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Principles of Acting I

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### “Wolves” Script Analysis

There are certain characteristics that those who have social anxiety will express if they can. The most prominent is that they have a hard time trusting people they don't know and that they prefer to stay in their comfort zones figuratively and literally. As someone who somewhat still struggles with social anxiety, I usually can sympathize with those who express the same characteristics but there was a certain line I just couldn't cross with a certain character in the play “Wolves” written by Steve Yockey. This is the sort of play that almost seems like a satire of some sort until it shifts gears on its structure as the plot thickens. It's the type of story that leaves you with a sense of discomfort and hopelessness when paths unravel for the characters. The more times you read the play, the more unsettling the main characters become as you notice more little details with each reread. In this analysis, I will discuss the characters of this story, the setting, the story and how it's structured, and the theme that this play presents.

Shocking as it may seem, there are four characters in this play in total. Ben who is the main character, in my opinion, is a young man who lives in an apartment with his friend, Jack, and values his own safety and the safety of Jack despite being overprotective and is very much an introvert. Ben has a distrust with the outside world that can be interpreted by how he must have spent so much time inside his living place or by some traumatic experience he may have had before the play. Jack, who is Ben's roommate, is a sort social guy and is quite the opposite of

what Ben is. He doesn't have the same fears that Ben has which makes Ben struggle despite caring for Jack. It is heavily implied that Ben and Jack had a relationship sometime before the events of the play which causes Ben's affection for Jack since he still has not gotten over their past relationship. Despite that Jack has shown no chance at ever starting a relationship with Ben again, he still accepts to live under the same roof as Ben and be his roommate. Wolf is the third character who is thrown in the middle of this dynamic and greatly feels uncomfortable about it despite trying to not display that. Jack brings back to the apartment to prove a point to Ben and Ben feels greatly threatened by him. I'll discuss him later when I talk about the story of this play. The last character in this play is the Narrator who knows what is happening in the play and occasionally talks to the audience directly in a humorous way. She mostly directs and controls the play until the plot thickens in the latter half of the story. That is as much of the characters that I can discuss without diving deep into the story too early but I hope you can get a grasp on the characters so far.

The setting itself is taken place in one distinct place, the main apartment. At the beginning of the play, the apartment is described to be very simple with only two bedrooms and a living room with a kitchen full of alcohol. The play only really describes Ben's room which has a stereo, headphones connected to it, and a lava lamp that doesn't turn off when the rest of the set lights go off. Briefly, the play describes an ax that sits near the entrance of the apartment. Most of the drama happens in the main living room but you do see Ben's room be used by that character and the restroom plays an important part later in the play. I things unfold in the story, you get a feeling that the apartment becomes more and more congested by the situations that take

place in the setting. The gleam of the apartment gets tainted by the events that take place in this story.

The story starts off with the Narrator describing the living situation between Ben and Jack and it is revealed that she can directly interact with the characters as if pausing the story to talk to them directly. Jack wants to leave the apartment but Ben really tries to persuade him to stay and not go out into the real world because he is afraid of what is out there and what might attack Jack. Ben sees the world as a dangerous forest and those out there are monsters and creatures of evil like wolves. After an argument, Jack leaves and brings back a man who he calls Wolf from the bar he went to. While Jack and Wolf are flirting with each other, Ben is jealously suspicious of Wolf and is anxious about the events that are unfolding in the living room as he stays in his bedroom. Ben confronts Jack about Wolf but Jack ignores him and the flirting continues. When Jack and Wolf start to get really intimate, Ben runs up to the two, picks up the ax that is sitting in the sides and swings it at Wolf. After dismembering the body, Jack and Ben discuss the events that have just happened while Wolf becomes a fourth-wall-breaking character alongside the narrator who discusses the events throughout the beginning of each act. The last act follows the events of Wolf who is some character of greater control taunting the two main Jack and Ben and showing them that they can not escape the events that have unfolded in that night. The very location that they live in becomes even smaller as they feel more and more trapped in their own apartment. As they cower in the bathroom, Wolf roars as the lights fade to black on the stage and we hear Ben and Jack scream in fear as the play ends.

The main theme that I feel that this play rides on is that we have to be careful of becoming the thing(s) we fear in life. Ben feared those who are not to be trusted in the outside

world as he saw them as dangerous “monsters” that would do nothing but harm Jack and him.

When Jack brings Wolf home, Ben distrusts him to a full extent despite Wolf showing no harm to their well being and flat out murders him as he has an intimate moment with Jack. It makes the audience member question whether Ben became what he very much feared throughout the entire play. There are also other themes in this story like, what if even our own comfort zones can be attacked by our own fears?

Overall, this play succeeds in giving its audience a sense of discomfort with its themes as the backbone of the discomfort. It shows the ups and downs of clingy relationships and the struggles of someone who is afraid of the uncomfortable. I would only describe it as a dark drama with slight comedy mixed into it because of the comments the Narrator makes during the play. If you feel like someone you know is a little too protective of you when you two aren't the closest of friends, then maybe you should read this play to reevaluate the friendship.