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## Can We Keep It? - A Multimedia Exploration of Sleepover Culture

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*Bard College*

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# Can We Keep It?

A Multimedia Exploration of Sleepover Culture

Senior Project submitted to  
The Division of Arts  
of Bard College

by

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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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*Dedicated to the friendships made with Arianna  
Fearing, Emma Nickles, Kylie Straub,  
and Nora Harris*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **PAPER**

I. How to catch a frog with your hands	1
<i>The idea</i>	
II. No one cares about your dreams they're not interesting!	3
<i>The writing process</i>	
III. The google doc for the human resistance	10
<i>The editing process</i>	
IV. I hate this game	12
<i>The rehearsal process</i>	
V. The pool was also outerspace	15
<i>The multiplicity of media's role in performance</i>	
VI. And then we all die	18
<i>How to cope with the end of a show</i>	

### **PLAY**

CAN WE KEEP IT?	21
<i>Written by Anya Kopischke</i>	
<i>Edited by Brynn Gilchrist</i>	

### **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A:	45
<i>Notes and Research</i>	
APPENDIX B:	49
<i>Production Photos</i>	
<b>WORKS CITED</b>	52

## I. **How to catch a frog with your hands**

### *the idea*

When I was little my parents used to call me an “old soul,” mostly because I frowned a lot and followed instructions very well, but now that I am fully my own person and not a child I would argue that my soul is right around the ripe age of thirteen. I had always been preoccupied by the age of thirteen for reasons I could never fully comprehend. It was neither a particularly fruitful nor a particularly traumatic year for me, but my adult life had been riddled with thoughts, feelings, and social situations usually associated with middle school and puberty. It seemed to me that perhaps I had never fully grown out of it. So when Brynn Gilchrist pitched her idea for an independent senior project that “explored the thoughts, ideas, and fears of children of all ages as completely valid thoughts, ideas, and fears”, I was fully on board. Her idea sparked a passion in me to explore the feelings of this age group I had been fixated on without the fear of self indulgence that usually accompanies my wish to explore my childhood and growing pains.

The plan was to build a structure that separated the Old Gym into six spaces: each space would hold its own individual piece, and each would represent a stage of development from ages seven to eighteen. We had several meetings about the structure of the festival, but if I’m being completely honest, I was in it to work with Brynn. At that point we had built a few sets together and I was taken by her determination to bring an idea to life by any means possible. I first noticed this quality when I approached her for guidance in building a set for FEST, a student-run theatre festival in the old gym. I assumed she was going to tell me that most of my ideas were impossible, based on most of my experiences in the technical theatre world which consistently confronted me with a laborious (and deeply comforting) sense of practicality. Brynn had none of

this. She greeted my ideas with enthusiasm beyond my own capacity and leapt onto the project immediately. Despite the fact that it was not her responsibility and she probably didn't have the time, she accepted my ideas as valid and took the initiative to make them come to life. In the back of my mind, I hoped the process would result in the two of us working closely together, and when the festival we had been planning started to disintegrate and that opportunity finally arose, everything began to feel right.

We hustled to make a new proposal for a piece that would be written by myself, directed by Brynn, and performed in the Luma Festival. We stuck with our idea of exploring the validity of the thoughts and fears of children, but we wanted to make a piece that focused specifically on thirteen-year-old girls and their relationships with each other. The media aimed at girls like me when I was that age made me feel ashamed to have female friends; the girls featured in movies about strong, intelligent, and interesting young women like *Matilda* were often fiercely independent on such a high level that they didn't have time for friends, certainly not girls their own age, whereas the girls featured in movies about female friendships like *Sleepover* or *The Clique* were often portrayed as frivolous and silly or manipulative and self-serving with friendships built only on social gain. I found myself looking toward films and television shows about women at least seven years my senior to escape feeling the shame of being in a girl group. But what nobody had told me was that middle school social structures find their way into adulthood and don't completely disappear with puberty. As Galinda so aptly says in the hit Broadway musical *Wicked*, "Think of celebrated heads of state or specially great communicators. Did they have brains or knowledge? Don't make me laugh. They were popular! Please."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Schwartz, *Popular*, (2003; Decca Broadway.) CD.

We wanted to explore the adolescent female friendship in a way that didn't infantilize or villainize the existence of a girl group, and we wanted to explore how middle school social dramas like cliques, gossip, and ridiculous romantic obsessions existed beyond the time we associate them with. A sleepover was the perfect setting; its structure calls for a group of young girls to interact with each other in whatever way they imagine friendship looks like, which is usually centered around games and gossip and general silliness. But what if these girls desired philosophical discussion and social critique? What if the sleepover games and activities were a structure enforced by an outside force? What if your participation at the sleepover determined your lot in adult life and what happens if you stayed past your welcome? We knew that this world had to be fantastical, and because our own social experiences around this age were so influenced by internet culture, it made sense that this world would be dictated by some kind of media. We defined our roles as such: I would design the media and Brynn the set, I would write while Brynn would edit, I would perform and Brynn would direct. As Brynn headed for a summer of intensive theatre in Berlin, I went home to write.

## **II. No one cares about your dreams they're not interesting** *the writing process*

I write because I feel like I don't understand, or I write because I don't know what I'm trying to say. Somewhere along the way I figure it out. I had written two plays at Bard, both of which started from an aesthetic and a deeply rooted confusion that slowly morphed into a question I didn't even know I was trying to ask. As I sat down to write a twenty-five minute performance for all women about a pre-discussed topic and idea, the thought crossed my mind



that maybe I had used up all my ideas in my previous plays. I had just closed a production of *Belly of the Ship*, a play I had written about growing up female, discovering sexuality, and losing childhood friendships, and it felt all too similar. Maybe I had purged all my thoughts and ideas into my writing already, and now I had nothing left to say. I tried to remember how any of those words or characters had come out of my brain, and it felt as though it had all come to me in a dream from something completely outside myself.

There was a basic structure I had in mind. It was based off of a six-page play I had written three years prior in Chiori Miyagawa's Intro to Playwriting called *BLOOMERS*. *BLOOMERS* was about six eggs having a sleepover in a womb, and one by one they each fell out until there was only one left. I was fascinated by this idea of the "late bloomer" due to my own frustration for having emotions that I associated with puberty in my adult life: feelings of being left out, friendship jealousy, or wanting to be cooler. I didn't think I was allowed to have those feelings anymore and that there was something inherently wrong with me for feeling them. Why had it taken me this long to get over these feelings when most of my friends seemed to have it all figured out? I began to think of the disappearance structure of *BLOOMERS*, a structure inspired by Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*<sup>2</sup>, and how that related to how I watched each of my friends mature at drastically different paces and when I saw each of them leave my life. As my father observed after seeing our final performance, "Growing up is an ultimately lonely experience; everyone goes into adulthood alone regardless of the friendships you've created." I hadn't realized it quite yet, but the age of these women was insignificant to the subject we were trying to explore; they were merely women who were trapped in the liminal space between their

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<sup>2</sup> Agatha Christie, *And Then There Were None* (1939).

childhood and adulthood. The sleepover was their limbo.

I tried to fill in this structure with the same pervasive dream-like questioning that had fueled my previous writings, but I couldn't find the *jeu*<sup>3</sup>. I hated each draft I wrote - they read like sloppy comedy sketches or a sort of Mad Lib awkwardly placed inside the structure of the piece. I knew the subject, setting, and structure, but was still in search of the question we were trying to ask. I tried a few options:

#### 1. WERE WE EXPLORING 13 Y/O CULTURE AS IT EXISTS TODAY?

In desperate attempts to get in touch with today's youth I quizzed my thirteen-year-old brother about what he thought was special about his female friends; I got little more than that they were funny and liked the same Youtube videos. Brynn and I had briefly discussed exploring the profession of cam girls, a profession some young women had taken on that involves performing sexually for strangers online, but I knew I couldn't write about this. That wasn't my experience, it wasn't what I was interested in, it was too easily "bad." I didn't have anything nuanced to say about it.

#### 2. IS THERE SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT ABOUT THE AGE 13 IN GENERAL?

I tried a more academic approach researched the number thirteen, which, as I found out, is a happy number<sup>4</sup>. A happy number is a positive integer that can be continuously replaced by the sum of the square of its digits until the sequence ends in 1 and stays there forever; for instance:  $1^2 + 3^2 = 10$ ,  $1^2 + 0^2 = 1$ . I found this interesting because not only did it rarify the number, but it gave it a sense of fate and finality. It was also a delightful contradiction to the

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<sup>3</sup> *Jeu*: The french word for game, and a term originally introduced to me by Dana Shimkoski through her direction under Geoff Soebelle. "Game" is also a common improv structure used to drive the scene forward. I've always associated it with the kind of itch that is joyfully scratched.

<sup>4</sup> "Sloane's A0077700 : Happy Numbers," *The Online Encyclopedia of Integer Sequences*. OEIS foundation.

unlucky connotations the number has, which are mostly religious in nature, both for its participation in the last supper and for its representation of the number of lunar (and menstrual) cycles in a year, now associated with a repressed lunar cult that was triumphed by the solar calendar<sup>5</sup>. I researched notorious thirteen-year-olds like Juliet, Mary of Nazareth, and Anne Frank, and almost named the characters after them, but I soon realized that the tragedies of these historical adolescents was so far from what we were trying to explore. They were independents, they were of a different time and different social structure, they weren't facing the struggle of trying to maintain a group of friends while trying to maintain your own unique personhood as you transition from one stage of life to the next. They were remembered because they surpassed the connotations of their age.

### 3. WERE WE JUST TALKING ABOUT OUR OWN EXPERIENCES FROM THAT AGE?

I would say that I happened upon some videos I had made with my friends when I was around the age of 13, but I didn't happen upon them because I never forget them. They're a staple of my past and I show them to anyone who will pay attention. I thought my friends were the most hilarious, beautiful, special people to ever exist, but no one could see it unless you spent a night with them. I don't speak to most of them anymore. We made a video series, a parody of the trashy reality television we watched called "The Richardsons," but they wouldn't let me show anyone outside of our immediate circle. I thought it was genius.

As I rewatched these videos, which are almost impossible to discern through the shoddy camera work and our squealing giggles, and began to find snippets of inspiration for dialogue. They could always improv random one-liners more brilliantly than I could ever could. I

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<sup>5</sup> David Emery. "Why Is Friday the 13th Unlucky? - History and Folklore"

transcribed lines such as “I was having a dream! And Jesus and I were...” “She shares her room with the bathroom. She actually quite enjoys it. It gets pretty toasty!” and “Are you trying to bite through my denim jacket? Are you a moron?”<sup>6</sup> There was nothing particularly clever about them, but they encompassed a dynamic that was silly and joyful and full of energy, but also intelligent and generative; we fed off of one another and grew through and because of each other. This was the dynamic that I felt was missing in media that exposed girl groups as either ridiculous or vicious.

I wanted to make a world where these women’s thoughts and conversations could survive without the existence of a male presence. But I felt it was inauthentic to pretend like it is an easy feat to pass the Bechdel test when I usually don’t pass it in my day-to-day life.<sup>7</sup> This is why the world of the play had to be fantastical; our utopia had to be protected from the reality of the world we exist in. Adolescent naïveté acted as our shield. Later, we would explore how this shield could be cracked or broken, especially with the prolonged presence of OMEGLE GUY, but more on this later.

For a while, I struggled with the clarity of the structure. Most of my writing is philosophically driven; consisting mostly of conversations inspired by dreams, thoughts, and comments that for some reason hit a more nuanced spot than others. It is my way of capturing forces from my mind’s deepest recesses that might be capable of augmenting or conquering the forces of waking life, as the Surrealists might say.<sup>8</sup> I never gave much thought to plot, I wrote

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<sup>6</sup> Anya Kopischke, *Richardsons Episode 2*. (2010; Door County WI), Facebook Video.

<sup>7</sup> Originally attributed to Alison Bechdel’s 1985 Comic “Dykes to Watch Out For,” the Bechdel Test qualifies a rule for feminist media with “three basic requirements. One, it has to have at least two women in it who, two, talk to each other about, three, something besides than a man.”

<sup>8</sup> Andre Breton, *First Surrealist Manifesto* (1924)

moments that felt authentic and left the audience to impose their own meaning or narrative upon it; “first to capture them and later to submit them, should the occasion arise, to the control of reason.”<sup>9</sup> The most generous theatrical moments I’ve experienced have left just enough room for my imagination to impose the specificities of my own life onto them. That’s why it’s easy to prefer a book to its movie adaptation; the movie takes away your creative input both visually and auditorily..

The best utilization of this particular brand of ambiguity I’ve seen was in Erin Markey’s *A Ride on the Irish Cream*. Part of what made the viewing experience so successful was that the story was grounded in broadly universal themes like love and childhood, anchoring the audience in relatable experiences so that Markey could explore the dualities and inconsistencies of life through surrealist language and with a plot that “makes as much literal sense as Mad Libs.” As the *New Yorker* describes it, “Markey’s intimate dream logic and her tender” and “weird chemistry with Blackwell” are the elements that drive the piece along.<sup>10</sup> Markey, playing a young Midwestern girl named Reagan, is in love with her family’s pontoon boat named Irish Cream that, “by the rules of childhood fantasy,” is also a horse.<sup>11</sup> The character of the horse/pontoon boat, played by trans actor Becca Blackwell, was notoriously poorly reviewed by Charles Isherwood of the *New York Times*, who completely missed the implications of gender fluidity in the dualism that the character inhabits. Markey’s “non-sequiturs” left him “befuddled,” particularly her bizarre lyrics that “rarely seem to intersect logically with the ‘plot,’” and her “self-indulgent writing” that went over his head “as if Ms. Markey were still a young girl

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<sup>9</sup> Andre Breton.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Schulman, *The New Yorker*, *A Ride on the Irish Cream*, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Schulman

intentionally trying to baffle her elders by speaking in a secret coded language.”<sup>12</sup> I sincerely believe that this was not Markey’s intention. The duality of the existence of Irish Cream and her simultaneously sexual and childlike relationship to them allowed Markey to grapple with more nuanced understanding of relationships and how people exist in the world than she could have with a more traditionally comprehensible plot.

I didn’t feel like I was discovering anything nuanced to say by filling in my predetermined structure with realistic dialogue. It wasn’t until the end of the summer that I began to find the *jeu*. I was driving back to Bard with my father after a long summer and remembered a dream I had about talking frogs and friends at camp that turned into aliens that also looked like gummy worms. I thought of Markey’s opening monologue, one of many audience addresses Isherwood would describe as a “non-sequitur,” speaking about a sexual awakening through a series of trips in the mud. I felt especially moved by this beginning because it invoked a childlike fascination of the world through confusion. Like a dream that produces a series of images stored in your subconscious, my brain ingested the material and imposed the narrative I needed upon it. It was then that I began to write the opening monologue, one of the few pieces of text that would make it to the final product. I wouldn’t realize until later that the image of watching your friends turn to aliens symbolizes watching your friends grow apart from you, or that listening to talking frogs was a sign of holding onto your past, or that, as Miriam Felton-Dansky pointed out, the monologue was a kind of ghost story. Maybe it didn’t matter what I was saying at all, but I was accepting the uncertainty of what I didn’t understand, and the things I don’t understand are the only things thrilling to me anymore. Miriam pointed out *A Ride On The Irish Cream* was

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<sup>12</sup> Charles Isherwood, “Review: ‘A Ride on the Irish Cream,’ Erin Markey’s Tale of an Odd Affair.” *The New York Times* (New York, NY), 2016.

anchored in the recognizable structure of a pop-indie concert, making Markey's dream logic and surrealist language easier to accept. We had to find what anchored our own childlike logic.

### **III. The google doc for the human resistance** *the editing process*

There were three elements that we discovered during editing process that were integral to our understanding of the world of the play: Game, Rules, and Fun. The play was divided by different sleepover activities we had played in our youth like Manhunt, making music videos, and creating mini reality television series like "The Richardsons." In the beginning, we struggled with the question of what made this sleepover special: why was this night the night that everyone disappeared? We knew in our minds that the disappearances marked the character's decision to let go of childhood and move into whatever was next alone, but we didn't yet know why. We toyed with the idea that one could not mature and disappear from this world until they faced their fears, and each activity brought out a certain fear in each of those characters, but we noticed that how each of them faced those fears was inconsistent: while some would face the fear of opening up to their friends, others were merely consumed by their fear of dancing in the spotlight. While the fears remained, we discovered that they were not the force that pushed the maturation process, nor did they make this particular sleepover different than others.

Then, through the structured activities of the sleepover, we discovered game, the *jeu!* The structure of game, as opposed the characters merely keeping themselves busy, gave us an outside force. There was a dilemma, a goal, and a winner; it gave the characters agency and it made sense that one by one they would disappear by being eliminated (while offering an interesting

twist to the idea of who “wins” and “loses”). With this structure, the sleepover no longer was a finite event but an endless cycle that could have been going on infinitely - we’re merely coming in toward the end of it.

The play was divided into five games MAN HUNT, DANCE PARTY, OMEGLE, PLAYING HOUSE, TRUTH OR DARE, and one anti-game, LOGAN’S DREAM. But game wasn’t the driving force for each disappearance, the disappearances weren’t motivated by winning or losing the game, but rather by the character’s relationship to rules. For instance, Ashley C hid out of bounds in MANHUNT, Sydney avoided the spotlight in DANCE PARTY, Blake broke character in PLAYING HOUSE; all disappeared immediately after, but Ashley C and Blake would have won their respective games while Sydney would have lost. We weren’t interested in winning and losing, we were interested in the expectation of rules; the arbitrary nature by which they’re given, our conditioning to expect them out of certain situations, and doubt we feel when we are left with no rules to follow. Loss of rules is a significant part of leaving childhood, it made sense to have this mark the characters’ disappearances.

Of course there were exceptions; our world was far from a well-oiled game machine. Most of the text was still surrealist, especially Logan’s monologues, and we found this duality to be fitting for the general sense of bewilderment that exists in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood. The friction between surreality and game structure presents itself most clearly in LOGAN’S DREAM, the sequence in which Logan rejects rules and manifests her own dreamscape to play with her friends in. We saw this as the climax, a definitive break from the oppressive structure of rules that had pervaded their world, but the fact was that dream logic and surreal language were present throughout the entire piece. It wasn’t a definitive break because



the friction was building throughout the entire piece, the world existed in constant tension between the flow of the subconscious and the constraint of rules.

Miriam pointed out that the pressure of fun was particularly pervasive in the game structure. This felt very true to what Logan working with in the penultimate act. The stakes of having fun were so high that, if fun was not had, you were forced to grow up completely alone, leaving the friendships you've made behind. Since Logan objects to the maturation of her friends and their disappearances, she is motivated to release this pressure by removing the system rules. But in removing this system, she fails in her attempt to relieve the pressure to have fun, because as we find out in LOGAN'S DREAM, someone else's forced fun is the least fun of all.

#### **IV. I hate this game** *the rehearsal process*

Game was our structure, rules were the driving force, and the stakes were the amount of fun each character was expected to have. But the real anchor of this play was the cast of performers and their intimate understanding of character which Brynn should take full credit for. Brynn brilliantly began the rehearsal process by recreating these games without use of the script. We played truth or dare, did lip syncs to songs of our choice, played house with characters we created for each other, and discussed intimate details of each of our characters such as fears, status in the group, relationship to each game, and relationship to each member of the group. We essentially had an in-character sleepover every rehearsal. It was important for us to explore how this game structure affected these people without being tied down to the text immediately. It was especially helpful for me to step away from my own words.

I've been warned about acting in your own play. I've tried to steer clear of it in the past, but watching Erin Markey perform in *A Ride on the Irish Cream* gave me faith that, every once in a while, one can write a role that is the right role for themselves to play. I know that in my work there's a part of me in every character, and it wasn't always easy to put the playwright part of my brain away (we never took script editing out of the process, which was necessary, but very distracting). Ultimately, I think the final effect was that it stripped the play of character; since I was constantly editing the voices of these characters within the rehearsal process, we all ended playing something that was more or less just a version of ourselves. I think our understanding of ourselves is far more complex than any written character could ever be.

As a playwright, I am too precious. As a woman, I am too quick to believe that I am being ridiculous if I fight for my opinion too hard. It's a tricky balance. Brynn gave me the best gift a director could give a playwright which was a generous amount of trust. But we all have to face the fact that no matter how clearly you define your roles from the beginning, it's impossible to split a creative piece halfway down the middle, especially for people like me and Brynn who have involved ourselves in almost every aspect of production. Both of our minds have worked as playwrights, directors, actors, and designers, and it's hard to put that part of your brain away when you have so much invested in a project. When Brynn confessed that she didn't see any of herself in the piece, I realized that I had not offered her the same generous amount of trust that she had offered me. I offer no solution. I am in constant fear that my ideas will be overlooked or not taken seriously because of how I have let people treat me in the past, so I have taught myself to not be silent and to fight for them, but it is still a struggle to hone that authority while not silencing the voices of the women around you. It's something we all need to work on.

I would be remiss if I acted like the political climate that infiltrated the fall of our senior year did not affect our process. The morning after the election I had a meeting with Miriam Felton-Dansky. Completely silent, she handed me a sheet of paper that had the quote printed “In the dark times will there also be singing? Yes, there will also be singing about the dark times.”<sup>13</sup> There were several meetings between Brynn and myself on how the piece existed in the current climate: the question so frequently posed by Jonathan Rosenberg, “why this piece now?” lingered in our minds. Yes, it was an all female cast with a female playwright, director, and designers, but while this might have been radical for a department show at Bard College, it was not as radical compared to much of the student theatre that was already happening. After several earnest attempts to reconfigure the questions we were asking to be politically charged, we came to terms with the idea that making theatre is political in and of itself. Theatre, like politics, is a public forum, locally based, with dialogue, conflict, and the power of democracy in its audience. Theatre, however, favors empathy over policy. And favoring empathy is in and of itself a political action.

Theatre is also political in that you have the opportunity to create your own miniature society inside of the hierarchies of production. This is why we started rehearsals on the even playing level of friends at a sleepover; we wanted a theatrical society built on communication, creative freedom, and friendship. Being an authority to your friends is hardly ever easy or fun, and there were times when our actors disagreed and fought us on a certain decision, but we appreciated that. Oftentimes they were right. We knew that it came from a place of deep investment in the piece, and I’m proud that the rehearsal room allowed them to stand their

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<sup>13</sup> Bertolt Brecht. *Motto to the 'Svendborg Poems*. 1939.

ground and offer their voices to the process.

Obviously, the only man ever in the room, which was OMEGLE GUY, had to be addressed. Although he was integrated into the overarching system of games and rules, emerging from the predetermined game of OMEGLE, he offered a certain level of adult danger that the rest of the rules worked actively against. We saw OMEGLE GUY as something disguised as trustworthy within the system we adhere to, but that is in actuality a crack in the protective dome of our protection; an infiltration from the adult world that one is not supposed to see within the world of games. Like the internet, he was a part of the system that we more or less trusted, but had a deep potential for danger, and his prolonged presence was like a virus of surveillance. It was important for us to talk about the dangers that sneak through the sometimes arbitrary barrier of protection we are given as children and the privilege of being able to appear “trustworthy.” This informed our final decision to construct OMEGLE GUY out of three figures who had this privilege: Brock Turner, Bill Cosby, and Donald Trump.

**V. The pool was also outer space**  
*the multiplicity of media's role in performance*

The design of OMEGLE GUY was intentionally inhuman; inspired directly by Tony Oursler's Bubble series, OMEGLE GUY'S face was eerily disjointed and squished like a frog. Tony Oursler's “often overtly humorous, somewhat grotesque characters attempt to seduce the viewer in various ways.”<sup>14</sup> Nick Gilchrist was the perfect voice; soothing, complimentary, inoffensive just enough to get away with overtly predatory language. OMEGLE GUY

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<sup>14</sup> Tony Oursler. *Sugar Pop (And Not)*, (2012; Hong Kong: Contemporary by Angela Li GF), Video Installation.

represented pure danger, and while he passed as that kooky older man your friends think is funny, he was never human. He was a crack in the system.

We knew from the beginning that the media would be an essential part of this world. While OMEGLE GUY represented an exposure to adult world, LOGAN'S DREAM was the final break from sleepover world into dreamscape (an journey inward) and the final manifestations of Logan's lyrical imagery. I was fascinated by the works of Cloud Eye Control, who used fantastical projections as the scenery for epic adventure plots.<sup>15</sup> The plan was to, over winter break, dive into a pool with a GoPro and swim deeper and deeper, overlay that image with stock space imagery, ultimately culminating in the illustrated effects of a black hole.<sup>16</sup> I integrated space and water into the dreamscape because their particular duality was especially dreamlike: they represented two opposite destinations, one going closer to the center of the earth and one floating farther away, but they both were so vast and overwhelming that it's impossible not to feel lost in them. We had been confined in a singular interior space for the majority of the play, so that when the world finally opened up to something as expansive as space or the bottom of a body of water, there is an overwhelming sense of not knowing what to do with the freedom. If I could do it again, I would have focused more heavily on the effects of the black hole and why Quincy decided to disappeared in it.

On the opposite end of the spectrum were the rules. Added initially as a direction for actors to push the idea of game, we began to wonder how these rules might exist theatrically and who they were as a character. We toyed the idea of having them recorded, but ultimately landed

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<sup>15</sup> Cloud Eye Control.

<sup>16</sup> Infinite stretching, slowed sense of time, and final disintegration of the body.

on using the device of supertitles. We liked the authoritative silence of a computer's commands, an increasingly common trend in the works of Annie Dorsen and Gob Squad. I was struck by Simon Stone's use of supertitles in a performance of *Thyestes* I had seen in Mannheim in 2014. They were used as exposition for the following scene, abruptly breaking up the action with heavy music and complete darkness as they exposed the tragedies about to happen. What followed was not epic, or even necessarily what the supertitles said would happen, but rather, jarringly human moments like playing ping pong with your brother while not picking up the phone call that will let you know about the death of your father. I enjoyed the conflict between a radical set-up and a seemingly inappropriate response. Our rules broke up the action in a similar way, if I could do it over I would have made the transition more abrupt and jarring perhaps with the addition of a musical accompaniment.

The music in the piece was a significant inspiration for the initial script, but it took us a while to bring it back into the final product. I was listening to a playlist of PC music over the summer; their eerily poppy tunes and simple, honest lyrics shaped the structure of each section in my head. Charlie XCX's song "Vroom Vroom" reminded me of the game *Manhunt* through the repeated mantra of "bitches say they can't catch me," but more acutely, the line "all my life I've been waiting for a good time" struck me as true to the sense of euphoria one feels when they capture a fleeting sense of fun in the moment.<sup>17</sup> I had experienced in games like *Manhunt* that were driven by pure adrenaline. The line "baby when you look at me you know that I'll be here forever. Baby when I look at you I know that we'll be here together" from A.G. Cooke's "Beautiful" reminded me of the blind love you feel for your childhood friends who you think

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<sup>17</sup> Charli XCX, *Vroom Vroom*

will be a part of your life forever.<sup>18</sup> This was the perfect foreshadowing for easyfun’s “Laplander,” whose hauntingly honest lyric I fixated on while writing the disappearance of Quincy, “can’t you see, don’t you see, it’s not true. It was only just to keep us together. This is it, that was it, your last chance. Don’t say I didn’t warn you in advance.”<sup>19</sup> The songs in DANCE PARTY were curated with our cast’s input, but these songs existed diegetically while the PC music existed extra-diegetically.<sup>20</sup>

I’m happy that the media in the piece was able to play multiple roles; that of authority, danger, and dreamlike freedom. This multiplicity reflects the liminal space between childhood and adulthood that we were exploring, and adds another element mistrust especially through the internet and technology: the thought that if a face is coming through the same projector that projects the rules that you adhere to and protect you, you should probably trust it, and the realization that both good and evil can both exist in a thing that you trust.

**VI. And then we all die**  
*or how to cope with the end of a show*

“I don’t like it when people come up to me after my plays and say, ‘I really dug your message, man.’ Or, ‘I really dug your play, man. I cried. You know?’ I like it when people come up to me the next day, or a week later, and they say, ‘I saw your play. What happened?’”

- Bill Murray, *Tootsie*

I was nervous up until the very end, that’s just how I am. I had gotten so deep into the process that I honestly had no idea whether it was something I should be proud of or not until

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<sup>18</sup> A.G. Cooke, *Forever*

<sup>19</sup> easyfun, *Laplander*

<sup>20</sup> Diegetic sounds come from a source within the story while extra-diegetic sounds come from a source outside the story that only the audience can hear.

after opening. By the middle of tech week I had a million regrets, distracting myself with things I would've done differently if we had more time or more resources, but as soon as the performances hit it all washed away. By no means is perfect or even finished product, but I am happy with how what I wanted to say was received. As my oldest friend at Bard, Hannah Conley, told me after seeing the performance, "I think you were finally able to tell the story you were always trying to tell." It was true. The entire time I was attempting to synthesize this itch of not knowing how to exist in the adult world while feeling like a child and feeling alone in that journey, but now I had scratched it.

I want to continue exploring the world of this piece. I'm not sure we ever really knew the exact question we were asking and I want to discover it. I think the world of the piece and its complexities are worth a continued exploration as well, particularly how LOGAN'S DREAM exists in that world; is it breaking the structure or was it part of the structure all along? What does it really mean to have no rules in this world? Miriam asked the question "what is a complete diversion from everything else we have seen to be possible in this world?" I don't think we ever discovered that because the rest of the world was so layered with surrealist text and imagination there weren't a ton of things left within our abilities that didn't exist in the world already. I'd be interested to see what this piece would look like if it was completely sterile and loyal to rules up until the very end.

One thing I think this particular production did very well was seeing these women and their relationships with each other as full, complex, and dimensional, and I owe this completely to Brynn and our wonderful cast. I went into this project wanting to show another side of young women, a side that wasn't boy-crazy or too silly or overtly malicious, but I have been thinking



recently about how hard it is to reject these stereotypes as a woman. You see these stereotypes in the media that are upsetting because they seem to be making generalizations about women that you don't appreciate and can't be healthy, but then you see the qualities of these stereotypes reflected in your friends and in yourself and you can't blame yourself by being influenced by what you see or what's already organically inside you. But then, by the same logic, you can't blame the media for representing the traits of people that actually exist in the world. It's an incredibly frustrating cycle that I am bombarded with everyday and face usually with a sense of hopelessness. But something I think *Can We Keep It?* captured very well in this production was the multiplicity of these characters' existence: being boy-crazy and hating yourself for it or acting like a silly girl while at the same time being terrified of death. It tackled the multiplicity of loving your friends and feeling completely alone when you're around them, of being protected and endangered at the same time, and being expected to act like both a child and an adult... There's no end to the contradictions women must continue to exist in, that part of our existence is never going to go away completely, but I can say that I am proud of what we made if all it did was make people feel a little less alone. Sometimes that's enough.

“The pool was also outerspace.”

# Can We Keep It?

By Anya Kopischke

Directed by Brynn Gilchrist

**CHARACTERS**

SYDNEY..... Nina Tobin

BLAKE..... Sarah Carlisi

QUINCY..... Catherine Bloom

ASHLEY C.....Sofia France

LOGAN.....Anya Kopischke

PROLOGUE

*Begin in darkness. SYDNEY begins counting from back of house.*

SYDNEY

1...2...3...4...5...6... *(she continues counting throughout monologue)*

*Light up on LOGAN. She addresses the audience.*

LOGAN

So it's at summer camp, and Ashley H is teaching me how to catch a frog. We're sitting there trying to take a picture and it's taking forever and the frog is dying in my hands, his belly slipping through my fingers and I think he might pop.

While we we're gone, everyone is up by the bonfire having a secret meeting. They always do that. So me and Ashley H come back early, but when we get there, everyone's face is turning different colors and they're writhing around on the ground. Transforming. Aliens! Changing back into their human forms.

*Back lights shine on panels. Silhouettes appear behind the panels, writhing like the bodies described. They continue to enact her story.*

I run back to my cabin to start a group chat for the human resistance, but I can't connect to the internet and I forgot to lock my cabin door, and the camp counselor comes in, apologizing, saying "we don't usually do check-ups but..." but I know they know. That I know. About the aliens. I pretended like I don't and she's about to leave, but then I see the frog. In my room. Just staring at me. And I say, to the counselor, just for casual conversation, "I think there's something weird with the frogs here." She turns around. My roommates slither out from under the rugs. I was caught.

SYDNEY

70! Ready or not here I come!

ACT 1. MAN HUNT

***RULES OF MANHUNT:***

1. ***Begin with one seeker***
2. ***If caught, turn on flashlight and join seeker***
3. ***Hide alone***

*Panels move forward. SYDNEY shines her flashlight on the stage. LOGAN runs.*

*SYDNEY comes onstage and begins searching. The hunt ensues.*

*After all are caught:*

BLAKE

Can this game just be over?

SYDNEY

*(hurt)* I love this game.

ASHLEY C

I gotta pee!

LOGAN

I can't tell if I'm sweating or if I peed myself

BLAKE

Ew! Logan, you're a big girl now.

QUINCY

ASHLEY C

Blake, it's fine, she's just an old soul.

*(interrupting)* I gotta pee is that okay?

BLAKE

*SYDNEY shrugs.*

Uh-huh.

ASHLEY C

I'm gonna go. Is that okay?

BLAKE

Oh my god, Ashley C, go.

*ASHLEY C leaves.*

LOGAN

Where's Ashley H?

*Silence. Shrugs all around.*

*(calling)* Ashley H! Ashley H!

*The others join in calling.*

ACT 2. DANCE PARTY

***RULES OF DANCE PARTY:***

***1. Lip sync correctly***

***2. Steal the spotlight***

*They stop immediately, move the panels back, they begin dancing / lip syncing to the song. They may bump into each other. It is chaotic.*

SYDNEY

*(to QUINCY over music)* I hate this!

QUINCY

*(to SYDNEY over music)* What?

SYDNEY

*(to QUINCY over music)* this isn't fun anymore!

QUINCY

*(to SYDNEY, not understanding)* Totally!

*Music fades, everyone continues dancing / lip syncing. ASHLEY C reenters and addresses the audience.*

ASHLEY C

*(yelling over music)* Were you guys yelling my name! *(no response)* I thought I heard someone calling my name when I was going to the bathroom! *(no response)* Do you think it was Evan confessing his love for me? *(forced laughter)* Probably not! I mean, I don't know

*ASHLEY C sees them dancing, begins dancing to herself. SYDNEY is knocked down again. She calls for help but no one hears her. Electrical fissure, blackout. When the lights come up SYDNEY is gone.*

ASHLEY C

Were you guys calling my name?

BLAKE

No.

ASHLEY C

I was just going to the bathroom and the window was open-

LOGAN

We can't find Ashley H!

QUINCY

She's very good at hiding.

BLAKE

She's been waiting all night to disappear.

*Solemn silence.*

QUINCY

*(breaking the tension)* And then we all die!

*She pauses, they wait to die, it doesn't happen.*

I've never been good with timing-

LOGAN

Oh my god. I can't die.

ASHLEY C

BLAKE

Well at least I'm the only Ashley now.

Why?

QUINCY

LOGAN

Ashley C!

It would be *weird!* They'd have to cancel  
my birthday! And Christmas.

ASHLEY C

It's confusing to people!

BLAKE

QUINCY

Logan, no one's gonna cancel Christmas.

That's why you're "C."

ASHLEY C

There's really only room for one Ashley in a friend group.

QUINCY

God, sometimes I wish I would just drown so my mom's worst nightmare would come true.

LOGAN

Your mom is really fucking crazy so...

BLAKE

My mom just produces attractive children. Honestly, I don't know how Aidan and I ended up looking like this, I mean, she's not... pretty.

ASHLEY C

Oh my god, *Blake!*

QUINCY

Blake stop.

ASHLEY C

Wait, where'd Sydney?

*The others look around. Now they're getting spooked.*

LOGAN

She was just-

### ACT 3. OMEGLE

#### ***RULES OF OMEGLE:***

- 1. Find a face***
- 2. Control the situation***
- 3. Don't get hung up on***

*BLAKE, QUINCY, ASHLEY C, and LOGAN move the panels forward line up in front of them like switchboard operators but on omegle. They call out "penis" when that's what they are connected with, which is all the time. Until:*

ASHLEY C

I got a face! I got a face!

*The others crowd around.*

LOGAN

Hello.

ASHLEY C

We're on mute.

BLAKE

Oh my god.

QUINCY

Just smile and wave.



LOGAN

What's he even doing?

BLAKE

Let's give him a fantasy.

QUINCY

You're riding through the jungle... on the back of a tiger... you feel his muscles flexing against your thighs...

LOGAN

Then the power of Christ compels you! (*disconnects*)

QUINCY

Logan!

LOGAN

What?

BLAKE

Did it not look like we were having fun?

LOGAN

I don't know.

*They resume their search at their respective computers*

QUINCY

I got another.

ASHLEY C

Put it on the big screen!

*They move the panels back. ASHLEY C opens stage projector. projection of a disjointed face appears on the panels.*

OMEGLE GUY

Hey

QUINCY, LOGAN, BLAKE, ASHLEY C

*(taken aback)* Hello.

OMEGLE GUY

What are you girls up to tonight?

*All playfully nervous except BLAKE. They speak sorta over each other in a higher pitch, softer tone than we've heard from them before*

ASHLEY C

We're having a fantasy!

LOGAN

We're having a party!

QUINCY

We're just hanging out.

OMEGLE GUY

*(Referring to BLAKE)* Why's the pretty one so quiet?

*QUINCY, LOGAN, and ASHLEY C pressure BLAKE into saying hi. BLAKE tries to play it cool but pretty quickly gets fed up and angry and goes over to the projector and turns it off.*

QUINCY

Goddamnit Blake.

BLAKE

Fuck off.

#### ACT 4. PLAYING HOUSE

##### ***RULES OF PLAYING HOUSE:***

- 1. Form a family***
- 2. Make the most drama possible***

QUINCY

Once upon a time, there was a mom, and a dad, and a baby, and they were very very rich. And Blake is the mom! Her name is Diane and she's destined to be a reality TV star but she really just cuts hair in her basement.

BLAKE

That's just my mom.

LOGAN

But you're so *good* at it!

BLAKE

Fine. Then Quincy is my little baby Lizzie who is "not like other girls."

*QUINCY is disgusted. Either snorts or says "Excuse me?"*

And she is deeply deeply attracted to our lord and savior Jesus Christ. And only dates men of her faith who are over the age of 40.

ASHLEY C

And Logan is Diane's ex-mother-in-law, Grandma Mamie, and she hunts hippos. Professionally. With her prized musket.

LOGAN

What happened to my son?

ASHLEY C

He was taken away. By hippos.

LOGAN

Oh my god! Then Ashley C is their long lost sister, Tiger, who was lost in the jungle as an infant and raised by a family of... monkeys.

ASHLEY C

Monkeys? Not tigers?

QUINCY

And Sydney's the tag along dad!

*She remembers. Awkward silence.*

OMEGLE GUY VOICE

I'll be the dad.

***They are shocked that he is still here and watching!!***

*QUINCY shoots BLAKE a look both out of worry for her and her own sick sense of enjoyment that BLAKE is at a disadvantage in the game.*

*We see QUINCY make the decision to spearhead the game even though her best friend is mad uncomfortable.*

QUINCY

You're not my real dad, you're just some guy. You just tag along.

OMEGLE GUY VOICE

I'll just tag along.

QUINCY

Whatever.

*They move the panels to create the house. The game begins. They address the audience like talking-heads in reality TV.*

BLAKE

I'll show you around.

*ASHLEY C is gnawing at an old carcass. She shoos ASHLEY C away.*

It's usually not such a mess. This is where the baby sleeps.

QUINCY

*(waking suddenly) I was having a dream! And Jesus and I were... (smiles coquettishly)*

BLAKE

She's going through some kind of Jesus kick. This is Tiger's room. She shares her room with the bathroom.

ASHLEY C

It gets pretty TOASTY!

BLAKE

And this is Gramma Mamie's office.

LOGAN

Oh Hello. This is where I keep my muskets and my books on muskets and musket care. Anyway, this is not a musket, this is a sword. You know allstate, the insurance company? When you break your car, you send it in, and you get a rental car BACK!

LOGAN

See, it's the same way with my musket insurance. I go to the musket man, and give him my musket he gives me a "rental car!" (*whispers*) the sword

*Whispering behind LOGAN. ASHLEY C is playing with QUINCY's hair*

QUINCY

Mother she keeps touching me!

ASHLEY C

It's your hair, it's not a part of you, you can cut it off.

BLAKE

There are other things you can cut off...

ASHLEY C

Got your nose!

BLAKE

That's your thumb you idiot!

*ASHLEY C tries to bite her arm.*

QUINCY

Mom!

BLAKE

What?

QUINCY

I just got a text that said you're terrible!

*BLAKE sticks out her tongue and sulks behind panel. QUINCY is alone.*

Um, Jesus? Are you there?

*Silence.*

So, I haven't been to confession in a while, and there's kinda been something on my mind.

OMEGLE GUY VOICE

I'm all ears.

QUINCY

Well, this one time when I was 7, my mom's boyfriend gave her this diamond necklace for Christmas. And I was sorta in love with him, you know? So I got kinda jealous. And - (*noticing LOGAN.*) GRANDMA MAMMIE HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN THERE! (*LOGAN shrugs*) GET OUT!

OMEGLE GUY VOICE

So are you confessing to the sin of envy?

QUINCY

No, I'm confessing to eating the necklace to spite my mother.

OMEGLE GUY VOICE

Oh.

QUINCY

Oh Jesus, I'm so sorry for what I've done and I've come to you to repent! What is my penance Jesus?

OMEGLE GUY VOICE

Give me a smile.

*BLAKE begins to watch from behind the panel.*

QUINCY

*(Hesitant but intrigued)* Okay... *(Smiles coyly)*

OMEGLE GUY VOICE

What a beauty. Who knew someone so pretty could be capable of such bad things. What else are you capable of?

*QUINCY appears intrigued, shifts her body language to very flirtatious and it about to answer when BLAKE stops her.*

BLAKE

Quincy! Stop.

QUINCY

Ohmygod Blake, I was having fun.

BLAKE

Can this game just be over? I hate this.

LOGAN

*(stepping out)* You hate every game.

BLAKE

Yes, I hate every game. I hate this one the most, so stop.

ASHLEY C

We can't stop.

BLAKE

Why not?

ASHLEY C

I don't know.

QUINCY

You used to be so fun.

BLAKE

Oh my god...

QUINCY

*(screaming into BLAKE's stomach)* Blake! BLAKE B! ARE YOU IN THERE?

BLAKE

Quincy, shut up.

QUINCY

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, BUT WE ALL MISS YOU IF YOU EVER  
WANNA COME BACK OUT!

BLAKE

*(near tears, really a dig at QUINCY)* Grow up.

*LOGAN & ASHLEY C move front panels to cover BLAKE. We see her silhouette.*

OMEGLE GUY VOICE

Do you want to talk?

BLAKE

No.

OMEGLE GUY VOICE

Come on, “Diane,” penny for your thoughts.

BLAKE

Stop it!

OMEGLE GUY VOICE

Just calm your pretty little head.

BLAKE

Why would you say that!

OMEGLE GUY VOICE

I just want you to know how special you are.

*Electric fissure, blackout. Lights up. QUINCY removes screen. BLAKE is gone.  
Silence. They wait for an air horn.*

QUINCY

Let’s watch a movie.

*QUINCY & ASHLEY C move panels back. A silent movie flickers behind them.  
LOGAN drifts asleep. OMEGLE GUY’s face appears in the film intermittently.  
Airhorn, the rules cover up the movie.*

Logan (*no response*)

### ACT 5: TRUTH OR DARE

#### ***RULES OF TRUTH OR DARE:***

- 1. Never ask dare***
- 2. Only one chicken***

QUINCY

Truth or dare?

ASHLEY C

Truth



QUINCY

Do you ever have that feeling like, you could die at any second, but if it happened, you'd be okay with it? Like... you've lived enough life?

ASHLEY C

*(beat)* no.

QUINCY

Oh.

ASHLEY C

Truth or dare?

QUINCY

Truth.

ASHLEY C

Have you ever read an entire book just because it was named after a boy you liked?

QUINCY

No. Truth or dare!

ASHLEY C

Truth

QUINCY

What was the book?

ASHLEY C

Luke's Magic Sword

QUINCY

That's disgusting.

ASHLEY C

Not like that!

QUINCY

Sure.

ASHLEY C

Truth or dare!

QUINCY

Truth.

ASHLEY C

Do people think I'm a slut?

QUINCY

No.

ASHLEY C

They really don't?

QUINCY

They really don't.

ASHLEY C

*Really?*

QUINCY

Do you *want* them to?

ASHLEY C

No! *(pause)* A little. *(pause)* I'm sorry. That's stupid. *(pause)* I just don't think people... think of me. Ever.

QUINCY

That's not true.

ASHLEY C

But it's so easy for people to give up on me. And I keep losing friends, like, Marty got mad at me because I didn't like him and Evan got mad at me because I did and Aidan stopped being my friend because I was hanging out with you guys and... I'm always the one trying to fix things, doing these big romantic gestures trying to get them back but... It's not like I'm not hurt too, you know? But *I'm* okay if they don't apologize because I'm the one who wants to keep them around.

QUINCY

Hey. You always have us.

ASHLEY C

But where's everybody going?

QUINCY

*(beat)* truth or dare

ASHLEY C

That was a chicken!

QUINCY

No! You didn't ask truth or dare!

ASHLEY C

Fine. Truth.

QUINCY

What do you want people to think when you die?

ASHLEY C

I just want everyone to miss me. *(Pause)* Truth or dare.

QUINCY

Truth.

ASHLEY C

When do you think you're gonna die?

QUINCY

In water. I always think about it when I'm in water. I just feel like it's so dark, there could be ANYTHING in there, and it was wants me to die... and sometimes I think, maybe that would be okay. I mean, you start thinking about your relationships with people and everything you've done, and you start to think, like, you'll be okay if you just leave everything how it is. Right now. But sometimes you're not ready, and then it's just... sad. There's like, stuff you didn't finish, or you're not talking to someone, or weird shit is just going on, like that guy on omegle!

*They look around to see if he's still listening.*

What would he think if somehow he knew that I just dropped dead. It would be WEIRD, not sad, just WEIRD... like, "I just jacked off to a dead girl..."

QUINCY (cont.)

So, like, you're never going to do everything you wanted to, it's just the moment you leave things in. And sometimes you're ready and sometimes you're just not.

ASHLEY C

You think it's gonna happen soon?

QUINCY

I don't know. But I don't think I'm ready this time.

ASHLEY C

*(beat)* Quincy... where's everyone going.

QUINCY

I don't know.

ASHLEY C

I feel like I can picture them so clearly in my head, right here.

QUINCY

I feel like when I picture something perfectly I never find it.

*LOGAN shoots awake.*

QUINCY

Logan, truth or dare?

LOGAN

Dare!

QUINCY

Logan, you can't say dare!

LOGAN

That's boring!

I was having a dream. And you were both there. everyone was there!

*MUSIC begins while voices of SYDNEY, BLAKE, and ASHLEY H count down.*

*QUINCY and ASHLEY C try to find the source of the voices. LOGAN moves the panels off stage.*

LOGAN (cont.)

And all that was left of the world was concrete slabs and these aliens that looked like frogs, and we were the last humans on earth.

And the alien spaceship was at the bottom of this pool, but I was so sure that the pool jets were connected to the ocean and that a shark would pop out and eat us whole, but I would never say anything. *(to QUINCY)* So you went in to get the spaceship, but as soon as you jumped in, the frog aliens squiggled out of the pool jets.

We tried to run and tell you, but we couldn't because we were by the pool. Then you pulled us in with you, into the alien spaceship, and the pool was outer space!

I have a new game.

*Dollies and helmets roll onstage!*

ACT 6: LOGAN'S DREAM

***RULES OF LOGAN'S DREAM:***

***1.***

ASHLEY C

What are the rules?

LOGAN

There aren't any!

QUINCY

How do you win?

LOGAN

I don't know, who cares?

QUINCY

*(to ASHLEY C)* Okay then... We'll go to Neptune and I'll be the King and you'll be the Queen.

ASHLEY C

I don't get it.

LOGAN

Every pool light is a star, and every pool vent is a black hole, and we're taking the alien spaceship deeper and deeper.

QUINCY

So are we in outer space or are we in a pool?

LOGAN

It's both! It's a dream!

ASHLEY C

I thought this was a game!

QUINCY

Logan, this doesn't make any sense. Your dreams aren't interesting to other people.

*There's a shaking*

What's that...

LOGAN

Please don't leave me.

ASHLEY C

The pool vent, it's creating a black hole!

LOGAN

I like myself when I'm around you. I've never felt that way before. I think it happened by accident. I can't make that happen again!

QUINCY

*(she loses control of the ship)* I can't control it! I'm kinda having fun. Is that weird?

ASHLEY C

Yes!

LOGAN

Last summer I would just stay home and watch SVU marathons and eat chips and cheese all day! I didn't know that people DID things together!

QUINCY

I think I gotta go.

ASHLEY C

You're too small, it'll suck you in!!

QUINCY

I know!

LOGAN

You introduced me to everything I love, I can't keep doing those things if I'm always thinking of you... not being here... I thought you'd be here forever.

*QUINCY leaves the ship*

ASHLEY C

Quincy-

*QUINCY is sucked into the black hole. ASHLEY C and LOGAN roll away in opposite directions. The ship disintegrates. They call for QUINCY, they scream, but they are not audible because they are underwater.*

ASHLEY C

*[One last, sad call for Quincy]*

LOGAN

That's what happens when there aren't any rules? I'm sorry, I just got excited because no one was telling us how to play, I didn't think we'd LOSE someone!

ASHLEY C

We didn't lose Quincy. *[beat]* She just left.

LOGAN

But if there had been rules -

ASHLEY C

Rules only matter if you want to play the game *(she realizes that she can leave)*

LOGAN

Why are we the only ones left?

ASHLEY C

Well you've always been a late bloomer and I just have some stuff to figure out I guess.

LOGAN

I'm sorry I never tried to know you better.

ASHLEY C

It's okay. We don't have to be best friends.

LOGAN

But... it's just us. *(beat)* Is this what friendship is for adults?

ASHLEY C

Logan, you gotta move on, you're a big girl now.

LOGAN

I know...

ASHLEY C

I mean, you gotta stop with this shit, you're a junior in High School

LOGAN

What?

ASHLEY C

You have to stop talking about middle school, you're 22 years old!

LOGAN

No I'm not!

ASHLEY C

You need to move on, you're a 37 year old woman.

LOGAN

Okay! Okay! I'm trying!

ASHLEY C

Logan, look at your life. Look at your choices. You're 53 years old.

LOGAN

I know, but I don't feel-

ASHLEY C

You have to stop acting like you're 13 years old, Logan, you are 75. You're an *old woman* not a teenager!



LOGAN

What does that even mean?

ASHLEY C

I guess this is it, Logan.

LOGAN

Am I dying?

ASHLEY C

I guess this is goodbye.

LOGAN

I'm not ready to die!

ASHLEY C

We all have to move on at some point.

*Blackout.*

#### EPILOGUE

*Lights up on LOGAN. She cannot tell if she has disappeared or if ASHLEY C has.*

*She searches for the others, but she is completely alone. Sunlight fills the room.*

*She eats breakfast.*

## APPENDIX A

### *Notes and Research*



Mary Engelbreit

#### RESEARCH:

Strikingly similar folkloric aspects of the number 13 have been noted in various cultures around the world: one theory is that this is due to the cultures employing lunar-solar calendars (there are approximately 12.41 lunations per solar year, and hence 12 "true months" plus a smaller, and often portentous, thirteenth month).

13 is a Happy Number. A happy number is a number defined by the following process: Starting with any positive integer, replace the number by the sum of the squares of its digits, and repeat the process until the number either equals 1 (where it will stay), or it loops endlessly in a cycle which does not include 1. Those numbers for which this process ends in 1 are happy numbers, while those that do not end in 1 are unhappy numbers (or sad numbers).

The end of the Mayan calendar's 13th Baktun was superstitiously feared as a harbinger of the apocalyptic 2012 phenomenon. Fear of the number 13: Triskaidekaphobia, a word coined in 1911.

The Last Supper: At Jesus Christ's last supper, there were thirteen people around the table, counting Christ and the twelve apostles.

A repressed lunar cult: In ancient cultures, the number 13 represented femininity, because it corresponded to the number of lunar (menstrual) cycles in a year ( $13 \times 28 = 364$  days). The theory is that, as the solar calendar triumphed over the lunar, the number thirteen became anathema.

- This is the first year a person is considered a teenager.
- This is also the age in the US, a person can watch, rent, or buy a PG-13 film without parental guidance.
- Apollo 13 was a NASA Moon mission famous for being a "successful failure" in 1970.

In Wicca, most covens have 13 members, although sometimes there can be fewer.

## PLOT

The Clique/ Lizzie McQuire/ iCarly

*End with the morning after a sleepover*

*Something dark has to happen at this sleepover*

*And then there were none?*

- 2 min Manhunt (one Manhunter, 5 hiding, last one never found) (5-4)
- 2 min Enter into sitcom set up
- 5 min Omegle cam girl
- 5 min Dubbing -> role play (4-3)
- 5 min Dreamscape (3-2)
- 5 min Blood rituals and return to sitcom (2-1)
- 1 min Morning after sleepover

## CHARACTER

1, literary character

Matilda, little prince, alice, laura, massie b, anne of green gables, sara c, Ramona Q, THE OUTSIDERS, SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS, THE UGLIES, THE CLIQUE

VIOLET B: model, stoic, kind of above it

VIVIAN H/RAMONA Q: crazy party girl, seems harmless, funny (hard past)

ANNIE G/MEG M: awkward, tries too hard, goes all the way, prioritizes intellect, wishes she was a boy

LESLIE B: badass but sensitive, prolly the gay one

JULIE C: lovesick

MISSING CHARACTERS: Mothers? Narrators? Men? Banished friend?

ROLE PLAY: grandmother, mother and daughter, man

MOM: VIOLET B - Diane

DAUGHTER: SUSIE X -Lizzie

GRANDMA: ESSIE V - Gramma Mamie

BOY: LAURA Y - tag along dad

SUSIE X (S E Hinton) geri x type, projects a tough and hardened attitude but is more emotional than she lets on. Maybe the queer one. FAV BOOK: the outsiders

ANNE Z (lemony snicket) emma type, beautiful, takes masculine roles with ease and grace

LESLIE V (Vivian harris) fun party girl with a dark hidden side,

LAURA Y (laura ingles wilder) awkward type

VIOLET B: gothic sweet lovesick girl

2, middle school names

EMMA K dies first. We never meet her. ANNE G

ASHLEY J dies first (Juliet) JULIE C

CRUZ G dies roll playing (geri x) HARPER L/

VIVVY X dies during the dream (we like her the most) (Vivian Harris)

EMMA Z dies (it's her and MEG M's love story) ANNE F/VIOLET B

BLU Y is left in the morning. She's the late bloomer. She doesn't belong.

### 3, name meanings

HAYDEN S: sweet but tries to be dark, a series of unfortunate events

ASHLEY H: Vivian, fun party girl with darker side, The Clique

BLAKE S: Emma Type, stoic, takes on male roles with grace, unembarrassed

FRANKIE X: geri x type, hardened but sensitive, the outsiders

COURTNEY Y: needs to prove something, the uglies

### 4, historical characters

Suffragettes, Sylvia plath, Anne sexton, Virginia Woolfe, Anne Frank, Diane Arbus, Dorathia Lang, Lizzie Borden, Elizabeth Short, Deirdre, Mary Shelly

Historical names: Anne, Mary, Juliet, Susan, Elizabeth, Emily, Laura, Jane, Harper

### THOUGHT

the number 13 (13 men)

dream analysis

sitcom

Cam girls

middle relationships existing into adulthood

Mother/daughter companionship

### DICTION

Role Playing

### MUSIC

PC Music: easyfun, A.G. Cooke, Charli XCX

### SPECTACLE:

Basement Must

DREAM: Queen of Everything (lot's of pillows)

Manhunt

Dubbing a movie

DREAM: Dragging people on floor

Dancing to the beat of your own ipod

DREAM: Blood rituals

*Last night I had a dream. The whole family was there. People I hadn't even met. There were some cousins about my age; their hair was very silky. We were in the basement. It was snowing. Every time I talked no one listened. I saw a dinosaur. I said. There's a dinosaur does anyone care? No one heard me except grandpa. We started running. The rest of the family saw us run so they ran after us, but they kept getting trampled. It was a very long cement hallway, and soon grandpa and me realized it was a black hole but it was too late. We had been inside, and when we fell out we became round balls.*

*I was going to the bathroom. The window was open and I heard someone singing. Maybe yelling. It sounded a little like my name. I wondered if someone was out there yelling my name. Maybe confessing their love to me? Or yelling 'I'm sorry?' Then I realized that couldn't be true because nobody knew me. Nobody I would want yelling my name would have anything to apologize for. Nobody I would want yelling my name knew enough about me to be in love with me. I wasn't the kind of person that people drove to the window of and confessed their love for because what would they even love?*

**APPENDIX B**

*Production Photos by Rowan Dunfey*



PROLOGUE



OMEGLE GUY



TRUTH OR DARE



LOGAN'S DREAM



LOGAN'S DREAM



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