

ONE NIGHT

A 10-minute Monologue

by

Mare Biddle

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Cast

Susan:

A woman in her mid 40's
She is shy, warm and
slightly self-conscious

SCENE:

Restaurant in New York City.

TIME:

2005

ONE NIGHT

SETTING: A table set for two in a casual restaurant. Two water glasses and a breadbasket are on the table. There may be other patrons seated in the dark around her well-lit table, or she may be the only player on stage.

AT RISE: SUSAN is seated at the table fooling with her napkin. Throughout the play Susan addresses the audience and at other times seems to be talking to her younger self.

SUSAN

They're playing Barry Manilow in the bathroom. How hilarious is that. I swear, I knew the words to just about every one of his songs in the 70's.

The first time I heard Barry Manilow's *Weekend in New England* I was at my first boy-girl party and Scott Benson was standing toe to toe with me asking me to dance.

(SUSAN gazes out into her memories.)

He took the Tab cola from my hand and led me into the middle of the den. Scott slid his long thin arms around my waist, resting his clasped hands across the back of my hips.

I felt something inside my stomach shift; my thighs tingled. I wondered if Scott felt the curve in my spine; if he could tell that my right hip was three quarters of an inch higher than my left. I brought my arms up around his neck and laid my head on his shoulder. I felt his breath; he smelled like fresh laundry and... McDonald's french fries.

My eyes adjusted to the glow of the lava lamps around the room. Three of Scott's teammates huddled around one of those Octagon-shaped game tables, clutching Coors cans, ogling the layouts in Mr. Vaughn's Playboy magazines. I didn't know how the boys snuck the beer past Debbie's mother, but it made me think about Sami. I wondered what she was doing that night.

Samantha and her family moved in next-door two weeks before first grade started. Samantha was petite, hyperactive... and you know... she always seemed to carry a whiff of sour milk about her.

I remember one day that year when Sami came to school with a chipped front tooth. Sami said she smacked her mouth on the bottom of their pool while playing a diving game with her cousins. We made eye contact, and she looked away. Sami's pool didn't have any water in it, and I was pretty sure she didn't have any cousins around either. I piped up, "We could hear you in our house. It sounded like you were having a great time in the pool!" We were best friends after that.

(SUSAN checks her watch and looks for her companion.)

Scott pulled me closer so our hips touched. I was sure he could feel my limp as we turned circles on the shag carpeting. They found the scoliosis in my spine when I was 12. *They* wanted to put me in a back brace. Have you seen those things? There were two to choose from, and they both had a goddamn halo around the top of the neck. No way was I going to wear that thing.

I cried a lot. But Sami – she was always with me. During lunch recess one day one of Scott’s teammates made fun of me out on the bleachers. Sami jumped to her feet, marched down to where he was sitting and punched him in the face! “I’d rather have a limp than an ugly face!” she yelled.

Sami knew a lot about hitting. Her grandfather was an alcoholic. Sami’s father didn’t drink because “he didn’t want his kid growing up with a drunk for a father.” But, her dad... he was mean... and sometimes Sami got in the way.

(SUSAN drinks from her water glass.)

At first, her mother called to see if Sami could sleepover. Eventually, she just started bringing her stuff over in the middle of the night. But one night, when Sami hadn’t gotten out of the house soon enough, her father shoved her clear through their Arcadia door.

Even though I missed my best friend that night, I also felt relieved that Sami wasn’t at the party. I was worried that if she had been there that I would have needed to protect her from rude whispers about her dad, and I really wanted to dance with Scott...

(SUSAN checks her cell phone for messages.)

I could tell the song was ending. Scott lifted his arm up to my cheek, brushed my hair back off my shoulder and nuzzled his face against my neck. My knees swayed. I remember that I giggled and started to squirm, but then he raised his head to my ear and whispered, “shh....”

And I finally got it – at the end of the song, I would be his girlfriend. Later that night, at the end of the driveway, Scott kissed me for the first time.

(Her focus floats away with the memory.)

Standing under the street light waiting for my father to pick me up, I realized that I had my first boyfriend, and I realized that everything would be different about me after just that one night.

I knew that I would wait for Scott at his locker Monday morning, and he would kiss me when the bell rang for homeroom. I was pretty sure that Debbie and Carol would invite me to sit with them at lunch, and they would share their lip-gloss with me during P.E. class. I bet all of Scott's teammates would nod approvingly in my direction when they passed me on the breezeway.

And when Sami tried to catch my eye in Social Studies on Monday... I wondered for the first time... if I would look away.