

THE PERFECT WOMAN
By Martine Teetaert for Hands On: CLAY 2010

Characters:

Anna – a teenage girl, insecure about her body and how others see her

“Perfect Woman” – The living personification of a Barbie doll with the same limited movement

(Scene opens with Anna in her bedroom examining her own body in disgust. She approaches her mirror and is startled to see not her own image, but “The perfect woman” staring back at her. She jumps back in surprise as the PW steps through the mirror into her bedroom.)

Anna: W-who are you and what have you done with my reflection?

PW: (speaks in a high pitched girly voice) I am your reflection silly!

Anna: No you're not! My reflection doesn't look half as good as... well it just doesn't look like you.

PW: (giggles) Well of course it doesn't! I'm the reflection you wish you had. I'm the reflection of everything you could ever dream to be. You see I am the perfect woman!

Anna: (slowly, hopeful) Wait...so if you're the reflection of my dreams, does that mean that I could look like you one day? Maybe if I just worked harder at it, got more exercise, lost some weight –

PW: (giggles) Don't be silly! I'm not like everyone else, because I wasn't created like everyone else. I was created in the image of what people want me to be. It's my job to set impossibly high standards that no woman can ever live up to, including you!

Anna: (Crestfallen) Oh.

PW: I think someone could use a hug! Turn that frown upside down! (PW approaches Anne and attempts to hug her despite her limited movement).

Anna: (awkwardly moves away) Why are you so stiff?

PW: Perfection isn't possible when you let your body hang out all loosey goosey. Relaxation is not an option!

Anna: But you can barely move! It seems ridiculous to give up mobility in the name of physical beauty.

PW: But I don't need to move on my own. That's what everyone else is for. The job of the perfect woman is to be what people want me to be and do whatever they want me to do.

Anna: So can you even sit down on your own?

PW: Nope (giggles) I wouldn't even be able to stand if it wasn't for these stilettos. My feet are moulded to fit only high heeled shoes. I'll show you. Go ahead and take my shoe off. (Anna obliges. PW loses balance and topples over onto Anna's bed). See? (giggles) I am entirely useless on my own. Like I told you before, I'm the woman –

Anna: (cuts her off) that other people want you to be. I know. It just seems so strange. I spend so much time trying to make myself look beautiful and act like someone I'm not to try and fit in. Everything that I read and see tells me that if I look beautiful and act a certain way I should be happy. But I'm not.

PW: Why do you think I have this stupid smile plastered on my face? It's not because I am happy all the time, oh no. Really I am quite miserable. But no one wants a woman who's gloomy and depressed all the time, so I stay smiling.

Anna: So the happiness is a lie along with everything else. (Frustrated) Ugh I just don't get it! I don't want to be society's helpless dumb toy who can't think or act for herself! (Looks at PW) No offense, but I don't want to be like you. I don't want to live the false life everyone tells me I should and pretend to be happy in it.

PW: I think you're forgetting one tiny little important thing.

Anna: What's that?

PW: You're not like me, and you never can be. I, along with my entire life, was created from the social desire of what a woman should be. But you were created by something much more powerful. It's a force of love that made you into who you are. An unconditional love that knows you are beautiful and perfect just the way you are. (Anna stares at her, saying nothing). Don't believe me? You have friends and family –

Anna: (Interrupts) Well you have friends and family too. (slightly envious) and a boyfriend.

PW: All who were manufactured to fit in with my manufactured life. It's all to project an image, there's no love there. But your friends and family they love you for who you are. They don't care that you don't fit into society's mould of perfection. They just care about you. They are proof that you were created through love in a mould that is completely unique to you!

Anna: Wow, this is really starting to make sense. I don't need to look try and live a fake life to be loved by others. I already am loved! And I didn't have to change myself to earn it! (Help's PW put her shoe back on and stand up) Thanks. You know, for a helpless dumb toy, you sure know what you're talking about.

PW: Oh how sweet of you to say. (pauses) Can I have another hug?

Anna: (laughs) sure.

(Light's go down on Anna and PW in another awkward hug)