

LOST AND FOUND

By Katherine Dubois

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ISBN: 978-1-60003-738-2

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LOST AND FOUND

A One Act Comedy-Drama

By Katherine Dubois

SYNOPSIS: From a lost shoe to a lunchroom tiff with a best friend to a parents' divorce, a Language Arts teacher helps his students negotiate the landmines of starting middle school in this humorous, touching play.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 male, 3 female)

MR. EARLY (m)	A language arts teacher. (151 lines)
KATJA (f).....	Student; a bookworm. (31 lines)
LAMBERT (m).....	Student; does everything with a flair. (20 lines)
CARLOS (m).....	Student; easygoing. (40 lines)
LUPITA (f)	Student; shy. (30 lines)
SUNAINA (f).....	Student; wants to be up-to-date and sophisticated. (50 lines)
AYUSH (m).....	Student; normally boisterous but now subdued. (16 lines)

PRODUCTION NOTES

SETTING: A middle school classroom

TIME: The present

RUNNING TIME: 25 minutes

COSTUMES: Everyday school clothes.

PROPS:

- ☐ Large box
- ☐ Papers
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Binder
- ☐ Copy of *Things Not Seen* by Andrew Clements
- ☐ Scrap of paper
- ☐ Shoe

AT RISE: *The scene is a classroom. MR. EARLY sits at his desk. There is a large box on the floor next to it. KATJA approaches the opposite side of the desk hesitantly. SHE clutches a binder to her chest.*

KATJA: Um—Mr. Early?

MR. EARLY: Yes, Katja?

KATJA: May I look through the Lost and Found box?

MR. EARLY: Does looking through the Lost and Found box have anything to do with the spelling sentences you're supposed to be writing?

KATJA: I need to.

MR. EARLY: And why is that?

KATJA: I lost something. Will you help me find it?

MR. EARLY: If I knew what this "something" was...

KATJA: It's a book.

MR. EARLY: Can you be a little more specific, Katja?

KATJA: It's a book I was reading.

MR. EARLY: You lost a book while you were reading it?

KATJA: No, Mr. Early. Nobody could do that. I had it yesterday. And I think maybe I left it here. But it might be in my locker. Or maybe the choir room. I hope I didn't leave it on the bus, 'cos it's a library book.

MR. EARLY: Can you tell me about the book?

KATJA: It's about a boy that gets invisible.

MR. EARLY: Is the book invisible?

KATJA: *(With a giggle.)* No.

MR. EARLY: Then can you *describe* the book you've lost? Does it have a title?

KATJA: I don't remember.

MR. EARLY: You don't remember if it has a title?

KATJA: It does. But I don't remember what it is. Something about seeing.

MR. EARLY: Is it hardback? Paperback? Fat? Thin? Big? Little? Furry?

KATJA: *(Another giggle.)* No. Mr. Early. You're teasing.

MR. EARLY: Well, yes, I am, a little. But the book must have some physical features.

KATJA: Books aren't furry, Mr. Early.

MR. EARLY: Not very many of them. But I've seen a copy of *The Little Fur Family* that had fur on the cover. Pretty distinctive.

KATJA: This wasn't like that. It's just—well, it's a book. (*SHE sets her binder on the edge of his desk and gestures with her hands.*) Like so. The cover's blue, does that help?

MR. EARLY: A blue cover would be a distinguishing characteristic.

KATJA: Dark blue. And there's a face on it, in silver. From the side.

MR. EARLY: Do you know what that's called, a face from the side?

KATJA: Profile?

MR. EARLY: Very good.

KATJA: And there's stars, and a city in the background.

MR. EARLY: Now we're getting somewhere. You see, Katja, when you give me specific, distinct, clear details, it helps me picture what you're describing. And right now I'm picturing something that looks a lot like this.

HE leans over and pulls a copy of Things Not Seen by Andrew Clements out of the Lost and Found box.

KATJA: That's it! That's my book. Thank you, Mr. Early.

MR. EARLY: You left it here yesterday.

KATJA: Sorry. It's hard having so many classes and having to carry everything around everywhere.

MR. EARLY: Starting middle school's a big transition. But don't worry, you'll adjust.

KATJA: Thank you, Mr. Early.

MR. EARLY: Are you liking the book so far?

KATJA: Yeah, it's good. Sometimes I wish I could be invisible. Like when I see my brother in the halls and he makes fun of me and all his friends laugh at me.

MR. EARLY: Thinks he's pretty big stuff, does he, now he's in his last year here?

KATJA: To hear him talk, you'd think he was born a teenager. He says he's one of the big kids and I'm just a little squirt. But if I turned invisible I could get past him.

MR. EARLY: I guess invisibility could have its uses. What about the boy in the book? Does he like being invisible?

KATJA: A little bit, I guess. His parents tell him he's supposed to stay in the house but he sneaks out, and he creeps up on people and listens to what they're saying. But he gets lonely because he can't talk to anyone. Not without giving himself away.

MR. EARLY: I guess it would be hard to make friends if you were invisible. In fact, I guess there's a lot of things it would be hard to do. No one could see you smile at them, for instance.

KATJA: I guess so.

MR. EARLY: And your brother wasn't born a teenager. I know, because I had him in class when he was your age. And he wasn't calling anybody a little squirt then.

KATJA: Was he smaller than me?

MR. EARLY: By about half a foot.

KATJA: Really?

MR. EARLY: Really. But don't tell him I said so.

KATJA: Thank you for finding my book.

SHE heads back toward her desk.

MR. EARLY: Katja?

KATJA: Yes, Mr. Early?

HE hands HER the binder she set on his desk.

Oh, sorry.

SHE returns to her seat. MR. EARLY grades papers for a moment. LAMBERT approaches the desk.

LAMBERT: Mr. Early?

MR. EARLY: Yes, Lambert?

LAMBERT: May I see if there's a thing in the Lost and Found box?

MR. EARLY: You don't need to see, I'll tell you. There are seven things in the Lost and Found box.

LAMBERT: Is there a shoe?

MR. EARLY: One shoe?

LAMBERT: I have the other one. *(HE points to his feet.)*

MR. EARLY: You have two other ones.

LAMBERT: *(Pointing to his left foot.)* But this isn't the shoe I want. This is one of my dress shoes. But this one *(Pointing to his right foot.)*, this is the one I want.

MR. EARLY: It's right there.

LAMBERT: No, the other one of it. It's a pair.

MR. EARLY: A pear? Are you sure? It looks like a shoe. Most pears are yellow. Or sometimes red. And they grow on trees—

LAMBERT: Not pear, *pair*. You know, like, two of something. A pair of shoes. That go together. I want a match for this one. *(Pointing to his right foot.)*

MR. EARLY: You want a match for that shoe? Are you going to set it on fire?

LAMBERT: I want the one that's like this *(Pointing to his right foot.)* but that goes like this. *(Pointing to his left foot.)* This one *(Left foot.)* would be at home, if I could have found my other one like this one *(Right foot.)* I would have worn this one *(Right foot.)* rather than this one. *(Left foot.)* I mean, I would have worn the one like it. You know what I mean. Don't you? The one that's the same as this one *(Right foot.)* but goes this way. *(Left foot.)*

MR. EARLY: And what leads you to believe your shoe might be in my Lost and Found box?

LAMBERT: Yesterday I wore my P.E. shoes after gym class and I had these *(Right foot.)* in my backpack but when I got home one was missing so it must have fallen out. And since I have this class right after P.E., I thought maybe it was here.

MR. EARLY: Well, let's see. *(HE reaches into the box and pulls out a shoe.)*

LAMBERT: Yes, that's it.

MR. EARLY: Hold your foot up and let's see if they're the same.

LAMBERT balances on his left foot and lifts his right foot up without resting it on the desk. MR. EARLY places the sole of the shoe he's holding against the sole of Lambert's right shoe.

MR. EARLY: They're identical. Oh, but wait a minute. You don't want a shoe that's identical to yours, do you? You want one that's the reverse. So this can't be your shoe. *(HE starts to put it back in the box.)*

LAMBERT: But that's my shoe. It's the same as this one. (*Right foot.*)

MR. EARLY: But you don't want one that's the same. You want one that's the same but goes the other way.

LAMBERT: But—wait a minute. It's because you had it turned around. Turn it the other way.

MR. EARLY: (*Turning the shoe upside down and holding it against Lambert's right foot.*) No, now they're not the same at all.

LAMBERT: No, not that way. (*HE holds his hands together palm to palm.*) See? This way, they're the same. (*HE flips his hands around fingers to wrists.*) This way they're not. But this way (*HE holds them out side by side.*) they're the same but different. Because they face the other way. See? Here the thumb's over here, but here the thumb's over here. So that's my shoe.

MR. EARLY: (*Hands it over with a smile.*) You've got me convinced. And I don't think anyone else could have explained it the way you just did. But if you're trying to explain something on paper? Words like "left" and "right" and "top" and "bottom" will do you a lot more good than "this one" and "that one" and "this way" and "that way."

LAMBERT: You bet. Thanks, Mr. Early.

MR. EARLY: You're welcome, Lambert.

LAMBERT sits on the edge of MR. EARLY'S desk and takes off his dress shoe.

LAMBERT: I'm sure glad I found this. (*HE starts to put the other shoe on.*) My Mom wasn't happy about me losing this shoe. She said I'd have to replace it out of the money I made helping my uncle this summer. And of course, you can't replace one shoe, can you? You have to buy two.

MR. EARLY: Two just the same.

LAMBERT: But different. (*HE holds out his hands side by side.*) But now things are cool.

MR. EARLY: I'm glad to hear it, Lambert.

LAMBERT tosses the dress shoe into the air, catches it, and goes back to his desk. CARLOS approaches the desk.

CARLOS: Hey, Mr. E.

MR. EARLY: Hey, Carlos.

CARLOS: Can I see the Lost and Found box?

MR. EARLY: If you can't see it from there, I think I'd better send a note home to your mother to have your eyes checked.

CARLOS: I mean, can I look inside it?

MR. EARLY: Do you mean, are you able to?

CARLOS: You're on about my grammar again, aren't you?

MR. EARLY: It is my job, Carlos.

CARLOS: May I look in the Lost and Found box?

MR. EARLY: Have you lost something?

CARLOS: You see, I'm supposed to have a pencil to mark stuff the conductor says. On my music.

MR. EARLY: Maybe it would help if you started at the beginning.

CARLOS: It's not the school band. It's at the Community Center. I play tenor sax.

MR. EARLY: Try starting at the very beginning.

CARLOS: I need a pencil today after school. At rehearsal. I can't use pen.

MR. EARLY: You've lost your pencil.

CARLOS: Because with pen, you can't erase. And sometimes she changes her mind. About the dynamics or the tempo. So you have to be able to erase. Because with art, you have to be free to follow your inspiration. Like a gust of wind bending down the flowers, and then lifting them up again.

MR. EARLY: That's a beautiful image, Carlos. I like it. But it doesn't tell me much about your pencil.

CARLOS: Well, actually, I forgot to bring a pencil today but I thought maybe if there was one in the Lost and Found I could have it.

MR. EARLY: You haven't actually lost a pencil.

CARLOS: No.

MR. EARLY: But you'd like to know if you could *borrow* one out of the Lost and Found.

CARLOS: I'll bring it back. Tomorrow. I promise.

MR. EARLY: How about I let you borrow one of *my* pencils until tomorrow.

HE hands Carlos a pencil.

CARLOS: This one I can't erase with. Look, the eraser's all rubbed down. And the erasing is what I just told you about.

MR. EARLY: Carlos, you are not only ending three consecutive sentences with a preposition, you're looking a gift horse in the mouth.

CARLOS: Isn't that a bit of a cliché, Mr. E.? I thought you always wanted us to be original.

MR. EARLY: If you can give me a better image, I'll lend you a pencil with a pristine eraser.

CARLOS: Pristine?

MR. EARLY: Like the newly-fallen snow. Like a CD that's never been removed from its case.

CARLOS: Okay. An image. Better than looking a gift horse in the mouth?

MR. EARLY: Yes.

CARLOS: Let's see. It's like—criticizing a gift.

MR. EARLY: It *is* criticizing a gift. Or in this case, a loan. But what's a more lively way to describe that?

CARLOS: It's like—correcting the grammar of someone who gives you a compliment.

MR. EARLY: Not bad.

CARLOS: It's like—counting the little squares when someone shares their chocolate bar with you.

MR. EARLY: Good!

CARLOS: It's like sniffing at the armpits of a shirt someone lends you.

MR. EARLY: Well, that's colorful.

CARLOS: It's like touching up your portrait while the painter is still in the studio.

MR. EARLY: Oh, I like that one.

CARLOS: Can I have the pencil now?

MR. EARLY: May I.

CARLOS: May I?

MR. EARLY: Yes. Please see that you return it without teeth marks.

CARLOS: Whoa, this one's cool. What's this button do?

MR. EARLY: That feeds in more lead.

CARLOS: And this one?

MR. EARLY: That extends the eraser.

CARLOS: The eraser's extendable? Cool!

MR. EARLY: Click the barrel clockwise.

CARLOS: Wow! It lights up. This is wicked.

MR. EARLY: Are you saying my pencil has an evil disposition, Carlos?

CARLOS: I'm saying it *rocks*.

MR. EARLY: Rocks?

CARLOS: This pencil is to an ordinary pencil what an iPod is to a tape player.

MR. EARLY: Take good care of it, then.

CARLOS: I will. And thanks.

CARLOS goes back to his seat. MR. EARLY returns to grading papers. After a moment, LUPITA approaches the desk, dragging a chair with her. SHE places the chair very near to MR. EARLY'S desk and sits quietly, watching him. HE looks up from his grading.

MR. EARLY: Lupita?

SHE merely nods.

MR. EARLY: Did you want to talk to me?

SHE nods again.

MR. EARLY: Talking usually involves words, Lupita.

SHE looks at the floor and nods.

MR. EARLY: Is something the matter?

SHE nods again.

MR. EARLY: Well, let's see. What could be the matter with Lupita? Have you lost something?

LUPITA: *(In a very small voice.)* Yes.

MR. EARLY: What have you lost?

LUPITA: My best friend.

MR. EARLY: Maya?

LUPITA nods.

MR. EARLY: Maya's gone missing?

LUPITA: We had a fight.

MR. EARLY: What happened?

LUPITA: We were in the cafeteria together. *(SHE pauses.)*

MR. EARLY: Okay.

LUPITA: Standing in line for lunch. *(Another pause.)*

MR. EARLY: Go on.

LUPITA: So we got our lunch and needed a place to sit.

MR. EARLY: And?

LUPITA: *(Taking a big breath and plunging in.)* And she wanted to go sit by the window and I said no, the sun would be in our eyes. And then she said she was going to anyway and I could do what I wanted. I said I wanted to sit with her but there was a whole table full of boys near the window, they were being loud. She said I was a liar to say it was the sun when it was really the boys. And I said it was both, they were both reasons. And a third reason was that Juan was there and he always bugs me. Maya said I was chicken. She said I must be in love with Juan and that's why I'm afraid to sit near him. But I'm not. He just bugs me. He says my nose is too long and he calls me Pinocchio and now all his friends do, too. And I told Maya that, and she said I was being stupid. She said just ignore them and I said couldn't we just sit somewhere else and she called me Long-Nose and said she didn't want to sit with me if I was going to make a big fuss about a bunch of boys. And I said if she was my friend she wouldn't call me names and I was tired of always doing what she wanted and that she was a bully. So then she said I was being a baby and she didn't want to eat with me at all, and I said maybe *she* was the one who was in love with Juan and that's why she wanted to sit by the window. Then she called me stupid again and said she never wanted to be my friend anymore.

MR. EARLY: What happened then?

LUPITA: I sat all alone but I didn't feel like eating anymore so I went outside.

MR. EARLY: Have you seen Maya since lunch?

LUPITA: I saw her with Teresita and they were laughing and whispering and walked the other way when they saw me.

MR. EARLY: You didn't talk to her.

LUPITA: No.

MR. EARLY: Because you know sometimes people say things they don't really mean when they get angry. After they've had time to think about it, they realize they don't really feel that way. Do you think Maya's a bully?

LUPITA: Well, sometimes she wants to do things her way and won't listen to what I want.

MR. EARLY: Is she not a very good friend?

LUPITA: Most of the time she is. Most of the time we have fun together.

MR. EARLY: And what do you usually do if she's stubborn about getting her own way?

LUPITA: Usually I can tell her that makes me feel like she wants to boss me around, but today she was being really mean. And now she doesn't want to be my friend anymore.

MR. EARLY: Do you still want to be Maya's friend?

LUPITA: Yes.

MR. EARLY: Maybe you could tell her that after school. Or maybe if she's still mad at the end of the day you could write her a little note and tell her some of the things you like best about being her friend. Do you think that might help?

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