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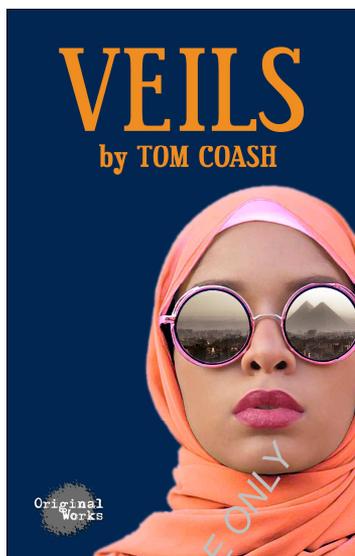
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The Diplomats
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VEILS by Tom Coash

Synopsis: Intisar, a veiled, African-American Muslim student, thought she might finally fit in when she enrolled for a year abroad at the American Egyptian University in Cairo. However, the Arab Spring soon explodes across the Middle East, threatening to overwhelm the young American woman and her liberal Egyptian roommate, Samar. In the struggle to find their footing in this political storm, the young women instead find themselves on opposite sides of a bitter and dangerous cultural divide.

Cast Size: 2 Females

THE DIPLOMATS

by
Nelson Diaz-Marcano

SAMPLE ONE

The Diplomats was first produced as part of the Fresh Fruit Festival in July 12, 2017 at the Wild Project. It was produced by Strike 38! in New York, NY.

Producers: Liz Thaler, Louis Lopardi
Director: Blayze Teicher
Technical Director: William Montolio
Assistant TD: David Haan

Cast:
Annie: Ricki Lynée
Carlos: Carlos Angulo
Gary: Chris Callahan

SAMPLE ONLY

THE DIPLOMATS CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:

Annie: Early 30's African-American woman. She is the ultimate liberal thinking feminist that believes in social justice so much that she can't decide what to put her focus on. This is also a representation of how she sees life.

Carlos: Early 30's Latino male. A Puerto Rican man who left his country to go to NYU hoping to find acceptance of his homosexuality. Years later, he is a successful man who married rich and has accepted himself beyond what he thought he could.

Gary: Early 30's Caucasian male. A man who has struggle recently with money and saw a way out in a dishonorable way. Heavy on his conscience, Gary has justified it with the fact that it provides a better life for his estranged family.

THE DIPLOMATS

(A small apartment in Astoria, New York. The living room has an inflatable couch, a love seat, and a coffee table in the middle. The Ikea kind. In the middle there's a bucket with paraphernalia in it. Around it, some random objects like TV controls and the sort. On the wall, we see a series of pictures that depicts women in different aspects of their lives. There are 4 of them, and each one has to determine the emotion of sadness, toughness, determination, and anger. There are two doors, one that leads to a kitchen we never see, and the other to her room. In the center of the door of the room, a poster encouraging voting.)

(The date is November 6, 2016. 2 days before Election Day.)

(Lights fade in with smoke coming out of the kitchen. Annie, a black woman in her early thirties, enters the stage laughing and coughing. She is dressed in a black hoodie and casual jeans and shoes. She can't control her laughter or the coughing.)

ANNIE: Forget it! We got to order some grub, nobody is eating that.

(Carlos comes in from the kitchen. He is around the same age but is dressed in a tight fitted button-down shirt and casual pants. It's obvious he does well. He enters and fans the little smoke left out.)

CARLOS: Who says? It's only scorched.

ANNIE: That chicken looks like it was hit by terrorism.

CARLOS: The way you let it burn.

ANNIE: It's incredible isn't it?

CARLOS: I mean, I am not even touching it. What if it moves?

ANNIE: The attack of the vengeful poultry.

CARLOS: Some psychotic chicken spirit ready to get the hell hounds out and come pay us our respects.

ANNIE: Logic is flawed honey. We didn't kill the chicken.

CARLOS: No, but we are the ones the chicken was killed for.

ANNIE: The chicken can't hate us for this shit, we didn't decide till today, they decided before us.

CARLOS: See, but that's how these companies are smarter than us and keep doing this longer without retribution.

ANNIE: Come on Carlos, tell me how you kill the chicken, but I deal with the retribution.

CARLOS: Easy. You ate it. The responsibility falls on you. I just facilitated it. Plus--- You ended any dignity poor Mirna had.

ANNIE: Mirna?

(Carlos takes his cell phone out.)

CARLOS: Bitch I grew up next door to. Only name I could think of that fits that tramp. And not even her deserves what you did to that chicken. *(Give spotlight to his cell phone.)* Shall we?

ANNIE: There's this spot Chicken Shack close by—

CARLOS: After Mirna, I do not want any Chicken.

ANNIE: People would die to eat at least Mirna.

CARLOS: They would die from eating Mirna. And what are you my mother? Are you going to start talking about the ever-present kids from Africa that starve?

(Annie laughs.)

ANNIE: That's fucked up.

CARLOS: Sorry, how about the kids from South America that starve. Don't mean to offend your blackness.

ANNIE: Don't get sassy and racist.

CARLOS: You can't be either these days.

ANNIE: You can always be sassy, it has never been okay to be racist.

CARLOS: Yes, but the determination of what's racist has changed through the years.

ANNIE: That, or you know, the tolerance for it.

CARLOS: I honestly think we are too deep in the politically correct hole. I was never that bothered by some of the stupid stuff they say about my peeps back in the island.

ANNIE: That's because you are Puerto Rican. Basically, loud white Americans.

CARLOS: That is not true! You better step back with that nonsense.

ANNIE: Carlos, you are a citizen. Maybe people do think they can deport you, but you have the best comeback ever.

CARLOS: Yeah, I tell them to go fuck themselves.

ANNIE: And you can!

CARLOS: True.

ANNIE: What about the gay part? You deal with that shit all the time.

CARLOS: Homophobia and racism are two different things.

ANNIE: Come from the same place.

CARLOS: True, but I only have a comeback for one, the other I only have my money to protect me from the insults. The green paper does make it roll over you pretty easily.

ANNIE: I should have gone to college for an actual degree.

CARLOS: What did you graduate with, basket weaving or some shit like that?

ANNIE: Art in Tapestry. Asshole.

CARLOS: Freaking NYU letting you make your own major.

ANNIE: Taking advantage of us intelligent young folks with different interests. I do not regret it.

CARLOS: I can tell by your apartment.

(Annie opens her mouth in amazement.)

ANNIE: You've gotten mean.

CARLOS: You have no idea. What are we eating?

ANNIE: You choose.

CARLOS: I don't like choosing.

ANNIE: You are the guest, you choose.

CARLOS: You are the host, feed me!

(Carlos extends the phone to her. Annie points at the basket of paraphernalia.)

ANNIE: I lost my appetite when I saw Mirna's corpse.

CARLOS: Amateur.

ANNIE: Let's hit this shit over here, I'll get hungry

CARLOS: You can.

ANNIE: What?!

CARLOS: I'm hungry already.

ANNIE: And you still don't want to hit this?

CARLOS: I have a confession...

ANNIE: What?

CARLOS: I quit!

(Annie gasps loudly.)

ANNIE: What?

CARLOS: I did not stutter.

ANNIE: Why?

CARLOS: Because I'm too old for that mess.

ANNIE: What are you trying to say?

CARLOS: I am not saying anything.

ANNIE: You are throwing shade.

CARLOS: No shade here.

ANNIE: Please, that shade could save me from a super nova.

CARLOS: I'm just saying I don't have time to be tired and lazy now that I'm past thirty.

ANNIE: Now you are calling me lazy?

CARLOS: Baby, nobody is talking about you. Just a general statement.

ANNIE: Generalizing usually makes people look like assholes.

CARLOS: I don't need much to make me look like that.

ANNIE: I use it for anxiety.

CARLOS: I understand.

ANNIE: Do you? I also need it to sleep.

CARLOS: Baby girl, you do you. I'm just saying I can't anymore.

ANNIE: Yeah, then proceed to talk shit.

CARLOS: Love you. Getting a glass of wine.

(Carlos goes to the kitchen. Annie smiles.)

ANNIE: Walking away.

CARLOS *(Off-Stage)*: No, just ignoring your female anger.

ANNIE: Female?!

CARLOS (*Off-Stage*): Yes! You are a woman that's what I meant so don't take that next step onto your soapbox!

ANNIE: I should. Just to bother you.

(*Carlos comes in with a glass of wine.*)

CARLOS: Annie, why does it bother you so much more than before. Where we went in college, we use to say my nigga to each other.

ANNIE: We were young.

CARLOS: We were in our twenties.

ANNIE: We made mistakes.

CARLOS: With each other, no harm done.

ANNIE: Enabling it is as bad.

CARLOS: But feeling bad about things you didn't do or create makes no sense to me.

ANNIE: I don't know, let's ask Mirna?

CARLOS: Awww Mirna.

(*Carlos phone vibrates. He looks and snickers.*)

ANNIE: Rude.

CARLOS: Please, like I need to tell you.

ANNIE: You took Mirna's moment away from us.

CARLOS: We were having a moment, weren't we?

ANNIE: Yes, and it's been awhile since one of those. Why did you have to move?

CARLOS: Because despite my beautiful life here in the glorious city and my expensive degree, I found myself the luckiest of all.

ANNIE: A sugar daddy.

CARLOS: Correction. A hung sugar daddy

(Carlos shows her what he just saw on his phone.)

ANNIE: Oh —

CARLOS: Best thing my degree ever gave me was that alumni party I went to and met this man.

ANNIE: Sending dick pics after forty tho'.

CARLOS: I have him acting like a trashy teenager, I know. What about your homecoming?

ANNIE: Homecoming? What are you talking about?

CARLOS: To the penis. What's his name?

ANNIE: Arnold, and we are no longer together, so thanks for asking.

CARLOS: I never met him, so please, might as well ask.

ANNIE: Well too late.

CARLOS: How did he make an old dyke like you into—

ANNIE: Don't call me that.

CARLOS: You got sensitive.

ANNIE: And he understood, which nobody else seems to do.

CARLOS: He caressed your feelings with his words.

ANNIE: With his words yes, everything else he did with everything else.

CARLOS: And hallelujah, you realized what you been missing.

ANNIE: You know, it had nothing to do with sex. I just—

CARLOS: Feel attracted to whoever and you go get it. Lucky.

ANNIE: Is not like I can help who I'm attracted to.

CARLOS: I can tell by the fact that they are usually not really attractive.

ANNIE: You are with a bald and not that attractive man yourself, honey.

CARLOS: I have my reasons, what are yours?

ANNIE: He was bigger than Ralph's.

CARLOS: My Ralph?

(Annie nods, Carlos gasps, both phones go off. They both look to see who's calling.)

ANNIE: My mom.

CARLOS: Gloria!

ANNIE: Not answering.

CARLOS: You should.

ANNIE: She's been blowing up my phone all day. Prefer not to answer.

CARLOS: What if it matters?

ANNIE: Shouldn't you care about picking up your phone.

CARLOS: I'll text after. Who does calls anyway?

ANNIE: Besides my mother.

CARLOS: Try to deal with my Puerto Rican one. Anyway, I should tell you before—

(Carlos' phone vibrates again. A text.)

ANNIE: Another dick pic?

CARLOS: More like a text from a dick... Gary just got off the train.

ANNIE: What train?

CARLOS: Well he messed up and got off two stops away, but he'll be here soon.

ANNIE: You invited Gary?!

CARLOS: It wasn't intentional!

ANNIE: You know I don't fucking like Gary.

CARLOS: I was drunk!

ANNIE: He is the worst!

CARLOS: And I saw him on my way to the hotel—

ANNIE: Gary sucks.

CARLOS: And I said we should all have a reunion—

ANNIE: In my apartment?

CARLOS: And he told me you haven't talked to him in years—

ANNIE: I don't like him.

CARLOS: And I said that was nonsense and that he should come. Weren't you guys like best friends?

ANNIE: You were wrong. And yes, a long time ago.

CARLOS: Listen, what's done is done. I'd say I'm sorry but I wouldn't want to lie to you, so let's decide what to do with poor Mirna and choose what we eating.

ANNIE: I don't want his worm ass here.

CARLOS: Come on Annie—

ANNIE: You know what he does!

CARLOS: It's money.

ANNIE: How do you know? How do you know he's not actually voting for HIM—

CARLOS: Can we not talk about the election—

ANNIE: It's in two days and my dear old best friend might be voting for HIM that is running on a platform of hate.

CARLOS: He is just a political candidate, Annie.

ANNIE: He that mocks people and wants to take my rights as a woman, as a black person—

CARLOS: Still don't really want to talk about it.

ANNIE: A man whose whole campaign has been based on racism, bigotry, sexism and—

CARLOS: All the isms, got it. You want to vote for HER and her unlikable ass.

ANNIE: Qualified ass.

CARLOS: Who cares! Haven't you heard?

ANNIE: What?

CARLOS: No politics at the dinner table.

ANNIE: We haven't chosen dinner yet.

CARLOS: And there's no table. Can we talk about it after Tuesday?

ANNIE: I'm annoyed with you right now.

CARLOS: Come on Annie, is this worth losing a friend?

ANNIE: A friend doesn't write click-bait articles, basically propaganda, for a man that wants to take our lives back fifty years, taking our shit away...

CARLOS: Isn't that why people are voting for the man, because they fear people been taking shit away all this time? Jobs, housing and what not.

ANNIE: I mean rights!

CARLOS: Isn't property your rights too?

ANNIE: Property doesn't bleed.

CARLOS: Nor does poetry, calm down Maya Angelou!

(Carlos grabs the bottle of wine.)

ANNIE: I want whiskey and we don't have none.

CARLOS: You sure you are not still a lesbian?

ANNIE: Don't be ridiculous. You are avoiding the conversation.

CARLOS: What conversation?

ANNIE: The one you just changed.

CARLOS: That wasn't a conversation, that's you looking for opportunities to get on your high horse.

ANNIE: Is dignity a high horse?

CARLOS: Does Gloria ask you these many questions when you ignore her calls?

ANNIE: She barely talks to begin with.

CARLOS: What are you talking about? She talks my ear off every time I see her.

ANNIE: I mean on the phone.

CARLOS: I don't think it's the phone.

ANNIE: I try to let her speak.

CARLOS: Do you? Because every time we are on a call, all I hear is about your day and what new social justice you are following.

ANNIE: This is not true. And I only follow one social—

CARLOS: All of them.

ANNIE: All of them are the same. Justice for humanity. That's my cause.

CARLOS: Ugh, boring. Might as well ask me to sleep with a woman. You can't make an actual change when you are asking for all of the changes at the same time.

ANNIE: What's the point of making the comment about my mother? To criticize my life and what I do?

(Carlos laughs.)

CARLOS: Your life? There's much more to your life—

ANNIE: Not as important.

CARLOS: Explains a lot.

ANNIE: Don't push it Carlos.

(Carlos puts his hands up.)

CARLOS: Anyway, I said the comment about your mother because I don't think you actually listen to her.

ANNIE: To my mom?

CARLOS: Are you even interested in listening to her?

ANNIE: I always ask her how her day went, what's new? You know the usual suspect of questions.

CARLOS: And how interested are you about hearing them?

ANNIE: I mean she lives in a small ass town in the middle of Cali, what can possibly be that exciting there?

CARLOS: Nothing to you maybe. God knows nobody misses the small town friendly judgment, but that's her world. You probably devalue it each time she talks about something.

ANNIE: How?

CARLOS: I've heard you talk about the people in your town. About their loser lives and lack of ambition. How can they want just a family and a house, you ask! How can a wedding day be the peak of somebody's life, you say!

ANNIE: Legit questions. These are the kind of people that think High School was the best time of their lives and listen to that Green Day song with a nostalgic smile.

CARLOS: You diminish their lives on the way to trying to make yours better and you wonder why she doesn't talk?

ANNIE: That's unfair.

CARLOS: How? Because you want to be right doesn't count.

ANNIE: Because I come from that small place.

CARLOS: And you left, and we are all happy for that, but that high horse we talked about before... that's the one that you ran into the sunset on, leaving behind a trail of shit so people knew what you thought. You don't listen because you don't think they are worth listening to. Only you and your culture friends. How do you think your mom feels with that attitude?

ANNIE: Shouldn't she be more interested in what I have to say—

CARLOS: And there it is.

ANNIE: It doesn't mean I am better or I think myself better, don't be ridiculous.

CARLOS: So, what does it mean?

ANNIE: That I do more than go to Walmart and Applebee's to get my social fix.

CARLOS: No, you go to bars in Astoria nobody knows and sometimes go to Union Square for your

social fix. You know how many people go to their Walmart?

ANNIE: On a daily basis?

CARLOS: A lot less than visit Union Square, so why are you the special one?

ANNIE: You know what I meant.

CARLOS: I do, but it's your Logic that is flawed now, beau. They have a more unique experience than you. An American experience.

ANNIE: Funny since you would think ours is too.

CARLOS: New York City ain't America, its New York City.

ANNIE: Exactly, so why are you arguing about which story is more interesting?

CARLOS: Because I'm sure your mom is also tired of your repeated stories of successes and failures and struggling to pay rent, but she still listens, right?

ANNIE: I--- We should think about ordering food.

(Carlos opens his mouth happy.)

CARLOS: I'm right!

ANNIE: What?

CARLOS: You are changing the subject because I am right!

ANNIE: I'm hungry AF that's why.

CARLOS: Nah, nah, nah! Admit it!

ANNIE: Carlos, what you said makes sense. That's it, I have to think it over.

CARLOS: In the ten years I've known you, this is a first.

ANNIE: We all change when we turn thirty, don't we?

CARLOS: Don't say that number.

ANNIE: Reminder of your floundering youth?

CARLOS: I already have an old man to take care of me, what do I need youth for? I just don't like the number three and I get to be stuck with it for a decade.

ANNIE: I forgot about that and never understood it.

CARLOS: Because you never listened!

ANNIE: Is that the theme tonight?

CARLOS: It's been the theme. You just spout and decide everyone has to take your side.

ANNIE: Yeah, well just like with my mom, I have more interesting things to say!

CARLOS: And just like your mom, I only listen because I love you.

(Annie stares then chuckles.)

ANNIE: Then tell me my little gay, why do you hate the number three?

CARLOS: Because that's the first time we realize chaos exists. First time we are at odds.

ANNIE: One is the first odd number.

CARLOS: Is it? You see one has a significance, it's what people with ambition aspire to be. The number has all these fragile emotions connected to it. It

validates people's lives. Two, is the first even number, also the dream of many a person is to be part of a couple. That means two has a powerful meaning. Two halves, two soul mates, blah blah. But then comes three, and it's the first time in numbers we are confronted by a number that throws everything off. It's the first odd number. Every time a third gets involved a fourth needs to come to stabilize. Chaos is the number three, and the number three will be my enemy.

ANNIE: So, the thirties are just a big mess.

CARLOS: Sort of. Most people settle and become the person they never were in this particular decade of their lives.

ANNIE: Or the person they always were.

CARLOS: Then how come it only comes out when your body starts to hurt, and everything starts making you feel old.

ANNIE: You get time to reflect.

CARLOS: On your own mortality? On the last breath of youth? Your long life before it? You reflect between the drunken nights and one-night stands in your twenties. You reflect on the dreams you had when you were in the teens. And by the time you reach the three's, you are put for the first time at odds by your body and soul. You've reached the age where you have to decide whether you are a settler or a pursuer, because when the next decade comes to settle everything for you, chances are that's how the rest of your life will look. We are raised to reach our Thirties free and then to give up our life by the time we reach forty. The rest is just mornings and nights in a crazy loop of routines and passive hobbies. That's why I hate threes.

ANNIE: That's depressing.

CARLOS: Yeah well...

ANNIE: We can change that.

CARLOS: Better people than us have tried.

ANNIE: I bet none of them are from my small town.

CARLOS: See but people in your small town are mostly happy with that. What's wrong with happiness?

(Carlos' phones buzzes.)

ANNIE: Fake happiness?

CARLOS: Is it fake??

ANNIE: Yes!

CARLOS: Wait, what's the apartment number again

ANNIE: You just came through the door.

CARLOS: I don't retain things I can't save on my phone.

ANNIE: It's probably on an old text.

CARLOS: Oh yeah. Let me check, but back to fake happiness and your wrong statement on it.

ANNIE: Not wrong. It is fake happiness; these people never explore past what their determined their lives should.

(Carlos sends the text.)

CARLOS: Some people are happy just treading the path, Annie, not everybody wants to go to the road less traveled.

ANNIE: See I don't get that—

CARLOS: And that's fine, just deal with it.

(The buzzer sounds. It sounds like a washer just finished doing laundry.)

CARLOS: Is that the---

ANNIE: Yes, the buzzer.

CARLOS: Are you sure you're not doing laundry?

ANNIE: The buzzer just teases me with the idea of having, you know, actual amenities.

CARLOS: Maybe it's Mirna, coming from the grave.

ANNIE: We need to throw Mirna out.

CARLOS: Such cruelty.

(Buzzer goes off again.)

ANNIE: Go get your friend.

CARLOS: Our friend and you go get him, this is your house.

ANNIE: That pig is your guest.

CARLOS: Fine but please be nice.

ANNIE: I'm not happy about it. But—

(Annie fakes a smile and Carlos makes a gesture of disgust. Then Carlos disappears into the kitchen, like he saw a monster.)

ANNIE: You saw where the buzzer is.

CARLOS *(Off-Stage)* Just be nice, and don't do that—

ANNIE: Why?

(Carlos is visible again but stays by the kitchen entrance.)

CARLOS: Because we are friends! When was the last time you saw him?

ANNIE: Before you moved like three years ago.

CARLOS: Then why such contempt?

ANNIE: Do you not follow his Facebook? Actually his Facebook is just idiot jokes, he doesn't even share the damn articles he writes.

CARLOS: Is that really what we are basing our opinions on? I told you it could be—

ANNIE: It's the life he likes to portray at the very least.

CARLOS: It's fucking Facebook, Annie! You annoy the shit out of me through it, I don't judge you in real life.

ANNIE: I annoy you just the same.

CARLOS: Never.

(The doorbell rings.)

CARLOS: I have one more night before going back to my married life in Florida, please let's have an adorable little reunion and order some damn food.

(Doorbell rings again.)

ANNIE: Just get the door.

(Carlos exits the stage throwing her a kiss. Annie starts breathing in and out, preparing mentally for when she

sees Gary. Annie hears them say pleasantries as he opens the door.)

GARY: (*Off-Stage*) Hey—Hey—Hey what is up my favorite bitches! Long time no see.

CARLOS: (*Off-Stage*) I saw you yesterday.

(Carlos enters the stage. Gary enters on his line. Gary is white, tall, and has a bit of weight to him. Not much, but enough to where it is noticed.)

GARY: I saw a version of you yesterday, a very loving one I might add—(*Notices Annie*) Talking about Strangers, was up Annie?

ANNIE: (*No enthusiasm*) Hey Gary.

GARY: Oh man, still loves me this one, eh?

(Carlos gives him a half smile.)

CARLOS: Feminists can only have so much love to give and I have most of hers.

ANNIE: Got shit to do with me being feminist.

CARLOS: True, she is just not that nice.

ANNIE: Just in a bad mood.

GARY: Does it have to do with me getting a little fat? I understand the visual is not as appealing now—

ANNIE: You look pregnant.

GARY: Years of beers will do that to you.

CARLOS: Ew, who drinks beer that respects themselves.

GARY: Those that do not have a sugar daddy paying for their liquor.

CARLOS: You both mention this like I should be ashamed.

GARY: Just jealous about your ability to take it so deep, and shit money.

CARLOS: Yep he has that Midas cock, papi, and I am not hating the gold he makes.

ANNIE: Boy talk knows no bounds.

CARLOS: Hmm that's sexist.

GARY: Yeah, we call it Locker room talk now, ok?

CARLOS: And the only requirement is something Gary and I both have, not something that only you and Gary like.

ANNIE: Of course, you had to go and mention that—

GARY: Oh, by the way how's Lenny? Is she around?

ANNIE: She's dead.

(Everyone gets quiet.)

GARY: Seriously—

ANNIE: To me at least. We broke up a long time ago.

(Gary and Carlos both breathe.)

CARLOS: Isn't she a pearl?

GARY: Aight, I'm feeling a bit of tension here. So is it ok to say Annie hasn't learned how to cook yet?

CARLOS: Oh shit, Dinner!

ANNIE: There was no dinner.

CARLOS: Because you can't decide.

ANNIE: Me?

GARY: Oh, my bad, I thought you were cooking. Now the joke sucks.

CARLOS: It doesn't. Check the oven and see Mirna.

GARY: Mirna?

ANNIE: The chicken I burned.

CARLOS: The corpse is still in the oven, mocking us. Reminding us of our sins.

GARY: Throw it out.

CARLOS: Leave it there as a reminder of her culinary skills.

(Gary just smiles and walks toward the kitchen. Carlos gives Annie a smirk which she responds with a mocking face.)

GARY: *(Off-Stage)* Oh wow! This is Joan of Arc bad.

CARLOS: Reaching there.

(Gary enters.)

ANNIE: Yeah, you are reaching. Maybe witches from Salem.

CARLOS: Doubt Mirna served God.

GARY: But what if she did.

CARLOS: Then we are all fucked. Want to order something with us?

GARY: Nah, just ate some Tacos on the way here.

ANNIE: Healthy.

GARY: Oh, you think this tummy makes itself? Seventy percent beer, thirty percent just munchies.

CARLOS: You seem to be holding down to your lost 20's for dear life, huh?

GARY: I'm maturing, just in baby steps. Anyway, I didn't come empty handed as you can see by the bag.

CARLOS: Oh, what's in it?

GARY: Her favorite.

ANNIE: What do you mean my favorite? I don't like Jameson anymore.

GARY: Is not Jameson, last time we hung out you drank that Glenfiddich shit.

(Carlos takes the bottle off the bag.)

ANNIE: That was three years ago.

GARY: I always remember what my dear Annie likes.

(Gary throws kisses at her.)

CARLOS: Since when can you afford this?

GARY: Been making money here and there.

CARLOS: Must be a pay bump.

GARY: When you consider I wasn't getting paid at all—sure you can call it that.

CARLOS: I see the life of a writer still is as amazing as ever.

GARY: It's just so many different paths to get to that "success."

ANNIE: Selling pieces of your soul must help.

GARY: Nah, writing for blogs doesn't pay much. My soul cost a little bit more than that

CARLOS: She is on her period.

ANNIE: Fuck you Carlos, no I'm not.

CARLOS: You are acting like it.

ANNIE: Being upset doesn't mean I'm on my fucking period. It means I'm upset. It means something bothered me. You know, women can get angry too without half our blood coming out of our vaginas.

CARLOS: Ay Jesus, I was just kidding.

ANNIE: Well, some of these "jokes" are truly awful, so I apologize if I don't laugh for your broken ego.

GARY: Yeah, I agree, that feminist joke is played out Carlos. You are better than that.

CARLOS: Apparently me and my broken ego are the worst.

GARY: And dramatic too but we are talking good qualities. You are funnier than those jokes.

ANNIE: Now you are a crusader?

GARY: Whoa—I'm not in this fight at all.

CARLOS: Nobody is fighting.

ANNIE: Sure. Just jesting.

(Silence.)

ANNIE: You can sit if you want?

GARY: Thanks, but I'm actually going to the bodega right downstairs for a second. Gotta grab some beer. Let the emotions in the room run cold, you know?

CARLOS: Why didn't you get the beer before you came in?

GARY: Cause I just didn't know how to deal with being one more second away from you. Need anything?

CARLOS: I'm good.

ANNIE: Me too.

GARY: Cool. Well, I'm gonna go keep destroying my health. When I come back let's... *(He waves his hands around)* You know? Chill and party like she still likes Jameson and you are not a prick with a rich man up your sewer.

CARLOS: You know, I do love him.

GARY: But never like you loved me.

(Gary kisses him on the cheek, throw the deuces in the air and exits. Carlos looks at Annie with a smile on his face.)

CARLOS: Things are going so well, don't you think?

ANNIE: Fuck you both.

CARLOS: Annie are you ok? Are you ok? Are you ok Annie?

ANNIE: But fuck you the most.

CARLOS: Remember how we are all friends and helped each other through a lot during those formative and important years. Right?

ANNIE: Lay off with the jokes at my expense.

CARLOS: Remember how bitchy and beautiful we were.

ANNIE: “Were” being the operative word.

CARLOS: Aww, you still pretty though. Not beautiful, but pretty and bitchy still.

(Annie lets a chuckle out.)

ANNIE: Not cool Carlos.

CARLOS: Fine, I admit I went a little hard.

ANNIE: This is already uncomfortable.

CARLOS: You are making it that way!

ANNIE: Am I? Because it seems like having a dick presence makes you *abhor* the vaginas around. It’s non-stop.

CARLOS: I already admitted it!

ANNIE: It’s always been that way, and you always think that admitting it just makes it go away.

CARLOS: Hold on! This is about me?

ANNIE: It’s about both of you.

CARLOS: Annie, when we were in college we all made fun of each other, no one ever got mad.

ANNIE: Because we didn’t think it was ok to be mad. I mean you know that.

CARLOS: I learned very early on how to ignore the maricon calls and how I was more fabulous.

ANNIE: But what about when they would call you Mexican, huh?

CARLOS: Whatever. It's not an insult. Anyway—

ANNIE: Are you Mexican? Because if you are not, then it is an insult, and I've seen you offended. I've seen you call people out on it. Like that time somebody called you Mexican at the Starbucks, and you called them French. Remember? He said, do I look French? And you said—

CARLOS: No, you just look like shit

ANNIE: Yeah. Because you were insulted.

CARLOS: I loved comebacks that's all.

ANNIE: You didn't like it, but you made it known from time to time, which is more than most ever did, but inside, you were always bothered. Like it was gnawing at you. Yet most of the time—When we did it, when your students did. When they would ask you to say a word cause it was funny in your accent? Are you their monkey?

CARLOS: I'm nobody's monkey.

ANNIE: Yet you said the words for some cheap laughs. Laughs. Laughs. Because the poor boy couldn't speak proper English, fuck that he knew two languages. Nah, you were nothing.

CARLOS: Then I became something.

ANNIE: By burying your shame in a graveyard with the rest of ours.

CARLOS: And I turned out fine.

ANNIE: You are strong.

CARLOS: Exactly, so why make it easier?

ANNIE: Because nobody should be anybody's monkey, not even our friends.

(Carlos stares at her, quietly.)

CARLOS: You remember that time we went to Off the Wagon?

ANNIE: Man, I haven't heard of that name in years.

CARLOS: Remember?

ANNIE: Which time? We were always there.

CARLOS: The cute British boys.

ANNIE: Phil and Andy.

CARLOS: Yes, Phil and Andy. Remember I had the biggest crush on Andy...

ANNIE: I mean Phil was awful to look at.

CARLOS: Not everything is looks Miss High and Mighty.

ANNIE: When it comes to bar hookups, yes, it is.

(Carlos looks for a comeback but ends up agreeing.)

CARLOS: Anyway, I flamed up for them because he said he liked them femmy.

ANNIE: Oh, I remember, Miss Sazon.

CARLOS: My god, don't call that bitch. She died in the streets between McDougal and depravation.

ANNIE: There's a memorial there.

CARLOS: Yeah, it's a pot hole to remember my services and what they did to me. *(Beat)* That night I went home with him, and I was fine being the super gay stereotype. He was sort of straight, but was down as long as the guy wasn't manly. But once done with that chunk of butt, I went to get ready to leave, and he said thank you to me. And I ask for what? And he said, "I always wanted to know what a brown person tasted like."

(Silence.)

CARLOS: At first, I was ok with it. The way he said it. It made me feel exotic. Then days later I was sitting with some friends, and I hear one of my straight ones say "Oh yeah I had a black one once. Savage." Then the other one said, "You should try them Chinese bitches." Meaning Asian girls, of course, not just Chinese. And I sat there, listening to their filth and thinking to myself huh, this is gross as shit. It was then that it dawned on me... I was just that little brown boy, that filled his "Mexican" quota. I was nothing but the color of my skin and accent. An anecdote for a person to finish their sexual map—and suddenly, the realization made me cry because I've realized I've had that black guy. I had that Asian guy, but they were never just guys unless they were white. It feels like you are only human if your pigmentation is the right color, besides that we are just novelty acts trying to do our shit.

(Silence.)

CARLOS: At least I'm in a position where no matter what happens, I'll be fine. Is not about race or anything like that, it's about money. And we have that. So look at me now world, nobody's monkey but my husband's.

ANNIE: Isn't that the same?

(Carlos slowly gazes upon her.)

CARLOS: What do you want to eat?

(The buzzer rings.)

ANNIE: I'll do it.

CARLOS: I can do it.

ANNIE: Nah I'll do it—you know, all that talk about Mexican and the fact he mentions tacos is making me want some Mexican food, you down?

CARLOS: Last time I ate Mexican, it didn't go well, so I'm going to go with no on that.

ANNIE: The worst.

(Annie exits to get the buzzer.)

CARLOS: It's called standards, you should learn them sometime.

(Annie comes back into the entrance of the living room.)

ANNIE: So, no Mexican?

CARLOS: No, if you like the smell of mold and don't want to change it to gas.

ANNIE: Then I'm all out of options, don't know.

CARLOS: Really?

ANNIE: Most of the time, I roll a nice blunt then get to that phase. Gets me in the mood.

CARLOS: Then go ahead, don't let me stop you.

(Doorbell rings.)

ANNIE: Yeah no. I don't wanna waste a blunt on him.

(Annie goes to the door.)

CARLOS: He was the one that got you high for the first time.

ANNIE: Yeah and now it's ruining my life. I smoke like four to six blunts a day.

CARLOS: Just blunts?

ANNIE: Yes.

CARLOS: Holy shit, Annie.

ANNIE: I know. I just get so much anxiety—

(Doorbell rings again.)

ANNIE: Oops.

(Annie runs to get him. Carlos looks at her apartment with some pity. Gary enters.)

GARY: Now we are ready!

ANNIE: I bet.

GARY: You got your nice whiskey, he got his pussy wine, and I got—

(Gary takes out a six pack of Miller High Life.)

ANNIE: *(To Carlos)* And you were talking about standards?

CARLOS: I wasn't including him on that conversation.

GARY: All right you pretentious fucks, this is called the Champagne of beers for a reason.

CARLOS: Yes, cause Champagne taste like shit.

GARY: What?

ANNIE: Only gay guy I know who doesn't like champagne.

CARLOS: Then you need to know more gays.

ANNIE: Do I really?

CARLOS: No—Gary might be the only straight person you know.

GARY: That's awful.

CARLOS: She knows.

GARY: I can tell.

CARLOS: You feel it?

GARY: Hasn't she made it obvious?

CARLOS: She does not know subtlety. Lighten up sweetie.

ANNIE: What are you going to ask me next? To smile?

CARLOS: Would be nice.

GARY: So, what did you guys decide to order?

CARLOS: We haven't.

ANNIE: I don't know what to eat.

CARLOS: She says she needs to smoke.

GARY: What's stopping you?

ANNIE: I don't really wanna smoke.

CARLOS: Lies.

ANNIE: I'm trying to quit. Smoking too much.

GARY: Ha! What's that?

ANNIE: What?

GARY: Too much.

CARLOS: She smokes like four blunts a day.

GARY: Oh shit!

(Gary laughs.)

ANNIE: Trying to slow it down.

GARY: That's heavy smoking, how do you feel?

ANNIE: Lungs like shit and lethargic but takes the anxiety away.

GARY: Yeah, I loved it for a long time.

ANNIE: Loved it?

GARY: I quit some time ago—I mean quit as in I do it from time to time, but very rarely.

ANNIE: Why?

CARLOS: Because he's an adult.

GARY: Nah, I would have done it till I die, but it started making me paranoid and shit. Uneasiness creeping in. I figured after Sheila was born, I should quit.

CARLOS: That's so cute.

ANNIE: How is Sheila?

GARY: She's great. I go down there every few months and chill with her in good ol' Tennessee.

CARLOS: Beautiful girl. I definitely stalk Marina through Facebook.

ANNIE: Oh, that bitch.

GARY: She ain't that bad now. Homie she is seeing is cool. I just can't move back to Tennessee... it's too white for me.

ANNIE: What?

GARY: I like flavor and we got none.

ANNIE: But the music.

GARY: That's Nashville. She lives deep in Tennessee.

CARLOS: Oh yeah no.

GARY: Says the guy that lives in the middle of Florida.

CARLOS: In a mansion, you might add.

GARY: Why would I? I knew you were going to say that. It's your validation for the selling out.

CARLOS: It's called love?

GARY: Same shit.

ANNIE: So, you have never thought about moving closer to her again?

GARY: Oh, all the time, but then I visit and fuck all that.

ANNIE: When she gets older she's going to start asking questions.

GARY: And I'll have the answers. I'm no dummy. I know what this is all about. As long as I keep sending her the money that she needs and visiting her constantly why do I need to live over there? It would disrupt her life.

CARLOS: So, you are paying that child service bill on time and traveling there?

(Annie and Carlos seem so surprised.)

GARY: Yeah... what the fuck guys? I do have a job.

CARLOS: I didn't know it pays that well.

GARY: It's not that much money.

CARLOS: Yeah but to do it constantly...

GARY: It's called budgeting.

CARLOS: Annie, take notes.

ANNIE: I was starting to miss being the target.

GARY: Leave her alone, motherfucker. Annie, what's up with you girl? Haven't heard from you in ages.

ANNIE: Yeah well you know here and there.

GARY: Smoking blunts every day.

ANNIE: And being short of breath.

CARLOS: And cash, judging by this apartment.

ANNIE: I'm so ready to break up with you.

(Carlos smiles charmingly at Annie.)

GARY: I like this spot. Better than the last one I saw.
A little more space. Also, love those pictures. You
took 'em?

(They all look at them.)

ANNIE

Nah, those are my girl.

GARY: Oh, you started dating somebody else?

ANNIE: I mean my friend. I'm single.

CARLOS: And she was dating a guy till the other day.

GARY: Whaaaaat?

ANNIE: Why is that a surprise?

GARY: I thought you were full lesbian.

ANNIE: You met me when I was dating a guy!

GARY: Yeah but I mean, he was gay.

ANNIE: No, he wasn't!

CARLOS: Yes, he was.

(Annie looks at him and seems perplexed.)

CARLOS: What?

ANNIE: I don't want to ask.

GARY: Oh shit—

CARLOS: What? I didn't sleep with him.

GARY: You sure?

ANNIE: I said I didn't want to know.

GARY: You said ask.

ANNIE: You knew what I meant—

CARLOS: Wait—

GARY: Did I?

ANNIE: You're getting stuck on silly semantics here.

CARLOS: Hold on a second—

GARY: Semantics are everything. Just a little tweak here and just like that the whole thing's meaning could change.

CARLOS: You guys think I slept with him?

ANNIE: Seeing how offended you are, I guess not.

GARY: I mean do you blame us for thinking it?

CARLOS: Yes!

ANNIE: The way you said it.

CARLOS: Cause the moment I met him, I knew it!

ANNIE: I don't get it!

GARY: You didn't notice the flames?

CARLOS: Talking about semantics and tweaking, he knew how to do that.

ANNIE: Nah, I always can tell.

CARLOS: Obviously not.

ANNIE: He was not gay.

CARLOS: Gay-er than pink fluff baby. Farting skittles, belching rainbows.

ANNIE: We had sex.

CARLOS: Pretty sure for him it was the equivalent of sexual bulimia.

(Makes the puking sounds while Gary laughs.)

ANNIE: Maybe bisexual. I give you that.

GARY: No such thing.

ANNIE: If this is another thing about semantics...

GARY: No, I just don't think Bisexuality is really a thing.

CARLOS: Told her that once, she wouldn't listen.

ANNIE: What are you trying to say?

GARY: I meant what I said

ANNIE: So did I. He was probably bisexual.

GARY: Yes, but one mine is a fact and yours is a theory.

ANNIE: A bigoted theory dressed as a fact you mean.

GARY: Bigoted? How the hell is that bigoted?

CARLOS: Annie, don't get on the soapbox yet.

(Annie looks at Carlos.)

GARY: Listen I didn't mean to offend you—

ANNIE: But you did.

GARY: I was just telling it how I see it.

ANNIE: And how is that a fact?

GARY: Fine! Let's just say mine was a theory and move on.

ANNIE: Just like that.

CARLOS: Annie it's not that serious to ruin the night. He didn't mean to start a fight.

GARY: No fighting here. I missed you guys.

(Annie is going to say something and then breathes.)

GARY: I'm serious.

ANNIE: And that's supposed to make it ok?

CARLOS: Yes!

GARY: Annie, I believe you. I just said it, because I truly do not think it exists.

ANNIE: Then explain what does it mean for us that are attracted to both sexes?

GARY: Annie, I'm not—

ANNIE: Maybe it is a fucking matter of semantics—

CARLOS: How about we finally order some food. I'll take Mexican.

ANNIE: But unlike you, I'm not an expert of twisting words and making up stories.

GARY: That seems like you are complimenting me on my bachelor's in creative writing, but your tone somehow tells me different.

ANNIE: You know what I'm talking about.

GARY: I actually don't--- A second ago you were calling me a bigot for making a very popular statement

about bisexuality. Then a second after that you got offended.

(Carlos does a face-palm when he hears popular opinion.)

ANNIE: It doesn't matter how popular it is. It's simply not true.

GARY: Then fine, an opinion.

ANNIE: It's not an opinion Gary, it is an attack to my lifestyle.

GARY: It wasn't meant to be that.

ANNIE: Too bad life doesn't give a fuck what you mean or not.

GARY: Can we move on?

ANNIE: Sure, let's move on, it seems like the theme of the year. I wouldn't want to hurt your feelings by continuing anyway.

GARY: Jesus—

(Gary gives a look to Carlos.)

CARLOS: Don't look at me. You messed it up when you brought up popular opinion. Actually, wasn't lynching gays a popular opinion too?

ANNIE: That's making a comeback soon.

CARLOS: Oh, don't be so dramatic, nothing will happen after the elections. Even if the MAN wins.

ANNIE: Let's see after Tuesday.

CARLOS: People are freaking out about nothing.

ANNIE: How can you say that?

CARLOS: Not talking about you. You freak out about everything.

GARY: She always has.

ANNIE: Back in the conversation and he hasn't even apologized yet.

CARLOS: Give him a chance, the poor kid doesn't know any better.

GARY: Now you guys are ganging up on me.

ANNIE: Did you hear an apology?

CARLOS: No.

GARY: Carlos, you too?

CARLOS: I'm a free agent, Gary. When it comes to hate I spread it to those who deserve it.

GARY: Man, I thought I was coming here to have a good ass time with some old friends, not to get gangbanged by the moral police.

CARLOS: So, what, are you going to leave?

GARY: What?

CARLOS: Good with twisting words, but not listening to them.

GARY: Annie, do you want me to leave?

(Annie makes a thinking face gesture. Carlos looks at her.)

CARLOS: Have we been cruel enough yet?

END OF SAMPLE