

DRIP

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DRIP

On stage are a chair and a couch. In the chair is an obvious psychiatrist, DOCTOR; he is an older man wearing glasses and is comforting, yet stern. On the couch a younger man, JOHN, is lying down.

DOCTOR: So?

JOHN: So.

DOCTOR: How have you been?

JOHN: Honestly?

DOCTOR: Yes.

JOHN: I haven't been great.

DOCTOR: Has your sleep improved?

JOHN: Not really.

DOCTOR: What's been keeping you up?

JOHN: I don't know. Dogs, cars...there's a drip outside the house. I have brand new gutters and yet there's still a drip.

DOCTOR: A drip?

JOHN: Yes.

DOCTOR: What about when it's not raining?

JOHN: What about it?

DOCTOR: Is there still a drip?

JOHN: No.

DOCTOR: Then what's keeping you awake when there's no rain?

JOHN: Thinking about the drip.

DOCTOR: Okay.

Pause.

JOHN: I know. It's a bit weird.

DOCTOR: Are you under any stress at the moment?

JOHN: I don't care what the lifestyle shows say; everybody is under stress, always.

DOCTOR: Do you watch a lot of lifestyle shows?

JOHN: I don't know...I guess.

DOCTOR: Which shows?

JOHN: I'd rather not say. It's a little embarrassing.

DOCTOR: You need to be able to talk to me.

JOHN: I guess.

DOCTOR: Well?

JOHN: I really don't want to say. They're lifestyle shows. They're not exactly masculine.

DOCTOR: Can you tell me why you're watching them?

JOHN: I'm not sure.

DOCTOR: Thinking about a holiday?

JOHN: No.

DOCTOR: A new career?

JOHN: No.

DOCTOR: Then why...?

JOHN: I'm watching the segments that show you how to build things.

DOCTOR: Is it that you want to create something new?

JOHN: No. I want to know how to fix the drip.

DOCTOR: I don't think that's it.

JOHN: No, really, it is.

DOCTOR: You're not worried about your contribution to society?

JOHN: Do you think I should be?

DOCTOR: That's not what I said.

JOHN: You kind of did.

DOCTOR: That's not what I meant.

JOHN: Why do you care anyway?

DOCTOR: It's my job.

JOHN: That's it, is it?

The DOCTOR'S phone, which is sitting on the arm of his chair, starts ringing.

DOCTOR: Excuse me.

The DOCTOR answers his phone.

DOCTOR: Hello. Hi Kate...no it's okay; you're not interrupting anything important.

JOHN gets up, clearly annoyed, and walks around the room.

DOCTOR: Just take a breath; you can do this. It can't hurt you. No it can't... because you're strong...because you're a tiger. Now let's hear you growl...again...again! Louder! Well done.

Eventually the DOCTOR hangs up.

DOCTOR: Sorry about that. Please have a seat.

JOHN doesn't sit back down.

JOHN: When I come to see you, I turn my phone off. You know why?

DOCTOR: So we're not interrupted.

JOHN: Partly, but mainly because it's the polite thing to do.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry but, as I've explained before, I need to be available at all times.

JOHN: Of course you do. What was I thinking? You have to make time for everybody. People always need you.

DOCTOR: If this is about your contribution to society...?

JOHN: It's not about my contribution. I'm happy with my contribution. It's about the drip.

DOCTOR: It's not about the drip.

JOHN: It is!

DOCTOR: Okay.

The JOHN sits down.

JOHN: I don't know how to fix it.

DOCTOR: Where is it?

JOHN: It's in the spout.

DOCTOR: Have you tried putting something under it?

JOHN: Like what?

DOCTOR: Something soft?

JOHN: How would I know to do that?

DOCTOR: That's just what I would do.

JOHN: How do you know what to do but I don't?

The DOCTOR has a revelation.

DOCTOR: Ah, I see...no one ever taught you.

JOHN: I'm watching *lifestyle* shows.

DOCTOR: So this all comes back to your father.

JOHN is silent.

DOCTOR: As it so often does.

Again JOHN just sits there.

DOCTOR: You know, eventually you're going to have to realise that you can't blame all of your problems on this.

JOHN: I was alone.

DOCTOR: You weren't alone.

JOHN: My male role models were cartoon characters.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry, but you have to admit you've done well under the circumstances.

JOHN: What, thanks to television?

DOCTOR: You have a very healthy set of values.

JOHN: Sure.

DOCTOR: You do.

JOHN: Plus I know how to defend the planet from aliens and I could probably solve mysteries with a dog.

DOCTOR: There are worse influences.

JOHN: Yes...there are.

DOCTOR: You're 'blaming' again.

JOHN: I'm not blaming anyone. I'm just saying that a dad that was hardly ever around wasn't a great influence.

DOCTOR: We've been over this before.

JOHN: Yes.

DOCTOR: I thought we'd made some progress.

JOHN: Obviously not as much as you thought.

DOCTOR: Because of a drip.

JOHN: A very annoying drip and a constant reminder. Drip, 'he didn't care'. Drip, 'he didn't want to see you.' Drip, 'you weren't important.' Drip, 'you weren't worth the effort' Drip...drip...drip!

DOCTOR: None of that is true.

JOHN: So you say.

DOCTOR: You know it's not true.

JOHN: I still can't sleep.

The DOCTOR looks at his watch.

DOCTOR: Look, I can see this is still really troubling you. We should make another time to see each other soon.

JOHN: What, that's it?

The DOCTOR stands up.

DOCTOR: I'm due back at work.

JOHN: Yeah right, same old story. Everything's more important than me.

DOCTOR: That's not fair.

JOHN jumps to his feet.

JOHN: No, it's not!

DOCTOR: John, I know you're annoyed at me but I'm trying my best.

JOHN: You should have been there.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry.

JOHN: You should have taught me how to throw...

DOCTOR: John.

JOHN: How to ride a bike, how to shave...

DOCTOR: John.

JOHN: You should have been at my birthdays. You should have picked me up from school.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry! How many times do I have to say it?

JOHN: You should have been there!

DOCTOR: STOP SAYING THAT!

The DOCTOR is angry.

DOCTOR: I'm here now. I don't want to be; but I am!

There's a pause as JOHN takes this in. JOHN sits down, deflated, on the couch.

JOHN: That's just great, Dad.

The DOCTOR pulls out his wallet and holds out some money to JOHN.

DOCTOR: Here.

JOHN: What's that for?

DOCTOR: Get your damn drip fixed.

JOHN doesn't take the money.

The DOCTOR throws the money onto the couch and walks out. JOHN lies back on the couch.

After a few seconds of silence we hear a 'drip'.

Pause

'Drip'

Pause

'Drip'

Blackout.