

Driving Miss Lillie

A short play by
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

JEFF: Mid 30s, workaholic and alcoholic father.

LILLIE: Thirteen years old student; daughter of Jeff.

SETTINGS

A moving car; residential neighborhood.

TIME

The present.

DRIVING MISS LILLIE

Lights up. There are four chairs arranged as the front and back seats of a car. On the back seat is a suitcase. JEFF occupies the driver's seat. He drinks from a beer can and wears suit pants, a shirt with the two top buttons undone and a loosen tie around his neck. Jeff looks at his wrist watch. He is visibly impatient. He looks back over his shoulder and at his invisible mirrors looking for someone.

LILLIE enters stage. She wears jeans, a dark T-shirt and a dark backpack. She walks around the front of the car, opens the invisible passenger door and sits. Jeff stares at her the whole time. He puts his beer down on the floor and with a twist of his wrist he turns the invisible engine on. Engine noises are heard.

JEFF

Put your seat belt on.

LILLIE

I don't like it.

JEFF

And I don't like having to get out of my way to solve your problems missy.

LILLIE

Then you shouldn't have had a daughter.

(JEFF grabs LILLIE's backpack from her lap and tosses it on the backseat. She gives him a mocking stare. JEFF sighs.)

JEFF

You're turning out just like your mother. That worthless piece of shit is filling your head with bullshit.

LILLIE

I am not like my stupid mother.

JEFF

Put your seat belt on, don't make me ask again.

LILLIE

If you put your seat belt on, then I'll put mine.

JEFF

You are in big trouble here princess. I'm your father, I say how it goes.

LILLIE

Because the reason I don't wear a seat belt is because you don't wear a seat belt.

JEFF

Fair enough.

LILLIE

And don't call me princess.

(JEFF fastens his invisible seat belt. LILLIE does the same.)

JEFF

Listen, I don't care what you do in your own time, just stay out of trouble. Because you know what's happening right now? Nothing. I am not doing anything- when I should be at work, so I can support you and your useless mother. Don't I give you all the freedom in the world? Can't you do whatever you want?

LILLIE

Yes dad.

(JEFF looks ahead, turns the invisible wheel and pushes the invisible pedals. Noises of a moving car are heard. Whilst driving JEFF keeps his left hand on the wheel and uses his right hand to sip on his beer.)

(After a few seconds LILLIE's phone starts to ring inside her pocket. We hear a 'bad ass' ringtone.)

JEFF

Are you gonna answer that? It's probably your mother.

LILLIE

I don't care.

JEFF

You know who she's gonna call next, right?

(The phone stops ringing. JEFF takes his own phone from his pocket. A few seconds later it's start to ring. We hear a 'standard' ringtone.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Guess who.

(JEFF passes the phone to LILLIE. She reluctantly accepts.)

LILLIE

(Into phone.)

Hi Margaret... Leaving school right now... I didn't hear it ... Yes ... Okay Margaret...

(LILLIE passes the phone to JEFF.)

LILLIE

She wants to talk to you.

(JEFF reluctantly accepts. He puts his beer down.)

JEFF

(Into phone.)

Hello ... Listen, I am driving okay? ... Everything is under control... My fault? ... No, no, no, you live with her! This wouldn't be happening if she was living with me... What? ... I can't do that! ... Okay, whatever... Yeah, whatever!

(JEFF hangs up the phone and drinks beer.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Change of plans. You're gonna be staying with me for a few days.

LILLIE

Really? What did she say?

JEFF

She said... she is busy. What did she say to you?

LILLIE

She said I'm grounded.

JEFF

I guess she is right about that one... All right, we are gonna go quickly get your stuff, okay? Don't take too long. You already wasted enough of my time.

LILLIE

Yes dad. Don't worry, I don't have so much stuff. I am not some silly girl anymore.

JEFF

You are not? Then what do you call what you did today? You call that 'smart'?

LILLIE

'Justice'. Natalie deserved a slap so I slapped her.

JEFF

You can't do that. We already talked about this.

LILLIE

I know. If I get in trouble then you get in trouble.

JEFF

That's how it works.

LILLIE

But if you get in trouble by your self, then it's okay.

JEFF

You're on very thin ice Lillie. Don't push your luck.

LILLIE

Or what? You're gonna hurt me?

JEFF

Maybe I should. It has been a while, hasn't it?

LILLIE

Then slap me. I deserve it.

(JEFF drinks beer.)

JEFF

You're grounded. Keep your mouth shut.

LILLIE

I want beer.

JEFF

Lillie...

LILLIE

I want to try it dad, what's the problem? You drink and drive, that's illegal. You cheated on mom, that's illegal too. I can denounce you, you know that?

JEFF

That's it!

(JEFF puts his beer down and gives
LILLIE a hurtful pinch on her arm.)

LILLIE

Ouch.

JEFF

Shut up. From now on you are gonna keep your mouth shut.

LILLIE

You know what else I did? I beat up a boy too. I punched him in the face. But he didn't go crying to the teacher. Not like that little bitch Natalie. So it was okay... Anyway, I just slapped her... I treated her like the little stupid girl she is. Sometimes I want to slap mom too. She is so stupid.

JEFF

You can't talk like that about your mother. But okay... Sometimes I want to slap her too.

LILLIE

Sometimes I want to punch you dad.

JEFF

Okay..?

LILLIE

Because you are an asshole... But I don't- because then you are gonna kick my ass. And I don't slap mom either because... I don't want to see her cry.

(JEFF drinks beer.)

JEFF

So you beat up a boy huh?

LILLIE

Yeah. I kicked him in the nuts and punched him in the face.

JEFF

Nice combo.

LILLIE

And then he was rolling on the ground and moaning. And the other boys were all too scared to do anything. I'm better than they are. I'm stronger, I'm better at sports. I'm the only girl who plays with the boys all the time.

JEFF

Huh...

LILLIE

Yeah... I mean, the girls... they are nice. But all they want to do is take selfies and dress weird. They can't play sports. They look like little chickens when they run.

(LILLIE giggles.)

LILLIE (CONT'D)

They are so cute. My friend Becky is cute. I like her.

(Silence.)

LILLIE (CONT'D)

Dad. I'm gay.

(JEFF spits beer.)

JEFF

What?

LILLIE

I must be.

(JEFF tries to keep control of the car. He takes another sip of beer.)

JEFF

I'm gonna need more beer.

LILLIE

I'm a man!

JEFF

No, no, no, no...

LILLIE

I'm like you dad.

JEFF

Shit. Lillie. Lillian...

LILLIE

I like what you like.

JEFF

Obviously this is something... we have to talk about.

LILLIE

I like you more than I like mom.

JEFF

Thank you... That's- Really?

LILLIE

Yeah dad. Mom is always freaking out about shit... But you are cool, I mean... maybe is because I see mom all the time and-

JEFF

Right. You know what? This is just a phase. I think it's great that you are gonna be staying with me-

LILLIE

Well you should.

JEFF

... for a while. And I know that sometimes when I'm talking about your mom, junk comes out of my mouth.

LILLIE

She says the same thing about you.

JEFF

Yes. Even so, your mother she can be-

LILLIE

A bitch.

JEFF

Who are you? God, you've changed. I don't recognize my own daughter anymore.

LILLIE

I told you I'm not some silly girl anymore.

JEFF

I just didn't think you were really paying attention to all these stuff.

LILLIE

I try not to.

JEFF

You shouldn't. And you shouldn't be getting into fights either just because I do.

LILLIE

You drink and drive too.

JEFF

I'm used to it. I drive better when I drink.

LILLIE

Does that mean I can drink and drive?

JEFF

Over my dead body you can.

(JEFF passes his beer to LILLIE.)

LILLIE

What's this?

JEFF

It's beer. You said you wanted to try beer. There you go.

LILLIE

Really?

JEFF

If you don't mind my drooling all over it.

LILLIE

But I'm thirteen years old.

JEFF

And I drink and drive. And I cheat on your mom.

(LILLIE drinks beer. She hates it
and spits it out.)

LILLIE

Pff. Argh.

JEFF

(laughing.)

I guess you are a little girl after all.

(She gives him a mean look.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

I'm just kidding.

LILLIE
I want to drive.

JEFF
Really...

LILLIE
Please dad.

JEFF
No Lillie, you can't.

LILLIE
Please, pretty please dad, I know how to drive.

JEFF
Have you driven before?

LILLIE
Well no but-

JEFF
Another time Lillie, I'm late for work already.

LILLIE
Daaaaad...

JEFF
There's too much traffic-

LILLIE
I'll just go around the block, it's only going to take 5 min.
My friend Harry he drives all the time with his dad and my
friend Jason too.

JEFF
Hold on...

(JEFF turns his invisible wheel.
Jeff stops the car and pulls the
hand break. Car noises cease.)

JEFF (CONT'D)
Do not under any circumstance tell your mother.

LILLIE

I don't even want to talk to her.

JEFF

Okay, c'mon, switch with me.

(They clumsily switch places. She is now on the driver's seat.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

What do you do first?

LILLIE

Keys.

(JEFF pulls his invisible seat belt.)

LILLIE (CONT'D)

Seat belt...

(LILLIE puts her seat belt on.)

JEFF

Now?

LILLIE

Keys!

JEFF

No Lillie. Now you adjust your seat...

(LILLIE pushes the chair forward a little.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Can you reach the pedals?

LILLIE

Humhum.

JEFF

Okay. Very important. You have two pedals, but you only use your right leg, okay? Your right foot to press the pedals. Understand?

LILLIE

Okay..?

JEFF

So your left leg it's only for support, you don't push any pedals with it.

LILLIE

Okay.

JEFF

So when you want to give it gas you use your right foot to press the pedal on the right. That's the gas. Good... Press it very slowly. Yes... And if you want to slow down, you are going to take your foot off the gas... Good. And if you want to stop, you're are going to slowly press the pedal on the left which is the break... Got it?

LILLIE

Got it.

JEFF

All right. What now?

LILLIE

Keys!

JEFF

No Lillie. Fix your mirrors first.

LILLIE

Oh, right.

(LILLIE fixes the invisible mirrors.)

JEFF

Okay. Now?

LILLIE

Keys?

JEFF

Yes.

(LILLIE turns the engine on. We hear engine noises. LILLIE is nervous and excited.)

LILLIE

Oh my goooood.

JEFF

Okay. The signal, push it down. No. (Helping her pull the invisible signal.) Down. Good. That's left. You always signal before you take off. Good... Lillie?

LILLIE

Yes?

JEFF

Calm down. Everything is okay. Breath.

LILLIE

Okay, I'm okay.

JEFF

Gear on 'drive'.

(LILLIE puts the invisible gear on 'drive'.)

LILLIE

Oh my god.

JEFF

Let's check your mirrors again... (Looking at the mirrors and over his shoulder.) Okay, we're good... Now, gas... slowly.

(We hear the noises of a moving car.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Good. You see? It's easy. Eyes on the road. Eyes on the horizon.

(LILLIE's phone rings.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

No. Eyes on the road. Two hands on the wheel. You are not gonna pick that up. Stay focused.

(The phone stops ringing.)

JEFF

Good. You always keep two hands on the wheel.

(JEFF's phone starts to ring.)

JEFF

Eyes on the road.

(JEFF picks up the phone and looks at the phone screen.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Shit, already.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(Into phone.)

Hi Margaret... She can't come to the line right now... Because... she is driving.

(Margaret starts shouting on the other side of the line. JEFF is seen pulling his ear away from the phone.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

(Into phone.)

She is fine, don't worry... What Margaret, don't start... No... What?

(As he talks on the phone he signals LILLIE to stay focused on the road.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

(Into phone.)

...No, she is gonna stay with me now... You are such... Why do you do that? You can't do that! ... What the hell is wrong with you?

(LILLIE feels pressured when her parents argue. She is losing focus.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Lillie slow down.

JEFF (CONT'D

(Into phone.)

Whatever Margaret. What?

JEFF (CONT'D)

Lillie slow down.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(Into phone.)

Yeah that's what I am doing!

JEFF (CONT'D)

Lillie slow down! Lillie stop the car! Hit the breaks!

(LILLIE is freaking out. JEFF grabs
the invisible wheel.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Lillie remove your legs!

(JEFF pulls the hand break. We hear
tires skidding.)

JEFF AND LILLIE

Aaaaaahhhhh!

(The car stops. Nobody is hurt.
LILLIE is in shock.)

JEFF

It's okay darling. You did good.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(Into phone.)

Hi Margaret. Yes everything is okay. Yes, she is fine. Hold
on Margaret.

(JEFF opens the invisible door and
steps outside. He goes around the
car to the driver's window. He
opens the invisible door and helps
LILLIE out.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

C'mon darling. Come outside.

(JEFF hugs LILLIE. She feels a little better.)

LILLIE

Is mom on the line?

JEFF

Yeah. Do you want to talk to her?

(LILLIE nods.)

LILLIE

(Into phone.)

Hi mom. Yes, everything is okay... Yes mom, I'm coming home right now... No it's not his fault- well, you are right, I guess it was his fault... Yes mom. I'll be there soon... And mom? I miss you already.

(The line is silent.)

LILLIE (CONT'D)

(Into phone.)

Mom? You there?

(Margaret says something. LILLIE smiles.)

LILLIE (CONT'D)

(Into phone.)

Well, you should. Okay. I'll see you soon mom. Bye.

JEFF

What did she say?

LILLIE

She wants me to come home.

JEFF

Of course she does. C'mon.

(JEFF goes around the car and enters on the passenger side.)

LILLIE

What are you doing dad?

JEFF

C'mon. Let's go around the block a few more times.

LILLIE

No way dad. I'm so scared.

JEFF

That's why you have to do it. No daughter of mine can be scared of driving.

LILLIE

But you are gonna be late.

JEFF

Yeah... but I'm always on time anyway. I need to be late more often.

(LILLIE takes the driver's seat. She instinctively puts her seat belt on. JEFF fasten his seat belt as well. LILLIE fixes her seat, checks the mirrors, turns on the engine and signals left. JEFF observes her with pride.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Real slow. We got all the time in the world.

LILLIE

Okay dad.

(LILLIE turns the engine and starts driving. Car noises are heard.)

JEFF

Nice and easy. Nice and easy...

(Silence.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Are you really gay?

(LILLIE shrugs her shoulders. She is not sure.)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Because that's okay. Better than bringing home some random douche bags.

(LILLIE does a clumsy turn on the wheel. JEFF grabs hold of the invisible safety handle. A loud car noise is heard).

JEFF (CONT'D)

Slowly!

LILLIE

Who's the little girl now dad? Huh?

JEFF

You are turning just like your mother...

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF PLAY)