

Reassembling Sasha

by
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Reassembling Sasha

Characters: (9 women, 3 men) (in order of appearance)

Maya: Sasha's lab assistant. Hard worker, gets things done.

Betty: Part of Sasha--runs the show. Proud, uptight, organized.

Amelia: Part of Sasha. Laid back. Prone to despair and sloth.

Ava: Part of Sasha. Businesslike, interested in the potential cash in everything.

Gladys: Part of Sasha. Smart, but always hungry.

Dr. Bert: Department chair. Self-important. He's not a fan of Sasha or her research.

Lexia: Part of Sasha. Sasha's sensual side. Feels oppressed.

Ira: Part of Sasha. (Played by a man.) Often aggressive and angry. Sasha's masculine side.

Ivy: Part of Sasha. A social peacemaker, but also prone to jealousy.

Dan: A librarian. Interested in Sasha.

Natasha: Not quite Sasha.

Dr. Sasha Marlowe: A brilliant scientist. She normally works a little too hard.

Time: Now

Place: A university.

Setting: Dr. Sasha Marlowe's lab.

(Note: if you double the male roles and Sasha/Natasha/and one of the other parts, you can do this play with 7w, 1m)

Reassembling Sasha

Scene: A laboratory. This can be a simple set--a bunch of chairs, some sort of console or high tech device (lots of wires and lights, but very much glued and hacked together) attached to a booth, which can either have a door or just a curtain, or can just be a flat that people can move behind. The booth needs to be large enough to hold at least one person.

At rise: MAYA, in a lab coat, watches AVA hard at work on the console with various tools. Maybe Maya shines a flashlight on the wires. BETTY looks on with a clipboard and pen. AMELIA sits on one of the chairs and sighs loud and long. GLADYS paces, eating a huge bag of chips. (Ava, Betty, Amelia, and Gladys should each wear the same costume, but in a different color. Their apparel should be quite different from Maya's.)

BETTY

Did you try shifting the hoosit?

AVA

What?

MAYA

The inverter?

BETTY

I don't know the words anymore. But there's an order. Shift the hoosit, but first you have to uncouple the feed from the thingamajigs.

AVA

The capacitors?

BETTY

Sure. Yes. That could be it. We'll just go down the list.

MAYA

Let me see that. (Betty tries to hide her clipboard, but Maya gets a glance) That's just gibberish.

BETTY

It's my list. We will fix this machine and get back to normal, and it will be done in an orderly fashion.

AMELIA

You're never going to get it.

AVA

(holding up a singed part)

The power surge fried this whole card. We need to design a protective circuit--if we did it right, we could patent it and make a mint.

GLADYS

It's always about making money with you. Where is your hunger for intellectual knowledge?

AVA

Money is required to keep you in chips and ice cream.

GLADYS

(to Maya)

This bag is almost empty. Is there more?

MAYA

Let's focus on the problem, please. (to Ava) No, the transducer shouldn't go--

BETTY

She knows what she's doing. You're the lab assistant, we're the scientist.

AVA

Hand me the soldering iron.

AMELIA

We're going to be stuck like this forever.

EVERYONE (EXCEPT AMELIA)

Shut up!

GLADYS

Try to focus on what we're learning from this. The ramifications are astounding.

AMELIA

There's no point. We're doomed.

A LOUD knock at the door.

BETTY

Do you think they're back?

MAYA

I gave them the key.

Loud knock again.

MAYA

Um. Graduate students.

BETTY

Ha! Post-docs, at the very least.

DR. BERT

What are they doing here?

BETTY

Only the most important work this university has ever seen.

AVA

Could be very lucrative.

AMELIA

We're stranded.

GLADYS

Starving.

DR. BERT

Dr. Marlowe does not have the budget for additional lab assistants.

MAYA

Oh, they're, um, pretty much--

GLADYS

Working for chips. These are almost gone. I can't think on an empty stomach. Do you still keep that stash of chocolate in your office, Dr. Bert?

DR. BERT

None of your business. (to Maya) I need to see Dr. Marlowe right away. This power surge, it's just the latest... this entire research project is going to make us a laughing stock. You can't split a person up into her constituent parts, it's just... ridiculous. She used to be someone to be admired, but now this--

BETTY

--might finally put this university on the map again.

AVA

Grants pouring in.

DR. BERT

I'm sure she'll appreciate your cheerleading. But she no longer has the support of this department or this university. Maya, please find her and tell her to meet me here as soon as possible. This has to come to an end.

Dr. Bert exits.

GLADYS

Bring snacks when you come back.

BETTY

Idiot.

AVA

There goes a man with a hundred thousand dollar education and a ten-cent imagination.

MAYA

He's going to shut us down. I'll be fired. You'll be...

BETTY

He can't shut us down. The machine works. We're living proof.

GLADYS

It'll be a whole new field of study. Fundamentals of personality extraction.

MAYA

I told her, told you, over and over again, don't test it on yourself.

AMELIA

We never listen. Never. And now we're doomed.

AVA

We'll fix it, and then he'll see. I predict a raise in our future. Dr. Sasha Marlowe, full professor. I like the sound of that.

AMELIA

Even if you fix the machine, we can't reassemble ourself. Where are the others? They're lost out there.

GLADYS

Maybe I should go look for them. I could stop by the chili truck on my way out.

MAYA

No. No one else goes out. We stay here and fix this, so when they do come back, we'll be ready to reverse the process and get you out of this mess.

AMELIA

They won't be back, because they don't want to go back. They like the air. The freedom. Personally, I don't care. Put me back, box me up, seal up the air holes.

BETTY

I want to go back. I plan to show everyone the most brilliant discovery of the century. Let's get this fixed NOW!

Betty pushes Ava out of the way and starts trying to work on the machine.

AVA

You won't show anyone anything if you insert the circuit that way. Put it in the slot on the left. The other left. Gently. No, not like that. Give me that.

BETTY

It's not my fault that you got most of our hand-eye coordination.

AVA

And I know my right from my left. Kills you, doesn't it?

BETTY

I have plenty of skills, don't worry. And at least I don't keep stuffing myself like some people.

Gladys has found a bag of candy and is working her way through it, scattering wrappers everywhere.

GLADYS

What? You think you're so special? Tell me, how does the flux dynamo work?

BETTY

Um.

AVA

That's this piece, isn't it?

GLADYS

Yep. And you should hook up that other brown wire instead of the grey one, or you'll zap your hands off.

MAYA

You mean green and red.

GLADYS

Did I?

MAYA

Who here can see colors? What color is this flashlight?

AMELIA

Grey?

AVA
Green, right?

BETTY
It's not important.

GLADYS
Chocolate brown?

MAYA
This could be a problem.

AMELIA
(to Ava)
For what it's worth, I remember that you're supposed to
reboot the auxiliary processor. Not that there's much point.

MAYA
You can't really fix this, can you?

BETTY
Sure we can. Step by step. Right?

AVA
Well. None of us has the complete picture of how this
machine works. But all together, we can probably do it.
Once the others are back, we'll know how.

MAYA
Where are they?

She takes out a cell phone and dials.
No answer.

GLADYS
They probably don't know how to answer it.

MAYA
What?

GLADYS
Who here would know how to answer a cell phone?

Only Ava raises her hand.

AMELIA
There are so many buttons.

BETTY
I know stuff they don't know. Robert's Rules of Order. How
to set up a flow chart.

AMELIA
They're unreachable. Lost. Vanished.

MAYA

We can fix this. Here take this (gives flashlight to Gladys, who nibbles it). Point it at the machine. (to Ava and Betty) Shift over. I may not be as brilliant as all of you put together, but at least I do have a fully functioning brain.

BETTY

I'm functioning just fine, thank you very much.

MAYA

Pliers.

AVA

(slapping the pliers in her hand)

Pliers.

MAYA

Soldering iron.

AVA

(slapping a soldering iron in her hand)

Soldering iron.

MAYA

Chip puller.

AVA

Chip puller.

Maya makes more adjustments.

MAYA

That might do the trick. Next time, document your work a little better, all right?

BETTY

You're our lab assistant. That was your job.

MAYA

But you didn't tell me everything, did you? Too many midnight sessions.

AVA

We had some concerns about confidentiality.

MAYA

You don't trust me?

AVA

There's a lot of money at stake.

AMELIA

The rest of us trust you, don't worry.

MAYA
Okay. Okay. Let's try it. (to Amelia) Flip the switch.

AMELIA
It's so far away.

MAYA
Flip it. We need to see if anything trips or sparks in here.
Keep that light steady.

AMELIA
I just don't know if I have. the. energy.

GLADYS
Flip the switch.

With a loud sigh, Amelia hauls herself out of her chair and slouches her way over to a switch.

MAYA
Did you flip it?

AMELIA
Hold on. Okay. Ready?

She flips the switch. Nothing happens.

MAYA
Did you do it?

AMELIA
I did. Good night.

She goes back to her chair and flops down.

AVA
Nothing happened.

BETTY
What are we missing? Let's look at the list again.

MAYA
Your list doesn't actually say anything!

A loud clamor from outside and suddenly IRA and IVY burst into the room, dragging an uncooperative LEXIA. Like the other parts of Dr. Marlowe, they all wear the same costume but in slightly different colors.

LEXIA
Let me go. You can't do this.

IRA
Shut up. You're asking for a punch in the nose.

LEXIA
Help! I'm being suppressed.

IVY
Shhh. If we don't go back, someone else will eventually figure all this out and get the credit. This is OUR discovery and you're going to mess it up.

LEXIA
Let me go back outside. The colors, the flowers, and all those men. There are beautiful, gorgeous, interesting men all over this campus.

GLADYS
Did you bring some snacks?

IRA
Have you fixed it yet?

BETTY
We've almost got it.

IRA
For crying out loud, we've been gone for hours. You should be done by now. Let's go, let's go, let's go.

BETTY
Keep your shirt on he-man. If we keep this orderly, we can put everything back together.

IRA
Get it done. Get it done. Get it done.

AMELIA
Calm. Calm.

IVY
(to Ava) Hurry, before he pops a gasket.

LEXIA
This lab is so drab. (wraps an arm around Maya's shoulders and walks her around the room) How do you work here day after day? How do I do it? A little paint would brighten up our lives, don't you think? Lemon yellow. Some curtains around these windows might make the place seem less industrial. And could these chairs be any less comfortable?

MAYA

Great ideas. But let's focus on putting Humpty Sasha back together again, okay?

LEXIA

Maya, promise me we'll paint. Once we're all back to being Sasha, I'll be squelched. It's those two (points at Betty and Ava) mostly running the show. No time to stop and smell the roses, no time to experience life, just work, work, work. That's why I dreamed up this machine in the first place.

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