

## Scott Lost His R

An extemporaneous one-act By Braden Bunch

Written for the 2008 SCTA Convention 24-Hour Play Project, November 15, 2008

Setting: A subway station at midnight, with rails for the trains played both upstage and downstage. Entrances for the subway station are DSR and USL. There are two benches center stage, separated by about a foot, with the stage right bench facing downstage and the stage left bench facing upstage. There is a broom underneath the stage left bench.

*Note: If it is not possible to have the two benches (or row of chairs, or just a chair) on stage, simply ignore the stage directions involving the benches, and place the broom on the floor USL. Do not try to mime the benches if they are not there. It simply will be a station without benches.*

*Also, if possible, have a subway rail car enter when indicated. This availability is less likely. If, for some tragic reason no rail cars are available, the actors should still indicate the comings and goings of the trains. This is a station with trains. Actors should play as if the subway trains coming along the downstage "rail" are coming from stage right, while the trains along the upstage "rail" enter from stage left.*

**Elliott**, a disheveled young man, enters from DSR. He is clearly tired, depressed, and clutching a pair of ballet shoes/slippers. He walks down stage, leans over the edge and peers, stage right, looking for the train. Seeing none, he ambles to the SR bench (or where the bench should be), and sits.

Once Elliott sits, **Lindsey** and **Jamie**, enter from USL. They are giggling and carrying on like two friends returning from a party. **Lindsey**, the older of the two girls, leads them on to the platform, wearing a gold mask that dangles around her neck, hanging off her back. Stumbling slightly (note: don't play drunk), she walks upstage and looks SL for the train, while **Jamie** continues toward the SL bench. Once Jamie spots Elliott, who is oblivious to the girls' entrance, she freezes and then rapidly turns SL. Having seen Jamie's response, **Lindsey** giggles, puts on the mask, and begins approaching Elliott, pointing her finger at him in "E.T." fashion.

**Lindsey:** (using "E.T." voice) Elliott! Elliott!

**Elliott** slowly looks up. Upon noticing the girls, he quickly, reflexively, works to hide the ballet slippers, stuffing them, although not completely, down his pants. Meanwhile, **Jamie**, aghast at her friend's actions, runs up to Lindsey and rips the mask off her, taking a beat to stare at her friend.

**Elliott:** Excuse me? Who is that? Oh, of course. It's you, Lindsey.

**Jamie**, now panicking, puts on the mask, and hurries upstage, pretending to look for a train.

**Lindsey:** (condescending in tone) Hey, Elliott, buddy. How's it going?

**Elliott:** (not exactly thrilled to see her) I'm fine, Lindsey. How are you?

**Lindsey:** Nothing that a couple cold beers couldn't handle. And a few...other things.

**Elliott:** Riiiiight.

**Lindsey:** (*now leaning over the bench*) Didn't see you at the party tonight...wait, that's right, you said you had to go to training for your new job. As if anyone's in an office for training after 5...

**Elliott:** Some jobs have different time constraints.

**Lindsey:** You were probably just afraid no one would talk to you.

**Elliott:** Maybe I was afraid that you might talk to me.

**Lindsey:** Ouch! Very good, my dear effeminate introverted outcast. Two points for you. (*Looking back, yelling to Jamie*) Hey, look who's here!

*Jamie shakes her head and waves her arms, making it clear she does not want to join the conversation. Lindsey approaches Jamie, while Elliott, happy that Lindsey is leaving him alone turns back downstage.*

**Lindsey:** What's the problem, my dear masked lady?

**Jamie:** (*pulling the mask down to talk*) Just leave him alone.

**Lindsey:** Why? You're not still protecting him for the time back in school when he brought you a glass of orange juice when you were sick?

**Jamie:** (*blushing, then resolute*) No, I just have to get my work done, and if he hangs around, I'm not going to be able to finish up in time. I'm late enough as it is. I can't believe I let you talk me into going to that stupid party.

**Lindsey:** What are you talking about? That was the place to be this evening, my dear Catwoman. Those are the people to know. Definitely the in-crowd.

**Jamie:** Franklin's crowd? Really? Less than an hour after we got there, they were amusing themselves by taking turns to see who could fall out the window the fastest.

**Lindsey:** His apartment's on the first floor, albeit elevated. It's not like anybody was going to get hurt that bad... Much.

**Jamie:** Oh, yeah? Did you notice John's limp? Or the fact that Scott couldn't say the letter R when he got back? He kept calling Roger, "od-ge".

**Lindsey:** It's a tough letter. Rrrrrr. Rrrrr. There's so much involved. Besides, Scott might not sound smart – he might not be smart – but he's cute, and there's no R in Lindsey. And he was quite happy to say my name. In fact, next train in here is taking me to his place so he can say it again... in a more personal setting.

**Jamie:** Fine. Whatever. (*pointing at Elliott*) But you've got to get him out of here. I've got to get this place cleaned up before Ms. Jones comes through here, otherwise I'll lose what miserable job I have.

**Lindsey:** Jamie, darling, look around you. It's a subway station. It might be your job to clean it up, but no one expects it to be too clean. They might get frightened if it was. Besides, I don't think Elliott plans on staying much longer. He's here for the train, not to visit. Why are you so worried about Elliott seeing you sweeping up down here anyway?

**Jamie:** I...I just don't want him to see me here.

*(Beat)*

**Lindsey:** Oh my God. *(in a sing-songy, childhood taunting voice)* You love him! You think he's cute! You want his babies! Inside your belly!

**Jamie:** Stop it!

**Lindsey:** Really?? Elliott?? *(pause, looks at Elliott)* To each her own, I guess.

**Jamie:** Lindsey, just...just stop it.

**Lindsey:** Oh, I'm going to. I'm going to stop this once and for all.

*Lindsey grabs Jamie, who is scrambling to put the mask back on, and drags her to the SL bench. Lindsey then walks around smugly and sits next to Elliott, left of him, but on the SR bench.*

**Elliott:** Back for more?

**Lindsey:** Yep.

**Elliott:** What's the problem this time?

**Lindsey:** Oh, there's many. There's a problem with the water we drink, the air we breathe, the price of those individual peach tea packets you can pour into your bottled water – far too expensive. But I'm not here to discuss the environment or non-carbonated beverages with you, Elliott. I'm here to give you a little piece of advice.

**Elliott:** Really?

**Lindsey:** Yes, really. I'm just a lovely person that way. In many ways, in fact. Thought you'd realize that by now. Anyway, I thought you should know, I have a...well, we'll say a friend, although I'm beginning to question her judgment. But this friend, who wants to remain hidden for completely understandable reasons, probably because she's too ashamed to admit this, thinks you're the cat's meow.

**Elliott:** Uh-huh.

**Lindsey:** It's true. Scout's honor on my cross-my-heart bra. She just won't show herself to you now, because of a deep, dark secret she doesn't want to admit.

**Elliott:** That she's friends with you?

**Lindsey:** Keep working, funny man. Here I am trying to help you and...oh my God, are those ballet shoes in your pants?! Or are you just happy to see me?

**Elliott:** *(Taking a beat, realizing he's been found out)* Well, I'm certainly not happy to see you now.

**Lindsey:** *(reaching)* Let me see those...

**Elliott:** *(jumping up from the bench)* Get away from me!

**Jamie:** *(pulling down the mask)* Leave him alone!

**Lindsey:** Would you look at that, the mystery custodian decides to reveal their identity, after all. And it's a her! The horror! The horror!

**Elliott:** Jamie? Wait, Jamie? ... Jamie? Was she...talking about you?

**Jamie:** *(standing up, taking the broom out from under the bench)* Yes. Yes she was.

*They pause as they look back and forth at one another, Lindsey smiling wildly, until...*

**Lindsey:** Would you look at that, here comes my train. Funny how they come by here so regularly. You think they were on a schedule or something.

*Lindsey walks upstage, and mimes getting on the train, slowly walking, then speeding up, as she walks sideways off USR. She waves to Jamie and Elliott as she leaves. Elliott and Lindsey look down, acting coy, almost giggling.*

**Elliott:** Nice broom.

**Jamie:** Nice shoes. Is that really why you wouldn't go out with us when we'd ask you to come along? Why didn't you just say so?

**Elliott:** I...I don't know. You and Lindsey are always hanging around with those motorheads. I figured you might not be interested if you knew I was studying to be a dancer.

**Jamie:** I can't believe you thought I'd think less of you because you were a dancer. I know and hang out with...well...a few dancers, I'm sure.

**Elliott:** It's not the same thing. Lindsey's dancing involves a pole.

**Jamie:** She doesn't do that anymore.

**Elliott:** Maybe not professionally...

**Jamie:** All right, all right. She might be eccentric, but she's my friend.

**Elliott:** O.K., O.K. So...you actually work down here?

**Jamie:** *(now sweeping)* Yes, yes I do.

**Elliott:** So...you don't want anyone to know you're a janitor...

**Jamie:** Custodial assistant.

**Elliott:** Custodial assistant, exactly, but you can handle me prancing around in a tutu?

**Jamie:** You wear a tutu?

**Elliott:** No, just thought I'd get us past that visual as quickly as possible. Like ripping off the Band-Aid.

**Jamie:** I see. But I don't want to. But yes, I mean no, I mean...I've confused myself.

**Elliott:** Let me make it simple. Can we see each other soon? Just you and I? No Lindsey? No masks or pretty slippers?

**Jamie:** I'd like that. *(beat, as they stare at each other)* Your train's coming. And...I've got to get to work.

**Elliott:** Yeah, I better go. Gotta get my rest so I can be ready to prance around tomorrow.

**Jamie:** I'd hate for you to strain yourself on your next pli  because of me.

**Elliott:** Yeah, and I'd hate for you to not have enough time to chase off the subway rats because of me. It's...uh...it's really nice seeing you though.

**Jamie:** Yes, it is.

*They slowly move closer toward one another, eventually embracing and about to kiss. Just as they get inches apart, Lindsey runs in from DSL in the same fashion she left earlier. She runs up, breaks up the embrace, and snatches the mask off of Jamie.*

**Lindsey:** I forgot I was wearing this when I was flirting with Scott! If I show up without this mask, he'll have no idea who I am! *(to Elliott)* Get on the train, loverboy.

**Elliott:** Thanks a lot, Lindsey. *(more sincere)* No, really, thanks a lot.

**Lindsey:** Told you I was wonderful. Why doesn't anyone ever believe me?

*Elliott starts to kiss Jamie again, but the moment is wrong now, so he steps on to the train, waving to Jamie. Jamie waves back, only to quickly hand Lindsey the broom and run on to the train as it starts to go. Elliott and Jamie exit DSL. Lindsey puts the mask on and begins sweeping.*

**Lindsey:** The things I do for people. I am wonderful, aren't I? Wait, there's the train. *(Looks at broom)* I'm not that wonderful. I'm a-comin', Scott!

*Lindsey throws down the broom and begins her train exit USR as the lights fade out.*