

Flowers for Dan

By

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Scene 1

Subway platform.

DAN maneuvers past the oncoming straphangers and steps onto the platform. He leans over the track to check for the train.

A teenage GIRL walks past him, holding a bouquet of white flowers. She accidentally drops one.

Dan notices after a beat and picks it up.

DAN

Excuse me, ma'am, I think you dropped this.

The girl takes the flower silently.

Her lack of response bothers Dan. He can't let it go.

DAN

It was your flower, right? I assumed it was yours because you're holding a bunch of flowers.

(beat)

But if it isn't your flower, you should say something. Someone might have received it for their first ballet recital. Or, maybe it's for a son who wants to put flowers on his mother's grave.

(beat)

Because she died recently.

(beat)

Of AIDS.

GIRL

You talk funny.

DAN

No I don't.

GIRL

Whatever.

DAN

How rude.

GIRL

Look man, do you want these flowers or something?

DAN

No! Thank you. Dammit! You were supposed to say 'thank you' to me.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAN (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I'm a little nervous. It's just that, there's an election tonight and I'm running for president.

Girl laughs hysterically.

DAN

What's so funny? Celia's retiring, so there's an opening in our grocer's union chapter. Did you think I meant President of the United States?

GIRL

(towards audience)

That guy over there is peeing. He's been peeing for 5 minutes.

DAN

That's a lot of pee.

GIRL

I'm gonna be President someday. I've already figured out my strategy.

DAN

It's harder than it looks, toots.

GIRL

Well, assuming our tastes and ideologies don't change too much over time, I think have a pretty clear idea of what kind of story I'll invent about myself. I'll start with something like 'having the integrity to be my own person' and finishing with 'holding the incentive to make America great again.' And blah blah filler, other equally pleasant-sounding platitudes.

DAN

Um, what?

GIRL

Are you anti-woman?

DAN

Not at all! Dan Yousef loves women.

GIRL

What was your name?

DAN

Yousef. Dan Yousef.

GIRL

(at the mention of his last name)
Oh..are you visiting?

DAN

No, I live here.

GIRL

But you weren't born here.

DAN

I was definitely born here.

GIRL

Listen, Dan Mohammed, if I were running for office like you, I'd consider a few things. Just be Dan. Or, be Dan and think of an action verb for your last name.

DAN

Why would I change my last name?

GIRL

So your name doesn't interfere with people's first impressions. No superhero was ever named Dan Yousef. How about Dan... Triumph?

DAN

I work with these people every day, they know my real name. And the union already has me on file. I'm sure they've already printed out the ballots.

GIRL

Fine. Do you have a girlfriend?

DAN

Whoah..

GIRL

Shut up, I'm not trying to seduce you or anything. People just like to see commitment by their leaders. There's so many websites out there, they make it really easy.

DAN

Well, I had one, but you know, love is--

GIRL

--So you're gay. People love that even more! Not lesbians, of course, but gay men.

DAN

Maybe, but there's no one in the picture.

GIRL

We can think of other angles.

Dan ducks behind a pole, and pulls Girl with him.

GIRL

What the hell, dude!?

DAN

It's Mary Francis. Why's she taking this train? She lives on the East side.

GIRL

Who's Mary Francis?

DAN

Are you kidding me? Mary Francis! She's my main competition tonight! It's me against her. Do you think she saw me?

GIRL

I don't know. Which one is she?

DAN

Imagine a canvas powersuit from Talbots in patriotic colors.

GIRL

That's..oddly specific.

DAN

She doesn't actually wear a pantsuit, she's too hip for that. When you meet her, it just feels like she's wearing a canvas powersuit from Talbots in patriotic colors.

GIRL

(scans the crowd)

I get it.

(beat)

Oh! I see her. I don't think she saw you.

DAN

Mary Francis hasn't even worked at Food Monkey for more than a year and a half. She doesn't know anything about displaying produce, much less unions.

GIRL

And you do?

DAN

Sure. I've worked at Food Monkey since I was fourteen. I started as a bagger, then was promoted to cashier,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAN (cont'd)

then the front office. I know grocery. And, I'm a legacy. 3rd generation monkey.

GIRL

Things aren't looking good for you.

DAN

Are you kidding me? The presidency should be handed to me.

GIRL

That's not the wave of the future. Have you watched the news? You gotta present yourself as the least experienced person for the most important job in the world.

DAN

That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard of.

GIRL

Is it? Think about it. You don't want to ever show up to a party as the smartest person. No one likes a know-it-all. Trust me.

DAN

Why not?

GIRL

Trust me.

DAN

What's Mary Francis doing now?

Girl peers out into the crowd.

GIRL

Taking off her bra without unbuttoning her shirt.

DAN

What?!

He looks out from behind the post.

Girl laughs.

DAN

Shit! She saw me. Hi Mary! (quietly) Fuck you, Mary.

GIRL

I'm sure she's a really nice person.

DAN

No one ever says I'm a really nice person. But I am.

GIRL

Yeah, but it's really a consolation prize, isn't it? To be called 'nice.' Do you really want to be called 'nice'? I'd rather be interesting. Anything but nice.

DAN

I just want to be president so badly. My dad would get off my back, my mom would be proud of me..

GIRL

What about you, though?

DAN

I think I'd have more friends.

GIRL

If anything, you'd have more enemies.

*A beat as they stare at each other. Contemplating.
Possible chemistry?*

GIRL

The train's coming.

DAN

Oh?

GIRL

I can see the light peeking into the tunnel.

DAN

Come with me tonight. You can help me stay strong.
Please say yes.

GIRL

I have to go home. Think about things. (sheepishly holds up flowers) First recital of my high school career. I bought these. My parents weren't even there.

DAN

High school?

GIRL

So?

DAN

(freaking out)

No! Whoa! You're a...(minor)? I was talking to a... I had no idea. Of all the days! I'm about to have the biggest election of my life--please don't report me. I don't want to go to jail.

(CONTINUED)

GIRL

It's cool.

DAN

How old are you anyway? Wait, I don't want to know.

(beat)

But I kinda do. How old?

GIRL

Now you're being creepy.

DAN

No, I didn't mean..! We just had this intense conversation about politics and life. If you're 16 or 17, I think it's okay.

GIRL

I'm gonna scream.

DAN

Not if I scream first.

Dan starts screaming. The people around him pay no attention.

Feeling uncomfortable, the Girl walks off.

DAN

Wait! I didn't even get to thank you for helping me.

(beat)

I feel much better about the election!

(beat)

I didn't even get your name!

(beat)

You didn't even thank me for picking up your flower!

(beat)

Congrats on the recital!

(to himself)

What the hell am I doing? I'm a child chaser.

Now embarrassed, Dan notices the people around him and tries to look anywhere else.

Scene Two

Election night at Local 103C Union Chapter.

Dan and MARY FRANCIS introduce each other to the voters (the audience). Dan is now wearing a blue sequined hat.

First, they shake hands with each other.

(CONTINUED)

DAN

This is Mary Francis.
Mary knows that everyone is staring at her boobs.
Mary hopes that someday you will get to know the real
girl inside.
Mary is a decent person.
Be like Mary.

Mary's next.

MARY FRANCIS

This is Dan.
Dan is a white American male who just changed his last
name to Triumph because of a teenage girl.

Dan has the strength and the courage to stand up and
speak the truth.
Dan's relatable.
Be like Dan.

DAN

This is Mary.
Mary worked really hard on her president speech for
you, but she accidentally burnt the closing arguments
with her scented candle.
Mary hopes you'll just clap anyway because she doesn't
have time to rewrite it.
Mary's quirky.
Be like Mary.

MARY FRANCIS

This is Dan.

DAN

This is Mary.

MARY FRANCIS

Dan.

DAN

Mary.

MARY FRANCIS

Your future president is here.

DAN

Like any other race, we're here to perform for you.

MARY FRANCIS

Let's do this.
(beat)
American style?

(CONTINUED)

DAN

(nods)

Call me Triumph.

*Mary Francis stretches proudly, arching her back.**Dan takes a breath. Steels himself.**He grabs the back of Mary Francis' head with the palm of his hand and for a second, they lock eyes.**But**Slowly he pulls her down into a wrestling squat, so they are ready to fight. She grabs the back of his head with the palm of her hand and they lead each other in a circle. Like to warriors.**They circle and circle each other until Mary Francis throws Dan to the ground in a wrestling move. Dan doesn't get up.**She takes a white flower from her chest and lays it on top of him.***FADE TO BLACK.**

END.