

Stutter

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Title: **Stutter**

Setting: William's kitchen/dining room

Time: Present

Characters:

William: A normal young man (18 – 21) with a crush. He also has cerebral palsy*.

Jill: A pretty young woman (early 20's). William's personal care attendant (PCA).

Short Summary:

In the course of their normal routine to prepare for the day, William, a young man with cerebral palsy, and his PCA Jill, talk about his romantic prospects. After getting his appearance just right, William hits Jill with a surprise request.

*Note on CP:

Cerebral Palsy is a fascinating condition, and takes as many forms as there are individuals who have it. It is a purely physical condition: absolutely nothing is wrong with William's mind. The director and actor working on the script are at their leisure to make specific choices regarding its effect on William. The minimum, however, should include: difficulty walking, requiring support from Jill; limited fine-motor skills (i.e. he cannot pick up a drinking glass or fork; he must be fed by Jill and drinks through a straw); and speech is very difficult (Jill may repeat words to make sure she understands) and thus non-verbal communication is quite important.

Stutter

AT RISE:

(A kitchen with dining area. To one side is the kitchen: counter, some appliances implied. Other side: a table, some chairs.

A doorway beyond the table leading to the rest of the house. A window. Morning.

JILL helps WILLIAM walk in. WILLIAM has severe Cerebral Palsy. This takes about 10 seconds.

WILLIAM wears boxers and an undershirt.

Almost there, WILLIAM leans on JILL.)

JILL:

Come on buddy.

(WILLIAM sits at table. JILL pushes WILLIAM in.)

Watch your feet. What's on the menu today, boss?

WILLIAM:

Um -

JILL:

You want some coffee?

WILLIAM:
(laughing)

Uh huh.

JILL:

Like I gotta ask.

WILLIAM:

Um -

JILL:

And for food?

WILLIAM:

Um -

JILL:

Two sugars, right?

WILLIAM:

Um - three.

JILL:

Three.

(JILL sets coffee, straw and cloth on table.)

JILL:

Food? You want that sandwich heated up?

Um – thank you. WILLIAM:

Sure. JILL:

I think we have some pasta in the refrigerator. Could you check? WILLIAM:

Pasta? Um – yeah there’s some of that stuff I made last night. JILL:

Yeah. WILLIAM:

Yeah? You like that? JILL:

Uh huh. WILLIAM:

It’s delicious. Thank you so much. WILLIAM:

Sure. I’m gonna grab your clothes, okay? Be right back. JILL:
(She exits)

Jill?
Jill?
Jill?! WILLIAM:

(WILLIAM leans to drink coffee – it’s too far away.)

Ohh... (JILL enters with clothes.)

Jill – JILL:
It’s so nice out today. We should go for a walk maybe later.

Jill? WILLIAM:

What’s up? JILL:

Um – I’m gonna wear jeans and – and a polo shirt. WILLIAM:

Polo shirt - the blue one? JILL:

Uh huh. WILLIAM:

Okay – I'll grab those. You look nice in that.

JILL:
(JILL exits)

Jill?
Jill?

WILLIAM:
(JILL returns with shirt.)

Here we go.

JILL:
WILLIAM:

Jill?

WILLIAM:
JILL:

Yeah?

WILLIAM:
JILL:

Um, Jill? Could you move the coffee?

JILL:
(JILL wipes WILLIAM's face and holds the coffee up for him. WILLIAM leans his head into JILL's stomach)

The coffee? Come here.

Get offa me. You with the face. A face no mother could love.
(rubs WILLIAM's head. He drinks.)

How's your week?

WILLIAM:
JILL:

Good.

Yeah? Hey – how'd it go with Nadia last weekend?

WILLIAM:
JILL:

Great!

Yeah? Hot date?

WILLIAM:
JILL:

No.

You kiss her?

WILLIAM:
JILL:

No!

Why not? Get in there pal! Naughty Nadia, she's just asking for it.

WILLIAM:

No, it wasn't a date.

JILL:

No? I thought it was.

WILLIAM:

No, I don't – she's just a friend.

JILL:

Just a friend?

WILLIAM:

Yep. I like someone else.

JILL:

Someone else? Yeah?

WILLIAM:

Uh huh.

JILL:

Ooo-oo! Who's this?

WILLIAM:

I want to get dressed.

JILL:

Say that again?

WILLIAM:

Can you help me get dressed?

JILL:

Sure. Um – what's first, bottom's or tops?

WILLIAM:

Bottoms.

JILL:

Okay – hoist!

(She helps him stand – puts on his pants)

What would Nadia think if she saw me doing this? Lift your foot? Whoo! Panties!

Okay. Let's do the top.

(He sits – she puts his shirt on).

Big head big head. You look like Igor.

WILLIAM:

Hello mathter.

JILL:

Hello Igor.

WILLIAM:

I've got fresh bodies.

Ooh – yummy! Do you want the shirt tucked in?

Uh huh.

Okay. There you go – looking good!

Um – could you brush my hair?

Brush – sure.

Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.

Sure, buddy.
Nice. Looking slick.
So what’s on the schedule?

Could I have some coffee?

Wanna go for that walk? Jesus it’s gorgeous out. What do you think?
What’s up buddy?

Oh – um . . . How do I look?

You look sharp – yer so handsome.

Thank you. I think you’re beautiful.

What?

I said you’re beautiful.

Awww – thanks.

JILL:
WILLIAM:
JILL:
WILLIAM:
JILL:
(she brushes his hair).
WILLIAM:
(she continues brushing absently.)
JILL:
WILLIAM:
(She returns and sits for the first time. She moves coffee; he watches her.)
JILL:
WILLIAM:
JILL:
(She reads her newspaper.)
WILLIAM:
JILL:
WILLIAM:
JILL:

(She wipes his mouth with a cloth. He drinks coffee.
She reads. He watches her.)

It's you.
WILLIAM:

What, buddy?
JILL:

It's you?
WILLIAM:

I'm sorry I'm having trouble -
JILL:

It's you.
The girl. I wanted to give you a kiss.
WILLIAM:

Wow.
Well - buddy that's really sweet. But - my boyfriend -
JILL:

You have a boyfriend?
WILLIAM:

You didn't know that?
JILL:

Oh. No.
WILLIAM:

Yeah.
JILL:

Wow. What's his name?
WILLIAM:

Paul. It's Paul.
JILL:

He seems nice.
WILLIAM:

Yeah.
JILL:

Okay.
WILLIAM:

(A long moment.)

Done with your coffee?
JILL:

WILLIAM:

Uh huh. Thank you.

Yeah.
You wanna go for that walk?

Uh huh.

Um, Jill?

Look at you. Huh?

Can you take me to the bathroom?

Sure.
Am I gonna need my gas mask?

I am, huh?

JILL:

WILLIAM:

(She stands, rubs his head)

JILL:

(She helps him stand)

WILLIAM:

JILL:

(They laugh; WILLIAM nearly falls.)

(They exit.)

End of Play.