

**Trudy Tries to Say I Love You But Runs Out of Breath**

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**Characters:**

Trudy:

big hair  
red lips  
tight pants

The Janitor:

a janitor

**Place:**

the janitor's closet  
it's kind of small

**Time:**

fall and windy  
there's a draft

*Trudy stands in a sea of inflated trash bags.  
Some have holes in them.  
Some are black with red ties.  
Some are white with white ties.  
Some are big and thick.  
Some are very small.*

*Trudy takes a trash bag out of her back pocket.  
She blows it up like a balloon.  
She has some difficulty.  
She blows.*

Trudy:  
It's about lip placement

*She blows.*

Trudy:  
and a little support in the gut

*She blows.*

Trudy:  
and having just enough air in your tiny

*She blows.*

Trudy:  
body to get it all out there.

*She blows.*

Trudy:  
Trap it all inside this other

*She blows.*

Trudy:  
thing.

*She runs out of breath.  
She ties a knot at the end.  
She has some difficulty.  
She catches her finger in it.  
She yanks it back out.  
She has some pain.*

Trudy:  
Ow.  
Maybe I won't tie the next one.

*She picks up the inflated trash bag.  
She holds it intimately.*

Trudy:

Yes.  
Now this is what I pictured.

*She places it down.  
She positions it so.*

Trudy:

This is him.  
He has the perfect figure.

*She takes a deep breath.  
She turns her back to it.*

Trudy:

Be cool. Be cool.

*She turns back around.*

Trudy:

Hi!!!!!!

No. Not cool. Not cool.

Hello.

No. Too formal. Too formal.

Hey, what's -

No.

Sup.

No.

*She looks at the trash bag. She kisses it grossly. She pulls away.*

Too quick.

It's really hard to talk to people, but sometimes it's even harder to talk to a thing. At least a person responds. At least. I hope he responds. But, the right kind of response. Not the. Bad. Kind.

I'd like to find the right words. Not the wrong words. They don't do much for me. Or if I run out of words and my mouth hangs open and my tongue kind of runs out of juice and my teeth get really cold like they need a horse blanket kind-of-cold like a horse-blanket-in-December-kind-of-cold not March-kind-of-cold and then I'm just sort of standing there and all that's left are my

lips.

And I don't even know what to do with those.

Sometimes I forget to breathe. I keep giving air away and I keep blowing him up a thousand times as many times as I can so he can be here. It's not him. But, I pretend it's him. All I can do is pretend. I give him all my air. But, I don't get anything back. Yet. I haven't yet. But I will. Yet. When you love somebody it's hard to think about anything but to breathe.

*She breathes.*

How do I say:

Hi. I want to put all the breath that I've collected today inside of you. All the little particles of McDonald's fries and foundation powder and paper mites in Jane Eyre and when I was walking down the street by the little river and some man with a giant beard and a red pick-up truck whistled and then called me a slut and the piece of apple I had for lunch that sprayed into my nose when I took the biggest bite I could.

*The Janitor enters.*

*His eyes get big when he sees the bags.*

*Trudy doesn't notice him.*

*She takes lipstick out of her front pocket.*

Trudy:

How do I say I love you...I think.

The Janitor:

I don't think you should be doing this.

Trudy:

Oh.

The Janitor:

We need these for the trash.

Trudy:

Oh.

The Janitor:

How would you like it if I went into your place of business at um I don't know and I took all of your supplies like um oh I don't even wanna know and -

*Trudy starts to put on lipstick.*

The Janitor:

You're putting on lipstick.

Trudy:  
Yes.

The Janitor:  
Well, put it down.

*The Janitor takes the lipstick.*

Trudy:  
Oh don't do that. I need it to practice.

The Janitor:  
To practice?

Trudy:  
Yes. See, there's this boy.

The Janitor:  
A boy?

Trudy:  
Well, a guy.

The Janitor:  
Guy?

Trudy:  
No his name's not Guy.

The Janitor:  
So, he isn't a guy.

Trudy:  
Well, he's more like a man.

The Janitor:  
Oh.

*The Janitor's watch blows up.*

Trudy:  
I think your watch blew up.

The Janitor:  
Yes I see that.

Trudy:  
Does it hurt?

The Janitor:  
Yes.

*Trudy tries to take his watch off.*

Trudy:  
I never wear watches for this reason exactly.

The Janitor:  
Well, that's dumb they're not bombs.  
Well.  
This was probably just a bad battery.

*Trudy takes off his watch.  
She holds his hand.*

Trudy:  
Your skin is red.

The Janitor:  
Your lips are red.

Trudy:  
And your watch is-

The Janitor:  
Broken.

*The Janitor stands. Brushes himself off. Clears his throat.*

The Janitor:  
Well, how will I know what time it is now? Right? That's gonna be. Well. Difficult.

Trudy:  
You'll just always be early or always be late.

The Janitor:  
What if I'm on time?

Trudy:  
Not likely. Hey! You can help me now that you're here.

The Janitor:  
Oh no, I don't think so.

Trudy:  
Yes. Yes. Because then I won't need to practice with trash bags. I can practice with you.

The Janitor:  
What.

Trudy:  
You can be my dummy.

*The Janitor starts backing up.*

The Janitor:  
No thanks I was someone's dummy before and it didn't work out.

Trudy:  
I mean like my model.

The Janitor:  
Model for?

Trudy:  
My practicing.

The Janitor:  
For?

Trudy:  
Saying I love you without saying I love you.

The Janitor:  
For the man?

Trudy:  
For the man.

The Janitor:  
Alright what do I gotta do? What's my backstory here? What kind of man we talking like the big type or kinda scrawny? Let's just start with his name.

Trudy:  
You don't need to know his name.

The Janitor:  
Why not? I gotta get into character here.

Trudy:  
Because it's none of your business.

The Janitor:  
Well, I mean, I kinda need to get into character, you know start really delving into -



Trudy:  
I don't know his name.

The Janitor:  
Oh.

Trudy:  
Stand here.

*He does so.*

Trudy:  
So. I'm going to pretend  
you're him.  
But, we're just pretending.

The Janitor:  
Right.  
Wait.

Trudy:  
You can't tell me to wait.

The Janitor:  
But, we're already waiting.

Trudy:  
Fine. Go ahead...You were saying?

The Janitor:  
I was saying. I was saying.  
You were saying we're just pretending.

Trudy:  
Yes. Ready.

*Trudy goes to kiss him.*

The Janitor:  
How will we know when we stop pretending?

Trudy:  
I'll tell you.

The Janitor:  
How will you know when to tell me?

Trudy:  
I don't know you don't have a watch.

The Janitor:  
Oh. Right.

*Trudy goes to kiss him.*

The Janitor:  
So, how will you know then?

Trudy:  
I don't know I'll just eyeball it.

The Janitor:  
Oh. Right.

Trudy:  
So. I'm just going to start.

The Janitor:  
Okay.

Trudy:  
Don't say anything.

The Janitor:  
Alright.

Trudy:  
Stop it!

The Janitor:  
What? I didn't know we were starting.

Trudy:  
We're about to start.

Hello -

*The Janitor laughs.*

What?

The Janitor:  
That's how you're going to open? Just - hello?

Trudy:  
Yeah. Is that bad?

The Janitor:  
No, no, but -

Trudy:

You had a bad response. I was hoping I would get a better response.

The Janitor:

No, it's just very bland.

Trudy:

You think I'm bland?

The Janitor:

No, I don't think you're bland, I just think maybe you could say more.

Trudy:

I don't know what else to say to you—to him.

The Janitor:

Well, you could start with: I've been thinking.

Trudy:

Go on.

The Janitor:

Well, I don't know what to end with. I just said you could start with. That.

*She takes a paper bag out of her bra.  
She breathes in and out of it.*

The Janitor:

Start with that - what are you doing?

Trudy:

Practicing my breath control. I get nervous around people. Men. And this. Man. Makes me particularly nervous because I don't know how he thinks or what he eats or if he were to take a bite of my love would he swallow or spit me out. Or even if he likes red lipstick and all I wear is red lipstick and it gets everywhere and so it's kind of permanent and there's nothing I can do but practice to breathe so that in moments like these. When I see him. I don't feel dumb.

The Janitor:

What would you say if it didn't matter?

Trudy:

But, it does matter.

The Janitor:

But, if it didn't.

Trudy:

I'd say - I want to fill you up with what I breathed today.

*The Janitor laughs. Takes a napkin out of his back pocket. Writes it down.*

Trudy:

What's that a recipe?

The Janitor:

No.

Trudy:

A cooking recipe? Do you like to cook? Like home-style stuff or more of like an ethnic cuisine?  
Do you use a lot of butter or do you prefer -

The Janitor:

What?

Trudy:

Oil.  
What?

The Janitor:

It's not a recipe. It's just funny. So I wrote it down because it was funny. Not because it was a recipe.... You said something very dumb and I wasn't expecting it. It was irony. Ironic. You know what that means? So I wrote it down. I wrote it down actually to tell my brother because he's depressed. He's actually in an insane asylum and likes to hear dumb things.

Trudy:

He must like having conversations with you then.

The Janitor:

Ouch.

Trudy:

Ouch.

Trudy:

Give me my lipstick back.

The Janitor:

Give me my watch back.

*They exchange.*

Trudy:  
You said dumb.

The Janitor:  
But, I -

Trudy:  
Dumb me. You said -

The Janitor:  
But, I was just joshing.

Trudy:  
But, I couldn't tell.

The Janitor:  
Oh.

*The Janitor rips up the paper.*

The Janitor:  
My brother's better off depressed.

Trudy:  
That's terrible.

The Janitor:  
Oh.  
I should get back to work.

*The Janitor attempts to get to his supplies. He steps over the bags. Carefully.  
Trudy laughs. The Janitor turns.*

The Janitor:  
What?

Trudy:  
You.

The Janitor:  
You have really white teeth.

Trudy:  
Oh.

The Janitor:  
In a good way, in a good way.

Trudy:  
Thanks.

*The Janitor nears closer to her.*

The Janitor:  
I like your lipstick.

Trudy:  
Oh. You do?

The Janitor:  
It's red. It's nice.

Trudy:  
Your skin's not so red anymore.

The Janitor:  
Neither are your lips.

Trudy:  
Oh.

*She reapplies hurriedly.*

The Janitor:  
But I like them not red too really it's -

*She takes a bite of her lipstick.*

The Janitor:  
Fine. What are you doing?

Trudy:  
I've always wondered-

The Janitor:  
No.

Trudy:  
What it would -

The Janitor:  
No!

Trudy:  
Taste like.

The Janitor:  
Spit that out!

*She spits into his hand.*

Trudy:

It was just a bite. You said you liked it. So I wanted to eat it. I didn't know if you would like it because it gets everywhere I mean it really leaves stains and if you like it, well, I want to keep it in me. That sounds wrong. That sounds, well, I didn't mean to sound this way, I didn't want to tell you this way -

The Janitor:

Tell me?

Trudy:

I love you...I think. I wanted to say the right words. I wanted to practice. But, you got here early. You weren't what I expected. You weren't on time. Then your watch blew up and I couldn't read the numbers or the face or the hands so I knew there was no time at all. No time like now. And then we started to pretend, but I wasn't pretending I was practicing so

I could say:

I want to fill you up with what I breathed today. All the lipstick. All the little flecks of fall leaves and fig jam when I was walking down the street and the church bells boomed big and the cute baby that walked out of the bagel shop just as I was walking in to buy the apple I had for lunch that sprayed into my nose when I took the biggest bite

I could

love you because I'm the kind of lover that gulps. If I took a bite out of your love I'd swallow you whole, but I don't know what you think or if you even think at -

*The Janitor looks at the spit out lipstick in his hand.*

*He eats it.*

*He swallows.*

Trudy:

All.

What are you doing?

The Janitor:

I like red lipstick.

Trudy:

Oh me too.

The Janitor:

We should practice.

Trudy:

Yes. We should.

*They kiss grossly.*

*End.*