

TEAM B.L. or Doing the Lightning Bolt was first produced on November 10, 2012, by Saint Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School at St. Andrew's Church Hall, Richmond, Hampshire, United Kingdom. The production was directed by Sylvie Sice.

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CHARACTERS

STEPHANIE: *the team captain.*

LAUREN: *the best player.*

COURTNEY: *the goalkeeper.*

ALEXIS: *a forward.*

VICTORIA: *a defender.*

BRIANNA: *a winger.*

(All characters can be played by actors between the ages of 12 and 16.)

TIME

Day

SETTING

A girls' dressing room.

Dressing room. Day. Lights up. A girls soccer team enters after a disappointing loss. They are hot and sweaty and dressed in the team's uniform. Some sit on benches, others take off their cleats and throw them on the floor. LAUREN sits in the corner and takes off her cleats.

VICTORIA: Well that was great. Congratulations to us. Double congratulations to us. We were hopeless. How hopeless do you have to be? One goal. All we needed was one goal and we couldn't even score that.

BRIANNA: We wouldn't have needed one goal if you hadn't let them score.

VICTORIA: I didn't let them score. Courtney did.

COURTNEY: Only because you let their captain shoot.

VICTORIA: You still could have saved it. It was an easy shot. Their keeper would have saved it.

ALEXIS: Their keeper was good.

VICTORIA: Better than our keeper. If we had their keeper we would have won for sure.

BRIANNA: And their forward. Alexis missed an open goal.

ALEXIS: Their defender tripped me.

BRIANNA: Which defender? The "Invisible girl?"

ALEXIS: Well, we would have scored if you didn't hog the ball all the time.

STEPHANIE: Stop it, Alexis. We all feel bad. It wasn't anybody's fault. We all played badly.

VICTORIA: Lauren didn't. She won Best on Field.

BRIANNA: Lauren always wins Best on Field.

VICTORIA: Then why do we always lose? We have the best player so we should win.

STEPHANIE: That's not always what happens, Vicky. You know that.

VICTORIA: No I don't. We practice just as hard as every other team, we have the same number on the field, we have the best player. We should win. I'm sick and tired of losing.

BRIANNA: And we're sick and tired of you whining all the time.

STEPHANIE: Okay, we lost badly—it doesn't mean we have to be bad losers.

ALEXIS: But we practiced the Lightning Bolt for when we scored and we didn't even get to do it.

STEPHANIE: That's just what happens. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose.

VICTORIA: No, we lose all the time. We dream of sometimes.

BRIANNA: I dream of you being on another team.

VICTORIA: If I was on another team, we'd beat you as well.

STEPHANIE: Cool it! Everybody cool it. Just calm down. Now I know everybody's upset, I'm upset too.

COURTNEY: You said we'd win.

ALEXIS: You promised we'd win.

VICTORIA: You said if we trained really hard and did everything you said . . .

COURTNEY: We'd win.

BRIANNA: And we did everything you said . . .

ALEXIS: And we still lost.

STEPHANIE: I know you trained really hard and you stuck to the game plan and I'm really grateful for that.

VICTORIA: It would help if we had a coach.

STEPHANIE: Mr. Earnshaw's wife is sick. You know that. He promised he'd come back when she was better.

BRIANNA: When will that be?

STEPHANIE: I don't know. It's just the way it goes. It was a close game but the ball didn't bounce our way.

ALEXIS: Actually it did bounce our way. It bounced right into our goal.

VICTORIA: *To Courtney.* Because she didn't save it.

STEPHANIE: Stop it.

BRIANNA: We were meant to be like Team USA.

ALEXIS: Instead we were Team BL—Big Losers.

STEPHANIE: Stop it!

VICTORIA: There's no color for the medal we won.

COURTNEY: There isn't even a color.

STEPHANIE: STOP IT! Everybody just stop it. We lost, okay, it doesn't matter what anybody says now we lost. Nothing's going to change that. So stop talking. Everybody stop talking! The Olympics is meant to inspire a generation. And we're that generation. So we just have to accept the loss and see what we can learn for next week. We have to work harder. Get better. Just like Team USA.

VICTORIA: That's what you say every week.

STEPHANIE: But it's still true. If we want to do the Lightning Bolt, then we have to be like Usain Bolt. We have to train harder, longer, smarter. You think when he was growing up in Barbados, he had it easy?

LAUREN: *Quietly.* Jamaica.

STEPHANIE: He probably had setbacks just like we did . . .

LAUREN: *Loudly.* Jamaica.

STEPHANIE: But he kept going. And now look at him, he's the . . .

LAUREN: *Louder.* Jamaica.

They all turn to look at LAUREN.

Usain Bolt was born in Jamaica. Not Barbados.

STEPHANIE: Sorry, Jamaica. I meant Jamaica, but it doesn't change the fact that—

LAUREN: *Standing.* In the one hundred meters final, there were three runners from Jamaica—Usain Bolt, Yohan Blake, and Asafa Powell. There were no runners from Barbados. The only runner from Barbados was Ramon Gittens and he got knocked out in the heats.

VICTORIA: Yeah, Stephanie.

LAUREN: And Victoria, you don't have too much to talk about. You did let their captain into the area. But Courtney, it was an easy shot—you should have saved it. And Brianna, you need to pass the ball more, but Alexis did miss an open goal. It was all our faults. Every single one of us.

STEPHANIE: You were the best . . .

LAUREN: Every single one. *Beat.* You know what happened when Usain Bolt went to his first big track meet?

VICTORIA: He won?

ALEXIS: He killed them?

BRIANNA: He left the other runners lying in the mud?

LAUREN: He didn't even make the final. And you know what happened the following year?

ALEXIS: He won.

LAUREN: He got arrested. When he was meant to be preparing for his race, he hid in the back of a van as a practical joke. The police didn't find it so funny though, and he was arrested. They even blamed his coach.

COURTNEY: I didn't know that.

LAUREN: Most people don't. And then in 2004 at the Athens Olympics, he was eliminated in the first round. No one had even heard of him back then. It wasn't till 2008 when he won the gold medal in both the one hundred and two hundred meters in Beijing that he became famous.

BRIANNA: And that's when he did the Lightning Bolt.

All except STEPHANIE and LAUREN dance around doing the Lightning Bolt, a la Usain Bolt.

LAUREN: No, he didn't. He invented the Lightning Bolt years before. And you know why?

ALEXIS: So he could win?

LAUREN: So he remembers to do the most important thing.

COURTNEY: There's something more important than winning?

LAUREN: Having fun! When he ran in the Junior World Championships in Jamaica in 2002 he got so nervous being in front of his home crowd he put his shoes on the wrong feet. So from that day on he vowed never to let himself be affected by nerves again and just have fun. Don't you see him when he's running? He has a big smile on his face. He loves it. And that's why he runs. And that's why we don't win. Because we don't enjoy it. Look at you all out on the field. Frowning and angry. Stop yelling at each other and have fun. That's when we'll win. And even if we don't win, then it's okay—because at least we had fun. We need to start having fun or else . . .

STEPHANIE: What?

LAUREN: Or else I don't want to play anymore.

ALL (except Lauren): No!

COURTNEY: Please, Lauren.

ALEXIS: You have to play.

VICTORIA: Or then we'll really be Team BL.

LAUREN: Then you all have to swear, right now.

BRIANNA: We swear.

LAUREN: Whatever the result, we have fun.

Holding out her hand, palm facing down.

Agreed?

ALEXIS: *Putting her hand on top of Lauren's.* Agreed.

BRIANNA: *Adding her hand.* Agreed.

COURTNEY: *And hers.* Agreed.

VICTORIA: *And hers.* Agreed.

STEPHANIE: *Adding her hand.* Agreed.

ALL: *Raising their hands.* Team USA!!!

ALEX BROUN

LAUREN: Good. Now there's only one thing to do.

BRIANNA: What's that?

LAUREN: The Lightning Bolt.

They all do the Lightning Bolt as they dance off stage.

END OF PLAY

THE STAR-SPANGLED WOOLY BULLY

Steve Koppman

Inspired by Richard Cohen
