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*This play is for Sakia Gunn, Shani Baraka, and the countless other young women from around the way who have had the courage to celebrate love in a hateful time.*

## **Cast of Characters**

KIA CLARK, 16, black, a little rough around the edges but very compassionate

MARISOL FELICIANO, 16, Latina, a little abrasive but very charming nonetheless

ANDRE, 17, black, Kia's best guy friend; tries a little too hard to be hard

REGINA CLARK, late thirties, black, Kia's mother

MR. KEYS, late thirties, Kia's English teacher

ALIA, 16, black, a gossiping classmate

*Ensemble Roles\**

TEACHERS

STUDENTS

THE BUTCH BRIGADE

SCHOOLCHILDREN

GLBT SUPPORT GROUP MEMBERS

BOY

and ADRIENNE RICH (of course)

*\*Can be effectively played by three additional actors.*

## **Setting**

Inner-city, 2003.

## Acknowledgments

*She Like Girls* was developed at the Lark Play Development Center in New York City, first as a reading in 2007 and then as a workshop production in 2008, both directed by Kristin Horton. It premiered at the Ohio Theater on December 3, 2009 as a Working Man's Clothes production with the following cast and crew:

KIA CLARK . . . . . Karen Eilbacher  
MARISOL FELICIANO . . . . . Karen Sours  
REGINA CLARK . . . . . Amelia Fowler  
ANDRE DUPREE . . . . . Paul Notice  
ALIA . . . . . Lavita Shaurice  
MR. KEYS . . . . . Adam Belvo  
ENSEMBLE . . . . . Ashley Noel Jones, Chaz Rose,  
Jessica Gist

Executive Producer . . . . . Ken Goldman  
Producer . . . . . Darcie Champagne  
Director . . . . . Jared Culverhouse  
Assistant Director . . . . . Terry Jenkins  
Set Design . . . . . Kelly Syring  
Lighting Design . . . . . Jake Platt  
Sound Design . . . . . Ryan Dorin  
Costume Design . . . . . Laura Taber Bacon  
Choreography . . . . . Sabrina Jacob  
Publicity . . . . . Katie Rosin and Antonio Minino  
of Kampfire Films

# SHE LIKE GIRLS

by Chisa Hutchinson

## ACT I

### Scene 1

*(Setting: Initially we are inside the head of KIA CLARK for a dream she is having while she sleeps in her room, where we will be once she wakes. The bedroom is nice enough, but is clearly in a working-class home. It is a little messy and not too elaborately decorated.)*

*(At rise: Spot on MARISOL FELICIANO wearing a cheerleading outfit and performing a provocative dance to a popular booty-shaker of a hip-hop song. Every once in a while, perhaps during the refrains, she removes a scandalous pair of panties [thong?] from underneath her skirt. It should be a deliberate tease, so that the audience thinks that each pair might just be the last. The last time she reaches under her skirt, she produces a gun and aims it at the audience. The music stops.)*

**MARISOL.** I seent the way you be lookin' at me in Algebra.

*(Spot down. The abrupt sound of an alarm clock going off as KIA CLARK awakes startled in her bed. She shuts off the alarm and begins to gag. She reaches into her mouth and pulls out a scandalous pair of panties.)*

*(End of scene.)*

### Scene 2

*(Setting: The Clark kitchen. It should be as complete a kitchen as possible, with an old refrigerator, a breakfast table, and maybe some cheap wooden cabinets.)*

*(At rise: REGINA CLARK sits at the table, buttering her toast. She is dressed to do a job that she wouldn't do if she didn't have to, like cleaning hotel rooms. She is in a playful mood. KIA enters.)*

**REGINA.** The dead has arisen. Gimme some sugar...

*(KIA kisses her mother. REGINA sniffs.)*

**REGINA.** Oooo, and some funky dead, too! Oooo, Kia! Why didn't you give yourself enough time to wash your stanky booty? Walkin' outta here smellin' like I ain't raised you to know what a bar of soap is...

**KIA.** Ma. Please.

**REGINA.** Well, good mornin' to you too.

*(KIA looks in the refrigerator and finds nothing. She searches the cabinets and finds a bottle of syrup. She grabs what's left of the loaf of bread from the bag on the counter and makes a syrup sandwich.)*

**REGINA.** And what the hell was you dreamin' about last night? I had to come in to make sure you ain't snuck no niggas up in my house, all the noise you was makin.' And then I go in and you just knocked out, by yourself, all tangled up in the sheets like you was fightin' with 'em and they was winnin.' And all sweatin' too, like—

**KIA.** Didn't you bring home summa them cinnamon roll things from work yesterday?

**REGINA.** Uhn-uhn.

*(Beat.)*

You know, you could at least toast the bread.

*(End of scene.)*

### Scene 3

*(Setting: A bus stop.)*

*(At rise: ANDRE is waiting for the bus. He is short, but thinks tall. He addresses a girl [we don't see her] who is walking across street.)*

**ANDRE.** 'Ey!... 'Ey-yo, shortay!... Yo bitch, I know you hear me! Whatever. Go 'head and act stank, ya stank-ass bitch...

*(Enter KIA.)*

**KIA.** *(Playfully:)* Ain't it a little early to be actin' like a hoodlum?

**ANDRE.** I was wondering where ya ass was. You lucky the bus late today. And naw, it ain't never too early to *(Loud enough for the girl across the street to hear:)* let a ho know she a ho!

*(Back to KIA:)*

Yo, why you look like that? Fix ya face. Please.

**KIA.** I had a rough night. Why *you* look like *that*?

**ANDRE.** *(Deliberately misinterpreting:)* Just lucky, I guess.

**KIA.** Yeah, lucky you wasn't born in a country where they feed ugly babies to wolves or some shit.

**ANDRE.** Yeah, whatever, you know you want me.

*(A pause to let her know that he was only half joking. KIA pretends to ignore him.)*

**KIA.** Did you do the Algebra homework last night?

**ANDRE.** Only if you did your English.

**KIA.** Andre, all we had to do was read a poem.

**ANDRE.** Poetry is for chicks and faggots. Could you just sum it up for a brotha?

**KIA.** Nigga, you can't summarize poetry. It's already summarized. That's the whole point.

**ANDRE.** Com'on, you know what I mean. Just tell me what it was about so I 'on't look stupid if he call on me. And he *will* call on me. Yo, he be pickin' on me, you notice that? All the time. Like he got somethin' against me. He prolly a faggot hisself. Just mad 'cause he know he can't touch this. I seen the way he be lookin' at me, yo...

*(Lights change as MARISOL enters, still dressed like a cheerleader. She speaks only to KIA, right into her ear. ANDRE does not see her.)*

**MARISOL.** I seent the way you be lookin' at me in Algebra...

*(MARISOL and ANDRE speak over one another, becoming increasingly vicious in tone:)*

**ANDRE.**

He try to look away real quick when I catch him doin' it, but he ain't foolin' nobody. Like when we be writin' in class or takin' a test or som'n and then when I look up he be givin' me that weak-ass smile and that little nod like he was just lookin' around to make sure we was all doin' our work and his eyes just happened to land on me. I be testin' his ass, too. Like this one time I took off my sweat-shirt, but I did it in that way that make your t-shirt

**MARISOL.**

You try to look away real quick when I catch you doin' it, but you ain't foolin' nobody. Like whenever I go up to the board to solve a problem or som'n, you think I don't know but I can feel you starin' at me. Your eyes feel different from everybody else's. Like they sendin' fuckin' electricity through my back and shit. Like you be tryin' to burn me up or som'n, but you can only do it like one molecule at a time. I be teasin' you too. Like when I do that thing with my pen. Bitin' and suckin' on

come up so that my pack  
was showin', right? And I  
know he was lovin that shit  
and that's when I really  
started thinkin' he was  
fruity. But let him try  
it. I fuckin' dare his ass  
to try to come at me wit'  
some homo shit. 'Cause if he  
fuckin' do,  
I WILL FUCK HIM UP.

**KIA.** Shut up.

*(End of scene.)*

it and stuff...yeeeeeah... I be  
doin' that shit on purpose  
'cause I know you like it.  
I knew you was a coochie-  
eater from the day one. But  
you just try som'n. Go  
'head. I dare you. I dare  
you to step to me with some  
lesbo wrap. 'Cause  
if you do,  
I WILL FUCK YOU UP.

#### Scene 4

*(Setting: Homeroom at Kia's public school.)*

*(At rise: A TEACHER reads off a roster, and the STUDENTS, including KIA, ALIA [short for Treshondalia] ANDRE, and two others respond.)*

**TEACHER VOICE.** Kia Clark...?

**KIA.** Here.

**TEACHER VOICE.** Terrell Crawford...?

*(No response.)*

Terrell...? No...? Okay... Saleemah Crawley...?

**STUDENT VOICE 1.** Here.

**TEACHER VOICE.** Ashanti Davis...?

**STUDENT VOICE 2.** Here.

**TEACHER VOICE.** Andre Dupree...?

**ANDRE.** Whaddup.

**TEACHER VOICE.** Tre... Treshan...dalia Edmonds...?

**STUDENT VOICE 3.** Here.

**TEACHER VOICE.** Shanique

*(Pronounced "Shaneequay.")*

Epps...?

**STUDENT VOICE 4.** It's Shanique.

*(Pronounced "Shaneek.")*

Like "Monique" but with a "sha"...damn, it's only the middle of the damn year...

**TEACHER VOICE.** Daquan Evans...?

*(No response.)*

Dash...

*(Sighs.)*

Dashi-eri-a Evans...?

*(No response.)*

Go figure...okay...Marisol Feliciano...?

*(KIA perks up a bit as MARISOL comes hurrying into the classroom dressed in regular clothes and takes a seat next to her.)*

**MARISOL.** I'm here I'm here I'm here...

**TEACHER VOICE.** That's a nice trick, Miss Feliciano. You'll have to show me how to do it one day.

**MARISOL.** Yeah. Thanks.

**TEACHER VOICE.** Nashika Jackson...? Nashika...?

*(KIA sneaks a glance at MARISOL. MARISOL notices and gives her a nod. KIA nods back, looks away, suppresses a smile.)*

*(End of scene.)*

## Scene 5

*(Setting: The locker room. There are lockers, of course, and some bathroom stalls nearby.)*

*(At rise: MARISOL, KIA, and ALIA are changing into their gym clothes.)*

**ALIA.** All I'm sayin' is, bitch betta watch her back. She gotta know she got a beat-down coming her way after stealin' my man.

**KIA.** Um...didn't *you* break up with *him* last week?

**ALIA.** 'Cause he was creepin' on me with that ho'!

**KIA.** Sooo...shouldn't *he* be the one you wanna beat down?

**ALIA.** There's a *code*. You don't fuck with the code.

**KIA.** Was the code in effect before or after you stole him from Shonda?

**ALIA.** That was different. Shonda's a bitch. And you, bitch, are missin' the point. Who side you on anyway?

**MARISOL.** (*Deliberately changing the subject:*) God, I am not in the mood for gym right now.

**ALIA.** Tell me about it. Whose brilliant idea was it to give us first period gym, anyway? For real. Who the hell wanna be jumping and running around and stuff this early in the morning?

**MARISOL.** Shit, white people do it all the time. My mama say they be out joggin' and biking and doin' yoga and all that when she goin' in to work and that's at like six in the mornin'.

**ALIA.** You know what I'm doing at six in the morning? Gettin' some fantabuliscious head from Taye Diggs. Right before I wake the fuck up.

**MARISOL.** Please, Alia. That nigga ain't thinkin' about you. He got hisself a white girl.

**ALIA.** Damn, Marisol, why you gotta be bringin' up white people all the time? Don't nobody care about no white people! They don't give a shit about us, so why we gotta be so preoccupied with them? Damn. A sista can't even dream without them messin' it up...

**MARISOL.** Yo, speaking of dreams, I had this—

*(She interrupts herself. What began as a discreet scratching of her chest has now progressed to a full-blown, unabashed exploration of her left breast. She seems unsettled.)*

**ALIA.** What are you doin'?

**MARISOL.** I'm—I think there's...

*(Continuing to touch her own breast:)*

This don't feel right. There's—there's a lump in here. Com'ere, feel this...

**ALIA.** Nahn-uhn! What I look like touchin' your titties? I am strictly dickly...

**MARISOL.** (*Beginning to panic:*) I'm serious, Alia. This don't feel right.

**ALIA.** Well, I ain't a doctor either so I don't know what to tell you...

**MARISOL.** You are such a fuckin' bitch, yo! Here I might have a tumor or somethin' and you can't even—

**ALIA.** (*Dismissively*) You don't have a tumor. You ain't even seventeen yet—

**MARISOL.** Kia! Kia, com'ere. Come feel this real quick. Does that feel like a lump to you? I mean like—you know—like a tumor?

(*KIA hesitates. She slowly approaches MARISOL and reaches out to touch her breast. The lights change subtly as she makes contact.*)

**KIA.** Uh, yeah...there's...definitely som'n there.

(*End of scene.*)

## Scene 6

(*Setting: Various classes at Kia's school.*)

(*At rise: There are three TEACHERS on stage: Biology, English, and Health [complete with banana and condom].*)

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** (*Reading from a book:*)

"...I want to show her one poem  
which is the poem of my life. But I hesitate,  
and wake. You've kissed my hair  
to wake me. *I dreamed you were a poem,*  
*I say, a poem I wanted to show someone...*  
and I laugh and fall dreaming again  
of the desire to show you to everyone I love,  
to move openly together  
in the pull of gravity, which is not simple,  
which carries the feathered grass a long way down the upbreathing  
air."

In order to truly understand this poem, you first have to understand a few things about Adrienne Rich...

**BIOLOGY TEACHER.** The thing you have to understand about genetics—even in the all too likely event that you don't understand anything else—is the endless potential involved. Genetic engineers have been doing some bold work that could dramatically expand the role of science in our society. We all know that there are genes that determine eye color, for example, or whether or not your earlobes are attached...

**HEALTH TEACHER.** Okay, ladies, we all know why we're here...

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** The first thing you need to know about Adrienne Rich, aside from the fact that she's a fantastic, award-winning poet, is that she is a lesbian. She didn't always identify as

one, though. In fact, she got married and had three kids before she allowed herself to believe it...

**BIOLOGY TEACHER.** But geneticists also believe that there is an intelligence gene, an athletic gene, genes that determine personality, food preferences, behavior...

**HEALTH TEACHER.** This...

*(The banana:)*

is a penis...I know it's really a banana, but just—just bear with me, alright? Humor me. Now. Unless you're planning on becoming a nun or something, you are going to encounter at least one of these in your lifetime. Judging from the number of young ladies who have taken mysterious extended medical leaves this year, I'm, uh, pretty sure that some of you have encountered a few already...

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** She allowed herself to be locked away inside a life that she did not want because society had her convinced that the feelings she was having were "monstrous," "wrong," something she should be ashamed of and keep hidden...

**BIOLOGY TEACHER.** There are even some scientists who are trying to locate the "gay gene." And this is very controversial because there are lots of people who don't like the idea that homosexuality is genetically determined. Because then that would prove that gays really can't help...being *gay*...

**HEALTH TEACHER.** This is a condom. Now, this...

*(Condom.)*

may be a new thing even for those of you for whom this

*(Banana.)*

is not a new thing. And this is precisely why we're having this special session today. You ladies have got to start being careful when it comes to your sexual, uh...you know...behavior. You gotta start protecting yourselves. Protect yourselves against *these*...

*(She brandishes the banana.)*

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** But she found her liberation, a voice, in poetry. And that is what this poem demonstrates. It is an expression of the profound desire she had—that everyone has—to be able to share all of the important parts of herself with others—not just the socially acceptable parts—and also the profound sadness she felt when she couldn't...

**BIOLOGY TEACHER.** Because you can't help how you're born, right? Wrong. This is the exciting part: if genetic engineers can identify

and isolate any gene, then what's to stop them from altering the undesirable ones? Imagine: when you decide to have children, you could have the option of eliminating the possibility that your child would be overweight or a serial killer or a homosexual...

**HEALTH TEACHER.** So now I'm gonna show you how to do this...

*(She unwraps the condom and begins to put it on the banana.)*

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** Here, listen again:

"I dreamed you were a poem,

I say, a poem I wanted to show someone..."

**BIOLOGY TEACHER.** You want your child to have the best life possible, so if you knew in advance that he or she was going to suffer from diabetes or mental retardation, wouldn't you want to take advantage of the opportunity to change that?

**HEALTH TEACHER.** And you roll it aaaall the way down to the base...pinch the reservoir tip to make room for the baby batter and voila: that's how it's done.

*(End of scene.)*

## Scene 7

*(Setting: Kia's bedroom.)*

*(At rise: KIA and ANDRE are passing a joint.)*

**KIA.** Ain't that messed up, though? She's sixteen...

**ANDRE.** Prolly still a virgin and shit. Technically.

**KIA.** *(Deliberately ignoring him:)* Think about that shit: chillin' one minute and then thinkin' you might die the next...

**ANDRE.** I don't mean to rain on your funeral procession but um, we all die...

**KIA.** Nigga, you know what I mean.

**ANDRE.** Yeah, I do and I'm serious. You think I expect to make it to forty? You think I *want* to? Here? Doin' what I do? Who you know around here made som'n of themselves? Shit. The old people around here ain't shit. What they supposed to be, our role models? Who the hell wanna be scrapin' and hustlin' and shit for that long? Not me, yo. If I do make it to forty, I'll prolly go and pick a fight wit' the biggest, baddest nigga out there just so I could die wit' some dignity. Leave behind a fine ass corpse.

**KIA.** Yeah. All busted and swoll' up.

**ANDRE.** 'Ey, the funeral parlor people can fix broke. They can't fix old.

**KIA.** Whatever, 'Dre.

*(Pause.)*

**ANDRE.** You touched her titty for real?

**KIA.** She asked me to.

**ANDRE.** I'm sayin,' I got some parts I'd like you to touch. All I gotta do is aks?

**KIA.** Shut up.

**ANDRE.** Well what it feel like?

**KIA.** Like a titty, muthafucka. What the fuck kinda question is that?

**ANDRE.** I mean, are you sure there was something in there?

**KIA.** Yeah, nigga.

**ANDRE.** I'm just sayin' you gotta be careful around them types. They be tricky.

**KIA.** What types?

**ANDRE.** Bitch, you know...

*(KIA looks genuinely puzzled.)*

**ANDRE.** You *don't* know?

*(Nope.)*

**ANDRE.** For real?

*(For real.)*

**ANDRE.** Damn girl, where you been? Marisol is a bull, yo. She like girls. She try to keep it on the DL, but ain't no hidin' that shit. A dyke is a dyke, right?

**KIA.** ...Yeah.

*(End of scene.)*

## Scene 8

*(Setting: Inside KIA's head again as she dreams in her room.)*

*(At rise: KIA finds herself back in the locker room with MARISOL and ALIA.)*

**MARISOL.** Yo, speaking of dreams, I had this—

*(She interrupts herself. What began as a discreet scratching of her chest has now progressed to a full-blown, unabashed exploration of her left breast. She seems unsettled.)*

**ALIA.** What are you doin'?

**MARISOL.** I'm—I think there's...

*(Continuing to touch her own breast.)*

This don't feel right. There's—there's a lump in here. Com'ere, feel this.

**ALIA.** Nahn-uhn! What I look like touchin' your titties? I am strictly dickly...

**MARISOL.** *(Beginning to panic:)* I'm serious, Alia. This don't feel right.

**ALIA.** Well, I ain't a doctor either so I don't know what to tell you...

**MARISOL.** You are such a fuckin' bitch, yo! Here I might have a tumor or somethin' and you can't even—

**ALIA.** *(Dismissively:)* You don't have a tumor. You ain't even seventeen yet—

**MARISOL.** Kia! Kia, com'ere. Come feel this real quick. Does that feel like a lump to you? I mean like—you know—like a tumor?

*(KIA hesitates. She slowly approaches MARISOL and reaches out to touch her breast. This time when she makes contact, red lights begin to flash dramatically and an alarm sounds as two female OFFICERS with "BUTCH BRIGADE" on their uniforms storm in and ambush KIA.)*

**OFFICER 1.** Butch Brigade!!! Don't move!!!

**KIA.** What the...?!?

**OFFICER 2.** We caught you red-handed!

*(KIA struggles as the OFFICERS restrain her.)*

**KIA.** Hold up, I was just—I was—hey!—I was just checking for a lump! She asked me to check for a lump!

**OFFICER 2.** Yeah. Sure. Likely story.

**OFFICER 1.** Com'on, on the floor!

*(As the OFFICERS push KIA to the floor and cuff her, MARISOL steps forward and addresses them.)*

**MARISOL.** Didn't I tell you?

**OFFICER 2.** You sure did. Nice work, Feliciano. She'll make a fine addition.

**OFFICER 1.** Yeah, I know some girls in D Block who'd love to get a piece of this!

*(She smacks KIA's ass. Suddenly, ANDRE climbs out of a locker wearing a wig and women's lingerie. He yells after KIA as the OFFICERS drag her away.)*

**ANDRE.** See?! I told you they were sneaky! I told you! Just look at what they did to me! Look at what they did!!!

*(Lights down. The sound of the Butch Brigade alarm slowly segues into that of an alarm clock. Lights up on KIA stirring in her bed. She groans and reaches to turn off the alarm, but finds that she is still cuffed. She bolts upright and examines the cuffs incredulously.)*

*(End of scene.)*

## Scene 9

*(Setting: A classroom.)*

*(At rise: An Algebra teacher's voice drones: "...so then if you subtract seven from both sides, you get four x equals..." The STUDENTS are all there. KIA is sitting next to MARISOL, who is looking very distracted. KIA decides to write a note to her. The two pass notes throughout the entire scene, and through some form of visual aid—a transparency projector or maybe posterboard held up by stagehands—the audience should be able to read what they are writing. The exchange is as follows:)*

**KIA.** "Are you okay?"

**MARISOL.** "I found a lump in my breast. What do you think?"

**KIA.** "Sorry. Stupid question. Are you going to get it checked out?"

**MARISOL.** "I have an appointment this afternoon."

**KIA.** "Is anyone going with you?"

**MARISOL.** "No. My mom has to work."

**KIA.** "Would you like me to go?"

**MARISOL.** "Why would you do that? You don't even know me that well."

**KIA.** "I know you well enough to examine your boobs, but not well enough to go with you to the doctor?"

*(This makes MARISOL smile a bit. A new note.)*

**KIA.** "I wouldn't want to go alone if it was me."

(MARISOL looks over at KIA. A moment before MARISOL nods and mouths, "Okay.")

(End of scene.)

### Scene 10

(Setting: Kia's room.)

(At rise: KIA and ANDRE are on the bed. Andre is rolling a joint.)

**ANDRE.** So...how come you ain't come home on the bus today? I let two numba twenty-fives pass before I gave up on ya ass. And then I started gettin' worried, thinkin' 'bout you comin' home by yasef...

(KIA laughs a little.)

**ANDRE.** For real. You know how it is out there. Niggas don't know how to act so yeah: I'm gonna be concerned! And then you just call me up a couple hours later like it ain't no thang. Whassup wit' dat?

**KIA.** I had some things to take care of.

**ANDRE.** Things. Yeah. A'ight.

(Pause.)

I saw you passin' notes to Marisol in Algebra.

**KIA.** And?

**ANDRE.** And...and nothing. I was just making a observation.

(Pause.)

It is a little, uh, troubling that you and her are like "bosom buddies" now, though. No pun intended.

**KIA.** Troubling?

**ANDRE.** Yeah troubling! I'm worried about you, Kia. I just don't wanna see you get turned out. That's all.

**KIA.** First of all, it ain't none of your damn business who I get to be friends with, okay? Second, could you be a bigger asshole? The girl prolly got breast cancer, and you sittin' up in here pullin' some ol' passive-aggressive bullshit, accusin' me of being what—gay? 'Cause you had to wait a little longer than usual for the bus? I'm tryin' to be a friend to somebody—somebody that ain't you—so that makes me a lesbian? Nigga, please. Ain't nobody gettin' turned out, okay?

**ANDRE.** Yeah? Prove it.

*(A pregnant pause before ANDRE tries to kiss KIA. She pushes him away.)*

**KIA.** What the fuck are you doin'?!

*(ANDRE persists. There is an elaborate struggle until finally KIA breaks free and smacks his face. Hard. ANDRE is stunned. KIA is confused and angry. Pause as the two catch their breath.)*

**KIA.** Get out, man...

*(ANDRE doesn't move. He looks suddenly like he really wants to apologize, but says nothing.)*

**KIA.** I said get the fuck out!

*(ANDRE scrambles to his feet and leaves.)  
(End of scene.)*

### Scene 11

*(Setting: The locker room.)*

*(At rise: KIA, MARISOL, and ALIA are changing for gym again.)*

**KIA.** Hey, Marisol. How you doin'?

**MARISOL.** I'm cool.

*(Beat.)*

You know, you don't have to keep aksin' me that.

**KIA.** I know. I just...wanted to know how you doin'.

**ALIA.** Shouldn't you be excused from gym? I mean...you know... don't you have a note or som'n?

**MARISOL.** I think I can handle a few chin-ups, bitch.

**ALIA.** I ain't mean it like that, Marisol. I'm just sayin'...damn...

*(Pause.)*

You should prolly at least quit cheerleading, though. All that jumpin' and shit...

*(Pause.)*

They know how you got it?

**MARISOL.** It ain't the fuckin' flu, dummy. It ain't like AIDS. It's fuckin' cancer. It's not like it's contagious.

**ALIA.** *(Indignant:)* I know that.

*(Pause.)*

You gonna get surgery?

**MARISOL.** Yeah. They still gotta run some more tests and stuff, but there ain't no gettin' around that.

**ALIA.** They not gonna like...you know...cut the whole thing off, are they?

**KIA.** Alia...

**ALIA.** What? I'm just sayin', I hope it don't come to that.

*(Pause.)*

That would be some crazy shit, though. Havin' just one titty. I think if it was me, I would just have 'em cut both of 'em off...

**KIA.** Would you shut the fuck up?!

*(MARISOL storms off to a bathroom stall and latches the door. KIA follows.)*

**KIA.** Marisol! Marisol...

*(Sounds of stifled crying come from inside the stall. KIA stands outside and listens for a moment, fumbling for the right words.)*

**KIA.** Girl, don't listen to her ignorant ass. She just...she 'on't know what the fuck she talkin' about...

**ALIA.** I can hear you, bitch...

**MARISOL.** Leave me alone...

*(More crying. KIA takes a deep breath.)*

**KIA.** When—when is your surgery? Do you know yet? Just say the word and you know I'll be there. Well, I ain't gonna be there for the actual surgery part 'cause I mean damn, I can't even change my tampon wit'out gettin' woozy and shit, but I'll be right there when you go in and I'll be right there when you come out—with *both* titties, tumor-free, and all high and giggly from the anesthesia...

*(MARISOL laughs a little despite herself.)*

**KIA.** All you gotta do is say the word...

*(MARISOL unlatches the door and opens it.)*

**MARISOL.** Thank you.

*(End of scene.)*

**Scene 12**

*(Setting: Marisol's living room. A cheap, veloury-looking couch covered with plastic and maybe an old coffee table.)*

*(At rise: KIA and MARISOL enter.)*

**MARISOL.** You want somethin' to drink or somethin'?

**KIA.** I'm fine.

**MARISOL.** You sure? Shit, the least I can do is pour you a glass of Kool-Aid after everything you done for me, you know?

**KIA.** *(Smiling:)* Naw, I'm good. Thanks.

*(They sit on the couch. It makes that someone-just-sat-on-a-plastic-covered-couch noise. Pause.)*

**MARISOL.** Thanks for coming over. Ma ain't gonna be home 'til Sunday night. The couple she work for went on vacation, so she been there like all week takin' care of they brats. I ain't even get to talk to her about the appointment yet. I would call her but it ain't exactly somethin' I wanna talk to her about over the phone, you know?

**KIA.** Yeah.

*(Pause.)*

**MARISOL.** Well enough of this shit. You wanna watch TV or somethin'? Listen to some music? I got a lot of different kinds of music... you know how to salsa?

**KIA.** Naw. I wish I did, though. It look like fun.

**MARISOL.** It is! You should let me teach you. I like to dance, you know? It helps me take my mind off stuff.

**KIA.** A'ight.

**MARISOL.** Cool! A'ight, stand up and face me...

*(MARISOL stands. KIA stands and faces her.)*

**MARISOL.** Okay. I'll be the man, so I lead. I put one hand on your back, you put yours on my shoulder...and you hold my other hand... and there's a basic step that's like...one, two, three...one, two, three... back, two, three...forward, two, three...

*(MARISOL demonstrates the basic salsa step. Once they get into a good groove, some salsa music begins to play and the lights change. As KIA grows more confident, MARISOL begins to try some more complicated moves: spinning, twisting, ducking...finally, the two come back to the basic step and they are very, very close. After a few counts, the music abruptly stops and out of nowhere*

*descends a banana. It suspends right above MARISOL's head so that only KIA can see it. Upon seeing the banana, KIA quickly backs away from MARISOL.)*

*(End of scene.)*

### Scene 13

*(Setting: The Clark kitchen.)*

*(At rise: REGINA sits at the table reading a trashy romance novel. On the table is a recently used dish and a coffee mug from which REGINA occasionally takes a sip. Enter KIA.)*

**REGINA.** Where you been? I never get home before you. Thought somethin' mighta happened to you...

**KIA.** A friend's house.

**REGINA.** Ah. There's dinner in the fridge.

*(Beat.)*

Girl friend or boy friend?

**KIA.** Girl.

**REGINA.** *(Relieved:)* Oh. Okay.

*(KIA rummages through the refrigerator and finds a Tupperware container covered with aluminum foil. She inspects it.)*

**KIA.** Uh...what is this?

**REGINA.** Now, you know better than to aks a question like that.

**KIA.** Riiight...

*(KIA grabs a fork out of a drawer and eats. More like swallows. A silence.)*

**REGINA.** So, who's this friend? Do I know her?

**KIA.** Naw. Her name is Marisol.

**REGINA.** Hispanic girl?

**KIA.** Yeah.

**REGINA.** Hm.

*(Pause.)*

**KIA.** She just found out she might have breast cancer.

**REGINA.** *(Genuinely concerned:)* Oh that's terrible! How old is she?

**KIA.** Sixteen.

**REGINA.** Lord...that could be you, Kia...

**KIA.** Yeah, I know. I been like, checkin' myself a lot now, you know?

**REGINA.** Well, that's just terrible. She gonna be alright? I mean, do they know if it's m-manig-lant or whatever?

**KIA.** She's gonna get it removed. She'll be a'ight.

**REGINA.** Well, I hope they get it all.

**KIA.** Yeah.

*(Pause.)*

**KIA.** Ma?

**REGINA.** Mmm?

**KIA.** ...Do you... Have you ever known anybody wit' breast cancer?

**REGINA.** Oh yeah. Had a friend at work, Vivian. Ate her up.

*(Beat.)*

I'm sure that's different, though. Vivian didn't like to go to the doctor, so she didn't even find out about it 'til it was just about done wit' 'er.

*(Beat.)*

I ain't never hear of nobody that young wit' it, though. I'm tellin' you, I think it's somethin' in yall school milk or something—they hormones or whatever they be feedin' yall. You gettin' breasts faster, so I guess it figures you would be gettin' breast cancer faster. It ain't natural, though. We got enough to worry about. Don't need to be addin' premature death to the list.

*(Pause.)*

**KIA.** Ma?

**REGINA.** Hmm?

**KIA.** ...Nothin'.

*(End of scene.)*

## Scene 14

*(Setting: A split scene between Kia's room and Andre's room. Andre's room is pretty spare, a suggestion of a room really: dirty socks, shoes, magazines strewn about. He sits on the floor.)*

*(At rise: KIA and ANDRE are on the phone with one another.)*

**ANDRE.** I just really don't want you to be mad at me. It kill me when you mad at me, yo. And you ain't never been mad at me for more than a few minutes.

**KIA.** Well, this is different, man...

**ANDRE.** I know, and I'm real sorry. I 'on't know how else to say it: I'm sorry. I know I messed up. I 'on't even know why I did that. I guess I just—you know—I was high as hell—

**KIA.** That ain't no excuse, Andre. We get high all the fuckin' time.

**ANDRE.** I know. You right. I...shit...I just had a lot on my mind.

**KIA.** Like what?

**ANDRE.** Like...like crushin' on somebody and not bein' able to do nothin' about it...

*(ANDRE picks up a magazine and flips through it. Think Vibe with some hip-hop or R&B pretty boy on the cover like Usher or Chris Brown.)*

**KIA.** 'Dre...we been friends a long time...

**ANDRE.** I know. And I didn't mean to fuck that up. I know it's gonna take some time to get your trust back. I 'on't know what got into me, but I know it won't happen again. Believe me.

**KIA.** Yeah, nigga. A'ight.

**ANDRE.** Thank you. For real. You'll see.

*(Beat.)*

And all that shit I said about Marisol. I didn't mean it. I mean, she still a dyke and all, but if she a friend of yours then she a friend of mine, a'ight? Maybe we could all get together for a friendly smoke or som'n...pass a peace pipe and shit...

**KIA.** Don't get ahead of y'self, man.

**ANDRE.** I mean it. Tell her I can hook her up if she interested, a'ight? I 'on't want no bad blood.

**KIA.** A'ight. Well look, I'll holla atchu layta, okay?

**ANDRE.** Yeah. Thanks, Kia.

**KIA.** No worries.

*(They hang up. ANDRE is still looking at the magazine. He closes it and examines the pretty boy on the cover.)*

*(End of scene.)*

**Scene 15**

*(Setting: A hospital room.)*

*(At rise: MARISOL is resting in bed. KIA enters.)*

**KIA.** Hey...

**MARISOL.** *(Smiling:)* Hey...

**KIA.** Can I aks you how you doin' or are you gonna bite my head off again?

**MARISOL.** *(Still smiling:)* I'm alright. Tired, though...

**KIA.** Yeah...

**MARISOL.** They got it all. I still have to get, like, checked up every few months just to be sure, but they say it came out pretty clean. Showed it to me and everything. Ugly little fucker. They even aksed me if I wanted to keep it, but I was like, "Why the fuck would I want to do that?" You know?

*(Beat.)*

So? What's goin on? What's happenin' at school?

**KIA.** Not much.

*(Pause.)*

Miss Howard told me to tell you to get well soon.

**MARISOL.** That's sweet. I knew there was a reason she's my favorite teacher. Thanks.

**KIA.** And my mom made you these...

*(Placing what appears to be a crumpled up ball of aluminum foil in MARISOL's lap.)*

**KIA.** They're supposed to be cookies, but I 'on't know. I love my mom and all, but I wouldn't trust 'em if I was you.

*(MARISOL giggles. Pause.)*

**KIA.** Um. And I have a card for you. It's uh...

*(KIA holds onto the card for a moment. We see her make the decision to hand it to MARISOL.)*

**KIA.** Here. You don't have to read it right now.

*(MARISOL opens the card and begins to read it.)*

**KIA.** No, for real. Don't read it right now...

**MARISOL.** Shhh...

(MARISOL continues to read the card. Her expression gradually changes. She looks up at KIA with a look of intense gratitude when she is finished.)

(End of scene.)

## Scene 16

(Setting: Around the school.)

(At rise: ALIA is on the stage along with two other STUDENTS. They speak facing the audience and are, for the most part, unaware of each other. Their speech overlaps much of the time.)

**STUDENT 1.** Is it true that Kia was the one that found the lump in her titty? What she all touchin' the girl's titties for?

**ALIA.** I was there when she found it. At first, she wanted *me* to touch it to like, check it out or whatever, but I was like, "Nahn-uhn!" I don't get down like that...

**STUDENT 2.** I heard that they was gettin' busy in the locker room and Kia was all feelin' her shit up and that's how she found it...

**STUDENT 1.** I heard that they stay down in the locker room until everybody else go to gym and then lick each other...

**ALIA.** I thought I saw them go into the shower together once...

**STUDENT 2.** I thought I saw them kissin' on a bus...

**STUDENT 1.** Kissin' in the movie theater...

**ALIA.** In the locker room. For real.

**STUDENT 2.** I heard when Marisol got out of surgery, that Kia was like right there waiting and...

**STUDENT 1.** Professed her undying lesbo love...

**ALIA.** Humped her right there in the hospital bed...

**STUDENT 2.** Asked Marisol to marry her...

**STUDENT 1 and ALIA.** (Momentarily acknowledging STUDENT 2:) Dykes can't get married, stupid...

**STUDENT 2.** Well, shit, I'd rather be stupid than be a coochie-lickin', finger-ridin'...

**STUDENT 1.** Titty-suckin', dildo fuckin'...

**ALIA.** Pussy-breath...

**STUDENT 2.** Lesbo...

**STUDENT 1.** Dyke...

**ALL.** Bitch!

*(End of scene.)*

### Scene 17

*(Setting: In the hall at school.)*

*(At rise: The girls from the last scene have remained on stage, and are whispering venomously as KIA approaches. When she gets near enough, STUDENT 2 begins making kissy noises.)*

**STUDENT 2.** Here puss' puss' pussy...!

**KIA.** Excuse me?

**STUDENT 2.** *(Mock innocent:)* What?

**KIA.** You got som'n to say to me?

**STUDENT 1.** Nobody was talkin' to you. We just tryin' to find her kitty cat...

**STUDENT 2.** Yeah, Kia, have you seen my kitty cat?

**STUDENT 1.** Please. She wish.

*(Without warning, KIA goes right for STUDENT 1, fist raised.)*

*(End of scene.)*

### Scene 18

*(Setting: A bench outside the Principal's office.)*

*(At rise: KIA and REGINA are waiting. KIA's hair is a little disordered and her lip is bleeding. They do not look at each other. Some moments pass before REGINA speaks.)*

**REGINA.** Eleven years. Eleven years of school without getting into the slightest bit of trouble...no detention, no trips to the principal's office, nothin'. No. You wait eleven years to pull this shit. Well, congratulations. You got me. Surprise! Bam! Suspension.

*(Beat.)*

You always been so slow to anger, too, Kia. I just don't understand what happened. I mean, why now? Why wait until it really counts, when you startin' to look at colleges and stuff and they gonna be lookin' atchu...now when they look, they gonna see this. A big ol' red mark on your permanent record. That's just great, Kia. Just great.

(Beat.)

What happened today that made it any different from any other day you chose to stay ya ass outta trouble, hm? What's so special about today? What did they say to you to get you so upset? Hm? You couldn't just let it slide, right? No. That woulda been the smart thing to do.

(Pause.)

I swear, if you hadn't already been in a fight today, I would beat yo' ass.

(End of scene.)

### Scene 19

(Setting: The Clark living room, which is not very different from Marisol's.)

(At rise: MARISOL is bringing KIA her homework.)

**MARISOL.** ...And Mr. Thompson said don't worry if you can't get all the problems on your own. It make more sense if you been in class.

**KIA.** Okay. Thanks.

**MARISOL.** Least I could do.

(Pause.)

I heard. About what happened. You wanna talk about it?

**KIA.** Not really. Stupid bitches sayin' stupid shit. Just pissed me off.

**MARISOL.** Yeah.

(Beat.)

Is it true?

**KIA.** Is what true?

**MARISOL.** What they said. Are you a...uh...

**KIA.** No.

**MARISOL.** Oh. I guess it musta really bothered you then. I know I hate when people call me somethin' I'm not. Like Puerto Rican. I hate that shit, yo. Not that there's anything wrong with being Puerto Rican or nothin'—Latinos unite, right?—but I'm not Puerto Rican, *soy Mexicana* so get it right, okay? Or when they accuse me of somethin' I didn't do. Like this one time, this girl accused me of stealin' somethin'

from her. We was supposed to be good friends too, but to tell you the truth she was always kinda like, lookin' down on me 'cause her family got a nice house and shit. So this one time, she couldn't find some earrings and she swore up and down that I took 'em but I didn't. She went runnin' to her mother and her mother called my mother and they sent me home, and you wanna know the worst part? My mother believed 'em. My own mother, yo. Told me I embarrassed her. Can you believe that? So on top of losin' my friend, and gettin' humiliated in front of her family, I get my ass beat when I get home. And I didn't even do it. Kinda made me wish I did, though. At least that way it woulda made sense. If you gonna suffer the consequences for doin' somethin' you may as well've done it, you know?

**KIA.** Yeah.

*(Brief pause.)*

**MARISOL.** If you were, though...you know...it wouldn't bother me...

**KIA.** Why would it?

**MARISOL.** *(Playfully:)* And it would explain some stuff...

**KIA.** Stuff like what?

**MARISOL.** You know...like why you been so nice to me...

**KIA.** What the fuck? A girl can't be nice just to be nice?

**MARISOL.** Not really. Can't afford to. Girls around here gotta be mean as hell, yo. Especially to other girls. You know that. So the only explanation that anybody can think of is that you all up *in* it 'cause you want somethin' *out* of it, that you must...like girls. You know like, *like* like 'em.

**KIA.** Well I don't.

**MARISOL.** A'ight. Cool.

*(Pause.)*

I do.

*(KIA looks at MARISOL and opens her mouth to speak, but nothing comes out right away.)*

**KIA.** I know.

**MARISOL.** *(Flirtatiously:)* I know you know.

*(The two lock eyes for a moment before moving in to kiss one another. It is a soft, tentative kiss, followed by a longer, bolder one.)*

**End of Act I**

## ACT II

### Scene 1

*(Setting: A classroom.)*

*(At rise: The ENGLISH TEACHER sits on a desk facing the audience center stage. He is concluding class. There are some STUDENTS, including KIA, planted in the front row of the audience [or somewhere about there].)*

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** For homework, please prepare a formal outline for your essays, complete with thesis, topic sentences...you know the drill. Okay. That is all.

*(As the STUDENTS begin to shuffle out, the ENGLISH TEACHER approaches KIA.)*

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** Kia! Welcome back. Class wasn't the same without you. You were sorely missed...

**KIA.** Thanks.

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** And unjustly suspended, if you ask me.

*(Brief pause.)*

I um...I know why you did what you did, and I—

**KIA.** *(Defensively:)* Excuse me?

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** I mean...I know what those girls were saying to you and I know that it upset you and...I'm not making any...I'm not jumping to any conclusions about your uh...I don't pretend to know—nor do I particularly *want* to know—anything about your sexual preferences, but I just want you to know that whatever they are, you should...you should know that they're okay. You should feel supported by your community...

**KIA.** I'm not gay, Mr. Keys.

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** Okay, but even if you aren't, you at the very least know what it's like to be harassed for something that's nobody else's business, right? You can draw on that experience to gain perspective and to help others who are struggling. You can empathize, if not sympathize. So no, I'm not saying you're gay, but there are supports in this community for those who are. There's a group that meets regularly downtown. It's for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, but even if you're not any of the above...well, allies are always welcome. It meets on Sundays well after church hours so the Christian contingent doesn't feel any more alienated than they already do. I can write down the info. If you want.

*(Pause.)*

**KIA.** A'ight.

*(End of scene.)*

## Scene 2

*(Setting: A bus stop.)*

*(At rise: KIA and ANDRE are waiting for the bus.)*

**ANDRE.** So can I come over, or am I still on probation?

**KIA.** Naw, man. I got a lot of work to do. Still playin' catch-up.

**ANDRE.** Well, I could prolly help you out or som'n...

*(KIA laughs at him a little.)*

**ANDRE.** Okay. No biggie, that's cool. I gotchu...

*(Beat.)*

So what was that all about with Mr. Keys? I saw yall talkin' after class.

**KIA.** Damn, Andre, why didn't you just stick around and eavesdrop? It would be a lot less annoying than you tryin' to pry shit outta me after.

**ANDRE.** So there's som'n to pry then?

**KIA.** No.

**ANDRE.** Com'on, Kia. For real, what'd he say?

**KIA.** He just wanted to welcome me back and make sure I was on track with my classwork and stuff.

**ANDRE.** That's it?

**KIA.** That's it.

**ANDRE.** He didn't like, try to recruit you into the ranks or nothin'?

**KIA.** You are so fuckin' stupid.

**ANDRE.** Whatever, yo. Teachers gossip just as much as the students do, so you know they know...

**KIA.** They know what, Andre? Don't nobody know shit! Not you, not the teachers, not those bitches that was talkin' shit about me, none of yall! And I am so tired of people tryin' to tell me about me. Tryin' to tell me what I must be. Stickin' they noses all up in my coochie tryin' to figure out what flavor it is. This is so fucked up! I helped a girl out, showed some human fuckin' *decency*, and all of a

sudden—poof!—I’m a lesbo. Maybe I *should* just go all bull-dyke and shit. Then at least it would make sense...

*(Suddenly, MARISOL appears wearing a sexy salsa dress, and begins to dance circles around KIA and ANDRE. She moves slowly at first and then increases to a frenetic pace by the end of the scene. Only KIA acknowledges her presence.)*

**ANDRE.** Kia, you startin’ to sound a little crazy...

**KIA.** I’m serious! Maybe I should just call Marisol up and invite her over. Light some lesbo candles. Read some lesbo poetry...

*(The lights change.)*

Strip her down and lay her on my bed and lick her dizzy. I could start with her collarbones and then work my way down...nipples... belly-button...hover between the insides of her thighs...and then afterward, we could just lay there and not worry about whether one of us just got pregnant or if the other is gonna go braggin’ about it to her homegirls because fuck what they think, right? They already think they know everything they need to know about us. But they don’t know shit! They don’t know the first thing...

*(At this, the lights change back to normal and MARISOL spins off-stage.)*

**KIA.** So they can just leave us the fuck alone.

**ANDRE.** Kia...?

**KIA.** What?

*(Brief pause.)*

**ANDRE.** Nothin’. Forget it. Shit.

*(End of scene.)*

### Scene 3

*(Setting: Kia’s room.)*

*(At rise: KIA and MARISOL are on the phone with each other. We see KIA but do not necessarily have to see MARISOL.)*

**MARISOL.** They say that I’m still in the clear and that it’s highly unlikely that it’s gonna come back, but I don’t know. I keep thinkin’ it’s gonna sneak back up on me just when I got my guard down and shit. Just when I start like...carin’ about stuff, you know?

**KIA.** ...Yeah.

(Beat.)

**MARISOL.** Any particular reason you didn't sit next to me today in homeroom? Or in Algebra?

**KIA.** Um...no. I just...didn't.

**MARISOL.** It's no big deal or nothin', I was just wondering... It seemed kinda like...I 'on't know...like you was tryin' to avoid me or somethin'...

**KIA.** Marisol, come on. You know I'm not avoiding you. It's just... it's hard havin' people watch my every move since I got back, you know? It's like they just waitin' for me to give 'em somn' to talk about.

**MARISOL.** So? What, you think if you keep your distance from me, they'll stop talkin'? Lose interest? Or maybe you're hoping that they'll let you back into the fold if you can show them that you don't really like me like that and that they're not right about you bein'—

**KIA.** Don't talk like that, please.

**MARISOL.** I'm sorry. But you know it ain't gonna work like that so uh...welcome to the club.

**KIA.** Club. Right.

(Beat.)

Did you know there actually is a club for uh...for gay people that meets downtown? Like a support group...

**MARISOL.** (*More amused than surprised:*) Kia! Are you admitting that you're...?

**KIA.** I'm n—can we not get caught up on that word?

**MARISOL.** What word? Gay?

**KIA.** Hey...

**MARISOL.** Lesbo?

**KIA.** 'Sol...

**MARISOL.** The best fuckin' girl kisser a girl ever kissed?

**KIA.** ...?

**MARISOL.** Kia? You still there?

**KIA.** Yeah...

**MARISOL.** I mean it. And I've kissed guys, too. Just to be sure, you know? Yeah. Definitely like girls better. And definitely like you the best.

(Pause.)

**KIA.** So then...you've...done this a lot?

**MARISOL.** You mean am I a slut?

**KIA.** No, that's not what I mean...

**MARISOL.** Chill, Kia, I'm just playin' witchu! It's a fair question, I know...

(Pause.)

**KIA.** So...?

**MARISOL.** I've had a few flings, yeah...

**KIA.** Like how many?

**MARISOL.** Well considering where we live, it can't be that many, right? No seriously, though: just a few.

**KIA.** Few liiiiike...three?

**MARISOL.** ...

**KIA.** Five?

(MARISOL sighs.)

**KIA.** Ten?!

**MARISOL.** Eight.

**KIA.** Eight?

**MARISOL.** Girls.

**KIA.** Eight girls? How many guys?

**MARISOL.** Does it matter?

**KIA.** I just...I'm just tryin' to get a sense of what I'm gettin' into here...

**MARISOL.** Are we getting into somethin'?

**KIA.** I 'on't know...I thought...

**MARISOL.** God, you are so easy to fuck wit'...I'm just joking. You gotta lighten up if you gonna be my girlfriend.

**KIA.** Your girlfriend...

**MARISOL.** Yeah. You got a problem wit' that?

**KIA.** (Smiling:) No...

**MARISOL.** And it wouldn't exactly be very girlfriendly to keep avoiding me at school, either.

**KIA.** Yeah...

**MARISOL.** Good. So we're straight. Well, not really but we're, uh, clear.

**KIA.** Crystal.

**MARISOL.** And you're sure you wanna do this? It's kind of a big deal, putting yourself out there. And you *will* be out there.

**KIA.** Hell, I'm already out there. Not like I had a choice in the matter.

**MARISOL.** Who's already what? Please. You can't even say it.

**KIA.** Say what?

**MARISOL.** See? You still in denial.

**KIA.** That's another joke, right?

**MARISOL.** Ah, she's catching on...

**KIA.** I don't...I don't know what I am but I know how I feel about you. I've known since September. And puttin' a label on it ain't gonna make it any more legit. So if you can handle that, I can handle this.

**MARISOL.** *(Smiling:)* Yeah. Okay.

*(Pause.)*

**KIA.** So when you say eight, is that counting me?

*(End of scene.)*

#### Scene 4

*(Setting: Inside KIA's head once again in a stereotypical elementary school classroom.)*

*(At rise: MARISOL and KIA are doing a Show-and-Tell [a sign or chalkboard might help indicate this immediately]. MARISOL, dressed as a little school-girl with pigtails and knee-socks and all, is showing off her new girlfriend. KIA is dressed regularly. There are some other SCHOOLCHILDREN planted in the front row of the audience.)*

**MARISOL.** *(With the voice of a kindergartener:)* This is my new girlfriend. Her name is Kia Clark. She is sixteen years old. I just got her a couple of days ago. She has a pretty face, a great ass, and nice hands with long fingers that are really good at...

*(Mischievously:)*

...doing things. She can also do tricks with her tongue.

(To KIA:)

Go on. Show...

(KIA *hesitates*.)

**MARISOL.** She's a little shy. All the attention makes her nervous...

(To KIA *again*:)

Go on, Kia. Show them what you can do...

(KIA *does a trick with her tongue*. The SCHOOLCHILDREN *ooo and aah*.)

**MARISOL.** Good girl! She's really sweet and loyal and a really good friend and that's why I wanted to share her with you all today.

(The SCHOOLCHILDREN *clap*. MARISOL *beams*. Even KIA *allows herself to swell at the applause*.)

**MARISOL.** Any questions?

(Three hands *shoot up in front*.)

**MARISOL.** Yes?

**SCHOOLCHILD 1.** What does your girlfriend like to do for fun?

**MARISOL.** Me! Next question?

**SCHOOLCHILD 2.** What does she eat?

**MARISOL.** Me! Any other questions?

**SCHOOLCHILD 3.** How can she be your girlfriend if you're a girl? Aren't girls supposed to have *boyfriends*?

(*Out of nowhere*, ADRIENNE RICH *appears*, *good-cop style*.)

**ADRIENNE.** I can answer that!

**MARISOL.** Adrienne Rich!

**ADRIENNE.** You see boys and girls, when a woman and a woman love each other very much, it doesn't matter that society says that one of them should be a man. All people, no matter what their gender, should be free to love who they want to love.

**SCHOOLCHILD 3.** Hey, are you a dyke?!

**ADRIENNE.** No, but I am a lesbian...

**SCHOOLCHILD 3.** Dyke!!!

(SCHOOLCHILD 3 *begins to chant "dyke," and the others follow suit*. The SCHOOLCHILDREN *then begin to throw things*—

*crayons, small toys – at KIA, MARISOL, and ADRIENNE. The three flee as the children continue to chant. The chanting segues into the sound of an alarm clock as the lights go down. When the lights come up, KIA stirs in bed and shuts off the alarm clock. She sits up, checks herself and her surroundings to make sure that no residual weirdness has followed her out of the dream. Once she is convinced that all is normal, KIA gets out of bed. Suddenly, an apple descends and is suspended in front of her face. She considers it a moment before she starts to reach for it.)*

*(End of scene.)*

## Scene 5

*(Setting: The locker room.)*

*(At rise: KIA, MARISOL, and ALIA are changing for gym again. ALIA is changing very carefully, putting on clothes underneath her other clothes so as not to reveal anything to the other two.)*

**MARISOL.** You heard her, yo: “Nice of you to grace us with your presence this morning, Miss Feliciaaano...”

**KIA.** Yeah but you can’t take that shit personally. Some teachers are just like that. Like they got som’n to prove all the time so they gotta make an example outta somebody.

**MARISOL.** I guess. But I swear, the next time she do that shit, I just might haul off and smack her ass.

*(Suddenly noticing ALIA:)*

Bitch, what are you doing?

**ALIA.** What it look like? I’m changing for gym.

**MARISOL.** I can see that. But what you all hidin’ your stuff for? It ain’t like we ain’t seen it before.

**ALIA.** Whatever...

**MARISOL.** Seriously, though: what, you think we just gonna lose control at the magnificent sight of your big saggy boobs or your big ashy booty? I guess you don’t wanna see my stuff either then, huhn?

*(MARISOL pulls up her bra and shakes her chest at ALIA. ALIA backs into the lockers.)*

**ALIA.** Back the fuck up.

**MARISOL.** You wanna see my scar from the surgery? Look!

(MARISOL taunts ALIA with her left breast.)

**ALIA.** For real, Marisol! Back off!

**MARISOL.** What, you think if you look at it, you gonna turn to stone? Or maybe into a lesbian...!

(MARISOL darts her tongue in and out at ALIA.)

**ALIA.** I said back up off me!

(ALIA shoves MARISOL. There is a tense moment when it looks as though MARISOL might just retaliate physically. KIA senses the danger.)

**KIA.** Aliiii...did you just touch her chest?

**ALIA.** What?

**KIA.** You did. You just touched her titties, I saw you. You couldn't keep your hands off 'em, could you? Although who could blame you really. They *are* irresistible...

**MARISOL.** (*Playing it up:*) Aww, honey! That's so sweet!

(MARISOL moves over to KIA and gives her a little smooch on the lips to punctuate the joke. KIA is a little taken aback by the gesture, but does not refuse it.)

**ALIA.** (*Walking off:*) You crazy dyke bitches betta watch who you fuck with...

(MARISOL and KIA burst into laughter.)

**MARISOL.** Yeah, you can definitely handle this.

(*End of scene.*)

## Scene 6

(*Setting: A classroom.*)

(*At rise: The ENGLISH TEACHER is again concluding class.*)

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** ...And that is why you must have a thesis, people. Because otherwise, who cares? Right? Okay... Now: I would like to take the last few minutes of class to address something...of a personal nature. I try to keep my personal business separate from my professional business, but someone or someones seem to have made my personal business *their* business. And everybody else's, for that matter. As some of you may already know, my car has been... vandalized. That is to say, one of you little rascals decided that it would be really funny to spray-paint the word "faggot" in bright

orange letters across both sides of my Honda. And of course my first reaction was to run all your names through my head and try to figure out which one of you may have done it and I even came up with all sorts of punishments for the perpetrators in case I ever found out who they were—some legal, all ruthless—but you know what I realized? It doesn't even matter. Because regardless of how you feel about me, you still have to learn how to properly analyze a poem from my faggoty ass, and I still have to read your little essays and then write your little grades in my little gradebook with my faggoty little pen. And in five years when, as an ironic twist, you're pumping gas into my new faggoty little car, or I'm watching you on Jerry Springer or Cops, I still won't hold a grudge. You know why? Because I may be a faggot, but I'm a successful one. I have a job that's honest and honorable with health benefits and a retirement plan and if I want to leave said job because I'm tired of being harassed by a bunch of ignorant *children*, I have skills that are employable elsewhere. I have a loving, supportive family and a partner of seven years whom I will never have to demean into giving me child support on national television because I have been taught how to *love* instead of just how to *fuck*, although from what I hear, I'm pretty successful at that, too. So as you're turning in your essays on Monday, know that despite this...unpleasant incident, they will be graded with as much objectivity and love as I can muster. Because I am a successful faggot. And all the spray-paint in the world couldn't take that away from me.

*(End of scene.)*

## Scene 7

*(Setting: Kia's room.)*

*(At rise: KIA and MARISOL are sitting together on the floor.)*

**KIA.** And then he was like, "I am a successful faggot and you can kiss my faggoty ass!" It was beautiful.

**MARISOL.** I wish I coulda been there.

**KIA.** Yeah. Although, it was kinda sad, too, you know? That he felt he had to resort to that. And that he got picked on in the first place.

**MARISOL.** Yeah...

*(Pause.)*

Hey, maybe you should tell him about that club thing downtown. The one for fags and stuff...

**KIA.** He was the one who told me about it.

(Beat.)

And why you always have to talk like that?

**MARISOL.** Like what?

**KIA.** It's like every other word that come outta your mouth is "fag" or "dyke" or "lesbo."

**MARISOL.** Um, newflash: that's what we are.

**KIA.** No, that's what *they* say you are.

**MARISOL.** What is this "you"? Don't you mean "we"? And that's just the thing: it's different when *we* say it 'cause *we're* not *them*. It's like how when black people use "nigger" as like—whatchu call it—a term of endearment.

**KIA.** That's different.

**MARISOL.** How?

**KIA.** First of all, it's "nigga." Not "nigger."

**MARISOL.** Tomayto, tomahto...

**KIA.** And second...whatever, it's just different. We're transforming the word when we use it. We make it into a positive thing. If you call yaself a "dyke," there's no getting around the...the hate in it. It's negative no matter who says it.

**MARISOL.** Whatever, bitch.

(Pause.)

**KIA.** I was actually thinkin' about goin'.

**MARISOL.** Goin' where? To the gay club?

**KIA.** ...Yeah.

(A brief pause.)

**MARISOL.** That's cool.

(Suppressing a laugh:)

**MARISOL.** They can start you on your twelve-step Pussyholics Anonymous program...

**KIA.** Shut up...

**MARISOL.** Step one: Admitting that you need pussy...

**KIA.** Marisol...

**MARISOL.** Step two: Apologizing to all the people you may have hurt while you were jonesin' for some pussy...

**KIA.** (*Smiling despite herself:*) Would you stop it?

(*Pause.*)

Does your mother know? That you...aren't straight?

**MARISOL.** Are you kidding me?! Hell no! She would fuckin' kill me. If you think "dyke" and "lesbo" are bad, shit, you should hear the Spanish versions...

(*Pause.*)

You gonna tell *your* mother?

(*End of scene.*)

### Scene 8

(*Setting: The Clark kitchen.*)

(*At rise: KIA and REGINA are sitting at the table. REGINA is reading her trashy romance novel. KIA is doing her homework. Some moments pass before REGINA speaks.*)

**REGINA.** Ooo Kia, listen to this...

(*Reading from the book:*)

"...He stared deep into her questioning eyes and then answered with a kiss that shook her to her frozen core. With just the touch of his lips, he opened doors inside her that she thought had been shut for good, and then, right there on the back lawn amidst the daffodils and tangles of ivy, he entered those doors without so much as a single backward glance..."

(*Genuinely moved:*)

Mmph! Don't that just make you wanna run out and grab the first man you see?

(*KIA looks at REGINA but does not answer; she looks as though she might be holding her breath. REGINA waits for a response, and rolls her eyes when she doesn't get one.*)

**REGINA.** Oh hell, whatchu know about romance...

(*REGINA resumes reading her book quietly. KIA looks at her mother. We see her make the decision to say something, but she thinks better of it and goes back to doing her homework.*)

(*End of scene.*)

Scene 9

*(Setting: The Clark living room.)*

*(At rise: KIA and ANDRE are sitting on Kia's couch. ANDRE looks upset.)*

**ANDRE.** Whoa...

*(Pause.)*

This is...this is...whoa...

*(Pause.)*

So that's why you didn't want me comin' over here no more...

**KIA.** No, I didn't want you comin' over here no more because the last time you was here, you was actin' up.

**ANDRE.** I mean I had my suspicions but damn...

*(Beat.)*

I guess the thing that bother me the most about it is that I had to play detective to find this shit out. I had to hear it through the grapevine. I 'on't understand why you didn't feel like you could tell a brotha...I mean that's fucked up Kia. How long we been friends?

**KIA.** Oh, you have got to be kidding me! With all your "faggot" this and "homo" that...

**ANDRE.** Kia, you know that's just the way I talk...

**KIA.** And all that stuff about Mr. Keys? Like how you would beat his ass if he ever tried to hit on you or som'n...

**ANDRE.** That's different, yo. He a man...

**KIA.** That's supposed to be reassuring? I bet you know som'n about what happened to his car, too. I bet one of your little hoodlum friends prolly did it...

*(A guilty silence.)*

**KIA.** Andre...?

*(Still no response.)*

Andre, you didn't do that shit, did you?

*(ANDRE looks at KIA, speechless. She looks at him, appalled.)*

**KIA.** Shit...

*(Pause.)*

Shit!

**ANDRE.** I'm sorry...

*(At that moment, REGINA enters carrying a couple of bags of groceries. She stops abruptly upon noticing ANDRE. ANDRE stands up.)*

**REGINA.** Hello. Kia, I didn't know we was gonna have company...

**KIA.** I didn't either. He just...showed up.

**ANDRE.** Hi, Ms. Clark.

**REGINA.** Regina. Please. And you are?

**ANDRE.** Andre. Ma'am.

**REGINA.** *(Smiling:)* Ooooooooooh... Andreeeee... I've...uh...heard a lot about you. It's nice to meet you. Finally.

*(An awkward pause as REGINA looks from ANDRE to KIA and then back to ANDRE.)*

I'm gonna go put these away.

*(Another awkward pause.)*

You can sit back down, if you want.

**ANDRE.** Actually, I was just on my way out.

**REGINA.** You sure?

**ANDRE.** Yes, ma'am. It was...

*(Making his way out:)*

it was nice meeting you. I'll see you at school, Kia.

*(KIA offers no response.)*

**ANDRE.** A'ight...

*(ANDRE exits. REGINA remains in the living room. After she watches ANDRE exit, she looks at KIA. KIA is very deliberately not looking at her.)*

**REGINA.** Well, well. He's cute, Kia.

*(REGINA begins to exit.)*

**REGINA.** *(Amused:)* "Ma'am"...

*(End of scene.)*

### Scene 10

*(Setting: The Clark living room is dark and empty.)*

*(At rise: There is a knock on the door and then another before REGINA enters wearing a nightgown to answer it.)*

**REGINA.** Who is it?

**MARISOL.** *(Muffled and raspy:)* Marisol Feliciano...

*(REGINA opens the door. MARISOL stands there, bruised and swollen and carrying a backpack.)*

**REGINA.** Oh my God, girl, what happened to you?!

**MARISOL.** I'm sorry to bother you so late...

*(KIA enters in her nightclothes. Her eyes widen when she sees the state MARISOL is in. MARISOL, upon seeing KIA, starts to cry.)*

*(End of scene.)*

### Scene 11

*(Setting: The Clark kitchen later that night.)*

*(At rise: REGINA is drinking a cup of coffee. She looks deeply disturbed. KIA enters.)*

**REGINA.** How she doin'?

**KIA.** She's pretty shook up, but she'll be a'ight. Thanks for lettin' her stay.

**REGINA.** What the hell else was I supposed to do? What happened?

**KIA.** She got into a fight with her mother.

**REGINA.** Well, I didn't think she got beat up by the Tooth Fairy. And if she did, I like to think she woulda gone home to her mother instead of coming here so...what were they fighting about?

*(Pause.)*

Well...? You can tell me. It's not like I'm gonna turn the girl back out on the streets...

*(Pause.)*

**KIA.** Her mother found out she a lesbian.

**REGINA.** Ooooh...

(*Beat.*)

Oh.

**KIA.** Her house got egged tonight and the people that did it was callin' her...names and her mother heard and when she asked Marisol about it...

**REGINA.** I see...

(*Pause.*)

Well. That's still no reason to throw the girl out. Especially not after what she done been through with the cancer and all. But I can certainly understand why she would want to.

**KIA.** You can?

**REGINA.** Yeah! Kia, you know how I feel about that mess. I ain't a particularly religious person, but I know when som'n ain't right morally, and *that* ain't right. Anybody who can't see that it ain't right is choosin' not to see it.

**KIA.** You think she *chose* to be that way? You think she *chose* to get made fun of at school and get eggs thrown at her house? Did she choose to have her mother throw her out? Who chooses that?

**REGINA.** I didn't say it was a *easy* choice. I'm sure that whatever it is she feelin' is real and strong and hard to resist but there's consequences, Kia. There's always consequences. Look, all I'm sayin' is I can understand where her mother is comin' from. If I found out you was...like that, I'd wanna beat yo' ass, too...

**KIA.** For real?

**REGINA.** Well, I prolly wouldn't 'cause I'm a big ol' softy—you know that—but...

(*Noticing her daughter's face:*)

Kia?

(*Pause as REGINA's face changes.*)

I'm gonna go back to bed.

(*Beginning to exit:*)

And you can sleep on the couch tonight.

(*End of scene.*)

**Scene 12**

*(Setting: The meeting room of the LGBT support group.)*

*(At rise: KIA stands alone on stage addressing the SUPPORT GROUP, which interjects phrases of encouragement from the front row.)*

**KIA.** Hi, everybody. My name is Kia. I'm... I never been to one of these things before, so I'm a little nervous...I guess I'm here because there's been a lot of fucked up things goin' on—I'm sorry, can I say that?—yeah...just a whole lot of stuff...

*(Beat.)*

I...I have a girlfriend. She's my first girlfriend. My first anything, actually. I used to think that I just wasn't interested in bein' wit' anybody in that way 'cause I couldn't think of any *guy* I wanted to be wit' like that...and my mom was happy about that 'cause she said I should be concentrating on my schoolwork anyway. Which is kinda funny 'cause it was som'n I read in class that first put the idea in my head that I...that I could actually do this, you know? I never did thank you for that, Mr. Keys... Anyway, my girl's mom just kicked her out and she's stayin' with us now. My mother don't even know for sure that we together, but she still 'on't want me to sleep in the same room as her, which is kinda stupid when you think about it 'cause her face is all like...

*(Choking up a little:)*

...swollen and bruised and shit from her mom...she can't even... she can't even lay on the pillow without it hurtin' so...all that hot lesbian love that my mom think might go down is definitely out of the question...I just found out that my best friend is an even bigger gay-basher than I was forgiving his ass for bein' in the first place. He done some shit lately that I honestly never woulda thought he was capable of... I'm just wonderin' what I'm supposed to do now? Now that I'm out on this limb, what am I supposed to do to keep from falling off it? Especially wit' everybody shakin' the damn tree like this.

*(End of scene.)*

**Scene 13**

*(Setting: A classroom.)*

*(At rise: The ENGLISH TEACHER is concluding class once more.)*

**ENGLISH TEACHER.** So. For homework, you are to read the first two chapters of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. And, of course, don't forget to hand over your essays on your way out. Thank you.

**THIS PLAY IS  
NOT OVER!**

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