



Sample Pages from Boat

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BOAT

A VIGNETTE PLAY IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



Boat

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Printed in the USA

Characters

4M 7W 3 Any Gender, Expandable to 32

There are two opposing groups, WARM & COOL, who present the scenes. There is one overseer group, the ADVOCATES made up of three characters (AD, VO, and CATE).

Minimum Casting: The show can be done with 4 Males, 7 Females, and 3 Either with the following doubling:

Male	Female	Any
Parker, Chad, Benny	Tam, Dory	Ad
Solomon, Logan, Pace	Krysta, Noel	Vo
Mike, Toby, Ras, Hector	Jean, Lei	Cate
Brad, Adam, Bob	Ruby, Opel, Amy	
	Chelsea, Aisha, Helen	
	Destiny, Cora, Joelynn	
	Martina, Nada, Neda, Allison	

Character Breakdown

For a larger cast, there are a total of 32 parts. They are specifically outlined below as well as which parts are gender flexible.

Tug of War: Full group with 7 individual speakers: Ad, Dory, Ras, Noel, Aisha, Chad, Martina. (2M, 4W, 1AG)

All can be changed to any gender. Allow actors to choose their own character names if they wish.

I Don't Care: Adam, Neda, Destiny, Mike, Opel, Jean. (2M, 4W)

All can be changed to any gender. Allow actors to choose their own character names if they wish. These characters (aside from Jean) can be played by some of the same characters in the previous moment for a smaller cast.

The Elevator: Parker, Solomon, Cate. (2M, 1AG)

Brussels Sprouts: Bob, Ruby, Hector, Nada, Vo. (2M, 2W, 1AG)

All can be changed to any gender. Allow actors to choose their own character names if they wish.

Muskrat Lemonade: Logan, Amy, Allison, Benny, Brad, Cora, Chelsea. (3M, 4W)

All can be changed to any gender. Allow actors to choose their own character names if they wish.

My Dad: Helen, Neda, Krysta, Joelynn, Pace, Toby, Lei, Tam. (2M, 6W)

Neda is the same character as in a previous scene. All can be changed to any gender. Allow actors to choose their own character names if they wish.

Dead Dad Club: Tam, Krysta. (2W)

Must be played by same two actors from previous scene.

Hugs: Jean, Benny, Joelynn, Ruby, Martina. (1M, 4W)

The characters in this scene must come from previous scenes. If you wish to change to different characters, that's fine but who ever plays the "Martina" role must be a previously negative character.

Set

A couple of cubes downstage left, a couple of cubes downstage right. A riser upstage left and a riser upstage right for the two group tableaux.

Use the risers to create an upstage staging space that allows the WARM and COOL group to hold their tableaux for a length of time that is also interesting to look at. Think about what kind of backdrop would fit the theme of the play.

Costumes

The WARM group wear modern clothes in red, yellow, and orange. The COOL group wear modern clothes in blue, purple and green.

The identification of WARM and COOL is only to indicate what colours each group should wear as costumes and to differentiate the two groups. Feel free to modify costume choices.

Premiere Production

Boat premiered on March 28, 2017 by Owensboro Middle School (Owensboro, KY) with the following cast:

Maris Blount, Olivia Board, Piper Bradfield, Aiden Brice, Caitlin Brown, John Brown, Makiya Brown, Ali Calhoon, Allie Campbell, Ace Collier, Ana Collins, Chryslyn Doughty, Avery Elliott, Alysha Embry, Jasmine Ferry, Mason Fisher, Victoria Garrard, Brendan Geary, Ericka Gregory, Carrie Hagerman, Darby Haire, Allena Handley, Destiny Harris, Hunter Hedges, Summer Henry, Serenity Hinton, Braylon Howard, Omarion Jackson, Brenna Kiesling, Alivia Lewis, LaVida Lopez, Jessica Loyd, Kalea McRath, Noah Miller, Amiaha Moorman, Kelton Moorman, Brianna Newman, Bonnie Beth Olson, Lauren Payne, Kyle Reese, Hayley Rudd, Chad Shaver, Grace Shields, Marley Simon, Camryn Stahler, Elizabeth Strunk, Byrd Taylor, Elliot Tines, Sam Tucker, Miles Weikel, Kyreon Whitley, Ben Wilkins, Christian Wilson.

Directed by Jessica Stafford.

Upbeat music plays.

Three of the WARM group walk from stage left to stage right in a line with precision. They exit.

At the same time they exit, three of the COOL group walk from stage right to stage left in a line with precision. They exit.

As soon as the COOL line exits, they turn around and re-enter. At the same time, the WARM line also re-enters. Both lines walk toward centre stage, headed straight for each other, walking with precision. At centre stage they do a sharp turn downstage. When they get to the edge of the stage they make a sharp turn away from each other. They continue walking in lines, making sharp turns so that their action now remains on stage.

As soon as these two lines meet centre stage and turn downstage, additional lines from the WARM group and the COOL group enter. They can come from the audience or they can come from either side of the stage. Wherever they come from, everyone walks with precision. The protocol is that any time a line from one group approaches the other group on stage, they take a few steps toward each other and then make a sharp turn away.

After everyone is onstage and it has been established that they do sharp turns away from each other, a line of three from the WARM group move centre stage. They stand arms folded. A group of three from the COOL group moves centre stage and comes face-to-face with the WARM line, hands on their hips. The two lines look at each other with hate. The rest of each group sees what's going on and runs to stand behind their group. They start yelling at each other. They yell nonsense, not words. Once they start yelling the music fades.

NOTE: Use levels here so that we can see as many actors as possible.

The point of the next bit is that the two groups despise each other, but what they're saying almost sounds identical. Whatever tone WARM shoots at COOL, COOL should repeat it back exactly. Whatever

gestures WARM uses in this moment, COOL should repeat them back exactly.

WARM: Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah!

COOL: Bleh, bleh, bleh, bleh, bleh, bleh, bleh!

WARM: Blah, blah, blah, blah!

COOL: Bleh, bleh, bleh, bleh!

WARM: Blah, blah, blah!

COOL: Bleh, bleh, bleh!

WARM: Blah, blah!

COOL: Bleh, bleh!

WARM: Blah!

COOL: Bleh!

WARM: BLAH!

COOL: *(same time as above)* BLEH!

Both groups now start yelling at the same time. They yell nonsense, not words.

A whistle is heard. The groups freeze mid-rant. A group of three, dressed in black/white/grey enter from upstage. They are the ADVOCATES. They walk from upstage centre to centre stage in-between the two frozen WARM and COOL groups. They look at the groups, they look at one another.

AD: Ready?

VO: Ready.

CATE: Ready.

AD: Think we can do it this time?

VO: Never hurts to try.

CATE: *(looking at the two groups with great optimism)* I'm feeling optimistic.

AD: *(not optimistic)* You always say that. Ok. One. Two. Three.

AD blows a whistle. The ADVOCATES push out/up with their arms, palms flexed. There is a loud sound—a booming drum, or a riff on a guitar that turns into music for the groups to move to.

The WARM and the COOL groups react as if punched in the stomach. Make this a big physical moment. Everyone moves as if being pulled or dragged around the stage. It is involuntary. They try to stay with their own groups, reaching out, trying to hold on, but cannot. They act as if they are being pulled by huge magnets around the stage. This mixes up the two groups.

Everyone moves involuntarily to form a tug of war line with two sides. Once the line is formed downstage, the music cuts off.

Both sides (which are now mixed with WARM and COOL) stand with grim scowls and their arms crossed, facing the audience.

AD stands on a cube above the two sides. At no time should the two groups look back at AD. They should always face out to the audience, no matter their dialogue.

AD: Now children... This is not the way we play... Pick up the rope, please...?

ALL: *(everyone picks their own negative, have a mix)* Nope, no way, uh-uh, not a chance, never.

NOTE: Whenever the text says ALL, that means everyone in both the WARM and COOL groups, even if they're not directly involved in the scene.

AD: Pick up the rope, please. We can't play tug of war if we don't pick up the rope. Tug of war demands that there is a rope being pulled in two directions. Otherwise it's a game of rope on the floor which isn't fun at all. *(She laughs at her own joke. No one else does. She clears her throat.)* If we pick up the rope, you'll see that it works just the same no matter who is on your team.

DORY: *(pointing, referring to a COOL)* She can't be on my team.

RAS: *(pointing, referring to a WARM)* I'm not playing with him.

NOEL: *(pointing)* He'll pull wrong.

AISHA: (*pointing*) She's going to make us lose.

ALL: (*everyone picks their own negative, have a mix*) He's no good. She's can't pull. I don't like her. I don't like him. No good. No way. Never. We'll lose. She'll make us lose.

AD: Now, now, now. None of this is true.

DORY: Yes it is.

RAS: So true.

NOEL & AISHA: We know.

AD: The only thing you know is that you don't know each other yet. And if you would just pick up the rope...

CHAD: (*pointing*) They should pick up the rope first.

MARTINA: (*pointing*) They should.

CHAD: You should.

MARTINA: You!

AD: You could both pick up the rope, and then you'll see—

ALL: (*defiantly*) No! Uh uh! Never!

AD: That seems like a long time. A simple solution would be to—

DORY: (*pointing to a WARM on the other side*) Hey! You should come over here!

NOEL: Great idea!

AD: What?

RAS: (*pointing to a COOL on the other side*) Come on ours!

AD: No, no, no...

AISHA: (*switching sides*) We should all switch!

DORY: Yeah!

Everyone switches to be on a WARM side and a COOL side in a riot of agreement.

ALL: (*everyone picks their own line, have a mix*) Great idea! This is awesome! We'll win now! I love this group! Awesome! Go team! We can't lose! I missed you so much!

AD: *(during the above)* No... children... rope... every...

Everyone is now happily on their own side. They mime picking up the rope.

MARTINA: That's so much better.

CHAD: Let's play!

Everyone cheers. AD blows a whistle and everyone freezes mid-cheer. AD blows the whistle again and the booming drum is heard. Music plays. Again, everyone reacts as if they have been punched in the stomach. Make this a big movement. It's as if a giant magnet is trying to mix them up again. It is involuntary. The WARM group tries to stay with the WARM group. The COOL group tries to stay with the COOL group. They reach out, they try to hold onto one another. They fight the magnets with everything they have.

At the end of this movement everyone is smushed together in a shape, centre stage. It looks like a big pile of arms and legs stuck to a huge magnet.

AD blows the whistle and everyone freezes. The music stops. CATE and VO come over. They look at the shape.

AD: That is pathetic. Look at them. *(pokes the shape)* Total resistance.

VO: *(cheerfully)* It looks like art.

CATE: What kind of art are you looking at?

VO: *(can't keep it up)* I don't know.

CATE: *(to AD)* It's only the first go.

VO: What about something smaller? Maybe one at a time?

CATE: I'm optimistic.

AD: *(with a sigh)* All right. Something smaller.

AD blows a whistle and CATE pulls ADAM out of the group.

ADAM: *(to audience)* No, I don't care. I don't care that I made him feel bad. I don't care that he cried. I don't care about apologizing. I don't care about being a better person. These are all things you care about, not me.

CATE pushes ADAM back into the group as VO pulls out DESTINY.

DESTINY: (to audience) No, I don't care about this stupid family. I want to go out with my friends. You can't make me go to dinner. (beat) Grounded? I'm grounded? That's so unfair. Leave me alone! I hate you!

VO pushes DESTINY back in the group as CATE pulls out MIKE.

MIKE: No, I don't know what he's so upset about. It was just a joke.

CATE pushes MIKE back into the group as VO pulls out NEDA.

NEDA: So what if your boyfriend broke up with you? I don't care about him. Why aren't you listening to me?

VO pushes NEDA back into the group as CATE pulls out OPEL.

OPEL: Call the police? It's a tiny purse. You're blowing this out of proportion.

CATE pushes OPEL back into the group. The group is frozen.

AD: Maybe we should go to dinner. My treat. (turns to leave)

CATE: (turns AD back around) We can't give up already.

AD: I am feeling a blues only a burger can cure. And fries. And a milkshake.

AD starts off. CATE gets in front of her.

CATE: One more? (to VO) One more.

VO pulls JEAN out of the group.

JEAN: Ok, I'll tell you. Can you keep a secret?

VO looks at CATE and AD. AD shrugs. VO pushes JEAN lightly downstage. JEAN is talking to an unseen classmate.

JEAN: You caught a lucky break, I'm on my way there now. Oh yeah, I go all the time. This morning has been pretty stressful. (cheerfully) You know those days when all you want to do kick at every person who comes near? Full on rage. (cheerful, she's just stating

(facts) It burns my skin, screams in my ears, bites my tongue— *(so cheerful)* Everything is out of control! *(beat)* Say, you won't tell anybody about this will you? Ok. *(she looks around and then mimes unlocking and opening a door)* Welcome to my emotional dumping ground! *(pointing across the stage)* That's my mom. *(waving across to the other side of the stage)* Hi Mom! Mom gets the brunt of everything. Every ugly, resentful, emotion I've got gets dumped on her. We had a two hour fight last night about keeping my room clean. *(laughing)* She's a champ. *(calling out and waving to the other side of the stage)* You're a champ, Mom! You're the best! Whenever I feel like raging I come in here and ... *(she exhales)* It's magical. I'm not kidding. Life gets... clearer. School doesn't seem so bad. Life doesn't seem so bad. Did you know Dawit Bayu's mom left? Like gone? He's a mess, thinks it's his fault. I let him yell at my mom for the whole weekend. First time he's smiled in weeks. Speaking of which, you gotta go. *(calling across to the other side of the stage)* I'll be right over to fight about that camping trip, Mom. I'm going to say a lot of horrible things! Love you!

VO grabs JEAN and puts her back in the group. There is a pause.

VO: Well?

CATE: I'm optimistic.

AD: You always say that.

CATE: Doesn't make it less true.

AD: Ok.

AD blows a whistle and gestures. The same drum riff is heard. The WARM and the COOL groups react as if punched in the stomach. Make this a big physical movement. They move as if being pulled or dragged around the stage. The two groups move upstage and form tableaux—WARM stage left, COOL stage right.

The WARM and COOL groups hold their tableaux. Use levels. It doesn't have to be frozen, but it does have to be focused. The groups watch the scenes (they should see what's happening). They can even react with one another so long as it's subtle.

VO grabs SOLOMON and PARKER (one from the WARM group and one from the COOL group) and pulls them downstage left.

CATE joins the scene, standing between SOLOMON and PARKER. The three are standing in an elevator. SOLOMON and PARKER clearly dislike each other. All three stare up at the number panel.

CATE: This elevator is sooooo slow. Can you believe how slow this elevator is? *(beat)* I can't believe it. Better than the stairs though. Right? Am I right? *(no answer)* I'm pretty sure I'm right.

SOLOMON makes a noise.

PARKER: Say something?

SOLOMON: What? No.

PARKER: I heard you.

SOLOMON: What if I did? Why do you care?

PARKER: I don't. I could care less.

SOLOMON: Good to hear.

PARKER: You making fun of me?

SOLOMON: Why would I do that?

PARKER: Don't.

Pause.

CATE: So. You guys know each other?

SOLOMON: No.

PARKER: Why would I know him?

CATE: Sounds like you know him. You go to the same school or something?

SOLOMON: He's nothing. He can barely write his name.

PARKER: *(getting in SOLOMON's face, pushing CATE a little)* You got something to say?

CATE: *(getting in between them)* Whoa, easy there.

SOLOMON: *(in PARKER's face)* Intimidation. That's all you know how to do.

PARKER: You don't know me.

SOLOMON: And you know me so well.

PARKER: Don't you ever say anything—

SOLOMON: (*overtop of PARKER's line*) Intimidation. Intimidation.

There is a metallic clunking sound. Everyone on stage stomps, or hits the ground with a hand. The three move as if the elevator has suddenly stopped.

There is a pause. The three hold.

SOLOMON: What was that?

PARKER: What was that?

SOLOMON: Why did we stop?

PARKER: We're not supposed to stop.

CATE: I think we're stopped. Huh. Whatever will we do...

CATE slowly, simply, strolls off to the side. She stands to the side, outside the scene/elevator and watches. SOLOMON and PARKER stand side-by-side, staring up the number row above the elevator doors. Unless mentioned they stare up and out.

SOLOMON: I don't like the stopping.

PARKER: I hate the stopping.

SOLOMON: Me too. Hate the stopping. You know what comes next?

PARKER: What?

SOLOMON: First the stopping, then the falling.

PARKER: I don't want the falling.

SOLOMON: I have dreams.

PARKER: Nightmares.

SOLOMON: Stopping, falling, stopping, falling.

PARKER: There's worse.

SOLOMON: What could possibly be worse?

PARKER: Stopping. Pausing. Falling.

SOLOMON: The horror.

PARKER: Stopping, pausing, oh everything's okay, everything's going to be all—Whomp!

SOLOMON: Ahhhhhh!

PARKER: Crash!

SOLOMON: Splat!

PARKER: I hate the pause most of all.

SOLOMON: The pause is the worst. I never even thought about the pause.

PARKER: The pause is all I think about.

SOLOMON: Oh no.

PARKER: What?

SOLOMON: You haven't noticed? (*whispering, still looking out*) We're in the pause.

PARKER: (*whispering*) Oh no.

SOLOMON: This is it.

PARKER: I don't want to Whomp!

SOLOMON: I'm too young to Splat!

PARKER: I've never driven a car!

SOLOMON: I've never had the chance to vote!

PARKER: I haven't been to a concert!

SOLOMON: I haven't protested on the steps of City Hall!

PARKER: (*now looking at SOLOMON*) These are the things you think about in a moment like this?

SOLOMON: (*now looking at PARKER*) Why focus on the pointless?

PARKER: My dreams are pointless? Is that what you're saying?

SOLOMON: (*de-escalating*) Hey. Hey. We are in the pause. (*turns to stare at the number panel*) There are only two choices after the pause.

PARKER: (*staring at the number panel*) I just threw up in my mouth.

SOLOMON: Let's not focus on who we are, who we were, what we think about each other.

PARKER: You're right, you're so right. I'm sorry.

SOLOMON: I'm sorry too. Nobody should trample on your dreams. Your dreams are your dreams. Celebrate, man.

PARKER: Thanks, man.

A metallic noise is heard. EVERYONE stomps or hits the floor with their hand.

SOLOMON: What was that?

PARKER: Did you feel that?

SOLOMON: Is this it? Is this the falling?

PARKER: Hold me!

The two hold each other fiercely.

SOLOMON: I'm sorry I've always hated you!

PARKER: I'm sorry you always made me feel so stupid that I wanted to stomp on your face!

SOLOMON: Intimidation is a losing game! I'm sorry I said that!

PARKER: I wish I had better communication skills!

SOLOMON: I wish I didn't use condescension as a crutch!

They both scream and then...

SOLOMON: Wait. We're moving. The elevator is moving. Normally.

PARKER: No falling?

SOLOMON: No. No falling.

PARKER: No whomp.

SOLOMON: No. No splat?

PARKER: No splat. Ok.

SOLOMON: Just moving.

PARKER: Just moving.

SOLOMON: Ok.

They both take a deep breath and let it out. Pause.

SOLOMON: Can you let go of me?

PARKER: One more minute? I'm really freaked out.

SOLOMON: I got you. I got you. I'm Solomon.

PARKER: I'm Parker.

SOLOMON: Nice to meet you. *(beat)* Where did that girl go?

AD blows a whistle. The drum sounds. Everyone reacts as if they are hit in the stomach. The two groups change sides. This time the WARM group makes the tableau that the COOL group previously made, and the COOL group makes the tableau that the WARM group previously made. The point being, the groups are essentially the same even though they feel different.

During this scene change, AD grabs HECTOR and BOB from the COOL group and CATE grabs RUBY and NADA from the WARM GROUP. VO puts a cube downstage centre and stands beside it. BOB is forced to sit on the cube. The others gather around sullenly.

VO is MS. HARPER, a middle school teacher. The rest are students.

VO: All right, all right, come in. You are in for an exciting treat.

RUBY: You forced us to give up lunch.

VO: Oh Ruby, such a strong choice of words.

HECTOR: You said you'd fail us on our end of year project.

VO: I said no such thing.

ALL: *(everyone, including those watching the scene)* Yes you did.

VO: Fail you? Why, that's absurd. I couldn't do that on a whim. You must know when I'm joking, Hector. *(gives a brittle laugh)*

NADA: *(goes to leave)* So we can leave?

VO: *(stopping her)* Not yet. We have to talk about Bob. *(she gives a flourish toward BOB who has been sitting, watching the whole time)*
Let's hear it for Bob! *(with a big wave)* Hello Bob!

There is no response from the students.

VO: That was decidedly lacking in oomph. Let's try it again. Hello, Bob!

ALL: (*even those watching, sullen*) Hello, Bob.

BOB: Please let me go back to class.

VO: No. I saw that altercation. (*to other students*) I saw what you did.

BOB: It wasn't a big deal. It happens all the time.

RUBY: Bob says it wasn't a big deal.

HECTOR: Bob thinks we should go back to class.

NADA: Let's hear it for Bob!

VO: No! We're going to get to know Bob so this type of behaviour doesn't happen again.

RUBY: Do we have to?

VO: Yes.

NADA: Why?

RUBY: Because she'll fail us.

VO: Because Bob is different and we have to get to know people who are different than us. That's how you thrive in the world. You must meet differences head on. Learn to think for yourself and not let society dictate your responses. You will be out there, on your own, soon enough.

HECTOR: My mom said I shouldn't leave the house till I'm 30.

VO: Well that's, that's not exactly—

BOB: (*standing*) I'm not different.

VO: (*pushing him down*) Hush dear.

RUBY: He'll never be one of us.

NADA: He's insane.

VO: There! That's what I'm talking about. That's the language we have to meet head on. We do not throw that word around. Bob has made different choices. And when someone makes different choices it is up to the collective us to embrace, discover, and yes, understand.

HECTOR: I'll never understand him Ms. Harper. I'll never understand how can he eat those, those things!

BOB: They're tasty.

NADA, RUBY and HECTOR all make explosive gross out noises and large physical shuddering movements. Even VO gives a shudder. The students run to stand on the other side of VO, away from BOB.

RUBY: *(during the above movement)* There is nothing tasty about Brussels sprouts. Nothing!

NADA: *(building)* They taste like death!

RUBY: *(building)* They smell worse than death!

HECTOR: *(building)* Sprouts are insane!

VO: *(climax moment!)* Stop saying that word! Are you trying to get me fired? *(she takes a deep breath)* Let's reframe our thoughts. While I might... agree with your, um, assessment of the, um, we can't reject choices that are different than our own. *(beat)* Really Bob? You...like them?

BOB: I brought some for lunch. Wanna try one?

VO: *(reacting with horror)* Ugh! *(realizing her mistake)* Not ugh, not ugh. I didn't mean ugh. *(she steps forward and gives a decisive clap of her hands)* Right. Take off your shoes.

BOB: What?

VO: If we're going to understand this choice... we're all going to walk a mile in your shoes. *(she kneels down and starts undoing BOB's shoes)*

RUBY: Ms. Harper? There has to be another way to do this.

BOB: Listen to her. *(trying to pull away from VO)* Hey!

VO: Shoes off now! *(she wrenches one of BOB's shoes off his foot)*

HECTOR: Can't we write a reflection or something?

VO: *(she now has one of BOB's shoes)* Nada. Put on Bob's shoe.

NADA: *(crossing her arms)* It's not going to fit.

VO: Put it on.

NADA: No.

VO: Hector?

HECTOR: My mother has a strict policy about other people's clothes.

VO: Ruby?

RUBY: (*stepping forward*) I'll... do it if I have to.

VO: The only way to see the world through Bob's eyes,

BOB: Ms. Harper you're over exaggerating this whole—

VO: The only way to see the world through Bob's Brussels sprout lens is to be Bob. (*she thrusts the shoe at RUBY*)

RUBY: Remember this when you're marking my final project.

BOB: No! (*he grabs his shoe*) I'm putting my foot down. (*he stomps his sock foot, which isn't all that effective*) No one is going to walk around in my shoes. It's stupid.

VO: You're not being a good sport.

BOB: (*bursting out!*) And you're being a lunatic.

VO: Bad words! Language... hurt... ears... (*she staggers back and either falls or sits down in a daze, her hands to her chest*)

RUBY: Go, Bob!

NADA: Ruby!

BOB: Who cares if people don't like what I eat? I like a lot of different food. Chocolate ice cream, egg rolls, grilled cheese sandwiches, kale, french fries and—

NADA: Wait. You eat kale? On purpose?

HECTOR: What kind of monster are you?

RUBY: Hey! I like kale.

NADA: You do?

HECTOR: My universe is imploding.

RUBY: Oh suck it up. All I said is that I like kale. This is stupid. Bob can eat Brussels sprouts all day long if he wants.

HECTOR: All day long?

BOB: That's a lot of sprouts...

HECTOR: Digestion-o-rama.

BOB: Tell me about it.

RUBY: (to NADA) You have something to say to me?

NADA: We're supposed to be partners on the Science Centre field trip.

RUBY: So you won't be my partner now? Is that it?

NADA: No...

RUBY: And we can't be friends?

NADA: No! Of course we can.

RUBY: Good.

HECTOR: Should we do something about Ms. Harper?

VO: (in a daze) No, Mommy. Please don't make me eat death...

RUBY: (helping her up) Come on, Ms. Harper. We'll take you to the nurse.

VO: Did I hear something about kale? I hate kale.

AD blows the whistle. The drum sounds. Everyone onstage reacts as if punched in the stomach. They are all pulled to change positions and now they come together as one tableau. A couple of WARMS are now mixed in among the COOLS and vice versa. LOGAN moves offstage.

AD stands on the cube off to the side. CATE and VO walk in front of the group, deciding who to choose. CATE pulls DESSA forward.

DORY: I totally know how you feel. My dad won't let me go to the Sweet Pete concert. I am devastated. Totally devastated. Mostly devastated. Sort of devastated. Ok, not really.

CATE pushes DESSA back into the group as VO pulls RAS forward.

RAS: I totally know how you feel. I've been there. Totally. I lost my dog once. It was devastating. We found him again, but for that 30 minutes I was totally wasted on grief.

VOS pushes RAS back into the group as CATE pulls JOELYNN forward.

JOELYNN: Wow. That's totally... (pause) I don't know how you feel. I won't pretend I do. But I'm here if you need someone.

CATE and VO give a silent victory dance at that. They high five each other. They pump their fists. All silently. AD finally has had enough.

AD: Ahem!

CATE and VO stop. But they keep grinning.

AD blows the whistle. The drum sounds. Everyone reacts as if punched in the stomach but stay in their tableau. LOGAN enters.

As soon as LOGAN enters everyone fixes on him and starts talking. LOGAN freezes.

ALL: *(Everyone picks a different sentence, and then speaks at the same time. Don't say the whole thing in unison. Keep repeating.)* Sorry. I'm sorry. Logan I feel your pain. I'm so sorry. Can I tell you how sorry I am? I feel your pain. Sorry. Really sorry. Sorry. Sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm really sorry. I feel your pain.

LOGAN tries to run downstage to block out the sound. Everyone keeps talking to him, fixed on him, reaching for him, leaning toward him.

ALL: *(Everyone picks a different sentence, and then speaks at the same time. Don't say the whole thing in unison. Keep repeating.)* Sorry. I'm sorry. Logan I feel your pain. I'm so sorry. Can I tell you how sorry I am? I feel your pain. Sorry. Really sorry. Sorry. Sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm really sorry. I feel your pain.

LOGAN tries to run to the other side of the stage but can't escape the sound. He finally turns and holds up his hands.

LOGAN: Stop! Would you just stop! *(the crowd is quiet)* Stop saying you're sorry. Stop feeling my pain. It's stressing me out.

AMY: *(moving forward)* But what if we feel sorry? Really sorry.

ALLISON: *(moving forward)* I want to feel your pain.

LOGAN: It doesn't help! *(quieter)* It doesn't help. It makes everything—don't you get it? *(he looks at everyone)* You don't get it.

BENNY: *(moving forward)* We have to say something.

LOGAN: Why?

BRAD: *(moving forward)* Because.

AMY: We're supposed to say something. That's what you do in situations like this.

CORA: (*moving forward*) Right. We can't say nothing.

CHELSEA: (*moving forward*) That would be rude.

CORA: We can't ignore you.

ALLISON: We have to say something.

BENNY: If we can't say sorry, what are we supposed to say?

LOGAN: Say a different word.

BRAD: What word?

LOGAN: Anything! (*thinking on the fly*) Muskrat lemonade.

AMY: What?

LOGAN: Yeah. That's it. I want you to say muskrat lemonade.

BENNY: You're kidding.

LOGAN: (*serious*) That's what I want.

CHELSEA: Just so I'm clear. Instead of saying "I'm sorry" in this horrible, awful situation, you want us to say—

LOGAN: Muskrat lemonade.

ALLISON: I don't know...

BENNY: It doesn't sound right.

CHELSEA: It sounds rude.

BRAD: It sounds funny.

CHELSEA: Brad!

BRAD: What? It does.

LOGAN: Trust me. Ok?

AMY: Ok. (*takes a breath*) Logan, I'm muskrat lemon— (*starts to laugh*) I can't!

CORA: Logan. I'm really muskrat lemonade.

ALLISON: I don't know...

BRAD: I'm really muskrat lemonade for you.

LOGAN: Perfect. Only don't say "really." (*crossing in front*) Instead of saying really... bark like a dog.

CHELSEA: I can't do that.

AMY: I'll laugh. This is an awful—

LOGAN: No, don't! Don't. (*beat, serious*) I need you to bark like a dog and say muskrat lemonade.

BENNY: Ruff Ruff muskrat lemonade?

CORA: (*holding up her hand*) Can I say lemonade muskrat?

BRAD: Logan asked us to say muskrat lemonade. That's what he needs. Sometimes, I need to do the hokey pokey.

ALLISON: Why?

BRAD: My sandbox is empty, my mom is giving away every toy I've ever owned. My childhood is rushing away like freight train.

CHELSEA: I don't think this is the same thing.

BRAD: I know it's not. All I'm saying is that if Logan need us to say muskrat lemonade, I'm going to muskrat lemonade like no human has ever done before.

AMY: Ruff ruff muskrat lemonade!

LOGAN: Ok, one more thing. Just to cut the awkwardness. Put a hand over your eyes.

BENNY: (*doing it*) Like this?

LOGAN: Exactly. And hop on one foot.

BRAD: It's kind of like the hokey pokey.

CHELSEA: Just to be clear. You want us to cover our eyes, hop on one foot...

LOGAN: And say ruff ruff muskrat lemonade. All at the same time.

ALLISON: Ok...

CORA: Let's do it.

Everyone, even those just watching, covers their eyes, hops on one foot and says the phrase. LOGAN is delighted.

ALL: Ruff ruff muskrat lemonade. Ruff ruff muskrat lemonade. Ruff ruff muskrat lemonade.

CORA: How was that? Was that ok?

ALLISON: It didn't feel okay.

LOGAN: No. That was great. It was exactly what I needed. Thank you.

AD blows a whistle. The drum sounds. Everyone reacts as if being hit in the stomach. They change positions. Now there are a couple more WARMS on the COOL side and a couple of COOLS on the WARM side.

As they move, CATE and VO pull out PACE, TOBY, LEI, and JOELYNN. They are from the COOL group. They sit stage left.

HELEN, KRYSTA, and NEDA sit stage right. They are from the WARM group.

JOELYNN: My dad...

TOBY: I can't believe him.

PACE: My dad!

LEI: You're not going to believe this—my dad...

ALL: (everyone, even those watching) My dad!

TOBY: All of a sudden he wants to do things. Wants to pal around.

PACE: All he does is grill me.

TOBY: "Let's pal around Tobe."

JOELYNN: My dad won't let me do anything. I can't even breathe without permission.

LEI: My dad talks. A lot.

TOBY: He wants to take me to basketball games. He wants to talk basketball. I have to sit and watch him pretend he knows anything about basketball.

JOELYNN: But if my brother asks for the same thing—oh sure. It's not fair.

ALL: My dad.

PACE: He wants to know what college I'm interested in.

LEI: He wants to know who I eat lunch with.

PACE: I say, I don't know. This was not the right answer.

TAM enters from stage left. She walks slowly across the stage with her head down.

HELEN: (referring to TAM) Look at her. She's so dumpy.

NEDA: She kinda has a good reason?

HELEN: No one has a reason to look dumpy.

NEDA: She's so dumpy.

ALL: My dad says,

JOELYNN: My dad says, "We have to talk."

TOBY: My dad says, "Let's do this next week!" And then he disappears.

JOELYNN: I say, "I don't want to talk." Doesn't matter. He talks. At me. For an hour.

PACE: My dad doesn't think bullying is real. Like I'm exaggerating.

JOELYNN: My dad—

TOBY: My dad—

LEI: My dad says we should fear aliens. We should fear that there are aliens among us stealing our will to live with mind altering devices which will render us numb so when the forces come we'll be powerless to resist and they'll take over and use our body parts for experiments.

There is a pause. The others turn to stare at LEI.

PACE: Really?

JOELYNN: Your dad says that?

TOBY: Wow.

LEI: He talks a lot.

TAM trips in front of HELEN and falls on the floor. She slowly gets up.

HELEN: What are you doing? Walk much?

NEDA: Yeah, walk much?

HELEN: You're so useless, you know that? You should—are you crying?

NEDA: She's crying!

HELEN: What a baby. Your dad must be glad he's not around to see this. Pathetic.

TAM runs off.

HELEN: What's her problem? Serves her right her dad died. (to KRYSTA) Your dad's dead and you're not crying.

NEDA: Yeah.

KRYSTA stands.

HELEN: Where are you going?

KRYSTA runs off. AD blows the whistle and there is a transition. Music plays. Everyone on stage moves, as if punched in the stomach, changing places, into one tableau. The two groups are now completely mixed.

CATE moves a cube centre stage. TAM enters and sits on the cube.

KRYSTA enters and starts to move slowly toward TAM. She definitely wants to talk to TAM but is also conflicted. She looks around, as if to make sure no one can see her and slowly creeps forward.

Suddenly TAM leaps up and turns. This startles KRYSTA, who stumbles back onto the floor.

TAM: Would you hurry up already?

KRYSTA: (falling back) Gah!

TAM: (moving forward) If you're going to do something, hurry up! Do it and get it over with so we can all get on with our... Why are you on the ground?

KRYSTA: You surprised me.

TAM: Not used to that, huh? Score one for me. (she returns to the cube and sits, with her back to KRYSTA)

KRYSTA: (getting up) I'm not... oh. You think—I'm not Helen.

TAM: (not looking) You're friends with Helen. You sit at the same table as Helen at lunch. You think the same way as Helen. I can do the math.



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