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*Dramatic Publishing*

# ERIC AND ELLIOT

A Play

by

DWAYNE HARTFORD



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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ERIC AND ELLIOT was developed in the Whiteman New Plays Program at Childsplay in Tempe, Arizona, where David Saar is artistic director. Graham Whitehead was the dramaturg. Before the public opening, the play did a limited tour of Phoenix-area high schools in May 2002. The production was directed by Graham Whitehead. The cast was as follows:

Eric . . . . . Jeff Goodman  
Elliot . . . . . D. Scott Withers  
Mother/Daisy. . . . . Lisa Kindall  
Mr. Willoughby. . . . . Jere Luisi  
Miss Hadden . . . . . Katie McFadzen

ERIC AND ELLIOT premiered at the Tempe Performing Arts Center in Tempe, Arizona, on November 1, 2002. The production was directed by Graham Whitehead. Geof Eroe did the scenic design. Liz Ihlenfeld did the costumes. Lighting design was by Michael J. Eddy, with sound design by Benjamin Monrad. Gretchen Schaefer stage managed. The cast was as follows:

Eric . . . . . Gordon Waggoner  
Elliot . . . . . D. Scott Withers  
Mother/Daisy. . . . . Debra K. Stevens  
Mr. Willoughby. . . . . Jon Gentry  
Miss Hadden . . . . . Kimberly Morgan

# ERIC AND ELLIOT

## SCENE 1

*(In the blackout we hear sounds of a summer evening in the woods by a lake: crickets, loons, the creaking of a boat dock against lapping waves. The voices of two boys are heard. MOM, a woman in her late thirties, appears lying in bed, staring at the ceiling. Her bedroom is a mess, with piles of laundry, dirty dishes and trash everywhere. During the following, MOM sits up in bed. She rocks back and forth slightly. She occasionally closes her eyes, as if to concentrate or to shut out visions she doesn't want to see. She starts to shake. She looks away, bringing the pillow to her face, as if to stifle a scream.)*

VOICE OF ERIC. Elliot? Where are you?

VOICE OF ELLIOT. I'm here, Eric. I'm here.

VOICE OF ERIC. Where? It's not fair. I can't see you. It's getting dark.

VOICE OF ELLIOT. Too bad. You know the rules. You can't quit in the middle of the game.

VOICE OF ERIC. Mom's going to be mad.

VOICE OF ELLIOT. No, she's not. She knows the rules, too.

VOICE OF ERIC. Where are you?

VOICE OF ELLIOT. Gotcha!



*(ERIC screams, then the two laugh. The ambient noise changes to that of a thunderstorm. The voices shift to another conversation.)*

VOICE OF ERIC. Elliot!

VOICE OF ELLIOT. I'm here, Eric. I'm here. Just follow my voice.

VOICE OF ERIC. I'm scared.

VOICE OF ELLIOT. It's okay. Just follow my voice.

VOICE OF ERIC. Why did the lights go out?

VOICE OF ELLIOT. The storm must have knocked a tree over onto the power lines.

VOICE OF ERIC. I wish Mom was home.

VOICE OF ELLIOT. I know. It's okay.

*(Shift to another conversation. There is no background noise. On the opposite side of the stage, ELLIOT appears, standing beside a rowboat, watching MOM.)*

VOICE OF ERIC. Elliot!

VOICE OF ELLIOT. What?

VOICE OF ERIC. Mom says you have to play with me.

VOICE OF ELLIOT. I don't feel like playing.

VOICE OF ERIC. You never want to play anymore. Well, too bad. Mom said...

VOICE OF ELLIOT. Just leave me alone, would you?

VOICE OF ERIC. I'm telling Mom.

ELLIOT *(on stage, speaks)*. Mom?

*(The thunderstorm is heard again. During the following, ELLIOT walks toward MOM.)*

VOICE OF ELLIOT. Mom will be home soon. She'll shine the car lights into the cabin, and then we'll find the lantern. Are you walking toward me?

VOICE OF ERIC. I think so.

*(ELLIOT, now standing in the doorway to Mom's bedroom, speaks again.)*

ELLIOT. Mom?

VOICE OF ELLIOT. Just follow my voice, Eric. Just follow my voice.

*(During the following, MOM moves about the bedroom, trying to pick up, but failing. She seems to ignore ELLIOT.)*

ELLIOT. Mom. I'm sorry you're feeling so sad. I thought you were going to be okay. I thought you were doing better, but now...Mom, you need help. Remember when Dr. Turner said you could call him anytime? I know. I'm sorry I haven't reminded you to pay the phone bill. But I was thinking maybe you could just... No. I know.

*(ERIC appears in a separate bedroom, sleeping fitfully. He cries out. Hearing his cry, MOM goes into her bathroom, closing the door behind her.)*

ERIC. Elliot! Help me! It's heavy! Elliot!

ELLIOT. Another nightmare.

ERIC. Elliot, where are you?

ELLIOT. Mom. I'm going to take Eric to Dr. Turner's office this morning. We need to tell someone about what's

going on here. You need to get better. I know you don't know what that is right now, but, please, hang in there.

For Eric and me.

ERIC. Elliot!

ELLIOT *(to ERIC)*. I'm here, Eric. I'm here. *(To MOM.)*

I'll get him back as soon as I can. I love you.

ERIC. Elliot?

ELLIOT. I'm here.

*(ELLIOT walks toward Eric's bedroom. At the same time, ERIC gets up and walks toward the boat. Seeing the boat, he screams.)*

ERIC. Nooooo!

*(ERIC runs away from the boat, and into Mom's bedroom. He jumps into the bed. MOM walks to the bed and looks at him. ELLIOT walks back to the doorway of Mom's bedroom. He watches this moment between MOM and ERIC. He steps into the room. MOM starts to shake again. She goes back into the bathroom, closing the door. ELLIOT sits on the bed.)*

ELLIOT. Eric.

ERIC *(waking)*. Ah! Elliot?

ELLIOT. Having a bad dream?

ERIC. I was looking for you and I couldn't find you.

ELLIOT. Is that why you're in Mom's bed?

ERIC. In Mom's bed? What? I don't know. I went to sleep in my own room. Did you carry me in here?

ELLIOT. No way. You'd drool all over me.

ERIC. I would not.

ELLIOT. You would, too. Look at your pillow. Gross.

ERIC. You drool, too. (*Pause.*) Maybe Mom brought me in here.

ELLIOT. I think you were sleepwalking. Where is Mommy? I want my mommy.

ERIC. Nuh-uh. Mom brought me. Where is she?

ELLIOT. She's in the bathroom.

ERIC. Is she going to work today?

ELLIOT. I don't think so.

ERIC. Oh.

ELLIOT. I think Mom needs a doctor.

ERIC. Really? Why? It's just a cold.

ELLIOT. It's not a cold.

ERIC. The flu?

ELLIOT. It's not the flu. Mom is really sad. More than sad. I think she's in trouble.

ERIC. Nuh-uh. She's not.

ELLIOT. She hasn't been to work in two weeks. And look at the house. It's a mess. The kitchen is gross. There are things living in the refrigerator. And that pile of clothes. When was the last time laundry was done?

ERIC. Mom was going to do the laundry yesterday. I guess she didn't feel up to it. Hey, why don't we pick up the house? Maybe that'll help Mom feel better.

ELLIOT. That's a good idea, but first we're going to see Dr. Turner.

ERIC. We are?

ELLIOT. We've got to tell him about Mom.

ERIC. But how are we... You mean we have to walk all the way there?

ELLIOT. It's only a couple of miles, Eric. We've walked a lot further than that before. Come on, you want Mom to feel better, don't you?

ERIC. Yes.

ELLIOT. All right, then. We can play Use It or Lose It on the way.

ERIC. Really?

ELLIOT. Sure.

ERIC. Cool. (*ERIC gets out of bed, goes to a pile of clothes, and pulls out items to wear. He is wearing a simple chain around his neck. He dresses during the following.*)

ELLIOT. What's that around your neck?

ERIC. What's it look like?

ELLIOT. I thought you said you didn't wear necklaces.

ERIC. I changed my mind.

ELLIOT. Oh. Something's missing, isn't it?

ERIC. You gave it to me, so I can do what I want with it.  
Hey, I get to go first.

ELLIOT. What?

ERIC. Use It or Lose It. I get to go first.

ELLIOT. You went first last time.

ERIC. I'm younger.

ELLIOT. But I'm only playing because you want to.

ERIC. But you always choose hard stuff.

ELLIOT. And you always choose easy stuff.

ERIC (*whining*). Please?

ELLIOT. Oh, all right, Mr. Whiner...

ERIC. Yes! Can we stop at McDonald's?

ELLIOT. Sure. Do you have any money?

ERIC. No. Do you?

ELLIOT. Why don't you get some from the cookie jar?

ERIC. The cookie jar money is for emergencies.

ELLIOT. I think this qualifies.

ERIC. Cool.

ELLIOT. Don't take all of it.

ERIC. I won't.

*(ERIC leaves. ELLIOT looks around the room. MOM opens the bathroom door.)*

ELLIOT. Don't worry, Mom. I'll watch out for him.

*(MOM goes to the bed and gets in it.) I love you. (ELLIOT leaves.)*

## SCENE 2

*(The way to Dr. Turner. The stage is littered with piles of papers, boxes and books. ELLIOT enters, followed by ERIC. ERIC is searching for an object with which to start the game.)*

ELLIOT. Hurry up, Eric. We've got to keep walking.

ERIC. But I haven't found a thing for the game yet.

ELLIOT. We need to get to Dr. Turner.

ERIC. You said we could play while we walked.

ELLIOT. I saw Mom again before we left.

ERIC. So.

ELLIOT. So? I'm really worried about her, Eric. She needs help.

ERIC. You're just trying to scare me. If Mom were really, really sick, she'd go see Dr. Turner herself.

ELLIOT. She can't. That's how serious this is.

ERIC. Everything is serious to you. Mom calls you Dan Rather junior. “This is the Elliot Evening News.”

ELLIOT. I’m not always serious. But this...

ERIC. I know, I know...you don’t have to say it again. We’re going, aren’t we? Ah-ha! *(He picks up a stick.)*  
All right, I’m ready to start the game.

ELLIOT. I don’t think we’re done talking about Mom.

ERIC. I am. We’re going to see Dr. Turner. He’s going to make her feel better. And, we’re going to play Use It or Lose It on the way there. We either play now or I’m going home.

ELLIOT. Okay. You’re right. Go ahead.

ERIC. Thank you. Let’s see...ah...it’s a...cane! *(He uses the stick as a cane, then hands it to ELLIOT.)* Your turn. *(The boys walk as play continues.)*

ELLIOT. Yours are always so easy. It’s a cane, and... *(brings stick up like a trumpet)* ...it’s a trumpet. *(He hands stick back to ERIC. Each time a new object is named, the stick is used as if it is that object.)*

ERIC. It’s a cane. It’s a trumpet. And...it’s a Popsicle.

ELLIOT. It’s a cane. It’s a trumpet. It’s a Popsicle, and it’s a telescope.

ERIC. It’s a cane. It’s a trumpet. It’s a Popsicle. It’s a telescope, and it’s a crutch.

ELLIOT. You already said it was a cane.

ERIC. So? A crutch is different than a cane.

ELLIOT. It’s a cane. It’s a trumpet. It’s a Popsicle. It’s a telescope. It’s a crutch, and it’s a magic wand. Poof! *(Taps ERIC on the head.)*

ERIC. Ribbit, ribbit.

ELLIOT. Poof! *(ELLIOT taps ERIC’s head again. ERIC does his best chimpanzee. ELLIOT hits himself over the*

*head with the “wand” then joins ERIC in chimpanzee play. When this plays itself out, ERIC takes the “wand” from ELLIOT and taps them both on the head. They return to human.)*

ERIC. It’s a cane...

ELLIOT. The stick is boring. Let’s find something else.

ERIC. It’s my turn! It’s a cane. It’s a trumpet. It’s a Popsicle. It’s a telescope. It’s a crutch. It’s a magic wand, and it’s a fishing pole.

ELLIOT. It’s a cane. It’s a trumpet. It’s a Popsicle. It’s a telescope. It’s a crutch. It’s a magic wand. It’s...what did you just say?

ERIC. I’m not telling. You’re going to lose it.

ELLIOT. Yeah, right. It’s a fishing pole—thought you had me, didn’t you—and it’s a machine gun.

ERIC. I don’t like playing guns anymore.

ELLIOT. We’re not playing guns. We’re playing Use It or Lose It. Your turn.

ERIC. I want to start a new one.

ELLIOT. I don’t. Use It or Lose It.

ERIC. No. Come on. You wanted to start over, too.

ELLIOT. I changed my mind. You know the rules. We have to both agree to stopping, so Use it or Lose It. *(He tickles ERIC.)*

ERIC *(laughing)*. No!

ELLIOT. Say the words! Say it!

ERIC. I lose it!

ELLIOT. Thank you! Ladies and gentlemen, the Unde-  
feated World Champion, Elliot! Roooooar!

ERIC *(throws the stick)*. I let you win.

ELLIOT. Yeah, right.

ERIC. I did.



ELLIOT. Hey, remember when Mom used to play Use It or Lose It with us?

ERIC. She's the best at it.

ELLIOT. She ought to be. She made it up.

ERIC. I thought we did.

ELLIOT. No way. Mom did. She used to make up all kinds of games. But Use It or Lose It was the only one you ever wanted to play. We used to play it all the time when we went to the lake.

ERIC. I don't remember.

ELLIOT. Sure you do. Remember that time when we were playing, and we walked all the way into town? And she found that paper plate and was using it like a tambourine, and that old couple thought she was begging, and put a quarter in it?

ERIC. And then Mom tried to give it back to them, but she couldn't stop laughing.

ELLIOT. And then they got scared. They thought Mom was crazy.

ERIC. They were running away from her, and she was trying to tell them about the game, but she was laughing so hard...

ELLIOT. I like Mom's laugh. Especially when she sounds like a horse. (*ELLIOT imitates MOM's horse laugh.*)

ERIC. Then she starts that hiccup thing. (*ERIC demonstrates the hiccup variation.*)

ELLIOT. Which leads into the silent laugh. (*ELLIOT does the silent laugh.*)

ERIC. Remember that time when we were all watching the sunset, sitting on the boat dock, and you and I got up to do the Hawaiian dance, and Mom laughed so hard she fell in the water?

ELLIOT. Then we all jumped in.

ERIC. Mom always laughed at the Hawaiian dance. No matter how many times we did it.

ELLIOT. What about the time when we were putting the boat dock in—it is pouring rain and we were all soaked—and we started dancing, and Mom laughed so hard she peed her pants?

ERIC. She tried to be mad, but she couldn't stop laughing.

ELLIOT. It's about that time of the year again. Time to head up to the lake, put in the boat dock, and open up Grandpa's cabin for the summer.

ERIC. Not this year.

ELLIOT. No. I guess not. I bet you're going to really miss it.

ERIC. What?

ELLIOT. The lake. Grandpa's cabin.

ERIC. No, I won't.

ELLIOT. Really?

ERIC. It's stupid. There's no TV. The water is freezing for half the summer, and the mosquitoes eat you alive. I'm kind of glad we're not going back.

ELLIOT. What are you talking about? You love the lake. What about playing Gotcha in the woods behind the cabin? Or going waterskiing?

ERIC. Can we play Gotcha now?

ELLIOT. Maybe on the way home. Remember when Grandpa and Mom taught you how to water ski? Mom would hold you in the water, while Grandpa drove the boat.

ERIC. You were supposed to be spotting, but you always let me bounce a few times before you'd tell Grandpa I had fallen.

ELLIOT. I thought maybe you'd bounce back up.

ERIC. Yeah, right.

ELLIOT. You could have just let go of the rope.

ERIC. I was little. I forgot.

ELLIOT (*imitating ERIC bouncing*). Boing, boing, boing.

ERIC. I'm hungry.

ELLIOT. I know.

*(The empty boat from the first scene appears in front of the boys. The sight of the boat stops them both.)*

ERIC. Elliot, what's that boat doing here?

ELLIOT. I don't know.

ERIC. It was in my dream. Where are we?

ELLIOT. We're right around the corner from...that's weird.

ERIC. What? Where are you taking me?

ELLIOT. What street are we on?

ERIC. I don't know. I thought you knew where you were going.

ELLIOT. I did. I do. We must have made a wrong turn when we were playing the game.

ERIC. How did we do that? Where are we?

ELLIOT. I'm not sure.

ERIC. Are we lost?

ELLIOT. No. I got turned around, that's all. I just have to figure out what street we're on.

ERIC. I don't see any signs. I don't see any people. Where is everybody?

ELLIOT. Don't panic, Eric. Nobody's around because it's still early. We're fine. We haven't been gone long, so

we can't be that far off track. We'll figure it out. If not, we'll ask someone.

ERIC. Who? There's no one around. There are no cars, no people, nothing but this boat.

ELLIOT. Calm down. We just...

ERIC. I'm hungry.

ELLIOT. I know. We'll buy a candy bar if we pass a store, okay?

ERIC. You promised McDonald's.

ELLIOT. We'll get to McDonald's. Cut the whining, would you? Stop thinking about your stomach and think about Mom. She needs help. I wish you could get that through your stupid head.

ERIC. Don't call me stupid. I'm not the one who got us lost.

ELLIOT. I didn't mean to call you stupid. I'm sorry. I know you are hungry. We'll get you some food as soon as we can. Okay?

ERIC. Okay. Which way do we go?

ELLIOT. Let's walk down that way.

ERIC. How do you know it's that way?

ELLIOT. I don't know.

ERIC. Elliot...

ELLIOT. It's all right. I'll get us out of this. Don't I always figure it out when Mom gets lost?

ERIC. Yeah.

ELLIOT. Well, I'll figure it out this time, too.

ERIC. This is like the dream I had last night. I was lost. I was looking for you. I couldn't find you.

ELLIOT. Well, I'm here, Eric. I'm here. Hey, remember when Mom got stuck in the slide at McDonald's?

ERIC. The manager had to call the fire department.

ELLIOT. They tried to get Mom's coat off her.

ERIC. You were so embarrassed.

ELLIOT. It was embarrassing having your mom stuck in  
Playland.

ERIC. It was funny. Mom thought so.

ELLIOT. I know. She couldn't stop laughing. Every time  
they pulled on her, she just laughed harder. (*The boys  
exit, doing their imitations of MOM's laugh.*)