

Broadway Boy

by Jon Christie

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ACT I

SCENE 1

Lights come up on a blank stage. A young child sits center. A girl with colored streaks in her hair enters stage right. She addresses the audience.

JACKIE

Hey. I'm Jackie. You're about to watch a play about an idiot who thought he could change the world. Oh, and it's not this kid. He's actually not even a main character, which is stupid cause he's the first one you see. Why? I don't know, I didn't write this stupid play.

A little girl skips onstage. She wears her hair in a ponytail and carries a plush pony toy.

PONY

Come on Priscilla, we gotta go to the supermarket and buy you some apples and some oranges and some green stuff and some dog food so's you won't starve.

JACKIE

Hey! Do you mind?

PONY

Aw shucks Priscilla. It's the grumpy grocery girl again.

JACKIE

I'm trying to narrate here. Go play grocery store somewhere else.

PONY

I know! We'll play a game with her! Then she won't be such a grumpy gus!

(She tucks her pony under her arm, closes her fists and offers them to Jackie.)

Pick one!

JACKIE

I'm not picking one.

PONY

Aw come on! It'll only take a sec!

JACKIE

You don't have anything in your hands.

PONY

(Singing)

Yes I doooooooooo!

Jackie chooses a hand.
Pony opens it to reveal,
shockingly, nothing at
all.

PONY

Yay! You win!

JACKIE

Is the prize you leaving me alone?

PONY

Nope. You win a big huggy wuggy!

She grabs Jackie and gives
her the biggest hug her
little body can muster.

JACKIE

(To Audience)

Just try to ignore her. She'll go away eventually. Anyway, back
to the kid. The reason he's even wasting your time-

PONY

Hey I'm not wasting their time. I'm fun.

JACKIE

Not you. The other kid.

Pony spies the unhappy
child.

PONY

Aw he looks so sad.

JACKIE

Yeah it's a Shakespearean tragedy. This kid is directly
responsible for my friend's delusion of grandeur, which for you
high school drop-outs out there means freaking stupid idea.

A young man walks onstage.

JACKIE

There's my friend now. Paul. Seems like a normal guy right?
Just wait...

Suddenly, just as Jackie
had forewarned, Paul bursts
out into a dance routine.
And not a very good one.

PONY

Hee hee! He's being so silly Priscilla.

JACKIE

See, Paul has this...talent. I mean I wouldn't call it that, but ever since he performed in our high school's production of Friday Night Frenzy there was no convincing him. Me and Paul met when we were kids in Sunday school and became pretty much inseparable. You look confused. Why would a cynical smart mouth like me wanna hang out with a dork like him? It's easy. He makes me laugh.

PONY

Hee hee! Me too!

Jackie and Pony remove themselves from the scene. Paul, satisfied with his latest performance, continues on his way, but stops when he comes across the unhappy child.

PAUL

Well you don't look very happy.

BILLY

It's cause I'm not.

Paul decides to sit next to him.

PAUL

What's wrong, little ^boy/^girl?

BILLY

I'm not little, I'm only seven and I haven't hit my growth spurt yet.

PAUL

Oh, sorry. Well what's wrong... ^Boy/^Girl?

JACKIE

God, this writing sucks.

PONY

Nuh uh! I think it's good. It's got drama, and suspense, and a bunch of other stuff I don't know nothin' about.

BILLY

I'm not really supposed to be talking to you. You're a stranger.

PAUL

Well if I tell you my name and something about me, it doesn't make me a stranger anymore.

BILLY

Guess that makes sense.

PAUL

Great!

(Paul eagerly extends his
hand.)

Hello! My name is Paul and I love helping people.

BILLY

My name's Billy and I suck at everything.

PAUL

Oh, I'm sure that's not true.

BILLY

No it is true. I suck at sports. I suck at video games. I can't even ride my bike.

PAUL

Hmm, with or without training wheels?

BILLY

Without.

PAUL

Oh yeah, that's rough.

BILLY

All the kids at school make fun of me. And if I were them, I'd make fun of me too.

PAUL

I know what you mean Billy. When I was your age, I wasn't really good at anything either. Well except numbers. I sure knew my way around a math book. Although kids that age don't think it's cool to know how to solve first order linear matrix differential equations.

BILLY

What did you do about it?

PAUL

Cried mostly. Usually into a pillow so no one could hear how pathetic I was.

Billy slumps over in
depression.

PAUL

I have an idea.

Paul rises and clears
himself from Billy. He

lowers his head as he takes a moment to prepare for his next performance. He then jumps into the skin of Manny Rocko and performs the chorus of "Slick Thunder" (to the tune of "Greased Lightning.")

PAUL

Go Slick Thunder, you're tearin' up the concrete track. Slick thunder! Go Slick Thunder! Go Slick Thunder, you're blitzin' to the front of the pack. Slick Thunder! Go Slick Thunder! You've got the boom, the chicks'll swoon for Slick Thunder!

Billy smiles.

BILLY

Hahaha, that was pretty cool.

PAUL

Yeah I've got the hip action nailed down pretty good.
(Sighs.)

"Slick", what a classic! I remember when I first discovered the magic of musical theater back in high school. Singing "Friday Night Frenzy" in bell bottoms never felt so right. I finally found my talent. I became obsessed with musicals, and I made it my mission to learn every classic that ever hit the Broadway stage. Pajama Gimmick, Hug Me Heather, Book of Scientology, I know them all by heart.

BILLY

That's so cool!

PAUL

Thanks Billy.

BILLY

You're kinda like a super hero or somethin'!

PAUL

(Modestly)

What? No I'm not a super hero. Hahaha, that's crazy! Don't be ridi-

Billy and Paul freeze in place as Jackie steps back into focus.

JACKIE

Oh kid. If only you knew what monster you just unleashed. See what little Billy didn't know was that once you plant an idea in Paul's head, no matter how stupid it is, he becomes obsessed with

(MORE)

JACKIE (CONT'D)

it. Like this one time I told him he kinda resembled a young William Shatner. For the next week, he wouldn't talk to me unless I addressed him as Captain Kirk.

PONY

Who's William Shatner?

JACKIE

Anyway, the idea of becoming a super hero was like the holy grail of stupid ideas, which of course would be right up Paul's alley.

Billy and Paul unfreeze.

PAUL

-culous. You kids and your imagina-
(Light bulb.)

Hold on. I just had a crazy idea. What if I became a superhero?

BILLY

But that's what I-

PAUL

Yes yes, it makes so much sense! I should be a superhero!

BILLY

Yeah, but-

PAUL

All the signs point to it. This is my destiny. I knew there had to be a reason I was mocked and ridiculed throughout my life only to discover my incredible ability. I mean, that's how all heroes start out right? Misunderstood, yet gifted!

BILLY

Ooo! Can I be your sidekick?

PAUL

(Laughs)

Oh Billy. Sweet little Billy. Someday when you hit that growth spurt and discover your own unique powers, we'll discuss it over an ice cold Coca-Cola. But for now you need to leave the crime fighting to the adults. It's dangerous out there Billy. Villains and crooks lurk in every dark nook and cranny. But there won't be enough crannies and nooks for villains and crooks to cram into to escape from the spotlight of justice that is... That is...

BILLY

You don't have a name yet, do you?

PAUL

Well, no. But you can't rush these things Billy. A hero's name is everything. And when I discover mine it'll be a moniker to remember.

BILLY

Cool! So could you get all the kids at school to stop picking on-

PAUL

Can't talk now Billy. Time is of the essence, and evil does not sleep. Well this is one hero that's going to enforce a curfew. I'm off!

(He starts to run off, but
just before he gets out of
sight...)

And should you ever need me, all you have to do is... Yell...
Really loud.

Paul exits. Billy shrugs
his shoulders and walks
off.

JACKIE

(To Audience)

See what I mean? Stupid.

PONY

He is not stupid! He's dreamy...

JACKIE

Paul? Dreamy? Ha! Don't make me laugh. I mean look at his face,
it's... He's got big ears. It's really distracting.

PONY

What's that Priscilla? Jackie's in denial? Well I don't know
what that word means, but I feel I must agree.

JACKIE

That's it!

Jackie tries to grab Pony,
but she slips out of her
grasp.

PONY

Ha ha! You can't catch me! You can't catch me!

Pony runs offstage.

JACKIE

(To Audience.)

Just try to ignore her. Better yet, pretend she doesn't exist.
God knows I try to. Anyway, I wouldn't care two licks what crazy
obsession Paul has cooking up because I'm never involved. Well
this time, things were different.

SCENE 2

Aisles of DVDs make their way onto the stage, along with a front counter for a video store. Jackie cleanly moves behind the counter.

JACKIE

The truth is Paul really did want a sidekick, he just didn't want it to be some scrawny seven year old. He wanted it to be his best friend. Me. You can probably tell he doesn't have many friends. So he runs into the video store where I work and makes his pitch, thinking I'd be excited about it.

(Beat.)

I can hardly contain myself.

Jackie pins a name tag to her shirt and starts reading a magazine at the counter. The latest mainstream garbage is playing softly in the background. Paul bursts in.

PAUL

Jackie, you're never going to believe the idea I just had!

JACKIE

I'm on pins and needles.

PAUL

I am going to be... a superhero!

JACKIE

Paul, I told you to stay away from comic books.

PAUL

Ha ha Jackie, very funny. But I didn't get this from a comic book. See I was talking to this kid Billy-

JACKIE

That's a much better source.

PAUL

He was real down in the dumps. So I performed a little musical number to cheer him up.

JACKIE

Which one was it this time? "Oh What a Respectable Morning?"
"Spoonful of Vinegar?"

PAUL

"Slick Thunder" actually.

JACKIE

Classic.

PAUL

Anyway we got to talking and before I knew it I had this epiphany that I could save lives!

JACKIE

You wanna save lives? Don't go out so much.

PAUL

I'm serious Jackie. This could be the idea that changes my entire life!

Jackie puts down her
magazine.

JACKIE

Paul, you say that about every idea you have. Remember when you thought the same thing about being a domestic animal trainer?

PAUL

If a squirrel can be taught to water ski, why not a ferret?

JACKIE

And the time you wanted to be a fashion designer?

PAUL

There's wool. There's leather. Reptile scales are the way of the future.

JACKIE

And then of course there was underwater basketball.

PAUL

I'm going to stop you right there Jackie. SCUBA-ball will become the next Olympic sport. Steph Curry has already signed on as a sponsor.

JACKIE

His lawyer sent you a cease and desist letter Paul. Let it go. Look my point is your ideas... They're not all that great. I just don't like seein' ya crushed when they don't work out.

PAUL

Jackie I know I've been a little all over the place since high school, but that's because I haven't figured out where I fit. Now I know where I fit. It's always been musicals Jackie! And now I'm going to use my talent to save the world!

JACKIE

Paul I'm all for you figuring out your place. But being a superhero is a super bad idea. I mean haven't you ever seen the movie Kick-ass?

PAUL

Jackie, you know I don't like Jack-ass. Why would I watch the sequel?

JACKIE

(To Audience)

Do you see what I have to deal with?

(To Paul)

They're not related Paul. Action movies aisle two. Do yourself a favor and watch it before you run the streets in bright tights.

PAUL

(Speaking as a deep-voiced
super hero)

There's no time for that now Jackie. Bad guys are on the loose and they don't take movie breaks.

JACKIE

Speaking of breaks, mine is over. Have fun fighting crime, try not to get killed.

She crosses around the
counter.

PAUL

No wait, I haven't even told you the best part! The reason I came in the first place!

JACKIE

Somehow I assumed you being a superhero was the best part. How silly of me.

PAUL

I want you to be... My sidekick!

Paul freezes. Jackie
addresses the audience.

JACKIE

There are so many different ways I could've answered this. I could've let him down easy, spared his feelings, no harm no foul. But I don't work that way. See I don't-

Pony skips onstage.

PONY

Hiya Miss Grumpy!

JACKIE

Go away. I'm narrating.

PONY

Aw, but you're always narratin'.

JACKIE
And you're always annoying.

PONY
Why are you always so mean? You didn't used to be mean.

JACKIE
Yeah well, adulting sucks. Deal with it.

PONY
The goofy guy just wants to play with you. You should say yes!
It's more fun to say yes!

JACKIE
No!

PONY
Yes!

JACKIE
No.

PONY
Yes.

JACKIE
No.

PONY
Yes.

JACKIE
No.

PONY
This is going to be a very long play Miss Grumpy.

JACKIE
Get outta here!

Jackie makes another attempt
to grab Pony, but she slips
away again.

PONY
Ha ha! Missed again!
(To Priscilla.)
She's not very good at tag.

Pony skips off.

JACKIE

(Exasperated)

Believe me, I wish I could just get rid of her. But it's impossible.

(Seeing Paul still frozen.)

Oh right, sidekick. If you haven't figured it out yet, I don't sugar coat anything. So instead of beating around the bush with Paul, I decided to be blunt.

(Paul unfreezes. She turns to him.)

No.

PAUL

That's it? Just like that? No?

JACKIE

Just like that.

PAUL

But Jackie, haven't you ever wanted to make a difference in the world? Be a part of something bigger than yourself? Make a ripple in the cosmos lasting an eternity that says "Jackie was here"?

JACKIE

Paul I work for minimum wage in a video store when everyone has access to Netflix. I don't think making a difference is in my job description.

Paul changes his tactics.
He bows his head, takes a quick moment, and pops up.
The following is sung to the melody of "Marian the Librarian" from Music Man.

PAUL

(Singing.)

Aaaaaaaaddrian.

Jackie's eyes widen.

JACKIE

Paul no!

PAUL

(Singing)

Ms. Veterinaaaaaaarian.

JACKIE

Don't you sing from "The Melody Man!"

Paul completely throws himself into his character and begins following Jackie

around the video store.
Jackie tries her best to
keep Paul from seeing her
smile throughout the number.

PAUL

(Singing)

What can I say, my dove, to earn your love? I adore you madly,
madly Ms. Veterinarian. Adrian. Heaven help us, if a pet caught
an unknown virus, and the owner brought in his dalmation, and had
to beg for a cure from Aaaaaaadrian.

Jackie tries to elude Paul
by crossing behind the
counter. Paul throws himself
on top of the counter with
suave dramatic flare.

PAUL

(Singing.)

Ms. Veterinaaaaaaaaaarian.

Jackie finally loses her
resolve and smiles widely.

JACKIE

You're insane.

PAUL

I'm well aware of that.

JACKIE

And your performance was pitchy.

PAUL

I'll re-enroll in voice classes.

(Beat.)

So what do you say... Sidekick?

JACKIE

(Reluctantly)

Alright fine.

PAUL

Yes! You won't regret this Jackie

JACKIE

But if you sing anything from "Middle School Musical" I'm out.

PAUL

Well that's a bit of a buzz kill, but I accept your conditions!
Oh this is going to be great! Come on! Let's go catch us some
criminals!

JACKIE

Not so fast Flash. I'm on the clock till four. Your "sidekick" will have to catch up with you later.

PAUL

No it's cool. I understand. Besides we don't even have costumes to disguise ourselves.

JACKIE

If you try putting me in tights and a dress I'll shove nodes down your throat.

PAUL

Duly noted. I'll pick out some cool hero threads and we'll rendezvous at your apartment, say around four fifteenish?

JACKIE

It's a date.

A customer enters the video store. He wears a large trench coat and hat that hides all of his features. Obviously it doesn't have to be a he. It could very well be a she. The stranger approaches the counter with a DVD in his/her hand. (S)He hands it to Jackie.

TRENCH COAT

(Speaking with a deep, villainy-sounding voice.)

I'd like to return this.

Loud thunder and lightning clap outside.

JACKIE

Cool, gimme a sec.

She takes the DVD and does some typing on the computer.

TRENCH COAT

(To Paul)

Some weather we're havin'.

PAUL

Yeah, tell me about it. Totally unpredictable.

TRENCH COAT

Totally.

JACKIE

Ugh. I hate this slow computer.

PAUL

Excuse me while I use the restroom.

TRENCH COAT

Certainly.

The trench coat stranger
politely gets out of the
way as Paul exits.

JACKIE

Sorry, but it looks like you're a day late on this return. I'm
gonna have to charge you a late fee.

TRENCH COAT

Impossible! It is a three day rental and it was rented on Friday.

JACKIE

Yeah and today's Monday.

TRENCH COAT

(Losing his temper.)

Monday is three days after Friday! Your mathematics are incorrect!

JACKIE

My math's just fine actually. Friday counts as one of your days.

(She uses her fingers to
aid the confused customer.)

Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Three days.

TRENCH COAT

This is absurd! How was I supposed to know that?!

JACKIE

Sorry.

Trench Coat slowly backs
away.

TRENCH COAT

You are a fool if you think I am paying the late fee. I rented a
DVD and it has been returned. If you are not satisfied with the
timing in which it was delivered, I have to say tough tiddlywinks!
Feel free to send the city police after me, but you will do so in
vain, for I will not be captured!

He laughs maniacally as he
races out the door. Paul
reenters drying his hands
on his pants.

PAUL

Did that trench coat guy leave already? Such a nice guy. Me and him talked about the weather for a bit. You know, people don't just talk to other people about the weather anymore.

JACKIE

That guy was really weird. He makes you seem normal.

PAUL

Really? You thought he was weird? I didn't get that vibe at all.

JACKIE

Yeah, nothing gets by you.

Paul waves goodbye and
exits.

JACKIE

(To audience)

You people strike me as a curious bunch so I'm bettin' you have a couple questions. The first that comes to mind is what was up with that Trench Coat guy. Well-

Pony enters.

PONY

Aw shucks Priscilla. The grumpy lady's still being boring.

JACKIE

I'm not being boring. I'm narrating.

PONY

All you do is talk. You never do anything. 'Sides, you might say somethin' real important and it's way more fun to watch it happen.

JACKIE

You're saying I'm foreshadowing?

PONY

Four shadows? I thought you only get one.

JACKIE

I am not foreshadowing. Now leave me alone.

(To audience.)

Anyway, the deal with that Trench Coat guy is...

Jackie stops. She looks
at Pony who is wearing the
biggest grin.

PONY

Told ya. Four shadows.

JACKIE

Whatever. I was tired of talking anyway.

Jackie exits. Pony runs
to catch up.

PONY

Hey wait up! I gotta tell ya all the other stuff you're doin'
wrong!

Pony exits.

SCENE 3

A dark, dank room. Inside
are many tables, on top of
which rest evil-looking
vials and flasks filled
with colorful liquids.
Clearly this is some sort
of make-shift evil lair.
The Trench Coat man slinks
to a table with his back
to the audience. He is
joined by a little five
year old boy, Kyle. He
pulls a small bouncy ball
from his pocket and bounces
it in the corner.

TRENCH COAT

What is wrong with our society? Charging late rental fees, buying
jeans with holes in them, giving you a speeding ticket for only
going five over the speed limit! There must be a way to end this
madness!

He turns to the audience
and takes off his hat to
reveal his face. It is a
sinister face, one most
suited for the villainous
sort. An odd and random
thunder/lighting combo
accompanies his reveal,
which is odd and random
because it is not raining
outside. The strange weather
anomaly begins to make
sense when Trench Coat
notices the oddity and
heads straight for the
stage right wall. He pounds
on it quite hard.

TRENCH COAT

Blasted generator!

The lighting returns to
its normal condition.

KYLE

Aw, why'd you do that? I like when the room goes boom boom.

TRENCH COAT

Kyle go to your room, you can flicker the lights in there as much as you want.

KYLE

I don't wanna. It's scary in there by myself. I might get attacked by the boogie man.

TRENCH COAT

We've been over this, there's no such thing as the boogie man.

KYLE

Then how come the walls always make lotsa scary noises?

TRENCH COAT

I do that. I enjoy torturing you. Now how does one go about correcting a flawed society?

KYLE

Voting!

TRENCH COAT

No! Voting is nothing but a manufactured fantasy allowing the public to feel like they have a voice in political matters.

KYLE

How about writing a letter to your representative?

TRENCH COAT

No, you fool! The truth is that not even a sensible voting population can cure the corrupted misguided politicians who have squandered all of the federal finances. The government would rather watch its own debt climb higher and higher, a debt so enormous that it would be impossible for any country to repay it, than rectify any of the little insignificant trifles people like I must deal with on a daily basis but that are actually within the government's power to mend! It's absolutely maddening.

KYLE

(Spying something on the
floor.)

Ooo, bugs!

(Gets down on hands and
knees.)

One, two, three, four-

Trench Coat rushes to his
chemicals.

TRENCH COAT

There must be a formula, some combination of elements that will
bring this societal oversight to mass attention.

KYLE

Twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen-

TRENCH COAT

(Irritated.)

Kyle, what are you doing?

KYLE

I'm countin' the bugs! Look at how many there are!

TRENCH COAT

Why are you counting bugs?

KYLE

Cause it's fun! Look at 'em, crawlin' around like creepy crawlers.

TRENCH COAT

You are wasting your time! What is the point of counting them?
You'll never count them all! There are probably thousands of
them and thousands more underneath the wooden floor. Your goal is
pointless because you'll never achieve-

(Light bulb.)

That's it! There is no such formula, no chemical, no "quick fix."
If I am to alert the population of these societal issues, I'm
going to have to amplify these issues.

KYLE

You don't mean-

TRENCH COAT

Yes I do! I am going to create chaos the likes of which this puny
little community has never experienced! I am going to be... a
super villain!

He laughs maniacally, like
most super villains do.
Thuds are heard offstage
followed by an angry,
elderly voice.

ELDERLY TENANT (O.S.)

Stop that racket or I'll call the superintendent.

TRENCH COAT

Mind your own affairs elderly tenant, and leave me to mine.

ELDERLY TENANT (O.S.)

Well if you don't pipe down I'm gonna bust in there and show you what this elderly person can do with a baseball bat!

TRENCH COAT

Fine!

Trench coat resumes his maniacal laughter at a softer decibel.

KYLE

Heehee! One crawled on me! Wanna see?

Trench Coat groans and exits.

KYLE

Aw c'mon! Don't be a sissy!

Kyle exits.

SCENE 4

Just outside of Jackie's apartment. Jackie walks onstage and makes a beeline for her apartment door with keys in hand. Paul leaps out from behind a shrub and nearly gives Jackie a heart attack. He wears a brightly colored pair of sweat pants and a clearly homemade cape.

PAUL

Ha ha!

JACKIE

Oh my God! What is wrong with you?

PAUL

Surprised you huh?

JACKIE

More like scared the crap out of me.

PAUL

Excellent! Striking fear, that's good.

JACKIE

What the heck are you wearing?