

# WHORTICULTURE

by

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“We may safely assert that the knowledge that men can acquire of women, even as they have been and are, without reference to what they might be, is wretchedly imperfect and superficial and will always be so until women themselves have told all that they have to tell.”

*The Subjection of Women*, John Stuart Mill (1869)

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## CHARACTERS

written for a cast of 3 women  
(these descriptions were written for the final scene;  
the characters grow from there)

- INDI(GO)            The leader. Slightly more mature by about ten months, a great beauty, the kind of girl other girls want to follow. White and Blonde. Also plays MIA.
- BELLA(DONNA)    Absolutely in love with INDI, fairy-like and sweet. She is overweight and all body, loyal, she wants to focus on all things positive. Fears her own darkness. African-American. Also plays RILEY.
- LARK(SPUR)        The smart one. She is attractive in the librarian sense (when she lets down her hair) and can really change the world with the tools she is developing as a researcher. A match for INDI. LARK's face is disfigured for most of the play and then is not, and this transformation happens onstage. Asian-American.

THE CAST (20s) should be able to climb on and hang from a jungle gym and do some gymnastics also plays a HATER CHORUS, POISONOUS FLOWERS (these are like bigger, more intense versions of themselves) and OTHERS as noted.

## PLACE

a jungle gym for climbing and hanging

## TIME

shifts from the 2020s back to 2013 without markers  
Time should not call attention to itself

## NOTATION for ACTORS

Interruptions and overlaps are indicated with a /  
If / ends a sentence, the next line is a kind of echo  
If // appears, then the next speaker is interrupting from the earlier / and this double // means the second speaker after this line uses this as their cue  
Ellipses (. . .) mean the character cannot articulate the ineffable, an active searching for something to say and failing  
Dashes (—) are a change in direction mid-speech  
\_\_\_\_\_ means the character is in a kind of extreme psychic pain and unable to respond with words

N.B. — There is behavior on stage that might indicate nudity, but there is no actual nudity.

## WHORTICULTURE

(It is as if nothing has started, ALL 3 (20s) are there to put on a show. THEY set props and masks as THEY talk. LARK wears a man's suit with men's shoes and a tie but her hair is long and her face is different from her actual face — she has been disfigured. THEY ALL 3 remain onstage at all times to help out.)

LARK

. . . suddenly asking a million questions - because I chose this playground -- to answer my own questions which may never get answered, or maybe just to ask them, and --

MIA (INDI, 20s)

because it's a public space,

RILEY (BELLA, 20s)

(to MIA)

I thought she said that girls are forced to split themselves

LARK

Not so much split, but live always publicly on display

MIA

(echoes LARK, snapchatting)

On display, that's it! I totally live on display

RILEY

I thought you picked this playground to highlight decades of city budget cuts, general social decay and a lack of tort reform

LARK

I like it because there's a jungle gym with places for climbing and places for hanging.

MIA

(noticing audience)

Oh, they're here!

RILEY

It's time, Lark.

LARK

Ready to put on a show?

MIA

Apparently our whole lives are shows

RILEY

(to LARK)

Ready? A one, two, three, four!

LARKSPUR

If I were a Man I'd wear a Suit  
and no one would ever wonder  
are those my real tits under there?  
Or just phat underwear? — Not here to harm me? The world's an Army  
and I'm just one more Cunt-ry to Plunder.

If I were a Man my male Professors wouldn't picture me  
on my knees with my mouth full  
my own ideas in their classrooms  
wouldn't always seem to be so doubtful

they'd offer me their help, with grants and applications  
they'd get me into labs, to aid my education  
so I could graduate with honors  
instead of marking in my chart that I'm dishonest  
a bitchy pussy cause i growled once  
*that Bitch is pushy* says the TA-dunce  
who grabbed my tush when he was on the prowl  
asked me to thank him for the flattering attention, ow!  
to smile pretty and ignore his base intention  
no matter how I feel

I gotta Keep it Real — don't ask me to be nice about it  
I dream of future days when if I choose to refuse  
no one thinks twice about it, I could get used to  
Me, as a Woman, in a Suit.

(LOUD MUSIC moves into 17 year old BELLA's  
phone as she starts to film INDI, 18.)

LARK

I met Indi and Bella in Kindergarten. They posted this video in high school.

INDI

Cum and see! Live Girls!

Yay! We're doing it for free!  
BELLA

Hey, Class of 20-21!  
INDI

Look at this crowd!  
BELLA

INDI  
(into Bella's camera, playing to all the students)  
Here we are, Indi Martin and Belladonna Jones

BELLA  
(upset that anyone should know her full name)  
Bella Jones. Bella, thank you very much! Indi Martin and Bella Jones! Seniors, oh-oh-oh! Doing it in front of Lincoln Freedom High. School'scool with me. Cause we are happy to be free!

INDI  
Watch me — — watch me!

(BELLA films INDI's performance.)

INDIGO SPIKES  
Anyone can hook-up cause it feels good  
it feels gooooo — it feels good good good

to move my body against your body  
go down on your body  
surround your body  
and do it til you cum!

I'll be the one who can be of use  
I'll be the body you can call when you wanna  
I'll be the body you can squeeze for juice

What are the consequences?  
There are no consequences!

There is no way I'm getting made  
to carry your unwanted babe  
Make no mistake about it  
every month I get to bleed  
I waste your seed

INDI (cont'd)

I aint making mouths to feed.  
I waste your seed  
Until you run out of the need!

Anyone can hook-up cause it feels good  
It feels goooood — it feels good-good-good

BELLA

Indi! Yay! Oh-ooooh! Show me how it's done, Indi!

(INDI lies on the ground and puts her hands down her own pants while BELLA pulls her own panties down to her ankles and sits on INDI's face filming INDI and herself with her phone. They remain fully covered.)

LARK

Germaine Greer, born on this day almost 100 years ago, questioned the culture of her time. She said, "women fail to understand how much men hate them." I am trying to figure out if growing up female in this culture makes us hate ourselves. And if it does, and I think it does, then I am trying to figure out how to change it.

(BELLA rides and writhes on INDI's face as BELLA pinches her own nipples through her shirt and INDI writhes with her hands down her own pants.)

LARK

This is my presentation for my thesis,

BELLA

/fuck me

LARK

titled: "Intersectionality Colon

BELLA

on the prison blacktop

LARK

Beauty Slash Body Slash Mind"

BELLA

They all got their phones out all juiced up for the day

LARK

My mother always hoped I'd grow tall, and considering she's only 5 feet and my father's only 5 foot five, I didn't have much of a chance. But she wanted me tall, so she'd always ask me after school, "did you hang from the jungle gym?" She thought it would help me grow.

BELLA

in front of the whole school

LARK

Bella seemed to be enjoying herself.

BELLA

Make me cum, bitch.

LARK

I didn't go to Lincoln High. I went to a private school.  
On my phone, it looked like Indi was taking orders from Bella.

BELLA

You got your hands down your pants?

LARK

Watching them, I felt like a prude. Like if you look at Indi's shoes — this is a choice. Should I ATTRACT or should I choose to move easily with comfort and speed and maintain the health of my feet, my ankles, my knees?

BELLA

Fuck me.

LARK

The choice pits us against ourselves. For me, attraction is less of an issue because of my face, but we'll get to that. And the thing about Bella and Indi is that Bella is never on top. Never. So this seemed strange to me, but then Bella is also the one being done to, so is she really on top? And who actually likes to walk in heels?

(INDI starts to suffocate and tries to get BELLA's attention by thrashing and grabbing at her.)

BELLA

they'll post your pretty fucked face

LARK

So they make your legs look better, but better in what context?

BELLA  
such a pretty girl-bitch

LARK  
I wouldn't mind wearing heels to make my legs look better in a sexual context, but then why walk? Why not just wear my heels to bed?

BELLA  
for all the world to see as soon as I roll offa you

LARK  
Why is my sexuality a part of my every day life and presentation?

BELLA  
soon as you make me cum

LARK  
Why isn't it private?

BELLA  
so do it bitch

LARK  
And for that matter, what is private?

BELLA  
Fuck yourself, Indi-bitch, and fuck me!

(BELLA hits INDI, and INDI finds air.)

LARK  
What do we keep private today? Anything?

BELLA  
Right in front of Lincoln Freedom High!

LARK  
The fact that I've had seven surgeries on my face is hardly private.

BELLA  
Get me high, girl.

LARK  
Anyone can see it and wonder if I'm just vain or if there's a reason.



Set me free!

BELLA

But I didn't get cancer, or a rare disease,

LARK

At the prison door,  
Lincoln-Free,  
because we're slaves until we're free

BELLA

No one ever guesses what happened to me

LARK

/fuck me

BELLA

How does culture happen?

LARK

Do me!

BELLA

How do we learn it and abide by it or not?

LARK

oh bitch

BELLA

How do we resist?

LARK

you bitch

BELLA

What if we don't? What are the consequences?

LARK

you cunt! Oh-oooh!

BELLA

(BELLA cums and rolls off INDI and poses as INDI gets up and poses, her face wet with cum. Bulbs flash — students shooting pics.)

Here's an oldie.

LARK

(LARK cues her phone to play "Wrecking Ball" by Miley Cyrus.)

LARK

(sings with music)  
"I came in like a wrecking ball"

ALL

"All you ever did was wreh-eh-eck me!"

LARK

Remember that? I was eight years old. As a child, I loved Hannah Montana, so it was natural for me to want to love the real grown-up Hannah, Miley Cyrus. So of course that's in my head.

(The school bell rings. BELLA and INDI see the crowd disperse.)

BELLA

Thank you! Thank you all for coming!

(INDI slaps BELLA across the face. More camera clicks and flashes. INDI waits for students to leave, and then INDI backs BELLA into the jungle gym so that it becomes a prison)

INDI

I am not your bitch.

BELLA

Ow-ooh!

LARK

But my mother used to sing a song by a band called The Beatles — from a really long time ago — even before she was born

BELLA

Indi, I'm sorry! What?

INDI

You are my bitch.

Ow-ooh, I am gonna swell up.

BELLA

And don't you forget it.

INDI

LARK  
and my mother is a smart woman, with a PhD in nuclear physics, but she sings this song about a serial killer

BELLA  
I didn't mean it Indi, but you always say that to me.

INDI  
Did I make you cum?

(INDI has climbed on top of the jungle gym and towers over BELLA)

BELLA  
Yes, thank you.

LARK  
a serial killer who murdered women by crushing their skulls with a hammer. Super-catchy little tune! Some days she cannot get it out of her head.

BELLA  
Did I make you cum?

INDI  
Don't forget who's in charge of you, Bella.

BELLA  
Not always Indi. Sometimes I get to be on top.

INDI  
Only when I say so.

(INDI slips into the jungle gym with BELLA)

LARK  
So culture is the air we breathe.

BELLA  
You wanna tie me up later?

LARK  
It's not something we think about.

INDI  
I'm gonna tie you up and beat you with the stick.

LARK  
It's something we bathe in.

BELLA  
I'll cum for you, Indi.

LARK  
Unconsciously.

INDI  
I know you will.

LARK  
And my mother, with her degree in nuclear physics, teaches high school science because we moved to be near the hospital where my father practices brain surgery. This is the economics of female-non-personhood, it's a system.

BELLA  
You know I like it when you beat me.

LARK  
So she passes out petri dishes.

BELLA  
It's better for me than cutting.

LARK  
Once a year she cuts up fetal pigs.

BELLA  
The stick never makes me bleed.

LARK  
How do we change the air?

BELLA  
The stick only leaves a bruise, but I still feel it.

LARK

Is there someone I could point to, some place some where? A they? A person who claims to be the patriarch?

BELLA

That's all I want, Indi.

LARK

We're all singing the same song.

INDI

What's "what you want"?

BELLA

To feel something.

INDI

Sometimes you are so dumb.

BELLA

I'm, I love you, Indi.

INDI

Save it for my grave.

BELLA

Don't say that.

INDI

I can't stand that love shit. You know that.

BELLA

I want to feel whatever you want to do to me. You know that.

LARK

Whatever we might do in this world, as female persons, like finish this degree or get a PhD, or switch back to biology or write a book on female sexuality I'd call it Whorticulture with a W, or do it all, it all depends on one thing.

INDI

You know what I know?

BELLA

No, Indi, what?

We are what we think we are. LARK

I know you're my bitch. INDI

You know I am. BELLA

Say it. INDI

I'm your bitch. BELLA

It all depends on what we think we can be. What we can Imagine. LARK

What the fuck took you so fucking long? INDI

What do you mean? BELLA

It took you forever to cum. INDI

It was hard with all the people, Indi. BELLA

My whole face is fucking numb. INDI

I tried, I just — BELLA

At one point, I thought I'd suffocate. INDI

It was your idea. BELLA

Okay-okay-okay, blame it all on me. INDI

You're the one who has the ideas. BELLA  
 Okay, I just had to say something. INDI  
 So you hate me now? BELLA  
 No. I have to have boundaries. INDI  
 I didn't mean to suffocate you. BELLA  
 I'm here, okay? INDI  
 I would die. I would die, Indi, if anything happened to you. BELLA  
 No, you wouldn't. INDI  
 I would. I'd spontaneously combust from the grief of it. BELLA  
 Don't say that shit. INDI  
 But it's true. You know how hard it's been with us — because we are two of a kind/ the way we. . . BELLA  
 /Don't start, Bella. INDI  
 in the way that's important, on the inside,/ after what happened BELLA  
 I AM WARNING YOU BELLA INDI  
 I'm just saying our parents /and all that shit, BELLA

Yours. Not mine. Okay,/ okay, okay

INDI

What are you talking about?

BELLA

Just Forget it, okay?

INDI

What are you saying? Not Yours?

BELLA

What are you talking about?

INDI

You forgot? You think we didn't both go through/ the same fucked up shit that

BELLA

BELLA WHAT THE FUCK???

INDI

I am not the only one, and I will never forget it/ Indi never, and you should never forget

BELLA

STOP IT! BITCH, YOU BITCH\_\_\_\_\_

INDI

(INDI lashes out violently at BELLA.)

BELLA

You happy now? You got me. I'm down. You happy?

\_\_\_\_\_

INDI

so you and me forever

BELLA

\_\_\_\_\_

INDI

\_\_\_\_\_



BELLA

Two of a kind.  
Okay,  
I know you're straight and just wanna play around  
and do crazy shit like we did today,  
but I love you, Indi, /and I'd do anything for you.

INDI

GET the fuck out.

BELLA

Come on. It's okay — I'll be okay.  
Promise. It doesn't even hurt anymore.

INDI

Did you post it?

BELLA

Yeah. We have a ton of likes. And trolls. And haters. I AM FULL OF LOVE AND JOY!  
(gasps)  
Sorry!

(BELLA bursts into tears. INDI holds and comforts BELLA.)

LARK

It was all posted.  
Someone spliced them all together.  
6 million hits the first day.

(N.B. The following HATER CHORUS could become a wall of texts that continues to scroll throughout the show.)

(A chorus of POSTED RESPONSES performed by INDI as BEAUTY, BELLA as BODY and LARK as MIND. These performances could be masked.)

BODY (BELLA)  
Ho's!

BEAUTY (INDI)  
So what?

MIND (LARK)  
Whores!

BEAUTY  
Black bitch sits on a white girl's face.

BODY  
Who cares?

BEAUTY  
Putas!

MIND  
Fuck that!

BODY  
Why does it always have to be about race?

BODY  
Skanks!

BEAUTY  
Die bitches.

MIND  
Eat my ass!

BODY  
Fuck you all.

BEAUTY and MIND  
Can't you see

Can't you see that female

BEAUTY

BODY BEAUTY AND MIND  
sexuality

BEAUTY  
is a nasty thing?

BODY  
A dark thing.

MIND  
corrupt shit

BODY  
Can't you fuck off and die?

BEAUTY and MIND  
Kill yourselves.

BEAUTY  
You're not even cute.

BODY  
You bitches suck.

MIND  
Where's the sequel?

BODY  
— let's see the white chick cum.

BEAUTY  
She's the worst.

BODY  
Ugly cunt.

BEAUTY  
Blow me!

MIND  
Fuck off and die.

BODY

Suck my cock.

BODY  
And you suck

BEAUTY  
I'll fuck you

MIND  
Fuck you!

BEAUTY  
and you should kill yourselves

BODY  
and you should die!

BEAUTY  
Die ugly bitches!

MIND  
Die bitch die!

(Removing their masks/lights shift/BELLA sobs and INDI comforts her by pushing her playfully in a passive aggressive way all over the playground.)

BELLA

(crying)  
Don't push me.

INDI

You like it.

BELLA

(crying)  
I'm a happy girl, Indi. I'm happy!

(INDI holds BELLA.)

LARK

One thing we do in my family is make fun of ourselves and tell jokes, so my father, the brain surgeon, always says, "it's not brain surgery",

(laughs)

and then my mom will say, "it's not nuclear physics"!

(laughs)

Like anything at all is easier than that, right? But that is what they were taught.

There are rules and reasons for how to do that. A person can do what is expected and it all works out. So I envy them, because life feels harder than that to me. Like finding the right thing to wear. Or the right thing to say. Or like when somebody. Offs herself. You can be smart as a whip and still flunk life.

(INDI in a corner tears out her hair. CLAIRE, INDI's MOM might be BELLA wearing a cartoonish white-face mask.)

CLAIRE (INDI'S MOM played by BELLA)  
 What's going on, Indi?

INDI (18)  
 Nothing.

CLAIRE  
 Your hair. You're shedding all over the house.

INDI  
 I guess I'm your dog then.

CLAIRE  
 Do you feel like a dog?

INDI  
 "Do you feel like a dog"? What about you, Mom? Do you feel like a dog?

CLAIRE  
 Frank?

INDI  
 Oh, okay,  
 (loudly calling out, mimics Claire)  
 "Frank"! Daddy!

CLAIRE  
 Indi, your voice.

INDI  
 My voice?/ Yes, I will keep it down. /  
 (as to a dog, to herself)  
 Down girl! Down! Down!

FRANK (INDI'S DAD played by LARK)  
 (the line from Some Girls by the Stones, can be spoken or falsetto'd)  
 "pretty-pretty-pretty-pretty-pretty-pretty-gurul." What's all the —

CLAIRE  
 She's been tearing out her hair again.

INDI  
 Again?

It was nothing. CLAIRE

Nothing? INDI

Years ago. A nervous habit. But you stopped. You stopped years ago. CLAIRE

When? I don't remember. INDI

No reason to remember. CLAIRE

You mean 4th Grade? INDI

So you do. You remember. No big deal. CLAIRE

What else do you remember? FRANK

Frank. . . CLAIRE

Why do you want to know? INDI

We love you. CLAIRE

We love you, Ind./  
(as a coping mechanism quietly, again from the song under dialogue)  
"come-awon-baybay-please-please-please" FRANK

Do you? INDI

Of course. CLAIRE

Do you really? INDI

Frank? CLAIRE

(snapping to it)  
You know we do. FRANK

(to FRANK)  
Because Bella says that you . . . INDI

What? What do you mean Bella says what? What? CLAIRE

Y'know. . . you-know INDI

Who knows? Knows what? FRANK

What are we talking about Indi? CLAIRE

(THEY ALL KNOW what they are talking about.)

You know! INDI

I know? What do I know? FRANK

From when I was little. INDI

I knew it. CLAIRE

When Bella and I were in grade school. INDI

I knew she would say something. . . CLAIRE

INDI  
(to CLAIRE)  
What do you mean you knew?

CLAIRE  
Frank, say something.

FRANK  
What do you want me to say?

CLAIRE  
We should have put her in that private school.

FRANK  
I would have done it, Claire. But you said/. . .

CLAIRE  
We don't need /to go into that.

INDI  
What did you say? Mom?

CLAIRE  
I/ thought we should. . .

FRANK  
(to CLAIRE)  
You were the one who. . .

CLAIRE  
Frank/ . . .

INDI  
It was the money, right?

CLAIRE  
What?/ No, it wasn't that. . .

INDI  
You wouldn't spend the money for private school. So it's true?

CLAIRE  
What exactly did Bella say?

You're denying it? INDI

No one is denying anything — FRANK

Bella says this because. . . /she's upset with you? CLAIRE

Bella loves me. INDI

and loving you includes confusing you, upsetting you? CLAIRE

She just assumed I knew INDI

You had a fight, right? CLAIRE

You don't know anything about us. INDI

So now she's telling lies? Or are you making up lies? CLAIRE

No, / I — INDI

Claire, stop. FRANK

We can help you, Indi. CLAIRE

What? No. / No, you can't. INDI

We have always helped you. CLAIRE

Claire. . . FRANK



CLAIRE  
Remember how we used to play “therapy”?

INDI  
No. No, I don’t remember.

CLAIRE  
Of course you remember.

FRANK  
Don’t push her Claire.

INDI  
I don’t want to remember.

CLAIRE  
And you don’t have to,/ sweetheart. . .

INDI  
We played therapy? Fuck you. Fuck you!

CLAIRE  
Stop it.

INDI  
Forget it.

CLAIRE  
See?

INDI  
Just forget.

CLAIRE  
That’s right.

INDI  
I don’t want to know.

CLAIRE  
Indi, do we have to have so much drama all the time?

INDI  
Drama?

CLAIRE

Why don't you change out of that and fix your face? You're such a pretty girl!

(INDI decides to leave.)

FRANK

Where are you going, young lady?

(a la Jagger)

But you're my pretty-pretty/--gurul

INDI

Shut it, Dad. I have to go./ Going out!

CLAIRE

Indi?

FRANK (LARK)

Like that?

CLAIRE (BELLA)

You should not go outside like that.

(THEY block her way or cage her in the jungle gym.)

CLAIRE and FRANK (LARK and BELLA)

Indi!

(MASKS off. BELLA goes into jungle gym and holds  
INDI who is passed out in BELLA's arms.)

## LARKSPUR

If I were a Man I'd be Funny  
 If I belched as a Man at the Table  
 you would Laugh it off  
 if You were a Man you'd be Able  
 to Belch even Louder -  
 we would Laugh, we'd be Proud  
 how we're Funny  
 I'd be Funny as a Man if I Farted  
 no one would walk away all brokenHearted  
 another Man would light a Match and Fart on Cue  
 What a Night we could Have  
 Trying to outdo each other's escapades  
 We could belch and fart some serenades  
 and later on y'Know we'd both get laid  
 If I were a Man I'd be Funny.

(INDI, 15, climbs on the jungle gym.)

(NB: There are 2 Mr. Cestrums in matching CESTRUM MASKS because he carries twice the weight and has twice the power here over Indi, although she may use her sexuality as a counter-power, but as two actors, he may intimidate her from many directions in many ways. First THEY must bring her down from the jungle gym.)

MR. CESTRUM A (BELLA)

We need to discuss your paper.

INDI

Yes, Mr. Cestrum.

MR. CESTRUM B (LARK)

I am concerned.

INDI

Yes, Mr. Cestrum.

MR. CESTRUM A

I wonder about your personal experience with your topic.

INDI

Yes, Mr. Cestrum.

(INDI may move or cover herself in ways that make it clear SHE is trying to make eye contact with CESTRUM even though HE is only looking at her chest.)

Stop saying that.

MR. CESTRUM B

Okay, Mr. Ces —

INDI

And stop doing that.

MR. CESTRUM A

I'm not aware of doing any —

INDI

That — stop it —

MR. CESTRUM B

What?

INDI

Your eyes

MR. CESTRUM A

My eyes?

INDI

All right. Abortion statistics in our county

MR. CESTRUM B

have little to do with this other information that is

MR. CESTRUM A

purely anecdotal.

MR. CESTRUM A AND B

Statistics don't tell stories, Mr. Cestrum.

INDI

These can be interpreted.

MR. CESTRUM A

INDI

Yes, Mr. Cestrum, but you asked for 10 pages/, and —

MR. CESTRUM B

Welcome to Tenth Grade.

INDI

If you are saying you have personal experience with this topic

MR. CESTRUM B

then I'll have to report it by law.

MR. CESTRUM A

I am a mandatory reporter.

INDI

I never said these are my own personal experiences.

MR. CESTRUM B

But you've written here/ that

INDI

That is a quote from a source

MR. CESTRUM A

But you don't cite your sources, like here, another quote

INDI

No one wants to be identified.

MR. CESTRUM B

But —

INDI

Mr. Cestrum, am I in trouble for writing this?

MR. CESTRUM A

I don't see how you can claim to know this.

INDI

You think I lied or made it up?

MR. CESTRUM B

If it's not your own personal experience, then. . .

INDI

So either I say “yes, Mr. Cestrum, I had an abortion”, and you report me to Children’s Services, and they investigate me and my family, or I’m lying and making stuff up.

MR. CESTRUM A

In a report on the increase in abortions

INDI

over the past few years in this county,

MR. CESTRUM B

basically, yes.

INDI

I think I should choose a different topic

MR. CESTRUM A

But the final paper is due in two weeks.

MR. CESTRUM B

You’ll be late.

INDI

If I can’t quote people anonymously, I’ll have to change topics

MR. CESTRUM B

But topics had to be approved last month

INDI

And you approved this

MR. CESTRUM A

if you provide your sources

INDI

How about I write about day care?

MR. CESTRUM B

You mean little kids?

INDI

Isn’t that a social study — like how available and affordable day care is in our county

MR. CESTRUM A

Nothing controversial about that!

INDI

If you say so, Mr. Cestrum.

(MASKS off. BELLA goes back to cradling INDI.)

LARKSPUR

If I were a Man i'd get Paid More  
 I'd slip in Easy through the Front Door  
 If I were a Man I'd work Half as Hard for Twice the Pay  
 take Credit for the Things I Say  
 get Credit for the Things you Say  
 more Credit when I Take iDeas  
 What's yours is mine cause it actually is  
 Your thoughts Sound More like Mine than Yours  
 Cause men are men who own the floors  
 the ceiling made of glass or plaster  
 won't crack to let me squeeze through faster  
 even if I did beg and implore  
 If I were a Man equipment Opens the Door  
 If I were a Man I'd get Paid More

(BELLA meets LARK at the playground in  
 Laurel Glades, a suburban enclave.)

BELLA (18)

Why would you want to meet me here?

LARK (18)

I thought/ I would try to

BELLA

I totally fucked you up.

LARK

Well, I am actually/ having that worked on.

BELLA

I have no special love for you, Lark.

LARK

I wasn't expecting any/ love, Bella, I just —

BELLA

I don't feel bad either. I would do it again.

You would? LARK

I consider it justice. BELLA

For . . . ? LARK

I think you got what you deserved  
but I also feel like  
it's over. Like  
an eye for an eye. BELLA

An eye for an eye? As in the laws of Hammurabi? LARK

Who? BELLA

How we mark/ the beginning of civilization, LARK

/Who's we? BELLA

but it's a far cry/ from actual justice. LARK

But Lark, if you could stop interrupting me, Lark, you, of all people, you should know  
that I'm a fucked up person. BELLA

/I should? LARK



BELLA

I used to spend hours sticking pens in my vagina.  
I wedged myself in between my bed and the door to my room.  
If I press my legs against the door,  
I'm pretty sure my brothers can't bust in on me.  
I started when I was little,  
right after we had to move away from here,  
once my dad left, thanks to you, Lark The Fucktard,  
and my mom went to work, and my brothers went berserk,  
and I used to scrunch myself up against the door to my room  
with one pen,  
just slipping it in easy.  
I added one at a time until I had five or six in a circle.  
But my muscles would contract and try to push everything out —  
I couldn't stop them — so I worked on it.  
I taught my body to accept them. To hold them.  
I can relax, and let them be there. Because I want to.  
Because I want to enlarge myself. Because I like to please people.  
I got to the point where I could take twelve at once.  
That's when I knew that sex wouldn't hurt me, that I could do it.  
Cause that's a lot of pens!

LARK

Okay

BELLA

So don't you see?

LARK

You like sex now

BELLA

I don't like anything now.  
Right now. This minute.  
Since this whole fucked up fucked up fucked up shit,  
you shouldn't be here, Lark.  
I could do a lot of fucked up shit right now.

LARK

That's kind of why I thought we should talk.

BELLA

What the fuck? And you had to ask me to come here?

(INDIGO SPIKES rises from the bottom of the jungle gym and climbs it entwining herself in the bars while filming a vlog of herself. LARK and BELLA watch)

INDIGO SPIKES

(suicide note as a vlog)

Indigo dye is a dark, dark blue. The end of the rainbow before violet. Is violet a poisonous plant too?

Indigo creeper, fucking lowlife, almost un-killable. Almost. But kill or be killed.  
(laughs)

Tiny creeper with a red flower, such a pretty face. If her beauty isn't enough to attract you, Indigo tastes sweet like candy. Stay away. Dangerous. Weed her out. Get her by the root. Pull her up and root her out. And keep your eyes out for more.

Tiny creeper, flowered pretty-pretty. But the seed pods are sharp. They'll cut you open. Fuck you up. You can't imagine it. Because Beauty is its own curse. Because you see what you see. But you don't know me.

Nobody. Knows. Indigo.  
Dark. Dark. Blue.

(INDI collapses to a puddle on the inside of the jungle gym.)

LARK (18)

(to BELLA)

I never wanted anything bad to happen to you.

BELLA (18)

A lot of bad shit happened.

LARK

I was only trying to help.

BELLA

My Dad left.

LARK

You know I could not have ever imagined the consequences.

BELLA

We had to leave Laurel Glades and move to a crappy neighborhood, none of this fancy playground shit.

LARK

I was nine.

BELLA

And now this.

LARK

And even if I could have imagined them,  
the consequences, I think, in the long run,  
well, it doesn't matter what I think,  
I think, I think I would do it again too,  
so we're even that way. All right?

BELLA

You don't know shit, Lark.

LARK

I know you must be hurting right now/  
which is why I texted you because, because

BELLA

YOU don't know anything about me. I don't HURT.  
I don't get all feely-weepy, I do shit.

LARK

(as fast as possible, all at once)  
That's a good thing to know about yourself.  
I mean, I just wanted you to know that I am here.  
I mean I would listen to you  
if you wanted to talk to me about it,  
about anything, because I'm not staying long.

BELLA

Because you go to college? Go on. Tell me all about it. Blab!

LARK

Bella, . . .  
I'm leaving soon  
and I really appreciate that you drove over to see me. Thanks.

BELLA

Indi hurt, not me.

LARK

/I just meant —

BELLA

I KNOW she was in pain, cause I put her there

LARK  
No Bella, Indi was in pain long before she met you.

BELLA  
Okay

LARK  
You know it.

BELLA  
maybe I know, and you know, but she forgot.

LARK  
What?

BELLA  
She forgot, all of it.

LARK  
What are you talking about?

BELLA  
It was years ago and she forgot.

LARK  
But —

BELLA  
We had a fight and she. . .  
and I was like. . .  
and nothing she was saying was really making sense  
so I. . . Hell,  
I reminded her  
and she was like no-way  
and I was like yes-way  
and she was like NO!  
She didn't believe me  
and she was hitting me and screaming at me  
and I was ducking  
and she was saying I was lying  
and I was trying to be my happy self and not respond  
cause I have been practicing this

(MORE)

BELLA (cont'd)

but I just lost it  
and I was yelling  
and I was telling her  
what she said                   you know                   what she said  
that she was just like me . . .  
that that was the only reason she liked me anyway  
because no one that pretty would ever talk to me  
if we weren't connected that way  
but she didn't believe me  
she defended him  
said he would never do that  
like she had completely forgotten  
but I reminded her  
and then she was freaking out  
and she threw me out  
and then I went to see her later  
to apologize, to make it up  
and her mom said she'd gone out

LARK

It's not your fault.

BELLA

You don't know that.

LARK

Yes, I do. I know that.

BELLA

You can't say that.

LARK

Anyone could know that.

BELLA

What is that, some Ninja fucking smart shit? Fuck you, Lark. You didn't know her. I knew her, and I remember her.

(INDI, 13, at the top of the jungle gym.)

INDI

He's gotta real cute dick. It's pink, and it's got this funky blue vein, and a very defined ridge.

(BELLA climbs up to join her.)

You like that, huh?  
BELLA (13)

The ridge? Yeah, it's a thing.  
INDI

I don't care. I don't think I even notice.  
BELLA

You fucked up your vagina.  
INDI

I did not.  
BELLA

You know you did.  
INDI

I didn't mean to.  
BELLA

So you don't feel shit.  
INDI

I was worried.  
BELLA

You're flaccid.  
INDI

I am not.  
BELLA

You are.  
INDI

Am not. And that's a word for a dick.  
BELLA

Say cock. I think it's more grown up. Sexier.  
INDI

BELLA

Cock. Cock cock cock cock cock cock cock cockadoodle doooooo!

INDI

Shut the fuck up!

BELLA

Fuck you.

INDI

I like the small ones that grow more when they get hard.

BELLA

Why?

INDI

It's like a surprise. You know, you see it or you feel it in your hand, and you're like, this is a nub

BELLA

Nubby hubby

INDI

Do not say that — that is gross.

BELLA

Everything's gross to you!

INDI

Who gets married anyway? Like, why would you?

BELLA

I think you have to care for someone, like it's a personal thing

INDI

Mutually beneficial, that's what my mother says. It's mutually beneficial.

BELLA

Your mon is so — okay, Indi, if you say so. But I would though. Get married. I want that, that, you know, commitment. . .

INDI

So nubs?

Yeah. BELLA

Or fatties? INDI

They're different from nubs? BELLA

INDI  
A nub grows and surprises you. A fatty is wide but not long. Those are the ones you can doggie style and not have to worry about getting a piss infection.

BELLA  
Good idea. Yeah, cause I like doggie style.

INDI  
Why?

BELLA  
I can sneak my finger onto my clit.

INDI  
Why sneak?

BELLA  
I'm shy.

INDI  
You are not shy.

BELLA  
I am.

INDI  
Get the fuck out.

BELLA  
No for real.

INDI  
Shy?

BELLA  
At heart.



INDI

You don't think a guy would get off if you were touching yourself in front of him?

BELLA

No. He'd be freaked. They freak.

INDI

You're right. Guys just — they're not — guys are like wired for one thing, and when you over-excite them, they think you're a whore

BELLA

They think that anyway

INDI

or they don't think at all

BELLA

No, once you do it with them, they think you're a ho,

INDI

Only cause we don't have good boundaries

BELLA

That's stuff your mother tells you. She's like, she lives in some other world.

INDI

That's the way it is.

BELLA

So lick my ass!

INDI

They won't.

BELLA

I can ask.

INDI

No you can't.

BELLA

Why not?

INDI

Cause you are shy.

(LARK cartwheels! The GIRLS are all younger - like 8. LARK would play with them, but THEY are doing their thing and don't let her join them.)

INDI and BELLA

(chanted like "Miss Mary Mack" with hand motions/claps)

Not every girl is shy  
Not every girl is smart  
Not every girl gets high  
Not every girl's a tart

(LARK and BELLA age back up to 18)

LARK

If I were you,/ I would hurt.

BELLA

SHUT UP!

LARK

You pretend you don't feel.

BELLA

YOU ARE NOT ME.

LARK

I would hurt.

BELLA

Get the fuck out. Get the FUCK OUT LARK!

LARK

What are you gonna do? It's a public space. Plus it's my— —

BELLA

What? Your playground? In your neighborhood,  
your fucking Laurel Glades,  
and I don't get to be here anymore?  
Because of what you did.

LARK

No, I didn't mean that.

BELLA

Then what do you mean?

LARK

You want me to apologize, I apologize.  
But only because I did not know the consequences.  
I could not have known, Bella. I was nine.  
I was nine years old.  
So think about that. I was like this big.

BELLA

I know. I was like so much bigger than you. Still am.

LARK

Yeah, so?

BELLA

Just saying.

LARK

If you blame yourself, you don't know what will happen.

BELLA

So? What do you think? I have a glowing future out there?  
You think I've got a college scholarship waiting for me on the east coast?

LARK

I don't know.

BELLA

I'm not even getting my degree.  
They suspended me for lewd behavior in the school yard. Indi too.

LARK

Well. . . the video. . .

BELLA

What? Indi tried to help me. She wanted to cure me of my shyness, so don't even start, okay? What? You think we're whores.

LARK

I'm not judging you Bella.

BELLA

You're probably a fucking virgin, right?

LARK

You think that because of my face?

BELLA

No, I just meant you're not like us.

LARK

Why not? What's so different about you?

BELLA

I just — I meant you, oh forget it, forget it Lark.

(INDI does a split. The GIRLS are young again.)

BELLA and INDI (8)

(chanted)

Not every girl is tight  
 Not every girl is small  
 And any girl might bite  
 When backed against a wall

(BELLA, tries to use her body to fill the space of the jungle gym, makes herself as large as she could possibly be, her arms and legs outstretched.)

BELLA (13)

If I keep growing and growing, Indi, one day I'm gonna explode, you know?

INDI (14)

You mean be famous?

BELLA

I don't know about famous. I just mean pop! Burst into a thousand pieces! If this jungle gym was a model of the earth, and I could cover it all with my happy super-self then there'd be world peace, there'd be sunshine and photosynthesis, there'd be growth and abundance and joy!

INDI

Get the fuck out.

BELLA

Like Christmas-morning-joy that would last more than two seconds like last year when my brothers got a remote control drone — “Fuck yah”! — and the first time it flew, it got caught in the only tree for miles, like the only tree I ever saw once I left Laurel Glades, and nothing we could do to get it down, reaching, climbing, jumping, until my mom hit it down with her shoe, and it shattered, buh-bye drone! Buh-bye Christmas!

INDI

That musta sucked.

BELLA

We all walked back to the house like, “time for eggs and biscuits and bacon”. But I kept thinking if only I was bigger, then I could pick them all up and carry them in my arms, all of them, Mama and Braydon and Bryan. Hold them all, even while I’d still be walking toward breakfast, cause I was hungry, and I wanted them to feel how happiness can come from just thinking it up, you know like I do all the time, right?

INDI

You do.

BELLA

Cause what do I have to be happy about? But I do it. I make myself happy. It’s a habit.

INDI

You’re a miracle.

BELLA

I’m something, Indi. I don’t know what yet, but I’m something.

(BELLA cradles INDI under beside the jungle gym)

LARKSPUR

if I were a Man I’d get Home safe at Night  
I could Walk the Streets as if I own them  
and walking streets, I’d give a fright to  
sweet-meat-girls just tryin-ga-get Home then  
I’d Never be Blamed for being Out too Late  
if some Bastard asked for my Wallet  
but a Girl out Late is Penis-Bait  
Her ass is asking for what she deserves to get

LARK (18)

You flaunt your desires.

I what? BELLA (18)

That's the difference between us. LARK

So? BELLA

I guess I keep mine private. LARK

But nobody fucks you. BELLA

I have sex. LARK

Who would fuck you? BELLA

I have a boyfriend. LARK

Oh, like, some guy your parents set you up with? BELLA

No. LARK

Does he fuck you doggie style so he doesn't have to see your face? BELLA

(pause)

Bella, I'm sorry it's so hard for you. LARK

What is that supposed to mean? BELLA

I don't think you notice what you feel. LARK

BELLA  
What? I don't feel shit

LARK  
I know it hurts to be you.

BELLA  
How? How would you know that?

LARK  
Cause you keep trying to make me feel bad, but all I feel is how much you must be hurting.

BELLA  
I didn't want to come here.

LARK  
It's feels as if you're throwing your pain at me, like you want me to feel it.

BELLA  
You used to be friends with us.  
Why did you ask me to come here?

LARK  
Maybe if I feel your pain, you think you won't have to.

BELLA  
You know this is the place, you know, right?

LARK  
What place?

BELLA  
I'm leaving now, but you said before that it wasn't my fault.

LARK  
It's not.

BELLA  
You don't know that. But. Thank you. For saying that.

LARK  
So that's something.  
(pause)  
Indi would forgive you.

BELLA

You don't know shit about Indi.

LARK

Indi's dead, so it doesn't matter if I'm right or not. If I say Indi would forgive you, take it and believe it. Choose to be free.

BELLA

I always choose to be free.

LARK

Good.

BELLA

You can't free me. I free me.

LARK

Then be free.

(INDIGO SPIKES climbs and entwines herself in the jungle gym filming herself. LARK and BELLA watch)

INDIGO SPIKES

(from her suicide vlog)  
 when you google images of indigo  
 you get to see the horses  
 who died from eating it  
 little ponies and donkeys in photos  
 lie dying on the ground  
   how soft their ears would be  
   if I could touch them  
   but what I see online is never really around  
     I used to smile  
     I used to say to myself  
     I'm food for butterflies  
     I will become one  
     I'll be a butterfly one day somehow  
       and then I grew  
       and what I knew  
       was how to do this now  
         stick a pin through my chest  
         keep my arms and legs out-stretched  
         on a piece of black velvet  
           put me in a framed case  
           to keep me safe



INDIGO SPIKES (cont'd)

I am indigo spikes  
 my poison quickly bites  
 into your flesh  
 it causes death  
     toxic like cyanide  
     you better run and hide  
     I'll never leave a trace  
     I'm set to self-destruct  
     click erase

BELLA (18)

It's not my fault?

LARK (18)

No.

BELLA

How do you know?

LARK

Come on Bella. You know it.

BELLA

She loved sex. She would have sex with anyone. She loved it any way they wanted it.

INDI (16)

One kiss and I can tell what they wanted, like I got radar.  
 I can read them. Cause the faster I can figure it out and do it,  
 the sooner they cum. Get done.  
 It gives me a rush.  
 I provide a service,  
 something I'm good at.

BELLA

She'd do anything. Not like me.  
 I'll do anything for anyone, but I want them to love me for it.  
 They never do, but that's what I want.  
 She just wanted the sex. Craved it.  
 She'd do it with bands, teams, didn't matter.  
 She was obsessed with it, studying it, like science.

LARK

There are careers in that actually

BELLA

No way!

LARK

Yeah. I've been taking Biology thinking I might go Premed, but then you know I love Botany

BELLA

Flowers?

LARK

Yeah, the /cultivation of —

BELLA

Oh, that poison shit. You fucked us up with that.

LARK

Uh, I don't understand how that's even possible.

BELLA

I used to wear these little studs.  
Five green leaves than fanned out and held a purple berry.  
I was proud to wear them.  
My parents said, "look at our happy Belladonna,"  
and you told me the truth, and I became it.  
Toxic. Evil Belladonna.  
I thought they loved me til then.

LARK

Bella, you aren't evil.

BELLA

You can't change that.

LARK

Yes, you can. It's called Neuroscience. We can change our brains and our ideas and our thoughts all the time.

BELLA

Get the fuck out.

LARK

I might major in it, or Sexuality, Sociology, Gender Studies, I don't know.

BELLA

Yay, sounds amaze. I do a lot of gaming. I think you know that.

LARK

Yeah, well, . . .

BELLA

Yeah but you told Indi all that shit too — Indigo.  
Think Lark. You gotta think before you speak.

That's your fault. Your fault, Lark.

LARK

I'm sorry.

BELLA

That's it? She's dead, and you're sorry? Did you see the vlogs she posted?

LARK

I saw them.

BELLA

You think she figured that out by herself?

LARK

She needed help.

BELLA

Yeah, you.

LARK

No, I mean professional help.

BELLA

Right, but it's too late now. I'll let you go —

LARK

It's not your fault.

BELLA

Thank you.

LARK

Take care of yourself.

BELLA

Fuck no!

(LARK and INDI put on blackface MASKS to become CALLUNA and ABRUS, BELLA's parents)

CALLUNA VULGARIS, BELLA'S MOM (LARK)

Bella, you can't say no. She's your Grandma!

ABRUS PRECATORIUS, BELLA'S DAD (INDI)

She only wants a kiss.

BELLA (3)

No!

ABRUS

We don't say no to Granma.

CALLUNA

Bella, it's not nice! We don't say no.

BELLA

No!

ABRUS

You walk straight back in there, young lady.

CALLUNA

Kiss her and give her a hug.

BELLA

No, she's smelly, and she'll pinch me!

CALLUNA

I'll pinch you if you don't!

ABRUS

I will carry you/ back there, and —

BELLA

No! I won't!

ABRUS

Amaryllis Belladonna! I am warning you.

CALLUNA

It's just a kiss, Bella. It's just a kiss. Just do it Bella, and then we'll go.

BELLA

Ow-ooh, you're hurting me. . .

(MASKS OFF. BELLA cradles INDI as)

LARKSPUR

If I were a Man Rape has  
Nothing to do with me  
I have  
Nothing to do with Rape  
even if she is asleep  
or she's inebriated  
— Boys will be Boys  
it's guaranteed  
in the Consti-Fucking-Tution  
and As a Girl by now you'd think  
i Should be used to it,  
no need to press for any kinda resolution  
and g-d forbid I should request some prosecution  
If I were a Man  
I would know just how to rape you  
cause I was raised to think it's fine for me to hate you  
to use your body as a place for my own rage too  
and no one ever told me not to  
so rape is not my issue

(INDI in a MASK of GREAT BEAUTY, that could be her actual face, snaps on medical gloves. BELLA wears a yellowface MASK as DR. KIM, Lark's MOM)

DR. BANGS (INDI)

What they did to you is real.

LARK (14)

You don't have to tell me that. I know that.

DR. KIM (LARK's MOM) (BELLA)

She knows that.

LARK

No one knows that more than me.

DR. KIM

(correcting Lark's English)

I.

LARK

At first I could barely open my mouth to eat from a straw — I couldn't even chew.

DR. BANGS

See how far you've come!

LARK

I'm disfigured.

DR. KIM

Lark, it's not that bad.

DR. BANGS

It's bad for Lark. So there's no reason not to embrace this as an opportunity.

LARK

That doesn't make any sense to me.

DR. BANGS

But when you have the chance to have an all-expenses paid vacation, don't you take it?

LARK

Not in the middle of the school year. Not if I'm busy trying to do what I love.

DR. BANGS

Okay, maybe.

LARK

I want my face back the way it was.

DR. BANGS

But you could affect your entire future based on your choices here today.

LARK

Like how?

DR. BANGS

People have automatic reactions based on how people look. Those with higher cheekbones are automatically attributed more trust.

LARK

They're what?

DR. BANGS

People make first impressions unconsciously within milliseconds of seeing someone, and researchers found that people with high cheekbones are seen as more trustworthy. I could give you higher cheekbones.

LARK

I want my old cheekbones.

DR. BANGS

Cheekbones are an ancient marker of beauty.

LARK

I am not going to grow up to be a supermodel.

DR. BANGS

But it wouldn't hurt to look like one.

LARK

It would hurt me.

DR. BANGS

Then what do you want?

LARK

I want you to fix my face.

DR. BANGS

That's what I was talking about.

LARK

I want to look the way I used to. That's it. My face.

DR. BANGS

No one ever asks for that. We don't have protocols for that. What we have are models for perfection or the moving closer to perfection.

LARK

Like?

DR. BANGS

You could reshape your eyes.

LARK

What is that supposed to mean?

DR. BANGS

I'm not saying there is anything wrong with your eyes the way they are now, I'm only saying that Asian people sometimes come here to see if there is anything I can do to make their eyes look more, like other people's eyes

LARK

(to DR. BANGS)  
You aren't saying this.  
Mom?

DR. KIM

I don't know, Lark.

LARK

(to DR. KIM)  
Is she saying this?  
(to DR. BANGS)  
Are you? No. People don't come here and say that.

DR. BANGS

Sometimes.

LARK

You're lying. There are no Asian people who come to you. That's sick.

DR. BANGS

But you could say that

LARK

I will never say that

DR. BANGS

But if you did say that, then /I could be telling the truth.

LARK

But I would never — Will Never Say That

DR. BANGS

I could be telling the truth

LARK

But you're not. You're lying. Mom, she's lying.



DR. KIM  
What do you want me to say, Lark?  
(to DR. BANGS)  
I'm sorry, she's young, impatient, and. . .

LARK  
Admit it.

DR. BANGS  
Excuse me?

LARK  
Just because I'm a kid, you think you can lie to me?

DR. KIM  
Lark.

DR. BANGS  
I was not lying to you. I was positing a hypothetical situation and trying to solve your problem

LARK  
I don't have a problem.

DR. BANGS  
Then why did you come here?

LARK  
I was told that you could

LARK and DR. BANGS  
Fix my/your face.

DR. KIM  
Lark, your voice.

DR. BANGS  
So your face needs fixing. That means your face is a problem. I solve problems.

LARK  
My face is not a problem. My face is my face.

DR. BANGS  
What exactly do you want?

LARK

I want my face to look like me.

(with photo)

This is who I was. When I was twelve. Before.

DR. BANGS

I can see the droop here and we could fix that — that is not a slur against your being of Asian descent or Asian-American or whatever you are

LARK

None of your business.

DR. BANGS

It is my business if I'm going to work on your face. Maybe there are different ways of being Asian or Asian American that I'm not aware of — maybe there are Japanese eyelids and Chinese eyelids and Korean eyelids and —

LARK

and maybe there are blonde breasts/ and brunette breasts and redhead// breasts and

DR. KIM

Lark.

DR. BANGS

But there are! I can do that! Don't you see? We can match your skintone to hide/ the scarring and

LARK

Asian skin tone? Korean skin tone? Mom???

DR. BANGS (INDI)

We can graft your own skin, your own tones

DR. KIM (BELLA)

She was recommended.

LARK

Mom, we need to leave.

(LOUD MUSIC. INDIGO SPIKES plays on the jungle gym rubbing herself against the bars while filming herself and live streaming on her vlog. LARK and BELLA watch)

## INDIGO SPIKES

(warped, dissonant)  
 You're a pretty-pretty-pretty-pretty-pretty-pretty-gurull  
 (licks fingers)  
 All this time I thought  
 this was all my idea  
 I thought I liked it  
 (rope between her legs)  
 but you taught me, didn't you?  
 I forgot, silly rabbit, but you taught me to like it,  
 you taught me to say I like it, do it, do it again  
 watch me come for you, watch me, watch me

(INDI climaxes — it is not a big deal, more like a shiver, as if she has fulfilled a task, and she moves on to hanging herself still live-streaming. As INDI would hang herself, BELLA who is watching the film of the hanging tries to stop her by grabbing her.)

BELLA (17)

I would have stopped you Indi. I would have saved you.

(BELLA removes the noose as LARK watches the hanging on her phone and we hear the replay.)

INDI (18)

(from LARK's phone)  
 you taught me to say I like it, do it, do it again  
 watch me come for you, watch me, watch me

(Then silence. Crickets. BELLA holds INDI.)

BELLA

Oh-no, oh-noooh, Indi, no no no \_\_\_\_\_ such a good girl.

(BELLA takes selfies and photos of INDI and posts them online. BELLA records herself holding INDI.)

BELLA

(to the world)  
 This is Bella. \_\_\_\_\_  
 And this is Indi. \_\_\_\_\_  
 I hope she's happy. \_\_\_\_\_

(LARK and BELLA at the playground as before. INDI plays on the jungle gym.)

Are you happy, Bella?

LARK (18)

I want to be with Indi.

BELLA (18)

I have a teacher, Bella,

LARK

At your fancy fucking college?

BELLA

LARK

Yes. She says if there is something in my life I wish I could change, I should go back and try to figure out how to change it. I don't mean science-fiction change-the-past, I mean change the future, that I might have the power to do that.

Lah-di-fucking-dah, Lark.

BELLA

You have that power too.

LARK

(INDI, 11, does a back walk-over!)

INDI & BELLA (10)

Not every girl's impressed  
Not every girl's your chance  
To feast your eyes on her breasts  
Or free your dick from your pants

(BELLADONNA films herself performing this. LARK and INDI could be their FLOWER selves with BELLADONNA.)

BELLADONNA

This is for Indi. She mighta hated it. She mighta laughed at it.  
But since I'll never know what she thinks, I get to decide.  
And I say, Indi says,

## INDIGO SPIKES AND BELLADONNA

(BELLA as INDI)

Okay-okay-okay, go Bella!

## BELLADONNA

I'ma Break out and Find my Freedom  
 to be Un-self-Conscious  
 to Leave the House withOut  
 Checking my Face first.  
 to Walk the World withOut  
 Knowing my Race hurts —  
 Knowing my Body hurts —  
 Knowing the Space i Take hurts —  
 You? — Why am i Tripping Over You?  
 and You there Telling Me to Shoo —  
 i Ain't your Fly or Pest  
 my Stuff puts You on Edge?  
 jump Off the Highest Ledge!  
 i Do not Want to Hear the Shit you Want to Do to Me  
 whereEver I could Go to Get off And how I should Be  
 all Over You your Comments On my Body Parts  
 as If you Know a Fence  
 who'd Buy my Legs and Arms  
 if You could Hock me  
 keep Just my Tits and Ass  
 so You could Fuck me  
 and If i Speak or Call you On it, You are Joking  
 but You won't Calm it Til you See that I am Choking  
 on You, your Itty Bitty Penis,  
 so UndisCovered It been Lost up In your UnderPants  
 this Aint no Kind of Fancy PassionAtta Romance  
     so I'ma Break out and Find my Freedom  
     yo I'ma Refuse to Help you With your Need um  
 yeah I'ma Turning Off my Ear  
 and You can Bleed and Beg and Fear I'll Scratch your Itch  
 but I am Not your Bitch!  
     (to INDIGO SPIKES)  
 no I am Not your Bitch!  
 i'm Not your Beeatch!

(MASKS ON - LARK plays CLAIRE, INDI's MOM in whiteface and BELLA plays FRANK, INDI's DAD in whiteface)

CLAIRE (played by LARK this time)  
You could be friends with Hyacinth.

INDI (10)  
Hyacinth?! I hate her!

CLAIRE  
So someone else then.

FRANK (played by BELLA)  
We don't think Bella is the kind of person/ you should be friends with

INDI  
Why not

CLAIRE  
She doesn't live in Laurel Glades anymore

INDI  
So

FRANK  
So it's not convenient

INDI  
I see her at school

CLAIRE  
We've been thinking about that

INDI  
What is that supposed to mean

FRANK  
We might send you to a private school

INDI  
Are you threatening me

FRANK  
private school is not cheap

INDI  
You'd rather spend money on a private school than let me be friends with Bella?

CLAIRE  
We are thinking of your future

INDI  
I will always be friends with Bella

CLAIRE  
But there are so many other girls to choose from

FRANK  
Like Hyacinth

INDI  
Didn't you hear me like one second ago tell you I hate her?!

FRANK  
Then someone else.

INDI  
Because she can't afford to live here anymore or because she's black or because of what happened?

CLAIRE  
Do we have to pick just one?

FRANK  
I think it's sweet that you still want to be friends

INDI  
You think I pity her. I do not pity her

CLAIRE  
Then what's the attraction?

INDI  
Cause she's so unattractive?

FRANK  
We didn't say that.

INDI  
What attracts you to Daddy?

CLAIRE  
Well,

FRANK

Don't think too hard now, hon'

INDI

Forget I asked. Just forget it. I don't want to know.

CLAIRE

Indi, do we have to have so much drama all the time?

INDI

Drama?

CLAIRE

Couldn't you just dress up a bit — you're such a pretty girl!

FRANK (BELLA)

Where are you going, young lady?/  
(under his breath)  
such a pretty-pretty-gurul

CLAIRE (LARK)

Indi? You should not go outside like that.

CLAIRE and FRANK (LARK and BELLA)

Indi!

(LARK, 20s, removes her mask and then LARK  
removes her disfigurement.)

LARK

After all these years, 15 surgeries later, I want to have a party or something, so since I got you all here for my final thesis presentation, this is basically what I used to look like, for the first 12 years of my life. And I'd like to thank my friends

(indicates INDI and BELLA)

Mia and Riley for pretending to be Indi and Bella today.

(Instead of MIA and RILEY, THEY surprise LARK with  
confetti.)

MIA (INDI, 20s)

Happy Face Party for Lark!  
PhD! PhD! PhD!

RILEY (BELLA, 20s)

It's a party all right! Partay!  
Woohoo! Go Lark!



LARK

(to RILEY and MIA)  
Aw, thank you! You ready?

(LARK gives the count for the chant to begin.)

ALL

(chant)  
Not every girl wants you  
Not every girl can shout  
Not every girl wants to  
Tell you what she's about

LARK

I'm not your ancient courtesan  
I'm not your geisha here to kiss your hand  
a modern girl is not your biggest fan  
I happen to be able  
what you're bringing to the table  
is not half as much as you know what I can

ALL

Not every girl can say  
How far she'd like to go  
Not every girl can play  
Not every girl's a ho

MIA/INDI

I've gotta Maseratti  
and it's parked in my garage  
I won't let you touch my body  
til we shatter this mirage

RILEY/BELLA

I'm the One who Does the Driving  
even If you Break a Sweat  
I'm the One who Steers and Knows which Gears  
will Get me To the places I can Get

ALL

Not every Girl is Yours  
To Take and Do as you Please  
Not every Girl inSures  
You'll live your FantaSies

Not every Tiger has Claws  
LARK

Not every Girl gets A's  
RILEY/BELLA

Not every Girl has Flaws  
MIA/INDI

I'm not your Asian Phase  
LARK

Not every Girl's to bone  
A Girl ain't just physique  
But Every Girl's Her Own  
And Every Girl's Unique  
ALL

But Lark, you never really told us how it happened.  
MIA

How what happened?  
LARK

Your face.  
RILEY

Oh, right.  
LARK

You said you'd get to it, but you never really did.  
RILEY

But we don't want you to feel, you know  
MIA

Pressured or anything, okay?  
RILEY

Yeah, you don't have to, okay?  
MIA

Yay, Lark! Doctor Lark!  
RILEY

MIA

PhD! PhD!

(Confetti falls and then a LOUD Dissonant Bang Bang Maxwell's Silver Hammer — the dark part of the final "silver hammer." School bell rings. Schoolyard, 2015. THEY are 12.)

INDI

It IS you. Welcome to Middle School.

BELLA

We saw you at assembly.

INDI

I knew it was you.

BELLA

Indi knew right away. She always knows. She's smart like that.

INDI

We haven't seen you since, when Bella? Fourth grade?

BELLA

That's right, Indi, Fourth Grade.

INDI

We've wondered how you are.

BELLA

It's been such a long time,

INDI

Two long years.

BELLA

and we've missed you.

INDI

I wouldn't go that far.

BELLA

I've missed you, Lark.

Thanks, Bella. That's sweet.

LARK

She's dangerous that way.

INDI

I am not!

BELLA

LARK

Yes, I know that.

She even misses her Daddy.

INDI

There's nothing wrong with that. I love him too, just like you Indi, just like you.

BELLA

My father doesn't bother me.

INDI

But Indi! — you know he — that's not true—

BELLA

DON'T whine, darling.

INDI

I'm surprised you don't lead her around on a leash.

LARK

You mean because she's my pet? I do love her so much.

INDI

Aw, that's so good of you to say so, Indi. I love you too!

BELLA

Not now, Bella.

INDI

Sorry, okay.

BELLA

(to LARK)

INDI

Enjoying 6th Grade?

LARK

/I was.

INDI  
Did you get your period yet?

BELLA  
Do you shave your legs?

INDI  
Your pits?

BELLA  
Can you balance a pencil under your breasts?

LARK  
(ever the scientist)  
Are those your concerns these days?

INDI  
Remember how we used to play, Lark?

LARK  
I remember my father explaining/ to me —

INDI  
Is that the same father with the tiny vole-penis?

BELLA  
The one that peed in your bath?

LARK  
He said that if you and Bella try to approach me, it would be a violation/, and just because you

INDI  
Does it feel like a violation?

BELLA  
Do you know what a violation feels like, Lark?

INDI  
Bella, Lark still has a Daddy at home with her every night.

BELLA  
Helping her bathe safely.

LARK

You aren't supposed to have my schedule./ I was assured of this, actually, or I wouldn't be here.

BELLA

What schedule is that?

INDI

I guess your father was wrong.

BELLA

Fathers can be wrong, right Lark?

LARK

You know they can be, Bella.

INDI

And when fathers are wrong, there are people in charge, people who take those bad fathers away.

LARK

I was only trying to help you.

INDI

You have a lot to learn, Lark.

BELLA

That's what school's for.

LARK

They said your schedule /would be different.

INDI

Schedules are not that important to us.

BELLA

Not important at all.

INDI

No reason we have to keep ours, right Bella?

BELLA

That's right, Indi. No reason to be in every class every day.

INDI  
That would be boring.

BELLA  
That would be so dumb!

INDI  
Sometimes we cut class

BELLA  
and play Mortal Kombat Triple X, yeah!

INDI  
Let's teach her, Bella.

BELLA  
D'Vorah's like Indi, so pretty with the power to make a swarm of bees eat the skin off your bones and leave you skeletal!

INDI  
Bella.

BELLA  
Cassie Cage will cut your throat open, and as you fall, she catches you and takes a selfie with you as your gaping throat spurts blood all over my tits as you die!

INDI  
Bella, let's teach Lark a lesson.

BELLA  
(understanding)  
Oh-oooh! Mortal Kombat class!

INDI  
Get out your ballpoint.

BELLA  
Pen, check!

LARK  
No. Please.

(INDI grabs LARK so BELLA can assault LARK.)

BELLA

I'll be Kitana the goddess-warrior!  
I can harness the wind to scatter your organs  
when we slice you to pieces!  
Kitana! Kitana!

(BELLA and INDI push LARK to the ground and stab her with ballpoint pens. The sounds of the playground grow louder.)

(From the violent huddle, BELLA, INDI and LARK emerge dancing, laughing and squealing as 8-9 year old girls. School yard, 2013.)

(INDI, BELLA and LARK try to synchronize an extremely sexual dance routine to Miley Cyrus's, "Wrecking Ball." We don't hear this music; we hear playground sound. INDI, BELLA and LARK are laughing, excited.)

INDI

Okay-okay-okay, but when we sing, "I came in like a wrecking ball," let's do the coming in part like totally hot, okay?

BELLA

Like this Indi? Like this?/  
(moving and chanting under following dialogue)  
"I came in like a wrecking ball..."

LARK

But to come in is to enter — like a boy, like this.

INDI

But in the video, "...closed my eyes and swung" is like being swung, like getting done to.

LARK

But wouldn't you rather be the do-er?

INDI

Lark? Do you like know anything?

BELLA

"Left me crashing in a blazing fall!"



(BELLA falls and cracks up. THEY all laugh, scream and roll on the ground together until BELLA sees HYACINTH watching them.)

Hyacinth is watching us.

BELLA

Bye-acinth! I hate her.

INDI

Me too!

BELLA

Why?

LARK

We used to be friendly but not true friends like I am with you.

INDI

You hardly know me.

LARK

But I can tell we have a future together.

INDI

I love Fourth Grade!

BELLA

So why not Hyacinth?

LARK

She wants to make everyone call her Cindi to rhyme with me so we can be like twins.

INDI

But you were friends.

LARK

We could be Indi-n-Cindi-n-Bella-n-Lark.

BELLA

I like to keep my Indi-pendence.

INDI

But you're named for Indigo, the poisonous plant.

LARK

INDI  
Come on Lark, jay-kay?

LARK  
So why can't we ask her to join us? Hyacinth is poisonous too.

BELLA  
We are all poison?

LARK  
Isn't that how we became a group?

INDI  
We can discuss. I'm not like trying to be in charge.

LARK  
Can I go tell her, so she doesn't stand there staring?

(INDI shrugs, and LARK runs off.)

INDI  
Before we let her join us, we should be something special.

BELLA  
Like...?

INDI  
More than a group. A club!

BELLA  
Yeah! A club!

INDI  
Like sisters!

BELLA  
Yeah! Sisters!

INDI  
And we'll have to have a name!

(LARK returns.)

BELLA  
Yeah! A name!

A name? Like Poison Pollies.

Or Poison Pockets.

Oh, I like that!

INDI Poison Pockets like vaginas!

BELLA Poison Pockets!

BELLA Yeah! Like you can hide your Polly in there!

LARK No way!

INDI We could be Indi's Pendants!

BELLA Maybe!

BELLA As if we're hanging off your necklace?

INDI Like charms?

BELLA How about The Happy Charms?

INDI The important thing is we are a group and stay together just us.

BELLA Yeah, just us!

LARK But we all live in Laurel Glades and so does Hyacinth.

INDI You mean Bye-acinth?

BELLA Bye-acinth! I hate her!

She prefers Cindi.

LARK

Only because it rhymes with Indi. I asked her to stop.

INDI

How can she stop? Cindi sounds good.

LARK

I think Indi feels bad.

BELLA

Thank you Bella. I do.

INDI

Then let's find all the things that make us a group, and we'll see if she fits in.

LARK

That was my idea.

INDI

Like we all live in Laurel Glades?

BELLA

And we're all named for poisonous plants.

LARK

All right. Go on.

INDI

We all like Polly Pockets.

LARK

And recess! Yay!

BELLA

And the dance moves of Miley Cyrus!

INDI

Hannah Montana! Yay!

BELLA

Grow up Bella, she's Miley now.

INDI

We're all ten years old. LARK

I'm nine! INDI

We're all about to be ten. LARK

I'll be ten when it's almost a new year. BELLA

Okay, so. . . INDI

We're all girls. We all started fourth grade three days ago, and we're all in Mrs. Spurge's class. LARK

We all twerk with pride! BELLA

Not here, Bella. INDI

Okay. BELLA

So Cindi fits right in. LARK

Hyacinth does not fit in. INDI

Why not? LARK

Because, okay-okay-okay, she can't describe her Daddy's penis, and we can. INDI

I don't know about that. BELLA

Any penis is pretty much the same. LARK

INDI

But we can get to know each other by saying where we were and what we were doing, when we saw our Daddy's penis.

LARK

Very funny. Jay-kay?

INDI

Sisters don't keep secrets. We all have pictures in our heads of our daddies' penises.

LARK

We do?

BELLA

I do!

INDI

So we could free ourselves from them.

BELLA

Talking about it does that?

INDI

Definitely.

LARK

You don't know that.

INDI

I do too. My mother is a licensed psycho-therapist, and she helps people by getting them to talk about their problems.

BELLA

But what if we're totally happy and fine?

INDI

Then maybe you don't belong in our group.

BELLA

I was only asking.

(reaching herself)

I would like your mom's idea to work.

LARK

You don't have to, Bella. She's just trying/ to scare you—

INDI

I am trying to be her friend. It's a song — "getting to know you!" Don't you want to know everything about me too?

BELLA

I love you Indi, and I love you too, Lark, and I want to be known.  
I have seen my father's penis.  
In the dark, when everyone else is asleep.  
He comes to my room.  
His underpants have a secret hole in the front.  
His penis presses up against it til it pops straight out  
and stands in the air like a puppet with invisible string.  
Red. Warm. Veins. And blood pumping in and out to keep it inflated.

INDI

Does he put it inside you?

BELLA

Never. He says I'm too small, but I'm getting bigger every day!

LARK

Do you feel better now, Bella, now that you told us?

BELLA

No. I feel terrible!

INDI

I'm sorry, Bella! I forgot the most important part!

BELLA

You did?

LARK

You mean there's more?

INDI

My mom always shows the person love and complete acceptance.

BELLA

Oh, Indi!

INDI

I totally love and accept you Bella. And so does Lark.

(INDI hugs BELLA.)

Thank you, Indi. BELLA

Hug her, Lark. INDI

I'm not a very huggy person. LARK

But she needs to know that we love and accept her. INDI

I can love you and accept you, Bella, even without hugging you. LARK

Really? BELLA

Do you want me to do research and report on your toxicity? LARK

My what? BELLA

How toxic you are and all of your poisonous powers. LARK

I have powers? BELLA

Belladonna? Yeah, like the most toxic of us all. LARK

Thank you, Lark! But I'd rather just try to be the happy girl that I am. My mom says my joyful outlook is a superpower. BELLA

It's your turn. INDI

Says who? LARK

It was my idea/, so ... INDI



LARK

So why don't you go?

INDI

I will: my father's penis is purple when it gets hard. I know because he does it to me when my mom gets her nails done on Saturday mornings because I'm an only child and he says it's less violent than cartoons.

(INDI starts tearing out her hair.)

LARK

He puts it inside you?

INDI

Didn't I say that?

BELLA

Doesn't it hurt? You're smaller than me.

INDI

It isn't something I feel. I shut it out. It's not hard to do.

(BELLA starts rocking back & forth.)

INDI

Go on Lark, it's your turn.

LARK

I'll go tomorrow. Or maybe not at all.

INDI

We told you our stories — it isn't fair if you don't share!

LARK

It isn't fair to keep Hyacinth out. I like her. So does Bella.

BELLA (stops rocking)  
I never said that.  
Indi, I swear it. I  
never even thought that.

LARK  
She lives near all of us.  
She has tons of Polly  
Pockets.

INDI

Okay-okay-okay, we'll ask her to tell us her story, and IF she has one, then she can join, but you have to tell us too, Lark.

Agreed. LARK

Where are you going? INDI

To tell Hyacinth. LARK

INDI  
But Lark, Hyacinth told me she never sees her Daddy's penis. Hyacinth says her Daddy never does stuff to her. Hyacinth says it isn't normal. As if I'm not normal. Hyacinth hates me.

LARK  
She wants to join us, so she couldn't hate you.

INDI  
Okay-okay-okay, but she said it.

BELLA  
No one could hate you, Indi. You're too beautiful.

INDI  
Thank you, Bella.

LARK  
My Dad is in charge of my bath.  
So I don't drown.  
And one time he had to pee.  
His penis looks like  
a wrinkully, one-eyed vole —  
that's a forest rodent —  
and then he shook it, to dry it off.

INDI  
Ew! Gross!  
He peed in your bath?!!!

BELLA  
Ew! Gro-o-oss!  
Ooooo!

LARK  
He peed in the toilet.

INDI  
EW! in front of you!

BELLA  
Eeeeeewoooooooh!

INDI  
That is definitely not normal!

BELLA  
No-ot norrrr-mal!

LARK  
My mom is a scientist, and she says normal is just a lot of math.  
(to INDI and BELLA, meaning good-bye!)  
Bye-acinth!

(LARK exits. Awkward pause.)

INDI  
Bella, how does the end go?

BELLA  
(with sexual abandon)  
“You wre-eh-eck me!”

BELLA AND INDI  
“You wre-eh-eck me! You wre-eh-eck me!”

END OF PLAY