

BULLYING, INK.
SHORT PLAYS ABOUT BULLYING

by Diana Burbano, Hillary DePiano, Jonathan Dorf, Julia Edwards, Jeff Goode, Neeley Gossett, Bradley Hayward, Arthur M. Jolly, Laura King, Hayley Lawson-Smith, Ellen Margolis, Daniel Rashid, Dylan Schiffrin and Don Zolidis

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PRODUCTION NOTES

If produced in its entirety, the collection creates opportunities for an ensemble of 8-50+ actors (it is possible to eliminate one of the scenelets in *Babies*, thus reducing the minimum ensemble to 6). While a suggested order is above, it is possible to produce the plays of *Bullying*, *Ink*. in any order, and to omit any play(s) in accordance with the needs of your production. It is also possible to produce individual plays from the collection—visit the YouthPLAYS website for more information.

A LOSER LIKE YOU

A short dramedy by
Julia Edwards

CAST OF CHARACTERS

KADE

J.J.

TOMAS

LULU

SOFIA

AUTHOR NOTES

When you see a word in brackets [], feel free to substitute another word/prop/reference.

I have made choices about genders and names but feel free to sculpt the gender breakdown as needed.

When a character is BLEEPED out, feel free to solve this how you choose. He can actually say "bleep" as written or someone else can "bleep" him from offstage. Or, if that seems too risqué, you can choose to nix the bleeps altogether and simplify the sentences.

The last moment of the play calls for a rendition of Beck's tune "Loser." Feel free to substitute another raucous self-effacing song or even a battle cry from the entire cast. After all, we need a place for our rage to go.

SCENE 1

(A school bell. KADE stands alone, his foot propped on a ball. He looks like a statue of a pissed-off person. J.J. sprints in, out of breath.)

J.J.: Hey, are you using that ball?

(Kade doesn't acknowledge J.J.'s existence.)

Uh... Hey! Can we use that ball?

(Kade continues his statue routine. J.J. shouts and gesticulates as if talking to a hard-of-hearing elderly person from a foreign country.)

DUDE! BALL! CAN I USE YOUR BALL?

KADE: Nope.

J.J.: Oh, sorry. I thought you were deaf or something. All the other balls are flat, man. Can we use that one?

KADE: Nah.

J.J.: Why?

(Kade shrugs his shoulders.)

Come on. You're not even using it.

KADE: Says who?

J.J.: Well. It's a [soccer] ball and you're not playing [soccer] so...

KADE: I'm using it.

J.J.: Come on, dude. This is literally the best ball in the bin.

(J.J. plops a sad flat ball on the ground.)

Hey. You want to join us? We could use another player.

(Kade turns slowly, stares.)

KADE: You really want this ball?

J.J.: Yeah.

KADE: Here.

(Kade pretends to whip the ball at J.J., who flinches; Kade smiles.)

J.J.: You know what? Forget it. You suck.

KADE: No. You suck.

(Kade whips the ball at J.J. for real. Ouch.)

SCENE 2

(A clock ticks loudly, but strangely. Perhaps something is wrong with the time continuum? Yes, that's it! The previous scene replays on über fast rewind until J.J. sprints backward out of the scene and Kade disappears. Rewind, rewind, rewind until an earlier school bell rings. Kade and TOMAS race out of class with books [Kade] and ball [Tomas] in hand and jockey playfully for the best spot at the table.)

TOMAS: It's mine, man.

KADE: No way! I was here first.

TOMAS: Accept it. Or pay the consequences.

KADE: In your dreams.

(They continue to wrestle, but Tomas is bigger and stronger than Kade.)

TOMAS: Mercy?

KADE: Never.

TOMAS: Don't say I didn't warn you.

(Tomas grabs Kade in a half nelson. Kade fights to get free, to no avail.)

This is your last chance to lose gracefully.

KADE: I...was here...first.

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(Tomas stomps wicked hard on Kade's foot. Kade crumples and Tomas lays claim to...his favorite homework spot.)

Agh! I think you just broke my toe!

TOMAS: I'm awesome? I know! What page are we on?

(Kade limps and curses under his breath.)

KADE: Fifty-two.

(Tomas turns to the page in Kade's book. Hm... Uh... Huh?!)

TOMAS: WHAT THE BLEEP IS THIS BLEEP?? We've never done this BLEEPin' BLEEP!

KADE: Yeah. That is if you don't count the last hour we spent doing them.

(Tomas shrugs his shoulders.)

TOMAS: Mr. Oslo's a BLEEP! I wish he'd choke on page BLEEPin' fifty-two and BLEEEEEEEEEEP.

KADE: It's actually pretty easy. You want help?

TOMAS: From a loser like you?

KADE: You're the loser.

TOMAS: I'm not the one on the F team, bro.

KADE: It's not the F team!

TOMAS: What am I even doing here? I have practice. Here, why don't you play with your balllllllz?

(Tomas jets, leaving Kade and a bouncing ball in his wake.)

SCENE 3

(Tick, tock. We march backward in time. The previous scene fast-rewinds until both Kade and Tomas disappear. An even earlier school bell rings. Tomas dribbles his ball right into LULU'S path and does some fancy footwork around her.)

TOMAS: Hey, fancy meeting you here.

LULU: You're in my way.

TOMAS: Oh, that's a nice way to greet someone.

(Lulu tries to get by Tomas.)

Wait. I was wondering, you know, did you get a chance to, you know, ask her?

LULU: Ask who?

TOMAS: You know.

(He looks around to make sure the coast is clear, then sotto voce:)

Sofia.

LULU: Ask her what?

TOMAS: You know what, forget I asked.

LULU: Ooh. Touchy, touchy.

Why don't you ask her?

TOMAS: Cuz I don't want her to laugh in my face.

LULU: You'd rather have me laugh in your face?

TOMAS: Did you ask her or not?

LULU: Maybe I did and maybe I didn't. Sources say...try again later.

TOMAS: I guess they were right.

LULU: Who?

TOMAS: They.

LULU: About what?

TOMAS: You.

LULU: Fine. I guess that means you don't want to know what she said.

TOMAS: (*Desperation shines through:*) No! Wait! (*Remembers to act cool:*) What'd she say?

LULU: Well. When I told her you might like her, she got really red and then...

TOMAS: Yeah?

LULU: Then she said...she really wants to...punch you repeatedly until your face looks like...puke on a sidewalk!

TOMAS: Oh yeah?

LULU: Yeah! In fact, she said she'd rather kiss every zombie in the freakin' apocalypse than be caught dead with a loser like you.

TOMAS: You're the loser!

LULU: That was a good one.
Loser.

(Lulu struts away. Tomas slams his ball down.)

SCENE 4

(Tick tock goes the clock as the scene fast-rewinds back through time until Tomas and Lulu are nowhere to be seen. An earlier school bell. SOFIA storms in, lugging her [bassoon] instrument case. Lulu bounds in.)

LULU: Hey, Sofe! Where've you been? I've been looking all over for you.

SOFIA: Oh. Hey, Lulu. Here I am.

LULU: I was at Little Dom's before school.

SOFIA: Yeah?

LULU: I thought we were going to meet there?

SOFIA: Oh. Sorry. I was uh...running late.

LULU: I texted you like a hundred times. Did you not get them?

SOFIA: No, sorry, my phone kind of died.

LULU: Oh. Is that why you didn't like my cake last night?

SOFIA: Huh?

LULU: I made this amazing lemon chiffon cake and posted it. And guess what? Tomas liked it.

SOFIA: Sorry. My phone is super wonky. I need to, you know, go to the Idiot Bar and have them fix it.

LULU: That's cool. But weren't you in that group text from Mia?

SOFIA: Which one?

LULU: The one about that pug video she made? Yeah, I'm sure I saw you in the likes.

SOFIA: Oh yeah?

LULU: You know who else liked her post? Vivienne. She never likes my posts. And do you know what? I couldn't find her on my subscriber list. I think she unsubscribed! Oh, did you see my post of my neighbor's cat singing "Yellow Submarine"? I swear, it's funnier than the no-no cat.

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MASKS

A short drama by
Hillary DePiano

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MACKENZIE, a high school drama student.

SOFIA, a high school drama student.

ZARA, a high school drama student.

HALEY, a high school drama student.

SETTING

A high school costume shop. The present.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Masks was first performed in a staged reading on July 26, 2016 by the Performing Well Summer Theatre Workshop of Phoenixville Area High School's Theatre Guild at Reeve's Park (Phoenixville, PA).

MACKENZIE

Willetta Wisely

SOFIA

Michele McCaleb

ZARA

Ashley Bozzo

HALEY

Alexis Rose DiMauro

STAGE DIRECTIONS

Noah Horton

VIDEO

Christopher Schlosman

DIRECTOR

Craig Tavani

(A high school costume shop. The table is spread with crafting materials. ZARA, SOFIA and HALEY are decorating masks for

the play. MACKENZIE enters.)

MACKENZIE: Sorry I'm late. Today has been garbage.

SOFIA: Poor Mac.

ZARA: Oh, honey. I'm so sorry.

(She goes in for a hug. Mackenzie pulls back.)

MACKENZIE: What is with everyone today and the slow motion hugs? Arms up the whole way over and cooing like an idiot pigeon. It's like watching a car crash. Back it off.

HALEY: I told you not to flutter. *(Handing Mackenzie a cup:)* Mocha?

MACKENZIE: This is why I love you, Haley. Take notes, ladies. She's not coming at me like a hug zombie, she's here with the chocolate and personal space.

SOFIA: Noted.

ZARA: Well, I just wanted you to know that we're on your side.

MACKENZIE: So you're not on the side of pure evil? Congratulations.

ZARA: It was a perfectly awful picture.

MACKENZIE: I was getting changed! Excuse me for not expecting paparazzi in the locker room.

SOFIA: Are you going to report them?

HALEY: To who? There's no principal of the internet. I hit the little button, for whatever good that's going to do.

MACKENZIE: Exactly. Besides, my mentions are already half the dumpster fire they were when it went up this morning. A day or two and everyone will have forgotten all about it.

ZARA: That seems awfully optimistic.

SOFIA: Did you read the comments?

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MACKENZIE: Believe it or not, I own a mirror. I know what I look like.

SOFIA: Yeah, but—

MACKENZIE: Oh, no! The talking tampon and her minions are having thoughts about my physical appearance on the interwebs! Quick, someone fetch me my lacy handkerchief that I may sob gracefully into it.

HALEY: Sorry. Lacy handkerchiefs were last play. You could try those clown tights. Snot would only improve that look.

SOFIA: This isn't a joke.

MACKENZIE: It's not the end of the world either. Look. What they did? It's annoying. But I'm not going to kill myself or anything over a stupid picture so go ahead and dial it way back.

ZARA: But it's everywhere! It's not just kids from school anymore. By lunch it was—

MACKENZIE: Like I care what a mob of giggling bobbleheads think! The only part that even bothers me is where they got the whole "Humpy" thing. I haven't had posture issues in years!

HALEY: Yeah, that's... It's really weird.

ZARA: Well, if I was the one they were picking on—

MACKENZIE: But you're not! Jeez, Zara. Can I at least have ownership of my own bad day without having my emotions audited? Right now the only person picking on me is you!

ZARA: Well, then I guess I'll go help with costumes seeing as I'm not wanted here. Good luck getting any sympathy with that attitude!

(She exits, upset.)

MACKENZIE: Great.

SOFIA: She was only trying to help. We're your friends. You

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don't have to be obnoxious.

MACKENZIE: You know what? I'm going to just put one of these hero masks on and you can go ahead and pretend I'm having whatever reaction you want me to have. It's simpler that way.

(She grabs the nearest mask.)

SOFIA: That's a villain mask.

MACKENZIE: It is?

HALEY: I am doing the best I can over here! Sequins are only capable of so much menace.

SOFIA: The hero masks get sparkles.

MACKENZIE: Ironic when any crafter knows sparkles are the truest evil in this world. Pass one over.

(Haley tosses her a hero mask. Mackenzie puts it on.)

There.

SOFIA: I think you had it right the first time.

HALEY: Sof—

MACKENZIE: Excuse me?

SOFIA: I think the real reason you're not upset is because you know you deserved it.

MACKENZIE: Are you kidding me? What about this is supposed to be my fault? And what the hell do you know about how upset I am?

SOFIA: I know you're acting like the victim here when you're just as bad as they are. Maybe worse.

HALEY: Come on, let's just get these masks done.

MACKENZIE: I AM the victim. What have I done to anyone? They think my looks are wrong. The tone police over here think my emotions are wrong. Excuse me if my existence isn't fitting neatly into what the manual told you to expect for this

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situation.

SOFIA: So you never shoved a kid into a brick wall? Never gave her bruises all the way up her arm?

MACKENZIE: I don't even know what you're talking about.

SOFIA: Skylar's sister. I defended you. And that's when they dog-piled on me. I'm still getting trolled for sticking my neck out for you. The least you can do is tell me the truth.

HALEY: Maybe I should go after Zara.

MACKENZIE: No, stay. I need a real friend here to bear witness to this ridiculousness. Like I even knew Skylar had a sister? Are you forgetting that I went to a completely different grade school than you people?

SOFIA: They said this happened at Lakebrook. So did you hurt her or not?

MACKENZIE: Who knows? Lakebrook was a long time ago. People had thoughts about my existence back then too. You can't seriously expect me to remember every single kid that pissed me off!

SOFIA: I see.

(Mackenzie whips the mask off.)

MACKENZIE: You two don't know what it was like there. I was just trying to survive. Everything about that place was toxic. Words, fists, everything was a fight and yeah, sometimes shutting down weeks of taunts with one good slam seemed like a fair exchange rate.

HALEY: Uh huh. So that's all it was. Poor Mac was the video game hero defending herself from hordes of evil imps?

MACKENZIE: Look. I'll be the first to say I'm not perfect. I used to be a real battle ax back then. I was mad. And it's a real rush to take some of the power back. So sometimes you make a preemptive strike. Or take it out on a sidekick because the

leader's untouchable. Or some brat newbie steals your spot on the speech team and acts like she's –

HALEY: She's what?

MACKENZIE: Better than...

(She stares at Haley.)

Oh my god. It was you.

SOFIA: What is it? What's wrong?

MACKENZIE: Oh my god, Haley. I'm so sorry. I love you now. You're my best friend. I had no idea. Haley, I am so sorry!

HALEY: Are you? You'd think if you were haunted by guilt you'd recognize someone right in front of your face. Or was it because you were only letting yourself see this?

(Haley puts on a villain mask.)

This makes it easier, doesn't it? Then you can convince yourself you're still the hero.

(She shoves the hero mask back to Mackenzie, who doesn't put it on.)

Want to read the entire script? Order a perusal copy today!

BABIES

A short comedy by
Don Zolidis

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SUKI

DANIEL

BAILEY

CHASE

AMANDA

TRINA

YOHAN

ZARA

SETTING

Four maternity rooms at a hospital. All of them should be side-by-side.

(Lights up on SUKI and DANIEL. Suki holds a baby.)

DANIEL: She's so beautiful!

SUKI: Our little bundle of joy!

DANIEL: She's darling! She is just darling!

SUKI: She is!

DANIEL: And you did most of the work, honey!

SUKI: I did all of the work.

DANIEL: With my coaching. And let's face it, I was pretty terrific.

SUKI: You were very good, sweetheart. Almost as good as the guys on YouTube.

DANIEL: And look at her.

SUKI: Look at her.

DANIEL: Those eyes. She's got my eyes.

SUKI: They're closed.

DANIEL: But she closes them the same way I do.

SUKI: That's true. She's all scrunched up.

DANIEL: You can tell she's going to be a heartbreaker. Right? You're going to be a heartbreaker, aren't you, Esmerelda?

SUKI: Absolutely.

DANIEL: Watch out boys! Esmerelda's going to be gorgeous!

SUKI: That's right!

DANIEL: Dead sexy! Write it down! Oh yeah!

SUKI: I don't really think "dead sexy" applies to a baby.

DANIEL: Oh yeah. Knockout! You can tell she'll be bangin'!

SUKI: What have I told you about street slang?

DANIEL: Sorry.

SUKI: And besides, look at her little fists –

DANIEL: Oh, she's got fists!

SUKI: She's gonna be a fighter.

DANIEL: That's right! Fighter!

SUKI: Forget about being a knockout, she's going to knock you out!

DANIEL: Boo ya! She's gonna kick you in the head!

SUKI: Watch out nerds! She's coming for your lunch money!

DANIEL: She's going to take a sixth grader and slam him into the wall and take his cell phone!

SUKI: Boom! That's what I'm talking about!

DANIEL: Dominate the playground! Make the other children cry and run home to Mommy!

SUKI: But she'll get there first and beat up their mommies, and then attack the police when they show up!

DANIEL: Oh yeah! She's going on a multi-state rampage!

SUKI: You won't like her when she's angry! And she's angry all the time!

(A baby cries from the other room.)

DANIEL: Oh whoops. Better keep it down.

(Lights dim on previous couple and up on BAILEY and CHASE in their room, holding a baby.)

BAILEY: It's okay! It's okay, Buddy.

CHASE: Suck it up, Buddy. It's your first day of life. It's not getting any easier.

BAILEY: Chase. The negativity doesn't help.

CHASE: Sorry. You're doing awesome, bro. I'm gonna shake your hand.

BAILEY: You can't shake a baby's hand.

CHASE: High five then.

BAILEY: Please be serious. We are going to provide such a good life for you, Buddy.

CHASE: That's right.

BAILEY: Such a good life.

CHASE: Anything you want. You want candy for lunch every day, you got it. Candy for breakfast. Candy for dinner. We're on it.

BAILEY: I'm not sure that's exactly our philosophy.

CHASE: That's my philosophy. I'm correcting the mistakes my parents made with me. They were always like – "eat healthy!" I'm not putting limits on this little bundle of joy.

BAILEY: He is awesome, isn't he?

CHASE: So much better than the other babies. Did you see those other babies? They sucked.

BAILEY: Honey. Those babies were just –

CHASE: Stinkers. Seriously. If I woulda had one of them, I woulda been like, "I never saw this woman before in my life, I'm outta here." But not you, honey, you made a great one.

BAILEY: Thank you.

CHASE: And just think about what he's going to do in the future.

BAILEY: Oh look – he sees me. He's so smart. Yes you are. Yes you are. You are the smartest.

CHASE: No doubt about it. You can tell he's going to be able to make the best sarcastic comments from the back of the class.

BAILEY: Oh yeah. Definitely.

CHASE: Like if somebody's giving a presentation in class he'll be like, "Nice going, *great* presentation. That was *special*."

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BAILEY: Or if somebody trips in the hall and drops their stuff, he'll be like, "Have a nice *fall!*"

CHASE: So funny! Or what if someone is really ugly, he can be like, "You're so *attractive* today – NOT!"

BAILEY: Do people still say that?

CHASE: He'll bring it back!

BAILEY: He's going to be so funny! Pushing other people down so he can look good!

CHASE: And don't even get me started on the comments he's going to make online!

BAILEY: When he's anonymous? Are you kidding me?! He's going to destroy people!

CHASE: Somebody's drinking the Kool-aid! LOL! He's gonna say that all the time!

BAILEY: It's going to make him feel so much better about himself and totally mask his insecurities!

(Crying from the other room.)

CHASE: Oh! Shhh. Shhh. We're being a little too awesome in here.

(Lights dim on previous couple and up on the third room. AMANDA and TRINA are holding their baby.)

TRINA: Shhh... Shhh... It's okay...

AMANDA: It's okay...

TRINA: It's totally okay... Momma's got you.

AMANDA: And your other Momma's got you too.

TRINA: I thought I was Momma and you were Mother.

AMANDA: Oh right. Mother sounds weird, though. She's not going to be able to say Mother right away.

TRINA: We talked about this, Amanda.

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AMANDA: Sorry. (*She fakes a British accent:*) Mother is here as well.

TRINA: And so is Momma.

AMANDA: And you're going to be just fine, Angi.

TRINA: You're going to be amazing, Angi.

AMANDA: Completely amazing.

TRINA: With parents like us—

AMANDA: You're going to rule.

TRINA: I wouldn't say rule.

AMANDA: I would. Dominate. Destroy. Annihilate your enemies.

TRINA: Well—

AMANDA: I mean, look at her. Look at her adorable little face.

TRINA: She is adorable, isn't she?

AMANDA: And can't you imagine that adorable little face taking pictures of other girls and posting them on social media? Hello? One-way ticket to the top of the school! Am I right?

TRINA: Are they unflattering photos?

AMANDA: You know it!

TRINA: And is she going to share them with everyone?

AMANDA: She is a viral tornado waiting to happen! Click. Share. Destroy.

TRINA: Wow.

AMANDA: She's gonna use Snapchat and Instagram [or whatever apps are currently popular] and stuff that hasn't even been invented yet—

TRINA: Rate these uglies!

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AMANDA: No doubt! She can even do it to boys!

TRINA: Who's the worst-looking kid in the school? Vote!

AMANDA: That'll totally make her popular!

TRINA: And who's the Mother of the Year? Me! Boom.

(Crying from the other room.)

AMANDA: Actually, you're only eligible for Momma of the Year.

*(Lights dim on previous couple and up on the fourth room.
YOHAN and ZARA are holding their baby.)*

ZARA: It's okay, sweetie.

YOHAN: Man, some people need to shut up around here.

ZARA: Honey.

YOHAN: Sorry. Going on and on about how great their babies are. It's like they haven't even seen ours.

ZARA: Right? They wouldn't be talking so big if they saw this baby.

YOHAN: They'd probably just drop their babies and run.

ZARA: They'd probably find the nearest wolf pack and give their babies to the wolves to raise.

YOHAN: The wolves would probably do a better job.

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FENCED

A short drama by
Daniel Rashid

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SARAH, a teenager. Female.

GARRETT, a teenager. Male.

SETTING

Two adjacent backyards with a fence running between them.
Evening.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Jon Dorf, Isaac Jay and Story Slaughter for assisting with the development of this play.

(The backyards of two adjacent houses. A waist-high chain-link fence spans the center of the stage, running from upstage to downstage. There are two back doors, upstage left and upstage right, and a patio for both backyards. NOTE: The doors and patios aren't entirely necessary, and can be implied, imagined or cut.)

(SARAH, a teenager with an independent spirit and a hard shell of an exterior, steps outside her house with a pack of cigarettes. She pulls one out and is about to light it when she hears GARRETT, also a teenager, though arguably less mature, step out his backdoor, carrying a coke can. She puts the cigarette away as he enters. He cracks open the can of coke and sits on the edge of his patio.)

GARRETT: Hey.

SARAH: Hey.

(Beat.)

GARRETT: Chilly night.

(No response.)

You do the English?

SARAH: No.

GARRETT: It's pretty good. I don't think I've ever actually enjoyed a book for school before.

SARAH: Go inside, Garrett.

GARRETT: What?

SARAH: Don't talk to me.

GARRETT: Why not?

SARAH: Don't play dumb.

GARRETT: I don't know what you're talking —

SARAH: Does the work "slut" ring a bell to you?

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GARRETT: Oh, that was nothing!

SARAH: *Nothing?*

GARRETT: They were just playing around! That happens all the time. The other day Owen called me a faggot.

(He laughs.)

SARAH: I can't believe you're laughing about that.

GARRETT: It's funny!

SARAH: That's an insult. He was insulting you.

GARRETT: It's not an insult if I don't think it was. Not everything is an attack, you know. You can choose how to perceive other people's words.

SARAH: Okay. I guess I just prefer to have friends whose words I don't have to choose how to perceive.

GARRETT: Whatever. You're just making a big deal out of nothing.

SARAH: What do you like about Owen?

GARRETT: What do I like about him?

SARAH: Yeah. Like, why are you friends with him? I'm just curious.

GARRETT: Um, I don't know, he's a funny guy, I don't know. He's my friend. I don't really determine why I—I mean, why are you friends with Logan and Dimitri?

SARAH: Because they see me for who I am.

GARRETT: Really.

SARAH: Yeah. Like I don't feel like I'm supposed to be this picture perfect girl around them. They just see me.

GARRETT: I have a hard time believing that between the cigarette smoke and Jolly Ranchers, they can see anything at all.

SARAH: Don't pass judgment on something you don't understand.

GARRETT: I think I understand pretty well—

SARAH: You've literally never talked to either of them.

GARRETT: I'm afraid I'll catch lung cancer if I get too close.

SARAH: Oh my god, will you shut it with the cigarette judgment. You drink Coca Cola, for god's sake.

GARRETT: So?

SARAH: Soda is just as bad for you as cigarettes. Look it up. It causes cancer but nobody cares because we're all addicted to sugar, which is a drug just like nicotine, but there's no surgeon general warning so no one gives a crap.

GARRETT: So, your point is...

SARAH: You're a hypocrite.

GARRETT: Cigarettes are still terrible for you.

SARAH: You're right! But I choose to smoke them, knowing full well what I'm doing to my body. You, on the other hand, continue to guzzle Coke by the liter without any knowledge of what you're doing to your body. So, really, who's more to judge?

(Beat. Garrett puts his can of Coke down.)

GARRETT: They see you for who you are?

SARAH: Yeah. I don't have to pretend to be anyone else when I'm with them. I'm just me.

GARRETT: What about me?

SARAH: What about you?

GARRETT: Do you feel like I see you for who you are?

SARAH: Go to bed, Garrett.

(She starts to head for the door.)

GARRETT: Why? I'm curious.

SARAH: I'll see you at school.

GARRETT: Are you on your period or something?

SARAH: Ohhhh my god.

GARRETT: What?

SARAH: *Never* say that to a girl.

GARRETT: Sorry. I just—I don't know. I don't feel like we're friends anymore. You know, like we were.

SARAH: Well, why would you want to be friends with a slut anyway?

GARRETT: Oh come on, that was a joke! It's not even that bad of a word, anyway—

SARAH: SLUT. Slut. Slillut. Slut, slut, slut, slut, slutslutslutslut Slut. Such an ugly word. Slut. Starts to sound kind of ridiculous though, right? Slut. Slood. Slaahht. I don't care that Owen Pierce called me a slut. The guy can't even tie his own shoelaces. I care that you stood right behind him the entire time and didn't say anything. You laughed.

(Beat.)

GARRETT: I...I'm sorry. I really didn't—I honestly thought it was just a joke and I didn't think it—I mean, it obviously meant something, but I didn't think—

SARAH: Well think next time.

GARRETT: Sorry. I'm sorry.

SARAH: Yeah.

(Beat.)

GARRETT: Remember when we used to hold hands through the fence?

SARAH: What? You mean like when we were five?

GARRETT: Yeah.

SARAH: Yeah. 'Cause you were too short to reach over.

GARRETT: Hey!

SARAH: It's true.

GARRETT: I remember it was because our hands were growing and we realized that soon we wouldn't be able to fit them through the fence.

SARAH: I don't remember having that much foresight as a five year old.

GARRETT: Well I do.

SARAH: Well, you were always above average. Just not with your height.

GARRETT: Hey!

SARAH: I'm kidding.

(Beat.)

GARRETT: Did you really sleep with Dimitri?

SARAH: What?

GARRETT: That's what Owen said. Why he called you a...you know.

SARAH: No. What? Why do you believe everything you hear?

GARRETT: I don't! I didn't, I just—

SARAH: And who even cares? Why does everyone need to know the exact details of my love life? It's my love life. Not yours. Not Owen's. Not anyone else's. Everyone, like, gets off

on the rumors about—"oh, she's sleeping with him, but he couldn't get it up, so word is that she hooked up with his best friend"—who cares? Are you really that desperate that you need someone else's intimate details to fill your own gaping void of a love life? I don't even like guys anyway.

GARRETT: What?

SARAH: (*Realizing what she just said:*) I— ... Never mind.

GARRETT: You don't... What do you mean?

SARAH: I mean I don't like guys, okay? I'm a lesbian.

GARRETT: Since when?

SARAH: Since forever.

GARRETT: What do you mean since / forever? You've dated guys.

SARAH: (*Overlapping:*) / I mean I didn't know until like last year but I've been one since forever.

(*Beat.*)

GARRETT: Do your parents know?

SARAH: No. Nobody knows.

GARRETT: Just...?

(*She nods.*)

How do you know?

SARAH: I just know.

GARRETT: Have you ever kissed a girl?

SARAH: No.

GARRETT: Then how do you know?

SARAH: I just know. How do you know you're straight? You've never kissed a girl.

GARRETT: You don't know that.

SARAH: Yes I do.

GARRETT: Okay, but that's normal. It's biological.

SARAH: Well I've kissed more than enough guys to know that biology doesn't really get my blood rushing.

GARRETT: Maybe you've never kissed the right guy.

SARAH: I'm not going to kiss you.

GARRETT: That's not what I was –

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DRAGONZFIRE

A short drama by
Diana Burbano

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BAILEY, a teen girl. Smart. Intense. Creator of the video game *DragonzFire*. Any ethnicity.

WILLIAM, a teen boy. Shy. Kind. He gets teased a lot. Bailey's best friend since middle school. Any ethnicity.

KARA, an avatar. An anime of the perfect teenage girl. Big eyes, big hair, cat ears. Sparkles everywhere. Dressed in a Japanese school uniform. Any ethnicity.

MOOSHOO, an avatar. He is short, furry, excitable and karate chops everything. Has fox ears. Any ethnicity.

SETTING

Inside the video game *DragonzFire*.

(In the dark, the sound of "wah-wah-wah" that signifies a player has died in a video game. Lights up on a simple video game set, possibly consisting of cubes and squares to give the idea that the world is pixelized. BAILEY enters, clearly upset, dragging KARA, who is unresponsive. Bailey drops Kara, starts typing furiously on her phone. In a moment Kara animates, takes a pose with her arms on her hips and her foot beveled.)

KARA: That was not fun at all!

BAILEY: How did those creepers get so far into the game? Report, are you OK?

KARA: I no longer have my inventory, my potion level is back to one and — *(She pouts.)* They stole my magic hairbrush.

BAILEY: I'm going to upgrade your code. Then we are going back out to the public server and we are going to smash those creepers!

KARA: OK.

(She waits. Bailey presses a button. Kara stops frozen. Shudders. Comes back to life, with a nasty expression on her face.)

What did you do to your skin?

(She gestures at Bailey's outfit. It is garish.)

BAILEY: I changed it.

KARA: You look super stupid. No wonder those older girls were making fun of you.

(Bailey nods, satisfied. Goes back to working on her phone. MOOSHOO and WILLIAM enter the game, William dragging MooShoo, who looks dead. William works his phone. MooShoo powers back up.)

MOOSHOO: What's up? We're surrounded! Hiiiiyaaaa!!

(MooShoo tries to attack Bailey.)

WILLIAM: No, wait! It's an ally. Hey, Bailey, did you get Kara

powered all the way back up?

BAILEY: Sort of. She lost everything in the battle with those Wither Skills.

WILLIAM: Who were those guys?

BAILEY: I bet they were some of the guys from my English class. I think I recognized the Skins.

WILLIAM: How did they get past all your filters? That was freaky. I'm sorry they called you a —

BAILEY: They think they're anonymous. They can be as horrible as they want.

MOOSHOO: HHHIIIIYYAA!!

(Does a ninja move to Kara. Kara stops him with a practiced counter-move and an eye-roll.)

KARA: OmyGawd. Don't get too close, the ick will stick.

MOOSHOO: *(Slightly confused:)* Hahahaha? Ick. *(Glitches again.)* Ick. *(Again.)* Ick. *(Again.)* Ick. *(Again.)* Ick.

(William pokes at his phone. MooShoo stops.)

WILLIAM: He's so glitchy! He really got beat down.

MOOSHOO: The varlets called me skunk! I be not a skunk!!

BAILEY: I can fix him for you.

WILLIAM: Cool.

(Bailey works her phone, presses a button. MooShoo goes blank, shudders and reanimates.)

MOOSHOO: What ho! Time to whip some weasels!

KARA: *(To MooShoo:)* Geek.

MOOSHOO: *(Startled:)* What?

KARA: Ugh. You're so basic!

(Kara karate chops MooShoo, taking him down easily.)

WILLIAM: She's developed a lot!

KARA: Ninjas suck!

WILLIAM: *(Indicating MooShoo, to Bailey:)* You got a lot further than I did.

MOOSHOO: *(Grinning:)* I like bacon.

BAILEY: I've been working on her during geometry.

KARA: I used to be so totally square.

BAILEY: You were cute when you were pixilated!

KARA: You're such a lezzy!

WILLIAM: She's amazing.

KARA: I know I am.

BAILEY: I wrote a new kind of code. She's programmed to conform to popularity models. She goes off social media trends.

KARA: Like today, you're either a slut or a lezzy!!

WILLIAM: Kind of like those old "choose your own adventure" books.

BAILEY: Yeah sort of. Then when defenses are down, she obliterates her enemy. I'll upgrade your avatar.

(MooShoo goes blank, and then shudders.)

WILLIAM: Wait!

(MooShoo stands up straight and gets a mean look in his eye.)

MOOSHOO: Get out of my way. Geek.

WILLIAM: *(Not pleased:)* Escalates fast.

BAILEY: Yeah. Like in life.

KARA: Is it true that you got hot and heavy with Misty

Brenner in biology?

WILLIAM: That's too fast!

MOOSHOO: I guess not!

BAILEY: No. It's accurate to how people behave online.

WILLIAM: Restart them both. No input.

BAILEY: OK. *(She messes with her phone. Kara and MooShoo go blank for a second.)* Go.

KARA: Hey.

WILLIAM: Hi.

KARA: I was talking to your friend. *(To MooShoo:)* Ohmygawd.

MOOSHOO: Dude. Sorry, he's like, my brother's friend, OK?

KARA: Really? Is he normal? He looks...um...confused.

MOOSHOO: He's kind of a 'tard.

KARA: Oh. *(To William:)* What are you looking at?

WILLIAM: Um—

KARA: Jeez. Creep. Are you staring at my body? Are you a total perv?

MOOSHOO: He thinks you're hot.

WILLIAM: No. I—

KARA: Gross. Wait, No? Are you — a fag?

MOOSHOO: Perv 'Tard Fag!

WILLIAM: OK, that's enough!

MOOSHOO: What? We're just joking.

KARA: Ohmygawd, TAKE a joke!

(Bailey fusses with her phone again. MooShoo and Kara go blank.)

BAILEY: *(Sighs.)* She used to be so cute. Oh, well.

WILLIAM: Bailey. What's the point of making our avatars this awful? If I want to hear stuff like that I can just go to gym class!

BAILEY: They're programmed to behave like real kids our age. The meaner they are, the better they do.

WILLIAM: Yeah, but, I dunno. This is— Even the Doctor wouldn't approve of this.

KARA: That is so geeky I can't even.

WILLIAM: Can you turn that off?

BAILEY: No.

WILLIAM: I don't want to be like that.

(Gestures at MooShoo and Kara, who are giggling, whispering and pointing at Bailey and William.)

MOOSHOO: You have to learn who's on top here. Jerk.

WILLIAM: Bailey. Quit it. Let's just go back to playing regular old *DragonzFire*.

BAILEY: I wish I never wrote that stupid paper about creating *DragonzFire*. Why did Mr. Soto make me read it out loud?

WILLIAM: 'Cause it's a great game!

BAILEY: But it cemented my rep as the world's biggest, saddest nerd! No one in my class will ever let me forget it.

WILLIAM: You're the best coder I've ever seen, your maps are great, all the mods you put into the game are really fun—

BAILEY: But who cares if everyone thinks we're stupid for playing it? They'll just destroy everything anyway.

WILLIAM: I know.

BAILEY: That's why I created this mod. With these avatars

you can't tell that you aren't chatting to a real person. It's totally anonymous.

KARA: Hi! You're totally cute!

MOOSHOO: Hey. You're hot! No, wait, you're actually really ugly.

WILLIAM: Yuck. He's gross. I don't want to be like him.

BAILEY: Yes you do. You don't want to have zits, and bad hair and stupid clothes.

WILLIAM: I have bad hair??

KARA: Riiight?

BAILEY: You know how many times I've been asked to sit at someone's table in the cafeteria? Never. I'm a total pariah.

MOOSHOO: Because you use words like pariah. Loser.

WILLIAM: Can you put him back?

BAILEY: Really?

WILLIAM: Yes. I'd rather sit alone at lunch than turn into him.

BAILEY: Look how pretty she is. (*Indicates Kara:*) She's everything I'm not. She's thin.

WILLIAM: You're fine.

BAILEY: She has even teeth, perfect hair. Huge eyes.

WILLIAM: I think your eyes are nice how they are.

BAILEY: She's completely kawaii. Guys flip for her. No one looks at me twice.

WILLIAM: (*Rolls his eyes. He's done.*) Whatever, Bailey. Put MooShoo back to his previous mod, please.

BAILEY: You'll have to completely restart him. The code is, um, kind of a virus.

MOOSHOO: (*Very alarmed:*) Ohmygawd! I'm going to die!

WILLIAM: You on purpose gave me a virus!!!!??

BAILEY: It was the only way to make sure the code infiltrated the avatars completely!

WILLIAM: Gross! *DragonzFire* is supposed to be fun, Bailey!

BAILEY: I don't care.

KARA: That's kind of sad.

MOOSHOO: You're way not special anymore.

BAILEY: Wait, what? Glitch!

(Bailey furiously works on her phone.)

MOOSHOO: You're the one who clearly has a virus and needs to be wiped and upgraded.

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THERE IS NO DOWN

A short drama by
Dylan Schifrin

CAST OF CHARACTERS

KEATON, 16 years old, gay, and on the autism spectrum. Seeking refuge in his attic, which he sees as a haven high above any danger.

CRAIG, an old, stuffed Santa doll, whom Keaton imagines as alive. An upbeat companion committed to comforting Keaton.

ELIZA, 14 years old, Keaton's sister. Quiet and shy, but has learned to look within herself for solace.

SETTING

The attic in Keaton and Eliza's house. The present.

(Keaton's attic. A small, musty space full of old boxes and storage items. The stage is dark. We hear the sound of someone climbing up a ladder. Lights come up on KEATON.)

KEATON: The air here is denser than I remember. At higher elevations the air is supposed to be thinner. But it's not like that here.

(Keaton sits on the floor.)

It's smaller in here too. The walls must have gotten closer together and compressed all the air into a smaller space. I don't fit as well anymore.

(He lies down and closes his eyes.)

My brain keeps filling me with feelings, but I'll be safe once it goes silent. I'll be safe once my brain learns to ignore itself. That makes sense...right?

CRAIG: *(Off:)* Hello? Who's there?

(Keaton suddenly stands up and CRAIG, a beat-up, dusty, stuffed Santa doll with an eyepatch, enters.)

KEATON: Craig, is that you?

CRAIG: Oh my god! Keaton! You've changed so much! I mean, look at you! You're so big!

KEATON: I'm sixteen now.

CRAIG: Wow, sixteen! But you'll always be my little Keaton.

KEATON: I really missed you, Craig. I can't believe it's been eight years. I've lived half my life without seeing you. What's your favorite newt? Mine is the Iberian Ribbed Newt. I went to the science museum with Liam Rosenberg and we saw the Reptiles and Amphibians exhibit and –

CRAIG: *(Laughs.)* You've always loved newts.

KEATON: I'm sorry. That was a non-sequitur.

(Keaton covers his eyes, frustrated with himself.)

CRAIG: Don't be sorry, kiddo. We can talk about newts if you want.

KEATON: No. I don't want to talk about newts anymore.

(He sits down.)

It's not fair that Mom stopped bringing you out for Christmas just because your eye fell out. That wasn't your fault.

CRAIG: Don't worry about me. I'm here for *you*.

KEATON: I looked all over for it. I just wanted you to be the way you used to be.

CRAIG: Aww, kiddo...

(He tries to hug Keaton, but Keaton pulls away.)

Oh, right. No hugs.

(Keaton seems bothered by something.)

What's wrong? Are you still upset about Mikey?

KEATON: Mikey Jenkinson? That was eight years ago.

CRAIG: But you were so upset, remember? When he pushed you off the slide.

KEATON: It's just that the top of the slide was always my favorite spot. When I was up there I could see so far into the distance. No one below could reach me. I could still hear them, but I couldn't make out what they were saying.

CRAIG: I know what would help! A visit from...

(He digs around in a box and pulls out a toy submarine.)

Mr. Submarine! *(In a silly submarine voice:)* Hey there, Keaton! Let's go on an underwater adventure!

(He pulls out an old soup ladle from the box.)

Oh no! It's an evil tiger shark! It's a big, scary, ladle-shaped tiger shark!

(Craig hits the submarine with the ladle in slow motion.)

BLAM! We're hit! We're going down! AAAAHHHHH!!!

(Craig looks at Keaton, expecting some sort of reaction; Keaton doesn't react.)

(In his normal voice again:) I thought you liked it when I attacked Mr. Submarine with things.

KEATON: *(Not looking at Craig:)* I was climbing up the ladder and Mikey Jenkinson was already at the top of the slide. And then right before I reached the top –

CRAIG: He pushed you.

KEATON: Yes.

CRAIG: And it was scary when you were falling. Right?

KEATON: It wasn't the falling. It was when I landed in the sand, how it surrounded me...I tried to breathe but it filled my nose and mouth...I tried to stand up but my muscles wouldn't move and everyone was laughing above me...so I came home and climbed up here because I knew that there was no one waiting here to push me down.

(Beat.)

What motivates someone to act like that? I mean, evolutionarily speaking, organisms often rely on greater strength and force to get resources from weaker ones. That makes sense, right? So is he just a product of evolution? Is it my fault for being the weaker organism? *(He looks at Craig.)* Oh. I already told you all of this.

(Keaton sulks, frustrated with himself again.)

CRAIG: I haven't heard you speak that way about it.

(Beat.)

Remember how we used to pretend that nothing else existed outside of the attic? We were the whole universe, all wrapped snugly up here. There was only up here. There was no down there.

KEATON: The universe is bigger than up here.

CRAIG: But we would pretend. You used to love to pretend. (*Snapping out of it:*) How about I sing you a song?

(Craig starts stupidly singing as if Keaton were a young child:)

CRAIG AND KEATON, FRIENDS FOREVER,
TOGETHER WE'LL HAVE FUN WHENEVER!
YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE MY LOVE,
AND I'LL WATCH OVER YOU FROM UP ABOVE!

(Keaton is silent.)

Um...uh...how about a magic trick?

(Craig pulls out a deck of cards from the box and hands a card to Keaton.)

Now you take this card, and I'll look at all the other cards and through the magical process of elimination determine what card you have!

(He starts fanning out the cards.)

This may take a while.

KEATON: Why did you stop?

CRAIG: What?

KEATON: You promised, remember? To watch over me from up here so I would be safe down there. But you stopped.

(Beat.)

CRAIG: Did something happen to you?

(Keaton is silent.)

Keaton...I'm so sorry. I'm getting older. When my eye fell out it just became so hard for me, always watching you, and...and...well...

KEATON: What is it?

CRAIG: (*Hard for him to say:*) I didn't think you needed me anymore. For a long time I watched you through the window. I made sure you always came home from school with a smile on your face. But so many years passed, and, well, I figured you must have been fine on your own. Besides, I had gotten so old and worn out.

KEATON: I'm really sorry I couldn't find your eye.

CRAIG: But it was nice of you to look. You know, you're the only one who has ever seen me as something more than a retired Christmas decoration. You even gave me a name! I hated the name "Santa." It had no edge. I'm still here for you, kiddo.

(Craig tries to pat Keaton on the back; Keaton stands up in frustration.)

What's wrong?

KEATON: I don't know! Why can't you just make me feel better like you used to?

CRAIG: What do you mean? I'm doing exactly what I always did to cheer you up.

KEATON: But everything was so easy before. Why is it different now? Why can't it just...make sense?

(We hear someone climbing up the ladder to the attic. ELIZA enters.)

ELIZA: Keaton?

KEATON: (*Suddenly anxious:*) What are you doing here?

ELIZA: Keaton, come down. Please?

KEATON: (*Looking at Craig:*) There is no down. There is only here.

ELIZA: Mom wants you to come to dinner.

CRAIG: (*To Keaton:*) You don't have to listen to her, kiddo.

ELIZA: Please come down, okay? I miss you.

KEATON: Then stay here.

ELIZA: I don't like it up here. It's dusty.

KEATON: It's cozy. Like a womb.

ELIZA: You don't have to isolate yourself again.

KEATON: The last time I came up here was eight years ago.

ELIZA: But you were up here all night.

KEATON: How do you remember that? You were six.

ELIZA: Because I was terrified. I saw you run up here and disappear into the dark. I thought you were gone forever.

CRAIG: Don't worry about her. You made the right choice that day.

(Beat.)

KEATON: You shouldn't have stood up for me.

ELIZA: I was just trying to help –

KEATON: It wasn't your battle!

ELIZA: You're my brother!

KEATON: He would've left you alone. All of them would have. All of those stupid idiots who make bad choices –

ELIZA: I had to do something! He called you a weirdo newt-obsessed faggot. (*Silence.*) Keaton, I'm sorry –

KEATON: I do like newts. (*Beat.*) And boys.

ELIZA: So? That's okay. That's who you are.

KEATON: It's not just that. There's always something wrong with me. Every day their words beat me down, and it feels like it did eight years ago, like I'm suffocating in sand. And so I had to come up here where it's high up and safe and there's no sand. There's only dust. I can still breathe in the dust.

CRAIG: Keaton, I had no idea...

(Beat.)

ELIZA: Close your eyes.

KEATON: Why?

ELIZA: Please? I want you to try something.

KEATON: Your motives are unclear.

ELIZA: That's okay. Sometimes it's okay not to be clear with everything. This is something I do when I feel sad. Maybe it will help you too.

(Keaton closes his eyes.)

Now I want you to picture them. Imagine them surrounding you and saying what they always say.

CRAIG: You should have told me, kiddo. I could have cheered you up if I had known.

KEATON: Eliza, why am I doing this?

ELIZA: Wait. Now picture a newt.

KEATON: A newt?

ELIZA: Yeah. Imagine the biggest, slimiest, newtiest newt you can think of.

KEATON: Newtella is getting pretty big these days.

ELIZA: Good. Think of Newtella. Still listen to what they're saying, but at the same time, imagine the newt. Okay?

KEATON: Okay.

ELIZA: What else do you like? Besides newts.

KEATON: I guess I like some varieties of tree frogs. And Liam Rosenberg because he's cute.

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I KNOW YOU ARE BUT WHAT AM I?

A short drama by
Laura King

CAST OF CHARACTERS

TEEN 1, bullied by a teacher.

TEEN 2, bullied by a sibling.

TEEN 3, bullied by parents.

TEEN 4, bullied by friends.

SETTING

An empty stage with a box suitable for standing on and a bucket of foam balls.

NOTE

All parts can be played by either male or female actors. In the script where "/" is used, e.g. brother/sister, him/her, he/she, choose the appropriate word.

(Lights up on four teenagers. TEEN 1 is on a box looking outward. TEENS 2 to 4 are facing Teen 1. As Teens 2 to 4 speak, they throw foam balls at Teen 1.)

TEEN 2: Fat.

TEEN 3: Stupid.

TEEN 4: Ugly.

TEEN 2: Grotesque.

TEEN 3: Moronic.

TEEN 4: Deformed.

TEEN 2: Gargantuan.

TEEN 3: Defective.

TEEN 4: Repulsive.

(Teens 2 to 4 bombard Teen 1 with the rest of the foam balls. Teen 1 covers as the others laugh and start to exit.)

TEEN 1: *(Quietly:)* I know you are but what am I?

(Teens 2 to 4 turn to face Teen 1.)

TEEN 2: What did you say?

TEEN 1: *(A littler louder:)* I know you are but what am I?

(Teens 2 to 4 cross back to Teen 1.)

TEEN 3: What?

TEEN 1: *(Standing up and yelling:)* I know you are but what am I?

(Teen 1 jumps off the box and Teens 2 to 4 crouch down, cover their heads, and freeze.)

(To audience:) My first year here everyone wanted to know me. I was the new kid from the big city. I was exotic. Everybody wanted to hang with me. By my second year they were used to me. I was nothing new anymore. In my third year I wasn't just

nothing new, I was nothing. Invisible. Like I'd been swallowed up by a black hole in the floor of the gym. So, when my fourth year started, I tried to recapture that original magic. I tried to make myself exotic again: new clothes, different hair, more piercings. Let's just say it didn't go well. I wish that black hole *had* swallowed me up last year. It would be better than this.

(Teen 2 stands and faces Teen 1.)

TEEN 2: Do I know you?

TEEN 1: No.

(Teen 1 crouches and covers his/her head.)

TEEN 2: *(To audience:)* I used to run a mile in seven minutes. Laugh if you want, but I'm not kidding. My best time was 6:58. At first I only ran when my brother/sister was chasing me. Then he/she stopped chasing me and just ordered me to leave. "You're such a loser." "Get out of my space." "Go away." So, I'd take off and run and run. I used to think if I could run just a little bit faster, I would fly straight up into the clouds, where I'd be safe. But one day it all changed. Puberty ruins everything.

(Teen 3 stands and faces Teen 2.)

TEEN 3: Are you still here?

TEEN 2: No.

(Teen 2 crouches and covers his/her head.)

TEEN 3: *(To audience:)* My mom says that standardized testing has ruined education. I tried to tell her it's worse than that. Standardized testing ruined my life.

(Teen 4 stands and faces Teen 3.)

TEEN 4: Did you say something?

TEEN 3: No.

(Teen 3 crouches and covers his/her head.)

TEEN 4: *(To audience:)* This year started out great. I was elected to the homecoming court. I couldn't believe it. Me! I didn't think anyone even knew my name. To them, I'm just the kid with the bad skin and cheap haircut who eats alone in the cafeteria. I knew I probably wouldn't get a date, but I didn't care. I was on the court. Then I found out the truth.

(Teen 1 lifts his/her head.)

TEEN 1: The truth will set you free.

TEEN 4: If it doesn't kill you first.

(School bell rings. Teen 1 starts to collect the foam balls.)

TEEN 1: Help me clean up these balls.

TEEN 3: *(Throwing a ball at Teen 2:)* You do it, Lardo. You need the exercise.

TEEN 4: *(Throwing a ball at Teen 3:)* You too stupid to remember where the equipment closet is?

TEEN 2: *(Throwing a ball at Teen 4:)* That's where we should put you so we don't have to look at your ugly face.

TEEN 1: Hurry up, you guys. Coach will be here soon.

TEEN 4: Then let Coach put the balls away.

TEEN 1: Please, help me.

(Teen 1 frantically tries to clean up the balls. The other teens watch.)

TEEN 2: What's the deal with him/her?

TEEN 3: No clue.

TEEN 4: No surprise.

TEEN 2: Seriously, what's up?

TEEN 4: Who knows?

TEEN 3: Who cares?

(Teens 2 to 4 turn their backs on Teen 1.)

TEEN 1: *(To audience:)* You expect a certain amount of teasing. Boys will be boys. And girls can be worse. It's when you don't expect it that it really gets to you.

(School bell rings. Teen 2 runs in place. Teen 3 approaches Teen 2 and takes on the role of a sibling. Teens 1 and 4 watch.)

TEEN 3: You're going to look like an idiot.

TEEN 2: Shut up.

TEEN 3: Mom told me not to say anything, but I'm telling you for your own good.

TEEN 2: I said shut up.

TEEN 3: You can't go out on the track looking like that.

TEEN 2: *(Stops running and stares at Teen 3:)* Like what?

TEEN 3: Like the last time you ran was to the Tastykake Factory Outlet [or a suitable local equivalent].

(Teen 3 throws a foam ball at Teen 2. School bell rings. Teen 2 crosses away from Teen 3. Teen 1 crosses to Teen 3.)

TEEN 1: Help me out. We're running out of time.

TEEN 3: Don't mention time!

TEEN 1: But it's almost time—

TEEN 3: I said don't mention time! My parents are obsessed with time.

(Teens 2 and 4 join them and take on the roles of Teen 3's parents.)

TEEN 2: Five days until the HSPTs.

TEEN 4: Four days until the PSATs.

TEEN 2: Three days until the CATs.

TEEN 4: Two days until the ACTs.

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TEEN 2: One day until the SATs.

TEEN 3: My life is a constant countdown.

TEEN 2: It really doesn't matter.

TEEN 4: It won't do any good.

TEEN 2: We're fighting a losing battle.

TEEN 3: Why?

TEEN 4: *(Throwing a ball at Teen 3:)* Because you're as dumb as a rock.

TEEN 2: *(Throwing a ball at Teen 3:)* A doorknob.

TEEN 4: *(Throwing a ball at Teen 3:)* A stump.

TEEN 2: *(Throwing a ball at Teen 3:)* A corncob.

TEEN 3: *(To Teen 1:)* Stop! Make them stop.

TEEN 1: What am I supposed to do?

TEEN 3: I thought you were my friend.

TEEN 1: I have to clean up these balls.

(School bell rings. Teen 1 returns to cleaning up the balls. Teen 4 stands on the box and primps. Teens 2 and 3 whisper and giggle as they look at Teen 4. They cross to Teen 4.)

TEEN 2: It's a big day for you.

TEEN 4: Yeah.

TEEN 3: Homecoming court. Congrats.

TEEN 4: Thanks.

TEEN 2: We voted for you.

TEEN 4: You did?

TEEN 3: What are friends for?

TEEN 2: It looks like everybody voted for you. You won in a landslide.

TEEN 4: I know. I can't believe it. It's like too good to be true or something.

TEEN 3: You can say that again.

(Teens 2 and 3 laugh.)

TEEN 4: What's so funny?

TEEN 2: You really don't know, do you?

TEEN 4: Know what?

TEEN 2: It was a joke.

TEEN 3: You didn't think you got on the court for real, did you?

(Teens 2 and 3 throw balls at Teen 4. Teen 4 slowly steps off the box.)

TEEN 1: *(To audience:)* You expect a certain amount of teasing.

TEEN 2: *(Facing audience:)* Fat.

TEEN 3: *(Facing audience:)* Stupid.

TEEN 4: *(Facing audience:)* Ugly.

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CAN I SEE SOME IGENDERIFICATION?

A short comedy by
Jeff Goode

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ROSA

ZULIO

SETTING

The school gym.

(Lights up on ROSA, the girl in charge of handing out name tags. She waits at the front of the gym with a clipboard and a box of stickers. She wears a big pink name tag that says, "GRRL" and a bunch of stickers that say things like, "Cheerleader," "Piccolo!," "Mathlete," "Go Hawks!," "Yearbook," "Ice cream!" Enter ZULIO, one of the boys, on his way to practice. Rosa stops him.)

ROSA: Boy or Girl?

ZULIO: What do you mean?

ROSA: For your name tag. Boy or Girl?

ZULIO: Can't you tell?

ROSA: Of course I can. But I have to ask anyway. We're not allowed to assume anymore.

ZULIO: Why not?

ROSA: I guess somebody complained.

ZULIO: Somebody in our class?

ROSA: No, somebody on the news. And if anybody's parents hear about it, they'll call the school again. And Coach Tanner's already in trouble for that time she told us slavery was real.

ZULIO: When was that?

ROSA: Like, the 1800s.

ZULIO: No, I mean, when did Ms. Tanner get in trouble for slavery?

ROSA: Remember when she was gone a few weeks and we all thought she was pregnant and secretly having a baby?

ZULIO: Yeah.

ROSA: That was slavery.

ZULIO: That's so stupid.

ROSA: I know. So I just have to ask you a couple questions. And if you don't want to answer, you don't have to. But it's quicker if you do, and we'll get you straightened out and back to practice.

(Zulio notices the long list of questions on her clipboard.)

ZULIO: There's like a hundred questions on here!

ROSA: We just want to cover all the bases. I might not need all of them. Are you ready to get started?

ZULIO: Sure.

ROSA: One: Do you like football?

ZULIO: Yes.

ROSA: Are you on the football team?

ZULIO: No.

ROSA: I see. Do you like basketball?

ZULIO: Not really.

ROSA: Great, here you go. You're a girl.

(She hands him a big pink Girl name tag.)

ZULIO: What? No, I'm not! I'm a boy!

ROSA: *(Rolls her eyes at him.)* You don't like basketball. Boys like basketball.

ZULIO: I like football.

ROSA: But you're not on the team. You're more like a cheerleader. So... Girl.

ZULIO: I'm not a cheerleader, either!

ROSA: No, but I am. So if you'd like to try out for the squad, I can put you down.

ZULIO: No, I don't want to try out for the squad. I want to try out for the football team. I thought that's why we're here.

ROSA: Girls can't play football.

ZULIO: I am not a girl!

ROSA: You're supposed to say, "Girls can do anything boys can do!"

ZULIO: I don't care what girls can do, I wanna play football!

ROSA: (*Annoyed:*) All right, that's it, I am taking this back.

(She snatches the pink name tag away from him.)

ZULIO: Thank you.

ROSA: You are not being very ladylike.

ZULIO: I'm not trying to be ladylike!

ROSA: Oh, well, that's okay, then. Here you go.

(She hands the pink name tag back to him.)

ZULIO: What???

ROSA: (*Whispers:*) Don't you hate having to be ladylike all the time?

ZULIO: No, I don't! I mean, I would if I did. But I don't, so I'm fine.

ROSA: You don't sound fine.

ZULIO: I'm fine!

ROSA: Okay, calm down. There's no need for hysterics.

ZULIO: These are not hysterics!

ROSA: That's 'cause you're not wearing any make up. Do you want to borrow my eye liner?

(She hands him a makeup pencil.)

ZULIO: I don't even know what to do with this!

ROSA: You're right, you better keep the whole thing.

ZULIO: What?

ROSA: Y'know, I can make you gay, if you think that'll help.

ZULIO: How would that help?!

ROSA: 'Cause then you could go out for football.

ZULIO: Really?

ROSA: Sure! Here you go. You're gay.

(She hands him a rainbow sticker.)

ZULIO: Great, thanks. Wait, am I a gay lady or a gay dude?

ROSA: We don't say "lady", we say, "woman." Or "young woman."

ZULIO: You just said "lady" a second ago.

ROSA: Or Grrl with no "I", like a badger: Grrrrrrl.

ZULIO: Grrrrrr! That's kinda fun.

ROSA: And we don't say "gay." We just smile and point to the little rainbow sticker and everybody knows.

ZULIO: Knows what?

ROSA: That you're a... *(Smiles and points at rainbow sticker.)*
Grrl.

ZULIO: Look, I'm not any of those things.

(He hands her back all the stickers.)

ROSA: You have to be something or I can't assign you a sticker. And if you don't have a sticker, I can't let you try out for the cheer squad.

ZULIO: Football team.

ROSA: For the football team, riiight. *(Smiles and points at the rainbow sticker.)*

ZULIO: Do you want me to say I like basketball? Fine, I like basketball!

ROSA: You like basketball?

ZULIO: So much. Now can I like football?

ROSA: Are you on the team?

ZULIO: I'm not on any teams! That's the problem!

ROSA: So you're more like a cheerleader.

ZULIO: No!

ROSA: Here you go.

(She hands him the pink and rainbow stickers. He tries to give them back.)

ZULIO: I don't want that.

ROSA: You have to take it.

ZULIO: Don't give it to me!

ROSA: Take it! Put it on!

ZULIO: Look, I don't need a sticker.

ROSA: Nobody needs a sticker. You have to have them. Do you understand the difference?

ZULIO: Do you have a sticker that says "I'm not wearing a sticker, because it's none of your business, and I just want to go play football"?

ROSA: Sure. But you have to see the school nurse for that.

ZULIO: *(Flabbergasted:)* Why?

ROSA: Because you're gonna need a complete physical. He's right over there. Go ahead and get down to your underwear.

ZULIO: Right here in the gym?

ROSA: (*Shouting across the gym:*) I need a strip search in stickers!

ZULIO: I can't do that.

ROSA: Why not? (*Whispers:*) Are you not wearing a bra?

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ROOM TEMPERATURE

A short drama by
Ellen Margolis

CAST OF CHARACTERS

LEX, early teens, quiet and serious.

DANIKA, early teens, tough, angry.

ISABEL, Lex's sister, a year or two older than Lex and Danika.

SETTING

A small town in the U.S., the kind of place where everyone sounds a little "country," whether in Montana or California farm country or the south. Danika was born and raised here. Lex and Isabel have not lived here long. Their speech suggests a more educated background than Danika's, and their clothing might also set them apart.

NOTE

Slashes (/) indicate interruptions. When one character's line contains a slash, the next speaker should start their next line at that point.

(In the dark, we hear a bell signaling the end of the school day and the noise of kids leaving. Lights up on a Home Economics classroom, which may be suggested by a single counter. A working clock shows that the time is 3:10. Enter LEX, carrying a tote bag. He unpacks its contents and arranges them on the counter, moving calmly and with purpose. From the tote bag he takes a 5-pound bag of flour, a 1-pound bag of sugar, a container of salt, a dozen eggs, a pound of butter, and a couple of small zip-lock bags containing spices.)

(Lastly, he removes a neatly folded apron from the bottom of the bag, puts it on, folds the tote bag and stashes it out of the way.)

(Waits.)

(Checks the clock.)

(From a lower shelf or elsewhere in the room, he gathers a few utensils and two mixing bowls.)

(Checks the clock.)

(Waits.)

(He notices something about the butter.)

LEX: Oh no! Darn it.

(DANIKA appears in the doorway.)

DANIKA: *(Mocking:)* "Oh, darn it! Oh, darn it!"

LEX: *(Bracing himself:)* Hi, Danika.

DANIKA: What's the matter? Did you break a nail? Ooh, did your apron get dirty?

(Lex ignores her. Danika responds by moving very close to him and staring in his face.)

LEX: I have permission to be here. We have a class starting in a few minutes.

DANIKA: Apron class? (*Frantically swiping at her clothes:*) "Ooh, my apron is just filthy!"

(Lex sighs.)

You're being kind of rude there, Alex./I asked you a question.

LEX: Lex.

DANIKA: A-lex. Is it *apron* class?

LEX: Food science.

DANIKA: Ooh! Ooh! Can I take food science class? Pretty please?

LEX: You don't want to take it.

DANIKA: (*Like a series of fast punches:*) But could I? Could I? Could I? Could I?

LEX: You know you can't.

DANIKA: Oh, that's right...it's the GIFTED cooking class. For pretty little gifted babies in their frilly aprons. Right? Right? Right?

LEX: (*Deep breath.*) Right.

DANIKA: Just you and the gals. (*Gasp.*) Do they even know you're a guy?

LEX: Don't you have anything better to do?

DANIKA: Nuh-uh. I'm not gifted.

(As Danika grabs a whisk off the table, ISABEL appears in the doorway, watches silently.)

"Oh, look! I use my whisk to whip up gifty egg whites and make gifty pudding for my gifty little babies."

LEX: Wait – you like to cook?

DANIKA: What? NO.

LEX: You sure? Or do you watch cooking shows maybe?

(Danika shrugs.)

I like the science of it. Like when you make cookies, the reason you mix the butter and sugar together first is/that the sugar –

DANIKA: Don't care. *(Tosses the whisk back on the counter.)*
What's wrong with your mom?

LEX: What do you mean?

DANIKA: Why does she wear black all the time?

LEX: I don't know. She just does.

DANIKA: Why does she wear those big sunglasses?

LEX: She likes them. People wear black where we're from./The city.

DANIKA: Well, she sticks out like crazy. *(Right up in his face:)*
Is she crazy?

LEX: No.

ISABEL: *(Crossing to them:)* Hey! Idiot.

DANIKA: Someone's calling you.

ISABEL: YOU, idiot. Back off.

DANIKA: Who's this, your fairy godmother?

ISABEL: His fairy godmother's in rehab. I'm his sister. And that's my mom you're talking about.

DANIKA: Sorry.

ISABEL: Yeah. You're in the wrong room. This is for smart kids. Or at least normal kids.

DANIKA: How rude!

ISABEL: *(Coming at Danika aggressively:)* What does "euphonious" mean? Who was president before Obama [or current president]? What's nine times twelve? What's a catheter? What year did Helen Keller die?

DANIKA: God, shut up. Who cares about that stuff?

ISABEL: Smart people.

LEX: Not necessarily. You can be smart in a lot of different—

(Isabel cuts him off with an "are you kidding me?" look.)

DANIKA: Shut up. Loser.

(Isabel grabs the whisk, threatens Danika with the handle.)

ISABEL: You want to know how this feels shoved up your freakin' nose?

DANIKA: OK—I'm going. You're both weird, and by the way your mom looks crazy. You should tell her to dress normal.

(Danika exits.)

ISABEL: Why do you let her say that stuff to you? *(Lex glares.)* Are you serious? I got rid of that little pig for you, and you don't even thank me?

LEX: Congratulations. You treated her like she was treating me. And you didn't fix anything. We *are* weird here./Can you imagine Mom in one of those flag t-shirts?

ISABEL: That doesn't mean people get to—that's not the point! You don't even fight back!

LEX: Just let me be, Izzy. Mr. Mitchell will be here any minute, and the other kids. *(Beat.)* You probably made it worse.

ISABEL: Whatever.

LEX: Why are you even here?

ISABEL: That guy Connor?

LEX: Yeah?

ISABEL: Well, he and some friends of his are playing at the square tonight. I said I'd help them move their instruments. Can you leave by four thirty?

LEX: What? No! Class goes till five.

ISABEL: Yeah, but it's not a real class./You don't have to be here.

LEX: It's real for me. I like it./I want to—

ISABEL: No, I know you like it. That's cool. But I mean it's not a *class* class.

LEX: I'm making something special for Mom. It's the last meeting and Mr. Mitchell said we can bring in our own recipe, whatever we want to make.

(Isabel looks at the ingredients on the counter.)

ISABEL: What's special about this?

LEX: You remember the cookies she liked at that Aurora Bakery in Evanston?

ISABEL: By the laundromat? Yeah, sure. *(A happy memory.)* We always went and got a cookie as soon as we finished putting everything in the washers. But that place has been closed for—

LEX: Yeah, it's a frozen yogurt shop now. So I messaged them to see if they knew what happened to the owner. And it turns out he's just retired—Mr. Pappas—he's still in the neighborhood, see. And this guy, frozen yogurt guy, passed along my message, and Mr. Pappas called and talked me through the whole recipe on the phone! *(Opening one of the ziplock bags:)* He says the secret is cardamom. Smell.

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LOG OFF

A short drama by
Hayley Lawson-Smith

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CHARLOTTE, a female in her teens. Kind, gentle, if somewhat naïve,

PAIGE, a female in her teens. Very much worried about her social standing, likes to cause trouble.

SARAH, a female in her teens. A bit of a follower, malicious.

LUCAS, a male in his teens. Popular and knows it, spoiled.

SETTING

If appropriate or applicable, the director or production company should feel free to change the social media setting. For example, the photographs could be taken from Instagram or Snapchat, and the bullying itself could occur on Twitter, Tumblr or any other such platform.

The production company or director should also feel free to use multimedia, such as a projection on the back wall, to add to the storyline; for example, the audience could be able to witness the final comment thread and/or photographs through a series of slides.

(Each teenager is in their bedroom, sometime in the afternoon after school. They are each at their computers or on their phones. They are using social media at the same time as getting ready for their evenings out. LUCAS is getting homework finished at the same time as trying to get a perfect spike or coif in his hair. PAIGE is laying out her outfit for the night at the same time as putting away her cheer-leading uniform. SARAH is putting away her gymnastics uniform and doing her make-up. CHARLOTTE, the least social of the lot, is simply reading or studying while she takes quizzes on her computer and likes people's photos.)

ALL: www.facebook.com.

CHARLOTTE: Log on.

PAIGE: Log on.

SARAH: Log on.

LUCAS: Log on.

ALL: Status update.

LUCAS: Bring on the weekend. Coach says I've earned it.

SARAH: Big plans. Party, then gymnastics try-outs.

PAIGE: Counting down the hours. Gonna dance the night away, then leading the cheer squad.

CHARLOTTE: Shared, what do your hobbies say about your personality? Ten easy questions to find out now.

SARAH: Private message to Paige. Hey, you going to Lucas' thing tonight?

PAIGE: Reply. Of course. You?

SARAH: Hell yeah.

PAIGE: His parents finished the pool.

SARAH: Oh, nice.

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PAIGE: Let's see who else...click events...click Lucas' Birthday...click invited...scroll, scroll... Oh, ew.

SARAH: What?

PAIGE: Charlotte is invited.

SARAH: No way... Events, party, invited, scroll-scroll... Ergh. Who invited her?

PAIGE: *Why* would they?

SARAH: She won't go.

PAIGE: BRB... Private message to Lucas...did you invite Charlotte?

LUCAS: Reply. Parents made me.

PAIGE: Why?

LUCAS: Her parents are friends with my aunt and uncle, or something.

PAIGE: So just uninvite her, say it's cancelled, whatever.

LUCAS: Can't. Dad already spoke to her mom.

PAIGE: That sucks.

LUCAS: Sorry.

PAIGE: Hang on...invite Sarah to conversation.

CHARLOTTE: React to photo of kittens in a basket. Love! Share. Share on wall. Write post. This will brighten up your day. Hashtag, adorable.

SARAH: OMG.

PAIGE: You read it?

SARAH: Yes. OMG, Lucas, your parents suck.

LUCAS: Are you still coming?

PAIGE: Yeah.

SARAH: How embarrassing... Yes.

LUCAS: It's not my fault.

SARAH: She's so weird.

PAIGE: Does she come to your house and stuff?

LUCAS: No, she doesn't come to my house. It's just for the party. Mom was all like, you should be nice to her, set a good example, blah blah blah...

PAIGE: So, you're friends with her?

LUCAS: No.

SARAH: On Facebook he is.

LUCAS: Yeah, I had to send her a friend request to invite her. FML.

PAIGE: I'm totally sending her a friend request.

LUCAS: What?

SARAH: Do it, it'll be hilarious.

PAIGE: You do it too!

LUCAS: You guys are crazy.

PAIGE & SARAH: Click on Lucas' wall. Click friends. Search friends. Type C-h-a – there she is! Click on Charlotte.

SARAH: Are you doing it?

PAIGE: LMFAO, yes!

SARAH: LOL, me too!

CHARLOTTE: Scroll...scroll...like Cousin Maddie's post...scroll...scroll...react to Auntie Jane's photo, haha! Scroll...scroll...

PAIGE & SARAH: Friend request sent.

CHARLOTTE: Open page in new tab. Read article: I thought this was just a normal box, but when they lifted the lid...wow!

LUCAS: Has she accepted?

CHARLOTTE: Friend request received...friend request received! Friend request from...click. Paige. Friend request from...click. Sarah. Accept. Accept!

SARAH: Haha, she accepted!

PAIGE: She accepted me too, LOL.

SARAH: What a loser.

PAIGE: I'm sending her a message.

SARAH: Oh, so funny!

LUCAS: Tell her not to come to my party.

PAIGE: No way. I'm telling her how much I want to see her.

SARAH: (*Laughing:*) You're such a bitch.

PAIGE: She's the bitch; she shouldn't make people invite her to their parties.

LUCAS: I have to get some homework done. BRB.

PAIGE: Private message to Charlotte. (*Sarcastic:*) Hey girl, you going to Lucas' party? Sarah and I will be there. It'll be so, so great to see you! Smiley face. Fireworks. Martini glass. Click send.

SARAH: You sent it?

PAIGE: I'll add you in a minute.

CHARLOTTE: Scroll, scroll...pin link to recipe for chocolate brownies to top of the page...private message received! (*Pause. She reads.*) Click reply! Hi Paige, yes I am going to Lucas' party. It'll be lovely to see you and Sarah.

PAIGE: Agh! She replied.

SARAH: OMG.

PAIGE: Invite Sarah to conversation... (*Sarcastic:*) Hey Sarah, don't you think it'll be *lovely* to see Charlotte?

SARAH: (*Sarcastic:*) OMG, so lovely. Private message to Lucas. She is totally excited about your party.

LUCAS: I officially hate my parents.

CHARLOTTE: I thought I'd bake chocolate brownies. Do you think that's okay?

PAIGE: Yes, totally do that! Yummy.

SARAH: Yeah, you should bake brownies. Lucas loves brownies.

PAIGE: Private message to Lucas and Paige. LOL, she's going to bake you brownies, Lucas.

LUCAS: I'll throw up.

SARAH: Wait, I've got an idea. PM to Charlotte and Paige. Hey, Charlotte babe, I've got to tell you something, but it is, like, totally a secret.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, okay.

PAIGE: PM to Sarah. What's the secret?

SARAH: Just wait, it's hilarious. PM to Charlotte and Paige. Okay, I'll tell you, but you can't tell anyone. It's really cool.

CHARLOTTE: I won't tell. Promise. Trust is very important to me.

PAIGE: PM to Sarah. She's so lame.

SARAH: I know. PM to Charlotte and Paige. Lucas likes you. He *like* likes you, Charlotte.

PAIGE: PM to Sarah. ROFLMFAO!

CHARLOTTE: Click search friends. Search names, L-u-c...click on Lucas' profile. PM to Sarah and Paige. What do you mean?

SARAH: He has a total crush on you.

CHARLOTTE: Really?

SARAH: Yeah, that's why he invited you to the party.

PAIGE: He's going to ask you out. He thinks you're really cute.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, wow. That's so nice.

SARAH: Do you like him?

PAIGE: PM to Sarah. Ha ha, this is hilarious!

SARAH: What if she likes him?

PAIGE: So gross! Sick face emoji.

CHARLOTTE: ...yeah, I think he's very nice.

SARAH: You think he's hot?

CHARLOTTE: ...he's pretty good looking.

PAIGE: Do you have a crush on Lucas?

CHARLOTTE: ...a bit, yeah.

PAIGE: PM to Lucas and Sarah. Lucas, Charlotte totally has the hots for you!

SARAH: Yeah, she loves you.

LUCAS: FML.

SARAH: Wait. PM to Charlotte and Paige. You should send him a pic.

PAIGE: OMG, yes! He'd so love that.

CHARLOTTE: A pic? Like a photograph?

SARAH & PAIGE: Yes!

CHARLOTTE: Oh, Mom and Dad don't really want me to send photos on Facebook...

PAIGE: Don't be lame.

SARAH: Yeah, just do it, it'll be cute.

PAIGE: He sent you a friend request, didn't he?

CHARLOTTE: Yes.

SARAH: Then he wants to see your pics!

PAIGE: Go on, he'll love it.

CHARLOTTE: ...okay. PM to Lucas. Add attachment. Upload from computer. Search photos. Attach school photo. Type, hi Lucas, I hope you're having a nice day. Looking forward to the party tonight... Click send. PM to Sarah and Paige. I did it.

SARAH: PM to Paige. OMG!

PAIGE: Ha ha ha! Crying with laughter emoji.

LUCAS: Private message received. Click... *(Pause while he reads the message and looks at the photo.)* ...PM to Paige and Sarah. What the hell? She sent me a photo.

SARAH: Yeah, she loves you!

PAIGE: She wants to have your babies. Reply to her.

LUCAS: What? No.

SARAH: Just do it.

CHARLOTTE: I sent the pic.

SARAH: We know.

PAIGE: Lucas loves it. He messaged, he's so excited.

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HER REIGN

A short drama by
Neeley Gossett

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SOPHIE, a high school student. A social outcast.

ELSIE, a high school student. Sophie's only friend.

ENSEMBLE MEMBERS. The number can vary from 2-15, with potential for additional non-speaking ensemble members.

SETTING

Sophie's dad's house. The night of the homecoming football game.

(*ELSIE and SOPHIE, both teenagers, are in Sophie's dad's living room.*)

ELISE: You're wrong. It'll be nothing like *Carrie*.

SOPHIE: It'll be just like *Carrie*. It's just like the movie. I swear.

ELISE: You're completely overreacting.

SOPHIE: They elected me as a joke. If I stand with the homecoming court, they'll pour pig's blood on me, just like *Carrie*. I know it.

ELISE: That doesn't make sense at all. Even if they wanted to use pig's blood on you, they couldn't. Where would they find a pig around here?

SOPHIE: They've had five days to plot. I'm sure they've come up with some sort of animal blood.

ELISE: I doubt it. It's not like people in these golf course subdivisions raise livestock.

SOPHIE: Then they'd pour fake blood on me.

ELISE: That wouldn't be nearly as bad.

SOPHIE: Are you crazy?

ELISE: It wouldn't be the end of the world. Just wear a cheap dress.

SOPHIE: You're not funny.

ELISE: Sorry.

SOPHIE: And besides, I didn't buy a dress. That's another reason I'm not going to homecoming.

ELISE: I've told you all week, you can borrow one of mine. I have like five different ones.

SOPHIE: They wouldn't fit.

ELISE: They're all different sizes. I'm the weight fluctuation queen.

SOPHIE: I'm just not going.

ELISE: You can't stay here.

SOPHIE: Fine. I'll go to Lewis' house and play Dungeons and Dragons.

ELISE: Don't say things like that out loud.

SOPHIE: There's nothing wrong with D&D.

ELISE: I know. I'm just kidding. I like Dungeons and Dragons too.

SOPHIE: No you don't. You just liked Lewis.

ELISE: For a while, yes. It was about Lewis, but I also like the game now.

SOPHIE: So let's both go to Lewis' tonight.

ELISE: No. You have to walk on the court.

SOPHIE: There's no way.

ELISE: If you don't go, they win. Besides, you have to go. You might win queen. If you do, you get a tiara.

SOPHIE: I don't want a tiara.

ELISE: That's fine. You can give it to me. It's huge. I mean really huge. Last year, the girl who won homecoming queen could barely stand up with it on her head. Do you remember that?

SOPHIE: I wasn't there.

ELISE: She didn't eat for five days before homecoming. Promise me you'll eat dinner tonight. I don't want you getting dizzy up there like she did.

SOPHIE: I'm not even really on homecoming court.

ELISE: They elected you. It doesn't matter why.

SOPHIE: They did it to humiliate me. I'm not going to let them do that again.

ELISE: Exactly. If you go, you're a rock star. They're not going to humiliate you if you don't let them.

SOPHIE: And how do I do that?

ELISE: Think about it. There are more of us than there are of them. There might be thirty popular people in our grade, but there are like two hundred other people. And we're all going to cheer you on.

SOPHIE: That still leaves thirty people to laugh at me.

ELISE: So laugh back. I want to see their faces when you walk onto the field.

SOPHIE: I just want to put a blanket over my head and go to sleep.

ELISE: Then you won't conquer anything.

SOPHIE: I'm not trying to conquer anything.

ELISE: You have to. You have to shoot them down, make them stop.

SOPHIE: Easy for you to say. You've never been through this.

ELISE: People make fun of me too.

SOPHIE: Who? When?

ELISE: My brothers say –

SOPHIE: This is way different. I've been called ugly to my face literally every day of high school.

ELISE: You're so pretty.

SOPHIE: Don't say that.

ELISE: But you are.

SOPHIE: I mean it. Don't say that.

ELISE: Okay.

SOPHIE: (*A few beats.*) You're my only friend. When my phone beeps, I know it's you because you're the only one who texts me.

ELISE: What about Lewis and all those guys?

SOPHIE: They talk to me during D&D but walk right by me at school.

ELISE: Well, I'm the only friend you need anyway.

SOPHIE: I guess so.

ELISE: I know so. Nobody else is as awesome as I am. And I know no one else is as fun.

SOPHIE: Nothing about tonight is fun.

ELISE: I know. I'm just saying that *I'm* fun. I have to show you something.

(Elise pulls out her phone.)

SOPHIE: Don't play that video.

ELISE: I'm not going to.

(There is not an actual video. Instead, an ENSEMBLE MEMBER plays one of Sophie and Elise's fellow students in a social media video.)

VIDEO BULLY: When this ugly girl's name was announced, everyone's face —

ELISE: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hit play.

SOPHIE: I guess it's a good thing I saw it the night after they made the announcement. If I hadn't, I would still think they really wanted me on court.

ELISE: But did you read the comments?

SOPHIE: I started to. I just read the words "smelly, horse-face" and decided to stop.

ELISE: But that was Monday. There are more comments up now.

SOPHIE: Great.

ELISE: They're nice.

SOPHIE: Nothing on a comment page is ever nice.

ELISE: These are. I promise you.

SOPHIE: I just want to forget about the video.

ELISE: Fine. That's fine. But first, just read a few of these comments. They're from all over the country. Wait. No. From all over the world. Look, this one's from Helsinki.

SOPHIE: Where is Helsinki?

ELISE: I don't know, but it seems like a really long way away. You need to read it.

SOPHIE: Okay. Fine. Just this one. But only because it's from Helsinki.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: Don't worry, my dear. This kind of thing happens all over the world.

SOPHIE: That makes me feel worse.

ELISE: I know. It's sad. I'd like to think there is some far off land where people are actually nice to each other.

SOPHIE: I've never been that optimistic.

ELISE: Just read the other comments.

SOPHIE: Fine.

(The following statements should be rapid. The number of ENSEMBLE MEMBERS will vary by production.)

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: You've got to go to the game. Don't let them win.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: I've been bullied too. I'm in college now. It does get better.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: Hey. I'm on the football team. A lot of us want to see you out there tonight. We're not all jerks.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: If you need your nails done before the game, come on by Nail Style. We got ya covered.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: When you walk on that football field, walk like you own it.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: I don't know you, but I heard purple's your favorite color. We're all wearing it tonight in support of you. Photos to come.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: After you rock it out at homecoming, come by for D&D. Usual place and time. We'll save your chair.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: Everybody knows I don't do football games. I abhor sitting on concrete. But I'm coming tonight just to see you, Sophie.

TWO ENSEMBLE MEMBERS: (*In unison:*) Make us proud. Love and kisses from your cousins.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: I actually think she's pretty hot.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: Hey. I work at the diner on Main Street. Come in after the game tonight. Everything's on the house.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: Sophie, you can't back down. You've got to do this. Be a warrior.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER: If you stand up there tonight, you will be standing up for all of us who are afraid to go to school every day.

ELISE: It's pretty convincing.

SOPHIE: I guess so.

ELISE: You guess?

SOPHIE: What do you want me to say, Elise?

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BULLY ISSUES

A short comedy by
Arthur M. Jolly

CAST OF CHARACTERS

JAYSON, male.

NICK, male.

HAYLEY, female.

SETTING

Wherever. Just hanging out. The present.

(Lights up. Three bullies, JAYSON, HAYLEY and NICK, hang out.)

JAYSON: Sometimes I just ask myself—what am I doing? I started out poking—I'd just poke the guy, little hard finger jabs in his back, then stare him down when he looked back at me—like: What? What are you gonna do? The moment he turned back again—jab. He never did anything about it. All the time, my heart's racing. It's a rush, right?

(The other two murmur agreement, recognition.)

Is this the day he's gonna stand up, take a swing at me? Is the teacher finally gonna take her head out of her iPhone and see what's going on? But, eventually—this is after weeks—I come in, he's there, talking to her...and she says something to him, and he goes and sits down at a desk by the window. *(Beat.)* So I wait. That's it, he's moved...but she doesn't say anything to me. So...now I'm stuck—it's all long distance.

HAYLEY: Really?

JAYSON: But I'm staring—every chance I get, I'm staring at him like: "You're gonna get yours." Hallway after class, probably. I was thinking, maybe just push him into a locker or something?

NICK: Lame.

HAYLEY: So lame.

JAYSON: I don't want to hit the guy. You can get suspended for that. Expelled.

NICK: You are so elementary. At some point, maybe consider graduating to the next level.

JAYSON: This is what I'm feeling—have I peaked? Can I take this further—or is this like, as much as I'm gonna get out of this.

HAYLEY: Social is where it's at.

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NICK: Social bullying might be a little advanced for you. I'm into the psychological bullying myself. I started out, like you, with physical, but it's— it's too easy to get caught. You can get away with it as a little kid, but now...no, man. Step up your game. I've started working with shame a lot.

JAYSON: Shame?

NICK: Yeah.

JAYSON: What is that, like, name-calling?

HAYLEY: Oh, please.

NICK: Name-calling? I am light years beyond name-calling. I mean— okay, I'm not gonna knock it, it's got a place— you go by someone in the hall, you can always throw a word at them as you pass—

HAYLEY: A well placed "skank" can reinforce a week of concentrated effort to make a girl feel like everyone judges her—

NICK: But I am *mining*, man. I'm fracking, I'm digging up the bedrock of the psyche.

HAYLEY: Who talks like that?

NICK: Okay— you're just reinforcing a stereotype. The big, dumb bully. You shouldn't have to hide being smart.

JAYSON: Unless you wear glasses like a freak.

NICK: Well, yeah. But psychological bullying— it's like deep sea diving, you grope around in the abyss— and every now and then you grab hold of someone's subconscious anglerfish, and you just drag that little sucker up into the sunlight and watch it explode. Perfect moment.

JAYSON: It was easier when I could just hit someone and run away.

HAYLEY: No one ever said this would be easy. I read that article on later life –

NICK: The victim experiences study – I saw that.

HAYLEY: Yeah, thirty years old, less chance of a healthy relationship, higher stress, drug use –

NICK: Fifty years old – victims of bullying at fifty, higher rates of divorce, medical issues. What we do now lasts a lifetime – you think that's gonna just happen? You have to be prepared to work at it.

HAYLEY: Do your research, put in some effort.

JAYSON: I just wanna poke that annoying little rat-face and get that same rush. Is that so much to ask?

HAYLEY: The rush fades.

NICK: The question you need to ask yourself is: What do I get out of it? What need am I trying to fill?

JAYSON: Well, it's a power thing –

HAYLEY: Duh.

JAYSON: Okay, so – maybe I'm, I'm what – I'm feeling no control in my own life. This is an outlet for my... *(Beat.)* I'm not sure.

HAYLEY: This is basic stuff. It's cliché by now – trouble at home, parents divorcing, financial issues they discuss in front of you – you feel powerless, you take it out on someone else.

JAYSON: I guess so. *(Beat.)* But if that's all it is, surely I woulda outgrown that by now.

NICK: You're trapped in that dynamic. You've self-defined your persona as a bully, so if you lose that...what are you?

HAYLEY: I think the key is in the heart race.

JAYSON: Huh?

HAYLEY: You said it—heart pounding, not knowing whether he was gonna retaliate. That's adrenaline. That's like a barley grind down the railing out front—yeah, there's a sense of satisfaction that comes from nailing it, but there's also just this rush—a huge rush that you could slam and eat pavement. It's the danger. That's addictive.

NICK: That's what no one ever talks about—bullying feels good. It feels great.

JAYSON: But I hate myself for it.

NICK: That too.

HAYLEY: You make someone cry, it's power misused, so you feel like crap. Part of you does. But it's still power.

JAYSON: I feel so bad afterwards.

NICK: No one appreciates how hard it is to bully someone, day in and day out.

HAYLEY: It was so much easier for our parents—they could just harass some kid at school, make him run home crying and take the rest of the day off. I'm up half the night trying to keep up. I got three girls I have to keep track of. If one of them posts something and gets away with it—no. You gotta be right there to knock'em back down, any time, twenty-four seven. It's exhausting.

NICK: Okay, you know you can just write a script for that, right? Make a bot that autoposts whenever—

HAYLEY: I'm not an idiot. They block'em too quick. I gotta make fake accounts, keep moving—it's a lot of work.

NICK: No one appreciates what goes into it.

HAYLEY: Yeah.

JAYSON: Yeah.

NICK: Like *you* would know, poke-boy. Physical bullying, that's so...Neanderthal.

JAYSON: Really?

NICK: Look, you're stupid. And that's— that's not your fault, man. I look at your work—you tripped up that kid from wherever-the-hellistan, the one that doesn't even speak English yet. I was watching that, and it was casual, and sloppy. And yeah, you got a laugh from some of the guys that hang out with you—

HAYLEY: They're losers, by the way— you should ditch them.

NICK: True—but the thing is: he was going *to* the cafeteria line. You could've waited until he was done, coming back with a full tray— then all his food goes everywhere—

JAYSON: If he comes back the same way—

HAYLEY: Then position yourself. Think. I mean, that was probably all he was going to get to eat that day—

NICK: Better believe it. And you missed that opportunity. You didn't wait, because you have impulse control issues, and you're dumb. (*Considers his word choice.*) Dumb? Idiot? (*Beat.*) Your mom was a teen in what—the nineties? You're a little...a total...a *total waste*. Right? That's the one.

JAYSON: What?

NICK: That's what your Mom calls you: "A total waste...just like your father."

(*A beat. Jayson suddenly realizes this is a set-up.*)

JAYSON: Wow! That's...yeah, that's it. That's just—

NICK: Gets you, right?

JAYSON: (*Excited:*) Yeah! I could feel that.

NICK: Psychological. It's finding the right word. The perfect word, that just unlocks their emotional sandbox and lets you start throwing cat crap in it.

JAYSON: You're big on metaphors.

NICK: So's your momma.

HAYLEY: (*My turn:*) Okay, ladies, hold on.

(*She preps – cracks her knuckles, stretches her neck, etc.*)

Those losers you hang out with? You gotta ditch them. Seriously. 'Cause listen—you know that we're—we're your friends. But I don't know if we can hang out in public.

JAYSON: Wait—are you being serious right now, or—

HAYLEY: Jayson—listen. We like you, but we don't want to be seen with you. And it's not you—we like you. You don't have to change you...but when you eat lunch at the loser table—it makes you look like a loser. And the way they talk about you behind your back, like the minute you're not around...it's just...I feel bad for you. And I'm only saying this as a friend.

A pause.

JAYSON: Do they...do they really talk about me—

NICK: (*To Hayley:*) You are *amazing*.

HAYLEY: I have my moments.

JAYSON: So they don't—

HAYLEY: I don't even know your stupid friends! I don't have lunch the same period as you, I don't know the first thing about what table you sit at. But I could isolate you from everyone you know quicker than snot. Social standing is everything. And it's all so fragile, so easy to start screwing with people's lives.

NICK: Instead of poking them in the back, you start poking their existence.

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JAYSON: I guess so.

NICK: (*To Hayley:*) Look at him—he's still unsettled by that. Beautifully done.

HAYLEY: I've had a lot of practice.

JAYSON: So how do I start?

HAYLEY: Okay—what's your endgame?

JAYSON: I don't know.

NICK: The key to any project is to start out by looking at the end result. What does success look like?

JAYSON: I want to be... I like hitting people. But I'm not allowed.

NICK: You *like*...no, no. (*To Hayley:*) Help me out here.

HAYLEY: Okay—Choice A: this guy you've been poking, pushing around—he quits school, drops out, becomes a homeless nutcase. Total destruction of one particular victim.

JAYSON: Okay.

HAYLEY: Choice B: he—and all his friends—run from you. They avoid you—the school, everyone in school is scared of you. Give you money, get out of your way—bow down before you. You are the Alpha of the whole school. Two choices—what do you want? Destroy this kid, or rule the school?

JAYSON: I don't know.

HAYLEY: Those are not the same thing, this is not a hard decision.

NICK: The kid in the cafeteria, that's not the guy in class you—

JAYSON: Different guy.

NICK: So this isn't destroy the outsider, it's dominate the jungle.

HAYLEY: Exactly.

JAYSON: I don't know that it's either one.

NICK: This is what I mean about your need to bully. If you don't understand why, you're never gonna get it right.

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CRACKED SKY

A short drama by
Jonathan Dorf

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ANNA, female, mid to late teens.

DEVON, male, same age.

PRODUCTION NOTE

Bracketed text is meant to offer guidance on dialogue in cases where there may be more than one option depending on the needs of your production. Also, while you shouldn't change them unless you really need to, it's permissible to alter slightly the character names and the ones in Devon's monologue to names that fit the demographics of your community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to Daniel Rashid and Story Slaughter, for their assistance in developing the play.

(Outside a high school. The morning, before school. ANNA, mid to late teens, carries her books, but she's distracted, looking at the sky. DEVON, same age, enters holding a backpack in his hands that has something distinctly unbooklike in it. Anna bumps into Devon, knocking the backpack out of his hand.)

ANNA: Sorry.

DEVON: Whatever.

ANNA: I said I'm sorry.

DEVON: Fine.

(Anna reaches to pick up his bag.)

ANNA: Let me get—

DEVON: *(Trying to beat her to it:)* I got it.

ANNA: I'm just trying to—

DEVON: Get off!

(Anna lets go, but something is wrong here. Beat.)

Sorry. But please don't touch my bag. Please.

ANNA: I won't touch your bag. *(Trying to fill the dead space:)* I just get really distracted sometimes.

DEVON: Great. Don't text while you walk next time.

ANNA: I wasn't texting.

DEVON: OK.

ANNA: I didn't even have my phone in my hand. You do get the irony of yelling at me for not paying attention, only you're not paying enough attention to know I wasn't texting.

DEVON: OK. You win the argument. Hashtag winning—right? Catch ya later.

ANNA: Do you want to know what distracted me?

DEVON: It's all good.

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ANNA: I was distracted by the clouds.

DEVON: All right. I still gotta go.

ANNA: You've got ten minutes before the first bell.

DEVON: I know.

(Anna takes out her phone.)

Put your phone away.

ANNA: Why? I'm —

DEVON: It's just gonna be better if you do.

ANNA: *(Beat.)* OK. I'm putting it away.

(She puts her phone away.)

DEVON: Promise you won't take it out again.

ANNA: Until when?

DEVON: I don't know. Later.

ANNA: *(Beat.)* Do you want to see what distracted me?

DEVON: You said the clouds.

ANNA: Yes, but specifically.

DEVON: What's the difference?

ANNA: If there's no difference, why not look?

DEVON: Fine.

(Devon looks up so quickly it's like not looking.)

ANNA: That's not looking.

(Devon takes a longer look this time.)

DEVON: OK?

ANNA: I think it's cool. It's like this curtain of clouds, but it only goes halfway up, and then there's this giant crack in it — and the pattern totally changes.

DEVON: I guess.

ANNA: You don't see that.

DEVON: I guess kinda.

ANNA: I've never seen anything like it.

DEVON: Let me see your phone.

ANNA: Did you do the English homework?

DEVON: What?

ANNA: It's a simple question.

DEVON: You're not in my class. (*Back on the phone:*) I need to see it.

ANNA: I'm in the other section. Yeager always keeps them...what's the word? (*Beat.*) There's a word for it.

DEVON: (*Stuck participating:*) Equal?

ANNA: Kind of. (*Thinking:*) In tandem is what I was thinking, or in sync, but equal works. Or even. Or maybe parallel.

DEVON: Stop ignoring me.

ANNA: I'm not. I'm talking to you, and words are interesting.

DEVON: Look—you seem nice, but it's too late, so give me your phone, and then I gotta go.

ANNA: Too late for what?

DEVON: Gimme your phone.

ANNA: Did you do the homework?

DEVON: You're not gonna need it.

ANNA: You never answered the homework question.

DEVON: Nobody's gonna care about homework today.

ANNA: You see what I mean about the sky?

DEVON: Your phone.

ANNA: You really can't see it—?

DEVON: Fine. Not gonna make a difference.

ANNA: —How it looks like it's cracking in the middle.

DEVON: I don't look at the sky.

(He starts to leave. She grabs him by the bag.)

You don't want to grab me.

(He pulls his bag out of her grip, as she gives in and lets go.)

ANNA: What are you gonna do—shoot me?

DEVON: *(Beat.)* It's Anna, right?

ANNA: Yeah. And you're Devon.

DEVON: Go home, Anna.

ANNA: *(Beat.)* I can't just go home.

DEVON: Why not?

ANNA: I just can't.

DEVON: Then stay outside. Just stay right here by this...what is this?

ANNA: It's the war memorial. "To those graduates of [your school's name] who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their county." No wait—"country." That makes more sense. They really should clean this better. *(Continuing:)* "Heroes always."

DEVON: The kids in the cafeteria, they're not heroes.

ANNA: I don't think most of us have done anything heroic yet. Maybe tomorrow, or the day after, or—

DEVON: Yeah. But everyone kisses Ray Daniels' first team-all-star-all-whatever ass [butt]. And they worship Sophie Watson and her \$2590 Neiman Marcus prom dress that's worth more

than all my clothes put together, and Trevor Johnson, kneel before Trevor 'cause it's the easiest way to chug his parents' booze. What's their memorial gonna say? Thanks for tripping that kid you didn't even know, and for spitting in his lunch, and for hacking his Instagram [or social media network of the moment] and posting all those pictures you took in the locker room. Again. Thanks for being my personal heroes on a daily basis for the last three craptastic years. But seriously, I am sincerely grateful that every morning, like the pack of hyenas you are, you chase the rest of us out of the cafeteria before school and drink your lattes and laugh—and you never leave until two minutes after the first bell.

(Devon starts to leave again.)

ANNA: Devon.

DEVON: What? You feel bad now?

ANNA: I didn't know.

DEVON: Ostrich.

ANNA: What?

DEVON: People like you. You, the teachers, the principals, my parents, even the kids I thought were my friends. You're ostriches.

ANNA: I'm not trying to be.

DEVON: You are, but that's OK. You'll know all about it soon.

ANNA: Stay.

DEVON: I only got a couple minutes to get there.

ANNA: Please. I'll give you my phone.

DEVON: Thanks.

ANNA: If you stay.

DEVON: *(Leaving:)* It doesn't matter. You can't stop me.

ANNA: I could scream.

DEVON: Do it then. And by the way, I get it—it wasn't your problem.

ANNA: (*Trying to block him:*) That's not true.

DEVON: It's totally true.

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PICK NICK

A short dramedy by
Bradley Hayward

CAST OF CHARACTERS

NICK, male or female. High school outcast, teenager.

ACTOR, male or female. Plays multiple roles, listed below:

ISAAC, male. Jock, teenager.

CINDY, female. Drama student, teenager.

DAVID, male. Nerd, teenager.

MOM, female. Frustrated parent, 30-50.

DAD, male. Angry parent, 30-50.

SETTING

A bare stage.

PRODUCTION NOTE

One actor plays Nick (short for Nicole, if played by a female) and a second actor plays all of the remaining roles. It is important that each of these characters has a unique voice and distinctive mannerisms. Resist the temptation to rely on costumes or make-up for these quick changes, which will only slow down the play. How the actor embodies each character is far more important than his or her physical appearance. Have fun with this!

(NICK stands center stage. His eyes are closed as he whispers quietly to himself.)

NICK: Pick me. Pick me. Pick me.

VOICE: *(Off:)* I pick Trevor.

NICK: Pick me. Pick me.

VOICE: *(Off:)* I pick Caitlyn.

NICK: Pick me.

VOICE: *(Off:)* I pick Isaac.

NICK: Please.

(ISAAC, a jock, enters. He wears a baseball cap and carries a bat.)

ISAAC: Nick.

NICK: *(Hopeful:)* Yes?

ISAAC: What do you know about baseball?

NICK: *(Deflated:)* Oh, I, umm, uh...

ISAAC: That's what I figured.

NICK: No, wait! Can you repeat the question?

ISAAC: This isn't a game show.

NICK: I know. Although it kinda feels like *Survivor*.

ISAAC: *(Slowly:)* What. Do. You. Know. About. Base. Ball?

NICK: Not very much.

ISAAC: Then. Why. Should. I. Pick. You. To. Be. On. My. Team?

NICK: Because I don't want to be picked last.

ISAAC: That's not a reason.

NICK: Trust me, it's a reason.

ISAAC: A pathetic reason.

NICK: Please? I'm always picked last.

ISAAC: Look, nobody wants to be picked last.

NICK: Exactly.

ISAAC: But somebody has to be the one.

NICK: The one?

ISAAC: Yeah. The one.

NICK: The one who what?

ISAAC: The. One. Who. Nobody. Wants. *(He laughs, then points offstage.)* I pick Cindy.

(He exits.)

NICK: Just because I want to be picked doesn't mean I want to be picked *on*.

(CINDY, a boisterous drama student, enters. She wears a bright red scarf and carries a script.)

CINDY: Nick!

NICK: Yes?

CINDY: Today is your lucky day!

NICK: It is?

CINDY: You have an audition to be my friend!

NICK: An audition?

CINDY: *(Holds up the script:)* See this?

NICK: I do.

CINDY: Do you know what this is?

NICK: I don't.

CINDY: I'll tell you what this is! This is a play. A play about two friends. Two *best* friends. I wrote it, so it's very good.

NICK: Since when do you write plays?

CINDY: Since when are you in drama class?

NICK: Since I flunked gym.

CINDY: He who hath flunked gym doth not ask questions.

NICK: Sorry.

CINDY: As I was saying, this is a play about two best friends. One is beautiful and talented. The other is ugly and boring.

NICK: That doesn't sound very friendly to me.

CINDY: Who died and made you Shakespeare?

NICK: Sorry.

CINDY: I forgiveth.

NICK: And you want *me* to audition?

CINDY: (*Nods enthusiastically.*) For the ugly friend.

NICK: Of course.

CINDY: Good! (*Shoves the script in his face.*) Now take this script and memorize all the lines. When you've finished that, design and build a set. Then I need you to pick out costumes for both of us and submit your bio for the program. You have one minute. Go!

NICK: One minute?

CINDY: Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock.

NICK: Nobody can do all that in one minute.

CINDY: I can.

NICK: That's impossible.

CINDY: Nothing is impossible.

NICK: You are.

CINDY: Listen! I only offered to pick you as my scene partner because Miss O'Grady gives extra credit for showing pity upon those less fortunate. If you don't want me to pick you, just say so.

NICK: So.

CINDY: Then I guess you're not as desperate as everyone says you are. *(She laughs, then points offstage:)* I pick David.

(She exits.)

NICK: David? Are you kidding me? He's even more of a geek than I am.

(DAVID, a geek, enters. He wears dark rimmed glasses and carries a papier-mâché volcano on a piece of plywood. Next to the volcano is a bottle of Diet Coke and a roll of Mentos.)

DAVID: Nick.

NICK: Yes?

DAVID: Will you be my partner for the science fair?

NICK: Do you really want to pick me?

DAVID: Yes.

NICK: Is anyone making you pick me?

DAVID: No.

NICK: Okay, then! I'll be your partner.

DAVID: Good. *(Sets the volcano on the floor.)* Have you ever seen a volcanic eruption?

NICK: Sure. Every time my parents have an argument.

(He laughs. David stares blankly back at him.)

DAVID: Why are you laughing?

NICK: That was a joke.

DAVID: Oh.

NICK: I crack jokes when I'm trying to hide my true feelings.

DAVID: I don't like jokes.

NICK: I see.

DAVID: See what?

NICK: Never mind.

DAVID: Never mind what?

NICK: Nothing... You were saying something about a volcanic eruption?

DAVID: Yes, I was.

(Pause.)

NICK: You may continue.

DAVID: Oh. *(Deadpan:)* Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

NICK: What the heck was that?

DAVID: I thought maybe you were hiding your feelings again. So I laughed.

NICK: Let me speed this up or else we could be here all day. You want to simulate a volcanic eruption by causing a chemical reaction. Am I right?

DAVID: No. But you are correct. *(He opens the Mentos.)* I'm going to put one Mentos in the volcano. *(He does.)* I'm going to put a second Mentos in the volcano. *(He does.)* Then, I'm going to open this bottle of Diet Coke and pour it on top of the two Mentos. *(He opens the bottle of Diet Coke.)* If everything goes as planned, there will be a chemical reaction that triggers an explosion.

NICK: That reminds me of home.

DAVID: You live in a volcano?

NICK: No. But the first Mentos is like my dad. The second Mentos is my mom. And I'm the Diet Coke. (*He takes the Diet Coke bottle.*) Put us all together and—

(He pours the Diet Coke into the volcano and it erupts.)

DAVID: Hey!

NICK: Kaboom.

DAVID: Why did you do that?!

NICK: You told me to.

DAVID: I did not.

NICK: Did too.

DAVID: Did not!

NICK: I just did as I was told.

DAVID: You did what I said, not what you were told. There's a difference.

NICK: I'm sorry.

DAVID: Look at the mess you've made!

NICK: Story of my life. I do what people say, never what I'm told, and I make mess after mess after mess. I make a mess of everything.

DAVID: No wonder nobody ever wants to pick you. I'm telling my mom!

NICK: What's she going to do about it?

DAVID: (*Points offstage.*) I pick my mommy!

(He exits.)

NICK: Aren't you a little old to go running to your mommy?

(MOM enters. She wears a curly blonde wig.)

MOM: Nick.

NICK: Mommy!

(He rushes to Mom and hugs her.)

MOM: Aren't you a little old to go running to your mommy?

NICK: That's my line.

MOM: Close your mouth and open your ears. I need to you to pick up your room.

NICK: Why?

MOM: Don't pick a fight. Just do as I say.

NICK: I'm not picking anything—

MOM: And stop picking your nose. It's gross.

NICK: I haven't picked my nose since kindergarten.

MOM: Your father is on his way home and I need your room to be neat as a pin when he gets here.

NICK: Why?

MOM: He's angry. And you don't want to make it worse.

NICK: Why is he angry?

MOM: Because we're getting a divorce.

NICK: You are?

MOM: We are.

NICK: But if I clean my room, you won't get a divorce?

MOM: That's not what I said.

NICK: Then why do I have to pick up my room?

MOM: What did I say about picking a fight? Because I said so, that's why!

(She exits.)

NICK: If you're getting a divorce, then I don't want to live with you. I pick Dad!

(DAD enters. He wears a straight brown wig.)

DAD: Nick.

NICK: Dad!

(He rushes to Dad and hugs him.)

DAD: You can't live with me.

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