

Newton's Call

by
Patrick Gabridge

Patrick Gabridge
19 Netherlands Road, #1
Brookline, MA 02445
(617) 959-1437
pat@gabridge.com
www.gabridge.com
copyright Patrick Gabridge 2011

Newton's Call

Setting: the branches of a large tree in the city

Time: Right now.

Characters: 1 woman, 1 man, plus 2 offstage voices (1 man, 1 woman)

Ariel, early 30s

Jasper, early 30s

Synopsis:

Jasper hopes to use a tree and the power of gravity (and a few apples) to help shake up his relationship with Ariel

(9/13/11)

NEWTON'S CALL

The branches of a big tree in the city. We hear the sounds of traffic, birds, etc.

Ariel reaches up into the branches from below, with assistance from Jasper, who is below her.

JASPER

Okay. Ready. Up we go!

ARIEL

Grunt a little less, okay? Don't make me sound so heavy.

JASPER

You're light as a feather.

ARIEL

Shut up. How do I--

JASPER

Grab that branch and pull yourself up. There you go.

Ariel struggles to pull herself up into the tree.

ARIEL

We're too old to be climbing trees. I think twelve is the top age. Thirty is definitely too late.

JASPER

Just go, so I can climb up before someone notices.

Ariel climbs a little higher in the tree.

Jasper climbs up and joins her.

ARIEL

This is stupid.

JASPER

Shhh. Keep your voice down.

ARIEL

We're in the middle of the South End. We've been spotted.

JASPER

People don't notice as much as you think. And if they do, they'll just think we're weird and move on. People do all kinds of strange things around here.

ARIEL

If we fall, we'll break our necks. It's not like we have a lovely lawn below. The South End is all about brick. Bricks hurt. And I can just picture myself with one of those little wrought iron fence posts jutting through my forehead.

JASPER

Climb a little higher, so we're out of sight.

They climb a little higher.

ARIEL

I don't think we're supposed to be up here. Maybe this is what people do in the country, but not in the city.

JASPER

Just relax.

ARIEL

All that stands between me and life in a wheelchair is a four inch branch and my natural grace. I don't trust either.

JASPER

Take a breath. Look around.

ARIEL

I'm not going any higher.

JASPER

We're high enough. No one will see us.

ARIEL

Good, because if Terri and Donna see me up here, I'll never hear the end of it.

A birdsong, close.

ARIEL

Holy crap, what's that?

JASPER

A titmouse.

ARIEL

What does it want from me?

JASPER

Nothing. It's a bird.

More birdsong.

ARIEL

What's it doing?

JASPER

Singing.

ARIEL

It's staring at us. We're intruding on its territory.

JASPER

It's just a bird.

ARIEL

Yeah, and it probably has twenty little bird friends up here, scheming to rid this tree of human invaders.

JASPER

Or it could just be singing.

ARIEL

There's another one.

JASPER

That's a robin.

ARIEL

I'm a city girl. A ground level city girl, okay?

JASPER

It's nice and cool up here, isn't it?

ARIEL

Not exactly AC, but yeah. I guess you're right.

JASPER

And the light. It's different.

ARIEL

Greener.

JASPER

Lush and lively, but still soothing.

ARIEL

I'll give you that.

JASPER

Just take it in for a minute. Okay?

ARIEL

Fine.

Birdsong.

Traffic down below, distant.

Sound of the breeze in the leaves.

Ariel pauses to take it all in.

JASPER
It's all right, isn't it?

ARIEL
I guess so. Yeah. It's nice. Jasper?

JASPER
Hm.

ARIEL
Why are we up here?

JASPER
You said we never do anything. You claimed that we're completely stuck in a dull routine.

ARIEL
I don't know if--

JASPER
You said nothing about us offers any inspiration. To you, to us, to anyone.

ARIEL
I say a lot of things.

JASPER
I don't want you to be, but I think you're right.

ARIEL
So you thought we should climb a tree.

JASPER
For a start.

He unzips his backpack and takes out a bag of apples.

ARIEL
What's that?

JASPER
Apples. Here.

ARIEL
My hands are busy keeping me from plunging to my death and fighting off titmice.

JASPER
Take the apple.

She does.

ARIEL

Now what?

JASPER

Look for someone to inspire.

ARIEL

What?

JASPER

Shhh. How about that guy, the one reading down there? He looks like a thinker.

ARIEL

You want me to take this apple--

JASPER

And drop it.

ARIEL

On someone's head.

JASPER

A Newton moment. You think it was just a random apple that fell on Newton? What if there was someone up there, someone like us?

ARIEL

You think the way out of our rut is to climb up here and throw apples at people?

JASPER

Drop. Not throw. Drop. Gently. And they're small apples, the smallest I could find.

ARIEL

He'll call the cops.

JASPER

He'll think about something. It'll jostle him. Him and us. You'll see.

ARIEL

He's probably not a physicist, he's probably just an actor. Probably reading reviews or learning lines for an audition. Maybe we should go over to MIT and do this. (beat) Is this even an apple tree?

JASPER

No. But most people won't know that.

ARIEL

You're crazy.

I'm going to try. JASPER

Jasper. ARIEL

One, two, three. JASPER

He drops an apple. It disappears below.

Missed. JASPER

Shh. ARIEL

He didn't even look up. JASPER

Definitely an actor. That's a script, not a magazine. ARIEL

You try. JASPER

How about the couple at the table? ARIEL

They're too far out. You'll never make it. JASPER

You've never seen me play bocce. ARIEL

You play bocce? JASPER

There's things you don't know about me. ARIEL

Try it. JASPER

Look at them. Not much eye contact. They might as well not even be at the same table. Do you think they even talk to each other anymore? ARIEL

Maybe they've forgotten how. JASPER