

**DARREN.** Who's that?

**HECTOR.** *(Mysteriously.)* Wouldn't you like to know? *(Beat.)* And that's how I walk through the day. I live the life of the person I know I really am. *(Beat.)* I'm very happy, you know.

*(DARREN tries to let this sink in.)*

**DARREN.** ...There's somethin' in that, kid. Why can't I be the person who's inside?

**HECTOR.** You're not gonna be Captain Fuselage, are you?

**DARREN.** No.

**HECTOR.** Good. Because it's taken.

## HEART OF THE CITY

by Eric Lane

### Characters

HEATHER

BOBBY

### Scene

While excellent at his job in advertising, Bobby would rather be an artist. On a break from work, he visits the massage chairs at a hi-tech store. He meets Heather, a young, enthusiastic, quick-witted, cheeky British saleswoman.

*(Afternoon. BOBBY enters the hi-tech store. He looks around, then heads over to two massage chairs, sits in one. He takes off his shoes, which he leaves on the floor in front of him.)*

*(Bobby's picture I.D. from work is clipped to his bag. He takes out a pair of headphones from his bag. Checks them for 'left' and 'right,' then puts them on for music.)*

*(He settles down into the massage chair.)*

*(HEATHER, a saleswoman, enters and goes to him.)*

**HEATHER.** Act interested.

**BOBBY.** *(Removing headphones:)* What?

**HEATHER.** Pretend you're interested. My manager's watching... Ask me a question.

**BOBBY.** Um, does this chair come in any other colors?

**HEATHER.** The Inner Harmony Massage Chair comes in two soothing colors: sensuous midnight leather and plush dakota suede.

*(She gestures for more.)*

**BOBBY.** What about the settings?

**HEATHER.** The easy-to-adjust massage settings allow maximum—all right. Cheers.

*(Her manager gone, HEATHER sits in the chair beside BOBBY.)*

**BOBBY.** That's it...? Aren't you going to try to sell me the chair?

**HEATHER.** She's gone.

**BOBBY.** Even so. I could be interested in buying one.

*(HEATHER just looks at him.)*

**BOBBY.** I could be.

**HEATHER.** At \$3,000? Not likely. Besides, I've seen you in here before.

**BOBBY.** So...

**HEATHER.** Often.

**BOBBY.** I may've been passing by...

**HEATHER.** Quite often. Almost every day for the past 3 months, in fact.

**BOBBY.** Not every day.

**HEATHER.** No, once in a while you pop over to our store on 57th. You always stay at least one full massage cycle.

**BOBBY.** Maybe I sat down for a minute.

**HEATHER.** Usually two. And occasionally if you think no one's watching, three or— *(Notices store manager off-stage. HEATHER quickly stands.)* Comes with four easy to adjust settings:

*(She presses each setting, which BOBBY feels.)*

pulse, knead, vibrate and—

*(Manager leaves. BOBBY presses a lower chair setting.)*

This morning she caught me writing a poem and has been spotting me like a hawk ever since.

*(She sits.)*

**BOBBY.** What kinda poem?

**HEATHER.** Just stuff. It's not as though we weren't slow anyway. Sit as long as you want. Your secret's safe with me, Bobby.

*(He looks at her, surprised she knows his name.)*

**BOBBY.** How do you—?

**HEATHER.** *(She indicates.)* Your employee I.D.

**BOBBY.** Right.

**HEATHER.** *(Reads his I.D.)* Stone Advertising—that must be quite pressured. What is it you do?

**BOBBY.** At work...? I'm an account manager.

**HEATHER.** Meaning...?

**BOBBY.** Well, right now, we're introducing a new nighttime shower gel for women.

**HEATHER.** Sounds simple enough.

**BOBBY.** You'd think. Only according to my boss, we're not just selling a shower. It's a vertical bath experience.

**HEATHER.** *(Laughs.)* Yikes! Did you study advertising?

**BOBBY.** Painting.

**HEATHER.** What is it you paint?

**BOBBY.** Not much, lately.

**HEATHER.** Why's that?

**BOBBY.** Don't you have to work or something?

**HEATHER.** I'm assisting a customer. Why don't you paint?

**BOBBY.** By the time I get home from work...

**HEATHER.** I think you should paint.

**BOBBY.** I'm sure there are a lot of things I should be doing but—

**HEATHER.** A portrait of me. Sitting by a brook, perhaps. Dressed like Ophelia. Flowers in my hair. Light streaming through the trees. Wouldn't that be something?

**BOBBY.** I'll keep it in mind.

**HEATHER.** Make you less tense.

**BOBBY.** Who said I was tense?

*(HEATHER mimics him with his shoulders tense.)*

**BOBBY.** Maybe I just have a lot on my mind, o.k.

**HEATHER.** Yes, vertical bath experiences can be extremely taxing.

**BOBBY.** Not just... Never mind.

**HEATHER.** What were you going to say?

**BOBBY.** Nothing.

**HEATHER.** Fine. Be that way.

**BOBBY.** Fine.

**HEATHER.** Fine.

*(A beat.)*

**BOBBY.** Like my mom.

**HEATHER.** I'm like your mum?

**BOBBY.** No. On my mind—my mom. Nothing. I'm sure she'll be o.k.

**HEATHER.** Is she ill?



**BOBBY.** *(Notices Heather's manager off-stage.)* Your boss.

**HEATHER.** Is she?

**BOBBY.** They're just running some tests. I'm sure she's fine.

*(Notices Heather's manager moving closer. He switches gears. HEATHER rises.)*

**BOBBY.** I'm definitely interested but \$3,000 seems like a lot for a chair.

**HEATHER.** I don't think of it so much as a chair but as a horizontal massage experience.

*(BOBBY smiles. HEATHER doesn't turn, but senses her manager leaving, off BOBBY's gaze.)*

**HEATHER.** Gone?

*(BOBBY looks, nods. She sits. Simply.)*

**HEATHER.** I'll say a prayer. What's your mum's name?

**BOBBY.** You don't have to—

**HEATHER.** If you'd rather I didn't...

**BOBBY.** No, I didn't mean... Sue. Her name's Sue.

**HEATHER.** Sue. Got it.

*(A beat.)*

**BOBBY.** Thank you.

**HEATHER.** Sure.

*(A slight beat.)*

**BOBBY.** I gotta go.

*(He starts to put his shoes back on, gather himself together.)*

**HEATHER.** *(Rises.)* Off to work. So will we be shipping this to your home or office?

**BOBBY.** *(Rises.)* I didn't say—

**HEATHER.** Just joking.

**BOBBY.** Oh... I knew that.

**HEATHER.** Of course you did.

**BOBBY.** Right.

*(He exits.)*

## SLIDE/OVER

by Melanie Marnich

### Characters

SCOTT, a high school senior.

JAY, a high school senior.

### Scene

Scott and Jay are members of a closely-knit group of friends. When the rest of their group departs for class, they sit down to share some coffee during their free period.

### Author Note

This play is completely colorblind. If needed, you may change characters' names for the sake of authenticity or to make it right for your school.

Jay is not a cliché, one-dimensional cut-out of a gay girl.

*(A high school hallway.)*

*(JAY and SCOTT stay and clean their lockers.)*

**JAY.** Don't you have somewhere to go?

**SCOTT.** Not this hour. You?

**JAY.** Same.

*(SCOTT takes a thermos out of his locker.)*

**SCOTT.** Hey.

**JAY.** What.

**SCOTT.** Coffee?

**JAY.** Can you make a double-one-percent-three-shot-soy-protein-with-a-cherry-on-top grande chai?

*(SCOTT holds up a thermos with a 'this okay?' look on his face. JAY nods, smiles. They sit on the floor a little distance from one another. Pour, pour, sip, sip.)*

**SCOTT.** How'd your week go?

**JAY.** Great. Pretty much like any other week. Let's see...  
Three new people learned my name...