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Reborn

by Zayd Dohrn

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



**SAMUEL
FRENCH**

FOUNDED 1830

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***Reborn*ing was originally produced in New York at the
Summer Play Festival**

REBORNING premiered at the Public Theatre as part of the Summer Play Festival in June 2009. The performance was directed by Kip Fagan, with sets by David Evans Morris, costumes by Jessica Pabst, sound and video by Leah Gelpe, and lighting by Matt Frey. The cast was as follows:

- DAIZY** Greg Keller
- EMILY** Ally Sheedy
- KELLY** Katherine Waterston

CHARACTERS

KELLY - female, 20's.

DAIZY - male, 20's.

EMILY - female, 40's.

SETTING

A doll-maker's studio in Queens, NY.

To Dalin and Light

SCENE 1

(An industrial loft lined with shelves of dolls – some hairless, some without eyes, others just gray plastic casts.)

(The near-finished dolls are incredibly lifelike, photo-realistic. In fact, each doll has a snapshot of a real baby taped to its shelf, like a label.)

(There's a hallway leading to another studio, a bathroom, a kitchenette, and a freight elevator door. Also a couch, a computer, a TV, and a drafting table.)

(Music comes from the computer. Maybe Schooly D or the Beastie Boys.)*

*(A half-dressed young woman, **KELLY**, sits at the table, smoking a joint, wearing latex gloves, mouthing the lyrics.)*

(A dozen photographs of a baby boy are tacked above her desk – a set of Genesis Heatset paints, stencil creams, brushes, and a kit with tiny compartments for hair, nails, and eyes, all within easy reach. Also several beer bottles and containers of prescription medication.)

(A camera with a macro lens is mounted over the table, wired to a digital projector pointed at the wall.)

*(**KELLY** glances up every few seconds at the projection, which shows an extreme close-up of a doll's glass eye, enlarged a thousand times, the carefully painted capillaries visible.)*

*(**KELLY** is micro-rooting an eyelash into its vinyl lid with a hooked needle and a tiny drop of epoxy.)*

*See Music Use Note on page 3.

(There is a loud squawk from the intercom.)

KELLY. *(calling into the next room)* Daiz?

DAIZY. *(offstage)* Yah?

KELLY. You want to get that for me, baby?

DAIZY. *(offstage)* What?

KELLY. You want to get that please?

DAIZY. Get what?

(She turns off the music.)

KELLY. You want to get the fucking door? Sweetheart?

Thank you very much.

DAIZY. *(offstage)* I'm working.

KELLY. So am I.

(no answer)

So am I! Working.

DAIZY. *(offstage)* You're closer.

KELLY. Arrghh.

(KELLY puts down her tools, takes a hit from the joint, and peels herself off the stool, checking her butt for vinyl marks.)

KELLY. If this is FedEx for you again, man, I swear to God...

(She touches a button on the intercom.)

KELLY. What?

(A WOMAN'S VOICE crackles over the speaker.)

WOMAN'S VOICE. *(offstage)* Hello?

KELLY. May I help you?

WOMAN'S VOICE. *(offstage)* Yes. Is this "Little Angel Nursery"?

KELLY. Who're you looking for?

WOMAN'S VOICE. *(offstage)* I'm here for Eva.

KELLY. Eva?

WOMAN'S VOICE. *(offstage)* To pick up – Baby Eva?

KELLY. Oh...sorry. You're early.

WOMAN'S VOICE. *(offstage)* Yes. I had some time before work. I wanted to drop in and – check your progress. If that's all right.

(KELLY buzzes her in.)

KELLY. Shit. Daiz?

DAIZY. *(offstage)* Yeah?

KELLY. I'm smoking a joint out here!

DAIZY. *(offstage)* Cool...be there in a sec.

(KELLY runs to the table and stubs out her joint in an ashtray.)

KELLY. Shit shit shit...

(She gathers the empty beer bottles in her arms, dumps them in the trash, and turns on the track lighting, which illuminates the dolls like objects in an art gallery.)

(She pulls on a pair of glue-splattered jeans.)

KELLY. Did you fucking die in there or what?

DAIZY. *(offstage)* Got a little roll going...I'll be right out.

(KELLY goes to her computer and scrolls through her music library while she frantically waves the smoke away with her free hand.)

(She finds a song, clicks on it, and Brahms' Lullaby starts to play.)

KELLY. Know what? Forget it. It's all – under control...

DAIZY. *(offstage)* Awesome. Thanks.

(KELLY finds a can of Febreze. She spritzes it around the room, tosses the can, just as the freight elevator doors slide open, revealing EMILY, behind the wire mesh.)

(EMILY is middle-aged, wearing a suit and heels, very put together. She carries an expensive purse.)

KELLY. *(out of breath)* Hi...

EMILY. Hello. Kelly, right?

KELLY. Mrs. Palmer?

EMILY. Emily.

KELLY. Emily. Hey.

EMILY. So. It's lovely to meet you, finally, in person. After all the email, I start to feel I'm corresponding with a machine – "kt@littleangels.com".

(KELLY pulls a canvas strap, lifting the wire gate.)

KELLY. Come on in.

EMILY. Thanks. Nice place –

(Her cellphone rings. She grimaces at KELLY, picks up.)

EMILY. Yes? All right, Jan...it's fine...Tell them to wait...I'm on an errand. In Queens. "Queens" the borough? I'm just – Tell them I'm on my way. I'm breaking up, Jan. I'll –

(She hangs up.)

EMILY. Sorry.

KELLY. No problem.

EMILY. You don't have a secretary do you, Kelly?

KELLY. Me? *(glances around)* Uh. No.

EMILY. It's like my mother back from the dead, I swear.
The nag.

KELLY. Hah...

(EMILY takes in the room, sniffs the pot smoke.)

EMILY. So...Is this a bad time?

KELLY. Nope. Perfect.

EMILY. Are you sure?

KELLY. Yeah. Just wasn't expecting you – until tomorrow, that's all.

EMILY. No, I know. I know. I couldn't wait. *(re: the doll on the table:)* Is that her?

KELLY. No. No, she's back in the oven. Drying.

EMILY. Oh. All right. *(indicating the other dolls)* So...is it okay if I look around then?

KELLY. Be my guest.

(EMILY picks up one of the dolls, looks closely at its face.)

EMILY. Incredible. Seeing them in 3-D. The pictures don't do you justice, Kelly. You're an artist.

KELLY. Ha.

EMILY. Really. You even get – the dry skin, you know? The blotchiness.

KELLY. Mm.

EMILY. And the little stork-bites too...must be fascinating work. Paying such close attention to people's faces, I mean, must give you such a –

KELLY. Headache, yeah...

EMILY. *(smiles)* Unique perspective, is what I was going to say.

KELLY. Well...I'm better, actually, on the pore level, Emily, you know – whole people confuse me. Would you like something to drink?

EMILY. No, thank you – could I see her now, do you think?

KELLY. Sure. Uh...I'll go make sure she's dry.

(KELLY starts to go.)

EMILY. The pictures were okay?

KELLY. Fine.

EMILY. I had to have the IT people scan them for me at work. Made me feel about a million years old. I told them what you said about the "DPT", but I have no idea what that meant – or whether they understood – They said something about "lines." I said, "No, *dots*," but...

KELLY. They were fine, Emily. Exactly right. I think you'll be pleased. *(beat)* So...be right back.

EMILY. Okay.

(KELLY exits.)

(EMILY waits a moment, and then wanders around the room, looking at the dolls.)

(She smells the smoke, spots the roach KELLY stubbed out in the ashtray, picks it up, sniffs it.)

(She takes the lighter, lights the joint, takes a hit.)

(After a moment:)

DAIZY. *(offstage)* Kel? You get rid of him?

(EMILY exhales, looks around for the ashtray.)

(offstage) Hope you're sitting down now, babe, because you –

(EMILY hides the joint behind her back as DAIZY enters – cute, scruffy, a very realistic ten-inch dildo hanging out of his open fly.)

(He doesn't see EMILY at first.)

DAIZY. – are looking at my best piece – *(He spots her.)* ever – Oh.

EMILY. Hello.

(He snatches the dildo out of his pants, hides it behind his back.)

DAIZY.. Hey. *(He laughs nervously.)* Wow. I'm really sorry...

EMILY. It's okay.

(DAIZY looks for a place to put the dildo.)

DAIZY. I didn't realize –

(EMILY takes the opportunity to drop the roach in the ashtray.)

EMILY. Nor did I...Emily, by the way.

DAIZY. Daizy.

EMILY. Daisy, okay.

DAIZY. With a "Z."

EMILY. Interesting.

DAIZY. Hippy parents.

EMILY. Pleasure to meet you.

DAIZY. Likewise.

(looking for something to say...)

EMILY. So, how do you know Kelly?

DAIZY. We went to RISD together. In college? (*singing the school song:*) “R is for the R in Rhodeislandschoolofdesign... And I is for the I in Rhodeislandschoolofdesign”?

EMILY. I see.

DAIZY. You?

EMILY. How do I know –

DAIZY. Yeah.

EMILY. I was referred.

(*pause*)

DAIZY. (*re: KELLY*) So, she went to get the –

EMILY. Yes.

DAIZY. Which one?

EMILY. Eva?

DAIZY. Oh. That’s a good one.

EMILY. Oh good. Good...

(*long pause*)

DAIZY. (*starting to go*) So, I’ll just –

EMILY. Great.

(*KELLY reenters, with Baby Eva. She sees DAIZY, EMILY, the dildo.*)

KELLY. Daiz...? What are you doing?

DAIZY. I apologized, already, honey. I was just messing around. I didn’t know you had a customer.

KELLY. Emily...God, I’m –

EMILY. Is that..?

(*EMILY has her eyes fixed on the doll in KELLY’s hands.*)

(*She reaches out to touch it, pulls back, gets hold of herself.*)

EMILY. Is it all right if I –

KELLY. Oh, sure. Yeah. Careful. She’s not completely dry yet. Around the eyes.

EMILY. Okay.

(*EMILY takes a deep breath. She reaches out and takes the doll in her arms.*)

EMILY. Huh.

(a long pause)

(DAIZY pokes KELLY's ass with the dildo. She pushes him away.)

EMILY. God...

(She takes a deep breath.)

DAIZY. *(re: the dildo)* I'll just go put this away, yeah?

(Nobody answers.)

Sweet...

(He exits.)

EMILY. The little crust on her eyebrows. I haven't thought about that for...God knows. I didn't realize I still had that in my mind...

(She takes a breath, pulls herself together.)

I'm overwhelmed, Kelly.

KELLY. I'm glad. *(re: DAIZY)* Sorry, again. About –

EMILY. Please. Don't worry.

KELLY. It's his job, y'know. The...adult rubber and latex items?

EMILY. I gathered.

KELLY. He started this mail-order catalog? After graduation. Guys send in photos. Written measurements. Buy them for their girlfriends, as jokes, I guess. Or whatever. Hang them on the wall. Like a deer head.

EMILY. "Written measurements"?

KELLY. Yeah, you can imagine. We did a lot of twelve, fourteen-inch jobs.

(EMILY laughs.)

EMILY. I see.

KELLY. He hired me, right out of college. That's how I got good, you know, with the photo-realistic skin and veins. Hair. He's really very – good at it.

EMILY. I could see that.

KELLY. Anyway...It's like – building model airplanes to him now. He's so used to it, doesn't understand sometimes how offensive it could be, to walk in on somebody like –

EMILY. It's fine, Kelly. I'm not offended.

KELLY. Oh. Okay.

EMILY. (*re: the doll*) Her neck still looks a little wet to me...

KELLY. No, that's – Little babies stay moist, y'know, in the folds? Secrete a lot of oil. But you can touch her there. It's hard silicone gel. Just for visual effect.

(**EMILY** examines the doll, smiling to herself.)

(*after a moment:*)

EMILY. God, she's close, Kelly. Really, really close...

KELLY. Oh. "But"?

EMILY. No. No, I –

KELLY. Tell me. There's a "Lifelike Guarantee." If I missed something, I'm happy to fix it.

EMILY. Just – Just something about her – tone, I guess.

KELLY. Tone?

EMILY. Her skin looks – a bit too rosy to me. Somehow? I don't know.

KELLY. "Rosy."

EMILY. Pink. Or ruddy? Flushed, I guess is what I'm –

KELLY. Yes, I know what rosy means.

(*beat*)

EMILY. I'm sorry. I guess most people want that. Airbrushing. Enhancements?

KELLY. (*non-committal*) Mm.

EMILY. Make them look more – Gerber-y. Your website, with the pastel colors, the cherub logo. (*re: the music*) Brahms? No offense. That's not me.

KELLY. Good to know.

(*She switches off the music.*)

EMILY. I want her to be realistic. All right? Nothing fancy or cleaned-up, just...I hope I'm not offending you, Kelly. Talking like this.

KELLY. Not at all. Not at all, it's a relief, actually. To be so straightforward. I thought I was being realistic.

(She takes back the doll, looks at it.)

(DAIZY reenters, dildo-less.)

EMILY. I'll pay extra, of course, for your time. Whatever you think is appropri –

KELLY. You don't have to do that. It's part of the package.

EMILY. Money isn't an issue for me. As long as the quality is there.

DAIZY. In that case, maybe you'd like to browse around my studio for a little –

KELLY. No, she does not want to look at your – Daizy! God. *(to EMILY)* It's fine. Really. Customer is always...

(EMILY digs in her purse.)

EMILY. I brought an old videotape. If you'd like to take a look –

KELLY. That's all right.

EMILY. I think it'll help.

KELLY. I can't work off video, actually.

EMILY. No?

KELLY. Nope. People ask. Not enough detail. Even a freeze-frame in HD is much too grainy. I can't get anything off it.

EMILY. Okay, but you could see how she moved, at least, and what she looked like, right? Facial expressions, or –

KELLY. "How she moved" doesn't help me.

EMILY. No, but I mean – It might inspire you or – I'm no expert, but I assume Michelangelo Buonarroti didn't sculpt from photographs, did he?

DAIZY. In the sixteenth century?

EMILY. You know what I mean. Picasso then. Rodin.

KELLY. *(laughs)* I'm not Picasso, Emily. Or Michelangelo.
And I don't think those guys would have used video
tape –

EMILY. No, of course not.

KELLY. They preferred real life.

EMILY. Well, but “real life” isn't available here, is it?

(beat)

(KELLY looks at her.)

KELLY. Okay...Fine. *(She takes the videotape.)* No problem.

EMILY. Great.

(EMILY stands.)

So...I can't wait to see her, once she's done. I'm tremendously – encouraged, by what I've seen thus far...

KELLY. *(Nods.)*

EMILY. Well then. A week or so?

(EMILY exits.)

(KELLY and DAIZY look at each other. He raises a pierced eyebrow.)

SCENE 2

(The loft. That night.)

(KELLY is curled up on the futon, still wearing her latex gloves, drinking straight from a bottle of red wine.)

(Emily's home video is projected on the screen – old, scratchy, color-saturated footage of Baby Eva, in various places around the house.)

(After a while, DAIZY pokes his head in from the kitchenette.)

DAIZY. Popcorn? Milk duds?

(She barely acknowledges this.)

(He comes into the studio, eating.)

You getting anything off that or what?

KELLY. What do you think?

DAIZY. Cool. Betamax.

KELLY. May as well be.

DAIZY. Probably taped over an original *I Love Lucy* collection or something.

(He watches the projection with her.)

How old?

KELLY. I don't know. Eighties, maybe? Early nineties?

DAIZY. I meant the baby.

KELLY. Oh. Eight weeks? Maybe? Around that.

DAIZY. Cute.

(She shoots him a look.)

What? I can't think she's cute?

KELLY. No.

DAIZY. Got some milia there, on the bridge of the nose.

KELLY. I got that.

DAIZY. Little vascular stain on her shoulder too...*(beat)*
Be kind of fun, don't you think? To have a real one around this place?

KELLY. No, I don't think that'd be "fun".

(DAIZY picks Baby Eva up off the table.)

DAIZY. Little Chuckys are starting to creep me out, Kel, I'll be honest with you. Feel like homegirl might get my putty knife from the desk in the middle of the night, and like –

(He grabs a dildo, makes Baby Eva "stab" him several times.)

Ree! Ree! Ree! Ahhh!

(He takes Baby Eva's hands and pretends she is choking him.)

(He gasps, gurgles, falls to his knees.)

KELLY. Move, motherfucker! I can't see.

(He falls to the floor.)

Put it back.

(He returns Baby Eva to the table.)

DAIZY. You used to laugh at shit like that you know.

KELLY. You used to be funnier.

DAIZY. I think this "job" is starting to mess with your head.

KELLY. I like it. It calms me down.

DAIZY. You don't seem calm.

KELLY. I am! Calm!

DAIZY. Yeah, okay...So what are you watching for? If it's not –

KELLY. She wasn't happy with it.

DAIZY. Mm. And you think this is gonna make her –

KELLY. I don't know. I'm not a psychotherapist. I want her to be satisfied, okay? As a customer.

DAIZY. Um. That lady needs more than a doll, honey. I hate to break the news, but –

KELLY. We've been over this.

DAIZY. And?

KELLY. These *are* dolls. People do buy them.

DAIZY. What, “collectors”?

KELLY. Yes. Some.

(He scoffs.)

(KELLY picks up one of the dolls off the shelf.)

KELLY. This one’s a sixty-two year-old patent attorney and doll enthusiast. Douglas. All right? Lives in Florida. His wife, Estelle, thought it might be cute to have a little Dougie as part of his collection. For the retirement party.

DAIZY. *(trying to joke)* A sixty-two year-old male “doll enthusiast?” “Dope.”

KELLY. That’s not the point. People do collect them. For all sorts of reasons. *(indicating another doll)* And this girl’s having her third birthday party next month. Her mom wants to remember her, as a baby. In three dimensions. Like taking a lock of hair I guess. Bronzing the first shoes, or – whatever. People are sentimental.

DAIZY. *(indicating the shelves)* And the rest?

(KELLY pauses the tape. The projection shows a frozen image of Baby Eva.)

KELLY. Why are you so hostile about this? It’s a job, right?

DAIZY. You had a job.

KELLY. Oh. You’re still pissed about me quitting.

DAIZY. Come on.

KELLY. You are.

DAIZY. Nothing to do with that. I mean – you were really good at it, okay? But this is –

KELLY. You need me to pick up the slack, I said I would. Give me a couple orders.

(DAIZY shakes his head.)

KELLY. What then?

DAIZY. Honestly? I find your new “work” a little bit – disgusting, Kel. No offense.

KELLY. Thanks.

DAIZY. Sorry. But it's like – we're on Oprah or something here, and these people think they're buying *some product* that's gonna make them feel better about like – (*imitating Oprah*) “You get a doll! And you get a doll! Everybody gets a fucking doll!” (*picking up a doll*) Look at this. Is this a perfect symbol for some kind of – post-feminist capitalist nightmare? “Realities of life too depressing for you, little lady? Go shopping! Who needs a career? Play with dolls!” I mean – women in Africa lose half their kids within a year, all right? To diarrhea! Know what they do? They get knocked up again. Right away. They don't have time to raise a baby made out of plastic!

KELLY. Okay, Bono.

DAIZY. I'm not saying. Jesus, can't you just – There's something really sick and exploitative about making money off somebody else's suffering, Kel. You don't see that? “Little Angel Nursery”?

KELLY. So this is my fault. Selling rubber dicks is a moral occupation, but dolls –

DAIZY. The people who buy my dicks don't talk to them! They don't talk to them, or take them shopping, or fall in love with them –

KELLY. They actually have *intercourse* with them. But that doesn't count, apparently, in your –

DAIZY. Physical objects. With practical functions. It's a completely different –

KELLY. Do you even know the definition of a fetish object, Daiz?

DAIZY. No idea, why?

KELLY. You never read Freud?

DAIZY. No, I went to RISD. I can't read.

(She laughs in spite of herself.)

Go ahead, school me, Professor. O ye who went to Connecticut Prep before slumming it with us retards in art school. What does Freud say about fetishes? I'm a penis expert. I should know this.

KELLY. That the castration anxiety caused when a kid realizes his mom has no phallus makes him fixate on inanimate objects to replace her missing genital.

DAIZY. Ah. Well, that sounds ridiculous and incomprehensible. It must be smart.

KELLY. It means people invest things with emotional energy. They become symbols of unconscious longings. Of what's missing. We respond to them, as though they're real. It's a coping mechanism.

DAIZY. I'm worried about you, y'know...

KELLY. Oh, God. Don't do that.

DAIZY. Seriously. You know we haven't had sex in a month?

KELLY. It hasn't been a month.

DAIZY. How long's it been?

KELLY. I don't know. A week or two? At the most. I'm not keeping track.

DAIZY. Well I am. Keeping track. 28 days, 3 hours, 46 minutes.

KELLY. That's not a month.

DAIZY. It is if it's February.

KELLY. It's April.

DAIZY. I've been thinking – Maybe we should pull the latex.

(beat)

KELLY. I like latex.

DAIZY. *(snuggling her)* Seriously. I think you'd make a super-hot mom.

KELLY. Oh my God, Daiz...That is the single least erotic thing you've ever said to me.

DAIZY. So what? You're just gonna reproduce asexually now? Like an amoeba?

KELLY. Who says I'm planning to "reproduce" at all? I'm not interested in replicating my fucked-up DNA. We've been over this.

(DAIZY goes to the shelves, looks at the dolls.)

(long pause)

DAIZY. Maybe we should be seeing someone.

KELLY. What “someone”?

DAIZY. A...shrink? I don’t know. A sex therapist.

KELLY. A sex therapist. Did we get married? I thought only married people had to go to –

DAIZY. You got a better idea?

KELLY. Yeah. How about you stop making such a big deal about a little – slow patch? I mean – I’m not calling Dr. Ruth just because we haven’t fucked in a couple weeks, all right?

DAIZY. A month.

KELLY. A month, whatever.

DAIZY. I wasn’t thinking Dr. Ruth. More like...Jamie Buffalino? Dan Savage?

KELLY. You’re gay.

DAIZY. No. No, I’m writing him a letter right now. “Dear Savage Love: I’m male, hetero, disease-free. Moderately attractive. Sensitive to a woman’s needs. My girlfriend won’t fool around with me because she’s busy making babies out of *plastic*. I approached her with a nine-inch hand-sculpted dildo, on Valentine’s Day, and got no reaction whatsoever. Is there something wrong with me, or my synthetic friend, or am I right to be worried? Sincerely...Sensitive Blue Balls.”

KELLY. “Dear Sensitive. Maybe your girlfriend’s just going through some shit right now and you should give her a little space and support instead of a big hassle all the time. Maybe everything isn’t always about you men...P.S. ‘Blue balls’ is an urban myth invented by date-raping frat boys.”

DAIZY. He would not write that.

KELLY. He would. That’s exactly what he’d write.

DAIZY. I think he’d write, “Dear Balls: If she’s that into dolls, maybe you should find one you both can enjoy.

(He mimes sodomizing one of the dolls.)

DAIZY. *(as a ventriloquist, in the voice of Pinocchio:)* I'm a real boy now!

KELLY. Yech.

DAIZY. *(in Pinocchio's voice:)* I'll never tell a lie again!

(nothing)

All right, fuck it. I'm going to bed. Just me and Chucky here. As per youge.

KELLY. I'll be there in a minute.

DAIZY. Yeah, right...

(He mimes her nose growing longer with the dildo, makes the sound effect.)

(He exits.)

(After a moment, KELLY un-pauses the tape.)

(She takes out a prescription bottle, gulps down a few pills with some wine.)

(She watches the projection.)

SCENE 3

(**EMILY** and **KELLY** at the table, drinking coffee.)

(**KELLY** is badly hungover.)

(**EMILY** has Baby Eva in her lap. She looks at the doll for a long time, turning it this way and that.)

(**KELLY** takes a shaky sip, watching **EMILY** over the lip of her mug.)

EMILY. The hair, Kelly – How do you...?

KELLY. It's mohair. From Australia. Micro-rooted into the scalp. I started doing it that way after – Some of the wigs would come apart when people tried to shampoo them, so...

EMILY. Wow. You have amazing attention to detail.

KELLY. Crippling OCD. I'm on medication for it. Would you like something to drink, Emily? A beer, or –

EMILY. No, thanks. I'm late for work as it is.

KELLY. OJ?

EMILY. Water's fine.

KELLY. You sure?

(**KELLY** disappears into the kitchenette.)

EMILY. Hey – would you mind if I asked you something?

KELLY. (*offstage*) Sure. Yes. I mean no.

EMILY. . What made you start doing dolls?

KELLY. (*offstage*) Oh...a friend of mine asked me. If I could sculpt her nephew, when he was in the hospital. A couple years ago. She thought his parents would appreciate it, after –

(*She reenters, with two glasses.*)

And they did. So, it turned out to be like – an untapped market. Or whatever you call that, when people need something? Word spread. Pretty soon I was able to give Daizy my two dicks notice.

(They laugh, clink glasses, drink.)

(EMILY winces.)

EMILY. Whoah...

KELLY. Sorry. That's probably mine.

(They switch glasses.)

EMILY. Wow. You always start this early in the morning?

KELLY. No. Wednesday is my special day.

(The joke falls flat.)

EMILY. Mm...

KELLY. Anyway, I like it. It's soothing. The work I mean.

(beat)

EMILY. The woman who recommended you, you know...

Brenda? I met her at the Westfield Mall. She was uh – pushing her baby in a pram. We sat next to each other by the water feature. I congratulated her, how adorable he was, asleep like that, in his overalls. We got to talking...It took me maybe – ten, fifteen minutes. Before I realized her son had been born with a retinoblastoma. Had died in the hospital, when he was two. And that this *thing* in the nine hundred dollar stroller wasn't asleep. Wasn't breathing. Wasn't even a real –

KELLY. I don't remember her. "Brenda."

EMILY. No? You must remember the child though. That story.

KELLY. No. Not really.

EMILY. Your other customers don't talk to you about –

KELLY. No. They don't want to discuss it, usually. And even when they do, they don't use those words, Emily. "Died." "Cancer." There's a whole language of like – tense shifts, and euphemism for people to – most of my emails just say "I'd like to have a memento of my baby Julia whom I loved and treasured..." Y'know? Something like that? "Loved" instead of "Love" ..?

(beat)

EMILY. I'm sorry. I don't mean to be pushy. I guess I just never expected to be doll-shopping, for myself, by the time I was in menopause, so...*(laughs)* I wondered how other people came to it. That's all. Morbid curiosity. Forget about it.

KELLY. I think it's – private. How people choose to deal with –

EMILY. You're right. I should be glad you're so – circumspect, I suppose. You haven't asked me –

KELLY. I don't want to know.

(beat)

(EMILY digs in her purse.)

EMILY. I brought some more things – Eva's booties. Birth certificate. This – What is this, a teething toy? Something I saved. I don't know –

KELLY. Emily.

EMILY. What?

KELLY. What the hell am I supposed to do with this stuff?

EMILY. I don't know. Use it. For inspiration. It doesn't matter. I just thought you'd like to see –

KELLY. A birth certificate? How am I supposed to *sculpt* this?

EMILY. I don't know. I thought it might – You know, I don't believe in ghosts. I'm not – religious. But many cultures believe there's a powerful trace...energy left on personal objects?

KELLY. I don't work like that. I'm not a psychic. I use *photographs*?

EMILY. Sure. I guess I just thought – maybe the video would have given you a better sense of the eyes or something, but –

KELLY. The eyes?

EMILY. Yes. I mean, the lashes are so delicate. These little white bumps –

KELLY. Milia.

EMILY. The milia on the nose. So alive, it just – Makes the eyes feel a bit flat to me, that's all.

KELLY. Flat.

EMILY. Maybe there could be something more underneath it, you know? Some depth?

KELLY. Depth.

EMILY. Yes. Why are you repeating everything I say? Am I using improper terminology, or...?

KELLY. No, it's the right "terminology" or whatever, but – When people say "depth," Emily, what they actually mean is just – shadows. Vanishing points. Perspective lines. Painter's tricks.

EMILY. But in sculpture...it's 3-D, so –

KELLY. No, it's not. It's still – look. *(She picks up the doll.)* See? Our eyes don't recognize "depth" at all. All we ever "see" is shape and color projected on a flat screen, right? The retina? *(She moves the doll back and forth.)* What's sent to our brain is just two-dimensional data. The surfaces of things. It's only when those things start to move that we begin to think about space. Calculate that these flat images are rotating in relation to us, showing other sides. Moving closer and farther apart. We believe we're seeing depth, but we're not, really, just – collaging it together. Like an optical illusion.

EMILY. Well, it isn't working, yet. She still looks like a doll to me.

(They sit there quietly.)

I'm sorry to be so fussy. I'm not the kind of person, you know, who sends her dish back, at a restaurant. "I ordered well, not medium well." As though there's some objective measure. "Well." "Medium." It's just a steak. I know that. These things are relative, fine. She's just not the way I remember her, that's all.

KELLY. *(gently)* Memories change. Over time. Pictures don't. Trust me, this is what she looked like.

EMILY. No, it isn't.

KELLY. You think your recall is more accurate than a 35 millimeter photograph.

EMILY. It's different.

KELLY. Right. And I can't *sculpt* your memory.

(beat)

EMILY. Hey – can I ask you something else?

KELLY. Why not? The dam is broken.

(She gulps the contents of her glass, goes into the kitchenette.)

EMILY. Do you always work with the gloves on?

KELLY. *(offstage)* Yeah. Helps keep off dust and oil. Why?

EMILY. I'm no expert, obviously, but I would think it might help to have more of a – tactile sensation, while you're working?

(KELLY comes back in, her glass full.)

KELLY. Well, I can't feel anything anyway, so it doesn't really matter what I wear.

EMILY. What do you mean?

KELLY. I had an accident, as a little kid. My fingertips were burned off.

EMILY. Really?

KELLY. Yes. Really.

(She waggles her gloved fingers.)

EMILY. Must make your line of work difficult.

KELLY. No. I have to trust my eyes more. Makes for like – mechanical precision or something. I like to think it helps me focus.

EMILY. A sculptor who can't feel. It's like Beethoven or something, isn't it?

KELLY. If you say so.

EMILY. Hm. What happened?

KELLY. *(drinking)* With what?

EMILY. The “accident”? If you don’t mind – talking about it?

KELLY. No. It’s um. Kind of a long story though. Sort of grisly, actually...I don’t think you’ll want to hear –

EMILY. I do. Please. If you’re willing.

(beat)

KELLY. Um...Okay. *(laughs awkwardly)* Well. When I was a baby, I was – left, by my parents. Abandoned or whatever...wrapped in plastic and dropped in a dumpster in the Bronx?

EMILY. You’re joking.

KELLY. No. Um. Somebody poured Drano and bleach on my hands. Trying to take off my fingerprints, which shows an inherited um...Meticulous quality, maybe... *(forcing a laugh)* And they stabbed me a bunch of times, with some kind of...Awl or screwdriver or something. So I lost a lot of blood. This – construction worker found me the next morning. Took me to a hospital. Saved my life.

EMILY. Oh my God.

KELLY. I know, it’s – sorry. It’s embarrassing to talk about, but –

EMILY. No, but I mean – What kind of a person would do something like –

KELLY. I don’t know. A junkie maybe? A teenager? Somebody confused, obviously. And desperate.

EMILY. You read about these kinds of things in the newspaper I suppose, but you don’t ever imagine it could happen in real life...to someone you know.

KELLY. Yeah, I was kind of famous, for a while. In *The New York Post*. “The Dumpster Darling”. Sold a lot of papers for those assholes, which is probably my greatest regret...

EMILY. Huh.

KELLY. So. I was in foster care for a while. A plastic surgeon and his wife adopted me. I was fortunate. If I’d just

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