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SAVING SEPTEMBER

A Thesis About Bullying in Two Acts

by

John Jay Boda

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the
University Honors Program
University of South Florida, Saint Petersburg

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Thesis Committee:
Director: Trey Conner, Ph.D.
Julie Buckner Armstrong, Ph.D.
Thomas Smith, Ph.D.
GRATITUDE

While stationed in Iraq in 2006, I walked a dusty mile between my living quarters and work place. At first, I grumbled under my breath for having to lug so much gear for so far a distance; over time, those walks became my time for daily reflection and gratitude. Yes, I was in a war zone, away from my family, and frankly, I wasn’t very supportive of America’s presence in Iraq. But, I was extremely grateful for my health, relative safety, and I knew many people were sending good thoughts and prayers my way for a safe return. At night, without much light pollution, bright stars crowded the sky above me. During my solitary walks home, I could always pick out the large constellation, Orion. The Greek hunter quickly became my confidant and he heard my many confessions of gratitude; I continue to send him gratitude on clear, quiet evenings here in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Saving September would not have been possible without my esteemed thesis committee: Dr. Trey Conner, Dr. Julie Buckner Armstrong, and Dr. Thomas Smith. Each provided very different perspectives and valuable advice during my thesis year and helped me make September what it is: American literature, composition and rhetoric, political science, social justice, open-source, and civic engagement. To my committee, and all my USFSP professors, a very
grateful nod of thanks for the academic encouragement and friendship.

It must be said I wouldn’t have joined the Honors Program or perhaps even be in college today without the encouragement, support, and love of Pedro Acosta, my partner in life. The federal government and the state of Florida won’t let me call him my husband (yet), but he is that and much more to me. To him, cwm.

My college years came later in life after a 20-year career in the Air Force. Saving September could not have been possible if not for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Said without an ounce of shame, I, like many other kids from poorer families, joined the military for the education opportunities. My grateful acknowledgement goes to the American public for not only making September possible, but my entire college education — I hope their investment in me pays dividends in making our country a better place to live. Thank you.

To everyone else, near and far, I send sincere gratitude out to the universe — via Orion — for the opportunity to write Saving September. It’s been the most fulfilling academic experience in my life and has confirmed to me that “writer” is what I’m meant to be.
In 2010, a rash of suicides — especially among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth — began a national conversation about bullying. United States laws and policies along with prevailing societal attitudes towards homosexuality create an ethos condoning such bullying often leading many LGBT youth to conclude it is better to commit suicide than it is to go on living.

ABSTRACT:

Growing up isn’t easy for anybody, but it’s all the more difficult when you are (or perceived to be) LGBT. Saving September is part narrative play, part civics lesson about the difficulties of growing up gay in America and the various forms of bullying surrounding LGBT children.

Narrative story: Destructive forces rail against young people - gay and straight - attempting to survive their adolescence. An ill-fated love story intertwines with that of September, a teenager struggling against a riptide of homophobia.

Dialogues: Pointed and poignant verbal and visual essays reinforcing the author's thesis: anti-gay rhetoric surrounds LGBT youth leading them towards ideas of suicide. The production company adds its own context and experience to the “Dialogues,” making each a communal conversation.

Creating the play requires the production company to examine and consider the play's larger ideas while including local context. The author’s intention is to show how the broader ideas of homophobia impact all members of a community. Choice of music, imagery, and some dialogue are left up to the company and in this way, the play's message becomes organic and authentic for the audience.
When Dr. Thomas Smith accepted me into the USF St. Petersburg Honors Program in the summer of 2010, I knew then I would write a script for a play or film for my thesis year; however, I didn’t know what my subject would be about. I decided on my topic in October 2010. It was during this time politicians, media pundits, and regular folks vociferously debated around kitchen tables, televisions, and various venues across the Internet about LGBT equality and civil rights issues such as: repealing “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” same-sex marriage, and whether homosexuals should be allowed to adopt children. This national conversation created the backdrop for the horrific news in September 2010 of a 13-year old boy who hung himself from a tree in his yard after incessant bullying at his school because he was perceived to be gay. Then a boy shot himself; then another boy jumped off a bridge. Within a month, seven children had committed suicide all because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Their deaths inspired me to learn more about what has now become known as “bullycide.”
The One-Percent

When thinking about the goals and intention of my play, I was inspired by Eve Ensler’s community-action play, *The Vagina Monologues*, where anyone — with a vagina — can get involved in the theatrical experience to talk about violence against women. Performing a play “on book” (a staged reading of a script) appealed to me. Doing so allows regular folks outside the acting community to get involved. I didn’t want to write a play solely for trained actors. I wanted to create a play that could be performed by regular people in real communities so the message could reach a wider audience. *The Laramie Project* is performed this way as well and these plays became models for me when writing *Saving September*. Both plays demonstrated the effectiveness of community inclusion in social justice theatre that I wanted *September* to emulate. The goal for my play would be to bring a community together to learn about bullying and use their knowledge as a base to create an organic theatre experience.

The first step I took to start my thesis year was to keep a journal. I’ve attempted journals in the past and have never been successful due to a lack of passion for the endeavor. This time, I promised myself to stay on track.
I attribute my journaling experience as my number one resource for keeping me thinking about my thesis and not losing potential ideas. Whether I was in a class about American literature, geography, or art history, my journal was there and ideas popped up all the time.

Digging Deeper

I used my Fall 2011 semester exclusively to conduct research and remain open to new ideas about my thesis. I watched movies and documentaries, read books, plays and a graphic novel, joined Facebook advocacy groups fighting bullying, studied academic articles, and talked with friends, family, fellow students, and faculty about my thesis. I searched for anything that remotely spoke to my working thesis: American society implicitly condones bullying homosexual children through its laws and culture; I did not find any one source that put my entire thesis together. It seems I may have broken new ground.

Part of my research was free writing within my Advanced Composition class with Dr. Trey Conner, my thesis director. I experimented with different rhetorical techniques overtly and covertly with classmates to determine the effectiveness of my message. By the end of
the semester, I wrote a sample scene for my play and had classmates workshop it live in class. This was a tremendous learning experience for me and was literally the first time I had ever heard my words read aloud by others. My biggest take away from the experience was how I, the author, lost control of how others interpret what I put on the page.

**Big Ideas**

I can’t look back at my thesis year and not remember my first conversations with Dr. Conner about my very grandiose plans for my thesis year. Originally, I was to study and conduct research during my Fall semester. I would then use my research and work with local non-profits and civic leaders to craft my play during the Spring semester. Once finished writing, I would workshop the play with a test audience and conduct a Q&A session — perhaps even during my thesis defense! Lofty goals indeed. The reality of an 18-credit hour semester set in and my plans had to change.

The major change in plan was dropping non-profit involvement and the end-of-semester workshop. Neither endeavor became feasible during the Spring due to a heavy
reading and writing load during the semester. Making the decision to eliminate both aspects from my thesis year sits heavy on my heart. My original intention was to involve my community in the development of Saving September. Not having their voice in my ear as I wrote bothered me greatly. To solve this problem, I created several opportunities within my script for future production companies to insert their voice and perspective into the production and make Saving September their play.

To create a unique community production, I went beyond the “choose your own adventure” convention common in many murder-mystery-type plays and improvisation used in many children’s theatre productions. Instead, I included many prompts within Saving September allowing local choices in music to help create September’s character, organic video production to present the community’s point of view, vernacular choice, and even choosing the gender for certain characters. Indeed, the introduction to both acts and several Dialogues are completely invented by the community production team based solely on script guidelines. Again, the intention is to allow the community to study the issues within the story, make choices, and present a theatrical experience relevant to their community.
While I cannot be 100-percent certain my idea is unique, I did not discover any plays encouraging so much civic engagement, learning, and service while doing my research. It’s hard for me to imagine any two productions of Saving September ever looking alike due to its inherent demand to use a local perspective of LGBT issues. In this way, I believe I’ve broken new ground.

Ass in Chair

A wise professor - who will remain nameless - once told me, “ass in chair” is all the advice some writers need. I’m sure I could have continued the research phase of my thesis indefinitely. The American LGBT landscape is extremely dynamic with new laws, outrageous denouncements, and tragic events occurring almost daily. However, when the Fall semester ended, writing had to commence.

My writing work ethic does not include diligently writing for a prescribed period of time at a scheduled time of day. That doesn’t work for me. When the mood strikes, I clear my day and I produce an entire work at once. The work could be a brainstorm with sticky notes scattered all over my office wall, one or more monologues, an outline, or an entire play. In the case of Saving September, I wrote
in this exact way. I brainstormed ideas all through the Fall semester and during Winter break. I wrote essays and monologues which would become Dialogues from January to March 2012. I outlined elements for a narrative story that intertwined the Dialogues in early March. And finally, I birthed the narrative play in a weekend.

Typically, my best ideas come out of the blue when “lightning” strikes. By March, I didn’t have a coherent play beyond my thesis and the concept of having a civic engagement play; I hadn’t had my Oprah Winfrey-esque “aha moment” showing me the way how I could connect my various, disparate essays together. I knew I was in trouble; I needed to produce a coherent script. I remembered my professor’s advice. I needed to get my “ass in chair” and write a narrative script — with or without a good idea.

**Shakespeare Saves September**

I wrote the first draft of Saving September before Spring Break and it was a very forced and stilted story about a gay teen who attempts suicide after being incessantly bullied. The plot was completely invented and really didn’t have any heart. Elements from this version are barely present in the final version of the play. The
only surviving characters from the original version are September and FDM. The love story between Ava and Grayson did not exist in the first draft.

Then, finally - thankfully - lighting struck: William Shakespeare! During my second semester of Shakespeare, I had an epiphany during one of my assignments. My Shakespeare professor, Dr. Lisa Starks-Estes, assigns a group performance for her final. Groups must take one of the semester’s assigned plays and create an imaginary production of our own design. Without limits on budget, venue, time period, or context, groups create an original, yet imaginary, Shakespeare production. This mental exercise helped evolve Saving September.

Though I would never profess to be an expert of the Bard, I can safely acknowledge I do know Shakespeare’s talent wasn’t in creating truly unique story lines; he borrowed almost everything he wrote about. He’s revered and studied because of his use of language and how he made his source materials new and relevant.

Studying Shakespeare inspired me to borrow and make something new. For the narrative story of Saving September, I essentially borrowed the “two houses” trope from Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet as a jumping off point.
My two houses are the conflicting ideologies regarding LGBT equality and, of course, the love story within the play. However, beyond the two houses trope, I would be dishonest in saying September is any sort of an adaptation of Romeo and Juliet. It is not. Shakespeare just helped me get the ball rolling.

That said, I don’t think it presumptuous to say I wove together disparate source materials to create my narrative story as a way to make them new and relevant to my audience. For example: in the play, Grayson never expresses a romantic interest to Levi, however, Levi murdering Grayson was directly inspired by the murder of 15-year old Larry King — also detailed in the Dialogue, “And We’re Walking.” Saving September’s fictional plot exists no where else, but echoes of it can be found in real life.

**Rhetorical Questions**

I attempted several rhetorical conventions through out the narrative story and the Dialogues. Ethos, logos, and pathos were my watch words through out writing Saving September.
I make claims. I argue. I appeal. I use music, imagery, dialogue and emotion attempting to persuade. I am a novice in the employment of classic rhetoric, but I know enough from my composition classes and past military career, one never depends on one strategy to win a war. That said, I don’t think bullying will end by simply making it illegal or making it a hate crime. Bullying is a war of ideas.

As I learned during my American literature classes with Dr. Julie Buckner Armstrong, my thesis second reader, hearts and minds rarely change solely through legislation making actions illegal. Indeed, as she points out in her class and in her book, *Mary Turner and the Memory of Lynching*, lynching did not end because Congress passed hate crime laws — that wouldn’t happen until 2009. Lynching ended only after a concerted effort from multiple academic and artistic voices from across the country joined together to examine, deconstruct, and educate the public about the “raw, naked, brutal facts” of America’s shame (Armstrong 127). From this ongoing national conversation, lynching eventually became taboo and ended as an accepted practice. With that spirit, I submit a national conversation about bullying is needed in America. A conversation to end, once
and for all, the toxic phrase, “kids will be kids” and the idea nothing can really be done about bullying.

*Saving September* participates in this larger conversation about bullying and can be a means to end it by making the idea of bullying out-of-bounds and taboo. In stark and subtle ways, I attempt to show the multiple ways LGBT children continually encounter bullying while growing up in America. From insidious legalized discrimination like the *Defense of Marriage Act* to overt violence, I deploy the “raw, naked, brutal facts” of bullycide. Then I show the tragic consequences that happen far too often because of bullying.

A part of rhetoric is audience consideration. My casting directions encourage recruiting from a broad community spectrum. If successfully cast, people who may not typically participate in plays or be attuned to LGBT issues will be exposed to new ideas and will hopefully be persuaded to share them with others. Additionally, with new and atypical actors participating, ripples in the water expand when they invite their friends and family to see the play. Ultimately, I did not want *Saving September* to preach to the choir.
Finally, I recognize a means to strengthen an argument is to present the counter-arguments and then defeat them. I carefully considered this technique and decided not to present counter-arguments in my thesis. It is my opinion most, if not all, counter-arguments justifying discrimination towards the LGBT community are religiously based. I did not want Saving September politicized as an attack on religion. Secondly, religious arguments are by definition faith-based and, therefore, irrational in the sense no amount of empirical evidence will defeat religious dogma. I specifically avoided religious arguments in September. Overall, I decided that if a strong counter-argument in favor of bullying LGBT children to the point of suicide was to be made, it wasn’t going to be made by me. Someone else can write that play.

Killing My Little Darlings

At the beginning of the thesis year, Dr. Smith told his thesis students to write everyday. Write a little, write a lot. Just write. The more we wrote, the more ideas would come. He reminded us not to worry about staying too close to our subject in the beginning. Let ideas flow and see what emerges. He warned us the hard
part would come later. We would have to kill our little darlings as we honed our thesis and edited our work.

I can attest this was absolutely true for me. My many brainstorms yielded many ideas that did not make the cut in the final product. When I wrote my Dialogues in earnest, I wrote many square pegs that did not fit round holes. I created many arguments that needed to be heard, but they ultimately strayed from my original thesis about bullying. These became my little darlings.

One especially poignant and personal essay that wasn’t included in Saving September honored a personal hero of mine, Air Force Vietnam veteran and recipient of the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart, Technical Sergeant Leonard Matlovich — the first-ever servicemember to intentionally out himself as a way to legally challenge the military’s ban on homosexuals. Matlovich purposely revealed his sexual orientation to his commander in 1975 and when the Air Force attempted to discharge him, he challenged the move in court eventually winning his case. When he died in 1988, his graveyard in Congressional Cemetery in Washington D.C. became an unofficial memorial and gathering place for all LGBT veterans. He headstone reads, “Never Forget, Never Again — A Gay Vietnam Veteran — When I was in the Boda - xiv

Saving September - Front Matter
military, they gave me a medal for killing two men and a discharge for loving one” (Bedwell). I, too, served in the Air Force. The difference between Matlovich and myself: I had a 20-year career and retired honorably — silent and safely in the closet of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” never having the courage to challenge the policy like Matlovich. I nixed over a dozen essays that — to me — had similar resonance and power in an effort to stick to my original thesis.

What Did We Learn This Year?

I’ll let my play speak for itself as far as what I learned academically about my topic. The experience of creating a play taught me far more important lessons about my desire to be a creative writer.

Most importantly, writing the play never felt like work to me. This affirms my decision to pursue a creative writing career in either in theatre or film. Writing Saving September was always a pleasure and being such, I often felt guilty when it detracted from my other classes. However, in all things — good and bad — I attempt to learn something.
Having such a daunting schedule between school, home, and a docent position at the Salvador Dalí Museum taught me I can accomplish massive amounts work and balance it with my creative writing goals. Having now accomplished my honors thesis, I’m more confident as I look forward to graduate school.

My thesis year helped focus my direction for grad school beyond just a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing. Saving September also opened my eyes to the possibilities of combining social justice and civic engagement with the dramatic arts. I can see taking September forward, honing it, and creating other social justice theatre projects. Also, my last two semesters studying Shakespeare surprisingly made me a huge fan. I had never studied Shakespeare prior to Dr. Starks’ classes and she opened my eyes to the enormous opportunities to appropriate and update his themes addressing the problems of today. If I could design my grad school program right now, it would include playwriting with a concentration in social justice employing Shakespearean influences. It’s truly the direction I see for my future writing.
**September’s Future**

As mentioned above, *Saving September* does not end when I turn in my thesis and defend it as an undergraduate. I see a big future for *September*.

I look forward to establishing a non-profit organization and teaming up with others to combat bullying. I’ve purchased and reserved the domain names savingseptember.com and savingseptember.org. I also established a [YouTube channel for Saving September](https://www.youtube.com) so that locally produced video materials can be archived and shared between communities. Ambitious? Why not? I model my idea on Eve Ensler’s, *The Vagina Monologues*, and her V-Day campaign combating violence against women. Sharing *September’s* message with communities across the United States (and around the world) is my ultimate goal.

The end of my thesis year and my graduation from USFSP were the artificial deadlines for *Saving September*. I somehow feel forced to induce labor early and deliver *September* premature. *September* needs to mature with workshops to polish the dialogue. For example, I know the teen angst conversations between Ava and Perri aren’t quite realistic — me being a 41-year old gay man doesn’t help. I realize many scenes need work. Having theatre workshops to
polish dialogue, pacing, and scene energy is really the only way to solve these problems. This didn’t happen while I was in school, but this will happen with future opportunities.

All’s Well That Ends...Well?

I’ve never written anything as complicated or as comprehensive as Saving September. My greatest wish for my play is to have it live beyond the page and see it produced on stage. I want to see the ripples of change go out into the world and heal our national trauma called bullycide.

Between September and October 2010, seven children committed suicide and their needless deaths pushed me into action. Since then, scores more children have taken their lives. At first, I attempted to record every name, every story of a bullied kid who took his or her life during my thesis year as a way to honor them. I quickly realized I would inevitably fail. My various search engine alerts were not catching every suicide; sadly, there were just too many to cope. So as not to erroneously leave anyone out, I decided to focus on the first seven children – which is why Act 2 has seven narrative scenes. They began September’s journey and they represent all the children who will never
live to see their dreams come true. However, I would be remiss if I didn’t recognize one name.

On April 14th, 2012, 14-year old Kenneth Weishuhn of Primghar, Iowa committed suicide after receiving multiple death threats via his cell phone and a Facebook group that personally targeted him. According to Kenneth’s family, he was well-liked and had many friends — before coming out at school. Once he told his classmates the truth, they turned on him and within a matter of only weeks, Kenneth was dead. He had a Pinterest web page filled with his dreams. He planned his wedding with a future husband. He saw inspiring messages assuring him, “It Gets Better.” And yet, he’s gone. Kenneth doesn’t mark the last bullycide; his was the most recent before I turned in my paper for a grade. Children continue to choose death over life because bullies tell them to.

Kenneth’s death, the seven in September and October 2010, and all the others in-between... they didn’t kill themselves because they were depressed or because they didn’t want to be different. They were systematically, verbally, physically, and psychologically attacked to the point they choose death over life.
We as a country need to accept the problem is not within the children who commit suicide. The problem isn’t really with the children who bully other children. It’s Us. Our society is broken.

Until We stop legalized discrimination within our society, until We truly recognize and embrace our diversity, until We stop making excuses like, “kids will be kids,” bullying will continue.

Bullying will continue while politicians feel safe to heckle boys who use pink bowling balls. Bullying will continue when administrators cancel school proms to prevent same-sex couples from attending. Bullying happens because our society accepts it and condones it. Bullying in America is not taboo. It is not forbidden.

Bullying will not end until We say with a united voice, “No child should be bullied – ever, for any reason.” Until that day comes, We, the People, should become accustomed to the idea of children who’d rather stick gun barrels in their mouths, swallow handfuls of pills, and hang in their closets than live in a society that hates them.
Saving September - Script

a thesis about bullying in two acts

John Jay Boda
SAVING SEPTEMBER

or
The Most Excellent and Lamentable Story of Ava and Grayson

A Thesis About Bullying in Two Acts

by

John Jay Boda

version 1.0

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CASTING

While the narrative scenes are meant to be acted off-book (memorized), the Dialogues may be read on-book (read from a script) by non-actor ‘civilians’ allowing increased community involvement and impact.

When casting, companies should recruit from the broader community spectrum including many ages, races, gender identifications/orientations, religious backgrounds, socioeconomic/education levels, parents/non-parents, and professional backgrounds including local civic leaders, law enforcement, educators, etc.

By including atypical “actors,” the potential increases to reach audience demographics who might not otherwise hear the play’s message or think about LGBT issues.

———

The Cast

Eph Diem (FDM)
- A Fairy Drag Mother, owns The Lighthouse Flower Shop
- Any gender; adjust pronouns/idioms as necessary

Grayson
- High school student (probably a senior)
- September’s cousin
- Transgendered male (born physically female)

September
- High School student (probably a sophomore/junior)
- Grayson’s cousin
- Any gender; adjust pronouns/idioms as necessary

Ms. Conroy
- High school teacher
- Any gender, adjust pronouns/idioms as necessary

September’s Parent
- Any gender
Ava
• High school student (probably a junior/senior)
• Levi’s girlfriend, Perri’s friend
• Female

Perri
• High school student (probably a junior/senior)
• Ava’s friend
• Female

Levi
• High school student (probably a senior)
• Ava’s boyfriend
• Male

Sarah
• Ava’s mother
• Female

Mr. Romano
• High school vice principal
• Male

Levi’s friends
• High school students
• Male

Perri’s friends
• High school students
• Female

Ticket Taker
• Any gender

Security Guard
• Any gender

Dialogues Actors
• 'Actor-civilians'
• See casting notes above
STAGING

A blank space without formal sets. Plain chairs, tables and doors create stripped-down, imaginary sets. Pacing should be quick without much fuss/set-up between scenes.

A video projection screen mounted either center stage or stage left or right (or both) shows imagery for locally produced video pieces.

The author does not provide specific stage direction or a stage plan; he envisions narrative actors to enter and exit the stage traditionally, while Dialogue actors may remain on stage seated upstage or flanking stage left and right during the action of the play.
MAKING SEPTEMBER ORIGINAL

**Context:** The play studies anti-LGBT conditions at a national level, but the play allows opportunities for the community theatre to include local anti-LGBT realities. Several occasions exist to insert local details. Therefore, the company is highly encouraged to use the play as a way to study LGBT issues and include local laws, actions, and “color” (idioms, vernacular, news, pop culture, etc.) to make the play relevant to its audience.

**Video:** Small amounts of community-created video are essential in telling the complete story of Saving September. With the increasing ease and availability of presentation and video production software (along with many open-source options), the author does not view this as overly burdensome.

The company should use video as an opportunity to reinforce the play's message while representing context and ideas important to the community. Video should be produced in as simple a way as not to distract or overwhelm from the live production.

**Music:** Music should be played before each act to set the desired tone (See Pre-Show notes); music during scene transitions is also encouraged. Music should be the music of September's character — the music the company imagines to be on September’s iPod play list. In all ways, attempt to breakdown stereotypes.

**Verbiage:** Vernacular, especially dialogue within brackets [ ], may be replaced by the production company to better express local idioms or to make the play more accessible to younger audiences while maintaining the author's intention and meaning.

Ultimately, the play should be relevant and realistic for the community where presented.
SCENES

ACT I

Dedication
Introduction: Bullies
Prologue: Margaritas
Dialogue: Inventing Homosexual
Scene 1: Rally
Dialogue: Homosexuality, Now Legal Since 2003!
Scene 2 - Gossip
Dialogue: DOMA Is a Four-Letter Word
Scene 3 - Diversity
Dialogue: Homophobia Eye Test
Scene 4 - Homecoming Part 1
Dialogue: Just Words
Scene 5 - Help
Dialogue: Just Words, Too
Scene 6 - Homecoming Part 2
Dialogue: Sticks and Stones
Scene 7 - Dance
Dialogue: Rated Hate
Scene 8 - Kiss
Dialogue: LOL - You’re Dead
Scene 9 - Ambush

ACT II

Introduction: Bullycide
Scene 1 - Suspension
Dialogue: Google It
Scene 2 - Intentions
Dialogue: Coming Out
Scene 3 - Rejection
Dialogue: It Gets Better, Jamey
Scene 4 - Daisies
Dialogue: 140 Characters
Scene 5 - Swallow
Dialogue: And We’re Walking
Scene 6 - Nightfall
Scene 7 - Vigil
Epilogue
SAVING SEPTEMBER

ACT I
PRE-SHOW

Music of empowerment should play in the lobby, auditorium while audience takes their seats. While creating September’s character, imagine and create a play list of music that September would enjoy.

This is an opportunity to set an uplifting tone and establish September’s character. If music is played between scenes, the music should also typify selections September listens to.

Music needs not be music ‘typically’ associated with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered community.
Between September and October 2010, a rash of suicides among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) youth began a national conversation about bullying.

United States laws and policies along with prevailing societal attitudes about homosexuality create an ethos condoning such bullying often leading many LGBT youth to conclude death is preferable to life.

In late 2010, activist Dan Savage created the “It Gets Better Project” as a way to bypass normal barriers between society and LGBT kids as a way to save lives.

To date, over a quarter of a million people have created inspiring videos as a way to speak directly to children struggling with suicidal thoughts.

Saving September is in memory of those who we lost in September and October 2010:

Billy Lucas  
Seth Walsh  
Tyler Clementi  
Asher Brown  
Raymond Chase  
Aiyisha Hassan  
Zach Harrington
ACT 1 - INTRODUCTION - BULLIES

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
VIDEO CLIP MONTAGE.

An ‘overture’ on the topic of bullies.

Short montage of video clips (1-3 minutes) as if surfing the internet or flicking through television channels. Short bursts of anti-gay actions shown in the form of hate speech, violence, and other messages injected into mainstream consciousness. While violence easily translates to video, attempt to show more subtle anti-gay issues such as restrictions on marriage equality, historical actions, restricting same-sex couples from attending school dances, etc. Creativity is always welcome.

The author encourages researching and studying national, state, and local stories related to anti-gay issues, messaging, branding, etc.

Source examples might include:
• Newscasts / documentaries
• Anti-gay violence/depictions in television/film
• Political speeches
• Anti-gay music/videos
• Religious condemnations such as Westboro Baptist Church protests / signs, etc.
PROLOGUE: MARGARITAS

LIGHTS UP - DIM.

(An empty set - dark. A figure backlit and shown in silhouette appears -- it is important the figure’s identity be unknown (the actor playing September should be used here.)

(The figure has a gun in its hand. Without audible cries or screams, it falls to its knees weeping. It puts the gun in its mouth.)

QUICK BLACKOUT.

(A gun shot rings out.)

(FDM enters and lights a candle - she places candle on table/alter located either stage right or left; candle burns and remains on stage during entire play.)

LIGHTS UP.

FDM

(Using a ‘Chorus’-type persona)

Once upon a time...

Once upon a child.
Twin nations, separate, but not equal,
Occupy one space, not so unlike here.
Old discourse anew; behold a sequel!
Human rights: struggles never disappear.

Hateful ideas dissolve civility
And our precious children, they do listen.
To the Fates: succumb to senility
So old grudges die and end division.

Love is Love. Eros says not, “Who loves Who?”
Society: judge not with ignorance;
Death results and youthful bodies accrue
When we accent others’ difference.

Oh,

Please attend this, and watch this carefully.
Our intent, to mend your hearts perfectly.
LIGHTS CHANGE.

(Transforms into FDM Persona - perhaps through changing wardrobe or sitting at a dressing table finishing makeup.)

FDM

Her name was September. Her parents named her for the 9th month, the month she was conceived. Her sister, April. Her brother, August. Well, you get the idea.

(Sighs)

Whatever happened to old-fashioned names ... like Moon-Station? All in all, she wasn’t so different than you and me.

(Looks at himself)

Well... maybe you. I don’t know anyone quite like me.

She was born of the way the ancient Greeks called... Well actually, they didn’t exactly have a word for her ‘kind’ way back when. The word “homosexual” didn’t come along until Oscar Wilde was a boy.

(Aside - stage whisper)

Can I tell you a secret? All those religious books written long, long ago in Hebrew and Greek never mentioned “the gay.” That ‘sin’ wouldn’t come along until years later. Just another myth - busted.

Here’s one more myth. September’s parents weren’t horrible people who didn’t care about their [lesbian daughter]. It’s just that... they didn’t really understand her. They meant well, they just didn’t know what to say to her sometimes. I mean really, could you blame them? She grew up with her mother and father, they were even married - fancy that. But they weren’t lesbians. Okay, there was that time her mother was in college... But we really only count post-collegiate homosexuality these days. Hey, everybody tries on a pair of shoes now and then, right?

(Looks directly at audience member - winks)

Don’t we?
Anyway, that’s where I come in. Who am I, you ask? Why, I’m your Eph Diem (eff-dee-em), darling. Sort of like Dorothy’s Auntie Em— but in Technicolor— and with a hell of a lot more fashion sense. F-D-M. You can think of me as your Fairy Drag Mother.

So, September came to my attention when she wandered into my little shop— The Lighthouse Florist. I’ve tended to many flowers like September over the years. When children don’t get the tenderness and sunshine from their friends and family, they go looking for it elsewhere—I promise. She found my garden and I could tell she needed some looking after. Don’t we all need a little looking after?

LIGHTS BEGIN TO FADE.

Oh! Wait!

(Speaking to technicians)

I’m sorry. Please, bring the lights back up. Before we go on, I need to explain what all “this” is.

LIGHTS UP.

First, “this” is the hit parade of self-pity. We’re not here to watch anyone wallow and weep for two hours. So let’s all relax.

That’s not to say they didn’t try to darken September’s light. Believe me, darling— they tried. In no uncertain terms, she got the message—even as a little girl. She got it everyday and in every way: September—and people like September—are not supposed to be in this world.

People like September—people like me—we’re not in your history books. We’re not your role models. Parents don’t let their children grow up meeting people ‘like us.’

Gay folks have to learn who they are all by themselves. That’s our right of passage. And we come to know our place in society is separate—and-not-entirely-equal— at best. “Liberty and justice for all,” you say? Please. More like liberty and justice for some.
And - yes - people ‘like us’ take a lot of shit when we’re kids.

Okay - I know what you’re thinking. It’s tough being a kid - regardless of who you are - period. Growing up isn’t fun for anybody. But, try it as a kid being told by everything around you:

(Pointing to audience members)

You’re made wrong, you disgust me, you’re an abomination and going to Hell, you’re a freak of nature. Who I love seems to be everyone’s business, but my own. Hell, the world won’t even let me donate blood for fear everyone might catch “the gay.” And religion... girl, don’t get me started.

I am my mother’s lament and my father’s shame. Think about that. Growing up with all that garbage in your head, who’d want to grow up at all?

(Shouts up to the Universe)

I get it! I hear you! I got the message!

(Big sigh)

“This” is about living in a world that does all it can to erase your existence, pushes you down. It constantly whispers into your ear, “Go away - we don’t want you.”

No, honey. “This” is telling the world, “Fuck.you! I’m here whether you like it or not.” “This” is some truth telling. I’m NOT squeezing a bunch of lemons and handing you a tall, refreshing glass of lemonade.

No, ladies and gentlemen. I took those god-damned lemons - okay, mine were limes - and I made a pitcher of margaritas - and went to the beach - and I partied with the best of them.

You see, I saved my life - no thanks to my family and so-called friends. You bet your ass, I did. And I’m here to save September’s. And maybe I’ll save yours... or your kid’s... or your best friend’s.
Trust me. Someone you know right now is hurting. But, you
don’t see what you don’t know about; what you don’t want to
see. But, I’m gonna give you sight. That’s why I’m here.
To give you a pair of glasses, so you might see your
brother’s pain. To teach you the language, so you might
talk to your niece.

That’s it. That’s what all “this” is. I cracked the code.
And I’m giving it away like kisses under the mistletoe. To
quote the fabulous B52s, I’m gonna “tell it like it T-I
Is.” I’m telling “it.” Naming “it.” Destroying “it.”

Enjoy your bliss while you can... Because no one deserves
to be brought into this world with the understanding they.
don’t. belong.

(FDM Exit)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
Before the year 1868, the “homosexual” did not exist. That’s not to say ‘women who loved women’ and ‘men who loved men’ did not exist. However, society had other ways to describe “these kinds of people.” Let’s see, they were sodomites, pederasts, abominations... you get the idea.

The man who coined the term “homosexual” didn’t come from the world of science or medicine. He didn’t invent the word to empirically categorize the biological relationship between genders of animals and plants. He created the term when his close friend committed suicide after having been threatened and blackmailed for his “crimes against nature.”

Karoly Kertbeny was his name. Born in Vienna as Karl Benkert in 1826, he changed his name to reflect his Hungarian heritage when he was 21 years old. He was a man of letters who proudly translated Hungarian literature into western languages so others could benefit from his culture. He also spoke out in favor of social justice issues — a dangerous hobby in that time, in that place. It’s a dangerous hobby in this time, and in this place.

Beyond the act of coining the word “homosexual” — and “heterosexual” — no one really remembers Kertbeny for his writing achievements. He wrote no epic poem, no magnificent opus, nor a definitive treatise for others to enshrine and study.

No. Karoly Kertbeny merely did one great thing in his life. When there wasn’t a kind word to describe his friend beyond a Biblical sin, he joined two words of different languages together: the Greek “homo” meaning “same” and the Latin “sexus” meaning “sex” — as in gender. He did not glorify his friend nor make him out to be something he wasn’t. He simply described why his friend had committed suicide — in plain, scholarly language.

In this simple act, Kertbeny extended dignity and respect to millions of men and women. Men and women who before this, had nothing to call themselves besides religious epithets, whispered euphemisms, and sexual expletives.

END SCENE.

Source:
ACT 1 - SCENE 1 - RALLY

(Setting: School Auditorium - Day)

LIGHTS UP.

MR. ROMANO
Thanks, Levi. We’re really proud of your accomplishments this year. You and all the guys are doing a heck of a job out there. And that’s why we all need to show up next week for the big homecoming game. We expect a big turn out so don’t let me down.

(Thumbing through papers)

Oh. Okay, before we go, we have an announcement from the...uh, "Gay Straight Alliance." Come on up, September.

(SEPTEMBER steps out from the audience, approaches podium.)

AUDIENCE MEMBERS
(Some members of the cast seated within audience lightly heckle, moan with anti-gay epithets)

SEPTEMBER
(Softly)

Thank you, Mister Romano. I think we’ll all be...

AUDIENCE MEMBER
We can’t hear you.

SEPTEMBER
Ahem... I said, I think we’ll all be out in force supporting the team at homecoming next week. Go [Bulls]!!!

AUDIENCE MEMBERS
(Hoots - cheers for local team name)

SEPTEMBER
Um... As everyone probably knows, I’m the president of the Gay Straight Alliance.
AUDIENCE MEMBERS

(More heckling)

[Faggot, dyke, etc.]

MR. ROMANO
Everyone needs to settle down.

SEPTEMBER
Um... Attendance has been pretty low at our meetings lately. There’s only a few of us these days.

(Nervously chuckles)

I’d like to remind you that everybody can be part of GSA. You don’t have to be gay or lesbian. It’s a club for everyone. We mainly play games and...

LEVI
(Levi seated in audience - heckles)

Like what? [Carpet munching? Hide the sausage? Cross-dressing?]

MR. ROMANO
McDermott. I’m warning you. Another outburst and you get an invitation to my office after the pep rally.

SEPTEMBER
Um, we also like to talk about how we can make our school better. Safer for everyone. We listen to each other when we have problems. Last month we had a dance and we only had about seven students show up.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS
Get off the stage,[faggot/dyke/etc.]!

GRAYSON
(GRAYSON seated in audience)

Leave her [the fuck] alone. Let her talk. Jesus Christ.

MR. ROMANO
Grayson - my office! Seriously. Everyone check yourselves or we’ll all have a meeting in my office after the rally.
September, let’s wrap this up. When and where are your meetings?

SEPTMBER
Uh, they’re every week on Wednesday during homeroom. We meet in the group study area of the library. I’d like to mention again, you don’t have to be gay to join our group. It’s the Gay AND Straight Alliance. We’re trying to build a group of students who support each other no matter who they are...

(Mr. Romano interrupts)

MR. ROMANO
Great. Thanks, September. Okay folks, we’re done. Have a great day and a safe weekend. And remember... [Go Bulls!]

LIGHTS CHANGE
TO INDICATE CHANGE OF LOCATION.

(Cast members in the audience get up and exit via stage)

(Setting: School hallway. September hands out flyers to passing students. Some keep them, others toss them on the ground.)

(Levi approaches September)

LEVI
So, uh, what do you guys talk about at these ‘meetings?’ What would I have to do?

SEPTMBER
Oh, um, you know, it’s just a place to hang out. We watch movies sometimes or play games. Are you actually interested?

LEVI
What me? Are you kidding? I’m just curious what you guys do. Like, why are you even a club? Who cares about being gay?
SEPTEMBER
It’s not like that. No one cares who’s gay. But, some kids get stressed out about it. There’s a lot of pressure from friends and family. It’s just a safe place to talk about stuff. It’s also a place to show support for all students. You don’t even have to be gay to join.

LEVI

My dad says he doesn’t know why gays have to shove their homo lives down everyone’s throat.

(Enter TWO OF LEVI’S FRIENDS. Levi sees them and becomes agitated.)

LEVI (CONT)

(More forceful)

Seriously, why don’t you just go back in the closet where you came from, you [freak of nature].

(Levi slaps the flyers out of September’s hands. Levi and his friends laugh.)

SEPTEMBER

Hey!

LEVI

Why don’t you try acting normal instead of being a [dyke] for a change and maybe you could find a [boyfriend].

(Levi’s friends laugh as September picks up her flyers as Mr. Romano enters.)

MR. ROMANO

What’s going on here?

LEVI

Oh, we were just helping September pick up her homo flyers she dropped.

SEPTEMBER

Leave me alone, [asshole.]

MR. ROMANO

Hey, hey. Language missy.
SEPTEMBER
Mr. Romano, He threw my flyers all over the floor. He’s a complete homophobe.

LEVI
I did not, pervert. I don’t even care about your homo club.

MR. ROMANO
Whatever. Fellas, get yourself to class.

(Exit Levi and his friends)

MR. ROMANO (CONT)
September, can I give you some advice. Social clubs are all well and good - I suppose. But maybe you should think about sports. Girls like you - don’t you like softball? Why not try out for the team? I’m sure you’d be great.

SEPTEMBER
“Girls like me?” What’s that supposed to mean?

MR. ROMANO

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE - HOMOSEXUALITY, NOW LEGAL SINCE 2003!

(Production note: Statistics listed are current as of April 2012 and are highly volatile due to the dynamic nature of LGBT politics. The author encourages production companies to research the current state of affairs to ensure accurate information.)

LIGHTS UP.

ACTOR
In 1998, consensual same-sex sexual activity remained illegal in 14 out of the 50 states. These states enforced the law indiscriminately, but they enforced it.

Until late one night when a Texas deputy sheriff busted into an apartment with weapon drawn and arrested two men in response to a false domestic disturbance report from a jealous and romantically connected neighbor. The arrested men, John Geddes Lawrence and Tyron Garner, were held overnight in jail and charged with violating Texas’ anti-sodomy law prohibiting sex between members of the same-sex - a Class C misdemeanor.

Lawrence and Garner plead no-contest and were found guilty by a local justice of the peace. The men took their case to a Texas criminal court asking for the case to be dismissed on the grounds Texas’ law violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. The criminal court refused the request. Later, the Texas Fourteenth Court of Appeals found the Texas law was unconstitutional in a 2-1 decision.

Texas appealed and the case, Lawrence vs Texas, was heard before the U.S. Supreme Court in 2003 where in a 6-3 decision, the Court decided: "The Texas statute furthers no legitimate state interest which can justify its intrusion into the personal and private life of the individual." With its decision, the Supreme Court struck down the Texas sodomy law - and thereby all other sodomy laws within the United Stats.

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To date, 29 states continue to allow discrimination based on sexual orientation and 35 states do not outlaw discrimination based on gender identity or expression.

Until 2009, hate crimes committed based on the victim’s sexual orientation or gender identity are outlawed in all 50 states under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

In 2011, the U.S. Congress and President repealed “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” allowing all lesbian, gay, and bisexual military members to serve honestly first time in American history. They serve without any federal protection against discrimination for sexual orientation or gender identity. Additionally, transgendered servicemembers remain at risk.

Currently, the federal government denies troops legally married in states that allow same-sex marriage benefits offered to married heterosexual servicemembers. Benefits like access to base housing and health care for same-sex spouses. This is because the U.S. law called the Defense of Marriage Act defines marriage at the federal-level as being between one man and one woman.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
ACT 1 - SCENE 2 - GOSSIP

(Setting: AVA’s Bedroom - Afternoon)

(PERRI is trying on Ava’s clothes. Ava’s on her bed looking at her smartphone.)

LIGHTS UP.

PERRI
Oh, my gawd. This is too cute. You have to let me borrow.

AVA
Sure, whatev.

PERRI
Seriously? Your mom won’t mind? Ava... You remember what happened last time?

AVA
Don’t worry about it. Take it.

PERRI
You are the bestest bestie. Mmmmmwah! So, what are you wearing to homecoming?

AVA
Don’t hate me. But I don’t think I’m going.

PERRI
What! Why?

AVA
It’s so over done. People make too much about it. I’m mean really. Who cares?

PERRI
Are you crazy? You have to go. I’m going!

AVA
Exactly.

PERRI
Excuse me?
AVA
Kidding. You know I love you.

(Sighs)

I know, I know. I’m just not feeling it this year. Besides, Levi’s being a tool. Did you hear him at the pep rally?

PERRI
Okay. What’s wrong? Come on mama, tell me what’s up.

AVA
Nothing. I just don’t want to be around that kind of energy all night.

(Enter SARAH carrying folded laundry.)

SARAH
What about energy? You guys aren’t taking drugs are you?

AVA
Mother – what have I told you about knocking?

SARAH
Yes – yes. Remind me, again. Whose house is this again? Besides, how am I supposed to get all the “dish” if I don’t barge in? You never talk to me anymore. I remember when...

(Ava interrupts)

AVA
Oh god, mother. Just say gossip. And please. I have company.

SARAH
Hello, Perri. How are you? How’s your mother’s divorce, dear?

PERRI
She rants a lot. Today was bad so I had to escape.

SARAH
Oh, I’m sorry to hear that.
PERRI
Mrs. Amentugo, do you know what your daughter just told me?

AVA
Perri, don’t even.

PERRI
She’s not going to homecoming?!

AVA
Perri...

SARAH
Ava Marie Amentugo. Mind your mouth. It’s hard enough maintaining civility outside of this house. I won’t have disrespect under my own roof.

PERRI
Seriously, though. Tell her she has to go to homecoming with me.

SARAH
I thought you wanted to go. What happened?

AVA
Nothing... I just don’t want to. Is it such a crime?

PERRI
She doesn’t want to go with Levi.

SARAH
Why? What happened? I thought you two were getting along.

(To Perri)
See what I mean? I don’t know anything about my own daughter.

AVA
Everything's fine. I just don’t want to go to a dance. What’s the big deal?

SARAH
Well, I hope that’s all it is. And I hope you’re being smart about your future. You could do a lot worse than, Levi McDermott. He’s from a good family.
AVA
Oh my go--. Mother, please. A little space. Let me worry about my future.

SARAH
I’m only thinking of what’s best for you. You know how you start dreaming. I can’t believe you even mentioned the Peace Corps the other day. God forbid.

PERRI
OMG. The Peace Corps? I thought we’re going off to college together. Aren’t we?

AVA

(Perri and Sarah stare at Ava.)

AVA (CONT)
If it gets everyone off my back, fine. I’ll go to homecoming. Happy?

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE - DOMA IS A FOUR-LETTER WORD

(Production note: Statistics listed are current as of April 2012 and are highly volatile due to the dynamic nature of LGBT politics. The author encourages production companies to research the current state of affairs to ensure accurate information.)

LIGHTS UP.

ACTOR

On September 21st, 1996, a Republican-majority Congress and a Democratic president passed and signed the Defense of Marriage Act - or DOMA - into law.

DOMA defines federal marriage between one man and one woman - as husband and wife.

In 2004, the U.S. General Accounting Office reviewed all federal codes, laws, statutes, and provisions and determined DOMA denied 1,138 rights, privileges, and benefits contingent on marital status to same-sex couples legally married at the state-level.

The GAO divided these issues into 13 sub-categories ranging from social security benefits, taxes, military benefits, immigration, family violence, financial instruments, and other miscellaneous provisions.

Additionally, thousands of private-institutions, like banks, follow federal marriage guidelines for special spousal membership requirements.

In July 2010, a federal court held key provisions of DOMA to be unconstitutional. The law remains in effect while being appealed.

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As of April 2012, only six states recognize same-sex marriage: Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. The District of Columbia also recognizes same-sex marriages. Legally married same-sex spouses in these states only receive state-level marriage benefits.

Saving September - Script
A total of 31 states have state-level constitutional bans limiting marriage to one woman and one man to include [Florida].

In his 2004 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush endorsed the Marriage Protection Amendment to the U.S. Constitution defining marriage between one man and one woman, thus striking down all same-sex marriages nationwide.

President Obama officially opposes same-sex marriage, though he "supports full civil unions and federal rights for LGBT couples" and desires a full repeal of DOMA.

In February 2011, President Obama determined DOMA to be unconstitutional and directed the US Justice Department to stop defending the law in court. House of Representative leadership has decided to defend DOMA in federal court.

Today, DOMA remains in effect while many groups work to ratify and amend and the U.S. Constitution and include the Marriage Protection Amendment.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

Source:
ACT 1 - SCENE 3 - DIVERSITY

(Setting: Social Studies classroom - Day)

(September stands in front of class giving an oral report.)

LIGHTS UP.

SEPTEMBER
After his conviction in 1952 for homosexuality, Turing had the choice of going to prison or being chemically castrated. He chose castration and started a regimen of taking female hormones.

Two years later, Alan Turning, the father of modern computer science and the man who helped end World War II by inventing the code-breaking machine defeating Nazi Germany - Turing committed suicide by taking cyanide. He was only 41 years old.

In 2009, the British government formally apologized for its actions against Turing. Despite homosexuality having been later decriminalized across the United Kingdom, Turing has never been pardoned. Thank you.

(The class does not clap. September sits. MS. CONROY stands in front of class.)

MS. CONROY
Very nice report, September. Thank you.

Okay, that concludes our unit on cultural diversity and prejudice. I think we can tell from everyone’s reports that our school, our town, our country, and our world is connected by many kinds of people from many kinds of backgrounds and cultures.

(As Ms. Conroy talks, Levi pesters September with lewd hand gestures, whispered comments, etc. September tries to ignore it.)

MS. CONROY (CONT)
Before I let you go, don’t forget you have a lot of reading for next week. There will be a quiz so don’t put it off to
the last...Levi, is there something you’d like to tell the class?

LEVI
Oh. No, I was just telling September how much I loved her report. Great job, September. Where would we be without the homos?

MS. CONROY
Thanks for that insightful commentary, Levi.

(The class bell rings)

Don’t forget. You have a quiz next week. No mercy. Study study study!

(Students get up to leave.)

MS. CONROY (CONT)
September, can I talk to you for a minute.

That was an excellent report today. Alan Turing wasn’t on the suggested topic list or in our reading. Where did you learn about him?

SEPTEMBER
The internet. I was searching for ‘gay injustice’ and his name came up – I hope that was okay.

MS. CONROY
No, it was great. You even taught me a thing or two. Thank you.

(September motions to leave.)

MS. CONROY (CONT)
So, is everything going well for you? How’s GSA going? I’ve been meaning to sit in on a meeting, but it’s been busy. I’m sorry.

SEPTEMBER
That’s okay. It’s going. It’s just me and a couple of kids. Actually, it kinda sucks.
MS. CONROY
I’m sorry to hear that. I know you started it to make some friends. Is that happening?

SEPTEMBER
I guess. It’s hard. No one likes to really talk much. Mr. Romano likes to sit in sometimes so he kind of kills the mood to talk.

MS. CONROY
Hmm... I can talk to him if you like.

SEPTEMBER
Oh, that’s okay. Please, don’t. I get enough attention about it as it is.

Is everything okay?

SEPTEMBER
Yeah, it’s just... never mind.

MS. CONROY
It’s okay. You can tell me.

SEPTEMBER
It’s just that... he doesn’t seem to like the club and it’s like he’s spying on us to see what ‘the gays’ are doing in his school.

MS. CONROY
I’m sure he’s just curious since you’re a new club.

SEPTEMBER
I dunno. Hey, I gotta get to class.

MS. CONROY
Okay, thanks for talking. Come by if you ever need anything, alright?

SEPTEMBER
Will do, Ms. Conroy. Thanks.

(September moves to leave. Exit Ms. Conroy.)
LIGHTS CHANGE
TO INDICATE LOCATION CHANGE.

(Setting: School hallway.)

(September is walking to her next class. Enter Levi with his friends. Levi is clapping - slowly.)

LEVI
Great report on the [homo].

(September tries to walk around him. Levi’s friends block her.)

LEVI (CONT)
C’mon. Let’s talk faggety-homo stuff. It’s what you like isn’t it?

SEPTEMBER
Leave me alone.

LEVI
So tell. What have the lesbos done for the world? Don’t tell me, I know. They invented the... strap-on dildo.

(Levi obscenely demonstrates grabbing September. September tries to get away.)

SEPTEMBER
Stop it. Let me go.

LEVI
What’s wrong, [diesel]? I thought that’s what you ‘ladies’ liked?

(Enter Grayson)

GRAYSON
Levi. I thought I told you to leave her [the fuck] alone!

LEVI
Mind you’re own business, [tranny].

GRAYSON
If you don’t want a [tranny] to kick your ass, I suggest let her go. Now.
(Levi releases September.)

LEVI
(whispers to September)
I’ll see you later, [dyke].
Bye-bye, ladies.

GRAYSON
You okay, cuz?

SEPTEMBER
Yes. Thanks, Grayson. What an [asshole].

GRAYSON
He is that. You know, I’m not always around the corner. You gotta protect yourself. There are a lot of assholes out there.

SEPTEMBER
I was fine.

GRAYSON
I could see that. You need something like this.

(Grayson shows September a knife)

SEPTEMBER
I’m not going all Guns ‘n Ammo. I’m not carrying a knife around with me. With my luck, they’d find it and I’d get kicked out of school.

GRAYSON
I told you I know the tricks to get around that. You gotta watch your back. And stand up for yourself. Don’t let them walk all over you.

SEPTEMBER
I just ignore ‘em.

GRAYSON
And how’s that working out for you? They’re not ignoring you.
SEPTEMBER
Well, I’m not carrying a knife. I’ll be fine.

GRAYSON
Come on, let’s get you to class.

(Grayson and September Exit)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE - HOMOPHOBIA EYE TEST

ACTOR
Hello and welcome. The test is about to begin.

Now, just relax. The test is painless - for most. Again, just relax. You’ve taken tests like this before. This test is kind of like getting your vision checked by your eye doctor. Remember when you were a kid and you’d sit in front of that big machine? You looked through the viewfinder and you’d see a cute little puppy or a fire fighter or a big letter A. The doctor turns some knobs and pushes some buttons and the image would flicker. It would be the same picture, but it’d be a little different and the doctor would say, “Is it better or worse?”

This is the same thing.

In this test, I’ll be showing you a series of pictures. As I switch the pictures, I’ll be asking you - is the image better or is it worse?

The only difference with this test is that I don’t need to hear your answer. You’ll say “better or worse” to yourself - silently. After the test is over, I’ll give you your results and you’ll be on your way?

Are there any questions? Great - again, just relax.

ACTOR
Okay - we’ll start off nice and slow to get you into the swing of things. Here we go:

(Photos are shown slideshow-style. A slide projector ‘clicking’ sound as images change can make this feel more authentic.)

(Photos are shown slideshow-style. A slide projector ‘clicking’ sound as images change can make this feel more authentic.)
• Photos will be shown as pairs, but displayed one at a time. A ‘normative’ heterosexual perspective photo will be shown first, then a ‘non-normative’ LGBT perspective photo will be shown. Photos will be grouped by topics - explained below.

• The Actor will announce the photos in this manner (ad libbing is allowed as long as the point is carried):

  “Better or worse: (show 1st photo) This or (show 2nd photo) this. Better or worse?”

Each time a pair of photos are shown, the actor should reinforce the “better or worse” comparison between to the two photos. For the first few rounds, going back and forth between the the same 1st and 2nd photos may help warm up the audience to the idea.

• For the first couple of rounds within each group topic, the ‘normative’ photo should be shown first. The show order can then be ‘randomized’ between the normative and non-normative image.

• Group topics are listed below. Brainstorming other group topics is highly encouraged.

• Within each group, show variations within the ‘normative’ and ‘non-normative’ photos, i.e. traditional, odd-ducks, extreme versions of both straight and LGBT images as well as many demographics (age, sex, race, religion, class, etc.)

Groups:
• Women
• Men
• Girls
• Boys
• Couples (married, non-married)
• Weddings
• Domestic abuse (loving LGBT couple with a abusive straight couple (and vice versa))
• Occupations (police, fire fighter, military, sports, health care, child care, hair stylist, teacher, erotic dancer...)

Saving September - Script
• Social situations (neighbors, gardening, picking kids up from school, coffee house, club/disco, bar, sports bar, book club, swimming pool, sauna, hiking...)
• Civic actions (protesting, Members of Congress, on city councils, giving blood, in the hospital, providing disaster relief, as a governor, as President, as a judge...)
• Celebrities
• Films (action movie, romantic comedy, love story, drama, horror film)
• News makers
• Bullying
• Suicide (headlines can help here)
• Murder victims (headlines can help here)
• Children playing with toys: dolls, sports, cars...
• Infants (indistinguishable between gay and straight is the point)
• Ultrasound images (indistinguishable between gay and straight is the point)

Pairs of photos should include one ‘traditional’ or heterosexual image and then one photo from an LGBT perspective.

For example: for the group topic “Women,” the ‘normative’ photo could be a photo of a traditionally feminine woman and the ‘non-normative’ photo could be a woman who appears masculine. Several rotations of “Women” photos could go on to show well-known women (celebrities, newsmakers, etc.) who are known to be straight and/or LBT and have appearances that are very similar.

This technique blurs the lines of what it means to be straight-looking or LGBT-looking.

• Group topic photos should always be shown in pairs: a normative image with a non-normative image. For example: The topic, “Couples,” would include one photo of a male/female couple and then one photo of a same-sex couple. Multiple examples or rotations of couple photos may be shown to emphasize the point.

• Include photos representing the L, the G, the B, and the T communities – please, don’t concentrate on just the L and G. Attempt to be all-inclusive.
• The actor does **not** announce the group types or names. The actor can ad lib as the photos are shown, saying things like “Moving on” or “Here are some more photos”, but the basic premise is to only say “Better or Worse”.

• The “test” should only last a few minutes (no more than five minutes) and should include a fairly broad sampling of groups. Not all groups listed above need be represented.

Once the test is complete:

    LIGHTS UP.

    ACTOR
    Alright, the Homophobia Eye Test is now complete. You all did great. Your test results may be found in the pit of your stomach - you know, your gut. It’s that feeling...right...about...there!

    (points to stomach)

    After taking this test, you now know your own level of homophobia. Have a great day. Thank you.

    LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
ACT 1 - SCENE 4 - HOMECOMING PART 1

(Setting: Lighthouse Florist Shop)

LIGHTS UP.

(Grayson preps deliveries. September is behind counter surfing the internet.)

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SHOWS WHAT IS ON SEPTEMBER’S COMPUTER.
IMAGES OF ANTI-GAY STATISTICS,
GAY BASHING, AND VIOLENT IMAGES.)

GRAYSON
So are you gonna be a [lazy ass] all day or are you gonna help me over here?

SEPTEMBER
Did you know [recent anti-gay violence statistic, incident]?

GRAYSON
Like I told you. You gotta protect yourself little girl.

SEPTEMBER
It’s so depressing. The world is such a [ball of shit]. Why can’t people just leave each other the hell alone.

GRAYSON
Human nature, baby. Read your Shakespeare. There’s nothing new under this sun.

SEPTEMBER
God, it makes you wonder why we go on. People are so hateful. Look at this garbage.

(Enter FDM from back office)

FDM
Okay squirrels, I’m off. You’ve got the store ’til closing. Try not to burn the place down. What are you two squabbling about?

GRAYSON
September was just telling me how great it is to be homosexual.

SEPTEMBER
I was telling Gray about how the world shits on us.

(FDM adjusts [an earring])

FDM
Do tell, my darling.

SEPTEMBER
Well, did you know the United States used to have internment camps and mental wards for gay soldiers serving in World War II - just like the Nazis! That was in the U.S.! Or that a 15-year old boy in California had his brains blown out a couple of years ago when he asked another boy to be his Valentine?

FDM
Ah the internet - history’s great equalizer.

SEPTEMBER
FDM, I’m being serious.

FDM
Yes, dear. I can see that.

(sighs)

FDM (CONT)
Yes, our history is long. It’s bloody. But it’s glorious, too. Try not to concentrate on just the darkness.

Did you know the woman who wrote “America the Beautiful” played for our team or that one of the founders of Facebook is gay?

SEPTEMBER
(surprised)
Wow, really?

FDM
It’s reassuring to know you youngins don’t know everything, yet.
SEPTEMBER
Yeah, but who cares about that stuff when we’re getting our brains blown away? We’re not even equals under the law.

FDM
It’s difficult, cherie. I know. Believe you me, no one walks around looking this fabulous without understanding that. I won’t talk about what it was like when I was your age.

(feigns old-age)
“Back when I was little girl...”

Yes, bad things happen to good people no matter who you are. Gays certainly don’t have the monopoly on being targeted for hate and prejudice. We’re just one of many targets for those living in darkness.

GRAYSON
You gotta take the bad with the good, kiddo.

SEPTEMBER
Thanks. Did you get that off a Hallmark card? I’ll have to write that one down. I’m just saying, it seems to me there’s a lot more bad than good when it comes to gay folks.

FDM
Then they’ve won.

SEPTEMBER
What? Who?

FDM
Everyone who lives in the darkness. They push their message; we push back with ours. Everyone’s got an agenda, hun. But you can’t listen to just one side of the story - especially theirs. There’s always a flip-side.

SEPTEMBER
Well they don’t even let us talk about our side. Like, why do I have to take a test Abraham Lincoln’s assassination, but only learn about [Harvey Milk’s assassination when Sean Penn plays him in a movie]?
I’m sorry. Did I say life was fair? You know, somebody once said, history books are written by the victors. You’ve gotta fight - and win - to get into those books.

SEPTEMBER
Sounds pretty [shitty] to me. Why can’t people just do the right thing?

FDM
I can see you’ve been watching Spike Lee again. Keep fighting my little lesbian. If you don’t, the darkness win.

(FDM checks her watch)

FDM (CONT)
Ooh, I’m late. Okay, I’m off. I’m meeting Anita Mann downtown for drinks. Cheers, dears.

SEPTEMBER
Ahem. [Anita Mann]?

FDM
[Don’t we all]?

(FDM exits)

GRAYSON
Feel better?

SEPTEMBER
Not really.

GRAYSON
Well, snap out of it. Who are you taking to homecoming?

SEPTEMBER
Shut up. Like I’d go to that [face-fest.] No thanks. Are you?

GRAYSON
C’mon, it’ll be fun. We can torture the straights.

SEPTEMBER
Um... hello? No date. Thanks for reminding me.

Saving September - Script
GRAYSON
Um... hello. What about me? Do I have to get down on one knee?

SEPTEMBER
Imagine the fit Romano would throw if he saw two ‘lezziies’ going as a couple.

GRAYSON
Screw, Romano. We’ll dress boy-girl, or girl-boy. Or half-n-half. C’mon, it’ll be fun.

SEPTEMBER
I appreciate the thought, but haven’t you forgotten something?

GRAYSON
What?

SEPTEMBER
We’re cousins - that’s kinda weird.

GRAYSON
Second cousins. Besides, I’m not asking you to be my wife in Appalachia. Relax baby girl, we’ll go as friends. Straight girls do it all the time.

(Door chime/bell rings and Levi enters the flower shop.)

LEVI
[Holy shit], I didn’t know you guys worked here?

GRAYSON
Oh, you. We’re closed.

LEVI
Relax, relax. I’m just here to buy some flowers.

GRAYSON
We don’t sell [stink weed].

LEVI
Jeez - unclench. I just want some flowers.
GRAYSON
Like I said, we’re closed.

LEVI
Ya know, that’s wrong with you people. You think you’re better than everybody else. I was trying to be nice.

GRAYSON
Try harder. Besides, we don’t sell to “you people.”

LEVI
What’s your problem?

SEPTEMBER
I think... I’m gonna call Ephie.

GRAYSON
Don’t bother. I got this.

(Grayson pulls his knife out and puts it on the counter.)

GRAYSON (CONT)
Look [jerk off]. You need to leave. Now.

LEVI
[Jesus], [dykes] seriously got some anger management issues.

GRAYSON
You’re about to find out. I’m not going to tell you again. Get the hell out of here.

LEVI
Typical [diesel dyke, bitch.]

(Levi exits.)

GRAYSON
See? What’d I tell you? This speaks louder than words.

SEPTEMBER
Dude, you didn’t have to go that far. It’s like pouring gas on a fire. What happens if he comes back with his friends?
GRAYSON
He got the message. He won’t be bothering us again.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE - JUST WORDS

(Performance Notes:

• When casting allows, this piece is meant to be performed by two or more actors.

• Actors are encouraged to repeat words to show differences in meaning and shading depending on emphasis.

• Some words are divided into syllables by dashes. Each syllable is meant to be said separately and then the word itself.

• For an example of this speaking technique, search YouTube for “Electric Company Silhouette” videos.

Choreography:

• One of the many possible ways to stage this piece is to choreograph the actors based on the groups shown below.

  • Group 1) Actors walk towards each other
    • Showing agreement
  • Group 2) Actors meet/circle each other
    • Showing argumentation
  • Group 3) Actors walk away from each other
    • Showing disagreement)

  LIGHTS UP.

  (GROUP 1)

  ACTORS

  Hell-o
  com-passion
  attract-ion
  empathy
  tolerance

Saving September - Script
good-ness
being kind / being human
human beings

hetero / homo
homo-sapiens
homophobes
homophobic
homo-phobia
a Kinsey zero / a Kinsey six
One out of ten
Practicing Homosexuals
Practicing Heterosexuals
Practicing hypocrisy
(Pause)
gay
lesbian
bi-sexual
trans-gendered
questioning
intersexed
asexual
L G B T Q I A
Why can’t they just be normal?
(Pause)
You look...
pretty
handsome
beautiful
masculine
feminine
I’m not sure
a manly man
a man’s man
she’s mannish
he’s rugged
he’s effeminate
she’s a femme
she’s butch
he’s girlish
she’s girly girl
lipstick lesbians
chicks
babes
studs
twinks
boys
boy toys
tom-boys
sissies
they’re just late-bloomers
it’s just a phase
I don’t think so
drag queens
drag kings
facades
illusions
confusions
Why can’t they just be normal?

(Pause)
We the People
free-dom
liberty
justice / just us
for all
for some
human rights
civil rights
civil wrongs
on the wrong side of history
on the right side of history
equality
equal-ish
separate but equal
second class citizens
segregate
illuminate
act
activate
fight back
ACT UP
fight AIDS
silence equals death
   (Pause)
gay agenda
entitlement
privilege
birth rights
rights denied
injustice
justice delayed
justice denied
conservatives
liberals
red states - blue states
rainbow flags
mediate
moderATE
give and take
common ground
compromise
settle
sacrifice
surrender
forfeit
Why do they want special treatment?
(Pause)
We are family
boyfriends
girlfriends
best of friends
traditional marriage
oh no
here we go
one-man plus one-woman
Adam and Eve - Not Adam and Steve
the way it’s always been
um...not really
biological families
test tube babies
surrogates
fertility drugs
Octomom
adoptions
foster family
foster love
mothers
fathers
two moms
two dads
water is thicker than blood
lovers
soul mates
husbands
wives
partners
exes
sexes
I’m still single

domestic partners

she’s my fiancee

we’re engaged

we eloped

I do

I don’t

I can’t

we’re married

we’re civil unioned?

we have a domestic partnership

whatever that is

I’m divorced

I’ve been married four times

I’d like to be married just once

They threaten the sanctity of marriage

What’s next?

Marrying a goat?

(Pause)

Pride

pride parade

appreciate

L O V E

Saving September - Script
love-yourself
love-thy-neighbor
respect-yourself
respect each other
respect
hiding in plain sight
a fly on the wall
invisible
outed
coming out
coming home

Why can’t they just stay in the closet?

(Pause)

(GROUP 2)
It Gets Better.
It Gets Better?
It-Gets-Better
It-Gets-Worse

it’s natural
it’s unnatural
it’s nurture
it’s nature
it’s healthy
it’s diseased
so medicate it
castrate it
it’s sick
it’s a mental illness
they’re possessed
they’re criminals
they’re security risks
they’re blackmailed
they’re normal
They are not.

(Pause)

(GROUP 3)
I’m sorry.
I don’t mean to offend you, but...
god-hates-fags
fags-must-die
you’re-better-off-dead
why don’t you go-kill-your-self
I’m sorry?
Yes, you are.
You are...
hell-bound
disgusting
heinous
godawful
revolting
so nasty
appalling
vile
repulsive
despicable
sickening
offensive
repellant
filthy
contaminated
and infected
(Pause)
I am...
an abomination
nauseating
impure
unclean
evil
wicked
corrupted
depraised
shameful
sinful
immoral
a deviant
a monster

Sticks and stones
Break their bones
They’re just words
Makin’ headstones

She bullies
He bullies
They bully
We bully
They’re bystanders
presidents
politicians
televisions
pundits
children

Saving September - Script
parents
teachers
the principal
clergy
judges
laws
popular votes
amendments
edicts
secular

religious
godliness
godlessness
sinful
Genesis
Leviticus
Romans
Corinthians
Timothy
Paul
Sodomites
inhospitable
purity codes
man lies with man
man lies
righteous indignation
Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve
lust
immoral
mortal sins
sins against nature
condemnation
excommunication
What would Jesus do?
(Pause)
cast-out
out-cast
put out
put-downs
beat-downs
witch-hunts
intimidation
harassment
rumors
verbal
physical
psychological threats
promises

tease
pester
whisper
taunt
slap
trip
push
beat
punch
throw
shove
kick
stomp
cut
stab
pummel
trample
mutilate
shoot
run over
torture
burn
hang
suffocate
devastate
murder
bury
cover up
exterminate
extinguish
cruelty
innocence
difference
indifference
guiltless
kids will be kids
what about adults?
exquisite violence

(Pause)
Victims...
fight
stand up
stand your ground
endure
suffer
cry
plead
leave notes
have scars

(Pause)
stop me before its too late
it’s too-late
it’s never-too-late
it’s a new-day
it’s a new-beginning
there’s no-choice
there’s always new.choices
I like-you
Do you like-me
Please love-me
I love-you
don’t hate-me
I hate-you
it’s soul-crushing
I descend
I break-down
I’m broken
my heart breaks
don’t suffocate my love

There’s no end
so painful
so pain-filled
please stop the pain
it’s worse than living
it’s worse than hell
I’d rather be dead
the loneliness
the alienation
there’s no end in sight

I want it to end
I’m waiting for the end
I’m waiting-for-you
waiting for release
release me
no limits
no judgment
I want to be me
I want to be like you
I want freedom
please free me

homicide
genocide
assassination
suicide

Pills
swallow
painless
endless coma

Ropes
trees
necks
snap

Razors
wrists
veins
flow

Bullets
mouths
lives
explode

Bridges
fall
rivers
swallow

Obituaries
vigils
candle-light
memorials
immemorial
wakes
funerals
anniversaries
birthdays
death days

October 1998
I’m-sorry
Matthew Shepard

February 2008
I’m sorry
Lawrence King

September and October
I’m-sorry
Asher Brown
Billy Lucas
Seth Walsh
Tyler Clementi
Jadon Higginbothan
Raymond Chase
Aiyisha Hassan
Zach Harrington

Rest in Peace
Peace
Good-bye
Bye

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
ACT 1 - SCENE 5 - HELP

(Setting: September’s Bedroom - Evening)

(September is setting at her desk working on her laptop computer.)

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
DISPLAYS SEPTEMBER’S COMPUTER SCREEN.
A [FACEBOOK] CHAT PAGE IS SEEN.

(Technical note: The scene is without spoken dialogue beyond the messages scene through the video projection. Character ‘dialogue’ projects and represents what’s on computer screens. Diction and grammar are intentional. Aliases may be substituted, humor is encouraged.)

HAWT-MESS
omfg! your cousin pulled a knife? what’d u do?

BABYDYKE1996
nuthin. it was krazee tho. the world is so messed up. i can’t stand it anymore

HAWT-MESS
indeed. sorry, chica.

JACKHOLE6969
anybody pull a knife on me, they get JACKED roltf lmfao

HAWT-MESS
Whatevs jackhole

JACKHOLE6969
’specially tranny dykes - hahahaha

HAWT-MESS
STFU a-hole. no one asked u

JACKHOLE6969
u no u like it
BABYDYKE1996
no one likes it Jackhole. gawd - this is wut i’m talkin bout

HAWT-MESS
ignore the haters babydyke, he’s prolly sufferin in da closet

BABYDYKE1996
haters r everywhere. can’t get away fm them

(Someone knocks on September’s door. September shuts her computer screen off.)

VIDEO PROJECTION:
GOES DARK.

SEPTEMBER
Come in.

PARENT
Hey, Aunt Jill called. Wanted to know if you were up for a trip to their place for Spring Break? They want to show you their ‘gay mecca.’

SEPTEMBER
Yeah, maybe.

PARENT
C’mon... it sounds fun. A week away from the parents. Sounds fun to me.

SEPTEMBER
Maybe.

PARENT
You know, I wouldn’t mind a trip out west. I think you should go. C’mon - adventure awaits...

(September seems distracted)

PARENT (CONT)
Honey, is everything okay? You seem bothered by something.

SEPTEMBER
I’m fine. School’s just a drag.
PARENT
Did Ms. Conroy like your paper on Alan Turing?

SEPTEMBER
Yes. You were right. She loved it. I got an A.

PARENT
There you go. I told you she’d...

(September’s cell phone rings)

SEPTEMBER
It’s Grayson.

PARENT
Okay. Dinner’s almost ready so keep it short.

(September answers phone)

SEPTEMBER
Hey Gray.

What? No!

I told you, I’m not going to homecoming.

No. I’m not going.

What the... No. You did not rent me a tux.

Well, get your deposit back.

Well that’s your problem. I ain’t going.

Stop it. You cannot guilt me.

(mocking)

Oh god. You so need new material. The “my parents kicked me out of the house when I told them I’m transgendered” story is getting really tired.

Fine... I’ll go. You’re such a guilt tripper. You’re practically a parent.
Yes. What?

No, I don’t care if you don’t shave your legs. That makes two of us.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE - JUST WORDS, TOO

Performance Notes: Reference “Just Words” Performance Notes.

LIGHTS UP.

ACTORS

sodomite
diesel-dyke
bent
lezzie
nancy
nelly

a friend of Dorothy

ass pirate
bull dagger
butt buddy
pole smoker
cream puff

one-of-those

top
bottom
versatile
wuss
pussy
pansy
poof
sissy
swisher
fruit
fairy
flamer
faggot

a three-dollar-bill

butch - femme
dyke
dykes on bikes
lesbo

a confirmed-bachelor

pillow biter
cock sucker
fudge packer
sword swallower
salad tosser
shit stabber
rug muncher

AIDS magnet

AC-DC

switch-hitter

closet-case

bedbug

leather-queen

drag-king

drag queen

tranny

queer-bait

fag hag

santorum
ACT 1 - SCENE 6 - HOMECOMING PART 2

(Setting: Ava’s Bedroom - Evening)

(Perri is dressed for homecoming. Ava is not.)

LIGHTS UP.

PERRI
What do you mean you’re not going? I’m not going with Bobby Bigalow all by myself.

AVA
Looks like you’ll have to Perri-cake. I have an entire night of catching up on [Housewives, Buffy, Twilight, etc.].

PERRI
And what? You couldn’t have told me this in homeroom?

AVA
I did, but you wouldn’t listen. As usual.

PERRI
And what about Levi? He’ll be devastated when you don’t show up.

AVA
No. I already told him I wasn’t going.

PERRI
Jesus, Ava. And what did he say?

AVA
Jesus, Perri... Who cares? I’m not going.

PERRI
You are so stubborn sometimes. I don’t get you. What’s your mom say about it?

AVA
(sighs)

She’s thrilled for me. Said I should do whatever I want with my life and all she wants is for me to be happy.
(Sarah enters)

**SARAH**
I said no such thing. I said high school only comes around once. Think of all of the memories you’ll miss out on, honey.

**AVA**
Mother - what did I say about...

**SARAH**
Never mind what you said. You need to go, darling.

**PERRI**
You need to listen to your mom, Ava.

**SARAH**
Thank you.

**AVA**
Why? Why do I need to go? So I can fit in? What about I want?

**SARAH**
Honey, think about your friends. And poor, Levi. You’re being very selfish leading him on and canceling at the last minute. I raised you better than that.

**AVA**
Oh my god! Guilt? Really, mother?

**SARAH**
What? I’m just saying, it’s rude.

**PERRI**
Seriously, Av. Everyone expects you there. C’mon, it won’t be any fun without out you.

**AVA**
(sighs)

Fine. I’ll go.

**SARAH**
It’s really for the best.
PERRI
Ooh. I know exactly what you should wear!

AVA
I’m sure you do.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE: STICKS AND STONES

LIGHTS UP.

ACTOR

(Sing-song)

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”

(Chuckles with sarcasm)

ACTOR (CONT)

Ah...that little ditty almost got me killed me when I was 12 years old.

(Condescending)

ACTOR (CONT)

“Oh...kids will be kids.”

Hey... if you enjoy going to funerals - especially funerals for children - keep telling your kids that one. It’s a real hoot.

Look. Put it this way... If you had the biggest, most precious, the most unique diamond in the world, would you take care that you didn’t lose it? Would you do everything in your power to protect it? Of course you would.

Then why in the world do parents deceive and lie to their children about how hateful kids can be with each other? Have we forgotten what it was like to be a kid?

Hell...even if we did remember our childhoods, adults really don’t have a clue what kids go through today.

(Addressing an audience member directly)

Put yourself into a kid’s shoes today. Kids don’t write their ABCs anymore. They text – “W.T.F.” – to their parents. They don’t play hide and go seek. They murder prostitutes to “level up” on Grand Theft Auto. If you don’t know what any of that means, you need to catch up.
Gone are the days of getting off a school bus and casually walking to homeroom. My little niece sends her adorable pink Barbie lunch box and Capri Sun through an X-ray machine as she walks through a metal detector and gets a pat down — to get into kindergarten.

Sticks and stones...

(Sound: School bell rings)

Playwright, poet, novelist, and American treasure Tennessee Williams became a victim of assault in 1979 when five teenagers beat the crap out of him near his home in Key West during a spate of anti-gay violence.

Oh... kids will be kids.

(Sound: Laugh Track)

A school bus driver in Illinois goaded students on his bus to attack a 10-year old because he thought the kid was gay.

Oh... adults will be adults.

(Sound: Laugh Track)

A pack of 20 teenaged girls and boys beat two gay men after a concert yelling “faggot” as they broke one of the men’s jaw.

Kids say the darnedest things, don’t they?

(Sound: Laugh Track)

Three teenaged boys in Virginia nearly beat a 26-year old gay man to death. To finish the job so they ran him over four times to cover their tracks.

17 and 15. They’re so cute at that age.

(Sound: Laugh Track)

Another 17-year old – a straight-A student, athlete, and clean-as-a-whistle Eagle Scout shot and stabbed a 37-year old man after consensual sex. “But the man had sex with a child!” True. However, the “child” admitted he murdered
the older man to see if he could get away with it after deciding homosexual sex was worse than murder.

I wonder where he got that idea?

(Sound: Laugh Track)

“Gay Nigger Number One” was scrawled on the dismembered, buried skull of a 19-year old in New York. He was murdered by his stepfather.

Parents. Can’t live with them...

(Sound: Laugh Track)

One final “Father of the Year” story you can talk about around the camp fire:

A father in Tampa thought his 3-year old was becoming a “sissy.” So the father did what every good father does: he slapped his boy’s head and bounced him off walls to toughen him up.

Ronnie Antonio Paris, Jr. died in 2005 after sustaining multiple brain injuries and suffering bouts of lethargy, vomiting spells, and coma. Dad got 30 years in prison for second degree manslaughter and child abuse; Mom got five years probation for child neglect.

(Pause)

Kids will be kids. Kids will kill...kids. Strangers, friends, and parents, too I suppose. The point is... I think we’ve moved beyond “sticks and stones.” Don’t you?

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
ACT 1 - SCENE 7 - DANCE

(Setting: Homecoming Dance - Evening)

(Grayson and September are arguing with the ticket taker.)

LIGHTS UP ON:
TICKET TABLE.

GRAYSON
What do you mean we can’t go in? Here’s our tickets.

TICKET TAKER
There’s a dress code. Girls have to be in dresses. You got the rules when you bought the tickets. Next.

SEPTEMBER
C’mon, Gray. Let’s go.

GRAYSON
No. I paid the same money as everybody else. Your rules don’t apply to my closet. We don’t wear no dresses!

TICKET TAKER
I’m sorry. There’s nothing I can do.

GRAYSON
C’mon September. We’re going in.

TICKET TAKER
Hey! You can’t do that!

GRAYSON
I’m not askin’. You have my tickets. Take ‘em or leave ‘em.

TICKET TAKER
I’ll have to tell Mr. Romano!

GRAYSON
Great. Tell ‘em I said hi.

(Grayson and September enter the dance. Ava and Perri arrive together. They present their tickets and go inside without any problems. Ava and Perri find some
friends. Grayson sees Ava from across the room. Music erupts alluding to Grayson’s love at first sight.)

LIGHTS CHANGE
TO INDICATE LOCATION CHANGE.

(Setting: Dance auditorium)

GRAYSON
Oh my god. Do you see Ava? She is looking [fine.]

SEPTEMBER
Why do you torture yourself?

GRAYSON
What?

SEPTEMBER
What? Besides her being completely out of your league? She’s straight and goes out with Levi McDermott. Live in the now, dude.

GRAYSON
You never know... I’m going over to talk to her.

SEPTEMBER
It’s your funeral.

(Grayson crosses to Ava)

PERRI
Oh Jesus. The freak is coming over here.

AVA
Don’t be ugly.

PERRI
What? You like freak shows?

AVA
You can be a real [bitch] sometimes, Perri.

(Grayson approaches Ava)
GRAYSON
Hello. You two look very nice tonight.

PERRI
Oh my god. It is not trying to flirt with us. This is so embarrassing.

(Perri turns away)

AVA
You’ll have to excuse Perri. She flunked manners. Hi Grayson. You look nice, too.

PERRI
Ava!

AVA
Perri! Be a dove. Could you get us something to drink? I’ll just have water. Grayson?

GRAYSON
I’m fine. Thanks.

PERRI
I cannot believe you’re talking to that...

GRAYSON
Person? Thanks. You can call me Gray.

PERRI
I’m sorry did you say gay?

(Perri exits)

AVA
I’m really sorry about that.

GRAYSON
No worries. That’s tame compared to what I hear most of the time. But enough about me... you really do look spectacular tonight.

AVA
Thank you.
GRAYSON
Would you like to dance?

AVA
Oh. Um... I’m not sure if...

GRAYSON
Hey, that’s okay. I’ve been shot down before. That’s cool.

AVA
No. I mean, I’m not sure if it’s allowed.

GRAYSON
Dancing?

AVA
You know what I mean.

GRAYSON
So do you always do only what’s ‘allowed’?

AVA
Unfortunately, yes. Pathetic, huh?

GRAYSON
Wouldn’t life be a bore if no one broke the rules? Besides, originals are worth more than copies.

AVA
That kinda sounds like you got it off a greeting card.

(Perri enters with drinks)

GRAYSON
What would you do if I...

(Grayson quickly leans in and kisses Ava. Ava reacts and slaps Grayson.)

PERRI
What the hell, you perv?

AVA
Why did you do that?
PERRI
Because it’s a freak. I told you to ignore it.

AVA
Perri, stay out of this.

GRAYSON
I’m sorry. I just felt in the moment...

(Levi enters quickly and pulls Grayson away from Ava.)

LEVI
Leave my girlfriend alone you [dyke]!

AVA
Levi, it’s okay. Everyone, chill.

PERRI
Ava, let Levi handle this.

LEVI
This tranny-freak doesn’t get to touch what’s mine?

AVA
Excuse me?

GRAYSON
(to Ava)
I’m really sorry. I’ll go.

LEVI
You got that right. You’re a sorry excuse for a girl let alone a guy. What exactly are you anyway? Go home and put on a dress.

GRAYSON
That mouth is gonna get you in trouble.

(Mr. Romano enters)

LEVI
You’re one to talk, [tranny].

MR. ROMANO
Grayson! You were told to leave. C’mon, let’s go.
GRAYSON
No problem. I was just on my way out.

(Grayson exits as Mr. Romano follows)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE - RATED HATE

(Production Notes: The author encourages production companies to further research and include/replace quotes from local, state, and national figures who employ anti-gay rhetoric affecting the lives of young people.)

LIGHTS UP.

Video Projection:
Slide Text.

The following are real messages from real people impacting the lives of young people.

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
Sally Kern
Oklahoma State Representative

ACTOR

"The homosexual agenda is destroying this nation. It’s just a fact. ... I’m not gay bashing, but according to God’s word that is not the right kind of lifestyle. It has deadly consequences. For those people involved in it, they have more suicides ... there’s more illness. Their lifespans are shorter. It’s not a lifestyle that’s good for this nation. As a matter of fact, studies show that no society that has totally embraced homosexuality has lasted more than a couple of decades. It’s the death knell of this country. I honestly think it’s the biggest threat ... even more so than terrorism or Islam. ... Because what’s happening now they’re going after, uh in schools, two year olds. ... They want to get our young children into the government schools so they can indoctrinate them. I taught school for close to 20 years. They’re going after our young children as young as two years of age to try teach them that the homosexual lifestyle is an acceptable lifestyle. I tried to introduce a bill last year that would notify parents, uh schools had to let parents know what clubs their students were involved in. And the reason I did that bill primarily was this, we had the gay straight alliance coming into our schools. Kids were getting involved in these groups, their lives were being ruined. ... One of my colleagues said “We don’t have a gay problem in my county so that’s why I’m not voting for that bill.” Well you know what, to me that is so dumb. You know if you have cancer in your little toe, do you say, I’m gonna forget about it cause the rest of me is fine. It spreads. ... This stuff is
deadly. It’s spreading. It will destroy our young people and it will destroy this nation.”

http://abcnews.go.com/Video/playerIndex?id=4423704&affil=wftv

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
President Richard Nixon

ACTOR
I don't mind the homosexuality. I understand it. Nevertheless, goddamn, I don't think you glorify it on public television, homosexuality, even more than you glorify whores. We all know we have weaknesses. But, god-dammit, what do you think that does to kids? You know what happened to the Greeks! Homosexuality destroyed them. Sure, Aristotle was a homo. We all know that. So was Socrates.

http://www.infowars.com/articles/occult/bg_nixon_tape_homosexuals_at_grove.htm

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
Roy Moore
Alabama Chief Justice

ACTOR
The homosexual conduct of a parent -- conduct involving a sexual relationship between two persons of the same gender -- creates a strong presumption of unfitness that alone is sufficient justification for denying that parent custody of his or her own children or prohibiting the adoption of the children of others.... Homosexual conduct is, and has been, considered abhorrent, immoral, detestable, a crime against nature, and a violation of the laws of nature and of nature's God upon which this Nation and our laws are predicated. Such conduct violates both the criminal and civil laws of this State and is destructive to a basic building block of society -- the family....It is an inherent evil against which children must be protected.

http://www.glapn.org/sodomylaws/usa/alabama/alnews06.htm

Saving September - Script
Video Projection:
    Photo and name:
    Trent Lott
    Former Senate Republican Leader

ACTOR
It is (a sin)... You should try to show (kids) a way to deal with that problem, just like alcohol...or sex addiction...or kleptomaniacs.

http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1696&dat=19980617&id=7w0bAAAAIBAJ&pg=6755,2269043

Video Projection:
    Photo and name:
    Michelle Bachmann
    Congresswoman, Minnesota

ACTOR
Don’t misunderstand. I am not here bashing people who are homosexuals, who are lesbians, who are bisexual, who are transgender. We need to have profound compassion for people who are dealing with the very real issue of sexual dysfunction in their life and sexual identity disorders.


Video Projection:
    Photo and name:
    50 Cent
    Rapper

ACTOR
I ain’t into faggots. I don’t like gay people around me, because I’m not comfortable with what their thoughts are. It’s OK to write that I’m prejudiced. This is as honest as I could possibly be with you. ... But women who like women, that’s cool.

I hate gay people, so I let it be known. I don’t like gay people and I don’t like to be around gay people. I am homophobic. I don’t like it. It shouldn’t be in the world or in the United States. So yeah, I don’t like it.


Are you a fag? Are you gay? Do you remember the Vietnam War? I’ll kill y’all just like that.

http://www.outsports.com/antigay/antigayrockerslist.htm

Since our nation was founded, we have discriminated against certain things. We discriminate against kidnappers. We discriminate against murderers. We discriminate against thieves...There are laws that prohibit that kind of conduct. And there have been laws since the founding of our country against what are considered unnatural sex acts, sex between members of the same sex.”

http://www.wiredstrategies.com/robertson.html
Video Projection:
Photo and name:
Jerry Falwell
Founder, The Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg Christian Academy (now Liberty Christian Academy), and Liberty University, Co-founder of the Moral Majority in 1979.

AIDS is the wrath of a just God against homosexuals. To oppose it would be like an Israelite jumping in the Red Sea to save one of Pharaoh's charioteers ... AIDS is not just God's punishment for homosexuals; it is God's punishment for the society that tolerates homosexuals.


Video Projection:
Photo and name:
Anthony Falzarano
Founder, Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (PFOX)
National Director of Parents and Friends Christian Ministries

Basically, homosexuality is a neurosis. It's healable, it's treatable. We are ministering to 6,000 former homosexuals in the Exodus network. Basically, homosexuality is a stunting of psychosexual growth. They are children inside, and any parents out there -- you know, when your kid is spoiled, he'll keep coming at you and keep coming at you and keep coming at you until you give him a whack on the bottom and say, 'Enough!' and then the child will stop.

http://www.frc.org/net/st96d2.html
http://www.wiredstrategies.com/exgayspeech.html

Video Projection:
Photo and name:
Robert George
Princeton Professor, Political Science
Co-founder of National Organization for Marriage, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Senior Fellow at the Witherspoon Institute

(Being gay is) beneath the dignity of human beings as free and rational creatures.

http://www.glaad.org/cap
Gary Bauer
Former President, Family Research Council
Former Under Secretary of Education and
Domestic policy adviser to President Reagan

Involvement in homosexuality can kill you. It can kill you emotionally, it can kill you physically, and it can certainly kill you spiritually.

http://www.frc.org/net/st96j3.html
http://news.change.org/stories/anti-gay-hate-groups-not-made-for-tv

Robert Knight
Former Family Research Council Director of Cultural Studies,
Media Fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution,
Senior Fellow, Cultural Policy Studies for the Heritage Foundation,
Testified before the U.S. Senate committee on Labor and Human Resources against the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA)

Homosexual behavior is extremely unhealthy, contributing to the spread of AIDS, hepatitis A, B and C and other sexually transmitted diseases ... Other reports indicate that homosexuals are more likely to have drug and alcohol abuse problems.

http://www.wiredstrategies.com/frc.html

Tim Wildmon
President, American Family Association

There is nothing about homosexual conduct to be proud of, and much to be ashamed of.

http://www.glaad.org/cap
Rights. RIGHTS! RIGHTS? For sexual deviant, sexual behaviors? ... That's what I'm worried about with the pedophilia and the bestiality and the sadomasochism and the cross-dressing. Is this all going to be 'rights' too, to deviant sexual behavior? It's deviant sexual behavior. Why does deviant sexual behavior get rights? Don't understand that to start out with.

http://www.glaad.org/glaad/eyeonthemedia/drlaura/dr Lauratranscripts.html#latimes

I wonder what kind of database Obama uses to locate people like [openly gay Kevin Jennings and Chai Feldblum]? Is it Monster.com? That would be appropriate. Or is it FreaksUnlimited.com? Maybe Obamanations.com? No, it's got to be Perverts.gov. I'm telling you, the entire federal government is going to have to be fumigated some day when these deviants and degenerates are finally sent packing.

http://www.glaad.org/cap

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Justice defended the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) - the federal-level law banning same-sex marriage - showing it was constitutional by citing 52-year old legal precedents banning marriages involving incest and minor children.

Paraphrased the government’s motion said the following:

"Courts have followed the principle in relation to the validity of marriages performed in other States. State courts may refuse to recognize marriages from other states that conflict with its state policies. As an example, see Catalano v. Catalano wherein
1961, an uncle married his niece in Italy but the marriage was not considered valid in Connecticut. Additionally in 1958, Wilkins v. Zelichowski showed the marriage of a 16-year old girl was not recognized in New Jersey despite it being legal in Indiana. Finally, a challenge to the Mortenson's Estate in 1957 showed the marriage of first cousins was held invalid in Arizona, though the cousins were lawfully married in New Mexico.”


LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
ACT 1 - SCENE 8 - KISS

(Setting: Outside homecoming auditorium - Night)

(Ava and Perri enter, [smoking cigarettes])

LIGHTS UP.

PERRI
I can’t believe that he-she kissed you.

AVA
Perri, Jesus. Stop being so hateful. It was no big deal.
I was just surprised, that’s all.

PERRI
What?! You like being kissed by transvestites?

AVA
It’s transgendered.

PERRI
What is?

AVA
He... she...

(Ava chuckles)

AVA (CONT)
You know, I’m not really sure what to say. Grayson is
transgendered, Perri. She’s not a transvestite.

PERRI
Well, excuse me. I don’t even know what that means. All I
know is you seem to like being kissed by trans-whatevers?

AVA
(touching her lips)
It was good kiss.

PERRI
What?! Oh my god. That is so disgusting. What is wrong
with you?
AVA
What’s wrong with you? It was just a kiss, Perri. Calm down.

PERRI
Calm down? The king - or queen - of the deviants comes up to you and kisses you in front of the entire school and you’re “oh-whatever”? What would your mother say?

AVA
I don’t expect she’d say anything because she doesn’t need to know. It’s not the end of the world. Girl or boy, it was just a kiss.

PERRI
I’m ... I’m in shock. What are you saying? You like to kiss girls now?

AVA
I’m not saying anything. I’m just saying it was a kiss.

PERRI
Ava. You kissed a girl pretending he’s a boy. That’s completely and totally sickening.

AVA
I think you’re attitude is sickening. Who even cares?

PERRI
I care.

AVA
Maybe you shouldn’t.

PERRI
Ava, wake up. Do you remember when we used to play Barbies? You loved it when Ken kissed Barbie. Barbie didn’t kiss Skipper.

AVA
(mocking)
Well Skipper was Barbie’s little sister. That’d be a little gross don’t you think?
PERRI
That’s not the point and you know it. Focus. Girls don’t kiss girls.

AVA
Why not? I don’t get what the big deal is. Who cares what’s between each other’s legs? It should matter what’s between their ears.

PERRI
[OMG] - I don’t get you. I’m going inside. Maybe it wasn’t a good idea for you to come tonight.

(Perri exits. Ava is alone when Grayson enters.)

GRAYSON
So you don’t care what’s between people’s legs?

AVA
What? Were you eavesdropping?

GRAYSON
No, no. I was just walking to my car and heard your voice. I wanted to apologize for... before. That was out of control. I’m really sorry. I was really out of line.

AVA
It’s okay. You just surprised me. I’m sorry I slapped you.

GRAYSON
(smiles)
That’s okay. It only hurt - a little.

AVA
You really need to learn about boundaries.

GRAYSON
Yeah, folks keep telling me that. I’m not really good staying inside the lines - if you can’t tell.

AVA
And then there’s that. I didn’t mean anything...
GRAYSON
That’s okay. So did you mean what you said before? About not caring...

AVA
Well, yeah. Kinda. In a general sense why can’t girls kiss girls and guys kiss guys? I don’t know why everybody’s gotta get so uptight about it.

GRAYSON
So we never had that dance. No rules out here.

AVA
You really don’t stop, do you?

GRAYSON
Not until I’m happy.

AVA
Well, we can’t dance without music.

GRAYSON
I never leave home without it.

AVA
(Grayson pulls out his [iPhone].)

GRAYSON
I never leave home without it.

GRAYSON (CONT)
I hope that was okay.

AVA
(Ava leans in to kiss Grayson.)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE: LOL, YOU’RE DEAD

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION: SHOWS COMPUTER SCREEN.

(Shown on screen: Animated phone texting between boy and girl. Audio like keyboard clicks and sound prompts help create the illusion.

Actors may read messages aloud.)

KD

hiiiii!!! thx 4 ur ###

JONNEE

ur a hoteeeeee!!!!

KD

(blushhhhhhh)

JONNEE

wanna go out????

KD

YES! whennnnn??????

JONNEE

2nite?

KD

cant. fam stuff :((( friday????

JONNEE

ok. send me a pic?

KD

of????? ;-}

JONNEE

b creative :P

KD

maybeeee friday... if ur gooood ;)

Saving September - Script
JONNEE
k - gotta go

KD
xoxoxoxo

(Shown on screen: Animated Facebook-type “conversation” between friends with avatar pictures for characters. Actors may read messages.)

KD
luvvvvv is grand <3 <3 <3

AIMEE
who?????

KD
u knowww whooo!!

AIMEE
omg!!!! I’m so happy for you!

MERCEDES
tell us alllll!!!

REGINA
yes tell usssss!!!!!!!

KD
nothin 4sure. we go out fridayyyyy

MERCEDES
better bring protection, guys never do lollllllll

KD
ewwww... its jus a moveeee

AIMEE
ewwww iz rite. gross!!

REGINA
4 real, bring trojans, jus incase ;-)P

KD
whatev
REGINA
my parents r outta town if u need a place to get down ;)))))

KD

no thx, i’m good

MERCEDES
can we hide out and watch uuuu???? lollllllllll

AIMEE
she’s not a sluttttt

KD

thxx

REGINA
thats not what ive heard hahahahaha

MERCEDES
me 2. i heard shes a big fdf!!!

REGINA
omgggg! hahahaha

KD

stop it!!!!

MERCEDES
dont be shy, own ur slutitude lolll

AIMEE
what’s a fdf???

REGINA
first date fuck hahahahahaha

KD

I AM NOT

MERCEDES
touchyyyyy ... feeeeeeellly

REGINA
how many guyz so far sluttttt???
AIMEE
leave her alone, jus ignore them

MERCEDES
dont deny. the sluttttt knows it true hahaha

REGINA
ive got pix of her doing it

KD
STOP it or ill block u.

MERCEDES
show me the pix!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

REGINA
block me and ill POST them on twitter

KD
u dont have pix

REGINA
wanna bettttt BITCH!!!!! dont try me

MERCEDES
post random porn and attach her face

REGINA
waaaaaaay ahead of you

AIMEE
cmon, leave her alone

MERCEDES
shut it or youll b a lezzy on twitter 2morow!!! lollllll

REGINA
a big diesel dyke with her face hahahahahaha

MERCEDES
hahahaha i have 500+ followers

KD
plz u guys
REGINA

ooooo... look who’s so nice now... FUCKK UUUUUU

MERCEDES

u had ur chance WHORE!!!!! everyone’s gonna know ur a sluttttt now lollll

REGINA

apologize slutttttt!!!! NOW!!!

MERCEDES

say ur sowwy skanKKK lolllllllll

KD

plz. don’t

REGINA

check twitter

MERCEDES

OMG!!! 3 guyz at once! lolllllllll

REGINA

i know!!!! do u like her face?

MERCEDES

u scary good with photoshop ;P

REGINA

a new pic evryday hahaha

MERCEDES

have fun at skooool BITCH!!!!!!!

KD

I’m sorry, plz take them down

REGINA

evryday, a new pic with new rumors. I cant wait hahahahahahaha

MERCEDES

how will u go on living being such a dirty wh00000re???

lollllllll
REGINA
sluttttts should slit their wristssssss hahaha

MERCEDES
pillz r betta - no blood lollllll

REGINA
watch out BITCH - someone might push u in front of the busssss!!!

MERCEDES
good 1 hahaha

KD
Please. I’m really sorry...

KD
Hello?

KD
Please. Don’t...

(Video fades and transitions to a news web site headline)

Sixth Grader Dies After Months of Cyberbullying

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
(Setting: School parking lot - Night)

(Grayson and September walk together to Grayson’s car.)

LIGHTS UP.

SEPTEMBER
And you actually kissed her? Then what happened?

GRAYSON
She kissed me. She could write a book about kissing.

SEPTEMBER
Oh my god. You have some big balls. I could never do that.

GRAYSON
I like to think if I had balls, they’d be cannon balls.

(Levi and his friends enter.)

LEVI
Hey guys, look. It’s Mr. And Mrs. [Lesbo].

(The boys laugh and surround Grayson and September)

LEVI
So did you get you jollies tonight, [Diesel]? You have fun with my girlfriend?

GRAYSON
Well, I didn’t hear her complaining.

SEPTEMBER
(whispers)
Gray, shut up. Let’s go.

LEVI
Check your mouth. I don’t care if you are a girl. No one touches my property.
GRAYSON
You need to check a calendar. No one owns, Ava. Piss off.

LEVI
Girl, you just don’t know when to shut your mouth do you?

GRAYSON
Looks like we do have something in common.

LEVI
I guarantee there’s nothing alike between you and me. In fact, I think us boys need to teach you girls an old-fasion lesson about the difference between boys and girls.

GRAYSON
 Seriously, Levi. Get out of here or you’ll all be sorry.

GRAYSON pulls out her knife

SEPTEMBER
Gray, c’mon.

GRAYSON
Go, September. I got this.

SEPTEMBER attempts to leave. Levi’s friends try to block her way but she gets past them. September exits.

LEVI
Now now. C’mon. Be a man. You want to be a real man don’t ya?

LEVI pulls out a gun.

GRAYSON
Levi, I guarantee you, I’m more of a man than you’ll ever be.

LEVI
Again, that mouth. Grab her.

LEVI’s friends jump Grayson and hold his arms. Grayson struggles.
LEVI (CONT)
Now for that lesson in womanhood.

GRAYSON
I’m sure you could teach me a lot about being a woman.

(Levi covers Grayson’s mouth.)

LEVI
What am I going to do with that mouth? C’mon, let’s take her to my car. People will see us here.

(Grayson struggles and manages to cut Levi.)

LEVI
Ow, you bitch! You cut me.

(A SECURITY GUARD enters with September)

SECURITY GUARD
What’s going on here?

(Grayson struggles free - flailing his knife. Levi hides his gun.)

SECURITY GUARD (CONT)
(reaching for his gun)

Whoa - buddy. Put down the knife.

GRAYSON
You don’t have to worry about me. These asshats attacked me.

LEVI
That’s bullshit. Look who has the knife! She jumped us.

SECURITY GUARD
Everybody calm down. Put down the knife, son, and we’ll get this all sorted out.

(Grayson complies)

SECURITY GUARD
You know I gotta tell Mr. Romano. Come on, let’s go.
LEVI
This isn’t over, [diesel].

GRAYSON
Not by a long shot.

(Everyone exits.)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
END ACT I.

INTERMISSION.
SAVING SEPTEMBER

ACT II
PRE-SHOW

Music of anger/resentment/resignation/isolation should play in the lobby, auditorium during intermission. While creating September’s character, imagine and create a play list of music that September might listen to as she learns more about LGBT issues and her place in society.

This is an opportunity to set an uplifting tone and establish September’s character. If music is played between scenes, the music should also typify selections September might listen to.

Music needs not be music ‘typically’ associated with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered community.
ACT 2 - INTRODUCTION - BULLYCIDE

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
VIDEO CLIP MONTAGE.

An ‘overture’ on the topic of bullycide.

Short montage of clips (1-3 minutes) as if surfing the internet or flicking through television channels. Clips should be associated with cases of bullycide - suicides as a result of bullying - i.e. news reports, photos of children who have committed suicide, memorial web sites, etc. The montage does not necessarily need to include exclusively LGBT youth.

The company is encouraged to research and study national, state, and local stories related to bullycide.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
ACT 2 - SCENE 1 - SUSPENSION

(Setting: Mr. Romano’s office - Day)

LIGHTS UP.

(Mr. Romano, Grayson, September, Levi, and the boys from Act 1, Scene 9 discuss the fight from the ending of Act 1. Everyone but Mr. Romano and September yell and talk over each other about who caused the fight. Ad libbing encouraged.)

GRAYSON, LEVI, AND BOYS
(Yelling over each other)

You jumped us!

That’s [bullshit]!

You had a knife!

We were just walking to our car.

Etc.

MR. ROMANO
Enough! I’ve heard enough.

(Everyone quiets down)

MR. ROMANO (CONT)
As if my job isn’t hard enough, you jackasses have to go and make it even harder with this kind of [BS]. Pathetic. And on school grounds? You know better than that. You guys know we have a zero tolerance policy about fighting.

Well, I think the facts make things pretty clear. So in that respect, I guess you’ve made my job a little easier. As I see it, one group was walking to their car and minding their own business and the other group attacked because of actions that occurred earlier during the dance. It’s pretty clear who’s going down for this one.

GRAYSON
Damn straight.
MR. ROMANO
I’m talking about you, Miss Telupac. Bringing a weapon on school grounds? (tsk tsk) Not very smart young lady. Mr. McDermott is clearly the injured party and has the wounds to show for it. Levi and his parents have every right to press charges if they so choose.

LEVI
You bet your ass I’m pressing charges.

MR. ROMANO
Mr. McDermott, I’ll remind you to hold your tongue.

GRAYSON
You got it backwards. They jumped us! I was defending myself - and September. The said they were going to rape us.

MR. ROMANO
Well there’s the problem. You’re a boy - or that’s what you want to be. Why would they want to rape you? Besides, it’s really your word against theirs. And who am I to believe? They’re clean-cut student athletes. You’re a cross-dressing trouble-maker barely passing her classes - and who only minutes before the attack blatantly defiled our homecoming dance and school rules. Let this be a life lesson young lady.

GRAYSON
Is this the Twilight Zone? How does how I dress have anything to do with this?

MR. ROMANO
It has everything to do with it. You need to learn life has many rules - even for you - and your kind. You’re not a special class of people. And when you break the rules, there are consequences.

GRAYSON
But, you don’t understand...

MR. ROMANO
No! You don’t understand. I’m done arguing. I’m suspending you and September until the school board can review your case and decide what they want to do with you.
(Levi and the boys quietly congratulate themselves)

SEPTEMBER
But I didn’t do anything, I was the one who ran for help.

MR. ROMANO
I’m sorry. There’s nothing else I can do. Boys, you’re not off the hook either. I’m putting you on academic probation. One more slip up and you’re off the football team.

GRAYSON
So that’s how it is? They get slapped on the wrist and we’re kicked out of school? That’s [bullshit]!

MR. ROMANO
I suggest you mind your filthy manners and act like a proper lady for once or I’ll notify school security to call the police. I’m being charitable here, Miss Telupac. Be grateful. Boys, you’re excused.

(Levi and the boys exit. Mr. Romano gives Grayson and September slips of paper.)

MR. ROMANO (CONT)
Here, take this to security so they can escort you to your classes and you can collect your assignments. Security will then escort you off campus. I hope you take this as a real learning opportunity and a chance to redeem yourselves. God bless you both.

GRAYSON
God bless this!

(Grayson takes the paper and they both exit)

LIGHTS CHANGE
TO INDICATE LOCATION CHANGE

(Setting: School hallway)

GRAYSON
Can you believe that BS?
SEPTEMBER
I can’t believe you couldn’t keep your mouth shut just one time. Now we’re both expelled?

GRAYSON
Huh? You’re blaming me for getting expelled?

SEPTEMBER
If you’d just keep quiet for once and keep your head down, people wouldn’t bother us.

GRAYSON
Are you kidding me? That’s what you think? Just shut up and take it? That’s your answer?

SEPTEMBER
I don’t... Look, I don’t know. I just know I’m suspended and my parents are going to completely freak out.

(September becomes increasingly excited - pacing - etc. Talks to herself.)

SEPTEMBER (CONT)
I had a full scholarship lined up if I kept my grades up and had a clean record. That’s gone now. My parents were counting on me to get in college. What now? Flipping burgers? I might as well kill myself.

GRAYSON
Okay, okay. The world isn’t over. Hey, I’m sorry. Calm down. It’ll be okay. Shh...

(Grayson tries to hug September, but September pulls away)

SEPTEMBER
Leave me alone. This is all your fault. You ruined everything!

(September exits, running away from Grayson)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE - GOOGLE IT

Production Notes:

• This piece is best seen rather than described.

• An example of this piece may be viewed here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIX7fTwNexY

• The video conveys a completely random message based on results extrapolated from an internet search engine’s “autocomplete” results.
  • Many search engines, such as Google, use autocomplete suggestions to help predict what users try to look up. Suggestions are provided in real-time as the user types letters into the search field.
  • Suggestions are ranked from top to bottom based on the search engine’s users’ most common search terms and phrases.
  • Essentially, millions of users searching millions of search terms create the autosuggest results and thus the impacting message.

• The story is of a bullied child who interacts with the internet to find answers to his or her questions.
  • Where children once were told to look up unknown words in the dictionary or encyclopedia, they now consult the internet.
  • One search leads to another based on how the larger internet community interacted with the search engine.
  • The child forms an opinion, a belief based on all the previous searches from society.

• Listed below are the search terms used for the example video.
  • Results may vary when reproducing the search depending on the time, date, and search engine used.
  • Production companies may very the search pattern as long as the thread of the story remains the same: Child is bullied, child looks for answers, child becomes suicidal, child finds help.
Hello
I am your child
I am 14, 11, 8 years old
People call me gay but I’m not
I looked up “gay” in the dictionary
I didn’t understand what it meant
so I googled it
here’s what I found
gay is...
gays are...
the bible says homosexuality...
homosexuality is...
how do I know if I’m gay
do gays...
will gays...
can gays be happy
gays have...
aids is...
do all gays ...
can I stop being gay...
I don’t like being gay...
gay suicide hotline

LIGHTS UP.

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
ACT 2 - SCENE 2 - INTENTIONS

(Setting: Split-scene - Lighthouse Florist and Levi’s bedroom - Evening)

(September sits at the counter typing on the computer / Levi sits at his bedroom desk surfing the internet.)

(September sits at the counter typing on the computer / Levi sits at his bedroom desk surfing the internet.)

(Technical notes:
• Similar to Act I, Scene 4, the scene is without spoken dialogue beyond the messages scene through the video projection.

• Character ‘dialogue’ is shown via video projection and represents what’s on each character’s computer screen.

• Stage lighting or multiple video projection screens should indicate who’s computer screen the audience is looking at.

• Soft music may play and/or change between characters to help distinguish character’s dialogue.)

LIGHTS UP.

SEPTEMBER

Mom and Dad,

When you find this, I’ll be gone and you’ll have questions. That’s funny, because I have many questions, too.

(Back spaces / deletes text. Starts over.)

When you find this, I’ll be gone. You want to know why. I don’t have an answer except to say my heart hurts too much to live.

LEVI

(Surfs internet pulling up: Hateful images/video, protests against gays / violence against gays in TV & movies)
SEPTEMBER
I don’t want to hurt you. You’ve only shown me love. I couldn’t ask for better parents. But there are things even you can’t fix.

LEVI
(Anti-gay teaching/religious images/video, ‘God Hates Fags,’ Family Research Council / Pat Robertson)

SEPTEMBER
My life is nothing but pain. I see nothing but pain. I feel nothing but pain. I have no control to stop the pain. Even if you wanted to stop it, you can’t.

LEVI
(Harmful images/video: Exodus International / doctors saying they can ‘cure’ homosexuality)

SEPTEMBER
The world is a hateful place and I don’t have a place in it. If I have a place, I don’t want to be a part of it.

LEVI
(Consequence images/video: Larry King murder, LGBT suicides, cases of bullycide)

SEPTEMBER
Everything around me tells me I’m broken. The way I dress is broken, the way I think is broken, the way I love is broken. I am broken.

LEVI
(Loving images/video: Photos of same-sex couples / happy / children)

SEPTEMBER
I feel like I’m normal. But there must be something wrong with me if I can’t understand why everything is so upside down.

LEVI
(Positive images/video: Pro-gay reforms / Pride parades / Pro-gay TV & movies)
SEPTEMBER
Please tell April and August I love them. Tell Grayson this isn’t his fault. I’ve thought about this for a long time.

LEVI
(Hopeful images/video: It Gets Better messages)

SEPTEMBER
You won’t understand my choice, but I know you love me. I hope you will forgive me someday. I love you. Goodbye.

Your loving daughter,
September

(September prints the letter. She holds the letter in her hand – reads it. Crumples it up and throws it away. September exits.)

LIGHTS FADE
ON SEPTEMBER.

LEVI
(Scenes of homoerotic images/video)

(The scene ends with Levi looking at erotic gay images and beginning to undress insinuating he’s about to masturbate.)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE - COMING OUT

(Production Notes: Presented as a self-help lecture. PowerPoint-type slides help establish the premise.)

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Coping with Coming Out

ACTOR
Hello there! Welcome to Coping with Coming Out - a support group for families and friends with loved ones who have recently come out of the closet.

As we all know, “coming out of the closet” - as it is called - can be a difficult time. When someone comes out, they have many fears and questions. Many wonder: Will I be rejected by my friends and family? Will I be perceived differently? How will my life change?

But, just as the person who comes out has many questions and fears, so do their families and friends. And that’s why you’re here. You want to understand your child, your brother or sister, an aunt or uncle, or maybe your best friend; you want to love them. We understand. You have your own fears and questions about someone who now seems to you like a familiar stranger.

That’s okay. It’s perfectly normal to have these feelings. We’re here to help.

So let’s talk about the questions you might be asking yourself. Keep in mind, every situation is different - nothing is one size fits all. We’re going to try cover as many bases as possible, but your situation may differ slightly. If it does, just substitute as best you can. Got it? Let’s go!

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Out of the Blue

Alright, let’s talk about the typical coming out process. You’re at home. It’s just a regular Tuesday night and you’re making dinner. And out of the blue - your child,
maybe your best friend just “comes out of the closet.”
Bam!

Goodness, what do you do? Think about it. You’ve known this person for years. Sure... maybe you had your suspicions. Maybe not. What do you do if your child or friend comes out to you as... black, white, Asian, Hispanic, or maybe Arabic? Perhaps your loved one reveals they are Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, “just spiritual,” or god-forbid, an atheist. Just kidding. Again, the scenarios are virtually endless. If I haven’t mentioned your child’s specific situation, just substitute going forward. Got it? Great, let’s keep going.

We at Coping with Coming Out understand these are major life revelations that often take parents and friends completely by surprise.

Here are some initial questions you might be asking yourself: Where did this come from? Why now? Will my child or friend be safe in a world full of hate and discrimination directed towards them? Can they ever be happy? I assure you, these questions are absolutely normal. Never fear, we have answers and support for you. This can be an extremely difficult time, but it doesn’t have to be. We’ve developed tools to help you and your child get through the storm.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Support is Not a Four-Letter Word

Now the biggest question we hope you’re asking yourself is: How can I support my blue-eyed child or friend? Is it even possible to support them if it goes against my beliefs? You might be surprised to learn the answer is - yes. And yes, we realize it can be traumatic to discover someone you love has parents born in a foreign country.

From the outset, it’s important to realize - regardless if your child or friend came out to you, or you found out unintentionally, they need you now. Every person’s worst fear is that by coming out, their family and friends will reject them. No matter what your beliefs, fears or prejudices, you need to let your loved one know that you still love them.
Your child is the same person they were before coming out of the closet. Remember, being gifted with intelligence is just one part of who they are. It was there all along. The child who loved Barbies and/or The Beatles is still the same kid you've loved since their birth.

Nothing about them has changed, except now you have more knowledge about their life. Try to take this opportunity to connect as you did before you knew about their taste for Afro-Cuban jazz music. Was there a meal you liked to cook together, a favorite TV show you watched? Make sure you continue to do the things you did as a family or as friends.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Talk It Out

When someone comes out of the closet, it’s important to communicate. If you feel comfortable asking questions about being born “on the wrong side of the tracks,” do so. But you don’t need to focus on it exclusively. Just talk – talk about school, work, other activities and interests. Studies show that children whose parents take an interest in their lives are less likely to engage in risky behaviors.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Coping with It

Let’s be honest. You may blame yourself for your child taking a liking in ancient mythical literature. Don’t. It’s not your fault. Most scientists and psychologists agree, most people are born predisposed to their orientation. It is not something that you could have influenced one way or another.

You may feel depressed and isolated about your child having red hair. Maybe you feel like you have no one you can talk to. Never fear. This is a safe place. You can talk here. Or if this isn’t the right place for you, we can refer you to many reputable, supportive counselors in the area.

And it’s okay. Some things will be different and perhaps not what you hoped for with your left-handed child or friend. Many want their kids or friends to be like them and get married and have children. That’s completely normal. Letting go of that dream for your child can be
hard. Remember though, that was YOUR dream. However, many of these people choose to spend their lives with just one person and have children. So there’s hope!

And it’s important to accept that even though your child did not choose to be the way they are, they may make some life choices you do not agree with. Although this may be hard for you, remember, it’s their life and they have the right to live it as their own.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: In Their Shoes

Now let’s try to see things from the point of view of someone who has come out of the closet. When someone comes out as either pro “Mac” or pro “PC,” they often question their place in society. They wonder how they will fit in with their family? Can they still have a family? Can they get married? Can they have children? How will their faith community accept them? Will their friends accept or reject them?

Here’s where you have a choice. You can help them feel accepted and loved, or you can add to their feelings of isolation. Make sure they know they still have a place in their family, no matter what the outside world cruelly and often brutally tells them.

In any case, support your child if someone makes a disparaging remark or physically abuses them because of their height or weight. If they become a victim of verbal, psychological, sexual, or physical harassment because of it, stand by his or her side – and help them.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT: Who Can I Tell?

Who to come out to is ultimately your child’s or friend’s choice. Remember - who you tell can have a consequence on their life. On the other hand, you might need to talk to someone and don’t want to keep such important information to yourself. It’s important that you be able to get the support that you need. Check in with your son or daughter before you tell anyone about them being perceived as a nerd or geek. Let them know you need to be able to talk to people to get support for yourself. REMEMBER you can always talk to support groups online, many anonymously.
Now here’s where things can get uncomfortable. Some religions will call your child a sinner, an abomination, bound for Hell, or worse. Other religions are more open and accepting. You and your child are probably having many conflicting feelings about their being born female. The best course of action is to take a look at the work of some religious scholars who have a different interpretations of the hundreds of variations, editions, and translations of the various religious texts of the world. Only you will know the right answer, but you’ll find the directive to love outnumbers hate in every major world religion.

It’s important to know you’re not alone. Millions of parents and friends are going through what you are - right now! And there are many resources available.

Here are some real books to get you through your turbulent storm. Again, some of these titles might not address your child’s situation. But as a rule, these lessons are universal for kids and families dealing with issues surrounding the coming out process. Just substitute and apply these lessons the best you can. Got it? Here you go!

(Production Notes:

• Actors read the book titles with blurbs. Titles and blurbs should be read with sarcasm as these are actually meant to be ‘helpful’ and ‘positive’ books.

• The author encourages production companies to do additional research and include other ‘helpful’ self-help books.

• Slides should show book covers / titles with blurb.

• All book information available via Google Books or Amazon.com.)
• Gay Children, Straight Parents: A Plan for Family Healing
There is hope and healing for families.

• Straight Parents, Gay Children: Keeping Families Together
A survival guide for all parents who wish to help their gay children cope with the inevitable cruelty from which they cannot hide.

Unfortunately, some parents will have to go beyond simply coping with a son or daughter who comes out of the closet. Some children cannot bear society’s scorn. Many children go on to take their lives despite their family’s love. If you find yourself in this situation, here’s one of literally dozens of books written by parents after their child’s suicide.

• Prayers For Bobby: A Mother's Coming To Terms With The Suicide Of Her Gay Son
Bobby Griffith was an all-American boy ... and he was gay. Faced with an irresolvable conflict - for both his family and his religion taught him that being gay was " wrong" - Bobby chose to take his own life.

And of course, some members of society will sadly never accept many who come out of the closet. Sometimes, children are murdered. Thankfully, there are many books available for parents to turn to as a way to cope with their child’s murder. Like this helpful book by Judy Shepard.

• The Meaning of Matthew: My Son's Murder in Laramie, and a World Transformed
Heart-wrenchingly honest, The Meaning of Matthew is an unforgettable and inspiring story, chronicling one ordinary woman's struggle to cope with the unthinkable.
But not let’s forget about the folks struggling with coming out in the first place! There’s help for them, too. Here are a few books for people dealing with the coming out process:

• *Mom, Dad, I'm Gay: How Families Negotiate Coming Out*  
  (It) illustrates the wide range of family reactions and discusses the factors that determine how parents come to terms with the disclosure over time.

• *Now That I'm Out, What Do I Do?*  
  For most gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, acknowledging and accepting their homosexual orientation are only the first steps ... They then must ... reevaluate the most basic themes of human existence: family, love, spirituality, work, and community.

• *Crisis: 40 Stories Revealing The Personal, Social, And Religious Pain And Trauma Of Growing Up Gay In America*  
  Hundreds of thousands of gay teens face traumatic depression, fear, rejection, persecution, and isolation--usually alone. ... Homophobia and discrimination are at the heart of their pain.

And then there’s the rest of us. Your friend, possibly your best friend, comes out to you. Here are some books to help you cope with one of the most trying times of your friendship:

• *Outing Yourself: How To Come Out As Lesbian Or Gay To Your Family, Friends, And Coworkers*  
  A 14-step program — complete with exercises, meditation notes, and anger checks, as well as the accounts of the coming-out experiences of other lesbians and gay men -- shows how you can successfully handle this life-changing, life-renewing process.

• *Virtually Normal: An Argument About Homosexuality*  
  No subject has divided contemporary America more bitterly
than homosexuality. Addressing ... how a predominantly heterosexual society should deal with its homosexual citizens.

**What If Someone I Know Is Gay?: Answers To Questions About What It Means To Be Gay And Lesbian**
How Do People Become Gay?  
Is It A Sin? Is It A Choice?  
No Question Goes Unanswered In This Important Book About Being Gay.

**101 Questions About Homosexuality**
“My son just told me he is gay. He says he's finally accepted who he is, and that he's never been happier. Can this really be true?”

Now, don’t think we’ve forgotten those of you with religious tons of questions about coming out. We gotcha covered. Heck, there are whole sections of bookstores devoted to this thorny subject. Here are a few to help you “pray the gay away”:

**The Gay Agenda: It's Dividing The Family, The Church, And A Nation**
Can we still love people in this lifestyle, but hate the sin? What impact is this agenda having on the traditional American family? What impact will this agenda have on our nation?

**Is The Homosexual My Neighbor?: A Positive Christian Response**
A classic work of gay spirituality — newly revised to reflect today's issues, including gays in the military, the AIDS crisis, and genetic research on homosexuality.

**A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality**
Many insist we believe that nothing can be done about homosexuality, but research indicates otherwise. Clear insight is provided for identifying potential developmental problems in children and gives practical advice for addressing them.
Ultimately - a friend or child bursting out of the closet is always a traumatic experience - for them and you. But, you don’t have to go it alone. Help is not only available, but plentiful.

Navigating the rough waters of coming out won’t be easy. You can expect to go through nights of soul-searching with many fears and questions. It will be one of the greatest tests of love and tolerance you will probably ever experience. Our answer: open your hearts. Listen with compassion and love. The storm will pass - one way or another.

Dialogue and text adapted from actual parenting guides regarding the coming out process. Book titles and publisher notes are real and have not been altered.

END SCENE.

Source:

ACT 2 - SCENE 3 - REJECTION

(Setting: School cafeteria - Day)

LIGHTS UP.

(Perri and her FRIENDS sit at a table eating lunch and gossip. Ava enters and crosses over to Perri’s table. Ava approaches to sit down.)

PERRI
Oh, I’m sorry this seat is taken.

(Perri turns her attention back to her friends.)

AVA
Oh, sorry. I’ll grab another chair.

PERRI
I’m sorry, the table is completely full.

(Taken aback)

AVA
Perri, what’s wrong.

(Perri ignores Ava)

AVA (CONT)
Hello... what’s going on? What’s the joke? Perri?!

PERRI
What?!

AVA
What is wrong with you?

PERRI
Nothing. There’s just isn’t any room for you.

AVA
C’mon. What is it? Why are you acting like this?

PERRI
Acting? Like what?
AVA
Perri - stop being a [snot] and tell me what’s wrong.

PERRI
Look I’m not the one acting like “a snot.” You are. I haven’t changed - you have.

How have I changed?

AVA
Go ask your girlfriend.

(Perri and her friends laugh)

AVA
Oh god, you’re still mad about the other night? I don’t get it.

PERRI
No, you don’t get it, Ava. We were best friends, we had boyfriends, we were going off to college together and all of the sudden you turned into a flaming bull dyke.

AVA
Perri - I’m not - like that.

PERRI
Then what’s going on between you and that - thing you hang out with and kiss?

AVA
Grayson and I are just friends, Perri. I told you...

PERRI
Yeah, you told me how you liked kissing it. It’s totally disgusting. You need to think about what you’re doing, Ava.

AVA
What am I exactly doing, Perri?

PERRI
In the first place, how about respecting yourself? Imagine the diseases you’re exposing yourself to. Secondly, you’re
throwing your life away. Disappointing your parents. Losing your friends. Throwing away your chance at a decent boyfriend. Should I go on? You’re probably going to hell for acting the way you do.

AVA
(truly stunned)
Is that what you really think I am?

PERRI
Yes, I do. And so do your friends and family.

AVA
Well if that’s what you think, then we don’t have anything else to say. Good bye.

(Ava walks away from Perri)

LIGHTS CHANGE
TO INDICATE LOCATION CHANGE.

(Setting: School hallway - Day)
(While walking Ava runs into Levi)

LEVI
Hey, babe. What’s the rush?

AVA
Not now, Levi.

LEVI
(Levi steps in front of Ava and grabs her arm.)

Whoa. What’s wrong?

AVA
I’m late. Please let me go.

LEVI
Just a second. I wanted to see you after school.

AVA
I can’t. I have to be somewhere.
LEVI
Where? With that [dyke]? Jesus Ava, what is it with you and the freak? He’s not even a guy.

AVA
Get out of my way.

LEVI
Look... I’m sorry. I wanted to see you after school... to apologize.

AVA
You don’t seem to be doing a good job of it.

LEVI
I’m sorry... really. I know I’ve been a real ass to you lately.

AVA
Don’t bother. I’ve been meaning to give this back to you.

(Ava takes off Levi’s ring and tries to hand it back to him)

LEVI
What’s that supposed to mean?

AVA
What do you think it means? It’s your ring. I don’t want it anymore.

LEVI
I gave you that ring because I love you.

AVA
Oh god. Seriously, Levi? Just take it.

LEVI
No. Let’s talk later.

AVA
No - we can’t. Here - take it.

LEVI
No.
(Ava places the ring on the ground)

AVA
Then don’t take it, but I’m not keeping it. I’ve gotta go.

(Ava turns to leave)

LEVI
Your choosing that thing - over me? That’s what you’re doing? Over me?!

(Ava stops but does not look at Levi)

LEVI (CONT)
So what...are you gonna start coming to school dressed like a dude, too? Is that it? You gonna cut your hair and pretend you like pussy? So are you gonna play the man or woman? You gonna go down on her like you did me - you [fucking] whore!

(Ava turns to Levi)

AVA
I’m really sorry if it hurts you to think I’d rather be with him than with you. You’re just gonna have to live with it - because that’s how it is.

(Ava exits)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE: IT GETS BETTER, JAMEY

(Production Note: This Dialogue may be either performed live or with Jamey’s actual video.)

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:
In May 2011, Jamey Rodemeyer – a 14-year old gay teen from Williamsville, New York – posted this inspiring message on YouTube to encourage LGBT youth. His video was part of blogger Dan Savage’s “It Gets Better” campaign.

ACTOR
or show JAMEY’S VIDEO

"Hi, this is Jamey from Buffalo, New York and I’m just here to tell you that it does get better. Here’s a little bit about my story.

Um, December 2010, I thought I was bi and then I always was got made fun of because I virtually have no guy friends. And I only have friends that are girls. And it bothered me because they’d be like “fag in bed...” and they’d taunt me in the hallways and I felt like I could never escape it and I made a FormSpring which I shouldn’t have done and people would just constantly send me hate telling me that gay people go to hell and um...

I just want to tell you that it does get better ‘cause when I came out for being bi I got so much support from my friends and made me feel so secure. And then if your friends or family aren’t even there for you, I look up to one of the most supporting people of the gay community that I think of, that I know, um... Lady Gaga.

She makes me so happy and she lets me know that I was born this way. And that’s my advice to you from her, that you were born this way. And all you have to do is hold your head up... hold your head up and you’ll go far.

Because that’s all you have to do. Just love your self and you’re set. And I promise... you’ll get better. I have so much support from people that I don’t even know online. I know that sounds creepy, but they’re so nice and caring. They don’t ever want me to die... it’s just so... so much
support for me. So just listen here. It gets better. Just look at me - I’m doing fine. I went to the Monster Ball and now I’m liberated. So... It gets better.

LIGHTS DIM.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:

Four months after posting his video, on September 18, 2011, Jamey Rodemeyer took his life. Despite counseling and pleas for help to Jamey’s school, his parents say he had faced school bullies for years.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:

Jamey’s parents’ message to the world, “To the kids who are bullying - they have to realize that words are very powerful and what you think is just fun and games isn’t to some people, and you are destroying a lot of lives.”

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

Source:
ACT 2 - SCENE 4 - DAISIES

(Setting: Lighthouse Florist - Afternoon/Evening)

LIGHTS UP.

(FDM prepares a bouquet. Ava enters.)

FDM
Well ain’t you the prettiest little flower. What can I do for you?

AVA
Oh, hello. I’m looking for Grayson. Is he working today?

FDM
I’m sorry. You just missed him. I sent him on a delivery.

AVA
Oh. Okay, thanks.

(Ava turns to leave)

FDM
He’ll be back shortly. You’re welcome to stay - for tea?

AVA
That’s awfully nice, but you look kinda busy. I really should...

FDM
It’s no trouble. These flowers go out tomorrow to Mrs. Smithson - she gets a weekly delivery whether they’re ready or not. Really, it’s no trouble. Please sit down. And where are my manners? I’m Eph Diem.

AVA
F dee...

FDM
F-D-M. It’s Latin for Fairy Drag Mother.

AVA
I’m Ava.
FDM
Ava...that’s a pretty name. Why do I know that name...
Hmm...Getting old is no fun, honey. So how do you know our Grayson?

AVA
Oh, we uh... just really met each other last week at homecoming. We go to high school together.

FDM
That’s where I’ve heard your name. Grayson won’t stop talking about you. I have to admit, I can see why he likes you.

(FDM gives Ava a cup of hot tea)

FDM (CONT)
I serve English-style. It’s really the only civilized way, don’t you think? Milk or sugar?

AVA
Oh, thank you. Just sugar, please.

FDM
One lump or two, dear?

AVA
One is fine. Thank you.

FDM
Isn’t this fun? I love a good old-fashioned tea party - with some exceptions if you know what I mean.

(Ava looks distracted)

FDM (CONT)
What’s wrong dear? Oh, I didn’t mean to offend. I broke my own rule: never discuss politics or religion with friends. I’m sorry. I swear I have a real knack at putting my size 13 in my mouth.

AVA
No, it’s okay. I’m fine. I’ve just got a lot on my mind.
Oh, you kids these days. The world spins so fast for you. It’s hard enough being your age; the world really piles on so much more than you need. Can I help, dear?

Oh, no thank you. I’ll be fine. I’m just a little confused.

If you asked some of my family, they’d tell you you’re talking to the right person about confusion.

I’m kinda in uncharted water right now - emotions-wise.

About Grayson?

And everyone seems to have an opinion about him.

Opinions (sighs)... you know what they say about opinions. They’re like assholes - everyone has one.

Well, everyone says the most horrible things about Grayson and ever since I’ve given him the time of day, my family and friends are starting to say the same things about me.

And what do you think?

I’m just a little overwhelmed with everyone’s reaction. And confused... I don’t even know how I really feel about Grayson. A lot of feelings have been stirred up.

Ah - youth. I remember those feelings - barely. But now your family is - ["pitching a fit."]
AVA
Um, yeah. You could say that. My mother is convinced I’m literally going to Hell. She just called our pastor and arranged some kind of intervention.

FDM
Oh dear.

AVA
And my best friend just disowned me. God, why can’t everyone just mind their own damned business?

FDM
Well, if it helps, they’re trying - in their own twisted, eyes-wide-shut sort of way - they’re trying to help you.

AVA
Help me? They think I’m throwing my life away.

FDM
Exactly.

AVA
I don’t get it. Are you on my side or on theirs.

FDM
Yours dear - always yours. I’m just saying your family is afraid for you. Afraid of the unknown. They only know - or think they know - people like Grayson from what they create in their minds or what they see from movies. We’re “The Creatures from the Black Lagoon.”

AVA
I’m sorry. You lost me.

FDM
To them - Grayson is like the bogeyman. Something to fear. We’re one of the last bogeymen out there. The bogeyman used to be black folks drinking from the same water fountain as white folks. Then it became women voting or women asking a man on a date - or clutch-the-pearls: women on the battle field.

I’m sure your family will come around. In my experience, once you get to really know something - someone - it becomes pretty damned hard to hate it.
AVA
What if my family never comes around? What if I lose my family?

FDM
(Heavy sigh)
And sometimes that happens, too. Some folks refuse to ever open their eyes. That’s what actually happened to Grayson. His family threw him out of the house when he told them he was transgendered. Hasn’t seen them since.

He had to divorce his parents and has been on his own since he was 15. Sadly, they refused to ever see the light.

AVA
Jesus... I didn’t know that.

FDM
Jesus really had very little to do with it, dear. But I get your meaning.

Grayson has been through hell and back. He’s had to make his own family - and he’s got a pretty fabulous family if I do say so myself.

Many lose their blood. Religion or just good old fashioned bigotry gets in the way. Sometimes blood loses to hate.

So... We make our own family.

(Enter Grayson)

FDM (CONT)
And speak of the devil.

GRAYSON
Sorry I’m late I... hey, I didn’t know you were coming by.

AVA
Oh, it’s... Ugh... Everything is turning to shit.

FDM
I’m going to let you birds be. I’m heading home. This bouquet will have to wait tomorrow - I’ve lost the will to
deal with Mrs. Smithson. Good night, squirrels. Ava, remember what I said, okay. It’ll all work out.

AVA
Thanks for listening and for the advice.

GRAYSON
(To FDM)
I’ll see you tomorrow.

FDM
Don’t stay too late, dear.

(FDM exits to back of shop. Grayson goes to Ava.)

GRAYSON
Tell me.

AVA
God, it’s too much to tell. Everyone is going crazy.

GRAYSON
I’m sorry. It’s a lot of baggage, I know.

AVA
I feel trapped between my family and wanting to see you.

GRAYSON
Hey – look at me. Eph Diem is right. You’re going to be okay.

AVA
How can you say that? My mother wants to ship me off somewhere to be brainwashed.

GRAYSON
What?! Well, you don’t have to go. You have options.

AVA
What options? I’m not like you, Grayson. My future is mapped out for me.

GRAYSON
Then remake the map.
AVA
Grayson, I can’t just ignore my parents!

GRAYSON

AVA
Yours didn’t.

GRAYSON
Eph Diem told you... well yeah, my family failed the test. But who’s to say yours will. Let your family cool down. Nothing happens overnight.

AVA
I know. I just want things to be the way they were.

GRAYSON
I think it’s too late for that. Don’t you?

(Ava leans in to kiss Grayson)

AVA
It’s too late for a lot of things.

GRAYSON
I know. But it’ll be okay. Promise.

Ugh, I’ve got a lot of deliveries to make before we close. Can I see you later tonight? Let me finish up and I’ll come by your house.

AVA
Okay. But, let’s keep the drama low. Call me and I’ll meet you outside. I don’t want to deal with my mother.

GRAYSON
Deal.

(Grayson kisses Ava and she exits)
LIGHTING CHANGE
INDICATES LATER THAT DAY.

(Setting: Same - Evening)

(Grayson begins cleaning up the shop and getting ready to leave. The door chime/bell sounds.

Levi enters. Grayson faces away from the door.)

GRAYSON
I’m sorry. We’re closed.

LEVI
I just came by to apologize.

GRAYSON
Oh, great. Man, we’re closed.

LEVI
Hey, seriously. Truce. I just came to talk.

GRAYSON
C’mon on man. No more games. Just leave well enough alone. You already got me kicked out of school. Isn’t that enough?

LEVI
Look, sorry how all that went down. I’ve just been spun up lately.

GRAYSON
(Sighs)

Okay. Great. Thanks. We’re still closed.

LEVI
I know you’re pissed, but hear me out.

GRAYSON
Jesus... What?

LEVI
I’m just you know, really possessive and you were touching my girl.
GRAYSON
Well I didn’t see “Property of...” stenciled on her forehead.

LEVI
I got it. I know I’ve been an ass. Sorry...

GRAYSON
(Eases up)
Yeah... well, I can see how you’d get tore up about that. If anyone touched my girl...

LEVI
So you understand. See?

GRAYSON
Yeah, I suppose.

LEVI
Anyway, I’m really sorry.

GRAYSON
That’s cool. It’s forgotten... just wish school wasn’t messed up.

LEVI
Yeah, sorry ’bout that, too.

GRAYSON
Yeah, me too...

LEVI
Hey... You know, I’ve been wanting to ask you something, but you know - we hate each other and all...

GRAYSON
What’s that?

LEVI
So...can you tell me... How did you know? When did you know?

GRAYSON
Know what?
LEVI

That you were gay.

GRAYSON

I’m not gay.

LEVI

What? I thought you were...

GRAYSON

It’s called transgendered.

LEVI

Well, when...how did you know you’re...trans-whatever. How old were you? Were you scared?

GRAYSON

Um...It didn’t just come to me overnight, you know. But, uh basically I just...knew I was different. Most figure it out when they’re pretty young. You notice you’re not like a lot of the other kids. You’re not interested in the same stuff as the other girls - or boys. For me, I felt like my outside didn’t match my inside.

LEVI

So are you a...lesbian?

GRAYSON

Jeez - no. Trans-gendered.

LEVI

Sorry - I didn’t...

GRAYSON

It’s okay. A lot people get confused. For me, it’s easiest to put it like this. I’ve got a guy’s brain inside a girl’s body. Most folk’s brains and bodies match. Mine doesn’t.

LEVI

But you like girls.

GRAYSON

Yeah - because I have a straight guy’s brain.
LEVI
So you’re not a lesbian?

GRAYSON
Like I said, it’s not an easy to wrap your brain around sometimes. Lesbians are women with women brains who like women. Understand?

LEVI
Not really...

GRAYSON
Yeah, well try to catch up.

LEVI
So are you going to get one of those operations to make you look like a dude?

GRAYSON
Damn - man. Get personal much?

LEVI
Sorry, sorry. I was just thinking, how can you ever be really happy if the inside doesn’t match the outside. I wouldn’t be able to... I was just curious.

GRAYSON
(sighs)
Dude... I don’t know, yet. There’s no instruction manual for all this.

LEVI
Okay, okay. I’m just trying to understand it all. This is all kinda new to me, too, ya know.

Oh! What about God? The church says it’s wrong. Don’t you worry about going to Hell?

GRAYSON
Please. Let’s not bring up religion. God and me have our own understanding, and She says I’m doing just fine.

LEVI
Seriously, I don’t know how you deal with it. I’d be...super bummed.
GRAYSON
Ya know, I’m, uh... You know I’d love to explain all this to you, but I’m running late.

LEVI
Okay, okay. What about guys?

GRAYSON
What about ‘em?

LEVI
Can guys love guys?

GRAYSON
What? Yes, of course. It’s called being gay.

LEVI
But, can they really love each other? I mean can they be happy?

GRAYSON
Dude, I don’t know. I’m mean, yeah, I’m sure they’re happy. Are you okay? You look a little weird. Are you thinking you...

(Levi interrupts)

LEVI
I bet it feels like Hell. Like everyone hates you. I’d never make it. Alone, like a huge secret’s gonna crush you.

GRAYSON
Dude, did you want to tell me something?

LEVI
What? Me? Hell, no. I’m good. I just never had the chance to talk to you before. You know how the guys would give me shit if I ever...

GRAYSON
Yeah, okay Levi. I don’t mean to be a prick, but like I said, I need to go. So you’re going to need to...
LEVI
Okay, fine. I’ll leave, jeez. But hey, do me a favor, don’t tell anyone I asked you about anything.

(Levi turns to leave, stops, pauses. Levi turns to Grayson.)

GRAYSON
You’re secret’s safe with me.

LEVI
I was coming in for flowers. For Ava. To say sorry for being such an ass.

GRAYSON
That’s probably a good idea.

LEVI
What’s good to give for an apology?

GRAYSON
Well, I’m no expert, but I write a lot of the cards for the deliveries. Um, you can never go wrong with roses. But, come to think of it, a lot of guys who apologize to girls seem to send daisies.

LEVI
Hmm... daisies - cool. I’ll take a some. I’m going to her house after this.

GRAYSON
Oh... um... well, why don’t you have them delivered. Apologize tomorrow.

LEVI
No, I want to give them to her right away.

GRAYSON
You know, girls love delivery. Makes it more special. You could have them delivered to her in class. Think how that’d look. Everyone will talk.
LEVI

(Pauses)

Yeah, delivery. I guess that’d be cool. Yeah - I’ll do that. Let me see ‘em.

GRAYSON

See what?

LEVI

The daisies. What they look like.

GRAYSON

Dude, they’re daisies. [Shit,] they look like... daisies.

LEVI

Okay, but I want to see what you’re gonna send.

GRAYSON

(Sighs)

Dude, just a second, I’ll grab some.

(Grayson turns around to grab some daisies from a cart nearby. As this happens, Levi pulls a gun out of his jacket and takes aim at Grayson.)

LEVI

(Quietly)

I’m really sorry.

(Grayson turns around with the flowers in his hands and faces Levi. He sees the gun.)

LEVI (CONT)

Nobody keeps secrets safe.

QUICK BLACK OUT

GRAYSON

Levi, wait.

(A shot rings out)

END SCENE.
On March 12, 2012, the subject “ToMyUnbornChild” became a trending topic across the social media web site, Twitter. Thousands of people used the hashtag to post messages to their future unborn children.

The website “Storify” groups tweets together using trending topics and like ideas. Most of the tweets tagged “To My Unborn Child” were innocent and benign; however, one Storify user noticed a disturbing trend.

These are some of more than 100 real messages from real people to their unborn children posted on Twitter within a 24-hour period.

Names, grammar, and diction have not been edited.

(Video projection suggestions:

1) Actors portraying parents can say the tweets as written
2) The actual tweets can be shown as text

Music for the video should invoke childhood, i.e. “Hush Little Baby” or “Rock-a-bye Baby.”

Sample video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=aBaDVGEtp-Y


Alternatively, actors may perform a selection of tweets on stage.)
Forty-five out of the 100 tweets were fairly succinct and essentially had one or more of the following variations:

“If you turn out gay, go gay, you be a homo... if you are a fag... I’ll kill you. Imma gonna kill you; I prolly kill you; I will fucking kill you faggot. I will kill yo bitch ass. I’ll kill you myself. I will murder you.” Many added “hahaha” and/or “LOL.”

Other tweets about murdering an unborn gay child included:

#ToMyUnbornChild if you so much as think about being a homosexual I'll put a bullet in your damn skull

#ToMyUnbornChild if you turn gay, ill kill you and make another

#ToMyUnbornChild u bet not be gay. Because I will hang u at da first sign of gayness!!

#ToMyUnbornChild if you turn out gay, I will burn you alive.

#ToMyUnbornChild u betta not be gay mi ahh fi kill u

"#ToMyUnbornChild if your gay i will beat you to death with a bible"
[The username of this homophobe has been removed upon request]

ToMyUnbornChild if you're gay... You will sleep in the oven.

#ToMyUnbornchild Never sweat these females & you bet not be gay neither or ima hang you from,a bridge and beat you

#tomyunbornchild the first time you experience your gay moment I'm stepping on your throat #fuckwitme

#ToMyUnbornChild if your a girl i will drown you in the bathtub, and if your a guy and your turn into a faggot ill kill you

#ToMyUnbornChild I Will Put A Bullet Through Your Skull If You Become Gay...
#ToMyUnbornChild if you're gay, I'm putting you down. No question about it.

#ToMyUnbornChild I swear if your turn Gay , I myself will Murder yuh bloodclatt. And Go A JAIL

#ToMyUnbornChild if you turn like this ~~~~ (gay) imma hang yo ass wit a coat rack lol

#ToMyUnbornChild don't choose to be gay or you will live a very short life

#ToMyUnbornChild if your going to be gay might as well die as a miscarriage

#ToMyUnbornChild if your gay... I will stab you to death. #sorrynotsorry

#ToMyUnbornChild you better not be gay, or a pussy or you will die

#ToMyUnbornChild if you turn out to be a homosexual I will beat you until you die.

#ToMyUnbornChild if your a boy don't be gay or you will die

#ToMyUnbornChild(Son) You come up to me and say you wanna be gay. Ima shoot yo ass.

#ToMyUnbornChild you be gay imma be in jail and you'll be dead

#ToMyUnbornChild if you ever become homo.. Ohh shit ima kill your faggot ass

#ToMyUnbornChild I will kill you if you Turn Gay , (I support the gays but I will never be one , neither nor my unborn baby)

#ToMyUnbornChild if you ever come out a boy and turn into a faggot I will kill you
#ToMyUnbornChild if you turn out to be a homosexual... That will be the last thing you will ever do. I WILL KILL YOU.

#ToMyUnbornChild your ass better not be gay or ima kill yo ass & throw you out. Cause I refuse to raise a sweet ass child!

#ToMyUnbornChild If you EVER think about being gay imma beat your ass to death! #RS

#ToMyUnbornChild If you think gay is an option, let me know because we'll abort you

#ToMyUnbornChild if your gay I will drown you

#ToMyUnbornChild If I find out you doin gay shit ill put a gun to yo head and scare you straight

#ToMyUnbornChild turn gay and u die same time (:

#ToMyUnbornChild if u say some gay shit u might as well kill yo self

#ToMyUnbornChild if your legit gay, than I'm sorry but I'm gonna have to shoot you in the head

#ToMyUnbornChild if you are a boy please dont be gay or you will die and if you are a girl i'll only accept being bisexual

#ToMyUnbornChild If You Turn Gay Dont Even Come Home Cause Either Way You Gone Die.

tomyunbornchild if u dress, talk or act like a fag i will kill you.

#ToMyUnbornChild if you gay like my pops told me Imma kill you. #reckless #HateFaggots

#ToMyUnbornChild if you end up being gay, you will be beat to death. #EndOfStory

#ToMyUnbornChild if you come out homo im kill you myself.

#ToMyUnbornChild if you are gay I will kill you. Painfully
#ToMyUnbornChild if you're gay, or even think about men, I'm sending you to Uganda to join Kony's child army. I won't lose any sleep over it

#ToMyUnbornChild if you come out gay imma shoot your ass!

#ToMyUnbornChild - Kick twice if you're a gay fetus. Newt said it was okay to abort you then. Thanks!

tomyunbornchild if your a boy ill kill you if you turn gay
*blank stare*

"@camerojones: #ToMyUnbornChild if your gay..." I'll shoot mine in the head..

#ToMyUnbornChild if you're a boy and you even think you're going to be gay abort yourself

#ToMyUnbornChild I will always love and support you........ Unless you turn out gay, then ill kill you.

#ToMyUnbornChild if you're a boy, and you're gay. i will attempt to kill you every time i see you and i'll disclaim you.

"@ballislife_2013: #ToMyUnbornChild I'll kill you if you become a faggot" might as well kill yourself.....

#ToMyUnbornChild if you are gay, i am gonna murder you without hesitation.

tomyunbornchild you better not turn out gay later on swear to god I'm killing you myself

#ToMyUnbornChild if You Think About Going Gay , Your Dad Will Kill You

#ToMyUnbornChild ion tolerate dat gay shit! Ill kill u & start over na. U gotta give me sum grand kids.

tomyunbornchild if your a boy and your gay kill yourself and ill give u the gun to follow through

#ToMyUnbornChild If you end up gay. I'll stab you 357 times with a butter knife. #SlowPainfullDeath
Tweets collected by Storify user: “Homophobes”

#Tomyunbornchild tweets courtesy of following real people (names / handles have not been changed):

Bibi gabriels
Samurai Dave
allen derosa
#T-raww
Camryn Alan Hart™
HAAAAARRROOOOLLDD!!!
Moussa El-Sayed
MALEK
Abdulrahman.i Zahran
A-Flocka !
DJ Morton
Michael Morelli
Zachary waid
Rob Grant
Avontai Lackey
OJ tha Drankman
Brady Battenfield
Pin: 27D88D9E
Omeez
Adrian Sanchez
McKinley Dufferｍｍｍｍ
xYouthExplosionx
Colby Ross
18
That Bitch Sunny !
Mason Hendricks
theREALCooliee™
low'key mank
Ultra Log w/squirrel
Rodell™
©ApplyCherry(✿◠‿◠)
Darryl Thompson
Korey Frost
z@c(h@r¥ $@n£0d
Daniel Goff

Saving September - Script
Chase Pate
Jackie Boone
Sticky Fingaz
Porgantonio.
Evan Rogers
dat nigga RASHAD
Clark&Mac* *
Michael Taylor
Adam Elbadawi
Mason Hendricks
Mike Doherty
Kealii Kauahi
Matthew Chepinski
Fly Brown Guy
Nina Zulkarnain
FUCK YALL !!!!!!!
Austin Battaglia
TheRealCalebU
DeeBo
Adan Lopez
Kyle Brewer
XO till we overdose
Al Capone
Tywan Cofield
💖TNT💖
☆ Josh Anderson ☆
codie_sowders
Nicky Stix
Yoo Niggahh Lydiaa
Carmelo Anthony
Khalil
Arthur.
←Ᾱ is for Asshole
-KïїłňdyKush❤️
Moo Bilbro ➔MARCH 24
terminaor
Jalen Bentley
Hunter Elliott
Chris Woodie
Trippy ™
Alexandria Jones
Darla Nitsch
mike mears
June 9th . . . ❤️
Alex Byars
Martigus Henley
FLY Movement
Jesse Monroe Harris
Austin Rosenberry
Shane Magnifico
Mark Malm
#LakerNation
Adam Kusnyer
DV Mucho Dinero
D.
Alex Goodvin
Shiguy Walcott
Tucker Briley
Marcus Wilson
Yung Nigga
Storm Jones
Fredrick Stactic
Daborey Burrell
iBarber

VIDEO PROJECTION:
SLIDE TEXT:

#ThinkBeforeYouTweet

#TheInternetIsForever

Source:
ACT 2 - SCENE 5 - SWALLOW

(Setting: September’s bedroom - Evening)

LIGHTS UP.

(September sits at her desk staring at a bottle of pills. She’s in turmoil. The scene is silent except for the music September has playing from her computer.

After deliberating, she opens the pill bottle and pours out the pills on the desk. She’s crying as she lines the pills up, counts them.

Finally, September swallows first pill wincing at the bitter taste. She swallows a second pill.

As she’s about to swallow the another pill, there’s a gentle, but insistent knock at the door.)

PARENT (OFF)

September?

(September looks to the door and back to the pills. She swallows a another pill.

Another knock to the door, louder and more insistent.)

PARENT (CONT)

September, it’s [Mom]. It’s important.

(Again, September ignores the knocking and reaches for another pill. Very loud knocking interrupts September from swallowing another pill.)

PARENT (CONT)

September! Open up! Something’s happened to Grayson.

(September wipes tears and opens the door.)

SEPTEMBER

What’s happened?

(Her parent sees September has been crying and looks over to the desk full of pills.)
PARENT
What’s going on? Oh my... baby, what have you done? What have you done?

(Parent pulls September into a hug.)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
DIALOGUE: AND WE’RE WALKING

(Production Note: This Dialogue takes place in a museum. The actor plays a docent.)

LIGHTS UP.

VIDEO PROJECTION:
PHOTO OF LARRY KING.

ACTOR
(Ingratiating and cheerful)

Okay! The next stop on our museum tour is about Larry King. No, no... not that Larry King. Larry’s story is unlike the other children in our exhibit about Bullycide. His story is unusual in that he did not commit suicide after years of endless bullying for being gay.

(Gestures to photo of Larry King)

Now, here you can see a beautiful photo of Larry. Smiling and happy. However, Larry had a bumpy road through life. Adopted at age two, he had trouble connecting with his new family. He had his problems; he certainly wasn’t the perfect little boy we all know and love in our families. Larry was born way back in 1993 and came out as gay to his friends and family at the tender age of 10 years old. Bless his heart. Can you imagine?

Anyway... Larry was, of course, teased and taunted in school for flaunting his sexuality in front of everyone – naturally. But, strangely he really never showed signs of wanting to commit suicide. In fact, after wearing women’s make-up to school, his principal sent out a memo to the teachers about Larry’s behavior and to be on the “look out” for trouble.

Now... you know how the little ones have their “crushes.” Well Larry was no exception. When he was just 15 – this was back in 2008, he had his eye on a boy in his class named, Brandon McInerney. Larry was a total flirt with Brandon – you know how boys can be. Larry would practically parade around Brandon, wearing women’s jewelry, blowing kisses, and even saying he loved Brandon. Bless his heart. And this was in front of Brandon’s friends!
Some said it bordered on harassment! And you have to understand, Brandon was NOT gay and did NOT appreciate Larry’s “attention.” Can you imagine!?

Well... it was February. Kids being kids, you knooooow how they start thinking about Valentine’s Day. And Larry had his eye set on Brandon; he even asked Brandon to be his Valentine at a basketball game. Isn’t that adorable! Well! As you can imagine, Brandon was teased by his friends because of Larry’s attention. Brandon even tried to get his friends to gang up on Larry to end the flirting, but his friends wouldn’t do it.

So... Brandon did what every normal teenager would do and took the next logical step. The next day during their computer class, Brandon took a .22-caliber handgun out of his backpack, walked up behind Larry, placed the gun to Larry’s head, and fired two bullets at point blank range into Larry’s brain. Brandon then dropped the gun and walked out of school. Larry was declared brain dead the next day... one day before Valentine’s. So sad. Can you imagine?!

(Heavy sigh)

Well, of course there’s been all sorts of hubbub about what happened. Gay rights groups are in an uproar, the parents blamed the school, and Brandon claimed he was innocent. In fact, he said he was goaded into murdering Larry because he was being bullied by Larry. Brandon said he didn’t want everyone to think he was gay. Can you imagine being accused of anything worse? Of course, the “LGBT” groups say the “gay panic” defense is groundless and smacks of the “Twinkie Defense” that Dan White used after he murdered Harvey Milk in the 1970s. It was a big ol’ mess.

So what do you think happened to Brandon McInerney? Well of course, he was charged with murder and a hate crime - this all happened in California - if you know what I mean. Brandon’s trial took eight weeks and had over a hundred witnesses. It ended with a hung jury who couldn’t decide if Brandon committed actual homicide or just manslaughter. When prosecutors announced they’d retry Brandon they said they would drop the hate crime charge. So, Brandon plead guilty to second-degree murder and accepted a sentence of 21 years in prison.
Tsk tsk tsk... all that over a little ol’ Valentine! Can you imagine?

Okay then, onto our next display... and we’re walking...

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.

Source:
ACT 2 - SCENE 6 - NIGHTFALL

(Setting: Split-Scene Ava’s bedroom / Outside Ava’s house - Night)

LIGHTS UP.

(Ava lies in her bed reading / Levi walks up to outside her house. He’s carrying a bouquet of bloodied daisies.

Levi pulls out his cell phone and calls Ava. Ava looks at her phone and can see it’s Levi. She ignores the call.

Levi redials. Ava again ignores the call.

Levi redials again. Upset, Ava answers.)

AVA
Damn it, Levi. I don’t want to talk to you.

LEVI
I’m sorry.

AVA
Great. Thanks. Good...

(Levi interrupts)

LEVI
I’m sorry - I’ve really been an asshole. I’m outside, can I come in?

AVA
You shouldn’t have come. I have nothing to say to you.

LEVI
Ava, please.

AVA
Levi, go home.

LEVI
I’m really sorry. I just need to apologize.
AVA
Apology accepted. Now please...

LEVI
I have something for you - a surprise. I just got it for you.

AVA
Levi, I’m not in the mood for games.

LEVI
Come outside then - just for a minute - then I’ll go. I brought you something special. Please...

AVA
Levi...

LEVI
Please...

AVA
Just for a minute, then you have to leave.

LEVI
Fine.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

(Ava puts on slippers and moves downstage to Levi)

LEVI
Look... daisies.

AVA
Really, there’s no need.

LEVI
No, please, I’m really sorry.

(Levi forces the flowers into Ava’s hands.)

AVA
O...kay. Thank you.
LEVI
(Sounding distant, robotic. Not addressing Ava.)

Grayson said girls preferred delivery. He said it makes it more special, but I couldn’t wait.

AVA
Wait, what? When did you see...

(Levi interrupts)

LEVI
He said girls like daisies. Daisies. They’re supposed to be good to say I’m sorry. I’m sorry.

AVA
Stop. Why did you see Grayson?

LEVI
To get you the flowers.

AVA
And he gave them to you?

LEVI
Yeah, when I apologized to him.

AVA
Did you say “him?”

LEVI
Yeah, we talked all about how he’s like a faggot inside a girl’s body and he said… guys can’t really love other guys.

AVA
What? You’re not making any sense.

(Ava looks down to the flowers and notices they’re spattered with blood. She notices the blood on her hands and becomes visibly frightened.)
LEVI

(To himself)

I always kind of knew it. I mean, a long time ago. But, who could I tell? No way. Not nobody. Well I prayed. A lot. I prayed to make me... normal. I don’t want to be no fag. I did what everyone told me to do. Did the right things. Did everything I was supposed to. Played football, got a girl. That’s what Dad told me. Nothing helped. I can’t help it. I’m still...

(Levi realizes what he’s said. Snaps out of it. Levi looks up at Ava.)

LEVI (CONT)

Do you like the daisies? They’re good for apologies.

AVA

Levi... what have you...

(Levi interrupts)

LEVI

And now I’ve got it all figured out. I know how to act like a real man.

AVA

Levi, you’re scaring me.

LEVI

No, it’s okay. I’ll try harder next time. I know I messed up. I’ve been finding stuff on the internet and know what I did wrong before.

AVA

Levi, let me go inside and call Grayson.

(Levi pulls out his gun. Ava screams.)

LEVI

(Levi takes aim at Ava)

No! I’m your boyfriend. I can be a your boyfriend. I’m a man goddamn it. I’m not...not that...that... I’m not a f-f-reak! You’re gonna be with me now. I’m a man. I’m normal. I like girls!
QUICK BLACK OUT.

AVA
Levi, wait...

(A shot rings out)

LIGHTS UP SLOWLY - DIM.

(Lights and blocking should match the beginning of the play’s “Introduction” except Levi’s face is seen and Ava is lying motionless on the ground.

Levi falls to his knees audibly sobbing - should be the same action as from the beginning of the play.)

LEVI
God? Oh God, I just wanted to be happy. I’m sorry.

(Levi puts the gun in his mouth)

SLOW BLACK OUT.

(Shot rings out)

END SCENE.
ACT 2 - SCENE 7 - VIGIL

(Setting: School auditorium - Day)

LIGHTS UP.

(Entire cast files in leaving flowers, stuffed animals near a memorial set up for Ava and Grayson.

Last to arrive are Perri and September. They arrive at the memorial at the same time.

Perri acknowledges September and they hold hands as they exit.)

LIGHTS FADE.

END SCENE.
EPILOGUE

(Setting: Same as for Vigil - stage darkened)

LIGHTS UP.

FDM

Once upon a time...
   Once upon a child.
Twin nations, separate, but not equal,
Occupy one space, not so unlike here.
Old discourse anew; behold a sequel!
Human rights: struggles never disappear.

Hateful ideas dissolve civility
And our precious children, they do listen.
To the Fates: succumb to senility
So old grudges die and end division.

Love is Love. Eros says not, “Who loves Who?”
Society: judge not with ignorance;
Death results and youthful bodies accrue
When we accent others’ difference.

Oh,
Please attend. Did you watch this carefully?
Our intent, to mend your hearts perfectly.

(Small pause. FDM walks to candle lit in Act 1.)

A glooming peace this morning with it brings;
The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head:
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;
Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished:
For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

(FDM blows candle out.)

LIGHTS OUT.

END SCENE.
END ACT II.

END PLAY.
SOURCE NOTES

Extensive research informs Saving September. However, as with almost any creative project, it’s almost impossible to divorce the author’s personal experience from research material.

The author is gay and grew up in a small Kansas town during the 1970s and 1980s. He was bullied and wrote his suicide note when he was 12-years old. He could not safely come out to his family and friends until he was 21-years old. The author also served in the Air Force for 20 years while closeted under the now defunct discriminatory military policy called, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”

These experiences along with material within the Bibliography inform Saving September.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Saving September* is John Jay Boda’s first stage play and is based, in part, on his own experience being bullied and writing his suicide note at age 12.

Before graduating with honors from the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg with his Bachelor of Arts in English, Jay served his country for 20 years in the Air Force — [honorably retiring](#) as a Master Sergeant in 2010.

Today, Jay shares his life with his partner, Pedro, and their rescued chocolate Labrador, Guinness.

In 2013, Jay will begin the adventure of graduate school to attain his Master of Fine Arts degree with the ultimate goal to teach and combine his passions for social justice, civic engagement, and theatre. His dream is to see his work touch and transform lives for the better.

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If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.

*Walden*, Henry David Thoreau
DOCUMENT NOTES

The Nelson Poynter Memorial Library on the campus of the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg (USFSP) houses this document within its digital archive:

The permanent link accessible to the public is: http://dspace.nelson.usf.edu/xmlui/handle/10806/4612

Snell House, home to the USFSP Honors Program maintains a bound hard copy of Saving September.

The electronic document takes advantage of hypertext as a way to include more context and information that may be “unpacked” at the discretion of the reader. The author attempted to include links only for credible websites that use enduring URLs.

Over time, organizations update their websites, delete and/or change material, or disappear completely. The author apologizes for any links that will inevitably change through out the years. When all else fails, google it.
Pupitza