AND THEN, WHAT IF THIS TALE CAN'T BE SPUN?
WHAT IF I'VE KNOWN THE ENDING BEFORE EVER PENNING PAGE ONE?
AND ALL I CAN DO IS COUNT DOWN EACH MINUTE,
HATING THE PART THAT I'M PLAYING IN IT.
OH WHY CAN'T I BE THAT LITTLE GIRL?
AND HE...SHE BE ME?

READ THE FINAL CHAPTER BEFORE THE **STORIES DONE/STARTING**
CHAPTER ONE?

AND ALL I CAN DO IS WAIT, COUNTING DOWN EACH MINUTE.

HATING THE PART THAT I'M PLAYING **IN IT**.

OH WHY CAN'T I BE THAT LITTLE GIRL,

AND SHE-HE BE ME?

CAN I MAKE IT SLOW

TABLEAU,

GO, KNOW, THOUGH, AGO,

I'M SORRY, I REALLY

DO KNOW WHERE TO GO

AND NOTHING FELT WRONG, WAS WRONG, IS WRONG, WHY CAN'T I
PLAY ALONG?

I'M SORRY, WHERE WAS I?

SHOULD I START AGAIN?

WHERE OH WHERE IS THE YOUNGER ME?
WITH FILES OF STORIES THAT BRIGHTENED THE NIGHT.
OH I WISH I MAY, AND I WISH I MIGHT
REMEMBER HOW TO PLAY **THE/MY** WAITING GAME.
THE WAITING GAME.

WHERE OH WHERE IS MY YOUNGER SELF?
MY BRAIN WAS A SHELF FILLED WITH TALES THAT I'D WRITE
HOW I WISH I MAY, HOW I WISH I MIGHT
REMEMBER HOW TO PLAY THAT/MY WAITING GAME

WHERE OH WHERE IS MY YOUNGER SELF?
FULL OF ENDLESS TALL TALES THAT I LOVED TO TELL.
I WISH I MAY, AND I WISH I MIGHT DWELL
WITHIN THOSE DREAMS TODAY, IF I PLAY THE WAITING GAME.

HOW I WISH I MAY, HOW I WISH I MIGHT
REMEMBER HOW TO PLAY THAT/MY WAITING GAME

AND NOTHING FELT WRONG, WAS WRONG, IS WRONG, WHY CAN'T I
PLAY ALONG?

AND NOTHING FELT WRONG.
ANNA, WHY CAN'T YOU PLAY ALONG

IT REMINDED ME O
NOTHING WAS WRONG
ANNA, WHY CAN'T YOU JUST PLAY ALONG

YOU USED TO KNOW HOW,
SO WHY CAN'T YOU NOW

ONCE UPON A TIME,
I TOOK A TRIP TO EUROPE
WITH MY BROTHER.
AND...

HAND, GRAND, LAND, PLANNED, STAND, FIRSHAND, WITHSTAND,
UNDERSTAND, WONDERLAND

BALTIMORE'S A BORE–
NO, I'M HERE IN VIENNA.
BUD LITES FROM A CART–
NO, A BEER IN VIENNA.
TRACE BACK ALL YOUR TRAVELS:
HEIDELBERG, BAVARIA.
PICTURE-BOOK BROCHURES
THAT SAID: MYCOBACTERIA.

NOTHING WRONG
WITH MAKE-BELIEVING.
PLAY ALONG

YOU USED TO KNOW HOW,
SO WHY CAN'T YOU NOW
SIT AND WAIT?
AND WAIT, AND WAIT, AND WAIT AND WAIT, AND –

WHERE OH WHERE IS MY YOUNGER SELF?
WHOSE BRAIN FILLED WITH TALES THAT WOULD BRIGHTEN THE NIGHT.

OH I WISH I MAY, AND I WISH I MIGHT
REMEMBER HOW TO PLAY **THE/MY** WAITING GAME.
THE WAITING GAME.

BALTIMORE'S A BORE–
NO, I'M HERE IN VIENNA.
BUD LITES FROM A CART–
NO, A BEER IN VIENNA.
TRACE BACK ALL YOUR TRAVELS:
HEIDELBERG, **BAVARIA**.
PICTURE-BOOK BROCHURES
THAT SAID: **MYCOBACTERIA**.

THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE!
THERE'S NO FIX, ANNA.
FOCUS ON THE CLOCK'S HAND.
IT TICKS, ANNA.
EACH SECOND DRAGS BY
LIKE A LIFETIME AS I TRY
TO SIT AND WAIT.
AND WAIT, AND WAIT, AND WAIT AND WAIT, AND –

WHERE OH WHERE IS MY INNER CHILD?
SHE FILED AWAY THE "WHAT IFS" AND "WHY'S."
OH WHY CAN'T I WITNESS THE WORLD THROUGH HER EYES?
WITHIN THEM LIE THE WAY **TO WIN/TO PLAY** THE WAITING GAME.
IT'S NOT THE SAME.

LYING IN WAIT.
WADING IN LIES.
KNOWING WELL IT'S TOO LATE.
I'M NOT GOOD AT GOODBYES.
LESSEN THE WEIGHT
THAT'S DROWNING MY EYES.
IT'S ALL FUN AND GAMES
UNTIL SOMEBODY...

WHERE OH WHERE DID MY INNER CHILD FLEE?
SHE'S FILED AWAY, FORSAKING ME.
WHAT IF THIS WAIT CAN'T BE WON?
WHAT IF THIS TALE CAN'T BE SPUN?
WHAT IF I READ THE FINAL CHAPTER BEFORE **STORIES DONE/READING**
CHAPTER ONE?
AND HAVE BEEN SITTING ON IT,

WAITING FOR IT
HATE THE PART I'M PLAYING **FOR/IN IT.**

OH WHY CAN'T I BE THAT LITTLE GIRL,
AND SHE-HE-SHE BE ME?

SCRAPS

THAT RIVALED BOOKS ON MY SHELF.