

THE WONDER OF YOU

CHARACTERS:

GIRL..... 18; recent high school graduate. Animated, candid and charming. She wears jeans, a sleeveless top, and a large backpack.  
MAN..... Late 30s; casually dressed. Shy, gentle, a good listener.

TIME:

A hot afternoon in late June

PLACE:

The corner of Magnolia and Pine  
Chamblee, Georgia

Set requirement: A bench

*(MAN nods at GIRL and starts exiting, dragging his suitcase.  
Suddenly, HE stops. HE wavers, then turns around to face GIRL. )*

MAN cont.

Name five things you know about your father.

GIRL

What?

MAN

I said, name five things you know about your –

GIRL

You've got to be kidding me!

MAN

You're stalling. I think you're stalling.

GIRL

No, I'm not!

MAN

You don't know one thing about him, Miss. You don't know if he's a ... a thief, or if he likes green peppers, or –

GIRL

Pie! My father liked frozen blueberry pie.

MAN

That's one thing. You know hundreds of things about Henry. What did he do that you can't forgive him for?

GIRL

*(furiously)* I'm not listening to you. You don't know what you're talking about.

MAN

We're not talking about me. I asked you to name five things that you know about father.

GIRL

He wore a lucky red bandana, okay? OKAY? Never took it off.

*(MAN looks at her uneasily)*

Stop LOOKING at me like that!

MAN

*(quietly)* That's two things.

GIRL

He loved my mother.

MAN

I'm sure he did.

GIRL

He LOVED my mother!

MAN

I don't doubt it. That's three things.

GIRL

So ... so why did he leave me?

MAN

I can't answer that, Miss. I wish I could.

GIRL

If he loved us so much, why did he leave me!?

*(GIRL's breath becomes ragged. SHE paces)*

I kept calling for him. "Henry, Henry!" And the movie ... it kept playing. And, "Henry, I need you!" And she was hardly breathing by then. The credits are playing and ... her hands. Her hands were colder than a February frost, and ...

*(GIRL turns to MAN)*

Where was he for 136 minutes, huh? You tell me that. When I needed him most, when my mother drew her last breath! – WHERE WAS HENRY THEN!?

*(GIRL is in anguish. SHE sits down on the bench, hard, quivering, but SHE doesn't cry. As SHE calms down, MAN moves towards her.)*

GIRL cont.

Go away.

*(MAN moves towards her again.)*

GO AWAY.

MAN

I didn't mean you any harm. I never want to cause you any harm, Miss.

*(Silence. MAN shifts from side to side. Then HE turns to leave.)*

GIRL

*(softly)* Stay.

*(SHE calls out louder.)*

Mister, please ... stay.

*(MAN stops. GIRL pauses.)*

My father wasn't there for my entire lifetime ... but I forgive him. Why can't I forgive Henry?

MAN

I don't know. But ... I can sit with you for awhile. If you'd like. Maybe we can, uh ... figure it out together.

*(Silence. GIRL shakes her head.)*

GIRL

No. It's okay. I think ... I think I'm going to be all right.

*(GIRL looks at MAN. THEY hold eye contact.)*

Besides ... don't you have a plane to catch?