

Can Anybody Hear Me?



By Jacquelin Melilli

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Written by Jacquelin Melilli © 2002

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The National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication data:

Melilli, Jacquelin,

Can Anybody Hear Me?

For primary students

ISBN 0-9756800-0-5

I. Title.

A822.4

Front cover illustration by Judith Kirwood.

Can Anybody Hear Me?

An Australian Children's Play

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Sarah.....around ten years old
Sarah's Father.....a busy working Dad
Sarah's Mother.....a.very organised Super Mum
Teddy Bear.....sensitive and affectionate
Rag Doll.....homely, kindhearted and caring
Barbie.....vain, superficial, a party girl
Ballerina.....disciplined, dedicated, determined
Mechanical Man.....logical and unemotional
Clown.....a joker, very artistic

SUGGESTED COSTUMES:

- Mother:** Dress, stockings, shoes, necklace, hair tied in loose bun, earrings, watch, wedding ring.
- Father:** Trousers, shirt, tie, belt, shoes, watch, wedding ring, hair gelled back.
- Sarah:** Pyjamas, slippers, gorilla mask, toy gun.
- Teddy Bear:** Bear costume. Face painted.
- Mechanical Man:** Silver costume, long sleeves and pants. Face and hair painted silver. Silver boots.
- Rag Doll:** Raggedy Anne type costume and makeup -Striped stockings, pantaloons, apron with pocket and hanky poking out. Woolly red wig, braided with big colourful ribbons. Big buckled shoes. Pad & pen.
- Clown:** Clown costume, bright coloured wig, big red nose. Face painted, juggling balls.
- Barbie Doll:** Cowgirl costume, denim fringed skirt, American flag top, cowgirl hat and boots. Handbag with accessories.
- Ballerina:** Ballet costume with tutu, stockings and ballet lace up slippers. Tiara.

SUGGESTED PROPS:

Four stage boxes. Two placed together to resemble bed and covered with doona and pillow. Other two placed backstage on either side, left and right of the bed (centered). Ballerina to stand on one. Rag doll to lean on the other.

Can Anybody Hear Me?

Amidst her mother & father arguing, Sarah wants to be heard. Instead she gets sent to her room. One magical night, Sarah's toys come to life to help her sort out some of life's difficult problems. Teddy fixes everything with cuddles. Barbie thinks looking beautiful is best. Rag Doll bakes delicious treats in times of stress. Ballerina focuses on a strict regiment of very little food and plenty of dancing to fulfill her dreams. Clown laughs his way through everything and Mechanical Man tries to solve everyone's problems, or is he the cause of them?

Front stage curtain is closed. Sarah's mother and father are arguing. They stand far enough down stage center to allow Sarah room to move behind them. The argument is becoming quite heated. Both are completely unaware of how loud they are shouting.

Sarah is standing downstage right with her hands covering her ears.

MOTHER:

I can't believe you took money out of our bank account without talking to me about it first.

FATHER:

Well believe it. It's my account too.

MOTHER:

You know what the agreement was. How could you not tell me?

FATHER:

The reason I didn't tell you was because I knew you'd kick up a stink and I was right!

MOTHER:

How dare you! You don't think buying YOURSELF a two thousand dollar car stereo gives me the right to kick up a stink?

As her mother & father become louder, Sarah approaches her father and tugs at his sleeve. Both mother & father, completely engrossed in their argument, ignore Sarah.

FATHER:

Not now, Sarah. *(Turning back to Mother)* Look, I work hard and I don't see why I should have to ask you for permission every time I want to buy something.

Sarah attempts to get her mother and father's attention by faking a fainting spell.

SARAH:

I think I'm going to faint!

She places her wrist on her forehead, falls to the floor, raising her legs in the air and shaking them before dropping them to the floor. Her mother & father don't notice.

MOTHER:

How would you feel if I went out on a two thousand dollar spending spree?

FATHER:

(Shrugs his shoulders) You can do what you like. You do anyway.

Sarah gets up off the floor.

MOTHER:

I do not! I'm not as selfish as you are. That money was for our holiday.

Sarah pulls at her Father's sleeve again.

SARAH:

(Stamping her foot) Daddy, I need to talk to you.

FATHER:

I said, not now!

SARAH:

That's not fair! Why is it that grown ups are allowed to behave like children and children are supposed to behave like grown ups and you're allowed to get mad and shout at each other and if I try to get mad, you send me to my room!

Sarah's mother & father look at each other then turn and yell at Sarah.

MOTHER & FATHER:

Go to your room, Sarah!

SARAH:

See! Nobody listens to me!

Sarah walks away downstage left with her head down as both her mother & father continue to argue.

FATHER:

Look, making me feel guilty is not going to work this time. I earn the right to buy myself something from time to time. I work hard, I deserve it.

MOTHER:

I work hard too, you know!

FATHER:

And do I ever stop you from buying yourself anything? Never! Your wardrobe is full of clothes, shoes, make up, you name it, you've got it, but do I complain? No!

Downstage left: Sarah pokes her head out from behind the stage curtain. She lowers herself onto the floor and dramatically drags herself across the stage as if she is dying.

SARAH:

Help me. Somebody, help me!

Sarah goes unnoticed. Exits downstage right.

MOTHER:

That's different, I'm a woman. A woman was born to shop. It's in our genes! Besides, I don't spend thousands of dollars in one hit. I buy things when they're on sale.

FATHER:

If I was to add up all the little things you bought on sale it would add up to thousands of dollars, so you see, we're even in the long run.

MOTHER:

Don't use that psychology stuff on me. It's not logical! The point is, you've spent our holiday money so you'll have to send that stereo back and get a refund.

Sarah enters downstage right wearing a gorilla mask and carrying a gun. She points it at her mother & father.

SARAH:

Hands up, this is a hold up!

They still don't notice. Sarah exits downstage left in a huff.

FATHER:

Oh, no I'm not. I've waited years to buy this stereo and every time I've gone to get some money out of our account, it has always been spent on something else. Well, I've finally sneaked in there before you! *(He rubs his hands together and chuckles)*

Father begins to walk downstage left.

MOTHER:

Where are you going? Nothing's been solved yet.

FATHER:

There's nothing to solve. It's done. Now get over it. *(Exits downstage left)*

MOTHER:

Don't you walk away from me.....

Mother follows him exiting downstage left.

SCENE TWO:

Front stage curtain opens to reveal Sarah's bedroom. Sarah enters centerstage left, walks over to her bed centerstage and sits on it. She is surrounded by her toys. A big Teddy Bear, a Barbie doll, a Mechanical Man, a Ballerina, a Rag Doll and a Clown. Sarah looks sad and frustrated.

SARAH:

I could walk down the street in my underwear and nobody would notice. Does anyone care?
(Yells out) Can anybody hear me?

She places her elbows on her knees and props her chin into her palms. Slowly, her toys come to life.

TOYS:

(Altogether) We can hear you.

Startled, Sarah looks around at her toys in amazement.

SARAH:

Wow! Am I dreaming?

The toys move in a dreamlike way, slowly at first, then they click and become realistic. Teddy sways gently, wrapping his arms around himself in a cuddle. Barbie walks around 'Catwalk' style, occasionally flipping her hair back, Mechanical Man is constantly moving in slow motion with jerky staccato movements, Ballerina dances around the stage. Rag Doll is floppy, trying to keep her body and head in balance. Clown is juggling some balls with a big grin on his face.

Teddy moves over to Sarah and sits on the bed beside her. He gives Sarah a big cuddle. Sarah leans her head on Teddy's shoulder, enjoying the cuddle.

TEDDY BEAR:

We care about you Sarah and we know exactly how you feel.

SARAH:

You do?

RAG DOLL:

Sure we do.

SARAH:

How's that?

BARBIE DOLL:

(Speaks with an American accent) Well sweetheart, it's not like you don't ignore us when it suits you. We have feelings too you know.

SARAH:

How can you have feelings, you're a toy?

BALLERINA:

(Speaks with a French accent) Some grown-ups think that children don't 'ave feelings just because zhey don't talk about zhem.

SARAH:

I can't really talk about them because I just feel sad or angry sometimes without really knowing why I am.

TEDDY BEAR:

Exactly, that's why cuddles fix everything! *(Teddy wraps his arms around Sarah)*

MECHANICAL MAN:

Nonsense, there's more to life than cuddles. We must get to the root of the problem.

CLOWN:

There's nothing a good old joke won't fix! Do you know why eggs don't tell each other jokes?

Everyone shakes their head.

CLOWN:

Because they're afraid of cracking up.

Everyone laughs.

CLOWN:

So, why did the tomato blush?

Everyone shrugs their shoulders.

CLOWN:

Because he saw the salad dressing.

Everyone laughs.

CLOWN:

And, why was the little strawberry upset?

They all shrug their shoulders again.

CLOWN:

Because his mother & father were in a jam.

They all laugh again.

CLOWN:

Did you hear the one about.....

RAG DOLL:

Ok, that's enough thanks, Clown. Personally, I think there's nothing like freshly baked cookies and milk to ease away those troubles. Of course, chocolate cake will also do the trick as long as it has plenty of icing, jam and cream. Fudge! Yes fudge is another good one! *(Takes pen and pad from her pocket)* Can I take your order? I can whip anything up in a jiffy!

BALLERINA:

Please, don't talk about food. I zhink I'm going to faint. I 'aven't eaten in ages! *(Puts her wrist to her forehead in fainting mode. Teddy grabs hold of her to settle her)*

BARBIE DOLL:

Rag Doll, can't you think of anything else besides food? You could be a little more considerate. You know I'm on a diet.

CLOWN:

You're always on a diet. Do you know how to spell DIET? It's DIE, *(pretends he's dying)* With a T at the end.

BARBIE DOLL:

And you're always telling those stupid jokes. It takes a lot of effort to look like this. Liposuction is a nightmare, not to mention collagen injections in the lips. That's extremely painful!

RAG DOLL:

Haven't you learnt yet that beauty comes from the inside?

BARBIE DOLL:

Oh, please, look at Mechanical Man. I wouldn't call four double 'A' batteries beautiful.

TEDDY BEAR:

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. I think you're all beautiful.

MECHANICAL MAN:

I take two D size batteries, thank you. Now enough about beauty and feelings. It's all hogwash! You must learn to use logic to solve problems....problems..prob.. *(he shuts off and flops forward in a semi-bent position)*

RAG DOLL:

I can fix him. Your cousin Jordan didn't switch him off last time he was here and Mechanical Man walked straight out the door and fell down the stairs. He's had a loose wire every since. Poor thing! It's bad enough having a stuttering problem without conking out in mid sentence as well.

Rag Doll presses a button on Mech Man's back and he comes back to life.

CLOWN:

Problems, problems, problems. *(He says each word as he juggles a ball)* Who cares about problems. Life's about having fun, not worrying about problems.

SARAH:

Well how do you ever solve anything then?

RAG DOLL:

(Lifts pen to pad) Would some honey cakes help?

TEDDY BEAR:

Absolutely, and a great big hug.

BALLERINA:

There you go again, talking about food. I must not think about food. Dance, dance, dance! *(She dances around the stage with a determined look on her face)* Dancing will take away all your troubles Sarah. When you dance, everybody loves you. They simply cannot take their eyes off you.

BARBIE DOLL:

Sweetheart, you're so skinny, people would have trouble finding you. Has anorexia ever entered your mind?

BALLERINA:

Ha, you should talk! Rubber thighs!

Barbie looks outraged and glares at Ballerina.

SARAH:

Ballerina, why are you afraid of eating?

BALLERINA:

Well that is a silly question. Everybody knows that a ballerina must be slim and tall and in the best physical condition. If we are not, we are simply thrown out of the Royal Ballet Academy.

SARAH:

Well surely that's not the end of the world. Aren't there other Academies or other things you could do?

BALLERINA:

What else is there? Ballet is my life. It is every ballerina's dream to belong to the Royal Ballet Academy.

SARAH:

Isn't it best to follow your heart?

BALLERINA:

Oh, no, no, no! I did not work so hard to give it all up now! I must be the Prima Ballerina. The stage belongs to moi.

CLOWN:

Oh, brother! I think I'm going to throw up!

TEDDY BEAR:

Well that's just great! An anorexic ballerina and a bulimic clown!

RAG DOLL:

Waffles are good for an unsettled stomach. And they don't smell so bad when you throw them up. Waffles anyone? *(Lifts pen to pad)*

MECHANICAL MAN:

A little grease and oil is more to my liking, liking, liking...SHUTTING DOWN! (*He conks out coming to a stop in a semi- bent position*)

BARBIE DOLL:

This guy's garage sale material. He's going to need more than a grease and oil change!

RAG DOLL:

Have a heart, Barbie!

BARBIE DOLL:

I didn't come with accessories.

Rag Doll moves towards the mechanical man in her floppy way and pushes the button on his back. He comes back to life.

MECHANICAL MAN:

I heard that, Fat Lips. You've been trying to get rid of me ever since I came here.

BARBIE DOLL:

That's because a mechanical man does not belong in Sarah's room. You are clearly a boy's toy. An annoying reminder that Sarah's Dad had hoped for a son!

All the toys looked shocked that Barbie would let this slip out. Sarah bursts into tears.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

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