

GUT PUNCH

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CHARACTERS

ZARIA

Femme of color, dark-skinned, 20.

DOUG

White* man. 20.

DAN

White* man. Queer, cis-presenting. 20.

DINA

White* woman. 20.

**The character is white. All actors should be BIPOC.*

To indicate whiteness, have fun! Throw a blonde wig on, costume yourself in Vineyard Vines, colonize an entire demographic of people, you get it.

SETTING

2019.

A collegiate improv show.

NOTES

When casting, it is understood that race and ethnicity is a spectrum.

COMIC SANS indicates a stylization to the acting, "bit acting", basically, improv personality, while

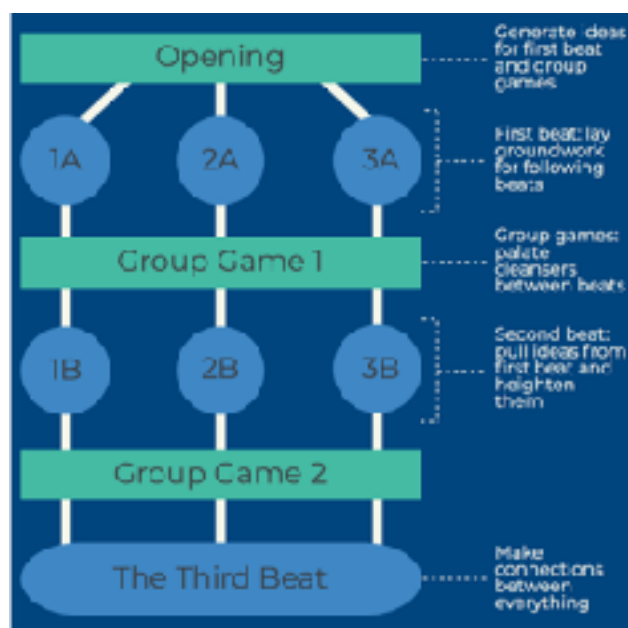
PALATINO indicates a more grounded reality.

"/" indicates overlap.

"-" indicates a quick cutoff.

"()" indicates whispering/under the breath.

There is musicality in "Oh, Hm, Wow, Ah, Um."



Opener

A shittily lit bathroom.

Zaria holds two tops to her torso, which is currently clad in a double sports bra (no one wants a nip slip on stage). She goes with the striped top. She applies lipstick, then thinks again, wiping it off.

She covers up the stain of the pigment with the distraction and mask of clear gloss.

She is about to maybe wipe it off, when there is a bang on the door.

DOUG

Zaria!

Zaria!

Za/ria!

ZARIA

I'm coming!

DOUG

Zaria!

ZARIA

I said I'm-

I'm literally-

I'm opening the door, Doug, back up-

DOUG

Zaria!

Zaza!

Z!

Zaria pushes the door, of which, Doug is in the way.

DOUG

Um, / ow?

ZARIA

Sorry, let's go.

DOUG

No rush, the opening team isn't even up on stage / yet.

ZARIA

Then why-

DOUG

We wanna warm up? As a team-
Get in the zone-
Pass the clap-
Thunder-
Zip zap zop-
Bad rap-
Get warm-
Get on the page-
The *same* page-
One / group mind-

ZARIA

One group mind.

DINA and Doug enter.

DOUG

"We are-"

DAN

Wearing sneakers?
Why / are you wearing sneakers.

DINA

Why. Are you wearing. Sneakers.

ZARIA

So I can move-

DINA

We agreed on hot girl energy for dress code tonight?

DAN

We said heeled boots.

Dan and Dina lift their pant legs to reveal heeled boots.

ZARIA

I couldn't find any last minute-

DINA

I do not want to hear excuses during preshow.

DOUG

Don't worry Z, I don't care about appearances-
I care about the craft?

DAN

Yeah, because your appearance is uninteresting.

DINA

Sorry that no one expects anything more than jokes from you, Doug.

DOUG

But this shirt has a graphic on it-

DAN

Gaaaauuche. Gauche of you.

The sound of applause coming from the stage.

DINA

Did the openers already start? You are fucking me sideways-

DOUG

Circle up!
Zip-

DAN

Zap-

DINA

Zop-

DOUG

I hate this warm up.

DAN

Can't we just take pics?

DINA

Yeah! *I* wore boots for this show-

DAN

Z, can you take pics?

ZARIA

Yeah, lemme set up self-timer-

DAN

No, *take* pics. Of the people who followed dress code. Here-

Dan holds out his phone to Zaria. She doesn't take it.

DOUG

No pictures / come on-

ZARIA

Group goals for tonight?

Let's list goals.

DINA

I wanna be funny-

DAN

Classic-

DINA

And! I want to do stronger edits-

Like transformations, I want to do those-

DAN

We suck at transformations-

DOUG

Yeah, and we will tonight if you're negative-

ZARIA

Strong first beats. I want to hear names-

DAN

Memorable! Names...that means you have to name your partner in scenes, Doug-

DOUG

I always name names!

ZARIA

Strong character choices-

DINA

Bold voices-

DAN

Specific physicality-

DOUG

Cool accents-

ZARIA

No.

No accents-

DOUG

Why not?

ZARIA

...

DAN

I want us to do an Armando opening!

DINA

We agreed we're going to do a group game-

DOUG

No, I agree, it should be an Armando opening.

I'll do it-

ZARIA

Um-

DAN

Do you have to?

DOUG

Well, I'm gifted at monologues-?

ZARIA

But you're always the one who steps forward for them.

DOUG

That's just me taking initiative-

DAN

That's the point. Don't, for once.

DINA

I can do it!

DOUG

But you're bad at monologues-

DINA

WHAT?!

DAN

Okay idea-

Who's taking the suggestion?

ZARIA

It's my turn I think-

DAN

You're doing the monologue then.

ZARIA

...Is everyone okay with that?

DAN

Yes.

DOUG
...Fine.

DINA
...I am not bad at monologues.

DOUG
HUGS!

They go around and make sure they each hug the other members of the group.

As they hug, they mutter "I love you and I trust you." It is part of a ritual, one that has gone sour for this group.

Doug hugs Zaria slightly too long.

Doug hugs Dina with a hand on her ass. She elbows him.

Dan claps twice.

DAN
Who are we?

The stage.

ALL
"We are-
SLUTTY MONKEYS!"

Team gesture.

Beat One

Zaria steps forward out of their line.

ZARIA

Can I get a suggestion of anything at all starting with the letter T?

DOUG

(Penis!)

ZARIA

T!

Zaria makes a T with her hands.

ZARIA

I heard "Tinkerbell", thank you!

ALL

"Tinkerbell, thank you!"

Zaria takes center and is clearly about to start a monologue.

She takes a deep breath, and begins to mime an activity.

She is "sewing".

She is about start talking when Doug steps out.

DOUG

The thing about Tinkerbell-

My lovely, little wife-

Because Doug has said the first word, it is his monologue.

Zaria tenses.

She is stuck onstage, having been named Doug's wife.

DOUG

Is that she's actually not that sparkly at home.

But women get like that at a certain age, ammirite guys?

There's been lots of issues with us lately. Less glitter, less light.

And I'm a lover, a cuddler-

I want the old ball and chain to snuggle me at the end of the work day.

And maybe even more than snuggle...isn't that right, Tink? Tinkerbell?

ZARIA

...

DOUG

See what I mean?

It's like we've lost...our spark-le!

(I'm holding for pun applause, guys).

Doug relishes the applause.

DOUG

Y'all are too much-

DAN

(Stay in the fucking scene!)

DOUG

Well you'll hear more about it all soon-

Back to work with me!

If only the commute were a little easier-

It's so easy getting lost in the Neverland jungle, especially when I'm with my jungle boyzzzzz-

They say, boyz will be boyz, but savages will be-

Zaria sweep edits the scene before Doug can say more.

Zaria is about to initiate a new scene when Dan crosses forward to center.

Dina initiates the first word of the scene.

Zaria melts to the side.

DAN

Light!

This stupid lightbulb won't turn on-

Mom!

DINA

Yes brother?

DAN

No, mom?

DINA

Um, yes, my brother who is younger than me-

Which is why you call me mom?

OH! Because our mom left us-

For Vegas!

And now we're in the house all alone-

With no food-

DAN

And no light bulb-

DINA

Yes! And we better call the power company to see about getting it back or else-

Or eles-

DAN

Or else we'll never get tans!

DINA

Oh brother-son, you are so silly.

You can't get tans from the indoor lights!

DAN

Then explain tanning beds-

DINA

Oh brother-husband, you got me there!

DAN

I miss mom-

DINA

You know what I love most about mom?

DAN

What, sister-wife?

DINA

...No, (I'm your sister-mother.)

DAN

Ah! It's so hard to keep this all straight!

DINA

Don't worry, we have each other, brother-husband-
And I...I love you!

DAN

Hashtag love is love is love-

Zaria enters.

This is a walk-on.

ZARIA

Where is my nephew-son and niece-daughter?

Dan and Dina pause, confused.

ZARIA

...Tis I, / mom-aunt! Back from Vegas-

DAN

Oh the housekeeper is here!

ZARIA

(Um-)

Doug sweep edits the scene.

As the other three clear off, Dan asks Zaria, "*Were we allowed to talk about tans?*"

Doug pulls Dina to stay on with him.

He pulls a little too rough. Shouldn't he have just made eye contact with her to keep her on? Physical touch is not allowed in transitions.

Why did he pull her arm so hard-

DOUG

Dammit, Denise!

DINA
Dammit...You!

DOUG
Me?

DINA
Yeah, you!
Because you're name is You.

DOUG
Well, I am half Asian-

Zaria leans, wanting to sweep edit-

DINA
Then where's your accent, huh?

Zaria leans, wanting to sweep edit-

DOUG
Oh, you wanna see an accent?
I'll show you an accent-

*Zaria, immobile. Silence.
The rest of this beat is pantomimed by Doug and Dina.
On the side, Dan folds over with laughter we can't hear.
Doug and Dina's scene seems to never end.
Over this silenced scene, Zaria has her Armondo monologue.
Spotlight.*

ZARIA
Can I get a suggestion of anything at all starting with the letter T?

Zaria makes a T with her hands.

ZARIA
I heard "Tinkerbell", thank you!

Zaria changes character, and begins "sewing".

ZARIA

It's hard being a little fairy in a big city.

This Neverland isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Nothing like being home.

It's so much harder to find a spark here, let alone run with it.

To sparkle, periodt.

All the things that used to come in handy, now just cause trouble.

Like my wings? These tree skyscrapers are stacked stories high. It's too hard to squeeze through.

I mean, I have to tuck them in every time I take the tree subway.

I'm hoping this cardigan I'm sewing together can help me tuck easier.

Gotta sew my own, because shocker, there is no GAP in Neverland.

And all the jobs? They just want guys younger and younger these days.

Like, little lost boys young.

In my opinion, I think they could be more seasoned, you know, grow up-

...

(And then someone could have had a walk-on as a lost boy-

"I'll never grow up!"

Big sweep edit, straight into beat two-)

A dance in which the team sweep edits, and runs over each other, scenes with speed.

It's tiring.

Zaria stays still, the action happening around her.

Beat Two

The lights go out, then slowly rise again. Applause.

The show is over.

The team stands steps forward to join Zaria, so they are all in one line.

ALL

"We are-

SLUTTY MONKEYS!"

Team gesture.

DOUG

But individually we have been-

DAN

Dan!

DINA

Dina!

ZARIA

Zaria!

DOUG

And IIIII'M DOUG!

ALL

"Next Up-"

A song with a strong beat maybe "Dripeesha"

The lights shift.

We're at the afterparty - offstage.

DINA and Dan pose for pics.

Doug double fists solo cups, one with hard liquor, one with a chaser.

Zaria eats pizza on the floor.

DINA

Bad, bad, bad, these all
look bad, I look fat-
We need to do more side
angles, I need to be on the
left-

That's selfish!

DAN

Fuck, I look good.
You're not fat, you're just
wearing stripes.

My hair part requires me
to be on the left-
...Don't be daft, it's
gauche of you.

DOUG

(Chug, Doug, Chug!)

Hey-
Hey-
HEY!

DOUG

We should do shots.

DINA

You're already doing shots freak-

DOUG

Then catch up-

DAN

Can I just say? That was a really good show.

DINA

Oh my god we were *so* good-
I love being on a funny team.
No offense to the other teams, but we're just naturally better than them?
I think it's because we're all so close-

DAN

Absolutely, a family, but like-
A hot one. The artsy, still funny kind of hot-
Just like, really desirable.
Like, a mixed level kind of hot-

ZARIA

What?

DINA

Ugh, I wish I was mixed-

ZARIA
What?

DAN
I want biracial twins, sue me!

DINA
It's so boring being plain old white-

DOUG
Tragic for us-

ZARIA
Yeah, so tragic for us, all being white?

DAN
Yeah, some of us are queer? Dap me up, Z!

Zaria does not, in fact, dap Dan up.

ZARIA
Mmm, imagine being both queer *and* not white?

DAN
Okay fine, *most* of our hot family is white, but we're *all* hot.

DINA
Yeah no one is saying you're not hot, Z-
Just like-
For Doug and I?

DAN
(And Dan!-)

DINA
It's just going to be so much harder for us to stand out. Like Second City-
Are they really gonna need two more white brunettes?

DAN
We're like, forced to be better than the best-

DOUG

Because we're white-

DAN

Sue us for being nervous!

ZARIA

That...is my cue!

I'm gonna go home-

DAN

Ugh, you sound annoyed, are you annoyed now?

ZARIA

I-

DAN

Is this because I said I wanted a biracial twins? I didn't mean "biracial" as a bad word- I probably won't reproduce, but if I did, I'd kill for those twins to be biracial, promise!

DOUG

Chill, Z, Dan will probably never find anyone to adopt biracial twins with anyway-

DAN

(We could surrogate!)

DINA

Shut up, Dan.

Z? We're friends.

Family.

And sometimes family jokes around.

ZARIA

Yeah, but about race stuff?

Coming from a mostly white team it's like-

Not complex at all.

DOUG

You can't be afraid to joke about race, Z.

Diversity in comedy is really important.

ZARIA

Okay, but when *you* do it, it's dumb.

DOUG

So you're the only one allowed to joke about race?

ZARIA

There's just like, a way to do it?

Why can't you ever punch up?

DOUG

I do!

ZARIA

Up?

DOUG

If the audience vibes when we go for the gut punch, that's where I'm gonna try and hit.

...

They like when we cross the line, so-

ZARIA

Okay, but I don't?

Onstage?

Without warning?

DAN

That's...what improv is?

Are you like, mad?

ZARIA

I'm just saying we had a weird set.

DINA

I thought it was our best show. Weird.

DOUG

Same, I have never landed an Armando monologue like that before.

Z, you were in it and we still made it work!

ZARIA

Well, yeah, I was supposed to do it, but then you just took it-

DOUG

Really? I was sensing you didn't want to, just based on your energy when you were up there.

I thought I was saving you, so-

ZARIA

But you didn't, Doug. You took.

You always / take.

DOUG

Oh so you're pissed about the set tonight because you didn't get to monologue?

DAN

Oh phew, I thought you were mad about the actual set-

ZARIA

I am, it was racialized-

DINA

So are you mad about the race stuff in the set or losing the monologue, it can't be both-

ZARIA

I'm just-

Nervous sometimes.

Improvising with y'all.

Because I never know what you're gonna say, why you say it-

DAN

Ugh, I don't want to talk about this anymore-

We're supposed to be family-

Family forgives each other, can't we just like, try better next time and drink tonight?

ZARIA

But we never talk about it, so how do we fix it for the next show if-

DOUG

You know what?

DOUG

Hey-

I don't think we need to make this a big deal.

ZARIA

But it kinda is-

I played a silent Tinkerbell wife object, a maid when I literally came on as your mommy-aunt—

DAN

In my defense, it was really hard to keep all the relationships-

ZARIA

And had to listen to Doug do an accent, when I literally-
Specifically asked us to chill with those.

They suck, Doug-

DOUG

How am I supposed to get better at Asian accents if I don't practice?

ZARIA

In what world would you need to do a Asian accent? What even is an "Asian accent"?
Asia has 43 fucking countries you white man-

DOUG

HEY!

ZARIA

WHAT? YOU ARE!

DOUG

I'm GREEK AMERICAN!

I do NOT appreciate being cancelled like this-

DAN

No one is cancelling you, Doug-

DOUG

Well good, because I have nothing to be cancelled for-

DINA
Okay, well, no.

DAN
DINA, chill-

DOUG
What?

DINA
Well, Doug, you grab my ass all the time-

DOUG
What?

DINA
But I get over it and still show up to rehearsal-

DOUG
I've never grabbed any part of you-

DINA
And it makes me feel really bad.

DAN
Wait, Doug, that's fucked.
You should apologize.

ZARIA
For that, and for the accent-

DAN
Could you stop making everything about race? We're having an actual harassment issue in our family right now.

DOUG
No we don't!
I didn't grab your ass, DINA!
I gave you a hug!
And hugs are really touchy, if you didn't know

DOUG

Like-

Maybe I grazed?

But I didn't grab-

Like even if i wanted to grab your ass-

Which I do not-

Not that you aren't hot-

You are so hot, this is a hot group-

We're all hot and funny, which makes us even more hot-

But like-

Even if i wanted to, I wouldn't.

Because i would never jeopardize the team like that-

Like-

Like!

How are we supposed to 'prov together if we don't trust each other?

You trust me, right?

You've known me for how long?

Like, a year!

Like-

You know me by now.

I'm not like that.

...

So you know I wasn't trying to like, violate boundaries, okay?

I wouldn't do that to the team.

...

Sorry if you like, misinterpreted that.

DINA

You realize you are incapable of taking responsibility for your actions right now, right?

DAN

Ugh, can we stop talking about this? I'm getting a tummy ache-

DOUG

Agreed-

DINA

Whatever-

DAN

Like, none of us are intentionally trying to be Republican vibes, right?
We all have some bias stuff, so what?

DINA

I learned about implicit bias in my Gender studies class!
So scary-

DAN

I know right-
So like!
Let's just agree that we're a family, so it's fine.
And we can just stop talking about it, and it'll be-

DINA

So, SO fine.

DAN

Yes! And what if-

DOUG

What if we just take shots? Cheers to our little hot family?

DINA/DAN

Please / yes / exactly / thank god!

*Doug pours vodka in Dan and DINA's shot glasses.
Zaria has her coat on by the time Doug comes to pour
Zaria's shot.*

DAN

Zaria?

*Zaria sweep edits this scene, a transition indicated by
lights.*

Beat Three

The third beat is for making connections between everything that happened.

The stage.

Dan and Dina take off their blonde wigs.

Dan, Dina and Zaria look at Doug, still in his blonde wig.

They decide as a team, Doug should go.

Doug exits.

Dan, Dina and Zaria go around and make sure they each hug the other members of the group.

As they hug, they mutter "I love you and I trust you."

It is part of a ritual, one that holds meaning for this group.

Healing.

Dan claps twice.

DAN

Who are we?

The stage.

ALL

"We are-

MÉNAGE TWO THREE!"

Team gesture.

Zaria steps forward out of their line.

ZARIA

Can I get a suggestion of anything at all starting with the letter T?

Zaria makes a T with her hands.

ZARIA

I heard "Tinkerbell", thank you!

ALL

"Tinkerbell, thank you!"

Zaria takes center and is clearly about to start a monologue.

She takes a deep breath, and begins to mime an activity.

She is "sewing"

ZARIA

The worst part about living in Neverland?
My commute to work.
These old wings of mine were not made for public transportation.
Oh, why do I have a NeverMetroLandCard, you ask?
Why take the subway if I can literally fly?
I don't know, have you heard of SMOG?
I am 75% fairy dust and I WILL evaporate if I'm not careful.
Hopefully this cardigan-

Zaria holds up what she has been "sewing".

ZARIA

Will help me blend in a little better with everyone else.
They all told me back home not to move to Neverland for a job-
But I'll find my footing soon. Because I mostly walk now.
...
Can I just say-
How much it means
To be the only fairy and to do it this well?
How this whole concrete jungle would be just boys and bush without me-
And my wings.
There is no way to fly-
Without the spark I make.
Connected by my fibers and veins is the possibility for what does not yet exist.
Others cannot seek flight-
Without my spark present.
And there is no spark without the support of-
Of everyone else.
Symbiosis.

Zaria puts her cardigan on.

ZARIA

How do I look?
Ugh, I know. Totally gauche.

Dan steps into the scene.

DAN

Hi there! I'm a little lost boy wandering the woods, trying to get back to my friends!

Could you help me-

Oh, my, god. That cardigan is so last year-

Dina taps Dan out, initiating a pattern.

DINA

Hey I lost my little boy friends can you help-

Um, what GAP outlet did you get that from?

Dan taps Dina out, completing the third beat to this pattern.

DAN

I'm just a wittle lost kid can you-

HELP! IS THAT POLYESTER?

Zaria breaks, and laughs herself.

Dan internally edits and shifts location focus for the scene.

Dina immediately steps forward.

DINA

Oh it's just a tragedy-

DAN

What is it, Dolly?

DINA

Horrible in every way, Doris-

DAN

What, Dolly-

DINA

Oh dear sister, how ever will we cope?

DAN

There is no way to be sure, sister dearest, without you telling me!

DINA

I-

DAN

Can you bring yourself to say it?

DINA

I, I-

DAN

Oh Dolly!

Dan winks at DINA, a code.

They do a stage slap, where Dan claps their own hand as Dina reacts with a wail.

It is playful and well timed.

DINA

I forgot to pay electricity!

The lights, they-

DAN

They'll go out.

DINA

And we'll be alone...in the dark.

DAN

No, Dolly-

DINA

Yes, Doris-

DAN

But, but I'm afraid of the dark!

DINA

If only there were someone who could fly over here and control sparkles so that the light could come back on without ComEd?

Zaria realizes Tinkerbell is being called on, and runs in-

ZARIA

It's me! Tink!

Sorry I'm so late, the tree subway was a bitch today-

DINA/DAN

We're saved!

Dan internally sweep edits, but makes eye contact with Zaria to keep her on.

A dance in which the team sweep edits, transforms a set, with give and take.

It's fun.

We want to keep watching-

Slow fade to black.