

PREVIEW

“Benched”

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Welcome to Benched

Play Introduction:

Character Breakdown:

- **Lobbyist:** A Lobbyist.
- **Man:** A Man. Rude.
- **Person:** A Person. Curt.
- **Yen:** A person filled with lust.
- **The Desires:** Desire...
- **Barney:** A handsome and awkward stranger.
- **Barb:** A hippy chick with a lovely nature.
- **Mr. Dejected:** A man filled with regret.
- **Teen:** A young person with anxiety.
- **Clown:** A no-nothing terrifying being - created to make us question god, morality, and truth. They also blow great balloon animals.
- **Rhonda:** A strong liberal queen.
- **Lyn:** Rhonda's biggest supporter. Also a queen.

Author's Notes:

- Every character is intended to be in all-black clothing - unless otherwise noted
 - Sherlock and his gang will be in FULL costume
- If a line is indented, then those lines overlap

TIME: 1:00 PM

Limbo, but at a bus stop. A man, a **Lobbyist**, walks into view. He stands in front of the bench. He is wearing a suit and carries a briefcase. After a beat, he checks his wristwatch.

Another man, **Man**, joins him just two steps away.

Lobbyist: *(Checks his watch again.)*

Man: *(Adjusts his coat.)*

Lobbyist: *(Scratches his head.)*

Man: *(Sniffles.)*

Both: *(They look at each other like deer in headlights.)*

Both: *(Goes back to looking forward.)*

Lobbyist: *(Stomach rumbles softly.)*

Man: *(Clears his throat.)*

Lobbyist: *(Stomach rumbles.)*

Man: *(Peers at **Lobbyist**.)*

(Beat.)

Lobbyist: *(Stomach rumbles LOUDLY.)*

Lobbyist: Hey, I'm gonna use the bathroom - can you knock on the door when the bus comes?

Man: Mhm - Hmm.

Lobbyist: Thanks. *(**Man** rushes off U.S.L. A plastic door slams shut.)*

TIME: 1:07 PM

After a moment, **Man** sits on the bench. He pulls out his phone. Beat. Then **Person** joins him. **Person** sits on the bench - closely. **Person** looks at **Man**. **Person** scoots away as if **Man** has a swarm of bees around him. Awkward pause. **Man** peaks at his phone.

Man: *(To break the ice.)* The bus is taking a little longer than usual, isn't it?

Person: (...) Yeah... (...) It's normally here by now.

Man: What time is it supposed to get here?

Person: Uh... 1:00 - I think...

Man: And what time is it?

Person: *(They look at the phone in **Man's** hand. Then, they look at their phone.)* 1'o 7.

Man: Hmm. Weird.

Person: Mhmm.

(Silence)

Man: So... what's your name?

(Silence)

Man: That's a nice name... I'm Dom.

Person: *(Softly.)* I haven't got a name.

Man: What?

Person: I don't have a name.

Man: What??

Person: I said, I don't-

Man: I heard what you said... How can you live without a name?

Person: I don't need one. Haven't needed one for thirty years.

Man: How is that possible?? How can you get a license, a social - Hell, what do you say when the cashier asks for your name when you order food? Do you just stand there and blink? How can you live without a name?

Person: Like I said, I don't need one.

Man: But... don't you want a name?

(Silence)

Man: *(Brief rise.)* Why wouldn't you want a name?

(Silence)

Man: If you don't have a name, what do people call you?

Person: They call me 555U8.

Man: *(Snicker.)* That's not a name. Do you know what a name is? Like a few letters that make sounds. Does that ring a bell?

Person: *(Real.)* I don't need a useless string of letters to represent me as a person; I can do that on my own. I represent me, not consonants and vowels. And if need be, I give them my title, 555U8, but I rarely need to. They remember me, not my title.

Man: But how does 555U8 have more meaning than the name Dom? Tell me that. In Dutch, Dom means "beloved." How does your "title" have more meaning than that? How can you give meaning to a random strand of numbers?

Person: 555U8 means everything and nothing. The first "5" represents the month of my birth. The "55" represents the deaths in the hospital the hour I was born. The "U" represents selflessness, a hunger to help others, not the flesh.

Man: What about the "8"?

Person: The meaning of the "8" will be found after my death, but my children will know. Unfortunately, I will not.

Man: You said that "it means everything and nothing." What does that mean?

Person: It means everything to me and nothing to you.

Man: *(Drop.)* That sounds a little pretentious.

Person: It might be, but so is placing importance on meaningless letters. Yet, you are too simple-minded to find deeper meaning beyond what is spelled out to you.

(Silence)

Person: Looks like our bus is here.

Man: *(He looks around. He gets up and leaves, flustered. Leaving his briefcase.)*

Bus Driver: *(O.S.)* Hey - you coming?

Person: I'll just wait for the next one.

Bus Driver: *(O.S.)* Suit yourself.

TIME: 1:14 PM

Person sits on the bench. They exhale - lightly. Moment. **Yen** enters and plops down next to **Person**. **Yen** carries a small book bag. He tries to put the bag to the side of the bench, but a briefcase is waiting there.

Yen: Uh, is this yours?

Person: No... it's- Oh, *he* left it.

Yen: Is there a place I can put this?

Person: On the ground.

Yen: No, I mean. A place he can find it. Like a lost and found or something.

Person: I don't think bus stops usually have lost and founds.

Yen: Well, I guess I'll just leave it here. *(As he moves it - he hears a slosh inside.)* Did you hear that?

Person: *(Did he hear me toot?)* Excuse me.

Yen: No. In the case. I heard a slosh inside.

Person: Slosh?

Yen: Yes, a slosh. Or a shuffle. Whatever it was, it was a strange sound you shouldn't hear in a leather-bound case.

Person: Just put it down. It's none of your business.

Yen: Fine. (*Putting down the case. Half-beat.*) (*Now in quick succession.*) What do you think it is?

Person: It's none of our business.

Yen: But I could be.

Person: But it isn't.

Yen: Do you wonder what it is?

Person: Of course.

Yen: Do you want to find out?

Person: No.

Yen: Why not?

Person: Because.

Yen: Because why?

Person: Because it's none of our business.

Yen: He won't know.

Person: But it's his privacy.

Yen: He left it here.

Person: So?

Yen: It's ours now.

Person: It's not.

Yen: Ours for the taking.

Person: Just don't open it.

Yen: Why?

Person: We could get hurt.

Yen: How?

Person: It could be dangerous.

Yen: It's not gonna hurt us.

Person: It could.

Yen: How?

Person: It could be bees.

Yen: Well-

Person: *(Starting to raise the tension.)* Or a snake.

Yen: I-

Person: Or a gun.

Yen: I mean-

Person: Or an unfiled W2!

Yen: Stop...-

Person: Or a used condom-

Yen: Ew-

Person: OR A HEAD! WHAT IF IT'S A SEVERED HEAD? COVERED IN BLOOD AND ROT. WITH YELLOWED EYES. AND A MESSAGE FROM A SERIAL KILLER WRITTEN ON THE FOREHEAD WITH CORAL BLUE LIPSTICK. OH, GOD!!!

WHATEVER YOU DO.

DON'T OPEN THAT BRIEFCASE.

Yen: I already did.

(HUGE Beat. Person looks at Yen with daggers in their eyes.)

Person: *(Breathless.)* Why did you do that?

Yen: Just wanted a quick peek.

Person: Oh, god. I don't wanna look.

Yen: It's just a stack of paper.

(Yen pulls out a large stack of white letter paper. Brass brads hold it together. Small beat while the duo inspects it.)

Yen: It looks like a manuscript.

Person: What's it called?

Yen: *Benched.*

Person: Hmmm. Weird title.

Yen: *(He opens the manuscript.)* Oh, it's a play. But it's not finished. Over half of the pages are blank.

Person: Weird. What's the last line?

Yen: Weird. What's the last line?

Person: I'm asking you - you have the script.

Yen: No, that's what the page says.

Person: Huh. That's weird.

Yen: Wait, what?!?

Person: What??

Yen: It's writing down everything we say.

Person: What?

Yen: Look-

Person: *Person: Huh. That's weird. Yen: Wait, what?!? Person: What?? Yen: It's writing down everything we say. Person: What? Yen: Look- Okay, this is fucking weird.*

Yen: Oh fuck that- I'm getting out of here. *(He leaves S.L. Running back on S.R.)* What the...
(He leaves S.L. Running back on S.R.) Okay, I- *(He leaves S.L., Running back on S.R.)* Oh, god-
(He leaves S.L. Running back on S.R.) THERE'S NOTHING.

Person: What??

Yen: Can't you see what's going on?! We can't leave! We're trapped!

Person: Calm down! Give me a second. *(They take the script. Flipping through pages.)* Okay.
Okay! Some of these pages were written in pen. Maybe we can use a pen just to finish the story -
that'll get us out of here.

Yen: How? We still can't leave!

Person: That's because your exit wasn't in the stage directions. You can't leave unless the author
tells you to. *(They pull out a pen.)* But if we're the authors - we can leave.

Yen: Okay... Okay - That's worth a shot. I'll write yours. (...) What do you want it to say?

Person: Uhh, I don't know. Something dramatic.

Yen: Okay... *(Writing.)* Person... Person... Evaporates from the bench...?

Person: Evaporates?

(Intense blackout. Person lets out a garbled yelp. Lights up. They. Are. Gone.)

Yen: Oh god. What have I done?? I'll just erase it! *(Look at the pen.)* I'll just scratch it out.

(Paper ripping.) Fuuuuck. Okay. Okay. *(A clock ticks, then stops. Chimes play in reverse. A
wicked smile appears on Yen's face. Blackout.)*

END OF PREVIEW