

Things That Fly

By R. James Scott

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Eleven-year-old Robert, with help from his little sister Sally, has built a flying machine in their backyard. On launch day, he is hassled by his older brother Bryan, as well as the local neighbor kids. When the machine fails to operate as Robert expects, he is laughed at and ridiculed by those who have come to watch. Little Sally comes to his rescue, and together they fly.

Running time: About 35 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 4 w, 2 flexible)

SALLY: A little girl. Robert's sister.

ROBERT: A sixth grader.

BRYAN: Robert's big brother.

MOTHER

GARY: A boy from the neighborhood.

BRENT (BRENDA): A boy or girl from the neighborhood.

CRAIG (CRISTINA): A boy or girl from the neighborhood.

STEVEN: A kid from the neighborhood.

MARY: A kid from the neighborhood.

LISA: A kid from the neighborhood.

SETTING

The play takes place in a lower-middle class backyard with grass, a couple of garbage cans, and a small tree. Upstage there's a low picket fence. There may also be a swing set or a sand box, but they are not essential to the action of this play. What is essential is a strange-looking contraption, at right center. It appears to have been built out of junk, the kind you might scrounge from the back allies of lower-middle class suburbia. Many pieces are recognizable as the once functioning refuse of modern man. Within the construction, slightly camouflaged by the rest of the things, are two seats, possibly old lawn chairs, or at the outside, the back seat of a Buick. The important thing is that within the contraption, there are places for two persons to sit.

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(AT RISE: The time is early morning. If we listen we might hear the chirp of neighborhood sparrows, or someone's radio down the street. Aside from the aforementioned articles on the set, there is only one other oddity that catches the eye. Just downstage, and slightly SL of the contraption, is a dark mound, which we come to recognize as a sleeping bag, and a few moments after curtain, slight movement tells us that someone is in it. About this time, SALLY enters from SR. She has a slice of toast, which she obviously has been munching on prior to her appearance. She approaches the sleeping bag, squats down by it in a little girl fashion and speaks.)

SALLY: Robert ... Robert, it's morning time ... *(Nudges the bag a little.)* Robert, wake up ... wake up. Robert, it's morning. *(The bag stirs a little. SALLY continues prodding.)* Robert, it's time to get up, it's today.

ROBERT: Go away.

SALLY: But it's morning, Robert. You said today is the day.

ROBERT: I just got to sleep.

SALLY: But you said it's today, we're going to fly today.

ROBERT: Is that what I said?

SALLY: That's what you said. "Today" you said. Are we really gonna fly, Robby?

ROBERT: What did I tell you?

SALLY: You said we were gonna fly ... today.

ROBERT: That's right.

SALLY: I had a dream.

ROBERT: Oh yeah.

SALLY: I dreamed we were flying waaaaaay up high, and we could look down and see everything.

ROBERT: Everything? What kind of everything?

SALLY: Just like you said -- trees and houses, and people, and clouds, and ... well, everything.

ROBERT: I had a dream too.

SALLY: Tell me.

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ROBERT: *(Sitting up.)* I was flying too, except I didn't need the machine, I was doing it all by myself. I just stood up, and then kind of leaned forward, and lifted my feet up off the ground. It was more like floating really, but I was in the backyard, just floating around like I was a balloon or something. It was so real, like I could almost do it right now if I wanted to.

SALLY: That would be fun. Come on, you gotta get up now, this is our big day.

ROBERT: I'll get up in a minute. Oh no, here comes Bryan. Just tell him I'm still asleep.

(BRYAN enters at this time; also from SR. He carries a newspaper bag, which he throws on his bicycle.)

BRYAN: Sal, what are you doing out here?

SALLY: He's still asleep.

BRYAN: He better wake up and get moving if he knows what's good for him.

SALLY: He's really tired.

BRYAN: That's what you get for dinking around all night. Hey! *(HE gives the bag a kick with his foot.)* You better get up and get moving. You gotta get this junk outta here.

ROBERT: It's not junk. *(Sitting up.)*

BRYAN: Its junk and it better be out of here by tonight. Dad's coming home tonight, and it better be gone.

ROBERT: It's not junk.

BRYAN: Listen, you little twerp, *(BRYAN grabs the end of the sleeping bag and yanks, leaving ROBERT lying on the bare ground.)* I say it's junk, it ain't never gonna fly. You just get it torn apart and out of this yard before Dad gets home.

ROBERT: I have a right to --

BRYAN: You got no rights, you're just a twerpy kid. You hauled all this crap in here from all over the place, and now you're gonna haul it right back out. Stupid kid. Think that that pile of crap is gonna take off and fly like a bird, you're out of your mind.

SALLY: He is not.

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BRYAN: You even have your sister believing in you.

SALLY: I'm going with him.

BRYAN: You ain't going nowhere.

ROBERT: You just wait, you'll see.

BRYAN: The only way you're gonna fly is when Dad kicks your butt right over that fence. You better listen to what I'm telling you.

ROBERT: I don't have to listen to anything. We'll be long gone, you wait. We'll be out of here.

BRYAN: I'll be back in a couple of hours, and you better be started.

(BRYAN rides out the gate and disappears SL. ROBERT is sitting on the grass.)

ROBERT: He doesn't know anything. We'll show him. We'll fly down and knock him off that stupid bike.

SALLY: We don't have much time left.

ROBERT: I just need a couple of hours.

SALLY: Were you out here all night?

ROBERT: All night? Well, almost.

SALLY: Are we really going to fly?

ROBERT: 'Course we are.

(ROBERT starts putting on his shoes. SALLY sits on an old milk crate.)

SALLY: How high up are we going?

ROBERT: I don't know, today's just a test flight. You don't go very high on a test flight.

SALLY: High as the house?

ROBERT: I don't know.

SALLY: As the trees? *(Standing up.)*

ROBERT: I don't know, Sally, maybe high as the house, maybe high as the clouds. It's a test flight.

SALLY: Maybe high as the stars? *(Standing on the crate.)*

ROBERT: We can't go to the stars, at least not today.

SALLY: Why not?

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ROBERT: No air up there. Ya gotta have air if you go to the stars.

SALLY: We could take some with us. In a sack or something. *(Stepping down.)*

ROBERT: It doesn't work like that. Maybe we'll go there later, but today is just for a test.

SALLY: Did you find a battery?

ROBERT: It's in the garage, it's charging. *(ROBERT has finished his shoes and goes to sit in the SR seat of the machine.)*

SALLY: What do we have to do?

ROBERT: Run the wires, and hook up the switching panel.

SALLY: Is that a lot?

ROBERT: A couple of hours.

(MOTHER enters SR. She has her purse and is digging for her keys.)

SALLY: Here comes Mom.

ROBERT: I see her.

MOTHER: Robert?

ROBERT: Over here, Mom.

(MOTHER crosses over to THEM, still hunting for keys.)

MOTHER: I am leaving now. I'll be home about five. Take care of Sally, and don't get into trouble.

ROBERT: I won't, Mom.

MOTHER: And get this yard cleaned up. Your father will be home tonight.

ROBERT: I know, Mom.

MOTHER: Be good, and remember about cleaning this junk up. *(MOTHER hugs SALLY and kisses the top of her head.)* Goodbye, honey, see you when I get home. *(Another hug for ROBERT.)*

SALLY: Bye, Mom.

ROBERT: Bye, Mom. *(When she's gone.)* It's not junk. They'll see, it's not junk.

SALLY: We're going to fly.

End of Freeview

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