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Creating Theatre: The Search for a Voice

Barney Lopez

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CREATING THEATRE:
THE SEARCH FOR A VOICE

by

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B.A., Theatre, University of New Mexico, 2009

DISSERTATION

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CREATING THEATRE:
The Search for a Voice

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ABSTRACT

This essay will explore questions related to the political theatre, the use of irony and satire and Augusto Boal’s “Invisible Theater”. I will analyze my plays, *The House That Ché Built*, *Carson Lake*, and *Simon as Sergio*. I will discuss my experimentation with politic theatre, my dive into the family politics of Greek tragedy, and I will investigate the dual identities we are navigating while social networking becomes increasingly integrated into our lives. Throughout this essay, I will discuss how my playwriting has developed and how I have begun to find my voice as a playwright. I hope that this essay helps codify my theories on theatre while highlighting the plays I have been writing during my years of graduate study.
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INTRODUCTION

I am a native New Mexican who grew up imagining worlds that exist beyond the “Land of Enchantment”. As a child named Barney, I was constantly mocked in school. I quickly developed a fine-tuned sense of humor to compensate. It was my best, and only, defense. I grew up in a rural area without any neighbors, save for the prisoners in the Central New Mexico Correctional Facility. I spent much of my time alone in my bedroom with a cast of plastic toys reenacting the movies I watched with my dad. I’ve always enjoyed telling stories. Lots of them.

I love theatre. I have been creating it non-stop since I got my first taste as a teenager in Los Lunas, New Mexico. I wrote/directed/produced my first play, The Land of Tomorrow, in high school. I lost interest in the plays my drama teacher produced at school. They were old. They were boring. They were safe. I thought I could make something better. I pulled together a group of friends. We rehearsed in an abandoned single-wide trailer and performed at a restaurant for a weekend. I’m positive it wasn’t a better show than our school productions of The Crucible, or even George Washington Slept Here. Both are great plays. It wasn’t about the play though. It was the process of creating something original and seeing people enjoy it that really got me hooked into this art medium. Theatre is amazing. It has the ability to incorporate all of the arts and in doing so it builds community.

When I felt the need to learn comedic styles during my undergraduate studies, I started my own theatre company with a group of friends. Our company,
Blackout Theatre, began producing late night sketch comedy shows. We proceeded to work together after graduation. After seven years, we have 501c3 status and have been voted Albuquerque’s Best Theatre Company three years in a row.

I have collaborated with Blackout Theatre on four devised theatre pieces; *The Poe Project* (2010), *The Sparrow’s Daughter: A Cuento* (2011), *A Christmas Carol* (2011), & *F8: A Rock Musical* (2012). Most recently, I directed Blackout Theatre’s environmental theatre based haunted house, *Quarantine* (2013). In addition, Blackout Theatre has produced three of my plays, *Petite Poems of Peas* (2010), and *The Ups and the Downs* (2012) and *Carson Lake* (2014). As Education Director of Blackout Theatre, I helped re-launch Wrinkle Writing, an in-school playwriting program in the Albuquerque Public Schools. We are currently in our third year and are serving more than 1000 students, bringing playwriting into the schools. I currently serve as the Marketing Director for Blackout Theatre Company.

Blackout Theatre is a full spectrum theatre company. Every member of the company is encouraged to learn every facet of creating theatre. This is a philosophy I truly value as an artist. Yes, I am a playwright, but I also consider myself an actor, a director, a designer, and an improviser, too. I feel that serving every role in the theatre will inevitably make me a better playwright. It helps me think about all of the other aspects of theatre while I am writing. I ask myself, “What kind of world would be an artistic challenge for designers? What kind of characters would actors like to explore? What kind of story would a director enjoy
telling?” Theatre is a uniquely collaborative art form. It encompasses many different roles. I want to write theatre that leaves every collaborator feeling artistically fulfilled.

I have a strong desire to use my playwriting as a tool to examine society. I see it as my duty to civilization. Like a shipwright in a small village. I hope there’s something noble in this profession. I hope there’s some reason that human beings insist on sharing fictional stories with one another. In Anne Bogart’s and then you act she investigates the purpose of making theatre. One of her analogies that stuck with me as a theatre maker is from the introduction to Bogart’s essays. She states:

_The South African writer Antjie Krog described meeting a nomadic desert poet in Senegal who described the role of the poet, he explained to her, is to remember where the water holes are. The survival of the whole group depends on a few water holes scattered around the desert. When his people forget where the water is, the poet can lead them to it._ (Bogart 1)

What a noble and necessary role for the poet. As a playwright, I feel it is my duty to find these water holes. Whether they represent a forgotten past or a possible future, these water holes are the keys to who we are as a society. The scripts I write are an investigation of areas I find intriguing; the areas I think may hold water.

For the first part of this essay I will discuss political theatre. I will examine its relation to Augusto Boal’s “Invisible Theater” and critique its use by _The Yes Men_. I will then explore how these theories have affected my plays, _The House That Ché Built_, _Carson Lake_, and _Simon as Sergio_ and how these plays mark my development as a playwright. I will discuss _Simon as Sergio_ examination into the
borders between real life and the cyber world. I hope that this essay helps codify my theories on theatre while highlighting the plays I have been writing during my years of graduate study.
INVISIBLE SATIRE

I feel an impulse to explore issues that affect society. However, I have found writing plays that delve into these ‘issues’ difficult. It’s hard to hold a mirror up to society or pull back the curtains on the machinery without coming across as self righteous. I think the best way to achieve this is through comedy. I will get into that later. In the first part of this essay, I will examine the nature of theatre and discuss strategies I find effective in the political theatre.

Theatre is a communication tool. It has traditionally been used by governing bodies to educate large groups of people in an attempt to civilize and control them. In his revolutionary book, “Theatre of the Oppressed”, Augusto Boal suggests that, in the theatre of Aristotle, “it is necessary to make sure that all remain, if not uniformly satisfied, at least uniformly passive with respect to those criteria of inequity” (Boal 25). Boal implies that Aristotle’s theatre is “a powerful system of intimidation” (46). Theatre is part of a complex system that skillfully corrects societal behaviors with the interest of maintaining power over said society. According to Boal, Aristotle’s chief aim, catharsis, “is correction…Catharsis is purification” (27). Augusto Boal suggests that Aristotle’s Poetics is not merely a book about how to make theatre, but is rather an instruction manual on how to create persuasive political theatre with the intent of controlling the masses.

Through theatre (and all forms of ‘entertainment’), the ruling class maintains control over society using the most efficient and ancient education system in the world. In Satire and Dissent: Interventions in Contemporary
Political Debate, Amber Day reminds readers that, “the real officials at the press conference are also, in a sense, actors playing their roles, wearing the appropriate wardrobe, speaking in the expected tone of voice, and often mouthing memorized (or teleprompted) lines that have been scripted for them” (Day 45). Using clever rhetoric in their press releases and broadcast interviews, politicians funnel their ideologies into the general public through television. Each party casts their opposition as the “bad guy”, an evil, immoral individual who doesn’t think the same way that “normal” people think. These politicians cast the people at odds with one another, convincing them that there is no reasoning with the other side. To make matters worse, the news media that we are supposed to trust for un-biased analysis of our political system has been hijacked by political agendas.¹

All of this is dangerous political theatre. It has slowly separated our public into two opposing camps. Through a well-thought out system of propaganda, our political parties are training people to isolate themselves from opposing opinions. I see this as a major risk because without healthy civil discourse we will go to war with one another. When man’s vocal communication is oppressed, he must resort to physical communication; he inevitably resorts to violence. The ironic state we live in uses political theatre to train non-communication. Wasn’t communication the original reason human beings began creating theatre?

watch—*the party is* over! Secondly, among the actors, they separated the protagonists from the mass. The coercive *indoctrination* began! ... The walls must be torn down. First, the spectator starts acting again: *invisible theater, forum theater, image theater, etc.* (Boal 119)

According to Boal, the people must take back the theatre from the oppressors if we ever want to reverse course. If we are to do this, we will need to develop a series of theatrical tools that encourage healthy civil discourse.

Satire and irony have long been tools of the theatre; however their effectiveness has been diffused by the limitations of their audience. The common criticism of satire and irony is that they are essentially “preaching to the choir”. In *Satire and Dissent*, Amber Day characterizes irony as “a mode that functions successfully only when ironist and audience share particular assumptions and cultural cues” (Day 40). The people who agree with the ironist/satirist will take notice, while those that disagree will ignore.

In traditional treatment, satire and irony function similarly to Aristotle’s catharsis. “In classic literary theory on satire and political humor, there is an extensive tradition of criticism that links these modes unequivocally with the status quo and the shoring up of dominant norms” (11). These tools are effective at pointing out flaws in human behavior because they elicit laughter rather than shame. Through laughter, satire and irony remind audiences why their society functions according to pre-determined rules. Satire and irony “function conservatively” by “ridicule[ing] non-normative behavior, thereby reinforcing existing attitudes” (11).

So what is the point of satire and irony?
When satire and irony are used in the traditional mode, they function to “rally the troops”, or a comedic attempt to organize activism and unify a political voice. However, Amber Day notes that “parodic news programs” have begun to use satire and irony as a means of criticizing our societal functions, often poking fun at the bias of the news media.

Irony and satire are primarily being used by performers that align themselves with liberal ideals. Thus, their motives and strategies have been criticized as “fomenting cynicism” (43) and displaying the same degree of bias which they claim to ridicule. While the “parodic news programs” were praised by liberal elites during the Bush administration, many wondered, “when Barak Obama won the election in 2008 … whether figures like Jon Stewart of The Daily Show would be able to maintain their popularity and relevance” (4). These critics seemed to assume that the “parodic news programs” were functioning as a political tactic in opposition to the conservative news program’s rhetoric of fear.

In essence, this proposed use of satire and irony attempts to place it in tactical opposition to the neo-conservative use of fear. The latter seems more effective to me. Satire and irony, in their prime, generate laughter and encourage cynicism, while fear produces paranoia and demands obedience. Utilizing satire and irony in the same manner that politicians utilize fear is ineffective and will be self-destructive when the cynicism turns on itself.

2 Examples; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, The Mercer Report, Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher, & Saturday Night Live
Satire’s greatest strength is its ability to break through political rhetoric and open dialogue. “Much of the audience’s pleasure [in watching The Daily Show] is derived from watching real, serious news material ironically transcontextualized and stripped down in front of their eyes” (Day 73). There is much value in utilizing satire the way it is used by “parodic news programs.” Rather than trying to use parody and satire in support of one political agenda over another, I propose that the tools be used to alienate the audience. Day argues, “this blend of satire and political nonfiction enables and articulates a critique of the inadequacies of contemporary political discourse, while demonstrating an engaged commitment to the possibility of a more honest public debate” (43). Once the public can acknowledge the political rhetoric for what it is, they can decide what to accept as valid information and what to disregard as political theatre.

I propose combining the use of satire and irony with techniques of Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed in an attempt to create what Boal calls “The Theater as Discourse” (Boal 142). I would like to make theatre that “encourages the spectator to ask questions, to dialogue, to participate” (142). Theatre should open a meaningful dialogue, but in order to do that the audience must be composed of differing political opinions. Unfortunately, the current political climate is increasingly separating people with differing opinions. How can we get people of differing opinions into the same space where meaningful conversations can begin? How can we reach the audience that really needs activist theatre? It seems nearly impossible through conventional practices.
*The Yes Men* are a pair of culture jamming activists, Jacques Servin & Igor Vamos. The pair practice a technique Amber Day names “identity-nabbing” with the intent to “make people question the rhetoric used by real officials with real power and to take a closer look at the philosophy underlying official actions” (170). *The Yes Men* were spawned from an organization called ∞®™ark, a “‘brokerage’ firm that trades in corporate subversion, linking to prank ideas on its website and encouraging those with funds to support stunts [and] to meet up with others who have the ability to carry them out” (168).

While *The Yes Men* share similarities to groups such as *Billionaires for Bush*, Reverend Billy, & Stephen Colbert, they differ in their very deliberate attempt at ambiguity. *The Yes Men* welcome confusion among their audience by assuming the roles they impersonate so accurately. They have been compared to Stephen Colbert because of their tactic of nabbing the identities of the people they oppose and parodying the rhetoric of their targets. However, unlike Stephen Colbert, *The Yes Men*’s audiences tend to be unassuming, and often, members of the very group *The Yes Men* intend to satirize.

Gaining access to an audience of powerful people who might not agree with ones parody is very difficult. Usually, there are several barriers to pass before an organization will approve a performance. It requires true creativity and

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3 For more on culture jamming, see Day, pp 159-164
4 It must be noted that both of these names might be pseudonyms, as *The Yes Men* have been known to use many different names in an attempt to keep their identity private as the stunts they create border on fraudulent activity.
5 See Day, pp. 164-172
6 An exception can be made for Stephen Colbert’s performance at the White House Correspondents’ Association dinner in 2006 in which he performed for an audience that included President George W. Bush and many members of his administration. For an account, see Day, pp 80-81.
innovation to gain access to such an exclusive audience. *The Yes Men* have accomplished this task through a clever form of “hacktivism” (Delio 1). *The Yes Men* create websites that closely resemble the official websites of companies and organizations such as General Electric, Exxon-Mobile, and even government agencies such as HUD. Through these websites, *The Yes Men* attract invitations to unsuspecting conferences where they are expected to speak as real representatives of said organizations. *The Yes Men* proceed to create elaborate presentations designed to expose the ills of their targeted group. They call this practice, “Identity Correction”. They describe it as “honest people impersonat[ing] big time criminals in order to publicly humiliate them,” (Day 169).

*The Yes Men*’s most successful fake website is its *World Trade Organization* website. “Gatt.org continues to be such an effective parody of the official WTO site that you have to read it very carefully to see that it’s a spoof. It works by taking the WTO’s real, live aims and actions to their logical extremes -- thus demonstrating their absurdity” (Kingsnorth 16). Through this website, *The Yes Men* have been invited to speak at many conferences. They invent absurd presentations that vary on subject matter according to the conference.

In April 2002, *The Yes Men* were invited to speak to students at the University of New York in Plattsburg as the World Trade Organization7. *The Yes Men* were preparing to speak as the WTO in Australia and decided to test their presentation with a room of college students. Disguised as a World Trade

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7 For a video account see, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZP_nNemsNT8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZP_nNemsNT8)
Organization official and a McDonald's executive, *The Yes Men* explain the world hunger problem and their plan to address the issue.

Their plan? They claim that only 20% of all food consumed is actually used by the human body and that the waste, the remaining 80%, has great potential in solving world hunger. Claiming that NASA has already started using similar technology, *The Yes Men* propose that McDonalds, with the help of the WTO, recycle the waste of the first world nations, and reproduce hamburgers for the third world. Through an elaborate system of collection and filtration, McDonalds and the World Trade Organization claim that McDonald's hamburgers can be reused more than ten times.

The presentation caused a lot of commotion among the students in the lecture hall. Many of them were outraged at this plan. They ridiculed the World Trade Organization and McDonalds for their ridiculous, immoral proposal. The students started verbally attacking *The Yes Men* and the presentation was forced to end when students began throwing objects at *The Yes Men* and walking out of class.

*Theatre of the Oppressed* can be characterized as Augusto Boal's case for “transforming the spectator into actor” (Boal 126). In the fourth chapter of Boal’s book, “Poetics of the Oppressed” Boal explains four stages of transformation. I propose that, through their elaborate presentations, *The Yes Men* are successfully practicing the fourth stage of transformation, “The Theater as Discourse” (126), a stage “in which the spectator-actor creates ‘spectacles’
according to his need to discuss certain themes or rehearse certain actions” (126).

*The Yes Men* practice a form inspired by Augusto Boal’s “Invisible Theatre”. According to Boal, invisible theatre “consists of the presentation of a scene in an environment other than a theatre, before people who are not spectators” (143-144). This type of theatre usually has a very detailed script, but one which actors are prepared to improvise in many different directions should the audience lead them there.

*The Yes Men’s* presentations are designed very similar to those of the “Invisible Theatre”. They are always prepared with a detailed script in which they are ready to improvise with the audience. They are well versed to talk around the theory behind their proposals while remaining in character. *The Yes Men* are not performing in a theatre, but rather a lecture hall to people who have no clue that they are spectators in this play.

One can argue that *The Yes Men* don’t exactly fall into Boal’s “Invisible Theatre” because they still participate in an accepted mode of performance. Whereas Boal suggested performances before people who “are there by chance” (144), *The Yes Men’s* audiences are purposely in attendance. Their audiences have typically come to see a type of performance, whether it be conference presentation or classroom lecture.

The goals of the “Invisible Theatre” are: for the viewers to become protagonist; for the performance to open a public forum; and to encourage
viewers to action. “A successful Invisible Theatre performance involves bringing together people who might not otherwise have had any interaction, but are suddenly united by an issue, which transforms them into a momentarily politicized collective” (Day 175). Invisible theatre should leave the viewers asking questions, criticizing the actions, and sometimes outraged at the subject of the spectacle. Boal said, in a successful production, “all the people who are near become involved in the eruption and the effects of it last long after the skit has ended.” (Boal 144). While The Yes Men don’t completely meet all the criterion of Invisible Theatre, their presentations certainly share similar results.

The connections between Boal’s “Invisible Theatre” and The Yes Men’s practices lie in the “spec-actors”. In the case of the “Post Consumer Waste Recycling Program”, the “spec-actors” are the unsuspecting college students. The Yes Men’s presentation is successful in generating criticism, questions and outrage. When The Yes Men push the students over the edge, they finally form a collective force and move past a mere verbal reaction by throwing things at the speakers and walking out of the lecture hall.

The Yes Men are successfully practicing, what I would like to call, invisible satire. By disguising their satire under the guise of seriousness, The Yes Men accurately portray their targeted villain without their audience being aware of the satire. This absolute believability is something that both Stephen Colbert and Jon Stewart have failed to transcend. At the end of the day, the audience knows that they are just joking. Very rarely are Stewart and Colbert mistaken for really believing and representing the ideals that they satirize. As satirists, Jon Stewart
says, “Look over there,” and Stephen Colbert says, “Look who I'm pretending to be.” The Yes Men completely embody their characters and say, “Look who we are,” and they make us say, “I don’t like who they are. I want to do something about people like them.”

Invisible satire exposes true feelings about archetypal figures by assuming the identity of a target and highlighting the absurdity of the targets thought patterns. Through invisible satire it is possible to not only present a joke that wise people think they are “in on” but also to raise a flag in unsuspecting viewers heads that something is wrong with a certain mode of thinking. Invisible satire leaves it to the spectator to point out what is wrong with the satirist’s behavior.

Invisible Satire is important because, practiced successfully, it has the ability to sneak past deep-seated, partisan viewpoints and make spectators think for themselves. By donning the mask of the opposition the artist/activist is able to sneak into their political rival’s mindset. From this viewpoint, not only can they use satire to expose injustice, but they inevitably get a glimpse of their opponent’s perspective. Through this perspective, the artist can more accurately determine what to satirize with the intent of producing a desired result, an awakening of civil discourse.

Both sides of the political spectrum have developed clever and effective articulation to control the thoughts of their followers and discourage civil discourse in favor of political agendas. Theatre should not try to mimic the Aristotelian practice of political theatre of oppression. Political theatre is being
used all around us. In newspapers, on television, in the elaborate narratives candidates develop to make a bid for the presidency. Theatre should be taken back for the people. Invisible satire is one of the tools we can use to open discussions in our communities. Through this theatre, we can begin a conversation, and theatre can once again serve its purpose in society.
THE HOUSE THAT CHÉ BUILT:
Experimenting with Political Theatre

I started the Dramatic Writing program feeling politically motivated. I wanted to write plays of significance. I wanted to create theatre that changed the world. I was obsessed with the thought that there had to be some kind of higher purpose for the work I was doing. Could I really be wasting my time and money writing little stories for fun, while ‘real’ people with ‘real’ professions solved ‘real’ world problems? There had to be a reason for my work. I had to write something ‘important.’

I became caught up in the Occupy Wall Street movement during my first year of study. “This,” I thought, “is a big deal and needs to be written about.” I attended several of the protests and general assemblies on campus. I was there the night SWAT teams moved in and forced people out of the park. The political climate was electrifying and I was awash in the utopic dream of a better world. I had a new purpose as a playwright and that purpose was political theatre.

The House That Ché Built was my response to the Occupy Wall Street movement. In the play, Manny, a recently abandoned ‘anchor baby’, secretly starts squatting in a house that his friend’s mom is trying to sell. While staying in the house, he comes across an enchanted portrait of Ernesto “Ché” Guevara which magically comes to life and brings the revolutionary leader through the picture frame and into the modern world. Manny, inspired by the teachings of Ché, invites homeless people to squat with him in the house. They proceed to start a miniature revolution, occupying foreclosed homes all over town. The play comes to an abrupt end when the police storm the house and shoot the
homeless people. Ralph, the wealthy home buyer, enters and says, “Thank you officers. I think the disturbance has been taken care of,” (Lopez 82) and he proceeds to burn the enchanted portrait of ‘Ché’ Guevara, thus quashing the little uprising and maintaining standard order in society.

I was unable to find the proper tone for The House That Ché Built. I knew the play would be funny, but my comedic tone was too strong and it drowned out the serious subject matter of the play. This is something that I was able to balance in my next play, Carson Lake, but I was still learning it with The House That Ché Built.

Another reason that the message was lost was because the play was too abrasive. I tried to cram as many political theories into one little play as I could. (In that sense, I think it was a decent representation of some of the same problems that the Occupy Wall Street movement ran into.) My approach to writing a political play was blatantly obvious. The play was overtly political and one-sided. It left the audience feeling berated rather than contemplative.

In Bertolt Brecht’s monumental book, Brecht on Theatre, he describes the difference between traditional theatre and what he calls the ‘Epic Theatre’.

The theater-goer in conventional dramatic theater says: Yes, I’ve felt that way, too. That’s the way I am. That’s the way it will always be. The suffering of this or that person grips me because there is no escape for him. That’s great art—Everything is self-evident. I am made to cry with those who cry, and laugh with those who laugh. But the theater-goer in the epic theater says: I would never have thought that. You can’t do that. That’s very strange, practically unbelievable. That has to stop. The suffering of this or that person grips me because there is an escape for him. That’s great art—nothing is self-evident. I am made to laugh about those who cry, and cry about those who laugh. (Brecht 1936)

This is what I was trying to achieve with The House That Ché Built, and to a certain extent, I succeeded. The play definitely came across as “very strange and
unbelievable.” I can attribute this to my willingness to explore qualities of magical realism. *The House That Ché Built* features homeless people organizing behind a magical portrait of ‘Ché’ Guevara that comes to life when its cigar is lit. Obviously, I am pushing the script into a fantastical realm that leaves the audience saying “This could never happen.”

While I feel that I had success in presenting the issues of the play, I failed at truly achieving Brecht’s ever-so-important alienation effect, and thus I failed at truly asking the audience to think about the issues presented. There were two primary problems with *The House That Ché Built*: my relatable protagonist, Manny, and the setting of the play. These two factors encouraged the audience to become invested in the play rather than remain distant and watch the play from an objective perspective. I was at a loss. How do I write a play with characters that the audience will not try to see themselves in? How do I create a protagonist that the audience absolutely hates? Or should they initially hate the protagonist and then surprise themselves when they find that they are rooting for the “bad guy”?

I think Bertolt Brecht is successful using the alienation effect in his play *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Mother Courage, the protagonist, runs a canteen wagon and follows the war around to make money off the soldiers. Throughout the course of the play, Mother Courage loses all of her children to the war and the audience becomes increasingly frustrated with her. The play is fascinating because we don’t feel like we are Mother Courage. Instead, we are left questioning her actions as she harnesses herself to the wagon at the end of
the play and says, “I hope I can pull the wagon by myself. Yes, I'll manage, there's not much in it now” (Mother Scene 12). We are left feeling negative empathy for the protagonist and subsequently questioning our own actions living in a military industrial complex.

Bertolt Brecht wrote *Mother Courage and Her Children* in response to the rise of Nazism and Fascism in Europe towards the end of the 1930’s. Brecht set the play during the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) as a way of distancing the action of the play from the real threat that was festering in Germany. This technique creates the alienation effect in *Mother Courage and Her Children* by distancing the audience from the setting of the play and thus the characters living in that time. It allowed the audience to sit back and think at the beginning of the play, “Oh, how awful times were back then. It’s a good thing that times have changed.” Or have they? As the play gets more shocking, the alienated audience has the opportunity to start putting the similarities between then and now together on their own. Thus, Brecht’s play does not appear to be an overt political critique of the increasingly militaristic climate of pre-war Germany. It’s just a play about a woman running a canteen wagon during the Thirty Years’ War. The distance that Brecht creates by setting the play far in the past, works like a wink and a nod to the audience. The audience is responsible for connecting the dots, not Brecht. In effect, Brecht is not preaching anti-war rhetoric to the audience, but they are discovering their own anti-war sentiments deep within themselves.
The House That Ché Built did not do that. The play was set in modern times. There was no distance for the audience to separate itself from the setting and characters. Instead, they continue wondering whether or not this could really happen in our current world. The audience is looking for the realism in the play instead of wondering how it relates to their lives. The play did not allow the audience to discover the meaning for themselves. I was trying to force my opinions onto the audience, and I was unsuccessful. They need to discover it on their own.

I thought that magical realism would be enough to alienate the audience, but it seemed to only heighten the realism of Manny’s situation. I created a character, ‘Ché’ Guevara, that gave both the audience and the other characters hope that all would end well. When I killed ‘Ché’, I extinguished that hope. I betrayed the audience rather than motivate them to action. Looking back on the play, I should not have done it in modern times. I think it would be best to take an example form Mr. Brecht and move this play back in time so that the audience can truly have some distance from the play. Maybe with some more distance in time, I will be able to achieve Brecht’s alienation effect and this play will get audiences to think about the political nature of the play.

Despite The House That Ché Built’s shortcomings, I thought it was great to get in over my head with my first play in graduate school. I learned a lot about myself as a writer on my first project. I learned that my writing is generally comedic, even when I am not trying to be funny. I learned that I try to cram too
many thoughts into a single play. Finally, I learned how difficult it really is to write effective political theatre.
CARSON LAKE:
A Return to Family Politics

After The House That Ché Built crumbled, I felt discouraged trying to ‘say something’ through political theatre. I wanted to write plays that would remain relevant. I am inspired by the work of Brecht because his plays have the ability to be both political yet not topical. Brecht's epic theatre takes on an immortal quality that I would like for my work to emulate.

I decided to focus on the politics of the family for my next play. If we are all part of the same human tree, then all politics are family politics. It is the most basic relationship we have in our lives. When we look at the surviving plays from the Greeks, we find that the majority of them are about the politics of the family unit. The relationships we have with our family are paradoxically unique and general. A strong family play is sure to remain relevant.

I began writing Carson Lake in the spring of 2012 as a response to Jean Racine’s Phédra et Hippolyte (which is itself an adaptation of the Greek tragedy Hippolytus by Euripides). Carson Lake follows champion boxer, Johnny Garcia, as he returns home, to Carson Lake, to take the throne after hearing news that his father, King Dusty Garcia, overdosed in the desert. Upon returning to Carson Lake, Johnny’s step-mother, Pedra, makes sexual advances on him in attempt to hold onto power. When Dusty returns to Carson Lake alive, Pedra accuses Johnny of rape and Dusty goes about punishing Johnny, only to be killed by the powerful fists of his own son. Carson Lake was dark and gritty and it really felt like I was finding my voice as a playwright.
I focused on the power of language while working on *Carson Lake*. In *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theatre*, Bert O. States discusses the ways that language is used to create the world of the play. As he puts it:

*The scene ‘permeates’ the speech and the speech illuminates the setting.*—So a strange thing occurs: if one of the characters begins to talk about something taking place elsewhere in his fictional world—the qualities established by this perceptual synthesis before us will vaguely infect this absent something that fills the mind’s eye.—So the ear sees scenery and the eye hears it. (States 52-53)

The power of language has the ability of transforming the stage through words alone. Thus a relatively blank stage, such as those used by the Greeks and Shakespeare, can become many different scenes without the need of elaborate scenery or set changes. “Even if nothing has changed scenographically, the play appropriates the stage as part of its qualitative world as established by the poetry” (53). *Carson Lake* gave me the opportunity to create a stage world with moods that transformed based on the language of the scene.

In *Carson Lake*, I chose to explore my fascination with language. I love the sounds of words and I write with attention to those sounds. I’m a musician so it made sense for me to approach the language of *Carson Lake* with an emphasis on the musicality of the spoken word and the rhythm of the dialogue. My experimentation resulted in a heightened language that fell into free verse. I chose to juxtapose this heightened language against the gritty setting of a New Mexican trailer park.
The result of this mixing achieved the alienation affect that was missing in

_The House That Ché Built._ The heightened language in _Carson Lake_ defamiliarizes trailer parks to the audience. In “Art as Technique”, Viktor Shklovsky best describes ‘defamiliarization’.

_The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects ‘unfamiliar,’ to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object. (Lodge 20)_

Language effectively changes the way the audience experiences _Carson Lake_. I used language, as Shklovsky suggests, to “increase the difficulty and length of perception” (20). This technique affects the audiences’ perception of the characters as they speak. The same happens with the world of _Carson Lake_. Carson Lake is treated both as a gritty, off-the-grid trailer park and a royal kingdom. The audience is free to make the connections between the two worlds and find what lies in between. The language and the scenery are working in opposition to create tension and heighten the play.

With _Carson Lake_, I had finally started to get a grasp on my voice as a playwright. I arrived there, by allowing myself to experiment with form. _Carson Lake_ started in a class focused on response plays. In class, we studied several works that were written in conversation with an existing play. Will Eno’s _Middletown_ is a response to Thornton Wilder’s _Our Town_. I was inspired by the liberty that Mr. Eno took with his loose adaptation. Mr. Eno was able to make his version stand on its own without a required knowledge of _Our Town_. At the same
time, I felt that *Middletown* helped me understand *Our Town* better. I wanted to take the same liberty in adapting *Phaedra*.

I decided to explore language as a tool to create a unique auditory world that was entirely my own. Despite *Carson Lake* originating from a Greek tragedy, it felt like it really belonged to me. I took control of the root story and told it with my voice. I found it incredible liberating to work inside the general structure of *Phaedra*.

*Carson Lake* was a success because I had a solid framework to create my play within. Moving forward from this play, I knew that I had the ability to speak as a playwright, as long as I could establish a solid, clear plot and a vivid play world. In Elinor Fuchs’ *Visit to a Small Planet: Some Questions to Ask a Play* she describes a play as, “Not a flat work of literature, not a description in poetry of another world, but is in itself another world passing before you in time and space” (Fuchs 6). I used the questions outlined in Ms. Fuchs essay to develop the world of *Carson Lake*. It was incredibly helpful to generate so much information about my world. It only makes sense that the clearer I could be about the world of my plays, the easier it would be to develop characters to live in these worlds.

The characters of *Carson Lake* are really amazing and I completely attribute it to the clearly developed world of the play. To be honest, I was a little nervous about the characters in the play and whether the language would make sense for an audience. I was pleasantly surprised when Blackout Theatre produced *Carson Lake* this past February. The characters were the best part of
the play and the actors loved having the chance to work on them. I was told by many of the actors that it was a wonderfully rewarding acting challenge. The audience not only understood, but loved the language of the play.

*Carson Lake* helped me further tune my voice as a playwright by giving me a steady framework to experiment within. I found a proper balance for the comedy and tragedy in the play and I managed to defamiliarize the audience with New Mexican trailer parks. *Carson Lake* is a wonderful example of development in the Dramatic Writing program. I’m very happy that I was able to see it produced as well.
SIMON AS SERGIO:
The Pieces Fall into Place

Simon as Sergio began in the spring of 2013 as an investigation of the dual identities we are navigating while social networking becomes increasingly integrated into our lives. Much like The House That Ché Built, I started writing Simon as Sergio, inspired by an issue; the change that social networking is causing in our society. The internet gives us the ability to construct our identity and shift between the real 'I' and the digital representation of 'I'. Social networking is changing our understanding of identity and the ways in which we express ourselves and interact with others.

Simon as Sergio is inspired by my experience with social media marketing. The nature of this work requires frequent shifts of identity to represent various personas. Perhaps the most interesting persona I assume is that of my band, Red Light Cameras. The band is fronted by Amanda Machon and often people assume that she is the one posting on Facebook. I have had various conversations with fans/admirers who think that I am Amanda. Sometimes, I let them know the truth, but sometimes I entertain myself with their misunderstanding and continue to play the part. Doing this has made me hyperaware of the masking ability that the internet gives its users. This makes me wonder where the line exists between the real world and the cyber world.

A major influence on the creation of Simon as Sergio was dark play or Stories for Boys by Carlos Murillo. The play follows Nick, a computer whiz who tricks another boy into a dark game of lies and manipulation. In Murillo’s play,
Nick uses the internet to lure a love-sick boy, Adam, into a relationship with Rachel, a girl that Nick invents in a chat room. Nick leads Adam through a twisted story filled with many different digital personas, all controlled by Nick, and all deceiving Adam.

*dark play or Stories for Boys* takes place in two distinct worlds; the real world and the cyber world. In the cyber world, Nick is king. He has the ability to become many different characters and control them to fool others for his entertainment. This world is shady and everything is susceptible to be a lie. The real world is more difficult for Nick to manipulate because he is limited to his own body. He is still able to lie and deceive Adam, but no matter how hard he tries, he can never be Rachel in the real world. The real world is Nick’s weakness. It’s the world in which he has the least control.

My play, *Simon as Sergio*, investigates the relationship between the real and cyber worlds and experiments with the concept of identity in the social media age. *Simon as Sergio* is about two high school aged brothers. Simon is a nerdy sophomore, but his brother Sergio is the star quarterback and is running for prom king. Things get complicated when Sergio asks his brother to run his Facebook profile and help him win prom king. While pretending to be his brother, Simon falls in love with Erin, a home-schooled girl that he meets online. Their romance blossoms in the cyber world, but neither knows the other’s true identity.

*Simon as Sergio* is an exploration of identity and the ability to construct it depending on the world we choose to ‘live’ in. In Katie Ellis’ “Be Who You Want
to Be: The Philosophy of Facebook and the Construction of Identity”, she describes communicative identities as:

A performance of the self based on already established social roles. We are who we are on Facebook based on what we already know about identity and perception. (Ellis 37)

Simon is able to become Sergio because Sergio’s Facebook profile has existed as a representation of him. The profile is a part of Sergio’s identity. Anything posted through the voice of the profile is assumed to be directly from the mind of Sergio, even if it is actually written by Simon.

On Facebook, an identity is a choice, an object we choose to project. When ‘I’ maintain my Facebook page, I select a ‘me’ to project to the world.” (39)

The ability to shift identities online, gives Simon a special power to be a ‘cooler’ person than he is in the real world.

At the top of the play, we see the low social status that Simon has in the real world.

SIMON
I asked Candice to go to Jr. Prom with me. Like you said. I asked her.

SERGIO
Oh. How’d that go?

SIMON
She said no.

SERGIO
Sucks dude. Sorry.
Better luck next time, right?

SIMON
Right... (Lopez 5)
Simon doesn’t have the skills necessary to find a girlfriend in high school. But online, when he chooses to be Sergio, he assumes a completely new persona, that of the high school heartthrob. The internet gives Simon the ability to live out a life that is seemingly impossible in the real world. He has the chance to be romantic with Erin because she thinks he is someone else. Without the internet and social networking, Simon would not be able to pull off this guise.

The internet is completely changing the social landscape. From the way we interact to the way that we present ourselves, the internet is quickly offering us new tools for self expression. In Simon as Sergio, Erin, the romantic love interest of the brothers, is actually a teenage girl with cerebral palsy. She uses the internet to live a life that seems impossible to her. Kel Smith’s article “Universal Life: the use of virtual worlds among people with disabilities” discusses how communities with disabilities are embracing virtual worlds.

*In real life, people with disabilities sometimes feel isolated and stigmatized by others; there is always a feeling that they are nothing more than a source of aggravation to their families or caregivers, even though they may be highly functional and appreciative within their respective communities. With the degree of autonomy afforded by virtual worlds, users have the opportunity to overcome self-perceptions that may limit their capability. (Smith 397)*

Erin relishes in the fact that she is finally able to flirt with boys, just like any other teenage girl. The internet grants her the ability to form relationships with people who may otherwise display prejudice and avoid her because of her condition. The internet serves as a vehicle of empowerment to Erin, even though her true power comes in learning to accept herself for who she actually is, and to expect nothing less from a person who loves her.
I stuck with a basic plot structure for *Simon as Sergio*: Boy gets girl. Boy loses girl. Boy gets girl back. This basic form allowed me to explore the ideas of digital identity more completely. It served as a familiar base to keep the audience grounded. The play remained relatively simple, even though the ideas I was investigating were complex. This strategy worked well for me. I have the tendency to try too many new things at once, but I have learned that there is great value in keeping some things simple. In a way it is like composing a good song. If you have all the instruments soloing at once, the song will quickly descend to chaos and become difficult to comprehend. A good song works together, with different parts taking turns experimenting. A solid, steady rhythm section will help highlight the eccentricities of the melody. I feel that the simple plot was the bass line in *Simon as Sergio* that allowed me to explore language and form.

Inspired by my experimentation with language in *Carson Lake*, I decided to integrate emoticons into the dialogue of *Simon as Sergio*. I am fascinated with the increasing prominence of emoticons in our daily lives. In Ganster, Eimler, Kramer’s article “Same Same But Different!? The Differential Influence of Smilies and Emoticons on Person Perception” they describe Social Information Processing Theory as “people actively compensate[ing] for technological shortcomings and minimize[ing] ambiguity by creating surrogates for missing social cues” (Ganster 226). They argue that emoticons are filling a communication gap that we lose when we are not speaking face to face. Furthermore, they have found that:
Empirical studies on the effects of emoticons suggest that they are similarly interpreted and fulfill similar functions to nonverbal behavior in face-to-face situations as they, for example, positively influence the users’ mood. Further, misinterpretations of the message can be prevented by the use of emoticons: a smiling emoticon may, for example, reduce the ambiguity of a message. By contrast, if the direction of the text’s meaning and the meaning of the emoticon are opposed to each other, ambiguity may be caused. (226-227)

Throughout *Simon as Sergio*, I use this technique to create ambiguity between meaning and emoticon. There are several times in the play, where a character says an emoticon insincerely. Often I use this technique when one character is trying to appease another. They are shielded from non-written communication behind the mask of the internet, and thus they are able to maintain a positive guise in order to keep the other character happy, and in doing so, get what they want. This technique creates tension within the line because it highlights the subtext of the emoticon.

One of the most exciting developments during my work on *Simon as Sergio* was the Facebook character creation process. I thought it would be a fun experiment because *Simon as Sergio*’s subject matter lends itself to that kind of exploration. In addition, it was sensible to develop the Facebook profiles for future design purposes, as much of the play takes place on Facebook and projected screenshots are called for in the script. I had no idea how beneficial the profiles would become as the play shifted into production mode.

I created Facebook accounts for every principle character in *Simon as Sergio*. Once the play was cast, the profile pictures were updated to match the actors. The actors were given the login information and encouraged to play with
their characters online. I think this feature is beneficial to the acting process because much of this work is the same that actors need to do for their character development. Every actor should know the basic details needed to create a profile and the amount of customization that actors could make is nearly unlimited. Facebook gives them the ability to bring life to these digital characters.

Facebook serves as a perfect platform for the actors to interact with each other outside of the rehearsal process. As a director, I often ask my actors to improvise external scenes. I find that this exercise helps develop a realistic backstory that both actors can agree upon. This practice is especially useful whenever characters mention a shared moment that does not exist in the play. With Facebook, the same kind of work could be done with the added benefit of having a recorded script of the improvisation. This script could then be referred to for future rehearsal work and it could be edited and further developed.

My work as Marketing Director for Blackout Theatre has trained me to always mind the marketability of the show I am developing. I try not to let it hinder my creativity, but it is useful to think about during a play’s development process. What’s the pitch of this play? How are we going to get butts in seats? How are we going to generate buzz? All of these questions came to mind while I was developing *Simon as Sergio*.

The Facebook profiles have great potential as marketing tools. Every profile is an effective advertisement for the show. Unlike traditional advertisements, the Facebook profiles have the ability to interact with the
audience and get them excited about the production. Last fall, I directed Blackout Theatre's interactive haunted house, *Quarantine*. We experimented with many different marketing strategies. I found that interactive marketing techniques are successful at generating buzz. *Simon as Sergio* has the unique ability to engage audiences online. This engagement allows the audience to become more invested in the play world, and this enhances their experience of the play.

Audiences want to be engaged. It's the key to reaching the younger demographic that so many theaters are starving for. This audience wants an experience they cannot have at the movie theatres. If the theatre wants to remain viable, then it should aim to meet that demand. This is one of the reasons I was strongly behind the idea of having a real prom following one of the performances of *Simon as Sergio*. I think it is another exciting feature to the play, and it has generated more interest in the play. In hindsight, I wish it were possible to have a short prom at the end of every performance of *Simon as Sergio*. It would be a great way to end the show, with the audience engaged in the world of the play.
CONCLUSION

_Simon as Sergio_ is a great example of my many skills as a theatre practitioner successfully converging into my work as a playwright. Without my previous experiences in the full spectrum of theatre creation, I couldn’t have created such a complete and intriguing play. My experiences with _The House That Ché Built_ and _Carson Lake_, prepared me for the work I have done in _Simon as Sergio_. I feel that I have finally found the balance between writing a play that explores an issue, but remains entertaining and encourages audiences to look back at our society with a new lens and to ask, “Is there water there?”

I am starting to feel comfortable calling myself a playwright. For the longest time, I’ve found it difficult to associate myself with that title because I spend much of my time working in other areas of the theatre. Over the course of my graduate career, I’ve come to realize that I do all these other jobs _because_ I am a playwright. Everything that I do in the theatre informs my writing. In fact, it makes me a better playwright. I have grown so much during my three years in the Dramatic Writing program. Under the direction of a fabulous faculty, I have watched my playwriting skills sharpen. I’m finally able to write the type of theatre that I want to see.

I make theatre. That’s what I do. Sometimes I write it, sometimes I direct it, sometimes I act in it and more often than not, I am involved in the designing and marketing end of the process, too. Regardless of my role, I am creating theatre. It is my duty, and I don’t think I will ever be able to stop. I want to
continue exploring all the aspects of theatre. I want to get my hands dirty. I want to jump in the mud. That’s the fun part.

I am an imaginative playwright with a unique perspective on the world. I write plays that ask audiences to look at the familiar in a new light. I explore the fantastic, making rules for the worlds I create in my plays. Movies and television can keep the realism. The theatre I want to create is magical, unreal, quirky, and sometimes outrageous. I love to juxtapose ideas and mine the intersections for inspiration. My greatest strength as a playwright is my natural ability to find humor within my exploration of dark, serious content. I’m forever growing as a playwright and I don’t consider any of my plays complete. They are living, breathing documents, waiting for a breath of life from an eager production company. No doubt, they will change with every iteration. I think that as I mature so will my work. I’m interested to see where this rabbit hole leads me. Hopefully, it will guide me to becoming a better storyteller. Hopefully, it will always guide me back to the watering holes.
APPENDIX A

Simon as Sergio
By Barney Lopez

A Play in 2 Acts
SIMON AS SERGIO

CHARACTERS
Simon/Student 1
Sergio/Student 2/Dwayne
Erin/Student 3/ Beth
Emma/Student 4/Stevie

Setting: A bedroom fills most of the stage.
In Act One: Simon & Sergio’s. In Act 2: Erin & Emma’s.

A portion of the stage is the cyber world. It is in no way realistic. It looks like some modern art installation piece. Most importantly, it looks completely different from the real world. Maybe there are levels. Whatever. Have fun.

NOTES: The actors in the cyber world converse like normal. The actors in real life communicate with the cyber world through text and images projected on screens, but they also speak what they type.

Emoticons are spoken.

:) = Smiley Face
:( = Sad face
:/ = Slanty Face
:p = Tounge Out Face
;) = Winky Face
:* = Kissy Face

/ Indicates point to start next line
#Sarcasm# indicates a line should be sarcastic
... indicates allowing a sentence left uncompleted.
Scene Titles should be projected above or below the stage.
HAIRCUT / FRIEND REQUEST

Simon sits in the bedroom facing the audience. Immediately behind him is a projection of his head and shoulders. He has longer hair in the projection.

Droning grunge music plays a louder than comfortable.

The projected image of Simon begins to change. Each new image shows the stages of Simon’s haircut.

The final image is of Simon with a smile and a thumbs up, with the caption, "Today’s the day."

Simon should remain stone face during this change.

Lights rise on Erin as the music fades. Erin stands in the cyber world in front of her profile picture. It’s an image of a cat with the caption, “Erin Price”.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Hey Sergio,

My name is Erin. I’m home-schooled and I’m trying to write a paper on prom traditions. My friend at Harding High told me that you are running for Prom King and I would really like to interview you. Please let me know when you have some time to chat. ;)

Hope to talk to you soon.

Erin

Lights fade on the cyber world. The image of Simon fades away, leaving Simon staring at the audience.

Simon sits on the chair in front of the computer desk.

Sergio enters the room, barely acknowledging Simon.

**SERGIO**
Sup Sime

**SIMON**
Not much.

**SERGIO**
Not much. Not much.

Sergio starts digging through the closet.

**SIMON**
I did it.

Sergio turns back to look at Simon again.

**SERGIO**
D’you get a haircut?

**SIMON**
I asked her.

Sergio laughs a little.

**SERGIO**
No shit! You did? Did uh... Wait is that... Is that why you got a haircut?

That’s my haircut!

**SIMON**
What?
SERGIO
That’s my fucking haircut.
You got
You cut your hair like mine!

SIMON
Oh! Really?

Simon turns around to the computer and turns on the camera to use as a mirror. The live video projects on the screens.

SIMON (CONT’D)
Shit. I...
I guess I did.
I didn’t mean to.

SERGIO
It’s cool. Whatever. Just kinda weird.

SIMON
Sorry.

Sergio continues digging through the closet. He starts putting things in his backpack. (Beers, bag of weed, a bottle, etc.)

SIMON (CONT’D)
I just asked the lady to do whatever.
Actually, I said, I remember this.
I said, “Make me look handsome!”

SERGIO

SIMON
So I guess you have the “handsome”.

SERGIO
#I guess#

Sergio finishes packing.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
I’m going to a party with Stevie and her friends.

SIMON
Oh.

SERGIO
SIMON

SERGIO
You’re not invited.

SIMON
I know.

SERGIO
Okay.
Well.

SIMON
I don’t want to go.

SERGIO
Good.
Tell mom and dad I went to Rick’s to study.

SIMON
Okay.

SERGIO
Thanks little bro. You’re the best!

Sergio ruffles Simon’s hair and starts to leave.

SIMON
You didn’t ask what she said.

SERGIO
What?

SIMON
I asked Candice to go to Jr. Prom with me.
Like you said. I asked her.

SERGIO
Oh. How’d that go?

SIMON
She said no.

SERGIO
Sucks dude. Sorry.
Better luck next time, right?

SIMON
Right...

SERGIO
SIMON

SERGIO
Hey!

Sergio opens his backpack and gets a beer.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
Have one on me.

SIMON
Thanks.

SERGIO
Hide that in the closet when you’re done.
Peace.

Sergio leaves.

Simon looks at the beer for a moment. He opens it, takes a drink and makes a disgusted face.

A moment. He takes another drink. Sergio runs back into the room.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
Shit!

Sergio rushes to the computer.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
You have to do something.
This chick wants to interview me.

SIMON
Oh–

SERGIO
You gotta do it.

SIMON
What?

Sergio logs onto his profile.

SERGIO
Here.
Her name’s Erin. She’s gonna message me at eight.
SIMON

SERGIO
Pretend to be me.

SIMON
No way.

SERGIO
Come on man.

SIMON
No!

SERGIO
Dude come on! Be a bro.
It’s not that hard. Just tell her about prom.

SIMON
Serg.

SERGIO
I’ll tell dad that you watered down his liquor
and sold it to kids at school!

SIMON
Dude!

SERGIO
I will man.
Nothing is stopping me.

SIMON
That’s fucked up.

SERGIO
Just answer her stupid questions! Not that
hard dude.

SIMON
I don’t feel comfortable/ pretending to be

SERGIO
#/I don’t feel comfortable#
Come on! Stop being a wus and help me out.

SIMON

SERGIO
Here’s my profile.
Say whatever you think I would say or
whatever.
SIMON

SERGIO
Don’t make me sound dumb.

Sergio grabs his backpack, smacks Simon on the back and leaves.

SERGIO (O.S) (CONT’D)
Thanks, bro. You’re the best!

Simon sits at the desk staring at the computer.

He gets up and lays down in the bed looking at his phone.

A BLEEPING LOVE

Students 2 and 4 enter the cyber world next to a projection of Sergio’s profile picture.

STUDENT 4
(BLEEP)
OMG! Lol. You know what I’m talking about!

STUDENT 2
(BLEEP)
Dude!!!! You comin’ or what? We’re all waitin’ on you.

STUDENT 4
(BLEEP)
You’re way cooler than Dwayne. I’m voting for you;

STUDENT 2
(BLEEP)
Hey Brah, got an extra ticket to that concert next week. Wanna come?

Simon walks over to the computer to put it on mute.

As he gets there Erin appears in the cyber world.
ERIN AS ERIN.

(BLEEP)
Hey!
You there?

SIMON

ERIN AS ERIN.

(BLEEP)
It’s me. Erin.

SIMON

ERIN AS ERIN.

(BLEEP)
I guess I’m a little early, but thought I’d just check if you wanted to start sooner. Saw that you were online.

Simon sits at the computer desk.

ERIN AS ERIN. (CONT’D)

(BLEEP)
Maybe you’re away from the computer.
That’s cool. Just message me back whenever.
I’ll be here :)

Simon takes another drink from the beer. Same disgusted look.
Same 2nd drink.

Simon begins to type.

THE INTERVIEW: SIMON AS SERGIO

SIMON AS SERGIO
Hey.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Hey! How’s it going?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Good.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Are you ready for the interview? :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah. I guess I’m as ready as I’ll ever be.
ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol. Okay.
Don’t worry. I don’t have too many questions and like, if I do, like if you’re sick of answering questions, you can totally tell me to stop.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Lol. It’s okay. :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
Seriously. If I’m getting on your nerves just let me know.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Okay.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Sorry. I’m nervous.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Shouldn’t I be the nervous one? ;)
I’m the one being interviewed.

ERIN AS ERIN.
We can both be nervous!

SIMON AS SERGIO
Deal!

ERIN AS ERIN.
:) Okay.
Sergio, First question.
Why are you running for prom king?

Simon looks around the bedroom.

SIMON
Uh...What would...

SIMON AS SERGIO
To win.

SIMON
No...

SIMON AS SERGIO
J/k

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol.
SIMON
Um...

SIMON AS SERGIO
Honestly, it was my girlfriend’s idea.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol.
So that answers one of my questions.
You have a girlfriend.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Ya. Her name’s Stevie. She’s running for prom queen.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I figured.
Do you actually want to be prom king?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Ya. I think it would be cool.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Why?

SIMON
Um...

SIMON AS SERGIO
You know. To be king. I mean it sounds like... impressive? I guess I could like tell my kids, like “hey kids, your dad was King.”

ERIN AS ERIN.
You have kids?

SIMON AS SERGIO
No! No way. I mean in the future.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I know. J/K
:P

SIMON AS SERGIO
Lol.

ERIN AS ERIN.
:)
So you’re in it for the title.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I guess. Is that bad?
ERIN AS ERIN.
No. I think that’s why most people get into these kinds of things.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Popularity contests?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Exactly.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I guess.

ERIN AS ERIN.

SIMON AS SERGIO

ERIN AS ERIN.
Next question: Do you think you’ll win?

SIMON AS SERGIO
I hope so.
I mean, I’m pretty popular.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Oh yeah? How so?

Simon looks around the room.

SIMON
Uh...

SIMON AS SERGIO
I play on the Football Team.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Really? What position do you play?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Quarterback

ERIN AS ERIN.
Awesome!

SIMON AS SERGIO
I made state this year.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Congrats.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Thanks. I’m pretty awesome I guess.
(Mutters to self)
Ha that’s/ so fucking stupid.

/Lol. Okay.
What other things do you do in school?

I’m kinda on the student body.

Kinda?

I don’t really do anything in it. I just show
up and get free food. I guess I vote on
things.

How’d you get into that?

Stevie. She’s the vice president.

Cool.

I guess she drags me along to a lot of things.

I noticed.

I know. I’m whipped.

Whipped?

Like, I do whatever she tells me to do.

Lol. If you say so. :)

:) 

It’s nice of you to be supportive of your
girlfriend. :)}
SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah. I guess that’s what good boyfriends do, right?

ERIN AS ERIN.
BRB.

Erin exits the cyber world.

Simon pokes around Sergio’s profile, waiting.

After a while, Erin returns.

ERIN AS ERIN. (CONT’D)
I have to go.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Oh. Okay.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Sorry. Something just came up.
It was nice talking with you. Thanks for letting me interview you!

SIMON AS SERGIO
Is that it?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Well, I gotta go. I’m soooo sorry, but I really gotta deal with something right now.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Okay. Do what you need to do. :)
If you want to talk more later, let me know.
Like if you have more questions.
I should be on most of the night.

ERIN AS ERIN.
That’s very nice of you! Like super nice!
;) ;);)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Triple smile?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yeah. Triple smile!
You’re so nice. All the other people I talked to were rude or too cool to talk to me.

SIMON AS SERGIO
That sucks.
ERIN AS ERIN.
But you’re nice! I like that. :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Thanks.
:)

ERIN AS ERIN.
No. Thank you.
:)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Anytime.
:) :) :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
:) :) :) 
Okay. Gotta go. TTYL

SIMON AS SERGIO
TTYL

Erin exits the cyber world.
Simon stays at the computer.

CYBER CAMPAIGNING

The students enter the cyber world. Four images appear. They are profile pictures of Sergio, Stevie, Dwayne and Beth. Each image is labeled "(Name) For King/Queen".

SIMON AS SERGIO
You know You know
You gotta go
Vote for Sergio
FOR KING!

STEVIE
I like that.

BETH
I like that.

DWAYNE
I like that.

STEVIE
Believe me, believe me
You wanna vote for Stevie!
SIMON AS SERGIO
I like that.

DWAYNE
I like that.

BETH
I like that.

DWAYNE
Dwayne’s the man.
That is all.

BETH
I like that.

STEVIE
I like that.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I like that.

BETH
Please vote for Beth.
Thanks guys :)

DWAYNE
I like that.

STEVIE
Vote for Stevie and Sergio.
The only couple running for King and Queen ;)

SIMON AS SERGIO
I like that.

DWAYNE
If you vote for me, I’ll wear a crazy tie!

BETH
I like that.

SIMON AS SERGIO
No bribes needed.
Vote for Sergio.

STEVIE
I like that.

BETH
Don’t let nice people finish last.
Vote for Beth.
DWAYNE
I like that.

STEVIE
Beth is implying that I am not nice and that is simply not true. How mean of her to spread such nasty rumors online. We all know where that leads. Vote for me because I would never stoop to Beth’s level.

BETH
I never said anything mean. Stevie is lying.

STEVIE
Vote for Stevie.
Not for Beth.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I like that.

DWAYNE
Why can’t we all just get along.
Vote for Dwayne.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I like that.

STEVIE
I like that.

BETH
Please, please, please
Vote for me.

DWAYNE
Vote for me.

STEVIE
Vote for me.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Vote for me.

BETH
I like that.

DWAYNE
I like that.

STEVIE
I like that.
SIMON AS SERGIO
I like that.

Simon gets up from the computer, leaving it on. He turns off the light. He goes into his bed and lies down. The cyber world continues.

BETH
I like that.

DWAYNE
I like that.

STEVIE
I like that.

DWAYNE
I like that.

BETH
I like that.

STEVIE
I like that.

BETH
I like that.

STEVIE
I like that.

Lights slowly fade on cyber world, leaving Simon sleeping in his bed.

BROTHERLY LOVE

Sergio comes in loud and clumsily. He fumbles for the light on the night stand and turns it on. Simon wakes up.

SIMON
Uh...Dude.

SERGIO
Hey bro.
SIMON
What time is it?

SERGIO
Like 3.

SIMON
Turn the light off.

SERGIO
In a sec.

SIMON
I’m trying to sleep. I have a test in the morning.

SERGIO
Quit your crying baby.

SIMON
(under his breath)
 Fuck you.

SERGIO
What?!

SIMON
Nothing.

Sergio sits at the computer desk and takes off his shoes.

SERGIO
Wicked party dude. Stevie got really drunk.

SIMON

SERGIO
We made out in my car for like an hour.

SIMON

SERGIO
I fingered her.

SIMON
Dude! I don’t want to know that.

Sergio throws a shoe at Simon.

SERGIO
Yeah you do. Little perv.
SIMON

SERGIO
’sides, my sex stories are the closest you’ll ever get to any action.

SIMON
I’m only a Sophomore.

SERGIO
I got my first handie in middle school.

SIMON
Dude!

SERGIO
We were in the school library.

SIMON
Fuckin’ gross man.

SERGIO
Pretty sure it was the non-fiction section.

SIMON
I hate sharing a room with you.

SERGIO
You’re just jealous.

SIMON

SERGIO
You can deny it all you want, but you wish you could be me. Live my awesome life.

SIMON
Whatever.

Sergio gets in his bed.

Silence.

SERGIO
D’you do that interview thingy for me?

SIMON
Yeah.

SERGIO
How’d it go?
SIMON
Good, I guess.
We didn’t finish it though.

SERGIO
What do you mean?

SIMON
I don’t know. Something came up with her and she had to go. She still has some more questions for you. She may message you tomorrow.

SERGIO
Fuck that. She had her chance.

SIMON
Come on. She was really nice. I think you should finish it.

SERGIO
Tomorrow? I can’t. I got a... Thing.
You can do it!

SIMON
Seriously?

SERGIO
Ya. Makes more sense anyway. Since you been talking to her already.

SIMON
Okay. Sure. I’ll do it.

SERGIO
My password’s “Scoots Magoots”

SIMON
Our cat?

SERGIO
Ya. Easy to remember.

Silence. Maybe Simon can get some sleep. Nope.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
Wanna run that page thing for me, too?

SIMON
What?
SERGIO
It’s a pain in my ass. Having to update it all the time. Asking people to vote for me.
#Inviting them to my event#
Uhg. It’s so dumb, but #Stevie# says it’s the only way we’re gonna to win.

SIMON
Oh.

SERGIO
But I’m like, I don’t have time for all this shit. You know. Letting people know everything that I’m doing. Like who really cares anyway. It’s like everyone is wishing they had a stalker or whatever.

SIMON
Yeah.

SERGIO
I’ve got better things to do, you know.

SIMON
Yeah.

Silence.

SERGIO
So you gonna do it?

SIMON
Run your page?

SERGIO
Yeah.

SIMON
I don’t know.

SERGIO
Come on. All you do is sit on the computer all day anyway. Might as well be a little productive.

SIMON
You want me to pretend to be you?

SERGIO
It’s your dream come true, bro.

SIMON
Whatever.
SERGIO
Come on! I’ll...look I’ll take you to a party.

SIMON
Serg...

SERGIO
Two! Three! I’ll take you to at least three parties. Before the end of the school year.

SIMON
Really?

SERGIO
Ya. Awesome parties with real hot girls in the hills.

SIMON
Yeah?

SERGIO
Ya.

SIMON
I just have to run your profile.

SERGIO
Ya. Stevie says I have to post something about prom every four hours. So just, like, do that. Say like, “Vote for Sergio” or whatever. Maybe post cool pictures of me playing football.

SIMON
Okay.

SERGIO
Really!?!?

SIMON
Yeah, sure. I’ll do it.

SERGIO
Schweet!!

SIMON
Can I go to bed now?

SERGIO
Oh. Ya. Sure.

Silence.

SIMON
Will you turn off the light?
SERGIO
You get it. You’re closer.

Simon gets up and turns off the light.

THE INKLINGS OF LOVE-PART 1

Lights up on Erin in the Cyber World.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Alright Sergio, are you ready for another awesome question?

Lights up on Simon sitting at the computer.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Enough questions about me.

ERIN AS ERIN.
What?

SIMON AS SERGIO
I want to know more about you.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Oh really? :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah. Like, what’s it like being home-schooled.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lonely :/

SIMON AS SERGIO
Oh. Yeah, I can see that.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I mean it’s fine. I just spend so much time with my mom. I mean, she’s pretty cool, but sometimes I wish I could have more friends, you know, like my age.

SIMON AS SERGIO
It must be hard making friends when you’re home-schooled.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Very.
SIMON AS SERGIO
Well, sometimes it’s just as hard for some people in regular school, too.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yeah?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah. It’s really tough for some people.

ERIN AS ERIN.
But not for you :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
#Yeah. Not for me. :)#

ERIN AS ERIN.

SIMON AS SERGIO

ERIN AS ERIN.
What’s the first thing you thought about this morning?

SIMON AS SERGIO
I thought about you actually.

ERIN AS ERIN.
::Blushing:: Really?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah. I mean I woke up thinking about how we had to finish this interview.

ERIN AS ERIN.
We’ve been “finishing this interview” for a few days now.

SIMON AS SERGIO
It’s an in-depth interview process. ;)

ERIN AS ERIN.
That’s cute.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Then I started thinking about how maybe one day we will find out a way to log into the internet in our dreams.

ERIN AS ERIN.
That would be cool.
SIMON AS SERGIO
We could actually hang out with each other in our dreams. Wouldn’t that be awesome?

ERIN AS ERIN.
What would we do?

SIMON AS SERGIO
I’d take you on a hot air balloon.

ERIN AS ERIN.
:) That would be so cool.

SIMON AS SERGIO
And we’d take our balloon into space. Maybe land on the moon and build a house.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Woah!

SIMON AS SERGIO
We’d build our moon home using 3D printers.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol
You’re nerdier than I expected.
But it’s still cute.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Thanks.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I have a confession to make.

SIMON AS SERGIO
What’s that?

ERIN AS ERIN.
I was looking at your pictures.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah?

ERIN AS ERIN.
You’re very handsome ;)

SIMON AS SERGIO
My own little stalker.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Teehee
You have puppy dog eyes.
SIMON AS SERGIO
Is that a good thing?

ERIN AS ERIN.
It’s a great thing. It’s adorably cute.
Irresistibly cute.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Five points for that word.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Thank you.

SIMON AS SERGIO
:)

ERIN AS ERIN.
:) :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
:) :) :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
Triple Smile!

SIMON AS SERGIO
You’re cute.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Thank you.

SIMON AS SERGIO
How come you don’t have any pictures of you on your profile?

ERIN AS ERIN.
My mom won’t let me. She barely let me have a profile. I begged.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Lame.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I know.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I wish I could see what you look like.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’m sorry.

SIMON AS SERGIO
But, I guess I understand your mom’s concern. Don’t want creepy pervs scop ing you out.
ERIN AS ERIN.
Scoping. Is that even a word?

SIMON AS SERGIO
You know what I mean.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Just teasing you.

SIMON AS SERGIO
:)

ERIN AS ERIN.
:)
One scoping perv is enough

SIMON AS SERGIO
I’m not a scoping perv!

ERIN AS ERIN.
J/K

SIMON AS SERGIO
:p

ERIN AS ERIN.
:p

SIMON AS SERGIO
Well if you ever feel like taking a chance and emailing a picture to a scoping perv, please pick me.

ERIN AS ERIN.
We’ll see ;)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Really??

ERIN AS ERIN.
We’ll see.

SIMON AS SERGIO
:):):)

ERIN AS ERIN.
Triple Smile?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yup. I feel quite honored that you’d consider sending me a pic.
ERIN AS ERIN.
Well, you are quite welcome for the...consideration.
:)

SIMON AS SERGIO
:) :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
:) :) :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
I don’t mind talking to you like this, though.
Like not knowing what you look like.
It’s like we are in the old days again.
Like when people used to send letters.
Like when the men were away on expeditions, or war or whatever and the women stayed behind to take care of the homeland. And they’d send these notes back and forth. Forgetting what each other looked like and changing all at the same time. Growing closer through words alone.

Does that make sense?

ERIN AS ERIN.
:) Totally.

SIMON AS SERGIO
:)

Silence.

ERIN AS ERIN.
So, like I guess the actual interview is over now.

SIMON AS SERGIO
:( yeah I know.
Can we keep talking though? Like be friends?

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’d love that!

SIMON AS SERGIO
YEAY!!! :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
YEAY!!! :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
I have to go right now though. :( 
ERIN AS ERIN.
:(

SIMON AS SERGIO
I know. :( 
Sorry.

ERIN AS ERIN.
It’s okay. We can talk more later! 
Tonight?

SIMON AS SERGIO 
Sure. Later tonight!

ERIN AS ERIN.
:)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Okay. TTYL

ERIN AS ERIN.
TTYL :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
:) ;)

ERIN AS ERIN.
:) :) :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Triple Smile!

ERIN AS ERIN.
Triple smile!

SIMON AS SERGIO
Okay. Goodbye for real now.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Goodbye for real.

Lights fade on Simon in the real world.

A LIKE IS JUST A LIKE

Lights up on more of the cyber world revealing various aspects of Sergio’s digital life. Erin looks through it. Sergio and Stevie enter the cyber world.
SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sergio Gomez is going to Harding High School Track Meet.

STEVIE AS STEVIE
Stevie Ryan likes that.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sergio Gomez posted a photo.
A photo of a cat riding a Roomba appears.

STEVIE AS STEVIE
Stevie Ryan likes that.
OMG soooooo funny.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that.
LOL.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sergio Gomez is listening to Kanye West on Spotify.
A photo of Yeezus by Kanye West appears. (Or whatever new album the kids are into)

STEVIE AS STEVIE
Seriously?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that.
I love Kanye!
College Dropout is one of my favorite albums of all time.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sergio Gomez shared a photo.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that.

STEVIE AS STEVIE
Stevie Ryan likes that.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sergio Gomez shared a photo.
ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that.

STEVIE AS STEVIE
Stevie Ryan likes that.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sergio Gomez was tagged in a photo

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sergio Gomez shared a photo.

An image of Sergio Gomez with the text “Sergio For King” appears.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that.

A series of photos of Sergio appear on the screens. After each one. Erin responds.

ERIN AS ERIN. (CONT’D)
Erin Price likes that.

ERIN AS ERIN. (CONT’D)
Erin Price likes that.

ERIN AS ERIN. (CONT’D)
Erin Price likes that.

ERIN AS ERIN. (CONT’D)
Erin Price likes that.

STEVIE AS STEVIE
Stevie Ryan wrote on Sergio Gomez’s wall.
Give me a call. Like now.

Stevie and Sergio leave the cyber world.
A BEACH SCENE

Lights up on Simon sitting at the computer desk in the bedroom. Erin sits in the cyber world.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Do you wanna do something?

ERIN AS ERIN.
?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Oh
No
LOL not that

ERIN AS ERIN.
Whew. LOL

SIMON AS SERGIO
Lol I’ve never done that

ERIN AS ERIN.
Would you?

SIMON AS SERGIO
I don’t think so
I don’t know
would you?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol. IDK. Maybe I’d try it

SIMON AS SERGIO
/Yeah.

ERIN AS ERIN.
But I’d have to know the other person really well.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah.
for sure
me too

Silence

ERIN AS ERIN.
What did you wanna do?
SIMON AS SERGIO
Like
Pretend we’re on the beach.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol. Ok.

SIMON AS SERGIO
And I’m like a surfer dude with my board just like standing on the beach assessing the waves, waiting for a good surf.

ERIN AS ERIN.
LOL. Okay.

SIMON AS SERGIO
What about you? What are you doing?

ERIN AS ERIN.
On the beach?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Uh...I’m laying down on my beach towel in the sand, underneath a big umbrella, reading.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Reading?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yes. :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Okay.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Are you going to tan?
While you wait for the waves?

SIMON AS SERGIO
I guess I could do that here.
If you don’t mind.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I don’t mind at all. Go ahead. :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Thank you.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’m just reading my book. ;)}
SIMON AS SERGIO
I forgot to bring sun screen.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Uh-oh.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Do you have some?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Here you go!

SIMON AS SERGIO
Thanks!:)
SPF 55. That’s pretty good. Won’t get sunburned with this stuff.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol. That’s the idea.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Tanning is funny. It’s like you want to tan, but not too much. You don’t want to look dark and red. Like burnt. With your skin all cracked.

ERIN AS ERIN.
That’s gross.

SIMON AS SERGIO
But you don’t want to look pasty white either. We all just want to look bronze. I think, in the future, we’ll genetically modify our skin cells to be perfectly tanned. It’ll be awesome. I mean, just think about it. It’ll probably end racism.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol!
Probably ;)

SIMON AS SERGIO
I finished putting the lotion it on my front. Can you help me get my back?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Sure.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Thanks.

ERIN AS ERIN.
LOL
SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah there.

ERIN AS ERIN.
LOL.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Ah yeah.
It’s so hard to get the middle of my back
because my biceps are so big.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol. :)
I’m pretty sure most people can’t reach the
middle of their back. Don’t think biceps have
anything to do with it.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Mine do.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I think it’s about bone structure.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah, and my bones are surrounded by muscle.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Okay
Is that enough sun screen?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah. Thank you very much kind lady ;)

ERIN AS ERIN.
No problem handsome gentleman. ;)

SIMON AS SERGIO
:)

ERIN AS ERIN.
Do you want to do me now?

SIMON AS SERGIO
What?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol.
I mean, do you want to put sunscreen on me?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Oh! Yeah! Do you need some?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yes please. Let me take off my top first.
SIMON AS SERGIO
What?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol. Turn around. Close your eyes.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Okay. They’re closed.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Okay. I’m laying down now. You can come put sunscreen on me.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Okay. I’m putting sunscreen on your back.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Oh yeah. Right there.

SIMON AS SERGIO
There.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yes. :) That feels good.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Rub it in. It feels good.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’m rolling over.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I’m brushing sand and hair out of your face.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’m grabbing the back of your head and pulling you in for a kiss.

Sergio enters the bedroom of the real world.

SIMON
/Shit

SIMON AS SERGIO
BRB
Sergio launches his backpack across the bedroom.

SERGIO
Shit!

ERIN AS ERIN.
What is it? Is everything alright?

SIMON AS SERGIO
It’s fine. Just my brother.
I gotta go.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Okay. :)
See you later, surfer dude.

SIMON AS SERGIO
:) Bye Beach babe.

Simon clicks around on his computer. He logs off as Sergio. Lights out on the cyber world.

SERGIO
I’m sorry man. Did I interrupt something?

SIMON
Nah. It’s cool. Don’t worry about it.

Silence.

SIMON (CONT’D)
What’s up man?

SERGIO
Shit day.

SIMON
Yeah?
Stevie?

SERGIO
Yeah. She’s being all jealous and insecure.

SIMON
Yeah?

SERGIO
It’s like I can’t have any friends of the opposite sex. Kinda ridiculous.
SIMON
Yeah.

SERGIO
I mean it’s half the fucking world. She can’t exclude half the world from my realm of friendship.

SIMON
Yeah.

SERGIO
And now she’s all pissy because girls are liking my photos on Facebook. I’m like, lay off. People like shit on Facebook. It makes them feel better about their shitty lives. It doesn’t mean anything.

SIMON
You guys have been fighting a lot lately.

SERGIO
Yeah. Not sure shit’s gonna work out.

SIMON

SERGIO
Sucks.

SERGIO
Yeah.

SIMON
Sorry.

SERGIO
Eh.

SIMON

SERGIO
I mean at this point, I’m not sure what’s gonna be best either way. I guess that doesn’t make any sense.

SIMON
Nah.

SERGIO
It’s like, the village is already on fire, maybe we should all just get the fuck out and let it burn.
SIMON
Uh, yeah I guess.

SERGIO
I mean, like you could try and stay and put the fire out, but you live in an old village made out of hay and shit. So like, it’s a big risk.

SIMON
Yeah. I guess it’s like better if you both make it out alive

SERGIO
With minor burns

SIMON
I don’t know what to tell you man, but sounds like you’re in some serious thinking zone or whatever.

SERGIO
Yeah.

SIMON
Yup.

A couple seconds of awkwardness. Then Simon grabs a backpack from his desk.

SIMON (CONT’D)
I’m outtie. Ren’s parents are outta town tonight. We’re gonna watch some movies and play video games. You can come if you want. I already asked mom and she’s cool with it.

SERGIO
Nah. I’ll probably be on the phone with Stevie all night.

SIMON
Lamzoid.

SERGIO
Yeah.

SIMON
Well, I gotta go.

SERGIO
Se ya.
Simon exits. Sergio walks around the room. He sits at the desk and turns on the computer. He tries to log in. He gets denied. A screen in the cyber world reads “Password Invalid”. Sergio tries again. “Password Invalid” flashes again.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
What the fuck?

Sergio’s phone starts ringing.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
Uhg.

Sergio answers the phone.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
Hey babe...

Sergio lays down in bed. Lights fade slowly.

THE INKLINGS OF LOVE-- PART 2

Erin enters the Cyber World.

Simon sits at his computer desk. It is late. Sergio sleeps on the top bunk.

ERIN AS ERIN.
U there?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Hi :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
Hi :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
It’s late.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I know

SIMON AS SERGIO
Everything alright?
ERIN AS ERIN.
Can’t sleep

SIMON AS SERGIO
Same here.

ERIN AS ERIN.
The moons too bright.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I haven’t seen it

ERIN AS ERIN.
Look outside

Simon gets up and looks out the window. Sergio rustles in bed. Simon closes the curtains.

SIMON AS SERGIO
It’s big.

ERIN AS ERIN.
It keeps me up when it gets like that.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Maybe you’re a werewolf?

ERIN AS ERIN.
LOL.

SIMON AS SERGIO
:)

ERIN AS ERIN.
I may have to visit a doctor and have that checked out.

SIMON AS SERGIO
LOL
Maybe a veterinarian

ERIN AS ERIN.
LOL

SIMON AS SERGIO
I’m sorry the moon is keeping you up :( 

ERIN AS ERIN.
It’s okay.
I’m happy you’re online. Makes the insomnia more bearable.
SIMON AS SERGIO
I do what I can.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Like a knight?

SIMON AS SERGIO
A Night Knight

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol
If I were drinking something I would have spit
it out. That’s funny.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Thank you.

ERIN AS ERIN.
My Night Knight.

SIMON AS SERGIO
At your service.

ERIN AS ERIN.
:) :) :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
:) :) :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
:*

SIMON AS SERGIO
Is that a kiss?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yes.

SIMON AS SERGIO
For me?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yes.

SIMON AS SERGIO
:

ERIN AS ERIN.
:*
and there’s another one.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I feel so honored.
Silence

ERIN AS ERIN.
I wrote a haiku for you

SIMON AS SERGIO
You did?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yeah

SIMON AS SERGIO
Tell me

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’m not sure

SIMON AS SERGIO
Come on

ERIN AS ERIN.
It’s not done

SIMON AS SERGIO
You can’t tell me you wrote a haiku for me and then not let me see it

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’m nervous

SIMON AS SERGIO
It’s fine
I’m not going to publish it or anything

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’ll trade you

SIMON AS SERGIO
For what?

ERIN AS ERIN.
A kiss

SIMON AS SERGIO
What?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Give me a kiss

SIMON AS SERGIO
Online
ERIN AS ERIN.
Are you going to come across town right now and give me a real one?

SIMON AS SERGIO
I wish

ERIN AS ERIN.
Just an emotikiss.
Like this
:*

SIMON AS SERGIO
:*

ERIN AS ERIN.
:*

SIMON AS SERGIO
:*
That’s it.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yup. :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Okay. You’ve had your emotikiss.
Now hand over the poem!

ERIN AS ERIN.
:)

SIMON AS SERGIO
:)

ERIN AS ERIN.
You’re sweet

SIMON AS SERGIO
you’re stalling ;)

ERIN AS ERIN.
Lol. I am.
Promise not to laugh

SIMON AS SERGIO
promise

ERIN AS ERIN.
I mean, do whatever you want, but don’t tell me if you LOL

SIMON AS SERGIO
I won’t
ERIN AS ERIN.
It’s new

SIMON AS SERGIO
LOL. Just tell me already!

ERIN AS ERIN.
Okay here it goes

Silence as Erin types

ERIN AS ERIN. (CONT’D)
Some nights I just wish
I could fly to your window
And give you a kiss

For this is my wish
To feel your lips against mine
For a very long time

But I have no car
And I think that you live too far
And my kiss will miss

So I can just wish
And hope and pray that one day
I can learn to fly

Silence as they stare at their screens.

ERIN AS ERIN. (CONT’D)
That’s it

SIMON AS SERGIO
It’s beautiful

ERIN AS ERIN.
You don’t have to say that

SIMON AS SERGIO
No really
I like it

ERIN AS ERIN.
Thanks

SIMON AS SERGIO
I wish I could kiss you.
IRL

Silence
ERIN AS ERIN.
I should go to bed.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah, it’s almost morning.
I should go to bed, too.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Okay I’m going to bed now.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Sweet dreams

ERIN AS ERIN.
Can I have another?

SIMON AS SERGIO
?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Emotikiss

SIMON AS SERGIO
Of course! :*

ERIN AS ERIN.
:*

SIMON AS SERGIO
:):):)

ERIN AS ERIN.
:):):)

SIMON AS SERGIO
Triple smile!

ERIN AS ERIN.
Triple Smile!

SIMON AS SERGIO
Goodnight.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Goodnight. TTYL

Lights fade on the real world.
Erin Exits the cyber world.
All four actors enter the cyber world. On one screen an image of “Dwayne for King”. On the other, “Sergio for King”. When the students pledge their support for one of the candidates, they run to the image.

**STUDENT 1**
Ren Williams likes “Sergio for Prom King”

**STUDENT 3**
Rachel Meadows likes “Dwayne for Prom King”

**STUDENT 2**
Andrew Mitchell likes “Dwayne for Prom King”

**STUDENT 4**
Angela McCallister likes “Sergio for Prom King”

**STUDENT 3**
Wendy Elk likes “Sergio for Prom King”

**STUDENT 4**
Sofia Sluth likes “Sergio for Prom King”

**STUDENT 3**
Sarah Soyer likes “Sergio for Prom King”

**STUDENT 1**
Chris Loman likes “Dwayne for Prom King”

**STUDENT 4**
Samantha Green likes “Dwayne for Prom King”

**STUDENT 2**
Carlos Montoya likes “Sergio for Prom King”

**STUDENT 1**
John Vernon likes “Sergio for Prom King”

**STUDENT 3**
Franny Smith likes “Sergio for Prom King”

**STUDENT 4**
Henry Windston likes “Sergio for Prom King”

Maybe this goes on longer. When it reaches it’s climax, lights fade.
Simon sits on the computer.
Sergio comes in upset.

SERGIO
Stevie dumped me.

SIMON
What?

SERGIO
Yup. She doesn’t want to go to prom with me anymore, either. Fucking bitch.

SIMON

SERGIO
Fuck her.

SIMON
Yeah she was kinda a bitch.

SERGIO
She’s such a bitch. She just can’t stand it that I’m more popular than her.

SIMON
Yeah...

SERGIO
She was getting all upset because I’ve got more likes on my page than she does. And she’s losing to Beth so she asked if I would deny the King Crown if she didn’t win Queen. And I’m like, No. What do you think I am? Stupid?

SIMON
Oh.

SERGIO
So she asked me if I would dance with the girl that wins Queen, and I’m like, Duh. It’s like tradition you know. The king and the queen are supposed to dance.

SIMON
Yeah.

SERGIO
So she asked me to deny the crown if she doesn’t win and I put my foot down. If I win. (MORE)
SERGIO (CONT'D)
Then I win. That’s that. If she doesn’t win, which she won’t, then she doesn’t win.

SIMON
Yeah. Stevie/ is so

SERGIO
/ahh!!! I don’t want to hear that name anymore. From now on she will be known as, “She Who Shall Not be Named.”

SIMON
Okay.

SERGIO
There’s no way she can win if I’m not her boyfriend. She just shot herself in the foot. Dumb bitch.

SIMON
What are you going to do about a prom date, then?

SERGIO
Rebound!

SIMON
Rebound?

SERGIO
That’s it! I need to get over “She Who Shall Not be Named”. Get past this shit that has like ruined my life all semester. Fuck. All year.
Shit!
Since the summer!

SIMON
Yeah.

SERGIO
You have no idea dude. I could have tapped all kinds a tang this summer.

SIMON
Tang?

SERGIO
Poontang!
At the beach.
All kinds.

SIMON
Oh
SERGIO
But no! I was with She who shall not be named. 
Fuckin’ changin’ myself for her.

SIMON
That ain’t right.

SERGIO
Shit no it ain’t! 
This ain’t me. 
This.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
And this. 
I’m not this. 
Or fuckin’ this shit. 

SIMON
What are you talking about?

SERGIO
All this smarty-prep shit. 
Fuckin’ Abercrombie & Fitch shit 

SIMON
Your nice clothes?

SERGIO
Fuck ’em! 
All this preppy bullshit. 
It ain’t me!

SIMON
Uh...

SERGIO
It’s her. It’s who she wants me to be. 
Fuck it all! 
I’m gonna just start dressing in ripped up 
jeans from the fuckin’ thrift store. Fuckin’ 
shirts for marathons that I didn’t run. 
Dirty fuckin’ rags. 
And my hair a mess cuz I don’t care!

SIMON
Uh. I don’t think that’s/ a good idea

SERGIO
What? Why?
SIMON
Well, I mean, at least ‘til the prom. People won’t vote for you if you look like that.

SERGIO
F*ck it!

SIMON
What?

SERGIO
Fuck it. I don’t really want to be prom king.

SIMON
Dude!

SERGIO
She wanted me to be prom king.

SIMON
Really. You didn’t want it a little.

SERGIO
It’s cool, I guess. But then I’m like king of her stupid society of snobs and douche bags.

SIMON
Yeah, but I bet she’s be pissed if you were.

SERGIO
Fuuuuck. You’re right, bro! It’ll totally drive her nuts. Ha!

SIMON
You’re almost to 100 likes.

SERGIO
Ah yeah! Yeah!
Bro! Think of all the chicks I could hook up with as King.

Sergio gives Simon a high five. Simon is reluctant and awkward about it.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
I like the way you think.
Chicks’ll be all over me.

SIMON
You’ll have to beat them off with a stick.

SERGIO
Fuckin’ gross bro.
SIMON
What? Ah! Dude. I didn’t mean that/ way.

SERGIO
Sicko.

SIMON
You know what/ I meant.

SERGIO
Yeah just fuckin’ with you.
I can just see her face now. With her ugly
wrinkles. Oh how fucking angry just pure
bitter anger coming over her when she finds
out I won.

SIMON
yeah...

SERGIO
She’s such a fuckin’ bitch.

Silence. Sergio goes to the
computer and turns it on.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
Hey man, did you change the password my
profile?

SIMON
Uh. Yeah. Sorry. I forgot to tell you.

SERGIO
What’s the new password?

SIMON
Here.

Simon goes to the computer.

SERGIO
Just give me the password.

Simon types the password and
hits enter. Simon starts
navigating the computer for
Sergio.

SIMON
There.

SERGIO
Why’d you change the password?
SIMON
I opened a weird email and I didn’t want to get phished.

SERGIO
Oh.

SIMON
That would suck to send out dick pics to all your followers right now.

SERGIO
Ha. Yeah it would.

SIMON
101 people like Sergio for Prom King!

SERGIO
Schweet!

They high five.

SIMON
Awesome. Kevin Grancher. He’s got a ton of friends in cross country.

SERGIO
What’s the new password?

SIMON
Uh. It’s a shape.

SERGIO
A shape.

SIMON
Like a shape on the keyboard. Like this.
cde45tgv
It’s a circle around the F and the R.

SERGIO
Woah.

SIMON
I read about it online. It’s really hard for people to break passwords that make no sense to anyone who doesn’t know the pattern.

Sergio takes control of the computer.

SERGIO
Where’s that chick at?
SIMON
What chick?

SERGIO
Erin? The one that is sending me the flirty messages.
Home-School girl.

SIMON
She’s...

SERGIO
Found her!

SIMON
Yeah. That’s her. Why?

SERGIO
You know what I’m thinking?
Rebound!

*Sergio holds up a hand for a high five. Simon doesn’t.*

SIMON
No way dude.

SERGIO
Fuck yeah dude.
Rebound!

*Sergio offers his hand for a high five again. Simon reluctantly connects.*

SIMON
I don’t know.

SERGIO
She’s the perfect rebound for me dude.

SIMON
Uh... I don’t/ think

SERGIO
What’s she look like? She doesn’t have a picture on here?

SIMON
No. Her mom won’t let her.

SERGIO
You said she was cute.
SIMON
She is.

SERGIO
Then how do you know she is cute?

SIMON
She is. In conversation. Like. I can just tell.

SERGIO
That’s dumb.

Sergio starts typing.

SIMON
What are you doing?

SERGIO
Seeing if I can get a picture outta her.

SIMON
Dude. Don’t do that.

SERGIO
Why not?

SIMON
It’s a little pervy.

SERGIO
Whatever. You don’t know how to talk to chicks. That’s why you’re a virgin. Chicks like it when guys are pushy. Or. What’s it called? Assertive. Yeah.

SIMON
I don’t think you should hook up with her.

Simon gets close to Sergio and the computer.

SERGIO
Shut up.

Sergio pushes Simon away.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
I need a rebound. You said so yourself. If I hook up with Erin this weekend, it would be perfect. No one would ever find out. (MORE)
And, I’ll feel a shit load better because I won’t be all hung up on “She Who Shall Not be Named.”
Come on man. You want me to be happy?

SIMON
Yeah, but...

SERGIO
But what dude?

SIMON
I mean, you can’t just use Erin.

SERGIO
What’s the big deal man?
Do you have a thing for her?

SIMON
I...

SERGIO
Did something happen with her?

SIMON
We. She.

SERGIO
What did you do?

SIMON

SERGIO
We cybered.

Silence. Sergio looks intensely at Simon. He bursts out laughing.

SERGIO
Yeah right.
You’re fucking lying!

SIMON
We did.

SERGIO
No you didn’t. You don’t have the balls to do that.

SIMON
Yeah I do.
SERGIO
So you cybered with her as me?

SIMON
I...

SERGIO
First off, that would be fucking weird. And secondly, you wouldn’t even know how to cyber because you’ve never had the real sex.

SIMON
I would too!

SERGIO
#Sure#

Erin enters the cyber world.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
Hey, hey, hey! Look who just logged in.

SIMON
Erin!

SERGIO
My little home-school rebound.

Simon tries to get close to the computer and Sergio pushes him away again.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sup, Girl.

SERGIO
I’m going to see if she wants to cyber again.

Erin stands in the cyber world.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Hey! :)

SIMON
Don’t!

SERGIO
Why not? She likes doing it, right?

SIMON
Stop it.
SERGIO AS SERGIO
What are you up to sexy?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Just getting ready to go to dinner.

SERGIO

SIMON
Don’t send that.

SERGIO
Why not?

SIMON
We didn’t.
We never cybered. Okay.
We’ve just been chatting a lot.

SERGIO
I knew it.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
You’re too chicken to actually cyber with a chick.

ERIN AS ERIN.
What are you up to?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Not much. Just thinking of you.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Awww. How cute!

SERGIO AS SERGIO
I miss you.

ERIN AS ERIN.
:) I miss you!

SIMON
What is she saying?

SERGIO
None of your business.
SERGIO AS SERGIO
We should hang out sometime. In real life.

ERIN AS ERIN.
That would be awesome.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
What are you up to tonight?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Tonight?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Yeah. I’ve got a car. I can pick you up.

ERIN AS ERIN.
:0 Sergio!
:() :() :()

SERGIO
That’s a lot of smiles.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I can’t tonight.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
:( :( :(  

Simon sits on the bed clearly upset.

SERGIO
Check it out. I made three sad faces. Ha!

SIMON
You’re fucked up.

SERGIO
Whatever.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Sorry. I’m going to dinner with my family. We go every Friday night to some Uptown restaurant. I actually have to get going now. :

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Super :(  

ERIN AS ERIN.
Can we talk later tonight?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sure babe.
ERIN AS ERIN.
Ok. It’s a date. :) :) :)

SERGIO AS SERGIO
 :) :) :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
Okay. Bye!

Erin exits. Sergio swivels around in the chair.

SIMON
What?

SERGIO
She had to go.

SIMON
Oh.

SERGIO
She’s totally into me. I can tell.

SIMON
...

SERGIO
I bet she’s been dying for me to make my move, while you’ve been dickering around because you afraid of chicks in real life.

SIMON
Shut up.

SERGIO
You’ve always been afraid of everything. Like when we were kids and you wanted to go to school as superman cuz you were afraid Peter Miller was going to beat you up on the school bus.

SIMON
That’s not why I wanted to go to school as superman.

SERGIO
#Sure# Whatever.

Sergio gets up and grabs his jacket.

SIMON
Fuck you.
SERGIO
Fuck you dude. I’m going on an adventure.

SIMON
What are you talking about?

SERGIO
A fuckin’ adventure. It’s what brave people do.

SIMON
Where are you going?

SERGIO
I don’t know stalker. I’m hungry and I’m going to go get me some food because that’s what you do when you are hungry.

SIMON
Okay

SERGIO
Think I’ll go Uptown tonight.

SIMON
Can I come?

SERGIO
Do you have a drivers licence?

SIMON
No.

SERGIO
There’s your answer. Get the guts to take drivers ed and you can go on whatever adventures you want.

SIMON
Whatever. I don’t want to go to Uptown anyway. It’s gay.

SERGIO
Whatever.
Don’t bother trying to log on as me. I changed my password. No more pretend to be me, sicko. I’m going out to experience real life.
See ya!

Sergio exits. Simon sits on the swivel chair.
FISHING

Simon types at the computer. Two students enter the cyber world.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez has requested your friendship.

STUDENT 3
Friend Request has been denied.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez has requested your friendship.

STUDENT 4
Friend Request has been denied.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez has requested your friendship.

STUDENT 3
Friend Request has been denied.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez has requested your friendship.

STUDENT 4
Friend Request has been denied.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez has requested your friendship.

STUDENT 3
Friend Request has been denied.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez has requested your friendship.

STUDENT 4
Friend Request has been denied.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez has requested your friendship.

STUDENT 3
Friend Request has been denied.
Lights fade on the cyber world

BROTHERLY HATE

Sergio enters. He takes off a coat and tosses it somewhere in the room.

Sergio
Guess who I saw tonight?

Simon
I don’t know. #Your drug dealer#.

Sergio
#Ha Ha very funny#

Simon
Who?

Sergio
Guess.

Simon
Somebody famous?

Sergio
In some worlds.

Simon
Like a news anchor? The weatherman?

Sergio
Erin.

Simon
WHAT!?

Sergio
Yup. Totally saw her.

Simon
No way!
Where?
What was she doing?

Sergio
None of your business

Simon
Did you talk to her?
SERGIO
Wouldn’t you like to know.

SIMON
Did you?

SERGIO
Maybe I did. Maybe I didn’t.

SIMON
You’re a dick.

SERGIO
Whoa! Where’d that come from?

SIMON
You’re dicking me around.

SERGIO
So un-called for.

SIMON
You’re just trying to tease me because that’s what you always do. Since we were kids. It’s what you’ve always done. You didn’t see her. You’re just lying to piss me off.

SERGIO
I saw her!

SIMON
Whatever.

SERGIO
I didn’t go talk to her. Okay? Just checked her out in real life. You know. Like a normal person. She told me she was going to uptown. I went to see if she is who she says she is.

SIMON
I can’t believe you went to go see her and didn’t tell me!

SERGIO
Stop getting all pee pee hearted about this.

SIMON
You’re stealing her from me!

SERGIO
Fuck you. That chick likes me. Not you.
SIMON
She doesn’t know you.

SERGIO
No but she’s going to know me.
She’s going to know me real good.

SIMON
Fuck you!

SERGIO
What? You think you actually had a chance with this chick?
What do you think she’s going to say after you confess that you aren’t really me?

SIMON

SERGIO
Come on man. Get real. She’d never go for a pimply dweeb like you.

SIMON
Fuck you.

SERGIO
Seriously. Earth to Simon. She’s out of your league!

SIMON
We’re in love!

SERGIO
Ha! Seriously! #LOL# dude.

SIMON

SERGIO
It’s the internet dude. You can’t fall in love on the internet. That’s retarded.

Simon throws something at Sergio.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
Woah!

SIMON
Fuck you!

SERGIO
You’re crazy, bro.
SIMON
YOU ALWAYS DO THIS TO ME!

SERGIO
What?

SIMON
Take.
Just take take take. Every time I get something that I really like and really care about, you come in and take it away from me. Every time.

SERGIO
Whatever.

SIMON
The X-Box!

SERGIO
You know Mom meant for both of us to use that.

SIMON
You use it more than me!

SERGIO
I’m better at it!

SIMON
That’s just it. You’re #better# at everything.

SERGIO
Sorry, bro. I can’t help being so awesome.

SIMON
I hate you.

SERGIO
You don’t mean that.

SIMON
If you take Erin from me/ I’m going

SERGIO
SHE’S NOT YOURS!

SIMON
IF YOU TAKE HER FROM ME!

Simon approaches Sergio threateningly.
SIMON (CONT’D)
I will...
I’ll... Sergio stands up to Simon.

SERGIO
What? Silence as the boys stare each other down.

SIMON
Don’t do this. Sergio grabs some clothes and the laptop from the desk.

SERGIO
Or what? Simon grabs some clothes and the laptop from the desk.

SIMON
I’ll end you. Sergio takes out his laptop and puts it on the desk.

SERGIO
Ha. #End me#. Sergio opens his laptop.

SIMON
I hate you. Erin enters the cyber world.

SERGIO
Fine cry baby. Sleep tight. Erin enters the cyber world.

SIMON
I’m sleeping in the living room. Erin enters the cyber world.

SERGIO
Fine cry baby. Sleep tight. Erin enters the cyber world.

SIMON
I hate you. Erin enters the cyber world.

SERGIO
Don’t let the bed bugs bite! Erin enters the cyber world.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
#End Me# Erin enters the cyber world.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Hey! You’re on :) :) :)
Sergio as Sergio

:) :) :)  
You’re on!

Erin as Erin.

I am.

Sergio as Sergio

Lucky me.

Erin as Erin.

Oh yeah?

Sergio as Sergio

We did have a date, didn’t we?

Erin as Erin.

You’re an eager beaver.

Sergio as Sergio

Me? No way. ;)

Erin as Erin.

:) I missed you.

Sergio as Sergio

Oh yeah?

Erin as Erin.

Yes. I wish I could just stay online with you all day.

Sergio as Sergio

Me too.

Erin as Erin.

Do you believe in soul mates?

Sergio as Sergio

I’m not sure.

Erin as Erin.

I do.

Sergio as Sergio

Hey, you should go to prom with me.

Erin as Erin.

Really!?

Sergio as Sergio

Yeah. Mine’s next week and I need a date.
ERIN AS ERIN.
What about Stevie?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
We’re done. She was such a bitch anyway.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I don’t go to your school and I’m not sure my mom would let me.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Go with me.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’ll have to ask.

Sergio addresses the audience.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sergio Gomez is going to prom with Erin Price.

ERIN AS ERIN.
What the heck did you do that for?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Cuz you’re going to prom with me.
I need a prom date for next weekend.

ERIN AS ERIN.
That’s a little pushy don’t you think

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Don’t you like it?

ERIN AS ERIN.
IDK?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sometimes you gotta take life by the horns.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I guess.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
So that’s a yes?

ERIN AS ERIN.
I guess so...I still have to get permission.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Screw permission. Just come with me.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Okay.
SERGIO AS SERGIO

:) :) :)

ERIN AS ERIN.

:) :) :) 

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

COVER FOR A FLING

Act Two takes place in Erin & Emma’s bedroom and the cyber world.

At rise: Erin is laying on her bed reading a book.

Sergio sits at his computer in the cyber world.

SERGIO AS SERGIO

(BLEEP)

Sup girl.

Erin looks up from her book and looks at her computer desk. She decides to continue reading.

SERGIO AS SERGIO (CONT’D)

(BLEEP)

You there?
Erin looks up from her book again.

SERGIO AS SERGIO (CONT’D)  
(BLEEP)  
Did you find a picture to send me?

ERIN  
Alright. Alright. I’m coming.

Erin struggles to get up in the bed. She reaches down and picks up a set of crutches.

Erin slowly makes her way to her computer desk. Her legs are stiff as she walks with the crutches.

SERGIO AS SERGIO  
(BLEEP)  
I would be nice to know what you look like before I pick you up for prom. :) :) :)

Erin finally makes it to her desk and sits down. She reads Sergio’s messages.

SERGIO AS SERGIO (CONT’D)  
(BLEEP)  
U there?

Erin shuts her computer. Lights out on Cyber World.

ERIN  
Erin sits silently for a while.

ERIN (CONT’D)  
(calling offstage)  
Emma?  
Em?

Emma walks into the bedroom.

EMMA  
What’s up?
ERIN
Can we talk?
I’m having boy trouble.

EMMA
Cute boy?

ERIN
Sergio.

EMMA
You finally told him?

Emma sits on the bed with Erin and rubs her back.

ERIN
I need you to go to the Harding High School Prom with him.

EMMA
What!?

ERIN
I need you to pretend to be me/, and go to prom with Sergio, please.

EMMA
No! No way!

ERIN
Please!
Please please please please please

EMMA
Erin! No.

ERIN
Please.

EMMA
Are you crazy?

ERIN
I can’t dance!

A long silence.

ERIN (CONT’D)
How the fuck am I supposed to go to a prom?
With these fucking things?!

Erin throws her crutches to the ground. She cries.
Emma goes to her and rubs her back.

**Emma**
Maybe it’s time to tell him the truth.

**Erin**
He’s such a sweet guy and I really like him. I’m just not...

**Emma**
You’re not ready.

**Erin**
Please, Emma. His girlfriend just dumped him. And I kinda already told him I would go.

**Emma**
You did what!?

**Erin**
I know! I shouldn’t have, but it was like an instinct like a second instinct and I never thought I would be asked to prom and it’s like a natural response you know from like watching all the movies where the guys asks a girl to prom or to get married or whatever and the girl says yes. She says yes. She always says yes and so that what I did. I said yes. And now he posted it on Facebook that we’re going together and everyone knows and likes it. Like 40 likes. His status got 40 likes. I don’t want to make him change that. He’ll look like a big loser and probably lose the race for prom king and definitely hate me forever. Please, Emma. I can’t do that to him. Please please please.

**Emma**
Fine!

**Erin**
Really?

**Emma**
Uhg...Yeah. I guess so. It’s just... Promise me that you’ll tell him the truth.

**Erin**
After prom.
EMMA
Okay. Fine. I’ll do it.

Erin gives Emma a big hug.

ERIN
Oh thank you thank you thank you!!!
I love you Emma.

EMMA
Promise me.

ERIN
I promise.

EMMA
What?

ERIN
I’ll tell him the truth after the prom.

EMMA
Okay.

ERIN
Thank you.

EMMA
Just this once. Don’t ever make me do this again.

ERIN
#I’ll try not to be invited to anymore dances.#

EMMA
#Ha Ha#

Emma starts to leave.

ERIN
Oh Hey Emma!

EMMA
What?

ERIN
Can I...
Can I send him a picture of you?

EMMA
ERIN
Just one.

EMMA

ERIN

EMMA
Okay.
Just one.

ERIN
Thank you.
Thanks so much.

EMMA
You’re welcome.

Emma exits.

Erin gets on the laptop. She types the status update and an image of Emma appears in the cyber world.

ERIN AS EMMA AS ERIN
I’m so excited to go to Harding High School prom with Sergio Gomez!!!!

She exits and lights fade leaving only the image of Emma with the caption Erin Price.

CURIOSITY

Two students, Stevie and Sergio come into the cyber world and look at the photo of Emma.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sergio Gomez is going to Harding High School Prom with Erin Price!!

STUDENT 1
Wayne Green likes that.
Good for you man.

STUDENT 3
Wendy Patterson likes that.
She’s cute ;)

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STEVIE AS STEVIE
Who the hell is that?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
My new prom date. You got a problem with that?

STUDENT 1
Wayne Green likes that.

STUDENT 3
Wendy Patterson likes that.

STEVIE AS STEVIE
Ya right.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Whatever. Doesn’t matter who she is. She’s way cooler than you.

STUDENT 1
Mike McDaniels likes that.

STUDENT 3
Stephanie Lorado likes that.

STEVIE AS STEVIE
I think you’re making her up.

STUDENT 3
Sean Lewis likes that.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
You wish.

STUDENT 1
Wayne Green likes that.

STUDENT 3
Wendy Patterson likes that.

STEVIE AS STEVIE
Mysterious pretty girl all of a sudden wants to go to prom with you. #yeah that seems plaubable#.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Plaubable’s not a word stupid.

STUDENT 1
Wayne Green likes that.

STUDENT 3
Wendy Patterson likes that.
STUDENT 1
Mike McDaniels likes that.

STUDENT 3
Stephanie Lorado likes that.

STUDENT 1
Mitch Cutter likes that.

STUDENT 3
Sarah Lewis likes that.

STEVIE AS STEVIE
You’re a dick.

Lights fade on the cyber world.

A SISTER’S PLAN: EMMA AS ERIN

Lights up on the bedroom. Erin sits at her computer. Emma sits close by.

EMMA
That’s weird.

ERIN
It’s only pretend.

EMMA
Still. It’s pretty weird. Is that like cyber or whatever?

ERIN
No!

EMMA
How do you know?

ERIN
It’s not. Okay. Trust me.

EMMA
You told him you were taking your top off on the beach.

ERIN
It was just pretend. I was playing along.

EMMA
#Okay sicko#
ERIN
Shut up.

EMMA
Do you do this a lot?

ERIN
No. Not really.

EMMA
Not really?

ERIN
I talk with boys online sometimes, but never nothing serious.

EMMA
Then what’s this?

ERIN
This is a first.

EMMA

ERIN
I swear.

EMMA
Go back to his profile.

Erin clicks back to his profile. Sergio’s image appears on the screens in the cyber world.

EMMA (CONT’D)
Go to the pictures.

Erin starts clicking through the photos on Sergio’s profile.

ERIN
He plays football.

EMMA
I can see that. Keep going.

Erin starts going through the photos faster.

EMMA (CONT’D)
Nice.
ERIN
And track?

A funny photo of Sergio comes up on the screen.
The girls laugh.

ERIN (CONT’D)
Yeah. He’s pretty funny sometimes.

EMMA
That’s good.

A photo of Sergio with Stevie comes up.

EMMA (CONT’D)
Who’s that?

ERIN
His ex.

EMMA
Looks like a bitch.

ERIN
She is.

Sergio enters the cyber world.

ERIN (CONT’D)
He’s on!

EMMA
Ooo La La

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sup girl.

EMMA
#Do you need your privacy for a few minutes.#

ERIN
Shut up.

EMMA
Just playing.

ERIN
You should stay. You need to get to know him before you go to prom.
Okay.

I got your picture.
One word.
HOT!!!

Did you like it?

:) :) :)

:) :) :)

You’re so beautiful.

Aww.

Thank you.

I knew you would be.

Oh yeah?

Ya. You talk like a cute girl.

Ha!

What does that even mean?

You know. Cute girls talk all cute.

And what do ugly girls talk like?

I don’t know. They talk all smart.

Ha!
ERIN AS ERIN.
Does that make cute girls dumb?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
No. That’s not what I meant.

ERIN AS ERIN.
What did you mean?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
I don’t know anymore.
I guess I meant to say you are cute and I am happy.

ERIN AS ERIN.
:)

SERGIO AS SERGIO
:)

ERIN AS ERIN.
That’s good.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Do you like Italian? I was going to make some reservations for dinner on prom night.

EMMA
Aw. How sweet.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yeah. I like Italian.

EMMA
I hate Italian, though.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Schweet.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I mean, I don’t like it.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Ok?

ERIN AS ERIN.
I mean. I don’t feel like Italian for Prom night.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
That’s cool. What do you feel like?
ERIN
(to Emma)
What do you want?

EMMA
Seafood. Tell him I want sea food.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Seafood.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sounds good to me. We can go to Red Lobster.

EMMA
Ew. Gross.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Maybe someplace else?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sebastiano’s?

EMMA
That’s better.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Sounds great.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Should we be matching or anything?

ERIN AS ERIN.
What do you mean?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Well, like Stevie was insistent that our outfits matched for prom. Do you care?

EMMA
Whatever.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Not really. What color is your tie?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
It’s a bow tie.

ERIN AS ERIN.
What color is it?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Red.
ERIN
(to Emma)
Do you have anything red?

EMMA
I’ll find something.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Cool. I’ll wear something red. You don’t have to worry about anything.
:) :) :)

SERGIO AS SERGIO
:) :) :) Where do you live? I need to know where to pick you up.

ERIN
(to Emma)
He shouldn’t come here.

EMMA
Ya.

ERIN AS ERIN.
How about I just meet you at Sebastiano’s and you can give me a ride from there?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
I can’t come to your house and get you?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Remember we’re being sneaky.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Oh. Right. Good idea. :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
:)

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sneaky sneaky.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yes.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Cool. I gotta go.

ERIN AS ERIN.
So soon?
SERGIO AS SERGIO
Ya. Gonna hang out with some friends in the hills. Eric's brother's in town for the weekend and he's 21!

ERIN AS ERIN.
Oh.

EMMA
Sounds fun.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
He's going to buy us some party supplies. Should be a pretty schweet. You wanna come?????

ERIN AS ERIN.
I don't think I can.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Aw come on! We could hang out a little before prom. It would be great to get to know you in person!

EMMA
I'll go.

ERIN
What?!

EMMA
Yeah. I'll totally go to a party in the hills for you.

ERIN
I don't know how I feel about that.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
How come you never want to hang out in real life? It makes me nervous about the whole prom thing.

EMMA
Look. If you want this whole prom thing to work out, I should probably go out to this party tonight.

ERIN
I don't know.
EMMA
It’s okay. I’ll talk to him a little bit and plus I can make sure he’s really a good guy in person.
You know. A good guy for you.

ERIN
Yeah?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Well I gotta go. Don’t say you weren’t invited.

Emma reaches over and types on Erin’s computer.

EMMA AS ERIN
Okay! I’ll go with you!

ERIN
Hey!

EMMA
It’s okay. Trust me.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Really! Schweet!
:):):)

EMMA AS ERIN
:):):)

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Do you need a ride there?

EMMA AS ERIN
Yeah, pick me up at 3rd and Edith. The Circle K.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sneaky Sneaky.

EMMA AS ERIN
Yeah.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Okay. See you soon beautiful!

EMMA AS ERIN
:) okay! :)

Emma moves away from the computer and moves for the door.
ERIN
I don’t know how I feel about this.

EMMA
Don’t worry. It’s just a party in the hills. I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but I kinda like to just hang out with people and party.

ERIN
Yeah.

EMMA
I think I can handle this one. Look, we can text the whole time and I’ll keep you updated.

ERIN
Yeah?

EMMA
Yeah!

ERIN
Okay.

EMMA
Are you worried that something’s going to happen with us?

ERIN
Kinda...

EMMA
Stop worrying. I’m not going to do anything with him. Just hang out.

ERIN
And drink.

EMMA
Yeah. I’ll have a few drinks, but I’m not going to do anything with him. Even with a few drinks.

ERIN
You promise.

EMMA
Swear.

ERIN
Okay.

EMMA
Don’t worry.
ERIN
Ok.

Emma exits.

ERIN (CONT’D)
Have fun...

Erin goes back to the computer. She looks through Sergio’s profile for a while.

CHANCE ENCOUNTERS

Simon enters the cyber world.

A picture of a dinosaur riding a shark with a rocket launcher appears.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez likes that photo.

A picture of horses pulling a carriage through a field.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that photo.

A picture of two turtles racing.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez likes that photo.

A picture of a Darth Vader reading Harry Potter.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that photo.

A Picture of nuns with guns.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez likes that photo.

A picture of silly looking monster walking through a valley.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that photo.
A Picture of someone’s first car.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez likes that photo.

A picture of a birthday cake.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that photo.

A Picture of a man riding a unicycle.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez likes that photo.

A picture of the Cookie Monster at a computer saying, “Delete Cookies!?”

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that photo.

A Picture of the Earth from the International Space Station.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez likes that photo.

A picture of a bicycle with the words “Two Wheel Drive”

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that photo.

A picture of a cat scaring a bear.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez likes that photo.

A picture of hopscotch.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that photo.

A picture of a hot air balloon and the moon.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez likes that photo.
ERIN AS ERIN.
Erin Price likes that photo, too.

Lights fade on the cyber world.

SUSPICIONS

Erin lays in her bed. The moon shines bright through her window. She is wide awake.

The sound of a car pulling up in the driveway outside. It sits idle for a moment.

A car door opens and closes.

Sounds of the keys opening the door to the house quietly.

Sounds of a car driving away.

Sounds of Emma sneaking through the hallway.

ERIN (whispers)
Emma?

Emma enters Erin’s room.

EMMA (whispers)
Hey!

Emma shuts Erin’s door carefully.

ERIN
How’d it go?

EMMA
Good.

ERIN
Yeah?

EMMA
Yeah.

ERIN
Fun.
EMMA
Yeah.

ERIN
That’s good.

Silence.

EMMA
Did I wake you up?

ERIN
No.
I just lied down.

EMMA
Oh.

ERIN
I can’t sleep.

EMMA
Oh.
I’m sorry.

ERIN
I think I was just worried about you.

EMMA
Oh.

ERIN
You know, that you were safe. That he wasn’t some psycho serial killer.

EMMA
He was nice.

ERIN
That’s good.

EMMA
Yeah.

ERIN
Yeah.

Silence.

ERIN (CONT’D)
So he’s like, not a jerk or anything?

EMMA
No. He’s funny! You were right.
ERIN
Yeah.

EMMA
He’s a little cocky.

ERIN
Yeah?

EMMA
But I like that. A little.

ERIN
Oh.

EMMA
Do you like that?

ERIN
I don’t know.

EMMA
Well, I mean, he’s not too cocky. Like it’s not unbearable.

ERIN
Yeah.

EMMA
Yeah.

Silence.

ERIN
What all did you guys do?

EMMA
Just hung out.
Talked mostly.

ERIN
Were there a lot of people there?

EMMA
At first there were, but then that dude’s brother didn’t show, so there was no beer.

ERIN
Oh.

EMMA
Someone showed up with some wine coolers later.
We drank that.
ERIN
Oh.

EMMA
And vanilla extract.

ERIN
What?

EMMA
I know right.

ERIN
Why?

EMMA
I guess there’s alcohol in vanilla extract.

ERIN
Does it get you drunk?

EMMA
Not really. But I don’t know. I didn’t drink that much.
Some of the other girls seemed like they got drunk off it. But they could have been faking it. You know.

ERIN
Oh.

EMMA
Yeah.

ERIN
But you had a good time?

EMMA
Yeah.

Silence.

EMMA (CONT’D)
Nothing happened.

ERIN
What do you mean?

EMMA
I mean, I know that’s what you really want to know. Nothing happened. We didn’t make out or anything.
ERIN
Did he try?

EMMA
Ya. A couple times.
It was pretty cute.

ERIN
Yeah?

EMMA
Yeah. He
Ha!
The first time he tried, we were like sitting
on these rocks looking at the big bright moon.
He turned to me and said
(Trying a suave
impression. Trying not to
laugh.)
"The moonlight’s magic makes me mesmerized."
And...
"So do you"
Then he started getting close to me and he put
his hand on my leg and leaned in and then!
And then.

His friends car alarm started going off!
And they all got scared someone was going to
find us so they decided to move to a different
part of the hills.

ERIN
Wow.

EMMA
It was pretty ridiculous.

ERIN
Sounds fun.

EMMA
Yeah. It was.

ERIN

EMMA
Thanks for letting me go. As “you”. You know.

ERIN
Thanks for going as me.

EMMA
I had fun.
ERIN
You like doing that kinda stuff?

EMMA
Partying? Yeah. Doesn’t everyone.

ERIN
Some people don’t.

EMMA
His friends were all really nice and fun to hang out with.

ERIN
That’s good.

EMMA
It’s weird. They were a lot like my friends. You know. Like different versions of the same people.

ERIN
That’s weird.

EMMA
Yeah.

Silence.

EMMA (CONT’D)
Well I should get to bed. School in the morning.

ERIN
What about the second time?

EMMA
Huh?

ERIN
You said he tried twice.

EMMA
Oh, yeah. Well, the second attempt was kinda half a success.

ERIN
You kissed him!

EMMA
He kissed me! I swear. It was like a peck and I pulled away as fast as I could.
ERIN
Emma.

EMMA
I’m sorry. I didn’t see it coming. He pulled up to our house and I was looking out the window at our place, like telling him where to go. We stopped and I turned to say good night to him, so I could leave, you know, and there he was. Right in my face. Laying a kiss on me. I pulled away and got out of the car. I’m sorry.

ERIN
It’s okay.

EMMA
You sure.

ERIN
Yeah.

EMMA
I’m sorry.

ERIN
No. I’m the one that asked you to pretend to be me.

EMMA
And this stuff just kinda happens on dates. Guys kinda expect it at the end.

ERIN
Yeah?

EMMA
Yeah.

ERIN
Okay.

EMMA
I’m sorry if it makes you upset.

ERIN
It’s okay. I’ll get over it.

EMMA
You sure.

ERIN
Yeah.
EMMA
Ok. I’m going to go brush my teeth.

ERIN
Okay.

EMMA
Good night.

ERIN
Night.

Emma exits. Erin lies down and falls asleep.

A DIGITAL DREAM

Simon enters the cyber world and stands in front of Sergio’s profile picture. He stares straight at the audience while the words “Password Invalid” continues to flash in front of Sergio’s picture.

Elsewhere in the cyber world, the following shadow puppet scene happens. It is set to music.

A girl enters from one side and a boy from the other.

A hot air balloon is center. They walk to the balloon. They stand in front of it.

The balloon takes off and flies higher and higher until it reaches the moon. It lands on the moon.

They get out on the moon and walk to a 3D printer. A house is printed. They look at each other and kiss.

They exit together, hand in hand.

Lights fade on the cyber world.
WAKING LIFE

Lights rise on Erin in the real world on her computer and Sergio in the cyber world.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Hey!

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Hey babe. How’s it going?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Good. Just got a dress for the prom.
:) :) :)

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Schweet!
:) :) :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’m so excited to go. Thanks for asking me.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
You don’t have to thank me, beautiful.

ERIN AS ERIN.
You’re sweet.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
I had a good time last night.
;)

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yeah, me too.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
You’re a good kisser.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Oh yeah?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Oh yeah. I wish we could have kept making out all night.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yeah? Me too.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
:) :) :)
SERGIO AS SERGIO
I’m excited for prom night.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yeah. Me too.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Do you like dancing?

ERIN AS ERIN.
I love dancing.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Are you good at it?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yeah. I dance all the time.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Awesome. You’ll have to teach me some things. I’m kinda bad.

ERIN AS ERIN.
It’s okay. ;)

SERGIO AS SERGIO
You’re not allergic to flowers are you?

ERIN AS ERIN.
No.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Good. Cuz I’m gonna get you some.

ERIN AS ERIN.
That’s sweet.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Any requests?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Just whatever.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Okay. I can do whatever. Lol.

ERIN AS ERIN.
;)

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Sorry I can’t afford a limo.

ERIN AS ERIN.
It’s okay.
SERGIO AS SERGIO
My Dad’s car’s way better than a limo anyway.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yeah?

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Oh yeah. It’s a red mustang! I can get it to 140 when I take it out into the desert.

ERIN AS ERIN.
That’s cool.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
I’ll take you tomorrow after prom.
I mean. If you want to.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Maybe. :)

SERGIO AS SERGIO
It’s a lot of fun.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I believe you.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
You have no idea. I’ll show you. Tomorrow ;)

ERIN AS ERIN.
Okay.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Well, I need to go to track practice now.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Okay. Goodbye. Have a good practice.

SERGIO AS SERGIO
Thanks, bye.

Lights fade on the cyber world.

PREPARATION

Emma enters in a prom dress.

EMMA
How do I look?

ERIN
Good.
EMMA
Yeah?

ERIN
Yeah.

EMMA
You don’t think it’s too poofy back here.

ERIN
It’s a little poofy.

EMMA
That’s what I thought.

ERIN
But it looks good.

EMMA
Yeah?

ERIN
Yeah.

EMMA
Elegant?

ERIN
Yeah.

EMMA
That’s what I was going for!

ERIN
I know.

EMMA
Thanks!

ERIN
Yeah.

Emma goes into the closet.

EMMA
Do you have any shawls?

ERIN
There are a few in there.

EMMA
Ooo

Emma takes out a shawl.
EMMA (CONT’D)
I like this one. Can I use it?

ERIN
Sure.

Emma puts it on and models.

EMMA
I’m kinda nercous. I’ve never been to prom before.

ERIN
You’re only a sophomore.

EMMA
Still. Some girls start going when they’re in Jr. High. Can you believe that?

ERIN
Some girls have babies in High School.

EMMA
Ha. I guess you’re right.

Emma looks at herself in the mirror.

EMMA (CONT’D)
Does my make-up look good?

ERIN
Yes, jeeze.

EMMA
What?

ERIN
Nothing.

EMMA
No. What’s up?

ERIN
Nothing.

EMMA
Don’t say nothing. It’s pretty obvious that you’re upset.

ERIN
It’s just...
EMMA
What?

ERIN

EMMA
Are you feeling sad because you aren’t going?

ERIN
Yeah. Kinda.

EMMA
I’m sorry.

ERIN
But...

EMMA
What?

ERIN
Did you make out with Sergio the other night?

EMMA
What?

ERIN
In the car?

EMMA
What makes you say that?

ERIN
Did you?

EMMA
We kissed.

ERIN
You said you pulled away right away.

EMMA
Well...I mean...I’m not sure because you know how when you are kissing time changes.

ERIN
I’ve never kissed a boy.

EMMA
Oh.

ERIN
So I guess I don’t know.
EMMA
Sorry.

ERIN

EMMA
I mean, I wanted to pull away, but I don’t know how quickly I was able to initiate that action you know because I was in the shock of being kissed. You know.

ERIN
Oh.

EMMA
So, maybe the kiss lasted longer than I thought.

ERIN
But you kissed back.

EMMA
I guess so.

ERIN
Oh.

EMMA
I’m sorry Erin. It’s just like the thing you do when someone kisses you. You kiss back. Like a natural reaction or whatever.

ERIN
Ok.

EMMA
What did Sergio say?

ERIN
He said we made out.

EMMA
Yeah. But...You know. Guys like to live in their own world and believe their fantasies.

ERIN
Yeah.

EMMA
Yeah.
A long silence between sisters. They both know the inevitable.

ERIN
What are you going to do tonight?

EMMA
What do you mean?

ERIN
Are you going to make out with Sergio again?

EMMA
I don’t know.

ERIN
You probably should.

EMMA
Yeah. Probably.

ERIN
I mean, it’s prom.

EMMA
Yeah.

ERIN
He might want to have sex.

EMMA
WHAT!? Gross. No way.

ERIN
He might. It’s prom.

EMMA
Well, I won’t let him.

ERIN
Okay.

EMMA
I won’t.

ERIN
What if you get too caught up in making out?

EMMA
I won’t. Okay. I promise.

ERIN
Okay.
EMMA
Okay?

ERIN
Alright.

EMMA
I won’t do anything you wouldn’t do.

ERIN
I’d have sex with him.

EMMA
Erin!

ERIN
I would. It’s prom.

EMMA
Gross.

ERIN
It’s prom! That’s what people do after prom.

EMMA
Well, I’m not going to do that.

ERIN
Okay.
Thank you.

EMMA
It’s almost 6. I should get going.

ERIN
Okay.

EMMA
Okay.

Awkward silence. Emma starts to leave.

ERIN
Hey Emma.

EMMA
Yeah?

ERIN
Have fun for me.

Silence.
EMMA

I will. Emma leaves. Erin gets on her computer.

CHECKING IN

The four students enter the cyber world.

As they say their names, images of them in their prom outfits appears on the screens.

STUDENT 1
Billy Turner is at Harding High School Prom.

STUDENT 4
April Jailers is at Harding High School Prom

STUDENT 2
Tom Arnez is at Harding High School Prom

STUDENT 3
Cynthia Monroe is at Harding High School Prom

STUDENT 4
Mia Green is at Harding High School Prom

STUDENT 1
Matthew Arnold is at Harding High School Prom

STUDENT 2
Henry Poole is at Harding High School Prom

STUDENT 1
Conner Lightfoot is at Harding High School Prom

STUDENT 4
Amanda Poler is at Harding High School Prom

STUDENT 1
Steven Ried is at Harding High School Prom

STUDENT 3
Laura Handle is at Harding High School Prom

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez is at home, wasting away in misery.
PROM SCENE

Simon stands in the cyber world in front of the image of Sergio. The screens continue to flash “Password Invalid”.

Sergio enters the real world with Emma. Sergio wears a crown. They dance.

EMMA
Wow. This is amazing.

SERGIO
It’s pretty awesome.

EMMA
You did it!

SERGIO
I did it!

EMMA
My King.

SERGIO
My lady.

Emma giggles. They dance closer.

SERGIO (CONT’D)
You’re so beautiful.

EMMA
Thank you.

SERGIO
I’m so happy that you came to prom with me.

EMMA
I’m glad you asked me. I’ve had such a great time.

SERGIO
Me too.

EMMA
Really. I really mean it.

Erin enters the cyber world.
SERGIO
I’m glad you turned out to be as awesome as you are.

EMMA
What do you mean?

SERGIO
Well like with the internet, you never know.

EMMA
Yeah.

SERGIO
To be honest, until we went to the hills the other night, I was a little worried that you might not be who you said you were.

EMMA
Yeah?

SERGIO
Yeah. Like maybe you were lying and sending me fake pictures.

EMMA
Ha. That’s silly.

Erin starts looking at pictures of Sergio online. She starts to cry.

SERGIO
Yeah. I know. I guess...

Simon finally has success and logs onto Sergio’s profile.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Sergio?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Uh, hey...

EMMA
Thanks for taking me to prom.

SERGIO
Thanks for coming with me.

ERIN AS ERIN.
What are you doing online?
SIMON AS SERGIO
I was going to ask you the same thing.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Who is this?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Who is this?

EMMA
Can we just not talk anymore?

SERGIO
Yeah. Sure.

EMMA
I just want to dance.

SERGIO
Okay.

EMMA
Hold me closer.

SERGIO
Tony Danza

EMMA
What?

SERGIO
Shhh.

Emma and Sergio slow dance.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I’m Simon. Sergio’s brother.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Really?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Yeah.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Why are you on his account?

SIMON AS SERGIO
Erin, I need to tell you the truth. I’m the person you were talking to before Sergio invited you to prom.

ERIN AS ERIN.
What?
**SIMON AS SERGIO**
I’m sorry I never told you the truth. It was so stupid of me. But I was the person you interviewed. In the beginning. The beach. The Haiku. The hot air balloon ride to the moon. That was all me.

**ERIN AS ERIN.**
Really?

**SIMON AS SERGIO**
I’m sorry, I never told you. Sergio took his profile back after Stevie dumped him.

**ERIN AS ERIN.**
Are you serious?

**SIMON AS SERGIO**
Yes. I’m sorry. I should have told you. I really like you, Erin. I thought we were hitting it off. I should have just told you the truth right away, but you already thought I was Sergio and I knew things were already kinda weird and I didn’t know what to do. I’m so stupid.

**ERIN AS ERIN.**
You’re not stupid.

**SIMON AS SERGIO**
No. I’m pretty stupid. I should never have lied to you. I’m sorry. So So So Sorry. And if you can’t ever forgive me, I totally understand, but I just wanted to tell you the truth.

**ERIN AS ERIN.**
I can’t believe it.

**SIMON AS SERGIO**
I hope this doesn’t ruin your entire prom night. Sorry. You should probably go back to hanging out with Sergio. He’s going to be pissed that I told you.

**ERIN AS ERIN.**
I’m not there.

**SIMON AS SERGIO**
What? Did you stand him up?
ERIN AS ERIN.
No. I didn’t stand him up.
I’m not there.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I’m confused.

ERIN AS ERIN.
My sister went with him. She’s pretending to be me.

SIMON AS SERGIO
What????? Why?

ERIN AS ERIN.
I can’t dance.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Neither can Sergio. What’s the big deal?

ERIN AS ERIN.
I can’t really walk on my own either. I have cerebral palsy.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Oh.
I’m sorry.

ERIN AS ERIN.
You don’t have to be sorry. It’s kinda just the way I am.
I couldn’t go to prom with Sergio, so I asked my sister to go for me.
It’s sad. I know.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Hey! Don’t be sad. It’s okay.
Prom sucks anyway. Who wants to go to some stupid dance?

ERIN AS ERIN.
I do.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Oh.
Well.
Then...
Let’s make our own prom!

ERIN AS ERIN.
What do you mean?

SIMON AS SERGIO
A digital prom.
ERIN AS ERIN.
LOL. :) :) :)

SIMON AS SERGIO
:) :) :)
My lady, may I have this dance?

ERIN AS ERIN.

SIMON AS SERGIO
I’m holding my hand out. Don’t leave me hanging.

ERIN AS ERIN.
No. I’m sorry, but I do not want to dance with you Sergio.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Really?

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’m waiting for Simon to ask me to dance.

SIMON AS SERGIO
Really?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yes. If you see him, please let him know to come ask me.

SIMON AS SERGIO
BRB

Simon logs out at Sergio and reenters as Simon.

SIMON AS SIMON
Simon Gomez has sent you a friend request.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Friend request accepted.

Their pictures appear side-by-side in the screens.

SIMON AS SIMON
Hello m’lady. May I have this dance.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yes you may kind sir.

SIMON AS SIMON
:)

151
ERIN AS ERIN.
:) :)

SIMON AS SIMON
:) :) :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
Triple Smile!

SIMON AS SIMON
I’m taking you to the dance floor.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’m grinning from ear to ear.

SIMON AS SIMON
I’m holding you close. It’s a slow dance.

ERIN AS ERIN.
I’m wrapping my arms around your neck.

SIMON AS SIMON
You’re a very good dancer, Erin.

ERIN AS ERIN.
So are you. LOL

SIMON AS SIMON
Thank you very much. I’ve been taking an online course.

ERIN AS ERIN.
:) :) :)

SIMON AS SIMON
:) :) :)

ERIN AS ERIN.
You’re so sweet. Like the sweetest guy I’ve ever met.

SIMON AS SIMON
You’re the coolest girl I ever met.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Online?

SIMON AS SIMON
Or in person!

ERIN AS ERIN.
Come over!
SIMON AS SIMON
For reals?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yes!

SIMON AS SIMON
Okay.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Right now!

SIMON AS SIMON
Really?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yes. Come over to my house.

SIMON AS SIMON
I don’t have a car.

ERIN AS ERIN.
Call a cab. I’ll pay for it.

SIMON AS SIMON
Really?

ERIN AS ERIN.
Yes. Please. I just want to kiss you. The real you. The you I fell in love with.

SIMON AS SIMON
Okay! See you soon.

ERIN AS ERIN.
:) :) :)

SIMON AS SIMON
:) :) :)

Simon exits the cyber world.
Erin moves to her bed in the real world. She takes out make up and begins applying it.

Emma and Sergio continue dancing. Emma’s head is resting against Sergio’s chest.

EMMA
It’s almost over.
SERGIO
I know.

EMMA
I don’t want it to be.

SERGIO
Do you want to keep hanging out?

EMMA
What are you thinking?

SERGIO
I don’t know. Maybe going on that drive I was
telling you about.

EMMA
Oh yeah....
You wanna just make out instead?

SERGIO
Uh. Sure.

Sergio kisses Emma. She pushes
him away.

EMMA
Not now. I mean. After.

SERGIO
Oh. Yeah. Yeah!

EMMA
I like you.

SERGIO
I like you.

EMMA
No. Like.
I like you.

SERGIO
I know.

EMMA
But you don’t.
Not really.

SERGIO
What are you talking about?
EMMA
I mean.
It’s nothing.

EMMA (CONT’D)
I wish we could be honest with each other.

SERGIO
What are you talking about?

EMMA
It’s just. There’s.

SERGIO
Son of a bitch! Did he talk to you?

EMMA
What?

SERGIO
Simon.

EMMA
Simon?

SERGIO
My brother. God Dammit. What an ass hole! I’m gonna kick his ass when I get home.

EMMA
What?

SERGIO
Okay. Fine. I admit it. For a while you were flirting with my brother online, but I swear for the last like week it’s been all me. I kicked him off my profile.

EMMA
Woah.

SERGIO
But, look, I really like you. I think you are so beautiful and I’m sorry I didn’t tell you right away what was going on.

Emma moves away from him and stops dancing.

Emma puts her head on Sergio’s chest and they keep dancing.
EMMA
Woah. This is.
I need to sit down.

Emma finds a place to sit and
Sergio follows her.

SERGIO
I’m sorry. I really am. I should have been up
front.

EMMA
Look.

SERGIO
No. Please. I really like you. Like for real
Erin. I think you’re really cool and I’d like
to try and make things work with us.

EMMA
Sergio.

SERGIO
Please.

EMMA
Sergio!

SERGIO
I swear I won’t lie to you anymore.

EMMA
I’m not Erin!

SERGIO
What?

EMMA
Erin. She.
I’m Erin’s sister.
My name is Emma.

SERGIO
What?

EMMA
She asked me to come to prom with you.

SERGIO
Seriously.
EMMA
I’m sorry. I guess I’ve been lying to you too. Erin couldn’t come with you because she’s disabled and in crutches. So, she can’t really dance.

SERGIO
She’s crippled?

EMMA
She has cerebral palsy.

SERGIO
Oh.

EMMA
She really wanted to come with you, but she was afraid of telling you about her condition.

SERGIO
Oh.

EMMA
I’m sorry.

SERGIO
No. It’s cool. Don’t worry about it.

EMMA
Sorry Sergio.

SERGIO
It’s just.
I really like you.

EMMA
What do you mean?

SERGIO
Like, you’re so hot and like really cool. I’m kind of bummed out that you aren’t the real Erin.

EMMA
Well, if it makes you feel any better, I’ve had a great time with you tonight.

A knock at Erin’s door. She starts to get up.

ERIN
Come in.

Simon enters and goes to Erin.
SIMON
Hi.

EMMA
Hi.

Simon holds out his hand.

SIMON
I’m Simon.

Erin grabs his face and kisses him. He picks her up and takes her to the bed. They make out in the bed.

SERGIO
I’ve had a great time too!

EMMA
And, honestly, I like you, Sergio.

SERGIO
Really?

EMMA
Yeah, duh! You’re so awesome!

SERGIO
So...Do you want to keep hanging out then?

EMMA
Fuck it! Let’s get out of here.

SERGIO
Okay!

EMMA
How fast does your car go?

SERGIO
Let’s find out!

Emma and Sergio exit hand in hand.

Erin and Simon sit in the bed staring into each others eyes.

ERIN
I love you.

SIMON
I love you, too.
Lights fade.

END OF PLAY.
REFERENCES


Lodge, David ed., Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader (London: Longmans, 1988), pp. 16-30

