

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this play is subject to royalty. It is fully protected by Original Works Publishing, and the copyright laws of the United States. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

The performance rights to this play are controlled by Original Works Publishing and royalty arrangements and licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. PLEASE NOTE that amateur royalty fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a royalty quotation and license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Royalties are payable with negotiation from Original Works Publishing.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Particular emphasis is laid on the question of amateur or professional readings, permission and terms for which must be secured from Original Works Publishing through direct contact.

Copying from this book in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable.

Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing, and advertising for the play:

**“Produced by special arrangement with
Original Works Publishing.”
www.originalworksonline.com**

Due authorship credit must be given on all programs, printing and advertising for the play.

Lizard Brains
© 2009, Mark Scharf
First Printing, 2009
Printed in U.S.A.

Also Available from OWP

Artificial

by Sean Kenealy

2 Males

Synopsis: When Dan enters an empty cafe just after midnight on New Years, wielding a guitar case and razor sharp tongue, he sparks the ire of cafe manager Charles, who wants nothing more than to close up, albeit a bit early. What transpires between the two are conversations and stories ranging from the trivial to the tragic, almost bringing the men to blows, and definitely blurring the lines between the truth and the artificial.

Information, PLEASE!

by J.C. Svec

1 Male, 2 Females

Synopsis: It's April 1971 and Stanley Cup hockey has invaded Madison Square Garden. While the Rangers and Maple Leafs battle each other on and off the ice during a bizarre playoff game, a battle of the sexes has erupted across the Hudson, and the epicenter is an isolated New Jersey phone booth, where George, Katie, and Rita dial up the truth over slices of stolen pizza and a little piece of history.

Suburban Peepshow

by James Comtois

6-8 Males, 2 Females

Synopsis: Bill is a husband, father, and professional. But this week, a cross dressing social deviant gets fired at the office and Bill is poised to step into his position. The promotion all but guarantees new dishtowels for the wife, and the in-ground pool for son Jeremy. But a New Girl in the office has designs for Bill, and he ain't gonna pass it up... if you know what I mean. Who can blame him with his wife contemplating jumping the Pool Guy, a strange Carnie Barker interrupting dinner, and the occasion Gladiator battle waiting at home. It all depends on how the Playwright is feeling tonight.

LIZARD BRAINS

a play in one-act

by Mark Scharf

LIZARD BRAINS

CAST OF CHARACTERS

LISA

Mid/late 20's, a bookstore manager.

COREY

Mid/late 20's, lead guitar player for a rock band in the early stages of success and LISA's former live-in lover.

TIME

An early afternoon in the winter of the present.

PLACE

Lisa's apartment in a suburb of Washington, D.C.

LIZARD BRAINS was first produced at The Miranda Theatre Company in New York City in early 1995 during The Moonshine Series.

Directed by Jerry Mettner

LISA Valentina Fratti

COREY Earle Hugens

LIZARD BRAINS was later produced during the summer of 1995 at The Fells Point Corner Theatre, Baltimore, Maryland as part of the 14th Baltimore Playwrights Festival.

Directed by William Kamberger

LISA Claudia Berman

COREY Tony Reda

Lizard Brains is a Finalist for the 2008 Arts and Letters Prize in Drama and the winner of the Best Original Production, Northern Virginia Theatre Alliance Festival, 2008.

For Marianne Germaine...

LIZARD BRAINS

A Play in One Act

(The light of the early afternoon of a winter's day struggles to enter an apartment bedroom through venetian blinds. A feminine touch to the decor is visible beneath the clutter.)

(The debris from a passionate evening are scattered about the room: half empty glasses and wine /champagne bottles, candles burnt down and out or still faintly glowing in the semi-darkness, and shoes and clothes dropped about the room. In one corner DS, an electric guitar case stands propped against a wall.)

(Somewhere under and through the tangle of sheets and covers on the bed a man and woman hold on to each other in sleep. The WOMAN stirs and slowly sits up holding a sheet around her against the cold with one hand and her head in the other. The MAN doesn't move.)

(The WOMAN raises her head and looks about the room and slowly breaks into a big, wide smile. SHE turns to find the MAN in the bed and lovingly strokes the hair from his forehead. The MAN groans slightly then rolls over.)

(The WOMAN sits back up and strains to reach across to a hard-backed chair for her robe. SHE puts it on as SHE stands up, shivering against the cold.)

(SHE crosses to a window and peeks out at the day through the slats of the blinds. SHE lets the blinds close as SHE turns and surveys the wreckage in the room. SHE starts gathering clothes from the floor picking her way over to the DS corner where the guitar case stands.)

(When SHE reaches the guitar case SHE stops and stands before it frozen. After a moment, SHE takes a quick glance back towards the sleeping MAN in the bed, then all at once drops all the clothes gathered in her arms onto the floor.)

(SHE kneels before the guitar case then reaches out to it and brings it down onto the floor beside her. SHE runs her hands along the front of the case until her fingers find the latches and then SHE flips open the latches one at a time, sneaking a peak behind her at the sleeping MAN after the snap of each latch opening.)

(SHE opens the case and stares for a moment at the electric guitar inside, its strap laid across it like a diplomat's sash. SHE reaches into the case with both hands and carefully lifts the guitar out and cradles it in her lap.)

(SHE runs her hands around its contours and down the strings along its neck. SHE gets to her feet, holding it before her, and throws the strap around her shoulder and slips its leather ends around the knobs on the guitar. SHE then lets go of the guitar and feels its weight as it hangs from the strap over her shoulder and around her back.)

(Her left hand finds the neck and its fingers curl around to find the strings while her right hand moves to the strings over the pickups. SHE tentatively, quietly picks at a few strings with her thumb, checking to see if the tinny unamplified sounds disturb the sleeping MAN. HE sleeps on.)

(SHE begins to pose and then move with the guitar, and becomes bolder as SHE imitates all of the cliché rock n' roll guitar player moves and stances, making faces at an invisible audience.)

(SHE tries to duck walk a la Chuck Berry across the floor, at which point the MAN rolls over onto his back and raises himself up on his elbow to see what's going on.)

(SHE doesn't see that he's watching her at first, and freezes when SHE sees him sitting up in bed.)

LISA: Hi.

COREY: Good morning.

LISA: It's afternoon... actually.

(Small PAUSE.)

COREY: How late in the afternoon?

LISA: Uh, I don't know exactly... *(SHE awkwardly crosses to a bureau, trying to keep the guitar from swinging while walking, and picks up her wristwatch.)* It's one-thirty.

COREY: *(Visibly relaxing.)* Okay.

LISA: Why? Do you have to be somewhere?

COREY: I always have to "be somewhere." Don't you remember?

LISA: I remember.

COREY: Don't you have to go into your store today?

LISA: Not today.

COREY: I thought Saturday was a big business day. Lots of books being bought by a public thirsty for knowledge.

LISA: Thirsty for gossip and trash.

COREY: You really haven't changed.

LISA: Not entirely.

COREY: Not at all.

(Small PAUSE.)

LISA: Aren't you going to ask me what I'm doing with your guitar?

COREY: Nope.

LISA: No?

COREY: The Chuck Berry moves are a little passé.

LISA: Smart ass. How long were you watching?

COREY: Not long. Enough to know you weren't imitating me.

LISA: Don't flatter yourself.

COREY: It looked to me like your basic, generic, every day rock guitar moves.

LISA: I don't remember asking for a critique.

COREY: You know, I don't remember you ever playing air guitar around me.

LISA: Air guitar?

COREY: You know. Like guys in high school when they're listening to music. (*HE demonstrates a little.*) Isn't that something you've dreamed about doing?

LISA: No.

COREY: I guess it's a "guy" thing.

LISA: Yea. I guess all the guys want to be where you are now.

COREY: I know I do. (*Small PAUSE.*) So, what were you doing?

LISA: I was just curious.

COREY: About what?

LISA: How it felt.

COREY: So, how does it feel?

LISA: Heavy. This thing weighs a ton. I don't know how you can stand it pulling on your neck.

COREY: Why don't you put her back in her case.

LISA: Are you afraid I'll hurt it?

COREY: You won't. Not unless you want to.

LISA: It would make sense, in a way if I trashed it.

COREY: How so?

LISA: I'd be getting rid of the competition. What do you call it?

COREY: "Her." It's a "her." Her name is "Louise."

LISA: There was a time I'd have taken great pleasure in smashing Louise into a million pieces.

COREY: Well, as much as I'd hate to lose that guitar, it can be replaced.

LISA: Success has spoiled you. (*SHE crosses to the guitar case and unstraps the guitar.*) You used to threaten to kill me if I even touched her.

COREY: I was young and passionate. Now, I'm old and passionate.

(*LISA places the guitar carefully back in its case.*)

LISA: Yea, you're a fossil now. A rock dinosaur.

(*SHE finishes putting the guitar away and closes the case.*)

COREY: Coming back to bed?

LISA: I thought you had to be somewhere.

COREY: Eventually.

LISA: Band related business, or some other woman?

COREY: Would you believe me if I said rehearsal?

LISA: I don't know. Should I?

COREY: Well, like everything else, that's up to you.

LISA: What do you mean?

COREY: Just what I said. I can't make you believe what I say. I can't make you do anything. And I don't want to. What you do is up to you.

LISA: Success has mellowed you too.

COREY: That's right. I'm spoiled and I'm mellow, and I'm not going to fight with you.

LISA: I'm not fighting.

COREY: No. But you're trying to start one.

LISA: No, I'm not.

COREY: Okay, okay. Maybe not. Could be just the way I'm seeing things right now. Sure you don't want to get back into bed? It's cold outside of these covers.

LISA: I don't know. Right now I just want... I just want to stand here and look at you. I never thought I'd see you there again.

COREY: Well, I'm here.

LISA: I'm not sure if it's a good thing or not.

COREY: Me either, if you want to be honest about it.

LISA: Why not?

COREY: Same reasons you probably have. Our, uh... Our history together.

(SHE wanders over to the chair and sits down.)

LISA: I really surprised you, didn't I? You didn't expect to see me last night.

COREY: No.

LISA: "No" what?

COREY: What do you mean?

LISA: "No -- you didn't expect to see me," or "No, I didn't surprise you."

COREY: For God's sake. I just woke up, Lisa...

LISA: Which is it?

(Small PAUSE. HE sighs.)

COREY: You really surprised me, and no, I sure didn't expect to see you.

LISA: I see.

COREY: Isn't that what you wanted me to say?

LISA: If it's the truth.

COREY: It's the truth.

(SHE stands and wanders away.)

LISA: To be honest, I was more than a little surprised myself. When I first heard that you guys were coming back to town I thought I'd just ignore it. But then, it was like everywhere I turned there was something in the paper or on the radio or TV. I couldn't escape being reminded that you were going to be here. And I started thinking about it -- you. And me.

COREY: I'm glad you came.

LISA: Are you, Corey? I mean... are you really glad?

COREY: Yea, sure.

LISA: You didn't look glad last night. You looked... scared.

COREY: I was surprised.

LISA: Why?

COREY: I didn't expect to see you again.

LISA: Ever?

COREY: Well... You never know.

LISA: Why didn't you think you'd ever see me again?

COREY: What's with you this morning?

LISA: Answer my question.

COREY: What's the point?

LISA: I'd like to know.

COREY: You know damn well.

LISA: Do I?

COREY: Yea. You do.

LISA: You tell me.

COREY: I thought we weren't going to open any old wounds.

LISA: We're not.

COREY: So, let's just drop this, okay?

LISA: I'm only curious. Everybody sees things differently. I already know how I remember things.

COREY: Leave it alone, Lisa.

LISA: You don't have to be defensive.

COREY: I'm not being defensive. I'm being practical.

LISA: You were never practical. I was always the practical one.

COREY: It's part of the new me.

LISA: *(Lost in thought.)* The new you.

COREY: You seemed to like me last night.

LISA: I did.

COREY: Come back to bed.

LISA: Let's... Why don't we... *(SHE crosses to the side of the bed and kneels on it beside him.)* Why don't we...

(HE pulls her to him and kisses her, SHE kisses him back.)

COREY: Why don't we what?

LISA: Why don't we go do something together?

COREY: We can do lots of things right here.

LISA: We've already explored those possibilities.

COREY: Worth doing again, aren't they?

LISA: Let's do something with the rest of the day.

COREY: It's cold out there.

LISA: You'll live.

COREY: As soon as you get outside you're going to wish you were right here. All warm and cozy... and close.

(HE leans to her again, but SHE backs off the bed and pulls on his arm.)

LISA: C'mon, Corey. Let's go play.

COREY: Play?

LISA: Yea. We can catch snow flakes on our tongues. Make snow angels... Make a snowman and a snow woman. We don't have that much time. *(SHE stops pulling but doesn't let go.)* Do we?

COREY: We have a little time.

LISA: Let's not waste it.

COREY: Maybe I should go ahead and take a shower here.

LISA: All right.

COREY: I guess I don't need to shave...

LISA: Let me do it.

COREY: What?