

## The Chair

*Two young girls are lying on the floor with blankets and pillows. SYLVIA is fourteen. JENNY is ten. There is a chair pushed against the room's door. No other furniture.*

*The two lay motionless in the dark.*

JENNY  
*(whispering)*  
Are you awake?

SYLVIA  
No.

*(Pause.)*

JENNY  
Sylvia?

*(SYLVIA snores)*

JENNY  
Shut up. You are too awake.

SYLVIA  
What do you want?

JENNY  
I was just thinking.

SYLVIA  
Oh Jesus. Here we go.

JENNY  
No, really. Do you ever think about the fact that we don't go to church?

SYLVIA  
No.

JENNY  
You don't?

SYLVIA  
No.

JENNY  
Don't you ever wish we went?

SYLVIA  
Why would I wish that?

JENNY  
I dunno.  
There's music.

SYLVIA  
Music?

JENNY  
Yeah, you know. Singing and all that.

SYLVIA  
So what? You can just turn on the damn radio and get singing.

JENNY  
Yeah, but church has singing and Jesus. And God.

SYLVIA  
So what?

JENNY  
Don't you like God? Or Jesus, even? You have to like Jesus.

SYLVIA  
Who says?

JENNY  
You go to hell if you don't like Jesus.

SYLVIA  
That's just a bunch of crap.

JENNY  
How do you know?

*(Pause.)*

I like Jesus.

*(Pause.)*

JENNY (cont.)  
I don't want to go to hell.

SYLVIA  
You're not going to hell, dumbass.

JENNY  
How do you know?

SYLVIA  
You're just not.  
I think you have to be at least 20 to go to hell, anyway.

JENNY  
Really?

SYLVIA  
Yes. Now go to sleep.

JENNY  
So you're saying I only have ten years to figure out how not to go to hell, all by myself, without going to church? How am I going to do that?

*(Long pause.)*

Sylvia?

*(Pause.)*

Are you awake?

SYLVIA  
What the hell is it?

JENNY  
Why do you think God gave girls what they have, and boys what they have?

SYLVIA  
What do you mean?

JENNY  
You know. Like, our bodies. How come boys get to have something that sticks out, and girls have to have something that gets-- stuck into?

SYLVIA

Don't be a weirdo.

JENNY  
I wish I was a boy.

SYLVIA  
Yeah, don't we all.

JENNY  
If I was a boy, I'd go around sticking my thing into everything, just to see what it felt like.

*(She giggles)*

Not people, though. Just things.  
Melons.  
Feather pillows.  
Tapioca!

*(laughs)*

SYLVIA  
*(laughing)*  
God, what's wrong with you?

JENNY  
I wonder if it's like having another finger.

SYLVIA  
I don't know. Another finger'd probly be more useful.

JENNY  
Sylvia?

SYLVIA  
Yeah.

JENNY  
I hate boys.

SYLVIA  
I know.

*(Pause.)*

JENNY

You know what I really wish I had, though? A tail. Like, one that could hold onto things. It'd be like having another arm. You could do your homework faster than everyone else.

JENNY (cont.)

You'd get straight A's. And then, if someone was trying to get you, you could fight with your hands and your tail could grab a rock and smash them on the head from behind. You'd have to get special pants made, though.

SYLVIA

Oh, didn't Ma tell you?

JENNY

What?

SYLVIA

I thought for sure she woulda told you by now.

JENNY

What?

SYLVIA

You did have a tail. When you were born.

*(Pause)*

JENNY

Ha, ha.

SYLVIA

Yeah. A nice, long, smooth one. Like a rat's tail, kind of. But cute.

JENNY

Shut up.

SYLVIA

I could hold out my little finger and your tail would just curl around it, sweet as you please.

JENNY

Nuh-uh.

SYLVIA

Ma was freaked out at first, but the doctor said it happens like that sometimes. Every now and then.

JENNY  
Are you for real?

SYLVIA  
I'm serious. Like, one out of ten thousand babies are born with one.

JENNY  
For real?

SYLVIA  
Yeah.

JENNY  
Well, how come I don't still have one?

SYLVIA  
They cut it off, stupid. Ma didn't want to make

*(starts cracking up)*

all those special pants for you.

JENNY  
You are so mean.

SYLVIA  
*(laughing)*  
A tail! For Chrissakes!

*(A noise outside. They freeze.)*

JENNY  
What was that?

SYLVIA  
Just the cat, I think. Go back to sleep.

*(Long pause.)*

JENNY  
Sylvia?

SYLVIA  
What?

JENNY

Do you think God likes me?

SYLVIA  
What the hell kind of question is that?

JENNY  
I dunno.

SYLVIA  
How would I know?

*(Pause.)*

Yes. I think God likes you.

JENNY  
What about Jesus?

SYLVIA  
If God likes you, what the hell does Jesus have to say about it?

JENNY  
I dunno. They're two different people, right?

SYLVIA  
Yeah, but Jesus is the son. If God likes you, Jesus has to too.

JENNY  
Oh yeah. "He's seated on the right hand side of the father", like from church at Gramma's.

I wonder what he's sitting on. A big throne, probably. A huge, beautiful throne with all kinds of intricate carving, all polished shiny by the saints, and with a big soft red pillow so he can stay comfortable. He probably has one of those big sticks too, like kings hold.

SYLVIA  
A scepter.

JENNY  
Yeah.

I wonder if he gets to walk around from time to time. Or if he just sits there, day after day. I wonder if he gets bored.

I hope you're right. I hope Jesus likes me.

I wish Jesus was my dad.

SYLVIA

Jesus is nobody's dad.

JENNY

I wish he was mine. And just mine. I wouldn't share him with anybody else.

*(Pause.)*

Except maybe you.

SYLVIA

Thanks.

JENNY

If you're nice to me.

*(Front door opens in another room. Both the girls fall silent quickly. Heavy footsteps in the other room, thumps, mumbling.)*

*Long pause.)*

JENNY

Sylvia?

SYLVIA

Jenny, you HAVE to be quiet now.

JENNY

*(looking at the chair)*

Do you really think it'll keep him out?

*(Pause.)*

Are you awake?

*(Pause.)*

Sylvia?

**END OF PLAY**