

RONDO À LA BONGO

A short comedy by
Joe Zarrow

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

LU, a teenager.

RHONDA, Lu's fraternal twin sister.

KURT, another teenager.

SETTING

The present.

There are no breaks between scenes; one loops into the next in an unbroken chain.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Rondo à la Bongo was commissioned and produced for the 2016 Piven Theatre Scene Study Class in Evanston, Illinois. It was directed by Abby Pierce.

SCENE 1: LU AND RHONDA

(RHONDA holds a big gross wad of hair, showing it to LU.)

RHONDA: What did you do?

LU: Seems pretty obvious that I shaved Bongo.

RHONDA: Why did you shave Bongo?

LU: Have you seen him lately?

RHONDA: Yeah, because he's been hiding in my bedroom, curled up in bald, naked shame, because you shaved him.

LU: Cats don't feel shame.

RHONDA: Real big assumption, Lu.

LU: It's springtime. Bongo is an outdoor cat.

RHONDA: He only got out once.

LU: Maybe his preferences are changing. I thought it was best to be proactive. There's a lot of danger for long-haired cats out there: ticks and burrs and wet, gross things they can drag their fur through—

RHONDA: He's not *your* cat.

LU: I would say "ours," but you're the one who left him all matted and gross.

RHONDA: He wasn't matted! He had a beautiful, glossy coat. Look, I'm older—

LU: Thus proving how age does not always equal wisdom.

RHONDA: Mom and Dad entrusted Bongo to me.

LU: Proving my point about age a second and third time. Besides, you're only fifteen minutes older, and you've always leaned a bit too hard on that quarter-hour.

RHONDA: Can't I have anything nice?

LU: I'm allowing Bongo to live the life he deserves.

RHONDA: You'll pay for this.

SCENE 2: RHONDA AND KURT

(KURT does something inherently cheerful, like coloring, or playing with a paddleball.)

RHONDA: Are you good at vengeance?

KURT: Don't think so.

RHONDA: But you're so quiet.

KURT: Why would that make me good at vengeance?

RHONDA: I assumed your quiet was covering some deep-seated anger, and that the only way you knew how to deal with those feelings was through cold-hearted, calculating vengeance.

KURT: Nope.

RHONDA: Lu shaved Bongo.

KURT: On purpose?

RHONDA: You can't shave a cat by accident. I'm amazed she isn't covered in scratch marks.

KURT: Why did she—

RHONDA: Control. Power. Bongo, poor kitty, is caught in the crosshairs of a sibling rivalry that has nothing to do with him.

KURT: Won't it grow back?

RHONDA: Who knows? For now, he's a wreck. Can you please wreak vengeance on my little sister?

KURT: Why me?

RHONDA: If it's me she'll see it coming.

KURT: But I'm really a nice guy.

RHONDA: Kurt, you don't have to do anything permanent or awful. Just a little vengeance. I feel like you have it in you. Even if you don't know it. Please? Pleeeeease?

(Beat.)

KURT: My pleasure.

SCENE 3: KURT AND LU

KURT: Your sister asked me to wreak vengeance upon you.

LU: I presume this is about Bongo?

KURT: She's pretty upset.

LU: I was acting in Bongo's best interest.

KURT: I'm with you. I'm just saying: she loves that cat.

LU: What style of vengeance were you thinking of wreaking?

KURT: No idea. I'm less of a vengeance person and more of a cooperation person. I thought maybe you could help me think of something—

LU: But if vengeance isn't your thing, why would you agree to help Rhonda?

KURT: Well...

(Four seconds of silence. He's looking hard for how to answer this.)

I guess that...

(Three more seconds of silence.)

Um.

(Kurt looks bashfully down at his feet.)

LU: You have a crush on my sister.

KURT: No! Yes.

LU: Why? She's a terrible person.

KURT: Is she, really?

LU: She's a *vengeance* person. Only terrible people seek vengeance. And she can barely take care of that cat. I still have the clippers... Maybe when Rhonda's asleep I can give her the Bongo treatment –

KURT: Please don't. Please break the cycle of revenge.

LU: It probably has to go through a few more steps before it's properly a revenge *cycle*. This is just even-steven, kill or be killed.

KURT: Don't kill your sister.

LU: It's just a saying. I'm not psycho. Unlike Rhonda.

KURT: I have no desire to actually wreak vengeance upon you. But I do want to get in the good graces of your sister. So I was thinking –

LU: We could make up a story about vengeance wreaked upon me without actually wreaking it?

(Took the words out of Kurt's mouth. Kurt offers a hand. They shake on it.)

SCENE 4: LU AND RHONDA, AGAIN

LU: And finally he spilled milk all over my math notebook.

(Rhonda laughs uproariously.)

RHONDA: Oh my goodness, that is delicious. I didn't know Kurt had it in him. Milk is a good touch, because Bongo usually *loves* milk, but since The Shaving Incident his appetite has vanished.

(Lu rolls her eyes.)

I'm sorry, was that an eye roll?

LU: I was looking at the ceiling.

RHONDA: I thought you were sincerely regretful, but you actually seem kind of sarcastic.

LU: I'm not sarcastic. I'm just trying to cope with the overwhelming shame and dismay I feel at how I treated Bongo. And Bongo's primary caregiver.

RHONDA: I'll allow it. Can I see the notebook?

LU: The which?

RHONDA: The notebook Kurt ruined with the spilled milk.

LU: Had to throw it away.

RHONDA: Of course. Shucks. Next time, then. Not that there'll be a next time.

LU: Certainly won't be.

RHONDA: So you're sorry?

LU: Very sincerely sorry.

RHONDA: Aww. C'mere, sis.

(Rhonda pulls Lu into a hug. During the hug, Rhonda fishes a long receipt out of her own pocket.)

Now that we've forgiven and forgotten, we can move forward to expenses.

LU: Pardon?

RHONDA: The air's still chilly, and poor Bongo's nude, so I had no choice.

LU: *(Referencing the receipt:)* Why does Bongo need five outfits?

RHONDA: They're mix and match, so there are actually a lot more than five possible combinations.

LU: Twenty dollars for a set of cat shoes?

RHONDA: Eighty, actually. Twenty per shoe. They're sized individually.

LU: You know what our allowance is. To pay this back would take—

RHONDA: As long as it takes. As your older sister, I have to teach you about finances and responsibility. Sometimes it's gonna sting, but isn't that worth it for a little self-knowledge?

LU: (*Erupting out of anger:*) What does Kurt see in you!? You're awful!

(*Beat.*)

RHONDA: Kurt's into me?

SCENE 5: RHONDA AND KURT, AGAIN

RHONDA: I'm so flattered.

KURT: Great!

RHONDA: It just seems weird to me that. When did this come up? Like, you're in the process of humiliating her like I asked you to—great points on that by the way. Ruthless. But, somehow, in the midst of vengeance, you open up to Lu about your romantic feelings for her older fraternal twin sister.

KURT: Yeah weird when did that happen.

RHONDA: Did you actually wreak vengeance upon my sister?

SCENE 6: KURT AND LU, AGAIN

KURT: I swear it was an accident.

LU: And now everything's for naught because she's up my butt about "renewing the vengeance" and paying for even

more cat fashion because I "lied" to her.

KURT: Well, you did.

LU: Yes, I lied about being revenged upon.

KURT: And you shaved her cat without permission.

LU: How is that relevant?

SCENE 7: EVERYBODY

(This scene is different. Increasingly frenetic movement. Maybe there's music.)

RHONDA: *(Entering, to Lu:)* It's relevant because you're a dirty liar and a bad sister. *(To Kurt:)* I trusted you.

KURT: I didn't have it in me. *(To Lu:)* Why did you tell her I liked her?

LU: It slipped out. *(To Rhonda:)* Why did you manipulate Kurt?

RHONDA: Because none shall stand in the path of my vengeance!

(They run after each other in a circle: Rhonda chases Lu, who chases Kurt, who chases Rhonda. They speak at the same time.)

KURT: Maybe I didn't succeed at getting back at your sister for you, but ultimately I think that proves I'm a very nice young man. And is that so bad? Being nice? Not that anybody owes me anything for my niceness—that would be the opposite of nice—but I just thought maybe you would have seen what a nice guy I am and then wanted to actually hang out or something.

LU: (*Simultaneous with Kurt:*) You had one job. It was seamless. Our plan was perfect. Vengeance without vengeance is the best vengeance, right? In fact, I seem to remember it initially being your idea. So don't act all hurt and victimized about the lying, when you're the biggest pants-on-fire liar of them all!

RHONDA: (*Simultaneous with Lu and Kurt:*) I think your youthful indiscretion shows up most clearly in your unwillingness to take responsibility for anything. I mean, the shaving of Bongo is just the latest in a long line of disrespectful misdemeanors. And sure, you admitted that you were The Shaver, but you refused to accept any repercussions. That's not justice!

KURT: Wait! Wait! STOP!

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