

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this play is subject to royalty. It is fully protected by Original Works Publishing, and the copyright laws of the United States. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

The performance rights to this play are controlled by Original Works Publishing and royalty arrangements and licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. PLEASE NOTE that amateur royalty fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a royalty quotation and license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Royalties are payable with negotiation from Original Works Publishing.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Particular emphasis is laid on the question of amateur or professional readings, permission and terms for which must be secured from Original Works Publishing through direct contact.

Copying from this book in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable.

Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing, and advertising for the play:

**“Produced by special arrangement with
Original Works Publishing.”
www.originalworksonline.com**

Due authorship credit must be given on all programs, printing and advertising for the play.

Armless

© 2004, Kyle Jarrow

First Printing, 2012

Printed in U.S.A.

*More Great Plays Available From
Original Works Publishing*

Canned Peaches in Syrup

by Alex Jones

5 Males, 3 Females

Synopsis: The timely post-apocalyptic comedy *Canned Peaches In Syrup* is set in a seemingly absurd and inconvenient future where global warming has reduced the planet to a desert wasteland, peopled by dwindling tribes of vegetarians and cannibals. Ma, Pa and Julie wander the blighted landscape in search of vegetable sustenance; but when the malicious prophet, Blind Bastard shows up and discovers they are the guardians of the very last can of fruit known to mankind, his greed sends cannibal Rog into their camp, triggering a Romeo and Juliet journey that spirals dangerously into passion, mayhem and destruction beneath the fractured sky of a doomed world.

You May Go Now

by Bekah Brunstetter

2 Males, 2 Females

Synopsis: Dottie has trained young Betty to be the perfect 1950s housewife; to cook the perfect pot roast, to bake a gorgeous seven-layer cake, to remove any stain. And tonight, Betty's 18th birthday, it is time for Betty to go out into the world. Only Dottie has failed to mention that the year is 2007, that the world is a vast and complex place, and that there is a reason she cannot abide being called 'Mother'. Ghosts from the past haunt the women and shatter their idyllic, if odd, existence. When a mysterious traveler is stranded at their home, he brings a revelation that forces Betty to choose between the love of her 'mother' and her freedom and sanity. *YOU MAY GO NOW* is an adult fairy tale about a 'mother' and 'daughter' whose love is as real as it is destructive.

ARMLESS

a play
by
Kyle Jarrow

ORIGINALLY PRODUCED AT THE NEW YORK
INTERNATIONAL FRINGE FESTIVAL 2004

Directed by Ian Tresselt
Produced by Rebecca Habel & Reed Ridgley

John... Sam Turich
Anna... Colleen Quinlan
Doctor... Robert Carr
Receptionist... Gabrielle Reznik

ARMLESS is now a motion picture directed by Habib Azar, available
on DVD. More info at www.armlessthemovie.com

**Read more about Kyle Jarrow and his other plays at
www.landoftrust.com**

CHARACTERS

John

Anna

Doctor

Receptionist

SETTING

Somewhere in the USA. Now.

The set shouldn't be naturalistic.

It's better if the stage is white and sterile, suggesting a cold medical environment.

Different scenes should be suggested by a few props or furniture pieces—an answering machine, a desk, an operating table, a hotel bed, etc.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Between all scenes (except between 1 & 2 and 3 & 4), there should be a complete blackout and music should be played loudly for about thirty seconds. Each time, the music should begin and end abruptly, jarringly, in the middle of a phrase.

ARMLESS

1. Suburban Home

(John stands by an answering machine in a well-appointed home. He is in his early thirties. He is healthy-looking with all his limbs in place. A heavy suitcase sits by his feet.)

JOHN: Here I go.

(He presses a button on the answering machine. The machine beeps and says, in an electronic monotone: "Record message now.")

JOHN: Hi honey. It's John. I have something very important to tell you. I'm going—I—shit.

(He hits stop. Beep. He hits another button. "Record message now." He tries again.)

JOHN: Hi honey. It's John. I have something very important to tell you. I'm going—I—you should probably sit down for this. Honey, I had a terrible accident. With a carving knife. *(Pause.)* No. I had a terrible accident with a power saw. *(Pause.)* No.

(He hits stop.)

JOHN: *(to himself, thinking about it)* With a log chipper.

(He hits record. "Record message now." He tries again.)

JOHN: Hi honey. It's me. I had a terrible accident with a log chipper. There was a lot of blood and it was very painful. My arms—my arms were ripped clean off of my body. *(Pause.)* That's right. Both of them. *(Pause.)* I don't want you to see me this way. I don't want you to be disgusted, so I have to go away for a long time. I'm going to the city, and you will never see me again. *(Pause.)* Don't get upset. Try to breathe. And think about that one night you were holding me in your arms, and I asked you, "would you still love me if something awful happened? If I had a frightening secret, or a horrible disease, or if I lost a limb?" What you should do, right now, is think about that question. Back then, you said "yes." You didn't even hesitate. But I need to know: did you mean it?

(He stops the tape. He is frustrated. He hits record one more time. "Record message now.")

JOHN: Hi honey—

(Lights out.)

2. Suburban Home

(Lights up on the same room. The answering machine is blinking with one message. Anna stands, holding her coat, as if she has just entered. She stares at the blinking light.)

ANNA: Honey? Honey, I'm back. *(Pause. She gets no answer.)* The light's blinking on the answering machine. Did you check this message? Did you check it? *(Pause.)* So, what? You're in one of your moods? That's okay. Just tell me you're not standing in the closet again. Honey? *(Pause.)* Okay. That's okay. It's just that I've had a long day and I was hoping we could talk about it. It's not really the same talking to you through a closed door. Honey? *(Pause.)* It was very stressful at the office today. I started having trouble breathing. I had to go sit in my car and calm down. But it was really *hot* in the car. I got these huge sweat marks on my blouse and I had to keep wearing it all day. I was pretty embarrassed. *(Pause.)* Honey, you haven't checked this message, have you? I wonder who it is. It really could be anyone. And they could be saying anything. The possibilities are endless. *(Pause.)* I wish you'd say something, honey. You know how I get, with my breathing. Everything tightens up, I anticipate, I feel like I've lost something, or I'm losing something—I—*(Pause.)* Today, sitting in the car, I felt like something awful was about to happen. Or maybe something awful has already happened, but I just don't know about it yet. Sometimes I feel like there's a message waiting for me and it's an awful message. It could be from anyone; it doesn't matter. What matters is that after I listen to this message, everything will change. *(Pause.)* So I think: if I never listen to this message, I will never know, and nothing will ever change. But if I did that, the light would just keep blinking, forever. *(Pause.)* Would you come out here and listen to this message, honey? I'd really rather you do it. *(Pause.)* Please. *(Pause.)* Goddammit John, I'm getting tired of this.

(She presses play. We hear John's voice.)

JOHN'S VOICE: Hi honey. It's me. I'm going away to the city. You will never see me again. I love you. Goodbye.

(The machine clicks and the metallic voice speaks: "End of messages." Blackout.)

3. Doctor's Office Waiting Room

(A Receptionist sits at a desk. She is remarkably apathetic. John enters with his suitcase.)

JOHN: Hello.

RECEPTIONIST: Hello.

JOHN: Is this Doctor Phillips' office?

RECEPTIONIST: Yes it is.

(Silence.)

JOHN: Aren't you going to ask how you can help me?

RECEPTIONIST: How can I help you?

JOHN: I would like to see Doctor Phillips.

RECEPTIONIST: He's at lunch.

JOHN: Can I see him when he gets back?

RECEPTIONIST: No.

JOHN: Why not?

RECEPTIONIST: His schedule is full today.

JOHN: It's very important for me to see him.

RECEPTIONIST: Is it an emergency?

JOHN: Yes.

RECEPTIONIST: What's the problem?

JOHN: I'd rather not to tell you.

RECEPTIONIST: (*shrugging*) All right then.

(*Pause.*)

JOHN: I would tell Doctor Phillips, though.

RECEPTIONIST: Well, I guess you and I aren't going to get anywhere. We should schedule you an appointment. (*Flipping through a book*) He's free two Fridays from now, 2 o'clock. How's that?

JOHN: I need to see him today. I came a long way.

RECEPTIONIST: His schedule is full today.

JOHN: I heard that the first time. This is a special case.

RECEPTIONIST: But you won't tell me what it is.

JOHN: It's the kind of case he specializes in.

RECEPTIONIST: Nasal reconstruction surgery?

JOHN: No, my nose is just fine.

RECEPTIONIST: Well that's his specialty.

JOHN: (*craftily*) Oh. I see. No, it's not that, but it's something I think Doctor Phillips would understand. If it's all right, I'd like to stay here and wait for him to get back from lunch.

RECEPTIONIST: I think it would be better if you made an appointment. I could squeeze you in for a short one on Wednesday.

JOHN: I'm going to wait right here.

(*He sits, clutching his suitcase close to him.*)

RECEPTIONIST: Fine, wait right there.

(He sits there and stares at her.)

RECEPTIONIST: You're making me very uncomfortable.

JOHN: I'm sorry. This wasn't easy for me, coming here.

RECEPTIONIST: *(uninterested)* Is that right.

JOHN: Can I ask you something?

RECEPTIONIST: I guess so.

JOHN: What does it feel like to work for such a great man?

RECEPTIONIST: You mean Doctor Phillips?

JOHN: Of course.

RECEPTIONIST: How is he a great man?

JOHN: He's someone who really *understands*. That's what they all say about him.

RECEPTIONIST: Who's they?

JOHN: The people in the chat room.

RECEPTIONIST: What chat room?

JOHN: *(leaning forward, conspiratorially)* You don't have to pretend with me.

RECEPTIONIST: Pretend?

JOHN: You know why I'm here, right?

RECEPTIONIST: No. You wouldn't tell me, remember?

JOHN: Oh. I understand. *(He winks at her)* I appreciate your discretion. I should have expected it from the Doctor. It can't be easy, doing what he does.

RECEPTIONIST: I don't know about that; I'd say he's got a pretty cushy setup.

JOHN: Well, I'd say he's inspired.

RECEPTIONIST: He's pretty boring actually.

(Doctor Phillips enters.)

DOCTOR: Were you talking about me?

RECEPTIONIST: No. *(Points at John.)* There's a gentleman here to see you.

DOCTOR: *(to John)* Don't believe a word she says about me.

RECEPTIONIST: He wouldn't tell me why he was here. He said he'd only talk to you.

JOHN: Doctor Phillips?

DOCTOR: Yes?

JOHN: *(shaking his hand)* It's an honor.

DOCTOR: Do I... do I know you?

JOHN: No. But you know many people like me.

DOCTOR: *(confused)* Is that right? *(He looks at the Receptionist questioningly. She shrugs.)* Let's step into my office.

(He leads John into his office.)

4. Doctor's Office Interior

(They enter the office.)

DOCTOR: Take a seat.

JOHN: *(as he sits)* I hope it's okay I said it was an honor. I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable... but it really is. An honor, I mean.

DOCTOR: Thank you. *(Pause.)* I'm sorry, what was your name?

JOHN: My name is John Hazzard.

DOCTOR: John Hazzard. *(Pause.)* You know, Mr. Hazzard, most of my patients feel comfortable telling Jenny what the trouble is.

JOHN: I wasn't sure if it was okay to tell her. She was playing it very cool.

DOCTOR: That *is* her style. Well, now you've got me, Mr. Hazzard, let's talk.

JOHN: I came all the way to the city to see you.

DOCTOR: Is that why you have the suitcase?

JOHN: Yes, in a way. *(Pause.)* I left my wife behind and drove all night to get here. *(Pause.)* I'm from pretty far away. I'm not going to tell you from where, though.

DOCTOR: Oh no? You're not from Hazzard County?

JOHN: What?

DOCTOR: Just a little joke. Your name. The Dukes of Hazzard. *(Pause.)* Didn't you ever watch the Dukes of Hazzard? They drove these big cars around Hazzard County, and the horn played the first couple notes from "Dixie."

JOHN: I didn't come here to talk about the Dukes of Hazzard.

DOCTOR: It's just what your name makes me think of. I'm sure when you were a kid, everyone called you "Duke" or "Boss Hog" or something, right?

JOHN: *(tightly)* Okay. So Hazzard's not my real last name.

DOCTOR: It's not?

JOHN: Of course not. I made it up on the way here. I'll admit it's a stupid choice.

DOCTOR: Are you making a joke?

JOHN: No. You were the one making a joke.

DOCTOR: I'm a little confused. Why are you here?

JOHN: You know why.

DOCTOR: Excuse me?

JOHN: (*meaningfully*) You know why.

DOCTOR: I don't understand.

JOHN: In the chat room, they mentioned your name.

DOCTOR: My name?

JOHN: Yes.

DOCTOR: What kind of chat room are you talking about?

JOHN: Don't you know?

DOCTOR: I don't think so.

JOHN: Oh. (*Pause.*) Maybe I made a mistake. I'll be going now.

(*He starts for the door.*)

DOCTOR: Wait. John—just a moment.

(*John stops, and turns around.*)

DOCTOR: Don't go. I'd like to help you.

(*John hesitates.*)

DOCTOR: Just for a moment, sit back down.

(*John sits.*)

DOCTOR: I'm sorry I made a joke about your name. Dukes of Hazard was a terrible show.

JOHN: Yeah, it really was.

DOCTOR: It sure was. Listen, I don't care if your name is Hazzard or not. Clearly something's wrong, and you can tell me. That's what doctors are for.

(John looks at him for a long moment.)

JOHN: You think I'm a cop, don't you?

DOCTOR: Why would I think that?

JOHN: I'm not a cop.

DOCTOR: I don't think you're a cop. Listen, John... That's your *real* first name, right?

JOHN: Yes.

DOCTOR: Good. So, John, why don't you tell me how I can help you? As I said, that's what doctors are for.

JOHN: I thought you would know right away why I was here. But you don't seem to understand.

DOCTOR: I don't seem to understand what?

JOHN: *Me.*

(The Doctor leans forward, intent.)

DOCTOR: No. I do. I understand you.

JOHN: You understand?

DOCTOR: Yes. I want to help you. Why are you here?

JOHN: I—

DOCTOR: Don't be afraid. Come on.

JOHN: (*swallowing, then looking straight at him*) I'm here to ask you a question.

DOCTOR: And what's that?

JOHN: Will you do it?

DOCTOR: Do what?

JOHN: Will you *do it*?

DOCTOR: What do you want me to do?

JOHN: I want—

DOCTOR: What?

JOHN: I want—

DOCTOR: You can say it.

JOHN: I want you to cut off my arms.

(*Long pause.*)

DOCTOR: I'm sorry?

JOHN: I told you, I'm not a cop. I'm for real. I know about you; you've done it before. That's what they said in the chat room: Doctor Phillips, he'd done it twice before. One woman, one man. Both of them: both arms. That's what they said in the chat room. Though it wasn't actually them in the chat room—I mean, they can't type anymore. But others, who know them, they said Doctor Phillips, in the city, he'd done it and he would do it again for me.

(*Pause.*)

DOCTOR: It must have been a different Doctor Phillips.

JOHN: A different one?

DOCTOR: It's a common name.

(John looks at him for a long moment, and realizes it really is the wrong Doctor Phillips.)

JOHN: Oh shit.

(He grabs his suitcase and starts out again.)

DOCTOR: No. Stop.

(He grabs John's arm.)

JOHN: *(yanking his arm away)* Don't touch me there.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. You don't really want that, do you?
This is some kind of prank, right?

JOHN: No.

DOCTOR: You want someone to cut off your arms?

JOHN: Yes.

DOCTOR: Is something *wrong* with your arms?

JOHN: Yes.

DOCTOR: What?

JOHN: I have them.

(Pause.)

DOCTOR: *(realizing)* You *are* serious.

JOHN: Do you know any other Doctor Phillipses?

DOCTOR: You don't need a Doctor Phillips. You need a psychologist.

JOHN: I went to a psychologist.

DOCTOR: What did your psychologist say about it?

JOHN: She said, “There’s nothing I can do to help you.”

DOCTOR: Didn’t she refer you to someone else?

JOHN: I just walked out when she said that. I could tell I disgusted her.

DOCTOR: Have you talked to anyone else about this?

JOHN: I’ve had very bad luck talking to people about it. In fact, I’m not sure I should be talking to *you* about it.

DOCTOR: No. This is good. This is what you *should* be doing.

JOHN: You think so?

DOCTOR: Yes. I’d like you to tell me more.

JOHN: Really?

DOCTOR: I find it rather fascinating.

JOHN: You’re not disgusted?

DOCTOR: Not at all.

JOHN: Promise?

DOCTOR: I promise.

(John relaxes a bit.)

JOHN: I’ve just had such bad experiences telling people. When was a kid, back when I first realized this was what I wanted—when I first realized who I was—I needed to talk about it but there was no one. I would go into my closet, I would lock the door, and I would stand there whispering to myself. Very quietly. I would pretend. I would say, “they’re not there.” Meaning my arms, of course.

DOCTOR: Of course.

JOHN: I did that for awhile. And then I thought maybe I could tell someone else. I told Billy. He was my best friend.

DOCTOR: What happened?

JOHN: He threw up.

DOCTOR: Oh.

JOHN: I didn't tell anyone else for fifteen years. Then, a couple months ago, I started doing the closet thing again. And all the web-sites. I thought: I'm an adult now. It's time to face this. So I went to the psychologist. And you know how that went.

DOCTOR: Right.

JOHN: So this isn't easy for me. (*Pause.*) It's a hard secret to carry.

DOCTOR: Well, it'll be hard to carry anything without arms.

(*John glares at him.*)

DOCTOR: Just a little joke. I'm sorry. I—listen, this is good, what we're doing now—this is good. (*Pause.*) Can we talk about your wife for a moment?

JOHN: Anna?

DOCTOR: That's a nice name, Anna. Have you told *her* about this?

JOHN: No. I think she likes me with arms.

DOCTOR: Did you tell her you were coming here?

JOHN: No.

DOCTOR: She must be very worried.

JOHN: I'm sure she is. But I can never see her again.

DOCTOR: I think you're very upset, John.

JOHN: I *am* upset. (*Holding out his arms.*) Look at these things. They're so big. So heavy.

DOCTOR: They look normal to me.

JOHN: They're not normal to *me*. (*Pause.*) Have you ever seen someone without arms? I have, once. Okay, I've seen them all the time on the Internet. But only once in real life. It's beautiful. That's what I want to be. Someone with nothing there. Just smooth stumps. Just... nubbins.

DOCTOR: Nubbins?

JOHN: I want nubbins.

(*Pause.*)

DOCTOR: Listen: I have a good friend who's a very competent psychologist. I'll give him a call and he'll come over here. The three of us can continue this conversation together.

JOHN: No. I've made a decision.

DOCTOR: What's your decision?

JOHN: Cutting them off is the only way.

DOCTOR: I don't think that's true, John. I think you're very confused.

JOHN: Don't look at me that way.

DOCTOR: What way?

JOHN: Like you think I'm disgusting.

DOCTOR: I don't.

JOHN: You do. You think I'm disgusting.

DOCTOR: I don't think that.

JOHN: How could you ask me all these questions, and then look at me that way? It's not right.

DOCTOR: I told you, I don't—

JOHN: Yes you do. I can tell you do. But I'm not the only person like this. There are others. There are websites for us. There's a chat room. They understand me, even if you don't, even if Anna doesn't. Doctor Phillips, the *other* Doctor Phillips, understands. I'll find him. And he'll do it for me.

DOCTOR: I'm not letting you go anywhere. You'll stay here, you'll talk to my friend, you'll—

JOHN: Why don't *you* do it?

DOCTOR: Me?

JOHN: You're a doctor. You could do it, you could make it safe.

DOCTOR: No.

JOHN: I have plenty of money. I could pay you whatever you wanted.

DOCTOR: No doctor would—

JOHN: Just name the price.

DOCTOR: There *is* no price. No doctor would do this for you.

JOHN: What about the other Doctor Phillips?

DOCTOR: I'd lose my license. I could go to jail.

JOHN: If I can't find him, I'll do it myself.

DOCTOR: How?

JOHN: I'll use a power saw.

DOCTOR: You could bleed to death.

JOHN: Maybe. But it's worth a try.

DOCTOR: Do you really mean that?

JOHN: Yes. *(Pause.)* I have a saw in my suitcase.

(Pause.)

DOCTOR: Are you serious?

JOHN: Well, a log chipper wouldn't fit.

(The Doctor is speechless.)

JOHN: I'm leaving now.

DOCTOR: *(getting in his way)* No.

JOHN: You can't stop me. It's my body.

DOCTOR: I'll call the police.

JOHN: And what will you tell them?

DOCTOR: *(pause, then)* I don't know.

JOHN: I'm going.

DOCTOR: Before you go—at least, at least take my card. You can call me, anytime. Before you do anything rash, you should call me. I want to help you.

(He offers his card. John takes it, looks at it.)

JOHN: I told you how you could help me.

(He exits. Doctor Phillips is left alone. Blackout.)

5. Hotel Room

(John holds a phone book in his lap. He is on the phone.)

JOHN: *(into the phone)* Hello? Westside Pediatrics? Is there... is there a doctor at your practice by the name of Phillips? No? Thank you. *(He hangs up. Flips a page, dials again.)* Hello? White and Associates? Is there a doctor there named Phillips? No? Thank you.

(He hangs up. Flips a page, starts dialing again, when there is a knock on the door. John freezes. The knocking continues. John stands nervously and goes to the door. The knocking continues.)

JOHN: Who is it?

ANNA: *(through the door)* John? John? It's Anna!

(John stands still for a long moment. He can't seem to decide what to do.)

ANNA: *(through the door)* John, I heard you in there... please, open the door... please, John!

(Finally, John opens the door. Anna enters. They stare at each other for a long moment. They do not touch.)

ANNA: John.

JOHN: Hi.

ANNA: You look terrible.

JOHN: I drove all night.

ANNA: I drove all day.

JOHN: How was the traffic?

ANNA: Not too bad. *(Pause.)* Should we close the door?

JOHN: Yeah.

(Anna closes the door.)

JOHN: How'd you find me?

ANNA: This is the hotel we stayed in the last time we came to the city.

JOHN: *(realizing it's true)* Oh yeah.

ANNA: Apparently you checked in under the name John Hazzard.

JOHN: Yeah.

ANNA: That's a stupid name.

JOHN: I know.

ANNA: It sounds like a reference to "Dukes of Hazzard" or something.

JOHN: I know.

(Long pause.)

ANNA: Are you having an affair?

JOHN: No.

ANNA: Your message certainly made it sound like you were having an affair. No explanation, no nothing, just goodbye. Just a fucking message on the answering machine, saying goodbye.

JOHN: I also said "I love you." I wouldn't have said "I love you" if I were having an affair.

ANNA: *Do* you love me?

JOHN: Yes.

ANNA: I was scared maybe you didn't.

JOHN: I do.

ANNA: Then kiss me.

JOHN: Okay.

(They kiss. He puts his arms around her and she lays her head against his chest.)

ANNA: I like having your arms around me.

(John pulls away.)

ANNA: What's wrong?

JOHN: Do you love *me*?

ANNA: Of course. That's why I came here.

JOHN: I didn't want you to come here. I didn't want you to see me like this.

ANNA: Like what?

JOHN: I'm sorry I didn't explain it to you better.

ANNA: Well, it's not like we've been talking much lately. You're always standing in the closet.

JOHN: I know.

ANNA: Is this connected to the standing-in-the-closet stuff?

JOHN: Yes. It is.

ANNA: I tried to be very understanding about that. But I can't be understanding about *this*. We need to talk about it. You're in bad shape.

JOHN: That's what I mean. I didn't want you to see me like this.

ANNA: I know, but I'm here, and you need to tell me what's going on. You need to tell me right now. Please.

(She touches his arm.)

JOHN: Don't touch me there!

(Anna steps back.)

ANNA: Honey, you're scaring me.

JOHN: I'm sorry.

ANNA: My heart's beating a mile a minute.

JOHN: It is?

ANNA: It is. Feel it. Come on, feel it.

(She presses his hand to her heart.)

JOHN: It is.

ANNA: You need to tell me right now what's going on, or I may have a heart attack.

JOHN: Okay.

ANNA: You'll tell me?

JOHN: Yes.

ANNA: What's going on?

JOHN: I've been living a lie.

ANNA: What kind of lie?

JOHN: A very confusing one.

ANNA: Can't you explain it a little better than that?

JOHN: No.

ANNA: You have to try. You can't just walk out on someone you love, and not tell her why! You know what I'm like; you knew what that would do to me. I have a terrible feeling, John. The whole way, driving up here, a terrible feeling that something awful is happening to you. I had to stop the car every couple miles, and sit there, and make myself breathe again. When I was driving, I couldn't breathe. There was this tightness in my chest and my heart was beating so fast—please, make me stop feeling this way. Tell me something to make me stop feeling this way.

JOHN: I don't know what to say.

ANNA: Then what are we supposed to do?

(Pause.)

JOHN: Let's just sit here for a little while. We don't have to talk. It's nice just having you near me.

ANNA: Okay.

(She sits down. The suitcase is between them.)

ANNA: Can I move the suitcase?

JOHN: Yeah.

(She picks up the suitcase.)

ANNA: Jesus Christ, this is heavy. What's in here?

JOHN: *(grabbing the suitcase away)* Nothing. Just clothes.

(He puts the suitcase down.)

ANNA: Don't lie to me. What's in the suitcase, John?

JOHN: I don't want to talk about it.

ANNA: John—

(He cuts her off by kissing her.)

ANNA: *(pulling away)* John—

JOHN: I missed you. I want to make love.

ANNA: Now?

JOHN: Yes.

(He kisses her again.)

ANNA: That feels good.

JOHN: Is your heart beating a little bit slower now?

ANNA: A little bit.

(They kiss some more. Anna slides her arms around him, but he leaves his dangling at his sides.)

ANNA: Put your arms around me, honey.

JOHN: I don't want to.

ANNA: Why not?

JOHN: I don't want to use my arms.

ANNA: What?

JOHN: *(pulling away)* Never mind.

ANNA: What's wrong? Just a minute ago, things were good.

JOHN: I don't want to do it anymore. I have too much on my mind.

ANNA: Don't think about it. Don't think about anything.

JOHN: I don't know if I can do that.

ANNA: If I can do it, you can do it. Close your eyes.

JOHN: Okay.

ANNA: And kiss me again.

JOHN: Okay.

(They kiss again. The kiss gets more passionate and John whispers...)

JOHN: Pretend I can't use them.

ANNA: What?

JOHN: My arms. Pretend you can hold me but I can't hold you. Pretend there's nothing there.

ANNA: Nothing there, huh?

JOHN: Nothing.

(She touches his arm.)

ANNA: Then what's this?

JOHN: I don't feel anything.

(Anna laughs.)

ANNA: I don't understand.

JOHN: I thought you wanted me.

ANNA: I do. What does that have to do with your arms?

JOHN: I can't explain—

ANNA: Okay. Let's not start that again. Shhhh. *(Pause.)* Come here.

(He goes to her. She holds him.)

ANNA: Okay?

JOHN: Okay.

(A moment. Anna decides to try to pretend.)

ANNA: *(flatly)* Oh no. Where are your arms?

JOHN: Not like that. I don't believe it when you say it like that.

ANNA: I'm trying, John. This is a little strange. I can't imagine you without arms.

JOHN: You need to try.

ANNA: Why? Does it turn you on?

JOHN: Yes.

ANNA: Oh.

JOHN: Is that disgusting?

ANNA: No—I don't know.

JOHN: You think it's disgusting.

ANNA: You've just never mentioned this before. It's something new.

JOHN: So you think it's disgusting.

ANNA: No, it's just a little... you're not disgusting, honey, you're just confusing.

JOHN: It's like when we play doctor and nurse. You know how we play doctor and nurse sometimes?

ANNA: Sure.

JOHN: It's like that, only this time you're pretending that I don't have any arms.

ANNA: Will it make you feel better if I pretend?

JOHN: Yes.

ANNA: Will you make love to me if I pretend?

JOHN: Yes.

ANNA: Okay.

JOHN: You'll do it?

ANNA: Yes.

JOHN: Then say it.

ANNA: What?

JOHN: 'There's nothing there.'

ANNA: There's nothing there.

JOHN: No arms.