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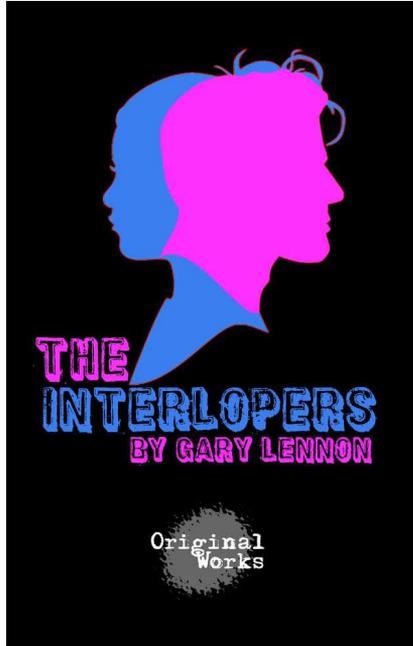
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To Whom It May Concern
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The Interlopers by Gary Lennon

Synopsis: *The Interlopers* is a *Romeo and Juliet* story set in the transgender world of Los Angeles. Through the theme of identity, the play explores a group of unique misfits who call themselves family, and who are brave enough to challenge the obstacle course called life. Examining these singular and special people, the play follows them on their journeys to being their whole and authentic selves.

Cast Size: 6 Males, 2 Females

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

By Aurin Squire

To Whom It May Concern was first produced in the 2006 Fresh Fruit Festival in New York City at the Abingdon Theatre. Carol Polcovar, Artistic Director of Fresh Fruit Festival. The production was directed by Erick Herrscher and won festival awards for Best Play, Best Writing, and Best Actor (Ted Caine). The cast was as follows:

LORENZO LAFARHOFF: Ted Caine

MAURICE CREELY: Vincent Ingrisano

To Whom It May Concern received a second production at Arclight Theatre in New York City on March 2008. The production was directed by David Gaard. The cast was as follows:

LORENZO LAFARHOFF: Israel Gutierrez

MAURICE CREELY: Matthew Alford

CHARACTERS

1. Lorenzo Lafarhoff – 15-year-old rural boy
2. Maurice Creely – 20-year-old soldier

TIME

The play takes place in the time period of America's invasion of Afghanistan, roughly between 2003-2015.

STORY

To Whom It May Concern is an epistolary play about transcendent and oft-kilter ways of love and internet relationships. When a 15-year-old boy writes a letter to a soldier and is confused for an older woman, a series of seductive exchanges begins.

NOTES ON STAGING

The play can be staged in a variety of flexible and creative ways. When characters write letters, e-mails or instant messages, the act should be performed with fluidity. Direct address to the audience is probably the smoothest way, but most certainly not the only way. That said, miming the writing or texting without a prop in hand is not preferable. During heightened scenes or to emphasize certain moments, these suggestions can be modified or ignored as seen fit. For instant messaging, the characters can speak out the abbreviations and symbols. Emoticons are printed in bold.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

SCENE ONE: FIRST LETTER

(Abilene, Kansas and Kabul, Afghanistan.

LORENZO LAFARHOFF, 15, sits in his bedroom writing a letter.

MAURICE A. CREELY, a 20-year-old with glasses, eats cookies and reads the letter.)

LORENZO: To Whom It May Concern at the 1st Marine Division of the United States Armed Forces, I read an article in the Abilene Chronicle and wished to contact Sgt. Maurice A. Creely. I found his rescue story very cool. And I'm not going to lie: I also liked the picture attached to it. I guess you can say this is a fan letter. I'm a student at Carter High School in Abilene, Kansas. I've enclosed a sealed batch of chocolate oatmeal cookies. Hopefully, you can get them to Sgt. Creely before they rot. The army might have a strict policy on packages, but I'd really like to get this to him. Let me know. I have his picture hanging by my bed.

Yours truly,

LL

MAURICE: Dear LL, It is always nice to get a fan letter, especially from a young woman who sounds as sweet as you. And just so you know the army may have a strict policy on receiving packages but I wouldn't know because I'm not in the army. I'm in the Marines. There is a difference. But...no big deal, just an FYI. Anyway, thank you for the cookies. They were delicious. I bet you are too. Ha ha. But seriously. The desert is hot and there are so many bugs it is disgusting. I try not to think about it. Instead I try to picture pretty things. In fact I'm trying to get a picture of you in my head. Do you have one? I would like to see it. I bet you are really...cute. By the way, are you going to be 18 any time soon?

Sincerely,

Maurice Creely

LORENZO: Dear Sgt. Creely, you seem to be under some misconception about me. Perhaps it is my fault. I was hoping that you might be...your sensitivity led me to believe that there was a slight –not great but miniscule- chance that you would be interested in me. I realize you might never want to speak to me again but I can't lie...

(Beat)

LORENZO: I'm one hot teenage girl. I'm 17, so I guess I'm not a girl, not yet a woman. But I will be. Any day now I will blossom into a beautiful young

woman. My buds are ripening as I write. Post me back. Please.

Sincerely,

LL... Lillian.

MAURICE: Dear Lillian, I don't know why you would think I would want to stop receiving your letters. Besides your cooking is so delicious I think my entire unit would kill me if I stopped talking to you. I've been telling them all about you and they agree: you are one special almost-legal teenager. I mean, who bakes stuff and mails them to Marines they don't even know? No one. Who takes the time to pick out a lonely...lone face in a crowd and write them a letter? No one even cares about the thousands getting killed. I thought everybody had forgotten about us out here. Your letters give me hope that maybe that's not true. I know I see you, Lillian. And I want to continue seeing you. Especially when you...turn 18. Ha-ha-ha. But seriously: don't stop writing. Yours are the only letters I get. I want to know everything about you. And a picture would be nice, too. I don't know if you have a computer or not, but we should e-mail each other. It'd be a lot quicker way of getting to know each other...

(LORENZO and MAURICE move to computers.)

LORENZO: ... I get all wet and moist inside and slip my fingers between my...

(LORENZO flips through an anatomy book and cringes.)

LORENZO: ...labia majora. It feels so good when I rub my...vestibule and clitoris. My vulva gets all tingly and then I explode, shuddering and biting down into my pillow hard. Then I melt like a little kitten, falling asleep thinking about how good you make me feel.

(Beat)

MAURICE: Thank you for the e-mail.

LORENZO: You're welcome. This is a lot quicker than writing. This past month has been so good.

MAURICE: Lillian, I can't stand looking at pictures anymore. When are you going video chat?

LORENZO: I prefer you see me. I've left a ladder by my window just for you. I have to go meet...a friend at the bus stop. For now, I've sent you another sweet treat.

MAURICE: *(taking out her panties)* Thank you for the latest treat. I don't think I'll be sharing this dessert with the unit. Do you have some way we could talk more directly, like instant messaging?

(They switch to instant messaging.)

MAURICE: So good to finally meet you in cyberspace **(smiley face)**.

LORENZO: (**smiley face**) likewise. Btw, if you ever want to talk always here at my computer around this time...after cheerleading practice.

MAURICE: Cheerleading practice? BFG.

LORENZO: What's that?

MAURICE: Big fucking grin.

LORENZO: Well AAP, A3: always a pleasure. Anytime, anyplace, anywhere. Have to leave in a minute but Maurice, u know what I'd do 2 u if you were here. I'd like to...

MAURICE: Oh, now, DEGT. Don't even go there! (*out of the side of his mouth*) Lieutenant is looking over my shoulder and I think he knows about our cyber-love. Don't want 2 make him jealous. I think he likes me.

LORENZO: What?

MAURICE: I think he's a H-O-M-O.

LORENZO: Really?

MAURICE: I know. CYBI: can u believe it?

LORENZO: ICB: I can. Is he cute?

MAURICE: What? You're funny.

LORENZO: Ha-ha, I know. But seriously...would you describe him as...

MAURICE: I don't know. Yeah, I guess he could be considered that. But I'm more interested in seeing a picture of you.

LORENZO: Soon enough. But let's get back 2 this lieutenant.

MAURICE: Come on, Lil...

LORENZO: Don't be shy, this is interesting to me. Is this the same lieutenant as the 1 in the article w/ u?

MAURICE: Yeah.

LORENZO: Maybe he just admires u.

MAURICE: He's got no reason 2.

LORENZO: Course he does. You did something very brave.

MAURICE: That was weeks ago.

LORENZO: Once a hero, always a hero.

MAURICE: U think I'm a hero?

LORENZO: You're a total bad-ass.

MAURICE: Don't really see myself as that sort of guy.

LORENZO: Try seeing yourself differently.

MAURICE: Who am I trying for?

LORENZO: 4 me.

MAURICE: ...okay. 4 U I'd do it. So how about giving ur
hero some video play?

LORENZO: U really want 1?

MAURICE: Yes! Hop to it, woman.

LORENZO: Yessir. I guess you'll eventually have to see
me.

MAURICE: No time like the present.

LORENZO: BRB.

*(LORENZO grabs his digital camera and takes a few pic-
tures.)*

LORENZO: Gonna send u a pic first.

MAURICE: What? I thought u were-

LORENZO: It's a pic of my friend. Tell me what u think.

MAURICE: -No, Lil.

LORENZO: HOAS.

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: Hold on a second.

MAURICE: Wow, ur text vocab is huge.

LORENZO: Well I use it a lot. I can talk entirely in acronyms and emojis if I want to. Tell me what u think of this guy?

MAURICE: Lillian, the only picture I want 2 see is yours.

LORENZO: In a second. Maurice, if this lieutenant is H-O-M-O would that be such a bad thing?

MAURICE: No.

LORENZO: Good.

MAURICE: I just don't want those people around me.

LORENZO: PXT, please explain that.

MAURICE: They stay in their place and I can stay in mine.

LORENZO: And what is their place?

MAURICE: Away from me.

LORENZO: Look, I know you guys have this big macho image to uphold being in the army-

MAURICE: -Marines.

LORENZO: -right, whatever but-

MAURICE: -no, baby. It's not whatever. You've done this a few times in our conversation and I've let it slide. Because I like u.

LORENZO: Fine, but-

MAURICE: -there is a big difference. Look: labels are very important. What we call ourselves. What we call others, what we say we believe in. It's very much not a 'whatever' thing. If a guys says he's in the Navy and u keep calling him Coast Guard Bill, he's going 2 get upset. Because he had to earn that label.

LORENZO: Ok, well what if they was born w/ it? Let's say Bill was born into the Navy. Even though he didn't necessarily want to be in it, he was labeled as a seaman.

MAURICE: LOL, **(smiley face)** U said seaman.

LORENZO: **(smiley face)** Anyway he was born w/ a label and expected to spend his whole life at sea. Let's say this person wanted to be on solid ground. In the Marines.

MAURICE: Now ur talking. Well, I'd tell him 2 go sign up.

LORENZO: But what if he couldn't do it, Maurice. What if he couldn't just sign up?

MAURICE: Why not?

LORENZO: Because. He couldn't be on dry land.

MAURICE: Are you talking about somebody like Aquaman? Or something like that?

LORENZO: (*sighing*) OMG...sure. Like Aquaman.

MAURICE: So...Aquaman is in the Navy...

LORENZO: Or something.

MAURICE: But he wants 2B in the Marines? PXT, because I'm confused, I think ur mixing ur analogies.

LORENZO: He wants 2B on land. His family lives on land. They don't understand why he can't come in from sea. They think he's sick, so they send him to a doctor. And when he refuses to get better, when he can't get better, they don't want him any more. They think he's disgusting, b/c of the label he was born with. When he tries to explain they scream. When he tries to touch them, to hug them, they beat him. But they don't understand he would change if he could. Because it's lonely out there.

MAURICE: Can't he find other sea creatures?

LORENZO: None his age. Most of them are hiding. And the creatures he bumps into out there are old and mean. Their skin is wrinkled like prunes and they don't care about him. They've been alone in the ocean for so long that they've forgotten how 2 treat each other. And I...he knows that he's going to become like them. If he doesn't find a way 2 get 2 land or another creature as kind and caring as him, he's going 2B lost at sea. And he doesn't want that cu then he really will be corrupted.

MAURICE: This creature could always...kill himself.

LORENZO: What?

MAURICE: If they are doomed 2B unhappy their whole life why not spare themselves? Why die a thousand deaths when you can die 1?

(Beat)

MAURICE: We're still talking about sea creatures, right?

(Beat)

MAURICE: LL?

LORENZO: IGR.

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: I gotta run. Meeting a friend in the park.

MAURICE: Lillian, who are all these friends UR meeting in parks? And why can't they just come back to UR house? Wait, are U trying to make me jealous?

(LORENZO puts condoms and lotion in a backpack.)

MAURICE: Lillian.

LORENZO: Maybe we shouldn't speak 2 each other 4 a while.

MAURICE: Cuz why?

LORENZO: Cuz I don't feel like talking to U.

MAURICE: Cuz why?

LORENZO: Cuz you're not the sensitive person I thought U were.

MAURICE: Wait. What just happened? Did I do something? If so, I can make it up to U. I sent U a package yesterday.

LORENZO: GFY.

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: Go. Fuck. Yourself.

MAURICE: LL?

LORENZO: Army brat.

MAURICE: That's not even correct terminology.

LORENZO: Then how bout army boy? Or how bout closeted army faggot.

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: U heard me, army fag.

MAURICE: Lillian they monitor our computers.

LORENZO: Good, then they'll know that UR an army fag. Maybe U and the lieutenant can

MAURICE: -hey, fuck U, bitch.

LORENZO: -yeah, fuck me and fuck U. Guess we finally agreed on something.

MAURICE: But Lillian, what's going on? Whatever it is, it can be worked out. UR the only...please. I need to speak to U. What am I supposed to do?

LORENZO: Well, I guess U should take UR own advice.

MAURICE: And what's that?

LORENZO: Kill yourself.

SCENE TWO: STORM

(MAURICE walks in with shawl around his head. A sandstorm rages outside while in Kansas, a thunderstorm is passing overhead. MAURICE sits down on his bed and unwraps his shawl.)

MAURICE: Lillian? U there?

(Beat)

MAURICE: U said U were normally online at around this time so I thought I would try. I got an internet hook up to my personal computer by my bed. So we can say whatever we want now. There's a sandstorm outside. All operations have been grounded. Not even the suicide bombers are out today. You can't see your own hands. You ever been in a sandstorm? The air becomes this ocean of yellow and it feels like a hundred glass needles are sticking every inch of your body. On your nose, on your toes, in your eyes all these tiny needles. And every time you breathe, you inhale these needles and it burns your chest and head. You sweat and sand clumps together and runs down your face in little streams. I got all these rivers of dirt and sand running down my arms and chest. I feel like I'm being buried alive.

(Beat)

MAURICE: Look, I'm sorry. I thought about what I said. No one should be ashamed of who they r or label. I really like you and we have nothing to be ashamed of.

So there, r u happy: I don't think Aquaman should kill himself.

(LORENZO enters, with ripped clothes and dripping wet. He's searching under the bed for something.)

MAURICE: If you're there...TMB. That's text me back. I've been chatting and increasing my txt message vocab. I'm sure I'm not at your level yet. I mean that in a lot of ways. Well, I guess you're not there. WWYC. Write When You Can.

LORENZO: Maurice, hey. LTNS.

MAURICE: Long Time No See back at you. How are you?

LORENZO: Wet. Incredibly wet.

MAURICE: **(smiley face, wink, wink)**

LORENZO: Not like that, perv. Came in from a storm.

MAURICE: Me 2.

LORENZO: It's raining over there?

MAURICE: Sandstorm.

LORENZO: What's that like?

MAURICE: *(sarcastic)* Fun.

LORENZO: Wish you were here.

MAURICE: I wish I was there 2.

LORENZO: Your family must miss u.

MAURICE: Don't know.

LORENZO: Y not?

MAURICE: They got their own lives. Hey, wanna cyber-sex, **(smiley face wink)**?

LORENZO: ... **(frown)** Not really.

MAURICE: Come on, it'll be fun.

LORENZO: Not in the mood, dude.

MAURICE: Lil, is this about last time? Look, I'm sorry about what I said.

LORENZO: It's not you. Daddy issues.

MAURICE: Ahhh, family crap. Feel your pain.

LORENZO: U2?

MAURICE: 1 of the reasons I joined the Marines.

LORENZO: Really? What about ur Mom?

MAURICE: Gone.

LORENZO: What?

MAURICE: Left when I was in high school.

LORENZO: That's fucked up.

MAURICE: You get used to fucked up things.

LORENZO: Brothers and sister?

MAURICE: 1 Gone. Don't ask.

LORENZO: What happened?

MAURICE: What did I just say?

LORENZO: Sorry...brother or sister?

MAURICE: You really don't know how to follow orders.

LORENZO: Yeah, one of my problems. So...

MAURICE: Brother. Younger. Dead.

LORENZO: Sorry. Dad?

MAURICE: Wish he was dead.

LORENZO: Same here. Maybe. I like my mom better.

MAURICE: Same.

LORENZO: So why did yours leave?

MAURICE: Never said. Guess she just got tired. Woke up one morning. Drank some coffee and walked out.

LORENZO: Creepy. I thought only Dads did shit like that.

MAURICE: Everybody leaves. Eventually. Only fucked up thing is she left the water on in the tub. It was like it was raining in my room. Water was running down the stairs. It took two weeks to dry out everything. And then the mold. On the ceilings, inside the walls, everything stank. Her clothes and stuff were all on her closet floor and they got covered with these green moldy spores.

LORENZO: So she didn't take anything?

MAURICE: 1 thing. It was coming up on a year since my brother was buried. We had a picture of him on a mantel piece that she took that.

LORENZO: What a jerk.

MAURICE: Hey! That's my mother.

LORENZO: Sorry. But it's true.

MAURICE: ...yeah.

LORENZO: If anybody ever did that to me I'd fucking hunt them down.

MAURICE: No, u wouldn't.

LORENZO: I'd hunt them down and, and... blow their fucking brains out.

MAURICE: No, u wouldn't, Lillian. Your too sweet and nice.

LORENZO: Maurice, I'm not that nice.

LORENZO: Maurice, I'm not that nice.

MAURICE: Yeah, u r. That's why u can forgive me so easily.

LORENZO: I haven't forgiven u yet.

MAURICE: But u will.

LORENZO: And how do u know?

MAURICE: Cuz. I'm ur bad-ass hero.

LORENZO: Oh really?

MAURICE: Yeah...I mean, if u want me 2 B.

LORENZO: Maurice, that's not the way a bad-ass hero talks.

MAURICE: I'm in training. I've been working on being...better. B/c of u. I'm trying 2 improve myself, for u. Trying 2 change.

LORENZO: But why? But u haven't even met me.

MAURICE: I think we've met each other. In some way.
And I want to be smarter, funnier, and just...more for
you.

LORENZO: Don't be more. I'm sorry 4 being so shitty. I
hope u can forgive me.

MAURICE: Always. U know, I've never been 2 Kansas.

LORENZO: Not missing much. Can't wait 2 get out of
this fucking city. This state. The douchebag heartland
of America. Pickup trucks, belt buckles, fried chicken
and fat-ass retards with their fat-ass wives and their
fat-ass greasy kids.

MAURICE: Is something wrong today?

LORENZO: Just venting. Maybe I could go 2 Kabul.

MAURICE: LOL. Are u serious?

LORENZO: Y not? I can get work. And they can't be set-
ting off bombs on every corner. And I'll wear one of
those burkhas. Nobody will see my face or know my
name. Just you and me.

MAURICE: Lillian, it's just sand and caves. Can't even
understand how these people have been living out
here. There's no atmosphere.

LORENZO: That sounds nice.

MAURICE: During the day it's an oven and then at night it's a freezer.

LORENZO: Just want to get out of this town.

MAURICE: You feel like an outsider? Like that Aquaman?

LORENZO: LOL, I guess.

MAURICE: Lillian, it will pass. When I was younger-

LORENZO: -aren't u only 19? I mean u still can't order wine.

MAURICE: 20, and don't interrupt ur elders.

LORENZO: Sorry.

MAURICE: The point is that I felt exactly like U2.

LORENZO: And what did u do about it?

MAURICE: Joined the Marines.

LORENZO: Then I guess it worked out 4 U. UR name is in the paper, U won some medals and now UR a hero.

MAURICE: Yeah, listen Lil. I'm not a bad-ass hero.

LORENZO: Not yet. But U got UR learner's permit.

MAURICE: No, I'm serious.

LORENZO: If I did anything even slightly cool I'd brag 2 everybody.

MAURICE: It's just pure chance who gets in the newspaper. That's all it was. LL, don't join the Marines. Being on dry land isn't what it's cracked up to be. Stay out at sea.

LORENZO: W/ who?

MAURICE: Have some time off soon. Going home to St. Louis. I could take a bus out 2 Kansas.

LORENZO: Ummm...don't inconvenience yourself.

MAURICE: No inconvenience. What else do I have 2 do?

LORENZO: U got friends u want 2 visit?

MAURICE: A few.

LORENZO: Sure u gotta bunch of girls hanging around.

MAURICE: Lillian, my life is a really bad country Western song. My dog died. My mom left. U R it. My only contact w/ someone real. This is for real. At least that's what I think. Don't know how U feel.

LORENZO: Yeah. It's real.

MAURICE: So when I get there...if I get there...I'll finally get 2 CU.

LORENZO: Well, let's talk about that later. We gotta plan it out. Gotta know so I can get myself ready.

MAURICE: What does a young, hot woman like urself have 2 prepare? U gotta fix UR face?

LORENZO: Among other things.

MAURICE: You're just being shy.

LORENZO: Actually I have finals around that time. Studying and preparing to go to college. Don't want you to come all the way out here and be disappointed. Wouldn't want you wasting your time on me.

MAURICE: It wouldn't be a waste **(smiley face)**.

LORENZO: **(smiley face)** I'm sorry 4 telling U2 GFY.

MAURICE: I was more offended by the army reference.

MAURICE: And I'm sorry 4 what I said. Aquaman should live. And all his descendants.

LORENZO: So now we've made up.

MAURICE: Almost. We still have 1 thing 2 do. **(smiley face, wink wink)**

LORENZO: I thought U couldn't because they monitored UR computer.

MAURICE: Everyone sexts. U get the package I sent?

LORENZO: (*taking out jock strap*) Yes, thank u. I sleep w/ every night.

MAURICE: Whaddya do w/?

LORENZO: Rub it.

MAURICE: Where?

LORENZO: On my vulva.

MAURICE: LL...could you...

LORENZO: What is it, MAC68?

MAURICE: When you talk about 'stuff,' be a little less clinical.

LORENZO: LOL. Okay, Big Mo. I take your hot, sweaty jock strap and I rub it on my...vagina.

MAURICE: A little bit better...what else...

LORENZO: And then I let it slide down my, my...pussy lips...

MAURICE: Now you're talking! That's it LL, what else do you do?

LORENZO: Uh-uh, not so fast, cowboy. First tell me what you do with my package?

MAURICE :...let it slide all up and down my...bod.
Across my 6-pac abs, and over my pulsating pecs,
between my hairy thighs...

LORENZO: Yes, yes...

MAURICE: ...then I wrap it around...my .45 magnum.

LORENZO: Yeah, I do the same.

MAURICE: ...?

LORENZO: LOL, jk, joking. I mean I press it into my
moist, sweet...vulva

MAURICE: (**frown**) Lil-

LORENZO: -cunt. I meant my slick hawt quivering cunt.
I press ur jock n2 my sweet warm. And I see u,
sneaking n2 my bed. Real quiet like a panther ready 2
pounce on me.

MAURICE: And u under me...

LORENZO: And I'm rolling...

MAURICE: And writhing. Grinding, sweaty and hot...

LORENZO: ...pounding me, harder and harder...

MAURICE: You're so sweet,
and soft, and gentle. I kiss
ur breast and neck as I'm
inside. You arch ur back
like a cat, oh yes, tell me
ur 18...tell me you've
turned 18...yes! Oh, I'm
coming, I'm coming...
*(he exhales in a long
sigh)*...XOXO

LORENZO: ...me feeling
on ur chest, rubbing
my hands across ur
hair, down ur stomach,
I can feel u inside me,
hot. All muscle and
sand, gritty and sweat-
ing. I'm 18, I'm legal,
I'm legal!!! Oh, I'm
coming... *(he exhales)*
Nighty nite. TTYL,
XOXO

MAURICE: LL? Lillian? I can't wait any longer.

SCENE THREE: CREEP

(LORENZO is asleep. MAURICE opens the window and climbs in. He places his bag on the floor and begins taking off his clothes.)

MAURICE: Here I am, Lil. Your desert soldier in the night. Sorry it took so long to get here. Getting extended leave is a bitch. But now that I'm here, I'm going to do it just like we talked about. I even got a blindfold from a NAVY SEAL, you know, if you want to make it more mysterious.

(LORENZO moans and shifts under the covers. MAURICE crawls into bed and rolls the covers over their heads.)

MAURICE: Here I am, Lil. Whew! You kinda big...but that's all right...now turn around and let me get a look at those big brown eyes...

(MAURICE explodes out of the bed.)

MAURICE: Wait, wait...listen, kid. I'm sorry. I thought...I mean...

LORENZO: Please don't hurt me.

MAURICE: No, no, I'm not-

LORENZO: -I won't make a sound. Just take whatever you want.

MAURICE: I climbed in the wrong window.

LORENZO: What?

MAURICE: Be calm. I'm looking for Lillian Lafarhoff.

LORENZO: Huh?

MAURICE: Kid, I'm her...friend. And I was just looking to play a...joke...

LORENZO: Maurice.

(LORENZO turns on the light.)

MAURICE: Yes, that's my name, kid. Just don't call the cops.

LORENZO: You had a look in your eyes like one of those tweaking meth heads who forgets where he is and chops up a whole family while they sleep in their beds like this story I just read about it. Saw about it. One of those news clips online, so I say read when I actually mean watching online. But you're not a crazy meth head who's gonna chop me up so it's cool.

MAURICE: Wait...how do you know my name? *(Door closing off-stage.)*

LORENZO: Hide.

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: I just heard my parent's door open down the hall.

(LORENZO throws the covers over him. LORENZO opens the door and light from the hallway comes in. After a moment, the light goes out. LORENZO locks the door.)

MAURICE: Safe to come out?

LORENZO: Is it ever?

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: I said just a second. Dad just...walking back from the bathroom.

(He grabs MAURICE's gift jock strap and shoves it under the bed. MAURICE uncovers himself.)

LORENZO: Hi, I'm Lorenzo.

MAURICE: I'm Maurice...but you already know that.

LORENZO: Yeah.

MAURICE: How do you know that?

LORENZO: Because. I'm Lillian's younger brother. She's spoken of you as a...friend.

MAURICE: Yes, me and her are just good friends.

(MAURICE becomes aware that he isn't wearing pants. He puts them on. LORENZO grabs a robe for himself.)

MAURICE: I was just...playing a practical joke on her by sneaking up here. Thought her bedroom was here.

LORENZO: Huh?

MAURICE: The window was open.

LORENZO: I like to sleep that way sometimes.

MAURICE: Right. Well...that was pretty funny.

LORENZO: Yeah...

MAURICE: I mean we almost...

LORENZO: (*depressed*) ...if it had only been a little bit darker.

MAURICE: Yeah, and you've got really smooth skin.

LORENZO: Thanks.

MAURICE: OH! Not that I'm...I mean, it's just an observation.

LORENZO: I use three different types of acne medication. I've got the bar, the cream, and I make my own facial scrub. Twice a day. You really like my skin?

MAURICE: It was just an observation...it's soft...like a woman. Is Lillian home?

LORENZO: Is Lillian home?

MAURICE: Your sister.

LORENZO: Yes, my sister. She should be home in a little bit.

MAURICE: Isn't it kind of late for her to be out?

LORENZO: Isn't it kind of late? Yes.

MAURICE: Why do you keep repeating what I say?

LORENZO: Why do I keep...I'm joking. It's a nervous habit when I'm trying to think of something to say. Otherwise if I don't, I just...

(LORENZO stares at him for a long time.)

LORENZO: And that's when people get nervous, like you just did. So I figured it's better to just keep shoveling coal into the ol' furnace. Even when the train isn't going anywhere. Keep the pistons pumping, the jets blazing, the feet jogging.

MAURICE: What is your sister doing out so late?

LORENZO: Cheerleading practice.

MAURICE At 11:30 at night?

LORENZO: After practice she hangs out with the cheersluts. She's really dedicated. I told her that it's just cheerleading but she was like all, 'shut up. I love to cheer. Yay!' But I guess it's worth it when you

look at her (*looking at him*) taut, lean muscular body. You should wait here until she comes home. We can hang out.

MAURICE: I've got a bus back to St. Louis in the morning. I can go away and then come back before then.

LORENZO: No, that's too much trouble for you. And she really wants to see you, Please don't go. She would be so disappointed.

MAURICE: I can't wait all night.

LORENZO: Of course.

MAURICE: A few minutes. So...is it Lorenzo?

LORENZO: Sure. Whatever you want.

(LORENZO dims the lights.)

MAURICE: Why did you just do that?

LORENZO: The lights hurt my eyes. I just woke up.

MAURICE: Right. So, Lorenzo...

(LORENZO hits the play button on his laptop and rock blasts. He quickly switches it off.)

MAURICE Should I hide again?

LORENZO: No, it's fine. I hit the wrong button.

MAURICE: He can't come in here, right?

LORENZO: Nope. Door is locked. And they're down the hall anyway. We only have to worry if you hear the door opening for a bathroom run. My Dad wakes up a lot. Big man. Tiny bladder.

MAURICE: That sucks.

LORENZO: If he lost some weight his belly blubber wouldn't crush his tiny bladder. But he loves the Ham & Eggery. Family goes there every Saturday. But I don't want to think about that. Just need some mellow music.

(LORENZO goes to his computer for music and something, maybe Annie Lennox.)

LORENZO: There we go. You want something to drink?

MAURICE: Some tap water.

LORENZO: Sure you don't want something like wine?

MAURICE: How do you have wine?

LORENZO: My mom and dad keep dozens of bottles of Manischewitz. I don't know why, maybe they think a wedding is going to break out at any moment. I siphon off a little from each and replace it with water. And I found one these computer towers in the trash that hollowed out as a secret case. And before you know it, ta-da!

(LORENZO drags an old computer tower from underneath. He removes the tower's face and takes out a bottle of wine. A piece of paper slips out and falls near the bed.)

MAURICE: What are you, a teenage James Bond?

LORENZO: Sometimes you have to practice a little bit of camouflage in life, you know? *(laughs)* Well of course you know that. But do you know your wines?

MAURICE: Kid, how old are you?

LORENZO: I'm 15. But I'll be 16 in two months. *(thinks)* God, that sounded so immature. I'm sorry.

MAURICE: You're 15?

LORENZO: Yes, why?

MAURICE: You seem, I don't know, too clever.

LORENZO: Blame the internet.

MAURICE: Yeah, I guess. Well be careful. When you're at a certain age you can know more than you should.

LORENZO: Drink?

MAURICE: No.

LORENZO: Why not?

MAURICE: Because I'm not 21 yet.

LORENZO: (*tilts bottle back and takes a gulp*) Yeah, that's rough. The disadvantage of siphoning is that you get like thirty different Manischewitz flavors crammed into one. Are you sure you never drank alcohol before?

MAURICE: Course I drank alcohol before.

LORENZO: Then why did you pretend you didn't?

MAURICE: I wasn't pretending. Just saying I shouldn't because I'm not 21 yet. I was trying to set a good example.

LORENZO: Thank you.

MAURICE: No problem. Can I have some water?

LORENZO: Coming right up.

(*LORENZO exits. MAURICE begins looking around at the room.*)

MAURICE: Do you have any pictures of your sister?

LORENZO: No. But why would I want a picture of my sister in my own bedroom? Kinda sick, right?

MAURICE: Maybe. So, Lorenzo-

(*LORENZO comes back in with water, handing it to him.*)

LORENZO: Here you go.

MAURICE: Thank you. So, Lorenzo...

LORENZO: You like saying that a lot, don't you?

MAURICE: Yes, it's catchy. So, what did your sister say about me?

LORENZO: She said that you were a total bad ass.

MAURICE: (*embarrassed giggle*) ...she's got a way with words, doesn't she?

LORENZO: She's a poet.

MAURICE: You're very lucky to have such a wise sister. What else did she say?

LORENZO: That you were from St. Louis. That you left high school and joined the Marines. I read the article about you.

MAURICE: (*annoyed*) Ahh, yes. 'The' article.

LORENZO: It's a great story.

MAURICE: Yeah. They always find a way.

LORENZO: What?

MAURICE: They always find a way to tell a great story. The truth is more...nuanced. Do you know what that word means?

LORENZO: I'm 15, not retarded. FYI, I'm in AP and Honors classes.

MAURICE: Okay, my bad. An Honors student. You're like the kids I used to beat up in school. The smart ones. You're probably smarter than me.

LORENZO: Yeah. Probably. So what's it like in Afghanistan?

MAURICE: Let's not get into it.

LORENZO: But you've gotta have stories. Are we ever going to leave that place?

MAURICE: Let's just drop the war. I have two weeks back in the States and I intend to get some good food, solid sleep...

LORENZO: -Maybe a little nookie.

MAURICE: ...perhaps, yes. But not with your sister. Of course. The goal is to think as little as possible about...over there.

LORENZO: I can imagine, my Mom says we're probably going to lose the whole region.

MAURICE: We're not going to lose.

LORENZO: No offense maybe 'lose' isn't the best word. It's more...nuanced, right?

MAURICE: Exactly. Things will be better off than when we first arrived. Hopefully.

LORENZO: Even with all the religious genocide and ethnic cleansing?

MAURICE: It's not religious genocide.

LORENZO: Not anymore, they already killed everybody they wanted to. All while the US watched. Just like in Iraq.

MAURICE: I'm not going to talk to a 15-year-old kid about ethnic cleansing.

(Beat)

MAURICE: And it's not ethnic cleansing. It's neighborhood resettlement.

LORENZO: Yeah, whatever.

MAURICE: Uhhh...it's not whatever.

LORENZO: Right, I know labels are important.

MAURICE: Why did you say that?

LORENZO: I don't know. I think I heard it from my sister. Look, I'm not saying we're going to lose.

MAURICE: Good.

LORENZO: I think both sides are going to lose.

MAURICE: Both sides can't lose. Somebody has to lose and somebody has to win. Let's get back to something pleasant, like Lillian. What else did she say about me?

LORENZO: She said you were a muscular, good-looking sensitive soldier in the Army. I mean, Marines. She would always get that confused.

MAURICE: It must be contagious. I'm getting confused right now. I'd really like to see a picture of your sister.

LORENZO: I don't think I can find any. My dad doesn't like to encourage the hordes of horny teenage boys around here. Besides, who needs a picture when you can be painted with a beautiful highly-descriptive biography.

MAURICE: Why don't you take me to her room?

(MAURICE finishes water. LORENZO takes his glass and goes into the bathroom.)

LORENZO: She keeps it locked. And I don't want my dad catching you out there. Lets just sit and wait. You've gotta tell me what it's like in Kabul. I read a bunch of blogs and online papers to keep up with what's happening in Afghanistan. You're stationed on the outskirts, right?

(MAURICE finds his mailed jock strap and begins fuming.)

MAURICE: Yeah. So Lorenzo, how would you describe your sister...in your own words.

LORENZO: She is just an angel. Kind, and giving, and has...huge breast. Her face is sort of, like, um, Christmas.

MAURICE: What else about her?

LORENZO: She's just really pretty. Red bursting lips, curvaceous hips, golden hair, green eyes, like pine trees or...

MAURICE: -an emerald.

LORENZO: Right.

MAURICE: Wow, she describes herself with a lot of the same words that you use.

LORENZO: Great minds think alike.

MAURICE: Sometimes they're so great they're the same.

LORENZO: Well, yes. We are very close.

MAURICE: Lorenzo, could you come out here for a second?

(LORENZO enters and MAURICE holds up his jock strap.)

MAURICE: What is this?

LORENZO: Um...I know you're probably thinking to yourself what is your jockstrap doing here?

MAURICE: My jockstrap? How did you know it was mine?

LORENZO: My sister told me. Of course. You're probably wondering what I'm doing with that and I can explain. I took it from her room. I thought some jock left it behind and I didn't want my Dad finding it. But then she told me about you and I figured I'd keep it safely here.

(MAURICE grabs LORENZO and slams him into the bed.)

LORENZO: Okay, okay, okay. Let's calm down.

MAURICE: I'm going to pound your fucking face in.

LORENZO: No, wait...

MAURICE: Tell me the truth about Lillian, you fucking punk.

LORENZO: This is all a, a misunderstanding and...
(MAURICE raises his fist to strike him) ...WAIT,
wait. Okay. I'm sorry. the truth about Lillian is...
you're looking at her.

MAURICE: What the hell are you talking about?

LORENZO: I am her.

MAURICE: No, no, no. You're joking. This is a joke, right. There's a candid camera around here somewhere. And Lillian is...

LORENZO: Yes.

MAURICE: You're not serious. I mean, why would anyone do that?

LORENZO: Don't know.

MAURICE: You wouldn't do that, right? Not to me.

LORENZO: I didn't think you'd ever show up looking for her.

(MAURICE releases LORENZO.)

MAURICE: That is so fucking twisted...aaahhh!

LORENZO: Shhh, my parents.

MAURICE: Kid, you got problems.

LORENZO: I know.

MAURICE: Pretending to be a woman...

LORENZO: I didn't mean to.

MAURICE: What are you talking about? You accidentally went along with this for months. You just happen to take on the name Lillian, signed letters and emails with it.

LORENZO: You assumed I was a woman and I went along with it.

MAURICE: Why?

LORENZO: I don't know. You sounded interested in me.

MAURICE: I was interested in Lillian.

LORENZO: Well I am sort of...Lillian.

MAURICE: You are a not an barely legal hot cheerleader. You are a 15-year-old boy with too much time on his hands. The letters, cookies, e-mails, panties. The panties! Are these your panties?

LORENZO: No, usually I go commando.

MAURICE: Aww, TMI.

LORENZO: I stole those from a store.

MAURICE: How come they smell the way they do?

LORENZO: I rubbed them with a little canned tuna and hot sauce.

MAURICE: That is so fucking sick.

LORENZO: I saw how to do it on REALSEX HBO. It was a mail order company in Poughkeepsie that sends used panties to men. It's how they give fresh panties that worn smell.

(LORENZO picks up jock strap from the floor.)

LORENZO: What about your jock strap?

MAURICE: I'm not a liar. I wore it.

LORENZO: Yeah, I can smell you. Even left some hair in the crack-

MAURICE: Gimme that!

(MAURICE walks around the room and gathers his things.)

MAURICE: And the picture?

LORENZO: J Crew holiday catalog. Face like Christmas.

MAURICE: Kid, you gotta pay. For all this sick fucking...

(MAURICE punches LORENZO, who crumples to the ground. LORENZO gathers himself.)

LORENZO: Okay. Okay. Is that my payment?

MAURICE: You think this is funny? You think you're being cute?

LORENZO: (*winces in pain*) No. Sorry.

MAURICE: ...I didn't punch you that hard.

LORENZO: Sure.

MAURICE: I barely tapped you. You're not hurt.

LORENZO: Sure, sure. I'm fine. I've been hit before. It just takes a moment. One time I met this dude and after we did it, he found out I was a dude and he started punching me in the face. He was screaming about getting AIDS and shit. I thought he was going to kill me, said he was going to cut my throat and he ran back to his car. I didn't stick around because...

MAURICE: ...don't you ever shut up?

LORENZO: Sorry. Nervous habit.

(*Beat*)

LORENZO: Are you grossed out because I like you?

MAURICE: You don't like me. You don't know me.

LORENZO: Just so you know... I wish I was Lillian. If it makes you feel any better I wish I could be her.

MAURICE: Yeah, so wouldn't get your ass kicked.

LORENZO: No. I wish I was Lillian so you would stay. I can't do anything about my age or what I am. Isn't this what you were looking for?

MAURICE: Uh...no.

LORENZO: No family, no friends, You said you had nothing.

MAURICE: That doesn't mean I'm gay.

LORENZO: It's not about that.

MAURICE: Actually, I think it is.

LORENZO: It's about a connection, right? How many times did we fuck over email?

MAURICE: Oh god.

LORENZO: Or IM? That's all it is. An instant connection through wires, cables, and satellites. But now you're here. Now we're standing in the same room. And I feel like we know each other. I've laughed with you, I've worried about you. I've lived with you. And I even baked you fucking cookies!

(Beat)

LORENZO: I like you.

MAURICE: Kid, I don't care if you like fisting frozen turkeys while getting spanked with a rolled up newspaper.

LORENZO: Huh?

MAURICE: It's a figure of speech.

LORENZO: Where?

MAURICE: In my head, okay. The point is that I don't care what you like. You lied.

LORENZO: I'm sorry.

MAURICE: Sorry isn't good enough. You gotta pay.

LORENZO: How much was the bus ticket?

MAURICE: Not that kind of pay.

(Beat)

MAURICE: It was \$55 but I'm talking about pay as in suffering. Penance.

LORENZO: Penance?

MAURICE: It's a Catholic thing.

LORENZO: You can do whatever Catholic thing you want to me.

MAURICE: Oh, really? Whatever I want?

LORENZO: Yes.

MAURICE: So I could...shove you *(backs him up)*.

LORENZO: I'd let you. You could do whatever you to me.

MAURICE: Oh, really? Whatever I want.

LORENZO: Yes.

MAURICE: (*hitting him*) And if started hitting you, then you'd be fine?

LORENZO: Yes, if you want to.

MAURICE: Why aren't you fighting back?

LORENZO: You want me to fight you?

MAURICE: Yeah. It makes it harder to kick your ass when you don't fight.

LORENZO: But I don't want to fight you, Maurice. Look, if it's sex I know a girl at school who's a total slut.

MAURICE: It's not the sex. It's the time and energy and effort. After all I've done. Months! MONTHS!

LORENZO: Maurice, my Dad might hear you.

MAURICE: You've taken months from me. Of my time, of my money, of my mind. Months you've wasted and... (*Maurice takes a moment.*) I'm telling your Dad. He'll punish you. My dad would kick my ass when I was young. Sometimes for doing nothing. It's good for you. Makes you learn things. Things you don't wanna take to. Like not lying.

LORENZO: How are you going to tell them?

MAURICE: I'm going to march in there... *(thinks)* ... okay, that's a problem.

LORENZO: My mom won't care much. She never does. But my dad might call the police. He also has a gun in his room.

MAURICE: You are going to march in there and introduce me.

LORENZO: As what, a friend?

MAURICE: As...as...I don't care. Just get in there.

LORENZO: I... don't want to.

MAURICE: Excuse me?

LORENZO: I don't want to do it.

MAURICE: I know you don't want to do it. That's why it's called punishment. Because you do something you'd rather not. I'm ordering you to get in there.

LORENZO: I'm not good with following orders.

(LORENZO and MAURICE look at each other. MAURICE moves toward him and LORENZO backs up.)

MAURICE: Lorenzo, this is stupid. Stop moving away.

LORENZO: Then stop following me.

MAURICE: Lorenzo. I'm not going to chase you.

(Beat)

(MAURICE chases LORENZO. Lorenzo throws clothes at him as obstacles. It is a silent and stealthily Maurice eventually catches him and slams Lorenzo against the wall.)

MAURICE: Now, listen up Lorenzo...

LORENZO: -Don't make me tell him.

MAURICE: You are going to learn responsibility.

LORENZO: Maurice, I don't want to be thrown from a window.

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: He said he would throw me from a window.

MAURICE: Who?

LORENZO: My dad. Next time he caught me with a guy.

MAURICE: Well he's not catching you like that, because we didn't do anything.

LORENZO: Listen, I'm sorry for what I did, but my Dad doesn't joke around. He's a big believer in punishment.

MAURICE: So was mine. Big deal.

LORENZO: With paddles, pipes, and chains

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: A few months ago the manager at the Greyhound station called him. Said I was loitering around the bathroom, making travelers nervous. But I was just, I don't know, hanging out. But he came. Straight from work he marched down to that station. Smiled, nodded his head, talked real nice and calm to the manager and thanked him for looking out for me. And he drove me home in the rain and calmly told me the next time he embarrassed him like that he would throw me out of a window. Didn't know if he was serious or not. But when I was walking up the steps to the front door and he knocked me down and threw a sheet over me. He started waling on me with these chains, from the snow tires. Got a couple of good ones in on my back and stomach and there's no sign of the chains because of the sheets. And he starts kicking and cussing and spitting on me. His fucking faggot son. I stole a fishing knife from the garage. I ran up to my room and I was going to wait until he was asleep. Fuck me? Fuck him! Fuck him, fuck all these goddamn assholes! Fuck the Greyhound manager, fuck the married businessmen jerking off in the bus stop bathroom. Fuck it all. Then I thought about what you said when we got in that fight: 'why not just kill yourself?'

MAURICE: I didn't mean it like that.

LORENZO: But you were right. Fuck it all. Only take a few cuts and I'd be done. And then I got your IM about the sandstorms. And talking to you made things...less fucked. I didn't want to...do it. Maurice, you're the only one I'd let hit me, touch me, do whatever. But not him. If you make me go into that room, I'll do what I started. I'll fucking kill him and I'm not joking. And then I can slash my own throat and be happy just knowing that fucker is dead. Because I'd rather kill him, my mom, this whole fucking town, and me than let him throw me out a window. And if you make me go in there, I will.

(LORENZO dashes into the bathroom and locks the door.)

MAURICE: Kid. Hey, you're not going to...Don't. look: it's all right. Okay...okay?