

Me.

written by Jill Twiss

RELENTLESS

CHARACTERS:

ADDIE- 30s-40s, funny, a little manic. On a hunger strike.

COLIN - 50s-60s, one of those guys where you can't tell if he's handsome or just incredibly confident. But he's definitely confident.

SCOUT - 20s, wide-eyed, pretty enough

SCENE 1:

ADDIE, in her bedroom filming a YouTube video on her phone, which is on a tripod. But she's essentially talking to the audience.

ADDIE

Going on a hunger strike in L.A. was a real miscalculation.

(beat)

It's gonna take at least a month before people stop complimenting me.

(beat)

Anyway, the hunger strike is for climate change....

(a shrill laugh)

I want it to change faster! If climate change is real then how come my gynecologist's hands are still so cold?! I'm kidding. Obviously. The first thing to go is my filter. I'll say anything now. Twenty-six hours without food and I'm ready to stab my husband right through the eyes with his own tuning fork!

More frenzied laughter.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

Why did I say that? I don't even have a husband. If I'm going to make up a musician husband, I should at least give him perfect pitch.

(beat, confides)

I was engaged once in case you think no one could ever love me.

(MORE)

ADDIE (CONT'D)

But throughout the whole thing I kept thinking "do I want to be married or do I just want to be proposed to over and over?" That single moment where you know that you could make or destroy someone's life with one syllable? That's the stuff. Makes me understand why someone would want to be president. I mean, that's the good part, of course. The power. The bad part is having the Secret Service watch when you get up in the middle of the night to eat frosting out of a can.

(remembers her hunger)

Oooh frosting! Oh, hi YouTube. Did I say that already? We're on Day 2 of the hunger strike and as you can see, it's going great. It's not just climate change though. Can you be on a hunger strike against...everything?

(she thinks)

Sun Chips is putting fewer chips in the bag now. Same size bag. Just less chips. And, to be honest, I can't fucking handle it. How are we expected to live in a world where you think you have a steady number of chips, when they can just change it up willy nilly! Willy goddamn nilly! "Oh she won't notice. She's too busy worrying about abortions and wildfires whether A.I. will come for her job." Well I noticed, mother fuckers! I noticed!

(catches herself)

I'm not saying you should be able to trust everyone. I'm not an idiot. I'm saying you should be able to trust *someone*.

A long pause. Is she...done?

ADDIE (CONT'D)

You know what else? I'm on a hunger strike against reboots. That's right. And comic book movies and...and jukebox musicals! What was the day where we all woke up and went "We're all full up on new art!" I wasn't in on that meeting. I'm on strike against never being invited to the meetings.

(thoughtful)

I'm not saying it's easy, though. Writing comic book movies. Or musicals. Or whatever. Writing is that thing at the eye doctor where they say "which slide is better, this one or this one?"--and at some point you can't really tell the difference but you pick one anyway because you have to -- but it's for every sentence forever for the rest of your life.

Scene 2:

Picket line. People in WGA shirts carrying picket signs.

Among the picketers is COLIN, carrying a sign reading **"You know writers will win. Even our commas went to Oxford".**

SCOUT stands to the side watching, with a sign reading **"You make billions. We make "Billions." We are not the same."** She works up her courage and approaches Colin.

SCOUT

Hi. Um, hi. I...is it weird to say I'm a huge fan? Can we do that here? Is it rude to just walk up to people on the picket lines?

Colin is gracious and also used to this.

COLIN

Of course not. It's very kind of you to say so.

SCOUT

I just, I watched your show when I was a kid--

COLIN

Oh god, stab me through the heart! I'm a fossil.

SCOUT

No no! I just mean, it's the reason I became a writer. The idea that the entire world -- Cassandra, the machines, everything -- it all came from inside you. You made a whole world. It's incredible.

(catches herself)

Wait, I don't know if I can call myself a writer yet. But it's the reason I decided to try.

COLIN

Well that's very flattering--

Fishing for her name.

SCOUT

Scout! My name is Scout. My parents -- My mom loved -- Oh you know. Mortifying.

COLIN

"To Kill a Mockingbird."
(a joke)

I think I've heard of it. Well why don't you
send me some of your writing, Scout?

SCOUT

No! What? I don't have anything that's ready.
Not for you.

He puts his hand on her shoulder.
She clocks it, but it feels more
fatherly than anything.

COLIN

Oh I've got a good eye. I can wade through the
rough spots. It's great for me to see what the
next generation of geniuses--

SCOUT

(overlapping)

Oh I'm not--

COLIN

--is playing around with. My email is just my
full name at AOL dot com.

They laugh.

COLIN (CONT'D)

I know. It's so uncool it's almost cool again
right? At least that's what I tell myself.

SCOUT

I'll--I'll send you something. I will.

She beams.

SCENE 3:

ADDIE's bedroom. A few days later.
She's woozier, lying on the bed
filming -- holding the phone above
her head.

ADDIE

Day 6. Here's something: penguins walk exactly
like a drunk girl at 4am who just broke the
strap on her sandal. That's not about the
hunger strike. Just something I thought you'd
like to know. I thought of something else I'm
on strike against though. That thing where the
commercial is twice as loud as the TV show.
How dare they? It's terrifying.

(MORE)

ADDIE (CONT'D)

I have been through a lot and I don't deserve Flo from Progressive screaming at me about car insurance.

(sits up, screaming)

I don't care, Flo! You seem like a good woman and I hope someone writes a role where you can use your talents!! It's just that your unpredictable volume is not something I can physically handle right now!

Looks at her phone.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

Oooh a comment.

She reads the comment.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

Six days in and you motherfuckers won't stop calling it a cleanse! Fuck every last one of you!

She gathers herself. That was too much.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. My colleagues are all on the picket lines, you know. I guess I should be out there. I feel bad that I'm not out there. But I can't. What if I go out there and --

(she can't say it)

Who's crazy anyway? Them out there pretending they can change the world or me in here controlling what I can? Anyway, can you go on strike for a job that you don't feel like was ever really yours to begin with?

ADDIE stays on the bed, but focus shifts back to COLIN and SCOUT on the picket line.

COLIN

Scout! Good to see you again. I've been looking for you at these things. I read your screenplay.

SCOUT

Oh God.

COLIN

I'm so sorry to say it was...

(prolonging to tease her)

incredible! Just, man, you've got a voice. A real raw, unique voice. Just needs polish.

SCOUT

Really?

Hand on her shoulder again.

COLIN

Really. The jokes were fantastic. I laughed out loud and, as a comedy writer, I gotta say I never laugh out loud.

SCOUT

Wow. I mean, wow. Wow.

Back to ADDIE:

ADDIE

Something I think a lot about: How come it's so much easier to say "Me Too" than it is to just say "Me"? Like the fact that it also happened to someone else makes it both more and less important. On the one hand, you're not alone. On the other, you're not special. What happened to you is just another thing that happens to women, like getting your period. I heard if you work in an office near a bunch of women, all of your sexual harassments will sync up.

Picket line:

COLIN

You know, I had a show picked up right before all this started.

Scout catches her breath. Tries not to hope.

SCOUT

Yeah?

COLIN

I'm gonna have to staff it and I'll need some newer writers. You know, fresh voices to shake up the room a little.

SCOUT

Oh.

Back to ADDIE.

ADDIE

I met him at some industry party where I was a cater-waiter. He was so kind.

(MORE)

ADDIE (CONT'D)

Just a huge, famous writer-director offering to read something I wrote. I couldn't believe how lucky I was. And then he called to say it was great. "A real raw, unique voice." Those were his exact words. I know it because I wrote them down as soon as he said them. "I'll want to remember this moment," I said to myself. And he had a staff writer position opening on his show. Crazy coincidence. I...I never asked what happened to the person who left the job before me. So I got hired. It was the best day of my life. I got a Dairy Queen Blizzard for a treat because I hadn't gotten paid yet so I was still poor, but I deserved something because this meant maybe I wouldn't be poor forever. I was giddy.

(she gets lost in this)

And then, a few days in, he touched my back like he always did. Nothing creepy. More like a dad than anything. Massaged my shoulders a little. But this time he moved his hand lower. I jumped away like it was an accident and we both laughed. A couple days later he asked me to stay late. Long story still pretty long, he put his hand on my leg and moved it and then he got pretty aggressive and I...I pushed him a little bit and I ran off and--

(she hardens)

--and when I got to work the next day, my writing wasn't good anymore. I didn't have a raw, unique voice. Now I was an idiot who didn't know the rules of comedy. "Doorknobs are hack," he said. "Blenders are funny." That's a real sentence he said. "Doorknobs are hack." Like it was a thing everyone knew but me. And here's the thing: when the boss doesn't think you're funny no one else does either. I got fired as soon as my contract was up.

Picket line:

COLIN

I'm not technically allowed to hire you yet. But how about we talk as soon as this strike is over.

SCOUT

That would be...amazing.

He puts his hand on her shoulder, rubs her upper back a little. Scout clocks it. It feels just a little different now.

Now the focus is on both sides of the stage. Addie talks as Colin starts to massage Scout's shoulders.

ADDIE

I never told anyone. What would I even say? Sure one option is that he fired me even though I was an amazing writer. But the other option is he hired me even though I was a terrible one.

COLIN

You seem tense. Probably all this picketing.

SCOUT

Yeah, I guess.

ADDIE

And I will spend the rest of my life wondering which one is true.

More writers have entered the picket line with Colin and Scout, chanting "**What do we want? CONTRACTS! When do we want it? NOW!**" On her side, Addie starts to put on her shoes.

ADDIE

We don't have a lot of nuance in this industry. If you're not Harvey Weinstein you're pretty much a good guy.

Addie exits. The picket line continues to circle and chant, as Colin massages Scout's shoulders.

Addie re-enters on the other side of the stage and watches the picket line for a long moment. The chanting quiets. Addie takes a breath as Colin sees her. He gives a wave and starts to walk toward her.

Addie walks toward Colin, refusing to break eye contact. And then...walks past him to Scout.

ADDIE
Hi. I'm Addie.

SCOUT
Scout.

The two walk away from Colin. ADDIE holds out a bag to Scout.

ADDIE (CONT'D)
Sun Chip?

ADDIE crunches on a Sun Chip as the lights fade.

THE END

RELENTLESS