

**PUSHED**  
**A COLLECTION OF SHORT PLAYS**  
**ABOUT PEER PRESSURE**

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by Nicole B. Adkins, Jeff Goode, Adam Hahn, Samantha Macher, Greg Machlin, Wendy-Marie Martin, Liz Shannon Miller, Jonathan Price, Mike Rothschild and Dave Ulrich

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

*Pushed* is a collection of short plays exploring peer pressure and its intersection with other real issues that teens face.

The plays can be performed as individual pieces or grouped together in any combination to create a show of the desired length and performed under the title *Pushed*.

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

*Pushed* was conceived and developed by Nicole B. Adkins and Jeff Goode in collaboration with SkyPilot Theatre Company in Los Angeles under founding artistic director Bob Rusch and written by members of the company's Playwrights Wing.

It was first workshopped at Determined to Succeed, an educational non-profit organization in Los Angeles on September 21, 2013, directed by Jeff Goode, with the following cast:

Nicole B. Adkins, Zelika Chante, Jude Evans, Arden Haywood, Jason Kobielus, Morgan Lariah, Franci Montgomery, Niki Nowak and Ethan Zachery Scott.

Special thanks to Determined to Succeed Program Director / High School Coordinator Angel Honda, Executive Director Abby Adams, and student responders Brittany Aguilar, Krystal Briseno, Katherine Calderon, Sara Elmourabit, Raul Gonzalez, Gabriela Hernandez, Chris Madrigal, Diana Ovalle, Diana Pena, Mario Santos, Jackie Trejo, Isaiah Tulanda, Josh Tulanda.

*Pushed* was further developed through a staged reading on June 7, 2014 at The Young Actor's Studio under the direction of Jeff Alan-Lee & Andrew Shafer, with the following cast:

*Guts* (aka *Once upon a Time in the Peanut Gallery*) by Dave Ulrich

ZOE - Emily Kilroy

DERRICK - Josh Drummond

BUTT CHIN - Henry Kamp

RATATOUILLE - Johnathon Kidd Pollock

*Six of Beer* by Adam Hahn

BRICE - Josh Drummond

MARK - Alejandro Cervin

NARRATOR - Amanda Horowitz

*B-E Aggressive* by Samantha Macher

JANAE - Emily Kilroy

ANA - Noelle Backman

OLIVIA - Sareh Wilburn

CRYSTAL - Hannah Guterman

DELANEY - Sharon Rodas

*Foam* by Mike Rothschild

MADISON - Noelle Backman

HUNTER - Amanda Horowitz

CHRIS - Selina Alvarez

HARVEY - Sharon Rodas

*Out Post* by Nicole B. Adkins

CRUZ - Shir Zahavi

ISABELLA - Miya Parry

*Awareness* by Jonathan Price  
LIA - Emily Kilroy  
MADDIE - Hannah Guterman  
COAT-RACK - Amanda Horowitz

*Full Circle* by Wendy-Marie Martin  
HARRISON - Johnathon Kidd Pollock  
SYDNEY - Selina Alvarez  
MEGAN/JADA/FRIEND - Sharon Rodas

*Four Calls* by Liz Shannon Miller  
EMMA - Noelle Backman  
JOSH - Gus Kamp

*King's Gambit* by Greg Machlin  
CASSIUS - Henry Kamp  
BLACK KNIGHT - Sareh Wilburn  
BLACK ROOK - Alejandro Cervin  
BLACK BISHOP - Hannah Guterman  
WHITE ROOK - Josh Drummond  
WHITE PAWN - Shir Zahavi  
WHITE KING - Johnathon Kidd Pollock  
WHITE QUEEN - Miya Parry

*Jax-In-A-Box* by Jeff Goode  
DARIUS - Henry Kamp  
JACKSON - Gus Kamp

# GUTS

A short comedy by  
Dave Ulrich

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

ZOE, female.

DERRICK, male.

BUTT CHIN, male.

RATATOUILLE, male.



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*(A couple of outcasts, ZOE and DERRICK are hanging out. They have just finished lunch, alone on bleachers, away from everyone else.)*

**ZOE:** Hey, when are you gonna get your tickets to...

**DERRICK:** *(Leaping to his feet:)* Whoa! Zoe! Check it out...

**ZOE:** What?!?

**DERRICK:** *(Pointing down, off into the distance:)* Fight!

*(Two boys, BUTT CHIN and RATATOUILLE appear on the opposite end of the stage. They are circling each other slowly, fists up, prepared to fight.)*

**ZOE:** Oh jeez. Who?

**DERRICK:** "Butt Chin" is about to kill "Ratatouille."

**ZOE:** Aww, I like Ratatouille.

**DERRICK:** That kid?

**ZOE:** Jeez Derrick, why would I nickname him after my favorite movie of all time if I didn't think he was all right?

**DERRICK:** Good point. But I thought it was 'cuz he kinda looks like... oh!

*(Butt Chin finally throws the first punch. He hits Ratatouille in the stomach and Ratatouille falls to his knees.)*

**DERRICK:** Ouch! Poor guy.

**ZOE:** *(Covering her eyes:)* I can't look. *(Beat.)* What's happening?

**DERRICK:** Butt Chin landed one in the gut. Oh, don't be ridiculous, Zoe. Just look.

**ZOE:** No, I can't look. Describe it to me...gently.

*(Butt Chin resumes fighting position as Ratatouille gets back to his feet, stumbling back into his defensive maneuvers.)*

**DERRICK:** If I'm going to be telling you, might as well see it yourself. They're mostly just circling each other, anyway.

*(Zoe slowly lowers her hand from her eyes, but keeps the hand raised, in case she needs to cover again quickly.)*

**ZOE:** I wonder what he did to Butt Chin.

**DERRICK:** I would guess that he breathed air and Butt Chin thought it was his air. You don't seriously think he did something.

*(Butt Chin and Ratatouille each throw awkward punches and miss.)*

**ZOE:** Boys are so dumb.

**DERRICK:** Like girls don't have bullies.

**ZOE:** We don't throw down.

**DERRICK:** Sometimes.

**ZOE:** Look—Butt Chin's trying to explain why he's gonna beat him up.

**DERRICK:** What's he saying?

**ZOE:** *(As Butt Chin:)* He's all like: "I'm secretly in love with my quarterback, so I'm going to hide it with a grand display of masculinity."

**DERRICK:** *(As Ratatouille:)* Haha. And Ratatouille is like: "I feel like my parents' divorce was my fault, so I deserve to be punched."

**ZOE:** That's awful.

**DERRICK:** No, what's awful is that whatever it is has nothing to do with Ratatouille.

**ZOE:** Well what is it, then?

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**DERRICK:** It's like this...

*(Derrick hops to his feet and takes a fighting position like Butt Chin.)*

Take that! *(Punches the air:)* ... because I have a butt for a chin and I can't get rid of the zits on my face. And take that! *(Punches the air again:)* ... because I got these muscles from 'roids and I hate my tiny testicles. *(Punches the air again:)* And that's 'cuz even with summer school I might get put back a grade because I think studying sucks.

*(Zoe jumps to her feet and gets in a boxing stance across from Derrick. They match the positions of Butt Chin and Ratatouille.)*

**ZOE:** *(As Ratatouille:)* And OUCH! I'm gonna let you beat me up because everything makes me nervous, and I shovel food in my little rat mouth when I'm nervous.

**DERRICK:** *(As Butt Chin:)* And BAM! My older brother beats me up.

**ZOE:** *(As Ratatouille:)* And OUCH! I think about suicide.

**DERRICK:** *(As Butt Chin:)* And BAM! I'm scared of sex, but pretend I've already done it.

**ZOE:** *(As Ratatouille:)* And OUCH! I cut myself.

**DERRICK:** *(As Butt Chin:)* And BAM! I never talk to my parents except when we yell and fight.

*(Butt Chin pushes Ratatouille to the ground. Derrick lowers his fists a little and takes a more serious tone.)*

**DERRICK:** And I'm gay.

**ZOE:** Butt Chin? You really think....

**DERRICK:** No Zoe. I... well... I'm...

**ZOE:** (*Lowering her arms:*) Oh my god. So many things make sense now.

*(Butt Chin walks a victory lap around the curled up Ratatouille on the ground.)*

**DERRICK:** (*Dropping his arms completely:*) I don't know what to do.

**ZOE:** You don't know what to do?! I'm pregnant.

**DERRICK:** Wait. You...? No way!

*(Zoe plops down and sits in defeat.)*

**ZOE:** Way. As if I weren't a big enough loser, now EVERYONE's gonna shut me out.

*(Butt Chin finally pounces on Ratatouille, and puts him in a headlock.)*

**DERRICK:** (*Crouching down to comfort her:*) I won't.

**ZOE:** Yes you will. You still have a chance to fit in. You can't be seen with me when I'm preppers.

**DERRICK:** Fit in? (*Pointing down to Ratatouille:*) That's going to be me down there soon enough.

**ZOE:** Well, you hide it now. Just keep hiding it.

**DERRICK:** I don't think I can hide it anymore. I think it might even be harder.

*(Pause.)*

**ZOE:** So the social outcasts by choice are about to become social outcasts for real.

**DERRICK:** Well, you never know. Maybe this school will come around. Evolve.

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*(Butt Chin lets Ratatouille back up. Butt Chin walks a few steps away while Ratatouille dusts himself off.)*

**DERRICK:** Actually, yes. Why not? We'll be the open-minded generation. A revolution that starts with us.

**ZOE:** Ha!

**DERRICK:** What do you mean, "Ha!"?

*(Butt Chin goes back in and punches Ratatouille in the arm.)*

**ZOE:** I mean who are we? We don't have the guts. We're sitting here watching someone get his face punched in—and mocking it.

**DERRICK:** Well what are we supposed to do? Go put our faces in front of a fist? Take that kid's place?

**ZOE:** I don't know. Maybe. Do something to stop it. Or go embarrass the bully.

**DERRICK:** Embarrass the bully??!!

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

# SIX OF BEER

A short comedy by  
Adam Hahn

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

BRICE, male, a teenage boy.

MARK, male, a teenage boy.

NARRATOR

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*(BRICE and MARK hanging out on a couch.)*

*(NARRATOR in narration posture.)*

**NARRATOR:** Two teenagers, on a couch, in a living room.  
Brice:

**BRICE:** Are you hungry?

**NARRATOR:** And Mark:

**MARK:** No. I'm thirsty.

**NARRATOR:** We will now show you six variations on one scene. All of them center around one thing:

**MARK:** Beer!

**NARRATOR:** Part one: Temptation. Variation One.

**BRICE:** What?

**MARK:** Your parents have a case of beer in the fridge. They won't notice if we drink a couple.

**NARRATOR:** Variation Two.

**BRICE:** What?

**MARK:** Twenty-four beers in the refrigerator. I bet I can drink more than you.

**NARRATOR:** Variation Three.

**BRICE:** What?

**MARK:** We have beer.

**BRICE:** We?

**MARK:** We should call girls and tell them we have beer. Beer plus girls equals party.

**NARRATOR:** Variation Four.

**BRICE:** What?

**MARK:** Beer.

**BRICE:** What?

**MARK:** Beer. Beer, beer, beer, beer, beer, beer, beer. Beer!

**NARRATOR:** Variation five.

**BRICE:** What?

**MARK:** You are a terrible host. I've been in your house for an hour, and you haven't offered me a beer. Stop being rude, get yourself in that kitchen, and pop me a cold one.

**NARRATOR:** Variation Six.

**BRICE:** What?

**MARK:** Do you want to drink some beer?

**NARRATOR:** Part Two: Reflection. Brice, stand up.

**BRICE:** What?

**NARRATOR:** You're going to tell us six different things that you might be thinking after your friend asks for beer. Stand here, so it doesn't look like a conversation with Mark.

**BRICE:** Here?

**NARRATOR:** Close enough. Number One.

**BRICE:** Even if we only take a few beers, my parents might notice.

**NARRATOR:** Number Two.

**BRICE:** If we drink as much beer as we can, my parents will definitely notice. Anyway, I have gym first period tomorrow, then a geometry test. I don't want to go through those hung over.



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**NARRATOR:** Number Three.

**BRICE:** I do like the idea of having girls over, but the girls I'm interested in probably wouldn't be impressed by a random phone call asking if they want to get drunk on a Tuesday night.

**NARRATOR:** Number Four.

**BRICE:** Mark's not a good driver sober. If he drinks, then drives into a ditch or gets picked up by the police, he'll be in trouble, my parents will hear about it, and then I'll be in trouble.

**NARRATOR:** Number Five.

**BRICE:** I've seen Mark drink a couple of times. When he gets a little buzzed, he gets kind of annoying—more annoying than he already is. Then he keeps drinking, and he gets more annoying. Then he pukes. He'll be right in the middle of saying something really annoying, and all of a sudden he'll kind of—

**NARRATOR:** Thank you, Brice—

**BRICE:** Oh, and there's this sound he makes, like he's crying and puking at the same time.

**NARRATOR:** That's enough, Brice.

**BRICE:** And the smell! It's like he—

**NARRATOR:** Stop!

**BRICE:** Sorry.

**NARRATOR:** Number Six. Brice, have you ever even had a beer?

**BRICE:** No.

**NARRATOR:** Why not? Everyone else drinks.

**BRICE:** Not everyone. Actually a lot of people don't.

**NARRATOR:** Your parents do.

**BRICE:** But they're adults. They don't have to lie about it, and when they drink, they're careful.

**NARRATOR:** Don't you think you'd be careful?

**BRICE:** Yeah, in a few years. Have you looked at the kids my age who drink? Some of them do really stupid things.

**NARRATOR:** Don't they get away with doing stupid things?

**BRICE:** Sometimes. I don't want to lie to my parents, and I don't want to do anything stupid. I'm not ready to start drinking.

**NARRATOR:** Brice, go back to the couch, and we'll see six different ways Mark might react after you say no. Part Three: Resolution. Variation One.

**BRICE:** Mark, my mother notices if I don't change my socks every day. She'll notice if we take beer from the fridge.

**MARK:** Why would you not change your socks every day?

**NARRATOR:** Two.

**BRICE:** I don't want to drink. I have gym first period.

**MARK:** So a drinking contest will help you develop your competitive spirit. It's like studying for gym class.

**BRICE:** That's another reason not to do it.

**NARRATOR:** Three.

**BRICE:** We are not inviting girls over to drink my parents' beer.

**MARK:** This is why we don't have girlfriends.

**BRICE:** It's not the only reason.

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

# B-E AGGRESSIVE

A short drama by  
Samantha Macher

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

JANAE, female, a tenth grader.

ANA, female, another tenth grader.

OLIVIA, female, their cheerleader classmate.

CRYSTAL, female, Janae's sister, a senior.

DELANEY, female Ana's sister, a senior.

---

*(Lights up on five high school girls. The two older ones, CRYSTAL and DELANEY, sit on one bench, two girls, ANA and JANAЕ, sit on another, and a third, OLIVIA is standing between them in a cheerleader's uniform.)*

**OLIVIA:** Be aggressive!

B-E Aggressive!

**JANAЕ:** I can't believe she had the nerve to show up here.

**ANA:** That girl's got no shame.

**JANAЕ:** I know! Like she can walk up in here like a perfect little princess after what she did.

**ANA:** Seriously. She shouldn't have even been invited to that party. I mean, who even likes her?

**JANAЕ:** It's so unfair that she gets to go right back to being the center of attention and I can't even sit in the bleachers.

**ANA:** We could try again —

**JANAЕ:** No way. I can't deal with any more catcalling.

**OLIVIA:** B-E

A-G-G-

R-E-S-S-I-V-E

Aggressive

B-E Aggressive!

*(She waves her pompoms.)*

**CRYSTAL:** *(Pointing at Olivia:)* I can't stand her.

**DELANEY:** Me neither. Tenth graders are the worst.

**CRYSTAL:** Ever since that stupid party, Janae just hasn't been the same. This pep rally is the first time I've seen her out all week and that's only because she couldn't fake a fever. We never shoulda gone over there.

**DELANEY:** You were the one who took her? Girl, your mom is gonna kill you when she finds out.

**CRYSTAL:** I really thought it'd be okay. I thought it would be a fun way for her to meet my friends. I didn't even think there'd be beer! But no one's parents were home, and someone found out, and they brought the booze then all of a sudden: POOF—it's bad decision time. Now she won't even talk to me about it.

**DELANEY:** It's not like you guys talked before.

**CRYSTAL:** Yeah, but this is different. I had to find out from some girl in my English class.

**OLIVIA:** Go! Fight! With all your Might!  
Explode, ignite, defense let's fight!

**JANAE:** God! Every time I see her ugly face I just want to punch it in.

**ANA:** You're prolly gonna have to wait in line. I hear she's got pics of Jackie and Xander but won't delete 'em.

**JANAE:** Well Jackie can just wait her turn. I want to break that girl's fingers. I want to make sure she never takes another picture again. That girl? She's nothing. She's less than nothing. She's a mattress with pompoms

**ANA:** That's one way to put it.

**OLIVIA:** Offense, offense, go run score!  
Offense, offense, we want more!

**DELANEY:** Do you even know what happened?

**CRYSTAL:** Something about some boy and some pictures online.

**DELANEY:** Did you tell anyone? Your mom, maybe?

---

**CRYSTAL:** My mom? Are you kidding? She'd kill us both. Besides, she'd have to take time off work to deal with it.

**DELANEY:** What about Mr. Greenly?

**CRYSTAL:** The guidance counselor? What is he gonna do?

**DELANEY:** Maybe he can make Olivia take them down?

**CRYSTAL:** Don't you get it? They think that if some girl like Janae was "dumb" enough to do X, Y, and Z that she deserves what she gets.

**DELANEY:** I dunno, I mean it seems pretty reasonable to at least ask.

**CRYSTAL:** Delaney, please. It's like you don't even watch the news. Nobody out there cares about what happens to high school girls who go to parties.

**OLIVIA:** R-O-W-D-I-E  
That's the way we spell Rowdy.  
Rowdy, let's get rowdy!

**JANAE:** You know what we oughta do?

**ANA:** What's that?

**JANAE:** We oughta throw a party.

**ANA:** (*Sarcastically:*) Instead of beating her down? Yeah. That'll teach her.

**JANAE:** And we should have booze and invite boys—

**ANA:** Well, obviously, but—

**JANAE:** And when she gets good and liquored up, I say we give her a taste of her own medicine.

**ANA:** - -

**JANAE:** Isn't that a great idea?

**ANA:** I dunno. Janae. That seems like it might make things worse.

**OLIVIA:** Knock 'em down  
Roll 'em around  
Come on defense, work, WORK!

**DELANEY:** Maybe, but I think it's better than letting them handle this alone. I mean, they're like, fifteen. Who knows what they're gonna do?

**CRYSTAL:** Who cares?! It can't be worse than going to the school. Do you know what they'll put Janae through trying to get that picture down? What kind of questions they're going to ask?

**DELANEY:** Then you have to tell your mom and let her handle this. You can't let Janae go through this alone, and you definitely can't let these creeps get away with this!

**CRYSTAL:** She's gonna be pissed.

**DELANEY:** Yeah, well she's gonna be *more* pissed when she finds a picture of your sister on some website. That stuff gets around.

**OLIVIA:** Let's get physical  
Get down  
Get tough  
Get mean  
Let's get physical and beat the other team.

**ANA:** I don't know about this.

**JANAЕ:** What do you mean you don't know. It's *perfect!* Maybe she'll know how we feel for a change.

**ANA:** Can't we just kick her ass? I mean, seriously.

**JANAЕ:** I shoulda known.



---

**ANA:** You shoulda known what?

**JANAE:** You're just as uptight as she is.

**OLIVIA:** Hit 'em, Hit 'em  
Smack 'em down  
We are Central  
We own this town

**CRYSTAL:** My sister wasn't even *awake* when she took that picture. Then she went and spread it all over school? That's not right, Delaney.

**DELANEY:** I'm sorry about that.

**CRYSTAL:** I just wish someone would have done something at the party. That someone woulda said something to help my baby sister. If I had known, I would have done anything to stop it.

**OLIVIA:** We are Central we know how to do this  
C'mon girls we gotta get our boys through this!  
Fight, fight, fight, fight  
We won't rest til the end of the night.

**ANA:** I'm not uptight, Janae, I just don't think it's right.

**JANAE:** But you think it's right that she did it? That everyone around here knows everything about me? That every guy in school thinks I'll hook up with them now? That every girl thinks I'm a slut? Is that alright?

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# FOAM

A short comedy by  
Mike Rothschild

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

MADISON, female, a popular high school student.

HUNTER, female, her friend, another popular high school student.

CHRIS, not their friend, an unpopular student.

HARVEY, a carrot.

---

*(Lights up. MADISON and HUNTER, two popular high school students, stand center stage. They hold small, ornate containers.)*

**MADISON:** This is so freaking good.

**HUNTER:** It's like...better than good. What's better than good?

**MADISON:** Um. Really good?

*(They each sip from their containers, then delicately roll whatever they drank around in their mouths, making noises of intense pleasure.)*

What do you have? I have jicama maple mango deluxe with a bacon reduction.

**HUNTER:** I've got seaweed saffron salmon sorbet. With a bacon reduction.

**MADISON:** Duh, Hunter. What's the point without the bacon reduction?

*(They sip again, and make really loud and obnoxious noises again.)*

*(CHRIS enters, with a sack lunch and not anywhere near as much popularity. She takes out a sandwich. Madison and Hunter look at her in disgust.)*

**MADISON:** What is that supposed to be?

**CHRIS:** Sorry?

**MADISON:** That...food. Is that a joke? It's not a funny joke.

**CHRIS:** I don't understand what we're talking about.

**HUNTER:** We're not talking. We're judging. Right, Madison?

**CHRIS:** Guys, come on. I'm just trying to eat lunch.

*(She gestures toward her lunch.)*

**HUNTER:** Exactly! I can't believe you'd put that filth in your body.

**CHRIS:** My sandwich? It's organic turkey on whole wheat.

**MADISON:** Carbs...regular nutrients. Ew.

*(Chris nods, understanding.)*

**CHRIS:** Let me guess. You guys are into foam?

**MADISON:** Who isn't drinking foam? Everyone important drinks foam.

**CHRIS:** Well, I'm not. Sorry.

**MADISON:** Like I said. Everyone important.

**CHRIS:** It's a fad. Foam is a fad. Just like the all the other fad diets, just like low fat, just like high fat, just like the positive molecular spin diet, just like the purple diet...

*(Madison points an angry finger at Chris.)*

**MADISON:** Do not throw shade at the purple diet! My mother lost thirty pounds on the purple diet.

**CHRIS:** I'm not going to stop eating food and start eating non-food just because you say it's so great. I need proof, not stories!

**MADISON:** Foam is better than food, stupid. It's made of super-nutrients, flavored anti-oxidants and hexagonal molecules that absorb better than regular round ones.

**CHRIS:** That's not a thing! None of those are things!

**HUNTER:** Have you even had foam?

**CHRIS:** No! Why would I try it? It doesn't do anything.

**MADISON:** You can't knock what you don't try. That's ignorant.

**HUNTER:** Like racism. Are you a racist, too?

---

*(They menacingly walk toward Chris, who backs away.)*

**CHRIS:** No! Of course not!

**MADISON:** Then why are you being racist against foam? Stop being stupid and TRY IT!

**HUNTER:** We're trying to help you through peer pressure and insults.

*(Hunter thrusts a container at Chris.)*

**CHRIS:** I don't want your stupid foam!

**MADISON:** Fat pig! Carb eater!

**HUNTER:** Food racist!

**CHRIS:** Fine, fine! I'll try foam! Just leave me alone!

*(She takes the cup of foam and starts to put it to her lips.)*

*(Suddenly, a voice from offstage yells...)*

**HARVEY:** *(Off:)* Stop that activity!

*(HARVEY walks on stage. Harvey is a carrot.)*

Before you make her drink that foam, think about what you're doing.

**MADISON:** Um....

**HUNTER:** Am I the only one seeing this?

**CHRIS:** No, we're all talking to a carrot.

**HARVEY:** Yes, I'm a carrot. And I am a carrot with questions. Why do you do this?

**MADISON:** Because foam is what people who care about their body drink. And we care about...whatever this person's name is.

**CHRIS:** Chris.

**HARVEY:** No, no. Not why are you making HER drink, why do YOU drink?

*(Madison and Hunter look at each other. They've got this.)*

**MADISON:** It helps you lose weight. Duh.

**CHRIS:** But how???? How does it help you lose weight?

**HUNTER:** It has hexagonal molecules...it does stuff. It's better.

**CHRIS:** Do you even know?

**HUNTER:** I...um...Madison, do you know?

**MADISON:** I thought you did. Look, I just saw someone drinking it and they said it made them thinner. That's enough for me.

**HARVEY:** That's enough? That's not anything! You have no idea what it does, but you're convinced that it does it, aren't you?

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# OUT POST

A short drama by  
Nicole B. Adkins

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

CRUZ, female, a freshman.

ISABELLA, female, her big sister, a junior.

## PRODUCTION NOTE

[Bracketed] text may replace the dialogue it follows, per director's discretion.

*(CRUZ, a high school freshman, is in her room, pacing, talking on her smart phone.)*

**CRUZ:** Mrs. Perez...yes ma'am...no, wait— I— could I talk to her for just a— please...I only want to tell her— *(Beat.)* Mrs. Perez? Hello? *(In frustration:)* AGGHH!

*(She considers throwing her phone. ISABELLA, her older sister, watches her for a moment without being seen.)*

**ISABELLA:** You OK?

**CRUZ:** *(Without looking up:)* Do I look OK?

**ISABELLA:** *(Beat.)* I'm making a nice dinner. Come downstairs?

**CRUZ:** I'll pass.

**ISABELLA:** Dad will be home soon.

**CRUZ:** *(Beat.)* Lea's mother just hung up on me.

**ISABELLA:** *(Beat.)* I'm sorry, sis...

**CRUZ:** Don't act all sweet! You have no right!

**ISABELLA:** I had nothing to do with any of this.

**CRUZ:** You sure didn't.

*(She looks at her phone and then shows the screen to Isabella.)*

Look. Look at all these comments on my page. It's been three days. Three days of nastygrams, notes in my lockers, messages from kids I don't even know wishing Lea and me dead... And my own sister? She says...nothing.

**ISABELLA:** They will get tired and move on.

**CRUZ:** To the next person?

**ISABELLA:** I asked Laura not to post anything else.



**CRUZ:** Oh, you "asked" her not to post anything else. How polite. Thanks.

**ISABELLA:** Not everybody is nasty like that.

**CRUZ:** Yeah but the ones who are speak loud. And you can't buy me off with sweet-talk and food! I'm not even hungry.

**ISABELLA:** I just wanted to— I was just trying to—

**CRUZ:** What I want is for you to have my back.

**ISABELLA:** I have your back.

**CRUZ:** Yeah, when things get tough, Iz'll put on her apron and make a nice dinner! A regular Betsy Crocker.

**ISABELLA:** It's Betty.

**CRUZ:** Who?

**ISABELLA:** Never mind. Anyway I cook when I'm upset.

**CRUZ:** What do *you* have to be upset about?

**ISABELLA:** Forget it.

*(Isabella starts to leave.)*

**CRUZ:** That's right. Avoid. Your best move.

**ISABELLA:** You're the one who said you didn't want to talk about it.

**CRUZ:** Well now I do. Let's talk about it. Let's talk about how *your* BFF gave everybody permission to open fire.

**ISABELLA:** She's not my best friend and yes, what she wrote was...terrible.

**CRUZ:** Off the map terrible.

**ISABELLA:** But, you're the one who posted the picture.

**CRUZ:** People post pictures with their friends all the time. If your BFF hadn't made that comment it would've ended there.

**ISABELLA:** I told you to delete it.

**CRUZ:** I don't negotiate with terrorists.

**ISABELLA:** You're kissing in the picture.

**CRUZ:** So? Who does that hurt? Anyway, it could have been a friend kiss.

**ISABELLA:** Nobody kisses their friends like that.

**CRUZ:** You and I used to kiss on the mouth.

**ISABELLA:** We're sisters. And it wasn't that kind of kiss.

**CRUZ:** I bet French people kiss on the lips.

**ISABELLA:** That was a French kiss all right!

**CRUZ:** Lea hasn't come to school in two days.

**ISABELLA:** And you think that's my fault.

**CRUZ:** This is her first time publicly going out with a girl. It wouldn't have taken much, Iz. One comment...or even just a like! I kept thinking that you were just thinking up the perfect thing to say, and it was gonna' be good...but then it was too late.

**ISABELLA:** So you start a war and I'm supposed to fight it for you?

**CRUZ:** I posted a picture of a kiss. Isn't that the opposite of war?

**ISABELLA:** That's not the point.

**CRUZ:** What is the point then? That I'm gross cause I like girls? What am I? Bigfoot? Newsflash fellow citizens: Lesbians

---

Walk Among Us. Watch out! They are Coming to Kiss You!  
What century is this?

**ISABELLA:** This isn't about that. Everybody at school's pretty much over that by now.

**CRUZ:** Oh yeah? Well that's not what all the comments on my page say. They tell me that plenty of people are still perfectly ready to hate me if other idiots, like your good friend, lead the way.

**ISABELLA:** OK, yes, some people are still living in the past. But mostly, people just like drama. They'll say whatever online. This is about Lea. She wasn't popular to begin with, and you gave everybody an opening.

**CRUZ:** What do you mean?

**ISABELLA:** (*Beat.*) You're the one who outed her.

**CRUZ:** It was one picture!

**ISABELLA:** Didn't it occur to you that everybody sees what you post?

**CRUZ:** When you posted those million pics of you and Tony you got like a hundred likes on every one. Everybody said how cute you were. Including me. Nobody tried to make you feel disgusting. And if anybody had I would have rolled over them like a tank.

**ISABELLA:** I didn't ask you to! And anyway this is different—

**CRUZ:** What's so different?

**ISABELLA:** Tony's and my relationship! Not because he is a guy, but... Look, you're supposed to love her, right?

**CRUZ:** I do!

**ISABELLA:** Well maybe going public with Lea's biggest secret wasn't the greatest way to show it.

**CRUZ:** I wanted her to see that I don't care how popular she is or isn't, I am still proud to be her girlfriend!

**ISABELLA:** You were making choices for her.

**CRUZ:** No! I was just trying to...make something *right*.

**ISABELLA:** I think you were tired of being kept a secret.

**CRUZ:** (*Beat.*) Yeah, so?

**ISABELLA:** You're a fighter, Cruz. You always have been. Why do you think Dad calls you his "like-it or-lump-it-kid"? I'm on your side. I always have been, but you and me, we are different. Maybe you gotta think sometimes about how you wanna make change.

**CRUZ:** (*Holding out her phone to Isabella:*) And maybe you need to act sometimes. If you are really on my side, log in and defend me.

**ISABELLA:** (*Beat.*) You and I have our own ways of doing things.

**CRUZ:** What? I do them, you don't?

**ISABELLA:** That's not it—

**CRUZ:** You've never complained about me fighting when it was in your favor. Like when you wanted to stay out past midnight for prom. I defended you. And when Grandma was gonna take out the hems in your skirts, I defended you. I convinced her to leave them alone. And look at the larger world—things never change unless somebody steps out and makes some noise!

---

**ISABELLA:** OK, but you can't make people change if they aren't ready.

**CRUZ:** Lea's the one who took the picture. With her phone! She texted it to me!

**ISABELLA:** To YOU! Not the world. Do you remember when you came out to Dad?

**CRUZ:** Yeah, worst day ever.

**ISABELLA:** Did you ever think that it might not have been so great for him either?

**CRUZ:** He's not the one who has to face life with people judging him for something he can't help!

**ISABELLA3:** Oh no? *(Beat.)* Why do you think we stopped going to Mass?

**CRUZ:** *(Beat.)* What?

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# AWARENESS

A short dramedy by  
Jonathan Price

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Three 15-year-old girls:

LIA

MADDIE

COAT-RACK, wears glasses, speaks quickly.

---

*(LIA, MADDIE, and COAT-RACK enter. They carry light coats and backpacks.)*

**MADDIE:** Not the art room again!

**LIA:** We're skippin' lunch. I didn't write my essay on bullying. This is the only time I got.

**COAT-RACK:** I didn't wanna skip lunch.

**MADDIE:** You wouldn't.

**LIA:** Suck it up, Coat-Rack. We got work to do.

*(Lia takes off her coat and backpack. Coat-Rack extends her arms and Lia hangs them on her after taking out a notebook.)*

**MADDIE:** My topic was "Bystander." I made my sister write it.

*(She hangs her coat and backpack on Coat-Rack.)*

You should make Coat-Rack write it.

**LIA:** Cooley won't buy it. She knows Coat-Rack's writing.

**MADDIE:** Use your tablet.

**LIA:** She knows her writing *style*. Besides, I forgot to charge it.

*(Lia and Maddie sit down. Coat-Rack begins to sit down.)*

**COAT-RACK:** Lia, Anime Con is...

**LIA:** Coat-Racks don't sit down.

*(Coat-Rack stands back up, still holding all the coats and backpacks.)*

**COAT-RACK:** Anime Con is a week from this Sunday in Costa Mesa and my mom said she'd drive us.

**MADDIE:** You should wait 3 months and Lia will have her license.

**LIA:** "Awareness." What the heck is awareness?

**COAT-RACK:** Well, my mom said she'd drive us, and there's a CosPlay, and I was thinking of going as Haruhi Fujioka.

**LIA:** *(To Maddie:)* I need a pencil.

*(Coat-Rack takes out a pencil at the same time Maddie stands up to get one. Coat-Rack moves to hand her the pencil. Maddie backs away in mock horror.)*

**MADDIE:** Get away from me, perv! Get away!

*(Maddie laughs. Lia snickers.)*

**LIA:** You fall for that every time. Hork it over to Maddie, Coat-Rack.

*(Coat-Rack tosses the pencil to Maddie, who then gives it to Lia.)*

**COAT-RACK:** I thought I could get a blue jacket and some dress pants from Goodwill, and get some shoes from there, like polish them or something, and get the tie and an iron-on crest online, cuz the whole costume is really expensive.

**LIA:** I can't write about awareness with a Coat-Rack jabbering in my ear! What am I supposed to write about anyway? If I see some jerks bullying somebody, I'm supposed to be aware. "Yep. There's a bully."

**MADDIE:** Did anyone bring a snack? I'm hungry.

**COAT-RACK:** I've got a granola bar.

*(Coat-Rack pulls out a granola bar, while Maddie stands up. Coat-Rack moves to hand her the granola bar. Maddie backs away in mock horror.)*

**MADDIE:** Agh! Don't touch me! It's a pervert!

*(Maddie laughs. Lia snickers.)*



**LIA:** (To Coat-Rack:) You are such an *idiot*.

(Coat-Rack tosses the granola bar to Maddie.)

**COAT-RACK:** Anyway, I was thinking I could get a brown, short-haired wig, and a wig stand, and there's a special brush you have to get for the wig and a hair net. With her glasses on, cuz she normally wears contacts but she *does* have glasses, so I'm just gonna be her with glasses cuz I don't wanna wear contacts.

**LIA:** Will you just *shut up!*

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# FULL CIRCLE

A short comedy by  
Wendy-Marie Martin

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

HARRISON, male, a 14-year-old boy with a desire to belong, preferably very Caucasian.

SYDNEY, female, a 14-year-old girl happy with who she is in spite of peer pressure, any ethnicity.

MEGAN/JADA/"FRIEND," female; roles are all written for a 14- to 16-year-old girl, preferably African-American.

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*(Lights up on SYDNEY and HARRISON getting seated at school desks.)*

**HARRISON:** I'm serious, Syd. My brother told me—

**SYDNEY:** Well I think your brother's full of it. Why would you change anything just because we're freshmen?

**HARRISON:** Because this is the beginning of the rest of our lives, Syd. Do you really want to live the rest of your life like you are now?

**SYDNEY:** What's the matter with how I am now?

**HARRISON:** Forget it. Just don't come crying to me when you have no friends left.

**SYDNEY:** Whatever.

*(Harrison exits. The bell rings.)*

**HARRISON:** *(Off:)* Hut one. Hut two. Hut three...

*(Harrison enters in a football jersey carrying a football. MEGAN enters in a cheerleader uniform.)*

Hike!

*(He pretends to throw the ball toward Sydney.)*

**SYDNEY:** What the...are you crazy?

**HARRISON:** I was just kidding—

**MEGAN:** Good one, Harry—

**SYDNEY:** Harry? Wow. Who are you and what have you done with Harrison?

**HARRISON:** Very funny. I'm trying out for the football team after school—

**MEGAN:** Give me an H, give me an A, give me a double R—

**SYDNEY:** Don't make me hurt you.

*(Megan exits quickly.)*

Harrison, you hate football.

**HARRISON:** Not anymore. You are looking at the future star quarterback of the team—

**SYDNEY:** Oh my god, that is not going to make people like you—

**HARRISON:** Yeah? Well, we'll see, won't we?

*(Harrison exits. The bell rings. Emo music is heard. Harrison returns emoed out.)*

**SYDNEY:** Harrison? What happened to your football career?

**HARRISON:** It's dead.

**SYDNEY:** Oh. Well... I... uh—

**HARRISON:** We're all dying, you know. Every day. We die a little more.

**SYDNEY:** Oh my god. You aren't seriously—

**HARRISON:** Stop judging me, Syd, and worry about yourself.

*(Harrison exits.)*

**SYDNEY:** Whatever.

*(The bell rings. Rap music can be heard and gangsta Harrison reenters with his new "friend," Jada.)*

**HARRISON:** Yo, yo Sistah Syd. 'Sup?

**SYDNEY:** You need help, Harrison—

**HARRISON:** It's Killa H, now, Syd—

**JADA:** You tell her, Killa—

---

**SYDNEY:** Who is this person?

**HARRISON:** This here? Oh this is my good friend...Miss Juicy J—

**SYDNEY:** You're joking, right?

**JADA:** Watch yourself, girl—

**HARRISON:** She's cool, Juicy. She's cool.

**JADA:** If you say so. See you after class, Killa—

**HARRISON:** You know it.

**SYDNEY:** I think I just threw up in my mouth.

**HARRISON:** (*Dropping the accent:*) See? It's just like I told you. I've got a whole group of friends now—

**SYDNEY:** That was not a friend, Harrison.

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# FOUR CALLS

A short dramedy by  
Liz Shannon Miller

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

EMMA, female, teenager, pajama-bound and doesn't care.

JOSH, male, teenager, looks cool, cares a lot about that.

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**SCENE 1**

*(Night. Lights up on EMMA and JOSH, both with cell phones. Emma is dressed for bed. She might even be in bed. Josh sits on a couch.)*

*(If possible, Josh's clothes change minimally between scenes – stripping down from a hoodie to a button-down to a T-shirt to a tank top. Emma's always remain the same.)*

**EMMA:** How. Dare. You.

**JOSH:** Who is this?

**EMMA:** You're such a jerk.

**JOSH:** Seriously, who?

**EMMA:** You beat up my little brother today.

**JOSH:** *(Beat.)* I mean, honestly, who is this?

**EMMA:** My name is Emma. And my brother's name—your VICTIM's name—is Dave.

**JOSH:** Oh. *(Beat.)* I didn't know that was his name.

**EMMA:** You just beat up people you don't even know?

**JOSH:** Sometimes, yeah.

**EMMA:** Well, his name is Dave.

**JOSH:** And your name is Emma.

**EMMA:** And don't do it again.

*(Blackout.)*

**SCENE 2**

*(Night. Same as before, Emma sitting up.)*

**EMMA:** Hello.

**JOSH:** Emily? Wait. No. Emma.

**EMMA:** My brother told me you apologized.

**JOSH:** Well, I felt bad.

**EMMA:** Good.

**JOSH:** We're in the same class, aren't we?

**EMMA:** Yeah.

**JOSH:** Why don't I ever see you in school?

**EMMA:** I go to school.

**JOSH:** Yeah, but why don't I ever see you there?

**EMMA:** It's none of your business.

**JOSH:** Hey, you're the crazy person who keeps calling me. I figure you want to talk.

**EMMA:** I'm not crazy.

**JOSH:** Okay.

**EMMA:** Not. Crazy.

**JOSH:** Then what's the problem?

**EMMA:** I...I don't feel well. Sometimes. Most of the time.

**JOSH:** What, are you sick or something?

**EMMA:** Something like that.

**JOSH:** Is that why you call instead of text? Like, did your hands get cut off or something?



*(A beat. Then, Emma laughs.)*

**EMMA:** No. My hands are fine. I just... I don't talk to other people very much. It's nice to talk. Even when I'm talking to jerk bullies like you.

**JOSH:** I said I was sorry about that.

**EMMA:** But are you still doing it? Beating up kids like my brother?

**JOSH:** *(Long beat.)* I said I was sorry.

*(She hangs up on him. Blackout.)*

**SCENE 3**

*(Night. This time, Emma is woken up.)*

**EMMA:** Hello?

**JOSH:** Thank you for answering.

**EMMA:** I was asleep. I thought you were my alarm clock.

**JOSH:** Wake up. School starts in just seven hours.

**EMMA:** I don't talk to bullies.

**JOSH:** I'm going to keep calling you.

**EMMA:** Why? To explain why you terrorize kids? To apologize to the one person who doesn't care?

**JOSH:** If you don't care, why did you call me?

**EMMA:** Because I wanted to tell you to your face that you're a jerk.

**JOSH:** But it wasn't to my face.

**EMMA:** Goodnight.

**JOSH:** Don't—don't you want to talk?

**EMMA:** I can't. Not tonight.

*(She hangs up. Blackout.)*

---

**SCENE 4**

*(Night. Emma is awake. Resigned.)*

**EMMA:** Why do you keep calling?

**JOSH:** Why do you keep answering?

**EMMA:** Because no one else calls.

**JOSH:** That can't be true.

**EMMA:** You must have no idea what it feels like to be lonely.

**JOSH:** Of course I do. *(Beat.)* That's why it happens. With kids like your brother. It's how I make sure I'm not lonely.

**EMMA:** Don't blame me, my friends make me do it?

**JOSH:** They don't make me. They're just my friends.

**EMMA:** You need better friends.

**JOSH:** I'm working on that.

**EMMA:** That doesn't mean anything to my brother. Or the other kids you hurt.

**JOSH:** Does it mean anything to you?

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# KING'S GAMBIT

A short drama by  
Greg Machlin

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

CASSIUS, 15, high school freshman who identifies as transgender.

### Black Chess Pieces (Cassius' Team)

BLACK KNIGHT, preferably female, tough, younger.

BLACK ROOK, either, slower and older.

BLACK BISHOP, either, cautious.

### White Chess Pieces (Opposing Team)

WHITE PAWN, either, young, obnoxious.

WHITE QUEEN, female, older, exceedingly dangerous.

WHITE KING, male, older, unfocused.

## PRODUCTION NOTE

[Bracketed] text may replace the text it follows, per director's discretion.

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(CASSIUS' bedroom. He's 15, a freshman in high school. A banner for Central High School is taped to the wall.)

(Actors representing four white pieces and three black ones are in the final stages of a chess game. Chess piece characters wear all white or all black clothes, with something visible to clearly indicate their piece. Even when the pieces played by actors aren't moving/active, they're alert, concentrating on the game – or on Cassius.)

(Directors do not have to match the board squares referenced in stage directions; it's just important that it feel like a chess game.)

**CASSIUS:** Trans: adjective. "Used to describe anyone whose identity or behavior falls outside of stereotypical gender norms. More narrowly defined, it refers to an individual whose gender identity does not match their assigned birth gender." (To himself:) Speak English, Cassius! Someone in a man's body who identifies as a woman. Or someone in a woman's body who identifies as a man. Different from gay—a guy who's gay has no problem with being a man—he's just attracted to men instead of women. But people who are trans are convinced they're trapped in the wrong body. Many people who can afford it get surgery to change their gender when they're grown up. My parents would never allow that.

(He moves to the chessboard to consult with his pieces, the black ones.)

**BLACK KNIGHT:** A wise man once said "I make my own luck." As a knight, I agree. They never see me coming.

**BLACK ROOK:** You know, Ruy Lopez told me about a situation like this back in 1673...

**BLACK BISHOP:** You never knew Ruy Lopez, Black Rook! For crying out loud, will you shut up about Ruy Lopez? It's "Ruy Lopez" this and "Ruy Lopez" that!

**WHITE PAWN:** Hey, tell your fat rook friend to shut up, fatty!

*(White Pawn moves, stepping forward.)*

**BLACK BISHOP:** And...I'm movin' back this way.

*(Black Bishop moves a square.)*

**BLACK ROOK:** If you were in my sightlines, I'd take you out, you creepy little pawn!

**WHITE PAWN:** But you're not, are you, fat man? Lard ball? Tubbo?

**BLACK BISHOP:** *(Pointing at the White Pawn:)* Keep your eye on him!

**BLACK ROOK:** *(Pointing at the White Queen:)* Do you see the giant White Queen in front of me? I'm a little tied up right now! She could take me at any minute!

**WHITE QUEEN:** Cassius, I don't understand. You say you wish you were a woman? That doesn't make any sense. *(Concerned for him. Not malicious:)* You're sick, sweetie. You just need to see a doctor and this strange phase will pass.

**BLACK KNIGHT:** Hey. Leave the kid out of it. Game's on the board.

**WHITE QUEEN:** The game's everywhere.

**WHITE PAWN:** Yeah, Cassius knows that. Don't you, Cassius? See, I've been thinking about your problems. Nobody's going to listen to your crazy, weird, I-identify-as-female stuff. That's way worse than being gay. YOU WILL HAVE NO FRIENDS if you try and tell anyone else about this. So—

**BLACK KNIGHT:** Cassius, don't listen. He's dangerous.

---

*(White Pawn jumps a square forward.)*

**WHITE PAWN:** You can hear them talking about you in the halls, in between classes. They *already* think you're gay. How many "sick days" you used up this year. Seven? And it's only October! I have a solution: you should consider killing yourself.

*(Pause.)*

**CASSIUS:** I've thought about that.

**WHITE PAWN:** Then everyone would feel sorry for you. And you wouldn't have this whole weird thing that you had to hide away —

*(White Pawn jumps forward.)*

—from your friends, your mom, your dad. Your mom said you could talk to her about anything...but clearly, she lied.

**BLACK ROOK:** Cassius, little help!

*(The Black Rook steps to one side to avoid the White Pawn.)*

**CASSIUS:** I need to make sure my king's safe.

**WHITE PAWN:** Gee, that's a shame.

*(Jumps onto the final row/rank:)*

Because now I get to turn into a queen.

**CASSIUS:** *(Smiling:)* I'm sorry, did you say you wanted to become female?

**WHITE PAWN:** Of course not! You're the one who wants to wear a dress. That, and get the, uh, equipment. Not me. *(Pointing at his crotch:)* I have never met a guy who wanted to get rid of that. You gonna wear pink now? Play with those "American Girl" dolls?

**CASSIUS:** No. And I don't know any 15-year-old girls who do that. You hate girls?

**WHITE PAWN:** Not *real* girls. I *love real* girls. But men who want to turn themselves into girls—you gotta admit, there's something wrong there. So, no, I'm not going to wear a dress. Fag. [Gay-boy.]

**CASSIUS:** Bigoted much? I'm not gay. I'm trans. There's a difference.

**WHITE PAWN:** No real man would want to be a woman ! It's sick!

**CASSIUS:** In that case, you probably don't want to turn into a queen.

**WHITE PAWN:** Well, I'm not going to be a rook! Rooks are fat!

**BLACK ROOK:** Just pick *something*.

**WHITE PAWN:** Fine! I want to be a bishop! A promotion is a promotion! We're gonna beat you anyway.

*(White Pawn picks up a pointy bishop's hat.)*

**BLACK KNIGHT:** Wrong move.

*(Black Knight jumps closer to the White King.)*

*Check.*

**WHITE KING:** Oh, you stupid useless waste of plastic, White Pawn!

**WHITE PAWN:** Sorry, Dad!

*(White King stomps backwards.)*

**BLACK KNIGHT:** Back where I come from, threatening two pieces at once—we call that a fork.



---

**WHITE PAWN:** Hey, all that stuff I said about Cassius—I know he's your little brother—I didn't mean it.

**BLACK KNIGHT:** Of course not.

*(Black Knight jumps onto the same square as White Pawn:)*

Just like I don't mean this sleeper hold.

*(Black Knight puts White Pawn in a sleeper choke hold. White Pawn struggles, then collapses. Cassius drags White Pawn off board.)*

**BLACK ROOK:** And that's a *stupid hat!*

**BLACK BISHOP:** Ahem.

**BLACK ROOK:** *(To Black Bishop:)* Uh, no offense. Your hat is... totally different.

**WHITE QUEEN:** Cassius, honey, have you ever considered that this whole "transgender" thing is just a bid for attention? Listen, I'm sorry we've been so busy with the law firm and everything, but this is *sick*—

**CASSIUS:** I *am* sick! I'm sick of pretending to be someone else! I'm a woman, okay?

**WHITE QUEEN:** You listen to me, young man. If you wear a dress to school, I will ground you for the rest of your life. And take away your internet. That's where you got this stupid idea, anyway.

*(The White Queen storms over, close to the Black Knight.)*

**BLACK KNIGHT:** Did you forget I move in an L-shape? And *backwards?*

*(The Black Knight jumps in an L-shape to land on the same square as the White Queen.)*

Take her away, boys.

**WHITE QUEEN:** Cassius, you can't do this! Think of what you're doing to me!

*(The White Queen, hissing and muttering, scurries off the board.)*

**WHITE ROOK:** Guys, it's okay. Cassius is their leader! They can't win with him! Cassius, what's it like being a girly loser? I'm totally gonna take your knight out.

*(White Rook slides over and grabs onto the Black Knight.)*

I'm going to enjoy this.

**BLACK BISHOP:** Really? Take another look at the board. You just left your king in check. From me. ILLEGAL MOVE. Move back to where you were.

**WHITE ROOK:** Uh... Uh...

*(Ashamed, he scurries back. The move must be replayed.)*

**WHITE KING:** I am surrounded by idiots.

**CASSIUS:** You need to redo the move.

*(White King moves to a different square [f6].)*

**BLACK ROOK:** Cassius, you know there's a famous British comic called Eddie Izzard who wears a dress every time he goes onstage?

**CASSIUS:** I didn't. Is he trans?

**BLACK ROOK:** No, but Lana Wachowski, who wrote and directed *The Matrix* with her brother, is.

**BLACK BISHOP:** Time to go, White Rook.

*(Black Bishop moves from b3 to e6 to take White Rook.)*

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**WHITE ROOK:** (*Like Bill Paxton in Aliens:*) Aw, no, man, no, no, no! That's game over, man! Game over!

(*White Rook slumps off the board.*)

**BLACK KNIGHT:** (*Moves to c6:*) So what happens next?

**CASSIUS:** (*Deep breath:*) I announce that I'm trans at school. Tomorrow.

**BLACK ROOK:** Are you ready for what's ahead?

**CASSIUS:** I don't know. I really don't. I'm terrified.

(*White King edges away from them:*)

**WHITE KING:** Look, I didn't *mean* it! Can we call it a draw?

(*Black Rook races forward to h7:*)

**BLACK ROOK:** You can run, but you *cannot* hide. *Check.*

**WHITE KING:** Mercy! For the love of God, mercy!

**BLACK ROOK:** Were you going to show Cassius mercy?

**WHITE KING:** Well, no—but still!

(*Cassius stands up. All pieces except Black Knight and White King return to stillness.*)

**BLACK KNIGHT:** Good luck, kid. You're gonna need it.

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# JAX-IN-A-BOX

A short comedy by  
Jeff Goode

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

DARIUS, male, an older brother.

JACKSON, male, a younger brother.

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*(Lights up on a large cardboard box. Enter DARIUS, dribbling a basketball. He notices the box, decides to ignore it, at first. After a while, though, he dribbles closer.)*

**DARIUS:** Is that you, Jax?

**JACKSON:** *(From inside the box:)* Go away.

**DARIUS:** What are you doing?

**JACKSON:** I said, "Keep walking!"

**DARIUS:** Aren't you supposed to be in school?

**JACKSON:** Aren't you?

*(Darius dribbles in silence.)*

**DARIUS:** Does your mom know you're in a box?

**JACKSON:** What do you care? You're not my brother no more.

**DARIUS:** Maybe not, but I bet your mom'd care if she found out you was cuttin' class. *(Pause for effect.)* Might even give me a reward for turning you in.

**JACKSON:** I'm not going back to that school!

**DARIUS:** I hear that.

**JACKSON:** Ever.

**DARIUS:** I thought you liked school.

**JACKSON:** Who told you that?

**DARIUS:** You get good grades.

**JACKSON:** So?!

**DARIUS:** Better than I get.

**JACKSON:** That basketball gets better grades than you get.

**DARIUS:** Don't make me come in there, Jackson.

**JACKSON:** The only thing I like about that school is from now until three o'clock, everyone in the world that hates my guts is inside that building. And as long as I stay out of it, they can't get me.

**DARIUS:** Kids pickin' on you again?

**JACKSON:** Again? They don't stop, Darius!

**DARIUS:** So how do you think it's gonna go if they see you hiding in a box?

**JACKSON:** They can't see me, if I'm in here. That's the point, stupid.

**DARIUS:** You gotta watch your mouth.

**JACKSON:** The only thing they're gonna see is some idiot skippin' class so he can talk to a box.

**DARIUS:** All right, that's it, you're comin' out!

*(Darius plunges his hand into the box. And quickly pulls it back out.)*

Ow! You cut me!

**JACKSON:** I scratched you. Don't be a baby.

**DARIUS:** I'll show you who's a baby!

*(Darius plunges both hands in the box. And just as quickly pulls them back out.)*

Ow! Knock it off!

**JACKSON:** I'm not comin' out!

**DARIUS:** Fine, stay in there.

**JACKSON:** I will!

**DARIUS:** You need to cut your fingernails.

**JACKSON:** I did. And then I sharpened them.

**DARIUS:** You what?? Why'd you do that?

**JACKSON:** Cuz it's the only thing keeps people from grabbin' at me.

**DARIUS:** That's stupid.

**JACKSON:** You gonna stick your hand in here again?

**DARIUS:** No.

**JACKSON:** Then it's working.

*(Darius dribbles, considers leaving.)*

**DARIUS:** You can't stay in there forever, Jackson.

**JACKSON:** Not forever. Just until I graduate high school.

**DARIUS:** You're not gonna graduate if you don't come outta your box.

**JACKSON:** All I need is a D minus.

**DARIUS:** Everybody hates school, Jax, but we all gotta go. You think I like it in school?

**JACKSON:** You don't like it cuz you're bad at it. I don't like it cuz they all want me dead.

**DARIUS:** What? Nobody wants you dead.

**JACKSON:** Then I don't know where I heard it.

**DARIUS:** You think the whole school's tryin' to kill you?

**JACKSON:** I didn't say that. I said they want me to die. They say it to my face.

**DARIUS:** They don't say you should die.

**JACKSON:** And send me links to suicide kids like I should take a hint.

**DARIUS:** You're makin' that up.

**JACKSON:** I'm not makin' it up, Darius! Just cuz you don't wanna see it, don't mean it's not happening! That's why they do it! Cuz they think you're okay with it.

**DARIUS:** I never said it was okay.

**JACKSON:** No, you don't have to say nothin'. Just stand there and watch. (*Pause.*) Be nice if somebody had my back.

**DARIUS:** So all this is cuz you're afraid to go to school?

**JACKSON:** I'm not afraid!

**DARIUS:** You're hidin' in a box.

**JACKSON:** I tried to go. I can't. I get sick to my stomach.

**DARIUS:** You get sick being at school?

**JACKSON:** It's like I can't breathe. My hands start shaking. I tried to go today and I had to throw up in the parking lot.

**DARIUS:** Aw, no, yuck. Did anybody see you?

**JACKSON:** I don't know. I ran away.

**DARIUS:** Well, I guess you did the right thing. You don't want people finding out about that.

**JACKSON:** And the farther away I ran, the better I felt. Until I got here and I crawled in this box. And now I'm fine. As long as I stay in here, I'm fine.

**DARIUS:** You're not fine. You're in a box. This isn't fine.

**JACKSON:** It's quiet. There's nobody here to tell me what they think of me.



**DARIUS:** You gotta come outta there sometime, Jax. Look, you don't see me skippin' school just cuz I don't keep up in my classes. And all my teachers ridin' me cuz I can't get the same grades as my little brother.

*(Jackson pokes his head out of the box for the first time.)*

**JACKSON:** *(Suspicious:)* You're right. You don't care about any of that.

**DARIUS:** That's what I'm sayin'.

**JACKSON:** So why are you here?

**DARIUS:** What?

**JACKSON:** You don't care what anybody thinks of you or me or your grades. So why are you outta school?

**DARIUS:** I'm not. I came looking for you.

**JACKSON:** No, you didn't.

**DARIUS:** Your mom sent me.

**JACKSON:** Why don't you call her, then? Tell her you found me.

**DARIUS:** I don't know her number.

**JACKSON:** You're here cuz you skipped outta school. What are you up to? If they sent you to mess with me, I'll scratch you.

**DARIUS:** Now stop it! Nobody sent me.

**JACKSON:** I'm callin' my mom.

**DARIUS:** All right, stop... Look, I accidentally – I accidentally asked out the wrong girl, okay?

**JACKSON:** What wrong girl?

**DARIUS:** Shaundra Kelly.

**JACKSON:** Ha! That's never gonna happen!

**DARIUS:** Thanks, bro.

**JACKSON:** So what did she say?

**DARIUS:** What do you think she said?

**JACKSON:** I think she smacked you and told you to step off.

**DARIUS:** She told me she'd think about it.

**JACKSON:** Ha! You're such an idiot! That means "no."

**DARIUS:** She said she'd talk to me at lunch.

**JACKSON:** It's almost lunchtime now. What're you doing here?

**DARIUS:** I'm not goin' in that cafeteria.

**JACKSON:** Why not?

**DARIUS:** Cuz you're right, all right? It's never gonna happen. And I don't need her laughin' at me in front of all her friends.

**JACKSON:** That would be funny.

**DARIUS:** Watch it.

**JACKSON:** You gotta eat some time, Darius.

**DARIUS:** I hafta cut weight for track anyway.

**JACKSON:** So you're afraid of a girl.

**DARIUS:** No, I'm not.

**JACKSON:** You're not in school, cuz you're afraid of a little girl.

**DARIUS:** You shut up. Come out of there.

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*(Darius tries to grab Jackson who ducks back down in the box.)*

Ow! Stop scratching!

**JACKSON:** Stop grabbing!

*(Darius glares at the box. Jackson is inside.)*

So what are you gonna do? Drop out of school?

**DARIUS:** I wish.

**JACKSON:** Over Shaundra Kelly?

**DARIUS:** Well, I can't now.

**JACKSON:** Yeah, your dad'll kill you, missing class over nothing.

**DARIUS:** Forget that. Your mom'll kill me if she thinks I gave you the idea to do it.

*(Jackson emerges again.)*

**JACKSON:** Hey, that's right. That's exactly what she's gonna think if she finds out.

**DARIUS:** You better not be getting any ideas.

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