

The Godspell Snap

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/13925964) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/13925964>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Fandom:	Slings & Arrows
Characters:	Darren Nichols , Geoffrey Tennant
Additional Tags:	Community: fan_flashworks
Language:	English
Collections:	fan_flashworks
Stats:	Published: 2018-03-11 Words: 772 Chapters: 1/1

The Godspell Snap

by [fengirl88](#)

Summary

Darren Nichols should know better than to fall for an actor's tricks. Especially when that actor is Geoffrey Tennant.

Notes

written for the Fall challenge at fan_flashworks.

“Look at you,” Geoffrey says, with something appallingly close to fondness.

“Yes.” Darren shifts uncomfortably in his chair. He hardly recognizes that grinning barefoot boy in the *Godspell* snap, guileless and unbespectacled, clutching a giant inflatable fish.

“You were a big goof,” Geoffrey points out, tapping the photograph for emphasis.

Darren is, infuriatingly, apparently incapable of making a suitably cutting response to this entirely redundant observation, or indeed any response apart from a short embarrassed laugh.

“You were happy then,” Geoffrey insists.

An absurd oversimplification, but Darren has a technical rehearsal to get to, and this excruciating interview with an unnaturally tidy, besuited and coiffed Geoffrey Tennant has already gone on altogether too long, and -

“I was - I was happy then,” Geoffrey says, and starts to cry, shameless, intolerable tears that make something twist in Darren's chest.

Darren has to get out of here before he does something irretrievably stupid like patting Geoffrey's hand or worse, hugging him. Geoffrey won't take the photograph back - “No, you keep it, I can't even stand to look at it” - and continues sobbing about the fresnels (nobody in the history of theatre has ever cried about fresnels, Darren is certain of it) and how Darren should break some legs.

So it's with the *Godspell* picture in his hand and a head full of confused Geoffrey Tennant feelings that Darren goes to the technical rehearsal for *Romeo and Juliet*. The rest is history.

Later, when he's able to think again, he'll spot Geoffrey looking his usual unkempt self, and realize how thoroughly he's been played. He won't particularly care at first, being at that point high on the success of his opening night and still buzzing from the unexpected release of the Belkovsky exercise. In an unguarded moment at the bar, he'll even reminisce about that *Godspell* production.

Later still - and no doubt a half-competent analyst would have a field day with the reason for the delay on this one - it will occur to him to wonder why the hell Geoffrey had that photograph of him in the first place, why he'd kept it for twenty years before using it to ambush Darren with *feelings* and subvert his artistic integrity. The fact that the redirected *Romeo and Juliet* was better only aggravates the offence. No doubt the imaginary analyst would also have some searching questions to ask about why Darren hasn't yet managed to throw away that sunny false image of a prelapsarian state.

We liked each other, didn't we?, Geoffrey's voice says in his head. *You were happy then. I was - I was happy then.*

He could tell himself - the imaginary analyst is *of course* oneself, a statement so obvious it hardly needs making - that he keeps the photograph to remind him not to fall for an actor's tears and tricks again, but he knows that's not true. His psyche has unfinished business with

that big goof in the *Godspell* snap, and with Geoffrey Tennant, the wild boy who burned so bright it hurt your eyes to look at him. Who held your heart in the palm of his hand, in the days when you still believed in hearts. Who took your breath away when he sang or moved or spoke a line, however banal the text. Who marked you for life, with that ridiculous duel -

Who kept a photograph of Darren for decades, inexplicably (and there will never be an explanation, because Darren would rather direct Oliver Welles's *Hamlet* again than ask for one).

Later still, when New Burbage's hit production of *Merrily We Roll Along* (minimal set, no pyrotechnics, middle-aged actors de-aging through the show, *all* the awards) goes to Montreal for a one-off charity gala performance, Darren scribbles a note that he shoves into an envelope with two tickets and the photograph: *This is all your fault, Geoffrey; the least you can do is come to the show.*

The likelihood of Geoffrey's turning up, alone or with Ellen, is vanishingly small, which is probably a blessing. It hadn't hit Darren till opening night how uncannily like his and Geoffrey's younger selves the actors playing Charley and Frank are in that final scene up on the roof, though there must be hardly anyone left who would see the resemblance. What that likeness says about him, and about his feelings for Geoffrey Tennant, is something Darren may have to take to an actual, not an imaginary analyst, but it's too late now to redirect this particular piece of self-exposure. Still, there's something in him that wants Geoffrey to see it. Wants to be seen by him. Wants him to say again, fondly: *Look at you.*

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!