

sTALLING



Authors Note:

This play is an exploration in the different ways people deal with conflict. In situations of extreme danger, humans are wired to respond in one of three ways: Fight. Flight. Or Freeze. I believe we also do this in less extreme moments of conflict. I am a fighter. I used to look down on others who avoided necessary conflict. However, I've realized we're just programmed differently. They feel the same anxiety I do- but instead of feeling it when they avoid conflict, they feel it when they address conflict. Instead of viewing others' preferred method of handling conflict as better or worse, I've decided to focus on how it affects relationships.

This play is an attempt at showing a Flighter and a Fighter (and in some ways, a Freezer) interact with each other amidst grave conflict.

It also explores the idea of anger from afar, which naturally causes hatred to fester. Face to face confrontation forces you to confront your own blind spots and allows for empathy.

Hopefully the audience will leave with a greater understanding of these four women, regardless of your opinions of them.

Characters

All characters can be played by any female identifying person of any race.

CAMILLE. (35 years old) Jo's soon to be ex-wife. Planner. Avoids conflict. Manic. The embodiment of "Everything's Fine!"

CECE. (10.5 years old) Camille and Jo's child. Dorky pre-teen. Shy. Curious. Full of energy that she's not sure how to channel.

MARGE. (33 years old) Camille's sister. Jo's best friend from college. Aspiring Country Singer. Loud. Proud. Life of every party. The person who says they hate conflict but is always in the middle of conflict.

JO. (33 years old) Camille's soon to be ex-wife. Blunt. Direct. Cuts through the B.S. Lives in extremes. Lawyer.

YODA/DARTH VADER/CHEWBACCA .Can potentially be played by the same actor.

Lights up on a Four Seasons public restroom in Jacksonville, Florida. There are three stalls. The fourth wall acts as a mirror several feet in front of the stalls. There are three unattached sinks. Camille's makeup bag and I-pad sit on one of them.

Camille is standing in the middle of the restroom in her underwear and spansks, trying desperately to fit into a ball gown wedding dress that is too tight. Her hair is in rollers.

Cece sits on the floor. She wears a dress (perhaps with butterflies on it), glasses with beaded string attached on each temple, and lime green crocs. She reads Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince. She pays no attention to Camille.

Camille looks at herself in the mirror. She closes her eyes and takes three deep breaths.

CAMILLE. Find the joy.

Camille tries once more to zip up her dress before quickly releasing a guttural yell.

Cece doesn't look up from her book.

A toilet flushes. Pause. Who's there?

A person dressed as Yoda exits one of the stalls and crosses to the sink. She struggles to move around Camille's dress before washing her hands thoroughly.

Awkward silence.

YODA. Nice hotel, huh?

CAMILLE. Uh. Yeah.

YODA. (*to Camille*) Is that your Leia cosplay?

CAMILLE. Huh?

YODA. For the Star Wars Convention.

CAMILLE. No.

YODA. Well good luck with (*She motions to the wedding dress*) that.

Yoda exits.

CAMILLE. Cece, honey - Will you put the book down and help Mommy get into her dress?

Cece crosses to Camille and tries to pull up the dress zipper.

CECE. Can we go to the Star Wars Convention?

CAMILLE. We're busy today, you know that.

CECE. It doesn't fit.

Cece goes back to reading her book.

CAMILLE. This is fine.

She takes three deep breaths.

CAMILLE. I'll just call your mother.

Camille pulls out her phone and dials a number she has memorized.

CAMILLE. Hey! No you go first...Right. I was just wondering if you were on your way ... No, come whenever! I didn't mean to seem pushy... I was hoping you could do me a favor... My dress doesn't fit... My *wedding* dress... Don't laugh at me... I have a backup hanging on my bathroom door...Stop laughing! I thought it would be nice... Can you bring the dress or not?... Thank you... You're the best, Love you. (*Awkward pause.*) See ya later, bud.

Camille hangs up the phone. She steps out of the wedding dress and puts on a Florida State sweatshirt. She hangs the dress over a stall door.

CAMILLE. How's the book?

CECE. Good.

Beat.

CAMILLE. (*doing a Hagrid impression*) Yer a wizard 'arry!

Cece continues reading.

CAMILLE. Are you excited to see your friends today?

CECE. They aren't coming.

CAMILLE. What? Why?

CECE. I didn't invite them.

CAMILLE. Why not?

CECE. It's weird.

CAMILLE. It's a party!

CECE. Normal people don't do this.

CAMILLE. There's going to be an ice cream bar! Normal people love ice cream!

CECE. I hate ice cream.

CAMILLE. Since when?

CECE. Since Izzy found out she was allergic to dairy. None of the girls in my class eat ice cream anymore.

CAMILLE. Right. Who's Izzy?

CECE. The coolest girl in the 5th grade.

CAMILLE. Got it. Well It's not too late to invite people. I can call Mrs. Atkins and see if Brenna is free. Or Izzy!

CECE. They're probably busy.

CAMILLE. Your mother could pick them up on her way.

CECE. I DON'T WANT THEM TO COME.

CAMILLE. Okay Okay. It'll just be us. That'll be even better. It's been a minute since we've had a family day... Come here.

Cece crosses in front of Camille. They both face the mirror as Camille starts to brush Cece's hair. She takes her time.

CAMILLE. I know these last few months have been hard but today is not going to be like that. Remember when Harry and Ron got into that big fight?

Cece picks up the lipstick and tries to put it on.

CECE. In the Goblet of Fire?

CAMILLE. Sure.

CECE. Ron was mad at Harry because he thought Harry put his name in the goblet of fire even though he didn't. But really he was just jealous that Harry was getting all the attention again.

Camille wipes Cece's lipstick off and applies it properly.

CAMILLE. Right. Your mother and I are kind of like Harry and Ron.

CECE. Harry and Ron make up after the first challenge.

CAMILLE. They do? I think I missed that part of the movie.

CECE. You fell asleep. You and Jo aren't going to make up.

Beat.

CAMILLE. Listen Cece, things are going to be different now. But your mother and I will always be friends. And we'll *always* love you. And today is like that Harry Potter dance!

CECE. The Yule Ball?

CAMILLE. Yes- that! It's going to be a good day.

CECE. Promise?

CAMILLE. Pinky swear. *(She holds out her pinky finger. Cece reciprocates).* You look beautiful.

CECE. Will you play hide and seek with me?

CAMILLE. I wish I could. But I have so much to do. *(She picks up her Ipad and reads off her to-do list)* The florist is going to be here in ten minutes, the centerpieces need to be assembled, I have to check in with the Natalie Merchant cover band, someone needs to make sure the bartender knows not to over-serve Marge, /

CECE. /Whatever.

Marge enters holding a wrapped present and a pink bedazzled guitar. She wears matching pink cowboy boots.

MARGE. There you are! Ready to get hammered, screw a stranger, and puke your guts out in that *(She points to a stall)* stall?? I brought uppers so I'm ready to go all night.

CAMILLE. Marge-

MARGE. Plus I took Pepto so I won't get gassy.

CAMILLE. Marge-

MARGE. You know tequila gives me the runs.

Cece runs to Marge and hugs her.

CECE. Aunt Marge!

MARGE. Cece! I didn't see you there!

Marge mouths "I'm so sorry" to Camille through the mirror.

MARGE. I got a present for you.

Marge gives the wrapped present to Cece.

CECE. Really?? What for?

MARGE. I figure if anyone deserves a gift today, it's you.

Cece unwraps the present, revealing a smaller pair of pink cowboy boots. She squeals.

CECE. Oh my god. I love them!

Cece puts the boots on.

MARGE. We match now!

CECE. Thanks Aunt Marge! Will you play hide and seek with me?

MARGE. Maybe later! I gotta catch up with your mom first. *(to Camille)* So this is where you're getting ready?

Cece goes back to her reading spot and opens her book.

CAMILLE. The bridal suite was reserved. Apparently Quinceañera trumps Divorce Party. You brought a guitar?

MARGE. Jo said I could sing some songs at the party.

CAMILLE. Did she? How nice.

MARGE. Are you going to ask?

CAMILLE. Ask what?

MARGE. How my audition for The Voice went!

CAMILLE. Was that this week?

MARGE. Yep. Seventh times the charm.

CAMILLE. You got it??

MARGE. Yeah! Well, no. But Blake Shelton said I could be a country singer if I, "buckled down and really put my mind to it."

CAMILLE. You don't sing country music.

MARGE. I do now!

CAMILLE. Marge, we're from Connecticut.

MARGE. So? *(She does a fake southern accent)* Country isn't a place. It's a state of mind.

CAMILLE. You know what this reminds me of?

MARGE. Don't go there/

CAMILLE. /The circus.

MARGE. This is nothing like the circus.

CAMILLE. What was your clown name, again?

MARGE. Noodles.

CAMILLE. Noodles the Clown.

MARGE. Because I love Noodles.

CAMILLE. And what happened?

MARGE. It wasn't the right fit.

CAMILLE. You're not allowed within 300 feet of their tents.

MARGE. This isn't like the circus!

CAMILLE. You're not a kid anymore. Don't you think it's time you/

MARGE. /I'm a natural born entertainer- I just had to find my medium. Cece loves my songs, dontcha Cece?

CECE. Uh-huh! Sing the song about the fancy girl!

MARGE. You got it, missy.

MARGE begins to play the guitar and sing "Fancy" by Reba McEntire. She doesn't need to do either particularly well. She performs to Cece.

MARGE. I remember it all very well lookin' back
It was the summer I turned eighteen
We lived in a one room, rundown shack
On the outskirts of New Orleans
We didn't have money for food or rent

To say the least we were hard pressed
Then Mama spent every last penny we had
To buy me a dancin' dress

Mama dabbled a little bit of perfume on my neck then she kissed my cheek
And then I saw the tears wellin' up in her troubled eyes as she started to speak
She looked at a pitiful shack
And then she looked at me and took a ragged breath
She said, "Your Pa's runned off and I'm real sick,
And the baby's gonna starve to death."

It sounded like somebody else that was talkin'
Askin' Mama what do I do
She said just be nice to the gentlemen Fancy
And they'll be nice to you
(*CECE joins in.*)
/Here's your one chance Fancy don't let me down
Here's your one chance Fancy don't let me down
Lord forgive me for what I do, but if you want out
Well it's up to you
Now don't let me down now your mama's gonna move you uptown

CAMILLE. Oh my God! Marge!

MARGE. What?

CAMILLE. Cece, cover your ears. (*She doesn't.*) That song is about a mother telling her daughter to become a *hooker!*

MARGE. Uh No. It's about self preservation and the American Dream!

CAMILLE. And prostitution!

MARGE. Potato, potato.

CECE. I like when she says "I might have been born just plain white trash, but Fancy was my name!"

MARGE. (*to Camille*) Come on, that's just a great line.

CAMILLE. I've missed you. I'm glad you could make it.

MARGE. I wouldn't miss it. It's not every day you get to see your sister publically break a vow she made to like- God.

CECE. In Harry Potter, there's "Unbreakable Vows". If you break them, you die.

CAMILLE. Cece, why don't you go look for someone your age to play with. There might be a tiny chewbacca who loves hide and seek.

CECE. Fine.

Cece exits. Over the course of the next exchange, Camille does her makeup and takes her hair out of rollers.

MARGE. This must be hard for her.

CAMILLE. She'll be fine.

MARGE. Isn't she a little old for hide and seek?

CAMILLE. I thought so but she won't stop asking me to play it with her.

MARGE. Interesting.

CAMILLE. What?

MARGE. When mom and dad broke up, I ran away from home for two weeks.

CAMILLE. You were in the treehouse in our backyard. You came home every day for food.

MARGE. Would you rather I starved?

CAMILLE. Cece is not as dramatic as you.

MARGE. I just worry about her.

CAMILLE. Well don't. (*Beat.*) How's living with a roommate again?

MARGE. Jo's fine.

CAMILLE. I didn't ask about Jo.

MARGE. Look, I get it's weird. But she needed a place to stay/

CAMILLE. /No, I get it. You guys are best friends!

MARGE. And you're my sister. I'm not taking sides I swear.

CAMILLE. Of course you're not. Who said you were?

MARGE. She says you still won't return her calls.

CAMILLE. I just called her.

MARGE. Really? Good. That's good!

CAMILLE. The past is the past. Today is about moving forward.

MARGE. Really? Cause it feels like a cry for help.

Camille cackles.

CAMILLE. That's funny!

MARGE. You're in a cheerful mood.

CAMILLE. I'm a cheerful person.

MARGE. I just didn't know how this was going to go.

CAMILLE. We're celebrating!

MARGE. It's just Jo said it was going to be a huge thing.

CAMILLE. Like a "huge thing" or like a "*huge thing*"?

MARGE. Don't freak out. She just said you were pulling a 'Classic Camille' and renting out a ballroom at the Four Seasons for a 'Divorce Reception'.

CAMILLE. Well, I *am* doing that.

MARGE. It was just her tone. I'm probably reading into it.

CAMILLE. Probably... *(Beat.)* If she had a problem with the party she should have said something. She agreed to it and now she wants to make me out as the bad guy-No, I'm not doing this today.

Camille closes her eyes and takes three deep breaths.

CAMILLE. I've been working on breathing.

MARGE. Uh cool. Me too.

Marge takes three regular sized breaths. Camille Cackles.

CAMILLE. You are so funny!

MARGE. Are you okay?

CAMILLE. I'm great!

MARGE. Come on, Camille.

CAMILLE. I'm serious- I feel good! At first, I was struggling with the divorce but then I had this epiphany. I was in the grocery store and there was this kid- he was probably like four or five - throwing a massive fit because his mom wouldn't let him get Lunchables. And his poor mother was trying her best to shut him up but no matter what she did he just kept screaming. And then, all of a sudden, she just stopped arguing with him and *pushed her cart away.* And eventually he stopped crying and wandered after her- Silently! And it just made me realize: You are responsible for creating the joy in your life!

Pause.

MARGE. She just left her kid?

CAMILLE. She was just one aisle over.

MARGE. Okay but he found her, right?/

CAMILLE. /You're focusing on the wrong thing. Arguing with him wasn't going to make a difference. She took charge of improving her circumstances.

MARGE. So did Fancy!

CAMILLE. What?

MARGE. In the song. She was improving her circumstances.

CAMILLE. Fine. I'm trying to do that too.

MARGE. You're gonna start hooking?

CAMILLE. No! The Divorce Party.

MARGE. You lost me.

CAMILLE. I'm trying to find the joy! Who says a divorce can't be a celebration?

MARGE. Our mother, The Catholic Church...OJ Simpson.

Camille cackles.

CAMILLE. You're so funny! Do you remember Coach Glover?

MARGE. Our childhood basketball coach?

CAMILLE. Yes. Remember when he died a few years ago?

MARGE. I saw him at the liquor store last Thanksgiving.

CAMILLE. No you didn't. He's dead. Lymphoma.

MARGE. Then who did I see at Toddy's?

CAMILLE. I don't know, Marge.

MARGE. That's really going to bug me.

CAMILLE. So I went to his funeral/

MARGE. / You went to Coach Glover's funeral?

CAMILLE. It wasn't called a funeral. It was called... I can't remember. But no one wore black! They were all dressed in colorful clothes. And there were flowers and music and an open bar! The feng shui was perfect.

MARGE. You want your *divorce* to have great *feng shui*?

CAMILLE. (*remembering*) - Celebration of life! That's what it was called. I am celebrating *the life* of my marriage.

MARGE. But its dead.

CAMILLE. That doesn't mean everyone has to act all sad and awkward.

MARGE. It *is* sad and awkward.

CAMILLE. Jo and I were married for thirteen years. That's something to celebrate!

MARGE. There are cheaper ways to celebrate. Buy a nice bottle of wine. Take a spa day. Light all her shit on fire!

CAMILLE. We had the money saved up.

MARGE. How much?

CAMILLE. It's not important.

MARGE. And Jo was okay with spending it?

CAMILLE. What has she told you?

MARGE. Nothing. I'm not involved.

CAMILLE. We didn't get to have a big wedding.

MARGE. I loved your wedding! It was so *rustic!*

CAMILLE. It was in our backyard. You stepped in dog poop.

MARGE. Yeah that was gross.

CAMILLE. We had a bad wedding and then we had a bad marriage.

MARGE. I don't think the two are related.

CAMILLE. You never know.

MARGE. This sucks.

CAMILLE. What does?

MARGE. This. I didn't want to say anything but this has been really hard for me. I hate being in the middle.

CAMILLE. You're not in the middle. There's nothing to be in the middle of!

MARGE. You're getting a divorce.

CAMILLE. It's amicable! We're throwing a party!

MARGE. These things are complicated.

CAMILLE. This isn't! I told you, I'm happy. I've moved on.

MARGE. But you can't control how Jo's feeling.

CAMILLE. What are you talking about?

MARGE. I shouldn't have said anything.

CAMILLE. Well you did.

MARGE. Forget it. You know I hate conflict.

CAMILLE. Look- Jo and I have our issues but Cece is my main concern. This party is for her. I want her to know that even though we're not together anymore, we will always respect each other.

Ding. Camille's ipad lights up.

CAMILLE. The florist is here. Will you go talk to him? I have to pee.

MARGE. Sure.

Marge exits, leaving her guitar. Camille walks into a stall and closes the door. Jo enters with an umbrella in hand. She places the umbrella against the restroom wall and crosses to look at herself in the mirror. A toilet flushes. Camille exits the stall and crosses to wash her hands. The two make eye contact in the mirror.

CAMILLE. Jo! Hi!

JO. Camille.

"The Imperial March" -aka the Darth Vader theme song- plays.

A person dressed as Darth Vader enters the restroom holding a lightsaber.

She leans her saber against the wall and pulls out her phone. The ringtone stops.

DARTH VADER. Hey Gary. Can I call you after the convention?.. Say hello to Lin and the kids for me. Ba-Bye.

Her breathing sounds like Darth Vader's and continues throughout the course of the scene. Darth crosses to a bathroom stall and closes the door.

Darth Vader Breath... Darth Vader Breath.

CAMILLE. You cut your hair!

JO. Three months ago.

Darth Vader Breath.

CAMILLE. It looks nice- edgy. (*Awkward Pause. Darth Vader Breath*) Marge is here!

JO. I saw her.

Pause. Darth Vader Breath ... Darth Vader Breath .

CAMILLE. I hear she's a country singer now.

JO. Yeah.

CAMILLE. Classic Marge making a rash life decision. It's just like/

JO AND CAMILLE. The circus.

Darth Vader Breath .

JO. I think it's great. She's doing what she loves.

Darth Vader Breath .

CAMILLE. Totally. It's great that she can be so *care-free*. Do you think she'll get as drunk as she did at our wedding? Remember- she tried to screw your cousin. (*Darth Vader Breath*) What's his name?

JO. Tobin.

Camille cackles. Darth Vader Breath .

CAMILLE. Yes, oh my god. She tried to bone Cousin Tobin!

JO. He's a nice guy.

Darth Vader Breath.

CAMILLE. Yeah no he seems nice. Remember when she was with that guy, Ronny?

Darth Vader Breath .

JO. The cat arsonist?

CAMILLE. I think you can be an ‘arsonist’ and a ‘cat murderer’ but I don’t think ‘cat arsonist’ is a term.

Darth Vader Breath .

JO. Well either way your mom’s cat is dead.

Darth Vader Breath . Camille cackles.

CAMILLE. Marge is wild! I love her to death but she’s a mess.

Darth Vader Breath .

JO. I don’t think we’re really in a position to judge.

Awkward Pause. Darth Vader Breath. Toilet flush. More Darth Vader Breaths are heard as Darth Vader opens the stall door and crosses to the sink. She looks down to see her hands are inside the costume. She exits the restroom.

CAMILLE. You forgot to wash your hands! ... *(to Jo)* Do you have my dress?

JO. It’s in my car. I forgot to bring it in.

CAMILLE. Is that what you’re wearing?

JO. I just came from court.

CAMILLE. Nice.

JO. What?

CAMILLE. Nothing.

JO. What's the problem?

CAMILLE. There's no problem. You look fine!

JO. I didn't realize there was a dress code.

CAMILLE. It's at a hotel... The invitations said 'semi-formal'.

JO. They did say that.

CAMILLE. And I called you. You could have changed when you went home to get the dress.

JO. My clothes aren't there anymore.

CAMILLE. Right... It's not a big deal. That's not what today should be about.

JO. What exactly is today about?

Pause.

CAMILLE. I've got to check in with the florist!

JO. Camille, I need to talk to you about/

CAMILLE. /Can it wait? I have to finish stuffing blue-scarlet pimpernels into mason jars before the guests arrive.

JO. Pimper-whats?

CAMILLE. They're flowers. They symbolize change.

Camille exits.

JO. Of course they do.

Jo crosses to the dress hanging over the stall door. She enters a stall and closes the door.

Cece enters looking for her book.

Spotlight on the lightsaber. Twinkle sound effect (Wind chimes?) as Cece crosses to it, mesmerized.

She picks it up. Music Plays. (Perhaps Vivaldi's Viola d'amore Concerto in A minor RV 397?)

She pretends to fight an invisible person. She commits fully to the fight lost in her own world. She defeats the invisible person and bows.

Darth Vader re-enters. Cece is too enthralled with the saber to notice. Darth Vader Breath . Cece turns slowly to see Darth Vader. Cece, embarrassed that she was caught, hands the saber back to Darth Vader. Darth Vader exits.

Toilet flush.

Jo exits the stall and crosses to wash her hands.

JO. Hey kiddo!

Jo and Cece hug before doing some sort of secret hand-shake.

CECE. Jo! I've missed you.

JO. I've missed you too, bug.

CECE. I'm on Half Blood Prince now!

JO. What did you think of Umbridge?

CECE. She's the worst!

JO. I know! I hate her more than Voldemort.

CECE. Really? What about Snape?

JO. Snape's complicated. You'll see.

CECE. I hate Snape. He's so mean to Harry.

JO. Love makes people mean sometimes.

CECE. Who does he love?

JO. You'll get there. How's school?

CECE. It's fine.

JO. Do you want to talk about what happened last week?

CECE. I told you- No.

JO. Well I'm all ears if you ever do. I actually had something I wanted to talk to you about.

CECE. What is it? Just tell me.

JO. Don't worry, it's a good thing. I bought a new house.

CECE. Oh.

JO. It's got a pool.

CECE. Really??

JO. Yeah. After this is over, you'll see me a lot more.

CECE. Not just on weekends?

JO. Nope. You can spend a whole week with me and then a whole week with your mom.

CECE. And then a whole week with you again?

JO. Yep. The house is about twenty minutes away from your mom's. It's actually in a new school zone. You know Bearden Middle?

CECE. They do the really good musicals. We saw the one about the big plant there.

JO. They also have a really good chess team. I toured there a few days ago and it looked really cool. You could go there next year if you want.

Pause.

CECE. Mom said I was going to Webb next year.

JO. She did? *(Beat)* We have to discuss that.

CECE. Will you play hide and seek with me?

JO. You bet. You hide, I'll seek.

CECE. Can we use the whole hotel? Please!

JO. Let's stick to the ground floor.

CECE. Fineee. Count to twenty. No peeking!

Jo covers her eyes and begins to count to twenty. Cece crosses to the restroom door and opens it. She stops. She closes the door. She tiptoes past Jo and into a stall, closing the stall door quietly behind her. Jo finishes counting. She starts to leave the restroom. Marge enters the restroom.

MARGE. Hey! Sorry, I've really gotta pee!

Marge fast walks to a stall and closes the door.

MARGE. Camille has me setting up centerpieces. I told her about The Voice and I think she took it really well.

JO. You told her you quit your job?

MARGE. Yeah. Well, no. But it was implied. She knows I'm serious about my music now.

JO. uh huh.

MARGE. Baby steps. You know how she is. She doesn't understand how much pressure that job was. You don't just "Make a Wish". A lot goes into it. I had to choose which kid got to meet their hero. Like what am I - God? Obviously I'm so thankful I don't have stage 4 cancer but sometimes I think "What about me? Where's my wish?"

JO. You aren't dying Marge.

MARGE. Of course. It's just those kids made me realize it's that life is fleeting. That's why I gotta dedicate myself to this country music thing while I still can.

Marge exits the stall and crosses to wash her hands.

MARGE. Camille's right. You are responsible for creating the joy in your life.

JO. Camille said that?

MARGE. Yeah it's her new mantra or whatever. So you think it's a good idea, right?

JO. What?

MARGE. Being a country singer.

JO. Seriously?

MARGE. Yeah.

JO. No.

MARGE. What?

JO. I think it's a bad idea. You're 33, you don't have a stable form of income, it's a competitive field, you have to be really talented to make money-

MARGE. -Ouch.

JO. I'm just being honest.

MARGE. I didn't realize you felt that way.

JO. Don't get upset. You're a dreamer. I love that about you. We're just different people.

MARGE. Yeah I guess. How's it going with Camille?

JO. Fan-fucking-tastic.

MARGE. You said you wanted to talk to her.

JO. She's too busy trying to throw the perfect party.

MARGE. You know I'm not involved but/

JO. /She is such a control freak. This whole party is just her, once again, taking complete control of our lives.

MARGE. Why did you come then?

JO. For Cece! She wanted me to be here.

Jo hands Marge her phone.

JO. Plus- Read this.

MARGE. “ Dear Jolene, I'm sorry I haven't returned your calls. I needed time away from you to process our break up. I want you to know that I cherish the time we spent together and even though it's over, I want to celebrate it. I have booked the Four Seasons (*Insert day of show here*) for a Divorce Party. Before you ask, yes it's a thing. Google it. I have invited all our friends. I hope you can be in attendance. I was thinking we could sign the Divorce papers then. Once we make this official, we can file for joint custody. I think it's what's best for Cece. Peace and Love, Camille”

JO. The sooner we sign these papers, the sooner I get joint custody and Cece gets back to some sort of routine.

MARGE. Maybe she's thinking this party is a chance for you guys to make up.

JO. Who knows what she's thinking. That's the problem- She refuses to communicate and it's not fair to Cece! Six months ago, her entire life was uprooted. No explanation, no conversation, nothing. She wakes up one Sunday, and all my stuff is packed up on the front lawn. And suddenly she only sees me on the weekends. Everything was fine until it wasn't ! And she doesn't even know why! ...It's not fair. To her. *(Beat)* Camille told her that she's going to Webb next year.

MARGE. Shit. I didn't realize you guys were secretly loaded.

JO. We're not.

MARGE. I mean, this party is one thing but Webb is like 16k a year.

JO. Yeah well who knows where Camille got the money for this thing.

MARGE. Oh.

JO. What?

MARGE. Nothing.

JO. Marge.

MARGE. It's really not my place but, Camille said she used your guys' savings for the party.

JO. No. That's ridiculous. I would know.

MARGE. That's what she said.

JO. Oh my god- Cece's college fund. I cannot believe her!

MARGE. Where are you going?

JO. To find her.

MARGE. Can you not say I told you? I don't wanna be involved!

Jo has already left.

MARGE. Great. Now I'm getting anxiety sweats.

*She tries to air out her armpits. Maybe there's a hand-dryer that she uses?
Camille enters the restroom door.*

CAMILLE. There you are! I need you out here on centerpieces. People are going to be here any minute. Have you seen my I-pad? Oh!

Camille grabs Ipad.

MARGE. I'll be right out.

CAMILLE. Do you know where Jo is?

MARGE. She was just here. Heads up, she's in a bad mood.

CAMILLE. I know! I wasn't sure if it was just me.

MARGE. She basically said I wasn't talented enough to make it in the music industry. And that I'm too old which is like - ageist.

CAMILLE. That is harsh.

MARGE. You can't just say whatever you want! Words hurt people.

CAMILLE. Exactly, that's why I didn't want to talk to her these past few months. She dominates every conversation. It's like she's not even listening. Like- I'm not one of your witnesses! I'm not on the stand!

MARGE. You're so right.

CAMILLE. Anyway, if you see her tell her I need my dress.

MARGE. Will do. Be right out.

Camille exits.

A person dressed as Chewbacca enters clutching her stomach. She makes a sad Chewbacca sound. She crosses to a stall and closes the door.

MARGE. Tough day?

Sad Chewbacca sound.

MARGE. Me too.

Jo re-enters the restroom. Maybe she paces?

JO. I can't find her anywhere.

MARGE. She was/

JO. /You know what her problem is? She thinks she's better than everyone else. Like earlier she was talking about your shitty taste in men. Seriously Camille? You're in no position to judge.

MARGE. What?

JO. She's throwing a Divorce Party!

MARGE. No- what was she saying about my taste in men?

JO. That you date weirdos and freaks.

MARGE. She married you! No offense.

JO. Some taken!

Camille opens the restroom door and yells inside.

CAMILLE (voice). MARGE! Centerpieces!

MARGE. Coming!

JO. Camille we need to talk!

Jo crosses to the restroom door.

CAMILLE. Yes! Later! Please get my dress.

The restroom door closes. Camille is gone.

JO. *(calling after her)* Camille! *(to Marge)* She is such an asshole!

MARGE. Totally. I gotta go. You better get her dress.

Marge and Jo exit. Long pause. Sad Chewbacca sound. Camille enters and looks at herself in the mirror. She takes three deep breaths.

CAMILLE. You've got this. This is your day. Find the joy.

Jo enters with Camille's dress in a garbage bag and shoves it at Camille, who takes it.

CAMILLE. Thank you so much.

JO. Fuck you.

Camille blubbers.

JO. No. It's my turn to speak.

CAMILLE. I thought we were going to act like adults today but I guess not.

Camille starts to cross to a stall. Jo stops her.

JO. Don't act like I'm the immature one. You're the one throwing a damn divorce party!

CAMILLE. I knew you weren't okay with it. You should have said something.

JO. When was I supposed to do that? You wouldn't return my fucking calls!

CAMILLE. You could have emailed me.

JO. You were going to throw this party no matter what I said. You always do whatever you want without giving a shit about anyone else.

CAMILLE. You are so dramatic.

Camille crosses to a stall and closes the door. She changes into the dress over the course of the next exchange.

JO. Did you or did you not spend Cece's college fund on this pathetic party?

Pause.

CAMILLE. Okay listen I'm/

JO. /Yes or no?

CAMILLE. Just some of it.

JO. How much? (*Beat. Silence.*) How much, Camille?

CAMILLE. Just a couple thousand. I'll pay it back I swear. I have a plan. It'll all be back by next year.

JO. Jesus fucking christ you are such a cunt.

Camille shrieks in the stall.

JO. Oh come on- It's just a word.

Camille slams open the stall door and steps forward. She is wearing a Slutty Mary Poppins costume.

CAMILLE. You are a vindictive little snake. Really? I ask you to do one thing for me-One thing! And you bring my slutty Mary Poppins costume?

JO. I think you look fabulous. Oh! I almost forgot.

She crosses to the umbrella she left earlier, picks it up, opens it, and hands it to Camille.

(continuing) M'lady.

CAMILLE. You knew how important this day was to me.

JO. How could I know if you weren't speaking to me?

CAMILLE. I've been planning this for six months.

JO. Of course you have. That's what you do. You plan. Our first date, our wedding, our house, our vacations. It only makes sense you would plan our divorce. You planned our entire lives.

CAMILLE. That's not true.

JO. You even planned Cece's conception!

CAMILLE. That was your idea!

JO. You're delusional.

CAMILLE. You said "Let's make a baby!"

JO. It was Halloween and we were plastered and you were wearing *that* slutty Mary Poppins costume. I said "I bet you'd be great with kids" cause I was drunk and trying to get laid. And then *you* said, "Let's make a baby!"

CAMILLE. And you said "*Okay*"!

JO. I was drunk and in love with you! I would have gotten a tattoo of Elmo on my ass if you asked me to!

CAMILLE. You agreed!

JO. And you inseminated yourself the next day!

CAMILLE. You make it sound like I did it behind your back. You never objected!

JO. Because that was my role! You make all the decisions and I go along with them!

CAMILLE. That's not fair.

JO. I'm done going along with your bullshit, Camille. Cece is not going to Webb./

CAMILLE. /Oh my god, Is that what this is about? I was going to talk to you about it.

JO. She's not going, that's final. I bought a new house. It's zoned for Bearden Middle/

CAMILLE./ I don't want my daughter going to a public school.

JO. She goes to a public school now!

CAMILLE. Middle school is different. It's a delicate time for kids. She needs to be somewhat.. Sheltered.

JO. She needs to experience the real world!

CAMILLE. I know what's best for my kid.

Beat.

JO. Your kid?

CAMILLE. You know what I mean.

Marge enters.

MARGE. Hey guys, people are here... and you're being sorta of. um. Loud.

CAMILLE. We'll be right out, Marge.

JO. *(to Camille)* You have always looked at her as your kid, not ours.

MARGE. See you guys out there!

Marge exits quickly.

CAMILLE. You're being ridiculous.

JO. You think that just because you gave birth to her/

CAMILLE. Oh my god.

JO. You have some special connection to her and can just make all the decisions/

CAMILLE. That is not true/

JO. Like you know best/

CAMILLE. I DO KNOW BEST. I take her to all her doctor's appointments. I make sure she eats her vegetables and gets her homework done and goes to bed on time. I taught her how to read and tie her shoes. I know what she needs!

JO. And I don't?

CAMILLE. No.

JO. You may make her bed and take her to school, but I read her bedtime stories. And take her to the playground and the fair and to basketball games. I play with her!

CAMILLE. You're her friend, not her parent! You get to be the fun mom while i have to play bad cop. And I do it because she needs someone to. And yeah, maybe I'm not her favorite. But I'm okay with that because I love her and I want what's best for her.

JO. Her school called me last week. She got suspended for the day. They wanted me to come pick her up.

CAMILLE. And you're just now telling me?

JO. She begged the front office to call me. She didn't want you to know.

Pause. This clearly stings Camille.

CAMILLE. What did she do?

JO. I don't know. She didn't want to tell me.

CAMILLE. You are her parent!

JO. What do you want me to do? Waterboard her?

CAMILLE. You are being ridiculous.

JO. Should I have curbed stomped the kid?

CAMILLE. Of course she goes to you! You don't even care what she did.

JO. Probably should have lit her on fire like Ronny did to Mr. Whiskers.

CAMILLE. You should have been her mother!

JO. I'm not the problem here. She's clearly acting out.

CAMILLE. What are you saying?

JO. Six months ago her world got turned upside down and all you care about is this stupid party.

CAMILLE. This party is for her!

JO. Is that what you tell yourself? This party is for you! This is just another way for you to avoid dealing with your shit.

CAMILLE. Don't lecture me about how I choose to handle this.

JO. I will lecture you! Because your choices affect other people. You kicked me out without an explanation! You ended a thirteen year marriage without even a discussion! You are the most selfish person I have ever met!

CAMILLE. I guess Hope's not selfish, huh?

Beat.

JO. What?

CAMILLE. Your girlfriend. Hope.

JO. So you did know.

CAMILLE. Yeah I knew.

JO. How?

CAMILLE. We share an icloud, idiot. Your texts started popping up on my ipad one day.

JO. How much did you read?

CAMILLE. Everything. How you felt trapped in your marriage. How we were too young when we got married and were only staying together for Cece. How you didn't love me anymore.

JO. I never slept with her.

CAMILLE. I don't care. (*Beat. Camille cackles*). Hope is such a stupid name. Like Faith or Chastity. They're concepts, not names. You're in love with a concept!

JO. I'm not in- Camille, I am so sorry.

CAMILLE. Now you're sorry? Two minutes ago you're calling me *that word* and now you're sorry?

JO. You could have told me, I could have explained.

CAMILLE. I didn't want to hear it.

JO. I deserved a chance to/

CAMILLE. /You don't deserve anything. You're the selfish one. So if Cece's having trouble adjusting that's because you're a fucking whore/

CECE. /STOP IT.

Cece opens to stall door and steps out.

CAMILLE. Cece/

CECE. *(to Jo)* /You didn't want me?

JO. Cece that's not what I said.

CECE. You always say that the divorce has nothing to do with me but you're mad at mom for having me! You're a liar!

JO. Cece, Listen - It just all happened really fast and I didn't feel like I had a lot of say over it. I wasn't sure I was ready to be a mom. But you are the best thing that's ever happened to me I swear.

CAMILLE. Cece, our divorce has nothing to do with you.

CECE. It's because Jo cheated on you! *(to Jo)* You're the cunt.

CAMILLE. Cecelia Grace don't say that word.

CECE. Why not? That's what she called you.

CAMILLE. It's not a nice thing to say.

CECE. Good. *(to Jo)* I don't care if it has a pool- I don't wanna live in your stupid house. I wish you weren't my mother!

JO. Cece, I didn't mean for you to hear any of that.

CECE. Well, I did. You're really bad at hide and seek.

Cece exits. Long pause.

CAMILLE. We can fix this.

JO. Camille/

CAMILLE. /She just needs space. She'll forgive you. We just need to/

JO. /How do you do that?

CAMILLE. Do what?

JO. That! It's like optimism is your fucking survival mode.

CAMILLE. I'm just trying to/

JO. I know, I know you are. Fuck. FUCK. I fucked up! *(Beat)*. I didn't mean it like that.

CAMILLE. I know.

Long Pause. Maybe they sit down?

JO. How did we get here?

CAMILLE. I don't know. We used to be so happy. You were happy, right?

JO. Yeah. *(Beat)* I liked our first date, and our wedding, the vacations. I liked that you planned everything. It made things easier. But after awhile I felt like my whole life was made up of decisions that you made and I got angry... and that's not fair to you because I let you do it all. I let you.

CAMILLE. I don't always want to be the one who makes the decisions.

JO. Really?

CAMILLE. I stuff my own stocking.

JO. What?

CAMILLE. Every Christmas morning, I wake up and pretend to be surprised when I look in my stocking but I'm not surprised- because I put everything there. *I buy my own freaking christmas presents and pretend to be surprised!* Because you aren't going to do it. And that's not your fault. You didn't even know I wanted you to do it... I just don't want to stuff my own stocking anymore.

JO. I thought you liked doing it.

CAMILLE. I did at first. I guess people change.

JO. Yeah.

Long pause. They sit in silence. Marge enters the restroom, pissed.

MARGE. SHUT UP YOU DUMB SLUTS (*Beat*) I thought you would be talking. Okay, YES! I'm a little drunk. Sue me! I like to have fun. Parties are supposed to be fun! Why are you not having fun?? You are both so embarrassing. That's right- *I'm* embarrassed by *you*. You act like I'm the mess. This (*she points to Jo and Camille*) is the mess! Cece is so cool and smart and creative and a little odd but in a way that's still cute and she's outside *crying!* On Divorce Day! I thought Divorce Day was supposed to be happy- Huh, Camille? You guys are Buttholes. Like just, huge stinky hairy buttholes. Actually that's mean... to buttholes! Buttholes don't deserve that. And Cece doesn't deserve this! You guys are pathetic.

Marge exits.

JO. I don't know if you've heard but she's not involved.

Camille chuckles.

JO. I'm going to try to talk to Cece.

CAMILLE. I don't think that's a good idea. She just needs time.

JO. I can't just sit here. I have to fix this.

Jo exits.

CECE (*offstage*) Go away!

JO. (*offstage*) CeCe, please!

CECE. (*offstage*) I don't wanna talk to you- I hate you!

Cece runs in.

CAMILLE. Cece, I'm so sorry you heard all that.

Cece runs to Camille and hugs her. Camille strokes her hair.

CECE. You promised it was going to be a good day.

CAMILLE. I wanted it to be. I really messed up Cece.

CECE. It's not your fault. Jo cheated on you.

CAMILLE. Things are never that simple, hun.

CECE. Yes they are. She cheated on you and she promised not to tell you I got in trouble at school and then she did it anyway. And she didn't even want me!

CAMILLE. She didn't want *me*. She loves you more than anything. You know that.

CECE. Well she said/

CAMILLE. /People say a lot of things they don't mean when they're mad.

CECE. People tell the truth when they're mad. They lie when they're happy.

CAMILLE. Life isn't black and white, CeCe. She loves you so much. I know that and you know that.

CECE. Well she still cheated on you.

CAMILLE. Yeah. That sucks.

Long pause.

CAMILLE. Cece, what happened at school last week?

CECE. I don't wanna get in trouble.

CAMILLE. You won't.

CECE. Promise?

CAMILLE. Pinky swear.

CECE. Brenna said when a mom and a dad love each other forever God gives them a baby and I said that's not true because I have two moms and they hate each other. And she said I was wrong so I told her Santa wasn't real and it's her grandfather's own fault he died because everyone knows smokers get lung cancer and then she cried a lot and said this is why I have no friends. *(Beat)* So I bit her.

Pause.

CAMILLE. Did it make you feel better?

CECE. What?

CAMILLE. Biting Brenna.

CECE. Yeah. At first.

CAMILLE. But then you had to deal with it.

CECE. Yeah.

CAMILLE. I think that's why I waited so long to yell at your mother. I didn't want to deal with what happens next.

CECE. She was right.

CAMILLE. Jo?

CECE. Brenna. No one likes me.

CAMILLE. That's not true.

CECE. They all think I'm weird. I always try to say the right thing but I'm either too loud or too quiet. No one ever wants to play with me. Are you mad at me?

CAMILLE. No honey.

CECE. But I bit someone. You're supposed to be mad.

CAMILLE. Do you feel bad for doing it?

CECE. I didn't mean to hurt her. I just got really angry.

CAMILLE. We all get angry sometimes. Sometimes you hurt people and sometimes you get hurt. All you can do now is try to do better next time.

Jo steps into the restroom.

CECE. I don't know if I want to be Brenna's friend anymore.

CAMILLE. You don't have to be.

CECE. I think I hate her.

CAMILLE. Maybe someday you won't.

CECE. Mom?

CAMILLE. Yes?

CECE. Do you hate Jo? Tell the truth.

Pause.

CAMILLE. I don't know. Maybe. But you gotta care about someone to hate them.

CECE. That doesn't make sense.

JO. If we didn't care, we wouldn't have yelled. I wouldn't even be here.

CECE. I told you I don't want to talk to you right now. Why do you keep trying to talk?

Pause.

JO. You're right. No more talking. Wanna play a game?

CECE. For real this time?

JO. For real this time.

CECE. Which one?

JO. Whatever you want.

CECE. You're both wizards like in Harry Potter. And I'm Hagrid obviously.

JO. Obviously.

CECE. Does anyone have a wand?

JO. I left mine at home.

Cece picks up Camille's umbrella and fully commits to impersonating Hagrid, making her voice sound over the top Cockney.

CECE. Welcome ter Hogwarts: the greates' magical school in all the land. I'm Hagrid the groundskeeper. I like dragons an' friendship!

CAMILLE. So who am I playing?

CECE. Whoever yeh want. Now 'ere at Hogwarts there are a few rules-

CAMILLE. -I'm just not very familiar with the canon.

JO. You can be Harry.

CAMILLE. The titular role? That's a lot of pressure.

JO. Let's play quidditch! Watch out for the bludgers !

Jo pretends to fly on a broom and play quidditch. Camille follows her lead clunkily.

CAMILLE. Does my orphan upbringing affect my ability to play for a team?

CECE. There's no quidditch game today.

JO. Oh okay. I challenge the infamous Harry Potter to a duel!

Jo starts pretending to shoot spells at Camille.

CAMILLE. Abrakadabra!

CECE. No Duelin'! Duelin' isn't allowed outside o' class.

CAMILLE. Sorry Hagrid. Unless I'm not sorry. Is Harry a rebel?

CECE. Yeh two have been actin' nuttier than squirrel poo. Everyone in school is talkin' bout yer fightin and hollarin. Now let's settle this fer once an' fer all - with an unbreakable vow. Close yer eyes an' hold yer hands.

They oblige. Marge enters holding a glass of wine.

MARGE. Are you guys done being sad? They just brought the ice cream bar out and you're gonna miss it.

CECE. We're playing Harry Potter. Do yeh Jo promise not to call Mom a 'cunt' as long as you both shall live?

MARGE. I think I missed this part of the movie.

JO. I do.

CECE. And do yeh Mom promise to not call Jo a 'fuckin' whore' as long as yeh both shall live?

MARGE. Should have read the books.

CAMILLE. I do.

CECE. Great. And remember this is a bindin' magical contract. If yeh break it, yeh die.

The song, "Fireworks" from Harry Potter Plays. They all run around casting spells. Cece's umbrella wand knocks Marge's glass of wine out of her hands. It spills all over Camille's wedding dress. Everyone looks at Camille, waiting for her to freak out.

MARGE. Camille, I am *so sorry*.

JO. The dry cleaners can probably get that out.

CECE. I'm sorry Mom.

CAMILLE. Don't worry about it. Seriously, it's fine.

No one believes her.

CECE. Really?

CAMILLE. It's just a dress. It doesn't even fit.

Camille picks up the dress and dumps it in the trash. Everyone stares at her, amazed.

CAMILLE. What?

JO. Nothing.

CECE. Let's go get ice cream!

CAMILLE. I thought you hated ice cream.

CECE. I changed my mind. *(to Camille)* Are you coming?

JO. Your mother and I will be right out.

Cece and Marge leave.

CAMILLE. Can you believe we made her?

JO. We?

CAMILLE. Yeah, we. Did you bring the papers?

Jo gets the divorce and custody papers from her briefcase.

JO. Camille, I really am sor-

CAMILLE. I know you are. Let's just do better. For her.

JO nods. She hands the papers to Camille.

CAMILLE. Do you have a pen?

JO. No. Do you?

CAMILLE. If I had a pen do you think I would have asked?

JO. It was just a question.

CAMILLE. It was a pretty dumb question.

JO. Why do you do that?

CAMILLE. Do what?

JO. "It was a pretty dumb question"

CAMILLE. I don't sound like that/

JO. You're always correcting me/

CAMILLE. /I wouldn't have to correct you if you weren't wrong/

JO. /You are literally the most annoying person/

CAMILLE. /Figuratively. You mean figuratively/

JO. No I mean literally!

The toilet flushes. Chewbacca exits the stall. She makes a happy Chewbacca noise and holds up a pen.

BLACKOUT. END OF PLAY.