

TIM. Forget it. I've got plenty of friends. The last thing I need is one more.

CINDY. Ok. *(She gets up.)* I should go. *(She pulls out a t-shirt from her bag.)* Here, I thought you'd want this back. Go Syracuse right?

(She tosses TIM the shirt. He looks at it, confused.)

TIM. *(Confused:)* This isn't mine.

(He hands it back to CINDY.)

CINDY. *(Pause.)* Oh. Sorry. Can I have a hug goodbye.

TIM. Why? You want one last spin on the Tim-go-round? Forget it sister.

CINDY. Goodbye Tim.

TIM. Goodbye Cindy. Going out with you is like jogging with a lemur. Just when you think you're getting somewhere, bam! You're off a cliff.

(CINDY leaves. TIM takes off his shirt and looks at his tattoo in the mirror again.)

TIM. Crap.

SQUARE ONE

by Mark D. Kaufmann

Characters

DARREN

HECTOR

Scene

The high school's coolest senior, Darren, awakens one morning to find he has been zapped back to being a nerd freshman—the only knowledge the world has of him. Here he angrily contemplates his new “reality” with genuine freshman nerd Hector, who believes Darren has been his best friend since fifth grade.

(DARREN sitting on a bench, seriously depressed. HECTOR enters and approaches DARREN hesitantly.)

HECTOR. You still feeling mopey?

DARREN. *(Not looking up:)* I feel like hell.

(HECTOR decides to sit down next to him. He opens his lunch pail, pulls out a thermos, a sandwich, chips. He opens a napkin and tucks it in his shirt.)

HECTOR. You've looked like you wanted to be left alone the last couple days. *(Beat.)* Since you shoved me.

(DARREN doesn't look at him; HECTOR eats a potato chip.)

HECTOR. I know you didn't mean it. I get real upset about things too. But I don't punch people. I just overfeed my turtle.

(HECTOR takes a bite of sandwich. He keeps one eye on DARREN.)

HECTOR. Aren't you hungry?

(DARREN shakes his head.)

HECTOR. You're going to need energy for the assembly this afternoon. You have to give a speech.

DARREN. Enough with the damn speech! I don't care about the speech. I'm not going to the stupid assembly.

HECTOR. Oh. *(Beat.)* I was looking forward to your speech.

(DARREN looks up at HECTOR; really takes him in for the first time.)

DARREN. Why are you sitting next to me?

HECTOR. (*A mouthful of sandwich; stopping in mid-chew.*) You're my best friend.

DARREN. You have *got* to be kidding.

HECTOR. We've been best friends since 5th grade. It was the day we stuffed those little marshmallows up our noses. We got into trouble. It was neat.

(*DARREN puts his head in his hands.*)

DARREN. Oh, God...

HECTOR. Up 'till then, nobody ever wanted to play with me. Or with you. That's what you said. So we were friends. (*Beat.*) And then the other guys became our friends.

DARREN. What other guys?

HECTOR. You know, the guys. Herman, Russell, Petey, Leopold.

DARREN. Leopold Muttmerenzie?

HECTOR. You know *another* Leopold?

DARREN. But he's dweeb central.

HECTOR. To the Juniors and Seniors, I guess.

DARREN. I've never been called a "dweeb" before.

HECTOR. Really? Everybody calls me one.

DARREN. You *are* a dweeb.

HECTOR. That explains it.

DARREN. (*Beat.*) I'm not *really* a dweeb, am I?

HECTOR. No more than any Freshman. I think you're cool.

DARREN. Don't say that; not you. (*Beat, then mostly to himself.*) How did this happen. I lived this already. I've earned my way out of it. I mean, three whole years... I hated algebra then. I hate it so very much more now...

HECTOR. What're you talking about, Darren?

DARREN. (*Beat.*) Hector, if we're...friends...I'll tell you. I gotta tell somebody. It'll sound really crazy, but it's the truth.

HECTOR. You want a marshmallow? They haven't been up my nose.

DARREN. Lose the marshmallows, kid, I'm serious.

HECTOR. Okay.

DARREN. Something really really weird happened to me. I—I'm not really this guy, the guy you think is your best friend. Monday I was a Senior. I was Darren Dormer, but a Senior, get it? And I was...the top guy here. I don't

mean just some cool guy, I mean I was *the* guy. And...I must have walked through some—I don't know—tear in space; some time warp. *You're* all the same, but now I'm "Freshman" Darren.

(*HECTOR has been concentrating hard while chewing his sandwich. DARREN looks at him for a reaction; HECTOR looks back and swallows his bite.*)

HECTOR. Huh. See ya...

(*HECTOR gets up to go; DARREN grabs his arm.*)

DARREN. Hector, you gotta believe me. Could I make that up?

HECTOR. Yes.

DARREN. Look: my friends won't talk to me. I'm...scared. (*Beat.*) Please.

(*HECTOR sits back down.*)

HECTOR. Well. You are acting strange.

DARREN. I don't get how you have this memory of a history with me. I only remember my life the way it was.

HECTOR. Well. If this is true, the laws of nature have been broken. Which is really cool!

DARREN. Not for me!

HECTOR. Oh, right. Well...maybe a new reality was created to correct some mistake.

DARREN. It was a mistake that I was a Senior? But why?

HECTOR. Or, maybe...

DARREN. —What?

HECTOR. Maybe this *is* your real life. Maybe it always was and you just dreamed the other one. But it was so real you blocked out the truth.

DARREN. Dreamed it? Dreamed I was eighteen? But why would it seem so real?

HECTOR. Maybe you needed to see what it would be like. But maybe it's better this way. (*Beat.*) Darren, you've just gotta be who you are. That's all you've got.

DARREN. That's easy to say—nobody sees who I really am.

HECTOR. Same with me.

(*DARREN looks intently at HECTOR as he continues, really taking in what he's saying.*)

HECTOR. Most people see me as a super nerdy jerky dork. But inside I know I'm...Captain Fuselage!

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.