

Plastic Holders

By

Paul Hufker

Copyright 2010
All Rights Reserved

paulhufker@gmail.com
41-32 76th St. #3
Jackson Heights, NY
11372

Cast of Characters

<u>BOY ONE:</u>	20's, thin, a weak kind of handsome
<u>BOY TWO:</u>	the same except a strong kind
<u>GIRL ONE:</u>	20's, thin, a mousey kind of pretty
<u>GIRL TWO:</u>	the same except a refined kind

Time

Present.

ACT I

Night. A small, brightly lit apartment. An opened window is Upstage Center, darkness beyond it. A radio sits on a small table. Four young, very thin, 20-somethings, (two boys and two girls) are drinking beers. BOY ONE holds a plastic six-pack holder, but no beers are in the rings. The other boy (BOY TWO) and one of the two girls (GIRL ONE) are sitting together on the couch, flirtatiously close, facing one another and looking in each others eyes. GIRL TWO sits on the floor, filling out the scene. She watches BOY ONE very attentively, with a beaming smile on her face as he folds the plastic six-pack holder onto itself like a mouth, as if it were a puppet, and makes it talk to the room. It is evident that he's been at this for a while. He is very energetic, almost wild with his presentation and is sweating. GIRL TWO is the only one watching. The couple pays little attention to what happens around them throughout, looking almost exclusively into each others eyes.

BOY ONE

(he gives the holder a voice; rough, bold, wild, and as fragile as himself)
It's someone's mother I'm after; the life-giving juices, the life-bearing parts. *Those* are what I'm after. So I can feel real. I am a ghost just now, plastic, hollow insides. Someone talks for me. Look how thin I am. If I turn sideways, I disappear. I wish to be *real*. So I have been in search of mothers. Their life for mine.

GIRL TWO, to whom he mostly talks, is watching intently with that beaming smile on her face. She takes a drink of her beer.

BOY ONE

(still as the puppet)
We drink and drink and are never full. We swallow and swallow but find no satiation. We never gain weight. There is nothing in the empty chambers of our plastic guts but longing.

GIRL TWO

(enthusiastic agreement)
Desperate longing.

BOY ONE takes a long drink, then moves about the room, continuing to talk as the puppet.

BOY ONE

Because as children, all our insides were scooped out
and made into rings. Plastic holders.

GIRL TWO

(suddenly a tinge of sickness)
Don't make it talk about childhood again.

BOY ONE

We are empty holders, but from birth we're never told
what we're supposed to hold.

GIRL TWO

(an element of fear)
Please, not childhood...

BOY ONE

And mothers are to blame. Mothers have made us and
allowed us to be hollow and plastic. But worst of all,
they have made us into makers.

GIRL TWO

Mother's aren't all bad. It's more fun when you don't
talk about childhood.

BOY ONE

It's *their* nipples, isn't it? Cans and bottles?

GIRL TWO

(quietly earnest)
I miss my mother.

BOY ONE

(he motions to BOY TWO and GIRL ONE)
They know what I mean. *Makers*. And just what happens to
what we make? *They* aren't angry with me for talking
about childhood.

BOY TWO

(to BOY ONE, without taking his eyes off
of GIRL ONE)
She's right, it's not funny anymore.

BOY TWO drinks.

GIRL ONE

It's beginning to be grotesque. You've been at it all
night. It's very late.

GIRL ONE drinks.

GIRL TWO

(interested again)
I'll watch, if you don't talk about childhood.

BOY ONE

(still as the puppet, to GIRL TWO)
You're just sore because your mother is dead.

GIRL TWO is hurt.

A knock at the door. BOY ONE's demeanor changes. He looks nervously over. GIRL TWO follows his lead. The other two don't even hear it.

BOY ONE takes a drink for fortification, then crosses to the door, opens it, goes into the dark hallway and disappears. The door closes.

BOY TWO tries to kiss GIRL ONE who plays coy and pulls away. He tries harder. She pushes away forcefully, all the while smiling.

After a moment, BOY ONE returns, white-faced.

BOY ONE

(now in his normal voice)
She said we're walking too loudly. The landlady said we're stomping again when we walk.

GIRL TWO

(as though this often happens)
What does she want us to do, hover?

BOY TWO

(jokingly)
She's not your mother! Throw her down the stairs!

BOY ONE

Now she's suggesting we put on socks and sort of...slide around the room.

GIRL ONE

That's the single stupidest thing I've ever heard.

BOY ONE

(seriously)
If we stomp, she'll evict us.

GIRL TWO

(suddenly frightened)
Where will we go?

Pause. BOY ONE takes a long drink, grabs the plastic holder, and talks as the puppet again; wild and manic as ever.

BOY ONE

Something has begun to well up in me; which seems rather odd, because I don't have insides. But nevertheless, it's damming up inside of me this very moment. I can feel it. It's begging me for answers. What will we do?

He thinks a moment.

BOY ONE

(as himself; grand, furious mocking)

We have to float!

He goes sliding around the room, pretending he's floating. A desperate kind of mania washes over both BOY ONE and GIRL TWO.

BOY ONE

(as himself)

We all have to! Come on, let's float!

He moves about in a kind of dance, where he pretends not to touch the ground. His furious disdain for the landlady's suggestion manifests itself in his alternating between gliding and pretending to step very lightly. Maybe he gets up on furniture to avoid making an imprint. After a moment, GIRL TWO stands and joins him.

She glides, while he goes to the radio and turns it on. It plays loud, aggressive, almost indecipherable commercials. BOY ONE glides with GIRL TWO.

The commercials read as follows:

The all-new, live forever, drive it, drink it, eat it, buy it, synthetic, plastic, handmade, homemade, American-made, foreign born, to wear, to walk in, to sleep in, to breathe, sleep better, eat better. For mom, fat dad, old cat, new dog, empty, full, wish for it, dream it, own today, buy tomorrow, rent me, lease, cars, food, clothes, cars, food, clothes, cars, food, clothes, where to go for god or the perfect hamburger. Travel, see the world in a week, learn to swim and speak Chinese, tough, weak, sharp, dull, thin/fat, thin/fat, thin/fat, kiss, together, sex, abs, ass, next song, thin, paper-thin, mine, yours, plastic

toy, ours, rail-thin, his, theirs, we're, won't, design, perfection, who are they? Outline, modify, pinpoint, define, define, define, war, all the way until we are gone again forever.

This plays on a loop and takes its volume cue from the stage directions.

BOY ONE and GIRL TWO float to the loud noise with wild smiles on their faces, while the other two remain locked in each others eyes. After a moment, the seated pair begins to kiss. This time, she does not pull away.

BOY ONE

(over the commercials, as himself)
 Kiss? Don't kiss! It's not our mouths that are the problem. It's our feet! We ought to use our mouths to make noise!

Everyone laughs. BOY ONE goes to the radio and turns it up now very loudly. The floaters float while the seated pair continue to kiss.

BOY ONE

(wild shouting)
 We'll will tread very, very lightly till we die!

They float for another moment. Then, GIRL TWO becomes unhappy and stops. She watches BOY ONE glide around manically, as she becomes more and more upset. She goes to the radio, turning it down. BOY ONE stops.

GIRL TWO

(disgustedly)
 The landlady is no one's mother, is she? She doesn't have any children. She's never nursed a thing in her life! I found her cat dead in the stairwell. How dare she come up here!? My mother! My mother was drowned at the beach because no one heard her screaming over the radio.

BOY TWO

(breaking the kiss just long enough)
 We know. You've said.

BOY ONE

(to BOY TWO and GIRL ONE)
 Look away from each other once in a while.

GIRL TWO

(frightfully reliving it, staring out)
 We were all singing along and no one was watching and she floated out past the breakers and by the time the lifeguard got to her she was dead. He pumped and pumped and blew air into her lungs, cracking her ribs, but she was full of salt water and died. *She* had insides! *She* nursed something! And every single morning from that day to this when I wake up, the first thing I see are the footprints in the sand that I made when I walked away and left the beach that day. I see them every single morning. And we're not to walk? We're not to take any steps? An imprint is all we have! Turn the goddamn radio up!

BOY ONE turns up the commercials very loudly, but instead of floating, he and GIRL TWO stand motionless. They look at one another.

This plays:

paper-thin, mine, yours, plastic toy, ours, rail-thin, his, theirs, we're, won't, design, perfection, who are they?

The couple is kissing lightly, smiling as they do. BOY ONE and GIRL TWO look at one another. BOY ONE turns down the radio after 'who are they?'

BOY ONE

(confused, drained)
 This kind of noise isn't the problem.

GIRL TWO

(nervously)
 What do we do?

BOY ONE

I don't know. Mothers are no good anyhow.

GIRL TWO

Some are. Some could be. Mine was.

BOY ONE

That's not the point. It's not enough. What do we do?

GIRL TWO considers a moment, then bends her knees, closes her eyes tightly, and with all her might, in place, jumps. BOY ONE goes to the window.

BOY ONE

We're three floors up. Look at the moon.

GIRL TWO jumps.

BOY ONE

Think of hitting the pavement from here.

GIRL TWO jumps.

BOY ONE

Think of the imprint in the moonlight.

GIRL ONE

(casually, but looking in BOY TWO'S
eyes)

If it rains it's all washed away.

BOY TWO

(into GIRL ONE'S eyes)

You wouldn't even make a dent.

GIRL TWO considers another moment, then climbs on to the back of the couch, stepping over the couple as she prepares to jump.

GIRL ONE

(casually)

She'll come back if you jump like that.

She jumps. The two on the couch laugh.

GIRL TWO

Laugh as loudly as you want. It's not our mouths anyone cares about.

In place, she jumps again.

GIRL ONE

(smiling)

She's coming.

GIRL TWO

(disgustedly)

She's no one's mother.

There's a knock at the door. BOY ONE freezes. He fortifies himself again with a long drink, then opens the door and goes into the dark hall, closing the door behind him. The couple continue kissing. GIRL TWO stands panting, breathless, furious, waiting. BOY ONE is out there for a long beat. GIRL ONE pulls away from the kiss. BOY TWO forcefully pulls her back into it. They have a moment of aggression and indecision which for an instant borders on violent, but ultimately leads

them back into the kiss. Then, BOY ONE reenters and walks directly to the radio, turning it off. He has a ghostly look about him.

GIRL TWO
Well? (desperately)

Silence.

GIRL TWO
Well, what happened?

Silence.

GIRL TWO

(frantically)

Tell me quick, what's happened? I'm sick. I'm sick of the plastic talking heads. I'm sick of the beer. I can't drink the whole, salty ocean! I'm sick of being hollow! I'm sick of not looking away. I never want to hear about childhood again. I'm sick of how every single morning I wake up and the imprints are spread out before me and they don't vanish until I've washed or cried. My mother *was* a mother, a *good* mother, but no one heard her. No one cares about the noise from our mouths. I'm sick of making deep imprints when I walk lightly, or jumping and jumping and never making one at all. I'm very sick of being very thin and I'm ready to do something about it!

By the end of the speech, the couple is kissing very hard. GIRL TWO is again, furious and panting.

GIRL TWO
(to BOY ONE, desperately)
What's *happened*?

Pause.

GIRL TWO
(quietly trembling)
What happened?

Pause.

BOY ONE
 (pale)
I threw her down the stairs.

Pause.

BOY ONE
She was going to evict us.

Pause.

BOY ONE
The radio was loud. No one heard the snap of her neck.
Her body crumpled like the dead cat.

Pause.

GIRL TWO
(disgustedly)
She never nursed a thing.

Pause.

BOY ONE
You're right, though...mother or not, she ought to have
made an *attempt*...to nurse what's already alive.

GIRL TWO
(a realization)
It's either too much nursing, or none at all.

BOY ONE
(sadly)
All I wanted was insides.

*The couple kisses aggressively. GIRL TWO'S
demeanor changes. She's happy. BOY ONE lightens
with her. A smile comes across both their faces.*

GIRL TWO
Turn the radio up.

Pause. GIRL TWO picks up the plastic mouth.

GIRL TWO
It's my turn.

BLACK OUT.