

RONDO A LA BONGO

by

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CHARACTERS

LU

RHONDA

KURT

SETTING

The present.

There is no break between scenes. One loops into the next in an unbroken chain.

SCENE 1: LU AND RHONDA

(RHONDA holds a big gross wad of hair.)

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 longhaired 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's 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 those fifteen minutes.

RHONDA

Can't I have anything nice?

LU

I'm allowing Bongo to have 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?

Don't think so.

KURT

But you're so quiet.

RHONDA

Why would that make me good at vengeance?

KURT

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

RHONDA

Nope.

KURT

Lu shaved Bongo.

RHONDA

On purpose?

KURT

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

RHONDA

Why did she--

KURT

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

RHONDA

Won't it grow back?

KURT

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

RHONDA

Why me?

KURT

Because, if it's me she'll see it coming.

RHONDA

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? Pleeeeeeease?

(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.

KURT

The heart wants what it wants.

LU

She's seeking vengeance. Only terrible people do that. 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

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.)

RHONDA

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, I feel we can move forward to expenses.

LU
Pardon?

RHONDA
The air's still chilly, and poor Bongo's nude, so I had no other 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 a little bit, 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.)

Kurt's into me?
RHONDA

SCENE 5: RHONDA AND KURT

I'm so flattered.
RHONDA

Great!
KURT

RHONDA
It just seems weird to me that – like, when did this come up? Like, you're in the process of humiliating her like I asked you to, which – 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

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. The intro to "Blue Rondo a la Turk" from Dave Brubeck's *Time Out* album starts low and gets louder as the scene goes on.)

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 now start running after each other in a circle: RHONDA chases LU, who chases KURT, who chases RHONDA. They speak at the same time. The music ramps up in volume as well.)

KURT
Look, maybe I didn't succeed at getting back at your sister for you, but ultimately I think that proves that 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!

(The music stops. Everybody stops.)

KURT

Rhonda, you are very smart in English class.

RHONDA

Thank you?

KURT

I'm explaining why I like you. And you're pretty and stuff.

RHONDA

Awwww.

(Beat.)

KURT

But you two need to figure something out, because this is no way to live. I'm sorry I got involved in this and I hope I didn't make things too much more complicated. I'm sorry about Bongo's hair, but it'll probably grow back.

(KURT exits.)

RHONDA

I think he has a point.

LU

Oh, you're convinced by him, but you're not convinced by me, your very own sister?

RHONDA

This is no way to live. But you're right, I should be convinced by you, too.

LU

Okay. Can we end the cycle of vengeance.

RHONDA

Yes, please.

(They hug. It's nicer than last time.)

LU

So do you like Kurt back? He's a nice guy.

RHONDA

Ugh, no. He's so nice. It creeps me out.

LU

Right?

RHONDA

Like, how do you not act more in your own self-interest?

LU

It's the responsible thing to do.

RHONDA

Exactly.

(Beat.)

LU

So has Bongo tried out any of those outfits yet?

RHONDA

No, he's been in the basement, I've been giving him his space.

LU

Oh, he's not in your room? I thought--

RHONDA

Nope.

LU

But I was just in the basement and he was not there.

RHONDA

Oh. So you haven't seen him?

LU

No. I thought you had--

No. RHONDA

(Beat. They both start searching the stage for Bongo.)

Bongo? RHONDA

Bongo? LU

Bongo? RHONDA

Bongo? LU

(Their search brings them center stage with each other.)

Bongo? BOTH RHONDA AND LU

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY