

NOTES

27 Dolls is a short story written by Leland Faulkner, a Louisiana native, and it is perfect for a mature, male performer. Being a short story, it should be entered in Prose Interpretation; however, the first-person narrative makes this selection also suitable to be entered in Dramatic Interpretation. The drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer where to turn his pages in the manuscript. This selection is very much a *love story* and will perform best when portrayed with 100% honesty. Think of the *charm* possessed by male leads in romantic comedies, because the *success* of this selection will be determined by the *likeability* of the performer. There are tid-bits of humor scattered throughout this selection; however, the humor should never be forced. The performer will notice that some words have been *italicized*. These are words that need *emphasis* or *coloring*. Pausing slightly *before* or *after* the *italicized* words should aid the performer in giving a slight *emphasis* to the *correct* word(s) in each sentence. Play the moments, and never underestimate the power of a well-placed *pause*. These pauses, in turn, create magical, emotional transitions.

If you don't like love stories, you might want to leave. Now. Seriously. This is not just a love story. This is THE love story. It's more romantic than *Romeo and Juliet*. It's more passionate than *Anthony and Cleopatra*. It's bigger than *Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie*. I should know. This love story—is mine.



When my father got a transfer, he packed up the family and moved us to West Virginia. It's hard enough to be the *new* kid in school, but it's *murder* if you miss the entire first six weeks. It was the middle of October, and already the seasons were changing. The once beautiful, lush green foliage was now turning into the warmer tones and vibrant hues of a fast-approaching Autumn.



I met her in one of my classes. Well, I shouldn't say that I *met* her. You would actually have to *converse* first in order to officially say you'd *met* someone. I *saw* her—to be exact—that first day in my English Literature class. I didn't know what I'd say if we ever actually *did* meet, but I wanted to be prepared. I overheard my sister talking on her cell-phone to one of her best friends from back home. My sister was *telling* this friend about an *article* she'd read in one of her many teen magazines. After *eavesdropping* on the one-sided conversation, I gathered that the article suggested giving a *gift* to someone you might be too shy to *approach*. I should add here that—I'm *shy*. *Painfully* shy.

I've even had teachers call my parents and ask them if I'm a *mute*. My sister was urging her friend to give her unrequited *love* a package of baseball cards or an unopened pack of chewing gum. After much deliberation, I started to *warm-up* to the idea of giving a gift as an *ice-breaker*.



Now the hard part. What could *I* offer as a small token of my affection? What do girls like? *Flowers?* *Chocolates?* Finally, it hit me. It was so *obvious*. Dolls! What *girl* doesn't like *dolls*? I went to the local dollar store, and I was *amazed* at the assortment of dolls from which to choose—*two!* The choice was between a somewhat plush-looking cuddle doll—called *Cuddle Doll*—and a plastic rip-off *Barbie* called *Bridget*. Since *cuddling* was the optimum goal for project *Boy-Buys-Doll-Boy-Gets-Girl-End-Of-Story!* I purchased said *doll* and securely placed it in my backback. Just in case.



Piper—that's her *name*—sees me walking home from school one day. It ends up that we live in the same neighborhood. I *love* listening to the *sound* of Piper's voice. Apparently, she does, too! Piper talks about *everything!* Elections, favorite *foods*, how she's been a *vegetarian* for the past two-and-a-half years. She talks about the *weather*, names her *favorite* sports teams and even tells me *why* they're her favorite. As we stroll down the historic sidewalks of Charleston, Piper makes a point to show me *all* of the local landmarks. I realize that she might very well still be in high school, but *Piper* would make an *excellent* tour guide!



When we get to her house—three blocks past *mine*, mind you—Piper ends our trek with an observation. She looks at me and says, "You don't say much. Do you?" I just reached into my backpack, pulled out the *Cuddle* doll, and handed it to her. Piper took it—*studied* it for a second—then hugged me and ran inside. I just *stood* there for a few seconds—*savoring* the moment—then *ran* to the dollar store and bought another *Cuddle Doll!* Do you want to know what I did before I went to sleep that night? I *thanked* my sister.



Project *Boy-Buys-Doll-Boy-Gets-Girl-End-Of-Story* is a *huge* success! Piper and I become inseparable. We walk to *school* together. We walk *home* together. We do our *homework* together. We have practically all of the *same* classes, *same* teachers—just different *periods*. It only makes *sense* that we do our homework together. After all, the only time I get to see Piper *during* the day is fourth period in English Literature class.