

LEAF CALLBACK

1.12.23

(She crosses to the hallway with her stuff. She comes back and sits in the other side chair, so she, BEN, and LEAF are seated in a triangle.)

I don't know what to say.

BEN

I don't know what to say either.

(Beat.)

LEAF

I know what to say.

(They both look at him.)

I think you should play your secret game.

(He widens his arms as if laying an offering on the table for them, then stands up and exits into the hallway.)

KATE

I don't want to play that now. Look, Ben, I don't —

BEN

(cutting her off)

I don't think Meryl Streep is all that.

(KATE gasps)

KATE

What?!

BEN

That's my secret. She's good, but so are a lot of people. She's just good at raising a slow eyebrow, and it makes everyone feel uneasy, so she seems powerful, so we think she's the greatest. You go.

KATE

Jeez. Um, ok. Once, in high school, I was shopping and my lips were really dry, and I used a lip gloss at the store and then put it back. I didn't buy it. And--

(LEAF bursts out of the hallway, clapping his hands.)

LEAF

Ohhh-KAY! You can't play this game unsupervised anymore because YOU! ARE! LIARS! What is this game?! "Unimportant, Safe Secrets We Tell Each Other While Our Real Secrets Eat Us Up Inside" Hour? Do you ever share anything real? Meryl Streep? Petty crime?! Come on! You have someone to share the deepest parts of who you are with, and you don't do it! You chicken out every time! I have one! I have one! *Your house has been fixed for months.*

KATE

What?

START

LEAF

Your house has been fixed for months! I fixed the pipe, I replaced the carpet, that was one week. That was it. That's all it needed.

BEN

But what about the tub?

LEAF

Made it up. Wasn't real.

KATE

But...you ripped our bathtub out of the wall.

LEAF

Didn't need to. All for show.

BEN

Why?!

LEAF

Because here's another secret. I'm *lonely as shit*, ok? *That's* how you play Secret Hour. You reveal something real. I win your stupid game.

KATE

But...you're not lonely. You're free! You said you were free and happy.

LEAF

Yeah, you know what comes with being free? Being totally alone. Because as soon as you invite someone else into your life, you aren't free. But I came here and I fixed your pipe—which by the way, took two seconds with a wrench. Learn a skill. Either of you. And like...I don't know. I liked you. I liked talking to you, and eating cake with you. And you have indoor plumbing, which is like, a big deal when you live in a treehouse.

(Beat.)

There. Now you know both of my secrets, and I'm your handyman so you have to love and accept me exactly as I am.

BEN

Um...we're actually probably going to have to report you to someone. That is....highly unethical.

LEAF

It's not like I charged you. Now YOU play secret hour, but do it for real.

(BEN and KATE regard each other. KATE inhales to speak, then looks at LEAF. It's weird that he's still here.)

Oh, no. I'm going to sit here because I already know all of your secrets and I'm going to hold you accountable and make sure you don't do any more lip gloss bullshit. Jeez.

END