

KNOW YOUR ROLE

A one-act dramedy by
Brandi Owensby

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www.youthplays.com
info@youthplays.com
424-703-5315

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

PARTYGOERS	MONICA
EXPECTANT MOTHERS (2)	CATCALLERS
TAYLOR	KENDRA
CLAIRE	DADS
GRANDMA	DAUGHTERS
JAMES	SONS
DAVID	BRANDON
JARED	KAITLYN
TOM	ROGER
ERIC	ROGER'S MOM
TREY	ROGER'S DAD
ALEX	MATT
ALEX'S MOM	TESSA
GINA	MEGAN
JANE	JASON
MRS. GLADDEN	CHRIS
CLASSMATES	SUITS
MRS. MCCORMACK	LEIGH
GRAHAM	

CASTING

This play is written to be performed as an ensemble piece. The size of the ensemble is flexible and could be as small as 10 or as large as your program allows. In the group scenes, divide the lines among the cast members as you see fit. Actors should identify as the gender of the character as written due to the nature of the content.

SETTING

The set may be as simple as a bare stage or as elaborate as you desire. Transitions should be fluid. The scene headings are meant to divide the material for the rehearsal process, but are not necessarily places to stop the action during a performance.

NOTE

Cuttings are permitted to adhere to time limits. Contributions from the cast to reflect their own experiences are encouraged in the group scenes.

SCENE 1: The Boxes

(Two separate groups of PARTYGOERS on stage representing two gender reveal parties. Each centered on an EXPECTANT MOTHER at a large wrapped box. Excitement brews. Both mothers open their boxes simultaneously. One is pink and one is blue. Matching balloons emerge. Be sure to weigh these down. While "It's a girl!"/"It's a boy!" are spoken by all, individual party attendees deliver any subsequent lines that aren't marked specifically as "ALL.")

PINK

ALL: It's a girl!

A sweet little princess.

Girls are so fun to shop for!

Tiny dresses covered in ruffles and lace.

Headbands, bows, and ribbons in her hair.

A daughter will be your best friend.

Better tell daddy to get his shotgun.

She will be your Mini-Me.

She's going to be a beautiful little lady.

BLUE

ALL: It's a boy!

A little superhero.

Boys are so easy to shop for.

T-shirts with cars and dinosaurs.

It doesn't matter if a boy is born bald.

A son will keep you busy.

Better tell the ladies to watch out.

He will be a mama's boy.

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	He's going to be such a handsome man.
ALL: Just imagine...	ALL: Just imagine...
Baby dolls –	Trucks and cars –
Ballet –	Little league –
Dress up –	Roughhousing –
Make up –	Soldiers –
Shoes –	Mud pies –
Cooking –	Snakes –
Sugar –	Snails –
Spice –	Puppy dog tails –
Everything nice –	
ALL: Sugar, spice, everything nice, sugar spice, everything nice, sugar, spice, everything nice.	ALL: Snakes, snails, puppy dog tails, snakes, snails, puppy dog tails, snakes, snails, puppy dog tails.
That's what little girls are made of.	That's what little boys are made of.

(Partygoers and Expectant Mothers exit, leaving the boxes. TAYLOR enters and stands between the two boxes.)

SCENE 2: The Size of a Banana

TAYLOR: *(As if singing a nursery rhyme:)* Girls wear pink. Boys wear blue. Gender roles for me and you. *(Drops sing-song voice, considers the boxes/balloons:)* You were only the size of a banana when an ultrasound tech slathered your mother's lower abdomen with cold jelly and told her which of these boxes you belonged in. She'd been telling everyone for months "Oh, I don't care what the baby is, as long as it's healthy." She was lying. She knew exactly who she wanted you to be. She had plans for you. Outfits you were going to wear, a perfect name she had agonized over, activities you were going to do together, conversations you were going to have, a career you were going to pursue. The night before that appointment, she couldn't sleep for all the excitement. When she felt the wand on her belly, she reminded herself to smile regardless of the outcome. You appeared on the screen, the tech spoke, and your mother smiled; maybe she even shed a few tears. My mother smiled without hesitation and she shed tears of joy. I was exactly what she wanted. I was the size of banana and she knew exactly which box to put me in.

(Taylor picks up the pink.)

Every day since, I've been learning the role.

SCENE 3: Real Men Don't Cry

(The male members of the ensemble enter and divide the following lines:)

Twelve.

Seven.

Four.

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Three.

Nine.

Six.

Eight.

A car hit my dog right in front of me.

It was my first day of school.

I didn't make the team.

They told me they were getting a divorce.

My best friend moved away.

I failed my math test.

I wrecked my bike.

Grandpa relapsed.

You're not crying, are you?

A man's got to be tough.

It's fine to be sad, but crying is just going too far.

Suck it up, buttercup.

Walk it off.

You've got to be stronger than that.

You're setting a bad example for your brother.

Get a hold of yourself.

People will think you're weak.

Crying won't change anything.

Don't let anyone see you cry.

Don't be a wimp.

You're acting like a little girl.

ALL: Man up.

(Individual actors again:) Man up.

Man up.

Man up.

ALL: *(Compose themselves:)* REAL men don't cry.

(Male members of the ensemble exit as CLAIRE and GRANDMA enter.)

SCENE 4: It Comes in Pink

CLAIRE: I've always been...

CLAIRE & GRANDMA: Grandma's little helper.

CLAIRE: Grandma is the coolest; she's my best friend. Every Friday, we have a girl's night. We watch *Jeopardy*, eat ice cream with sprinkles and cherries, and stay up way past my bedtime. I also get to help her sort all her medications for the week. It's a super important job.

GRANDMA: Thank you, pumpkin. What would I do without you?

CLAIRE: When we wake up on Saturday morning, we go together to take care of all her important errands for the week, like her grocery shopping.

GRANDMA: Claire, you hold the grocery list. Make sure we don't forget to buy more sprinkles. *(Winks.)*

CLAIRE: Aye, aye captain!

(They laugh.)

I love shopping with Grandma. When her back is bothering her, I help her get the things she needs from the bottom shelves. If she needs me to, I can climb up to the highest shelves. We just have to make sure none of the workers are looking.

GRANDMA: (*Whispering:*) Hurry up, Claire. I think I see one coming!

CLAIRE: If my grades are good and I haven't given Mom too much sass during the week, Grandma usually says...

GRANDMA: Why don't we take a stroll over to the toy section?

(*Claire lights up.*)

CLAIRE: I have been waiting for those words all week! The twin boys who live next door just got a pair of brand new foam blasters. If I have any chance of beating them, I'm going to need something even better. There's a whole aisle of options; I'm eyeing a huge yellow and orange crossbow when Grandma calls out...

GRANDMA: (*Holding up a pink foam bow and arrow set:*) How about this one? The Heartbreaker. Says here it comes with a "Sweet Revenge Dart Kit." Come over here, where the girl toys are.

CLAIRE: (*Reading the back of the box:*) "The Diva Collection is a sports action brand built specifically for girls. Like all of our products, this line is full of great performing toys that provide hours of active fun, but these toys also feature the fierce styles girls love." (*Looks up, unsure.*) It costs five dollars more than the orange one and comes with less ammo.

GRANDMA: Money is no object for Grandma's little helper. You'll be the prettiest archer on the block. Let's go check out and get you home. You've got a neighborhood to defend.

CLAIRE: Thanks, Grandma. I love you.

GRANDMA: I love you more.

(*Claire and Grandma exit as JAMES, DAVID, JARED, TOM and ERIC enter.*)

SCENE 5: Like a Girl

JAMES: You run like a girl.

DAVID: You throw like a girl.

JARED: You punch like a girl.

TOM: You kick like a girl.

ERIC: You hit like a girl.

JARED: Your mom hits like a girl.

(All the other guys ad lib a shocked, negative response. Jared has gone too far.)

ERIC: You wanna say that again?

JAMES: Not cool, dude. Not cool.

DAVID: Show some respect.

JARED: Sorry, man; that was too far.

(Everyone relaxes. All is well. They exit as TREY enters.)

SCENE 6: Selfish

TREY: *(Proudly:)* My dad was the bravest woman I've ever known. Maybe that sounds strange to you, but I can explain. The summer before I started middle school, he... *(Corrects himself.)* ...she and Mom sat my brother, sisters and I down for a family meeting. Dad tried her best to explain it to us. She told us that she had felt like a girl ever since she could remember. The way her parents dressed her, the toys they bought her to play with, and even the way they cut her hair never felt right. She told us that she didn't want to hurt our family, but that she had never felt "at home" in her own body and that she couldn't continue to live her life as a man anymore. I was shocked and angry. How could he do this to us? None of us spoke for what must have been a lifetime, until I saw the tears in Mom's eyes and I finally boiled over.

(Remembering passionately:) "So, what, you're just going to start wearing dresses now? Everywhere? What will my friends say? How could you have lied to us and to Mom for all of these years? You're the most selfish person I know!" I stormed off to my room before she had the chance to respond and I spent the next eight months distancing myself from her. It wasn't hard to do. A few days after our family meeting, dad moved out. Once my parents split, it didn't take long for the word to start spreading around our small town. By the time the school year started, everyone knew. Conversations would come to a dead stop when I entered a classroom, but the whispers didn't. I ignored their words. I didn't care what they said about Dad, I just wanted to pretend none of this was happening. When basketball season started, dad showed up for our first game of the season; she always loved watching me play. I can still see her sitting alone near the top of the stands, cheering me on as loudly as ever, ignoring the whispers and stares of the other spectators. After the game, I dodged her attempt to hug me, yelling over my shoulder "You look hideous in that dress!" as I ran off to the locker room, *(With shame:)* leaving her to face the laughter of my teammates and their parents alone. Not long after that night, Dad started a new job as an over-the-road trucker. The bank she had worked at for fifteen years had fired her...something about poor performance reviews. I hadn't seen or talked to Dad in a few weeks when Mom got the phone call that would change everything. It was the police. Dad's body had been found beaten almost beyond recognition in a truck stop shower stall, the left side of her head completely caved in. She had been dead for hours before anyone reported it. *(Pause.)* I can't remember the last kind thing I said to my dad. I know I hadn't said "I love you" since the night of our family meeting. But I did...I did love my dad and I miss her every day. I would give anything to go back to that night, to have the chance to show Dad the compassion the rest of the world would refuse her. "Selfish," I had called her.

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(Beat.) You know, I think there's a lot of truth to the idea that the flaws we see in others are most often just the ugly reflections of our own shortcomings.

(Trey exits as ALEX enters.)

SCENE 7: Popular

ALEX: Mom signed me up for a beauty pageant right at the height of my eighth grade awkward phase. She said that it would help me...

(ALEX'S MOM enters. She carries the pink box, it contains assorted beauty products.)

MOM: *(Handing Alex the box:)* Discover your feminine side.

ALEX: And...

MOM: Feel more confident about yourself.

ALEX: I didn't know I had a problem with confidence until she told me that I did. I tried to argue, but she insisted.

MOM: Think of it like a game. You'll practice, compete, and win.

ALEX: How do you win at looking beautiful?

MOM: Pageants aren't all about looks, they're also about your personality and leadership skills.

ALEX: Then why are they called "Beauty Pageants"? Why not "Personality Pageants"?

MOM: Try it just this once and if you don't like it, you'll never have to do it again. I realize I'm asking you to step outside of your comfort zone, but I know this will be good for you.

ALEX: I don't want to.

MOM: Please? For me? It would make me so proud.

ALEX: *(Sighs heavily.)* For the next few months, Mom was in

nonstop pageant prep mode; she loved it. The best part was how much time she wanted to spend with me. We did everything together. Practicing my walk:

(Alex attempts a runway walk.)

MOM: You know, I think we can go with even higher heels.

ALEX: Playing with makeup:

MOM: *(Applying blush:)* This might seem like a lot, but stage lights are brutal.

ALEX: New hairstyles:

MOM: *(Piling Alex's hair on her head)* This does wonders for your jawline!

ALEX: Picking out outfits:

MOM: *(Holding several sequined choices up to Alex:)* Hmmmm, I'm trying to decide which of these Wild West looks will best compliment your skin tone.

ALEX: Practicing my interview skills:

MOM: *(Reading a notecard:)* If you were given the chance to change something from the past, what would it be?

ALEX: *(Thinks.)* I guess I wouldn't have given my baby cousin her first haircut. Aunt Cary cried...a lot.

MOM: *(Impatient:)* No, no, no!

ALEX: But that's what I would change.

MOM: That's not what the judges will want to hear. Try this "If I were given the chance to change something from the past, I would change the time World War II happened because Anne Frank is my hero and —"

(Doorbell rings.)

Oh, your choreographer is here to work on the talent portion.

(Mom exits.)

ALEX: It was in no way my idea to perform a modern jazz routine to "Popular," but mom has never been able to cope with the fact that she birthed an Elphaba, not a Glinda...Galinda...whatever. It's been years since the pageant and I still have nightmares that I'm stomping across a stage in six-inch heels, trying desperately to see through my glued-on eyelashes with that song on repeat. *(Sung:)* "Popular, you're gonna be popular." *(Laughs.)* It was a nice try, mom.

(Alex exits.)

SCENE 8: Gimme a...Break!

(GINA enters. She wears a cheer uniform, is beaming and full of energy.)

GINA: Gimme a B! Gimme an R! Gimme an E! Gimme an A! Gimme a K! What does it spell? BREAK! *(Drops cheery persona:)* Seriously, give me a break. I wear this uniform and I get nothing but judgment from all sides. Teachers assume I don't have two brain cells to rub together. Strangers assume I'm stuck up. Guys assume I'm easy. Girls assume I have an eating disorder. My parents assume I'm in it for the popularity. They all assume I'm in it for the football players. Worst of all, none of them hesitate to tell me that I'm not a "real athlete." They think I'm just some bimbo who's there to look cute in a skimpy outfit while the guys do the real playing. But I *live* to compete; the guys' games are just pit stops along the way. I run, I lift, I condition, I stunt, I tumble, and I also happen to occasionally throw people in the air. You might be surprised to learn that last one requires quite a bit of athleticism. This uniform doesn't give anyone permission to assume anything about me. I've had more black eyes than any football player I've ever known. I'm not eye candy, I'm a warrior. I know that cheer has made me stronger in every way possible. My teammates and I

are a family. We hold each other up physically and mentally, and that's what empowered women do. So please, gimme a B-R-E-A-K, BREAK!

SCENE 9: Distraction

(JANE sits in a classroom. She should be in violation of one or more of your school's dress code guidelines. Changes in the dialogue to reflect your actor's attire are permitted.)

JANE: My first block teacher Mrs. McCormack totally has it out for me. At least once a week this semester, about fifteen minutes into class, I get called down to discipline and I know that she's sent my administrator an email about my outfit. Probably because she used to look this good about twenty years ago.

MRS. GLADDEN: *(Over the intercom:)* Jane Hinds, please report to discipline. Jane Hinds to discipline.

CLASSMATES: Ooooooooooooooooo!

(Jane exits the classroom and reports to MRS. GLADDEN's office.)

MRS. GLADDEN: *(Sighs.)* Miss Hinds, would you care to explain to me what you're doing back in my office?

JANE: *(Shrugs.)* I'm as surprised as you are, Mrs. Gladden.

MRS. GLADDEN: Don't get smart with me, young lady. The rule is very clear *(As she reads, June mouths along:)* "Franklin High School is a distraction-free learning zone. Clothing may not disrupt the learning environment. A student's dress and general appearance should not be so extreme that it draws attention to the student. If wearing leggings or tights, fingertip length shirts, skirts, dresses, or shorts must be worn over them. Tank top straps must be at least once inch in width to cover all undergarments."

JANE: *(Looking at her shoulder:)* So, this is about my bra strap?

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That's an easy fix. I can take that off in the bathroom and put it in my bag for the rest of the day.

MRS. GLADDEN: Come on, Jane. Let's not play this game.

JANE: Is there some rule I'm not aware of that I have to wear a bra? The boys don't have to. Social norms and Victoria's Secret shouldn't be able to dictate that I wear an unnecessarily uncomfortable and expensive undergarment. Can you show me where it says I have to wear a bra in the student handbook?

MRS. GLADDEN: That's not the issue at hand, Jane. Your top's strap is not an inch in width. Should I get the ruler?

JUNE: Don't bother, I'll take the lunch detention and put my hoodie on.

MRS. GLADDEN: Jane, this is strike three. You are going to ISS for the rest of the day and I am calling your parents.

JUNE: My parents saw me walk out the door in this! This outfit isn't inappropriate by any reasonable standard. I don't want to get behind in AP U.S. History or Bio.

MRS. GLADDEN: (*Handing her a slip:*) Rules are rules. Room 302, Miss Hinds. I'll have your teachers send your work down. Let's make better choices from here on out, shall we?

JANE: But—

MRS. GLADDEN: Room 302.

(Jane exits the office.)

JANE: I can't believe this stupid school. How is it fair that I miss a full day of instruction because my shoulder will "distract" the boys? You'd think my first block looked something like this:

(Jane snaps, the lights shift to a classroom of male students. All desks are occupied except for one in the center. MRS.

MCCORMACK addresses the class.)

MRS. MCCORMACK: Alright everybody, we're going to do our best to get through all of today's material. I know it's incredibly difficult for you young scholars to focus in the classroom with that harlot Jane always creating a distraction.

(The male students nod sadly.)

(Near tears:) It just breaks my heart that she is robbing you of your precious concentration, because I know the only thing you hope to gain from your daily eight hours in these hallowed halls is a quality education.

GRAHAM: *(Passionately:)* The only thing I desire to gain from my daily eight hours in these hallowed halls is a quality education. I want to be challenged! I want to be questioned! I want to spend every moment gaining pertinent knowledge and skills that I will need in the real world, like how to diagram a sentence.

(Male students all ad lib their agreement.)

How to drop an egg from a five-story building without breaking it!

(Male students agree enthusiastically.)

How to use a geometric proof to conclude that two triangles are congruent given their properties!

(Male students cheer.)

How to speak Latin.

(Male students hesitate and mumble.)

Well, maybe not that one...but how about the knowledge that Alexander Hamilton wrote 51 of the 85 federalist papers?

(Male students go wild.)

Actually, I think we learned that last one from a musical. But anyway, *(Getting emotional:)* I just love learning. So. Much. So.

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Much. It. Hurts. (*Weeping:*) Hurts. So. Good. (*Composing himself:*) Ahem. I certainly hope that no one distracts me from learning. Because what I want to do is learn. I do not want to be distracted.

(Male students all ad lib their agreement.)

MRS. MCCORMACK: Oh, boys, you are so dedicated to the learning process. It warms my heart. It would truly be a shame if anyone were to offer a distraction of any kind.

(Jane enters the classroom normally. The male students react immediately and all stare intensely, perhaps sexy music plays. Mrs. McCormack pulls out an emergency button and presses it frantically. Jane makes her way to her desk and sits. The room is warm, so she takes off a layer to reveal a shirt that does not meet dress code. The male students go crazy. They howl like cartoon wolves, drool, pound chests, etc... Chaos in the classroom.)

JANE, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!

JANE: How am I responsible for this?

MRS. MCCORMACK: Boys will be boys.

JANE: NO! (*She snaps and the action freezes, Jane addresses the audience.*) Seriously? How about "Boys will exhibit basic respect and self control"? My body is not a danger to the educational system. Men who are raised with the belief that it is are a danger to my body. Now if you'll excuse me, (*Holds up ISS slip:*) I've got somewhere to be.

(Jane exits.)

SCENE 10: Smile

(MONICA enters, confident and radiant. She encounters MALE CATCALLERS who divide the following lines.)

Excuse me.

(Whistle.)

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How you doing today?

Hey, baby.

Looking good, princess.

(Kiss noises.)

I'd hit that.

What's up, beautiful?

Come talk to me.

Can I walk with you a minute?

Shake it for me, sweetie.

Psst-psst.

That's what I'm talking about.

Dayuuuum!

How much?

Can I get some of that?

(Monica does her best to ignore them, but she is shaken.)

Let's see a smile.

You're too beautiful to be sad.

Take a compliment.

You look even better walking away.

You don't wanna talk?

Someone's acknowledging you.

Think you're too good for me?

Don't advertise what's not for sale.

You should say "thank you" more.

You must be on your period.

Stuck up.

Bitch.

You don't look that good anyway.

(Monica's confidence has completely deflated. She exits. KENDRA enters and the catcallers start their lines again as the scene ends.)

SCENE 11: The Rules of Dating

(DADS and DAUGHTERS enter and stand in pairs throughout the stage. Dads stand protectively in front of their Daughters and deliver the following lines.)

The rules for dating my daughter:

One: If you make my daughter cry, I'll make you cry.

Two: I own an extensive collection of firearms.

Three: Have her home thirty minutes before her curfew.

Four: Understand, I don't like you and I never will.

Five: I don't mind going back to jail.

Six: She's my princess, not your conquest.

Seven: If you put your hands on her, I will remove them.

Eight: Whatever you do to her, I will do to you.

Nine: Besides me, there are only three other men she needs in her life: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And the final rule for dating my daughter:

ALL DADS: You Can't.

DAUGHTERS: Daddy! *(Giggles.)*

(Daughters exit, SONS enter and are greeted enthusiastically. They stand next to Dads.)

ALL DADS: The rules for dating my son.

(Pause. All burst into laughter, Sons are patted on the back, handed money, car keys, etc. and sent on their way.)

SCENE 12: The Game

(BRANDON and KAITLYN enter on opposite sides of the stage)

BRANDON: You have to make the first move.

KAITLYN: You can't seem too eager.

BRANDON: Don't text too frequently.

KAITLYN: Don't text back too quickly.

BRANDON: But don't take too long to reply.

KAITLYN: Someone else might be talking to them too.

BRANDON: You'll look desperate if you comment on every post.

KAITLYN: Who is that other girl commenting on all his posts?

BRANDON: Who else is she talking too?

KAITLYN: A little bit of jealousy shows you care.

BRANDON: Be nice, but not too nice.

KAITLYN: Be smart, but not too smart.

BRANDON: Keep your options open.

KAITLYN: Act like a lady.

BRANDON: Play it cool.

KAITLYN: Laugh at his jokes.

BRANDON: Pay for the meal.

KAITLYN: Order the salad.

BRANDON: Open the doors.

KAITLYN: Let him win.

BRANDON: Buy her gifts.

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KAITLYN: Don't be a gold digger.

BRANDON: Don't get left in the friend zone.

KAITLYN: Hide your baggage or he'll think you're crazy.

BRANDON: Those song lyrics *are* directed at you.

KAITLYN: Don't be the first to say, "I love you."

BRANDON: Don't be the last of your friends to hookup.

KAITLYN: Chill doesn't mean what our parents think it means.

BRANDON: It's not cheating if you're just talking.

KAITLYN: There's always someone else.

BRANDON: You can end it with a text.

KAITLYN: You can't see tears through a phone.

BRANDON: When you see her in class, act normal.

KAITLYN: If you see him in the hall, pretend you don't.

BRANDON: You have to save face.

KAITLYN: You can't lose the break up.

BRANDON: Everybody knows—

KAITLYN: There are rules.

BOTH: Know how to play the game.

(Kaitlyn and Brandon exit as ROGER and his PARENTS enter.)

SCENE 13: Going Pro

ROGER: My parents have always supported big dreams.

MOM: If you can dream it, you can do it.

DAD: If you work hard, nothing's impossible.

ROGER: Ever since I was a little kid, I've dreamed of playing

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Major League Soccer.

DAD: We believe in you, son.

MOM: If anyone can do it, it's you.

ROGER: I've been training and playing for years and they've always had my back. Whatever I've needed: equipment, soccer camp, private coaching, rides to practice, someone to kick the ball around with. They never hesitate and in twelve years they've never missed a game. Not even one.

MOM: You make us so proud.

DAD: That's my boy!

ROGER: None of us are naïve. When you look at the numbers, not a high percentage of high school athletes actually go pro.

MOM: If they can do it, so can you.

DAD: You've got the talent and the passion to make it happen.

ROGER: (*Moving away from his parents:*) I appreciate my parents' encouragement, but recently I've found my dreams shifting. I've discovered something else I have a passion and talent for: eSports. It might sound strange to some, but professional gaming is a massive industry. Players compete in local, state, national and even international tournaments for rankings, recognition, and prizes; some gaming tournaments even air on ESPN. My friend, Matt, plays competitively and he kills at it; Super Smash Bros Melee is his game of choice. One afternoon, I went over to his place to hang out. When I got there, he was finishing up practice. On a whim, I asked for a match.

(*He sits, MATT hands him a controller.*)

MATT: Alright, dude. But I'm not going to take it easy on you.

(*They play, Roger loves this. They ad lib taunts and reactions to the game. It's a hard-fought match, but Matt wins.*)

GET WRECKED!

ROGER: (*Laughs.*) Matt bodied me that first day, but I've always enjoyed a challenge. Soon we were playing together for hours every day.

Pretty soon, I started beating Matt almost as much as I lost to him. That's saying something, because Matt has been ranked second in the state for Smash for over six months! I even joined him at a local tourney where I placed third and won a hundred bucks, not bad for a beginner. (*Rejoining his parents:*) When I told my parents, they were less than impressed.

MOM: I don't understand. You're playing video games for money?

DAD: Seems like you could be spending your time more wisely.

ROGER: Look, I'm good at this and I like doing it. I want to start competing more often, focus on climbing up the ranks. I could have a shot at doing this for real.

MOM: It's fine for a hobby.

DAD: But it's not something to pursue for a career. It's unrealistic.

ROGER: What happened to "dream big" and "anything's possible"? Competitive gaming can be a career, and it isn't all that different from any other sport. I mean, Dad, you watch guys drive around in a circle 200 times covered in stickers and they get paid to do it.

DAD: (*Firmly:*) You need to stay focused on soccer.

MOM: You don't want to just throw all that time away.

ROGER: I'm not throwing it away, I'm just not sure it's what I want to do for the rest of my life.

DAD: So, what's the plan? To gain 200 pounds and never date

again?

MOM: Lou...

DAD: I'm not going to sit quietly while my only son turns his entire future into a joke. What kind of *man* plays video games for a living?

ROGER: Is that what this is about? How "manly" my career of choice is? How many girls it will get me? How impressed your friends will be with it?

DAD: You're twisting my words.

ROGER: What about what I want?

DAD: You don't know what you want, you're just a kid.

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