

WARRIOR CLASS

BY **KENNETH LIN**



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WARRIOR CLASS
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Produced by Second Stage Theatre, New York, NY in 2012,
Carole Rothman, Artistic Director.

Originally workshopped and developed in the 2012 Pacific Playwrights Festival
at South Coast Repertory.

WARIOR CLASS was presented at Second Stage Theatre Uptown (Carole Rothman, Artistic Director; Casey Reitz, Executive Director) in New York City, opening on July 23, 2012. It was directed by Evan Cabnet; the set design was by Andromache Chalfant; the costume design was by Jessica Pabst; the lighting design was by Japhy Weideman; and the sound design was by Jill BC Du Boff. The cast was as follows:

JULIUS Louis Ozawa Changchien
HOLLY Katharine Powell
NATHAN David Rasche

CHARACTERS

JULIUS

HOLLY

NATHAN

WARRIOR CLASS

ACT ONE

Scene 1

A nice spot for lunch. Baltimore, MD.

At rise: A burly, oak-filled steak house. The place is empty.

Nathan sits and fiddles with his iPhone.

Holly enters.

Nathan stands.

HOLLY. Mr. Berkshire?

NATHAN. Yes, yes. Please — Nathan. Holly?

HOLLY. Yeah. *(They shake hands.)*

NATHAN. Nice to meet you, Holly.

HOLLY. Nice to meet you.

NATHAN. Nice to meet you. Please ...

HOLLY. Sure. *(They sit. Nathan hands her a menu.)*

NATHAN. Have you had lunch?

HOLLY. No, I —

NATHAN. Have something, please.

HOLLY. Are they even open?

NATHAN. The owner's a friend. He's giving us a couple of minutes before the he opens for lunch, but you can order now.

HOLLY. Great. What's good?

NATHAN. Can't go wrong with the burgers. When you order a

burger here, they take a steak and grind it. It's not ground meat that's just sitting there.

HOLLY. Wow.

NATHAN. They take an aged steak, slice off the crust and grind it. You want to go see them do it?

HOLLY. No. That's alright.

NATHAN. Hard to find a place that grinds a steak. This is a dying breed.

HOLLY. Yeah. Well, I'm sold.

NATHAN. Good, good. I'm going to get one too. How do you like yours?

HOLLY. Rare.

NATHAN. Woman after my own heart. That's good.

HOLLY. Right.

NATHAN. Absolutely. Rare. *(He whistles through his teeth and holds up two fingers to whomever is offstage.)* Raw. Absolutely. *(To Holly.)* Something to drink.

HOLLY. Water's fine.

NATHAN. Baltimore has fine water.

HOLLY. Not really.

NATHAN. Right.

HOLLY. I live here. I read the reports. I know.

NATHAN. Want a soda instead?

HOLLY. Seltzer.

NATHAN. Great. Should we order something for your husband? Three burgers?

HOLLY. He's not coming.

NATHAN. Oh.

HOLLY. Yeah.

NATHAN. Trish told me you were coming together.

HOLLY. Yeah, I know —

NATHAN. Everything alright?

HOLLY. I just changed my mind.

NATHAN. I see.

HOLLY. I'm sorry. I changed my mind.

NATHAN. Nothing to be sorry about. *(Nathan takes a recording device out of his jacket pocket. Apologetic.)* I'm just going to need a record of this conversation, that's all.

HOLLY. That's fine.

NATHAN. Yeah? *(Holly nods.)* Okay, then. So, Trish filled you in

about everything.

HOLLY. Yeah. I'm sure I don't have anything much interesting to say. (*Nathan presses "record" on the device and sets it out on the table.*)

NATHAN. Great. Let's just call this, ah ... "burgers," then.

HOLLY. Burgers.

NATHAN. Great. So, I'm glad you were able to see me with such short notice.

HOLLY. No problem.

NATHAN. Great. Does anybody know that you're meeting with me today?

HOLLY. I didn't tell anyone. Does anyone know that you're meeting with *me*?

NATHAN. No.

HOLLY. Just burgers, then. (*She toasts him with her glass of water. She takes a sip. Chews some ice. Nathan chuckles.*)

NATHAN. That's right. Okay, so, like I was saying, I'm glad you could meet me on short notice. This is just a routine conversation as part of the vetting process. We're talking to friends and family this week. Your name came up under "friends."

HOLLY. Right.

NATHAN. Hopefully we'll be able to go through this quick, quick, quick, then it's burgers and "nice to meet you, have an antacid on me."

HOLLY. Sure.

NATHAN. (*Speaking into the recorder.*) Great. So, for the record, this is Nathan Berkshire. It's Monday, April 13th, 11:30 A.M. and I'm here with ... (*He holds the recorder up to Holly.*)

HOLLY. Holly Eames. (*He speaks into the recorder.*)

NATHAN. Formerly Holly Hathaway. Great. Okay, so, Holly.

HOLLY. Yeah.

NATHAN. (*Referring to the tape recorder.*) Let's just pretend that this isn't here, okay? (*Beat.*)

HOLLY. Right.

NATHAN. Okay, fair, impossible. But, this is just a part of the routine. It's not The Inquisition, alright?

HOLLY. Alright.

NATHAN. Good.

HOLLY. Can I have a copy?

NATHAN. When we're done?

HOLLY. Yeah.

NATHAN. Ahm, sure. Sure. That's fine.

HOLLY. Okay.

NATHAN. So, Holly, I wanted to meet you to talk a bit about Julius Lee.

HOLLY. Okay.

NATHAN. You know Julius, right?

HOLLY. We dated for a time.

NATHAN. This was back in college?

HOLLY. Yeah. Freshman and half of sophomore year.

NATHAN. Right. Okay. That's a decent amount of time.

HOLLY. Yeah. Almost half of college.

NATHAN. Yeah. Have you been keeping up with him since then?

HOLLY. I hear some news occasionally.

NATHAN. But you haven't had direct contact.

HOLLY. No. (*Nathan writes something on a legal pad.*)

NATHAN. What's the news you're hearing?

HOLLY. He's a politician now. I don't exactly know what kind.

NATHAN. New York Assembly.

HOLLY. Yeah. (*As in, "Of course, just like everyone else, I saw the speech."*) I saw that speech he gave at the Nine-Eleven mosque site.

NATHAN. Wasn't that something?

HOLLY. Yeah.

NATHAN. Really smoothed over a lot of tensions. Helps that he was there that day.

HOLLY. Yeah. He's "the Republican Obama," right?

NATHAN. (*Eye-roll.*) That's just Sean Hannity being Sean Hannity.

HOLLY. Yeah. That's what they say.

NATHAN. It's not a help. Believe me. Anyway, you know that Julius enlisted in the Marines.

HOLLY. I heard that.

NATHAN. Silver Star in Kuwait.

HOLLY. Didn't know *that*, but that's great.

NATHAN. Teach For America when he got home. Harvard Law Review. General Counsel for the Ministry of Hope.

HOLLY. Yeah.

NATHAN. What do you think about that?

HOLLY. Good for him. I guess we're meeting because he's running for Congress now, right?

NATHAN. We're vetting him for the House. Yes. But, between you and me, I really believe in him. Lots of faith.

HOLLY. Yeah.

NATHAN. Anyway, okay, good. You know he's married now, right?

HOLLY. Yeah.

NATHAN. How do you feel about that?

HOLLY. What do you mean?

NATHAN. Is it odd for you at all?

HOLLY. I'm married. I have kids. Nothing's odd.

NATHAN. Okay, good to know. *(He writes something on a legal pad.)* So, Holly, what kind of relationship did you and Julius have?

HOLLY. He was my boyfriend.

NATHAN. Right, no, I mean ... huh. *(He laughs.)*

HOLLY. I'm sorry. I didn't understand the question.

NATHAN. No, no. I'm not sure I knew the question myself. You know I've only had one girlfriend my entire life?

HOLLY. Yeah?

NATHAN. My wife. We met in high school and that's been me ever since.

HOLLY. Wow.

NATHAN. Yeah. I got real lucky. So would you say that you and Julius had ... a good relationship?

HOLLY. I mean ... we broke up.

NATHAN. Right. But, would you define it as abusive, violent? *(Beat.)*

HOLLY. No.

NATHAN. Okay. Good. But, perhaps it was a turbulent relationship.

HOLLY. Yeah.

NATHAN. Not unlike many relationships between young people inexperienced with relationships.

HOLLY. I guess we don't all meet our soul-mates in high school.

NATHAN. *(Smiling.)* I went to Arthur Murray before the junior prom. That was my secret.

HOLLY. Nice. *(Beat. Nathan writes something down.)*

NATHAN. Look, like I said, I really think that Julius is one of the special ones. I think he's going to change the world.

HOLLY. Julius always had something special about him.

NATHAN. I'm glad you agree with me. You do this as long as me and you get a nose for the good ones. *(He takes out some papers.)* So, hey, some friendly business before burgers.

HOLLY. What are those?

NATHAN. Just a letter of certification.

WARRIOR CLASS

by Kenneth Lin

2M, 1W

When Assemblyman Julius Lee makes a bid for Congress, the ghosts of his college days come back to haunt him. Nothing reveals true colors like a sprint to the finish, when friends become enemies and allies can turn on a dime. WARRIOR CLASS is a political battle of race, romance, forgiveness and debt.

“An absorbing new play ... [an] incisive drama [that] seems to suggest that American politics has become a game that has as its ends not so much the improvement of the civic sphere but the vicious thrill of the sport itself.”

—The New York Times

ISBN 978-0-8222-2799-1



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