

A Dancer in Cowboy Country

by  
Deb Norton

Inspired by the song "Yosemite" by Rain Perry

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BOY (12)

GINA (20-24)

JASON (20-24) Voice only

Synopsis: A Barbie-beautiful babysitter, escaping her obnoxious boyfriend and his slasher movie, catches her 12-year-old charge in the throes of a soulful self-created dance and enjoys the opportunity to make fun of him. But, she can't help but see herself in this strange boy and soon he has her wishing she remembered how to dance like that.

Set requirements: A boy's twin bed and side table with alarm clock. An upstage door.

Props: Box of action figures, a blonde Barbie, a boom box.

Music: "Still Loving You" by The Scorpions, or some similar heavy metal ballad.

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A DANCER IN COWBOY COUNTRY by Deb Norton  
Inspired by Rain Perry's song, "Yosemite"

A 12 year-old boy's bedroom in the low-income neighborhood of a small Texas town - Twin bed, night table with lamp. An alarm clock says 2am. Some light spills in through the door leading onto the hallway. The blare of a television can be heard from the living room - the tense music, screams, hacking and chain sawing of a slasher film.

The boy is in bed, wide awake. A scream from the movie makes him jump a little. He doesn't like himself for being frightened.

BOY  
(Solemnly)  
You must use the force.

This steadies him somewhat. He reaches into his night stand drawer and removes a Han Solo action figure. Pointing it at the door, he makes a space gun sound as Han lays waste to the bad sounds. Then he has Han shoot some blasts under the bed. He feels better.

BOY (CONT'D)  
(As Han)  
That's all of them, Friend. I don't sense any more evil in the area.

He reaches behind his night stand and retrieves a long white box from its hiding place. He removes a Barbie doll from the box. He finds more action figures in the night table drawer. The storm troopers are Barbie's henchmen. Darth is the captain. Han, Luke, Leia and the rest are captive villagers. The boy plays all the parts, jiggling the figures a bit to indicate the speaker.

DARTH VADER/CAPTAIN  
We did a house to house sweep,  
your majesty. None escaped.

BARBIE  
You will be handsomely rewarded,  
Captain.

STORM TROOPER/CAPTAIN:  
As you wish, my Queen.

The boy makes the Captain bow. Barbie moves toward the captive villagers.

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CONTINUED: (2)

BARBIE

Hear me, freaks. You have violated the credo of normalcy by refusing to assimilate. You were warned and yet you stayed. You have chosen your fate!

Han Solo moves forward to face Barbie.

HAN SOLO

Your arrogance will be your downfall, Queenie, 'cause now we have you right where we want you!

BARBIE

Address me with respect, you tiny little Freak.

Han Solo turns to his fellow freaks.

HAN SOLO

You all concentrate on the henchman. I'll take care of Queenie. Now!

BARBIE

Ow! My head! Captain, defend me from their Jedi mind attack.

HAN SOLO

It's too late, Queenie. We've blown their minds.

The boy knocks over the storm troopers.

HAN SOLO (CONT'D)

And now it's your turn! Give her all you've got.

The boy makes a humming sound, shaking Barbie to give an electrocution effect, then an exploding sound as he pops her head off. He makes her body and head fly away from each other, a dramatic slow-motion shot. Her head continues to speak.

BARBIE

(Gasping)  
Before I die... Finally free to tell you...

HAN SOLO

What is it, Queenie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BARBIE

I've always secretly... loved you.

And she dies. Princess Leah approaches Han.

PRINCESS LEIA

You saved us all. Kiss me!

He puts their faces together and makes a smooching sound.

VILLAGERS

Kiss us, too!

HAN SOLO

All right, there's enough of me to go around. Line up. Not you Luke, you big homo.

All the villagers mob Han, lots of smooching then the boy loses interest. He stares at the decapitated Barbie for a moment. More screaming and hacking from the living room. He looks at the tape player across the room.

He starts to get out of bed, swinging his feet over the side, but then jerks them back. He's afraid of the Thing Under the Bed.

BOY

There's nothing there, you big baby.

He springs away from the bed turning quickly to check behind him for The Thing, hating himself for doing so.

He quietly closes the door, goes to the cassette player, turns the volume to zero, carefully presses play, then turns the volume up slowly. It's The Scorpions, "Still Loving You." His body relaxes and he begins to move. It is a strange dance and highly idiosyncratic. He moves freely for a few beats before the Babysitter, 18, tall, blonde and pretty, opens the door, catching some of the dance before, he turns, sees her, runs to his bed.

BABYSITTER

Whatcha doin', Little Freak?

BOY

Nothin'.

She looks at the tape player, still softly playing.

BABYSITTER

Were you dancin'?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BOY

No!

BABYSITTER

Holy shit. You were too, weren't you? What kind of freak dance was that?

A male voice comes from down the hall.

BOYFRIEND (O.S.)

Hey, Gina!

BABYSITTER

Does your momma know you're a little ballerina?

BOY

(Quietly, trying to  
explode her head)  
Your arrogance will be your  
downfall.

BABYSITTER

Huh?

BOYFRIEND (O.S.)

Heeeeeey!

BABYSITTER

What!

BOYFRIEND (O.S.)

You're missin' the movie!

BABYSITTER

It's a crappy movie, anyway.

BOYFRIEND (O.S.)

What?!

BABYSITTER

I'm checking on the freak! He can't sleep 'cause your movie is too loud!

BOYFRIEND (O.S.)

Well, hurry up, you're missing it!

The Babysitter rolls her eyes.

BOY

Why don't you go watch the movie with your fatso boyfriend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

BABYSITTER

Whooh! I'm gonna tell him you said that.

BOY

Don't-

She yells down the hall.

BABYSITTER

Hey! Guess what the freak says!

BOYFRIEND (O.S.)

What?!

BABYSITTER

He says to tell you...

She looks at the boy, who is terrified.

BABYSITTER (CONT'D)

You have a fffffffaaaine truck!

She has a good laugh, then...

BABYSITTER (CONT'D)

He is pretty fat, huh. My fat future ex-husband. And the future dead-beat father of my 7 future snot-nosed brats.

BOY

Huh?

BABYSITTER

It's what we do in this town, Freak. I'll be a worn out rag by the time I'm 30. And you'll be a fat slob by the time you're 24. Hah. Then I can call you Fat Freak.

BOY

Stop it.

BABYSITTER

What, you like Psycho better?

BOY

No! Why do you act like that?

BABYSITTER

Like what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

BOY

Like... mean.

Some emotion flickers across her eyes but she recovers.

BABYSITTER

I'm tryin' to help you out.  
Weirdos don't do so good around  
here.

(beat)

'Sides, if you're not a psycho,  
what happened to poor ol' Barbie?

BOY

She deserved it.

BABYSITTER

Why? What'd she do?

The boy looks away.

BABYSITTER (CONT'D)

See? Psycho. They better lock you  
up before you go and Columbine all  
the cheerleaders at school.

BOY

What are you doin' in here?

BABYSITTER

I'm doing my babysittin' job.  
Checking on the baby.

(She sees the clock)

Where's your momma anyway?

BOY

Findin' me another stepdaddy to  
straighten me out.

BABYSITTER

(laughs) You're funny.

BOY

It's what she said.

BABYSITTER

Oh.

She picks up the Barbie and puts her head back on.

BABYSITTER (CONT'D)

So what kind of dance was that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

BOY

A freak dance. You wouldn't like it.

BABYSITTER

I could help you with your moves, help you fix it up. I'm a great dancer.

(Yelling down the hall)

Aren't I a great dancer, Jason?!

BOYFRIEND (O.S.)

What?!

BABYSITTER

Don't you think I'm a great dancer?!!

BOYFRIEND (O.S.)

Fucking, what?!!

BABYSITTER

Nothing!!!

(Under her breath)

Asshole.

She goes to the tape player, rewinds.

BABYSITTER (CONT'D)

Come on, just show me.

(Speaking through Barbie)

If you show the nice babysitter your dance, I'll let you rip my head off again.

(A bit more gently)

I swear I won't never tell.

He doesn't move.

BABYSITTER (CONT'D)

I won't call you freak anymore.

BOY

Whatever. You'll think it.

BABYSITTER

It don't mean nothin', it's just how people are.

(A beat)

I thought your dance was real cool. Real...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

BABYSITTER (CONT'D)  
 (Awkward but  
 sincere.)  
 Beautiful.

The boy stares at his feet.

BOY  
 Okay. But you have to do  
 something.

BABYSITTER  
 What?

BOY  
 You have to... show me how to  
 kiss.

BABYSITTER  
 (Shocked)  
 It ain't even right to do that.  
 You're just a little kid.

BOY  
 (Indignant)  
 I'm 12.  
 (Very embarrassed)  
 Whatever. I don't care.

BABYSITTER  
 What do you want to kiss me for  
 anyway? I'm... old.

BOY  
 'cause. I don't know how.

They are silent for a while. He tries to disappear, while she tries to work it out.

BABYSITTER  
 Okay...

He is clearly embarrassed, but also pleased.

BABYSITTER (CONT'D)  
 Come here.

He does. She bends toward his forehead.

BOY  
 On the lips.

She looks toward the door, then gives him a kiss that is both lingering and chaste. She backs away. They both look at the floor, smiling a little.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

BABYSITTER

Okay?

BOY

Yeah.

She goes to the tape player. It's silent in the room for a moment as she rewinds, presses play and then sits again on the edge of the bed.

The boy goes to the door, closes it.

He begins to move. There is maybe a bit more emotion in his movement now. He is heartbreaking and beautiful, if a bit disquieting and bizzare. The babysitter watches, holding her breath. She clutches the Barbie.

BABYSITTER

(She starts to cry)

Oh my god...

The Boyfriend's voice is heard from down the hall, getting fed up.

BOYFRIEND (O.S.)

Hey! Geeeeena!

The boy stops dancing. They both look to the door.

BOYFRIEND (CONT'D)

Gina!

BOY

He'll come in.

The babysitter positions herself in front of the door.

BABYSITTER

It's okay. I'll make sure.

BOY

Are you cryin'?

This makes her cry harder.

BABYSITTER

No.

BOY

You can dance, too. I don't mind.

BABYSITTER

Not right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

BOY

Maybe sometime... next time you're  
here.

BABYSITTER

You just dance. I'll be okay.

The boy starts to dance again. She continues to cry.