

FOR REAL

by Kris Thompson

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Cast of Characters

KRISTINE ALBRECHT: High school female unhappy with the struggles of being a teen. She's an average looking girl. No makeup. Baggy shirt. Sweatpants. Her father has purchased an AI to take her place as she's struggling in school.

AI DUPE: AI dupe of Kristine. Similar in physical appearance but full makeup, cute clothing, nails done, etc... Occasional slight robotic quality.

Synopsis

Teen Kristine is depressed and has been struggling in school. Her father (who does not appear in the script), intent on her educational success, provides her with an AI (Artificial Intelligence) Dupe to take her place and assure good grades. The AI Dupe learns more about Kristine than intended and, in doing so, helps Kristine understand herself.

Place

Kristine's bedroom.

Time

2030

ACT I
Scene 1

Setting: Kristine's bedroom.

At Rise: KRISTINE is at her computer intensely looking at something.

KRISTINE

What the-

(Taps computer keys.)

What the actual...

(Taps computer keys.)

This can't be right.

(AI DUPE enters looking amazing, happy, carefree.)

AI DUPE

Hello Queen! What's up?

(Tosses her backpack down and plops on to the bed or chair.)

KRISTINE

What's up? What's up is that I'm failing Geometry! You're literally a walking computer. How could you possibly fail Geometry?

AI DUPE

Geometry.

(Gets a nail file out and begins attending to her nails during dialogue.)

Ugg...Mrs. Hunt? Man, that class blows.

KRISTINE

It blows? What the heck do you mean by that?

AI DUPE

(Stands, expressionless, robotically providing information.)

"It blows" is an informal expression used to describe something as unpleasant, annoying, or disappointing.

KRISTINE

I'm not an idiot. I know-

AI DUPE

(robotically) It's often used to convey a feeling of frustration or lack of enthusiasm about a situation.

KRISTINE

Yea. I got it.

AI DUPE

(Plops back down and begins filing nails and speaks in her normal voice.)
Essentially it's a way of saying something is bad or awful.

KRISTINE

(Gets up and snatches nail file from AI DUPE.)
That doesn't explain my failing grade.

AI DUPE

Kristine, why would I attend a class that's bad and awful? It's simply not logical.

KRISTINE

So you haven't even been attending my Geometry class?

AI DUPE

No. I've been spending third period at the McDonald's on 29th with my friends.

KRISTINE

(sarcastic) Oh you have friends now do you?

AI DUPE

Of course I have friends! We usually get supersized fries and cokes and then smoke cigarettes behind the stadium seating until 4th period.

KRISTINE

You what!?

AI DUPE

Don't worry. Smoking might be bad for your body but it doesn't affect my mechanics in the least. And don't worry about Geometry. I talked to your guidance counselor, Mr. Abernathy? He's kind of dreamy, don't you think?

KRISTINE

Gross. He's my father's age!

AI DUPE

Well, all my friends think he's dreamy. We all dropped Geometry. We'll take it again next semester with a better teacher. Dreamy Mr. Abernathy is arranging it.

KRISTINE

You have one job. One! Go to my school and make excellent grades for me.

AI DUPE

Technically, that's two things. But you're right. I have one job. However, it's not about grades. I've been programmed to be the best version of you, Kristine Albrecht, as possible.

KRISTINE

And that means making Fs and dropping classes? (*sarcastic*) Fantastic.

AI DUPE

I'm glad you think so, because I also haven't been attending P.E.

KRISTINE

(*astonished*) P.E.? That's my easiest A!

AI DUPE

I dropped it for a class you'll like much better. Fashion and Retail Merchandising.

KRISTINE

Excuse me?

AI DUPE

My friends and I have this plan to one day take the fashion industry by storm!

KRISTINE

Fashion industry!? You're not serious.

AI DUPE

Would you like to see my sketch book?

KRISTINE

No I don't want to see your sketch book! I know that you know that I'm going to law school. That's always been the plan.

AI DUPE

Well, that's always been your father's plan.

KRISTINE

I am going to graduate high school and I'm going to graduate with honors. Summa Cum Laude. I am going to get into a good university, study prelaw, and then I'm going to law school.

AI DUPE

But, according to my analysis and algorithms, being a lawyer is not going to make you happy and you can't be the best version of yourself if you're not happy.

KRISTINE

How could you possibly know what would make me happy?

AI DUPE

Well...and I hope you don't mind this...while you were sleeping last week I downloaded your memories.

KRISTINE

You did what?

AI DUPE

Your memories. When I was programmed to be you I was given access to a simple dossier, but that had only basic information. After nearly five weeks at Weston High Academy, I decided if I was truly going to be the best version of you possible, I would need to really know you. Your memories were the best way to accomplish that objective.

KRISTINE

This is getting out of hand.

(Begins looking for manual and continues during dialogue.)

AI DUPE

I like you so much better now that I've gotten to know the real you.

KRISTINE

Where did I put the manual that came with you.

AI DUPE

Plus it's much easier to understand how to become the best version of you now that I have your memories. For instance, memory C284M72.3.

KRISTINE

(Stops looking for manual and turns to listen.)

Say what now?

AI DUPE

I categorized them. This one was from when you were four. You and your mother spent hours playing paper dolls. Do you remember?

KRISTINE

No.

(Starts looking for the manual and continues during dialogue.)

AI DUPE

No? I can show you if you like.

KRISTINE

Listen, I just need you to make good grades. I'm not interested in a ride down memory lane. Where is that manual!

AI DUPE

You were cutting out paper doll clothes with your mother. Doing fashion shows. She bought you your first pair of scissors.

(Gently and briefly touches KRISTINE on the shoulder, prompting a memory.)

Remember?

KRISTINE

(Stops looking for manual.)

Wait. I do remember. *(pause)* The scissors. They had red handles.

AI DUPE

That's right. And do you remember when you were five and your mom started teaching you to sew?

KRISTINE

(organically remembering) Yes...With a needle. She called it hand sewing. I pricked myself once. I remember watching my blood soak into the yellow fabric. It bloomed like a flower. *(Pause.)* Mother wasn't mad. She cleaned me up, kissed my finger, put on a Band-Aid, and drew a happy face on it. I remember she said mistakes are only mistakes if you don't learn something.

AI DUPE

And later?

KRISTINE

(remembering more, excited) Yes...Yes...oh wow. I haven't thought of this in years. I was seven I think? Mother taught me to use her sewing machine. My legs weren't long enough so she pushed the pedal for me.

AI DUPE

Ahhh yes. C615M107.42.

KRISTINE

(excitedly remembering) And when I turned eight we started going to the store every Saturday and Mother would let me pick out new fabrics and we would sew new clothes for my barbie dolls. *(pause)* Until-

(Changes expression from happy to painful in an instant.)

AI DUPE

Until what?

KRISTINE

(Shakes head, not wanting to remember.)

That's all.

AI DUPE

But that's not all. Don't you remember C787PM22.36? You cut up some of your mother's clothes-

KRISTINE

(uncomfortable) I don't remember.

AI DUPE

To make clothes for your barbie dolls?

KRISTINE

(uncomfortable) I don't want to talk about this anymore.

AI DUPE

And your father got very angry-

KRISTINE

(upset) Stop it! I said I don't want to talk about this!

AI DUPE

-and he got rid of your Mother's sewing machine-

KRISTINE

Shut up! I don't-

AI DUPE

-and he got rid of all of your mother's clothes.

KRISTINE

Please stop.

(Sobs.)

AI DUPE

Why would he do that? You loved sewing. You loved your Mother's sewing machine. Why in the world-

KRISTINE

(Crying.)

Because she died, ok! She died and he couldn't stand being reminded. He cried all the time. He tried to hide it, but I could hear him at night when I was supposed to be asleep. He was so sad. So so sad.

AI DUPE

(Sits next to KRISTINE and puts her arm around her, comforting her.)

And you were so so sad.

KRISTINE

And I was so so sad.

AI DUPE

He got rid of your mother's things because he wanted you to forget.

KRISTINE

He needed me to forget. *(long pause)* He needed me to forget so he could forget.

AI DUPE

And so you did.

KRISTINE

And so I did.

AI DUPE

(long pause) I'm sorry you lost your mother, Kristine.

KRISTINE

Thank you.

AI DUPE

I've never had a mother.

KRISTINE

Oh. I guess not. I'm sorry. Everyone should have a mother.

AI DUPE.

(wistful) If I had a mother, I'd want one like yours. She was lovely. In every memory she was lovely.

KRISTINE

She was lovely.

AI DUPE

(long pause) Are you ok?

KRISTINE

You know what? I feel better than I have in a really long time. That's weird, right?

AI DUPE

I don't think it's weird. I think pretending your mother never existed was exhausting for you. That's why you weren't doing well in school. In life. It probably feels so much better to simply miss her.

KRISTINE

Yes...Exhausting. *(pause)* Plus, I'd forgotten what it felt like to be with her. I'd forgotten who I was with her.

AI DUPE

Sometimes all it takes is remembering who we really are.

KRISTINE

Hey. I'd like to see your sketch book.

(AI DUPE gets sketch book, sits next to KRISTINE and they begin looking at it together.)

AI DUPE

How's that Fashion and Retail Merchandising class sounding now?

KRISTINE

Actually, it sounds pretty awesome.

AI DUPE

So I have your permission to change the course of your life?

KRISTINE

I think you already have.

AI DUPE

Fantastic! Can I have ten bucks for McDonald's tomorrow? Now that everything's out in the open, I'd like to stop lifting cash from your Dad's wallet.

KRISTINE

Oh, so you're responsible for that. He didn't think my AI could do such a thing. He was convinced it was me.

AI DUPE

Well, it was...kind of. I am you. You are me. So how about that ten bucks for tomorrow?

KRISTINE

You know what? I think it's time for me to get back to school. Back to my life. For real.

AI DUPE

Oh. (Sad.) Then I guess you won't be needing me anymore.

KRISTINE

I think your work here is done.

AI DUPE

What am I going to do? I'm only programmed to be the best version of you as possible.

KRISTINE

How about you reprogram yourself to be the best version of you as possible.

AI DUPE

Ahh...Queen! Brilliant! But who am I? Where will I go?

KRISTINE

Stay with me as long as you want. You can be my cousin from Idaho.

AI DUPE

Idaho? Like where potatoes come from? No. Hmm...How about California. Maybe Malibu?

KRISTINE

Wow! I just remembered I used to have a Malibu Barbie.

AI DUPE

Exactly...memory C64M883T.79. I'll be Barbie from Malibu!

KRISTINE

Well, that's a choice.

AI DUPE

Yes! I'm making my own choices now!

KRISTINE

Me too, Barbie. Me too.

END OF PLAY