

# Doors

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*Doors* examines the impact of divorce and separation in the lives of young people. Seen through the eyes of eleven-year-old Jeff, the day his parents decide to get a divorce painfully unfolds. Rather than face the reality of the impending divorce, however, Jeff escapes into a fantasy world where he lives in an ideal, happy family. Once his parents honestly confront their own issues, they are able to help him realize that he is not the cause of the divorce, and together they work out a compromise for moving forward.

## Two Males

In the first scene, Jeff has just lost his temper and smashed a toy model because of his parents' incessant fighting. His friend Sandy arrives and attempts to turn his interest back to a script they've been writing. In the second scene, Sandy gets Jeff to act out his parents' arguments.



*Sandy is heard pounding on the small door.*

SANDY: *(Off.)* Jeff, you in there! Jeff? *(Sandy enters through the small door. He is a bit put out, and he lugs a life-sized dummy with him.)*

SANDY: Jeeze, Jeff, doesn't anyone around here answer the door? I've been out there about a half an hour ringing the bell and yelling. Hey, do you know the TV is on? *(Jeff pulls himself together but avoids looking at Sandy.)*

JEFF: Yeah.

SANDY: And the stereo, too? *(Sandy turns off the TV.)* This much noise will rot your brain, at least that's what my mom says. *(Sandy starts to turn off stereo.)*

JEFF: Don't.

SANDY: Can't I at least turn it down? *(Jeff looks toward the large door. Sandy turns it down but not off.)*

JEFF: What are you doing in here?

SANDY: I knew you were home and the front door was unlocked so I . . .

JEFF: What do you want?

SANDY: We've got to finish the script, remember?

JEFF: Look, Sandy, this isn't a good time.

SANDY: Don't you even want to see what I brought?

JEFF: What's that? *(Sandy holds up the dummy proudly.)*

SANDY: It's a body for the crash scene! I figure we could put ketchup all over it for blood and maybe some dog food for brains.

JEFF: That's gross.

SANDY: Wait until you hear how I got it.

JEFF: Sandy . . . *(Sandy acts this out as he goes along.)*

SANDY: I was downtown in this alley behind Nordstroms, and I saw this arm sticking out of a dumpster . . . OH MY! I thought some bum had crawled in there and died, but then I figured out that it was a dummy. So, I asked this big goon by the loading dock if I could have it. And he said, "It'll cost you a dollar." So I grabbed it and ran down Fifth like I was kidnapping it or something. Then this number fourteen bus came along, and I hopped on. The driver said, "You can't bring that thing on this bus!" So, I said, "How dare you insult my younger brother!" And I paid two fares, sat it next to me, and talked to it all the way over here. Man, everyone on that bus really thought I was weird.

JEFF: You are weird. *(Jeff turns away.)*



SANDY: You're the weird one. I thought that would really crack you up. All the way over here, I just kept thinking, this will really crack Jeff up! *(No response.)* What's the matter?

JEFF: Nothing.

SANDY: Your report card! Your parents hit the ceiling about that F in science.

JEFF: I never showed it to them.

SANDY: The dog! You finally asked them if you could have a dog, and they said no, and . . .

JEFF: I haven't asked them about that yet.

SANDY: Then what's wrong? *(Sounds can be heard from behind the door.)*

JEFF: Sandy, I'll come over to your house later and . . .

SANDY: Did you get the video camera from your dad?

JEFF: Uhhhh, he's been out of town.

SANDY: You mean you haven't even asked him yet?

JEFF: I'll ask him.

SANDY: We've got to start shooting tomorrow!

JEFF: I'll ask him later.

SANDY: All right! How's the star ship coming along?

JEFF: *(Pointing towards the door.)* It's over there.

*(Sandy crosses to the door and picks up the wrecked model.)*

SANDY: What happened to the star ship?

JEFF: It got hit by a meteor shower!

SANDY: It got hit by something! Jeff, the wings are all broken and the frame is cracked! These things cost a lot of money!

JEFF: I'll pay you back! I'll buy you another one! What more do you want?

SANDY: Jeff, we are supposed to be doing this together, and all you're doing is screwing up! *(More sounds are heard.)*

JEFF: I don't want to do this today! Go home, Sandy. I'll call you later.

SANDY: I'm not leaving until we finish the script! And I'm turn-

ing that thing off! *(Sandy switches off the stereo; for a second the sounds of the argument can be heard, Sandy hears it and chooses to ignore it. Jeff turns away. Sandy pulls some pages out of his pocket.)*

SANDY: OK, we start with a long shot of the ship hurtling toward the death asteroid. Then we show the crash . . . This will work great! *(He sarcastically holds the model up.)* Then we show the crew, those who haven't been burned alive or had their heads split open . . . *(He indicates the dummy.)* . . . struggling out of the wreck. *(Sandy acts this out as he goes along; Jeff watches, becoming more and more involved.)*

SANDY: Colonel McCabe is the first one out; that's me. Then comes Rocco, the navigator; that's Paul; and then the ship's doctor, old blood and guts; that's Rick; and finally comes the ship's robot computer, CB 430; that's you. . . . *(Jeff suddenly joins in.)*

JEFF: Suddenly, the robot computer starts acting strangely. His lights flash and smoke comes out of his ears. He walks toward the ship's doctor and grabs him . . . *(Jeff grabs the dummy.)* He punches him in the stomach, hits him in the head, crushes him in his steel grip, and throws his lifeless body to the ground. *(Jeff beats the dummy and throws it.)*

SANDY: *(Laughing.)* Rick's not going to like that.

JEFF: Then he whirls around and walks toward Rocco. *(Jeff turns in a circle and grabs the dummy again.)* He grabs him by the arms and twists them out of their sockets! He throws him on the ground, time after time, after time, after time. *(Jeff beats the dummy on the floor.)*

SANDY: Jeff?

JEFF: *(Totally carried away.)* He kicks him in the stomach, in the back, in the head, in the nuts!

SANDY: Jeff, that's not in the script.

JEFF: Finally, he turns on Captain McCabe. *(Jeff turns on him and stalks him.)*



SANDY: Cut it out, Jeff.  
JEFF: Coming at him, slowly, slowly . . .  
SANDY: I said, cut it out.  
JEFF: Closer and closer. *(Jeff moves in and Sandy grows alarmed.)*  
SANDY: Stop it!  
JEFF: He raises his arm . . .  
SANDY: Jeff! *(Jeff backs him up until he is next to the bed.)*  
JEFF: And zap! The death ray! Colonel McCabe collapses in agony.  
*(Sandy is forced down on the bed. He is angry and confused.)*  
SANDY: He does not.  
JEFF: He does too.  
SANDY: Colonel McCabe does not die! It says in the script, I don't die!  
JEFF: You will if I want you to.  
SANDY: I will not!  
JEFF: Who's got the camera?  
SANDY: I don't know, Jeff. Who does? *(Jeff turns away.)* You're such a jerk! I'm going home!  
JEFF: Get out of here!  
SANDY: I am!  
JEFF: And take this piece of junk with you! *(Jeff throws the dummy at Sandy.)* Go home to your mommy and daddy, clear out of here and leave me alone!  
SANDY: You're a stupid jerk, Jeff. You've been acting like a stupid jerk ever since your parents first started . . .  
JEFF: You shut up about my parents! You don't know anything about my parents!  
SANDY: I know that they're yelling again, Jeff, I've heard them ever since I've been here. I could even hear them down on the street.  
JEFF: Get out of here, Sandy!

SANDY: I know all about it. *(Jeff turns away.)* My mom told me. Your mom talks to my mom; they gab all the time.  
JEFF: *(Without turning to him.)* What did she say?  
SANDY: She said that there was trouble over here, and I should keep my big nose out of it. *(Jeff sits, upset. Sandy hesitates and approaches cautiously.)* You want to talk about it in the pact?  
JEFF: The pact?  
SANDY: You remember the pact, Jeff?  
JEFF: We were just little kids.  
SANDY: You remember how we both pissed on that dead frog and buried it? How we both cut our fingers and spit and swore with our blood that we would always tell each other everything?  
JEFF: We were just little kids.  
SANDY: Yeah.  
JEFF: *(After a pause.)* I don't care anymore, Sandy. They can scream at each other until they're hoarse, I don't care. They can slap each other around all day, I don't care. I just want it to stop.  
SANDY: Do they really hit each other?  
JEFF: I don't know. I don't care!  
SANDY: Jeeze, I don't know what I'd do if my parents ever hit each other.  
JEFF: I didn't say they did. I just said, I didn't care.  
SANDY: Do you ever see them?  
JEFF: I never see anything, it's always behind the door.  
SANDY: Do they ever come down for breakfast in the morning, you know, with black eyes or bruises?  
JEFF: Blow it out your ear, Sandy.  
SANDY: Do you know what it's about?  
JEFF: Nobody tells me anything.  
SANDY: Do you know when it started?  
JEFF: I knew something was up when they started having all



these appointments. When I'd ask Mom where she was going, she'd say, "Your father and I have an appointment."



*Jeff beats his hand on the table.*

JEFF: I hate breakfast.

SANDY: Maybe you shouldn't have read at the table.

JEFF: It wouldn't have made any difference.

SANDY: My parents do that kind of thing all the time. It's like they have a secret code or something, they don't even have to talk, they read each other's minds.

JEFF: It used to be that way with my folks too; but now it's like they are screaming at each other, but their voices are so high pitched that only dogs can hear them.

SANDY: Jeeze. *(There is a pause and voices can be heard from behind the door. Jeff turns away. Sandy is a bit curious.)*

SANDY: Jeff, do you ever, you know, listen?

JEFF: Huh?

SANDY: I mean, when they fight, do you, you know, try to hear what they're saying?

JEFF: Sandy, I spend most of my time trying not to hear.

SANDY: Well, sometimes my folks argue, they don't really fight or anything; but when they argue, part of me tries to shut it out and part of me really wants to know what's going on.

JEFF: *(Not unkindly.)* You little creep!

SANDY: No, but the weird thing is, the really weird thing is, whenever I listen, it all sounds so stupid! Like last year, you know, we all went down to Puyallup, to the fair. We go every year, and every year the same thing happens. *(Sandy uses a couple of chairs to set up a "car" and he plays out the following.)* My dad always drives and my mom sits next to him and does needlepoint. Julie, Carrie, and I sit in the

back seat and argue over who has to sit on the hump. After we have been driving for about a half an hour, my mom looks up and says, "We always go this way and we always get lost."

Then my dad says, "You have a better route?"

And my mom says, "Back there at the service station, I told you to turn left."

"But that's the way all the traffic goes."

"That's because it's the right way."

"There's less traffic this way."

"THAT'S because we're going to Auburn."

Then, Julie says, "But I thought we were going to the fair!"

And they both say, "Be quiet, Julie."

And my mom says, "Daddy's trying to drive."

And Dad says, "What's that supposed to mean?"

So, my mom says, "It's not supposed to mean anything. I am just trying to get us to the fair. If you'd listen instead of charging ahead, we wouldn't be lost."

Then Dad says, "Who's lost? I know exactly where we are."

And Mom says, "OK, where are we?"

And we all say, "WE'RE LOST!" Then they both turn around and yell at US.

JEFF: Did you get to the fair?

SANDY: Yeah.

JEFF: How was it?

SANDY: It was great.

JEFF: With my folks we'd never get there. *(Jeff takes Sandy's place and acts out the following.)*

JEFF: My mom would say, "The reason you're driving this way is because you really don't want to go to the fair."

And my dad would say, "What?"

"You didn't want to go last night when I suggested it and you didn't want to go this morning, when I was packing the picnic. That's why you didn't help."

“You said, you didn’t need any help.”  
“Still, it would have been nice.”  
“Nice? I’m being nice. I’m taking you to the fair, aren’t I?”  
“Only because you feel guilty.”  
“Guilty?”  
“Because you didn’t take us last year.”  
“But I’m taking you this year! I am taking you to the god-damned fair when I should be at the office.”  
“See, I knew you didn’t want to go.”

Then, we’d turn around and all the way back to Seattle all you’d hear would be the sound of ice melting in the cooler.

SANDY: Did that really happen?  
JEFF: No, but that’s what would have happened.  
SANDY: How do you know?  
JEFF: I know, believe me, I know.  
SANDY: What do you know?  
JEFF: I know that’s what would have happened.  
SANDY: That’s not what I mean. What do you know about what’s happening?  
JEFF: I don’t know.  
SANDY: You don’t know what you know?  
JEFF: No! What are you talking about?  
SANDY: Look Jeff, if you can figure out what’s going on, then maybe you can do something about it.  
JEFF: I’ve tried.  
SANDY: Well, try again! What are the facts?  
JEFF: You sound like something out of “Magnum, P.I.”\*  
*(\*Update to any popular police or detective show and have Sandy imitate the lead character in his inquisition.)*  
SANDY: I’m just trying to help. *(Sandy leaps to his feet and becomes a detective.)* Come on, man, what do you know?  
JEFF: I know my dad’s not sleeping at home at night.  
SANDY: OK, where does he go?  
JEFF: I don’t know.

SANDY: Well, if he’s not sleeping at home, he has to be sleeping somewhere else.  
JEFF: Brilliant.  
SANDY: Have you asked him?  
JEFF: No.  
SANDY: Why not?  
JEFF: I can really see me going up to my father and saying, “Where you been sleeping these days, Dad?” Get real.  
SANDY: We may have to tail him.  
JEFF: I’m not going to do that!  
SANDY: It was just a suggestion. Say, Jeff, do you think he’s got a . . . girlfriend.  
JEFF: No.  
SANDY: Why not?  
JEFF: He just wouldn’t!  
SANDY: OK, scratch that. What else do you know?  
JEFF: I know they fight a lot.  
SANDY: What about?  
JEFF: Everything . . . anything.  
SANDY: You must have heard something in particular.  
JEFF: This afternoon, I heard my mom say, “I’m not giving up.”  
SANDY: Giving up what?  
JEFF: I couldn’t hear.  
SANDY: Smoking! Your dad wants her to give up smoking!  
JEFF: She doesn’t smoke.  
SANDY: When my mom tried to give up smoking, she threw a whole plate of spaghetti at my dad. She said it slipped, but I knew she threw it.  
JEFF: I said, she doesn’t smoke.  
SANDY: You sure?  
JEFF: She’s my mother!  
SANDY: What else did you hear?  
JEFF: I heard my mom say something about a job.  
SANDY: YOUR DAD LOST HIS JOB!



JEFF: I don't think . . .

SANDY: That's it! Jeff, I saw this thing on "Sixty Minutes," about how all these people are losing jobs. First they lose the job, then they go on welfare, then everybody starts fighting with everybody and . . .

JEFF: My dad works for himself, he's a contractor.

SANDY: Oh no, Jeff! That's the worst.

JEFF: But he just started a new project over in Bellevue . . .

SANDY: Don't take my word, ask Mike Wallace!

JEFF: Do you really think . . .

SANDY: Here, I'll show you. *(Sandy grabs the dummy and mimes the characters with it.)* Here is your father, sitting around reading his paper. And your mother comes in and says, "Well, I certainly hope that you're looking for a job." And he says, "Job, I have a job." And she says, "I mean a job with some money!" "Maybe if you wouldn't spend so much on cigarettes and panty hose . . ."

JEFF: I told you, she doesn't . . .

SANDY: And she says, "Me spend so much? You're such a cheap-skate . . ."

JEFF: Sandy . . .

SANDY: And that really makes him mad so he hauls off and . . . Bam! SLAP! POW! THWACK! *(Sandy makes the dummy punch the air. Jeff grabs it from him.)*

JEFF: I never said they hit each other!

SANDY: I was just trying to . . .

JEFF: I've never seen them hit each other. They're not like that at all! *(There is a pause.)*

SANDY: Hey, Jeff, why don't you just ask them what's going on? *(Jeff tenderly carries the dummy over to the bed.)* Ask your mom, she'll tell you something. My mother always tells me something.

JEFF: I just want it to stop, Sandy. That's all I really want. Every night when I hear them in there, I put the pillow over my

head, so I can't hear them and I try to imagine what it would be like if they would just stop fighting. I try to make myself dream about it. If they would just stop fighting, everything would be perfect. *(Jeff covers the dummy's head with a pillow during this speech. Lights change and there is music as we move into his fantasy.)* It would be morning, and the first thing I hear would be Mom, in the kitchen making breakfast. The first thing I would smell would be bacon frying. The first thing I feel would be sunlight on my face.