

=====

sizing him up

=====

by Michael Cheikin

Copyright by Michael Cheikin

To contact the playwright:
www.cheikin.com

=====
sizing him up
=====

Copyrighted material

Production Information

Synopsis: SIZING HIM UP is a two character
 piece about the humanity of the
 disabled, and about language as
 action.

Actors: Two actors:
 2 Females, mid 20's - 30's

Set: None needed.

Running Time: Approximately 18 minutes.

Props: Two manual wheelchairs, one with leg
 rests (for PRISCILLA, and one
 without (for SALL)
 Pillow
 Towel

TIME: Present.

PLACE: A lounge in a nursing home for the young disabled.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

SALLY A girl in her 20's, with cerebral palsy. Attractive and very feisty. She is confined to a wheelchair. She is spastic in speech and movement, with tongue protrusions, so she tries to keep her utterances minimal. It might take her many long seconds to get out one word or phrase. She's had cerebral palsy her whole life.

PRISCILLA A woman in her mid 30's. Also wheelchair bound, due to progressive multiple sclerosis, which she's had over 10 years. Her voice is slurred, her movements shaky and floppy. A bit sad. She's known what it is to be "normal".

Their laughter should convey their great sense of humor. We should be both laughing with them, and at their funny sounds and movements when they laugh (like that cartoon dog who had a funny laugh).

In general, there is a delay between their thoughts and their speech. We should sense them thinking, through their gestures, facial expressions, and laughter.

Regarding their sitting postures, they should not be sitting straight. Because of their inability to move (in reality, they would have power chairs, since they do not have the strength or coordination to push a manual chair any long distance), they are essentially "plopped" in their chairs in the morning by their aides, and stay in that position until put back to bed or they manage to get a kind soul to reposition them. Their postures should also reflect their medical conditions--with CP more spastic, with MS more floppy.

(TO THE ACTORS--BOTH CHARACTERS HAVE MAJOR SPEECH IMPEDIMENTS, SO SLOW SPEECH IS THE ONLY WAY TO BE CLEAR. YOU CAN'T GO TOO SLOW.)

SALLY IS SPASTIC, SO IT IS VERY HARD TO GET OUT EACH WORD OR PHRASE. HER RHYTHM IS STACCATO. HER TONGUE PROTRUDES WITH EACH ATTEMPT TO TALK. SHE TRIES TO USE AS FEW WORDS AS POSSIBLE. SOMETIMES, THE SENTENCE DOES COME OUT WHOLE (WHEN RELAXED). PRISCILLA SOUNDS SHAKY AND SLURRY--KEEP THE SOFT PALATE LOOSE. THEIR LAUGHTER IS ALSO VERY DISTINCT.)

1 (THE LIGHTS RAPIDLY RISE, REVEALING
2 PRISCILLA AND SALLY IN WHEELCHAIRS.
3 THEY ARE FACING FORWARD, LOOKING
4 OUT OVER THE AUDIENCE. EACH IS IN A
5 AWKWARD POSE IN THEIR WHEELCHAIR--
6 SALLY'S SPASTIC, AND PRISCILLA'S
7 FLOPPY. PRISCILLA'S HEAD IS PROPPED
8 UP ON ONE SIDE WITH A PILLOW. SALLY
9 HAS A "DROOL TOWEL" ON HER SHOULDER,
10 WHICH INTENTIONALLY BLENDS IN WITH
11 HER PRETTY DRESS.)
12
13 (THEIR CHAIRS AND BODIES ARE
14 POSITIONED IN SUCH A WAY THAT EYE
15 CONTACT IS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT
16 EFFORT TO TURN, WHICH DOES OCCUR
17 FROM TIME TO TIME, ESPECIALLY WHEN
18 THEY LAUGH TOGETHER.
19
20 (SALLY'S LEGS KICK
21 SPASTICALLY. ONE OF HER BRAKES
22 ISN'T LOCKED, SO SHE MOVES IN A
23 CIRCLE DURING THE COURSE OF THE
24 PLAY. HER CHAIR DOESN'T HAVE LEG
25 RESTS; PRISCILLA'S DOES.)
26
27 AS THE PLAY BEGINS, SALLY IS LOOKING
28 AT SOMETHING AND LAUGHING.)
29
30 SALLY:
31 (LOOKING AT SOMETHING AND LAUGHING) ...Hey ... floppy.
32
33 PRISCILLA:
34 What, spazzy.
35
36 SALLY:
37 ...Get ...that.
38
39 PRISCILLA:
40 (PAUSE, STRAINING HER EYES) Let me focus. (KEEPS STRAINING.)
41 Ohhh! (LAUGHS TOO)
42
43 SALLY:
44 ...Big ...pecker.
45
46 PRISCILLA:
47 Huge!
48
49 (PAUSE)
50
51 SALLY:
52 ...How ...long?
53
54 PRISCILLA:
55 At least eight inches!
56
57 SALLY:
58 No!! ... Been ...here?

59
60 PRISCILLA:
61 Oh. Last week.
62
63 SALLY:
64 What, what, what, happened?
65
66 PRISCILLA:
67 Diving accident. Twenty four.
68
69 SALLY:
70 ...Too ...bad. (LONG PAUSE) ...For him. (PAUSE) Good for us.
71
72 (PAUSE, THEN THEY BOTH LAUGH, EACH
73 IN THEIR DISTORTED WAY.)
74
75 (LONG PAUSE. THEY WATCH HIM.)
76
77 SALLY:
78 Eight!?
79
80 PRISCILLA:
81 Maybe nine!
82
83 SALLY:
84 How?
85
86 PRISCILLA:
87 Automatic.
88
89 SALLY:
90 But how?!
91
92 PRISCILLA:
93 Biology.
94
95 SALLY:
96 Oh!
97
98 (PAUSE)
99
100 PRISCILLA:
101 His name is Peter.
102
103 SALLY:
104 Peter. (PAUSE. LAUGHS:) Peter Pecker...
105
106 PRISCILLA:
107 (LAUGHS:) ...picked a peck of pickled... (TAKES A BREATH) peckers.
108
109 (THEY LAUGH. PAUSE.)
110
111 PRISCILLA:
112 Probably has a girlfriend.
113
114 SALLY:
115 ...Not for long.
116

117 PRISCILLA:
118 You think she'll dump him?
119
120 SALLY:
121 Sure. He's, he's one of, of us, now.
122
123 PRISCILLA:
124 Yeah.
125
126 (PAUSE)
127
128 PRISCILLA:
129 Good looking, too.
130
131 SALLY:
132 Yeah.
133
134 (PAUSE. THEY WATCH SOMEONE WHEEL
135 BY.)
136
137 SALLY:
138 Hey.
139
140 PRISCILLA:
141 What?
142
143 SALLY:
144 Ever do, do, do, do it.
145
146 PRISCILLA:
147 (SMILING) Spazzy!
148
149 SALLY:
150 (SMILING TOO) What!?
151
152 PRISCILLA:
153 You know.
154
155 SALLY:
156 Well?
157
158 PRISCILLA:
159 Once. In high school. Got drunk. He never called after.
160
161 SALLY:
162 (TEASING) Ooooooooouuuuu.
163
164 (THEY BOTH LAUGH IN THEIR COMIC
165 WAYS. THEY CALM.)
166
167 PRISCILLA:
168 After I got M.S., no one wanted me.
169
170 (LONG PAUSE.)
171
172 PRISCILLA:
173 Hey, Spazzy.
174

175 SALLY:
176 What?
177
178 PRISCILLA:
179 What about you.
180
181 SALLY:
182 I'm not telling.
183
184 PRISCILLA:
185 What!?
186
187 SALLY:
188 It's a secret.
189
190 PRISCILLA:
191 (ANGRY) C.P. Sally! I told you!
192
193 SALLY:
194 OK. (LOOKS AROUND, WHISPERS:) An aide.
195
196 PRISCILLA:
197 Really? Here?
198
199 SALLY:
200 Yeah.
201
202 PRISCILLA:
203 (SHE LOOKS AROUND) Who?
204
205 SALLY:
206 No. Before you. Jimmy.
207
208 PRISCILLA:
209 Did he hurt you?
210
211 SALLY:
212 Nooo. He liked me. Felt good. (SMILES.) Thought he gave me a
213 seizure.
214
215 PRISCILLA:
216 That was some seizure. (LAUGHS)
217
218 SALLY:
219 Yeah! (LAUGHS TOO.)
220
221 (PAUSE. THEY BOTH LAUGH AGAIN.)
222
223 SALLY:
224 Got fired.
225
226 (HER FACE TURNS SAD, SHE SOBS
227 DISTORTEDLY, FOR A MOMENT, AS SHE
228 REMEMBERS THE COURTSHIP, THE LOVE,
229 THE INFATUATION, THE LOSS.)
230
231 PRISCILLA:
232 (SYMPATHETIC, TRIES TO TOUCH HER) Ohhh.

233
234 (LONG PAUSE)
235
236 PRISCILLA:
237 Well, do you want him?
238
239 SALLY:
240 (RECOVERING, DOESN'T UNDERSTAND) What?!
241
242 PRISCILLA:
243 I said, do you want Peter?
244
245 SALLY:
246 He wouldn't like me.
247
248 PRISCILLA:
249 Yes he would. You're smart, and funny.
250
251 SALLY:
252 No I'm not.
253
254 PRISCILLA:
255 And you're pretty. And sexy.
256
257 SALLY:
258 No, no I'm not.
259
260 PRISCILLA:
261 Yes! (PAUSE) If only you didn't drool!
262
263 (THEY LAUGH.)
264
265 SALLY:
266 (TEASING) What are you, a lesbo?!
267
268 PRISCILLA:
269 No!
270
271 SALLY:
272 I like men!
273
274 PRISCILLA:
275 So do I!
276
277 SALLY:
278 I like looking.
279
280 PRISCILLA:
281 How about touching?
282
283 SALLY:
284 Yeah!
285 (PAUSE)
286
287 PRISCILLA:
288 Sometimes, my brother brings me videos.
289

290 SALLY:
291 Really! Can I, I...?
292
293 PRISCILLA:
294 Sure!
295
296 SALLY:
297 Where do you put your hands?
298
299 PRISCILLA:
300 You know.
301
302 (THEY LAUGH.)
303
304 PRISCILLA:
305 [Once you see my brother's videos you'll put your hands there too!]
306 Better than popcorn!
307
308 (THEY LAUGH.)
309
310 PRISCILLA:
311 Know what I'd do to him?
312
313 SALLY:
314 What?
315
316 PRISCILLA:
317 First, I'd give him a massage. My shakes would turn him on.
318
319 (THEY LAUGH. A STAFF MEMBER WALKS
320 BY (THIS SHOULD NOT BE PLAYED BY AN
321 ACTOR, BUT INDICATED BY THEIR
322 RESPONSES, AND EYE AND HEAD
323 MOVEMENTS.)
324
325 SALLY:
326 Shhhh!
327
328 (THEY WATCH THE STAFF EXIT.)
329
330 SALLY:
331 [Then what?
332
333 (THEY LAUGH AGAIN.)
334
335 PRISCILLA:
336 Then, I'd kiss him everywhere.
337
338 SALLY:
339 E-e-e-e-every?
340
341 PRISCILLA:
342 Everywhere.]
343
344 (THEY LAUGH HARD. CALM. LONG
345 PAUSE.)
346

347 PRISCILLA:
348 What would you do?
349
350 SALLY:
351 Me?
352
353 PRISCILLA:
354 Yes, you.
355
356 (THEY BOTH LAUGH.)
357
358 SALLY:
359 I'd u,u,u,use, my, my, my tongue.
360
361 (THEY LAUGH HARD.)
362
363 PRISCILLA:
364 Gotta use what God gave you!
365
366 (THEY LAUGH. PAUSE.)
367
368 PRISCILLA:
369 (SUDDENLY:) Look! Look who's after him.
370
371 SALLY:
372 (SNARLING) Jenny!
373
374 PRISCILLA:
375 She always does that.
376
377 SALLY:
378 (SNEERS) Thinks she's so sexy.
379
380 PRISCILLA:
381 Just because she can stand for a minute, she thinks she's hot shit.
382
383 SALLY:
384 Yeah!
385
386 PRISCILLA:
387 Quick! Let's run her over while she's still standing!
388
389 SALLY:
390 (SMILES) Yeah! (PAUSE) Or get Jack to loosen her brakes!
391
392 PRISCILLA:
393 ...Before she goes up the hill!
394
395 (THEY BOTH LAUGH.)
396
397 PRISCILLA:
398 You should go after him!
399
400 SALLY:
401 H-H-H-H-Who!?
402
403 PRISCILLA:
404 You. You're more sexy than Jenny.

405
406
407 Me?
408
409
410 Yes! You! (SNEERING AT JENNY) Look at that lipstick!
411
412 (THEY BOTH LAUGH AT HER.)
413
414
415 Think I could?
416
417 PRISCILLA:
418 Yes. Tell him about your tongue.
419
420 (THEY BOTH LAUGH.)
421
422 PRISCILLA:
423 He'll like you.
424
425 SALLY:
426 No!
427
428 PRISCILLA:
429 Yes. Go ahead.
430
431 SALLY:
432 Don't you, you, you wan-im?
433
434 PRISCILLA:
435 You can have this one. I'll take the next.
436
437 SALLY:
438 No!
439
440 PRISCILLA:
441 Yes.
442
443 SALLY:
444 Really?
445
446 PRISCILLA:
447 Go get-- Peter Pecker. Really. Go get him.
448
449 SALLY:
450 No! I can't.
451
452 PRISCILLA:
453 DO it! (PAUSE) Before Jenny! (PAUSE) Hurry up!
454
455 SALLY:
456 Maybe...
457
458 (BRIEF PAUSE. MUSIC SLOWLY RISES
459 UP, AS SHE THINKS.)
460
461 (A DETERMINED LOOK COMES OVER
462 HER FACE. SHE WIPES HER FACE ONCE

463 MORE, BEFORE TAKING HER DROOL TOWEL
464 OFF HER SHOULDER AND HIDING IT. SHE
465 TAKES GREAT EFFORT TO UNLOCK THE ONE
466 LOCKED BRAKE.)
467
468 (SHE BEGINS TO GO FORWARD, AND LOOKS
469 ONE MORE TIME AT PRISCILLA.
470
471 (PRISCILLA GIVES HER A SHAKY "THUMBS
472 UP".)
473
474 (SHE CONTINUES FORWARD, INTO THE
475 DAWN, AS THE LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE
476 OUT.)
477
478 (THE END.)
479