

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

By Aurin Squire

To Whom It May Concern was first produced in the 2006 Fresh Fruit Festival in New York City at the Abingdon Theatre. Carol Polcovar, Artistic Director of Fresh Fruit Festival. The production was directed by Erick Herrscher and won festival awards for Best Play, Best Writing, and Best Actor (Ted Caine). The cast was as follows:

LORENZO LAFARHOFF: Ted Caine

MAURICE CREELY: Vincent Ingrisano

To Whom It May Concern received a second production at Arclight Theatre in New York City on March 2008. The production was directed by David Gaard. The cast was as follows:

LORENZO LAFARHOFF: Israel Gutierrez

MAURICE CREELY: Matt Alford

CHARACTERS

1. Lorenzo Lafarhoff – 15-year-old rural boy
2. Maurice Creely – 20-year-old soldier

STORY

To Whom It May Concern is an epistolary play about transcendent and oft-kilter ways of love and internet relationships. When a 15- year-old boy writes a letter to a soldier and is confused for an older woman, a series of seductive exchanges begins.

NOTES ON STAGING

The play can be staged in a variety of flexible ways and these are some suggestions. When characters write letters, e-mails or instant messages, the act should be performed with fluidity. Characters should not mime the action of writing, typing or sending an email. Direct address to the audience is probably the smoothest way to get across long-distance correspondences. During heightened scenes or to emphasize certain moments, these suggestions can be modified or ignored as seen fit. For instant messaging, the characters can speak out the abbreviations and symbols.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

SCENE ONE: FIRST LETTER

(Abilene, Kansas and Kabul, Afghanistan.

LORENZO LAFARHOFF, 15, sits in his bedroom writing a letter.

MAURICE A. CREELY, a 20-year-old with glasses, eats cookies and reads the letter.)

LORENZO: To Whom It May Concern at the 1st Marine Division of the United States Armed Forces, I read an article in the Abilene Chronicle and wished to contact Sgt. Maurice A. Creely. I found his rescue story very cool. And I'm not going to lie: I also liked the picture attached to it. I guess you can say this is a fan letter. I'm a student at Carter High School in Abilene, Kansas. I've enclosed a sealed batch of chocolate oatmeal cookies. Hopefully, you can get them to Sgt. Creely before they rot. The army might have a strict policy on packages, but I'd really like to get this to him. Let me know. I have his picture hanging by my bed.

Yours truly,

LL

MAURICE: Dear LL, It is always nice to get a fan letter, especially from a young woman who sounds as sweet as you. And just so you know the army may have a strict policy on receiving packages but I wouldn't know because I'm not in the army. I'm in the Marines. There is a difference. But...no big deal, just an FYI. Anyway, thank you for the cookies. They were delicious. I bet you are too. Ha ha. But seriously. The desert is hot and there are so many bugs it is disgusting. I try not to think about it. Instead I try to picture pretty things. In fact I'm trying to get a picture of you in my head. Do you have one? I would like to see it. I bet you are really...cute. By the way, are you going to be 18 any time soon?

Sincerely,

Maurice Creely

LORENZO: Dear Sgt. Creely, you seem to be under some misconception about me. Perhaps it is my fault. I was hoping that you might be...your sensitivity led me to believe that there was a slight –not great but miniscule- chance that you would be interested in me. I realize you might never want to speak to me again but I can't lie...

BEAT

LORENZO: I'm one hot teenage girl. I'm 17, so I guess I'm not a girl, not yet a woman. But I will be. Any day now I will blossom into a beautiful young woman. My buds are ripening as I write. Post me back. Please.

Sincerely,

LL... Lillian.

MAURICE: Dear Lillian, I don't know why you would think I would want to stop receiving your letters. Besides your cooking is so delicious I think my entire unit would kill me if I stopped talking to you. I've been telling them all about you and they agree: you are one special almost-legal teenager. I mean, who bakes stuff and mails them to Marines they don't even know? No one. Who takes the time to pick out a lonely...lone face in a crowd and write them a letter? No one even cares about the thousands getting killed. I thought everybody had forgotten about us out here. Your letters give me hope that maybe that's not true. I know I see you, Lillian. And I want to continue seeing you. Especially when you...turn 18. Ha-ha-ha. But seriously: don't stop writing. Yours are the only letters I get. I want to know everything about you. And a picture would be nice, too. I don't know if you have a computer or not, but we should e-mail each other. It'd be a lot quicker way of getting to know each other...

(LORENZO and MAURICE move to computers.)

LORENZO: ... I get all wet and moist inside and slip my fingers between my...

(LORENZO flips through an anatomy book and cringes.)

LORENZO: ...labia majora. It feels so good when I rub my...vestibule and clitoris. My vulva gets all tingly and then I explode, shuddering and biting down into my pillow hard. Then I melt like a little kitten, falling asleep thinking about how good you make me feel.

BEAT

MAURICE: Thank you for the e-mail.

LORENZO: You're welcome. This is a lot quicker than writing. This past month has been so good.

MAURICE: Lillian, I can't stand looking at pictures anymore. When are you going video chat?

LORENZO: I prefer you see me. I've left a ladder by my window just for you. I have to go meet... a friend at the bus stop. For now, I've sent you another sweet treat.

MAURICE: (taking out her panties) Thank you for the latest treat. I don't think I'll be sharing this dessert with the unit. Do you have some way we could talk more directly, like instant messaging?

(They switch to instant messaging.)

MAURICE: So good to finally meet you in cyberspace (smiley face)

LORENZO: (smiley face) likewise. Btw, if you ever want to talk always here at my computer around this time...after cheerleading practice.

MAURICE: Cheerleading practice? BFG.

LORENZO: What's that?

MAURICE: Big fucking grin.

LORENZO: Well AAP, A3: always a pleasure. Anytime, anyplace, anywhere. Have to leave in a minute but Maurice, u know what I'd do 2 u if you were here. I'd like to...

MAURICE: Oh, now, DEGT. Don't even go there! (out of the side of his mouth) Lieutenant is looking over my shoulder and I think he knows about our cyber-love. Don't want 2 make him jealous. I think he likes me.

LORENZO: What?

MAURICE: I think he's a H-O-M-O.

LORENZO: Really?

MAURICE: I know. CYBI: can u believe it?

LORENZO: ICB: I can. Is he cute?

MAURICE: What? You're funny.

LORENZO: Ha-ha, I know. But seriously...would you describe him as...

MAURICE: I don't know. Yeah, I guess he could be considered that. But I'm more interested in seeing a picture of you.

LORENZO: Soon enough. But let's get back 2 this lieutenant.

MAURICE: Come on, Lil...

LORENZO: Don't be shy, this is interesting to me. Is this the same lieutenant as the 1 in the article w/ u?

MAURICE: Yeah.

LORENZO: Maybe he just admires u.

MAURICE: He's got no reason 2.

LORENZO: Course he does. You did something very brave.

MAURICE: That was weeks ago.

LORENZO: Once a hero, always a hero.

MAURICE: U think I'm a hero?

LORENZO: You're a total bad-ass.

MAURICE: Don't really see myself as that sort of guy.

LORENZO: Try seeing yourself differently.

MAURICE: Who am I trying for?

LORENZO: 4 me.

MAURICE: ...okay. 4 U I'd do it. So how about giving ur hero some video play?

LORENZO: U really want 1?

MAURICE: Yes! Hop to it, woman.

LORENZO: Yessir. I guess you'll eventually have to see me.

MAURICE: No time like the present.

LORENZO: BRB.

(LORENZO grabs his digital camera and takes a few pictures.)

LORENZO: Gonna send u a pic first.

MAURICE: What? I thought u were-

LORENZO: It's a pic of my friend. Tell me what u think.

MAURICE: -No, Lil.

LORENZO: HOAS.

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: Hold on a second.

MAURICE: Wow, ur text vocab is huge.

LORENZO: Well I use it a lot. I can talk entirely in acronyms and emojis if I want to. Tell me what u think of this guy?

MAURICE: Lillian, the only picture I want 2 see is yours.

LORENZO: In a second. Maurice, if this lieutenant is H-O-M-O would that be such a bad thing?

MAURICE: No.

LORENZO: Good.

MAURICE: I just don't want those people around me.

LORENZO: PXT, please explain that.

MAURICE: They stay in their place and I can stay in mine.

LORENZO: And what is their place?

MAURICE: Away from me.

LORENZO: Look, I know you guys have this big macho image to uphold being in the army-

MAURICE: -Marines.

LORENZO: -right, whatever but-

MAURICE: -no, baby. It's not whatever. You've done this a few times in our conversation and I've let it slide. Because I like u.

LORENZO: Fine, but-

MAURICE: -there is a big difference. Look: labels are very important. What we call ourselves. What we call others, what we say we believe in. It's very much not a 'whatever' thing. If a guys says he's in the Navy and u keep calling him Coast Guard Bill, he's going 2 get upset. Because he had to earn that label.

LORENZO: Ok, well what if they was born w/ it? Let's say Bill was born into the Navy. Even though he didn't necessarily want to be in it, he was labeled as a seaman.

MAURICE: LOL, (smiley face) U said seaman.

LORENZO: (smiley face) Anyway he was born w/ a label and expected to spend his whole life at sea. Let's say this person wanted to be on solid ground. In the Marines.

MAURICE: Now ur talking. Well, I'd tell him 2 go sign up.

LORENZO: But what if he couldn't do it, Maurice. What if he couldn't just sign up?

MAURICE: Why not?

LORENZO: Because. He couldn't be on dry land.

MAURICE: Are you talking about somebody like Aquaman? Or something like that?

LORENZO: (sighing) OMG...sure. Like Aquaman.

MAURICE: So...Aquaman is in the Navy...

LORENZO: Or something.

MAURICE: But he wants 2B in the Marines? PXT, because I'm confused, I think ur mixing ur analogies.

LORENZO: He wants 2B on land. His family lives on land. They don't understand why he can't come in from sea. They think he's sick, so they send him to a doctor. And when he refuses to get better, when he can't get better, they don't want him any more. They think he's disgusting, b/c of the label he was born with. When he tries to explain they scream. When he tries to touch them, to hug them, they beat him. But they don't understand he would change if he could. Because it's lonely out there.

MAURICE: Can't he find other sea creatures?

LORENZO: None his age. Most of them are hiding. And the creatures he bumps into out there are old and mean. Their skin is wrinkled like prunes and they don't care about him. They've been alone in the ocean for so long that they've forgotten how 2 treat each other. And I...he knows that he's going to become like them. If he doesn't find a way 2 get 2 land or another creature as kind and caring as him, he's going 2B lost at sea. And he doesn't want that cu then he really will be corrupted.

MAURICE: This creature could always...kill himself.

LORENZO: What?

MAURICE: If they are doomed 2B unhappy their whole life why not spare themselves?
Why die a thousand deaths when you can die 1?

BEAT

MAURICE: We're still talking about sea creatures, right?

BEAT

MAURICE: LL?

LORENZO: IGR.

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: I gotta run. Meeting a friend in the park.

MAURICE: Lillian, who are all these friends UR meeting in parks? And why can't they just come back to UR house? Wait, are U trying to make me jealous?

(LORENZO puts condoms and lotion in a backpack.)

MAURICE: Lillian.

LORENZO: Maybe we shouldn't speak 2 each other 4 a while.

MAURICE: Cuz why?

LORENZO: Cuz I don't feel like talking to U.

MAURICE: Cuz why?

LORENZO: Cuz you're not the sensitive person I thought U were.

MAURICE: Wait. What just happened? Did I do something? If so, I can make it up to U.
I sent U a package yesterday.

LORENZO: GFY.

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: Go. Fuck. Yourself.

MAURICE: LL?

LORENZO: Army brat.

MAURICE: That's not even correct terminology.

LORENZO: Then how bout army boy? Or how bout closeted army faggot.

MAURICE: What?

LORENZO: U heard me, army fag.

MAURICE: Lillian they monitor our computers.

LORENZO: Good, then they'll know that UR an army fag. Maybe U and the lieutenant can

MAURICE: -hey, fuck U, bitch.

LORENZO: -yeah, fuck me and fuck U. Guess we finally agreed on something.

MAURICE: But Lillian, what's going on? Whatever it is, it can be worked out. UR the only...please. I need to speak to U. What am I supposed to do?

LORENZO: Well, I guess U should take UR own advice.

MAURICE: And what's that?

LORENZO: Kill yourself.

SCENE TWO: STORM

(MAURICE walks in with shawl around his head. A sandstorm rages outside while in Kansas, a thunderstorm is passing overhead. MAURICE sits down on his bed and unwraps his shawl.)

MAURICE: Lillian? U there?

BEAT

MAURICE: U said U were normally online at around this time so I thought I would try. I got an internet hook up to my personal computer by my bed. So we can say whatever we want now. There's a sandstorm outside. All operations have been grounded. Not even the suicide bombers are out today. You can't see your own hands. You ever been in a sandstorm? The air becomes this ocean of yellow and it feels like a hundred glass needles are sticking every inch of your body. On your nose, on your toes, in your eyes all these tiny needles. And every time you breathe, you inhale these needles and it burns your chest and head. You sweat and sand clumps together and runs down your face in little streams. I got all these rivers of dirt and sand running down my arms and chest. I feel like I'm being buried alive.

BEAT

MAURICE: Look, I'm sorry. I thought about what I said. No one should be ashamed of who they r or label. I really like you and we have nothing to be ashamed of. So there, r u happy: I don't think Aquaman should kill himself.

(LORENZO enters, with ripped clothes and dripping wet. He's searching under the bed for something.)

MAURICE: If you're there...TMB. That's text me back. I've been chatting and increasing my txt message vocab. I'm sure I'm not at your level yet. I mean that in a lot of ways. Well, I guess you're not there. WWYC. Write When You Can.

LORENZO: Maurice, hey. LTNS.

MAURICE: Long Time No See back at you. How are you?

LORENZO: Wet. Incredibly wet.

MAURICE: (smiley face, wink, wink)

LORENZO: Not like that, perv. Came in from a storm.

MAURICE: Me 2.

LORENZO: It's raining over there?

MAURICE: Sandstorm.

LORENZO: What's that like?

MAURICE: (sarcastic) Fun.

LORENZO: Wish you were here.

MAURICE: I wish I was there 2.

LORENZO: Your family must miss u.

MAURICE: Don't know.

LORENZO: Y not?

MAURICE: They got their own lives. Hey, wanna cybersex, (smiley face wink)?

LORENZO:...(frown) Not really.

MAURICE: Come on, it'll be fun.

LORENZO: Not in the mood, dude.

MAURICE: Lil, is this about last time? Look, I'm sorry about what I said.

LORENZO: It's not you. Daddy issues.

MAURICE: Ahhh, family crap. Feel your pain.

LORENZO: U2?

MAURICE: 1 of the reasons I joined the Marines.

LORENZO: Really? What about ur Mom?

MAURICE: Gone.

LORENZO: What?

MAURICE: Left when I was in high school.

LORENZO: That's fucked up.

MAURICE: You get used to fucked up things.

LORENZO: Brothers and sister?

MAURICE: 1 Gone. Don't ask.

LORENZO: What happened?

MAURICE: What did I just say?

LORENZO: Sorry...brother or sister?

MAURICE: You really don't know how to follow orders.

LORENZO: Yeah, one of my problems. So...

MAURICE: Brother. Younger. Dead.

LORENZO: Sorry. Dad?

MAURICE: Wish he was dead.

LORENZO: Same here. Maybe. I like my mom better.

MAURICE: Same.

LORENZO: So why did yours leave?

MAURICE: Never said. Guess she just got tired. Woke up one morning. Drank some coffee and walked out.

LORENZO: Creepy. I thought only Dads did shit like that.

MAURICE: Everybody leaves. Eventually. Only fucked up thing is she left the water on in the tub. It was like it was raining in my room. Water was running down the stairs. It took two weeks to dry out everything. And then the mold. On the ceilings, inside the walls, everything stank. Her clothes and stuff were all on her closet floor and they got covered with these green moldy spores.

LORENZO: So she didn't take anything?

MAURICE: 1 thing. It was coming up on a year since my brother was buried. We had a picture of him on a mantel piece that she took that.

LORENZO: What a jerk.

MAURICE: Hey! That's my mother.

LORENZO: Sorry. But it's true.

MAURICE: ...yeah.

LORENZO: If anybody ever did that to me I'd fucking hunt them down.

MAURICE: No, u wouldn't.

LORENZO: I'd hunt them down and, and... blow their fucking brains out.

MAURICE: No, u wouldn't, Lillian. Your too sweet and nice.

LORENZO: Maurice, I'm not that nice.

LORENZO: Maurice, I'm not that nice.

MAURICE: Yeah, u r. That's why u can forgive me so easily.

LORENZO: I haven't forgiven u yet.

MAURICE: But u will.

LORENZO: And how do u know?

MAURICE: Cuz. I'm ur bad-ass hero.

LORENZO: Oh really?

MAURICE: Yeah...I mean, if u want me 2 B.

LORENZO: Maurice, that's not the way a bad-ass hero talks.

MAURICE: I'm in training. I've been working on being...better. B/c of u. I'm trying 2 improve myself, for u. Trying 2 change.

LORENZO: But why? But u haven't even met me.

MAURICE: I think we've met each other. In some way. And I want to be smarter, funnier, and just...more for you.

LORENZO: Don't be more. I'm sorry 4 being so shitty. I hope u can forgive me.

MAURICE: Always. U know, I've never been 2 Kansas.

LORENZO: Not missing much. Can't wait 2 get out of this fucking city. This state. The douchebag heartland of America. Pickup trucks, belt buckles, fried chicken and fat-ass retards with their fat-ass wives and their fat-ass greasy kids.

MAURICE: Is something wrong today?

LORENZO: Just venting. Maybe I could go 2 Kabul.

MAURICE: LOL. Are u serious?

LORENZO: Y not? I can get work. And they can't be setting off bombs on every corner. And I'll wear one of those burkhas. Nobody will see my face or know my name. Just you and me.

MAURICE: Lillian, it's just sand and caves. Can't even understand how these people have been living out here. There's no atmosphere.

LORENZO: That sounds nice.

MAURICE: During the day it's an oven and then at night it's a freezer.

LORENZO: Just want to get out of this town.

MAURICE: You feel like an outsider? Like that Aquaman?

LORENZO: LOL, I guess.

MAURICE: Lillian, it will pass. When I was younger-

LORENZO: -aren't u only 19? I mean u still can't order wine.

MAURICE: 20, and don't interrupt ur elders.

LORENZO: Sorry.

MAURICE: The point is that I felt exactly like U2.

LORENZO: And what did u do about it?

MAURICE: Joined the Marines.

LORENZO: Then I guess it worked out 4 U. UR name is in the paper, U won some medals and now UR a hero.

MAURICE: Yeah, listen Lil. I'm not a bad-ass hero.

LORENZO: Not yet. But U got UR learner's permit.

MAURICE: No, I'm serious.

LORENZO: If I did anything even slightly cool I'd brag 2 everybody.

MAURICE: It's just pure chance who gets in the newspaper. That's all it was. LL, don't join the Marines. Being on dry land isn't what it's cracked up to be. Stay out at sea.

LORENZO: W/ who?

MAURICE: Have some time off soon. Going home to St. Louis. I could take a bus out 2 Kansas.

LORENZO: Ummm...don't inconvenience yourself.

MAURICE: No inconvenience. What else do I have 2 do?

LORENZO: U got friends u want 2 visit?

MAURICE: A few.

LORENZO: Sure u gotta bunch of girls hanging around.

MAURICE: Lillian, my life is a really bad country Western song. My dog died. My mom left. U R it. My only contact w/ someone real. This is for real. At least that's what I think. Don't know how U feel.

LORENZO: Yeah. It's real.

MAURICE: So when I get there...if I get there...I'll finally get 2 CU.

LORENZO: Well, let's talk about that later. We gotta plan it out. Gotta know so I can get myself ready.

MAURICE: What does a young, hot woman like urself have 2 prepare? U gotta fix UR face?

LORENZO: Among other things.

MAURICE: You're just being shy.

LORENZO: Actually I have finals around that time. Studying and preparing to go to college. Don't want you to come all the way out here and be disappointed. Wouldn't want you wasting your time on me.

MAURICE: It wouldn't be a waste (smiley face).

LORENZO: (smiley face) I'm sorry 4 telling U2 GFY.

MAURICE: I was more offended by the army reference.

MAURICE: And I'm sorry 4 what I said. Aquaman should live. And all his descendants.

LORENZO: So now we've made up.

MAURICE: Almost. We still have 1 thing 2 do. (smiley face, wink wink)

LORENZO: I thought U couldn't because they monitored UR computer.

MAURICE: Everyone sexts. U get the package I sent?

LORENZO: (taking out jock strap) Yes, thank u. I sleep w/ every night.

MAURICE: Whaddya do w/?

LORENZO: Rub it.

MAURICE: Where?

LORENZO: On my vulva.

MAURICE: LL...could you...

LORENZO: What is it, MAC68?

MAURICE: When you talk about 'stuff,' be a little less clinical.

LORENZO: LOL. Okay, Big Mo. I take your hot, sweaty jock strap and I rub it on my...vagina.

MAURICE: A little bit better...what else...

LORENZO: And then I let it slide down my, my...pussy lips...

MAURICE: Now you're talking! That's it LL, what else do you do?

LORENZO: Uh-uh, not so fast, cowboy. First tell me what you do with my package?

MAURICE :...let it slide all up and down my...bod. Across my 6-pac abs, and over my pulsating pecs, between my hairy thighs...

LORENZO: Yes, yes...

MAURICE: ...then I wrap it around...my .45 magnum.

LORENZO: Yeah, I do the same.

MAURICE: ...?

LORENZO: LOL, jk, joking. I mean I press it into my moist, sweet...vulva

MAURICE: (frown) Lil-

LORENZO: -cunt. I meant my slick hawt quivering cunt. I press ur jock n2 my sweet warm. And I see u, sneaking n2 my bed. Real quiet like a panther ready 2 pounce on me.

MAURICE: And u under me...

LORENZO: And I'm rolling...

MAURICE: And writhing. Grinding, sweaty and hot...

LORENZO: ...pounding me, harder and harder...

MAURICE: You're so sweet, and soft, and gentle. I kiss ur breast and neck as I'm inside. You arch ur back like a cat, oh yes, tell me ur 18...tell me you've turned 18...yes! Oh, I'm coming, I'm coming...(he exhales in a long sigh)...XOXO	LORENZO: ...me feeling on ur chest, rubbing my hands across ur hair, down ur stomach, I can feel u inside me, hot. All muscle and sand, gritty and sweating. I'm 18, I'm legal, I'm legal!!! Oh, I'm coming...(he exhales) Nighty nite. TTYL, XOXO
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MAURICE: LL? Lillian? I can't wait any longer.