

...: Big whoop.

...: Who needs flowers, anyway? [She looks at the pair of shoes that are lying on the ground.]

...: Who needs either one of you? [She exits.]

...: [Taking TOM'S hand] Come on! I'll show you how to make sure the airplane glue doesn't get stuck to your fingers.

...: [She picks up TOM'S hand and picks up his hand. She picks up TOM'S hand and picks up his hand.]

I Went There

Jenny Lyn Bader

Originally written for *You Are Now the Owner of This Suitcase*, a collaboratively authored, multiwriter play directed and developed by Ari Laura Kreith at Theatre 167.

Dramatic

RUBY ROO: a girl
4: a boy

You Are Now the Owner of This Suitcase is a play set in magical Jackson Heights—a Queens, New York, neighborhood known for its cultural diversity—and inspired by the fairytales and folktales of the cultures of that neighborhood. At the end of act 1, the girl RUBY ROO comes to life in a moment of enchantment. The scene “I Went There” takes place at the beginning of act 2 on the eve of RUBY ROO’s 10th birthday. She has become friendly with a boy known only as “4,” who lives on the streets.

RUBY ROO: You went there? I don’t believe you.

4: I was looking for cans.

RUBY ROO: Cans?

4: Soda cans. I return them for nickels. I've always found a lot of soda cans. Until the cold weather set in this year. And suddenly—no soda cans. Anywhere I could see. But I heard there might be some there.

RUBY ROO: Uh-huh, but didn't you also hear that there's a witch there? And that you could drown there? And that people go in there and never come back? Or come back completely unrecognizable?

4: I heard there were soda cans.

RUBY ROO: Yuh-huh.

4: I needed the nickels for a new pair of shoes. My feet were hurting.

RUBY ROO: But you never heard about no magic.

4: Sure, maybe people said it was spooky, it was magic, it was haunted. It sounds familiar. But really—I need those cans. I go there . . . [*They begin to reenact the scene; 4 brings Ruby Roo along.*] . . . and there they are. But some of the sodas . . . they're not what you expect.

RUBY ROO: What do you mean? Like Mountain Dew?

4: Like, I don't know. Not that. Slice. Orange Cream. Sodas I never even heard of. With funny designs. Brilliant rainbow soda cans. I bundled them up in a blue bag.

[*4 bundles the sodas in a blue bag. It starts making funny sounds.*]

RUBY ROO: I don't like this. Let's get outta here!

4: You're not here. I'm just telling you about it.

RUBY ROO: You're telling it too well. Because I can see it. Weird cans. A bag . . .

4: And there was this strange sound.

RUBY ROO: Yes, that!

[*Strange clinking and music.*]

4: The cans knocked together and they . . .

RUBY ROO and 4: . . . played music!

4: Then that lady with the funny hat who lives next door came out. [*Ruby Roo screams.*] Why are you screaming?

RUBY ROO: She scares me.

4: Why?

RUBY ROO: I don't know.

4: She asked me for a story. I told her, "Lady, I'm not a storyteller."

RUBY ROO: What do you mean, you're not a storyteller? Aren't you telling a story now?

4: Yes now. But then—I had no story. That's part of the story. Part of the story is me getting a story. See I wasn't a storyteller. And I wasn't a doctor, either . . .

RUBY ROO: A doctor?

4: But suddenly there was a funeral procession, with three men holding a gigantic turquoise coffin—and they said, this is the distinguished doctor Christian Valiutis.

RUBY ROO: Which is not your name.

4: Which is not my name. But suddenly it was, too. It wasn't and it was. They said one of the men in the funeral procession was so tall, they were holding the coffin lopsidedly, and if I were that distinguished doctor could I shorten this man's legs.

RUBY ROO: What did you do?

4: I cut his legs off. And put them together again.

RUBY ROO: I don't like this story. First the witch . . .

4: She's not a witch, she's a next-door neighbor who looks like a witch.

RUBY ROO: Now the amputation.

4: I'm telling you his foot just went into his leg at a new place, and became like new. I suddenly knew how to be a doctor. And then I went into this little bar . . .

RUBY ROO: [*Alarmed.*] Did you get carded?

4: They just asked me to play the ukulele.

RUBY ROO: Did you tell them, no, you were a famous surgeon?

4: I played the ukulele.

RUBY ROO: Get out of here, it's getting creepy!

4: And then a woman walked up to me and said she needed something translated into Chinese.

RUBY ROO: Which you don't speak. Except you do.

4: Everything arrived at that moment. *Cun bu nan shang xin!* [*Translation: It was magic!*]

RUBY ROO: Do you speak Chinese now?

4: *Ni zhe dao.* [*Translation: You know it.*]

RUBY ROO: What did she want translated?

4: A love letter.

RUBY ROO: Did you translate it?

4: And delivered it. They're married now.

RUBY ROO: What did you do with the soda cans?

4: I realized I had become another person and I ran very, very far from the soda cans.

RUBY ROO: To . . .

4: The electronics store. On the corner of 78th, the Babelware electronic store. I read the sign in the window.

RUBY ROO: Which sign?

4: It says "Languages Spoken Here: English Spanish Mandarin Korean Hindi Russian Ukrainian German Greek Turkish Ravenish".

RUBY ROO: Ravenish?

4: The language of ravens. Ever since coming out of that forbidden alleyway, I understand Ravenish, and Pyelanguage, and all of the languages of the birds. And now here there must be another human speaking Ravenish.

RUBY ROO: And did you go in?

4: Go in where?

RUBY ROO: To the electronics store!

4: Of course not! That would be scary.

RUBY ROO: No. You've been to the forbidden place now. Now you can do anything. You have to go!!

Judy Maccabee

Susan Horowitz

Dramatic

JONATHAN: I

JUDY: I

The setting is Jerusalem, 165 BCE (1 Maccabees 1:53-54).

JUDY, disguised as a boy, is secretly in love with JONATHAN, the nephew of Judah Maccabee. JONATHAN writes on a scroll and gives it to JUDY, who looks at it upside down and pretends to read. JONATHAN turns the scroll around.

JONATHAN: So you can't read. Why do you try to fake it?

JUDY: I can read . . . Well, all right, I can't. But I'm not dumb.

JONATHAN: I never told you so. Do you want me to teach you to read?

JUDY: It's hard, right?

JONATHAN: Nothing important comes easy—like freedom. But it's worth fighting for. Reading is freedom, too.

JUDY: I'm free. I go where I want. Do what I want. I know