

Hell if I Know

By Becky Gray

SCENE THREE

SCHOOL HALLWAY

KAYLA, ALEX, ASH, and CHRISSY stand in a line waiting for... something.

KAYLA

I'm telling you, she's not coming.

ASH

No, Miss Glenning wouldn't miss this for the world. I'm pretty sure the three inch rule was abolished when Pastor Frawley was hired, but she insisted on measuring skirts daily anyway. It's like she gets off on it.

CHRISSY

I think my mom might've gotten an email saying she might be leaving the school.

KAYLA

You *think* she *might* have or she got an email?

CHRISSY

She got an email.

(beat)

I think.

KAYLA

Wouldn't surprise me if she were fired. She and that chem teacher on the third floor have been getting pretty cozy and if you ask me, it looked like her typical out of season cargo pants from what must've been the 90% off rack at Goodwill...they were fitting a little snug.

ALEX

You don't mean-

ASH

God, we haven't had a pregnant teacher in forever.

CHRISSEY

And never one out of wedlock.

KAYLA

At least not one that wasn't fired before we noticed.

ASH

And imagine Lonely Lauren Glenning being the trailblazer.

KAYLA

(laughing)

I forgot about that! What a mean thing to call her!

ASH

(laughing along)

I think Chrissy came up with the name!

CHRISSEY

I would never!

ASH

Imagine having to tell your kid they were conceived on the 3rd floor of Saint Dominic's.

ALEX

We don't know she's pregnant.

KAYLA

You're right. She could be on a yacht with a sexy French pilot.

ASH

And he only speaks English to recite the most romantic Sartre lines.

ALEX

Oh she was a whore for Sartre.

CHRISSEY lightly hits ALEX in admonition

KAYLA

(mimicking the pilot- to Alex)

"In love, one and one are one."

ALEX

Oh! My sexy pilot!

KAYLA

"Hope is the desire of the soul."

ASH

(playing along)

“Lauren my love, fly away with me, better to die on one's feet than to live on one's knees.”

ALEX

But sexy French pilot, I can't leave my Timmy Burnstead for you. Our chemistry is impeccable.

ASH

But mon amour! Follow your heart! “You are your life, and nothing else.”

ALEX

Okay you guys have an absurd amount of Sartre memorized. Do Plato next.

ASH

Ah yes. I think Plato once said: “please, eat this plate-o'-my-ballssss”

KAYLA

Ooo! Hey maybe there's no sexy French guy. Maybe her poor fashion choices prompted her to give up on clothes entirely and she's currently debuting on naked and afraid.

They begin acting out the scene they're creating

ASH

Yes! And she's wandering through the wilderness-

KAYLA

Scouting the area.

ALEX

(motioning)

Hunting for game.

CHRISSEY knocks fake weapon away from ALEX

CHRISSEY

Don't shoot it!

ALEX

What am I gonna kill with air?

ASH

And just when she finds the perfect spot... a bear jumps out!

KAYLA (as the bear) scares CHRISSY who jumps, but laughs

ASH

And then...

ASH motions for CHRISSY to continue the bit- CHRISSY stares, unsure

ALEX

What happens next Chrissy?

CHRISSY

And then... and then she runs away like crazy,
(now into it, acting it out)
But finds herself at the edge of a cliff!

KAYLA

And just when she thinks she's about to meet her bloody fate...

ASH

The bear pulls off his mask to reveal...

ALEX

Mr. Timothy Burnstead!!

CHRISSY

The chem teacher who got her pregnant!!

KAYLA

(kneeling and mimicking Mr. Burnstead)

Lauren, I know it's been a long year and I haven't always treated you right. I might not even be as hot and sexy as that French pilot with an impressively extensive collection of 18th century philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre memorized, but I'll always love you...

(touching CHRISSY's stomach)

And little Timmy junior.

ASH stands behind the two and sings some version of a hymn or wedding song as KAYLA and CHRISSY adlib "i do"s and "let's run away together"s

QUINN enters

The three notice a ruler in her hand

KAYLA

Oh you've gotta be kidding me.

QUINN

Straight line!

They break from the bit and form a line

QUINN begins measuring the others' skirt lengths

ASH

Who put the princess in charge?

QUINN

Ms. Glenning... Before she left.

ASH
(slyly)

You know something.

QUINN

I know a lot of things. And pull your skirt down.

ASH

What do you know, Quinn?

QUINN

...Let's just say lonely Lauren won't be so lonely in 9 months.

All but QUINN erupt in excited shock - exclamations overlap

KAYLA

/ No way!

ASH

/ We're geniuses!

/ I hope she's okay.

CHRISSY

/ Holy crap.

ALEX

Kayla, your skirt is too short.

QUINN
(halting their celebration)

Excuse me?

KAYLA

Your skirt is too short. Stop rolling it, you're asking for attention.

QUINN

Who the hell do I want attention from? You said yourself there's no guys here anyway. Unless you count Pastor Frawley.

KAYLA

Come on, Kay, it's no big deal just roll it down.

ASH

I'm not rolling it.

KAYLA

You never even measured.

(back to QUINN)

I don't have to measure, your whole ass it out.

QUINN

Quinn, take it down a notch-

ALEX

-and it doesn't matter if this is an all girls school or if you were here with 100 perverted 80 year old men, attention can come from anywhere.

QUINN

What the Hell are you implying?

KAYLA

I'm just saying sluts aren't picky.

QUINN

SCHOOL BELL RINGS

All stay put in motionless silence for a moment

KAYLA

Fuck you, Quinn.

KAYLA slowly walks offstage

ALEX and CHRISSY follow

Only ASH and QUINN remain.

QUINN moves to leave, then -

ASH

Did that make you feel good?

QUINN halts

QUINN

Excuse me?

(beat)

What kind of question is that?

ASH

Uhh, a good one, Quinn. Why else would you constantly act like a bitch unless it somehow made you feel good?

QUINN

I-

(stopping herself)

No, Ashlyn, it didn't make me feel good.

QUINN moves to leave

ASH

Then how did it make you feel?

QUINN

(stopping)

What?

ASH

You know, feelings, emotions... you have those right? Or have I been pinning you as a Wicked Witch gal and you've really been a Tin man all along?

QUINN

You're calling me heartless?
I'm not heartless!

ASH

Then prove it.

(No response.)

Sorry let me get my uh.. oil can here and -

ASH does a whole bit of fixing the tin man

ASH

Alright. Rust is all gone. Go ahead and bear your heart and soul.

QUINN

Last I checked, this is school, I'm not in therapy.

ASH

Oh it's very clear you're not in therapy.

At this, QUINN almost laughs

ASH

There's a smile.

QUINN immediately reinstates her stern expression

ASH

How about one word. Just so I'll leave you alone.

QUINN

One word?

ASH

One word about how you feel. And I'll drop it.

QUINN looks unsatisfied.

ASH

Cross my heart and hope to die.

This answer satisfies QUINN

QUINN

I feel... upset.

ASH makes a face.

QUINN

Angry?

ASH

Lazy!

QUINN

Perplexed!

ASH

Okay, we need a new strategy.

ASH thinks. And thinks. Then-

ASH

Make up a word.

QUINN

I'm sorry?

ASH

Make. Up. A. Word.

QUINN

No, no, no, no.

ASH

What?

QUINN

You can't just make up words.

ASH

Of course you can!

QUINN

I can't just make something up. Words are formulaic. They add order to the chaos. You speak and you listen, you don't add.

ASH

Why not?

QUINN

Because that's not how it works! No one just makes up words.

ASH

How do you think you got the ones you're using?

QUINN pauses

Be the creator for once, Quinn.

QUINN

Fine.

QUINN searches for a word.

I feel... poloramitied.

ASH

Mmm, too ambitious.

QUINN

Vekary?

ASH

Not ambitious enough.

QUINN

Torramitous!

ASH

Wow you suck at this!

QUINN

I do n-

(Realizing)

You joke a lot.

ASH

Okay, torramitous. Spelling?

QUINN

Torramitous.

T-O-R-R-A-M-I-T-O-U-S.

Torramitous.

Part of speech? ASH

Adjective. QUINN

Language of origin? ASH

English! QUINN
(now laughing)

And definition. ASH

QUINN takes her time defining until the words begin to pour

Torramitous. QUINN
The feeling that time is quickly passing, the things you want and need speeding by - blurred and just out of reach, meanwhile you're trying to move but each step is too rigid or too easy or too not perfect. So you stand still, watching, becoming less and less yourself with each second, but then again, losing yourself was one of the things you wanted so I guess something wasn't totally out of reach.

(beat)

Torramitous.

Both are silent for a moment

Could I hear it used in a sentence? ASH

QUINN smiles. Tension builds with the silence.

Ashlyn? QUINN

Hmm? ASH

*The two are close. Almost nose to nose.
 QUINN contemplates something, then, after
 a long pause, changes mental trajectory and
 starts to walk off*

QUINN

I can smell booze on your breath and if you don't clean up your act I'll report you.

ASH

(starting after her)

Quinn-

SCHOOL BELL RINGS

QUINN

Shit. You just made us late, Ash!

ASH

Quinn, I know-

QUINN

You know *what?* You don't know shit about me. If you want to sit here and play your perverted mind games go ahead but leave me out of it.

QUINN exits.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE FOUR

KAYLA'S ROOM - NIGHT

KAYLA is doing her makeup.

Music blares - something upbeat, vintage, and feminine, a
 "Girls Just Wanna have Fun" type song

CHRISSY enters cautiously

KAYLA notices

KAYLA

Hey

CHRISSY

Hi, sorry, I - your door was open.

KAYLA

Well. Open doors are for walking through? Come in!

CHRISSY

(moving further inside)

Right, sorry.

KAYLA

Stop apologizing.

CHRISSY

Okay, sor-

(off Kalya's look-)

Okay.

KAYLA returns to doing her makeup

CHRISSY

I just wanted to see if you were alright.

KAYLA

Why wouldn't I be alright?

CHRISSY

Well, Quinn-

KAYLA

Quinn has been a bitch since prehistoric times, she's just sour 'cause she never got over the dinosaur extinction.

CHRISSY

What?

KAYLA

She's the only big reptile left.

CHRISSY

Oh. I guess she can be.. cold blooded?

KAYLA

Hah.

CHRISSEY

But she really doesn't mean to-

KAYLA

Chris.

(turning to her)

Don't do that. You are pure and kind and good and just because you're all of those things does not mean you have to prove everyone else is too. They're not.

(her thoughts change)

Come on, help me pick out an outfit for this date I have tonight.

CHRISSEY

You have a date?

KAYLA

What, are you surprised?

CHRISSEY

No, I just - Kayla, you're not allowed off campus at night.

KAYLA

Screw that, we spend 4 miserable years trapped in this miserable place and they expect us to just follow all their miserable rules no questions asked? No thank you.

CHRISSEY

Is that why you were doing your makeup? For your date?

KAYLA

What? No, I... look, appearances, dressing up- is fun. I do it for myself. Of course that's not to say it can't be a tool.

(Getting an idea)

Have you ever had your makeup done?

CHRISSEY

Oh, I'm really not -

KAYLA

Ah! Come on, it'll be fun!

KAYLA playfully sets CHRISSEY on the bed
(or chair, dresser, etc)

CHRISSY

Kayla, I just found out the difference between lipgloss and flavored chapstick, I- I don't think I've made it to the boss level.

KAYLA

Oh my god, oh my god! Makeovers are not boss level, they're fundamental! You've never had a makeover? I can't believe you've never had a makeover! How old are you?

CHRISSY

Well-

KAYLA

Don't answer that. Chris, five minutes and I can change your life.

CHRISSY looks tempted, KAYLA waves makeup around jokingly

KAYLA

Oooo doesn't it all look so shiny?

CHRISSY

Kayla-

KAYLA

(continuing her bit)

Mmm there's nothing like the smell of overpriced blush at 8pm..

CHRISSY

Kayla!

KAYLA

/Yes?

CHRISSY hesitates, then gives in

CHRISSY

Fine!

KAYLA

Yes! / Victoryyyyyyyyyyy!

CHRISSY

(laughing)

Whatever... I'm about to change my mind!

KAYLA

Okay, okay. I'll go easy on you.

KAYLA begins applying CHRISSY's
makeup

KAYLA

Listen. A lot of people get this wrong. With this type of thing, the key is not in hiding what you don't like. It's about defining the features you do. It's all smoke and mirrors - point the eye in whatever direction you want.

CHRISSY

It's about control.

KAYLA

Exactly. And with the right contour, mascara, and push up bra, control becomes power.
(pausing)

Chrissy, you are so good. But that means nothing if you're at the bottom of the food chain. We all have to play the game if we want to change it.

(breaking sobriety)

Plus we get all these pretty colors to do it with!

KAYLA finishes and turns CHRISSY to
look in the mirror

CHRISSY

I look pretty.

KAYLA

You look powerful.

After a moment, KAYLA begins putting
away the makeup

KAYLA

Now I have a date to get to.

CHRISSY

Kayla?

KAYLA

Yeah?

CHRISSEY

..How did you learn all this?

CUE: TIME FREEZE LIGHTS

CHRISSEY freezes

KAYLA

When I was twelve, experiencing the uniquely specific brand of Hell that is the seventh grade, Jason Lewis pushed me over during a game of freeze tag and I cried. He responded by leaning over me, pressing his lips against my ear, and breathing “get up, pussy.” I was slightly confused at why he was calling me a cat, but I knew it was an insult so I told my mom how he and the other boys were acting, and she said it meant they liked me. I believed her.

That summer, the braces came off, the acne went away, I lost some fat, bought myself a tube of mascara labeled “Orgasmic Heights.” I didn’t know what it meant but the salesperson insisted it was the best for young women and I’d never been called a woman before so I payed the 8.99 and wore it proudly. I woke up one morning and suddenly, I had tits! That part felt like a miracle, as if God himself had interrupted his work to float down here in the middle of the night like the tooth fairy but for boobs.

All of this was normal to me, like a secret initiation into maturity, along with longer algebra problems and an invite to the front of the bus. But when I went back to school, and boys looked at my breasts instead of my test answers, and teachers exclaimed “Kayla! I hardly recognized you! You’ve *grown* so much!” and girls who used to borrow my glitter pencils and never give them back instead insisted *I* borrow *their* cherry flavored chapstick, well, I learned that maturity isn’t a rite of passage, it’s not about how much you know or the things you say or even the way you act, it’s about how you look. I also learned the boys’ teasing wasn’t because they liked me because the first day back Jason Lewis stopped calling me pussy and started calling me pretty.

If you look fuckable, you’ll be treated with the decency you dreamed about in the back of the bus and you cried about during freeze-tag.

LIGHTS BACK TO ORIGINAL

CHRISSEY

Kayla?

No response, CHRISSEY gently touches
KAYLA

Kayla?

KAYLA returns to reality

How did you learn all this?

KAYLA pauses, contemplating - her mask
returns

KAYLA

I don't remember.

END OF SAMPLE