

THE LOVE SCENE

Written by

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INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL DRAMA ROOM - AFTERNOON

THIRTY MIDDLE SCHOOLERS are crowded in a drama room that clearly hasn't been remodeled in years. On the stage is a half built set, obviously built by the children themselves. MS. MULBERRY, the zany, flamboyant, and cat-lady-esque drama teacher is standing in front of them.

MS. MULBERRY

Marvelous job today, thespians! So just as a heads up, tomorrow we'll be blocking the love scene first. So, Melissa and Spencer, be sure to look over your scripts tonight.

SPENCER, a typical high-energy thirteen-year-old musical theatre kid, LOOKS AT CAMERA, his eyes wide with terror.

SPENCER

(mouthing to camera)  
Oh God.

MS. MULBERRY

Then, once we get through blocking, we'll start learning the dance combination for the finale. Any questions?

Spencer raises his hand. Ms. Mulberry keeps smiling but her expression grows slightly pained.

MS. MULBERRY (CONT'D)

Spencer?

SPENCER

When you say love scene, does that include the kiss?

Spencer looks at the camera again, even more terrified.

MS. MULBERRY

Yes, Spencer. Any other questions?

She scans the room. Everyone is silent, waiting to leave. Spencer looks like he's about to explode from anxiety.

MS. MULBERRY (CONT'D)

Alright, then I'll see you all tomorrow. Have a good night!

The kids begin to stream out of the room. Spencer and ANTHONY, a reserved thirteen-year-old boy with thick glasses are walking together.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

They are now outside the school, headed for the front steps.

SPENCER

Oh my god, Anthony, what am I going to do?

ANTHONY

About what?

SPENCER

The kiss! Didn't you hear? We're staging the kiss tomorrow!

ANTHONY

Oh yeah. Well, it's just acting. You'll be fine.

They sit on the front steps, waiting to be picked up.

SPENCER

*I know it's just acting, but-*

He dramatically looks around to be sure no one is listening and drops his volume to an intense whisper.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

I've never kissed anyone! And I can't let my first kiss be in front of the whole cast.

(full volume again)

That would be humiliating!

ANTHONY

Alyssa from marching band told me that kissing's easy. It'll be fine.

SPENCER

No, no, no. I need to prepare. I mean, it's practically my responsibility as an actor! Okay, I have one day to have my first kiss.

ANTHONY

What? Who are you going to get to kiss you in one day?

SPENCER

I have no idea.

ROLLING BACKPACK WHEELS. RUBY, a fellow seventh grader sits down on the stairs about ten feet away. She places her rolling backpack and a large folder down next to her.

Her hair is in pigtails, and she is wearing a shirt with a cartoon alligator on it and alligator socks to match.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
(whispering to Anthony)  
Ruby!

ANTHONY  
What?

SPENCER  
Do you think she'll kiss me?

ANTHONY  
You wanna kiss Ruby?

SPENCER  
Sure, why not? Her hair is nice,  
and her socks always match her  
outfits really well.

ANTHONY  
You're right. They do. But-

SPENCER  
What? You don't like her, you know,  
*like-like* her, do you?

ANTHONY  
Well no but-

A minivan pulls up to the curb.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
I gotta go. My mom's here. Good  
luck I guess.

Anthony pauses for a moment as if he's about to say more.

SPENCER  
Thanks. Bye!

ANTHONY  
Bye Spencer.

Anthony trips over the curb as he gets into the minivan. He glances back at Spencer who is now focused on Ruby. Anthony watches Spencer through the window as the minivan drives off.

Ruby stares ahead blankly. Spencer scoots over to her.

SPENCER  
 (to the tune of "Hello  
 Dolly")  
 Well hello, Ruby!

Ruby looks over to Spencer, unamused.

RUBY  
 Why are you singing?

SPENCER  
 Oh, see it's to the tune of "Hello  
 Dolly". You know from the musical,  
 Hello Dolly?

Ruby stares at him blankly. Now he's just blabbering.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
 You know, the movie adaptation  
 stars Barbra Streisand and Louis  
 Armstrong sings:  
 (singing again)  
 Well hello, Dolly. Well hello,  
 Dolly.

Ruby still gives absolutely no reaction.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
 Nevermind.  
 (to camera)  
 Tough crowd.  
 (to Ruby)  
 So, what's that?

He motions to the folder sitting next to her.

RUBY  
 My art project.

SPENCER  
 Can I see it?

RUBY  
 No.

Spencer looks at the camera, cringing nervously.

SPENCER  
 I like your crocodile socks.

RUBY  
 They're not crocodiles. They're  
 alligators. Crocodiles have V-  
 shaped snouts. These are U-shaped.

SPENCER

Oh right. Of course. Well I really like how they match with your shirt.

Ruby's face brightens. She is almost sort of smiling.

RUBY

Thanks.

Spencer smiles back at her.

SPENCER

(to camera)

I'm almost positive we're flirting.

(to Ruby)

So, Ruby, this may come as a surprise to you, since we've been friends for awhile.

RUBY

Friends?

SPENCER

Oh okay, well acquaintances.

Ruby gives a slight nod.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

I just wanted to say that I think you're really pretty.

RUBY

Thanks.

SPENCER

And I was wondering if you would want to-

A beat up truck pulls up to the curb. Ruby gets up, walking towards the truck.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Oh okay. Bye Ruby!

Ruby gets into the truck without even looking back at Spencer. He sits back down on the steps in defeat.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL HALL - MORNING

Spencer and Anthony walk through the crowded hallway.

ANTHONY  
So, did you do it?

Beat. Anthony nervously awaits the answer.

SPENCER  
No.

ANTHONY  
Sorry, Spence.

SPENCER  
But I haven't given up yet. I think she might be into me, so I need you to give her this.

Spencer whips a folded-up note out of his pocket. Anthony takes the note and unfolds it, reading it aloud.

ANTHONY  
My dearest Ruby, meet me in the art room closet at lunch. Yours,  
Spencer.

Spencer looks to the camera proudly.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
The art room closet?

SPENCER  
What? It's the most romantic spot in the school.

ANTHONY  
But haven't you heard about what happens in there? Alyssa from marching band told me this one story where-

SPENCER  
Anthony, it'll be fine. It's the perfect place for a first kiss.

ANTHONY  
If you say so. But can't you just give her the note?

SPENCER  
No. You have class with her right before lunch. Please. It'll be perfect.

Anthony sighs, staring down at the note.

ANTHONY  
Okay fine.

INT. ART CLASSROOM - LUNCH

Spencer hesitantly knocks on the closet door. Silence.

SPENCER  
(to camera)  
Phew.

He opens the door and walks inside.

INT. ART ROOM CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

The small closet has shelves filled with art supplies, easels leaning against the walls, and stacks of paint buckets.

Spencer flips the light switch and an old light bulb dimly illuminates the room.

He cups his hand around his mouth to smell his breath. He pops a breath mint into his mouth. He takes a deep breath and then subtly practices kissing on his own hand. He glances at his watch. 12:17 pm.

INT. ART ROOM CLOSET - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Spencer paces within the closet. He looks at his watch. 12:22. He shakes out his limbs as if he's doing a theatre warm-up. He smells his breath and pops in two more mints.

SPENCER  
(to camera)  
She'll be here any minute.

INT. ART ROOM CLOSET - TEN MINUTES LATER

Spencer is now sitting in a ball, rocking himself. He looks at his watch. 12:34. He practices kissing on his hand and then smells his breath. He takes out the mint tin and devours the mints like they're M&Ms. A KNOCK at the door.

SPENCER  
Ruby?

The door slowly opens to reveal Anthony.

ANTHONY  
Hey, lunch is almost over.

SPENCER  
She didn't come.

ANTHONY  
I know. I saw her at the Harry  
Potter book club meeting.

Anthony nervously sits down next to Spencer.

SPENCER  
What am I gonna do now? Rehearsal's  
in three hours, and-

Anthony leans in and kisses Spencer who freezes with shock.  
Anthony quickly pulls away. They sit in silence, both staring  
ahead in disbelief. Beat.

ANTHONY  
Sorry.

SPENCER  
No. Thank you.

Beat.

ANTHONY  
I know my socks aren't as cool as  
Ruby's.

SPENCER  
No. That's okay.

Spencer looks down at Anthony's striped socks.

SPENCER (CONT'D)  
Stripes are cool too.

ANTHONY  
Thanks.

Anthony quickly gets up and walks out of the closet, knocking  
over an easel and a few paint cans on the way. Spencer stares  
at the door with a small smile. Beat.

SPENCER  
(to camera)  
You know, Anthony is a really good  
friend.