

PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

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A 10-minute play

By Rom Watson

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Character Breakdown:

Dr. Phillip Lindstrom, male, age open  
Bee, male, age open

The location: A psychiatrist's office.

The time: The present.

(Alone in his office,  
psychiatrist Dr. Phillip  
Lindstrom practices dance  
steps. HE struggles to learn  
the waltz.)

DR. LINDSTROM

Forward . . .right . . .together. Back . . .left  
. . .together. Step . . .step . . .together. Step  
. . .step . . .together.

(Frustrated, he sits down and makes a phone call.)  
Hi, it's me . . .not good . . .we need to rethink this  
whole dance thing . . .Of course I've been practicing,  
that's how I know I can't do it . . .I practice between  
clients, I practice after I eat my lunch, I even practice  
when I'm alone in the elevator. I just cannot get the hang  
of it . . .No. I am done practicing . . .then unhire the  
band . . .Becky, I'm not trying to weasel out of anything,  
I'm being very straightforward and telling you that I am  
not going to dance . . .I can already hear them laughing at  
me. I know exactly what they'll say when I make a fool out  
of myself . . .

(A male honeybee walks in.  
The bee is played by a human  
in a bee costume. HE has  
four small wings on his  
back.)

DR. LINDSTROM

I- I have to call you back. Someone just walked in  
. . .I love you too; bye.

(DR. LINDSTROM hangs up the  
phone.)

BEE

Hello.

(BEE sits on a chair.)

DR. LINDSTROM

What happened to my next patient?

BEE

She left as soon as I sat down next to her. Must be  
allergic to bees.

DR. LINDSTROM

No, she . . .she has other problems.

BEE

I see. Well, then it looks like I'm your next patient.

DR. LINDSTROM

How did . . .why are--

BEE

There's no reason to be afraid of me.

DR. LINDSTROM

I'm not afraid of you, I . . .

BEE

Yes you are. I can smell it.

DR. LINDSTROM

So it's true that bees can smell fear.

BEE

Yes, and it's not a pretty smell. But you don't have to be afraid; I'm a male bee, and male bees don't have stingers.

DR. LINDSTROM

The fear you're smelling . . .that's a result of my phone conversation. What brings-- . . .what's your name?

BEE

I don't have a name.

DR. LINDSTROM

Identity issues.

(DR. LINDSTROM writes  
something on a pad of paper.)

BEE

No individual bee has its own name. We're a hive organism. No individual ant has its own name either.

DR. LINDSTROM

Does your queen have a name?

BEE

Yes, but she's . . .she's the queen.

DR. LINDSTROM

What's her name?

BEE

Mitzi.

DR. LINDSTROM

I don't usually treat other species, but I'm intrigued.  
What seems to be the problem?

BEE

I can't fly.

DR. LINDSTROM

Aah; performance anxiety.  
(DR. LINDSTROM writes something on a pad of paper.)  
Have you been depressed?

BEE

No.

DR. LINDSTROM

Trouble sleeping?

BEE

No.

DR. LINDSTROM

How long have you had this problem?

BEE

Two days.

DR. LINDSTROM

How did you get over here?

BEE

A couple of friends gave me a lift. They're going to pick  
me up in an hour.

DR. LINDSTROM

My sessions are fifty minutes. How do you intend to pay  
for this session?

BEE

Honey.

DR. LINDSTROM

Of course.

BEE

My friends are bringing some when they come to pick me up.

DR. LINDSTROM

So tell me, what happened two days ago? Did you witness or experience a traumatic event?

BEE

No.

DR. LINDSTROM

Did you have an accident while in flight?

BEE

No, nothing like that. I was visiting a garden not far from the colony. I was buzzing around some clover, and when I landed I heard something. Something very disturbing.

DR. LINDSTROM

Go on.

BEE

The gardener was listening to a small radio while he worked.

DR. LINDSTROM

Rap music can be very disturbing.

BEE

He wasn't listening to music.

DR. LINDSTROM

Rush Limbaugh?

BEE

I don't know who it was, but they were talking about bees, so it caught my attention. The radio said that the wings of bees are too small to support their weight. According to the laws of aerodynamics, it's impossible for bees to fly. Did you know that?

DR. LINDSTROM

Yes. I read that somewhere, or heard it somewhere.

BEE

When?

DR. LINDSTROM

Years and years ago.

BEE

So this is not a new discovery?

DR. LINDSTROM

No, not new at all. What happened then?

BEE

I dismissed it. I've been flying my entire adult life. Obviously the radio was wrong. But as I flew back to the colony, I kept sinking closer and closer to the ground. I finally landed, and found I couldn't take flight again. I had to walk the rest of the way home.

DR. LINDSTROM

Did you tell any of the other bees what you heard?

BEE

And start a mass panic? Are you kidding?

DR. LINDSTROM

Good, it's best that you not mention it.

BEE

Can you help me?

DR. LINDSTROM

Yes, I think I can.