HOT DOGS AND FEMINISM By Jasmine Sharma

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CHARACTERS

OLGA SARA MAY RUTH DANIELLE (DANIEL) ALEX NICKY is desperate. is trying. is unrelenting. is obedient. is curious. is ravenous.

TIME 2016. Pink pussy hat season.

PLACE The 'burbs of a blue state.

NOTES

Casting should reflect the racial, size, and age diversity of the world we live in.

"-" Indicates a quick cut off.

(____) indicates a whisper.

ChAoTiC FoNt indicates a tantrum, or, a choice.

Scene 1

An unfinished basement. There is a podium, charts, glitter glue, maybe an ipad, definitely some bean bag chairs.

OLGA

Good evening, womens, and welcome to the first of probably many weekly meetings. In the history-I'm sorry, herstory-Of our friend group, I have taken the lead. Much like a mother-Not that womens have to be a Mother, because, they can be anything-Astronauts, dictators, castrators-Anything. I-I'm getting sidetracked. But tonight! Tonight, I invite our sisters and comrades in the fight against oppression. Gracing us with their seniority and wisdom, I present all the way from the fifth grade, Ruth Anderdaughter. Oh, and her sister, Danielle-

DANIELLE It's pronounced Daniel.

OLGA But-

DANIEL Mens do not own the pronunciations of names.

OLGA Yes! I knew that! Right on! Presenting, Ruth and Daniel Anderdaughter!

> Olga applauds, Nicky and Alex join in. Ruth and Daniel demand applause from the audience as well. The duo will not speak until the audience joins in.

RUTH

Good evening.

My sister and I are honored to be here tonight in the presence of such strong womens.

DANIEL

I have to go where my sister goes because we are twins!

RUTH

We have dedicated our lives to the furtherment of women rights-Whether it be in the country of Tibet-

DANIEL Yeah!-

RUTH Against Mike Pence!-

DANIEL Yeah!-

RUTH In the uteri of oppressed penguins-

DANIEL *Heck* Yeah!-

RUTH Or in our own homes-

DANIEL Sort of, when appropriate, but usually very subtle-

RUTH We refuse our given surnames of Anderson, we are Anderdaughters-

DANIEL Lot of pushback from mom on that oneRUTH Surnames? Ma'am-names, methinks.

DANIEL Again, that one is an ongoing uphill battle-

RUTH We have combated the patriarchy, promoted the matriarchy, and rebelled in anarchy-!

From offstage, Sara May calls:

SARA MAY Honey, are you and your friends all okay down there?

OLGA We're actually so fine mom!

SARA MAY Just making sure you're all alright-I can make snacks?

OLGA MOM! WE are ChallenGing The mAn! We don'T neeD SnaCks!

ALEX Actually, I could use really use a juice box, Olg.

NICKY And I haven't eaten in two hours? My blood sugar is really low-

OLGA Nicky c'mon-

NICKY Oh, is feminism not chill with DIABETES? I thought intersectionality was important? OLGA I uh, actually don't know the rules on that one? I'm still learning-

NICKY Well while you take up time learning, I could be on my insulinless deathbed, Olga-

ALEX You could DIE?

OLGA We suffer for our cause! Like the Suffragettes! Right?

ALEX I don't like to suffer, I like my friend Nicky.

OLGA But Ruth and Daniel are-

RUTH I could go for Tostitos Rolls, actually.

DANIEL Feminism embraces rolls! Body positivity! You are perfect the way you are!

OLGA MOM! WE NEED ROLLS! THE PIZZA KIND!

Enter Sara May. She's hip.

SARA MAY Hey gal pals!

OLGA MOM! We are Not Gals! We are WaRrIoRs!

SARA MAY Oh! Like in those Samurai documentaries-

OLGA Sara May!

OLGA

(You are so close to saying something not PC right now. I can feel it in my underdeveloped tubes.)

SARA MAY This feels like it could be a parenting moment... Pass! I've got a tray of snacks here, just take what you like girls-

RUTH Um, Ms. May? We're womens.

Ruth establishes herself as the new alpha.

SARA MAY Right, women! I mean, um, womens? I also brought down some socks because it just gets so clammy in the basement-I told Olgy she could have this playdate in the den, but she insisted the basement was more industrial chic which is much more the aesthetic of what you're all going for I guess?-

OLGA MOM! This is NOT a PlAyDaTe! We are fighting-

SARA MAY Yes yes! I know, I heard baby! I just-

DANIEL Ms. May, Olga is not a baby, she is an independent, self sustaining woman-

OLGA (Oh my Gloria Steinem she doesn't think I'm a baby that's so hot-)

SARA MAY Well I claim this self-sustaining woman as a dependent on my taxes-

RUTH (Federal tax forms are filled with phallic imagery.) SARA MAY

And that self sustaining silly pants still needs assistance whenever she wets the bed-

OLGA MOM!

SARA MAY It's okay Olgy! Anxiety manifests itself differently in every adolescent-

ALEX I wet the bed until I was ten.

NICKY Yeah, me too.

ALEX This one time, I wet Nicky's bed.

NICKY Yeah, you did!

> Nicky and Alex high five, but they hold hands when their hands meet midair. They stare into each other's eyes, sensing something. They lean in, as if to kiss, but abruptly break away.

OLGA What, did y'all have a sleepover without me or something?

NICKY We invited you, you just went to that march instead with-

RUTH With us. We got so many likes on our gram that day.

ALEX Was that the point of it again?

OLGA

Sara May, please leave the snacks and go. You've driven divides into this room.

SARA MAY Olga-

Olga-

OLGA

(Please mom, I'm so sorry. I know I'm talking back I'm just still so confused about "self advocacy.")

RUTH (It means yell, I'm pretty sure.)

SARA MAY Hm. Ah, a parenting moment for later! I'm right upstairs with the other mommies if you need anything-

DANIEL You are not j*ust* mommies!

RUTH You are strong, resilient beings of childbirth and career oriented individuals dedicated to the bettering and equalizing of society as we know it.

SARA MAY ...I love your skirts!

DANIEL and RUTH THEY ARE KILTS!

ALEX They look like skirts to me.

DANIEL Well they're NOT!

RUTH

Yeah, they're a sign of respect and in Braveheart all the warriors wore them for war-

DANIEL Yeah and then they lifted them to show their-Men Testicles.

NICKY Isn't that phallic imagery?

DANIEL Huh?

NICKY You said tax forms are phallic but-Testicles are for sure.

ALEX (It's so hot when you poke holes in radical arguments.

NICKY What?-

ALEX What?

DANIEL Um...-

RUTH Daniel doesn't have to explain herself!

DANIEL I don't?

RUTH Don't oppress her voice! That is misogynistic!

OLGA Big word! I don't know what it means!

ALEX Is that like anti-Semitic but for women?

NICKY

At Hebrew school, we heard the older kids talking about how Mel Gibson doesn't like Jews and so we can no longer look at him or his work in the same way because his art is a reflection of his values and his values are reflected in his art and so separating the artist from their art adds to the cycle of harm.

I need to work on breathing while talking.

Nicky gasps twice and then takes a puff from her inhaler.

ALEX

Sometimes my mommy says stuff really fast about my dad when she's had too much apple juice.

NICKY But your dad isn't an artist, he's an accountant.

ALEX

Well my dad says math is *like* art.

NICKY Math is not like art. You don't even use modge podge with fractions-

ALEX That's true. You're really smart Nicky-

NICKY I know, I'm going to be a woman in STEM-

OLGA Womens! We have business to attend to! Ruth and Daniel are FIFTH graders! We can't be wasting their times! Womens! back in your seats! Sara May! Get upstairs (please)! Ruth and Danielle-

DANIEL DANIEL-

OLGA DANIEL! Tell us the plan! SARA MAY Holler if you need me!

ALEX Thanks Ms. May!

> Sara May exits. Nicky sneaks over to the snacks.

OLGA NICKY! Take your seat!

NICKY My blood sugar is really low Olgy-

OLGA SO IS RESPECT APPRECIATIONS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMENSKIND. SIT. DOWN.

> Nicky sits, but dumps a bunch of snacks is her shirt, which she has slightly lifted up to make a sack. Ruth and Daniel take the podium.

RUTH

Womens, everything my sister and I have done as of yet have been mostly virtual. On twitter-

DANIEL Tweeting our thoughts on the women crisis in Tibet-

RUTH Fighting Mike Pence-

DANIEL By tweeting Planned Parenthood memes with Mike Pence's face in them-

RUTH Or protecting the uteri of virtual penguinsDANIEL By tweeting about how we were blocked from Cub Penguin-

RUTH

But today, we are taking action. In the real world.

DANIEL

Yeah!

RUTH

Raise your hand if you know Mr. Angelo from the cafeteria.

Everyone raises their hand.

DANIEL Recently, Mr. Angelo has been accommodating in all our requests.

RUTH Hanging women empowerment posters by the lunch line-

DANIEL Adding yonic veggies from the salad bar-(tomatoes)-

RUTH

Even ceasing to call us "missies", because that is derogatory. Because we are womens.

Also what a weird thing no one says anymore, unless it comes before the name Elliot. As in Miz, Missy Elliot.

DANIEL #getyourfreakon.

RUTH #get*her*freakon.

DANIEL But tides, they have turned.

RUTH

We have requested that Mr. Angelo stop selling hot dogs in the cafeteria-

DANIEL

As they're *phallic*-

RUTH

However, we have been... Refused. And so, womens, it is time we take extreme measures.

DANIEL

Pursuing the extermination of hot dogs in our cafeteria may be a small step for feminism in the long run, but every little step gets us there.

RUTH

Taking action in our community is really mature and gives you moral highground, which can easily be transferred into social capita.

OLGA But-

Daniel, pointing to different areas of her body, a la Portlandia:

DANIEL WHEN I SEE A HOT DOG, I FEeL a wEe-WEe hEre, heRe, and Here.

RUTH

...You're quoting Portlandia.

DANIEL

Yes, it is my favorite TV show, and media I like heavily influences what I believe.

RUTH

But I'm pretty sure you're plagiarizing Fred Armisen and Carrie-

DANIEL

Why would you say his name before hers?

RUTH Why wouldn't you let me finish her name?

DANIEL You're oppressing her!

RUTH YOU'Re oppressing her!

OLGA Womens! Please!

RUTH Excuse our brief tiff, we're back.

DANIEL True, womens have to support womens, it's the rules.

RUTH

We are going to protest the presence of wieners in the elementary school cafeteria this Thursday during lunch-

DANIEL And we are going to BRING THE WIENERS DOWN!

ALEX (I feel like this is a weird battle to be picking-)

NICKY (Don't say anything, you'll cause a whole big thing. We'll talk to Olgy about it later.)

Nicky selects a pig in a blanket from the snack platter.

OLGA NICKY! WHAt ArE yOu Eating!?!?!?

> Hell breaks lose. Cue a slow motion scene of over the top fighting in which Olga attacks Nicky, Alex gets in the middle unintentionally, Ruth stands overhead, and Daniel points to

all the areas she is feeling a hot dog, aka, "here, here, and here". Finally, Ruth breaks up the fight.

RUTH

Please, this is what the mens want! We must stay united! We cannot be divided because of the Ween!

DANIEL NOT the WEEN!

NICKY I'm sorry, I just think we're going too far-

A la Film noir mode.

NICKY What else am I to dip in Dijon? Who else do I relish drenched in relish? Whomst else will my Heinz packets be good for, if not for painting the sleek log of dog in between the sharp crease of a fluffy bun?

DANIEL I'm feeling attacked.

NICKY I'm feeling minimized!

ALEX

My mom's vegan again-She eats a lot of tofu-dogs? She says they taste like the real thing after a few glasses of apple juice?

OLGA Are tofu dogs okay?

RUTH No.

DANIEL I feel them here, hereALEX Well, just don't look then!

DANIEL Excuse me?

ALEX Well-If Nicky wants to eat a hot dog, then just, just-Just look the other way! She's not asking you to eat one yourself or, um, feel one-

RUTH You want us to loo

You want us to look the other way in face of injustice? We're leaving.

OLGA No!

DANIEL We thought you womens were cooler than this. See you round the playground-

OLGA No, wait, PleAsE! They didn't mean it-

RUTH Please, don't beg, it's sad to see.

OLGA I...understand.

DANIEL Oh, and Olga? Tell your mom we said thank you.

OLGA I will.

They do a weird salute, and then Ruth and Daniel suddenly

throw matching pink sweaters and skirts over their outfits from their backpacks.

RUTH Daniel! Call the uber.

They go upstairs.

ALEX Something tells me that Ruth was supposed to eat Daniel in the womb-

NICKY But decided last minute she could use a henchman-

ALEX Henchwoman*, weren't you listening-

NICKY Oh right, we listen, they talk. That's how feminism works!

ALEX Nicky, you're so funny-

OLGA We're socially ruined.

ALEX It's not that bad Olgy.

NICKY Yeah! So they're fifth graders now, so what? That'll be us next year. Plus their platform for change seemed a little unfocused-

OLGA Y'all aren't seeing the point. They're gonna be sixth graders next year! Being their friends would automatically get us in as "normal" when we move up to middle school.

OLGA

We'd be invited to position ourselves in the same locker row!

Gym teachers would recognize our power and we would always be team captains. AND! Having older friends means no bullies!

Most importantly, we'd be invited to The Moving Up Ceremony PICNIC. When my older sister was our age, her older friend from computer science club invited her to the Moving Up Picnic. That's basically how she became the coolest girl in her grade.

I was setting us up for the big game.

NICKY Middle school is so far away-

OLGA You gotta look ahead, or you'll fall behind, kid.

ALEX It's okay Nicky. I'd catch you-

NICKY Thanks Lex-

ALEX Yeah sure, anytime-

OLGA I think y'all better leave. I need to lick my wounds.

OLGA takes out a bag of fruit snacks, an apple juice (which she pours into a flask), and plays "Hello" by Adele on her iPod touch.

ALEX Oh Olgy. Not Adele!

NICKY

I'm sorry Olgy. I'm sorry my love of the dog came between you and your new friends.

OLGA No, please. It's fine. Don't change for me.

ALEX Hey, I've got an idea.

OLGA Not now, Alex. I'm hydrating.

Olga swigs from flask and tries to stand-

OLGA Woah, I need to sober up-

NICKY Olgy it's just apple juice-

ALEX When my mom has too much apple juice she-

NICKY She's not drinking apple juice Lex-

ALEX No, it definitely is-

OLGA Really Lex it's not-

NICKY

We're not judging her, Lex! It's so okay-Heck, in this political climate, it's understandable to wanna blackout just to forget the nightmarish series of confirmations and ignored testimonies and unconvicted-

ALEX Hey. I-I don't really wanna talk about it. I rather laugh? NICKY

Just saying that it's okay to feel helpless.

ALEX

Oh. OH! Olgy, do Ruth and Daniel make you feel less helpless?

OLGA

•••

ALEX

I know how we can get Ruth and Daniel to think we're super cool again!

OLGA

Really?

ALEX

WE'RE GOING TO DO A TAKE DOWN! And then everything will be FIXED and FINE.

NICKY You mean...take down the hot dogs?

ALEX Yes. But don't fear, Nicky. I know how to make Olgy happy and you happy.

NICKY Well okay-

ALEX Because I would never want to make you unhappy-

NICKY Okay-

ALEX Only happy happy pleasure-

OLGA WHaT iS thE pLAn?!

ALEX

We are going to win back the trust and interest of socially aware activists Ruth and Daniel by stealing all of the hot dogs out of Mr. Angelo's freezer during recess and moving them into Nicky's mom's SUV.

Nicky can have them for dinner and be happy and we'll take down the patriarchy for Ruth and Daniel.

NICKY

I like it.

OLGA Thank you Lex.

ALEX

Don't thank me, thank my woman brain.

OLGA

Okay, I've got construction paper in my room. Let's draw up some blue prints.

NICKY WOO!

ALEX Exciting!

OLGA

And womens, we are officially undercover anarchists.

Scene 2

That night, before anarchy. All the womens are in their respective bedrooms.

OLGA

Dear god-

Please let Alex's plan work, and please make these fifth graders like me, and please let me survive in the shark like tank that is middle school.

And please let my sister, Helga, call home once in a while from college.

I want to tell her I am following in her footsteps.

And making everything fixed and fine.

RUTH

Dear Spirit of the Female Body and Her Empire of Estrogen, please crush my enemies. And let me have my period already.

DANIEL

What Ruth said.

(But also - and don't let Ruth hear - I wouldn't mind if you made Daniel Markowitz like like me?)

•••

(And ask me to the Moving Up Ceremony Picnic? And marry me and have my babies because I am scared of childbirth?)

ALEX

Dear Buddha, mommy said that you and wheatgrass are in again. So hey. Nice to meet you!

I was wondering, since you're really enlightened, do you know if soulmates are real? And if my parents are?

And if maybe, Nicky is mine? It's no big deal in the grand scheme of things but... but I was just wondering.

NICKY

Dear Betty Crocker, please make me instant cake mix that literally makes cake in an instant. I have low blood sugar. Also, I miss when they used to give us bagels after Hebrew school. Can we get that back? I love you.

SARA MAY Olgy, are you asleep? OLGA No, I'm woke, Mom.

SARA MAY Your friends seem really unique. I hope they had a nice time today.

OLGA Yeah. Me too.

SARA MAY Ruth and Danielle seem very confident.

OLGA They're fifth graders.

SARA MAY I know, I know. But remember, they may be cool, but Alex and Nicky are better than cool, they're your friends.

OLGA But what if I want to be friends with cooler people?

SARA MAY Sometimes we want to fit in with people who don't like us, maybe people we're even scared of, like Mrs. Miller, who doesn't ever blink. Or Mrs. Patel, who runs in five inch heels. Or Mrs. Davis, who literally killed a man.

OLGA She did?

SARA MAY Yes.

OLGA (Dope.)

SARA MAY

But it's important to remember: your friends don't make you cool, you make you cool. The people you surround yourself with want to be surrounded by you too. Otherwise, you'd always be on the outside looking in. Like Evan Hansen.

SARA MAY Goodnight Snookums!

SARA MAY gives her a kiss and exits Olga's "room". In the hallway, she turns to the hanging portrait of her mother.

SARA MAY

Hey Mom. Miss you a lot.

Did you see that? I think it was a sick parenting moment.

...Missing you extra today.

I've been thinking about you, what you'd have to say about all this stuff going on. About how you'd explain it to Olga.

I don't know where to start, but I guess...you didn't have all the answers during the 60s either.

You and Olgy would've gotten on real well.

Hope you can help us out down here. We could use it.

Scene 3

The Take Down. During this monologue, Alex and Nicky should act out what Olga says as she reads from blue prints created on construction paper with glitter glue and stickers. Spotlights should be used and other lighting things to simulate that we're in some weird time thing where stuff is happening at the same time Olga explains it.

OLGA

Okay, here's the plan: As soon as the recess bell rings, Nicky will act really loopy and tell Mr. Angelo that her blood sugar is too low.

NICKY It probably will be!

OLGA

Then, she'll pass out.

During the commotion, Alex will sneak into the kitchen and fill her backpack with the hot dogs.

While Mr. Angelo takes Nicky to the nurse, Alex will pass the backpack off to me and sneak outside to recess and assume her normal disguise of an unassuming fourth grader-

ALEX

Wait, but if Nicky is at the nurse and you're busy taking the backpack somewhere, who am I supposed to play with?

OLGA Improvise Alex! DO! NOT! BLoW! OuR! cOvEr!

ALEX Yes ma'am!

OLGA

When Alex passes me the backpack, I will ask for the bathroom pass and actually head for the nurse's office, where I will hand the pack off to Nicky, whose mom has been called due to her fainting spell.

ALEX

Nurse Gina hates my mom because she didn't get me vaccinated.

OLGA

Nicky will bring the hot dog backpack home and empty the contents into her freezer, where her mom will assume her dumb dad purchased the meats. Nicky will then have an abundance of dog dinners for the next week.

Back to real time. Lights normalize. Olga, Nicky and Alex hold juice boxes back in the basement.

OLGA Well done womens. Cheers!

ALEX That was so so fun!

NICKY I feel like Jason Bourne or like, Shakira-

ALEX Her hips do not lie-

NICKY What does that even mean?

ALEX I, I'm not sure. It just sounded right to me-

OLGA I'm texting Ruth and Daniel to let them know!

NICKY Oh yeah. Them.

ALEX

You know, we can be our own special task fourth grade task force without them, Olgy.

OLGA But, why would we want that? What about the Moving Up Picnic?

ALEX I know but-

OLGA I already texted my sister we were invited!

NICKY Well why would you do that?

OLGA I wanted to-Well we did complete the mission-

ALEX You know, maybe I don't fit in with them. Maybe I'm not a feminist, Olgy.

NICKY Feminism is actually the economic and social equality of women to men, not women over men, so like, they aren't even really feminists, Lex.

ALEX So they're just feminazis.

NICKY Olgy we can't be friends with them. I'm JEWISH-

Olga's phone dings.

OLGA They're here!

ALEX Why didn't they just ring the bell?

OLGA Because they're Gen Z! SARA MAY Olgy! I'm sending your friends down!

NICKY Baruch Ata Adonai-

OLGA Be cool!

NICKY Judaism IS cool!

ALEX Can I come to your bat mitzvah?

NICKY That's like, a whole year away-

OLGA Aren't you bat mitzvahed at 13?

NICKY Yeah, but I was left back a few years. It's going to be a huge party-

OLGAParty?

RUTH YOU FEMALES ARE SO COOL-

DANIEL When we read Olga's text we literally tweeted about it-

RUTH It got more retweets than anything we ever tweeted about Tibet-

DANIEL As in TWO.

RUTH

We were wondering if you womens wanted to come to the Moving Up Picnic as our female friends in the fight of feminism?

DANIEL Yeah, our FFFFs.

OLGA (Really?)

RUTH Well?

OLGA We-

NICKY I think I'm gonna wait until our year has one, thanks.

ALEX Same.

Nicky holds Alex's hand. Alex is trying to stay cool.

RUTH

Lame. Olga?

OLGA ...I think I'm gonna wait too.

DANIEL Really?

OLGA Yeah. We'll just enjoy it so much more when we're fully adult women.

DANIEL Uh, *womens. OLGA We're still feminists!-

NICKY (Just not feminazis-)

RUTH I'm not understanding-YoU bAbIES are suPposed to IdoLiZe ME-

NICKY I'm so confused about what your interpretation of activism is-

ALEX (You are using so many big girl words and it is so hot-)

RUTH Daniel, fix this!

DANIEL

Honestly Ruth, we *could* fight harder, but most of our platform is based on a performative aesthetic rather than a deeper understanding of what we can do to make actual impact, so we don't really know where to begin when it comes to communication.

RUTH W-whatever. S-...See you 'round the playground!!

Ruth whips on a pink pussy hat, and exits.

DANIEL

I should probably go with her. She usually goes live and starts explicitly venting when she gets like this, and we share an instagram. Rather not have to start another new account.

OLGA

Brave.

DANIEL Is it? DANIEL

I'm not really sure what the right things to say and do are yet. I'm pretty sure when I get to middle school, someone's going to help me figure it out.

OLGA That sounds right to me.

DANIEL See you womens around.

Daniel exits.

ALEX That was cool of you Olgy.

OLGA Really?

NICKY Yeah. Really cool.

OLGA Thanks guys-I mean girls-I mean women-I mean-

ALEX Stop, you'll hurt yourself.

NICKY Plus this year's Moving Up Picnic party is gonna SUCK compared to my Bat Mitzvah!

OLGA MaZeL ToV!

> The Horah plays, and Olga, Nicky and Alex dance. Sara May comes downstairs with a chair.

They struggle to lift her on the chair, until Ruth and Daniel reenter and assist. They all lift her as a fourth grade daughter and her friends would lift any cool mom. End of play.