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Cast of Characters

ARIEL (male)

LYDIA (female)

JOY (female)

MOM (female)

MELANIE (female)

PRINCIPAL (male or female)

COACH (male)

TINA/TONY (male)

MRS. GUNDERSON (female)

VICTORIA (female)

STACY (female)

CYNTHIA (female)

ALISHA (female)

GIRL 1 (female)

Setting

Characters and actions in this play move fluidly through several locations. Locations can be suggested simply by costume, props, or blocking. A few chairs would be fine. A few chairs, a bed, and a school desk would be even better. Here's a quick rundown of the locations:

a bedroom,
a drama class,
a back-stage area,
a dressing room,
a lunch-yard,
a principal's office,
a fast food restaurant,
a car,
a clearing,
a mall food court,
and a high school hallway.

LAND O' PLENTY:

MY JOURNEY AS THE ONLY BOY
IN AN ALL-GIRLS SCHOOL

by David Largman Murray

Scene One

(ARIEL [*pronounced ah-REE-el*] cleans up his messy room on the first day of school.)

ARIEL. Listen, before we start I have to tell you a few things. What happens in tonight's play did not happen to *anyone*, especially not me, okay? I'm just an actor, a normal high school student with virtually no problems, okay? Just make sure you don't confuse me with the character in the play. Cause me, I mean, I'm a pretty cool guy. Isn't it obvious?

(*It's not.*)

ARIEL. Anyway, my name's Ariel, but not like *The Little Mermaid*; her name is pronounced slightly differently. But this play is all about being a new kid in a strange and unfamiliar land. See, when my parents moved from Edison New Jersey to Silver Oaks Pine Glen... Wait—Silver Glen...Oakwood Glen...Mom, what's this place called?

MOM. (*Yelling off-stage:*) Silver Oakwood Glen.

ARIEL. Silver Oakwood Glen. When my parents said we were moving to Silver Oakwood Glen, I was nervous to say the least. When I say my parents, I really mean my Mom and my Aunt Lydia. My father died in a horse racing accident in the late 90s. He was a jockey, which explains my small size and intense interest in the Kentucky Derby.

(*His phone buzzes in his pocket. He checks it.*)

ARIEL. Lonesome Glory made it to the semi-semi-finals. Alright! Only four more months to go till K-Day!

(*A knock at the door.*)

LYDIA. Ariel? It's Lydia, can I come in?

ARIEL. Sure. You know, you don't need to identify yourself every time you knock on my door, I recognize the sound of your voice.

LYDIA. I just think it's polite to identify oneself when entering, I mean, this isn't the Dark Ages!

ARIEL. *(To audience:)* Lydia always references the Dark Ages because she wants us to ask about her research.

LYDIA. Yeah... My research on the Dark Ages is going pretty well but there's just not that much information out there.

ARIEL. That's the thing about the dark ages.

LYDIA. Isn't it?!

(LYDIA cracks up.)

ARIEL. So did you just come here to talk about your research again, or did you want to ask me for money?

LYDIA. I want to get a Jamba Juice.

(ARIEL hands her three bucks.)

LYDIA. Three bucks?

ARIEL. How much is a Jamba Juice these days?

LYDIA. Six bucks at least.

ARIEL. What?

LYDIA. I'm a generous tipper... And I have a crush on the assistant manager.

ARIEL. How old are you?

LYDIA. 37. Why? Do I have bags under my eyes? Am I wearing enough makeup?

ARIEL. Aunt Lydia if you don't need anything else, could you just give me a moment? It's my first day of real school. No more home-schooling.

LYDIA. I thought you graduated!

ARIEL. From 8th grade, there's still a few years left.

LYDIA. School school, first day of school... There's something I'm supposed to give you...

(LYDIA retraces her steps.)

ARIEL. If it's a lecture about safe sex, I've already been through that trauma with Mom.

(MOM approaches brandishing a steering wheel. She stands next to ARIEL, "driving" him.)

MOM. Ariel, honey do you know about love?

ARIEL. Uh, I guess.

MOM. Do you know about s-e-x?

ARIEL. Oh God.

MOM. The components, do you know about the components?

ARIEL. I think so, why are you saying it like that?

MOM. I'm uncomfortable using the actual words, Ariel, come on, this isn't easy for me either. So here goes... When a, uh, when uh...

ARIEL. When a man...

MOM. Yes, that's right, when a man... You know, when a man...

ARIEL. Loves...

MOM. Right right... When a man loves a...a...

ARIEL. A woman.

MOM. Exactly! Ariel, you probably know more about this than I do, just use a... Use a... Use a thing, okay?

ARIEL. Gross mom.

MOM. And Ariel?

ARIEL. Yeah?

MOM. I'm sorry that your dad... You know that I'm not your... That he can't be the one to... I'm just... I'm sorry, honey.

ARIEL. I know.

(MOM "drives" off. ARIEL stays. Back to scene.)

LYDIA. Oh I remember! Your school uniform came in the mail! I'll go get it.

(LYDIA exits.)

ARIEL. *(To audience:)* Now that they're gone, I have to talk about my love life. I've had exactly three girlfriends. I use the word "had" loosely. And I guess *girlfriends* wouldn't really be accurate either. These *girls who I knew* had exactly one thing in common: They weren't interested in me. Take Cynthia Charmane.

(CYNTHIA CHARMANE emerges wearing a fast food uniform.)

ARIEL. I had a crush on Cynthia Charmane since 4th grade and I knew the only way she would talk to me is if she were getting paid eight fifty an hour. You see every day Cynthia would say this:

CYNTHIA. Welcome to Burgolia, would you like to try our new Sweet Potato fries? Welcome to Burgolia, would you like to try our new Sweet Potato fries? Welcome to Burgolia, would you like to try our new Sweet Potato fries?

ARIEL. And my plan was to respond with this chestnut: "Sure, if they come with your number!" I spent days preparing.

ARIEL. (*Simultaneous with CYNTHIA:*) "Sure if they come with your number, sure IF they come with YOUR number. SURE, IF THEY COME WITH YOUR NUMBER!"

CYNTHIA. (*Simultaneous with ARIEL:*) Would you like to try our new Sweet Potato Fries? Would you like to try our new Sweet Potato Fries?

ARIEL. (*To CYNTHIA:*) I'm in love with you. (*To audience:*) And then the great day came.

(*ARIEL sprays binaca in his mouth and approaches CYNTHIA.*)

CYNTHIA. Hi! Welcome to Burgolia!

(*ARIEL waits.*)

ARIEL. That's it?

CYNTHIA. Are you ready to order?

ARIEL. I guess I'll get the Sweet Potato Fries.

CYNTHIA. They're discontinued.

ARIEL. What?! Why?

CYNTHIA. I don't make the decisions. Can I get you anything else?

ARIEL. (*To audience:*) And there it was. My moment. My in. (*To CYNTHIA:*) Would you like Sweet Potato Fries with my phone number?

CYNTHIA. That doesn't make any sense.

ARIEL. I'm Ariel.

CYNTHIA. Like the mermaid?

ARIEL. Or the Lion of God, whichever.

CYNTHIA. I can't date customers.

ARIEL. I'm not really a customer if I don't buy anything.

CYNTHIA. Well you can't really be here if you don't buy anything.

ARIEL. I don't have any money.

CYNTHIA. Buh-bye then.

(*ARIEL and CYNTHIA part.*)

(*ALISHA enters and lies down in a "clearing."*)

ARIEL. It didn't work. Then there was this one girl from camp. Alisha Swarensen? Without question the flyest girl in camp. She inex-

plicably grabbed my hand during the infamous “night hike,” and led me to a beautiful *Twilight*-inspired clearing where we lay with each other side by side just being super existential.

ALISHA. Don't the stars make you think about like, life and stuff?

ARIEL. Totally...

ALISHA. It's so dark.

ARIEL. It's so unbelievable to be here with you right now. I'm the luckiest guy on the entire planet. I mean *ME* with Alisha Swarenson, at Camp Chatanunu, in the middle of the night. I can't believe it.

ALISHA. You're funny.

ARIEL. I mean, *ME*. Ariel Carvell. With the prettiest girl—

ALISHA. Wait—You're not Patrick Larson?

ARIEL. Who?

ALISHA. Oh my God. AH! AHH!!!!

(She runs away screaming.)

ARIEL. Last, but certainly not least, is my one true love. The Brass Ring of women who will never date me in a million years: Girl who I saw eating frozen yogurt in the food court this summer.

(She emerges. Girl Eating Frozen Yogurt in the Food Court. And she's doing just that. We'll come to know her as JOY.)

ARIEL. Since the moment I saw her I knew she was the one, like the one the one, that everyone talks about. She was waiting for her friends. She was incredible. She had a Johnny Atlantis t-shirt on. For your information, Johnny Atlantis is like, only the best comic book character/crossover music project that's ever existed. And this next part you won't even believe. We spoke. Like, words. *(To girl:)* I like your shirt.

(JOY looks up. Just then, her friend calls from off stage.)

GIRL 1. We're leaving, come on Joy.

ARIEL. Joy. Nice name. Reminds me of being happy.

JOY. Wow, thanks. You're kind of funny. Well. Gotta go.

(JOY smiles at ARIEL and then leaves.)

ARIEL. And just like that, she was gone. I've been searching for her ever since.

(LYDIA comes back with a box.)

LYDIA. Here it is: The Uniform!

(ARIEL opens the box. He takes out the uniform. It's a girl's uniform.)

LYDIA. How cute!

ARIEL. This can't be right.

(MOM walks in.)

MOM. Honey it's time to—Oh, you gave him the uniform?

ARIEL. They sent me a girl's uniform!

MOM. Not necessarily, maybe the boys wear kilts.

ARIEL. That can't be right.

LYDIA. No, no, it's a kilt. Definitely a kilt. I think I remember something about this being a Scottish school. Or something.

ARIEL. So I'm supposed to wear this thing?

LYDIA. You want to make a good impression, don't you?

ARIEL. I guess.

MOM. Honey, just put on your uniform and let's go, we have an appointment with the principal.

ARIEL. Okay, well I'm putting it on over my pants!

MOM. It's your first day at your new school! Let's go let's go!

(MOM, ARIEL, and LYDIA grab their things and make their way to the "car," chaotically driving to school. ARIEL reads the school calendar.)

ARIEL. This says "Homecoming" is coming up, what's Homecoming?

MOM. It has something to do with football and popularity.

LYDIA. I know there's voting involved.

ARIEL. Oh my God, does the football team vote to kick the least popular kids out of school?! The new kids don't stand a chance!

MOM. Oh calm down, no one's getting voted out of school. You know what's a great way to make friends? Talk about what you did this summer loudly as you pass by the other students in the hall, they can't help but be interested.

ARIEL. You've clearly never been to high school. Besides I didn't do anything this summer.

MOM. That's not true, you fed the neighbor's fish!

ARIEL. Yeah, and it died.

MOM. But you replaced it, and that's the important thing.

ARIEL. I just don't get why everything has to change.

MOM. You know what I think about change? If it happens, it happens because it's supposed to. Whether good or bad, I say "thank you change. You're interesting, and I can learn from you."

LYDIA. You know I've said this before. The best thing that ever happened was Eddie leaving me.

(She immediately cries after she hears herself say the words "Eddie leaving me.")

MOM. Ariel, you're going to love high school. You'll finally be playing with boys your own age.

ARIEL. Mom, you don't call it "playing."

MOM. I'm sorry, "hooking up."

ARIEL. No, Mom, it's "hanging out"! *Hanging out!*

(LYDIA lifts from her tears.)

LYDIA. CAN WE PLEASE JUST STOP AND GO TO JAMBA JUICE?!

(The car screeches to a halt as the lights fade.)

Scene Two

(PRINCIPAL's office. MOM and ARIEL enter and sit across from the PRINCIPAL drinking Jamba Juices. ARIEL has his uniform skirt on over his pants.)

PRINCIPAL. You must be Ariel.

ARIEL. Yes.

PRINCIPAL. I love your hair, what a unique style.

ARIEL. It's just my hair...

MOM. It's my handiwork I'm afraid.

(LYDIA comes barging in with her Jamba Juice, checking the door frame to make sure it's sturdy.)

LYDIA. You know it's a private school when they've got real wood in the door frames. Hi, Lydia Carvell, Dark Ages historian.

PRINCIPAL. Mrs. Baskerville, principal of Hawthorne.

LYDIA. Speaking of which, I'm noticing a lot of Dark Ages architecture, when was this building constructed?

PRINCIPAL. 1982.

MOM. Thank you so much for meeting with us before Ariel's first day.

PRINCIPAL. Of course, of course, sit down. We love welcoming new students to our family.

MOM. Now, we homeschooled Ariel, and he's never been to a formal school before. I know he's worried about any customs he needs to be aware of?

PRINCIPAL. Ariel, you're going to love Hawthorne. Academically, it is without a doubt the strongest program in the state. In terms of customs, I will say that our girls typically don't wear their pants underneath their uniform skirts.

ARIEL. This a girl's uniform?!

PRINCIPAL. Of course.

ARIEL. MOM! Why did you get me a girl's uniform and make me wear it?

MOM. What's the big deal? If I were a boy, I wouldn't mind wearing a skirt over my pants every now and again. It feels nice!

ARIEL. Mrs. Baskerville, what do the boys at your school wear?

PRINCIPAL. Ladies, I'm afraid this is an all girl's school.

ARIEL. WHAT?!

MOM. Oh no.

PRINCIPAL. We've found that co-ed environments are distracting.

ARIEL. You think I'm a girl.

PRINCIPAL. I'm sorry?

ARIEL. I'M NOT A GIRL!

PRINCIPAL. (*Studying ARIEL's face:*) Yes... Yes I see it now.

MOM. I think there's been some kind of mistake. This is my *son* Ariel.

PRINCIPAL. I heard his name and assumed he was a girl. My daughter's favorite movie is *The Little Mermaid*.

MOM. His too!

ARIEL. Mom!

MOM. I'm so sorry Ariel. Mrs. Baskerville, can we just take back our deposit and be on our way?

PRINCIPAL. Deposit?

MOM. The four thousand dollars?

PRINCIPAL. That... Is... Uh, unavailable at this time.

(ARIEL starts to leave.)

ARIEL. Send us a check! Mom, can we go to a real school now?

MOM. Mrs. Baskerville, that's all the savings we have.

PRINCIPAL. Hawthorne is in a unique circumstance right now wherein we've spent all of your deposit money on... Let me see here...

(She takes out more files.)

PRINCIPAL. iPads. Yes, now I remember. A few of us wanted iPads.

LYDIA. Well give us the iPads then.

PRINCIPAL. I'm afraid we can't part with those.

MOM. How are we going to get our money back?

PRINCIPAL. You know, we are opening the school to boys next fall. If Ariel is comfortable being the only boy at an all-girls school until then, I don't have a problem with it. We'll call it a trial run.

ARIEL. NO!

MOM. That's a wonderful idea!

ARIEL. That's a horrible terrible awful idea! Can't I just go to a public school?

PRINCIPAL. What, Franklin?

ARIEL. Yeah.

PRINCIPAL. Oh, you haven't heard? They're so over capacity that they've been holding classes at a Starbucks on the other side of the Chatsworth bridge. The kids eat coffee grounds for their mid-morning snack, it's a very depressing state of affairs.

MOM. Honey, I know it's not perfect, but Hawthorne does sound a little bit better than the Starbucks school... Hawthorne is a good school. Trigonometry? Physics? Latin? I don't want to teach you that stuff, it's really boring.

ARIEL. The only guy in school?

LYDIA. Mrs. Baskerville, let's cut to the chase—I would also like to enroll at Hawthorne.

ARIEL. WHAT?

PRINCIPAL. Don't you have a high school diploma?

LYDIA. Not a real one, no.

ARIEL. Can we just go home and *re-group* for a second?!

LYDIA. Ariel, please don't rob me of the high school experience I was never lucky enough to have. Mrs. Baskerville, you understand. I've never had a prom, been elected to student counsel... Had my first kiss under the rafters...

PRINCIPAL. You poor thing.

ARIEL. No! No! She's lying! She wants to ruin my life!

PRINCIPAL. Ariel, I like your aunt. I think her dedication to learning will inspire our girls. I'm sorry, I should say: our girls and, now, one boy.

ARIEL. You mean your girls, one boy, and a 37-year-old woman who pretends to be staying at hotels to get the free continental breakfast!

LYDIA. Oh so now we're airing out the dirty laundry! Ariel has a penis-shaped birthmark on his shoulder!

PRINCIPAL. Oh dear.

ARIEL. You told me all boys have that! Mom you said all boys have that!

MOM. Honey, we didn't know what to tell you.

LYDIA. (To PRINCIPAL:) It's a very strange-looking birthmark.

ARIEL. No wonder I couldn't find anything about it online.

PRINCIPAL. (To ARIEL:) You know, I'm going to make an educated guess here and say that you and your Aunt would benefit from a more structured educational setting.

ARIEL. I don't believe this.

MOM. I don't know, Mrs. Baskerville. Ariel seems a little uncomfortable with the whole thing.

PRINCIPAL. Ariel, I want you to learn. And I know you're attached to home-schooling, and that's understandable. It's all you've known. But there's a big world out there and Hawthorne is part of it. We would love to have you. This was my mistake, so here's what we can do to clear things up: You and your aunt can attend Hawthorne with no further tuition. I think you two are just what our school needs.

MOM. That's very generous, Mrs. Baskerville.

ARIEL. Can we talk about these iPads? That seemed like a really irresponsible budget decision, Mrs. Baskerville. Back me up here, Lydia.

LYDIA. Come on kiddo, girls as far as the eye can see? This is a dream come true for a 14-year-old boy.

ARIEL. A dream come true would be a normal school. A normal life.

MOM. Honey you do have a normal life. It's just...not quite as normal as other people's.

PRINCIPAL. Try it out for one day. If you don't like it, we'll figure out a way to pry those iPads from our teachers and get your deposit money back.

MOM. One day, honey.

(JOY, aka The Girl Eating Frozen Yogurt At The Food Court emerges, opens her locker.)

ARIEL. *(To audience:)* That's when I saw her. The Girl Eating Frozen Yogurt At The Food Court. And the craziest thing was: she was still eating frozen yogurt. Probably the same one. She's so dreamlike. So ethereal.

LYDIA. Ariel? Snap out of it.

MOM. Mrs. Baskerville is a busy woman.

ARIEL. What?

PRINCIPAL. What'll it be young man?

ARIEL. Okay. I'll try your girl's school. For one day. One day, that's it! What's my first class?

PRINCIPAL. Drama.

ARIEL. I want to go home.

(Blackout.)

Scene Three

(MRS. GUNDERSON emerges. The Drama teacher. She wields a cane.)

MRS. GUNDERSON. Act One Scene One! Ladies, begin!

(ALL GIRLS fill the stage in elegant clothes. Perhaps a dance routine if you can fit it in. It's all part of a performance art piece. VICTORIA, STACY, and MELANIE are the primary actresses.)

VICTORIA. I am a strong, independent woman.

STACY. My womanhood turns the tides of humanity.

MELANIE. I was born a woman. I will die a goddess.

STACY. Hear me roar. Especially you Timothy Sputento! Maybe then you'll text me back!

MRS. GUNDERSON. Stick to the script Stacy!

STACY. It's been four days, Mrs. Gunderson, do you think *he's just not that into me?*

MRS. GUNDERSON. The script, Stacy!

STACY. Hear me roar.

(VICTORIA, painfully shy, barely ekes out her line.)

VICTORIA. Hear me implore you to listen.

MRS. GUNDERSON. Louder, Victoria! LOUDER!

VICTORIA. Hear me implore you to listen! If you want.

STACY. To suspend your notions of what it means to be woman.

MELANIE. In this topsy turvy world filled with expectations.

STACY. Degradations.

VICTORIA. And regret.

(ARIEL enters awkwardly wearing elegant fabrics and holding a script.)

ARIEL. I am the noble and elegant woman.

VICTORIA. Need a solution? See my books, my equations... My... My...

MRS. GUNDERSON. My intelligence.

VICTORIA. See my books, my intelligence... My...

MRS. GUNDERSON. Just jump in Melanie.

MELANIE. Need a revolution? Look no further than my spear and poison tipped darts.

ARIEL. Need a break? Rest here, on my bosom.

(The drama class breaks up into giggles.)

ARIEL. Mrs. Gunderson you know that I'm a guy, right?

MRS. GUNDERSON. My boy, my young young inexperienced boy, we are not boy or girl in this world, nor are we man woman; we are human.

ARIEL. That's not what this play makes it seem like. What is this play?

MRS. GUNDERSON. It's my senior thesis from Bard College. I've performed it every year since its initial inception in 1974. It is a *legend*.

MELANIE. Mrs. Gunderson, my neck is sore, can I put my neck brace back on?

MRS. GUNDERSON. Of course Melanie. (*To ARIEL:*) Melanie was injured during one of our lifts last week.

MELANIE. It was worth it Mrs. Gunderson.

ARIEL. When does this class get out?

MRS. GUNDERSON. Come come Ariel, we need you to do the lift.

ARIEL. Oh great, because I'm the only boy in the class I have to do all the lifts.

MRS. GUNDERSON. No no, Ariel, the girls will be lifting you!

ARIEL. Why can't we do *Our Town* or something? Everyone likes *Our Town*.

MRS. GUNDERSON. You are a very smart boy Ariel, but you ask too many questions! You have not truly lived until you experience the feeling of being thrust in the air by a group of strong women, now it's scene four, let's begin!

(*TINA, a boy disguised as a girl, enters.*)

TINA. Sorry I'm late Mrs. Gunderson, I had my—

(*She sees ARIEL.*)

TINA. What is a BOY doing here?

MRS. GUNDERSON. I'm afraid it's the end of an era, Tina. We're going co-ed. Now suit up.

(*TINA drapes on a colorful costume.*)

TINA. Well he better be willing to leave his hormones at the door.

(*TINA approaches ARIEL menacingly.*)

TINA. I will not be ogled over, groped, prodded at, or asked to any asinine school dance, are we clear?

(*The girls cheer for TINA.*)

ALL GIRLS. (*Ad lib.*) Go Tina! Nice one Tina! You tell him!

TINA. Bring it in girls!

(*TINA lifts her arms to be hugged. All the girls hug her. TINA seems to be in heaven.*)

ARIEL. You look familiar. Do you have a brother or something?

TINA. I'm an only child. And I don't like boys who ask too many questions.

MRS. GUNDERSON. Enough distractions! Ladies? Gather around and grab a limb, whatever you can! Lift LIFT!

(ARIEL lays on the floor as the girls gather around him. They grab his arms and legs and struggle to lift him in the air over and over again as he struggles.)

ARIEL. This is insane Mrs. Gunderson!

MRS. GUNDERSON. Life is insane Mr. Carvell!!

TINA. Light as a feather, stiff as a board!

MELANIE. All women gather, and meet on the shore!

VICTORIA. *(Too quiet:)* We demand justice, let's settle this score.

STACY. And screw you Timothy Sputento, hear me ROAR!

ALL GIRLS. ROOOOAAAARRR!!!!

(They drop ARIEL.)

ARIEL. This is abusive! OW! I think I broke my tailbone!

MRS. GUNDERSON. That's the first step to true liberation!

STACY. Ow, I think I hurt my neck.

TINA. Oh, I'll give you a neck rub.

STACY. You give the best neck rubs!

TINA. Victoria, do you want a neck rub?

VICTORIA. I'm scared.

MRS. GUNDERSON. Mr. Carvell, at Hawthorne we learn that we suffer for our art.

ARIEL. At my old school, which was my mom's garage, we learned about other people's suffering. She didn't make *me* suffer.

MRS. GUNDERSON. Welcome to private school, Mr. Carvell. We learn *true* life lessons.

ARIEL. Well what's the lesson here?

MRS. GUNDERSON. *Trust no one.*

(MRS. GUNDERSON winks at ARIEL, then slams her cane on the floor.)

MRS. GUNDERSON. Back to one! Ariel, go back stage and get the giant pig's head.

ARIEL. You want me to wear a giant pig's head?!

MRS. GUNDERSON. Do you see a better metaphor for our male-dominated capitalist society?

ARIEL. I guess not.

MRS. GUNDERSON. RUN!

(ARIEL looks both ways, then makes a break for it!)

(Back stage, the door is locked.)

ARIEL. Maybe Lydia can get me out of this. *(He takes out his cell phone and dials LYDIA.)* Pick up pick up pick up!

(MELANIE enters. ARIEL, frantic, doesn't see her.)

MELANIE. There's no cell phones allowed at Hawthorne.

(ARIEL screams!)

MELANIE. Don't worry, I won't tell.

ARIEL. Do you have a key to this door?

MELANIE. Yes.

ARIEL. Can I have it?

MELANIE. You know you're the first boy I've seen in two months.

ARIEL. Oh no.

MELANIE. It's just weird to see one up close.

ARIEL. Okay, keep your distance.

MELANIE. You're scared of me because of my neck brace.

ARIEL. Mrs. Gunderson kind of has me scared of all women in general. Neck brace or not. So can I have that key?

(MRS. GUNDERSON screams from off stage.)

MRS. GUNDERSON. Melanie! Bring back the boy!! ALIVE!

ARIEL. Oh God, I gotta get out of here!

(MELANIE locks the other back stage door.)

ARIEL. What are you going to do to me?

MELANIE. Nothing. Relax. I just want to take a break. Here, do you want one of my Twix?

(MELANIE takes out two Twix bars and gives one to ARIEL.)

MELANIE. Really, I won't bite.

(ARIEL takes one.)

(MELANIE eats hers really fast. ARIEL watches her, almost fascinated. She gets nervous and gets up. She turns, facing away from him.)

MELANIE. Do you ever get a feeling that's so strong, that like, even posting it on Facebook wouldn't get it out? It happens when I talk to boys. My voice starts to get shaky and my stomach feels like...like... Like there's this creature inside of me that wants to crawl out and eat me alive!

ARIEL. Yeah, I don't know if you should post that on Facebook.

MELANIE. And the worst part is I'm such a feminist you know? I mean, I hate men. They ruin everything.

ARIEL. You don't sound like a freshman.

MELANIE. I stayed back a grade to travel around the world with my parents, that's why I'm like...hella worldly. Can I kiss you?

ARIEL. Are you going to plant a creature in my stomach or something?

(MELANIE comes closer to ARIEL. ARIEL gets nervous. She moves in to kiss him. He hesitates at first but they kiss.)

(When it's over, things are awkward. They stand away from each other and don't know what to do or say. MELANIE is expecting him to say something nice to break the ice.)

ARIEL. So, do you have that key?

(MELANIE takes her key out, disappointed. ARIEL takes it, and puts it in the door, but notices MELANIE and feels bad.)

ARIEL. Um. Well. You know...I'd love to hear more about your trip around the world? Is Denmark all it's cracked up to be?

MELANIE. No. It's a complete and utter disappointment.

(MELANIE grabs the pig's head and makes her way back to Drama class.)

MELANIE. Goodbye Annabelle.

ARIEL. Ariel!

MELANIE. Whatever...

(She exits. ARIEL uses the key and escapes into the hallway.)

ARIEL. *(To audience:)* I think that was the weirdest first kiss in the history of the universe. And yet I feel... Strangely exhilarated.

(He sees her. JOY.)

ARIEL. There she is.

(Another girl off stage calls for her.)

GIRL 1. Come on Joy, let's go!

JOY. Here I come...

(She rushes off stage.)

ARIEL. Why is she always leaving? *(He shouts to JOY.)* Joy!

(He starts to run toward her, but a male voice interrupts him. It's the P.E. COACH.)

COACH. Dead man walkin', dead man walkin'!

(The COACH stops ARIEL and puts an arm around him, convivial.)

COACH. AH, I'm just kiddin', you're the new guy right?—Either that or the girls at Hawthorne just got uglier, AH, I'm only kidding, we've got the best looking girls under the sun— *(A girl walks by.)* Hi Connie, keep it real, not too real now! *(COACH winks at CONNIE.)* Free advice: Girls love compliments. They live and breathe on the stuff. Like I said, it's great to have another guy around, talk guy stuff, shoot the shoot so to speak, hey listen, will you take a look at this? *(Starts pulling down his pants.)* It wasn't here this morning and it's leaking green pus, AH, I'm only kidding! What's your name?

ARIEL. Ariel.

COACH. Oh no. You are a girl. I'm so sorry. You're very beautiful, a very beautiful girl, what a great... Hairstyle you've got, very um, hip. I love it, don't change a thing, how's your self-esteem? Did it take a shot just then? I'm sorry, I really am.

ARIEL. I'm not a girl.

COACH. Oh thank God, I can't afford another lawsuit.

(The bell rings.)

COACH. That's my cue buddy, and just so we're clear? Your ass is grass when we get to gym class, Carvell. You're gonna wish you were never born—RAWR!!!

(Passing period. Girls file past ARIEL as he looks for JOY. AUNT LYDIA comes running.)

LYDIA. Ariel, Ariel!

ARIEL. Hey Aunt Lydia, did you see a dream-like girl passing by, about yea tall?

LYDIA. I have to go to the library. I just came from AP European History, and I was completely humiliated. The first unit is on the

Dark Ages. Well guess what, it turns out I don't know *anything* about the Dark Ages.

ARIEL. Impossible!

LYDIA. I have physics next, quick, what's an atom?

ARIEL. I don't know, Mom skipped science, she said it was too boring.

LYDIA. Oh, I'm not cut out for this...

(LYDIA runs off.)

ARIEL. *(To audience:)* So, I'll spare you Mr. Freedman's Latin class and the excitement of Geography and instead just show you the picture I drew during those classes.

(He shows a ridiculously intricate drawing of himself riding a race horse.)

Scene Four

(ARIEL sits by himself eating lunch and waving at people nicely. No one is giving him the time of day.)

ARIEL. I'll skip to lunch. Ground zero for a new kid. And if you're the only boy at an all girl's school, it's even worse. My strategy: make friends within 45 seconds of the start of lunch. Statistically, if you haven't found a lunch partner within the first minute of lunch, you probably won't find one until after Thanksgiving break, you know, when you've been gone long enough that everyone's forgotten about you and you can start over.

(ARIEL sees TINA walk by with VICTORIA and STACY.)

ARIEL. Tina! Over here! Hi! You have ten seconds to get here!

(TINA leaves STACY and VICTORIA, pulling ARIEL aside.)

TINA. Okay talk. What the hell do you think you're doing? You think you can just waltz in here, dressed as yourself and everything? You're disrupting my whole plan.

ARIEL. Tony. Tony the Titan?! From Camp Chatanunu? It's me, Ariel Carvell? I barfed in my soup?

(TINA takes off his wig revealing that he really is "TONY," a boy.)

TINA. Ariel "The Soup" Carvell! Oh man, I thought you were just some jerk trying to steal all my ladies! Bring it in!

(ARIEL and TONY hug.)

ARIEL. Why are you dressed like that?

TINA. Isn't it obvious? Girls as far as the eye can see? Not another guy in sight. It's a land of plenty, buddy! Guess how many girls' numbers I have right now.

ARIEL. But they all think you're a girl.

TINA. No seriously, guess.

ARIEL. I don't know. Fifteen?

TINA. A hundred and twelve. 112 phone numbers. I even smell like a girl, man.

ARIEL. What happens when they find out?

TINA. I told them I have a twin brother named Tony who goes to boarding school. I talk about him all the time; they're in love with him. And the best part is, he's me! Wait a minute—now that you're here, my plan can go into phase two! See, Hawthorne's going co-ed right? My "twin brother Tony" can finally enroll for the "educational opportunity he's been longing for." Sure I have to pull some of that "Mrs. Doubtfire" crap for a while, but that's when phase three kicks in—I fake Tina's death. BAM! 112 girlfriends. Consoling me. Bringing me baked goods. Seeing my dead twin sister in my eyes. I mean, it's the perfect plan, I should have my own movie or something.

ARIEL. That's a horrible horrible plan.

TINA. And it's actually happening. Wait... You're not going to tell anyone are you? Look, I'll do anything for you, I mean we can help each other out, you know?

ARIEL. Well there is one thing. That girl Joy. Who likes the frozen yogurt. What can you tell me about her?

TINA. Joy. Very beautiful, very intelligent. Her mom is an economist and her dad is unemployed. I wouldn't use that as your lead-in. And she loves Johnny Atlantis. The creator of the comic book signed her cast and she kept it on for like a year. Which kind of turned me off, to be honest, so yeah, I guess I'll let you have that one.

ARIEL. How generous.

TINA. For "The Soup"? Anything! There she is now!

(JOY enters with her lunch.)

TINA. Oh Joy! Meet my friend! This is Ariel, he's the most amazing person I've ever met. Anyway, I should be going.

JOY. Oh okay, bye Tina!

(TINA/TONY *starts to leave.*)

JOY. And seriously, tell your brother Tony to accept my friend request!

TINA. What is his problem?! It must be that evil girlfriend of his.

JOY. God, I hate her!

TINA. (*Winking to ARIEL:*) Laying the pipe my friend, laying the pipe.

(TINA/TONY *exits.*)

ARIEL. Ha, awkward.

JOY. I'm sorry?

ARIEL. Oh, just... Awkward.

JOY. I don't understand.

ARIEL. Right. Me neither. Um... You like Johnny Atlantis, right? I love him.

JOY. Oh, me too! Yeah. I got his autograph once.

ARIEL. You got his autograph? Whoa!

JOY. Yeah, actually, he signed my cast. It's a funny story—

ARIEL. (*To audience:*) And from then on, I just pretended to listen to everything she said. Not because I'm a jerk, it's just that all I could think was "Don't barf...don't barf...don't barf..." But then eventually, we just got into this rhythm and I didn't even have to listen, I just felt like I knew what she was going to say next. Time flew by. And we kept talking.

(*The bell rings.*)

JOY. Hey, 6th is my free period, I can skip it.

ARIEL. Yeah me too. (*To audience:*) It's a good thing I'm not coming back tomorrow, because I didn't go to Chemistry. But you've gotta watch this next part.

JOY. I knew you liked Johnny Atlantis.

(*JOY touches his arm.*)

ARIEL. Are you touching my arm?

JOY. Yes.

ARIEL. How?

JOY. I just did.

ARIEL. Wow.

JOY. So did you hear they're making a whole concept album, like of Johnny Atlantis's intergalactic journeys?

ARIEL. I've been freaking out about it for five months—

JOY. I know, it should have been out by now—I know!

ARIEL. Favorite issue on the count of three. One. Two. Three.

JOY. (*Simultaneous with ARIEL:*) Eight.

ARIEL. (*Simultaneous with JOY:*) 12, I mean eight, yeah me too!

JOY. Time flies. 6th period is almost over. I should be getting back.

ARIEL. Oh. Right.

JOY. So. See you tomorrow.

(*JOY starts to leave.*)

ARIEL. Wait.

JOY. What?

ARIEL. Nothing.

JOY. Oh.

ARIEL. Wait.

JOY. What?

ARIEL. Um. Nevermind.

JOY. Bye.

ARIEL. Come back!

JOY. What?!

ARIEL. I like you.

JOY. Oh.

ARIEL. No, I *like* like you.

JOY. Okay.

ARIEL. So yeah, I guess I wanted to tell you.

JOY. Okay. Thank you.

(*She begins to leave.*)

ARIEL. Wait, that's it?! You don't like me?

JOY. I just met you.

ARIEL. I thought you liked me too, you touched my arm, not once, but one and a half times.

JOY. We've just been talking about Johnny Atlantis and school and stuff for like lunch and 6th period. How am I supposed to react when a guy I've just met tells me he likes me and expects me to like him back?

ARIEL. You're supposed to say that you like me and then we're supposed to date, and then we're supposed to be in this epic relationship that spans all through high school. Empires will rise and fall, Joy, with us at the center of everything.

JOY. No, too much. You should have just been like, "Hey, you want to go to Attic Records after school and see if they have the new Johnny Atlantis album?" Just keep it casual at first so I know you're not a freak, give me some time to get to know you before dropping the whole "I like like you" thing, and besides—

ARIEL. I don't have that kind of time!

JOY. And just so you know, you kind of interrupt people. Girls hate that. I'm not trying to be mean, it's just not attractive. But you have cute hair. And kind of a cute face, in a way.

ARIEL. Wow, thank you!

JOY. I wasn't finished. I *might* like you. Eventually. But right now you just seem like kind of a... A scrub.

ARIEL. I'm not a scrub. What's a scrub?

JOY. A scrub is a guy—

ARIEL. Wait, I just thought of something!

JOY. Interrupting!

ARIEL. But Joy, this might be the most important thing I've ever said. It's just the truth. I'm not supposed to be at this school. My mom enrolled me by accident. I won't be here tomorrow. So because of that, I want to tell you that I only interrupt people when I'm excited about what they're talking about. And I start to care about what they're talking about, which, to be honest, is kind of rare. And I guess I just get confused and I blurt out whatever I'm thinking. But if you want, I will never ever interrupt you again. And will you please go to Attic Records with me after school and see if the new Johnny Atlantis concept album is out?

(She looks at him, deciding if she'll say yes. The bell rings.)

JOY. It's 7th period.

ARIEL. No. We have 5 more minutes.

JOY. No, that was the second bell, we're late.

ARIEL. No, that was the bell for the end of ten minute break, we have five more minutes.

JOY. There is no ten minute break.

ARIEL. Yes there is, it's new.

JOY. Are you tricking me?

ARIEL. Let's just skip 7th.

JOY. I have to go, it's Physio with Mr. Sayers and he—

ARIEL. So you'll go to Attic Records with me?!

JOY. Interrupting!

ARIEL. Dammit!!

(She laughs.)

JOY. Look. I'll think about it. Bye.

(JOY leaves for real this time. ARIEL watches her go.)

ARIEL. So I'll meet you here after 7th? Right here then? This exact spot? 3:10pm? Wear whatever you'd like!

(Faking JOY'S voice.)

"Yes I'll meet you. In fact no, let's leave now. Screw physio! I love you Ariel, even though you have a girl's name. Now if only I could turn around and walk toward you as I say this..."

(Back to normal:)

She hates me. Of course she does. What was I thinking? "I like like you," what a loser. That's what being honest gets you.

(He lies down, defeated.)

ARIEL. 50 minutes until Joy gets out of 7th period. That's...3,000 seconds. Okay. 1...2...3... Maybe it's better if I start the other way. 3,000...2,999...2,998...

(AUNT LYDIA approaches wearing a "Hall Monitor" sash.)

LYDIA. What are you doing, young man?

ARIEL. I'm meeting someone. What are you doing?

LYDIA. I asked to be Hall Monitor during lunch to avoid the loneliness and isolation of eating by myself in the cafeteria. And then one of the girls called me a narc and did this—

**THIS PLAY IS
NOT OVER!**

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