

KISS AND CRY
By
Tom Rowan

KISS AND CRY

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KISS AND CRY

KISS AND CRY was first produced by Jorelle Aronovitch at the New York International Fringe Festival, a production of The Present Company, opening on August 15, 2004, in The Black Box at 440 Studios. It was directed by Kevin Newbury, with set design by Robert Monaco, costume design by Joanne Haas, lighting design by Greg Emetaz, and sound design by Robert Gould. Taylor Hansen was the stage manager. The cast was as follows:

| | |
|----------|-----------------|
| FIONA | Julie Leedes |
| STACY | David Lavine |
| LAUREN | Nell Gwynn |
| TRENT | Gregory Marcel |
| ETHAN | Paul Siemens |
| BRITTANY | Elizabeth Cooke |

The production was subsequently presented by Theater Ten Ten (Judith Jarosz, Producing Artistic Director) in New York City, opening on February 10, 2006. It was directed by Kevin Newbury, with set design by Robert Monaco, costume design by Joanne Haas, lighting design by Diana Kesselschmidt, and sound design by Robert Gould. Taylor Hansen was the stage manager. The cast was as follows:

| | |
|----------|-----------------|
| FIONA | Julie Leedes |
| STACY | David Lavine |
| LAUREN | Nell Gwynn |
| TRENT | Timothy Dunn |
| ETHAN | Reed Prescott |
| BRITTANY | Elizabeth Cooke |

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Cast of Characters

Fiona Blake, an actress, 25. Gorgeous and charismatic, with an irresistible energy and zest for life.

Stacy Clifford, a champion figure skater, 22. A beautiful young man with a gentle, boyish charm; moves like a dancer. Not as naïve as he sometimes seems.

Lauren Hadley, a playwright/director, 35. Fiercely intelligent, driven, and committed to her art and her politics.

Trent Weathers, a college student, 21. Cute and sexy, with a hip style and a wicked sense of humor.

Ethan Holder, a figure skater, 27. Bigger and sturdier than Stacy, with a big heart and a great smile. Could use a boost in self-esteem.

Brittany Bell, Stacy's pairs partner, 16. Adorable and talented. Her upbringing has been rigidly conservative, but she is developing a mind of her own.

Setting: The play moves swiftly back and forth between Los Angeles, New York, Denver, Las Vegas, and Seattle. Numerous locations are suggested, each with one or two furniture pieces. Scene changes are accomplished quickly during the music cues and *voiceovers* (prerecorded excerpts from TV and radio broadcasts, etc.) that are played during the transitions.

Time: The late 1990's.

Brisk pacing is essential. These characters have their eyes on the prize and seldom take time to stop and consider. Think fast cue pickup and witty repartee!

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ACT I

One

3 AM in Los Angeles: the terrace of a huge house in the Hollywood Hills. An ornate balustrade hung with vines. FIONA is by herself, taking in the view, when STACY enters from inside the house, carrying a mug.

FIONA. Oh!

STACY. What?!

FIONA. You scared me.

STACY. I'm sorry.

FIONA. Not your fault. I'm jumpy.

STACY. I'm Stacy.

FIONA. *(Laughs.)* Fiona, actually.

STACY. I know. Sorry, I just wasn't expecting to see you out here. Everyone left at the party is wondering where you are.

FIONA. Woops. I'm being bad. I just had to get away from all the... you know. All of it.

STACY. I think I can relate to that. *(Pause.)* Jeepers.

FIONA. Excuse me?

STACY. I've never... Well, never mind.

FIONA. No, what?

STACY. Well I was going to say I've never met a movie star before. But then I remembered I met two earlier tonight. Anyway, it's an honor to meet you. Sorry to disturb you. The movie was great! I'll leave you to...

FIONA. No, stay. It's nice out here. If you look over that way, you can see the Hollywood sign.

STACY. *(Looking.)* Cool.

FIONA. Yeah. *(Pause.)* Forgive me. I believe I'm suffering from slight inebriation.

STACY. I'm sorry. *(Beat.)* Would you like some of my coffee?

FIONA. You have *coffee* in there?!

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STACY. You were expecting?

FIONA. I don't know what I was *expecting*. Yes! I will have some. What time is it anyway? (*Takes the mug and drinks.*)

STACY. Almost three AM.

FIONA. I should--should I not?--go back in. I don't want to get a reputation for... anti-social... ism? (*Beat.*) How is it in there?

STACY. It's fine. I mean... it's different. From what I'm used to at least.

FIONA. To tell the truth, me too. I have to admit I'm not really in my element here.

STACY. Well, I guess that's not surprising.

FIONA. I mean, I've done New York parties. I *am* New York parties. But L.A.... -- What do you mean that's not surprising? I wanted you to be surprised.

STACY. Well this is your first big studio movie, right?

FIONA. Correct. Three years out of acting school. I've been waitressing in Manhattan. Waitressing and doing no-budget plays in basement theatres off-off-off-off. Then my agent sent me in for... well, you saw it.

STACY. (*Overlapping.*) The rest is history.

FIONA. *Maybe.* Or maybe I'll be a sauce in the pan.

STACY. Do you mean a flash--

FIONA. Fifteen minutes of Warhol! Here today, gone by Labor Day!

STACY. I don't think so. Tonight's premiere was, as they say, really well received. I think they all loved you.

FIONA. Potentially. There's a *potentiality* of love. But this was friends. Family. Industry people, studio yes-men. Paid escorts. Not critics. Critics could trash me unmercilessly. (*Beat.*) Of course, there were like twenty guys at the party that like wanted my ass. That's one reason I'm out here now.

STACY. I understand.

FIONA. Do you? You didn't come out here to hit on me, did you?

STACY. No.

FIONA. I didn't think so. Who are you, anyway?

STACY. My name's Stacy.

FIONA. But I mean, where do I know you from?

STACY. No place. (*Smiles.*) We've never met.

FIONA. But I mean, your face--or, well, actually your *butt*--looks familiar. Haven't I seen you on TV or something?

STACY. Maybe.

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FIONA. One of the soaps? Orrr... a sitcom?

STACY. No. I'm not an actor. I'm just a fan. Of yours. Especially after seeing the movie tonight.

FIONA. Oh please! Don't be nice to me! *Vampire Campus* is like the dumbest movie of the year!

STACY. *(Trying not to laugh.)* Shhh! The producer and director are still here.

FIONA. *(Exaggerated whisper.)* Soorry. *But.* It is dumb.

STACY. But entertaining. And *you* are terrific in it. A lot of the people at the party were saying your career is going to really go places.

FIONA. Yeah, right. Now that they know I can scream and grow fangs.

STACY. No, you can act. You made me... believe that you believed in those vampires.

FIONA. You're cute. *(He looks away.)* I'm sorry! I bet you've been hearing that all night, right? From women, men... . But I mean it. And not cute in a superficial way, like a Beanie Baby or something. In a good way! And I'm not saying that because I want anything from you. I'm just... responding to your truly genuine, *inner* cuteness.

STACY. I don't know what to say.

FIONA. Oh! That is so cute.

STACY. I think I'd better be...

FIONA. No! Wait don't. I mean... really. I want to tell you something. C'mere.

(Stacy slowly moves over to her.) I'm a lesbian. Truly.

STACY. Oh.

FIONA. Are you shocked?

STACY. No. Surprised, a little.

FIONA. That's okay. People tend to be. I don't fit whatever their, you know, narrow little stereotype of a dyke is. I've got long hair, I like makeup and clothes, blah blah blah.

STACY. Sure.

FIONA. Did I make you uncomfortable? I just wanted to... clear the air of any, how shall we say, misunderstanding. About my motives in befriending you.

STACY. No, that's cool. *(Beat; he is interested.)* Do you have a ... girlfriend?

FIONA. A life partner, we call it. Yes, I do. Her name's Lauren and we live together in a one-bedroom basement apartment in the Village.

STACY. What village?

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FIONA. Greenwich. In New York.

STACY. I've never been.

FIONA. Sweetheart, you should go there. Believe me.

STACY. What's she like?

FIONA. Lauren? She's brilliant. She's... on her own path, let's put it that way. We met at U-Mass Amherst. I was a drama major and she was in the grad directing program, but now she writes, too. After school we moved to New York together to start our own theatre company.

STACY. Wow. What's it called?

FIONA. It's called "Women for the New Millennium." Isn't that unprepossessing?

STACY. Totally.

FIONA. You're a sweetie. So what about you?

STACY. What about me?

FIONA. Do you have a... girlfriend?

STACY. No. (*Smiles.*) Actually, I have a "partner" too.

FIONA. Aha.

STACY. A skating partner. Her name's Brittany, and she's sixteen.

FIONA. Ice skating! On TV! *That's* where I recognize you from.

STACY. Guilty as charged.

FIONA. I'm a fan. I mean, not enough to remember the names or anything. But I remember you were great. And *that's* why I recognized your *butt!*

STACY. I thought you said you were a--

FIONA. Oh please. That doesn't mean I can't appreciate the male bun on like a purely artistic basis. You and that girl are like... ballet dancers.

STACY. Thanks.

FIONA. I've seen you skate in Nationals. And like, Internationals.

STACY. Worlds.

FIONA. Them too! And the Olympics.

STACY. I wish. That's the dream. But we've got another year and a half.

FIONA. You'll make it! You're the best. What I love is when you do that triple lutz/triple bypass combination.

STACY. You mean triple lutz/triple loop? A triple bypass is like... heart surgery.

FIONA. Come on, I'm sure it's not that hard for *you*; you're the champ. Oh look!

STACY. (*Alarmed.*) What?

FIONA. Over there!

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STACY. The Hollywood sign? You showed me.

FIONA. No no no. Higher! You can actually see two stars.

STACY. (*Looking.*) Who?

FIONA. Not movie stars, dummy. There's a hole in the smog! Two actual heavenly bodies.

STACY. Oh yeah. I see them.

FIONA. Let's make wishes!

STACY. (*Smiling.*) What?

FIONA. Pick one of the stars and make a wish on it. I'll do the other!

STACY. That's silly.

FIONA. Oh no no. I totally believe in this. Which star do you want?

STACY. Couldn't we share?

FIONA. I don't know, I wouldn't recommend it. I make big wishes.

STACY. Okay. You choose.

FIONA. The one on the left. Are you ready?

STACY. Yes. (*They close their eyes and wish.*)

FIONA. Are you done?

STACY. Uh-huh.

FIONA. Okay. What'd you wish?

STACY. Well if I tell you it won't come true, right?

FIONA. (*Exasperated.*) Now *don't* tell me you're superstitious! I can't stand that.

STACY. (*Laughs.*) What'd you wish?

FIONA. That I one day win an Academy Award. Is that tacky? I mean, be honest.

STACY. You wished for an Oscar? (*She nods.*) For *Vampire Campus*?

FIONA. No no no! For some... great movie I do. A great American film I make at the height of my career. For which I will be... remembered.

STACY. That's cool.

FIONA. Thank you. I think if I told Lauren that she'd leave me. Or at least laugh at me.

STACY. Well I think you should wish for what *you* want.

FIONA. Thank you. I like that. So what'd you wish?

STACY. Nothing.

FIONA. Oh yes you did. I could feel you wishing for something hard. (*Beat.*)

Come on, Stacy, no fair. *I* told. What'd you wish for?

STACY. Guess.

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FIONA. An Olympic gold medal!

STACY. No.

FIONA. (*Gently.*) What, then?

STACY. Okay. (*Quietly.*) I wished for... that special person.

FIONA. Who?

STACY. You know. What I always wish. For a special somebody. The person I could trust with anything and they'd always be there.

FIONA. Go on.

STACY. Well, that's it. You know, don't you? I want to be... the most important person in somebody's life. Forever. And have them be that for me. (*Shrugs.*)

FIONA. "Them," huh?

STACY. What?

FIONA. Nothin'. (*Smiles.*) That's very lovely. I hope your wish comes true.

STACY. I hope yours does.

FIONA. Let's make a deal.

STACY. Okay.

FIONA. Careful! You have to find out what it is first. Don't *ever* agree to anything in advance--or you're never gonna make it in this town.

STACY. I live in Denver.

FIONA. True. Well sports is just as bad.

STACY. Sometimes. So what's the deal?

FIONA. Whoever's wish comes true first, promises to call the other one and tell!

STACY. Deal.

FIONA. Although I guess if yours comes true you might not know at first. I mean about the "forever" part.

STACY. I think I'll know. (*Beat.*) But you won't have to call me to tell me about your Oscar. I'll be watching on TV!

FIONA. I'll call anyway.

STACY. All right. Do. (*Pause. They smile.*)

FIONA. Do you think you could do me one little favor?

STACY. Absolutely.

FIONA. (*Hitting him.*) You did it again! We're going to have to work on this.

STACY. Sorry! (*Fake deep voice.*) Depends on what it is.

FIONA. Get me outta here.

STACY. What do you mean?

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FIONA. Just... hold my hand and walk me downstairs past whatever... drunks and hangers-on and wannabes and piranhas are still in there.

STACY. No problem. So how're you getting home?

FIONA. There's a limo waiting for me in the driveway, actually. Don't laugh! It's a perk. *(Beat.)* I'll have the chauffeur drop you off first.

STACY. Deal. After you?

FIONA. Wait! *(She finishes the coffee.)* I said holding hands, remember?

STACY. Holding hands. *(They do. Lights; music into VOICEOVER.)*

Woman Announcer. Welcome back to *Entertainment Tonight*. Last night we checked out the premiere of the summer horror flick *Vampire Campus*--and the all-night party afterwards, which was a bona fide who's who of who's hot in today's young Hollywood. Our cameraman caught this footage of the movie's glamorous co-star, Fiona Blake, leaving the party hand in hand with--can you tell who that is?--Stacy Clifford, the figure skating champ who's considered one of the US's best hopes for a medal at the next Winter Olympics. We can't say for sure they're a couple, but don't they kind of look like a winning pair? Count on us to keep you posted on the latest developments. For *Entertainment Tonight*, I'm Julie Patterson.

Two

The stage is divided in half. Stage Right is an apartment in Denver, represented by a rumpled bed, with TRENT barely visible under the covers. Stage Left is Fiona's Greenwich Village apartment; we see a table with two ladderback chairs. LAUREN is sitting in one of them, working on her laptop computer. We hear a key in a lock offstage, followed by the sound of a door closing. Fiona, a bit bedraggled, enters with a duffle bag.

FIONA. Hi honey, I'm home.

LAUREN. *(Holding up an intense hand.)* Just a sec! *(Not looking up, she continues to type. Fiona stands by and watches.)* Just one... more... wait!--two... more... sentences. Got it! *(Looks up.)* Hey you! Welcome home!

FIONA. *(Kissing her.)* Hey. That was a... different kind of greeting.

LAUREN. Sorry sorry. I had a good idea and you know me; it takes over.

FIONA. How's everything been?

LAUREN. Good. The new play is coming along. Slowly but... hesitantly. In bursts,

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I should say. Of something or other, we'll see. I saw Annie's piece at the EstroFest. *Raw*. In the good sense and the bad. Mostly good, I think, but she's gotta clear out the family stuff and hone in on the regenerative. I talked to her. And *tonight*. We've got Dina's opening. Nine sharp.

FIONA. Oh jeez. A play?

LAUREN. No, babe. Her large installations. The Chelsea space.

FIONA. I may beg off; I'm beat. That's the last time I'm taking the redeye from LA.

LAUREN. You can't beg off. Dina's one of our sister artists, and she has agreed to do the set for our next show sight unseen. I don't know how you expect people to work with us if we don't support the work they're doing. *Capiche?*

FIONA. Like, whatever. (*Beat.*) So! Did you miss me a little?

(*Lights down on them, up on Stage Right. Stacy, shirtless, comes in from "the bathroom," and Trent stirs in the bed.*)

TRENT. What are you looking for?

STACY. My shirt. (*Beat.*) I didn't know you were awake.

TRENT. I hate it when they leave without saying goodbye.

STACY. I didn't want to wake you. It's after six o'clock.

TRENT. Don't tell me you have a paper route.

STACY. If I'm in my room at home before Brittany and her parents get up for church, they won't know I was out all night.

TRENT. You weren't. Saturday night doesn't end until at least one o'clock Sunday afternoon; do I have to teach you everything? (*Pause.*)

STACY. Was I that bad?

TRENT. That's not what I mea--

STACY. I warned you I'm not that experienced.

TRENT. Experience is overrated. You have the... raw materials.

STACY. I didn't mean to put you in the position--

TRENT. Honey, put me in any position you want. Just don't leave me alone in the middle of the night, okay?

(*Lights fade on them; up on Stage Left. Fiona is sitting alone at the table.*)

FIONA. What are you doing in there, babe?

LAUREN. (*Calling from offstage.*) Making you some breakfast.

FIONA. I ate on the... never mind. Thanks. Aren't you gonna ask me about how it was?

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LAUREN. How what was?

FIONA. LA. The premiere.

LAUREN. Well I would, hon, but I assume LA was LA and the premiere was a teenage vampire movie.

FIONA. Featuring *me*.

LAUREN. Uh-huh.

FIONA. So you haven't... heard anything?

LAUREN. About what?

FIONA. Well, the premiere was like all over *Entertainment Tonight* last night.

LAUREN. (*Deadpan.*) And you just know I watch that all the time. (*Enters with cereal.*) Here ya go. Put your feet up; I can't believe you took the redeye.

FIONA. Couldn't wait to see you.

LAUREN. I'm glad you're back home where you belong.

FIONA. The New York opening is Friday.

LAUREN. Of what? (*Thinks.*) Nora's show at HERE?

FIONA. *Vampire Campus*.

LAUREN. Oh yeah. (*Looks at her computer screen.*)

FIONA. Wanna go?

LAUREN. Why should I go see a movie designed expressly to get teenaged suburban heterosexuals to spend more money in shopping malls?

FIONA. Oh I don't know. Because you love me?

LAUREN. And therefore I don't need to see you merchandised.

FIONA. (*Munching on her breakfast.*) And yet you're going to go spend an evening nibbling cheese and avoiding wine and looking at "installations" Dina put together out of old broken toys?

LAUREN. The difference being that that's her lifeblood. Your movie you did for the money. Which yes, we all have to do. But I don't ask you to come down to the bookstore and watch me run a cash register.

FIONA. I do, though.

LAUREN. Only since we put in the coffee bar. (*Beat.*) So let me think what else. (*Consults calendar.*) You missed my anniversary.

FIONA. What? Our anniversary's in November.

LAUREN. No, *my* anniversary. Last Thursday. Two years of sobriety.

FIONA. Right! Congratulations. I'm so proud of you.

LAUREN. And then Sunday night there's an Artists Against AIDS meeting, I said

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we'd be there.

FIONA. Sunday?!

LAUREN. Problem?

FIONA. Don't you want to watch the Tony Awards?

LAUREN. Um--hello? I picketed that last year, remember?

FIONA. (*Whining.*) Lauren, you should love the Tonys! It's the one night of the year when all America gets to see what's going on in New York theatre!

LAUREN. Correction. What's going on on *Broadway*. Which you of all people should know by now is not the same thing. Speaking of which! I think I finally got the last scene solved in *Journey of the Daughter*.

FIONA. Well I can't wait to read it.

LAUREN. No need to wait. (*Starts offstage.*) I printed it up yesterday. Have a seat.

FIONA. (*Under her breath.*) Maybe later? I just got in the--

LAUREN. (*Reentering with manuscript.*) What, babe? (*Beat.*)

FIONA. Lay it on me!

(*Lauren hands her the script as the lights fade on them, and come up on Stage Right, where Trent is kneeling on the bed, kissing Stacy.*)

TRENT. Why are you so beautiful? (*Pause.*)

STACY. (*Laughs a little.*) Sorry; I thought that was the beginning of a poem.

TRENT. I'm an English major; I just talk like that.

STACY. I like it. (*Starts looking for his shirt again.*)

TRENT. And yet you're leaving.

STACY. It's not 'cause I want to. I just don't want to deal with their questions. Can't, actually. It's a very complicated situation.

TRENT. Sounds like something out of a Victorian novel. Not that I mind; I read them. Will you have to sneak in a window when you get home?

STACY. Not if I make it on time. (*They both laugh.*) I know it sounds ridiculous. (*Beat.*) The bus comes in five minutes, and I can't find my shirt.

TRENT. If you go like that you could probably get someone to give you a ride. (*Beat.*) Stay another few minutes, and *I'll* drive you.

STACY. That's nice of you, but it's so early. Don't you want to go back to bed?

TRENT. That's the point I've been trying to make! Sit. (*He pulls Stacy back down on the bed.*) So was this a one-night thing, or will I get to see you again?

STACY. I'd love to see you again, are you kidding? (*They kiss.*)

TRENT. Thank you. For a lovely night.

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STACY. Thank you for writing the letter.

TRENT. Oh jeez.

STACY. I'm embarrassing you; sorry.

TRENT. Hey, I don't embarrass. I'm just glad it worked. Guess it pays to go with a good photographer.

STACY. No, that's not what I'm talking about. I mean, the picture was nice, of course. But the letter. It got to me.

TRENT. Never underestimate the US Postal Service! *(He pulls Stacy's shirt out from under the covers and hands it to him. Stacy starts putting it on.)*

STACY. No, I mean it. I'd never have the guts to do something like that.

TRENT. *(Picking his own clothes up off the floor.)* Oh no, definitely not. You just... jump up in the air, spin around three times, and land on one foot in front of millions of people. Or twirl some chick around your head like a lasso!

STACY. *(Laughs.)* Okay. But I'd be more scared to do what you did. I mean, what if I had been mean and rude and wrote back something cruel to embarrass you?

TRENT. *(Starting to get dressed.)* Like I said, I don't embarrass.

STACY. Right.

TRENT. *(Beat.)* I knew you wouldn't do that.

STACY. How?

TRENT. You can tell a lot about a guy by watching him skate.

(The lights crossfade back to Stage Left, where Fiona is reading the last page of the manuscript.)

FIONA. Wow.

LAUREN. *(Entering from the kitchen.)* You're done?

FIONA. Yeah. I mean, I've got to read it again, there's so much in there. But yeah. Wow.

LAUREN. Works for you?

FIONA. I love your anger. Always have.

LAUREN. Now that you've read it, I can let you in on the... thing.

FIONA. Which is?

LAUREN. Sharon wants to coproduce. And she thinks she can get one of two Theatre Row theatres for a late fall run.

FIONA. Late fall this year?

LAUREN. This very. *(Smiles.)*

FIONA. Okay. It should be fine, but don't sign anything until I've talked to Lex.

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LAUREN. About?

FIONA. Well, there's a couple film projects that have... expressed interest, as they so carefully put it. And I really have to be available when *Vampire Campus 2: Sophomore Year* starts shooting. It's not nailed down, timewise.

LAUREN. I wrote this for you. It's what we've been working toward for five years.

FIONA. Right right right. All doable. It's just a matter of workin' the dates.

(*Gesturing with the script.*) The script is just... wow. You are the best. You are *important*. You speak to a culture.

LAUREN. We think the same way. Always have.

FIONA. Are you sure you want to direct it too?

LAUREN. Absolutely.

FIONA. Because I was thinking--you know me--just an idea!--file it, stow it, chuck it--but for whatever it's worth, I met a guy in LA who directs and might have just the *eye*--

LAUREN. A *guy*?

FIONA. Oh, probably gay.

LAUREN. *Probably?!*

FIONA. He did a short film that *rocked* at Sundance! Could be the ticket.

LAUREN. Ticket?

FIONA. To get... where we wanna be.

LAUREN. This *is* where we want to be. Theatre Row. New York. Women. *Us*.

FIONA. The magazine?!

LAUREN. You and me!

FIONA. Oh that! Okay, yeah. I was just thinking, and like I said, it's your call, but a lot of people--women!--think it's good for the playwright to not also direct. Like another creative mind can bring in a certain, you know, objectivity.

LAUREN. I'm *opposed* to objectivity. On principle.

FIONA. Which is valid.

LAUREN. What is this about?

FIONA. (*Grinning.*) *Well.* Okay. I was thinking that if we got somebody like this guy on board now, the whole project *might*--just dreaming here at this point, but that's what we do, right?--be able to be *developed* as a *film*.

LAUREN. It *is* a *play*.

FIONA. Absolutely.

LAUREN. The movie industry has been trying to kill off the live theatre for fifty

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years. It's not gonna get me. *(Beat.)*

FIONA. You know who you are; I've got to give you that.

LAUREN. I thought we both felt that way.

FIONA. Well, yeah, whatever. Absolutely. *(Beat.)* Although I happen to like film acting. In some ways I think it suits my temperament better than the stage.

LAUREN. Wonderful.

FIONA. Like in stage acting there's no second chances. You mess up, the scene's history, at least till the next night. Film you can always do another take; there's like, less pressure, you know?

LAUREN. Are you just doing this to infuriate me?

FIONA. *(Grins.)* You are sexy when you're mad. *(She runs into the bedroom, Lauren following. Lights and spectacular music into VOICEOVER.)*

Male Announcer: Chris Burlington! Michele Kwan! Todd Eldredge! Oleg Gorchakov! Brittany Bell and Stacy Clifford! See all your favorite Olympic, US, and World Figure Skating Champions, on tour, this summer, at an arena near you! Available now from Ticketmaster--or call our toll-free number, 1-800-SKA-TING. The best seats will go fast--call now!

Three

The men's locker room at the training rink in Denver. Trent is sitting on a bench. Stacy clumps in, wearing his skates with skate guards, and warmups.

TRENT. You skate so sexy.

STACY. *(Surprised to see him.)* Trent. *(Beat.)* Thanks. You watched practice?

TRENT. Just the end.

STACY. How did you get in?

TRENT. It's open to the public, apparently. *(Picks up a dance belt.)* Is this yours?

STACY. No. *(Dialing his locker combination.)* I don't leave my stuff lying around.

TRENT. Too bad, it smells good.

STACY. Trent.

TRENT. I thought you wanted to see me again.

STACY. I did--I *do*. But this is where I work. *(Starts taking off his skates.)* I'm sorry.

TRENT. *(Looking around.)* I don't know, it has possibilities. I haven't done it in a

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locker room since high school. There was this guy on the swim team--

STACY. Trent!

TRENT. Oh jeez, they're making ice skates out of plastic now? Whatever happened to quality?

STACY. They're called skate guards. So I don't blunt the edges walking around off the ice.

TRENT. This warm welcome is blunting *my* edge. Don't I even get a kiss?

STACY. What if someone comes in?

TRENT. Don't worry; I'll behave. (*ETHAN barges in, carrying his skates, and violently flings open a locker.*)

ETHAN. Fuck!

TRENT. I sincerely hope you're not addressing me.

ETHAN. Six years of skating with the same girl--excuse me: woman!--and we can't even do a side-by-side camel spin without getting off unison.

STACY. Sure you can, I've seen you. A hundred times.

ETHAN. Not this week. She's speeding up. Every time. And of course Geoffrey's blaming me.

STACY. It'll be better tomorrow. Every pair has bad days.

ETHAN. Three months running? (*Puts his skates down.*)

TRENT. Hey, he has those plastic thingies too! (*Ethan looks at him.*)

ETHAN. Who are you?

TRENT. (*Before Stacy can say anything.*) Bo Hendrickson. I'm a male model. We're doing a shoot here at the rink when you boys are done practicing. A new line of winter sportswear.

ETHAN. (*Frowns. To Stacy.*) Do you know him?

TRENT. We just now met. But he wasn't very convivial. You athletes are another whole... ballgame. (*Hands the dance belt to Ethan.*) You shouldn't leave these things lying around. It could trip someone. (*Trent exits.*)

ETHAN. What a character.

STACY. Yeah. (*He is unwrapping his knee.*)

ETHAN. Need any help with that, buddy?

STACY. No thanks.

ETHAN. Knee acting up again?

STACY. Always. To some extent.

ETHAN. Shit. (*He starts taking off his practice clothes and hanging them in his*

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locker.)

STACY. You said it. Doc Jensen doesn't think Brittany and I should do the tour this summer. Thinks I should stay in therapy and a carefully monitored practice schedule. *(He takes off his sweater.)*

ETHAN. Sounds like good advice. Not that I'm the authority. An asteroid would have to wipe out the world championships before anybody would ask me and Roberta to do a tour. *(A loud banging on the door.)* Go away!

BRITTANY. *(Offstage.)* Are you boys decent?

STACY. What is it, Brit?

BRITTANY. There's a reporter here who would like to talk to you.

STACY. Really? Well, okay. Send him in I guess.

BRITTANY. It's a *her*.

ETHAN. *(He wraps a towel around his waist.)* Have a blast. I'll be in the shower. They wouldn't want pictures of me anyway, even naked. *(Exiting.)* They only want to talk to the contenders. *(He's gone. Stacy hastily pulls on a T-shirt--as Fiona walks in. She's wearing sunglasses and has her long hair piled up under a fedora with a white card bearing the word "PRESS" attached to the front of it.)*

STACY. How can I help you?

FIONA. *(Faking an exaggerated New York accent.)* I'm from Figyuh Skating Monthly. Got an hour tuh tawk? *(Stacy looks bemused. Fiona pulls down her sunglasses and peers at him over the tops.)* It's me, silly.

STACY. Fiona? What are you doing here?

FIONA. I was in the neighborhood and thought I'd... don a disguise and drop by to say hi. Hi, Sesame Seed.

STACY. In the neighborhood of Denver? I knew you were bicoastal, but--

FIONA. Watch your language, young man. The walls have ears.

STACY. How long are you in town for?

FIONA. *(Consulting her watch.)* About... two hours. I scheduled a layover on the way back to LA.

STACY. Really? Why?

FIONA. Actually it was just an excuse to get into a men's locker room. I've seen those reporters on TV do it.

STACY. Why would you be interested in that? *(Beat.)* And who would believe that get-up?

FIONA. Sixteen-year-old girls are easy to fool. But of course, you knew that.

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STACY. You look like something out of *The Front Page*.

FIONA. (*Taking off the hat and looking at it.*) Actually I think that *is* where this came from. Lauren has a whole closet full of stuff like this, left over from her summer stock days. (*Shakes out her long, curly hair.*) Were you afraid I cut it off? I never would. Lauren calls this my Pre-Raphaelite look.

STACY. So why are you really here? I mean I know you think I'm cute and everything...

FIONA. ... but there are already enough rumors about us floating around out there.

STACY. (*Laughs.*) Did you see that?

FIONA. (*Pulling the newspaper out of her purse.*) Got it right here. (*Pause.*) I'm actually here to ask you a favor.

STACY. Sure, anything.

FIONA. (*Hitting him on the arm.*) I thought I told you not to do that! Find out what it is first.

STACY. What is it first?

FIONA. It's... well, it's not really a favor, really. Because it could be so... mutually beneficial. To you as well as I. Let's call it a... a business proposition.

STACY. A what?

FIONA. I was talking to my manager yesterday and he had an idea. About that article. And the thing on *Entertainment Tonight*.

STACY. Ohmygosh, I didn't even see that one.

FIONA. More of the same.

STACY. So you want me to call the editors and tell them it's not true?

FIONA. (*Pretending to think it over.*) Ummm... no thank you.

STACY. What then? Your friend Laura? Is she jealous?

FIONA. Lauren. No, she reads a different class of newspaper.

STACY. Then what? Clue me in.

FIONA. My manager, Lex--his name is actually Lex, can you believe it?--thinks it would be a good idea for us to um... play along.

STACY. Play along with what?

FIONA. The rumor.

STACY. I don't get it.

FIONA. Meaning... don't deny it. Meaning act like it might be true.

STACY. What? Why?

FIONA. Think about it. I'm the new Hollywood cover girl. Have you seen the

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reviews of *Vampire Campus*? Hate the movie; love me. I'm gonna be in teenage boys lockers all over the fuckin' country!--I mean my *picture* will, of course. The scripts are gonna be, like, rolling in. *If* I play my cards right. And keep certain ones very close to the vest.

STACY. I'm still a little lost here.

FIONA. Do you think anybody's gonna hire me for leading love interest-type roles if they even suspect I like women? This is Hollywood we're talkin'. Everything would be much easier if the world thought I had a boyfriend. Especially a very cute, world-class figure skater.

STACY. (*Laughing.*) Oh yeah? And what's in it for me?

FIONA. Great P.R., buddy. Sports figures need it just as much. Don't you want to snag all those *lucrative* endorsements once you've got your medal? A little financial security for the Canadian orphan. Don't tell me you wouldn't love a chance to get out from under the Born-Again Christian wing of Mr. and Mrs. Bell, who discovered you in a cold, lonely rink in Calgary and basically *adopted* you so their precious baby daughter could have a pairs partner?

STACY. Hey, how do you know so much about me all of a sudden? Last weekend all you had was some vague memory of seeing my butt on TV.

FIONA. (*Putting the "press" hat back on.*) I never show up for a performance unprepared. I spent last night on the Net reading up on you. I'd say the Bells made a pretty good investment if you ask me, since there's so many more American girls than boys going into figure skating. You know, the whole gay stigma thing.

(*Pause.*) It would hardly take any effort on our part, Stacy. Just let them take our picture once in a while--they'll make up the rest. You have a great look; they'll put you on all the covers.

STACY. But *lying*? I don't know, it feels sordid. Why encourage an untrue rumor?

FIONA. (*Loud whisper.*) To shut down the *true* ones. (*Pause.*) I might not know a lutz from a camel, but I do know the figure skating community's as notoriously homophobic as the movies. Maybe more so.

STACY. (*Beat.*) And what does that have to do with us? (*Fiona gives him a look. Another loud knocking on the door.*) Yes?

BRITTANY. (*Offstage.*) Can I come in?

STACY. What's the problem? (*BRITTANY enters. Gently.*) This is the men's locker room, Sport. You know better.

BRITTANY. I thought you must be decent because I knew there was already a lady

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in here.

FIONA. (*Back with the accent.*) I haven't been cawled dat in a while.

BRITTANY. Are you doing an interview?

FIONA. You could cawl it dat.

BRITTANY. Can I help? (*Beat.*) Sorry to intrude, but I like to do interviews.

STACY. Actually, Fiona was just leaving.

BRITTANY. (*To Fiona.*) Did you get everything you needed?

FIONA. (*No accent, with a glance at Stacy.*) Hard to say. Looks like maybe not.

BRITTANY. Ask me some stuff! I know all about this character. (*Fiona looks at her, and raises an eyebrow.*) You look familiar. Have I met you before?

FIONA. I don't think so, dear. (*Beat.*) Have you seen *Vampire Campus*?

BRITTANY. Yes! I mean no. But I've seen the commercial like six times. You're a great screamer.

FIONA. Actually, I've been getting more discreet.

STACY. As I said, Fiona was just leaving.

FIONA. Toodaloo! (*She ducks out.*)

BRITTANY. Wow. Is she your girlfriend?

STACY. Whoa. What? No.

BRITTANY. Why is she here?

STACY. That's a good question. To say hi, I guess. I met her last week when I was in California to see that knee specialist.

BRITTANY. So then you're... friends?

STACY. I don't know, actually. (*Laughs.*) Certainly nothing more than friends. She's weird.

BRITTANY. Would you tell me if you had a girlfriend?

STACY. Uh, yes. If that ever happened, you can be sure I would tell you.

BRITTANY. We tell each other everything, right?

STACY. (*Looking down.*) Something like that.

BRITTANY. (*Carefully.*) Could I ask you a question?

STACY. Okay.

BRITTANY. Promise you won't be mad.

STACY. At you? Never.

BRITTANY. Why didn't you come to church with us on Sunday?

STACY. What? I don't know, I was tired. Sometimes I stay up late on Saturday nights.

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BRITTANY. I know. Momsy said you once didn't come in till like three:twenty-six in the morning.

STACY. Wow, good thing my car didn't turn into a pumpkin. *(Pause.)*

BRITTANY. *(Not looking at him.)* Stacy... Could I ask you something else?

STACY. Sure I guess.

BRITTANY. Are you a faggot?

STACY. What?! No! Brittany, what are you asking me?

BRITTANY. Dadsy says he worries sometimes that you might be a faggot. And when you don't come home at night, he says if he ever found out you were out fagging around he'd ship you back north faster than you can do a flying camel.

STACY. Brittany, you shouldn't talk like that.

BRITTANY. Like what?

STACY. The word "faggot." It's not nice. Nobody wants to be called that. It's a bad word.

BRITTANY. But Momsy and Dadsy say faggot all the time, and they hate bad words. Momsy said people like that make God cry. *(Beat.)* And if they ever thought you were... funny... they wouldn't let us skate together anymore.

STACY. I'll never let that happen sport. You can trust me.

BRITTANY. But you said you're not, so it's fine. Anyway, it'll be easier to deal with in the book.

STACY. What book?

BRITTANY. My autobiography. *Champion Spirit: The Brittany Bell Story.*

STACY. Kinda early for that, Sport.

BRITTANY. Late you mean. Horton and Murphy have promised me a fifteen-thousand-dollar advance for the hardcover rights, but only if I get it done by September.

STACY. You're kidding.

BRITTANY. *(Heads for the door.)* On the contrary. I'm meeting with my editor over hot cocoa in thirty minutes; I've got to change. Don't be late for afternoon practice!

STACY. Am I ever?

BRITTANY. *(Turns back.)* No. But that's because I keep you in line. *(She is gone. Shaken, Stacy sits on the bench for a moment. Suddenly Fiona pops back in.)*

FIONA. You're right of course; you'd have nothing to gain from the arrangement. You'd just be doing me a huge favor, and you don't even know me all that well.

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STACY. I thought you were gone.

FIONA. I am. Gone head over heels over a cute young figure skater.

STACY. You are a good actress.

FIONA. That I am.

STACY. And a good eavesdropper, apparently?

FIONA. The walls have ears in this place, Sesame Seed.

STACY. That's for sure.

FIONA. A business agreement, Mr. Clifford. And after it's served its purpose, no strings. (*Beat.*)

STACY. I'm not comfortable talking about this any more *here*.

FIONA. Great. Let's go out for lunch someplace. On me.

STACY. What kind of place would you like?

FIONA. Someplace where gossip columnists and photographers hang out!

STACY. You're awful.

FIONA. I know. Don't you love me? (*Lights fade; lush, romantic music into VOICEOVER.*)

Woman. This is one of Stacy and Brittany's most special routines, based on the idea of Cinderella and Prince Charming at the ball.

Man. Opening with a spectacular star lift--oh! That's just terrific. She looks like she's really flying there, doesn't she?

Woman. And loving every minute of it. Here come the side-by-side double toe loops... Beautiful!

Man. His back positions are just splendid; he's got a balletic discipline and delicacy in his skating that you usually only see in the Russians. They really may have a shot at a medal next Olympics.

Woman. They sure do. It may turn out to be a modern-day Cinderella story for her. And whose parents wouldn't want a Prince Charming like Stacy for their daughter?

Man. I guess Fiona Blake's mom and dad must be counting their blessings then, don't you think?

Woman. (*Laughs.*) Now now, let's not bring the gossip columns into it. Look at this death spiral!

Man. And wasn't that breathtaking? Just breathtaking! (*Music out.*)

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Four

Lights up on Stage Right: Trent's apartment, with Trent and Stacy on the bed watching a TV in the fourth wall. They are listening to the last couple lines of the preceding voiceover.

TRENT. Unfuckingbelievable.

STACY. Silly, isn't it?

TRENT. You *left* a party with the woman at three in the morning--*one* party, *one* night over a month ago--and they're still making up stories about the two of you?

STACY. (*Shaking his head.*) Imagine.

TRENT. (*Turns off the TV.*) Okay, what's the deal here, Stace? The two of you are even in *Time* magazine this week. Is there more to this than meets the eye?

STACY. Less, actually.

TRENT. You are such a shitty liar.

STACY. What do you mean?

TRENT. The eyes, lover. Those puppy dog eyes. Adorable, but incapable of concealing a falsehood.

STACY. (*Uncomfortable.*) Trent...

TRENT. You're not secretly bi, are you? You're not boffing this starlet behind my back?

STACY. No, of course not.

TRENT. So what do you two... talk about?

STACY. Lots of things. We've gotten to be friends. She's really fun. (*Beat.*) She calls me Sesame Seed.

TRENT. Why, do you get stuck between her teeth?

STACY. She says it's because of my nice buns. Get it?

TRENT. Hmm. Sounds like it's time we got to... how shall we say? The "bottom" of this.

STACY. Cute. (*Pause.*) All right. I guess. Can I trust you?

TRENT. Sure. (*Beat.*) I'm waiting.

STACY. Jeepers, where to start? Okay. Here goes nothing.

(Stacy begins to tell Trent the whole story, but the audience can't hear him; the two of them are just seen conversing silently in very dim light while the full stage lights come up on Lauren and Fiona's New York apartment, Stage Left. Lauren is packing

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a suitcase.)

LAUREN. It's not too late to change your mind and come with me. It would do you a lot of good.

FIONA. I wish I could. I so wish that. You know how much I wish that. But this is gonna be a dream come true for you anyway.

LAUREN. My dream of Edinburgh always included you. I wrote this play for you.

FIONA. Gina will be brilliant.

LAUREN. Not the point.

FIONA. I'd give anything to be there, but the schedule just...

LAUREN. I know.

FIONA. And actually, we should be glad they moved up the filming of *Vampire Campus 2: Sophomore Year*. Now it'll be all over by the time we go into rehearsal for our Off-Broadway gig--which is our main event, right? Edinburgh is just a one-act. This one's gonna be your masterpiece.

LAUREN. Yeah, but who knows when it's finally gonna happen? Sharon said she might not be able to get the theatre we really want until after the holidays, and it still depends on--

FIONA. (*Worried.*) Just make sure we're done by mid-March.

LAUREN. Excuse me? What if we're a hit? It's open-ended.

FIONA. Nothing's open-ended in the movie business.

LAUREN. I'm not *in* the movie business.

FIONA. Well I am. And I have to keep that March-April time free. They're already talking contracts for *Vampire Campus 3: Junior Prom*.

LAUREN. I sure hope you don't think I'm gonna wait around for you to finish vampire graduate school.

FIONA. Touché.

LAUREN. Is that the kind of career you want?

FIONA. No, you know it isn't. That's why I'm trying to get Lex to delay the contract on that one. I haven't said anything because I don't want to jinx it, but... he thinks he can maybe get me a screen test for *Moonlight on a Ranch*.

LAUREN. A movie of the book by Seth Brown?

FIONA. Exactly. (*Grins.*) Prestige Project! It's been a *New York Times* bestseller for seven months!

LAUREN. I know, I work in a book store, remember? I think it took me forty-five minutes to read that novel. Counting my barf break.

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FIONA. You're awful. I thought it was lovely.

LAUREN. Then you must have a secret life as a suburban housewife.

FIONA. How come you have to belittle my projects all the time? Aren't you a little bit proud of me? I could win an Oscar and you'd still be looking down your alternative culture snob nose at me, wouldn't you? I'm close to being a movie star, Lauren. And it's building. They're predicting *Vampire Campus* will end up as the biggest money-maker of the summer. And if I get *Moonlight on a Ranch*, it could be *huge*.

LAUREN. Since when is it about money? I thought we understood that *reaching people* is the most important thing.

FIONA. Exactly. So what do you have lined up in Edinburgh? Four performances in a fifty-seat theatre? *Vampire Campus* played to two and a half million *opening weekend*.

LAUREN. And I'll bet it really changed their lives.

FIONA. Well maybe their lives didn't *want* to be changed. Ever think of that? What the fuck's wrong with *entertaining* people? You're always talking about like, *connections*, right? Movies connect! People are *talking* about *Vampire Campus* all over the country! The *world* soon. Scotland, even! Did you know that movies are one of the main topics of social conversation? Almost as big as sports, and certainly ahead of politics--only the weather has a clear advantage. I'm being discussed around water coolers and in bars all across the nation! Don't tell me that's nothing. You can't do that from a converted garage in the East Village.

LAUREN. I'd rather touch twelve people's souls in a basement theatre than drown twelve million in inane, violent, sexist bullshit.

FIONA. So if it's not post-lesbian radical... whatever!--then it's automatically garbage, right? I used to buy into that, but you know what? I don't feel like an outcast from society! I'm connecting with the world! I'm making waves! I'm rocking the boat! I'm—

(Lights down on them and back up to full on Stacy and Trent.)

STACY. "Selling out"? Is that what it sounds like to you?

TRENT. Well gee, I don't know. A gay male and a lesbian pretend to be a straight couple so they can make more money. Sounds like more of a personal statement to me.

STACY. Am I gonna be sorry I trusted you with this? *(Beat.)* I didn't want to have any secrets from you.

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TRENT. Well I guess I should feel pretty special then, since your whole *life* is a secret from everybody else.

STACY. Just please don't tell anyone. Especially about Fiona. She trusted me.

TRENT. As I've told you before, I don't believe in outing people. I think they should come out on their own when they're good and ready. If not sooner.

STACY. Thank you.

TRENT. Incredible story, doll.

STACY. Come on. It's not that weird. It's probably not all that uncommon.

TRENT. That's a scary thought.

STACY. Are you mad?

TRENT. Why should I be mad? I've got great blackmail material!

STACY. What's your price?

TRENT. (*Tickling him.*) Sexual favors.

STACY. You're cheap.

(*They roll over on the bed. Lights down on them and up on Stage Left, where Lauren is looking for something.*)

LAUREN. Damn. Have you seen my Doc Martens?

FIONA. Under the bed.

LAUREN. (*Exiting to bedroom.*) I've gotta get to the airport. It's almost three already. (*Fiona spots something in Lauren's open suitcase and quickly pulls it out.*)

FIONA. (*Calling offstage.*) Uh, Lauren?

LAUREN. (*From off.*) What is it?

FIONA. You're not taking this *Time* magazine to Scotland, are you?

LAUREN. I was going to read it on the plane. Why?

FIONA. There's an article in here that I really ... want to read.

LAUREN. What's it about?

FIONA. Figure skaters. I mean! (*Improvising.*) Uhhm... Lesbianism. You know, politics? Gay rights and shit?

LAUREN. Really? I'd like to see it.

FIONA. (*Quickly shutting the magazine.*) I thought you were in a hurry... And anyway, oh shit. (*Puts the magazine down on the table.*)

LAUREN. What's the matter?

FIONA. I just spilled coffee all over it. (*Does so.*) I'm so sorry.

LAUREN. (*Re-entering, with shoes and a sweater.*) Fiona, what is with you today?

FIONA. I'm just upset that you're leaving! I'm gonna miss you so much!

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LAUREN. (*Touched.*) Well I'm gonna miss you too. A month is a long time.

FIONA. A month in Scotland. No American newspapers or magazines! No American TV! You'll feel like you're in another world!

LAUREN. Well I guess that's one way of looking at it.

FIONA. (*Hugging her.*) Have a wonderful time!! (*Lights; music.*)

Five

The gym at the rink in Denver. A bench, a suspended punching bag, and a rack of weights. Stacy, in shorts and a tank top, has been working out. Brittany paces.

BRITTANY. Elise showed us sketches for the new short program costumes. With swatches. Do you want to see?

STACY. I trust you guys on costumes.

BRITTANY. Mommy said we have to look just right this year. Because this year is so special.

STACY. It is?

BRITTANY. Yes!

STACY. How so?

BRITTANY. Our year to win Nationals, dork! You're a silly.

STACY. Oh that.

BRITTANY. (*Laughs.*) Stop it. (*Beat.*) Dick Button said on TV the other day that we have a better chance of taking gold at the Olympics than any other U.S. pair since the seventies.

STACY. That's the rumor.

BRITTANY. Do you believe it?

STACY. Sure I do. We can do anything we set our minds to.

BRITTANY. My mind is set.

STACY. I can tell it is. You're gonna be a *star* out there one of these days, Brittany.

BRITTANY. And you're already one.

STACY. One what?

BRITTANY. A star.

STACY. Nuh-uh.

BRITTANY. Uh-huh! How many magazine articles does it take?

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STACY. No amount. That's not what makes somebody a star.

BRITTANY. I'm not so sure.

STACY. Well it's all pretty silly, Brittany. Just between you and me, that stuff doesn't really mean anything.

BRITTANY. It could, though.

STACY. How?

BRITTANY. Well, I was talking to Geoffrey about it. And Miss Danelli. And that sports agent man.

STACY. (*Winks.*) You take a meeting? Or do lunch?

BRITTANY. (*Serious.*) No, Stacy. Everybody really is talking about it. Because if we're celebrities--if *you're* a celebrity--going into the big competitions, it could actually affect the judging.

STACY. The judging's based on how we *skate*.

BRITTANY. Well, yes. But maybe no. Geoffrey said judges tend to mark you based on their expectations of how you'll do. So if you're in the news all the time and people are always saying how great you are and stuff, then we might be more apt to win because people are thinking of us as the best already.

STACY. So that's good, right?

BRITTANY. *Maybe.* But if we don't skate perfect, they might mark us down even more because they were expecting so much. Does that make sense?

STACY. No. You'll drive yourself crazy if you try to analyze all that stuff. All we can do is skate our best.

BRITTANY. You always make it sound so simple.

STACY. Well it is.

BRITTANY. Miss Danelli says it isn't. She was talking to Dadsy in the pro shop. She says it's all about image. She said your image is changing every day and we need to control it. We need to spin it our way.

STACY. Jeepers, where are you getting this vocabulary?

BRITTANY. Plus, Fiona's a little sleazy and everything, she's from New York and she does those kind of slightly kinky movies? So that whole wholesome, Christian kid appeal we had working for us is shot out of the water.

STACY. I'm having trouble keeping up here.

BRITTANY. So if it's not true then I think you should say so. Tell the reporters that it's just a rumor that got out of hand and you're just casual friends with her.

Unless...

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STACY. Unless what?

BRITTANY. Unless it's true and you really are in love with Fiona Blake. Which it doesn't seem like you are, Stacy. You don't talk about her that much. You hardly ever see her. *(Beat.)* But as your partner, I would like for you to level with me.

STACY. Well, that's understandable. *(Beat. She waits.)* All I can tell you is that I like being with Fiona. I'm learning a lot from her. She makes me laugh. She's... excited about life, and it's contagious.

BRITTANY. So is that being in love?

STACY. Love is a big word.

BRITTANY. Four letters. *(Grins.)* I forgot you didn't finish high school.

STACY. You're so mean to me. *(Ethan enters, and picks up a barbell.)*

BRITTANY. Gotta go. I've got Bible study. *(She exits.)*

ETHAN. *(Counting reps.)* Two, three, four...

STACY. *(Noticing the weights.)* You lifting heavier these days?

ETHAN. Got to. You'd better hope Brittany doesn't get a growth spurt. Roberta's not sticking to the training diet, and it makes a difference.

STACY. She looks the same as always.

ETHAN. Yeah, you don't spend six hours a day skating with her. Four pounds on the hips since last month. I know every inch of that woman's body.

STACY. You two working things through?

ETHAN. Not like you mean. The relationship part was a mistake, I think we both know that; simpler this way. *(Beat.)* Actually, I think you and Blake have the right kind of deal.

STACY. How do you mean?

ETHAN. Long distance relationship. Her in LA or New York, you here in Denver. See her once a month or so. Sounds about right. Any more than that you drive each other crazy. *(Stacy laughs.)*

STACY. You're gonna pull something if you don't lighten up.

ETHAN. *(Pushing even harder.)* Yeah right. Gotta get my body fat down to four percent.

STACY. That's suicidal.

ETHAN. Well if I kill myself working up to the Olympics, maybe I won't have to after.

STACY. What kind of talk is that?

ETHAN. Realistic. Me and Roberta have to move up three places from where we

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were last year to even make the team. And if I have to torture myself--and her--to make that happen... (*He smiles grimly.*)

STACY. Is it worth it?

ETHAN. That's easy for you to say. Not everybody's subsidized by the Rich Christian Nuclear Family That Ate Colorado.

STACY. That has its drawbacks.

ETHAN. So does going home to your middle-class parents and saying "Hey, thanks for not taking a vacation for the past ten years. Thanks for giving up the possibility of ever being able to retire! Oh, and by the way, the investment didn't pay off--I came in fifth again."

STACY. Maybe they weren't investing in gold options. It sounds like they love you.

ETHAN. Well it's fuckin' time I gave something back. And I don't know how I'm gonna do that when my pretty partner and I can't even agree on music.

STACY. (*Laughs.*) That's never easy.

ETHAN. I can't believe you let Brit talk you into that muzak you're using for the long.

STACY. It's an Oscar-winning song.

ETHAN. "Love Theme from *Little Red Riding Hood*"?! Spare me. How can you make yourself skate to that shit?

STACY. Brittany loves it.

ETHAN. And your opinion doesn't count?

STACY. Not really. (*Beat.*) But that's what pairs skating is about, right? The girl is the jewel. We're like the setting. We set them off.

ETHAN. Uh, sorry to break it to you, champ, but you're the one in the magazines. When you skate half the women in the audience, and at least ten percent of the men, wish they were skating with you. (*Stacy laughs, embarrassed.*) Roberta and me just don't make magic like that.

STACY. Maybe you could go back to singles?

ETHAN. And learn a quad at my age? Nope, this is it for me. The Moment of Reckoning. Then real life kicks in.

STACY. "Real life?" What does that mean?

ETHAN. You, my good friend, have asked the million-dollar question.

STACY. (*Trying to be helpful*) It comes around every four years.

ETHAN. Yeah, uh-huh. And I'm gonna make the Olympic team when I'm thirty-

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two and Roberta weighs two hundred pounds.

STACY. (*Laughs.*) You're terrible.

ETHAN. That's exactly what I've been saying.

STACY. Not at *skating*.

ETHAN. You know where Geoffrey's taking Roberta and me tomorrow?

STACY. I'm afraid to ask.

ETHAN. A hypnotist.

STACY. Yikes. Do you believe in that?

ETHAN. Sure, why not? All he has to do is psych us into thinking we can be the best. Or at least beat everybody else one time, when it counts. I mean it should be that simple, right?

STACY. I never thought about it that way.

ETHAN. (*Needing to know.*) How do you think about it?

STACY. I don't know.

ETHAN. Well we gotta know, right? So we can prove we're better than anybody else out there.

STACY. Who else is out there? (*Beat.*) It's just you and her for four and a half minutes.

ETHAN. Great, so what do I do with that?

STACY. Just make it beautiful. (*Pause, as Ethan considers this. Stacy towels himself off and gets ready to leave.*) I've got to go change for afternoon practice. See you there? (*Starts out.*)

ETHAN. Stacy, can I ask you something?

STACY. (*Turning back.*) Sure, I guess. (*Beat.*) What? (*Pause. Ethan can't find the words.*) Are you okay?

ETHAN. Yeah! I'm fine! Talking really helps. *Thank you.* Very much.

STACY. No biggie. (*Stacy exits quickly. Ethan watches him go, then attacks the punching bag furiously.*)

ETHAN. Damn! (*Lights and music.*)

Six

New York. Lauren and Fiona's apartment, full stage. Lauren is sitting alone, reading an old, wrinkled manuscript by candlelight. We hear the front door open and close, then Fiona enters.

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FIONA. Hi honey, I'm home! (*Looks around.*) Lauren? (*No response.*) Why are you sitting in the dark? Did we blow a fuse or something? (*She heads for the light switch.*)

LAUREN. Leave it off. (*Fiona stops and looks at her.*) I'm making a new rule in my life. No artificial light. Just the real thing.

FIONA. (*Puzzled.*) Okeydokey, I guess. (*Sits beside her.*) It's kinda romantic anyway, huh? Whatcha readin' there? (*Lauren shows her the manuscript.*) *Susan and the Witch!* Ohmygod! I haven't read this in years. I love this! (*She flips through the script affectionately.*) Wasn't this the first one-act play you wrote for me? I always thought it deserved to be done again. Are you going to submit it to the EST Marathon or something?

LAUREN. Hardly. Blank verse I wrote in grad school? Nobody deserves to be subjected to that. (*She hands Fiona the candle.*) Burn it.

FIONA. (*Laughs uncomfortably.*) Are you kidding? (*Beat.*) Lauren, are you okay?

LAUREN. Just hold it to the flame and set it on fire. Don't you want to?

FIONA. Of course I don't. Can I turn a light on? (*She stands.*) You're weirding me out a little. Let's get out of here and go get some dinner or something.

LAUREN. Sit back down.

FIONA. What?

LAUREN. Leave the light off and sit back down. (*Fiona complies.*) Do you even remember what it was about?

FIONA. What what was about? (*Looks down at the manuscript in her hand.*) *Susan and the Witch?* Well, yeah, it was like your lesbian version of *The Crucible*. (*She laughs a little and looks at Lauren, who is silent.*) Okay, it's about this girl named Susan--played by me!--during the Salem witch trials who falls in love with this older black woman named Isabel who claims to have healing powers.

LAUREN. Go on.

FIONA. You wrote it, don't you remember what it's about?

LAUREN. (*With a weak smile.*) I thought I did.

FIONA. Okay... Well okay. Then Susan's brother James sees the two of us making love in the woods, so we get arrested and tried as witches. And then the preacher comes to me in prison and says I'll be set free if I denounce Isabel as a witch and sign a paper that says she corrupted me. And I'm like, No! I'd rather burn at the stake than betray the woman I love. (*Flips through the script to find a line.*) This

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was my favorite line: “If magic ‘tis, a woman to adore, Then brand me as a witch forevermore!” So they burn us. (*Laughs.*) Guess we weren’t too subtle back in those days, huh? (*Kisses Lauren.*) But its heart was in the right place.

LAUREN. Was it? (*Beat.*) What I’m trying to get my brain around is that I wrote that play for you. You inspired it.

FIONA. Great. (*She gets up.*) And now I’m going to inspire you to stop sitting in the dark and being morbid and creepy. (*She switches on a light, then turns back to Lauren and sees a pile of magazines and tabloids on the floor at her feet.*

Cautiously:) Sooo... what else have you been reading lately?

LAUREN. Just a few articles Mark and Steven saved for me when I was in Edinburgh.

FIONA. Those bitches.

LAUREN. About you “dating” some teenaged figure skater.

FIONA. He’s twenty-two.

LAUREN. What?

FIONA. Uhhh--I said “There’s plenty... too.”

LAUREN. Of what?

FIONA. Untrue rumors floating around out there! I mean, you know, it comes with the territory. That’s Hollywood! This kind of thing happens when you get to... a certain level. At least they didn’t say I’m carrying an alien baby or losing my hair or something like that.

LAUREN. So I guess these photos of you making out with him on Malibu Beach are computer generated? Or how about this *New York Times* picture of you posing with him after a skating competition in Montreal?

FIONA. All right all right. I really did give some of those interviews. But none of it’s true, don’t worry! We made it all up.

LAUREN. Is this one of your “get into a role by playing it in public” kind of character studies?

FIONA. No way! I outgrew that junior year!

LAUREN. Then *what*, Fiona?

FIONA. I think I can make it in the movies! I already *am* making it. But how many movie stars do you know who are openly...??

LAUREN. Oh God.

FIONA. See, you always do this. That’s why I kept putting off telling you, because I knew you’d get up on your Militant High Horse and preach at me! Just give me

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two minutes to explain before you--

LAUREN. *Explain?!*

FIONA. Alright, it's a fucked-up system! You know that and I know that. So why not manipulate it for a little while till I get where I want to go? Right? I can't change the world all by myself.

LAUREN. I thought we were going to change it together.

FIONA. That was college, Lauren. *Susan and the Witch*. This is real life. *(Beat.)* You didn't really think I was in love with him, did you?

LAUREN. I'd rather you were! Anything would be better than this. Fall in love with a man if that's what floats your boat! Fuck a baboon for all I care, but write a song about it! It's the dishonesty that you're killing me with. To hide who we are from the world in order to ... *coddle* somebody else's idea of ... *(She picks up the script of Susan and the Witch.)* Every play we've ever done has been ... *(She shakes her head.)* Damn. *(She looks at Fiona.)* Did you *ever* get it? I'm thirty-five years old. Where did I put the last five years? *(Beat.)* I'm going to spend the night at Dina's. I expect your stuff to be gone by the time I get home from the book store tomorrow night. Don't bother leaving your key; I'm gonna get the lock changed.

FIONA. Lauren. Can we back up here a minute?

LAUREN. This isn't a movie, Fiona. We're over. You had one take only, and you blew it. *(Lauren exits quickly, slamming the door behind her. Fiona, shaken, sits down on the couch for a moment, unsure for once what to do. Music and lights.)*

Seven

Stacy and Trent are sitting in a restaurant in Denver. Menus and water glasses, but no food.

TRENT. So, last week I was in a toy store in Cherry Creek and guess what I found?

STACY. *(Embarrassed.)* Uh-oh. Those things are ridiculous.

TRENT. "Sports Heroes for Tomorrow!" The all-new Stacy Clifford and Brittany Bell dolls!

STACY. They call them action figures.

TRENT. Cutest fuckin' thing I've ever seen. Of course I had to get one. Took him home and put him on my bedside table.

STACY. The clothes are exact replicas of our long-program costumes from last

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season.

TRENT. And they come off.

STACY. I think the Brittany one is a better likeness.

TRENT. I threw that one out. Kept you.

STACY. You're awful.

TRENT. Needed something to remind me of what you look like.

STACY. It hasn't been that long. You know I miss you. But they have me scheduled twenty-five hours a day at the rink.

TRENT. I'm just teasing. The real thing's way cuter. *(Tries to take Stacy's hand.)*

STACY. *(Pulls his hand away and looks around nervously.)* Careful. That's for later.

TRENT. Sorry, I forgot about your armoire for a minute.

STACY. My what?

TRENT. The word "closet" is so overused.

STACY. *(Laughs.)* I have missed you. *(Beat.)* Maybe we could get a booth. This table is...

TRENT. Too "out" for you? Don't worry, I'll play it real butch. I can convincingly pull off the preppy frat boy thing. Until they notice the piercings. *(Fake deep voice.)* So, Bud, let's talk sports. How's practice goin'?

STACY. Slow but okay. It's taking a while for my knee to bounce back from the tour. But I like our programs this year. Brittany's parents hired a new choreographer for the long.

TRENT. Will I ever get to see it?

STACY. Of course. I don't know about all these side-by-side triples though. Every year there's more jumps you've gotta do to stay competitive.

TRENT. Like jumping through hoops with your paper doll sweetheart? Making kissy for the photographers?

STACY. Something like that. We've been going to these crazy parties; she's filming a movie up near Breckenridge: *Moonlight on a Ranch*? And she said something mysterious to me on the phone. Some video project idea she wants me to work on with her or something.

TRENT. The money'd better be good. In fact, she should have been paying you all along for taking part in this promotional relationship.

STACY. It's not really work. She's fun to be with.

TRENT. Doesn't mean you shouldn't get a cut of all the dough she's raking in.

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STACY. It's not like I'm doing it all as a favor to her. It's... mutually beneficial.

TRENT. So far anyway.

STACY. What's that supposed to mean?

TRENT. Lies come back to haunt you. That's why I stopped.

STACY. I wish I could afford to be as honest as you are.

TRENT. Someday. (*Sings.*) "Somehow. Somewhere..."

STACY. (*Trying to stay polite.*) Please keep your voice down.

TRENT. Oh, sorry! Momentary lapse. (*Looking offstage.*) Hey Lady Hot Tits! Got a sister for my friend here?

STACY. You are awful.

TRENT. Make a choice, buster. You're calling the shots.

STACY. I'm sorry. Fiona just has me paranoid. When we're out together she acts like there are microphones hidden all over the place.

TRENT. Maybe that's a clue that you should spend less time with your pretend lover and more with your real one. (*Smiles.*)

STACY. I promise I'll have more time after Worlds. Maybe you and I could go someplace in April. Up to Vail or someplace?

TRENT. Actually, *Switzerland* has always been on my wanna visit list. *Heidi* was my favorite book as a kid.

STACY. (*Sighs.*) Sorry. That wouldn't...

TRENT. Whatever you say, boss.

STACY. I mean, I would love it if you could come to the Olympics with me.

TRENT. Honey, I'm unemployed and my mom works for an airline. I want to sit with you on that poofy couch where you wait for the scores--what's it called?

STACY. The "Kiss and Cry" area? That's for coaches...

TRENT. (*Overlapping after "area."*) Yes! I love that name. You can tell them I'm your Kissing Cousin from Canada!

STACY. I think we should talk about something else.

TRENT. Let's! I do have a trip coming up. New York City.

STACY. That sounds fun. What are you gonna do there?

TRENT. I'm auditioning for a job as a veejay on the Cable Music Channel.

STACY. (*Laughs.*) Seriously.

TRENT. I am serious. They're doing a national search. I sent in a video of myself with orange hair, talking about the Squirrel Nut Zippers in an outrageously opinionated manner. Now I'm a finalist.

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STACY. Well good for you! That's really fantastic, Trent. I hope you get it.

TRENT. Then we'll both be media personalities.

STACY. But if you move to New York I'll hardly ever get to see you.

TRENT. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

STACY. Sounds good whatever it means. (*Beat.*) I'm hungry. Doesn't anybody work here? I feel like we're invisible or something.

TRENT. You get what you wish for.

STACY. I'm serious. We haven't even ordered. (*Looking around the room.*)

What's going on around here, anyway?

TRENT. Actually, I believe that comely young man over there is our waiter. He's been giving me dirty looks ever since he noticed I was sitting here with you.

STACY. See?--I asked you not to talk so loud. I thought you said this place was gay-friendly.

TRENT. Oh it is. All the waiters are gay, including Todd himself.

STACY. I'm confused.

TRENT. This is news? He's not avoiding us because he disapproves of our lifestyle. He's actually jealous.

STACY. Oh no. One of your exes?

TRENT. Could put it that way.

STACY. Shoot. Do you think he recognizes me?

TRENT. Change the channel please.

STACY. I'm sorry. (*Beat.*) So. Let's go someplace else then. There's plenty of restaurants in this town.

TRENT. Fine with me.

STACY. That poor guy must have really cared about you.

TRENT. Apparently I'm irresistible.

STACY. Yes you are. How long ago was it?

TRENT. Uh, let's see... Tonight's Thursday? (*Counts on his fingers.*) Four days.

STACY. Excuse me?

TRENT. We met at the club Friday night and spent much of the weekend at my place.

STACY. Not funny.

TRENT. Not joking. You were... busy practicing. Sleeping? Whatever.

STACY. I trusted you, Trent.

TRENT. To do what? Wait by the phone and play with my Stacy doll? Till we can

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finally go out and pretend not to be seeing each other?

STACY. I thought you...

TRENT. Cared for you? I did. I mean do.

STACY. I meant... well, that, yes. And, I thought you said you were fine with the arrangement.

TRENT. Do I not look fine to you? The arrangement works great. Gives me plenty of flexibility. *(Pause.)*

STACY. Gosh. I'm almost scared to ask this, but...

TRENT. Was he the only one? Stacy, I've been "seeing you," if the word even applies, for almost six months. And I'm not even allowed to tell my friends!

STACY. If you weren't happy you could have talked to me about it.

TRENT. Who says I'm not happy? *(Beat.)* Look, I'm twenty-two and I'm never gonna be this pretty again. If anyone has a problem with the "arrangements," it would appear to be you. *(Waves delicately to the offstage waiter.)* And Todd, I guess.

STACY. I don't know what to say.

TRENT. Might try "golly" or "jeeppers."

STACY. Screw you.

TRENT. *(Shrugs.)* If you don't, somebody will.

STACY. At least you're honest. I'll give you that.

TRENT. Oh, I never lie. It comes back to haunt you. *(Lights and peppy pop-rock music into VOICEOVER.)*

Male Announcer. Welcome to Stacy and Fiona's *Home Workout for Couples Home Video!* Here are your favorites: movie star Fiona Blake and figure skating champ Stacy Clifford! *(Music crescendoes. Applause and cheers.)*

Fiona. Hey, Sesame Seed, you look hot in that tank!

Stacy. Hiya, Fee! You look beautiful in that leotard!

Fiona. And the reason we do...

Stacy. ... is because we work out!

Fiona. Together!

Stacy. At home! And now you can work out with us. We'll start with some of the warm-up stretches I do at the rink.

Fiona. And then we'll do some of the aerobic exercises I do on the set! And you can follow along at home! But remember, Stacy and I are *very* athletic. If you're over twenty-eight, you should check with a doctor before starting this or any

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strenuous exercise program. Are you ready, Stace?

Stacy. Ready as I'll ever be!

Fiona. Great!

Both voices. Let's work out!

Eight

Stacy's new apartment in Denver. No furniture, just a couple of large cardboard boxes. Stacy enters with Fiona, who's carrying a picnic basket.

FIONA. Oh, I like. Hardwood floors are *so* retro. You done good.

STACY. Thanks. I think I'm gonna like it. It's just sort of quiet so far. I've never lived alone.

FIONA. Well the timing works, right? You've got your own place: No more making up stories to appease the born-again fascists. Welcome to being a grownup!

STACY. Thanks. (*Beat.*) I'm glad you're here. Sorry there's no furniture yet.

FIONA. I noticed. When are you gonna finish moving in?

STACY. I sort of am finished. I don't really have any furniture. Never have.

FIONA. You shittin' me?

STACY. No. Since I've never had my own place...

FIONA. I'm seeing a window of opportunity here. Because I, myself, have a keen eye for design. And I am also a shopper of rare brilliance. I could take you in hand and we could have a blast making this place totally funky-artsy-cool.

STACY. That sounds fun.

FIONA. In fact, maybe we could get a reporter and photographer from *Interior Design Monthly* to go with us. They could do a cover story.

STACY. Sure, I guess.

FIONA. (*With a touch of bitterness.*) I mean now that I'm *single*, I have a lot more time for playing house. (*Brightens.*) And I have here a gourmet picnic dinner to celebrate your house warming, complete with champagne!

STACY. Sounds good to me. (*Opens one of the boxes.*) I've got a quilt in one of these cartons... Here it is.

FIONA. Presto! A picnic for two. I can't wait till you taste these delicacies I picked out at Alfalfa's.

STACY. Good. I'm real hungry.

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FIONA. (*Unpacking the picnic basket.*) I got only the most wholesome, veggie-oriented entrees for my athlete in training.

STACY. Looks really good. I love this curry stuff.

FIONA. Have you stocked your fridge? Are you gonna have to learn to cook for the first time too?

STACY. Yes, and no. My grandma was pretty sick a lot of the time when I was growing up. I sort of had to learn early.

FIONA. Well then maybe you can cook me dinner one night when I get off the set. Give me a break from the location caterer.

STACY. That'd be really fun. How's *Moonlight on a Ranch* going?

FIONA. I think okay. Steve Remington is really nice to work with. I was surprised -he's like totally laid-back, a genuinely nice human. But he looks really old in person. I'm telling you they do a lot with lighting and choosing just the right camera lenses. You look pale, by the way.

STACY. Really?

FIONA. Really. And even thinner than usual. You're not losing weight are you?

STACY. A little. They weigh us every day at the rink. The new schedule's a killer.

FIONA. How much have you lost?

STACY. About five pounds.

FIONA. Five pounds? (*Feeling his ribcage.*) Honey, that's a lot on you! I'll bet you're not eating right.

STACY. Maybe not. It's hard to eat since...

FIONA. What? (*Pause.*) Come to Fiona.

STACY. Trent left me.

FIONA. He did *what*?!

STACY. Well, not exactly that. He seemed willing to keep it going, but he was seeing other guys the whole time. I never even suspected.

FIONA. You are so trusting. He, however, is a royal jerk. Doesn't he know how lucky he was?

STACY. Yeah right. I'm not much of a prize these days.

FIONA. Excuse me. *You*? You are like the kindest, most gentle, sweetest... In fact, can I tell you? If I were a guy, I'd probably fall for you myself.

STACY. I could hardly get any time away from the rink to see him, and if we did go out, I'd get all paranoid that somebody was gonna see us together and blow my cover. That's not exactly a turn-on.

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FIONA. Well he must have known you weren't out when he first got involved with you.

STACY. Sure, but things were different then. I could be seen with a guy in public and not get recognized. Now that you and I are these big media figures... I don't know. In a way I don't blame him.

FIONA. Oh shit, Sesame Seed. Things have gotten out of hand, haven't they?

STACY. What? I don't know.

FIONA. Are you starting to hate me?

STACY. Am I what? No! Why would I hate you?

FIONA. I never expected it would last this long.

STACY. What would?

FIONA. Our little game, silly. Here you are still playing my boyfriend, what? Over six months later?

STACY. Yeah, I guess it has been that long. Doesn't feel like it!

FIONA. So talk to me, Sesame Seed. You have needs too. If our little... arrangement isn't working for you anymore, maybe it's time to make a change.

STACY. What? I didn't mean--

FIONA. Lord knows it's been successful! Our little "run." I mean, look at us! Me starring in the biggest *prestige* movie of the year--look Ma, no fangs!--and you the heartthrob of the skating world. But it's time to move on. I mean, what's the point of carrying on this huge plot to keep our personal lives secret if it keeps us from even *having* personal lives, right?

STACY. Yeah well. I guess that sounds kind of true.

FIONA. It's served its purpose. The whole world thinks we're as hetero as we could possibly be. We could stage a much-publicized breakup--just to remind them--and call it a wrap. Here's a thought!--come to LA next weekend and I'll throw my drink in your face at Spago.

STACY. You make it sound so tempting.

FIONA. We'll get some mileage out of the split, then go our separate ways.

STACY. What do you mean--"separate ways"?

FIONA. I mean get back to our *lives*. Get *real*. Find *love*. You deserve that.

STACY. But not... Not not *see* each other anymore?

FIONA. Well hey, I don't know about you, but I could like totally stand to save the airfare!

STACY. But I like you. I mean, it's not *all* a put-on. Is it? I really love... being with

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you. We've gotten to be best friends. Don't you think? And that's a good--(*Sound of a ringtone.*)

FIONA. That's me. (*Rummaging in her large purse for the cell phone, which rings again.*) Hold that thought, Sesame Seed. This'll just take me a minute. (*Into phone.*) Fiona Blake. Hey, Lex. No, it's not a bad time. In fact, I was just thinking about calling you. Stacy and I--Lex, what? Slow down. (*To Stacy, covering the receiver.*) He sounds all spazzy. (*Into phone.*) Calm down, Lex, I can't even understand what you're--(*Pause.*) Uh-huh... uh-huh... shit. Uh-huh... uh-huh... uh-huh... Shit!!! (*Pause.*) Okay. I need to take this all in. Yeah you're right--the timing absolutely sucks. Listen, I'll call you back in a bit, okay? We'll get on this. Bye, Lex. (*Hangs up phone.*) Wow. (*Looks at Stacy.*) That was Lex.

STACY. That much I got. Bad news?

FIONA. Lauren wrote a new play. Got a good review in the *Times*.

STACY. Great.

FIONA. Uh, you could say so. In fact, the buzz is so good they're already talking about possibly moving it to Broadway.

STACY. Well cool. I mean, you're happy for her, right? Even though?

FIONA. I'm delirious. Stace, it's a play about a lesbian writer.

STACY. Uh-huh. "Write what you know," right?

FIONA. Who's involved with an actress. And the actress starts to have like this really big movie career. So she hooks up with this gay athlete guy and they concoct a whole harebrained scheme to pretend to...

STACY. Uh-oh. (*Beat.*) Who'd ever believe a crazy story like that?

FIONA. Very funny. Sounds like she changed a few details, but...

STACY. Well... maybe it's nothing to worry about. Nobody in LA knows you were involved with her, right? If she changed the names--

FIONA. Would you grow up?! A *lot* of people in the New York theatre know about me and Lauren. And if this play's a success... yikes. The *shit* will *hit*. Will you marry me?

STACY. What?

FIONA. (*On one knee.*) Will you marry me, Stacy Clifford?

STACY. Marry you?

FIONA. Exactly.

STACY. I'm confused.

FIONA. It's our only choice. I mean, nobody gets *married* as a joke.

KISS AND CRY

STACY. Well... there's reasons for that!

FIONA. Just! *Calm down.*

STACY. I am calm.

FIONA. I'm not! (*Beat.*) Stacy, this is the *worst possible timing* for us. For *both* of us! You have Nationals coming up. I have the biggest movie of the year! My best chance for the elusive Mr. O.

STACY. Mr. O?

FIONA. You know! The gold naked man.

STACY. Your Oscar.

FIONA. Fuck you, don't say it! You'll jinx it!

STACY. Jeepers, Fiona.

FIONA. I am in control here! I am not freaking on any level. Marriage is the obvious solution.

STACY. But when are we going to have time to plan a wedding? I'm in practice all day. It sounds so complicated. Your parents'll want to be involved. All our friends...

FIONA. You're right. (*Beat.*) So let's elope then!

STACY. Say what?

FIONA. It would be a blast. We could leave tonight. Drive till midnight and sleep under the stars on the Western slope, then get an early start and see the sun come up over Utah. We'll stop for black coffee and steak and eggs at some truckstop diner in the desert, then head on to Vegas. (*Beat.*) And since we're never gonna have sex or anything, we can get it annulled once the coast is clear.

STACY. Can you get out of filming?

FIONA. I'll tell them I'm on the rag. What about practice?

STACY. (*Tiny smile.*) My knee hurts. I could stand to get out of Denver for a few days. A road trip sounds exciting.

FIONA. Thank you thank you thank you!! (*She kisses Stacy on the mouth.*) I'll make it all up to you someday, Stacy, I promise. Anyway, I've got to make some calls and get a change of clothes--sorry I kissed you. Throw some stuff in a duffle bag and I'll pick you up in an hour.

STACY. No prob. (*Beat.*) Gosh. What if somebody recognizes us?

FIONA. That's the point, you dork! (*She hurries out as the lights fade.*)

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS –
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