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BIG DOG PUBLISHING
P.O. Box 1400
TALLEVAST, FL 34270

Baby Talk

COLLECTION. The characters in this madcap collection of short plays have quite a bit of growing up to do! In “Baby Talk,” Dilly shows up at a childbirth class ready to show “sexist Stone Age women” that a man can do anything a woman can do. In “Grown-ups” a job seeker who sucks her thumb interviews for a job with a business owner who wears adult diapers. And in “Zombie in a Cooler,” a frightened baseball player captures a zombie and holds it captive in a large cooler.

Performance Time: Approximately 30 minutes.

Baby Talk

(1 M, 4 F)

ARIEL: Teaches a childbirth class; wears yoga pants and a hippy shirt; has a breathy voice; female.

DILLY: Overly enthusiastic childbirth class member who thinks he can do anything a woman can; male.

KELLY: Postal worker who is really excited about being “preggers”; wears sweatpants and a tourist T-shirt; female.

DEANNA: Depressed because her boyfriend dumped her; wears a cartoon T-shirt and yoga pants; female.

LAURA: Unenthusiastic class participant whose breathing sounds like demonic grunting; wears all black and her hair hangs in front of her face; female.

Grown-Ups

(1 M, 1 F)

MANFRED: Weasely-looking business owner; hair is cut in a bowl cut and wears a suit with an adult diaper over his pants; male.

MISSY: Alaskan job seeker who just graduated from Yale and thinks she has really big thumbs; wears an interview suit with a red blouse; female.

Zombie in a Cooler

(1 M, 1 F)

BILLIE: Overwhelmed, frightened baseball player who has captured a zombie; male.

ALEXA: Tom-boyish girl who is a member of Billie’s baseball team; female.

Set

Baby Talk: A dance studio with mirrors on the walls. There are several mats along the floor for the pregnant ladies to sit on.

Grown-Ups: A fancy office in New York. There are a few exotic-looking potted plants scattered about. At CS, there is a large desk with a comfy chair. On the desk are some stacks of papers and a stress ball. There is a small trash can with a paper shredder beside the desk.

Zombie in a Cooler: A park on a sunny day.

Props

Baby Talk: Three baby dolls, water bottle, purse, yoga-type mats, man-purse, coat for Ariel.

Grown-Ups: Plants, watering can, stress ball, intercom/phone, pens, papers, adult diaper, pad of sticky notes, assorted office supplies.

Zombie in a Cooler: Large red cooler, metal baseball bat, baseball mitt, baseball, plastic spider.

Sound Effects

Grown-Ups: Buzz

Zombie in a Cooler: Moaning

“The goal of this class
is to become closer
with your loveling
and allow him
to pass freely and naturally
into the beautiful earth.”

—Ariel

Baby Talk

(AT RISE: A dance studio with mirrors on the walls. There are several mats along the floor, where the pregnant ladies are sitting. Ariel, who is not pregnant, stands at the head of the group. Laura is hugging her knees while rocking back and forth. Kelly is staring attentively at Ariel. Deanna is fixing her hair.)

ARIEL: *(To class, animating every line with a gesture.)* Welcome to Childlike Connection. This class will help you to integrate your new-found “loveling” into your life. That’s a term I made up for the purposes of this class. It’s like “duckling” because you’re all like big mama ducks that have to lead your ducklings through life and lots of gross seaweed lake stuff, but with more love...“loveling.” The goal of this class is to become closer with your loveling and allow him to pass freely and naturally into the beautiful earth. We are all part of the earth, and the earth is all part of us. Think of yourselves as just big clumps of mud that sprouted legs and started walking around. Your little lovelings are just an extension of that mud clump of juicy mud. Now, giving birth is all about breathing...a lot of breathing and a lot of blood. There also might be some vomiting involved if you get really good at it, but I don’t want to get you too excited yet. Hmm... *(Looks around.)* ...we’re missing one person and it’s a pretty small class, but why don’t we just go ahead and start with introductions to get them out of the way. *(Points to Kelly.)* How about you first?

KELLY: Hi, my name is Kelly. I’m [26]. I’m a postal worker, and I’m just really excited to be preggers! *[Or another age.]*

ARIEL: Great! But instead of “preggers,” let’s try to start using the term “with loveling.” *(Points to Deanna.)* How about you?

DEANNA: My name is Deanna. Well, at least it was until my boyfriend left me. Now, you might as well take a big red stamp that says “loser” and slap that right across my big fat misshapen head.

ARIEL: All right, then... *(Points to Laura.)* And what about you? *(Laura doesn't respond.)* What about you? *(Laura doesn't respond.)* Hello there...? Can you talk?

LAURA: No!

ARIEL: Well, all right, then...moving on. I want everybody to do a little stretching. *(Demonstrates.)* Reach up into the sky.

DEANNA: I can't see the sky. If I could, it would probably be cloudy anyway...dark and cloudy, with acid rain burning my skin.

ARIEL: The ceiling, then. Just reach up and try to touch the ceiling. Think of all the cool stuff that might be up there. Vents and...pipes...and other very cool things that you want. So you're reaching up there, and all of a sudden, a cute little puppy waddles by you and you want it.

(They all squat down and chase an imaginary puppy.)

KELLY: Oh, he's so adorable! I just want to spank his little bottom. He's got a little spot, and as soon as I catch him, I'm going to give him a name like... *(Thinks.)* ...Spot.

ARIEL: That's it! He's so cute and fluffy. Laura, speed up! You're never going to catch your puppy like that.

LAURA: They're filthy! I hate them!

ARIEL: Are you sure he's cute, and he's got chubby little cheeks?

DEANNA: My boyfriend had chubby little cheeks. He was just like a chubby little puppy.

ARIEL: Okay, and we're up. *(Stands with her legs apart.)* We're up here and we're breathing. In and out: He, he, hooo...he, he, hooo...he, he, hooo... *(etc.)*

(They all try the exercise except Laura, who simply stands with her hair over her face.)

ALL: He, he, hoo.

ARIEL: And again.

ALL: He, he, hooo.

ARIEL: Okay, I still am not believing your "he's." They should sound like a little girl at her seventh birthday party. A hunky 7-year-old boy told you a funny joke and you laugh, but you don't want other people to find out, so you give a quiet but very intense "he." Why don't we all try sentences with "he's" in them?

KELLY: Ummm, I am seven years old...it's my birthday and I...want to have a pillow fight later. He. He. He.

DEANNA: He left me.

ARIEL: *(Looks at Laura.)* You, next. *(Laura slowly shakes her head no. To group.)* Okay, and again: He, he, hoo.

ALL: He, he, hooo...he, he, hooo...he, he, hooo... *(Etc. During the exercise, Laura's "he, he, hoo" sounds more like demonic grunting.)*

ARIEL: Great job, everyone. Does anyone feel closer to the earth yet?

(Pause.)

KELLY: I thought I might have felt it, but it also might just be gas.

ARIEL: Well, all right. Let's lay down and really feel the earth by feeling your mat. Let it know that you're there. Pet it, smell it, say "hello" to it. *(Demonstrates.)* Hello, Mr. Mat. My name is Blank, and I am ready to feel your delicious earth.

ALL: *(In unison.)* Hello, Mr. Mat. My name is Blank, and I am ready to feel your delicious earth.

ARIEL: Good. Good. But you might want to replace "blank" with your actual name.

DEANNA: He's kicking! *(To belly.)* Hey! Cut it out! Don't make me come in there!

ARIEL: No, no, no...don't punish your loveling for kicking you. He's just letting you know that you're a bad mommy for not paying attention to him.

DEANNA: No, that's not it...my boyfriend Tommy used to... *(Starts sobbing.)* Play socc-er. And every time he kicks, it reminds me of him. *(Starts sobbing.)* Waaaaa!

ARIEL: That's okay. Let all of your emotions bleed out into the delicious earth.

DEANNA: Waaaaaaa! *(Crying goes on for far too long.)*

ARIEL: *(Annoyed.)* All right, tuck it in, woman! You're in public! *(Deanna doesn't stop crying. Laura approaches and slaps Deanna across the face, which causes her to stop crying immediately. Both women return to their mats.)* Uhhh...thank you, Laura.

DEANNA: *(To Laura.)* Thanks.

LAURA: I didn't do it for you.

ARIEL: *(To class.)* This next exercise I want you to do is called "the walrus."

KELLY: Oh, do we act like walruses?! That sounds fun!

ARIEL: No. Actually, I have no idea where the name came from...probably just one of those weird exercises that's named after someone.

KELLY: Oh.

ARIEL: All right. Now, first, I want you to lay on your back with your loveling toward the sky.

DEANNA: *(Correcting.)* Ceiling.

ARIEL: Ceiling. Whatever. Now, slowly roll over on your stomach with your arms supporting yourself. Lift yourself up, leaving your legs limp. Now "arf" vigorously.

KELLY: Ruff! Ruff!

ARIEL: No, no. More like an "arf" with kind of a moaning sound with it. *(Mimics walrus.)* Arf! Arf! Arf!

ALL: *(Mimicking her.)* Arf! Arf! Arf!

ARIEL: Come on! Really get into it!

ALL: Arf! Arf! Arf! (*Dilly enters hurriedly and stops when he sees the Women. He stares in amazement.*) Arf! Arf!

[END OF FREEVIEW.]

“Babies wear diapers.
I’m wearing an adult fecal depository.”

—Manfred

Grown-Ups

(AT RISE: A fancy office in New York. Manfred is sitting at his desk looking over some papers and squeezing his stress ball. He presses a button on his desk and a small buzz is heard.)

MANFRED: Margret! Send in the next one! (Releases the button. Pause. Presses the button again and a buzz is heard.) And, Margret, order me one of those tuna fish sandwiches. You know...not the cheap kind, the kind that is going extinct or whatever. (Missy enters. Points to a chair. To Missy.) Just have a seat right there.

MISSY: Thank you.

MANFRED: (Looking over resume.) So, your resume says you graduated from Yale, top of your class. Good, good. And you seem to be pretty well qualified, but Miss...what is your name again?

MISSY: Missy, sir.

MANFRED: Miss Missy, tell me about you...the real you.

MISSY: The real me?

MANFRED: The real you...like you behind the smoke and mirrors and education.

MISSY: Well, I was...born in Alaska.

MANFRED: Oh, so you're a foreigner.

MISSY: No, Alaska is in the United States.

MANFRED: Yes, I knew that, but it's basically in another country. That's what I was getting at. It's basically the same thing.

MISSY: Oh, well I—

MANFRED: So did you have Internet in your igloo?

MISSY: In my what?

MANFRED: Your igloo...that you lived in. Did you have Internet? Or electricity at all, I suppose. I know you Eskimos are a very...industrious people, but—

MISSY: I wasn't raised in an igloo. I was raised in a house.

MANFRED: Yes, a house made out of ice, which is more commonly known as an "igloo."

MISSY: No, it was a house made out of house...things.

MANFRED: Like ice?

MISSY: No, like bricks and wood, or whatever.

MANFRED: So it was more like a log cabin situation?

MISSY: *(Frustrated.)* No, I lived in a house! *(Stands.)* A regular house!

(Manfred shakes his head and writes something down. Slightly embarrassed by her outburst, Missy sits down.)

MANFRED: You have quite a temper for a woman who wants a job here. So, Miss Missy...how did you get along with your family?

MISSY: Aren't these questions getting kind of personal?

MANFRED: While I respect your question, I have one of my own. Do you want to work for my company?

MISSY: Yes, I, uh...I suppose my family and I got along well enough.

MANFRED: Do you know what a stress interview is?

MISSY: A what?

MANFRED: Oh, good. Nothing. So you got along well enough, but not perfectly?

MISSY: No, I mean, what family could possibly be perfect?

MANFRED: Mine. Did you ever feel unloved? Were you a latchkey kid...floating home from school on an iceberg only to come back to your primitive log cabin all empty and alone? Did that make you feel all empty and alone inside?

MISSY: I, uh...I...

[END OF FREEVIEW]

“It isn’t really my fault
when you think about it...”

—Billie

Zombie in a Cooler

(AT RISE: A park on a sunny day. There is a small baseball mitt and baseball on the ground beside a metal baseball bat. A large red cooler is rocking back and forth beside Billie, an overwhelmed, fragile little boy. Alexa, a tom-boyish girl, enters and taps Billie on the back. This startles Billie and he lets out a loud high-pitched scream.)

ALEXA: *(Laughs.)* You screamed like a girl.

BILLIE: I did not!

ALEXA: Yes, you did! You just did!

BILLIE: *(Lying.)* That was...somebody else.

ALEXA: We're the only persons around here.

BILLIE: You must have somethin' in your ear or something like a lotta wax. You should clean your ears more.

ALEXA: *(Clenched fist, threatening.)* What are you sayin' about my ears?!

BILLIE: Nothin'! I swear I wasn't saying nothin'. Please just leave me alone.

ALEXA: What's your problem?! I came over here to help 'cause you were lookin' all buggy and weird and you just want me to leave.

BILLIE: I promise I can handle him...it. The thing. I can handle the thing.

ALEXA: Speak English, buggy, before I pop you one in the eye!

BILLIE: I just...just, I, just.

ALEXA: You sound like Porky the Pig babbling like that, and I don't trust pigs any farther than I can throw them, which isn't very far because pigs are really heavy. *(Billie is hyperventilating. The cooler is moving back and forth and a loud moaning sound is coming from it. Billie gasps.)* What's in there?

BILLIE: I...I caught a...

ALEXA: Spit it out, twiggy.

BILLIE: A zombie.

ALEXA: (*Laughs.*) That's the dumbest thing you ever said, twiggy!

BILLIE: I'm telling the truth! It's a zombie!

(*Alexa knocks on the cooler.*)

ALEXA: You expect me to believe this thingy is a zombie?

(*Cooler moans and shakes.*)

BILLIE: Ahhh! Don't do that! You'll make him mad!

ALEXA: What's he gonna do?

BILLIE: Eat your brain.

ALEXA: (*Unconvinced.*) Pfffft.

BILLIE: That's what they do. It's, like, their favorite food. My big brother told me that little kids' brains are especially good to them 'cause they get mushy when they're old.

ALEXA: That don't make any sense.

BILLIE: Yuh-uh. It's just like a banana...because if you leave a banana out for a super long time, then it gets all moldy and mushy. If you leave brains out, then it's the same thing.

ALEXA: Let him outta there. (*Goes for the cooler.*) I'll be danged if some zombie is eatin' this brain. I'll pop him one right in the eye!

(*Cooler shakes.*)

BILLIE: Stop it! (*Sits on cooler.*) You can't hurt him.

ALEXA: I bet you a bajillion dollars I can.

(*Alexa starts to move Billie off the cooler.*)

BILLIE: (*Screams.*) He can't die! He can't die! He'll eat your brains!

ALEXA: (*Gives up.*) All right! All right, already.

BILLIE: Zombies can't die.

ALEXA: That's like the 70-millionth time you've said that.

BILLIE: Actually it's the third time. You're not very good at math. (*Alexa punches him in the arm.*) Owwww!

ALEXA: Serves you right, Twiggy.

BILLIE: My name's not Twiggy. It's Billie.

ALEXA: I don't care what your name is. When the zombie gets out of that cooler, he's going to eat you up first! So, ha!

[END OF FREEVIEW]