

THE STRAIGHT DOPE

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Characters: JEFF: college student somewhat-slightly built, average height

BOB: college student , slightly shorter, good friend of Jeff

VERONICA: Pretty college girl, friend of Bob, knows Jeff only thru Bob

ALICIA: Very attractive college girl, acquaintance of Jeff & Bob

Stage Requirements/props:

Short park bench that characters can drift on and off, as conversation dictates.

(At rise, BOB and VERONICA are sitting on a bench. JEFF and ALICIA are off stage)

VERONICA: So where WERE you last night?

BOB: I decided to hang out with Biff.

VERONICA (disappointed): I waited for you in the library for hours. I had to finish the paper myself.

BOB: Sorry about that. I'll make it up to you.

VERONICA: Well, the paper is DONE now. You know, I never thought I'd say this, but it was a good thing Jeff showed up.

BOB: I never thought ANYONE would say that either -- you've always said he's a pig.

VERONICA: Yeah, he's still a bit of a pig -- but he sure saved me last night in the library.

BOB: From what?

VERONICA: These two guys were really giving me a hard time.

BOB: So who was the other guy with Jeff?

VERONICA: No, these two guys I'd never seen before were hassling me. Then Jeff showed up, said something to the guys that I'd rather not repeat, and they both took off after him.

BOB: Jeff's such a coward. I'll bet he ran.

VERONICA: Those were two BIG guys. They probably chased Jeff clear across campus. But it gave me the perfect opportunity to get away.

BOB: That's him coming up now. Looks like he survived the pummeling.

(Jeff walks up to the bench, thrilled to see Veronica, who's not as thrilled to see him)

JEFF (very cheerful) : Hey, guys!

BOB & VERONICA (less enthusiastically): Hey.

JEFF (undeterred): You sure look happy.

BOB: We both just finished our papers on the Agricultural Revolution. The professor gave us a tight deadline & he can be very critical.

JEFF (trying to be funny): I hear he's outstanding in his field.

(Bob & Veronica just groan & look at each other, hoping Jeff will just leave)

JEFF (mostly to Veronica): Get it? It's a decent pun. I mean, I've done better...

VERONICA (somewhat grudgingly): I really should thank you, Jeff for bailing me out last night. Bob was supposed to meet me but was hanging out with Biff. Are you ok?

JEFF: Oh, yeah, I left those guys in the dust. In the words of Eric Carmen, "I'm a marathon man".

VERONICA: Uh, don't you mean Dustin Hoffman?

JEFF: Oh, the movie -- yeah, CLASSIC movie -- but the song is even better. I could play it for you, sometime, Veronica. I think you'd like it. Yeah, Bob, I know -- you're not impressed.

BOB: Whoop dee, he's a marathon man. So what?

JEFF: It's about a guy finding his identity. (very passionate) Eric Carmen is the best at that. He also writes great songs about disillusionment.

BOB: Sorry, Jeff -- normally, we could put up with this trivia but I've got things I need to get done & don't have time to waste.

VERONICA (completely ignoring Jeff): Bob, I can handle some of it. Gambrell isn't too far out of my way home.

BOB (also ignoring Jeff): You've already run errands for me. I couldn't ask you to do another one.

JEFF: Hey, I could help out.

VERONICA (still ignoring Jeff): It's not a big deal.

BOB (still ignoring Jeff): I know -- but I never do anything for you & it IS out of the way.

VERONICA: Well, I need the exercise anyway.

JEFF (pouncing on opportunity to get back in the conversation): You don't need the exercise, Veronica! In fact, I think you've lost weight since the last time I saw you (goes up to Veronica , half-way tries to gently pinch her behind). (very playfully) Gitchy Gitchy.

VERONICA (easily side-steps Jeff & says to Bob): I'll drop off your paper at Gambrell.

JEFF: You can pinch me if it'll make you feel better.

VERONICA: It would NOT make me feel better.

JEFF: Are you sure? I'd make ME feel better -- give it the old "gitchy gitchy" (sticks out his rear end).

BOB (realizing he'd better step in to intervene): OK, Veronica, it WOULD really help me to not have to go cross-campus again.

JEFF: Hey, Veronica, I could go with you. It's getting a bit dark, wouldn't hurt to have an escort. Seriously, I won't try anything -- you know that.

VERONICA (not sure how to take Jeff here): I know that but...Um, no thanks. It's not a big deal. See ya, Bob. (Gives Bob a hug that Bob isn't as enthusiastic about returning & then walks off).

JEFF (softly to Bob): Where's MY hug?

BOB: You want a hug?

JEFF: Not from you. From her! She is SO pretty!

BOB: She's cute.

JEFF: She's fantastic! And smart too! She always tries to help you out...not sure how you could do better.

BOB (sighs): Yeah, she's a nice girl

JEFF: I'm no expert on chicks -- but it looks to me like she's lobbying hard to be your girlfriend.

BOB: Yeah, I know.

JEFF: Yet you'd rather hang out with Biff?

BOB: I just told Veronica that. I was actually at a party with people who are more interesting and can help me more with my career. Biff was there too so technically I wasn't lying.

JEFF: So you're playing hard to get. I don't know how you do it but it sure seems to work. Worked great with Eleanor Why did you dump her anyway? She was pretty decent.

BOB: Eleanor became too clingy.

JEFF: I think she just wanted you to spend more time with her.

BOB: Monogamy is overrated.

JEFF: Oh, no! Monogamy is UNDERrated! Now, CELIBACY is overrated.

BOB: Celibacy is NOT overrated.

JEFF: Are you kidding? Celibacy sucks!

BOB: Yeah, but we all KNOW that -- something is not "overrated" unless there are people who actually think it's great.

JEFF: At one time, wasn't it considered "holy" to be celibate? So SOME people must've thought it was a great thing. It doesn't take a genius to know that those guys were idiots.

BOB (a bit impatient): Only an idiot would think you're a genius, Jeff. But yes, I think we're in agreement here that celibacy sucks. Monogamy gets complicated, though.

JEFF: Only that one time when you were dating Darlene. She was quite the demando ...

BOB: Yeah, you guys sure called that one. Having actually BEEN in a few relationships now, I can tell you that committing to ONE girl is more trouble than it's worth.

JEFF: I've never been in one but I'd like to test that theory with Veronica.

BOB: She's ok -- but that's it. Doesn't do much for me.

JEFF: So you're not gonna ask her out?

BOB: Nope, not my type.

JEFF: Well, then you really oughta TELL her. You OWE her some honesty after all she's done for you.

BOB: And how has the honesty policy worked for you, Jeff? Had any dates that weren't inflatable?

JEFF: I sent it back -- I told you that!

BOB: Only when you found out the price didn't include shipping.

JEFF: Veronica, however, is NOT inflatable & you're taking advantage of her. You should let her know that you don't share her feelings.

BOB (irritated): Yes! I'll tell her soon!

JEFF: I don't know why you haven't told her already. She's a very sweet girl who deserves better.

BOB (angry): If she wants to run errands for me, why should you care? This doesn't concern you!

JEFF: In a way it does. I don't wanna violate the code.

BOB (cooling down): Huh?

JEFF: Well, I only know Veronica through you so that puts her squarely onto your turf.

BOB: Turf? What are you talking about?

JEFF: We're men! We're hunters! It's how we were created. We're hunting for the right girl! Some more successfully than others. But I don't want to jeopardize our friendship by asking out a girl who's on your turf...

BOB: Nobody hunts on "turf". Maybe you mean ..."safari"?

JEFF: Whatever metaphor that will work here. I would never betray you. I've never violated the code & I never will!

BOB: I've never HEARD of the code but if it makes you feel better, I won't betray you that way either.

JEFF: Hey, thanks! It did happen to me one time & it was very painful. So ... just to be clear then, you'd be ok if I asked out Veronica?

BOB: Sure, I'd have no problem with it.

JEFF: No regrets or resentment if we fall madly in love and get married? She could be the one -- a pretty girl who's not too hung up on looks.

BOB: How do you know that?

JEFF: As a rule, a girl of Veronica's caliber only wants to date big athletic types like, say, your friend Biff. Yet she's interested in you. No offense, but I think I'm at least as attractive as you are. Therefore, I gotta like my chances with her.

BOB (taken aback): What makes you say that?

JEFF: Well, I'm a bit taller, haven't lost as much hair and I work out 3 times a week. I'm benching more than my body weight.

BOB: That's not what it's all about.

JEFF: Yeah, I think girls like abs & biceps too. So I've stepped up the curls & crunches. But I officially have your permission to date her?

BOB: For what it's worth...

JEFF (very encouraged): Cool! That makes my day!

JEFF (singing & doing his best impersonation of Marvin Gaye). When I get this feeling I want sexual healing (forgetting most of the words). Blah blah blah blah blah ... I got sick this morning.... um, temperature rising...

BOB: You can't sing. At least learn the lyrics. But you can't get your advice on women from Marvin.

JEFF: You know, I always thought Marvin Gaye was over-rated until I heard that song. If he were alive today & I met him, I'd tell him, "Marve, that song says it all." It really sucks he's dead.

BOB: Didn't he get shot by a jealous lover? Or was it the girl in the video?

JEFF: No! It was his dad, you idiot! I can't believe I'm taking advice on women from someone who doesn't know how Marvin Gaye died.

BOB: I DO know you can't sing "Sexual Healing" to girls when you meet 'em. Don't even THINK it.

JEFF: But I don't think I'm wrong about the sex thing. Women want to get married. Men need some motivation -- otherwise, we're just doing chores for nothing. Sex IS a major reason for men to want to get married. It is for me, anyway. Doesn't the bible say somewhere about "getting married so you won't burn with passion"?

BOB: I think it's in Corinthians or something. I learned it in Sunday School years ago.

JEFF: OK, let's say I AM thinking about it -- how do THEY KNOW I'm thinking about it?

BOB: They just do. It PROBABLY doesn't help when you look like you wanna pinch them & say things like "gitchy gitchy".

JEFF: Really? I don't get that. It wouldn't bother me if a woman tried that & said "gitchy gitchy". I could go for it right now, in fact (looks around to see if there's anyone nearby).

BOB: Women are not men.

JEFF: I mean, even if she were HIDEOUSLY ugly, or I just didn't like her, I STILL would be somewhat flattered.

BOB (mock admiration): That's very egalitarian of you.

JEFF: But you're saying that girls don't want me thinking about sex when I meet them?

BOB: Correct!

JEFF: That's hard to believe. And a bit unrealistic on their part. OK, what SHOULD I think about?

BOB: Anything else is better. Push the sex thoughts to the very back of your mind.

JEFF (incredulous): And YOU can do that? You can meet a real hottie & NOT think, "Ooh, I'll bet she'd cross her ankles just in the right spot on my back."