

THE DOCTOR IN YOU

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

- STACY An excitable, enthusiastic hypochondriac who lives a life guided by impulse and conviction
- ETHAN A reclusive and fastidious introvert who wants nothing more than peace and quiet in a tidy apartment

SETTING

The living room of an apartment.

SCENE

(Ethan is sitting on a couch in the living room of a shared apartment, engrossed in a book. After a moment, the door bursts open and Stacy rushes in carrying a large, sealed box that she has just received in the mail.)

STACY

Oh my god oh my god oh my god!!

ETHAN

(Startled)

Holy crap, Stacy! Practically gave me a heart atta—

STACY

Oh my god oh my god...

(She plops the box down on a nearby table and starts ripping into it. Pieces of box fly everywhere.)

ETHAN

There are scissors in the...

(She ignores him and keeps ripping. She's through the outer box and into packaging material, which she throws every which way.)

Stacy!

(He gets up and starts picking up the mess, clearly unsettled by it.)

Just get a trash bag and—

STACY

You know what this is?

ETHAN

(Irritated.)

A mess that was once a box.

STACY

It's the kit! The kit, Ethan! You know, the kit?

ETHAN

You ordered a baby fox?

STACY

Don't be a boob.

ETHAN

So is that why you have to make an unholy mess? To get to it before the little guy suffocates?

STACY

I told you about the kit last week— (*She suddenly realizes it wasn't Ethan.*) Oh. No, wait. That was Raj. Okay, so you know how I'm kind of a... oh, what's the word?

ETHAN

Natural disaster?

STACY

No. Well, yes, but not that. No, when someone is always worried that they're getting sick.

ETHAN

A hypocon—

STACY

Right! A hypocardiac! You know how some people say I'm—

ETHAN

A *hypocondriac*. Yeah.

STACY

Well last week I found the most incredible thing in a Facebook ad.

ETHAN

Let me guess – a kit?

STACY

A *self-diagnosis* kit. Everything you need to figure out what kind of disease or sickness you have!

(Ethan stares at her.)

Isn't it great?!

(He continues to stare.)

Think of how much money I'll save by not going to the doctor all the time!

ETHAN

Stacy—

STACY

It comes with all kinds of—

ETHAN

Stacy!

STACY

What?

ETHAN

Every time you look up symptoms on the internet, one of us ends up having to drive you to—

STACY

But not anymore! That's why this is so great. It's not just a list of symptoms. It's got all kinds of cool stuff!

(She roots around in the box and pulls out a Magic 8-Ball - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_8-Ball - or similar device, and puts it on the table. She then takes out the instructions: a little booklet or thickly folded piece of paper and reads.)

ETHAN

So you're going to be leaving more crap around the apartment for me to clean up. Lovely.

STACY

Okay, okay. I think I see how this works.

(She puts down the paper, and picks up the 8-ball and concentrates on it. Ethan picks up the instructions and glances over them.)

ETHAN

I don't think this is an actual—

STACY

Is the bump on my foot anything to worry about?

(She shakes the 8-ball, then quickly turns it over and reads.)

“Answer unclear.” Why would it say that?

(She sees that Ethan is holding the instructions.)

Gimme.

(She scans, then nods in understanding.)

I didn't set up the focusing magnet.

ETHAN

(Mocking...)

The *focusing* magnet...

STACY

Shut up.

(She hands the instructions back to Ethan, takes a small object out of the box, and places it on the top of her foot.)

There. Now...

(Balancing on the other foot, the one with the object held in the air.)

Is the bump on my foot anything to worry about?

(She shakes the ball again, turns it over, and reads.)

STACY (CONT)

“Possibly. Refer to step seven.”

ETHAN

Instruction step seven says “Diagnosis Deck”.

(Stacy thinks about this for a brief moment, then plunges back into the box. She removes a deck of cards with a folded piece of paper affixed to it with a rubber band. She takes the paper, unfolds it, and scans.)

STACY

Remove... did that. Open and remove the...

(She opens the deck’s box, and dumps the cards out onto the table. She returns to reading. In the meantime, Ethan examines the cards.)

Pick one card and...

ETHAN

These are just playing cards, Stace. Ordinary pla—

STACY

Gimme.

(She grabs the cards, stacks them, and then picks the top one.)

Four of diamonds. Let’s see...

(She scans the instructions...)

Location... foot...

(She grabs a second card.)

Jack of hearts.

(She scans...)

STACY (CONT)

Hearts, hearts... Jac— Ah hah! The bump on my foot is most likely some kind of insect bite, but it is possible that it could be... Oh my god. It could be a malignant tumor! I need to pick another card. (*She swallows hard...*) Ethan, y-you pick the next card. My hands are shaking too badly.

ETHAN

This is insan—

STACY

Pick the damn card, Ethan! Pick it!

(*With a disbelieving shake of his head, he picks a card.*)

ETHAN

Eight of spades.

(*Stacy shudders with relief.*)

STACY

Oh thank god. Just a bug bite. That was too close.

ETHAN

You're... you're not serious, right?

STACY

What? Do you think I should still keep my doctor's appointment?

ETHAN

No! I told you I thought it looked like a mosquito bite when you got it yesterday, and *not* to bother making an appoin—

STACY

Yeah, well the kit hadn't arrived yet. I couldn't be sure when it would, so...

ETHAN

But you feel better about it now?

STACY

Of course!

(*Pause.*)

ETHAN

You know this is all total bull, right?

STACY

I don't think so. It came with a money-back guarantee.

ETHAN

(Sarcastically.)

Oh.

STACY

But even better, it's not just for diagnosis. It also includes treatments and remedies.

ETHAN

Let me guess. It comes with a jar of leeches.

STACY

What are those?

ETHAN

Never min—

STACY

Here. I'll show you.

(She returns to the main instructions.)

Bug bite... bug bite... bug— here. Bug bite. It says to use the convalescent casting stones. Help me look. *(She starts rummaging through the box.)* They should be in ah... Here they are.

(She pulls out a container or little pouch, and then empties several dice into her palm.)

Okay. First one... *(she casts it...)* four. *(She looks at the instructions.)* Four, four... Ah. Four. It says to gently massage in a substance determined by... Ahh, I see how this works.

(She rolls a second die, and refers back to the sheet.)

Gently massage *toothpaste...*

(She rolls a third die, and refers to the sheet.)

STACY (CONT)

Over affliction.

(She hops off stage, holding the focusing magnet to her foot as she goes.)

ETHAN

(Calling out...)

Stace... Stacy! What are you doing? You better not be—

(She hops back in holding a tube of toothpaste in her free hand.)

That's mine.

STACY

I couldn't find mine.

ETHAN

Not my problem. Don't—

STACY

Hold these.

(She thrusts the instructions and the magnet at Ethan, who takes them. She squirts out a blob of toothpaste while kicking off a shoe, and rubs the paste onto her foot.)

ETHAN

Give me the toothpaste.

STACY

Here. Thanks.

(She hands it to him.)

ETHAN

And the top.

(She hands him the top. He screws it onto the tube.)

STACY

Just don't hide it like you did the last time.

ETHAN

Then stop using it!

STACY

(Calling...)

I had to. It's what the instructions said.

ETHAN

Buy your own!

STACY

Now you're just being petty.

ETHAN

How many times do I have to tell you to stop messing with—

STACY

This... this is incredible! It's working! My foot stopped itching! Oh my god! How have I survived without this all these years?!?

ETHAN

You survived like our house cat does: by being vaguely amusing in your unpredictable neuroses. And probably because no one has the heart to—

STACY

You wanna try it?

ETHAN

No.

STACY

Sure you do! Try it!

ETHAN

I'd rather you just move all of this crap into your r—

STACY

Come on! There has to be something bothering you.

ETHAN

Yeah. You. Making a mess. Again.

Ethan... STACY

Look, this is total nonsense. ETHAN

It's science! STACY

It's n— ETHAN

STACY
It says so right on the box. Look. Right there. “Scientifically validated”. That’s why they’re willing to provide the money-back guarantee. (*Then as an afterthought of explanation...*) Th-they explain that in the ad.

ETHAN
(*Sarcastic again...*)
Oh.

STACY
They couldn’t sell it if it didn’t work. Look, you’re obviously not going to believe it unless you try it for yourself.

ETHAN
There’s nothing I want to know.

STACY
Oh, please. Here.

(*She hands the 8-ball to Ethan.*)

You’ve been wondering for months if you made the right choice getting the vaccine. Go on. Ask it,

ETHAN
This is stupid.

STACY
Just ask it!

(With a big sigh, Ethan shakes the ball and looks.)

ETHAN

It says “murky”.

STACY

That’s because you did it wrong. You have to ask the question, *then* shake it and look.

ETHAN

If I do this, will you clean up all this crap and let me get back to my book?

(Unexpectedly, Ethan shakes the ball and looks as Stacy says.)

STACY

Yes.

(Ethan has a slightly uncomfortable look – the ball had replied with the same answer, but he’d rather not think about it.)

ETHAN

Fine. *(He shakes his head in resignation, then...)* Did I make the right decision in getting the vaccine.

(He shakes the ball, then looks.)

STACY

What does it say?

ETHAN

Definitely.

STACY

There! That has to put your mind at ease, right? Right?

ETHAN

It’s a toy. It’s a toy that gives random messages. Look.

(He shakes the ball again, but as he’s shaking it...)

STACY

You have to ask a quest—

ETHAN

Fine. Should I have gotten the vaccine.

(He shakes it and looks. Then he turns it back over, shakes it again, and looks again.)

STACY

What? What is it saying??

ETHAN

Same thing.

STACY

I told y—

ETHAN

(Very rapidly...)

Should I have gotten the vaccine?

(He gives it a quick shake, and then looks.)

Ah ha! There! It says ‘Cast the stones’.

STACY

Okay, here.

(She hands him the dice and takes the instructions.)

Go on.

(He rolls a die.)

Two. Alright. Two. It says... “take”. Roll the next one.

(He rolls another one.)

STACY (CONT)

Six. Six says... “Comfort”. Take comfort. That means yes! See? I told you!

ETHAN

It’s not real! It’s just coincidence!

STACY

You didn't believe the ball, so it had you check with the stones! And they said the same thing.

ETHAN

You think so? Alright, fine. Can I ask it another question?

STACY

Be my guest.

ETHAN

How do I make Stacy leave me alone?

(He gives the 8-ball a quick shake and looks.)

Cast the stones. Fine.

(He picks up the dice, then rolls one.)

Four.

STACY

Gently massage... Oh, this is the same thing I got before.

(He rolls the second die, and she looks at the instructions...)

Toothpaste again.

(He rolls the third die. She looks it up.)

Over affliction. What did you ask it again?

ETHAN

How to get you to leave me alone.

(Stacy gives a weak smile as Ethan grins, and starts to approach her while unscrewing the cap to the tube. She backs up nervously while saying...)

STACY

You're probably right about it being nonsense. You know what? I think I may just go to my room now.

(She quickly gathers up the kit and exits.)

ETHAN

Damn. Maybe it really does work.

(Lights out.)