

FRUIT

(Las Tierras, El Paso, Texas. Early 2010's. Onstage we see the interior of a grimy motel room. Poorly lit, with a queen size bed in the center and night stand to the side. A woman's silhouette is seen in the shadows. The lights aren't up on that part of the stage, so we cannot see her fully. Offstage, there is a commotion.)

SAM

(Offstage) Ya'll! Where are we/ goin?

ISAIAH

Don't be a little bitch about it Sam, we're almost there.

LUCAS

You chicken?

ISAIAH

Bawk Bawk Bawk Bawk

(Hooping, hollering, and laughter. Roy and Hunter poke and prod at Sam while he is blindfolded.)

SAM

Yo stop! Ow, stop it!

LUCAS

Damn, why are you being such a pussy.

ISAIAH

Yeah, you're screamin like a little bitch.

EDDIE

BOYS! *(A smack is heard.)* Stop being jackasses and leave your brother alone. Sam, man up, I didn't raise you to be no sissy. *(Beat)* Isaiah, Lucas, go back down and start the car. I needa have a word with Sam.

LUCAS

(Overlapping) Aw, c'mon that's no fair.

ISAIAH

(Overlapping) I wanna see the look on his face when/

EDDIE

I said GO!

(Enter Sam led by Eddie. They stop in front of a door to a motel room. Sam is still blind folded.)

SAM

Dad, will you please tell me what's going on?

EDDIE

Son, you're 18. You're a man now, and you gotta start actin like one. All you do is play basketball and keep your head in the books. Soon you'll be joining me and your brothers out on the construction sights and you won't have the opportunity anymore to let loose/ and have fun

SAM

Dad, I don't understand/

EDDIE

You gonna interrupt me, boy?

SAM

No, sir.

EDDIE

I wanted to give you a nice little surprise for your 18th. Somethin to welcome you into manhood.

(Eddie removes Sam's blindfold and opens the door to the motel. Lights up on the rest of the stage. Sam is confused.)

SILVIA

(Coy) Hi, sweetheart.

EDDIE

Happy Birthday Son! You two have fun now!

(Eddie shoves Sam into the room. The door slams. It is just the two of them.)

SAM

(Multiple beats) Um... hi?

SILVIA

Hi, sugar. Sam, right? Your daddy told me all about you. Said you were a bookworm, need a little help lettin off some steam. Why don't you have a seat with Miss Silvia and we'll get you nice and relaxed.

SAM

Um... I don't know if/

(Sam is interrupted by Silvia pressing him towards the bed and pushing his shoulders down so he sits)

SILVIA

Relax.

SAM

Uh...yeah... sorry. *(Beat)* Um. I'm sorry. Silvia? I just don't really know what's going on, my dad just kind of dragged me here.

SILVIA

Right! This was a surprise! Well, honey, I'm sure you could infer from... *(She gestures to herself and around to the motel room)*

SAM

Y-yeah yeah I think I got that. Um...so are we supposed to just...uh...?

SILVIA

(Confused.) I mean, I'd assumed so. That's why we're here. If you want to, obviously! It's your choice.

SAM

Um... yeah. Right. It's my choice? *(Beat.)* Sure. Yes! Why not, it's my 18th birthday?!

SILVIA

Wonderful!

(Silvia's in the zone now. She caresses Sam's body, tries to massage his shoulders. Sam is startled.)

SAM

Ah!

SILVIA

Relax, baby, imma take real good care of you.

(She continues massaging his shoulders and begins to kiss his neck. Sam is visibly tense. This goes on for a while, with Sam looking more and more panicked.)

SILVIA

Breathe, honey. I'm not gonna bite you. *(Coy)* Unless you like that.

(Silvia continues kissing and caressing Sam. She tries taking Sam's shirt off. He flinches.)

SAM

Ahhh!

SILVIA

What gives, kid? Are we gonna do this or not?

SAM

I'm trying, I swear/

SILVIA

You gay?

SAM

(Overlapping) What? No/

SILVIA

You got somethin against gay people?

SAM

What? Jesus Christ, no! That's fine... it's fine... if that's their choice. I'm just not... that. I'm not gay. I'm just nervous.

SILVIA

... okay?

SAM

Let's just try again.

(They repeat similar actions as before, going through the motions. It's robotic. Silvia is trying her best to be more gentle. Sam continues to get progressively more tense and worked up. He can't breathe. Sam finally breaks away.)

SAM

I can't do this. *(Beat. Then word vomit.)* I'm sorry. I know my dad paid you to come here and do... whatever the fuck this is. Most guys would kill to have this opportunity. But...that's just not me. I don't know why. I don't know what's wrong with me. But every time you touch me I feel like I'm about to throw up and I'd rather not do that all over your nice lingerie. *(Tries to compose himself)* So maybe we can just sit here and talk... Or maybe just sit in silence until my dad comes back and we can just pretend we had sex and then go about our very *seperate* lives and I can forget about this experience and why I feel like such a fucking idiot. Jesus Christ...

SILVIA

(Suddenly much softer) Woah woah woah, Sam! Honey. I don't care what your daddy said or what your friends at school will think, it doesn't matter. If you don't wanna do this, that's fine!

SAM

(Beat) How does my dad know you?

SILVIA

He doesn't know me personally, but let's just say... I've seen him around. You know the liquor store by the meat market? My...colleagues and I like to do business there. And since you're mama died your dad's been a pretty frequent customer of Carlo's Liquor and Spirits.

SAM

You're not supposed to know that my mom died. You're not supposed to know anything about me.

SILVIA

You disgusted that a hooker like me knows that your mama died? Or that old Eddie's son ain't ever had a girlfriend?

SAM

How do you know that?

SILVIA

Your dad told me.

SAM

What else did he tell you?

SILVIA

Said you were a good kid. Straight A student, captain of the/ basketball team.

SAM

What else?

SILVIA

(Beat. Reluctant.) He said that he was worried about you. You don't have many friends. You've turned down every opportunity for a girlfriend or to get laid. Said you were too smart for your own good. *(Beat)* He said he was worried you were... a "fruit."

SAM

That's what this is about? Forcing me to have sex with a prostitute for some stupid right of passage to make sure I'm not gay. What the fuck?! That's so fucked!

SILVIA

Either way Sam, you've made it abundantly clear you aren't gay. Not wanting to have sex is fine. There's nothing wrong with you. Maybe you're just not ready. I'm sure you'll find some nice girl/ in the future

SAM

But what if I am.

SILVIA

What if you're what? Ready?

SAM

No. What if I'm gay? *(Beat)* Y'know my dad's right. I am too smart for my own good. I finally got one of those Iphone's. Downloaded a news app, some social media apps. Heard about that governor from New York legalizing gay marriage. You know, when I first heard about that, it made me a little sick. That's unholy, it's sinful, it goes against basic human functions. And then I saw these videos. Protests. People fighting and dying for their right to just...love. Awful things happening to gay people. Conversion therapy. *(A brief moment of happiness)* Pride parades. *(Beat)* I found some stupid quiz. "Are You Gay?"

SILVIA

Did you take it?

SAM

I did.

(That's all she needs to know)

Here's your chance. Aren't you gonna call me all the names people usually do. Sissy, freak. Homo. Look at the faggot, look at the queer. Aw, the little fruit's gonna cry about it. *(Beat)* I used to say those things.

SILVIA

(Beat) Y'know Sam, I lied. About not knowing you're daddy personally. I do. It was right after your mama died a few years back. I had just been kicked to the street by my ex boyfriend. Except back then my name was Eduardo Vega. I was a cute little twink who liked to occasionally cross dress. Maybe liked it too much. After one too many times sneaking out to bars in a dress and heels my boyfriend had enough. Said it was already hard enough bein a gay man dating another gay man, he wasn't lookin to date some "freak."

SAM

I don't understand.

SILVIA

Sam, I'm trans. You wouldn't believe it now lookin at me. A few cosmetic surgeries done in a back alley doctor's office, grew out my hair, wore heels, learned how to carry myself differently. But just a few years back I was the token twink that roamed around the liquor store. That's when I met your father. He was drunk, roamin around trying to find someone to take to a motel. I was wearing a mini skirt and a cheap shake and go wig- he clocked me the moment he saw me. Called me a fag in a dress.

SAM

I don't want to hear/ this

SILVIA

He tore my wig off my head and spit on me before he said I was going straight to hell.

SAM

Why are you telling me this?

SILVIA

Because, I saw the way your daddy treated me. I saw the hatred and the rage foamin at his mouth. That's why I took the job. Part of me thought it was a bunch of bullshit. It'd just be another routine fuck and I'd go on my way. But there was a part of me that knew it wasn't gonna be that. I couldn't live with myself knowing I had let the same thing happen, let the same man who hurt me, hurt you.

SAM

Didn't my dad know it was you? When he hired you? That you were the same person he...?

SILVIA

No. He said I looked familiar, said he'd seen me somewhere before. But no, at the end of the day he didn't realize it was me.

(Sam takes many, many beats to process this information. The two sit in silence.)

SAM

Shit... shit shit shit. I'm fucked.

SILVIA

Look Sam, when Eddie shows up we can pretend that we had the wildest sex in the world and he can go on believing this lie that he's told himself. And then after that you're gonna graduate high school and you're gonna get as far away from here as possible.

SAM

How?

SILVIA

Sam, you're a smart kid! Go to college, make something of yourself. You are not obligated to stay stuck here pretending to be something you're not.

SAM

And end up like you? Homeless on the side of the street sellin my body for pennies.

SILVIA

I may not have much, and my life is far from happy, but I am living as the person I truly am. Not the person my ex-boyfriend or my parents or some God wants me to be.

SAM

Well that's great for you Silvia, but if I don't stay here and work on the construction site, I have nothing. I don't have the money for college or to move to some nice liberal city. I am not going to end up homeless or dead on the side of the road because I can't suck up my feelings. If I have been able to keep quiet about this for 18 years then I can keep my mouth shut for 18 more.

(Beat. Silvia checks the alarm clock on the nightstand. An hour has passed. They are running out of time. She has to make a painful decision.)

SILVIA

Ok Sam. If that's what you want. You're daddy will be here any minute now so it's best if we get our story straight.

(She moves to the cheap vanity in the room and begins reapplying her red lipstick. It is methodical.)

I'm a cisgender woman and you're a straight man. We had sex. It was good. Does that sound about right? Or maybe we should get into specifics. What positions were we in? Doggy? Missionary? Did I give you head? How many times did I make you/ cum?

SAM

Stop/ it

SILVIA

No Sam, if we're gonna tell a lie then we better make it a good one.

SAM

What do you want/ from me?

SILVIA

I want you to stop lying to yourself, Sam. All I ever did for 30 years of my life was lie to myself. To my friends, to my parents, to my partners. This world doesn't need another liar, Sam.

(Multiple beats. She goes back to applying her lipstick. Sam watches her. He makes a decision)

SAM

Could I try some on?

(Silvia softens. She approaches Sam and applies his lipstick. There's a sense of care as she does it. It is intimate and maternal. She leads him to the mirror and he sees himself for the first time, really sees himself.)

SILVIA

It's a good color on you.

(They spend however long they need to at the mirror. There is a sudden knock on the door. Eddie is back.)

EDDIE

Silvia! Sam! Hope I'm not interruptin anything!

(The two panic. Sam begins to frantically rub at the red lipstick. All he does is smear it all over his mouth.)

SILVIA

Coming Eddie!

(Silvia spots tissues on the nightstand, takes a few, and hands them to Sam. As he reaches for the tissues, he catches himself in the mirror and hesitates. He sees himself. He makes a decision. Sam crumples up the tissues and throws them on the ground.)

SAM

Coming, sir.

(Silvia looks at his lipstick smeared face and the question "Are you sure?" is in her eyes. Sam nods. He is sure. He reaches for the door and pushes it open. Blackout.)

END OF PLAY