

*INFLATABLE YOU*

Winner, Pittsburgh New Works Festival, 2020  
(Production postponed until 2021)

SCENE 1

[AT RISE, we see Bert Daniels, 58, husband and Wendy Daniels, 56, his wife. Wendy is frantically vacuuming the living room, awaiting the arrival of their son Marky, 36, and his new girlfriend.]

BERT

[Shouting] Wendy, honey, you can stop vacuuming now.

WENDY

What?

BERT

[Louder] I said you can stop vacuuming. The living room is immaculate.

WENDY

What? Oh my God, the vacuum stopped. Bert, what are we gonna do, it's broken.

BERT

It's not broken. I unplugged it. Look, Wendy honey, take a deep breath, all right? Do it with me...ohm, ohm. Namaste, Hari Krishna. Dali Lama, Kama Sutra. That's it, breathe, sweetheart, breathe. O.K.? Now look. I know you want everything to be spotless, but it already is.

WENDY

Are you sure? I just want everything to be perfect.

BERT

Of course, of course, so do I. But no sense flipping out about it. It's not like this is the first time Marky's bringing a girl home to meet us. Let's just hope it's not another one of his doozies. Remember Brandi?

WENDY

Oh God, her. The one with the beer can earrings and the street map of East Liberty tattooed on her stomach? Don't remind me. And what about that hippie woman, Moonflower Sundance? Those grey braids? The finger cymbals? She was older than we are.

BERT

Come on, she wasn't so bad. Actually, I kind of liked her.

WENDY

That's only because she gave us a plate of hash brownies for a housewarming gift.

BERT

I'm just saying.

WENDY

But for some reason I have this feeling this time, it's gonna be different. When Marky called yesterday he went on and on about this new girl, how thrilled he was with her. There was something in his voice. I've never heard him so animated. I really think this could be the one he walks down the aisle with. God, I hope so.

BERT

Me, too. I hope he gets married before he goes on Medicare.

WENDY

Bert, stop it. Marky's only 36.

BERT

I'm just saying.

WENDY

And will you please stop saying, I'm just saying? God, it's so annoying.

BERT

Well I'm just...uh, wondering, uh, did he mention the young woman's name?

WENDY

It's Dolly.

BERT

Dolly? Really? What a nice old-fashioned name. Dolly. It's kind of sweet. Did he say how they met?

WENDY

Online, of course. That's how they all meet these days.

BERT

Which one? E Harmony? Match dot com? Christian singles?

WENDY

I think he said, "Just-like-a-woman dot com."

BERT

Huh. That's a new one. So, is she local? Are her folks from around here?

WENDY

I honestly don't know anything about her. All I know is Marky told me she arrived in Pittsburgh about a month ago and he's crazy about her. I didn't want to pry too much over the phone. You know how he gets.

BERT

Right right right. We'll leave the surgical prying for when Marky and Dolly get here. Which should be any minute now.

WENDY

Oh, wait. I forgot to tell you. My mother's coming over. She wants to meet Dolly, too.

BERT

Your mother? Do we really need to subject the poor girl to an inquisition from the entire family?

WENDY

Come on, Bert. You know how much she loves Marky. He's her only grandchild.

BERT

I'm just saying.

WENDY

If you say that one more time...oh my God, the doorbell. They're here.

BERT

Well don't just stand there having a meltdown. Let them in.

MARKY [entering, carrying a small suitcase]

Hi Mom. Hey Dad.

BERT

Marky my boy, come over here and give your old man a big hug.

WENDY

Me first, Marky. Umm, it's so good to see you, sweetheart.

BERT

What's with the suitcase, son? You staying the night?

MARKY

No, not really.

WENDY

But wait. Marky, you said you were bringing Dolly. Where is she?

MARKY

She's right here. Let me take her out of her bag. [Marky opens suitcase, takes out a large piece of plastic, makes blowing sound—deep inhales and exhales, as if he's blowing up a raft. Goes on for several seconds.] Give me a few seconds. [More blowing sounds]

WENDY

[After a pause, as Marky keeps blowing] That's a rather large balloon, dear. What are we celebrating?

MARKY

[Gasping a bit] Wait. Just hold on. [Continues to make blowing sounds]

BERT

Son, you're all red in the face. You want me to get the bicycle pump ?

MARKY

No. Just wait, all right? [continues to blow, Dolly inflates]

BERT

Good Lord, it's a...it's a woman?

MARKY

[A bit out of breath, props doll up on his lap] Mom. Dad. This is Dolly.

BERT

[Laughing slowly, then harder] Ha. Ha ha. Ha ha ha ha ha! Dolly, I get it. Oh Marky! What a joker you are! Come over here, you crazy little monkey.

MARKY

Dad, stop.

BERT

Son, you really had us going there. So where's Dolly?

MARKY

This *is* Dolly.

WENDY

This is Dolly? You're new girlfriend? This is "the one?" A blow-up doll?

BERT

A sex doll.

WENDY  
Bert!

BERT  
I'm just saying.

WENDY  
Bert, damn it! Marky, please, honey. Tell me this really is a joke. Tell me you haven't lost your goddamned mind.

MARKY  
Mom, you know how you always told me to follow your heart? That when it's right, it's right? When that special someone comes along, grab hold of her and never let her go? Well, that's Dolly. She takes my breath away.

BERT  
Of course she takes your breath away. She's a goddamn blow-up doll! [Makes blowing up sounds like Marky did]. She's a piece of painted up rubber.

MARKY  
She's silicone, Dad. [to doll] Sorry, Dolly. I told you how he gets.

GRANDMA [entering]  
Hello everyone. So sorry I'm late.

MARKY  
Hi, Grandma.

BERT  
Here we go.

GRANDMA  
Marky, what's that you have there? A new pool float? What happened to your giraffe?

MARKY  
Grandma, this is Dolly. My girlfriend.

[Pause]

BERT  
Don't look at me.

MARKY  
Look, if this is too much for you, if you people cannot deal with us, maybe Dolly and I should just leave right now.

WENDY

No no no, please dear. Sit down, all right? It's just that your... girlfriend...well, she's not what exactly what we expected.

BERT

I'll say.

WENDY

Marky, should we uh, should we talk to her?

MARKY

Sure. Dolly is a great listener.

WENDY

Oh...well...Dolly, my name is Wendy, and...and this is my husband Bert...Bert, damn it, say something.

BERT

Dolly, can I offer you anything? Some helium, maybe?

WENDY

Christ, Bert...uh, Dolly? What beautiful blue eyes you have. They're so...shiny and...blue. Aren't they, Bert?

BERT

Yeah. Shiny and blue. Just like a Barbie.

WENDY

Bert?

BERT

I mean, a Barbie Hanson. Lives right down the street. Blue eyes. Shiny. Very shiny blue eyes.

MARKY

I know. Sometimes I get lost in them. Also, they pop right out, so I can plug in a different color to match her outfit. She came with a whole set of them.

GRANDMA

Isn't that clever. Just like contact lenses. And her skin is so lovely. What kind of moisturizer do you use, dear?

MARKY

Actually, just soap and tap water.

GRANDMA

Really? You should try Palmolive Liquid some time. It's tough on grease yet oh so gentle. I use it on my hands. Just look at them. The liver spots hardly show at all. See?

WENDY

Mother, Dolly doesn't want to hear about your liver spots. Bert, can you get my mother a martini? A double? So Marky, how long have you and... Dolly known each other?

MARKY

Dolly was shipped to me 30 days ago via FedEx overnight delivery. It cost a little more but she's so worth it. Today is our one-month anniversary. Right, sweetheart?

BERT

He's actually talking to it. I told you not to let him play with dolls when he was little.

WENDY

I thought it was harmless.

BERT

Look, son. I know I wasn't always the best father in the world. And maybe I wasn't great at explaining things, like how electricity works, you know, or why the sky is blue, or how fish sleep, things like that. But when we had our little talk about the birds and the bees, well, I thought you understood the basic principles of which parts go where... I mean, you do know, don't you?

MARKY

Sure, Dad. As a matter of fact, Dolly and I do it just like you explained how you and mom do it. But with a lot more foreplay.

WENDY

Foreplay? Really? *A lot* of foreplay?

BERT

Must we discuss this?

WENDY

Listen and learn, Bert. You were saying, Marky?

MARKY

Mom, wait a minute. Here you go, sweetheart. [blows more air into Dolly] OK, sorry. Anyway, I'm kind of uncomfortable talking about this in front of Grandma.

WENDY

Don't worry about it, she's deaf as a doorpost. Let's get back to the foreplay.

MARKY

Well, for one thing, Dolly loves to be warmed up.

BERT

I cannot believe this.

WENDY

Don't you dare stifle him, Bert. Go on, honey.

MARKY

So anyway, I bought her this gorgeous fleece blanket from L.L. Bean. It's electric, so we can control the temperature. I set it to number seven, and then I take off her nightgown.

GRANDMA

What size is she?

WENDY

Ma, please.

MARKY

And then, we cuddle, and pretty soon Dolly is hot to trot.

BERT

How does she like to do it, Marky? Dolly-style?

WENDY

Bert!

MARKY

You mean the actual intercourse? Don't worry, Dad. We practice safe sex.

BERT

Of course it's safe sex. Talk about wearing a rubber.

WENDY

Bert, you are disgusting.

BERT

I'm disgusting? You son is shtupping a silicone doll.

GRANDMA

Talking about getting hot, your grandfather Morton, God rest his soul, whenever we stayed in a hotel he was like a hamster in heat. And this was way before Viagra.

MARKY



Dolly loves hotels, too, Grandma. We love our weekend getaways, don't we, honey. Motel Six means six different ways.

BERT

Wait a second. Are you saying you actually travel with her? How do you get her through security?

MARKY

She's under 3.5 ounces, uninflated. When we fly, I just put her in her breathable Dolly bag.

GRANDMA

That's very wise, Marky. You'll save a lot of money on plane fares. Do you keep her in the overhead bin or under the seat in front of you?

MARKY

Under the seat. She keeps my feet warm. As a matter of fact, Dolly and I are heading to Las Vegas next week to tie the knot. You guys are welcome to come.

WENDY

Wait! You're getting married?

BERT

I can see it now. As Dolly floats down the aisle, the music begins. [Sings] Here comes the blimp.

WENDY

Bert!

GRANDMA

Marky, I want to get Dolly a wedding present. Is she registered anywhere?

BERT

Either Toys R Us or Frederick's of Hollywood.

WENDY

Bert, shut your pie hole. Now Marky, honey, just think a minute. You know there's nothing I want to see more than you getting married, but marriage is a serious commitment. It's not something you jump into, just like that. You've only known this, uh, girl, for what, a month? Why so sudden?

BERT

Maybe she has an expiration date.

MARKY

You know what? Maybe it seems crazy to you guys, and I really don't expect you to understand, and in a way, I really don't even care what you think. But let me tell you something. I know what I'm doing. I've dated all kinds of women and none of them can hold a candle to Dolly.

BERT

If they did she'd melt.

WENDY

Bert, could you give it a rest? Go on, honey, don't listen to your father.

MARKY

You just don't understand how great Dolly is. I mean, she listens to me, really listens, and she never interrupts. She's always there for me. And get this, Mom and Dad. Dolly and I never argue. She doesn't always try to get her way. She doesn't bug me to get her expensive things, but that doesn't mean I don't. I love to buy her lingerie and jewelry.

BERT

Well I wouldn't get her pierced earrings.

MARKY

She doesn't make me go to chick flicks. She doesn't roll her eyes at me when I fart in bed or pick my teeth with my pinky finger. She loves sports, too. She is perfectly content to sit with me and watch football all weekend. You should see her in her cheerleader outfit. And in bed she's always willing to do whatever I like. Well, sometimes she squeaks a little, but I think it's a love squeak. And get this, parental units—she's never, ever said, *not tonight, honey, I have a headache*. I just love her. I want to spend the rest of my life with her, and Dolly feels the same way I do.

BERT

She's a doll. What choice does she have?

MARKY

You know what, Dad? You don't like Dolly because she's not like us. Because she's different.

BERT

No kidding. We're organic. She's inanimate.

MARKY

What if she were a black woman? Or Hispanic? Or Jewish?

GRANDMA

Funny, she doesn't look Jewish. But she is rather short, dear, isn't she. Is she one of those dwarfs?

WENDY

Mother, please.

GRANDMA

I love that show on cable about the little people. What's it called, Tele-Tubbies?

WENDY

Marky, you know we're very open-minded about things.

BERT

Some things.

WENDY

It's just going to take some time for us to realize we're not losing a son, we're gaining...

BERT

A blow-up doll. That's it. I have had it! No son of mine is going to marry a balloon.

WENDY

Bert...Bert, what are you doing?

GRANDMA

Marky, look out, he's got a letter opener!

WENDY

Bert, are you crazy? Put that down!

MARKY

Dad, get away from her. Stop! Stop!

BERT

Hello, Dolly! Take that! [Stabs Dolly]

[Silence, except for a faint hissing sound]

WENDY

Oh God, Bert. You stabbed her. Right in the valve.

MARKY

Somebody help! I can't keep my finger over the hole forever. Please, someone get a Band-Aid or something.

WENDY

Bert, look what you've done to her. Do something, now!

BERT

Oh all right, all right. Sorry, son, just hold on. I'll get the patch kit from my bicycle.

WENDY

Just stay calm, honey. Daddy will be right back. Burt, hurry. She's wilting.

GRANDMA

It's gonna be OK, Marky. Maybe losing a little air pressure is a good thing. She was a kind of chubby.

WENDY

Ma, just stop. It's gonna be OK, Marky, you'll see. Daddy will put a patch on Dolly and she'll be as good as new.

MARKY

But she won't be. She won't. The patch won't match her skin.

GRANDMA

Marky, look at me. See my face? I've had lots of work done. It's gonna be all right. I know the best plastic surgeon.

LIGHTS