

Underdogs  
By  
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Based on TOPDOG/UNDERDOG

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ACT I

*The stage is brightly lit, with a sidewalk going along. The sounds of crowds talking amongst and cars driving by fade in and out in the background. The lights form the silhouettes of the cars driving through the road presented on the stage. From off stage, Lincoln, Booth, Lonny, Ronny, and Donny walk into the stage. Lincoln holds a stack of cards in his hands, while Lonny holds a cardboard box.*

LINCOLN

(to Lonny) (This is a good spot)

*Lonny sets the cardboard box down, as Lincoln sets his cards in motion between his hands. It is in the form of a quick, eclectic motion.*

LINCOLN

Alright, Ronny, you're the lookout, Booth and Donny, you my sides like before. Lonny, Sticks my brotha, you know what to do.

*Ronny moves off-stage, while Donny pretends to play cards as Lonny moves out to the opposite side of off-stage. Lincoln stands aside Booth.*

LINCOLN (cont'd)

Well, whaddya think, lil bro?! Ssalright so far, aight? We got good vibes today, oh yes, good vibes alright.

BOOTH

It's real nice.

LINCOLN

Real nice, fuck yeah.

BOOTH

You're so good with the cards, big bro. We already made what, 700?

LINCOLN

800.

BOOTH

You gotta teach me, Link.

LINCOLN

Eventually, just keep being my Sideman and observe

BOOTH

C'mon man, this is some easy shit. I've already observed your shit long enough, lemme help out.

LINCOLN

No.

BOOTH

C'mon bro, don't treat me like this bullshit. Y'kno it's some lie if you sayin' no like that.

LINCOLN

Well, not a complete lie. So it's either bull or shit, not bullshit.

(Rest)

I'm just in a good mood today alright.

BOOTH

Come on. I can do this.

LINCOLN

BOOTH

LINCOLN

BOOTH

*Lincoln sighs*

LINCOLN

Fine. Fuck it, fine, fine. Lonny. Lonny!

*Lonny walks back on-stage*

LONNY

What's good, Link?

LINCOLN

You're gonna be my Sideman for now. Booth here (pats on Booth's back) will be my Stickman.

LONNY

Oh. Well, alright.

*Lonny moves in and starts pretending to play cards with Donny.*

LINCOLN

(to Booth) Alright, now go reel 'em in!

*Booth runs to the corner of the stage and looks around, fishing for potential 'Marks'*

LINCOLN (cont'd)

Lean in close and watch me now: who see thuh black card  
 who see thuh black card I see thuh black card black  
 cards thuh winner pick thuh black card thats thuh  
 winner pick thuh red card thats thuh loser pick thuh  
 other red card thats thuh other loser pick rhuh black  
 card you pick thuh winner. Watch me as I throw thuh  
 cards. Here we go.

*Lincoln's card shuffling is in a smooth motion.  
 His voice encapsulating, matching with his nimble  
 method of sliding the cards between the fingers at  
 a blinding pace.*

thuh black card you got a winner. One good pickll get  
 you in, 2 good picks and you gone win. Watch me come on  
 watch me now.

*Booth begins waving over to someone off-stage, and  
 brings over a Mark.*

BOOTH

I noticed your attention, good sir, you look like a  
 good eye for this sort of thing

MARK

So I just pick for the black card twice?

LINCOLN

2 good picks and you gone win. 10 will get you 20, 20  
 will get you 40.

MARK

Alright. (slams down 40)

LINCOLN

Ima show you thuh cards: 2 red cards but only one  
 spade. Dark winner in thuh center, Watch me now as I  
 throw thuh cards watch me real close. Ok, man, you know  
 which card is the deuce of spades? Was you watching  
 Links lighting fast express? Was you watching Link  
 cause he the best? So you sure, huh? Point it out  
 first.

*Mark points on the card on the center*

LINCOLN (cont'd)

You got it right, how's that for thuh simple taste  
 (hands 80) we got ourselves a champ here, now how bout  
 you go for 2 deuces and hit the jackpot

MARK

I'm feeling good....400. (puts down 400)

*A silhouette multiples figures shapes around the group, in the form of a bustling crowd with curious intrigues*

LINCOLN

400 dollars? Yr thuh man of thuh hour you thuh man with thuh power. You musta been watching Link real close. You must be thuh man who know thuh most. Ok. Lay the cash in my hand cause Link the man.

*Mark hands Lincoln the 400*

LINCOLN (cont'd)

Thank ya, mister. I'll even hand ya a lifeline from any person in the crowd, even my good sir who has a good eye for this (points to Booth) Now lets see if you is thuh man of thuh hour (shuffles cards) Now don't pick thuh card, just point.

MARK

Hmm. (to Booth) Why don't you pick for me, son?

*Lincoln stares at Booth, he sticks his left hand in his left pocket. Booth stands in awe. He points to the card on his left. It is a deuce of spades.*

LINCOLN

Well sir, you are the man of the hour. (hands extra 400 as well as his original 400) There ya go. Show's over , folks.

*The silhouettes fade away.*

LINCOLN (cont'd)

(pushes Booth) you fucking idiot!! He actually picked you, you! That shit was in our hands, 800 bucks clean!

*The crew stares on as the two scuffle.*

BOOTH

The fuck you yelling at me for?!

LINCOLN

What the hell happened?! I literally signaled it!

BOOTH

Yeah, I saw.

LINCOLN

Yeah, you saw? So what the hell happened?!

BOOTH

Shit, I dunno Link, I thought you meant my left...

LINCOLN

Goddammit. We gotta find another place now.

*Lonny walks off with the cardboard box, followed by Ronny and Donny.*

LINCOLN (cont'd)

Can't do shit for yourself right. No wonder we still rock bottom with no parents.

*Lincoln walks off stage. Booth clenches his fist as he stares off.*

BOOTH

AAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!!!!!!

*Booth collapses, and his scream also de-escalates into subtle sobbing. Lights off.*

SELF-REFLECTION

For this play, I wanted to do my interpretation of the day Lincoln gave Booth a chance by letting him be his Stickman. I kept some thematic references to the original play's layout, such as some stage actions, and use of silence and pause. I'm also a huge fan of utilizing parallels so I wanted to try and use that in this prequel play rendition as well. A few examples of these is Lincoln using his card trick dialogue, mentioning the bullshit reference to Booth. The final parallel is Booth sobbing hysterically at the end of this play to the ending of TOPDOG/UNDERDOG. My goal for this was to add to the foreshadowing of the ending of the latter play as it was done for Lincoln.