

everyone in new york is beautiful (3/4/2024)
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CARINA “RENA” RODRIGUEZ — (Ree-nuh) Late twenties. Bisexual. Half Latina. Chapo Trap House. Poet/ Podcaster. Sort of has a health goth/ athleisure punk rock/ alternative hip hop thing going. Obsessive. Never stops talking. A character and a half. Everyone who meets her remembers her. One of those people who you would consider a “character” if you met them in real life. Addicted to caffeine in a very real way. Wears a knee brace for some chronic pain. I don’t think she’s quite disabled but... I once heard the term “flexibly abled” — she definitely can’t do all the things a person in her mid-late twenties can without a lot of pain. She/her. Played by a mixed actor, or a Latina actor who can pass as ambiguous. Dirtbag left.

HEATHER BAKER — Late twenties/early thirties. White. Queer Theory. Just coming out as a lesbian after a long long period of denial. Not yet out as nonbinary when we meet them —then newly out. WASP. Works for a publishing company. Has a bit of that cottagecore thing going on. MFA. Wealthy, conservative, Calvinist parents. Very empathetic. Very kind. Maybe a little highly strung, though. Believes in politeness and manners. Definitely not out to parents. Almost all of the outward aspects of Heather change in Act 2... that’s when you see the rage. She/her. Then they/them. Played by a nonbinary actor who’s comfortable presenting as femme/ playing a character who’s referred to as a woman in the first act. Progressive left.

RICO DE LEON— Late twenties. Latino. Straight. Film nerd. Verhoeven films. Service industry. Stylish in a minimal way. Extremely, genuinely polite and friendly. Always has on something like work pants, boots, and a T-shirt. Maybe dyed hair. Into professional wrestling, cult classic movies, and anime. He/ him. Played by a Latino actor. Definitely someone who’s unambiguously latino/ has some Afro-Latino or Indigenous features. Relatively apathetic on specific political matters, but certainly falls to the left.

JESSIE STONE— Mid/late twenties. White. Bicurious — then Bi. Drag Race. Visibly the youngest. Daughter of Manhattanite liberal elite socialites (her Mom probably gets lunch with Ira Glass). Bit of a yuppie. Reads as “straight”. No tattoos or piercings, relatively “normal” haircut. Impressionable, has several friend groups and changes based on which one she’s in. Empathetic. Genuinely empathetic. A bit of an NYC socialite. But the type you want to meet. Really good at talking to people. Really good at makeup. She/her. Bleeding heart liberal.

PLACE/TIME

2020s. A fictional town called Brooklyn, New York.

PACE

The dialogue should be spoken wicked-fast. Faster than hell. Faster than your first instinct. Scenes should be walked/sat/shifted into extremely quickly. Ellipses (...) are less of a person pausing and more of them stammering over their words/ interrupting themselves. They shouldn’t slow the tempo. Please add interruptions/overlaps/ad-libs EVERYWHERE.

The left will always need its journals and polemic and academic writing, but there are times when it is both right and proper to terrify the bourgeoisie with your own feralness. Reclaiming vulgarity from the Trumps of the world is imperative because if we do not embrace the profane now and again, we will find ourselves handicapped by our own civility. Vulgarity is the language of the people, and so it should be among the grammars of the left, just as it has been historically, to wield righteously against the corrupt and the powerful. We cannot cede vulgarity to the vulgarians; collegial intellectuals will always be niche, but class war need not be.

— Amber A'Lee Frost,

"The Necessity of Political Vulgarity"

Capitalism is not wicked or cruel when the commodity is the whore; profit is not wicked or cruel when the alienated worker is a female piece of meat; corporate bloodsucking is not wicked or cruel when the corporations in question, organized crime syndicates, sell cunt; poverty is not wicked or cruel when it is the poverty of dispossessed women who have only themselves to sell; violence by the powerful against the powerless is not wicked or cruel when it is called sex. The new pornography is left-wing; and the new pornography is a vast graveyard where the Left has gone to die. The Left cannot have its whores and its politics too.

— Andrea Dworkin

Pornography : Men Possessing Women

SCENE ZERO

A dark stage. We hear a voice speaking in a tone that can only be described as “leftist podcast”.

RENA

———alright babes, that's all we got for you today — and just like that we're closing out September. That was my esteemed guest @markfisherwasabisexualwoman give her a follow and or please stop asking her for nudes. Next week is @transcommiedraculaflow. As always, I leave you with a poem. This one I wrote quickly, so bear with me.

Lights up. Rena speaks the poem to the audience.

RENA

everyone in new york is beautiful
every bar you walk into is full of pretty, young, well-dressed people
with no pain and no problems and no damage or insecurity

everyone in new york is beautiful
they all know how to flirt for business and flirt for pleasure
and whenever you try to do one you end up doing the other
and end up fucking the people you want to work with
and working with the people you want to fuck

and everyone is beautiful in new york
they're all wearing designer jeans and that jacket you can't afford
o' how you want to love them
o' the days spent diving into cute little shops searching for the uniform
that will make you loved, loved, loved in new york

will you find it in brooklyn? queens? the bronx? it can't be in manhattan can it?
do you have to go as far out as staten island? far rock?
is it more specific than that? is it williamsburg? bushwick? (it's probably bushwick)
no it's too late for bushwick — ridgewood. prospect. crown heights.
or is it downtown — the east village. (yes it has to be doesn't it?
((doesn't it have to be the east village? two bridges? chinatown?)))
or is it rocketing back and forth between both
both on the same night night
bushwick to the village and back on the L
on the M...

or the J maybe?
could it be off the J? the C? (it can't be the C can it?)
is it a specific train?
is it an uber? the money for an uber?
is it a bus?

heaven help me — o' god, o' christ
these new york outfits,
these new york nights...

SCENE ONE

*Rena in her apartment with HEATHER BAKER. Post-sex.
Mid-argument.*

RENA
They're pieces of shit!

HEATHER
They're my family

RENA
Okay but like babe those two things aren't mutually exclusive.

HEATHER
I love them.

RENA
Sure. And they're like basically making you put your life on hold/

HEATHER
/I know/

RENA
/stop your whole development as a person/

HEATHER
I know that.

RENA

Yeah but I mean how do you justify that?

HEATHER

I don't — but

RENA

But what, Heather?

HEATHER

But they're my *family*.

RENA

Families are for kids, babe— they're/ basically Santa.

HEATHER

But I... what?

RENA

LISTEN. I don't even talk to my family!

HEATHER

Yeah but that's different.

RENA

How's that different?!

HEATHER

Your parents are divorced.

RENA

Yeah so I basically have four parents and *honey* I don't talk to *any* of them.

HEATHER

that/

RENA

They don't need to know my life!

HEATHER

I love my parents.

RENA

You gotta yank out the umbilical cord.

HEATHER

Gross.

RENA

Real! Look. I'm not your girlfriend. I don't know your life and your story and I'm not gonna judge.

HEATHER

... *and?*

RENA

... and I'm sorry for saying your Mom looks like a sloth.

HEATHER

thank you.

RENA

But I'm still pissed at them.

HEATHER

Rena!

RENA

For you! For your sake!

HEATHER

Alright.

RENA

I mean God knows it's hard enough being a young person right now. Like I dunno what being in your late twenties is supposed to feel like but I'm pretty sure it isn't *I have an IV of drain cleaner hooked up to my veins*. But the sloth thing. That was too far. And for that — I apologize.

HEATHER

Hey so uhm Rena?

RENA

And another thing.

HEATHER

Oh my God.

RENA

What even is a Calvinist?

HEATHER

I don't want to get into it right now?

RENA

Baptist shit?

HEATHER

Protestant. Have you ever read Gilead?

RENA

No.

HEATHER

It's this book by... — you know what that isn't the point.

RENA

I know I'm just con/fused

HEATHER

OKAY so like... uhm... you said "I'm not your girlfriend" but like... we... and I knew... like I *know* that — just um... we... you know. And it's *consistent*... so I guess just like/

RENA

... what are we?

HEATHER

Yeah like what areeee we?

RENA

I mean nothing exclusive I hope.

HEATHER

God yeah me too.

RENA

Oh thank god. Jesus.

HEATHER

I was just worried with like the whole babe thing/

RENA

/ no don't worry babe /I call everyone babe... see? I *cannot* be monogamous right now.

HEATHER

totally

RENA

like fuck.

HEATHER

yeah...

RENA

I don't think I can ever... monogamy... for me/

HEATHER

Totally.

RENA

Like never again. Never never again. Like if that's what people wanna do, fine but like it's their gay little funeral.

A pause.

RENA

How do you feel about that? Monogamy.

HEATHER

Uhm. I mean. I think I'd... like to have it. Some day.

RENA

Right.

HEATHER

I mean I know I'm gay... sure... but like... I dunno. I think I want a pretty normal existence eventually. Just me and the woman of my dreams...

RENA

... I dunno girl, I think that's just your family/

HEATHER

I thought we were gonna stop talking about my family.

RENA

I'm sorry but *honey* I'm honestly just so pissed at them.

HEATHER

I really don't want to talk about this.

RENA

It's just like they're so homophobic why would you think they would also not be *poly-phobic* and like why would that not seep into you...

HEATHER

Well they're devout Christians they're going to be poly-phobic that wasn't ever a question.

RENA

Listen I don't know what weird shit the Calvinists do.

HEATHER

They don't do polyamory.

RENA

I thought they might've!

HEATHER

That's the Mormons! And that's *polygamy*, it's/ different.

RENA

Like I'm just saying if you moved out you might be surprised what you find out about yourself!

HEATHER

I've actually been meaning to tell you I have a date with a girl coming up this week.

RENA

Good!

HEATHER

If that's okay...

RENA

Dude. Yes. I want this for you.

HEATHER

Right... sorry.

RENA

Good. Go. Fingerpop some girls, it's good for you. Otherwise you're gonna end up in an exclusive thing you don't want and before you know it you're cheating. Which happens to so many people.

HEATHER

By so many people/

RENA

Okay I mean me/ but like.

HEATHER

You've cheated???

RENA

Only twice! But like I didn't have a choice.

HEATHER

Right.

RENA

I mean who hasn't?

HEATHER

I? Haven't?

RENA

Really?

HEATHER

yeah but I also haven't hooked up with many people.

RENA

How many has it...

HEATHER

No, it's like an embarrassingly low number. I can't get over the fact that you cheated.

RENA

You will.

HEATHER

I've heard people argue that cheating is a violation of consent cause you know like it... exposes someone to risks without them realizing.

RENA

Yeah and... okay yeah like that's a valid point but also like I dunno people cheat? And like I cheated what does that mean like I'm a rapist?

HEATHER

No no no that's now what/

RENA

It's just I hate getting caught up in all of this woke rhetoric and this obsession with labels I mean I've got chronic knee pain and when it flairs up it hurts to walk and I like can't do stairs. But does that mean I'm a cripple? — Or disabled or whatever? Like I going around calling myself disabled with my hat in my hand like ohhh poor me like that's so fucking

gay. And also also I'm... I fuck women. I'm Bi. Sure. But am I... queer? Am I in *the community*? Like I like drag queens but astrology can throat my dick you know? Like what even is this fucking community. Like I legitimately don't get why that's something "queer" people do like that just... I don't get it. I admit it. I don't get it! I don't understand why I have to be in a whole community because I eat pussy.

HEATHER

Rena I just...

RENA

What?

HEATHER

I need to know. If we're going to continue this. That even if you disagree with them... it... whatever... that you can respect my family. And where I came from and where I'm at now and... I dunno I'm growing but... yeah I dunno that's something that I need.

RENA

Babe. Oh my God no I'm sorry I respect you so much.

HEATHER

Okay.

RENA

Completely.

HEATHER

Yeah...

RENA

I think you're so smart and have so so so much potential.

HEATHER

Okay okay okay... sorry I just... I think I just needed to hear that.

RENA

Yeah totally. I'm here for you. I believe in you. And I really like you babe. Okay?

HEATHER

Okay... yeah... okay.

A pause.

RENA

But like I was saying about monogamy/

SCENE TWO

RICO DE LEON and JESSIE STONE in their Bushwick apartment. Rico is on his laptop, watching wrestling. Jessie is on the phone with her Mom.

JESSIE (*re: phone*)

But it's unpaid.

RICO (*re: laptop*)

fuckkkk that's bullshit.

JESSIE (*re: phone*)

I know Mom but — no but like I don't wanna... I mean yeah fine if you want to pay the gas and electric but...

RICO (*re: laptop*)

Oh!!! Yes!!! Yes!

JESSIE (*re: phone*)

Yes I do wanna work in publishing.

RICO (*re: laptop*)

Yes!!!!

JESSIE (*re: phone*)

Not but... okay yeah call him, fine. But let me also ask professor Barnes for a reference.

RICO (*re: laptop*)

No! What?!?! No!!!! What the fuck.

JESSIE (*re: phone*)

Because I want to at least kind-of do things for myself. Look Mom I gotta/

RICO (*re: laptop*)
NOOO THAT'S SO SAD

JESSIE (*re: phone*)
I said I have to gooooo I'll call you back later, bye...

*Jessie hangs up and starts moving through the apartment.
Rico stays focused on his phone.*

RICO (*re: laptop*)
I've never been this depressed in my life.

JESSIE
Alright so what do you want for dinner babe...

Rico stays focused on his laptop.

RICO
I love wrestling.

JESSIE
Babe!

RICO
Ah! Yeah what?

JESSIE
What do you want for dinner?

RICO
Don't worry about it, I'll cook.

JESSIE
No look at you — how many hours did you work today? Relax.

RICO
Nah nah nah I can cook I can cook.

JESSIE
Nooo noo.

RICO

Yes baby YES Chef Rico is in the BUILDING. You just sit your pretty white ass down.

JESSIE

Let me take care of youuuu.

RICO

You cooked breakfast.

JESSIE

Yeah but look at you/

RICO

But division of labor thoood.

JESSIE

Division of labor can wait. Let me take care of you. Just relaxxx.

RICO

Thanks... You look a little worried. Everything alright?

JESSIE

Yeah! No yeah everything's fine.

A pause.

RICO

You sure?

JESSIE

Well there's something I want to talk about.

RICO

Oh wow.

JESSIE

Yeah... but maybe after dinner! Like I can totally cook first.

A pause.

RICO

Cool... cool...

JESSIE

Mom thinks I should go for this internship.

RICO

Your Mom's really smart. It's serious?

JESSIE

We'll talk about it later.

RICO

Later. Later yeah cool. Absolutely. Which internship is this?

JESSIE

The paper the guy my Mom dated in college went to.

RICO

Right.

JESSIE

I'm basically a cinch for it. It's just a matter of whether or not I wanna feel like nepo baby yuppie-scum.

RICO

Yeah but you're *my* nepo baby yuppie-scum. Whatever it is, I'm sorry.

JESSIE

No no no it's not... you're sweet. It's nothing bad...

RICO

I know I don't always catch when I mess things up but I promise I'm trying baby/

JESSIE

Rico! It's not a bad conversation! And you didn't do anything!

RICO

You sure?

JESSIE

Yes... we'll talk later about it... it's fine.

A pause.

JESSIE

Or we can talk about it now!

RICO

Oh God.

JESSIE

Okay. So. Okay. I was thinking. You know. And. Talking to Mike and Tracy. You know. They've got a really great relationship. And it's really loving and caring and you know — you like them. We like them...

RICO

Yeah I love Mike and Tracy, baby.

JESSIE

Right! Yeah and you know... they don't have the most... conventional relationship... and like... we live in New York. In the 2020s...

RICO

Holdup cause this is scaring me.

JESSIE

And I know how... promiscuous you used to be. *And don't apologize because it's not a bad thing.* And you know I wanted to jump into making this exclusive fast 'cause I wanted to know it was serious. But you know. I'm pretty... bicurious...and I never really got to do too much stuff with girls cause I was always like nose to the grindstone in college so I've been thinking/

RICO

Yeah?

JESSIE

And I've been growing/

RICO
Yeah?

JESSIE
And I think...

RICO
Yeah?

JESSIE
Just maybe...

RICO
Damn, you sure this isn't bad?

JESSIE
It isn't, I promise.

RICO
'Cause like...

JESSIE
Maybe nevermind.

RICO
No but you *gotta* finish now.

JESSIE
Okay well maybe we should consider opening this relationship...

A pause.

RICO
Oh! Wow. okay...damn.

JESSIE
...and you can say no!

RICO
Wow damn okay.

JESSIE

It's a conversation you know — something we need to decide together.

RICO

No no it's... I understand.

JESSIE

And it's not something I even know I want.

RICO

I understand I understand... hoo... Wow. I'm gonna be honest... did *not* expect that from you.

JESSIE

I know it's...

RICO

If anything like... you'd think I'd be the one wanting to open the relationship.

JESSIE

That's what Tracy said!

RICO

Yeah... wow...

JESSIE

Totally baby take all the time you need.

RICO

This is like... *crazy*.

JESSIE

yeah...

RICO

But like... not in a bad way! In a really cool way... I think...

JESSIE

I think so too...

RICO

Yeahh... well... like... yeah... man... so like... you'd be okay with me seeing other girls?

JESSIE

Yeah as long as you're okay with me seeing other people. And as long as you told me everything you did... like... got permission and everything. I'll obviously do the same... and as long as we like... respect each other's boundaries.

RICO

cool cool.

JESSIE

And as long as like... we stay away from people we know mutually.

RICO

Right 'cause that could like easily get ugly.

JESSIE

Yeah exactly.

RICO

No no yeah I think I'm into this... like I think... I dunno this sounds really cool to me.

JESSIE

Yeah like I think this will only make us grow stronger...

RICO

And like... help us love each other more.

JESSIE

Right!

RICO

'Cause we'll have more experiences with other people.

JESSIE

Exactly.

RICO

It's like we'll know what makes each other more *individual*.

JESSIE

Mmmhm.

RICO

More *unique*...

JESSIE

Mhm.

RICO

Like the scientific process or something.

JESSIE

Exactly. Thank you for being so supportive baby.

RICO

Totally baby! I'm the support king!!!

JESSIE

Hug?

They hug each other. Maybe kiss.

RICO

So should like... I download Tinder or something?

SCENE THREE

Rena and Rico at a coffeeshop.

RICO

Verhoven, Del Toro, John Carpenter, Jodorowsky — these are my favorite filmmakers.

RENA

That's cool.

RICO

Of course, chica. You got a favorite movie?

RENA

Roadhouse. What do you do for work Rico?

RICO

Oh man. Work's boring isn't it?

RENA

It can be.

RICO

I'm in the service industry.

RENA

A working class hero.

RICO

Something to be.

RENA

Bartender?

RICO

Si.

RENA

You'll have to get me free drinks sometime.

RICO

If you play your cards right.

Rena laughs.

RICO

What about you, *Rrrrrrena Rrrrrrodriguez*. What do you do?

RENA

I've got a podcast.

RICO

That's a job?

RENA

With the Patreon, yeah. I do poems too — like I get grants for them.

RICO

Oh wow so you're... daaaaaamn alright.

RENA

... and like I also freelance write 'cause I need to make ends meet.

RICO

Respectable.

RENA

But that's not... that doesn't like...

RICO

No no I feel you.

A pause.

RENA

And I have an OnlyFans.

RICO

Ayyyyyyyyyyyy.

RENA

But like fuck work work isn't life — how do you get your kicks?

RICO

What does... do people still say that?

RENA

I mean how do you have fun — what do you do outside of work, give me something to work with Rico.

RICO

I just spent five minutes talking about my favorite films!

RENA

I knowwww but I'm a woman.

Rico laughs.

RENA

Sorry is the misogyny too much to throw out on the first date?

RICO

Nah it was funny.

RENA

Too relatable? You hate women?

RICO

That's not what I'm saying.

RENA

Trust no bitch, that's what I always say. I should've just called you boring.

RICO

Oof.

RENA

Sorry!

RICO

No no don't apologize — I can take the heat!

Rena laughs.

RICO

I missed hanging out with Latina women! Y'all aren't afraid to push back.

RENA

Yes. Oh my god — 'cause my current girlfriend — this bitch is white/

RICO
Oh wow you have.

RENA
Sorry

RENA
No no no babe I don't even — it's like a totally casual thing.

RICO
Nah that's cool that's cool.

RENA
Like we're both seeing other people.

RICO
Obviously.

RENA
Obviously.

RENA
We've known each other for a long time. We had a shitty job at a restaurant in college and we would see each other on Tuesdays and we always kinda flirted.

RICO
Bro I wouldn't have gotten through college if it weren't for flirting at shitty jobs.

RENA
And dunno she's great and I like her a lot and God she's just got this brilliant mind but like I dunno she had this really boring suburban upbringing and sometimes it carries over and *honey* she's just *soooo* sensitive. And also like kind of a lib?

RICO
You're a conservative?

RENA
NO. Aaaaaisajjidifh. No no no no NO no fuck you I'm a leftist.

RICO
I thought the left was liberals...

RENA
Ohhh boy...

RICO

What, am I wrong?

RENA

Yeah you're like not in the realm of correctness.

RICO

What's the difference?

RENA

I'm not getting into that here.

RICO

Enlighten me.

RENA

Listen to my podcast!

RICO

"Listen to my podcast, subscribe to my OnlyFans"

RENA

Hey I did not say that.

RICO

Yeah but like.

RENA

Look all I'm gonna say — 'cause I am *not* talking politics on a first date — is that liberals are useless babe. They don't get shit done they're too busy fingering themselves to John Oliver clips and Roxanne Gay books. And further to the left in that... you get some people who are like... woke... and some people who aren't... and the latter is... well...

RICO

You.

RENA

Me.

RICO

Okay I think I can see it.

RENA

Yeah I dunno call me crazy I just think the main thing should be getting people healthcare and shit not like I dunno not canceling a professor 'cause he said the word "retard" or Something. The working class is you know. Tough. Vulgar. Crass. So like we should be able to take a joke. I mean what the hell is a safe space that's so... gay...

Rico laughs.

RICO

And the girl you're dating doesn't like this?

RENA

No... she thinks I'm "edgy".

RICO

And you don't?

RENA

What?

RICO

Think you're edgy?

RENA

I dunno I talk how I talk.

RICO

My girlfriend has the same problem with me sometimes.

RENA

Yeah but we're not edgy.

RICO

No. We're just/

RENA

We just like to say what we wanna say.

RICO
Exactly!

RENA
I just wish the girl I'm seeing would understand.

RICO
Me too.

RICO
People can't take a joke.

RENA
People can't take a joke.

A pause.

RICO + RENA
Women!

SCENE FOUR

Jessie and Heather at the bar.

HEATHER
Yeah I dunno I like her a lot she's just a little... edgy?

JESSIE
Oh *jesus*.

HEATHER
I know it's/

JESSIE
No oh my God I feel terrible saying it but like... ahhh my boyfriend is the same way.

HEATHER
It suuuucks because she doesn't even realize how hurtful she can be.

JESSIE

No same...

HEATHER

And she's like this militant downtown leftist archetype that I don't fully understand.

JESSIE

Communist?

HEATHER

Something like that.

JESSIE

I dated one of those in college. Sexy but some of the ideology???

HEATHER

A *looooot* of ideology.

JESSIE

It's just so cynical.

HEATHER

You think?

JESSIE

I do I do. I don't get the whole communism thing.

HEATHER

Right.

JESSIE

I mean I like democracy sue me I dunno I have hope for things. You know? I think the system is good. We've got bad people in charge of it right now but I think if we're patient and get the right messages out there and vote for the right people good things will come. I mean it sounds so naive saying it out loud but look how far we've come in like twenty years right? Gay people can get married. I mean you know ultimately... ultimately we do have a system which cleanses itself. And which can... you know... lead us out of the hard times. So I just think. I dunno. Is it bad to be optimistic?

HEATHER

... uh yeah I mean I disagree but like with Rena/ she's just.

JESSIE

I'm sorry, what do you disagree with?

HEATHER

Oh um... just. I guess I just. As a lesbian who like... who's really just... has had my existence denied by my own family for years and just... I have less trust in the current systems I guess. No matter who's in charge. I mean don't get me wrong I'm not Rena I didn't write in Bernie/

JESSIE

Oh God did she/

HEATHER

But also like. I'm not one of those people who was angry at Bernie and blame him for making Hilary lose or whatever.

JESSIE

Whereas I am...

HEATHER

Right...

JESSIE

But that's okay!

HEATHER

Right!

JESSIE

We can have different opinions.

HEATHER

Absolutely!

JESSIE

This is why I like New York so much you know? The exchange of ideas. I mean — I wouldn't be saying the same if I were talking to a conservative but you know...

HEATHER

Yeah no completely.

JESSIE

But also I do like talking to conservatives! You know I think it's so good to have conversations with people we disagree with. That's how we learn things. Like I have this uncle Keith — he's a homophobe. And he's one of my favorite people to talk to.

HEATHER

... right.

JESSIE

Like he knows so much about political history. He hates Trump. Despises Trump. He's kind of that old-school sort of intellectual conservative... a William F. Buckley type. And I dunno we just... he challenges me.

HEATHER

Have you come out to him?

JESSIE

I mean... I'm not... really out to anyone. I'm sort of still bicurious.

A pause.

HEATHER

... uh... I mean so... I come from a conservative background right? Calvinist.

JESSIE

Sure.

HEATHER

You know about Calvinism?

JESSIE

I mean my parents are lapsed protestants.

HEATHER

No, I mean do you know about Calvinism?

JESSIE

Uh... no.

HEATHER

Unconditional election. Before he even created us, God decided who would and wouldn't be saved. The moment you're born you're dead. You cannot be saved by any deeds. You cannot be saved by good works. The best person in the world might not go to heaven because they were not chosen. Because — John 15:16 “You have not chosen me, I have chosen you”.

JESSIE

Oh my God.

HEATHER

Yeah. So you can imagine. A worldview that believes certain people are chosen and others are not.

JESSIE

Right...

HEATHER

The homophobes I've encountered... they... they're not... well they haven't exactly improved my life...

JESSIE

No no totally I didn't mean to uh...

HEATHER

It's okay! I understand. I just... you know... don't really buy the whole “let's hear all sides” thing.

A pause.

JESSIE

So are you two um?

HEATHER

No no no we're not... we're just... I mean maybe in the future but yeah she's got this strong dominant personality but you know sometimes it just tramples me. Maybe that's just what being from Brooklyn is though. Are you from New York?

JESSIE
Yeahhhh.

HEATHER
Oh where?

JESSIE
... the village.

HEATHER
Oh wow... so you must uh...

JESSIE
My parents are loaded, yeah. I hate it. I mean I love my mom she's my icon but I kinda cringe at being a third generation Columbia Grad you know?

HEATHER
Fourth generation Cornell.

JESSIE
Wowwww look at us.

HEATHER
Jessie Stone. What is that name, English?

JESSIE
Uh huh. French and British. Which are the only two types of people that you're in good conscience allowed to hate.

Heather laughs.

HEATHER
Rena's half Dominican half Italian.

JESSIE
Rico's Cuban. But like... his great grandpa on one side is a straight up German guy.

HEATHER
Incredible.

JESSIE

We're all mutts now aren't we.

HEATHER

Not me.

A pause.

HEATHER

I'm 100 percent Dutch.

A pause.

HEATHER

It's so boring

JESSIE

No no I love wood shoes.

SCENE FIVE

Rena and Heather at Rena's apartment.

RENA

You had a date right?

HEATHER

Yeah.

RENA

Tell me about it babe and *don't* be nice.

HEATHER

It was actually really fun!

RENA

Uhk boring. I'm kidding that's great babe. You fuck?

HEATHER

Uh no. We just talked.

RENA

kiss?

HEATHER

A little.

RENA

Ohhhh lesbians. Oh hey so I have a surprise!

HEATHER

Oh yeah! What's that?

RENA

Jet's moving out.

A pause.

HEATHER

Jet's... what?

RENA

Yeah their Mom got worse and they've gotta break the lease.

HEATHER

And... you... does this mean...

RENA

Yeah I'd like it if you moved in here.

A pause.

RENA

Would you do it babe?

A pause.

RENA

I mean I really enjoy my time with you. I like sharing space with you. You make me happy every time you see me. I can't imagine anyone else I'd rather live with.

HEATHER

I... Rena oh my god.

RENA

I mean honey we've gotta get you out of the suburbs.

HEATHER

Yeah...

RENA

And you're still hanging around your homophobic parents... Like there's so much of you that you still have to hide. And I like you a lot but you know... I can't help but think of how much you'll come into yourself when you're here.

HEATHER

I know and I want to, really.

RENA

And like... I mean this place is rent-controlled like there are not a lot of places you're gonna find like this...

HEATHER

I know I know and I'm grateful I'm just worried.

RENA

What?

HEATHER

Worried about moving in with you...

RENA

I know I get it.

HEATHER

I mean would that mean... would that turn us into...

RENA

No... I don't think so. I mean not necessarily.

HEATHER

Because I don't know if I wan/

RENA

No me neither.

HEATHER

But I also don't know if I... don't... want...

RENA

... same.

HEATHER

'Cause you know. There are some feelings.

RENA

Yeah...

HEATHER

And it's like one thing if we were roommates who fucked sometimes. But if we're like... a couple living together after only four months? I just don't know if I'm ready for this.

RENA

Yeah but when are you gonna be ready? When's your life gonna start you know? You've been waiting for so long. It's *now* babe there's never going to be a right time.

HEATHER

But if there's a fight.

RENA

When have we ever gotten in a fight?

SCENE SIX

Jessie talking to invisible friends.

JESSIE

So... guys.... Listen to this... okay... this is crazy... so like... me and Rico have been open lately. I know! I know. Who would've thought that would be me?

Heather on the phone with her Mom, in her own space.

HEATHER

Hey Mom...

Yeah there's something I want...

Yeah I need to talk to you...

Yeah well...

Rena talking to invisible friends, in her own space.

RENA

but I swear to God my college roommate was the worst roommate in the world. One night — oh my God this was terrible — I was like. Kind of having? An orgy? Sex party? Whatever's woke to say. Anyway I had like four girls over and two of them were going down on me in the living room on that old futon —

Rico watches wrestling on his laptop late at night in his own space. A wrestler who sounds like Rico cuts a promo...

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

Now let me tell you something brother. I am the champion. And I am the champion for a reason. I am the champion because I was able to overcome my desires.

JESSIE

But you know like I dunno... I feel like there was all this... energy... built up like... in the 20-teens... like since Trump was elected especially... and everyone has all this pent up energy.

HEATHER

What I want for dinner doesn't matter.

Listen that doesn't matter...

Because...

Will you listen to me???

RENA

you know that old futon... no you *know* that futon. The one I got for 20 bucks on marketplace? Yeah so it was on this futon that these girls were eating my pussy...

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

I was offered the easy route and I did not take it.

JESSIE

And we're learning so much about people — about trans stuff and race and class and gender...

HEATHER

No but like will you...
Will you listen to me?

RENA

And I was moaning like a motherfucker like *hoooney*.

HEATHER

Okay.

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

There were days I woke up in searing pain and didn't want to wrestle. But did I do it?

JESSIE

And everything builds up into this peak.

RENA

And I was like ready to come.

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

HELLLLLLLl yess I did.

JESSIE

It builds to this peak but then the pandemic hits and like...
no one can do anything... and it's like we hit the factory
reset button you know what I mean?

HEATHER

Could you go into my room?

Could you please just...

JUST GO INTO MY ROOM.

Go into my room please.

JESSIE

Like we're all the same people... physically. Our bodies are
the same. We have the same pains and like... kinks...

RENA

ANYWAY my roommate was supposed to be out visiting her friend but she got into a fight
and her friend kicked her out and this bitch came home *without telling me....*

HEATHER

What do you see?

Tell me.

Is my stuff there?

JESSIE

but like... I feel like this whole generation... all these
young people who went through all these things back to
back to back. I feel like we're a new epoch. A new breed.

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

There were days when I finally had a day off
— when I just wanted to enjoy it — to party,
to see my friends.

RENA

and I have this like cute girl with a mullet and neck tattoos in between my legs and like
— this was a week after I realized I was able to squirt and I was like *close to cumming.*

JESSIE

You know how you had like... the birth of the
counterculture in the 20th century...

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

There were days when I want to sit on the
beach and sip on a coooool drink and relax
like all of you fat losers in the audience.

HEATHER

No it isn't.

Okay.

Okay.

So.

RENA

And I hear the goddamn buzzer.

JESSIE

like flappers and shit and people doing different things for
the first time

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

But did I drag myself to the gym to perfect
this body? HellLLLLL yes I did.

JESSIE

I feel like that's what's happening this time. It's not just
fads — things are never gonna be the same... and like...
old people have a right to be scared. Cause no, it's not like
it was when they were kids, and no, we're not just being
wild and young... we're really changing things...

RENA

And like I scream like *get your clothes on ladies my roommate is coming* and they're like
“oh what the fuck” ‘cause I told them I lived alone.

HEATHER

I moved out.

Okay?

I moved in with someone.

A uhm...

A woman.

Okay?

JESSIE

so yeah I'm open now!

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

And there were days.

JESSIE

And I dated a girl???

RENA

And my roommate came up to the room

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

Lonely. Broken. Out on the road

JESSIE

And like... I think I might be bi???

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

With my lovely wife far behind me.

RENA

We were all half naked and there were sex toys...

JESSIE

And she's sort of like a very new queer too you know we're both babies and... I dunno I feel like so many girls are bi...but that's not a bad thing.

RENA

It was obvious what we were doing. And she looked around.

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

Where I was looked at seductively across the coffeeshop by a hot Latina maiden,

begging for my loins. But did I stay faithful
to my wife?

JESSIE

Do you know what I mean?

HEATHER

Do you know what I mean?

RENA

Do you know what this bitch did?

WRESTLER/VOICE OF RICO

Hell yes I did. Because I'm a real man who
only needs his one wife.

HEATHER

I'm not coming home.

...

...

I'll be okay.

RENA

She just went off on this homophobic and weirdly sexist tirade.

HEATHER

Don't worry about me.

I'll call you next week.

RENA

Like it was dyke dyke dyke slut slut slut, cunt cunt cunt it was disgusting...

HEATHER

Okay?

RENA

And you know me.

HEATHER

Okay?

RENA
I'm tough.

HEATHER
Mom?

RENA
I didn't need her approval.

HEATHER
Mom?

RENA
But I broke down right there crying.

HEATHER
Mom, please say something???

RENA
I mean what was going on in her head? What was she going through? What inspires someone to snap like that and show that side to you? How long had she been thinking that about me? Someone who lived in my own apartment? How long had she held this searing anger at me?

SCENE SEVEN

*Rena and Heather in bed in their apartment, post-sex.
Heather's hair is shorter.*

HEATHER
Wow.

RENA
yeah.

HEATHER
like *wow*.

RENA
Uh huh.

HEATHER
you're like *reaaaally* good at going down on someone.

RENA
Uh huh uh huh uh huh.

A pause.

RENA
Round two?

HEATHER
Huh? No no I'm tired and they want me at the office early tomorrow.

RENA
ahh...

HEATHER
But uh. Thank you. I... seriously I needed that.

She gets up.

RENA
Awh you're going?

HEATHER
Yeah.

RENA
Whyyy

HEATHER
Uhh. I mean you know. Good to have some kind of pact. ... you know. No sleepovers.
Don't get attached.

RENA
Yeah but this is *our* apartment now

HEATHER

I knowwwwww but this is *your* room.

RENA

Yeah but like... I sleep naked and I look reeeeeeeally cute in the morning.

HEATHER

Ahhhhhhh don't tempt me.

RENA

And you know you're just down the hallway so like. I dunno. Maybe you'll have to pee in the middle of the night and you'll run into me coming out of the bathroom in... whatever I'm wearing...

HEATHER

Alright, fuck it.

They kiss.

SCENE EIGHT

Jessie and Rico in bed in their apartment, post sex.

A long pause.

RICO

I'm sorry baby...

JESSIE

No no it's okay.

RICO

I feel like... you didn't enjoy it.

JESSIE

I enjoy sex always! It's always a good thing!!

RICO

Okay.

Jessie starts getting out of bed/dressed. When she's finished she folds some clothes.

JESSIE

So I was just thinking about the internship — I really worry about feeling like I'm controlled by my Mom. Like she's still my idol but I don't wanna... have her dictate my life?

RICO

You were *just* thinking about that?

JESSIE

No, not *just* thinking about it —I was *just* thinking about your cock, silly.

They laugh.

JESSIE

But before that I was just like... I dunno... I was talking to my sister and like... My Mom has these files. From when my sister was a little kid like first discovering her interests... our Mom completely planned out her future. Like down to the schools she would apply to and jobs she'd get. And like she never told me this but it's really affected her cause like... she has one of those jobs. And she's successful. But she can't help feeling like her integrity has been somehow compromised by finding that out like... what if she had just been brainwashed by our Mom to do all that stuff? And also like... how do I know my Mom didn't do the same shit for me!

RICO

Damn...

JESSIE

What do you think?

RICO

Sorry this is a lot to hear like — directly post-nut.

JESSIE

Right right sometimes I forget how hard it is to have a conversation after an orgasm.

RICO

Ouch.

A pause.

JESSIE
I'm sorry.

RICO
Did you not?

JESSIE
No... I... you couldn't tell?

RICO
No. I thought you did a thing where/

JESSIE
No believe me when I cum I tell you. And like give you warnings.

RICO
Yeah like nonverbally.

JESSIE
No like I go "oh my God I'm gonna cum". And then "oh my God I'm coming."

A pause.

JESSIE
Like it's pretty clear.

RICO
That's happened like 6 times.

JESSIE
7 actually.

A pause.

RICO
Damn alright.

JESSIE

I'm sorry... I didn't mean to... I like sex with you! Really. I just... I don't cum that often.

A pause.

RICO

Do you not like cumming?

JESSIE

No I *love* cumming I just don't do it with you. Shit sorry that didn't come out right.... I just... sex with you warms me up and then I finish myself off after.

RICO

Yo what?

JESSIE

I thought you knew that.

RICO

I didn't.

JESSIE

Why do you think I spend so much time in the bathroom after?

RICO

I thought girls need to piss after sex.

JESSIE

Yeah but I don't take eight minute pisses.

A pause.

RICO

Do you not like having sex with me?

JESSIE

I like having sex with you!

RICO

But I don't make you cum.

A pause.

RICO

Why don't you just tell me?

JESSIE

Well I don't wanna... hurt you. Make you feel like you're not enough. Cause you're enough.

RICO

Is this why you want to be open?

JESSIE

No!

RICO

Okay.

JESSIE

Well kinda!

RICO

Oh man.

JESSIE

I mean someone with a vagina knows what someone with a vagina wants.

RICO

You just told me I was enough.

JESSIE

You are enough but maybe you're just not enough for me... sexually... right now.

RICO

Oh man ow.

JESSIE

I don't mean to... I mean you were! At one point. When I didn't care that much about cumming.

RICO

Not helping.

JESSIE

I just... I don't know how to put this kindly. Maybe my standards were just really low. Maybe I grew up with so much weird like good kid liberal shame that I don't know how to advocate for myself without stepping on toes a little bit. How do you do it? How do you get what you need nicely? 'Cause I'm starting to think life is a zero sum game... and all the women who I can think of who wanted to be nice for their partners ended up sticking their heads in ovens.

SCENE NINE

*Heather and Jessie in Rena and Rico's bed pre-sex.
Heather has a tattoo.*

HEATHER

Okay... okay wow...

JESSIE

You okay?

HEATHER

Yeah I just. I'm not used to uh. This is my first time with the whole... polyamory thing...

JESSIE

I know me tooooo... but weirdly like... I'm not nervous? Is that/

HEATHER

No, that's okay!

JESSIE

I mean I'm just excited. Like. I'm just ready to go.

HEATHER

Yeah no me too. I mean I. Like. I've definitely hooked up with people outside of a relationship before but like... It always ends up. Like I always end up just hooking up with just that person so it always ends being semi-exclusive if it isn't exclusive by name. So like... this is.... I mean like wow! Zoinks!... that was a bad joke... but like... I just

slept with someone last night and I'm gonna sleep with someone again today. Like. Whoaaah that's so not me... but like... now it's me!

A pause.

JESSIE

Well I mean no rush! Whenever you're ready. I'm really excited. I'm like really turned on actually.

HEATHER

ahhhhhh that's so hot.

JESSIE

You're hot!!!

HEATHER

You're hot!!!

JESSIE

Okay! Let's have sex!

SCENE TEN

Rena and Rico in Rena's bed pre-sex.

RENA

Okay... okay wow...

RICO

You okay?

RENA

Yeah I just... it's been a looong time since I've been with a guy.

RICO

Oh! Wow... oh man wow okay... haHA.

RENA

Yeah like/

RICO
Yeah I thought you were a/

RENA
What, a huge slut?

RICO
Nah... I mean.

RENA
I *am* a huge slut, babe.

RICO
Cool.

RENA
But lately it's been just the *girlies*.

RICO
I seeee.

RENA
Yeah I kinda. I kinda swore I wouldn't. But like you're hot and talking to you was so natural and it just got to this place and I wasn't feeling this until now... whew... okay...

A pause.

RICO
Uh... well if there's anything you need me to do.

RENA
Just lie on your back I'm gonna ride your dick.

RICO
Oh okay wow already.

SCENE ELEVEN

Rena and Heather in the park together. Jessie and Rico in

the park together, a different place and time. Heather goes by she/they pronouns now and dresses a little bit more masc.

RICO

So how was sleeping with her?

HEATHER

So how was sleeping with him?

JESSIE

You know, really fucking good actually. Like I just felt so... *seen* by a woman. I felt so... *sexy*. And she just felt so warm and soft and gentle — and she was nervous and I was nervous it was just so sweet and sexy.

RENA

You know, really good actually. I was like... hesitant at first — but... I really missed being with a guy. It just... there's something about being with someone with such a different body...

RICO

Oh wow cool! Yeah cool!

JESSIE

Yeah... but maybe it was the novelty!

RENA

But maybe I just missed dick.

JESSIE

But how was it for you?

RENA

How was it for you though?

RICO

Honestly?

HEATHER
Honestly?

RICO
Nerve-wracking.

HEATHER
Fucking amazing.

RICO
I mean like... man I never considered myself like prude or anything but like... this girl was soooo ready...

HEATHER
I mean like... god I never considered myself like a slut... or like... promiscuous or anything but like...

RICO
It wasn't just like doing something...

HEATHER
It wasn't just hooking up with someone.

RICO
It was like... she kinda got off on her own promiscuity? Like I could've been anyone. Anyone with a penis. I just... I didn't feel like it mattered that I was... me.

HEATHER
It was the proximity — it's like I've stepped into a new me.

RICO
It was fun but like... I dunno like honestly maybe it just isn't for me.

HEATHER
Like... like it was an *intense* experience. Just personally. I... I'm just so glad I'm where I want to be.

RENA
That makes me so happy!

JESSIE

I'm sorry baby...

RENA

I was like sitting at home and thinking about you out there... with her... having fun...

RICO

It's okay... I just want you to be happy.

RENA

And like... knowing that you were having fun and knowing that you knew that I know — like the total...

RICO

I just... maybe after all this time I do need someone I love in order to...

HEATHER

Communication!

RENA

Yes! Communication.

RICO

So maybe like... my side of it... I don't do the whole polyamory thing.

JESSIE

if that's what will make you happy.

A long pause.

RICO

I mean... if I'm being honest...

RENA

So like if I'm being honest...

RICO

I kinda wish you would close your side of it too...

RENA

It kinda made me realize that maybe I wanna... you know... call you my girlfriend.

RICO

Like I kinda expected you to like... call it all off...

RENA

Which like whoaaah I never expected.

RICO

'Cause you know I just... I wanted to try it and I felt excited about it but now I don't...

RENA

'Cause you know I went into this with just the intention of fucking...

RICO

And you know I tried it and I don't like it and it doesn't seem fair that you would keep doing it. I was kinda... I was kinda hoping you didn't enjoy your experience... just so we would have something... in common... just so I feel like I wouldn't be so alone in this... that I would be seen.

RENA

And you know I've tried relationships before but I always end up fucking them up because of my problems with monogamy so I was like *no more feelings* you know it just breaks other people's hearts.

RICO

But also like...

RENA

But also like...

RICO

That's not fair to you....

RENA

That's not fair to me...

RICO

You know you've found a situation where you're really getting what you want and you're

happy.

RENA

You know we found a situation where we're literally telling each other about hooking up with someone else and we're happy.

RICO

And it wasn't really until I learned you enjoyed it that I started to feel so... I dunno... bad...

RENA

And it wasn't really until I went off to hook up with someone else when I realized that you know... I really... care for you.

RICO

So maybe like...

RENA

So maybe like...

RICO

Maybe I shouldn't have said anything. Maybe I just... maybe I should just let you do your thing or... keep trying.

RENA

Maybe I could build a relationship — we could build a relationship... on non-monogamy. From the principle of non-monogamy — starting not from when we first hooked up with each other but when we first hooked up with other people. Does that make sense?

RICO

Babe?

HEATHER

I... I don't know what to say Rena...

JESSIE

I... I don't know what to say Rico...

HEATHER

It's like you read my fucking mind.

JESSIE

I feel really distant from you right now...

HEATHER

I think we can make this work.

JESSIE

I was hoping we could make this work.

HEATHER

Thank you for bringing me into New York.

JESSIE

I really need this.

HEATHER

Thank you for being my gorgeous bisexual lover.

JESSIE

And I don't want to hurt you...

HEATHER

Thank you for encouraging me to hook up with other people...

JESSIE

But I think I need to approach this as a non-negotiable from now on...

HEATHER

I think I'd really like to call you my partner.

RICO

Okay baby that makes sense.

RENA

We're gonna be *such little romantic sluts* we're gonna fuck the whole city.

HEATHER

We're gonna fuck the whole city!

RENA + HEATHER

We're gonna fuck the whole city!!!

RICO

Just try not to fuck the whole city.

SCENE TWELVE

7 months later. Rena podcasts.

RENA

and I'm always saying the thing about being queer in New York is that like you're basically straight. Like why even make a big deal out of it? It's not a weird thing! Okay that's all I got for you guys today go follow our guest @commieghost and lemme know if you think I could pull her. That caps our last episode of April I think all you replyguys out there owe me congratulations in my DMs cause we just got 500 dollars a month on the Patreon — one more step to funding my lifestyle of dumbgirl bohemian leisure. In all seriousness, the last seven months have been amazing and I've found such an amazing community, so many fantastic art recommendations, tons of free coke, and an army of simps. My knee's been all fucked lately but honestly — it's been an amazing time. As most of you know by now I'm throwing a big party Friday night, the day after this goes out — so come out and celebrate with me. Location going out a few hours before for my patrons. So pay up.

Lights change to their poem set up.

RENA

hey, everyone in new york is beautiful.

isn't it kinda scary?

isn't it kinda creepy?

doesn't it just kinda tickle the back of your neck a little bit?

living in a city full of beautiful people?

don't you worry one of them is going to kill you?

look behind you. who's that? It's one of the beautiful people. say hi.

but don't look behind you cause

everyone in new york is beautiful

everyone is crazy, everyone is stupid

everyone is kinda exactly what you need them to be at exactly the right time

who's hungry? I'm giving out free kisses to bootlickers. I'm giving handjob to hannibals im giving it all up for free.

im giving it all up for everyone in new york is beautiful and sweet coy the roaches in the morning roommate cracking eggs in the kitchen a wildness like rain slipping through the cracks from the suburbs and the pain to tell me i'm awake in the morning and the parking structure that came damn close kisses close and important hot warm and anarchic affirming the rain trying to end me the lights trying to end me concrete jungle makes you feel in new york is beautiful man everyone in new york is missing everyone in new york is exactly what you want with no notes no no suggestions no no no no nothing to improve in the bathroom at the after party at the edge of the world in the gaza strip in times square center of the world lights beaming down like the death of the sun it's 2008 and you just lost your house it's haiti and the slaves run the government it's the bhagavad gita and your body is bitten by hungry worms hungry ghosts in the rain in the sludge at the end of history at the death of the west and at the end of the world you don't meet god satan st peter st christopher doubting thomas moses shiva at the end of the tunnel when you scream through the white light when you crawl yourself bleeding up the stairs you don't find yourself face to face with the lord the light the endless cathedrals the many mansions you stare into the white white clouds with your dead dead eyes and at the end of it all it's giuliani it's rudy giuliani it's rudy giuliani at the end of the world

SCENE THIRTEEN

Rico and Rena chilling on Rico's bed, watching Robocop.

RENA

I dunno this isn't really my thing?

RICO

Isn't your favorite movie Roadhouse?

RENA

Character development, *Rrrrrico*.

Rena clicks the TV off and stands up. Moves her body a bit.

RENA

Alright. Let's go again.

RICO
Oh wow.

She does something provocative — takes off a piece of clothing or poses or whatever.

RENA
What? Too soon?

RICO
I thought you wanted to go to the IFC center.

RENA
I changed my mind.

He goes to get off the bed.

RENA
No no no. Crawl across the bed to me.

RICO
Man seriously?

RENA
Uh huh. Don't you want me?

RICO
Why don't you crawl across the bed to me?

RENA
'Cause 1. my knee is all fucked up and 2. I can tell you wanna feel *babygirl* tonight.

He crawls across the bed to her. Gets up to kiss her.

RENA
No no. Ask nicely.

RICO
Can I... can I kiss you?

She lifts him up by his jaw... hovers right in front of his mouth.

RENA

Do you have a line I can do?

RICO

no

RENA

Look, I wanna partyyyy.

RICO

I think you don't know what you want.

RENA

Yeah that's what parties are for, to figure out what you want?

RICO

That's maybe the most pretentious thing I've ever heard.

RENA

Pretentious is a coward's word.

RICO

I take it back — *that* is the most pretentious thing I've ever heard.

RENA

Come on, let's party.

RICO

I'm trying to put my partying days behind me.

RENA

So I guess I can't invite you to the party I'm hosting tomorrow.

RICO

Guess not. I'm working tomorrow night. Some of us have to work still, buddy.

RENA
So no coke?

RICO
No coke.

RENA
Boring.

She pushes him back on the bed.

RENA
I love coke I feel like it keeps me in touch with my monkey ancestors.

RICO
Ayo???

RENA
Not like... dumbass I didn't mean it like, I'm a spick too. I mean I think it really digs us into our Dionysian Roots.

RICO
Oh my God listen to yourself.

RENA
What?

RICO
Dionysian roots — you sound like a teenager who just discovered books exist.

RENA
Listen just cause you don't know/

RICO
Nah it's not that I don't know it's that like not everything's that deep you know? Like I don't need to hear about Camille Paglia and the dangerous nature of male and female sexuality to justify you wanting to fuck a lot of people.

RENA
But I like to fuck a lot of people.

RICO

Then say you're poly like everyone else!

RENA

I think that's reductive. I think it goes deeper than that.

RICO

Believe me I know how *deep* it goes.

RENA

Don't be vulgar.

RICO

You're the one who's begging for 1. Coke. 2. My penis.

RENA

Yes. Because I like coke and your penis. I also think polyamory is the superior form of building relationships, honey.

RICO

Well I must be inferior then, because I don't think it works for me.

RENA

Babe you're engaging in it.

RICO

Yeah and I dunno if it's the healthiest thing for me.

RENA

but you just rawed my pussy.

RICO

"Don't be vulgar."

RENA

Shut up.

RICO

You're the only person I'm doing that with.

RENA

Why? Twink death?

RICO

Can you cool it with the memes?

RENA

No.

RICO

I just don't need to fuck like 9 people at once. I'm fine with fucking one person at a time.

RENA

You're not gonna date me...

RICO

No believe me I don't wanna date you.

RENA

I don't find this conversation entertaining.

RICO

You're right. It's boring. But honestly so is sex kind of. I'm going to use this time in my life to focus on other things.

RENA

Like what?

RICO

Money?

RENA

That's so retarded.

RICO

yeah well we're not all podcasters.

RENA

Ouch.

RICO

I thought you hated snowflakes.

RENA

I can take it.

RICO

Good. 'Cause some of us can't afford to forget about money as a form of protest.

RENA

Good for some of us.

RICO

Speaking of which. I've got work in the morning.

RENA

You work in a bar.

RICO

Yeah I work in a supermarket too now actually.

RENA

Glamorous.

RICO

Never said it was. And I think it's time for you to go home.

RENA

For real?

RICO

For *real* for real. I dunno. Maybe I wanna take a little sex hiatus. Not see you a bit.

RENA

That'll last a week.

RICO

Maybe not.

Makes a move on him.

RENA

No honey. It'll last a week.

RICO

Maybe I have more willpower than you think.

Rena stops.

RICO

Goodnight *Rrrrrrena Rrrrrrrodriguez*. I hope you find a poetry MFA to fuck your brains out. Cause it can no longer be me.

SCENE FOURTEEN

Rena in her bed. She watches porn on her laptop and jacks off with a vibrator. Heather enters. They now go by they/them pronouns and dress completely differently.

RENA

Ah!

HEATHER

Ah whoah!

RENA

Beating off over here/man.

HEATHER

Sorry sorry.

RENA

I'm not sure if I should stop.

HEATHER

What are you watching?

RENA

Oh it's...

Rena tries to close the laptop, Heather opens it.

HEATHER

Ew

RENA

Kinda embarrassing.

A noise from the laptop.

HEATHER

EW! You get off to this?

RENA

Yeah I mean like

HEATHER

Rena!

Vibrator buzz stops.

RENA

what?

HEATHER

She's being used like a fucksleave.

RENA

I like that sometimes.

HEATHER

You always top me.

RENA

Yeah well you're a bottom.

HEATHER

So?

RENA

So sometimes... With *guys*.

HEATHER

With guys what?

RENA

Look I don't need to justify all my kinks to you.

HEATHER

Well you're my partner so you kinda do

RENA

You can just say girlfriend.

HEATHER

I prefer partner.

RENA

I'll refer to you as my partner but I'm saying you don't need to do that with me.

RENA

I thought this was about porn.

HEATHER

It is about porn — is this the kinda shit you like?

RENA

What's wrong with/

HEATHER

I mean she's hardly even a person in this video/

RENA

Yeah that's the point/

HEATHER

she's just this/

RENA

You know this is starting to sound very SWERFy

HEATHER

You *know* I'm not a SWERF.

RENA

Yeah I'm not so sure.

HEATHER

It's an amateur video — we don't even know if this is consensual.

RENA

It's her account.

HEATHER

So?

RENA

So it's her account!!!

HEATHER

How do we know she runs it? Or that this isn't like a repost. I mean it's on Pornhub which is a free site I mean *you know* how little/

RENA

Alright Jesus Christ I'll turn it off.

HEATHER

No jack off to it if that's who you are if that's what you wanna do.

RENA

Where's all this anger coming from?

HEATHER

The video! This is a woman just being turned into/

RENA

No, I don't think it's just this video.

HEATHER

well/

RENA

Because you know it's not just sex things you've been *deeply* critical of... like... the media I engage in and the things I say and the people I talk to.

HEATHER

Yeah well you have a whole like a whole new group of dimes square substack sovereign house idiot friends that you didn't/

RENA

alright this is/

HEATHER

/6 months ago I'm going to be curious/

RENA

I didn't say curious, I said critical.

HEATHER

Well I'm changing too and now I like to interrogate things.

RENA

Yeah but you don't have to interrogate everything right? I mean we're not fucking Freud are we? Maybe I get off on something because it's just how I like to get off.

HEATHER

I have *several* questions about that.

RENA

Jesus Christ.

HEATHER

First of all/

RENA

I really... I'm not having the best night... can we not get on me about everything I say again?

HEATHER

Does that mean you take back your apology for last night?

RENA

I don't think I should have to justify my tweets to you!

HEATHER

You were retweeting a white supremacist!

RENA

It was ironic.

HEATHER

Yeah well like I dunno I think you're losing the ability to tell the difference between what is and isn't ironic.

RENA

I'm not a white supremacist I'm brown.

HEATHER

That's not what I mean — just...okay... sometimes when you talk to/

RENA

When I talk to who — the new friends I made?

HEATHER

Yeah the new friends you made!

RENA

So it is about the friends!

HEATHER

Fine — yes. It's about the friends. Who are these people dude???? Like that one guy Richard?

RENA

Richard is like an acquaintance.

HEATHER

You had him on your show!!!!

RENA

He runs a big meme page!

HEATHER

Yeah and he like *makes fun of trans people*.

RENA

It's *ironic*.

HEATHER

Yeah I dunno if it's ironic! I feel like the 9th time you make the joke it stops being ironic! Like what happened to the Rena I knew? The campus poet-activist? I mean she was a little bit mean-girl-ie but like she didn't punch down.

RENA

Look... I can admit that since I've gotten famous/

HEATHER

Jesus Christ you've got 10,000 Instagram followers! Your podcast makes you 500 dollars a month. And you sell your tits on OnlyFans — which is how you make most of your money. Podcasting is your side hustle. Okay? You're not famous. No one knows you outside of your fucking Brooklyn podcast network.

RENA

Okay. And I get that. I know it's a bubble. Everyone's talking about it like it's a bubble but Jesus Christ like yeah I know it's a bubble. Everyone has circles they run in. But like in this scene... within the milieu. I have a very unique place.

HEATHER

So then you're not a knock-off Dasha Nekrasova?

Rena laughs.

RENA

You don't know how 2019 that makes you sound.

HEATHER

You get the point of what I'm saying don't criticize me for not being like cool or hip with my references.

RENA

I dunno man I think you just don't like that I like dick.

HEATHER (*voice breaking*)

Where did that come from.

RENA

Where did "knock-off Dasha" come from?

HEATHER

Is that like the worst insult you've ever heard?

RENA

You've just been all second-wave lately.

HEATHER

I'm not second wave.

RENA

Well you're always talking about hating men so I think maybe you don't like the fact that I sleep with men.

HEATHER

That's... no because what you're accusing me of... the implication is that I don't understand polyamory that I I I I am this fundamentally controlling manipulative jealous person and I'm *FUCKING NOT!*

RENA

Look baby/

HEATHER

Ever since I came out as nonbinary.

RENA

Oh here we go with this.

HEATHER

Here we go with what, my gender?

RENA

No one cares about your gender!!!

HEATHER

What?!

RENA

I mean we're all happy for you but like seriously no one cares.

HEATHER

I care about my gender!!!! I care!! This shit manners!!!! I'm a real person right in front of you. You don't care enough to ask me about my gender, you don't compliment me when I look more masculine, you don't care if I maybe wanna be a boy. You have more sympathy for someone who makes fun of a trans person and gets canceled for it than you do a real life trans person who loves you!

RENA

You're trans I thought you were nonbinary?

HEATHER

I'm leaving.

RENA

Wait baby.

HEATHER

Fuck you.

SCENE FIFTEEN

Jessie's apartment, late at night.

HEATHER

I cannot believe her.

JESSIE

It's okay.

HEATHER

No but like I *cannot* believe her.

JESSIE

It's *okay*.

HEATHER

But like is it?

JESSIE

yes.

HEATHER

She says she doesn't get where all my anger is coming from?

JESSIE

I know.

HEATHER

As if she doesn't like understand my *rage*?

JESSIE

Rage is a tough thing to understand.

HEATHER

Yeah I'll say! Especially for her, she thinks it's *cool* now for people to find her offensive like some fucking child.

JESSIE

And that's really frustrating.

HEATHER

Like who does she think she is Nick Mullen? Who does she think she is, Ivy Wolk? Adam Friedland? Betsey Brown? (I mean that's what it is, it's Betsey Brown.)

JESSIE

I don't think I know who any of those people are.

HEATHER

Yeah that's a sign you're a sane person.

JESSIE

You deserve to be able to be angry.

JESSIE

Give her the benefit of the doubt, okay? She seems like she really cares about you. She's just a little unorthodox.

HEATHER

I'm unorthodox. My parents are orthodox. She's something else... she's...

JESSIE

Listen, babe.

HEATHER

Don't call me babe...

JESSIE

I didn't mean anything by it.

HEATHER

I'm not your babe.

JESSIE

I was just trying to be affectionate.

HEATHER

I don't want affection right now!!! I want a partner in rage. I want my rage to be purified. Am I... am I wrong here Jessie? Is it too much too soon? 'Cause I feel like since I started coming out things have only been worse and worse and I was told they were supposed to get better. But I can't... what the fuck am I if I compromise? What the fuck am I if I hide my queerness like I'm just some... how am I supposed to live how am I supposed to embrace my anger sometimes I wish I just...

JESSIE

I mean you did it 'cause you had to not because it would be easy.

HEATHER

Yeah you're right! And fuck her for like trying to make it easy.

JESSIE

Well...

HEATHER

Like fuck her for using her queerness as some pick-me-girl partytrick.

JESSIE

jesus...

HEATHER

Like oh my god she's so bossy and intimidating but then you see her are a party with *anyone* with a blue checkmark or a podcast with more subscribers than hers and she's like "hahaha — what I'm such a cute dumb girl, you wanna fuck me in the bathroom?" And for Christ's sake can you please stop using the R word! Just stop! Okay?! Like is it that hard to stop?!

JESSIE

So I agree with you there!

HEATHER

When I met Rena I was older than her but I kinda looked up to her the way a queer kid looks up to an icon you know? And she was part of the student union and always reading her poetry in these crazy little cool cafes and she was this really kind welcoming warm person but she'd like scare off catcallers and she was just... and I dunno. She's still like that but..... is it bad if I say that I feel like New York got to her? By these irony poisoned shits who think it's cool and subversive to copy Harold Bloom's reading list. They don't know how to enjoy anything. They just siphon pleasure.

A pause.

HEATHER

What, nothing?

JESSIE

I...

HEATHER

Not even one of your one-word answers?

JESSIE

That's not fair...

HEATHER

Yeah well silence isn't fair either.

JESSIE

Heather, come on.

HEATHER

No you come on Jessie I'm pouring my heart out to you over here.

JESSIE

Your problem isn't with me.

HEATHER

Well maybe it is.

JESSIE

I've been nothing but nice to you.

HEATHER

Yeah, too nice. Neutral. Bland.

JESSIE

Don't call me bland.

HEATHER

Well you're bland, Jessie. You dress straight. You act straight. Does anyone in your life other than me know you're gay?

JESSIE

What does this have to do with anything?

HEATHER

I mean you seem so ashamed of who you are — why?

JESSIE

I'm not ashamed of who I am. Alright? I'm still coming into myself sure, but you've got what — five years on me? Give me time. Give me fucking time. I'm taking steps to break

free of my Mom. I'm questioning all of the fucking beliefs I grew up believing — I'm not as far as you but I'm not stagnant. I'm reading things I'm doing things I'm learning things— and you know what maybe you know less than you think you know about me. Maybe I don't have a normal = job anymore. Right? Maybe I've been working for 12 hours and my nerves are shot and I don't have some kind of white-collar 2 hours work a day job to fall back on. Now I've had a really bad day, alright? I've been listening to you talk for an hour. You have a legitimate grievance here. You're in the right here. You had a tough fight with your girlfriend but *you are in the right*. Don't make me lose sympathy for you okay? I'm on your side. I'm trying to help you.

HEATHER

Maybe you care — but you seem so fucking ashamed of me.

A pause.

JESSIE

That's so fucking unfair.

HEATHER

Is it false though?

JESSIE

Yes!

HEATHER

Don't yell at me!

JESSIE

Well you're pushing me Heather! And you're yelling at me!!! I mean you can't... you can't like attack people and interrupt people and then run and hide behind your queerness and softness and act like everyone else is the problem!

HEATHER

I wanna disappear.

JESSIE

Yeah well you hurt me so you don't get to/

HEATHER

I just.

JESSIE

You're not listening to me!

HEATHER

You don't necessarily have to listen to what other people have to say when you're healing.

A long pause. That really upsets Jessie.

JESSIE

Look. For your own sake. I know you're going through a lot right now and I don't want to say something that makes me mad at you — really mad. Okay? Because I care about you a lot. I'm not ashamed of you. I'm proud of you. Being with you made me realize I'm Bi and I'm poly — and I fucking look up to you in so many ways. And you've come so far and I haven't come as far as you but that doesn't mean you get to criticize me.

HEATHER

I didn't criticize you.

JESSIE

No you did. Okay? You really really did. You didn't even listen to what I just said to you. I said something important. So let me go for a little bit okay? I'll be back later. I'm on your side. Don't lose that.

SCENE SIXTEEN

Heather on their own podcast.

HEATHER

Hello? Yeah that's right I have a podcast now fuck you.

You know a lot of people say we were never meant to be monogamous. And you know I just don't think I agree. Certain animals are not monogamous, sure. They just sow their seed. But I mean like. They're just cumming in each other. And they're just trying to reproduce... like it's this "natural reproductive thing". You know they're not doing it for their own personal pleasure. Or like. Fulfillment. They're doing it just because it's what they're built for. They're doing it because in that moment that's the only thing they know how to do. I mean you've seen dogs do it. They do it in front of people — other dogs — they'll do it anywhere, any time, in front of anything. It's just this biological pull, they don't have like... conscious... you know what I mean. They're just following instinct.

And I don't like that. I don't like the association of *poly* with *nature*. Cause you know. We're not animals. We're not just like... fucking anything that moves. The point of life isn't to just like eat until you shit and then forage and gather and fuck or whatever. You're supposed to enjoy life. Life is supposed to be you know... fun... and fulfilling... and happy. Or as happy as you can make it. I mean we make art and listen to music — and I want my sex to be like *that*. And I mean what about sensuality? What about the bodily pleasures — what about foreplay, what about eating a meal together, what about running your hand up someone's jeans or listening to sexy music like...??? There's so much more that goes into sex than just... animal genital slamming. So I don't give two fucks what the animals do really. I mean that's such a... a masculine... manly... fucking... straight white way to look at it anyway. You know? Like “Gorilla Mindset mentality”. I mean it's so Fight Clubby. It's so pick-up-artistry. I mean have you ever checked out like pick up artist forms and stuff? This is the rhetoric they use — “oh tap into her natural feminine... fuck-energy and drive her biologically clit-crazy for your engorged manchode” like it's all so fucking... Like *I'm sorry!!!* — I'm not poly because I have this uncontrollable slutdrive and need my fuckholes pounded and impregnated like Jesus fucking Christ. You know like... this is... it runs down to who I am as a person... it's not unlike my gender... it runs deep into my humanity, it's not just some hormonal primeval *thing*. I mean if anything... if there's any force that's shaping me to be this way it's the complete fucking opposite, it's the unnatural, slavish, fucking heteronormative “safe sex” conspiracy of monogamy that's been imposed on us for centuries. Like that's the force that makes me feel out of control and like I can't help myself and so I'm reacting against *that* by fucking who I want to I don't just have my monkey fuck-hole tell me *oh now it's time to fuck, better find anyone — like, christ!* No it was the fucking... fucking... family value driven puritan protestant Calvinist batshit Christianity. I'm like. Reacting against that. Reacting against this terrible, patriarchal, marriage-driven, sex-only-for-pleasure, nose-to-the-grindstone “the world is not my home” “my salvation is for the next world” “honor thy husband” bullshit and taking ownership of my fucking sexuality. It's. You know. Like. When people. When people say counterculture like punk rock or hip hop or something is just. Like. You know. The same thing but opposite. Or like. The radical left is the same as the radical right. Like fuck you. *Fuck you*. It's like “oh you don't adopt the business suit you just adopt the jean jacket punk rock suit”. Like no *fuck you*. “You adopt the communist manifesto instead of the constitution. Heh heh heh”. *Fuck. You*. Fence sitting fucking nihilist. I mean look at what power the ideology is serving. Look what your fucking fence sitting bullshit is serving. Look why people react — it's not just to fit into some in-group social club — we don't do this as a fucking party or just to have something to do on a Friday night, while we're young, while we're bored, while mommy and daddy aren't in town — it's a fucking reaction — it goes bone deep — down to the whole of who you are — it's defining yourself *against* instead of *with* — it makes *life* worth *living* it's pursuing your fucking happiness no matter what in a world that is

designed to kill your happiness because all of these fucking *cretin* that run our *lives* our *country* our *lifecountry* who all go to the same *schools* and the same *fraternities* and they're all blood sucking *monsters*. Like you're trying not to take sides and by doing that you're... fucking... you know... you're fucking just ending up bland and boring. And like... *fuck that!* You know? I'm poly and open because it serves me to be poly and open. Political polyamory. Because it serves the young, fucking... people who care about the world... people who are queer and and and and... lesbians... and young... and *trans* and *nonbinary!* and and and who care about the world. Not because my fucking pussy or dick or whatever I have in my pants (and fuck you for asking by the way) is throbbing and *I just need it*. Like fuck that shit no. And if my pussy or dick was throbbing it would be throbbing in fucking rebellion to you Ronald Reagan ass Ben Shapiro Clarence Thomas Tucker Carlson evil boring ass hell-rot baby eating motherfucker. Polyamory is not an act of slavery to desires. It is — like transness — an identity of development. Of autonomy. Of self-creation. Okay so eat shit. You know — I'm a fucking person... I'm not... some fucking... chimpanzee...\

SCENE SEVENTEEN

The bar. Late at night. Jessie reads. Rena downs shots.

RENA
Ah fuck.

Jessie looks up.

RENA
You... what, you're reading?

JESSIE
What am I reading?

RENA
No like *what? You're reading?!* Like, disdainful surprise.

JESSIE
... alright

RENA
Oh fuck you're reading Times Square Red tho.

JESSIE
oh... yeah.

RENA
So I'm gonna guess you're a fag then?

JESSIE
Yeah, I'm a fag.

RENA
Cool... cool...

A pause.

RENA
That's a cool outfit.

JESSIE
You're gonna try to hit on me after that opener?

RENA
...I'm sorry...

JESSIE
I mean don't you get hit on by creeps enough to kno/

RENA
No I know... working on it.

Jessie starts reading again.

RENA
S'a good book though.

A pause.

RENA
So what do you do for a living stranger?

JESSIE

I'm a barback.

RENA

Oh wow... cool... you don't strike me as a/

JESSIE

It's a new position

A pause.

RENA

Look I'm sorry to bring this up again but just like *wow* you know you'd strike me more as a Baldwin gay than a Delaney gay.

JESSIE

Now what does that mean?

RENA

well I dunno... you're... you look...

JESSIE

Oh. My God.

RENA

You look more... and that book is all about like jizzing all over strangers.

JESSIE

Look I'm aware of how I look okay?

RENA

I'm just saying babe if you're gay then it's a very subtle and soft gay.

JESSIE

Yeah well at least you acknowledge it's a kind of gay.

A pause.

JESSIE

I know I look like I'm the president of the young republicans club.

Rena laughs.

RENA

Yeah exactly, like fuck, man, I have an immaculate gaydar and I couldn't even tell until I saw the book.

Jessie laughs.

RENA

But it recontextualizes you! It does. Like I start to see it and it all makes sense and... I dunno... it's not that you don't look gay it's just like... it takes a lil context.

A pause.

JESSIE

You know what, I'll take it.

A pause.

RENA

But like you're definitely Bi though cause there's no way you're a lesbian.

Jessie cracks up.

RENA

Am I wrong?

JESSIE

You're not wrong — but you *cannot* say that.

RENA

I like saying things I can't say.

JESSIE

That's always a gamble.

RENA

Guess I got lucky this time.

A pause.

RENA

What brings you to the bar on a Tuesday?

JESSIE

Please.

RENA

No, I'm genuinely curious.

JESSIE

I dunno me and my boyfriend are on like... doing a break and the person I'm seeing right now's really upset and started... saying things to me. I don't blame them for it — they're going through a lot right now. But you know I spent the weekend and then I had to deal with this person and cook for them and take care of them and I'm just... I needed to leave the house.

RENA

Well for the record babe I'm also at the bar on a Tuesday cause I feel like absolute shit.

JESSIE

Oh I'm sorry

RENA

It's alright I'm just tired... and sad... and in pain.

JESSIE

Emotional or physical?

Rena just looks at her. Jessica spots the knee brace, puts her hands over her mouth.

JESSIE

Oh my God I'm so sorry, what happened?

RENA

Car accident. Seven years ago. Still waiting for it to heal. Flare ups.

JESSIE

Right, right, I'm sorry.

RENA

It's alright... I came out after... realized I didn't wanna die in the closet. Sort of set me off on how I am... though I dunno if that's a good thing. Like made me bi and proud but It also set up this whole... I dunno... Cause after that I didn't wanna keep things in anymore. I was just gonna say what I think... some people think I'm mean... and I dunno if that's true but before that, no one was saying it so... I'm sorry I don't wanna...

JESSIE

No no, totally.

RENA

But this bar is a good place for a shitty night, right. Like you're gonna get fucked up but you're not gonna get into too much trouble. You do coke?

JESSIE

No.

RENA

That's probably a good thing. I wanted to go to a party tonight but there was nothing happening. Just some asshole friend doing a reading of his screenplay.

JESSIE

You should have gone.

RENA

He lives in a walk-up.

A pause.

RENA

I just... I'm in this haze. Like... I I I'm hurt and I'm drunk and the person I'm seeing is changing and I think... I dunno I support them but they're like a fundamentally different person from when I met them. And I love them but like... I dunno maybe we're not in the same place. But neither of us is gonna end it unless something happens... so you know... maybe something should happen. Maybe this was bound to... maybe... maybe... I dunno. I don't know what I'm saying... I wish I could remove my brain.

JESSIE
Sounds like the reason I left my boyfriend.

RENA
He changed?

JESSIE
I changed.

A pause.

RENA
That also happened to my ex boyfriend and I...

JESSIE
What changed about you?

RENA
I started eating pussy.

JESSIE
That'll do it. You guys were poly?

RENA
I mean *I* was.

Jessie laughs again.

JESSIE
Oh my god you're terrible.

RENA
I know I know. I'm working on it.

JESSIE
Still poly?

RENA
Stiiiiiiill poly. You?

JESSIE

Yeah but I'm only really seeing one person right now.

RENA

By choice or are you scaring the hoes?

JESSIE

Somewhere in between.

RENA

Ahhhhh so scary... (I'm a hoe by the way).

Jessie laughs.

JESSIE

Me too?

RENA

Really.

JESSIE

Oh yeah. Maaaajor wench over here.

RENA

You don't give me wench energy.

JESSIE

Didn't give you gay energy either.

RENA

True.

Rena drinks

RENA

You want something?

JESSIE

I've had enough for myself.

RENA
Come on, let me buy you something.

JESSIE
What are you a rich guy?

RENA
Something like that.

A pause. Rena drinks. Grimaces.

JESSIE
You poor thing.

RENA
Oh please.

JESSIE
No, I mean it.

RENA
You mean “you poor thing?”

JESSIE
I mean the empathy.

RENA
Fuck empathy.

JESSIE
Cynical.

RENA
It’s just I don’t know what it means. I don’t know what anything means. All these concepts, it's just too much. Overwhelmed. I can’t keep track of it.

JESSIE
Poor thing.

RENA
Christ.

JESSIE
I'm sorry! Just... is it so hard to believe that a stranger cares?

RENA
It's a little hard, yeah.

JESSIE
Well I care.

RENA
That's just because I'm hot.

JESSIE
No.

RENA
It helps.

JESSIE
It helps, sure.

RENA
And it helps that I'm a woman. Unthreatening.

JESSIE
Maybe...

RENA
But maybe I am dangerous, you know? Maybe I am threatening.

JESSIE
Well then I'm being nice to you either way.

A pause. Rena laughs.

JESSIE
And honestly I don't think anyone in a top like that could be that dangerous.

RENA
Be careful.

JESSIE
Maybe I'm trying to get in trouble.

RENA
You've got some mouth on you for a straight girl.

Jessie laughs.

RENA
Let me try it out.

They kiss for a bit.

Rena tries to escalate it. Jessie stops her.

JESSIE
We're in *public*.

RENA
I knowww isn't it fun?

JESSIE
Yes but I caaaan't.

RENA
Fiiiine. Come over though?

JESSIE
Noooo.

RENA
Why notttt.

JESSIE
Because you're mid-fight with a partner.

RENA
They're not home.

JESSIE
That's *not* what I meant.

RENA
They'll be fine with it.

JESSIE
Are you sure?

RENA
I think so.

JESSIE
You're a better person than "I think so".

RENA
I'm really not.

Rena kisses her again.

JESSIE
Well — then I'll be the one to decide that you are.

Jessie pulls away from her.

RENA
Maybe things with me and my partner won't work out.

JESSIE
Maybe.

RENA
I think we could really have fun then.

JESSIE
Sure. But don't pray on that, alright? You sound like you really like this person.

RENA

I do... we're just completely different people than when we met. It would be one thing if one of us changed. But now neither of us are recognizable.

JESSIE

What can I say? I believe in you guys. I believe it'll work out.

RENA

Can I see you again at least?

JESSIE

Sure but we probably shouldn't kiss.

RENA

What's your name?

JESSIE

Jessie.

RENA

Rena. I'm glad I got to meet you Jessie.

JESSIE

Same...

RENA

Makes me wish I came out and talked to strangers more often.

JESSIE

Doesn't seem like something you have a tough time with.

RENA

I'm better at being introduced.

A pause. Jessie seems disturbed by something.

JESSIE

Yeah that... sorry, your name is Rena?...

RENA
Yeah...

A pause.

JESSIE
Huh...

A pause.

JESSIE
Is your...

A pause.

JESSIE
You know what... nevermind... thanks for saying hi, Rena.

RENA
thanks for being nice to me.

Jessie goes to exit... stops herself.

Or maybe she completely exists and then comes back.

Maybe Rena is alone for a really long time.

JESSIE
And hey Rena before I go just...

A pause.

JESSIE
Be gentle with your partner okay?

RENA
I... but I.

JESSIE
No listen to me. Be gentle with your partner...and kind and sweet... they're... they

sound like they're trying really hard right now okay?

RENA

What are you...

JESSIE

Rena... your partner... listen to me... they're going through a tough change in their life. It's difficult. And they need you to be there for them okay? You're hard — but I can tell you don't want to be hard. Be kind. Be gentle. Be sweet.

SCENE SIX

Rena leaves a voice message on Heather's phone. Jessie leaves a voice message on Rico's phone.

RENA

Hey baby.

JESSIE

Hey Rico...

RENA

How are you doing?

JESSIE

I hope you're not working too hard.

RENA

I'm out in Brooklyn tonight.

JESSIE

I hope you get to look out the window tonight.

RENA + JESSIE

The stars are beautiful.

RENA

I wanted to tell you I'm sorry.

JESSIE

I wanted to say thank you.

RENA

Sorry in a deeper way than I meant it before.

JESSIE

I went out to a bar tonight.

RENA

I was lonely tonight.

JESSIE + RENA

I kissed someone.

JESSIE

She was a stranger.

RENA

I think you knew her.

JESSIE

I wish you knew her.

RENA + JESSIE

She was beautiful.

JESSIE

And her lips were perfect.

RENA

And her hair was gorgeous.

RENA + JESSIE

And she reminded me of you.

JESSIE

She had your laugh.

RENA
Not her face.

JESSIE
And your charm.

RENA
Or way of speaking...

RENA + JESSIE
She carried your essence.

RENA
And I just wanted to say.

JESSIE
And it reminded me

RENA
That when you kiss someone like that every poem is stupid.

JESSIE
That I'm thankful for the time we had together.

RENA
And every podcast and every take and every guest and every party.

JESSIE
And it didn't work out but you grew me.

RENA
And I'm fucking sorry man like.

JESSIE
And I hope I grew you as well.

RENA
Jesus fucking Christ how stupid can a girl be?

JESSIE
So thank you.

RENA
What am I doing fucking making you feel alienated?

JESSIE
Thank you thank you thank you thank you for everything.

RENA
'cause I want to feel cool — or part of some scene

JESSIE
Brooklyn is pretty tonight.

RENA
So I'm not going to the fucking party tomorrow.

JESSIE
And I hope wherever you are you feel safe and taken care of.

RENA
Or fuck it maybe I will go and I'll talk to no one but you.

JESSIE
You're amazing and I'm so fucking proud of you.

RENA
Whatever you want, baby.

JESSIE
Keep going, baby.

RENA
And life is complicated.

JESSIE
Life is difficult.

RENA
I'm an asshole.

JESSIE

I was kinda brutal at the end there.

RENA
and I'm selfish.

JESSIE
And cold.

REMA+ JESSIE
And put the blame on me.

JESSIE
And I want you to do something

RENA
I want you to know something

JESSIE
It won't be easy.

RENA
My knee is killing.

JESSIE
My head is spinning.

RENA + JESSIE
and life is one big brutality.

JESSIE
But tonight.

RENA
But tonight.

JESSIE + RENA
Absolve yourself.

JESSIE
You are forgiven.

RENA
You are free.

JESSIE
It's a get out of jail free card.

RENA
A one up.

JESSIE
Unlimited tries.

RENA
Go.

JESSIE
You're free.

RENA
We're gonna make it, baby.

JESSIE
Be free.

RENA
And even if you have to dump my ass you're gonna make it without me.

JESSIE + RENA
I haven't just kissed someone in years.

RENA
Without sex.

JESSIE
Without love.

RENA
Without romance

JESSIE
Without groping.

RENA
Without friendship

JESSIE
Without a future.

RENA + JESSIE

Just clinging to the moment with a beautiful stranger and kissing to repair things.

RENA
And it reminded me of something I saw scribbled once.

JESSIE
It reminded me of something that I heard

RENA
In a bathroom.

JESSIE
On some podcast.

RENA
Written with God knows what.

JESSIE
Clipped by God knows who.

RENA
After a long day at my old survival job.

JESSIE
On my Reels.

RENA
On Rockaway Beach

JESSIE
At complete random

RENA
At the end of the world.Screaming out to me so bad I put it in a poem.

RENA + JESSIE
everyone in new york is beautiful.

JESSIE
It's dumb.

RENA
It's stupid.

JESSIE
Empty.

RENA
Worthless.

JESSIE
An empty phrase.

RENA
Devoid of meaning.

JESSIE
But sometimes I say it to myself at night like a prayer.

RENA
But I started all of my poems with it for a while.

JESSIE
like saying the Rosary.

RENA
Like an ancient structure.

JESSIE
over and over until it meant nothing

RENA
everyone in new york is beautiful

JESSIE
everyone in new york is beautiful

RENA
everyone in new york is beautiful

JESSIE
hope we can catch up sometime.

RENA
I hope you get a good night's sleep.

End of play.