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# **The Smartest Girl in the World**

By

MIRIAM GONZALES

**Dramatic Publishing Company**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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(THE SMARTEST GIRL IN THE WORLD)

ISBN: 978-1-61959-200-1

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*The Smartest Girl in the World* was premiered by Childsplay at the Tempe Center for the Arts (Tempe, Ariz.) from Oct. 25 to Nov. 22, 2015.

CAST:

LEO ..... Rudy Ramirez  
LIZZY ..... Osiris Cuen  
HECTOR..... Vinny Chavez  
CHERYL..... Jamie Sandomire

PRODUCTION:

Director ..... Deborah Stevens  
Dramaturg ..... Jenny Millinger

The show was subsequently produced from Oct. 7 to Oct. 29, 2017, by Imagination Stage at the Annette M. and Theodore N. Lerner Family Theatre (Bethesda, Md.).

CAST:

LEO..... Dallas Tolentino  
LIZZY ..... Alina Collins Maldonado  
HECTOR..... Phillip da Costa  
CHERYL..... Yesenia Iglesias

PRODUCTION:

Director ..... Kathryn Chase Bryer  
Composer ..... Timothy Guillot  
Movement Director..... Elena Day  
Scenic Designer ..... Andrew Cohen  
Costume Designer..... Frank Labovitz  
Lighting Designer ..... Sarah Tundermann  
Sound Designer..... Neil McFadden  
Stage Manager ..... Amanda Landis

# The Smartest Girl in the World

## CHARACTERS

LIZZY MARTINEZ: a second grader; later, a third grader.

LEO MARTINEZ: Lizzy's big brother; a sixth grader; later, a seventh grader.

HECTOR: Leo and Lizzy's cousin; same age as Leo.

CHERYL: Lizzy's neighbor and playmate; same age as Lizzy.

AUNT KID: Leo and Lizzy's aunt; their mami's sister; 40s to early 50s.

MAMI: Leo and Lizzy's mother; early 30s.

PAPI: Leo and Lizzy's father; early 30s.

QUIZ SHOW HOST: Anglo, southern man.

QUIZ SHOW CONTESTANTS: three elementary-level students (one per team) from Pierce Elementary, Brooks Elementary and Crockett Elementary.

Possible Doublings:

HECTOR / PAPI / HOST

CHERYL / MAMI / AUNT KID / PIERCE CONTESTANT

LEO / CROCKETT CONTESTANT

## SETTING

Multiple settings in Leo and Lizzy's world: their bedroom, home, Aunt Kid's kitchen—all within a Latino neighborhood inside a southern city.

And the downtown local TV station, just outside their world.

LEO (*cont'd*). Hurry up Lizzy! (*He picks up the flash cards and calls out to LIZZY into the hallway.*) Florida.

LIZZY (*from hallway; offstage*). Uh ... Miami.

(*LIZZY enters in her pajamas, a floppy hat, and movie-star sunglasses.*)

LEO. Miami?

LIZZY. Orlando.

LEO. No. Ta—

LIZZY. Taaa—naaa—see?

LEO. Lizzy, is Tennessee a state, a capital or a continent?

LIZZY. Aha! Trick question. None of the above. It's a city!

LEO (*frustrated*). It's Tallahassee. The capital of Florida is Tallahassee. Tennessee is a STATE. (*Pointing to her sunglasses.*) Take those off. One of how many states?

LIZZY. Um, I'm sorry, Leo. But, I do know about neighborhoods and city workers. Miss Welch said that's all us second graders gotta know this year.

LEO. Lizzy. Look at me. We've been over this a hundred times. *I* have higher expectations for you. You. Have. To. Be. Smart—like me. One day we'll be *real* grownups—go to college, get big-time jobs. And, if we're smart, like Einstein smart—straight A's, speak ten languages, invent stuff—we'll make money, tons of it, and *nothing* will stop us. We'll live in huge houses, with a hundred butlers, and all the candy we want all day—

LIZZY. Pixy Stix!

LEO (*gesturing to the mural in their room*). An' then Papi can paint murals everywhere!

LIZZY (*dreamy*). Yeaah.

LEO. But, none of that's gonna happen if we aren't the smartest people in the world. It's the plan. Our *secret plan*. (*They do a secret handshake.*) It's how we help Mami and

Papi. It's how we help each other. It's how we all finally go on vacation to Hawaii!

LIZZY. Hawaii!! Yes! I can't wait!

LEO. And, the capital of Hawaii is ...

LIZZY. Yes, sir. Well, Hawaii is an *island*. Not. A. State. So, No capital! Trick question! Right?

LEO. OK, so once you're in *sixth grade*, you'll be as smart as me. Don't worry. I'll get on the *Challenge* quiz show, and I guarantee, you'll get on it, too, some day.

LIZZY. When will you be on the TV, Leo? On the *Challenge*?

LEO (*cool*). I dunno, first show's like in a month.

LIZZY. Oooh! I can't wait! I'm gonna be on TV, too. I'm gonna be like Blanca Patron-Jimenez de Garcia in *Fuego y Hielo*. Me and Aunt Kid love that show. (*Throws a blanket around her shoulders like a fur wrap; saunters around the room.*) "Ay, porrrrr favorrrrr, no autographs! Ay, get away frrrrom me!"

LEO. Lizzy. Movie stars come and go. Think: Lawyer. Journalist.

LIZZY. Doctor!

LEO. Scientist. Or ... *president*. (*Holds the lapel of his pajama top in a presidential pose and gazes into the future.*)

LIZZY (*admiring her hero*). President. I just know you're gonna be president one day, Leo.

LEO (*smiles sweetly at her*). C'mon. It's my turn. Quiz me.

*(Offstage, we hear PAPI approaching, he passes their doorway. We hear PAPI more than we see him. We might see him in his work uniform and boots as he passes by. LEO and LIZZY quiet down and hide the flash cards.)*

PAPI (*tired, gruff*). *Bueno niños, apagen las luces en trienta*



*minutos. Tienes agua? Tomaste la medicina, eh?*

LEO. *Si, Papi. I took the medicine, I got the water, it's all good.*

PAPI. *Muy bien, mijo. Bueno. Voy tarde, nos vemos por la mañana, OK?*

LIZZY. *Bye, Papi!*

PAPI. *Adios chicos, love you.*

*(We hear the front door shut and locked.)*

LIZZY. *When can we tell Mami and Papi!?*

LEO. *Not until after my tryouts, OK? I'm not kidding.*

LIZZY. *What will we do after you make the team?*

LEO. *We'll celebrate. I'll get money from my jar and buy Big Red and vanilla ice cream at Solano's. We'll make floats.*

LIZZY. *Mmmm! Yes!! And, for Mami and Papi, too? We'll make big ones. But, when will we—*

LEO *(drinks from his water bottle)*. *Right before Mami leaves. Dessert before dinner. It's OK. C'mon. Quiz me. (Tosses her the flash cards.)*

LIZZY. *What is the square root of eighty-one?*

LEO. *Nine.*

LIZZY. *Where was Marco Polo born?*

LEO. *Venice, Italy.*

LIZZY. *Who was the eighteenth president of the United States?*

LEO. *Ulysses S. Grant.*

LIZZY. *The longest river in the world ...*

*(Offstage—POW! A bang from outside the house startles them. It's a car's muffler backfiring. LIZZY clings to LEO. LEO is startled as well, but tries to mask it.)*

LIZZY *(cont'd)*. *What was that?!*

LEO. It's just a car, the muffler, I told you, they pop like that sometimes. It's nothing.

*(LIZZY's breathing grows frantic.)*

LEO *(cont'd)*. Lizzy, c'mon.

LIZZY. Nu-uh, that was louder, and it was closer—

LEO. It was nothing ... Lizzy, Mami will be home soon.

*(LIZZY pulls her blanket/shawl over her head.)*

LEO *(cont'd)*. Here. *(Picks up the alarm clock.)* We'll set it again for when she gets home. Two o'clock. On the dot. OK? *(Places it next to her pillow.)* Better?

*(LIZZY shakes her head under the blanket.)*

LEO *(cont'd)*. OK, you know what, it's late—maybe if you just go to sleep— *(Nudges her to get under the covers.)*

LIZZY. Sleep!! I can't sleep! Who know's what's out there. Nu-uh. I'm not sleepin'—*ever*—again!

LEO. Lizzy—

LIZZY. I'm scared. ... I'm scared!!

*(A beat. LEO sighs and looks about the room trying to figure out what to do. He remembers. He stands tall, and puts his hand to his ear, dramatically, pretending to hear something.)*

LEO *(storyteller/narrator tone)*. Hmm ... what is that I hear??

*(LIZZY turns her head to the right and left under her blanket.)*

LEO *(cont'd)*. A crack of thunder?? *(Makes thunder sounds; glances at LIZZY to see if she's catching on.)* A flash of light!

*(LEO reaches under his bed and retrieves a small shoebox.)*

*He takes out a cape made out of a sheet. He turns and ties it on. A lightning bolt has been drawn on the back.)*

LEO (*cont'd*). Could it be, is it true?!

*(LIZZY peeks from under her blanket. Then sits up in bed, smiling with anticipation.)*

LEO (*cont'd, turns, unfurling the cape dramatically; Kotar voice*). KOTAR LIVES!!!!

LIZZY (*shines her flashlight on KOTAR and across the room like a search light*). HOOOOORAY!! Hello, Oh mighty KOTAR!

LEO. Salutations, her royal highness the Great Elizabeth of the Land of Tara. As you can see my lady— (*Shines the flashlight out the window.*) no sign of danger in our kingdom tonight. All is well. Now, it is time for you to retire to your chambers. I will guard the land tonight. Off to bed, your highness. Your highness??

*(LEO attempts to guide her to bed. LIZZY tries to avoid going under the covers.)*

LIZZY. But, Kotar, we have to go back on our adventure, 'member, over ... there! (*Points to the waterfall in the mural with the flashlight; LEO doesn't look.*)

LEO (*does not look into the mural at any time during the story*). Lizzy—

LIZZY. Please, Leo? ... Please?

LEO. Fine.

*(The mural awakens here through lights and sound effects to illuminate their adventure and that LIZZY's imagination is at work. Story characters perhaps appear in the mural [if a*

*scrim is used]. Their room, their world is filled with color and imagination. LIZZY and LEO might act out their pretend story around their bedroom, using everyday objects as props.)*

LEO (*cont'd*). So, Kotar and the Great Elizabeth traveled for ten long days and ten dark nights to the cave of—

LIZZY. The evil dragon—

*(We hear a roar.)*

LIZZY (*cont'd*). Derfo!

LEO. Who lurks behind the magic waterfall—

LIZZY. Cuz, cuz he stole it, 'member? He stole our— (*LEO takes a drink from water bottle; LIZZY grabs a map—a prop they use.*) map. Me and Leo's treasure map!

LEO. Yes, the secret treasure map to—

LIZZY. The land of Hawaii!! Where we can reeeelaaaax in the sun—be lazy all day if we want, dive in the waves all day if we want, or—

LEO. Run all we want—and—

LIZZY. Picnic an' play all we want—they stole it!

LEO. “Never fear, my lady,” Kotar cried! “I will defeat these evil creatures and retrieve what is rightfully yours!” So, Kotar and the Great Elizabeth jumped on their trusty stallions and flew into the night across the Taravela mountains. They fought off wolves— (*We hear howls; other animal sounds follow.*) and snakes—

LIZZY. Lions—

LEO. Bears!

LIZZY. Wait! ... What am I wearing?

LEO. A dress—

LIZZY. *Pink*—Sparkly pink—

LEO (*takes a drink from his water bottle*). Sparkly pink dress, sparkly pink crown, shoes, hair—all sparkly. OK? So. As Kotar and the Great Elizabeth crossed the cold mountains, and fought off the last—

LIZZY (*yawning*). Giant spider, an’ an octopus—a fat one— an’ a shark, a big ol’—

LEO. Shh. Kotar could see that Great Elizabeth needed rest. Shhh. She was very tired.

LIZZY. No, she was not. (*Yawns.*)

LEO. The cave of Derfo the Dragon was covered in fog, it was hard to see—

LIZZY. I can see it, I can— (*Tired, rubs her eyes.*)

LEO. “We face more battles in the morning, my lady,” Kotar said. “We must rest.”

LIZZY (*barely able to keep her eyes open*). But, our map, our treasure—

LEO. “Sleep. We ride at dawn, Great Elizabeth.” And they did—and they never gave up, even after riding through (*We might hear sounds effects for each catastrophe.*) blizzards, monsoons, lava—

(*LIZZY yawns.*)

LEO (*cont’d*). They never stopped. They just kept going and going and going. With Kotar in her corner, and the Great Elizabeth in his, they were ... unstoppable.

(*LIZZY is asleep. LEO tucks her in. He takes the flashlight and looks in the dresser mirror. He unfurls his cape. He mouths “KOTAR,” lighting himself with the flashlight, and admiring his greatness. He strikes another pose, holding*

*the lapel of his pajamas—“President.” Then, he sees “Leo” again. He takes off the cape and lays it across LIZZY’s blanket. He turns off the lights, goes to his bed with his flashlight, studying his flash cards.*

*Time passes; middle of the night. The alarm clock rings. LIZZY turns it off. She sees the Kotar cape; smiles. She tiptoes to the bedroom door; peeks out, to see if Mami’s shoes are home. She finds them, holds them.)*

LIZZY (*whispering*). Leo. Mami’s home.

LEO (*bolts upright; his flash cards fly*). Reykjavik! Iceland! Capital of Iceland, capital ... (*Stumbles back to his bed; falls back to sleep.*)

*(LIZZY giggles. She shines the flashlight into the mural. The mural awakens here with sounds of neighing horses galloping away, “Never fear, Kotar is here!” LIZZY turns off the flashlight. She covers LEO with the Kotar cape.)*

LIZZY (*whispers*). Good night, Kotar. (*Goes back to her bed, sleeps.*)