

Note: This is a section from part way through the Dragon play, the play that I wrote at Erik's workshop. I figured, since I talked so much about it in my cover letter, that I should show it to you. It was performed on a shoestring in Austin this past year, after which I revised a great deal of it. It runs a little long...feel free to stop reading at the 10-page mark :)

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Loser Boy enters. He is on a shift at the convenience mart.

LOSER BOY

I thought you couldn't come here.

Young Man. He walks right past Dragon-Girl.

YOUNG MAN

Ten on five.

Loser Boy takes Young Man's money and gives him change. Young Man leaves.

DRAGON GIRL

I have to tell you something.

LOSER BOY

He didn't see you.

DRAGON GIRL

It's important.

LOSER BOY

How come he didn't see you.

DRAGON GIRL

Dragons are only seen when they want to be seen.

LOSER BOY

That's even better than flying. So if you wanted him to see you would he see like wings and all or -

DRAGON GIRL

Probably he'd see a naked girl people see what they can understand, Look -

LOSER BOY

Wait so then am I even seeing what you look like or -

DRAGON GIRL
WILL YOU LISTEN?

LOSER BOY
...

DRAGON GIRL
Dragons can see the future.

LOSER BOY
...
They can?

DRAGON GIRL
Not always. Only sometimes. Only when the future wants to be seen.

LOSER BOY
That doesn't make sense.

DRAGON GIRL
I saw myself.

LOSER BOY
In the future? What did you look like. What will you look like.

DRAGON GIRL
...

LOSER BOY
Hey, hey, it's okay, you don't have to tell me. Were you what were you doing?
(can't help himself)
Was I there?

DRAGON GIRL
...

LOSER BOY
Do you want a -

Young Man enters.

LOSER BOY
Shit.

Dragon Girl begins weeping again. Loser Boy winces.

YOUNG MAN

You outta the red slurpee?

LOSER BOY
(covering his ears)

Yeah.

YOUNG MAN

You don't have more in the back.

LOSER BOY

No we're out.

YOUNG MAN

Hey kid, you on something?

LOSER BOY

M'fine.

YOUNG MAN

Look look, you want me to call somebody, or - ?

LOSER BOY

Just get out just -

Loser Boy doubles over in pain.

YOUNG MAN

I'm not gonna just, you're Tell me what you're on and we'll Jesus Christ, are you I'm calling 9-1-1 --

LOSER BOY

No, no, just go.

Man looks up, sees Dragon Girl then doesn't.

YOUNG MAN

Did you see that?

LOSER BOY

Aauugh....

YOUNG MAN

I thought I saw a --a naked...um...

LOSER BOY

Just go, okay? Just go... Fuuuuuuuck.

YOUNG MAN

(backing out of the Sunoco, spooked)

Frickin' toxic fumes in here or somethin'.

Dragon Girl watches Young Man leave, pulls it together. Stops weeping.

DRAGON GIRL

Did he -- ? I thought he saw me but then he...

LOSER BOY

(weak)

I was gonna ask if you wanted a Slurpee.

Dragon Girl crawls to Loser Boy and pulls his head into her lap.

DRAGON GIRL

You're so fragile, aren't you.

LOSER BOY

Me?

DRAGON GIRL

Humans.

LOSER BOY

Stronger than we look.

DRAGON GIRL

...You'd have to be.

LOSER BOY

So did you want to tell me what you saw, or...

DRAGON GIRL

...

LOSER BOY

...

It's okay if you don't.

I don't mind if you don't.

I don't think I'd want to know the future.

I mean I guess if I were a dragon I could handle it.

DRAGON GIRL

...

LOSER BOY

I'm sorry. For whatever it is, I'm sorry.

...

But you can change it.

If you don't like what you see, right?

You can always..."Be The Change You Wish To..."

Or is there some kind of Dragon Rule.

He holds her, offers what comfort he can. This is worse, but she pulls him tight anyway.

She pulls away.

DRAGON GIRL

You have to learn how to fly. Before we do anything -- you need to learn to fly first.

LOSER BOY

But --

DRAGON GIRL

You have to.

Woman exits, leaving the bag onstage.

LOSER BOY

Humans can't fly.

DRAGON GIRL

Or we can't *ever*.

LOSER BOY

You can't just --

DRAGON GIRL

It's the only way. Do you trust me?

Man enters, finds the packed duffel bag.

LOSER BOY

Yes, I -- yes.

DRAGON GIRL

Then do it.

Man picks up the duffel.

LOSER BOY

In the future, did you - Can I fly?

Man embraces the duffel. You know the way you would hold your lover, a moment before she was ripped from your arms? It's like that.

DRAGON GIRL

...
Yes.

Loser Boy imagines a future where he can fly.
The sound of jets.

Man releases the duffel.

MAN

(to audience)

You think I'm an asshole?

This is the story of a man who knew more than he let on. Once upon a time there was a girl. And she was beautiful. God. The kind of beautiful where it makes your guts ache and your balls go blue and you figure this girl, this girl could tell you to go fuck yourself and it would still sound like poetry. And so you risk it. Talkin' to this girl you got absolutely no business talkin' to. Just to hear her tell you to fuck off. And then...she doesn't. She says sure you can buy her a beer. And then later she says sure she'll go out with you behind the Broken Spoke and sure she'd like one ah your cigarettes as long as it's a Camel Light and it is. And it's around this time that you realize this angel's got a broken wing or two because otherwise she wouldn't be talkin' to you, wouldn't be out here behind the bar with you, wouldn't be lettin' you hike her skirts up around her ribcage and scrape your belt buckle into her thigh and scrape her shoulder blades all to hell and back against the side of the building.

And it isn't 'til you're finished and you're tuckin' your shirt back in and she's twistin her hair back into its ponytail that you look at that back wall and see blood and bone and scales where her shoulderblades were, that you realize this girl had wings, yeah, but they weren't angel wings, they were leathery like a fuckin' bat or a - and then you look at her and see the stumps where those wings musta been, lookin' like they been scabbin' over for months and right before you're ready to run screamin' into the street she's smilin' at you and your heart just about stops, a girl with a face like that lookin' at you like that and you think you'd do anything, anything to taste the skin on her neck again, bury your face in that hair ah hers doesn't matter what those wings were about, they're gone now. So you tell her she looks cold and throw your jacket over her shoulders because you don't need another look at those fuckin' scabs and you tell her let's get outta here, the guys playin' tonight aren't the regular band and they suck. And it isn't long before all your friends know her, and your parents are worried that isn't this moving a little fast but it all works out, and you finish up at school and you put a ring on her finger before anybody know she's pregnant. And you settle down and build a life for her. With her, but for her too. And for yourself. And if some nights, once she's out, you trace the scars on her shoulder blades...if you've always got an eye out for whatever the something is, the someone is who took a knife to those wings, well...you get used to it. And you figure if, if he ever shows up...maybe you oughta buy him a cold one. Because if she'd had those wings when you met her she'd probably have flown off. Because otherwise you wouldn't be layin' next to her in the first place. So, really, who's the asshole?

(beat)

Information Management. The fuck is that?

EIGHT.

Woman stands outside in Man's anorak,
smoking.

Loser Boy sews together two enormous pieces
of parachute-cloth. Dragon Girl watches.

DRAGON GIRL

Would you rather go a week without going to the bathroom or a week without sleep.

LOSER BOY

Sleep.

DRAGON GIRL

Me too.

DRAGON GIRL

Would you rather eat nothing but pop-tarts or nothing but beef jerky for the rest of your life.

LOSER BOY

What flavor of pop-tarts?

DRAGON GIRL

Any.

LOSER BOY

Pop-tarts.

DRAGON GIRL

Beef Jerky. Would you rather go without sleep for the rest of your life or without sex?

LOSER BOY

...

DRAGON GIRL

Sorry. I mean in theory.

LOSER BOY

Get back to me.

DRAGON GIRL

Would you rather die in a a fire or by drowning.

LOSER BOY

Jesus.

DRAGON GIRL
(meaning his project)

That's not going to work.

LOSER BOY

Well I'll try and see.

DRAGON GIRL

I know they look similar but gliding and flying are two totally different -

LOSER BOY

JESUS. I KNOW. OKAY?

DRAGON GIRL

Okay.

I'm doing the best I can.

LOSER BOY

Okay.

DRAGON GIRL

Silence. He works.

DRAGON GIRL

If you could go anywhere, where would you go?

LOSER BOY

You mean like if this works?

She nods.

LOSER BOY

Spain. Castile and Valencia. They've got Cathedrals there, real ones. I'd like to see the real cathedrals.

And Thailand. There are temples. And good beach parties. Probably not as good as the Dragon Dances but. I'd go to India, too, all over Asia, the Yangtzee. My dad went there when he was in the service and he talks about it sometimes. Anywhere but here.

DRAGON GIRL

Here's not so bad.

LOSER BOY

...

DRAGON GIRL

Asia.

LOSER BOY

That's where dragons originate. Is what my books said.

DRAGON GIRL

Yeah, well, your books are bullshit.

LOSER BOY

Yeah.

So-you-wanna-tell-me-any-more-about-dragon-sex?

Dragon Girl laughs.

LOSER BOY

Are the orgasms better?

DRAGON GIRL

How would I know?

LOSER BOY

I mean a flying, fire-breathing orgasm...

DRAGON GIRL

I've never had a human one. Never even seen one.

LOSER BOY

It's like...

He demonstrates, fully clothed. Dragon Girl laughs.

DRAGON GIRL

Ours are definitely better.

(stops laughing)

...

LOSER BOY

...

I mean there are better ones. And women scream, usually, I think. Good screaming.

DRAGON GIRL

...

Loser Boy examines his work.

LOSER BOY

I think it's ready.

DRAGON GIRL

Are you sure you don't wanna -

LOSER BOY

JUST LET ME DO THIS, OKAY?

Loser Boy puts on his wings. Imagine Icarus, ready for flight but rough around the edges.

DRAGON GIRL

Where are you gonna -

LOSER BOY

From the cliff there.

Loser Boy walks away, all dignity. Dragon Girl watches. Flinches. Follows.

The sound of broad wings beating. A crash.

Loser Boy returns, his mangled wings in hand. Throws them down. Stomps on them. Rips them. Dragon Girl enters, watching.

DRAGON GIRL

You almost -

LOSER BOY

I can't. I CAN'T, OKAY? Fuck this. Fuck this and fuck you. Humans aren't meant to fly. We stay in one place and we keep our feet on the ground and we and we NEVER FUCKING ESCAPE, all right?

DRAGON GIRL

Maybe if you -

LOSER BOY

Fly away, Dragon Girl. Only one of us has wings.

Loser Boy leaves. Dragon Girl retrieves his broken wings. She looks at Woman.

Dragon Girl waits.

NINE.

Man pops the top on a beer.

MAN

(to Dragon)

And that was that, we danced, I drove her home and we both just kinda knew.

DRAGON

And this was when?

MAN

Well how old is Ben? Six so twelve years ago now.

DRAGON

You waited six years to have kids?

MAN

She had a She lost the first one.

DRAGON

Oh.

MAN

It was There were a lot of deformities it shouldn't have made it as long as it did so.

DRAGON

Oh. Sorry I shouldn't ask but...

MAN

No it's okay she

(checking for Woman)

She doesn't like to talk about it but. Scales. Actually.

DRAGON

Like...

MAN

Like scale scales like a fish. Or a lizard really actually.

DRAGON

...

MAN

It was right when right when we first got together like before we'd made it official you know? And we didn't tell our folks just kinda under the wire but my Ma, she's a nut, real religious and eyes like a fuckin' hawk she said that's what we got for you know out-of-wedlock...a real bullshit thing tah say to a woman who just lost a kid, yah know? Things were pretty rough there for a while, better since Ben was born and healthy of course but it took a while after that before we either of us were ready to get back in the saddle. ... Still try to keep those two women apart. Ma likes tah stir things up and She, can't tell it to look at her but she's got a real temper you know?

DRAGON

Yes.

MAN

You do.

DRAGON

I mean.

Yeah.

She was a real fire-breather. Back in the day.

MAN

You look younger than her.

DRAGON

In dragon years.

MAN

How was it you two know each other, anyway?

DRAGON

From when we were kids. When I was a kid.

MAN

...

'Cause she never mentioned you. Not once. Doesn't talk much about when she was a kid in general I mean I know she moved around a lot figured army brat that's kinda --

DRAGON

Army brat?

MAN

Well yeah said her dad made planes useta drink, that's what she said mostly I figured you know probably wasn't pretty, girl looks like she did and dad's a drinker so. So if she didn't wanna talk about it she didn't wanna talk about it. Better to let the past stay where it is.

DRAGON

...

Hard to know, sometimes, where it is 'less you look for it, right?

MAN

The way I figure it, you spend your life lookin' backward not gonna take too long 'fore you take a flyin' leap right over a cliff. And I don't know nobody's got wings, d'you?

DRAGON

None I've met recently.

MAN

Here's what's gonna happen. You and me are gonna drink a couple more beers, we're gonna let her smoke those fuckin cigarettes or whatever she's gotta do.

She's gonna play hostess and tell yah all about the kid and you and me we're gonna talk about fishing. Or whatever the fuck. And then I'll give you a what a half hour alone or so, say whatever else you came here to say I'm reasonable. And then after that you're gonna tell her you got an early plane and I'm gonna tell you to stay and you're gonna get the fuck outta my house and you are never. Never. Gonna come back here. And you're gonna quit sendin' your fuckin' postcards and I am never gonna listen to my wife scream for that fuckin' mutant devil spawn in her sleep ever again. Do you hear me? Because if I do, I will find you, wherever you are, and I will run you through with a fuckin' machete.

Man finishes his beer, gets up.

MAN

Another round?

Man exits.