

*From Badger by Don Zolidis*

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*1943. Rose and Timothy are workers at the Badger Ordnance Factory. They've just finished a dance.*

*ROSE, 18, married, has a bit of a crush on Timothy. Her husband is away at the war.  
TIMOTHY, 20, had polio as a child and walks with a serious limp.*

*ROSE helps TIMOTHY limp to a spot to sit down.*

ROSE

You okay?

TIMOTHY

Overdid it. Sorry.

ROSE

It's all right.

TIMOTHY

Sometimes I think... I can do everything that a... normal person can do and – I can't.

ROSE

You have to pace yourself.

TIMOTHY

Yeah.

ROSE

I had fun.

TIMOTHY

I'm glad.

ROSE

It's terrible that you wasted all your time with me, though; I'm sure there were other girls just dying to dance with a handsome young man.

TIMOTHY

I don't think they wanted to dance with me.

ROSE

Why do you get down on yourself like that? So what. So you're not dancing a jig anytime soon. That's not what a girl is looking for.

TIMOTHY

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Some of them –

ROSE

Then you don't want to be with them anyhow. Any girl worth a darn is going to look past... this and see what's really important about you. That you are a kind, decent man with a good heart.

TIMOTHY

You can tell all that about me, huh?

ROSE

I am a fantastic judge of character. Lately. I have become a fantastic judge of character.

TIMOTHY

Not so much earlier?

ROSE

Not so much.

TIMOTHY

Well thank you for... seeing me. And dancing with me.

ROSE

Least a girl can do. Besides, I think people at Badger can only dance with other people at Badger. Cause of the smell. We're used to it.

TIMOTHY

Maybe that's it.

ROSE

You know sometimes when I don't smell ether I get a headache. I heard of a gal who takes little pieces of explosives home and sleeps next to them - otherwise she gets an awful headache.

TIMOTHY

Huh. That's probably not good. Another reason to leave.

ROSE

You're thinking of leaving Badger?

TIMOTHY

Oh sure. Eventually. I got this dream of being a teacher.

ROSE

A teacher?

*She laughs.*

TIMOTHY

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Why is that funny? Everything right now celebrates these warriors and the scientists and the workers and I just want to tell people that there's more to life than that. Literature, poetry, art. Beauty. The things that make life worth fighting for. The whole society right now is conscripted to the war effort – an arsenal of Democracy, that's what FDR said we had to become – but think about that: that means that our individuality and our spirit get hammered out of us until we become a machine – I don't want to be a part of a machine. I want to be a human being.

ROSE

Wow.

TIMOTHY

Sorry I get carried away.

ROSE

I bet you'll be a really good teacher.

TIMOTHY

You think?

ROSE

Until you encounter children. Children are monsters. They'll murder you.

TIMOTHY

Unfortunately, it seems to be a requirement of being a teacher: encountering children. Job hazard.

ROSE

I think you should follow your dream.

TIMOTHY

What about you? You got a dream for after the war?

ROSE

Oh sure. It's little. I want to travel. I ain't never been out of Wisconsin.

TIMOTHY

Never?

ROSE

Nope. I been to Green Bay, that's about as far as I've gone. So maybe there's a world out there, where a person could go and... be free... like a balloon that escapes from the fair – up there wandering over the world – my Mom wants me to start working on grandkids right away, but –

TIMOTHY

You're eighteen.

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ROSE

I know! She keeps telling me, 'I'm gonna die soon, I just want one chance to hold a baby before I go.' She's forty-two. Picture of health. But she always thinks she's gonna die. Every time we have a cold snap she thinks she's gonna catch pneumonia and freeze to death. 'Oh here it comes if only you had listened to your mother... no grandchildren, so sad...'

TIMOTHY

She sounds fun.

ROSE

I was happy to move into the worker housing, let me tell you.

TIMOTHY

I bet.

ROSE

So tell me: which one of the girls do you have your eye on?

*He laughs.*

You can tell me. Eleanor?

TIMOTHY

Who's Eleanor?

ROSE

She was standing next to me when you came over. Grace? I bet it's Grace.

*He laughs again.*

TIMOTHY

No.

ROSE

Who is it then?

*A moment.*

TIMOTHY

She's uh... she's a married woman.

ROSE (*catching on*)

Oh. That's... too bad.

TIMOTHY

Right. Probably impossible.

ROSE

Definitely. Definitely impossible.

*Pause.*

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TIMOTHY

You know, I'm the kinda person who's never had a lot of courage. Not just about going to war, but about... everything in life. I guess I'm just used to people pitying me – it's a pretty awful feeling when you notice strangers looking at you like you're a broken little puppy – but, I just wanted to say it's nice not to be pitied. By you.

ROSE

Me?

TIMOTHY

Yeah you never looked at me like I was something pitiful, you looked at me like I was a full person. That's kinda rare. So I guess I thought maybe... I could be a full person to you.

ROSE

Timothy. You know I'm married.

TIMOTHY

I know. I'm sorry.

ROSE

You're very sweet and all.

TIMOTHY

Right. A fella's gotta dream, right?

ROSE

A girl's gotta dream too.

*She kisses him on the cheek, then heads off.*

*To read the rest of this play, please visit [www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com)*