

ROGER, MARY and DOLLY

By

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Characters

Roger 60 +

Mary 60+

Dolly (Dolly is an inflatable life sized doll)

There is a couch centre stage Dolly is on the couch, Roger is sitting beside her. They face the audience. There is a TV in front of the couch however, there is no actual TV. The audience is where the TV would be.

When we see (pause) in Roger's dialogue, he is listening to Dolly.

ROGER: You're unusually quiet tonight. *(Roger looks at Dolly for a couple of seconds and picks up the TV remote)*. Fine, if you don't want to talk, we'll just watch some TV.*(pause)* Don't get snippy with me, I can just pop that little plug in the middle of your back and fold you back into the box. *(pause)* Of course I don't, I want you here with me, not stuck back in the closet. I wondered how you got there and couldn't figure it out, until I realized Mary couldn't see or hear you... then I knew there must be a whole lot of things I can't figure out. *(pause)* Come on, let's watch TV. *(Turns TV on with the remote)* Jeopardy? *(changes channel)* CSI?... *(changes channel)* Seinfeld? *(pause)* Of course you have, everybody's seen them all. *(changes channel)* Look, how about this, a documentary on the history of hot air balloons. *(pause)* What? *(pause)* No you're not! If you're full of anything it's... I don't know... quiet dignity. That's it. *(pause)* Honest, you look wonderful just the way you are. *(pause)* Yes, really. *(pause)* Don't say sorry, no need to apologize. *(indicating the TV)* So you're fine with this? Good.

MARY: *(off stage)* Roger!!

ROGER: Yes Mary?

MARY: Cut it out!

ROGER: Cut what out?

MARY: Who are you talking to?

ROGER: What? *(to Dolly)* Don't say anything.

MARY: I said, who are you talking to?

ROGER: Nobody dear.

MARY: Are you on the phone?

ROGER: No.

MARY: Then who the hell are you talking to?

ROGER: Nobody dear.

MARY enters

MARY: So you're yappin' to yourself again huh? You're losing it Roger, I've told you before and I'll tell you again, you're losin' it.

ROGER: I'll try to find it dear.

MARY: Don't get smart with me! Forty five years Roger. Forty five damn years and it's always been something. My mother was right, God rest her soul, you're a whack-a-doo. A certified whack- a-doo and now I'm stuck with being the whack-a-zookeeper

ROGER: I was commenting on the TV show, that's all.

MARY: Commenting to *yourself*, you wack-a-doo ! Get up.

Roger stands. Mary indicates the couch

Look there, what do you see, On the couch.

ROGER: What do *you* see?

MARY: So now I have to answer my own questions? You can have a complete conversation with thin air but I have to answer my own questions. No way Jose, now tell me, what do *you* see on the couch.

ROGER: Nothing. There's nothing on the couch. What else would there be on the couch?

MARY: How should I know what's going on in that peabrain of yours, you're seeing a room full of dancing puppies and unicorns for all I know.

ROGER: There's nothing on the couch dear, it's completely empty.

MARY: Good! So you admit, you were actually talking to yourself.

ROGER: I told you, I was commenting out loud on the TV show. It's really quite interesting, have a look.

MARY: *(looks at TV)* Hot air balloons? Well it takes one to know one.

ROGER: That's really all it was, I was watching the show and I didn't realize I was talking out loud. I'm sorry if it bothered you but...

MARY: *(interrupts)* Remember when I said you were losin' it? Well I was wrong, you've lost it. Smarten up!

Mary leaves. Roger sits back on the couch.

ROGER: *(to Dolly)* Sorry 'bout that. *(pause)* Well what was I supposed to do? *(pause)* I didn't deny you. Not exactly anyway, I just didn't acknowledge your existence. *(pause)* What do you want? Do you want her to talk to you? You've seen what she's like, why would you want to talk to her? You should be happy she can't see you. I know I would be. *(pause)* She was never sweetness and light but it's worse since I retired. Apparently I'm under her feet... a nuisance.. *(pause)* Thanks, very nice of you to say that, now let's watch the show. Look at all the different shapes, they're not all round. I used to think they had to be round, something to do with aerodynamics, I don't know. Fascinating, isn't it? *(pause)* It would be wonderful, wouldn't it? Freedom. I often think the same thing when I watch birds fly. See, I knew you'd like it! *(pause)* I don't know, maybe you are related. I was watching a show about chimpanzees the other day and felt exactly the same way. Just a couple of extra chromosomes, a little gene dabbling and I could be swinging through tree tops and you could be floating over rooftops. In your case it would be a little helium, but you get the idea... a little internal dabbling and we're both new and improved. And free.

MARY: *(from off stage)* You're doing it again aren't you!

ROGER: I'm sorry dear, but talking out loud helps me think.

MARY: Then stop thinking! When has that ever helped you!

ROGER: I like to think.

Mary enters

MARY: What the hell is there to think about when you're watching a show about balloons? It's just a stupid bag of hot air with people dangling beneath it, what's to think about? *(pause)* Well?

ROGER: Well what?

MARY: Aren't you going to answer me?

ROGER: What was the question?

MARY: I said, what's to think about with stupid bags of hot air?

ROGER: The Archimedes principle.

MARY: Now you're just making crap up.

ROGER: Eureka!

MARY: That's not even a word.

ROGERS: Sure it is. Especially in the bath tub.

MARY: You've blown a gasket Roger.

ROGER: Do you think it's possible to replace a person with something else in your mind?

MARY: What?

ROGER: Maybe there's more than one way to be happy.

MARY: No wonder nobody wants to talk to you.

ROGER: I'm just wondering. What if reality isn't what you want, can the mind conjure up something you *do* want.

MARY: You mean, if you've got a tuna sandwich can you pretend it's really a T-bone steak?

ROGER: Kind of....

MARY: What a stupid question.

Mary stares intently at Roger for a few seconds.

ROGER: What?

MARY: And, it doesn't work. I was thinking of Brad Pitt but you're still a tuna sandwich.

ROGER: You never answered my other question.

MARY: I don't keep track of your bone headed questions.

ROGER: A couple of minutes ago, I asked if you saw anything on the couch.

MARY: No, I asked *you* who you were babbling to and you said nobody.

ROGER: Not quite. You asked me what I saw on the couch and I said nothing. Now I'm asking you the same question.

MARY: I don't have to answer questions, I'm not the one with the screw loose, talking about bathtubs and making up words like a loony tunes.

ROGER: Just humor me will you? What do you see on the couch.

MARY: Besides a babbling loony-tunes?. Nothing, alright? You happy now?

ROGER: Reasonably.

MARY: Geez, what a nut bar. I'm going to check the mail box. Where's the key?

ROGER: Hanging on the nail by the door where it always is.

MARY: Nut bar.

Mary exits, Roger sits back on the couch beside the doll.

ROGER: *(pause)* No I didn't deny you again. It's like meeting somebody in a social situation and neglecting to introduce your partner, it's not a crime, just a simple social faux pas. *(pause)* No, she already thinks I'm a nut bar. If I tried to explain you, she'd brain me with the MixMaster to put me out of her misery. Besides, the very fact I'm talking to you right now proves I believe in you. I'd rather be a simple nut bar than a nut bar with a MixMaster sticking out the side of his head *(pause)* What? *(pause)* Well, yes, I guess I did, in a sort of roundabout way, refer to you as my partner. I guess I do think of you like that. *(pause)* Oh cut it out you big softie!

Roger takes a Kleenex from his pocket and dabs Dolly's eyes.

If you start crying, then I'll start crying and when Mary gets back she'll think I'm getting all sentimental over hot air balloons. *(pause)* Yes, she'll be back soon, the mail box is just at the corner. *(pause)* Oh, that is so tempting!. Where would you want to go? We could get in the car and just drive. Maybe we should do that. I'll pack a suitcase and we'll just drive and drive and drive and drive some more. We'll chase freedom down until it just gives up sits at the side of the road waiting for us. Mary'll come stomping downstairs for breakfast and I'll be gone. Won't that make her crazy? She won't have her favourite whipping boy, *and* she won't have breakfast made, which will probably make her the craziest of all. *(pause)* Oh oh... I heard the door.

Mary reenters with some mail and a Time magazine

MARY: What's with this stupid egghead Time magazine? It comes every bloody week. The next one is here before we even have a chance to open up the last one. Not that there's anything interesting in them. *(she opens it and reads)* "International Affairs". What's the big deal with that? Unless they're talking about the Prime Minister bangin' some other county's female ambassador, I'm not interested. Why did you subscribe to this crap-o-rama? I'll bet some good lookin' floozy came to the door selling subscriptions. Did she flash her knockers at you? You never could think straight when you were lookin' at boobs.

She sits on the couch. Dolly is between them. She doesn't look at Dolly.

ROGER: Wish I knew that before I met you dear.

MARY: So do I. Coulda saved fifteen bucks on a push up bra. *(she thinks)* Hey, what's that supposed to mean?

ROGER: Nothing dear, just complimenting your upper hemisphere.

MARY: Well you can forget about my upper..... whatever, you damn pervert, now change the channel, I don't want to watch your dumbtastic balloon show.

ROGER: Maybe other people do.

MARY: What?

ROGER: I said maybe I do.

MARY: No you didn't, you said "maybe other people do". Other people, that's what you said. You plan on inviting friends over to watch your stupid balloon show? Not a chance.

ROGER: *(sighs)* Whatever you say.

MARY: That's right, and what I say is we change the channel.

ROGER: I don't feel like arguing tonight, I don't have the energy.

Roger picks up the remote control and starts to flick through the channels

MARY: Nope... *(flick)*.... nope....*(flick)*... nope....*(flick)*... Not so fast! ...*(flick)*... nope...*(flick)*... nope...*(flick)*....wait a minute, go back...*(flick)*... nope. ... *(flick)*. I give up! Why is there nothing but crap on? Whatever happened to American Idol? Nothing but crap! Fine, watch your crazy baboon show.

ROGER: Balloon Show

MARY: Ah go cram it.

Mary leaves

ROGER: Nothing but crap she says.

He changes the channel

I guess it all depends on your point of view. I'm kind of enjoying this. The Montgolfier brothers in 1793... the first hot air balloon flight! Fascinating. *(pause)* You really want to do that? *(pause)* Well, I guess we could, it's just that I've never thought about going up in one of those things. You know... dangling hundreds of feet in the air in nothing but a wicker basket. No motive power, no control over direction, solely dependent on the wind, a huge flame blasting a couple of feet from my head. Hmmm. Maybe that's why I've never thought about it. *(pause)* I never realized you were so adventurous, but I guess a week isn't long enough to know everything about a person. A week. Doesn't sound like much but it feels like a long time. You don't yell at me, you don't make fun of me, you're...nice. There's a lot to be said for being nice, too bad there isn't more of it around. *(pause)* I don't know... was I serious? The car's in my name.....Hell, why not! Let's just drive... who cares where we go, just you and me. We'll go someplace where nobody will laugh at us *(pause)* Sure we can do that too. We can find someplace that'll take us up in a hot-air balloon but I can't promise I won't pee myself and....

Mary enters

MARY: What the hell is wrong with you? So now you're yappin' to yourself about pissing your pants? You really are a pathetic waste of testerzone.

ROGER: Testosterone.

MARY: Don't you play the wise-apple, I know what I mean. Now you listen to me and listen to me good you blabbering moonbeam. I'm sick of being the only sane one in this house. Every time lately when I walk out of the room, you start mumbling to yourself. You're goin' soft in the head and if you think you're gonna stick around here while I wipe the drool off your chin, you'd better think again. Maybe I should just kick your saggy butt out of here now and be done with it. You're a sorry excuse for a spit-shine you know that? I'm gonna go upstairs to find my National Enquirer and if you're still talkin' to the leprechauns when I get back, you'll be outa here faster than a greased turd out of a Canada goose!

Mary leaves

ROGER: Have to give credit where credit is due. She certainly has a way with words. *(pause)* Yes, I think she *would* actually do it. I once spent two weeks on a friend's couch because I answered the question "Do I look fat in this". Yes, she would do it. In fact, I almost hope she does. Wow... said that out loud, didn't I? *(pause)* You're right, it would be freedom. *(pause)* You too? So, that's why you want to go on the balloon ride... the freedom. *(pause)* I don't understand *(pause)* You want to be the balloon? I never thought of that. Of course, why wouldn't you want that, but hot air won't work, I'd have to fill you with helium, and then we'd have to go to a nice open area, I mean god forbid there be power lines, and then I'd tie a long string to your ankle so you don't... *(pause)* But... *(pause)* Oh. I see. No string. But that would mean you'd...

There is a pause while Marty considers the implication of what Dolly wants. He uses the Kleenex from earlier to dab at his eyes.

ROGER: Of course. Freedom.

Mary enters holding a National Enquirer

MARY: So Napoleon, who are you talking to this time? You can't help yourself can you? Your wonky little brain gears just wobble around. Well, I'll tell you something buddy-boy, I've had it with you and your fairy dust sasquatch friends.

ROGER: If I had a string around my ankle, would you hold onto it or would you let it go?

MARY: What the hell is that supposed to mean? If I had a string right now I'd probably strangle you with it.

Roger gets up and wanders away from the couch. He doesn't look at Dolly or Mary

ROGER: Did you hear that, she said she'd strangle me with it, I don't think she really means it though.

MARY: What?

ROGER: Ohh she's all talk. Like they say... all hat, no cattle.

MARY: You don't have both oars in the water, do you?

ROGER: I think she's going to tell me to leave. She threatened it, and I think she actually will.

MARY: You got that right, nut bar.

ROGER: Wow I thought that when it came to this moment she'd come up with something better than "nut bar".

MARY: That's it, I want you and your do-lally imaginary friends out of here. Get upstairs and pack a bag. I warned you, didn't I warn you? I was either me or the loonies in your head and now we see what's important to you.

ROGER: Freedom

MARY: What?

ROGER: That's what's important. Freedom. Freedom for both of us.

MARY: Freedom? Who says I need freedom?

ROGER: I didn't say you did.

Roger leaves to go upstairs and pack a bag

MARY: What a nut bar. What an absolute nut bar. He's bent fifteen ways from normal.

Mary sits on the couch and picks up the remote, she's looking at the TV

Stupid piece of crap balloon show. *(changes the channel)* Once he's gone, I'm gettin' satellite. *(changes channel)* Oh, and by the way...

Mary slowly turns her head to look at Dolly. This is the first time she has looked at Dolly.

You ain't goin' nowhere.

Lights Down

The End