



**Sample Pages from
Characters Behaving Badly**

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CHARACTERS BEHAVING BADLY

A VIGNETTE PLAY IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



Characters Behaving Badly
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Characters

2M+2W+5 Any Gender + 1 Trans Woman

COM: (Any Gender) Introduction, Monologue One, Ten

SID: (M) Introduction, Three, Seven

NAR: (W) Introduction, Five, Eight

KLO: (Any Gender) Introduction, Three, Seven

FEEJEE: (W) Introduction, Four, Ten

KOI: (Any Gender) Introduction, Two, Monologue Two, Ten

GAZ: (M) Introduction, Four, Eight, Ten

PALLA: (Trans W) Introduction, One, Five, Nine

VAC: (Any Gender) Introduction, Two, Six, Nine

LAN: (W) Introduction, One, Six

Casting Breakdown

You are welcome to adjust which actors present the various scenes. You can also expand the cast by dividing the roles among more performers. The play would work well as a class project where everyone gets one scene to rehearse and present. It also provides the opportunity for discussions about the nature of “good” and “bad” characters, what it means to play a “bad” character and what defines “good” and “bad.”

Gender Note

You have permission to change the gender of the male and female characters. Of course, “Any Gender” means any gender. If you do not have a trans actor you may substitute a cis actor. But in this case, replace Scene Nine with the alternate scene provided in the Appendix.

Scene Four

This scene calls for a character in a wheelchair. If you do not have a student in a wheelchair, you can use the alternate scene provided in the Appendix.

Scene Nine

This scene calls for a trans character. Currently, it calls for a trans woman, as the character has been voted Prom Queen. If you do not have a trans actor, please do not have the character in Scene Nine played by a cis actor. Instead, replace Scene Nine with the alternate scene provided in the Appendix.

If you have a trans male actor who wants to take on the scene as Prom King, you have permission to do so, but be advised you’ll have to adjust the other roles the actor plays throughout the play.

If you do not have a trans actor, you can substitute a cis actor for the various roles, but again, replace Scene Nine with the alternate scene provided in the Appendix.

Cutting Permission

You have permission to cut any scene/monologue in its entirety. Any other cutting must be approved by the playwright.

Contact Theatrefolk at help@theatrefolk.com with details of what exactly you want to cut and why.

Setting

Use a unit set with risers for levels and cubes to transform the area into whatever location you need. A couple of extra moveable set pieces are suggested throughout, but keep everything mobile and easy to transform. **DO NOT USE BLACKOUTS BETWEEN SCENES.** Use music / movement / choreography to transition. The scenes are short and blackouts will drag the pace of the play.

Costumes

Keep costumes uniform using colour accents, accessories, hats, scarfs, vests and other easily changeable pieces to build character individuality.

INTRODUCTION

Bright, happy music plays. Lights up full.

COM enters, looking around the space to make sure everything is ready to go. They are happy with what they see and gesture offstage. They observe the following, either leaning against the side of the stage, or sitting somewhere visible but not in the way.

VAC walks across the stage, slowly, deep into their phone. They do not look up. From the other side of the stage, PALLA enters, skipping even. Their attitude is sweet and pleasant. PALLA “bumps” into VAC. They deeply apologize, VAC shrugs off the interaction, carries on, back into their phone. PALLA changes their facial expression to something more smug. They hold up the wallet they’ve just taken from VAC. PALLA skips off as SID enters. SID’s attitude is sweet and pleasant. They mime throwing up a rock and catching it. From the opposite side of the stage, NAR enters, watching SID. SID stops centre stage and their facial expression changes to hatred. They want to do harm. SID then throws the rock as if through a window. NAR reacts and makes a beeline toward SID “shouting all the way.” SID sees NAR coming and runs off. NAR chases after.

VAC enters again, deep into their phone. From the opposite side of the stage GAZ & LAN enter. They all meet centre stage. GAZ & LAN look VAC up and down condescendingly, laughing at VAC, belittling them as if to suggest they’re no good. VAC gets insecure and runs off as GAZ & LAN laugh. GAZ & LAN continue crossing the stage. PALLA enters and “bumps” into GAZ. They deeply apologize. GAZ & LAN carry on, chatting. PALLA holds up the wallet they’ve just taken from GAZ. PALLA looks after GAZ and runs off.

From the opposite direction KOI enters, acting as a politician: confident, smiling, waving, shaking hands. The rest of the cast surrounds KOI, listening to what they have to say. KLO enters from the opposite side, also acting as a politician. The crowd moves over to KLO. KOI turns offstage and gestures, frustrated. FEEJEE enters. KOI gives FEEJEE a large wad of cash. FEEJEE nods and moves to the other side of the stage. FEEJEE starts whispering in the ears of everyone

around KLO. Whatever it is, it shocks the listener and they exit immediately. KLO tries to stop everyone leaving but can't. KLO turns to KOI, who shrugs and exits happily.

COM now stands or moves centre stage, watching KLO.

KLO gestures at FEEJEE and gives them an even bigger wad of cash. FEEJEE and KLO shake hands and FEEJEE exits after KOI. KLO waves at COM. COM raises their hands and claps twice.

Everyone enters and arranges themselves in levels across the stage. The music fades.

COM: *(calmly, but gleeful, loves talking about this, think carnival ringmaster)*
In the world, there are many categories of bad.

KOI: Varying degrees.

VAC: Divisions.

NAR: Subsections.

PALLA: There's bad. There's *(quickly)* bad bad.

GAZ: There's bad bad BAD.

COM: *(calmly, with a smile)* The list goes on. *(with great solemnity)* Some might say that *(whispering)* murder is the worst thing anyone could ever possibly do. *(with more of a smile and a shrug)* Some might not. *(The others react with varying levels of outrage. COM gets the group back under control.)* Hey, hey hey! Not everyone has the same... *(enjoys this)* moral compass. On the other end of the scale, some might say the mere act of thinking bad things that makes you a bad person. Do good people have bad thoughts? *(to the audience)* Do you? *(everyone looks out to the audience, sizing them up)* Maybe. Bad behaviour is a sliding scale for everyone, that's what makes it so... *(smiling)* interesting.

KOI: *(overly cheerful)* Not for me. I'm Team Good all the way.

FEEJEE: What does that mean?

VAC: What's good?

NAR: Who gets to define it?

SID: *(snidely looking at KOI)* Team Good is so boring...

KLO: (*curious*) Do you ever look at people and wonder if they've done something really awful? Something you can't even imagine doing? (*imagines it and makes a face*)

PALLA: (*serious, suspecting everyone around them*) I want to know if they've ever sold secrets to a foreign government. It's always the people you least suspect.

FEEJEE: I want to know if they've ever cheated on anyone. That, to me, is bad bad bad bad bad bad bad.

KOI: (*overly cheerful*) Team Good never cheats.

SID: I think you're missing the point.

LAN: I want to know their hair secrets. Everyone has nicer hair than me, they must be doing something bad to get such good hair.

FEEJEE: Like what? Mug an old lady for her conditioner?

LAN: I don't know... (*a little menacing*) And I want to know.

GAZ: (*moves downstage, gets a little excited*) When I look at someone, I want to know if they've ever stolen a chocolate bar. Because I'm always thinking, (*really wants*) I want to do that. Just one. Just once. A teeny tiny chocolate bar. (*in the moment*) I mean, I'm standing in front of the rack and the clerk isn't looking but there are probably cameras, there's always cameras these days, someone is always watching and (*acting as if someone grabs them*) I could get caught and charged and sent to jail. Jail! Over a chocolate bar! (*throws themselves to the ground*) But it's fair because I took it! It's my fault. So I never take it, even though I want to. Just once. (*looking around*) Is that so bad?

COM: (*moves downstage*) Doing it. Thinking about doing it. (*gesturing to the group of actors*) Characters behaving badly? (*shrugging with a smile*) Maybe. (*holds up a wallet. Drops it to the ground*) You decide.

Transition: Music plays. Everyone leans in to look at the wallet just sitting on the ground and then there is a mass scramble as everyone leaves except for PALLA and LAN, who move to SR riser, and VAC and KOI, who move to SL riser. VAC and KOI sit in neutral, heads down. The wallet remains on the ground. Lights focus on SR riser. Music fades.

SCENE ONE

PALLA: (*energy, really trying to sell this*) Did Cinderella really win? I mean, it's a drafty, old, crumbling castle. No WIFI. Is that really a win?

LAN: Snow White is married to wallpaper paste. He's got the personality of glue. (*tossing hair*) No thank you!

PALLA: There are bats in that castle. I know it. Bats, spiders, and who knows what else.

LAN: (*lots of energy*) She has to entertain seven dwarves at a moment's notice!

PALLA: A chore is what it is. It's not a win. A chore and a loss.

LAN: Yeah! (*beat*) A really shiny, glittery loss. (*losing energy and sitting*) A dripping with jewels kind of loss. Diving into a pool of money... kind of... loss.

PALLA: Yeah. (*sighing and sitting*) It would have been so different if she was ugly. Or had big feet.

LAN: (*to audience*) Look, we know. We know what you think about stepmothers. We know we're not... perfect. We know! I told that huntsman to kill the brat and bring back her heart. Not perfect.

PALLA: When you call her a brat, it makes you look a lot less than perfect. Not to mention the heart thing.

LAN: (*leaping up*) At least I don't have two dumpy self-deluded daughters who couldn't get a prince if they paid him.

PALLA: (*leaping up*) You're a witch! You had all the witchy woones at your disposal. And you couldn't –

LAN: (*grabbing PALLA by the shoulders*) Hey. Hey. We're in this together. If we're trying to present our side, we can't be at each other's throats. (*referring to the audience*) We can't prove them right.

PALLA: Sorry. Sorry. (*sighing*) My daughters are dumpy.

LAN: (*sighing*) How was I supposed to know there'd be dwarves? I was beaten by dwarves!

The two face the audience and try to regain their composure.

PALLA: (*to audience*) Sure. We could have handled our situations differently.

LAN: It's not our fault we're stepmothers.

PALLA: It's not our fault stepmothers have a reputation. We worked with what we had.

LAN: That's right. We're not bad people. We were simply... *(trying)* working with the tools at our disposal.

PALLA: There are way worse out there.

LAN: We didn't decapitate our stepsons and turn them into stew. Google that one.

PALLA: *(to self, turning away)* Oh if I could have gotten away with that, I would have chopped her up so fast – *(LAN elbows PALLA, or coughs loudly)* Kidding! *(to audience, trying to regain composure)* Decapitation is never a good choice.

LAN: Remember there's always two sides of the story. Stepmothers deserve to be heard.

PALLA: *(really overdoing it)* Stepmothers are awesome! *(LAN looks at PALLA)* Too much?

Transition: PALLA and LAN turn their backs to the audience. Lights focus on SR riser.

SCENE TWO

There is the sound of a car sputtering, sputtering, and sputtering to a stop. VAC looks extremely anxious as this happens. KOI does not.

VAC: *(anxious energy)* What happened? What happened? Why isn't the car moving?

KOI: *(laidback energy.)* Yeaaaaaaaah. We totally ran out of gas.

VAC: This is bad. This is so bad. I need to get home before my parents realize I'm gone.

KOI: Yeaaaaaaaah. I run on fumes all the time and I've got so much further than this.

VAC: *(really anxious energy)* Ok. Ok. We're stuck on the side of the road. Without gas. In the middle of the night. Ok. We can solve this. Right? Can you call someone? Do you have something with your insurance? Where they bring a gas can out to you?

KOI: (*as if they've never heard of this*) They'll do that? Huh. I should totally get some insurance.

VAC: (*snippy*) Michelle said you were a responsible driver.

KOI: (*not bothered*) I am. Last time I took the car out I set it on fire. (*considering*) This is much better.

VAC: You did what?

KOI: My parents were so angry, it's a good thing they weren't home tonight. I'm only supposed to drive in case of emergencies.

VAC: And the concert was an emergency?

KOI: (*dead serious*) Absolutely.

VAC: I can't believe this. I can't believe I said yes. Throw caution to the wind! Ha! I can't believe I'm going to get caught over this. It wasn't even a good concert! I didn't even have any fun!

KOI: Yeaaaaaaaah. This really is on you.

VAC: Michelle said you were a responsible person. She said you were pre-med.

KOI: I was. Now I want to be a fashion designer. Hats. Maybe shoes. Hats and shoes. Together.

VAC: This is bad. Why aren't you upset about this? Doesn't it bother you to get in trouble?

KOI: Nah. It's totally not my fault. Things... happen. Sure, they're not great things, and they happen a lot but – (*looking out the window, as if realizing for the first time*) Wow it's so dark out there.

VAC: I cannot believe this. (*pulls out phone*)

KOI: (*on another planet*) I totally want to drive with my eyes closed. (*looking over*) Whatcha doing?

VAC: Calling my mom to pick us up so I can never see the light of day for the rest of my life.

KOI: Hey, that's a great idea! I should totally get a phone.

Transition: A short music sting plays. Lights focus on downstage. VAC and KOI turn or stand to turn their backs to the audience. SID and KLO enter, one from SR and one from SL. They stop CS, right by the wallet.

SCENE THREE

SID and KLO stare at the wallet.

SID: There's no I.D.

KLO: Nope.

SID: Just money.

KLO: Yep.

SID: A lot of money.

KLO: (*crouching down*) I've never seen this much, all at once. Have you?

SID: Nope. (*beat*) So. (*beat*) What do we do?

KLO: I don't know. I know what we should –

SID: Don't say it! Don't say it! Do not put those words into the universe.

KLO: But what I want to say is –

SID: If you say it, then I'll have to hear it. And then I'll feel guilty. If you don't say it I can pretend this wallet is free and in the clear. And if this wallet is free and in the clear then this money is ours and I could maybe buy that drone I've had my eye on...

KLO: (*trying to get this out*) I don't know if –

SID: (*interrupting*) Please don't ruin it. Please, please, please. I want to imagine a life where I'm the kind of person who sees something and takes it! Who never thinks about the consequences! (*moving away from the wallet*) Like Riva? Who breezed into the divisional science fair and told everyone she was going to win, even though it was with a subpar, in my opinion, bread mold thing? And she did. She took the win! Even though our water electrolysis experiments were way more advanced and everyone said so.

KLO: I know. I was there.

SID: She put that win into the universe and it actually happened! I still can't believe it. I wanted to win, too. You shouldn't be able to win by... What are we talking about?

KLO: The wallet.

SID: The wallet!

They run back to stare at the wallet.

KLO: What I was going to say, (*SID goes to speak*) Wait! What I was going to say is that I don't know if I... feel guilty.

SID: (*surprised*) Oh.

KLO: It's a wallet. Lying on the ground. No one's running up to claim it...

SID: You want to do this?

KLO: (*kneeling down*) We should pick it up again.

SID: (*stopping KLO*) Don't!

KLO: Why not? If we don't have it in our hands there's the possibility that someone will walk by and also see the wallet.

SID: While we're staring at it? And standing over it? And we'd see them coming?

KLO: Someone could see our inaction and want to do the right thing. They'll swoop it right out from under us. No more drone...

SID: That's not fair.

KLO: Or... they won't feel guilty either. And then they'll get the drone.

SID: Stop poking at me with the drone! (*closes eyes and makes a decision*) A wallet must find its owner. It's the right thing to do. I put it in the universe. I feel guilty. Here it comes. Yep. There it is. Hello guilt, take up a chair.

KLO: I'm going to pick it up. (*mimes picketing up the wallet*)

SID: Don't...

KLO: It's so heavy. Did you know money was so heavy? (*holding out their hand*) Want to hold it?

SID: (*recoiling back*) No! (*leaning in*) Yes! (*recoiling back*) No! (*accusing*) You want to keep the money.

KLO: You wanted to keep the money a moment ago.

SID: I was imagining keeping it. Imagining. I knew you were going to talk me out of it, but if you're not going to talk me out of it, now we're in the realm of the real and I'm not sure I can handle it.

KLO: We never do anything wrong. We follow the rules, we finish assignments on time.

SID: We never miss curfew.

KLO: I don't even have a curfew. That's how much I don't miss curfew.

SID: So what you're asking is, couldn't we do one wrong thing, this one time?

KLO: Is that what I'm asking?

SID: What would you buy? With the money.

KLO: The best Shoto Todoroki cosplay ever. Top quality. With a wig that doesn't itch. AND tickets to AX, Premiere Fan, AND – (eyes wide, realizing) oh no. Oh no. Oh no, oh no, oh no, oh no.

SID: What?

KLO: Let's do it! (*really loud*) Let's do the wrong thing!

SID: Not so loud!

KLO: (*holding up the wallet*) Let's take this money and go to town! Let's spend it all, spend, spend, spend, and then there won't be any money to feel guilty about! Come on, before I change my mind.

KLO starts to run off and SID stops them.

SID: Wait a second! We have to think about this.

KLO: (*trying to get away*) No! I don't want to think! I'm tired of thinking. All I do, all day long is think. It's time to act!

SID: (*trying to stop*) We have to think about why there's a wallet bulging with cash and no ID.

KLO: (*trying to get away*) We have to do this now! Now, now!

SID: There is the likelihood that this is ill-gotten gains. Have you ever thought about that?

KLO: (*trying to believe this*) It's a wallet full of clean, perfect, consequence-free money that no one is looking for!

SID: And the person who came by this money through ill-gotten gains will retrace their steps looking for this wallet. Maybe one of their henchmen is watching us right now. And they'll see us pick up the wallet. They'll watch us spend the money. They'll make us rue the day we ever did that, oh yes they will, they'll make us pay. Probably without fingernails.

There is a pause. KLO slowly puts the wallet back on the ground.

KLO: (*now totally deflated*) Why did you put that in my head?

SID: It's in mine. Why should I be the only one?

KLO: I hate you.

SID: That's fair.

KLO: Why can't we come across a wallet full of money with no strings attached? A wallet without any consequences. Why can't we buy nice things?

SID: There's no such thing as no consequences.

KLO: You know someone will come along and pick it up without thinking. They'll spend the money without thinking about their fingernails.

SID: Yeah. I know. Come on.

They start to exit.

KLO: The wigs are so itchy...

SID: I know. (*KLO starts to turn*) Don't look back.

KLO: I can take it. (*looks and sighs*) It's beautiful.

SID: I know. I know.

They turn and exit. There is a moment of silence.

One of them (your choice) comes back and takes the wallet and runs off in the other direction. The other enters, calling out "Wait!" and chasing after them.

Transition: Bright, almost kid-like music plays. All actors on stage exit. COM enters to sit on cube on SR riser. FEEJEE enters in front of the SL riser in neutral with head bowed. Lights focused on SR riser. Music fades.

MONOLOGUE ONE

COM: (*singing to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell"*)

I'm eating on the couch, I'm eating on the couch.

It's the nice one in the front room, I'm eating on the couch.

My mother doesn't know, My mother doesn't know,

I'll get in so much trouble, I'm eating on the couch.

(*speaking to "Mom" who isn't there.*) Hey Mom, I'm eating food

WITH condiments! Messy, messy condiments! Ketchup. Mustard. I thought about tomato sauce, that stuff is hard to get out. I thought about grease. *(to self)* Grease stains would drive her mental. Men-tal. Veins in her forehead. *(sighing)* But fried food upsets my stomach.

(singing) I'm eating on the couch, I'm eating on the couch.

(speaking) Hey Mom, I'm eating a cheeseburger! With ketchup, mustard and mayo!

(singing) I'm not allowed saturated fat, I'm eating on the couch.

(speaking) I think you were completely unfair. It was an A Minus. An A MINUS. So I didn't get an A in Spanish, that was grounds for grounding? Because I'm not "applying myself." I'm not "reaching" my "potential." *(to self)* Why am I getting upset, she's not even here. *(calling out)* I'm not getting upset, Mom. You know what I'm doing?

(singing) I'm eating on the couch, I'm eating on the couch...

(speaking) Whoops, I got ketchup on my hands and *(singsong)* I forgot a napkin. And this is one of those flimsy paper plates Aunt Kelly brought to the BBQ last summer that you hated and told her so. *(scoffing)* Not reaching my potential. All day long, all I'm thinking about is "my potential." You've burned it into my brain. Tattooed it backwards on my forehead so it's the first thing I see when I look in the mirror. I have had it. You know what? You know what? I might even get a B Plus in Spanish next semester. *(singing)* I'm eating on the couch, I'm eating – *(cuts self off)* Probably not, I like As. But you know what else I like, Mom? Credit for my work. Credit for the fact that Spanish doesn't come easy and I got an A Minus, Mom. Credit for the fact that I could have trashed my room and I didn't because it's really nice and I'd clean it up afterward and that, I feel, would depart from the point.

(singing low) I'm eating on the couch, I'm eating on the couch... I wonder if baking soda would get that out... I'm eating on the couch...

*Transition: Bad mall music or elevator music plays.
Lights focus on SL riser. COM sits with head bowed.*

SCENE FOUR

FEEJEE is in a wheelchair. Waiting. See the Appendix for a version of the scene without the wheelchair. GAZ enters from the opposite side of the stage. Music fades.

GAZ: All right! Thank you for waiting. I'm sorry to keep you, I was talking to my department head. Are you cold? (*FEEJEE doesn't answer*) I think we can wrap this up quickly. Although, first, if you don't mind, while you're here, what's your opinion about the accessibility of the store? We have an advisory committee and it would be great to provide them a firsthand experience account of a wheelchair user.

FEEJEE: Don't you have someone who's disabled on the committee thing? Ask them.

GAZ: Well, we would. Certainly. It's part of the strategic development of the committee to include a disabled consultant in the upcoming year. I'm not actually involved.

FEEJEE: Uh huh.

GAZ: Listen, I have to ask, my son would kill me if he knew I spent time with someone in a wheelchair and didn't ask – what happened to you? How did you end up this way?

FEEJEE: None of your business.

GAZ: Yeah. Yeah. I feel you.

FEEJEE: In what way do you "feel me"?

GAZ: It must be so difficult to talk about. It must keep you up at night.

FEEJEE: It really doesn't. Why aren't you calling the police?

GAZ: We don't need to do that, do we? I thought we would wrap this up quickly between us.

FEEJEE: Are you calling my parents?

GAZ: No. (*realization*) Oh, you need someone to come get you. Of course you do. Yes, absolutely I will call your parents.

FEEJEE: Don't bother.

GAZ: How will you get home?

FEEJEE: I attempted to steal thousands of dollars of stuff from your store. Thousands. And you're worried about how I'll get home?

GAZ: Obviously you didn't mean it.

FEEJEE: How so?

GAZ: This is a cry for help. Obviously. *(beat)* I'm a good judge of character and that's why I opposed my department head. She wanted to call the police. I think this is a time for empathy and understanding. It must be so difficult for you.

FEEJEE: You are the stupidest person I have ever met in my life.

GAZ: Now, now.

FEEJEE: I insulted you. I stole from your store. And all you can say is "now, now."

GAZ: Now, now. I think that...

FEEJEE: Your department head is right.

GAZ: I'm a good judge of character and I –

FEEJEE: *(smiling, this is not a bad thing to the character)* I steal things. Easily. Gladly. Cosmetics today, grocery store yesterday. No one ever sees me. They see the chair and they feel so sorry for me. *(exaggerated)* Awwwwwwww. You can't walk. How awful. So sad. *(sneering)* Pathetic.

GAZ: This is such a call for help.

FEEJEE: I don't want your help. Call the cops.

GAZ: I can't do that.

FEEJEE: I know you can't. I know you won't. People like you never do. You don't want to be seen as the bad guy. The one who authorized the arrest of a poor wheelchair-bound teenager. *(exaggerating)* A poor pathetic crippled teen. How sad. How tragic. *(smiling)* That's what I want. I want to make you squirm.

GAZ: *(sighing)* This must be hard for you, navigating this life.

FEEJEE: You're not even listening. Call the police.

GAZ: *(so uncomfortable)* We don't need to do that.

FEEJEE: Do it. Have them take me out in handcuffs. Do your job!

GAZ: No!

FEEJEE: Then you'll have to let me go. Roll on out of your office without having learned a thing. What will your department head say then?

GAZ: I can't do that...

FEEJEE: Then I guess we're at a standstill.

GAZ: I guess we are.

Transition: Suspense music up. FEEJEE, GAZ, COM exit during this transition. VAC and LAN enter to stand on the SR riser, with their backs to the audience. Lights focus on downstage.

SCENE FIVE

NAR brings a small table DSC and places it decisively. They look around, make sure the coast is clear and then they run to the side and grab a stack of books. They bring the stack to the table. They crouch behind the table. Music fades.

PALLA: (entering) Jo? Jo... ? This is stupid. I can't believe I agreed to –

NAR: (popping up from behind the table) Did anyone follow you?

PALLA: (jumping back) Ah!

NAR: Did anyone follow you?

PALLA: To the library? No.

NAR: Did you check?

PALLA: No.

NAR sneaks over stage right to look offstage. Perhaps NAR wears a pair of binoculars and looks through them.

PALLA: So... do you have those math notes?

NAR puts up a hand to quiet PALLA. NAR sneaks stage left and looks off, through the binoculars. NAR nods as if satisfied they are alone and comes back to the table. NAR begins stacking books on one end of the table as if building a small wall.

PALLA: Why are we meeting here?

NAR: I wanted somewhere quiet. I don't want anyone to interrupt us.

PALLA: It's math notes. It's not exactly top secret. What are you doing?

NAR: Putting up a book barrier. If anyone comes this way, I want them to be mentally repelled, and go somewhere else. Too! Many! Books!

PALLA: Won't Mrs. Franconi want to come over when she sees a wall of books sitting in the middle of the library?

NAR: She never leaves her desk at lunch. I've been observing her every move for weeks.

PALLA: Jo, this is weird. It's too weird.

NAR: This is prepared. I want to show you how prepared I am and that you should trust me.

PALLA: (*backing up*) I'm gonna go, ok? I don't really need those notes. I'll figure math out myself, I guess.

NAR: (*running over to PALLA*) Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait!

PALLA: I know we haven't hung out a lot this year. I know things aren't the same, and I'm sorry. But things change. Right? People change; there's nothing more to it than that. I'm gonna go.

PALLA turns to go but when NAR starts talking, this stops them.

NAR: You told Macie Stanhope that you had no hope of getting a good grade in Math. Your mom was going to kill you over your math grade and there's no way you'd be allowed to even leave your room this summer if you fail math, let alone go camping with your softball team.

PALLA: (*turning to NAR*) How do you know all that?

NAR: I have something better than math notes. Mr. Das gives the same test at the end of every year. (*runs to the table and grabs an envelope from inside one of the books*) These are the answers.

PALLA: What are you doing?

NAR: (*throwing the envelope down on the table*) Giving you an opportunity.

PALLA: To cheat on the test? I'm not going to cheat. No way. No. No. (*pacing*) I'll take the test and get the outcome I deserve. I'm

leaving. (*starts to walk away and turns around*) Are those really the answers? No, no, no! Why would you do this?

NAR: We used to be best friends.

PALLA: People change.

NAR: I miss hanging out with you.

PALLA: What do you want?

NAR: (*revealing*) I want you to come to my birthday party. Like old times. I'll give you the answers to the end of year test, so you won't fail, and your mother won't kill you, and you won't lose your summer, if you come to my birthday party. As my friend.

PALLA: I ... I can't do that.

NAR: (*pauses before speaking*) Okay. (*takes the envelope off the table*) Have a good summer. (*starts to walk away*)

PALLA: That's not fair. You can't say, here's the answer to all your problems and then pull it away. You can't bribe people to be your friends. We're not friends anymore.

NAR: You must be right. (*starts to exit*)

PALLA: Where are you going?

NAR: We're done, aren't we? No birthday party, no answers. Lunch is pretty much over, anyway. See you. (*resumes existing*)

PALLA: I can't fail math! I can't. (*pause*) Why would you do this for me? I've ignored you all year. (*beat*) Are you going to give those to anyone else...?

NAR: Nope. Just you.

PALLA: Huh. (*thinks*) Okay. Okay. I want... (*makes a decision*) I want the answers. I'll come to your birthday. For the answers.

NAR: Really? You'll come? That's great! (*hands over the envelope*) We're going to play mini golf. I can't wait. No one will go with me anymore. It'll be like old times. You'll see. You won't regret this. I promise. (*starts to exit*)

PALLA: (*staring at the envelope*) I hope so. (*following slowly off*)

Transition: PALLA slowly exits. There is the sound of a faraway crowd having fun, like at a carnival. Lights focus on SR riser. VAC and LAN turn around.

SCENE SIX

VAC and LAN both stand with their arms crossed. LAN looks disgusted. VAC looks a little defeated.

LAN: Ugh. So ugh. This is gross. Ugh and gross.

VAC: What?

LAN: This. *(VAC still looks confused. LAN makes frantic circles with both her hands.)* Thiiiiiiiiis.

VAC: This.

LAN: Yes. This.

VAC: Volunteering at a children's cancer charity event is gross. That this?

LAN: What else would I be talking about? I hate children. *(shudders)* Ugh. Especially sick ones.

VAC: Then why are you here?

Everything changes in LAN's demeanor as she sees someone downstage in the distance, she runs forward, waving frantically.

LAN: Hey! Hey John! Hey it's Summer, remember me! Halooo! *(she deflates and kicks the ground)* Stupid. Stupid job in the stupid parking lot. I should be in that tent! *(she moves back to stand with VAC)*

VAC: And the clouds have lifted... You like John, huh?

LAN: Why is he so busy? Why isn't he talking to me? *(referring to herself)* Look at this. Look! I am a magnet of beauty!

VAC: You do know his sister passed away from Leukemia. And he's very active in the foundation. And he's on the planning committee for this event.

LAN: *(negating hand gestures)* Neh! I don't care about any of that.

VAC: Of course you don't.

LAN: I need John to see me caring about children and he can't see me caring about children if he's in the tent and I'm stuck with *(lots of venom)* you in the parking lot!

VAC: *(referring to the venom)* No offense.

LAN: What?

VAC: Never mind. Why exactly do you want to date him?

LAN: Because. Duh.

VAC: He doesn't seem your type. Kind, friendly, caring...

LAN: If you can't figure it out I'm not going to – (*Everything changes when she sees John. She runs forward and waves.*) John! John! Halloo! (*stomps feet*) This is impossible! I got my nails done.

VAC: I can't see it. I know why I like him but, it seems like you only want to be seen with him which is kind of low, in my opinion. It's hardly a reason to date someone... (*LAN turns to stare at VAC*) What? What's the matter?

LAN: (*advancing slowly with menace*) Like or like like?

VAC: What?

LAN: (*very serious*) Like or like like? You like him like a friend or is there something more?

VAC: Are we in middle school? What does it matter if I –

LAN: You can't like John.

VAC: What? Why?

LAN: Because I said so. You cannot like John.

VAC: Sure I can. It's a free country.

LAN: You will not like John. You are not allowed to like John. I'm the beauty magnet. I'm the one with the good nails. I'm the one who understands the complexities of power couples.

VAC: Still a free country. Maybe he doesn't like beauty magnets. Or power.

LAN: (*serious*) I'm warning you. Stay away from John!

VAC: You're doing a good job of staying away from John. He's in the tent and you're way over here in the – (*LAN starts advancing menacingly on VAC. VAC gets out of the way.*) Oh, ok, ok. We're serious. I see that.

LAN: I'm warning you. Back off.

VAC: What are you going to do at a children's charity event? Huh?

LAN: I will tear all the hair out of your head if you don't back off. Don't tempt me, I will do it.

VAC: That might scare the children.

LAN: (*negating hand gestures*) They have cancer, I'm sure they don't scare easy.

VAC: Probably true. What if you're pulling out my hair and John comes over. He won't like it.

LAN: I'll tell him you insulted his sister. And I'll cry. Ugly cry. The believable kind. I can make my face red in under three seconds.

VAC: You wouldn't.

LAN: Don't tempt me.

VAC: Fine. Whatever. (*throwing hands up in frustration*) It's not like this day could get any worse. You want to be in the tent? I'm supposed to be in the tent. Me. John told me personally I'd be in the tent and now we're here, no tent. Parking lot. Direct sun. Everyone knows the parking lot is the worst job and I'm really annoyed that I talked to him for three weeks about how excited I was to volunteer at this stupid thing and every conversation was about stupid cancer but I was so sure once I was in the tent it would all be worth it. And where am I? Where am I? A million miles away with the worst job and the worst human being on the planet!

LAN: Excuse me?

VAC: Well, that shouldn't have come out.

LAN: (*smiling, realizing*) You don't like volunteering!

VAC: Didn't you hear the part where I called you the worst human –

LAN: (*negating hand gestures*) Forget that. You don't like volunteering! You think the parking lot is stupid.

VAC: Well...

LAN: Admit it!

VAC: (*they're not so different after all...*) We're standing in the direct sun! I'd be fine with it if I was in an air conditioned theatre or something.

LAN: I bet you don't like children either.

VAC: I like some children. These kids, (*the cancer kids*) they're fine. They look, (*looking around to make sure no one can hear*) they look a little weird all bald and stuff.

LAN: I thought so too!

VAC: But most kids, no. I don't like them. They're covered in snot and they don't care. They want to wipe their snot everywhere and I'm not interested in having my clothes that I paid for, in order to look good to attract attention, in a specific and thought out way covered in snot! (*throws hands up*) Go ahead, tear my hair out!

LAN: (*considering before talking*) All right. I'll make you a deal.

VAC: What?

LAN: I'll make you a deal. We'll work together to get his attention. We will get John to notice us in this parking lot. But once he's over here, it's everyone for themselves. And I won't be above the ugly cry. Deal?

VAC: Deal.

They shake hands.

LAN & VAC: (*running off*) John! Hey John!

Transition: Superhero-type music. KOI strides downstage centre. They move and act like a superhero. They gather the books on the table and hold them out. SID runs on, takes the books and exits.

MONOLOGUE TWO

KOI is at the table and using it to mime bagging groceries. Music fades.

KOI: Oh yeah. It was quite a scene. There is nothing like being on the inside. LIGHTMAN shook this hand. (*to a customer*) Paper or your own? We don't have plastic anymore. (*back to the listener*) Yep. Strength was my speciality. Lifting cars off of people, throwing stones. POWERFORCE. (*to a customer*) Paper or your own? We don't have plastic anymore. (*back to the listener*) I mean, I made a mistake. I fully admit that. I thought... well, the grass is always greener isn't it? Sure, being a superhero is great, but villains always looked like they were having more fun. (*to a customer*) Paper or your own? We don't have plastic anymore. (*a little irritated*) We had plastic and now we don't. We don't. Only paper. Or you can use your own bags. Uhhh they're bad

for the environment? Look, I'm just sharing store policy and – (*really irritated*) I'm not hiding any plastic bags. How would I do that? (*Takes a breath. Back to listener.*) So, I choked. I bent to the whispering wind. The red tape of being a superhero... nobody tells you about that side of things. No one at the Academy anyway. The amount of paperwork you have to fill out from the city is crazy. After every battle, I had to account for every car I lifted in the act of fighting crime: the make, model and license plate number. You think I'm keeping count of the inventory while I'm trying to stop THE DESTROYER from blowing up a building? It was nuts. (*to a customer*) Ma'am, do you want your eggs broken? Do you want scrambled eggs when you get home? (*back to listener*) Villains don't care about paperwork. (*thinking on their experience*) It's not exactly... structured over there. And when I saw what a huge mistake I had made... I tried to come back... I tried... well. (*beat*) At least I can say I was on the inside. I have an Academy sweatshirt. I have a picture with LIGHTMAN. And this? (*referring to the job of bagging groceries*) This is a loading zone. A holding point. A place to collect my thoughts while I figure out my strategy. I could write a book. Be an inspirational speaker. (*to customer*) Paper or...? Great. (*back to listener*) One of these days, everything is going to come back to me. I'll be who I was meant to be. They'll accept my apology. I'll be able to use my powers again. I made a mistake. A huge mistake, the biggest anyone could make... I'm more than my mistakes. Aren't I? (*to a customer*) Paper or your own? No. (*a little sad*) We don't have plastic anymore.

Transition: Superhero music plays. KOI lifts up the table, superhero style, and exits as GAZ and NAR enter to stand on the SR riser. They turn their back to the audience. On the other side of the stage, KLO and SID enter. KLO angrily brings a cube from the SL forward for KLO to sit on. A school bell rings.

SCENE SEVEN

SID sits miserably on the cube. KLO paces behind SID angrily.

KLO: Well? What do you have to say? (*SID shrugs.*) A shrug is not going to cut it. Speak.

SID: I don't know.

KLO: “I don’t know” isn’t going to cut it. The Vice Principal is right outside that door. He is not happy. He is not happy with what you did. I’m not happy I was pulled out of work. *(beat)* Well?

SID: I tried. Really I did.

KLO: Not hard enough.

SID: I tried to be what you want.

KLO: Clearly you weren’t listening. What did I tell you about this? What did I explicitly say?

SID: *(sighing)* Don’t do it in the school parking lot.

KLO: *(and the scene changes...)* Exactly! What were you thinking? And in daylight, too. Red-handed for all to see, your hand on the tire!

SID: *(sulky)* Buddy did it in daylight.

KLO: Clearly, you are no Buddy. Have I taught you nothing?

SID: I’ve been practicing and I thought –

KLO: You thought, you thought. What happened to the plan? What happened to staking out his house?

SID: *(sulking)* He never parks in the driveway.

KLO: Your problem-solving skills are a disgrace. *(sighing)* All right. What are we going to do?

SID: I don’t know. Um... cry?

KLO: Exactly. Cry, lots of crying. I can run back up but it’s really up to you. Can you do it? Well?

SID: *(a sorry excuse at problem solving)* I have an onion in my pocket...

KLO: *(can’t believe this)* An onion? An onion. We’re going to have a long talk about this. A long talk. Your problem-solving skills are a disgrace.

SID: *(sulking)* Buddy uses onion all the time. He told me.

KLO: Buddy is a tear master. A master. The onion is a supplement.

SID: I never wanted to do this in the first place! I wanted to join the robotics team! *(runs out)*

KLO: *(calling after)* Buddy would never think about robotics!

KLO exits after SID. Lights focus on the SR riser. A schoolbell rings.

SCENE EIGHT

GAZ and NAR turn around. They pose as per their characters.

NAR & GAZ: Who am I?

NAR: *(smiling and confident)* My label is superstar.

GAZ: *(angry, but also confident)* My label is troublemaker. And “I’m never going to accomplish anything.” I hear that, too.

NAR: Clean and sparkling. And my hair? Gorgeous.

GAZ: Dirty hair. Check. *(marking off the checklist of how others see them and make assumptions)*

NAR: *(referring to herself)* So put together.

GAZ: Same shirt as yesterday. Check.

NAR: Polite. Always polite. It’s not hard.

GAZ: I think the word they use for me is “combative.” Check.

NAR: Smile at teachers. It’s my trademark. *(as teacher, exaggerated)* “Oh, you always have a smile on your face!”

GAZ: I don’t have a lot of “patience” for teachers. I wouldn’t say that. But my word choice is frowned upon. And discussed. And written about. Check.

NAR: You have to consider your time and location. Who’s in the hall? Who’s on your side? You have to think things through.

GAZ: I never think. I act. It might be a little impulsive. A little rage connected. You might say I have a couple of things to be enraged about. Nobody says that though. Check.

NAR: You have to work fast. Short bursts, maximum damage. *(smiling)* I love damage.

GAZ & NAR: I don’t regret what I did.

NAR: Why would I?

GAZ: I’d do it again.

NAR: It makes me laugh.

GAZ: Why not live up to my “reputation?”

NAR: I’ll do it again.

GAZ: (*turning to NAR*) You think you’ve won.

NAR: (*turning to GAZ*) I did win. Who’s expelled? Not me.

GAZ & NAR: (*turning back to audience*) Who am I?

Transition: There is the sound of applause. GAZ and NAR exit. Lights focus on the SL riser.

SCENE NINE

PALLA enters wearing a crown and sash reading “Prom Queen.” (see note at the beginning of the play if you have a trans male actor and want to change this to “Prom King”) If you have time for a costume change, they also wear a Prom Queen type outfit that fits their identity. See the Appendix if you do not have a trans actor for the PALLA role.

PALLA is so happy. They move downstage as if looking in a mirror. VAC enters.

VAC: You look awesome.

PALLA: (*gives a twirl*) Well, thank you!

VAC: It’s pretty amazing. This whole thing.

PALLA: (*back to the mirror*) I can’t believe it. It’s like a dream.

VAC: It’s not a dream. It’s real. You won.

PALLA: I can’t believe it! I’m going to put it on my resume. I’m going to have business cards made up. “Prom Queen.”

VAC: That’s a great idea.

PALLA: I didn’t realize I had so much support. After... everything.

VAC: You do. I support you.

PALLA: I know. You always have. But this, this is... They voted for me! They accept me. I can’t stop smiling, my face hurts. I’ve never been happier in my whole life!

VAC: All I want is for you to be happy.

PALLA: (*hugging VAC*) You are such a good friend.

VAC: Thanks. That means a lot.

PALLA: Everything you've done... it's amazing.

VAC: (*a little dark*) You don't know the half of it.

PALLA: (*stepping away*) What does that mean?

VAC: It means... (*trying to get out of it, laughing*) Nothing. I don't know.

PALLA: Sure you do.

VAC: Well, I talked to a lot of people. You know. I advocated for you. I made sure they knew who to vote for. I made sure anyone who wasn't on your side was dealt with. I took care of everything.

PALLA: (*going back to the mirror*) What does that mean? "Dealt with."

VAC: I didn't break any kneecaps if that's what you're thinking. (*joking*) But they might have thought I was going to break their kneecaps.

PALLA: (*not laughing*) Ok...

VAC: I'm kidding! You know I'm kidding.

PALLA: (*knows deep down, VAC is not kidding*) Sure. (*beat*) It sounds odd.

VAC: I was helping you out.

PALLA: I can take care of myself.

VAC: Of course you can.

PALLA: It reminds me... when we were younger there was that big baking contest I entered and a couple of the favourites mysteriously had their sugar bowls replaced by salt. Their cakes were ruined.

VAC: No one knew it was me.

PALLA: I did.

VAC: You were way better than any of them.

PALLA: That wasn't for you to decide. (*long stare at VAC*)

VAC: (*in response to PALLA staring*) What?

PALLA: (*quiet*) What did you do?

VAC: Nothing.

PALLA: If you did anything to alter the votes...

VAC: You think I'd be able to figure that out? Huh? I can barely work my phone. You know that.

PALLA: Ok. If you have anything to do with someone else altering the votes, I will never forgive you.

VAC: I didn't! I didn't, ok?

PALLA: Because it would mean they don't accept me. That my identity... Did you plan this from the beginning when you suggested I run for Prom Queen?

VAC: (*moving away*) They're all awful. They're neanderthals. Do you know what they say about you? Do you know what they think?

PALLA: (*calmly*) Of course I do.

VAC: They needed to be shown that it's not their world anymore. We are on the right side of history and your identity is not a joke. How you feel about who you are... Don't you see? I had to do something. I had to and I don't regret it.

PALLA: (*gives a small hug*) You're a good friend.

VAC: I know I am. (*PALLA takes off the crown*) What are you doing?

PALLA: I'm going to tell the truth. I'm going to resign the crown. And then I'm probably going to eat a lot of french fries. It seems like that kind of day. (*starts to exit*)

VAC: But no one knows. As far as they're concerned you won.

PALLA: I know. (*as in 'I know the information'*) You never seem to get that. I know.

Transition: PALLA exits. VAC watches them go, and then slowly follows off. There is the sound of a crowd. It's the kind of crowd that gathers at concerts where there are very excited and perhaps screechy fans. Full stage light.

SCENE TEN

FEEJEE enters. They come downstage, and mime moving a curtain, as if looking out the window. They

*are not happy with what they see. They move away.
GAZ storms in.*

COM: You told everyone at school.

FEEJEE: Not everyone, I don't know everyone.

GAZ: Everyone I know knows. Have you looked out the window?

FEEJEE: No.

GAZ: You should. They're getting rowdy.

KOI, a parent or guardian, enters

KOI: Why is our front lawn littered with sobbing teenagers?

GAZ: They think they're going to see Jax Justice.

KOI: Why do they think they're going to see... who?

GAZ: Jax Justice. (to FEEJEE) Would you like to field that?

FEEJEE: I don't know anything about it.

GAZ: Well, it seems someone, in this room, decided to tell people they were related to a famous pop star, and when said pop star was performing in a certain city, said pop star would be staying in a certain person's home.

COM stumbles into the room. They are a very rabid fan.

COM: WHERE'S JAX?

KOI: Case in point, it seems.

GAZ: How did you get in here?

COM: I want to see them. (*hanging on to GAZ*) I won't do anything. Please tell me where they are!

GAZ: (*pushing them away*) Get off of me!

KOI: (*calmly to GAZ*) Can we not have a shoving match before noon?
(*calmly to COM*) It's not a good look to break into someone's house.

COM: (*snapping out of their rabidness*) Your basement windows are not secure. Like at all. It took five seconds. You should address that.

KOI: Ok. Noted.



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