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I WILL LOVE NO MORE FOREVER

By Robert Joseph Kurek

A short, one act play

THE CHARACTERS: Cynic, Conscience, Love
THE SCENE:

A small courtyard in no particular time period. Cynic is standing near a small reflecting pool of water. He is in a very despondent mood. As the scene opens, he does not notice two ghost-like figures standing by his side. He is very desperately trying to figure out the meaning of his life. He is talking to his reflection in the pool of water.

Cynic: (With remorse) What purpose is there to continue this awkward existence? What is the purpose of life to a man who knows not what he is, where he is, or of what he may become? My life is nothing! I am without purpose. Each life must have a purpose — we must have a reason for being — for without reason, what is the purpose? Why must we exist at all? (Paces back and forth. Stands silently for a few moments to gather his thoughts.) The true purpose of life is love — to love and to be loved — for without love we are nothing, therefore purposeless. (Tone changes to anger) Love is denied me — I am weighed down by the ponderous rock of loneliness; it forces me to my knees — and bows my neck till I fear that only the axman's blade can end my awful misery. (Becomes remorseful again) Few are those that care that I exist. What friends I may number, most are unreliable. My soul requires the emotional love of a woman — but the fates deny me such pleasure. I have lost all my hopes; my dreams have been shattered beyond reform by those who took my heart and tossed it aside as if it were but a toy. O Goddess of love! My soul is so open to you; my heart aches to be touched by you, but I fear you will trample down upon them again and slay my very spirit. I fear the shadow of death is closing fast. The passion has long ago burned itself out. I am beyond caring. I am defeated. I cannot continue to exist without purpose.

As Cynic is about to jump into the pool, Conscience reaches out and touches his shoulder.

Conscience: Endulging in self-pity again, my friend?

Cynic: Ah! My conscience calls! Of what am I to make of this? Why don't you leave me be? Surely you have little use for me now. I am so annoyed with life that self-pity is the only pleasure I have left. Allow me to indulge in this one last pleasure.

Conscience: (Shaking his head) Feeling sorry for yourself is not the answer. It only obstructs the path to love. It is like a sore that will not heal till it consumes you to nothingness. You have made many mistakes with love, but you close your eyes to the truth of why. Love has not abandoned you — it has always been with you if you would only accept it for what it really and truly is.

Love: (Tenderly) Yes, my friend, accept me for what I am and you will see and feel all that I can be! Let me into your soul and I will embrace your heart!

Cynic: (Stepping back from Love and angrily replying) Bringing in some help, heh Conscience? LET ME BE! You have tried this treachery before. It will not, nay, it cannot happen again. Go away, Love! Your teasing only stiffens my resistance to you! (Tone again is remorseful) You have already slain my soul, what more can I sacrifice to your cursed charms? My spirit is dead.

Conscience: Cynic, you are a contradiction in terms. (Turns to Love) He shouts out to you! He cries out his need to be loved! He moans that he is not loved! He begs, he pleads he cries! And when you appear, he slams the door in your face! (Turns back to Cynic) You must realize how absurd your position!

Cynic: I am what I am. . . and I am afraid.

Conscience: Everyone is afraid, my friend. Everyone is like you, and of you, and for you. Fear is a natural condition of life.

Love: I am as afraid of you, as you are of me, Cynic.

Cynic: (With feeling) You take me for a fool? Love afraid of me? I laugh! What have I ever done to you!

Love: (Hurt) You have rejected me time and time again.

Cynic: (With disbelief) I rejected you? You have rejected me! (Starts to become angry again) You have always rejected me! You have teased me beyond all human endurance — you've tortured my spirit — and always deserted me when I needed you the most. (Becomes almost tearful) You've toyed with my feelings for too long. I've reached out to you, begging, and all I ever wanted was for you to be with me. To give me hope; to give me a dream; to give me a purpose. (Strikes out in anger) You are cruel! Terrible! A witch! You have taught me to hate, to despise. You've destroyed me — my hopes and my dreams. (Bitterly) And you stand there and say to me, that it is I that rejected you.

Love: (Understanding) I tell you this because it is so.

Conscience: (Putting his arm around Cynic) Listen to love my friend. Listen to her words. Listen to her whispers and her sayings. Listen. For once in your life, listen.

Cynic: (Pushing Conscience's arm away) I will not listen to such nonsense!

Conscience: (Losing his patience) You will listen! I have let this matter go too far. I will have my say. Do not glance away! When a mind is closed it is difficult to work with. But you will hear the truth. There is a famous philosopher alive today — his name escapes me — but I will paraphrase him when I say, "Love comes to you the old fashioned way — you have to earn it!"

Cynic: Really, Conscience, I think you have finally gone off the deep end. You are supposed to be my conscience, not my judge. You blame ME for being unloved? I will not hear of this! It is nonsense. I want to be loved. I want someone more than life itself! It cannot be as you say! It just cannot be!

Conscience: Cynic, you are your own worst enemy. You are still contradicting your own true feelings. Look back into your past — look deeply into the meaning of your relationships and you will see that the reason you are not loved is because you will not love in return. You are trapped by your own sense of well being. You want everything, but will give nothing. You want it your way or no way at all. You cannot be bothered to work for what you desire. How can love work in such an atmosphere? I tell you, you need not surrender your identity, but you must unselfishly give of yourself. You have trapped your own spirit. Let it go! Remember back to those moments when your spirit was free — how love overcame all obstacles, how happy you were — until you recaptured your spirit and imprisoned it again. Love will not survive a spirit that is suppressed. Loved will surely die.

Love: (With extreme tenderness) I am a flower, Cynic. I am born of a seed. I am nurtured and pruned and I will live as long as the spirit is free. You have planted the seed but never waited for me to blossom. You have never allowed me to grow. You kill the spirit that nurtures the flower.

Cynic: (His feelings hurt) You never gave me the chance to watch you grow! You always took those I loved away from me! Others you give second and third chances! No one I ever cared for has ever given me a second chance! I made mistakes, yes. But must I always pay with the total loss of her love? Cannot anyone ever forgive me so that I can redeem myself? Why do you desert me but not others who do not have half the compassion I do?

Love: Question yourself! Examine yourself into the very depths of your soul. Beyond even! Was it I that deserted you or was it you that deserted me? Look deeply — past the present, beyond the future, into the past. A vision will appear — this is the object that has prevented me from fulfilling your hopes and dreams. It is this and only this that stands in the way of your happiness. Deeper, Cynic — beyond the eternal light — beyond the very reaches of your soul is the devil god that is destroying you!

Conscience: (Tossing a wad of money into Cynic's face. The money flutters to the ground while Cynic looks on in amazement) Yes, my friend, it is money that you love. You sacrifice all in the name of wealth. You have nothing! You lost someone that you truly cared about because you wanted more money. Because of this you lost her, and then you lost your job, and finally, lost all the money that you worked so hard to have. You have nothing!

Cynic: But who is to say that I would not have lost all these anyway?

Love: And who is to say you would have? No, Cynic, there are no guarantees in life and that is what you desire. Nothing is guaranteed, not even love.

Cynic: (Despairingly) I am forty years old. Life has passed me by. I have no way of finding someone now even if I agree with what you say. I don't know anyone and even if I did I would be too afraid of rejection to try. It is hopeless.

Love: All I ask from you is that you always keep an open mind; for ever let your spirit fly; keep no secrets in your soul, and most importantly never confine your heart in a prison of selfishness. Reject no one. Perhaps I will not come to you in the manner you would expect, but I will come to you!

Cynic: (Unsure of himself) Well, I. . . (With resolve) No! I will love no more forever!

Conscience: Forever, Cynic? Forever is eternity. When you have been dead one million years, you will still be dead forever. That's a long time to never want to love. I urge you to think again — to forget your past bitterness, and think about your life. You have done much good, you have a unique kindness and understanding of the weak and the underdog — your values are correct — but here is where you leave the track. You expect too much in return. Be unselfish — expect and require no rewards. Do what makes you feel good. Forget about doing the things you do just to be noticed. Learn to love for love's sake. There are a lot of lonely people out there — people that only need to be touched by someone who cares. Open doors for them and they will open doors for you. Let your spirit be free! O, I admit I know not what life may have in store, but I know that life is too short to be tossed carelessly about. Forever is forever.

Love: Let me in and I will show you the way. Let me grow and I will be with you always. Let me blossom and there is nothing we cannot do.

Cynic: (Tosses the money into the air. A smile crosses his face) Yes, yes! I see it now. Such a fool I have been. Such a life I have wasted. No! I will not quit! My spirit go, you are free. My soul — be trapped no more by the devil god — and my heart, my all so lonesome heart — beat for others as well as thineself. Let us go forth, if not to conquer the world, then to be of the world. Conscience, you shall be my policeman — right me when I go wrong, and love,

you by my side shall guide me. (He turns suddenly and notices that Love is gone, but he feels a new warmth) What is that glow? Love, you were there, but now you are here, inside my soul. Your warmth has made me comfortable. I am at peace with myself. Yes, I will allow you to grow to grow as tall as tall may be. I am free. I am free.

Conscience and Cynic walk off arm in arm.

By Julianne Kurns

“ . . . Or did we make them
because we needed to love someone
and could not love each other.”

— from, **Five Poems for Dolls** by Margaret Atwood

Pickin' a voodoo doll
as a lover ain't
so smart, baby.

Notice the way it props on the shelf and
stares, its glassy bean-eyes shifting,
the only motion in the room;

its crude straw body turning to
granite as the days go on and
the pins fall out three at a time;

one hundred thirteen strands of hair,
thickly matted braids that it
wields to lash and constrain you while

seven grotesque teeth honed, wait for
the moment you are dozing so it can
seize your lily-white throat

rendering you lifeless, and say
“I told you so, I told you so, I told you so.”

PROPER PRUDENCE

By Jan Lynne

I wish you could meet Proper Prudence,
Who regarded all folks as her students;
She preached right from wrong,
Her values were strong —
She'd repay even debts of two cents.

Her language was always “G” rated,
Her greting cards never belated.
She consulted Ms. Post
When she had to play host,
And her dishes were all silver-plated.

She was always dressed in a dress —
She wouldn't settle for anything less!
Out to shop, at the shore,
It was all that she wore,
And her suntan was not a success.

When introduced, she'd say “How do you do?”
And give a quick handshake or two.
She'd sit straight in her chair
In her beauty shop hair,
And she refused to get sick with the flu.

Her house was quite spotless by nine;
Off her floor one could easily dine.
Her cat dared not shed
Or sit on the bed,
And her children? They all toed the line.

She teetotaled all of her life.
There was never a more faithful wife.
She despised cigarettes,
Abhorred violence and sex,
And she allowed in her family no strife.

Proper Prudence, she met her demise;
It was certainly quite a surprise!
She slipped on her floor
While dusting the door
And was never again to arise.

And so she has passed on today
And approves of her new home, we pray.
If she rubs her white gloves
Against heavenly doves
And finds dust (!), I'm afraid she won't stay.