

Dolls and Guys

By Tom Moran

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Dolls and Guys

Place: a night-school classroom

Time: Tuesday night

Characters

Jeff, 20's - 30's

Claire, 20's - 30's. Carries a bag.

Roger, 20's - 30's

Elaine, 20's - 30's

Scene 1

(JEFF sits in a classroom seat. He faces another seat, in which sits a Resusci-Annie CPR dummy. Upstage are an entry door and a closet door.)

JEFF

It's just that ... that ... I feel like she and I come at everything from different angles. You know when you're having a conversation with someone and neither one of you really hears a word the other one is saying? There might as well be some kind of wall there. You know what that's like? (Beat.) No, I guess you probably wouldn't. (Beat.) Like Friday - Claire and I were going to go see a movie, one of those DC movies where the writing is dumb but it's all so elaborate that you don't notice. She loves that shit. But she bails out on me. Won't even say why. Alarm bells are going off here, you know? But we have this conversation where we manage to talk about everything but what I want to know and what she knows I want to know. She just - she - forget it. (Beat.) It's different with you. You're such a good listener. (He grabs Annie's hand and looks her in the eyes.) I feel like I can tell you anything. That's important, that kind of connection. Sometimes I think that we -

(A KNOCK. JEFF drops the hand, stands up and tries to look official. ROGER and ELAINE enter.)

ROGER

Hey, we're looking for the CPR refresher - (sees dummy and points) - ah, I guess this is it. I'm Roger and this is Elaine. From Dr. Richardson's office?

JEFF

Hi, yes, come in. I'm Jeff. (JEFF shakes hands with both.) And this is Annie. (Pause. JEFF motions to dummy.) Well, c'mon.

(ROGER and ELAINE stand dumbfounded for a moment. JEFF motions more emphatically. ROGER warily shakes the dummy's hand. ELAINE follows suit.)

ROGER

How do you do.

ELAINE

Pleased to meet you, Anna.

JEFF

Annie.

ELAINE

Right. Annie.

ROGER

Listen, we both got CPR certified last year. Our boss is making us do it again, but I don't think we need it. Can we skip the class and just demonstrate it?

JEFF

Oh, think you know what you're doing, huh? Think you're ready to save a life? (He gently picks Annie up, unrolls a mat and lies her down on it.) You're walking down the street and Annie here's lying on the sidewalk, blue face, no pulse, chunk of falafel lodged in her windpipe, are you ready to dive in and swim across the River Styx, drag her flailing spirit back with you?

ROGER

Uh. Yeah.

JEFF

By all means.

(ROGER kneels down by dummy.)

ROGER

Are you all right, Annie? Can you breathe?

JEFF

Oh for god's sake. Don't patronize her.

(ROGER checks Annie's mouth for breath, her chest for a heartbeat. Tilts head back, clears throat of obstructions, breathes in twice, does chest compressions, breathes again.)

JEFF

Hey, go easy on the breathing there.

(ROGER does more compressions and breathes again. JEFF looks upset. He pulls an antiseptic CPR mouth guard out of his pocket.)

JEFF

Here put this over your mouth for the breathing.

ROGER

What? Why?

JEFF

Well, otherwise there's, you know, germs.

ROGER

Seriously? I'm walking through the mall and I see a woman lying there not getting any oxygen to her brain, and you expect me to take the time to whip out one of these? And why do I have one on me in the first place?

JEFF

Just use it. It's school policy.

ROGER

No it isn't.

JEFF

You - have a problem attitude. I have something for guys like you.

(He walks to the closet and returns with a male CPR dummy, then throws it on the floor.)

JEFF

Say hello to your new best friend Andy. (He gives the mouth protector to ROGER.) Get to it. (To ELAINE) Elaine, why don't you work on Annie.

ELAINE

Okay. Do you want me to use one of those mouth guards?

JEFF

(shakes head, makes dismissive gesture)

Naw, don't sweat it.

(ROGER begins CPR on Andy. JEFF pays no attention. ELAINE repeats the CPR sequence on

Annie. JEFF makes excited noises when she gives mouth-to-mouth.)

JEFF

Yeah, nice, that's good stuff.

(ELAINE returns to compressions.)

JEFF

Why don't you drop the compressions. Just do the mouth-to-mouth.

(ELAINE begins doing straight mouth-to-mouth.)

JEFF

(excited)

Oh yeah, that's strong, strong work there. Yeah, get those lips on tight.

ROGER

Hey, you want to see what I'm doing over here?

JEFF

(shakes head)

What? No.

(ROGER sees ELAINE working on the dummy. He starts to get excited too.)

ROGER

Hey, nice going, Elaine. You got some moves there.

JEFF

(to ROGER, defensive)

Hey, what are you doing?

ROGER

I'm just, you know, watching her technique.

(ELAINE looks up.)

ELAINE

Listen, this is getting kind of... Could I maybe do this with Andy instead?

JEFF

You leave Andy out of this. Here, let me show you something.

(He kneels down next to the dummy.)

JEFF

See, you've got to make sure you cover the whole orifice like this. Good, strong, tight seal.

(He begins mouth-to-mouth, which degenerates into essentially a protracted French kiss. ROGER and ELAINE look at each other, unsure what to do. The door opens and CLAIRE storms in.)

CLAIRE

Jeff! I knew it! I knew I'd find you here!

(JEFF gets up, startled and defensive.)

JEFF

Of course! I work here!

CLAIRE

That's not what I mean and you know it. You're here because of ... her.

ELAINE

What? We just met.

CLAIRE

Not you. (To JEFF) What is this, huh? Every time things get a little tough you run back to your dummy.

JEFF

She is not a dummy, she is a highly sophisticated training mannequin.

CLAIRE

Please. Why can't you just buy an inflatable doll like a nice, normal perv?

JEFF

Hey, Annie's not that kind of girl! Plus, unlike some people, (counting on fingers) she knows how to listen, she doesn't talk back, she never lies to me or cheats on me or cancels dates without telling me why.

CLAIRE

So she doesn't have a personality or a will of her own. Every man's dream.

JEFF

At least *she* has a heartbeat!

CLAIRE

All right. Why? Why this.

JEFF

Last Friday. Where were you?

CLAIRE

What? Is that it? One dropped date and you head straight for the toy section?

JEFF

It wasn't the first time. Where do you go?

CLAIRE

Honestly?

JEFF

Yeah. Were you with someone else?

CLAIRE

I didn't go anywhere. I stayed home, put on sweatpants and worked my way through two Fellini movies and a documentary on howler monkeys. I just didn't want to see you. I didn't want to talk to you because I didn't have anything left to say. I didn't want to talk about the weather or politics or the vacuous film we just labored through.

JEFF

I thought you would've liked the movie.

CLAIRE

What? No. I like old French movies, where everyone's thin and wears black and says profound things and watches autumn leaves blow along sidewalks. I like three-dimensional characters with rich interior lives, which is apparently more than I can say for you.

(JEFF picks up the Annie dummy.)

JEFF

That does it. Come on, Annie, we're leaving. Where's your coat?

ELAINE

Can I interject something? It sounds as though Jeff here is exercising transference in an attempt to manufacture an appropriate conversational partner he doesn't feel he has. (to CLAIRE) And as for you, um...

CLAIRE

Claire.

ELAINE

It sounds like you just don't have anyone to talk to at all.

CLAIRE

Who the hell are you? (to JEFF) Who the hell is she?

JEFF

They work at Dr. Richardson's. They're therapists.

ELAINE

In training.

CLAIRE

Oh. Listen, stay out of this. You're in over your head here. There are things you don't know about.

JEFF

(to CLAIRE)

Yeah, like you and Andy.

CLAIRE

Oh, come on, Jeff, that was just a short-term thing. And it was purely physical.

ROGER

Whoa.

JEFF

And I bet he wasn't the only one. I'm not the only one who's been exercising translucence here, am I?

ELAINE

Transference.

JEFF

Right. Who else, Claire? Who's your sounding board?
Who's been hearing all of our secrets?

CLAIRE

No one! I have plenty of friends to talk to, Jeff. All
the time. I - I - all right.

(CLAIRE guiltily pulls a sock puppet out of her
purse. She puts it on her hand.)

CLAIRE

(puppet voice)

Claire's been talking to me. She and I are in love and
we're going to be married! (in her own voice) Oh, stop
it, you're embarrassing us both.

ROGER

Oh, look at all the lonely people...

CLAIRE

(to ROGER) Shove it! (to JEFF) I need someone who
listens to me. And who can tell me what I need to
hear.

JEFF

And what's his name?

CLAIRE

Jeff.

JEFF

Oh.

(JEFF puts the Annie dummy down.)

ROGER

I believe the word we're looking for here is
narcissism. Two people so wrapped up in themselves
they can't communicate with anyone else.

ELAINE

Everyone talks to themselves. They're just not usually
so, um, involved about it.

CLAIRE

And I suppose you have a better idea?

ELAINE

You could start by taking a break from Jeff. I mean, the one on your hand.

(CLAIRE turns her hand so she's staring right at the puppet. They 'stare' for a moment.)

CLAIRE

(to ELAINE)

Could you help me?

(ELAINE removes puppet from ELAINE's hand. Puppet 'fights back' briefly.)

CLAIRE

(as sock puppet)

Don't do it! Don't let her come between us! You complete me! Don't - aiiiigh!

(ELAINE pockets the puppet.)

JEFF

(quietly)

But what about Annie? I can't just put her away. I have to work with her, you know.

ELAINE

Well, I think maybe Annie just needs to catch someone on the rebound.

(ELAINE carefully places Annie in the closet.)

ELAINE

And I know just the guy.

(She picks up Andy and does the same.)

ELAINE

(into closet)

Have fun, you crazy kids.

(She turns off the closet light and closes the door.)

CLAIRE

Now what?

ELAINE

I dunno. Go get some dinner or something. But can you sign off on our CPR course first?

JEFF

Oh. Yeah.

(She hands him some papers and he signs them.)

JEFF

Go forth and resuscitate.

CLAIRE

C'mon. How about some Thai food?

JEFF

I hate Thai.

CLAIRE

(surprised)

Me too.

(JEFF and CLAIRE exit. ELAINE starts out and turns back to ROGER.)

ELAINE

You coming?

ROGER

I'll catch up.

(ELAINE exits. ROGER walks to the closet and opens the door.)

ROGER

Hey, Annie. You, um. Listen, you ever looking for a real man, you just give me a call.

BLACKOUT - END OF PLAY