

LITTLE KINGDOM
by J.C. Pankratz

About the play (from the playwright):

It's the last show of the year, and seniors Angel and Francesca find themselves doublecast as Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire* at their historically all-women's college. In three rehearsal sessions, Angel and Francesca scuffle and collaborate in equal measure to emulate their hero, Marlon Brando. What begins as toying with the trappings of masculinity turns into swagger competitions and debates on race, gender, and the very nature of acting in this chaotic, physically charged romp.

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ANGEL—A non-binary acting student who runs a little masculine of center, early 20s.

About the scene:

ANGEL and Francesca are working on getting into character as Stanley Kowalski, and as they rehearse they learn more about each other.

FRANCESCA

So you were like a debutante

ANGEL

Oh fuck no. No no no.

It was more like: you dress up. You wear white gloves.

Your mom's coworker gives you and sixty of your seventh grade classmates

Lessons in how to dance with "the opposite sex."

And then at the end a boy brings you a sugar cookie.

FRANCESCA

Pretty sure anybody's dictionary has a picture of someone in a dress and white gloves

dancing with boys under the word "debutante."

ANGEL

I only wore skirts from Marshall's. And pantyhose.

FRANCESCA

Uh-huh.

They didn't even go to cotillion on Gossip Girl

ANGEL

Well yeah they already knew how to do all that

Some people are born into it

Some people have to take cotillion in the junior high volleyball gym

The point is hopefully when we're all in the same place

Nobody will be able to tell who is who

FRANCESCA

I feel like I'm in anthro

ANGEL

Me too

The whole thing was weird performance art

FRANCESCA

Was it fun? Flirty?

ANGEL

Awkward. Acne-ridden.

FRANCESCA

Oh. Pestilent!

ANGEL

Every Monday I'd come home and put off getting ready
until the last
possible

second.

Mow down my leg hair with this twenty year old electric shaver we had
Because otherwise it would poke through the hose like cactus pins
And then dig dig dig through the clothes basket to find my outfit
Which actually was balled up under the bed
And then I'd finally make it to the car and it was all
"You ungrateful little gremlin"
"Mrs. Papadopoulos was so kind to let you do this for free"

FRANCESCA

Little gremlin!

ANGEL

She still calls me that

FRANCESCA

Mrs. Papadopoulos and the Little Gremlin
My favorite Hans Christian Andersen tale

ANGEL

It had the right amount of angst

FRANCESCA

Did you ever use it? The dancing?

ANGEL

Not even once

FRANCESCA

Hmmm.
How did it—
How did it make you feel?

ANGEL

Cotillion? Weird

FRANCESCA

Duh, but what kind of weird

ANGEL

When I think of those days I can't even see me
Do you remember the big sacks of flour?
Like the kind we toted around for health class,
pretend baby pillows, saddled and weighed
And carried forever, to love and kiss and care about
Instinctively, bone deep, in an attempt to tame our dazzling hormones
before they bubbled all over each other—
So, okay, imagine: I imagined my body was a construct:
bags of sandy flour, tied to a knobby broomstick skeleton,
Held together with holiday ribbon and operated on good days,
With precise little twists of both my hands, and on bad?
By the skin of my teeth, by the edge of my toenails,
By the very tips of my cactus pin leg hair stubble.
We survived together, with little bits of joy and beauty
And shittiness, and big rage, but it covered everything
I touched, you know, the way flour sacks do
When they puff their insides all over and leave dust
To drag your fingertips through, foxtrot shoe prints,
or to clean and clean and always find more, until
you're finding it in your books and your bra and your buttcrack
Literally just. Everything. Everywhere. You know?