

The Futility  
by Joshua James

# The Futility

A ten-minute play  
By  
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**CHARACTERS**

**JIMMY** – a man in his late twenties, early thirties, an obvious case of arrested development.

**GIRL** – a cute girl in her twenties.

**TIME**

Present

**SETTING**

A Cafe.

**NOTES**

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**A café.**

**A GIRL in her early twenties sits at a table, sipping coffee and reading the paper.**

**JIMMY, a young man in his late twenties, comes running into the café desperately. He runs up to the table and sits down with the girl. Jimmy speaks very fast.**

JIMMY

You won't BELIEVE what just happened to me, you won't believe it! First of all, I am so, so sorry. Please, please forgive me, it's not like me, doing something like this, it's completely out of character for me to be this late. Punctuality is a priority of my life. Without punctuality, it all falls apart, everything. But you're not gonna believe what just happened to me, it was something right out of the papers, right out of the tabloids. I left my apartment early, because I'm always on time, always always always. And I'm walking down the street, whistling away because I'm really looking forward to meeting you, when all of a sudden all these huge cops wearing body armor come busting out of nowhere, yelling and screaming and jamming guns in my face. They grab me and throw me on the ground, going "Hands where I can see 'em, Hands where I can see 'em! Don't move motherfucker, don't move, I fuckin' mean it don't you fuckin' move!" And I, of course, wasn't moving, I had NO intention of moving and even if I WANTED to, I couldn't, I was lying-face first, spread-eagled on the ground, hand-cuffed with five cops standing on my legs. Now the guy in charge, the one with the Glock automatic, he screamed, "In his mouth, he put something in his mouth!" and the guy that was sitting on my back, he reached around and stuck his fingers into my mouth and grabbed my tongue. And he had a big hand, a big huge hand like a canned ham and it was stuck in my mouth. "Spit it out, spit it out fuckface, spit it out and you better not fuckin' bite me!" he was bellowing this, not two inches from my ear and banging my head against the sidewalk. I was trying to spit, but I couldn't get anything past his canned ham of a fist and not only that, have you ever tried to do any kind of spitting without involving the tongue? You can't do it, you can't spit unless you use your tongue, it's impossible. This big ape had my tongue, what was I supposed to do? Finally, my gum fell out, I always chew Dentine chewing gum because fresh breath is a priority of my life, and that's what they were after, they saw me put the gum in my mouth and they were after that like rabid dogs in August. My gum falls out on the ground. The ape with the canned ham hands grabs my gum, going "I got it I got it I got it" and they pop my gum into a little baggie and whisk it away. Then they all relax, smoke some cigarettes while they stand around on top of me. And there we sat, for forty minutes, until somebody figured that it

was chewing gum in the baggie and that I was NOT the person that they were looking for. It was a case of mistaken identity. They thought I was a drug dealer, can you believe that? Is that fucked or what? Me, a drug dealer? Do I look like a drug dealer to you?

**Short pause, then she shakes her head.**

Jimmy

That's what I'm saying! I don't look like a drug dealer, what drug dealer looks like me? Nobody! Thank GOD I didn't have any pot on me today, I would have really been fucked if I'd had a roach tucked away somewhere in case I needed it. Anyway, it was all a case of mistaken identity. Would you believe that there is a drug-dealer out there somewhere with the same exact shoes that I'm wearing right now? That's what it was based on, my shoes, my goddamned shoes. First thing when I get home, I'm throwing these fucking shoes OUT the door. They're fucked now, jinxed. Sixty bucks for these shoes and now I can't even wear 'em. What a mess. But, what can you do, you know?

**Short pause, then she shrugs.**

Jimmy

Anyway, back to the present. Sorry I'm like, so late, but I'm here in one piece and that's the important thing. I made it, finally I'm here. God I'm thirsty, I gotta get something to drink, you want something to drink? You got something already, right, listen I'm just gonna grab a couple of coffees cause I'm parched, getting strip-searched is thirsty work but I'll be right back. Okay?

**Jimmy stands up.**

Jimmy

You know what?

**She looks at him quizzically.**

Jimmy

You're much prettier than I expected. I mean, I expected pretty cause I was told pretty, but you really are pretty. I just wanted you to know that.

**Jimmy walks off, but keeps talking.**

Jimmy

I mean, you never know what's out there. There are some real monsters swimming out there in the dating pool. I'm talking monsters, I'm talking Bigfoots, I'm talking Legend of Boggy Creek Sasquatches that Steve Austin would have trouble with. They're out there and they're hungry. And dishonest too. I met this one girl, set up through the

internet, she had wrote to me that she was a stunner, that's what she wrote, that she was a CURVY stunner. And when we finally meet, I see that's she's about five foot two and three hundred pounds. Now, I don't have anything against large women, my mother's a large woman, but I do believe in truth in advertising and damn it, there's a big difference between calling it curvy and calling it three hundred pounds! Honesty, it's a priority of life.

**Jimmy returns with three large cokes. He sits down and starts to drink one of them.**

Jimmy

Anyway, we should probably get on with this. Well, as you know, my name is Jimmy, I work in the Internet industry but I really want to do something artistic with my life. I really would, I think it's important to do something artistic, I was thinking along the lines of performance art, I could be a performance artist. When I was younger I thought about being an actor or a stand-up comedian, but I couldn't do it. I got this thing, this thing about speaking in public or even to more than one person at a time. I can't do it, I hyperventilate and get hives, it's really disgusting. I can't even talk to more than one person at work at any one time, otherwise I'm liable to break out, seriously. I can do it if they're sitting down and I'm sitting down, but if somebody stands up to do something, it kicks in. Is that weird or what? But what can you do, it's who I am. Which is too bad, because I think I got a lot of personality that I could share, if only I could figure out how to get it out there without suffocating myself. That's why I've been thinking performance art, something artistic that I could do in public that won't involve me speaking or anyone seeing my face. Anyway, I'm working on it, me and my pal Chucky, we got a couple things in the hopper. So how are you doing, you doin' okay, you need anything, a muffin or something like that? I can get you a muffin if you want. You need something you let me know, all right? I just want to do a good job at this, even though it's probably futile, I wanna do my best. I'm not trying to be negative, it's just . . . I really ain't good at this kind of thing, you know, meeting people, I don't know, first impressions, I always fuck them up, but you gotta keep tryin' even though it's usually hopeless. It's a jungle out there, don't you think? I met this one girl once, we went out to dinner, real nice place and all that, ordered the meal and before the food even got there, she deleted me, BING, right in the trash bin, she said something like, "You know what, we shouldn't waste each other's time. It's either there or it's not there. And guess what? It's not there." I was like, how do you know, you just met me, we don't even know each other yet? And she just goes, "I just know," picked up her bag and walked out. What a rip-off, I mean, if you agree to

have dinner with someone, you should stick to your word and eat the fuckin' dinner, not walk out and stick him with the meal and the check. I mean, that's cold. Don't you think that's cold? I think that's cold. I'll tell you something though, that food came and I ate it, every bite. I paid for that meal so I was goddamned gonna eat it. Fuck her, anyway. Dating sucks, don't you think it sucks? I think it sucks. I keep doing it and it keeps sucking. It's futile, I mean, how can we ever really know anybody? Do you think you're gonna know all that I am in this one brief casual encounter? Or I you? It's not gonna happen, it's not. People never really get to know each other. Take my girlfriend, my EX-girlfriend, take her, for example. Three years, we went out three years, practically LIVED together, might as well have, she was always at my apartment cause she hated her place. So one night, she just up and breaks up with me. We're eating popcorn, getting stoned and watching Lost Boys when she stands up and says, "it's over," and I was like, whatta talkin' about, it ain't over, Jason Patric just found out he was a vampire, we gotta long way to go yet! And she goes, "Not the movie, you goof, us. You and I, we're over," and she goes to get her coat. And it took me a minute to catch up cause I had a hell of a buzz working, then it hit and I jumped up, I said, what are you talking about over, what happened, what'd I do? "Nothing," she says, "you didn't do nothing, don't worry about it." Don't worry about it, you just dumped me in the middle of my favorite movie, you ruined my favorite movie! And on a side note, let me just add that I think Joel Schumacher is an under-appreciated cinematic GENIUS. That's right, I said GENIUS, he's an artistic genius. St. Elmo's Fire, don't get me started. Anyway she's out the door, I'm chasing her down the hall, yellin' if I didn't do anything wrong, why was she breakin' up with me? And she stops, looks at me for a minute, and says, "Because I don't like you." You don't LIKE me? After three years you DON'T like me? "Yes," she says. Just like that all of a sudden out of the fuckin' blue you don't like me? "Yes," she says. When did THIS happen? When did you DECIDE you just didn't like me? Just tonight? "No," she says, "I've never liked you. I just finally decided to do something about it," and with that she turned and walked out of my life. It all was very emotional, I still can't watch any movie with Keifer Sutherland or either of the Coreys without getting all choked up. I'm all right with Jason or Jamie Gertz, they don't bother me, but those guys . . . I can't even LISTEN to the Lost Boys soundtrack without bawling like a baby. Three years, she dated me for three years and she didn't even like me. It's like I said, you can never really know people, you can't. It's futile.

**Short pause as Jimmy looks at her.**

Jimmy

I suddenly just remembered, you're not supposed to talk about your ex-girlfriends when you're on one of these, it's supposed to be a big jinx. I'm sorry, I fucked up again. Okay, so listen, just forget I said any of that, okay. Just forget all of it. Tell me a little about yourself, where you from, what you love, all that jazz, talk to me, talk to me, talk to me.

**Brief pause, then as she opens her mouth to speak, Jimmy interrupts her.**

Jimmy

You know what? You are beautiful, you are truly beautiful. Too beautiful to be out on one of these things. And I just had a revelation. I suddenly had a flash. You and I, we could go out, we could date and have a lot of fun, the two of us. We would have great sex too, we would, I can feel the physical chemistry in the air between us, we would be on fire together. And I'm good at it, I am great at sex, believe me. I got all the books, all the training videos, I've done my homework when it comes to sexual prowess. I figure a person can only be GOOD at a couple of things in life, and so I decided one of mine would be sex and I've put in the practice time. And you, just looking at you a person can tell you're a tiger in bed. I can see this and more, all this with us. And it wouldn't be only sex, we would be pals, friends, buddies that hold hands. We could do things together, great things, live together, maybe even get a dog or cat, I could see us doing that. We would be great. But you know what? Sooner or later, the little things would get to us, sooner or later my career as a performance artist would start to eat away precious share time between us, and the little things, how I eat popcorn would bug you, my habit of turning my socks inside out so I can wear them twice as long, my obsession with Diane Sawyer, all that after awhile will begin to really bug you, I can see that. I could entertain you for awhile, I could give you a lot of laughs, but at some point you're gonna realize that you're too beautiful for me and that I'm a making you crazy. I would drive you absolutely fucking crazy. But you know what? I ain't gonna do that, I ain't gonna drive you to the point where you look at me and tell me you don't like me. I can't take it, I'm losing all my favorite videos to break-ups. AND I don't want to do that to a beautiful person such as yourself, I know from your profile that you're a sweet, sweet very nice person and I don't want to do that to you. You really shouldn't be doing this kind of thing anyway, all you're gonna meet on these deals are freaks like me that will make you nuts. I ain't gonna do that to you, I am taking a step toward integrity, integrity is the new priority of my life. I've decided that one good date is better than three years of bad ones and so this is it, I'm calling this one right

here, right now, don't try to argue with me on this, I think I know myself pretty well and I believe that the right thing to do in this case is to shake hands and walk away, don't look back, and go on with our lives. That's it. I'm out of here, I'm walking and I don't want you to say anything, not a word. You and I both, we should get out of this game, we should, computer dating is madness, pure madness. Dating itself is futile, it's all futile. We should all just walk away.

**Jimmy gets up and shakes her hand formally.**

Jimmy  
Cathy, it was a pleasure meeting you, no, don't say anything, don't. It's going to take all the strength I have just to walk away from you, I know it's hard but don't make it harder on me, please. Don't. Nothing more. Please.

**Jimmy tries to let her hand go, but is overcome. He kisses her hand gently.**

Jimmy  
In another universe, another time and planet, you and I could have been more than great, I know it. Let's honor that futile missing dream by walking away from this with . . . integrity. Farewell, Cathy, Farewell.

**Jimmy turns and walks out resolutely. She stares after him.**

Girl  
My name is Samantha.

**END OF PLAY**