



A comedy in two acts by

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Bitches, Factory Theater, Chicago 1993.

Clockwise from top left: Kirk Pyncheon, Sean Abley, Joey Meyer, Michael Hayes

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bitches was first presented by Some Mo' Productions in association with the Factory Theater, Chicago, Illinois, on September 3, 1993. The production was directed by Sean Abley and Amy Seeley, stage managed by Amy Seeley. Choreography by Kirk Pynchon. Suzy B's Uniforms designed by Carl Andruskevich. Makeup and wig design by Amy Seeley. "Pontificate with Paula" theme written by Dave Springer and Sheldon Wheaton. The cast was as follows:

ANGELATINA VINDECHI.....	Kirk Pynchon
SINDEE SANDSTONE.....	Sean Abley
CARMELLE CONSTANTINE.....	Joey Meyer
PEPPER SALTIMBEAUX.....	Michael Hayes
LILA DENCH.....	Carl Andruskevich
KATHY GRAHAM.....	Jesse Dienstag
RUBY.....	Mike Beyer
VERA VINDECHI.....	Jim Blanchette
CHARLENE SANDSTONE.....	Mike Meredith
PAULA DEMARCATO.....	Scott Parkinson
TERRI.....	Bo Blackburn
GRETCHEN, BENNI, COP #2, REPORTER, FOREPERSON, WOMEN ASSASSINS.....	George Brant
JANET / COP #1 / JUDGE.....	Brian Sheridan

The Los Angeles premiere of *Bitches* was presented by The Magnum Players on October 3, 2014. The production was directed by Sean Abley; produced by Brandon Clark; and stage-managed by Aaron Francis. Production design by Brandon Clark. Sound design by Jaime Robledo. Talk show themes by Michael Teoli. Publicity by Philip Sokoloff. Photography by Anousha Hutton. Logo design by Mike Ross. Poster design Marty Yu. The cast was as follows:

ANGELATINA VINDECHI.....	Matt Valle
SINDEE SANDSTONE.....	Drew Droege
CARMELLE.....	Michael Vaccaro
PEPPER.....	Timothy Joshua Hearl
LILA DENCH.....	James Jaeger
KATHY GRAHAM, JANET, CHEERLEADER HOPEFUL.....	Brad Griffith
RUBY, CHEERLEADER HOPEFUL, LADY ASSASSIN.....	Sean Abley
VERA VINDECHI.....	Jim Blanchette
CHARLENE SANDSTONE.....	Sam Pancake
PAULA DEMARCATO.....	Ralph Cole, Jr.
TERRI.....	Thomas Colby
ALL THE OTHER WOMEN.....	Jason Looney
UNDERSTUDY.....	Esteban Cruz

CHARACTERS

SINDEE SANDSTONE — Evil teen, leader of the pack.
 ANGELATINA VINDECHI — Nice teen, new girl in town.
 CARMELLE — Friend of Sindee, easily manipulated.
 PEPPER — Friend of Sindee, a little meaner and a little dumber than Carmelle.
 CHARLENE SANDSTONE — Sindee's mom, domineering, a terrible person.
 VERA VINDECHI — Angelatina's mom, the best mom ever.
 KATHY GRAHAM — Charlene's friend, easily manipulated.
 RUBY — Hard-bitten waitress, Charlene's friend, crass.
 MS. DENCH — Gym teacher and cheerleading coach.
 PAULA DEMARCATO — Talk show hostess. The Devil.
 TERRI — Her assistant... grudgingly.
 HOUSEWIFE — Abused spouse.
 JANET — Talk show guest with problems.
 GRETCHEN — Same.
 BENNI — Tough prison inmate.
 WOMAN — Assassin, but can you blame her?
 WOMAN #2 — Ditto
 NURSE
 POLICEWOMAN
 REPORTER
 FEMALE JUDGE
 LADY FOREWOMAN
 LADY WARDEN (VOICE)
 OTHER CHEERLEADERS HOPEFULS

NOTE: This character list reflects the Los Angeles production, which reworked the script to make the “All the other women” a quick-change role. Also, I prefer the cast of *Bitches* to be all male. There’s never been an all-female production of *Bitches*, so I can’t really provide any pros or cons to that approach. So if you want to give that a shot, have at it. But having a mixed cast, men and women, would be a no-no.

SETTING

Tubbsville, IL, USA

TIME

Probably sometime in the 90s.

TO DRAG OR NOT TO DRAG AND OTHER COSTUME NOTES

The original production of *Bitches* was in full drag, as were all the subsequent productions until the Los Angeles version. For some reason I decided to stage

the L.A. production in men's clothing (okay, truth, I didn't want to shave my beard), and I have to say, it worked really well, and certainly framed the socio-political statement I was trying to make in a different way.

There comes a point in the play at the top of Act Two where the actor playing "All the other women" is changing character from line to line. In the LA production we totally copped to the fact it was one actor, and had him dress in a basic black outfit, then had him change small pieces, sometimes on stage, to represent each character.

TO DANCE OR NOT TO DANCE

The original production opened on a complicated cheerleading dance tryout. I've left this in the script, but don't let it deter you from producing the play if you don't have dancers. The Los Angeles production cut the routine, opening instead with a cheer in the dark, then lights up on the girls bouncing around as if they'd just finished their tryout.

THE GARDENS

In several productions most of the scene changes were accomplished by painting four theatrical blocks different colors on each side, with one side including plastic flowers as a "garden." One color was the school, one color was Paula's set, etc. The actors would rotate the blocks as they entered as if it were part of the business of the scene.



Bitches, The Magnum Players, Los Angeles 2014.

Left to right: Matt Valle, Timothy Joshua Hearl, Michael Vaccaro, Drew Droeger
(Photo credit: Brandon Clark/ The Magnum Players)

BITCHES

By Sean Abley

ACT ONE

Scene One

(SUSAN B. ANTHONY HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM. On the stage as the audience files in is a sign on a chair:

*Susan B. Anthony High School
CHEERLEADER TRYOUTS!!!
Final Cuts Today!*

LIGHTS go to BLACK. We hear MUSIC. Something hip-hop with a great beat. LIGHTS FADE UP. Cheerleading tryouts. SINDEE, PEPPER, CARMELLE, ANGELATINA and the other CHEERLEADER HOPEFULS do a complicated, funky cheerleading routine.[NOTE: This on-stage tryout can be cut as per production notes.] After they finish, MS. DENCH, gym teacher and cheerleading coach, enters.)

DENCH. Alright, ladies, that was very nice. Very nice indeedy. Susan B. Anthony High School would be proud to have any of you on the squad. Unfortunately, there are only three spots on the Suzy Bees, so four of you are going to have to go home disappointed. I know it's an emotional time, and I'll try to comfort you the best I know how.

SINDEE. I bet.

DENCH. Don't start with me, Sindee! Your lip is what's going to keep you off the Suzy Bees.

SINDEE. That's just 'cause you want to use my lips for something else.

DENCH. (*Furious:*) Take a lap!

SINDEE. Why don't you make me?

DENCH. Look, Sandstone! I don't care if your mother is the social chair of the Tubbsville Ladies Auxiliary. You better get your ass around that track before I kick it around!

(It's a standoff. Finally SINDEE exits for a lap.)

DENCH. It's just as well she's gone. I've got the results of the tryout right here. Read 'em and weep.

(Dench posts the list and exits. The girls excitedly push one CHEERLEADER HOPEFUL toward the list. She checks, doesn't find her name, runs off crying.)

CHEERLEADER HOPEFUL. (*Crying:*) Why??? Why??? (*Exits.*)

(The group pushes the second CHEERLEADER HOPEFUL forward. She checks the list, doesn't find herself on it, races off crying as she tries to cut herself with a ballpoint pen.)

CHEERLEADER HOPEFUL. *(Crying:)* I cut myself so I can feel!!!! *(Exits.)*

(The girls push the third CHEERLEADER HOPEFUL toward the list. She checks, doesn't find herself, and makes a comically extended exit, crying all the way. PEPPER and CARMELLE shove their way to the list.)

PEPPER. Move it, Angelatina!

CARMELLE. Yeah, blow.

(They push ANGELATINA out of the way. They scream in excitement as they realize they made it. Then —)

PEPPER. Holy shit.

ANGELATINA. What?

CARMELLE. Sindee's gonna shit a brick!

ANGELATINA. What? What? *(She pushes her way to the list.)* Oh my goodness! Oh my goodness! I made it! I'm a Suzy Bee!

(SINDEE enters, panting.)

ANGELATINA. Isn't it great!

SINDEE. Isn't what great?

ANGELATINA. I made it! I'm a Suzy Bee!

SINDEE. What?

CARMELLE. It's true.

SINDEE. You're kidding.

ANGELATINA. Isn't it exciting?

SINDEE. I'm thrilled. So, which one of you sorry sluts didn't make the squad?

PEPPER. Well...

SINDEE. Move it. *(Reads list:)* Alternate?

CARMELLE. Now, Sindee...

SINDEE. Alternate?!

PEPPER. Now, Sindee, it's not that bad -

SINDEE. That fucking BITCH MADE ME AN ALTERNATE!! THAT STUPID LESBO MARTINA NAVRATILOVA WANNA-BE MADE ME AN ALTERNATE!!!

CARMELLE. Now Sindee, maybe a spot will open up. Maybe somebody will get hurt. And there's always next year.

SINDEE. There is no next year, stupid! I'm a senior! This was my last chance. I'm supposed to be captain of this fucking squad!

ANGELATINA. You're a senior? Wow. I'm only a sophomore.

(They all stare at her.)

ANGELATINA. Gosh. Well, I'll see you gals at practice. *(She holds out her hand to shake. The other girls don't move.)* Congratulations, Pepper. Congratulations, Carmelle. No hard feelings, huh Sindee?

SINDEE. *(Clearing her throat as if to spit on ANGELATINA's hand.)*

ANGELATINA. Well. Anyway. See you at practice! *(She exits.)*

CARMELLE. What are we gonna do?

SINDEE. Quit whining, Carmelle.

PEPPER. Yeah, quit whining.

SINDEE. Shut up.

CARMELLE. Well, I'm sorry, but it won't be the same. You have to be on the team. We planned it that way. There must be something we can do. Let's see. The only way an alternate—

SINDEE. Stop saying that word! Pepper, gimme a cig.

PEPPER. Here.

CARMELLE. The only was an... um... substitute can be on the squad is if one of the regular members can't make it. Like if they're sick or something.

SINDEE. So which one of you is gonna get sick?

PEPPER. Sindee!

CARMELLE. No way!

SINDEE. Alright, alright! Don't get your undies in a bunch. It's that Vindechi bitch we gotta get rid of.

CARMELLE. How?

SINDEE. Well, it can't be me. I gotta be as far away as possible when it happens, 'cause I'm the prime suspect.

PEPPER. We still don't know how.

SINDEE. Don't worry about that. I'll figure it out. Come on. I need something chocolate.

PEPPER / CARMELLE. Me too!

(They start to exit. DENCH enters.)

DENCH. Well, well. It looks like we got two thirds of our Suzy Bees here. And Sindee, too.

SINDEE. I'll get you for this, Dench! My mother —

DENCH. — is the social chairman of the Kiss My Ass Society of Tubbsville. Turn that record over, Sandstone. I've heard that side already. As long as it's my gym and my cheerleading squad you play by my rules. Got it?

SINDEE. Shove it.

DENCH. Oh, I will. Down your throat. You know, you little rich bitches make me sick, and the only thing that makes me feel better is dumping you on your ass. And I feel real good right now. Now get out of my gym.

SINDEE. *(Under her breath:)* ...Dyke...

DENCH. What?

SINDEE. I'm so sorry. That was rude of me. What I mean to say was...DYKE!

(The three girls squeal with laughter and race out. SHIFT FOCUS TO—)

Scene Two

(SANDSTONE HOME. Meeting of the Ladies Auxiliary. MRS. SANDSTONE [with a martini], MRS. VINDECHI [lady drink with umbrella], MRS. GRAHAM [scotch on the rocks], and RUBY [beer] are in attendance. We sense they may be a little drunk.)

KATHY. ...and they were swapping husbands! Can you believe it?

RUBY. Swapping them for what? A new toaster?

(They all laugh.)

VERA. *(Covering her mouth:)* Oh, stop! I can't believe I'm laughing at that. It's so bad... hee hee hee...

CHARLENE. Oh, loosen up, Vera. Let your girdle out a notch.

(They laugh.)

VERA. I do not wear a girdle!

KATHY. Oh, come on. If you hit somethin' sharp, you'd fly outta that thing like Pillsbury cookie dough.

(More laughter.)

RUBY. *(During the laughter.)* She is hugely fat...

VERA. I think some of the ladies at the meeting today have had a little too much loosey juicy. And I think that's causing the language to get a little... rough.

CHARLENE. You mean bitchy? If you don't like it, why don't you leave? Remember, Mrs. Vera Vindechi, you shouldn't even be at a Tubbville Ladies Auxiliary meeting. You haven't lived here for over a year. So, unless you want to go back to drinking cooking sherry and watching "Wife Swap" marathons alone each afternoon, I suggest you catch up with the program.

VERA. *(Silence, then haughtily:)* I have to use the powder room. Excuse me.

RUBY. *(To KATHY)* Why? Did ya fart?

(They laugh. VERA flounces out.)

RUBY. *(In the laughter:)* I really do think there was an odor...

CHARLENE. That tight-ass really puts a cramp in my style.

RUBY. God put a cramp in your style.

CHARLENE. Ruby, don't you have to get back to the diner?

RUBY. My shift doesn't start for another half hour. You're not gonna get rid of me that easy.

KATHY. Separate corners, girls, separate corners. Let's at least talk some business before "Oprah" comes on.

(VERA enters.)

CHARLENE. We'd better wait until her highness gets back or she'll throw a snit.

VERA. Present and accounted for, sans snit.

KATHY. Okay, last year you weren't around, Vera, but we started a thing where we have a contest throughout the community and all the entrance fees go to a good cause. Oh, what was it last year...?

RUBY. Starving kids or something.

CHARLENE. I think it was crack.

VERA. There's crack in Tubbville?

RUBY. Only in the back of my plumber's pants.

(They laugh.)

RUBY. I'm the funny one!

VERA. *(From behind her hand:)* Hee... hee... hee... Stop it!

KATHY. That's it. It was crack babies. Just horrible. So we had all the money go to...oh, what was it called? "Operation Safe Distance," that was it. So the mothers, the horrible, drug-addicted, homeless mothers who did this to their babies in the first place would never see their children again.

VERA. Hooray!

RUBY. Last year we had an origami contest. Sin Lu from Bamboo Heaven, over in the mall? She was the judge.

VERA. Oh, Sin Lu! I met her last week. She is so sweet. Is she a member of the Auxiliary?

CHARLENE. Of course not!

(Awkward silence while the others stare at VERA.)

KATHY. Anyway, we need to come up with something new for this year's contest.

RUBY. How about a hot dog eating contest? The diner could supply the wieners.

KATHY. Mmmm, no. But my husband would sure like to watch me practice.

(They laugh.)

RUBY. That's called fe-latch-io! It's French!

VERA. (*From behind her hand:*) Hee hee hee... Stop it!

KATHY. How about a dance-a-thon?

CHARLENE. And ruin my hair? I don't think so. Besides, I'm a Baptist.

VERA. How about a beautiful garden contest?

CHARLENE. I know! How about a beautiful garden contest?

KATHY / RUBY. Perfect! Lovely! etc.

CHARLENE. We'll call it "How Green Is My Valley" and everyone will have two months to get her garden together.

ALL. Hooray! etc.

KATHY. I'll get the flyers printed and all that, and we'll meet next week to get started.

VERA. I'm so excited!

KATHY. So, unless there's some other business, we'll adjourn the meeting.

RUBY. I'll second that.

KATHY. Meeting adjourned. Ruby, do you want a lift to the diner?

RUBY. (*Chugging her beer.*) Sure, hon. Thanks.

KATHY. Bye, Charlene! Thanks for the use of your rec room.

(*KATHY and RUBY exit. SINDEE storms in, bumping into VERA.*)

VERA. Oh, excuse me Sindee! Say, have you seen Angelatina?

SINDEE. Yeah. (*A beat, then she storms out.*)

VERA. (*Awkward silence*) Oh... well, thanks. Bye Charlene. (*She exits.*)

CHARLENE. Bye! (*Under her breath:*) Don't let the door hit your ass...

(*SINDEE re-enters with a bag of potato chips, eating them furiously.*)

CHARLENE. Sindee, what are you doing? Sindee, stop! Stop it! Sindee! Snap, little miss! (*She grabs the bag away.*) Now darling, what's the matter?

SINDEE. Nothing! Leave me alone!

CHARLENE. Sindee Sandstone, you only binge when something is wrong, so you better fess up, Miss Ma'am.

SINDEE. I didn't make the cheerleading squad.

(*CHARLENE slaps her.*)

CHARLENE. Don't you ever talk like that while I'm alive! What do you mean, you didn't make the cheerleading squad?

SINDEE. Angelatina took my spot, and she's only a sophomore! I hate that little bitch!

CHARLENE. Well, obviously you weren't trying hard enough. You're grounded.

SINDEE. What?!

CHARLENE. You and I and everyone else knows you should be on that squad. How are you going to be Queen of the Spring Formal if you're not captain of the cheerleading squad? I was Queen of the Spring Formal, as was your grandmother, and I will not have you breaking that royal lineage. So until you figure out how to regain the position that is rightfully yours, you're grounded. No losers in my family. (*Hands her back the bag of chips.*) And when you're done with these, go make yourself throw up, because it's almost time for dinner. (*Moves toward the exit.*)

SINDEE. Kitchen's that way, Mom...

CHARLENE. Kitchen's where mommy says it is! Let's go!

(*SINDEE and CHARLENE exit. SHIFT FOCUS TO –*)

Scene Three

(*TV STUDIO / SUBURBAN HOME. The "Pontificate with Paula" show is taping. The THEME MUSIC plays. PAULA is a brash talk show host, 30s. She is in the studio berating a HOUSEWIFE who has called in to the show from her home.*)

PAULA. Okay, we're back, so let's take another caller. Hello, pontificate with Paula.

HOUSEWIFE. (*On phone:*) Hello? Hello? Uh, hello -

PAULA. Oh, let's not play that "Hello, hello, am I on?" game, shall we? Speak up!

HOUSEWIFE. (*On phone:*) Well, I can identify with the topic because I'm being abused by my husband.

PAULA. So?

HOUSEWIFE. (*On phone:*) Uh... well... don't you want to talk about it? I thought that's why you took calls.

PAULA. Oh, well, alright. When did he hit you last?

HOUSEWIFE. (*On phone:*) Last night. He came home late and I'd already made dinner with the kids. He was mad we hadn't waited.

PAULA. And?

HOUSEWIFE. (*On phone:*) What?

PAULA. And? Get on with it.

HOUSEWIFE. (*On phone:*) Well...

PAULA. You didn't wait, and I'm supposed to crucify this guy on national television because his temper flared up a little?

HOUSEWIFE. (*On phone, incredulous:*) What?

PAULA. Look, honey. You know what the problem is, so solve it, for cripes sake. You just spelled it out for me right here. Stop wasting your husband's and my time and get on the ball.

HOUSEWIFE. *(On phone:)* You're insane!

PAULA. Yeah, and you know what? I've got my own TV show. *(She hangs up the phone.)* Let's take a question from the audience. You, over there.

(A WOMAN stands up in the audience.)

WOMAN. I've got a question.

PAULA. Yes?

WOMAN. Which do you prefer, Smith or Wesson?

(She draws a gun and points it at PAULA. Commotion. TERRI, Paula's assistant, rushes on.)

PAULA. Terri, do something!

WOMAN. You're the devil!

PAULA. Terri!

WOMAN. Don't take one more step, or I'll blow her guts out!

(TERRI very purposefully takes a deliberate step forward. The WOMAN shoots and hits PAULA in the arm.)

PAULA. I'm shot!

TERRI. Damn! *(As in, "she missed!")*

PAULA. Grab her, you idiot!

(TERRI wrestles the WOMAN for the gun, yanking it out of her hand. PAULA grabs the gun from TERRI and points it at the WOMAN.)

PAULA. Move away from her. Who are you?

WOMAN. I represent women -

(PAULA shoots her in the throat. The WOMAN falls offstage.)

PAULA. That's it for today. Join me tomorrow on "Pontificate With Paula."
(Holds as the theme music plays. Cameras off.) Terri, my lovely assistant.
Where the fuck were you? Gail would have taken that bullet for Oprah.

TERRI. She gets paid a little bit more than minimum wage.

PAULA. Your father owns this pathetic production company, so don't pull that with me you little bitch! We both know this "assistant" bullshit is because he made me take you on so you'd know the ropes for when he croaks and leaves it all to you.

TERRI. I'd guess that would mean you should be a little nicer to me then, huh?

PAULA. Don't count on it. By the time that geezer kicks I'll have my own production company, and then TransWorld can kiss my crack. You first.

TERRI. Can't wait. Meantime, you have promos to tape at 4:30. You should stop by wardrobe and see if they can get that blood out.

PAULA. Are you kidding? When I tape those promos, I'm gonna look like Jackie at Johnson's swearing in. Move your tail. We've got work to do.

(They exit. SHIFT FOCUS TO –)

Scene Four

(CHEERLEADER PRACTICE. CARMELLE, PEPPER, and ANGELATINA enter carrying gym bags. They all have big bees on their jerseys. They've been practicing, are sweaty and out of breath, but chat excitedly. SINDEE strolls in after them, obviously not having worked out at all. She has a big "A" for "alternate" on her jersey.)

ANGELATINA. Oh, my goodness! I have to tinky winky! I'll be right back.

SINDEE. I'm going to kill myself.

CARMELLE. Don't worry, Sindee. We'll make sure you get a real bee.

SINDEE. You fucking better. You got the stuff?

CARMELLE. Right here. *(Pulls Gatorade bottles and another small bottle out of her bag.)* "Syrup of Ipecac." What's this do?

PEPPER. It makes you puke.

CARMELLE. What are you gonna do with it?

SINDEE. You are gonna put it in that uptight bitch's Gatorade. After she tinky winks, she'll be thirsty and drink it down and then I'll get to be on the squad for tonight's game.

CARMELLE. I'm not sure -

PEPPER. C'mon, Car. Do it for Sindee. She can't because she's the most likely suspect. She can't be anywhere near that bottle just in case.

CARMELLE. What if I get caught?

PEPPER. You just say it was a mistake, you thought it was... I don't know, vanilla or something.

SINDEE. C'mon! She'll be back soon.

(CARMELLE hesitates, then pours Ipecac into one of the bottles of Gatorade. ANGELATINA enters.)

ANGELATINA. Whew! I really had to go! Hey, girls! Mom said I could have a slumber party Friday night. Won't you come?

CARMELLE. Um, no.

PEPPER. I've gotta perm my hair...

SINDEE. We'd love to come *(winks at girls)*, wouldn't we, girls?

(DENCH enters.)

ANGELATINA. You would?! Hooray!

DENCH. Alright, girls, that was a great workout. Time to hit the showers.

SINDEE. Will you be showering with us today, Ms. Dench?

DENCH. Watch your mouth... alternate. *(Stares SINDEE down.)*

SINDEE. It's like she's licking my pussy with her eyes...

DENCH. *(As she exits:)* And I got twenty-twenty vision, Sandstone...

ANGELATINE. Weird! Wow, I'm parched!

SINDEE. And I'm... have to be somewhere else. I'll be right back. *(Exits.)*

PEPPER. So hey, Carmelle was so nice and brought everyone Gatorade today.

CARMELLE. Oh, yeah, want some?

ANGELATINA. Oh, my gosh that is so generous! Thank you!

(CARMELLE should be holding two bottles of Gatorade by this point. ANGELATINA grabs what is obviously the wrong BOTTLE— i.e., no Ipecac—and chugs the whole thing. As she drinks, CARMELLE and PEPPER realize she's drinking the wrong bottle. SINDEE enters.)

PEPPER. *(To ANGELATINA.)* Uh, wait! Don't you want some more?

SINDEE. How's that juice? Stupid... Gimme that. *(Grabs the other Gatorade bottle [with Ipecac] and immediately starts chugging it.)*

CARMELLE. Wait -

(PEPPER elbows her. SINDEE drinks the juice. Her eyes bulge. She gags.)

SINDEE. You are dead. *(She runs off. We hear vomiting.)*

ANGELATINA. What was that all about?

(The other two giggle despite themselves.)

PEPPER. Nothing. Let's hit the showers.

(The three exit. SHIFT FOCUS TO -)

Scene Five

(OUTSIDE THE DINER. VERA walking her dog. CHARLENE approaches.)

VERA. Hello, Charlene!

CHARLENE. What's that?

VERA. This? It's Poopsie!

CHARLENE. What?

VERA. A dog, you silly noodle. His name is Poopsie.

CHARLENE. Poopsie?

VERA. Yeah. We named him that because he, you know, a lot. I have to take him out three times a day.

CHARLENE. I certainly hope he never gets off his leash.

VERA. Oh, certainly not. We had a bad experience with one of our little boys who got off his leash.

CHARLENE. (*Hopefully:*) Oh? (*Realization:*) Oh. You mean a dog.

VERA. Yes. You see, we got Angelatina a puppy for her tenth birthday. It was a cocker spaniel. Not too big, not too small. Beautiful golden color. It was the runt of the litter, and the breeder said he would need lots of love to get over being taken from its mother. And if there's one thing Angelatina is full of, it's love. So we went to the breeder on the morning before her b-day party, picked up Scooter — that was his name, Scooter — and put him in a big box with lots of holes in it and a big pink bow and drove right home for the party. All of Angelatina's friends were there, streamers everywhere, cake, the whole number. We set the box down in front of "A" — sometimes we call her "A" for short — and she had this look in her eyes, like "Could it be?" Like she had some sixth sense, as if she were psychically connected somehow to Scooter. Oh, it was magical. And she opened the box, and out jumped Scooter and he ran across the yard and into the street and got hit by a car and died. Angelatina's father was so panicked he ran out into the street and slipped in the blood and fell and hit his head on the pavement, and then, all woozy, staggered back into this screaming group of children covered in dog intestines. Well, I won't go into the whole mess except to say that the cake was ruined and very soon after, Mr. Vindechi left us. So no, he never ever gets off his leash.

CHARLENE. What? Sorry. I've got this song in my head and I just can't concentrate. Gotta go. Picking up lunch.

VERA. Oh, bye.

(*VERA exits with dog. CHARLENE crosses as we SHIFT FOCUS TO —*)

Scene Six

(*DINER. RUBY is working.*)

RUBY. Hey there, honey! The usual?

CHARLENE. Yeah, and pack it to go. I gotta get back and water the garden before "Pontificate With Paula."

RUBY. Water? Don't tell me you're takin' this "How Green" contest seriously?

CHARLENE. Of course I am!

RUBY. But you know you'll win. Nobody else gives half a crap about this thing but you. They'll all pay the entrance fee just 'cause it's a good cause.

CHARLENE. News flash, Ruby. That Vindechi woman will take this seriously. You know how much she wants to fit in. She'll be out there at midnight trimmin' her bush with a tweezers if she thinks it'll help her win.

RUBY. (*Snickers.*) Which bush? (*Cracks herself up.*) Ah ha ha ha! Double entendre!

CHARLENE. What? Oh, Ruby. That mouth.

RUBY. Well, it might be nice for her to win. Maybe it would give the Auxiliary a kick in the underpants.

CHARLENE. And what do you mean by that?

RUBY. I mean that it might be nice to have some new blood in the governing body of the Auxiliary. Look, Char, we're friends and all, but I gotta tell ya — sangria and the stories every Tuesday is fine for a while, but we need something new. Some sorta challenge or something. Kathy and I talked about it last night —

CHARLENE. Oh, so you and Kathy talked.

RUBY. Well, yeah. We do have conversations without you in the room every once in a while. And we decided there might be a need for a change.

CHARLENE. Uh huh.

RUBY. And, well, that's about it.

CHARLENE. Oh, it is, is it? Well, I have a little "it" to add. How about we up the stakes on this little contest that nobody seems to be taking seriously.

RUBY. What do you mean?

CHARLENE. I mean, how about whoever wins this little botanical competition becomes the new president and chair of the Tubbville Ladies Auxiliary?

RUBY. Oh, well —

CHARLENE. Oh, well what?

RUBY. Well, I mean it doesn't have to —

CHARLENE. Put your garden where your mouth is, honey. Because as social chair for the Tubbville Ladies Auxiliary I hereby declare that the winner of the "How Green Was My Valley" contest will take over as president and acting chair, effective immediately after the contest concludes. So if you want a change, you can make it happen. Capiche?

RUBY. Cap — ... Yes.

CHARLENE. Good. Now hand over my lunch.

(RUBY hands over an impossibly small [or huge] package. KATHY enters.)

CHARLENE. Adios. (*She passes KATHY as she exits.*) How's that garden comin' along, darling?

KATHY. Garden? Oh, that. Okay, I guess.

CHARLENE. Glad to hear it. (*Exits.*)

KATHY. What's up her rumpus? Besides the usual?

RUBY. Come on in the back. I'll tell you over lunch.

(They exit. SHIFT FOCUS TO —)

Scene Seven

(ANGELATINA'S BEDROOM. Slumber party. ANGELATINA, SINDEE, CARMELLE, PEPPER and VERA enter excitedly chatting and laughing. The girls should have pillows, stuffed animals and their diaries.)

VERA. This is so exciting! A slumber party! A rite of passage for every young American girl.

ANGELATINA. American? Don't you suppose they have sleepovers in the Soviet Union?

VERA. With the recent fall of communism I would suppose yes, the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would be very receptive to the idea of a pajama party.

ANGELATINA. Thank goodness! No girl, no matter what her social or political background, should be denied the excitement of staying up all night with some of her closest friends.

PEPPER. You have a wicked nice house, Mrs. Vindechi.

VERA. Well, thank you.

CARMELLE. Did you really sew all of the comforters and pillowcases for all of the bedroom sets?

VERA. That I did.

SINDEE. Well, they're just beautiful!

VERA. Thank you, Sindee. That was very nice of you to say.

SINDEE. Yes, it was, wasn't it?

VERA. So, what do you girls have planned for this evening?

ANGELATINA. Well, we're going to have some snacks, and then play some records and dance, and then have a séance —

VERA. Ooooh...

ANGELATINA. — and then we're going to share some of our most private secrets from our diaries.

VERA. Sounds like you girls have everything all planned out.

SINDEE. That we do.

VERA. You know, we used to do some pretty crazy stuff when we were kids.

SINDEE. *(Under her breath:)* Like inventing the wheel...

VERA. Excuse me?

SINDEE. Like what?

VERA. Well, the far out thing we used to do — do kids still say that? "Far out"? — was, well, freeze each other's brassieres.

ANGELATINA. *(Giggling:)* Mother, stop it!

VERA. I won't! That's exactly what we did. Take the bra, dip it in water, and put it in the freezer overnight!

ANGELATINA. Oh, mother! You never told me that!

VERA. And I'm sure you can imagine my mother trying to control a group of frozen bra-ed teenagers at seven a.m. Saturday morning.

ANGELATINA. Grandma! Oh, my goodness! Girls, isn't that crazy?

SINDEE / PEPPER / CARMELLE. (*Too enthusiastically:*) Hee hee hee, crazy... etc.

SINDEE. Insane, actually.

VERA. Time for bed. Well, for me anyway. I'll see you girls in the morning. 'Night.

ALL GIRLS. 'Night.

ANGELATINA. (*With a wink*) Mother, could you clear out the freezer?

VERA. What...? Oh, of course... (*Wink.*)

(*They start a laugh. VERA claps twice, the lights dim, and she exits.*)

ANGELATINA. What shall we do first? The séance? Now that my mother mentioned her, I would like to contact my grandmother. I've missed her so much since she passed away. She was my favorite. She was fat, just like grandmas are supposed to be. She used to bake every Wednesday, and every week we would have special time when she would braid my hair and tell me stories about the Depression. You know, they didn't have much money then. That's why they called it a depression.

SINDEE. (*A beat.*) Where the hell are the snacks?

ANGELATINA. Oh! Where's my head? I'll go get the snacks, and you stay right here.

SINDEE / PEPPER / CARMELLE. Okay, just go! Etc.

ANGELATINA. You stay right here, and I'll be in there.

SINDEE / PEPPER / CARMELLE. Okay, yes, go! Just go. We'll be here! Etc.

ANGELATINA. But I'll be right back. (*She exits.*)

SINDEE. Oh, my God for fuck's sake just go!

CARMELLE. Now what?

SINDEE. We get this diary thing going. Then later, while dumbass is freezing our bras, we swipe her diary. I paid one of the forensics geeks to read select passages Monday morning during the school announcements.

PEPPER. That's awful. (*They laugh.*) Here she comes.

(*ANGELATINA enters.*)

ANGELATINA. Okay, Diet Coke and Snackwells!

PEPPER. Great. Hey, let's get right to the diaries!

SINDEE. Subtle.

CARMELLE. Yeah, let's. Who wants to go first?

ANGELATINA. How about Pepper since she suggested it?

PEPPER. Oh, okay. Let's see... I know. You give me a page number and I'll read it. Between one and one hundred seventy-three.

PEPPER. Okay... (*Reads:*) "...and the store security must have seen me, Dear Diary, because before I knew it, I was hauled into the back of the store and asked to empty my bag. I was so embarrassed. When I pulled out the lipsticks, the store security called the police. I knew I had to act fast, so I pretended to start crying. By the time the cops got there I was in 'hysterics,' so they just gave me a lecture and let me go. I went straight over to —"

PEPPER. Uh, uh. She said page one hundred and two, and that's all that's on that page. You'll have to wait for next turn.

CARMELLE. Okay, between one and seven hundred twenty-six. *(She pulls out a huge diary.)*

CARMELLE. Okay. This is from Tuesday. *(Reads:)* "Today's affirmation - Not everyone is looking at your thighs. They are looking at your brain by way of your knees. Now on to the good stuff, Diary. I am in love. L-U-V, love. With Zach.

[illegible]

SINDEE. Alright. (*Reads:*) "Hurt my ankle in aerobics today, so I won't be able to go on that date with — " (*Pause*) "Eddie Bryan —"

(The girls all laugh.)

CARMELLE. Oh my God! You were going to go out with Ed Bryant? He is the hugest geek mus grande at Susan B. Anthony High!

SINDEE. (*Continuing, sulkily:*) "He said he'd pay, so I figured why not."

PEPPER. That's it?

SINDEE. It's a short page.

CARMELLE. Okay, Angelatina. You're next. (*CARMELLE laughs. The other two shush her.*)

ANGELATINA. Okay. Pick between one and two hundred forty-seven.

CARMELLE. Fifty-eight. (*She laughs again. They shush her.*)

ANGELATINA. (*Reads:*) "We haven't seen him for months, and I have to draw the conclusion that he is not coming back. Mother cries almost every night, and I try to comfort her, but inside I'm crying, too. Can anyone see this sunny façade for what it is? A mask? Inside I'm dying, but on the outside I must keep a smiling persona because that's what the world wants. No one wants to be confronted with the reality of emotions, at least the bad ones, like anger, or sorrow, or pity, or jealousy, or grumpy, or persnickety or anything like that. I'm sorry, Elizabeth — " That's what I call my diary, it makes it more personal that way. (*Reads:*) "I'm sorry, Elizabeth. I've gotten off the track. I just know that if I keep a happy face that soon mother will be all better, and then I can cry alone and come back to the world a better person for it."

SINDEE. (*A beat:*) Okay, time for that séance!

ANGELATINA. Let's do it in the rec room. I feel more psychic energy there.

PEPPER. Okay. Why don't you bring the snacks and we'll get the rest of the stuff.

ANGELATINA. Okay. Meet you there. (*She exits.*)

SINDEE. Okay, you grab her diary. I've already paid Betty, so just drop it off Monday morning and split.

PEPPER. Okay.

CARMELLE / SINDEE. Here we come, Angelatina!

(*SINDEE and CARMELLE pick up some stuff and exit. PEPPER picks up ANGELATINA's diary, and then spies SINDEE's. She holds both of them up—they are exactly the same. She shrugs, and exits. SHIFT FOCUS TO —*)

Scene Eight

(*VINDECHI HOME / GARDEN AREA. VERA is tending her garden and singing something to herself. ANGELATINA enters and does a little cheer.*)

ANGELATINA. Hooray, they like me!

VERA. Well, what's that all about?

ANGELATINA. The slumber party was a success! They like me! They really like me!

VERA. Yay team!

ANGELATINA. I've finally been accepted by my peers!

VERA. You see? What goes around comes around. You know that.

ANGELATINA. Like a Ferris wheel?

VERA. Or a merry-go-round?

ANGELATINA. Or a blender?

VERA. Or a rotisserie microwave. *(They both laugh.)* That's fun! Now see? It's not that bad.

ANGELATINA. I guess not.

VERA. Why don't you go in and make us some raspberry iced tea, and then come out and help me with the garden. I think we got a winner here.

ANGELATINA. Okay. Thanks, Mom.

(She exits. VERA tends her garden. KATHY enters and begins tending her garden.)

VERA. Howdy-do! Kathy!

KATHY. Vera!

VERA. How's the green valley coming?

KATHY. Oh... fine. Did you hear about the new rules?

VERA. That I did. And I'm gonna give you gals a run for your money.

(RUBY enters in her garden.)

VERA. Hidey-ho! Ruby!

RUBY. Hey, Vera. How's it hangin'?

VERA. How's...? Oh, you!

KATHY. It feels like these row houses get closer together every year.

(CHARLENE enters and tends her garden.)

VERA. Ello-hay, Arlene-shay!

CHARLENE. What?

VERA. Ig-pay Atin-lay. Pig Latin, silly! It's fun! You just take the first consonant from each word and put it at the end followed by the sound "ay."

(SINDEE and ANGELATINA have both entered from different parts of the stage.)

ANGELATINA. Mom loves cunning linguistics, like Pig Latin, oooh, and the Name Game!

VERA. The Name Game! Hey! Let's do "Vera"!

VERA / ANGELATINA. "Vera, Vera, bo bera! Banana fana fo fera! Mi my mo mera! Vera!"

SINDEE. Mother, make them stop! They're scaring me!

ANGELATINA. Let's do "Chuck!"

VERA / ANGELATINA. "Chuck, Chuck, bo buck! Banana fana fo -"

VERA. Whoops! That's enough of that!

CHARLENE. I'll say.

ANGELATINA Would anyone like some iced tea? It's raspberry.

KATHY. Sure.

RUBY. I'll take some.

ANGELATINA. Hello, Sindee, Mrs. Sandstone. Tea?

(VERA's dog comes out barking.)

CHARLENE. Holy shit! It's attacking! *(She shoves SINDEE in front of the dog.)*

VERA. No, no! He's not attacking! He's just frisky! Poopsie, now stop barking!

KATHY. Puppy!

RUBY. Hey, ya mangy little mutt!

KATHY. Come over here, you two. Pet the dog.

SINDEE. I hate dogs.

CHARLENE. *(Petting SINDEE.)* Good girl.

ANGELATINA. Mother, let's invite everyone in for coffee and snacks.

VERA. My little banana bread! A hostess in the making! Would anyone like to come in for coffee and cake? *(Dead silence as RUBY and KATHY look uneasily at CHARLENE.)* I have chocolate swirl bundt.

RUBY. *(Struggles, as CHARLENE has found her weakness. Finally:)* Well, why not.

KATHY. Oh, okay. Yes!

VERA. You will? Oh, my goodness, we're havin' a little hen party!

CHARLENE. Cluck, cluck.

VERA. Charlene? Sindee?

CHARLENE. Humph. No. We have a garden to attend to.

VERA. Oh. Well. Maybe next time, then.

CHARLENE. Maybe.

VERA. Come on, girls! Hup, two, three, four!

(VERA, RUBY and KATHY exit.)

ANGELATINA. Bye Sindee!

SINDEE. *(Mocking:)* Bye!

ANGELATINA. Thanks for the slumber party.

SINDEE. *(Mocking:)* My pleasure!

ANGELATINA. See you at school! *(She exits.)*

SINDEE. *(Mocking:)* Monday morning, bright and early! Ooh! I'd like to kick her where it counts!

CHARLENE. You should have thought of that before that little snip took your place on the cheerleading squad. Kick her where it counts. I'll show you "kick her where it counts." Pay close attention, young lady. *(She goes over to the dog, which growls at her.)* Shut up, you little toilet seat cover in the making. *(She unties his leash. The dog just stands there, barking.)* Move it, fleabag!

(She kicks or throws the dog into the street. We hear the sound of a car hitting the dog.)

KATHY. *(Off)* What was that?

RUBY. *(Off)* Sounded like a car crash...

VERA. *(Off)* Oh, my goodness! POOPSIE!

CHARLENE. Kick them where it counts.

(CHARLENE exits followed by a horrified SINDEE. SHIFT FOCUS TO -)

Scene Nine

("PONTIFICATE WITH PAULA." TERRI enters and, using the theater audience as the studio audience, explains the format of the show. This should be very loose and partially improvised if appropriate.)

TERRI. Hello, everyone. Welcome to "Pontificate With Paula." I'm Terri, the floor manager. How is everyone today? *(If no answer, she should work them until they do.)* Now, your host, Paulo DeMarcato, hates spontaneous outbursts or questions, so we've devised a little system of call and response. First off, we have the "Applause" sign. When I hold it up, you applaud. Very simple. Let's try it, shall we? *(She holds up the "Applause" card for a microsecond.)* Good, good. Second, we have some very simple response cards. All you have to do is, when I hold up the card, you read what it says. Okay? *(Holds up a card that says "Okay." The audience responds.)* Great! Oh, looks like it's time to go. Ladies, can I get you in please? Can we get the guests in their seats?

(TERRI improvises guiding VERA, JANET, and GRETCHEN in to their seats. PAULA enters and positions herself for the beginning of the show.)

TERRI. Cue the music. We'll go in 5, 4, 3, ...

(Theme music plays. Two, one, and on the air.)

PAULA. Welcome. Welcome in from the storm outside. I'm Paula, and this is our time. Today we have some guests. Friends, really. All of whom...who? Whom?

TERRI. Whom.

PAULA. Who. All of who have suffered a loss. An irreplaceable loss. The loss...*(Reading the prompter:)* of a pet. *(To Terri:)* Are you fucking kidding me? *(Recovers.)* The loss of a pet. Let's meet them, shall we?

(All CROWD responses are written on cards held by TERRI.)

CROWD. Yes.

PAULA. Everyone, meet Janet.

CROWD. Hello, Janet.

PAULA. Janet Michaels, you're from —

JANET. But... but... wait... You said you weren't going to use my last name!

PAULA. Well, what the fuck! Come on! You're holding up my show!

JANET. But you said —

PAULA. Alright, alright, alright, alright, ALRIGHT! Fucking A! It was only a cat, for shit's sake!

JANET. But she was all I had —

PAULA. Terri! I need a name!

TERRI. *(Rushes on.)* Jane. *(Rushes off.)*

PAULA. Alright, Jane...et, why don't you tell us your story?

JANET. Well — *(she breaks down)*

PAULA. Here. *(Throws a box of tissues roughly at JANET.)* Moving on. Gretchen. I assume you have no problem with your real name?

GRETCHEN. No, ma'am.

PAULA. Uh huh. So. Gretchen. Tell us.

GRETCHEN. Well, actually, there's been a wee mistake.

PAULA. A what?

GRETCHEN. A mistake. You see, I just thought Chuckie was dead.

PAULA. What?

GRETCHEN. Yes, see, he just woke up and he was fine. See? *(GRETCHEN pulls out a bloody dog carcass she uses as a puppet.)* Woof! Bow-wow! Ruff ruff! Grrr! Woof Woof! Aoooh!

PAULA. Gretchen, you have your hand up that dog's ass.

GRETCHEN. No, I don't.

PAULA. Yes. You. Do.

GRETCHEN. No, I don't.

PAULA. Gretchen —

GRETCHEN. Careful. He bites. Grrr —

(PAULA snatches the dog off GRETCHEN's hand, throws it on the ground and grinds her heel into it. GRETCHEN makes dog-getting-hurt noises.)

PAULA. Terri! Get out here and get rid of this thing!

(TERRI rushes out and takes the dog off. GRETCHEN makes dog noises that seem to fade as the dog goes further away.)

PAULA. *(Seething:)* Vera.

VERA. Paula.

PAULA. Have you something to share with us?

VERA. My dog was killed.

PAULA. And?

VERA. It was very sad.

PAULA. I'm thinking we can do better than that, Vera.

VERA. *(Sighs)* This is my second little boy who has met his death prematurely under the wheels of a car. The first time it happened I thought I'd never get over it. You see, it wasn't just losing a pet; it was losing a member of the family. I know that sounds ludicrous. It did to me before I had my first. But they are family. They have personalities, and you get used to them being there for you. You get used to them listening when no one else will, or you don't want anyone else to. They know when you're happy... or sad. *(Begins to cry.)* And they can hold a family together with their little wagging tail. I found that out the hard way. After a horrible incident where we lost our first, Mr. Vindechi left the family. He just stopped loving me or something. I'll never know, because he just disappeared leaving me to raise our daughter alone. And now... now I'm afraid it will happen again. I've lost my little one, and now I'm afraid I'll lose my daughter... and I couldn't live through that again. I'm sorry... *(Breaks down sobbing.)*

PAULA. *(A beat.)* YES! THAT'S what I meant when I asked you if you had something to share, you pathetic nimrods! That's a story! Not that Muppet freak show! *(Mocking:)* "Please don't use my name or I'll have to kill myself over my fucking cat!!" Get some guts and do it, baby! Do us all a favor!

(JANET rushes off.)

PAULA. What are you looking at?

GRETCHEN. Woof! Grrr —

PAULA. Get her out of here!

(TERRI drags GRETCHEN off, growling all the way.)

PAULA. *(Off-handed:)* That's the end of the program goodbye.

(Theme music. Off the air.)

PAULA. That was great! Who wrote that?

VERA. What?

PAULA. You really pulled this show out of the crapper today.

VERA. Thank you... I think.

PAULA. I... whoa, this is strange.

VERA. What?

PAULA. For some reason, I'm feeling like I should do something nice for you now. Wow. That's weird.

VERA. Nice? Like what?

PAULA. I don't know. You tell me.

VERA. Well, I... wait a minute. I do have an idea.

(They exit. SHIFT FOCUS TO –)

Scene Ten

(CLASSROOM / SCHOOL OFFICE. SINDEE, PEPPER, and CARMELLE enter and take their seats.)

PEPPER. That was fab how your Mom killed that hosebag's dog and everything.

CARMELLE. I don't know. I feel kinda sorry for the dog.

SINDEE. Shut up, you idiots! You wanna get my Mom thrown in jail? That stupid mutt ran out into the street and that's it.

PEPPER. Sorry.

SINDEE. Gimme a smoke.

PEPPER. I don't have any.

SINDEE. What?

PEPPER. Well, I quit.

SINDEE. What? What the fuck is wrong with you two?

PEPPER. I was having shortness of breath —

SINDEE. Carmelle, fork over! *(She snatches a smoke from CARMELLE.)* “I feel sorry for the dog. I quit smoking.” You two better get your fucking act together, or it's over.

CARMELLE. What do you mean?

SINDEE. I mean you two stupid skanks will be out of the most popular clique in the school.

CARMELLE. You wouldn't!

SINDEE. Try me.

PEPPER. Carmelle, gimme a smoke.

SINDEE. That's better. Carmelle?

CARMELLE. I... um... hate that dog...

SINDEE. I'm not sure I believe you, Carmelle. I think you're faking it.

CARMELLE. I'm not! Serious! Really, I hate that cute little dog!

SINDEE. Uh, huh...

PEPPER. I think she's lying.

CARMELLE. Pepper!

SINDEE. You know, I heard Carmelle was secretly going out with Brett Cooper.

CARMELLE. Sindee, stop it!

PEPPER. Yeah, I heard she let him feel her up.

CARMELLE. Stop it! Somebody will hear!

SINDEE. I heard it was Brett Cooper and Jack.

CARMELLE. Jack who?

SINDEE / PEPPER. The custodian!

CARMELLE. STOP IT! I do hate her! I'll prove it!

(BETTY enters the school office area and switches on the intercom.)

BETTY. *(Via intercom:)* May I have your attention please for the morning announcements?

PEPPER. Where's Angelatina?

SINDEE. It doesn't matter. She'll find out about it.

BETTY. *(Via intercom:)* There will be a Science Club meeting after school today in Room 219. Will both members of the club please be prompt as you have a lot of material to cover. All students who have not received their student activities cards must report to the office sometime today. The pep band will be playing pop standards for your enjoyment during pre-game ceremonies at tonight's game, so please come early. Mr. Berg says an empty gym causes an echo effect that throws off the band's timing, as evidenced by their pre-match show at the girls' volleyball game last week. And now for something special. *(Reads from SINDEE's diary:)* "Hurt my ankle in aerobics today, so I won't be able to go on that date with Eddie Bryant. He said he'd pay, so why not?"

PEPPER. Oops.

BETTY. *(Via intercom, reads:)* "It's too bad, too, because the last date we went on ended up in his garage. I've done it in the back seat of a car, but not on the hood. Eddie may be a geek on the outside, but on the inside, he's all man, if you know what I'm saying. One of my knees actually hit my face and gave me a black eye. After an experience like that I can truly say I am a woman. I am a slave to his manhood. A willing slave. Pull me by my hair, caveman, and treat me like the loathsome animal I was meant to be. Knock me over the head and then rock my world. And with that I leave you, Diary, to ice my wounded ankle." That was a passage from the diary of *(Flips to first page.)* Sindee Sandstone. *(Realizing what she has done:)* Uh... this will be the last time you hear my voice, as I expect to be murdered within twenty-four hours. Goodbye! *(Exits.)*

SINDEE. You are fucking dead —

(DENCH enters.)

DENCH. Alright! Quiet down and take your seats.

SINDEE. What are you doing here? This is Our Ever-Changing Bodies, not gym.

DENCH. I'm subbing. Ms. Julian is out with her lady friend who makes a visit once a month to her basement apartment to replenish her secret garden.

SINDEE. What?

DENCH. She's having her period. No lip, Sandstone. Plant it. We've got special visitors today. Angelatina, would you like to come in and introduce your guest?

(ANGELATINA enters.)

ANGELATINA. Hi everybody! I'm so nervous! Today, I have a special treat I'd like to share with you and the whole school. It's a woman whom I have admired for a long time now. I... well, I don't know what else to say. I'm sure you'll all know her. Ms. Paula DeMarcato!

(PAULA enters. The girls go nuts.)

SINDEE. Holy shit!

PAULA. Hello, ladies!

ANGELATINA. Ms. DeMarcato —

PAULA. Paula, please.

ANGELATINA. I mean Paula Please... oops! *(Giggles)* Paula agreed to come to school and take questions during lunch period.

PAULA. This is quite a lovely school you have here. Anything fun planned for the students coming up?

DENCH. Yes, actually. The Spring Formal is next month. We'll be electing a court in the next week or so.

PAULA. Really?

DENCH. Yes. We usually have some sort of local celeb pick the queen and the court, then crown them at the dance.

ANGELATINA. Couldn't you do it, Ms. De — I mean, Paula?

PAULA. Well, I don't know —

DENCH. Angelatina, Rachel Winters from that cooking show, "A Wok On The Wild Side," will be disappointed —

PAULA. I'll do it!

ANGELATINA. Hooray!

DENCH. Well, I'm the head of the committee, so I guess I have the authority to appoint you to the position. It's all yours, Paula.

ANGELATINA. I'm so excited!

PAULA. Me too, honey. Me, too. Now, as my first official act as the selection committee, I'm going to select the Queen of the court.

DENCH. Now?!

ANGELATINA. Oh, my goodness!

PAULA. That's part of the deal, right?

DENCH. Well, I guess so...

PAULA. So as the selector for the Spring Formal, I choose Angelatina Vindechi as the Queen of the court!

SINDEE. WHAT!?!?

ANGELATINA. *(Stunned:)* Oh, my goodness...

PAULA. I need to run. *(Exits.)*

ANGELATINA. *(Weak:)* Ms. Dench, I've got to lie down.

DENCH. Come on, dear. We'll take you to the sick room.

(DENCH helps ANGELATINA out. SINDEE just stands there, ominously quiet.)

PEPPER. Sindee? Sindee, listen to me. Before you do something rash...

CARMELLE. I'm sure there's something in the rules against this —

SINDEE. That slutbitchslitcumguzzlingfuckbagWHORE!!

PEPPER. Sindee —

SINDEE. Who does that bitch think she is?!

CARMELLE. She's lost it! Run!

SINDEE. Don't move. That bitch can't be Queen! She's a sophomore. I'm a senior!

CARMELLE. What do we do?

SINDEE. Do you hate her? Do you hate her? ANSWER ME!!

PEPPER / CARMELLE. Yes, I hate her! etc.

SINDEE. And you said you wanted to prove it to me, right?

CARMELLE. Um, right.

SINDEE. Well, now is your chance. Come on!

PEPPER. Sindee, wait!

CARMELLE. You look really pretty!

(SINDEE storms out with PEPPER and CARMELLE following and trying to calm her down. SHIFT FOCUS TO —)

Scene Eleven

(ON THE STREET. PAULA with TERRI.)

PAULA. I must admit, that was one of my more brilliant moves.

TERRI. What now?

PAULA. I just named a girl despised by her classmates the Queen of the Spring Formal.

TERRI. Why is that brilliant?

PAULA. Because, stupid, now there will be a lot of in-fighting among the students, it's likely to get violent, and I'll be there to expose the whole rotten, delicious scandal.

TERRI. Wow. Neat.

PAULA. Come on, Terri. I'm feeling charitable. Let's go get a pedicure. I'm sure those hooves could use a little filing down. My treat.

TERRI. Your treat? You must be happy.

(They exit. SHIFT FOCUS TO —)

Scene Twelve

(SICK ROOM. DENCH escorts ANGELATINA in to see the NURSE who enters from another door.)

ANGELATINA. I'm so embarrassed. *(She passes out onto the floor.)*

DENCH. I think she just needs to walk it off.

NURSE. *(Excited:)* No, I think she's really sick! Let's get her on the bed.

DENCH. I got the top.

(DENCH's hands find their way to ANGELATINA'S breasts as they left her onto the bed. DENCH starts unbuttoning ANGELATINA's shirt.)

NURSE. I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

DENCH. What? Don't you need me to help her get undressed?

NURSE. No, thank you. *(Pushes DENCH out.)*

DENCH. *(Off.)* I hate you!

NURSE. This definitely calls for a speculum!

(NURSE exits. SINDEE, PEPPER, and CARMELLE enter the sick room.)

CARMELLE. Sindee, what's going on?

SINDEE. Shut up!

PEPPER. Yeah, shut up.

SINDEE. You shut up, too.

PEPPER. Shut up!

SINDEE. Everybody shut up! Are you ready, Carmelle?

CARMELLE. For what?

SINDEE. Is she still out?

PEPPER. Cold.

SINDEE. Good. Here. *(She pulls out a gun and holds it out to CARMELLE.)*

PEPPER. Sindee!

SINDEE. Take it, Carmelle.

PEPPER. Sindee, what are you doing?!

SINDEE. Take it.

CARMELLE. I can't!

SINDEE. That's not what I heard from Brett Cooper.

PEPPER. Sindee, stop it!

SINDEE. And Jack. Did you blow him in the broom closet?

PEPPER. Sindee, this is too far!

SINDEE. Did you let him feel you up?

CARMELLE. No —

SINDEE. Did you let him finger you?

PEPPER. Stop it!

SINDEE. Take the gun, Carmelle. (*She forces the gun into CARMELLE's hands.*) Now get over there and finish that bitch off.

PEPPER. Carmelle —

SINDEE. Come on, Carmelle. Get in there. I've got fifty friends outside that door who will swear they saw you suck Jack's dick. Every fucking person in this school will swear that you're pregnant by that freak —

CARMELLE. STOP IT!!

SINDEE. — and you can kiss all your friends goodbye when I tell them he bent you over —

CARMELLE. STOP IT!!

SINDEE. — and fucked you up the ass!!

(*CARMELLE shoots ANGELATINA, emptying the gun.*)

SINDEE / CARMELLE / PEPPER. (*Screaming:*) AAAIIIEEEE!!!

SINDEE. Run!

(*They run out. NURSE enters.*)

NURSE. Darling? Angie? (*Shakes her.*) Oh no...

(*ANGELATINA's body falls to the floor in a bloody heap. The NURSE screams. BLACKOUT.*)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO
Scene Thirteen

(VINDECHI HOME. Gathering after the funeral. VERA, KATHY, RUBY, CHARLENE, MS. DENCH, SINDEE, CARMELLE, PEPPER, PAULA, and TERRI all sit with empty plates, silently grieving in their own way, while CHARLENE eats an entire piece of cake, first bite to last. Finally —)

CHARLENE. Ya got any more cake?

VERA. (*Dully:*) In the kitchen.

KATHY. (*A beat, then:*) The service was beautiful.

ALL. Yes, lovely, etc.

SINDEE. I loved it.

VERA. Yes...

RUBY. That Father Hoolihan certainly is a hunk of granite.

KATHY. And how.

RUBY. I wonder how he looks without that collar— (*Notices VERA isn't responding.*) Beautiful service.

VERA. Yes...

(*CHARLENE enters from kitchen with an empty pitcher.*)

CHARLENE. I'm going to mix up some more Crystal Light, okay? Vera?

VERA. Huh?

CHARLENE. Okay? The Crystal Light?

VERA. Sure...

CHARLENE. Honestly. (*Exits.*)

DENCH. Vera, I just want to say — and this isn't just because she's dead and all — your Angelatina was a very special girl. She was a wonderful addition to the cheerleading squad.

SINDEE. Yes, she was. Wasn't she, girls?

PEPPER. Yes.

CARMELLE. Uh... yeah...

VERA. That's very nice. You know, she never felt like she fit in, so it's so nice to spend this sad, sad day with some of her true friends. (*Cries.*)

KATHY. Come on, Ruby; let's pick up some of these dishes.

(*RUBY and KATHY pick up stuff and exit.*)

PAULA. (*To Terry:*) This will make a great fucking show.

TERRI. What?!

PAULA. Think we can pump up the relationship between the gym teacher and the girl?

TERRI. The gym teacher? You mean...?

PAULA. Keep your ear to the ground. What time is it?

TERRI. Four thirty.

PAULA. Shit. We've got a taping in two hours. Let's see if we can stir something up.

SINDEE. *(To Carmelle:)* What the hell is wrong with you?

PEPPER. Come on, Sindee. Lay off.

SINDEE. Don't you tell me what to do.

PEPPER. Why not?

SINDEE. Shut up and watch. It should happen any minute.

(POLICEWOMAN bursts in.)

POLICEWOMAN. Hello, ladies.

DENCH. Holy shit! A lady police officer!

POLICEWOMAN. Anybody else here?

DENCH. Yes. Ladies! Come in here!

(Everyone enters.)

POLICEWOMAN. Is there a Carmelle Constantine present?

CARMELLE. *(Scared:)* Yes. Here.

POLICEWOMAN. You are under arrest for the murder of Angelatina Vindechi!

ALL. *(Aghast hubbub.)*

(POLICEWOMAN immediately starts beating CARMELLE with her police baton. After beating her in front of the gathered crowd for a bit [to loud and vocal horrified reactions] the POLICEWOMAN beats CARMELLE out the door as they exit.)

VERA. Oh, my goodness... *(Faints dead away.)*

PAULA. Hooray! ... I mean... How horrible! Gotta go! Terri, come on!

(PAULA and TERRI exit.)

RUBY. Let's get her to the bedroom.

(RUBY, KATHY, and MS. DENCH improvise pulling a woozy VERA to her feet and leading her out.)

PEPPER. I gotta go. *(Exits.)*

(SINDEE turns to her mother.)

SINDEE. Kick 'em where it counts.

(She saunters out. SHIFT FOCUS TO –)

Scene Fourteen

(STREET. CARMELLE being escorted by POLICEWOMAN with PAULA and TERRI hounding her. The POLICEWOMAN switches her police hat with a REPORTER's hat with a "Press" card in the brim.)

REPORTER. Is it true your parents are divorced?

TERRI. Were you involved with the school janitor?

REPORTER. I have your signature here on a petition to allow shorts in school. Do you consider this subversive?

PAULA. Do you deny the rumor that you have had an intimate relationship with Lila Dench, Susan B. Anthony High School gym teacher and cheerleading coach?

TERRI / REPORTER. Oooooohhh...

CARMELLE. What?! I love Ms. Dench. She's my favorite teacher —

PAULA / TERRI / REPORTER. Aha!

CARMELLE. Wait! Stop twisting my words!

(PAULA and TERRI exit. REPORTER changes back to the POLICEWOMAN. She shoves CARMELLE in front of a mug shot camera.)

POLICEWOMAN. Shut up and move your ass. Here.

(Hands CARMELLE a card with numbers on it. CARMELLE poses for a mug shot. The camera flashes.)

POLICEWOMAN. Turn to your side.

(CARMELLE does, poses again. Camera flash. POLICEWOMAN takes away card and pushes CARMELLE into a chair. Interrogation light comes up.)

POLICEWOMAN. Sit down. *(Exits.)*

(CARMELLE sits. VOICES from offstage interrogate her.)

VOICE. *(Off:)* Why did you kill your friend Angelatina?

ANGELATINA. *(Off:)* Carmelle, you look lovely today.

VOICE. *(Off:)* You shot her, didn't you?

SINDEE. *(Off:)* Do it, Carmelle!

VOICE. *(Off:)* You blew her head off —

SINDEE. *(Off:)* Shoot her, you bitch —

PEPPER. *(Off:)* Sindee, stop it —

SINDEE. *(Off:)* I heard Brett fucked you —

VOICE. *(Off:)* Erased her face —

PEPPER. *(Off:)* Stop it!

SINDEE. *(Off:)* I heard you TOOK IT UP THE ASS!!!

CARMELLE. STOP IT!!!

(LIGHTS SHIFT to courtroom. FEMALE JUDGE / LADY FOREWOMAN enters.)

JUDGE. Lady Forewoman, have you reached a verdict in the case of Carmelle Constantine? *(Switches to FOREWOMAN.)* Yes, ma'am, we have. *(JUDGE)* And what is that verdict? *(FOREWOMAN reads:)* "In the case of Carmelle Constantine vs. the State of Illinois, we the jury find the defendant guilty of murder in the first degree."

(The court CROWD can be heard reacting. JUDGE pounds her gavel for quiet.)

JUDGE. In light of the heinousness of the crime of which you have been convicted, I hereby sentence you to be placed in a maximum-security juvenile detention center until the day of your eighteenth birthday, at which time you will be transferred to the Tubbville Penitentiary, where you will remain for the rest of your natural life.

(FEMALE JUDGE bangs the gavel then exits as the CROWD cheers the verdict.)

CARMELLE. No! I didn't do it! I didn't do it! I DIDN'T FUCK BRETT COOPER!!

(POLICEWOMAN enters and drags CARMELLE off. SHIFT FOCUS TO —)

Scene Fifteen

(DENCH'S OFFICE. DENCH is doing paperwork. TERRI enters.)

TERRI. Hello.

DENCH. Oh, hello.

TERRI. Um... I just wanted to stop by and apologize.

DENCH. For what?

TERRI. This. *(She opens a newspaper with the headline "Phys Ed Fem In Torrid Tangle With Pep Squad Sharp Shooter.")*

DENCH. (*Reads:*) "Phys Ed Fem In Torrid Tangle With Pep Squad Sharp Shooter." Why are you apologizing?

TERRI. My boss broke the story. Paula DeMarcato. "Pontificate With Paula."

DENCH. Oh. Well, you know it's not true.

TERRI. I know. Would it be so bad if it was?

DENCH. So you work in TV?

TERRI. Oh, yeah. With Paula. It bites, but my Dad owns the show. It'll be mine soon. She doesn't know it, but her neck's on the block.

DENCH. Really?

TERRI. Really.

DENCH. I always wanted to be in TV. Behind the scenes. Tellin' people what to do. That kind of stuff.

TERRI. Really? You know... I could take you on a tour. Of the studio.

DENCH. Yeah?

TERRI. Yeah! Any time.

DENCH. Yeah?

TERRI. Yeah.

DENCH. How about after school? Today.

TERRI. Sure! Sure, no problem.

DENCH. Are you hungry?

TERRI. Starved! I mean, yeah.

DENCH. How about having lunch on me. I mean, my treat.

TERRI. Sure. Where?

DENCH. School cafeteria. I get a discount.

TERRI. Do they have tater-tots today?

DENCH. They have tater-tots every day!

TERRI. I'm there!

(They exit. SHIFT FOCUS TO —)

Scene Sixteen

(DETENTION CENTER. CARMELLE is tossed into her cell with BENNI, a tough female con who is lifting weights.)

WARDEN'S VOICE. Get in there, you murdering lesbian psychopath!

BENNI. Ya got any cigarettes?

CARMELLE. Uh —

(Before CARMELLE has a chance to answer, BENNI leaps up and beats the crap out of her in an extended fight scene. Then:)

CARMELLE. Stop kicking my vagina!

BENNI. Listen up, honey! Things work different in the big dollhouse than on the outside. When I ask you for a butt, I don't want to hear any back talk, get it?

CARMELLE. Sure.

BENNI. Now gimme that butt!

CARMELLE. (*Presents her butt then realizes.*) Oh, you mean a cigarette. (*Hands Benni a cigarette.*)

BENNI. (*Snatches the entire pack.*) Thanks. It don't matter about your back-sassin' anyway, 'cause I ain't gonna be here much longer.

CARMELLE. You get out soon?

BENNI. Yeah, you could say that. See, some of us are goin' over the wall tonight.

CARMELLE. Oh... oh! You mean escape!

BENNI. Whew! Boy! I'm locked up with a Mensa scholar here!

CARMELLE. If I could get outta here, I could... Hey! Benni! Take me with you.

BENNI. What? You? Why should I? You're just a kid.

CARMELLE. Not anymore. I was a kid... twelve hours ago. But that twelve hours seems like twenty years after a strip search, a communal shower with fellow inmates with dubious intentions, and a meal of that swill they're passing off as food in the commissary. I'm a woman now. A woman of flesh and blood on the outside, with a stainless steel heart filled under pressure with piping hot bile that's ready to burst out and poison my body with its insidious disease. That disease is called revenge. And that disease has an antidote — Sindee Sandstone's head on a platter. And the only way I'm gonna cure what ails me is by getting' outta the joint. So you gotta take me with ya. Ya gotta.

BENNI. Brilliant. Lovely. I'm cryin' inside. You gotta write that down, honey. You could be one of them romance writers for sure.

CARMELLE. So you'll take me with ya?

BENNI. Not a chance. You're too volatile. A real firecracker. We need someone with a cool head when the heat turns on. And cool you ain't.

CARMELLE. Oh, really? (*CARMELLE leaps on BENNI and beats her in an extended fight scene. She wrestles away the zip knife BENNI has and holds it to BENNI's throat.*)

BENNI. Okay! Okay, kid. Let's keep this calm.

CARMELLE. When do we move out?

BENNI. Midnight. Tonight.

CARMELLE. How?

BENNI. The cell door. It's unlocked. We paid one of the screws to get careless.

CARMELLE. Remember this little chat we had, Benni. If I feel somethin' sharp in my back on the way out, you can bet I'm gonna take a couple of you down with me when I go. Got it?

BENNI. Got it.

CARMELLE. Looks like it's time. Let's go.

(*They exit. SHIFT FOCUS TO —*)

Scene Seventeen

(SINDEE'S BEDROOM. SINDEE is looking at herself in the mirror.)

SINDEE. Yuck! *(She tries to make her face look thinner. She holds up a glamour magazine and compares.)* Sick! I'm so fucking fat!

CHARLENE. *(Off:)* Sindee! I don't hear that aerobics DVD!

SINDEE. Alright! Alright! Get off my back!

CHARLENE. *(Off:)* What?

SINDEE. Love you... bitch. *(She remains sitting at the mirror, examining herself.)* Gross. *(She plays with the flab under her arms and grimaces. She spies a bag of cookies. She looks at the flab, back at the cookies, back at the flab, back at the cookies, snatches up the cookies and crams one in her mouth.)*

(Ghostly music plays.)

SINDEE. What the fuck is that?

(ANGELATINA enters as a ghost.)

ANGELATINA. Hello, Sindee.

SINDEE. What the fuck?!

ANGELATINA. Yes, Sindee. It's me. Don't worry. Yes, I'm dead. You did your job.

SINDEE. My job? I didn't shoot you. I liked you. Carmelle shot you. She's bad. She's in jail right now.

ANGELATINA. Well, you got one out of three right. You didn't shoot me. But you sure didn't like me.

SINDEE. That's not true! I was jealous of you. I'll admit that. But you've got to understand. I'm a senior! It was my year! You know it's not right you're on the squad. You've got two more years left!

ANGELATINA. Not anymore. You took care of that.

SINDEE. I didn't shoot you! I told you! Carmelle shot you!

ANGELATINA. Then why do you have blood on your hands?

SINDEE. What? Do... oh, my God... what... it's... how?!

ANGELATINA. Goodbye for now, Sindee. Oh, and don't forget. One out of three.

SINDEE. What?!

ANGELATINA. You didn't shoot me. But you didn't like me, and Carmelle is not in jail.

SINDEE. She was booked today!

ANGELATINA. Watch your back. Don't get kicked where it counts.

SINDEE. Come back here!! Take this off my hands!!

(ANGELATINA disappears. SINDEE tries to wipe off her hands. CHARLENE, a bit drunk, enters with PEPPER. SINDEE hides her hands behind her back.

CHARLENE. Pepper is here.

PEPPER. Hi, Sin.

CHARLENE. Don't chitchat too long, girls. Sindee has swimnastics tomorrow before school.

SINDEE. Beat it, Mom.

CHARLENE. Excuse me, Miss Ma'am. Hey. What do you have behind your back?

SINDEE. Nothing. Get out!

CHARLENE. Let me see.

SINDEE. No.

CHARLENE. Let me see.

SINDEE. Mom, get out!

CHARLENE. You just don't want me to see because I want to.

SINDEE. And you just want to see because I don't want you to see. Get out!

CHARLENE. Come here! *(CHARLENE yanks SINDEE's hands out from behind her.)* There! Nothing? You were hiding nothing?

SINDEE. That's right. Now get out!

CHARLENE. Sometimes I know exactly why your father left. *(Exits.)*

PEPPER. What the hell was that?

SINDEE. Look at my hands!

PEPPER. So?

SINDEE. See anything?

PEPPER. No.

SINDEE. Carmelle escaped!

PEPPER. What?

SINDEE. Carmelle escaped. She's gonna kill me!

PEPPER. She's out? I just watched the news. They didn't mention it.

SINDEE. It's not on the news. Angelatina told me.

PEPPER. Shut up! Quit fucking around. We can't talk about it or we'll get caught.

SINDEE. But she did.

(Ghostly music plays. ANGELATINA enters.)

SINDEE. See! There she is! Can't you hear that?

PEPPER. What? Quit it, Sindee! Enough!

SINDEE. But... oh, I get it. Drive me crazy, right? So I'll do something stupid like turn myself in or fuck up. Well, it's not gonna work!

PEPPER. That's it! I'm outta here. I'm freaked out enough without you spazzing out on me. Bye! *(PEPPER exits.)*

SINDEE. Pepper, come back!

(SINDEE exits after PEPPER. SHIFT FOCUS TO –)

Scene Eighteen

(ON THE ROAD. CARMELLE and BENNI flee.)

CARMELLE. Move it!

BENNI. They're coming! I can hear them!

(Sounds of dogs barking and police chase hubbub.)

CARMELLE. You're slowing me up! Time to part ways, honey!

BENNI. Perfect. I don't want you taggin' along, anyway. I'm goin' this way.

CARMELLE. You ain't goin' anywhere! *(CARMELLE stabs BENNI, then puts the knife in BENNI's hands and pushes her off in the direction of the posse.)*
I'll cut your hearts out!

(The sound of guns killing BENNI. CARMELLE exits the opposite way. SHIFT FOCUS TO –)

Scene Nineteen

(OUTSIDE SINDEE'S HOUSE. SINDEE chases after PEPPER.)

SINDEE. Pepper, get your ass back here!

PEPPER. Stuff it, Sindee! I can't take it anymore!

SINDEE. Can't take what anymore?

PEPPER. I'm going to the police!

SINDEE. Don't you dare!

PEPPER. I'm telling them everything! I can't live with this anymore!

(CARMELLE steps out with a gun.)

CARMELLE. Then you won't. *(She shoots PEPPER in the eye. PEPPER falls off stage, dead.)*

SINDEE. *(Suddenly happy:)* Carmelle! You're out! Hooray!

CARMELLE. Can it, Sandstone.

SINDEE. Okay. You're mad. I understand. I'd be mad to, if I'd been driven to the point of murder then set up to go to prison for the rest of my life. But I think we both need to take a breath before we do something we might regret for the rest of our lives.

(Ghost music plays. ANGELATINA appears.)

SINDEE. Angelatina!

CARMELLE. Right.

(ANGELATINA taps CARMELLE on the shoulder. CARMELLE turns and SINDEE wrestles the gun from her grip in an extended fight scene.)

CARMELLE. Now Sindee, think about what you're about to do!

SINDEE. Okay.

(SINDEE thinks for a moment, then shoots CARMELLE, who falls offstage, dead.)

SINDEE. *(To Angelatina:)* Why did you help me?

(Ghost music plays as ANGELATINA silently exits.)

SINDEE. Come back! Augh! *(SINDEE wipes her hands on her skirt. Sirens sound.)* Shit! FuckpissSHIT!!

(She exits. SHIFT FOCUS TO –)

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