

LOCKER BUDDIES
by John Lincoln
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Scene One

The set is a hallway in a high school. A row of lockers are lined up far upstage, with a couple of doors which would be classrooms. A set of stairs runs up and off stage, these should be placed prominently, though how to handle this is certainly up in the air.

KEVIN, a junior, sits alone, eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on the steps of the busy hallway. He is dressed like any other kid, though his expression is blank and absent.

Kids mill about loudly, having various conversations. While certain types can certainly be seen here, really pushing standard stereotypes (the dumb jock, the wiry and nerdy glass-wearing geek, the bubbly cheerleader) should be toned down or avoided.

The bell rings. Everyone makes their way into classrooms or off stage. Only KEVIN remains.

He slowly finishes his sandwich. He makes his way across the stage to a trash can and pitches it in. A set of feet appear at the top of the stairs, and the person makes their way down. This is MR. HOLDEN, a history teacher.

HOLDEN: Running late for class?

KEVIN: Yeah. I'm getting there.

HOLDEN: Bell already rang. You're late.

KEVIN: So are you.

HOLDEN: It's my free period.

KEVIN: Mine too.

HOLDEN: Come on Kevin. Where are you supposed to be?

KEVIN: Calculus.

HOLDEN: With who?

KEVIN: Mrs. Anderson.

HOLDEN: Need me to write you a pass?

KEVIN: Nah. I'll be fine. She's oblivious anyway.

HOLDEN: She's retiring in two months. Give her some slack. We're lucky she shows up at all.

KEVIN: Will do.

HOLDEN: You ok? How are you holding up?

KEVIN: I'm fine.

HOLDEN: You sure?

KEVIN: Yeah.

HOLDEN: If you need someone...

KEVIN: I'm ok. Really. Sick of talking about it. I'm ok.

HOLDEN: Sure, sure. Sorry kid.

KEVIN: No problem Mr. Holden.

HOLDEN: Alright. You should get to class. I should too.

KEVIN: I thought it was your free period.

HOLDEN: (shrugs)

KEVIN: (laughs) Alright. I'll go.

HOLDEN: Sounds good. You know where I'll be if... well. See you later Kevin.

KEVIN: Later.

MR. HOLDEN exits. KEVIN grabs his bag off the stairs, then cuts across the stage to leave. Before he makes it, LACY, another junior, pops out of a locker.

LACY: Jesus.

KEVIN is startled.

LACY: Sorry about that.

KEVIN: What are you doing?

LACY: Selling girl scout cookies. What does it look like I'm doing?

KEVIN: What?

LACY: I'm avoiding people.

KEVIN: Oh. In a locker?

LACY: Just do that until the hall clears. Usually a teacher and a whiny kid aren't standing right in front of my locker for ten minutes pouring their souls out to each other.

KEVIN: I wasn't...

LACY: Whatever. I don't care. I'm Lacy.

KEVIN: I know.

LACY: You do?

KEVIN: Yeah. We've been in the same school since sixth grade.

LACY: We have?

KEVIN: It doesn't matter.

LACY: Have you been, like, stalking me?

KEVIN: Of course not.

LACY: Don't be so defensive, geez. I'd take it as a compliment if I was being stalked.

KEVIN: I'm not stalking you.

LACY: Fine.

Beat.

KEVIN: Alright. I'm going to class.

LACY: It's rude. Didn't your parents teach you to mind your manners? If someone tells you their name...

KEVIN: Kevin. It's Kevin.

LACY: Does Kevin have a last name?

KEVIN: Wells.

LACY: Kevin Wells? You're Kevin Wells? I DO know you. Or at least... I mean you're the kid who...

KEVIN: The kid who what?

LACY: Nevermind. Sorry. That was rude. My parents clearly didn't teach me to mind my manners. Not that... crap. I mean not that parents are like, you don't need your parents to be like a good person. It's not like... Ok. I'm going to just shut up now.

KEVIN: That seems like a good idea.

LACY: Ok. Well, I'll see you. I'm getting a coffee.

KEVIN: Alright. Bye.

They look at each other a moment. LACY gives in first, she turns and heads for the stairs. KEVIN heads the other way. LACY stops, spins around. She pulls out a sharpie, starts to draw on his hand.

KEVIN: What are you doing?

LACY: I'm drawing.

KEVIN: I see that. What are you drawing?

LACY: A smile.

KEVIN: A smile?

LACY: Yep. A smile. You look upset. This will give you something happy to look at.

KEVIN: Is it that easy?

LACY: If you want it to be.

KEVIN: Who were you avoiding?

LACY: What?

KEVIN: Hiding in the locker. Who were you avoiding?

Footsteps at the top of the stairs. Lacy's locker was still open. She spins the locker next to her real fast and shoves Kevin in. She gets into hers and closed just before the person makes their way into the hall.

This is GEOFF and MADISON, both fellow students. There is a little love ladder here where MADISON has a crush on GEOFF, but GEOFF could care less. He has a thing for LACY.

GEOFF looks around a bit. He then walks right up to LACY's locker and opens it up. She steps out looking guilty.

GEOFF: There you are.

LACY: Sorry.

MADISON: We were already off campus. Why didn't you answer your phone?

LACY: I still had it on silent, my bad.

GEOFF: We had to sneak back in.

MADISON: If I get caught again, I'm suspended.

LACY: You and everyone else here.

KEVIN taps on the inside his locker.

LACY: Oh crap.

She lets him out.

LACY: Sorry about that.

MADISON: Hi Kevin.

KEVIN: Hey Mads.

GEOFF: (to Lacy) Are you seriously putting other people in my locker?

MADISON: (to Kevin) How are you holding up?

KEVIN: (to Madison) Same old.

GEOFF: (to Lacy) Wait, how do you even know my combination?

LACY: Relax.

GEOFF: You know this guy?

MADISON: Kevin Wells.

GEOFF: Ooooooh. Right.

MADISON: So, Lacy. We gonna go get coffee?

LACY: Yeah, sure. You wanna come Kevin? You're probably too late to go to class now anyway.

GEOFF: Uh, Lacy...

KEVIN: No, I'm cool.

GEOFF: Yeah. Dude's a little wired as it is. He doesn't need coffee.

KEVIN: Thanks. I appreciate you talking about me as if I'm not standing right here. Tactful.

GEOFF: Chill out guy. It's a joke.

LACY: Alright. Geoff, let's just go.

GEOFF: What? I'm not... I didn't do anything Lacy. You wanna walk on eggshells with this guy, go ahead. Geez.

MADISON: You can be such a jerk.

GEOFF: What? I'm not doing anything!

LACY: Let's go. I'm so sorry Kevin.

KEVIN: (laughs) It's really not a big deal. He's right.

LACY: No, it's very not cool.

KEVIN: It's fine.

LACY: Look, I'll see you later.

KEVIN: Cool by me. Have fun.

LACY, GEOFF, and MADISON exit. KEVIN lingers behind a moment before going as well.

SCENE 2

The Scene is set up identically to the look in Scene One. Kids milling about, Kevin on the stairs by himself.

Bell rings, all go.

MR. HOLDEN walks through. Through this tiny piece of dialogue, KEVIN positions himself near Lacy's locker.

HOLDEN: Go to class Kevin.

KEVIN: You got it Mr. Holden.

HOLDEN: See you around Kevin.

KEVIN: You too Mr. Holden.

After a moment LACY peeks out. She doesn't see KEVIN, because he has positioned himself to be right behind the locker door as it swings open. She steps out.

KEVIN: Hey!

LACY: Jesus! (she smacks him) That is very not cool.

KEVIN (laughs): I had to. I knew you were in there.

LACY: You did?

KEVIN: Yeah. I watched you sneak in a minute ago.

LACY: So you ARE stalking me!

KEVIN: Maybe a little. But it's a recent development.

LACY: That's cool. That's pretty cool.

KEVIN: Happy to oblige. (beat). So. Speaking of stalking you. I asked around about you.

LACY: Oh really? That's probably a terrible idea.

KEVIN: Yeah. Well, I wanted to see what sort of person everyone thought you were. I mean, I could have asked you directly, but that wouldn't have been very 'high school' of me.

LACY: What did you find out?

KEVIN: You are definitely an alcoholic. Your parents work third shift, which means there is a fifty percent chance your mother is a hooker. That actually makes a ton of sense, because you have slept with at least a third of the school. You are either smart but don't apply yourself, or you are dumb and don't care. Jury is out on the particulars there. Pretty sure you slept with a teacher last year to pass English.

LACY: My English teacher was Mrs. Horton.

KEVIN: From what I hear, it wouldn't matter if she was a man or a woman or both.

LACY: She's, like, sixty-five.

KEVIN: Oh. Didn't hear about anything geriatric like that. Maybe you're safe on that one.

LACY: So is that all?

KEVIN: Yep. Oh. No. You were probably out buying molly rather than coffee the other day. You're way into that stuff.

LACY: Cool.

KEVIN: So, I just assume the opposite of all that is true and call it a day. Truth is in the shadows, right?

LACY: Some of it.

KEVIN: Oh really? Which parts are true?

LACY: We aren't that good friends yet.

KEVIN: Well, we can work on that.

LACY: Are you asking me out?

KEVIN: No.

LACY: That was pretty close to asking me out.

KEVIN: Well, I mean I was thinking about it. But I hadn't gotten there yet.

LACY: Oh, ok. Let me know when you get there.

KEVIN: Will you say yes?

LACY: I'll let you know when we get there.

KEVIN: It would be easier to get there if I knew you were going to say yes.

LACY: Well, if I'm as easy as everyone seems to think I am, then I would tell you.

KEVIN: So...

LACY: I'm not going to tell you.

KEVIN: Deceptive.

LACY: Well, if you just ask around it's just because I am a giant tease.

KEVIN: Hey, perception trumps reality kiddo. That's what my Dad used to say.

LACY: Yeah. Your Dad is a smart man. Well, was... I'm sorry.

KEVIN: Stop apologizing.

LACY: I can be so... I'm just. I'm sorry.

KEVIN: I mean it. Stop apologizing. Geoff may be a bit of a douche, but he was right what he said yesterday. People don't need to walk on egg shells with me. The worst secret I have? I've actually made peace with what I've done. I know that makes me the worst kind of person...

LACY... No, not at all...

KEVIN: ... But I don't care. I spent enough time beating myself up. I spent enough time being self-deprecating. It's not me.

LACY: But you're... I mean, you just sit there by yourself and you don't talk to anyone.

KEVIN: I'm talking to you.

LACY: And you still have a smile on your hand.

KEVIN: Yep.

LACY: That hasn't faded at all. Don't you shower?

KEVIN: It faded a little. I reapplied some sharpie to make it fresh again.

LACY: Awww. You're a softie.

KEVIN: It's like tracing over a Monet, but I figured you'd be ok with it.

LACY: I don't know. A girl needs to keep her artistic integrity.

Beat.

KEVIN: Which version did you hear?

LACY: What?

KEVIN: There have been a few floating around. I'm just curious which one found you.

LACY: It's not... It's not like I...

KEVIN: I don't care. I'm not upset. I just want to know. I mean, I asked about you. I heard all sorts of things. I'm really just curious.

LACY: Fine. I heard, you were at a party all night and the next morning, your dad is like a hardass, and the next morning he woke you up early because you guys would go driving for practice for your test, or whatever. I heard you were still drunk and you, you like, you drove into a truck and he...

KEVIN: That's a good one.

LACY: What?

KEVIN: I like that one.

LACY: That's not what happened?

KEVIN: Drunk driving. I can see how it got there. The one where I was pissed at him and did it on purpose seemed like an embellishment, but that's fine. The one where the gas pedal was stuck and I couldn't stop is pretty good, and it's probably the nicest one because it implies that it wasn't my fault. The one where we stopped to buy some pot and my dad got shot by a drug dealer? That one made no sense. I'm not even... I can't figure out how someone made the leap there. But sure. Drunk driving, though? I like that. I should run with that one. Of course, I'd be in jail now. But, whatever.

LACY: So what did happen?

KEVIN: Why does it matter?

LACY: I guess it doesn't.

KEVIN: Perception trumps reality every time kiddo.

LACY: Sounds about right.

Footsteps upstairs. They repeat the locker move.

This time it is MR. HOLDEN. He walks by the lockers, sees that one is open a little, turns, opens it up.

HOLDEN: Your little locker trick is like the worst kept secret in this school Lacy.

LACY: Total lie. I've never been caught before.

HOLDEN: That's because people have stopped wasting their time. No offense.

LACY: None taken.

HOLDEN: Sure. Fine. Let's go to the office.

LACY: Wait. Can't you maybe just let it go this time. I...

HOLDEN: Don't bat your eyelashes at me. I'm immune.

LACY: But...

HOLDEN: Office. Now.

KEVIN knocks on his locker. He hasn't figured out not to fully close it.

HOLDEN: Who is that?

LACY opens it up.

KEVIN: Hi Mr. Holden.

HOLDEN: Oh God, Kevin...

KEVIN: It's not her fault Mr. Holden. I needed someone to talk to. This stuff with my Dad...

HOLDEN: Kevin. If you need someone to talk to there are plenty... Look. You don't need to be getting in with this crowd. No offense.

LACY: This time? Offense definitely taken. Dick.

HOLDEN: Yeah. I deserved that. Alright. You get out of it this time Lacy. Get to class. Both of you. And I'm not going to be dumb enough to walk away and assume you are going. I'm watching.

LACY and KEVIN look at each other. They start to go their separate ways. LACY stops.

LACY: Hey Kevin?

KEVIN: Yeah?

LACY: I'm going to say yes.

KEVIN: I'll remember that.

LACY goes.

HOLDEN: Kevin.

KEVIN starts back.

KEVIN: Mr. Holden, she's a really nice kid. She's really not...

HOLDEN: Stop it. Listen to me. She has a history. People who know her... they change.

KEVIN: Is that so bad?

HOLDEN: Sometimes. It can be. You don't want to become that crowd.

KEVIN: What does that even mean?

HOLDEN: Ask around. You'll find out.

KEVIN: Not every rumor is truth.

HOLDEN: And not every truth is a rumor. Go to class kid.

KEVIN starts to say something. Thinks twice about it. He leaves.

SCENE 3

Same set-up as we are used to. Kids milling about. KEVIN on the stairs.

This time, though, there is no bell ring, so the conversation happens as people are still hanging out. LACY is hanging out with GEOFF and MADISON in front of the lockers. They approach KEVIN.

MADISON: Want to come get coffee with us?

KEVIN: Is that a euphemism?

GEOFF: A euphemism?

KEVIN: For buying drugs.

GEOFF: What does euphemism have to do with buying drugs?

KEVIN: No, is getting coffee a...

LACY: Don't bother. You'll hurt his head.

GEOFF: What the hell are we talking about here?

LACY: Forget it. Pretty direct question Kevin. Would you like to walk down to the coffee shop with us and purchase a cup of coffee?

KEVIN: Is that all you guys do?

MADISON: Yeah. Same time every day. Better than English class.

KEVIN: Yeah sure.

GEOFF: Good!

KEVIN: You're suddenly excited. I thought you were in love with Lacy so we were, like, rivals or something.

GEOFF: What?

LACY: Is that jealousy Kevin? You don't wear that so well.

GEOFF: It's pretty simple dude. You're the get-outta-jail-free card. I could go poop on the Principal's desk and just say I was doing it to help you feel better about yourself. Killing your dad was a smart move.

LACY: (Yells) Jesus Christ Geoffrey. You need to stop.

Folks in the hallway realize something is going on. Their conversations slow, and the focus turns to our quartet.

KEVIN: Look man, I'm cool with you being flippant and whatever. But stop it. I really mean that.

Now EVERYONE is watching these four.

GEOFF: Awww. I thought you were all healed up. Lacy says you don't give a crap about killing your daddy.

The crowd lets out a harsh "oooooh"

LACY punches GEOFF in the arm really hard.

LACY: Cut it out.

KEVIN: Thanks Lacy. Thanks for that.

LACY: Kev. I'm sorry. We were just talking...

KEVIN: No that's cool. Hey? Since everyone else is here anyway... anybody else have anything to say about me? Anybody else wanna make a joke about my dead father? I know it's the cool thing to do, right?

BELL rings. Noone moves. Everyone is watching these four.

GEOFF: Alright. This is a boring conversation. I'm going to get some coffee. And buy coffee I mean a six pack. Anybody else coming?

MADISON: Alright. I'm coming.

LACY: Kevin?

KEVIN: Go. I'm just gonna go to class.

KEVIN leaves. LACY reluctantly goes with GEOFF and MADISON. People Head to class.

SCENE 4

The middle set of lockers has spun around and pulled down stage. We are now looking at the inside of each locker. Kevin occupies one. He leans his head against the wall.

Meanwhile, on the other side, we can still see students milling about.

LACY enters from the stairs. She is looking for KEVIN. Can't find him.

The bell rings. Students exit.

Steps at the top of the stairs. It is MR. HOLDEN.

LACY jumps into her locker, the one adjacent to where KEVIN is. She closes it this time.

MR. HOLDEN walks over to the set of lockers. We obviously can't see him, but we can hear him try the locks.

He exits.

LACY and KEVIN play this scene inside the lockers.

KEVIN: Is that you.

LACY: Yeah. Is that you?

KEVIN: Yep.

LACY: Can you let me out?

KEVIN: I locked mine.

LACY: Why did you do that?

KEVIN: I thought you wouldn't lock yours. You never lock yours. I was going to have you let me out.

LACY: Mr. Holden knows about it. I had to lock it.

KEVIN: Well. This sucks.

LACY: It could be worse. We could be alone.

KEVIN: Yeah.

LACY: Plus now I can talk to you and you can't leave.

KEVIN: I'd rather be alone.

LACY: Too bad.

KEVIN: Sure is.

LACY: I'm not a perfect person Kevin. I won't pretend I am. Some of the stuff you hear about me is true. I'm not some innocent kid who makes all the right choices. So, I'm sorry. I'm sorry that I can't be what you want me to be.

KEVIN: I think you don't have any idea what I want.

LACY: Then tell me.

KEVIN: It doesn't matter.

LACY: It really does.

KEVIN: I just want a friend. I just want a friend who doesn't know what I did and doesn't care. I want a friend who doesn't see my past as something to pity, or something to fix, or something to exploit. But I'm realizing that is sort of impossible around here.

LACY: No it's not.

KEVIN: Yeah. Yeah it is. As much as you complain about how people talk, you just perpetuated it

as much as anyone by running out and telling Geoff and Madi about...

LACY: That's so not fair. You are blowing that way out of proportion. I was complimenting you. I can't help it if Geoff turns it into...

KEVIN: Well you should know that. You should know that about a person.

LACY: Alright, fine. I made a mistake.

KEVIN: It doesn't really matter. I just need to get out of this place. I need to go somewhere else. Start over.

LACY: No you don't. You can start over anywhere. You just have to decide to do it.

KEVIN: So then what's your excuse?

LACY: For what?

KEVIN: For continuing to do dumb things.

LACY: I don't have one. I guess I could blame Geoff and some of the people I hang out with, but I think I just let *them* be my excuse.

KEVIN: Do you want to change?

LACY: Yeah.

KEVIN: Can I help?

LACY: Yeah.

KEVIN: Want to get dinner with me tonight?

LACY: I already told you I would say yes.

KEVIN: Awesome.

Beat.

LACY: Of course we are going to have to get out of here first.

KEVIN: There's that problem, sure.

Beat.

LACY: I really want to kiss you right now.

KEVIN: That would be nice.

LACY: Yeah it would be.

Beat.

KEVIN: So then you are a slut.

LACY: I really wish I could hit you right now.

KEVIN: (laughs) Get me later.

LACY: I will.

Kevin looks at the sharpie smile on his hand. Smiles. Lights fade.

END.