

THE CHESHIRE SMILE

A ten-minute drama by
Sara Glancy

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CARA, Freshman in college, smart and independent, but with all the insecurities of a teenage girl.

JAMIE, Senior in college, a jackass, but endearing at moments, is funny, and he knows it.

NATE, Senior in college, quiet unassuming demeanor.

SETTING

Worcester, Massachusetts.

PRODUCTION NOTE

The profanity in the play may be adjusted if necessary to conform to school or community standards.

(Three chairs spaced apart on the stage. NATE sits on the stage left chair, CARA in the middle, JAMIE far stage right. Lights come up slowly on Cara.)

CARA: It was a Tuesday. I remember that, because it always seemed so ridiculous to me that something like this could happen on a Tuesday night. Like, this kind of shit doesn't happen on Tuesdays, ya know?

(Lights up on Nate.)

NATE: It was Halloween.

CARA: God, isn't that apt? The poor naïve college freshman is lured to her fate on Halloween. If only it had been "a dark and stormy night." That would have really completed the cliché. Actually, it was a beautiful night. Clear sky, nice temperature, really beautiful...

NATE: I don't usually go to Halloween parties. Well, actually I don't tend to go to parties, period. They're just not really my scene. Ya know, it's always just a bunch of stupid frat boys trying to get a bunch of stupid sorority girls drunk and inevitably making, well, stupid decisions. Like, these people's very existence disproves Darwin's theory of natural selection. Seriously, it's a little frightening. But I did go to this party, as a favor to my friend Joe. He wanted me to, uh, chaperone his little sister, Cara.

CARA: I always used to get so pissed at my brother about this stuff. I'd be like "Joe, I'm in college now, I don't need a fucking baby-sitter!" I mean, he's always been WAY over-protective. But I didn't really mind Nate taking me to the party. I mean I would never tell my brother this, but I was a little nervous about going to my first real college party. I thought it might actually be nice to have a familiar face there...

NATE: So this party's at Bauer Hall, at this guy's place. This complete jackass, Jamie Hartman.

(Light up on Jamie.)

JAMIE: Dude, Halloween is the greatest holiday ever invented. Seriously, like fuck Christmas, fuck Easter, Hanukah, whatever the fuck you celebrate, just fuck it. Halloween, dude. Best day of the year. Period. Since I got to college not a single Halloween has gone by where I didn't get laid. I don't know what it is, maybe the full moon just makes all girls go crazy horny or something, but I just can't lose on Halloween.

NATE: I'd heard about this guy before. How he preyed on girls at parties and stuff like that. And I'll admit I felt really nervous about taking Cara there. Cuz she's like a little sister to me, ya know? I didn't really want her there.

CARA: I'd never met Jamie before. It's a really small school so I'd kinda seen him around, but I'd never actually spoken to him. He was always surrounded by friends, and he seemed to always be making them laugh. He was very crude a lot of the time, but weirdly, he could kinda pull it off in an almost endearing sort of way. I dunno, I guess I kind of had a little crush on him...I mean, before the party...

NATE: Another thing I hate about Halloween is the whole dressing up thing. I always feel like a total idiot no matter what I wear. This year I went Ernest Hemingway, which was admittedly not the *best* costume choice. Cara was the only one who got it. She's really smart. Like she's got real substance behind her which is rare today...

JAMIE: And damn! You should see the outfits these girls wear! It's like heaven on earth! I seriously think they all just pick a random noun and throw the word "sexy" in front of it.

We had sexy angels, sexy lawyers, sexy little-bo-peeps, swear to God, a girl came up to me dressed as a "sexy apple." Oh, but the best one of the night was this one freshman who came as—

JAMIE & CARA: Alice from *Alice in Wonderland*.

CARA: I've always loved that story since I was a little girl. Actually, I just recycled the costume from when I went as Alice when I was nine. Back then it looked really cute and little-girlish. Of course nine years later the skirt seemed significantly shorter and the bust was much tighter. And yeah, I know that's kinda trappy, but it was my first college party and I just really didn't want to be a wallflower, ya know? And I wasn't. I looked sexy.

JAMIE: Hot.

NATE: Beautiful. She's just a beautiful girl, you know? And in that really natural unprocessed kind of way, which is so refreshing. Anyway, yeah, she looked pretty...

JAMIE: She knew exactly what she was doing walking into a room looking like that. She was looking for a good time. And of course, I was more than happy to oblige...

NATE: I had him pegged the second we walked in the room. The look he was giving her or whatever.

CARA: I could tell he was looking at me. It was kinda nice actually. Boys don't usually look at me that way. It was a nice change.

NATE: He was just staring at her, and I could tell it was making her uncomfortable. I mean, he had no right to be staring at her like that. I asked her if she wanted to leave but, she was being a real trooper about it. She said she wanted to stay.

CARA: Nate kept bugging me about leaving but I was like "No way!" I mean, I had FINALLY gotten Jamie's attention—I wasn't about to leave without talking to him.

JAMIE: So I walked over to this girl, God, I can't remember her name for the life of me. Oh well, let's call her Alice. I walk up to Alice and start making with the small talk. You know, "nice costume," "what's your major" blah blah blah. I could tell she was enjoying herself, but her friend kept hovering around us like a big fucking gnat.

CARA: Nate kept being really weird, like inserting himself into my conversations or whatever. And I was starting to get really frustrated.

NATE: I told you, Cara's really smart, but she's also kinda naïve. Like this guy was just feeding her lines and she was eating them right up.

CARA: So eventually, in order to get away from Nate, I asked Jamie to dance.

NATE: I'll never understand that—how she could be so stupid.

JAMIE: Gotta love an assertive woman! She took me out on the dance floor and we got down and dirty. Oh, Alice!

CARA: God, that was new! Dancing like that. I'd never done it before. It was weird at first, but once you kind of get into it you just...go.

JAMIE: After a few songs she was right where I wanted her.

CARA: It's intoxicating, you know? I really did feel like Alice tumbling down the rabbit hole. Like, with the lights and the music and the heat it was like entering another world. Just as trippy as Wonderland, but maybe just a bit more sexual...

JAMIE: Her face was all flushed from the dancing so I asked her, *totally* innocently, if she wanted to go into the other room to cool down.

NATE: I didn't mean for it to happen. I mean, I hadn't taken my eyes off her all night. But somehow, I lost sight of her. I remember! It was that apple girl. She was completely wasted, and she came over and tried to start grinding with me or something. And while I was trying to fight off the tipsy produce, somehow Cara slipped away.

CARA: I was getting so carried away by the momentum of the party that I didn't even think twice about it. I was busy chasing the White Rabbit, not thinking of where he might lead me, or how I would find my way home after. I didn't realize until I went through the door that he had taken me to his bedroom.

JAMIE: I always get laid on Halloween.

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