

10 Seconds

By Miriam Gonzales

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Inspired by the Imagination Stage Police and Youth Program

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Characters

Ray Henderson, 14 years old, Jimi's friend. Also plays: Grandma, Mom and Dad; student 1. African American

Jimi Roberts, 14 years old, Ray's friend; chorus. African American

Craig Leland, police officer. Also plays: Jimi's Dad; teen boy; student 2; chorus. African American

Samantha Kent, police officer. Also plays teen girl; Annie, 15 years old; Drama teacher, Ms. Martin; chorus. White/European American

Setting: Washington, DC; current day.

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You are my déjà vu.

LELAND

(slow claps)

Today's the big day, huh?

JIMI

Ahhh, man, you heard all that??

LELAND

It's good. It is.

JIMI

Nah—

LELAND

It is.

JIMI

No, it's dumb.

LELAND

What's dumb is walking on a crack when you need some good luck with this young lady.

JIMI

Man, you and Ray both. I don't believe in all that.

LELAND

Waitta minute. So, you believe in déjà vu, that you're psychic, but you're not superstitious? Helloo?--step on a crack, break your Mama's back??

JIMI

My Mom? Why would I care what happens to her?

(grows agitated)

She doesn't care about me? Why are you bringin' her up, why are you talkin' about -

LELAND

Jimi. Relax. C'mon. Breathe.

(pause, as JIMI settles)

Where's Ray, huh? You guys are going to be late for school.

JIMI

He left already. I needed to talk to you --

(pause)
I'm nervous, Officer Leland.

LELAND
It's all good, Jimi.

JIMI
What if Annie laughs at me? What if--

LELAND
You're in there. You got this.

JIMI
She's amazing.

LELAND
I know.

JIMI
A track star, too.

LELAND
I know.

JIMI
Fast, like a cheetah. And she's little and cute, like a . . . a . . . hedgehog. I should add that, right, yea, that's good --
(takes phone out to edit poem)

LELAND
I'm not sure that's a compliment. I might not use that line --

JIMI
See, I'm an idiot.

LELAND
No you're not.

JIMI
She's gonna hate me.

LELAND
No she's not.

JIMI

(looks at poem on phone)
Can I read it to you again?

LELAND

Jimi, you're late.

JIMI

But--

LELAND

You're not even gonna see this girl if you don't get yourself to school.

(looks JIMI in the eye)

You've been doing good. Staying out of trouble, going to school *every* day. But you gotta get there *on time*. There are rules in this world, young man. No. More. Tardies. You don't want the school or me calling your Dad --

JIMI

You wouldn't do that Officer Leland--c'mon, I need to practice--

LELAND

Here comes the train --

JIMI

You know what -- maybe I'll just walk to school, real slow. Deuces --

(starts to exit)

LELAND

(playfully pulls him back by his back pack)

You can do this. Listen, I'm late for a meeting, but I'll be at the Metro by your school today. Find me and we'll talk. Okay?

(re-directs him to the direction of the train)

JIM

Fine.

LELAND

Hey Jimi -- Good luck.

JIMI exits. LELAND freezes.

RAY enters. A beat.

He tries to continue writing, but can't.