



**BRAVE SPIRITS THEATRE
ARCHIVE**

PERFORMANCE SCRIPT
The Trojan Women Project
2018

Director: Rachel Hynes
Dramaturg: Laura Esti Miller
Devised by Rachel Hynes and the ensemble

**For inquiries about producing *The Trojan Women Project*,
please contact Rachel Hynes at rhynes@gmail.com**

Artistic Director: Charlene V. Smith
Resident Dramaturg: Claire Kimball

Brave Spirits Theatre is providing these early modern theatre resources free of charge for educators, students, and theatre practitioners for research purposes only. All design, directing, and dramaturgical work is the intellectual property of the artist who created it. Any use of this work in future productions is forbidden unless the express permission of the artist is obtained.

Scripts in Word document format and scene charts in Excel are available for open source use and adaptation. You are also welcome to consult BST's script edits and doubling tracks for research or production. This page and other identifying markers should not be removed from PDF files.

If you found this document helpful in your research or practice, please consider donating to Brave Spirits Theatre at (bravespiritstheatre.com/support) to help support the company and these archives.

The Trojan Women Project

**Devised by Rachel Hynes
and the ensemble**

Copyright 2018, Rachel Hynes
rhynes@gmail.com
Last revision: 02/26/18

The Trojan Women Project
Devised by Rachel Hynes and the ensemble

Originally produced by Brave Spirits Theatre, Alexandria, VA
Charlene V. Smith, *Producing Artistic Director*
www.bravespiritstheatre.com

As part of the Women's Voices Theater Festival

January 31 - February 25, 2018

Directed by Rachel Hynes
Assistant Directed by Amber Smithers
Set Design by Brian Gillick
Costume Design by Kristina Martin
Lighting Design by Peter Caress
Makeup Design by Briana Manente
Fight Choreography by Casey Kaleba
Original Music by Karen Lange
Stage Managed by Kaylin Peachey

Original Ensemble

JennySuzy Alden
ReganRenea S. Brown
Jessica.....Francesca Marie Chilcote
Betty.....Lisa Hill-Corley
SarahKaren Lange
LollyNancy Linden
WillowRuthie Rado
Maya.....Diana Gonzalez Ramirez
NefertitiNicole Ruthmarie
Kimberly.....Claire Schoonover
DevinEzra Tozian
AlexisAllison Turkel
Maria.....Claudia Rosales Waters

Workshopped with Suzy Alden, Sandra Atkinson, Elliott Bales, Greta Boeringer, Francesca Marie Chilcote, Debora Crabbe, Peter Danelski, Gwen Grastorf, Lisa Hill-Corley, Nancy Linden, Chloe Mikala, Lilian Oben, Risikat Okedeyi, Fatima Quander, Otis Ramsey-Zoe, Ruthie Rado, Diana Gonzalez Ramirez, Charlene V. Smith, Alison Talvacchio, Stephanie Tomiko, Ezra Tozian, Allison Turkel, and Claudia Rosales Waters.

additional text by Euripides, translated by Edith Hamilton

Note: Lines in choruses may be broken up at the director's discretion, as long as they are spoken by all of the members of the ensemble.

Note: The character of Devin is gender non-conforming and should be played by a performer who identifies as non-binary or gender-fluid, preferably one that has spent time living as a woman. Under no circumstances should cisgendered men be cast in this play.

ACT I

The Trojan War

The house opens. The audience enters to find the Women sitting on their chairs sideways, upside down, but definitely not upright. Some are happy about it and smile serenely. Some are neutral, others share fear or discomfort.

Audience enters. Ushers seat audience members by “dumping” the Trojan Women out of their chairs, setting the chairs upright and seating the audience member. The ushers make no mention of the women. The women stay scattered throughout the space, dumped on the floor. It is the present and also the metaphorical past.

There is an enormous white dress hanging from the ceiling. The skirt is vast and extends three quarters of the way into the space. Over the course of the play it becomes many things: the sails of a ship, a tent, a womb, a house, the self.

Excavating These Women

A video plays. It is an academic video titled “Excavating These Women.”

ACADEMIC 1: Good day, thank you for joining us for this press conference. We wish to tell you of our truly remarkable discoveries. As you know, we have been excavating the city of Troy for--

ACADEMIC 2: Twenty-eight days.

ACADEMIC 1: Twenty-eight days--

ACADEMIC 2: Troy was made famous in Homer’s epic poem, *The Illiad*, the subject of which is the Trojan War, whose men and culture were famously decimated over the course of one night.

ACADEMIC 1: It is an epic and much-studied conflict--

ACADEMIC 2: Which has shaped the way we perceive heroism for hundreds of years.

ACADEMIC 1: We have made a discovery that is truly remarkable--

ACADEMIC 2: That changes the way we think about the role of the female in early Greek culture.

ACADEMIC 1: What is remarkable about our excavation of Troy, is that two miles away, we have discovered a burial ground, whose graves correspond to Troy VI, the version of the city built in 1200 BC.

ACADEMIC 2: We have discovered, in particular, one large burial chamber. Our cohort’s current postulations are that this burial chamber houses some of the sorrowful and tragic Trojan Women.

ACADEMIC 1: As you recall, the wives and daughters barely-mentioned in this epic tale of a civilization lost—

ACADEMIC 2: Due to the wartime slaughtering of all of their menfolk. This is a truly remarkable opportunity to be excavating these women.

The ensemble gasp for breath and 13 arms shoot upward, as though rising from the dead.

ACADEMIC 1: Now, once we entered the burial chamber, we thought to find Polyxena (*Polex-in-a*), who is, as you know, the daughter of Hecuba, but indeed, that is not the case.

ACADEMIC 2: What we found, was one figure in particular, wearing a bronze cuff around her neck, inscribed with three Macedonian letters.

One ensemble member rises, then another and another, until all thirteen are standing.

ACADEMIC 1: Now this is, indeed, truly remarkable because these Macedonian letters

ACADEMIC 2: These specific markings--

ACADEMIC 1: Are a tribal mark.

ACADEMIC 2: These tribal markings tell us that this figure is not of that tribe. She is not Trojan. So what we have here is an unknown, unnamed woman.

ACADEMIC 1: This problematizes the entire circumstance, because also in the chamber are the remains of roughly twelve other women, scattered around the burial chamber. These women do not bear the markings, problematizing the entire situation. Why does one woman bear the markings and the rest don't?

The ensemble turn and notice the film playing. They slowly walk to stand in front of the screen and watch the film. They are silent, watching these men tell their story.

ACADEMIC 2: Now, we must keep in mind that the burial chamber is in the Valley of the Brides, the place where young women were sacrificed as brides for the fallen soldiers and would have been laid to rest.

ACADEMIC 1: What is also significant of the single figure who bears the tribal markings is that, on further scanning of her body, that the hymen has been broken, which means we have a non-virgin in the valley of the brides. As we know, you must be a virgin to be worthy of sacrifice.

ACADEMIC 2: Problematizing the notion of one, virgins and two, brides. What does this mean if one woman is not a virgin and the rest, ostensibly are?

ACADEMIC 1: Our final discovery, giving new meaning to all that we've discovered in the bridal chamber or what we now know as the (*air quotes*) "bridal chamber," and actually five feet outside the door—

ACADEMIC 2: And this was a truly remarkable discovery, it goes beyond any of our expectations, we have found the figure of what appears to be a young...man, here, the valley of the brides.

ACADEMIC 1: His brides? His virgins? If it is now impossible to say what is a bride and what is a virgin, who are these people to him?

ACADEMIC 2: We have therefore resourced and reframed our investigation to focus on this male figure, outside the bridal chamber.

ACADEMIC 1: In summary, we have 13 unnamed women and one man, with a name. because of Greek naming practices, we know that this man was named Seneca Paul. A descendent of THE Seneca—

ACADEMIC 2: Adding an extraordinary level of meaning to the entire circumstance. Therefore, it is the belief of this research team that the most edifying and productive use of our resources, will be to completely refocus our research on Seneca Paul.

From the Trojan Women to the Present

A timeline of history begins to play, taking us from the Greeks to today. As the timeline scrolls, the ensemble moves through a series of historical tableau.

- *The Trojan Women, a classic portrait of lamenting women*
- *Middle ages, women dying in childbirth, disease*
- *Rise of the British Empire/Queen Elizabeth, Shakespeare*
- *The first Europeans arrive in the Americas, boats, triumphant exploration, displacement of indigenous Americans*
- *Salem witch trials*
- *The Birth of the United States of America, both the triumph of the Revolutionary war and the selling of Africans as slaves*
- *Three concurrent tableau: 1. The Civil War 2. Pioneer Women and Manifest Destiny 3. The Decimation of Indigenous Peoples*

While the tableaux occur, the timeline scrolls by, faster and faster.

415 BC Euripides writes *The Trojan Women*, winning second prize in the ancient Greek festival, the City Dionysia

500 CE One-third of all women die in childbirth in Europe's middle ages

1347 The bubonic plague kills 50 million people

1559 Queen Elizabeth I crowned Queen of England

1619 The first African slaves are brought to American soil

1620 The Mayflower lands in Plymouth Rock

1662 Hereditary Slavery Virginia law decrees that children of black mothers “shall be bond or free according to the condition of the mother.”

1682 Virginia declares that all imported black slaves are slaves for life

1692 Bridget Bishop is convicted, the first to be hung as a witch in the Salem witch trials

1776 The signers of the Declaration of Independence declare that “all men are created equal”

1832 The Trail of Tears begins – the official start of the campaign to remove indigenous people from their homes across the US

1840 Westward expansion started a migration of 7 million Americans

1855 In Missouri v. Celia, a Slave, a Black woman is declared to be property without a right to defend herself against a master’s act of rape

1860 South Carolina secedes from the union, starting the US Civil War in 1861

1865 The Civil War ends and The Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery, takes effect

1872 Victoria Woodhull becomes a Presidential candidate on her own ticket

1892 Ellis Island Immigration Processing Center opens in New York

1914-1918 World War I

1920 Women’s right to vote ratified in Congress

As the timeline plays, the chorus's movement becomes more vicious. They begin to fight. It's shocking, the strength of their rage and cruelty. The ensemble crawls in pain, they die, they rise to fight again. The fighting and dying transforms into a march and a choral movement. They march as men, beating their chests in rhythm, moving forward, screaming,

ALL: Mine. *(They grab their vaginas)*
Mine. *(They grab their butts)*
Mine. *(They grab their breasts)*
Mine. *(They cover their mouths)*
Mine. *(They cover their ears)*
Mine. *(They cover their eyes)*
Mine. *(They gestures to their entire bodies)*

They look at the audience.

American Women

The rock song, “American Woman” starts to play. There is a fashion show of iconic American Women. They stomp the catwalk. They are brilliant. We see:

- *Clara Bow*
- *Amelia Earhart*
- *Lucille Ball*
- *Rosie the Riveter*
- *Marilyn Monroe*
- *Katherine Hepburn*
- *June Cleaver*
- *Sylvia Plath*
- *Rosa Parks*
- *Angela Davis*
- *Janis Joplin*
- *Eartha Kitt*
- *Ruth Bader Ginsberg*

Their names flash on the wall. It ends with the women in fabulous tableau.

There is a buzz and the word NON-COMPLIANT flashes on the wall.

One by one, after each buzz, each woman drops to neutral, as though all of their limbs have been tied and they have been gagged. Except for June Cleaver.

There is a “ding” and the word COMPLIANT flashes on the wall. June offers cookies or apple pie to the audience.

The Neighborhood Changes

BETTY: *(Addressing the audience)* Hi, I’m Betty and this is my neighborhood. I’ve been living here since 1974. A lot of changes going on lately. Hey, can you do me a favor? When I ask you to close your eyes, will you close your eyes? And when I ask you to open your eyes, will you open your eyes?

Betty walks through the neighborhood over and over again. Every time the audience re-opens their eyes, the chairs in the space change to show how the neighborhood has started to change. New residents begin to appear, until we reach the neighborhood of today, 2016.

Meet the Street

It’s October 2016, the presidential election is in full swing and presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton has an 80% chance of winning, according to the historically accurate political website, Five-Thirty-Eight. We are on a gentrifying street in Northeast Washington DC. The street is in the beginning of gentrification and there is a healthy mix of long-time residents and newer residents.

Betty, a long-time resident and school teacher, is working in her garden. It's unusually warm for the fall, and things are still growing. Alexis, who has lived in the neighborhood for 19 years and opened the first gay bar in the neighborhood, chats with her.

ALEXIS: So the police came to the bar and tried to get me to close up, but I said, "I'm a former officer and I know my rights."

BETTY: How many years have you been having that conversation?

ALEXIS: Seventeen, but they've been happening more recently. The police are just...around more. You'd better believe when Hillary is president, we're going to have more female officers, more female leadership, everything. This place will be run by competent, badass, gorgeous, glorious women!

BETTY: *(Smiling)* And you're gonna invite them all to your bar, eh, Alexis?

ALEXIS: *(Laughing)* Not like that. But I wouldn't kick them out, if you know what I mean.

Enter Jessica, a baker who moved in 15 years prior. She is pregnant and stirring a bowl of batter. She approaches Betty.

JESSICA: Hi Betty. What's going on?

BETTY: Working out here before they take it away...or winter comes, whichever comes first.

JESSICA: What are you growing?

BETTY: Got some root vegetables coming up here...something else, I don't know what that is... we'll call it hope.

JESSICA: You're growing hope? That's nice.

BETTY: *(Referring to her belly)* You're growing hope and *that's* nice. What do you have there? You baking again?

JESSICA: Hillary Logo cookies, for the election party.

ALEXIS: I'm with her! I can't believe we're about to have our first female president. About time. About damned time.

BETTY: It's about time.

JESSICA: I know it's basically a done deal but I'm so nervous.

ALEXIS: She's gonna be fine, Jessica. Donny boy has revealed himself for what he is. There's no woman in her right mind who would vote for a guy like that.

BETTY: I got to get some flowers. Don't you feel like we need some flowers in here? We need something besides vegetables. They're good for you (*pointing to Jessica's stomach*) and you.

JESSICA: Yellow. Gender neutral.

BETTY: Yellow.

Willow walks by on her phone. She is a newer resident, a young woman who works for a non-profit, but is training to be a yoga instructor. She is good-hearted and vaguely anxious.

WILLOW: Yeah. Yeah. I was wondering. Is like noon ok? Yeah. I'm sorry. I'll be able to do everything, but it's just been a hard morning. I'm going to try and vote tomorrow, but I'll have to see how I feel. I'm in a very blue district and Five-Thirty-Eight says 80%, so it doesn't really matter. So, I'll see you in an hour? I'll pick you up a pupusa from this really authentic place in my neighborhood. Thanks, you're my favorite boss, I love you. Bye!

Willow approaches the pupusa shop. It is owned by Maria. Her parents started the shop and passed it onto Maria.

WILLOW: (*To Maria*) Buenos Dias.

MARIA: Good morning. What can I do for you?

WILLOW: One pupusa, please. Is anything here gluten-free?

MARIA: It's corn.

WILLOW: Is that gluten-free?

Enter Maya, a young Salvadorian who grew up in the neighborhood. She is in her freshman year of college, the first in her family to attend.

MARIA: (*To Maya, in Spanish*) Hey girl, you want your usual?

MAYA: (*In Spanish*) Yes, thanks Doña Maria.

MARIA: (*In English*) Get to college now, we're proud of you! (*In Spanish*) And don't forget to vote!

MAYA: (*In Spanish, to herself*) If I could, I would.

Maya exits, almost bumps into Willow.

WILLOW: Sorry.

MAYA: Sorry.

A chorus appears, rhythmically speaking this “women’s language.”

CHORUS

I’m so sorry!
Sorry
Sorry
Sorry
Sorry
Does that make sense?
I could be wrong.
I’m not sure
You’re probably right
It’s just an idea
How can I help?
I’ll volunteer!
I can do that!
I can organize that!
I can do it by myself!

Enter Jenny, with flyers. She’s new and eager to get involved through existing structures, namely the new Home Owners Association. Nefertiti enters from the opposite direction. She grew up in the neighborhood and is friends with Maya; they go to college together.

JENNY: Hi, I’m Jenny, I’m from the Home Owners Association and I’m new here.

NEFERTITI: Hi, I’m Nefertiti.

JENNY: Hi Niffertini?

NEFERTITI: (*Correcting Jenny*) Nefertiti.

JENNY: Sorry. Here’s a flyer, if you’re interested in neighborhood beautification efforts.

Jenny exits.

NEFERTITI: It’s over.

MAYA: What’s over?

NEFERTITI: The neighborhood.

MAYA: What do you mean, over?

NEFERTITI: You see that sign at the end of the block? I will buy your house for cash.

MAYA: So what?

NEFERTITI: That's it. The beginning of the end.

MAYA: Those signs are up everywhere. They don't mean anything. I mean, it's hand-written. Obviously a scam.

NEFERTITI: It's not a scam.

MAYA: You're crazy.

Maya Exits

CHORUS

Sorry

Sorry

I'm so sorry

I'm being crazy

Am I crazy?

Does that make sense?

Does that make sense?

Does that make sense?

Does that make sense?

Am I making sense?

That didn't make sense

Fuck.

Fuck me.

Sorry, don't fuck me. Please.

Lolly calls to Sarah from the porch. Lolly has lived in the neighborhood longer than anyone else. She's a woman who has seen the neighborhood change several times and seen a lot. Sarah is a newer resident. Her husband works for the government and her daughter, Cadence, is five.

LOLLY: Hey there, kiddo, how you doing?

SARAH: Hi Lolly. Doing good.

LOLLY: How's that little baby of yours?

SARAH: She's good, almost five.

LOLLY: Talking up a storm, I bet. They get chatty around five, as I recall.

SARAH: Um, her speech has been a little delayed, so we're taking her into a therapist next week. I'm off to the store to get more organic Cheerios. A Yes! Organics is about open six blocks away. I'm so excited.

LOLLY: Do you want to know what they called organic food when I was growing up?

SARAH: What?

LOLLY: Food. And we grew it ourselves. Now it's all picked by foreigners.

SARAH: I've got to get those Cheerios.

CHORUS

Sorry

Sorry

I'm so sorry

How are you doing?

Oh, I'm fine.

I'm fine.

I'm fine.

I'm super fine.

This is fun, isn't it.

Are you having a good time?

IS EVERYONE HAVING A GOOD TIME?!

I'm fine! Having it all!

Sarah exits. Regan enters. She's beautiful, polished and ambitious. She walks by counting her steps and checking her fitbit.

NEFERTITI: Hey queen.

REGAN: Regan, you know it's Regan.

NEFERTITI: *(to Devin)* She was Miss DC in 2012. Thinks she's too good for the neighborhood.

CHORUS

I'm fine! Having it all!

She's such a bitch.

She has low self-esteem.

She's a bitch.

She's a bitch

She's a bitch

She's a bitch

I don't mean to be a bitch, but...

Enter Kimberly. 65 year old divorcee. Her husband left her for a younger woman and not much alimony. Enter Devin, gender non-conforming. They both volunteer at Martha's Table and have become friends.

KIMBERLY: What a beautiful day.

DEVIN: Back from church? All good?

KIMBERLY: Wonderful, lovely service. How you doing?

DEVIN: Fine. Fine. Fine enough.

KIMBERLY: Are you going to volunteer appreciation night at Martha's Table?

DEVIN: I told Sequoya that I'd be there. She's starting 8th grade and I think she needs some support.

KIMBERLY: As long as she's not banging my ex-husband, she'll be fine.

DEVIN: Kimberly, she's thirteen.

KIMBERLY: Not too young for some men, it seems.

DEVIN: It's hard to watch the news lately.

KIMBERLY: True 'dat, as the kids say.

Enter Lolly.

KIMBERLY: I missed you in church, Lolly. How are you?

LOLLY: My legs are bothering me.

KIMBERLY: Let me know if you need anything, ok? We old broads have to watch out for each other. And young broads, too.

DEVIN: I'm not a broad.

KIMBERLY: Right, we have to watch out for each other like...hUUUuman beingsss.

CHORUS

Sorry!

Sorry, it's ok

What if we did

I mean

You know?

Do you need anything?

Can you get that?

That's ok, I can get that

That's all right.

I understand.

Do you mind if?

Don't worry.

I'm willing to go down if it's not in the budget.

I can take notes.
I'm on my way already, I can do that.
I can take on one more
Whenever works for you
I'm flexible.
I'm flexible. (*sexy*)

Jenny re-enters, crosses over to Betty.

JENNY: Hi, I'm Jenny, I live down at the end over there. I haven't lived in the neighborhood long but I love it, I think it's beautiful over here. I was talking to the board of the Home Owners Association and I was thinking...we could spruce up the neighborhood by having a day of painting the windowsills. We thought blue. A nice, pretty blue would help spruce up the neighborhood.

BETTY: Where are you from?

JENNY: Down on the end. I'm number 116.

BETTY: We have a board in the neighborhood? When did that happen?

JENNY: I just moved in a couple of months ago and wanted to get involved and I talked to Mary, whose husband does real estate...

BETTY: What are we painting? The windows?

DEVIN: What about the graffiti that needs to be painted over?

NEFERTITI: There's a lot of stuff in the neighborhood that needs to be fixed up. Been waiting on that a long time.

JENNY: Well, I'm sure you could ask the board...

BETTY: We could use a wall right around this garden.

JENNY: I love your garden. I walk by it every day and I just love it. (end in upward inflection)

CHORUS

Ah! (*This is the sound of an upward inflection*)

Ah! (*This is the sound of a downward inflection*)

Yeah?

Right?

Like?

Over it!

Sorry, that was aggressive.

Sorry, like—sorry, I'm trying not to say like anymore.

Fuck, I keep apologizing. Sorry.
Fuck.
Sorry.
It's, like, so hard.
Fuck--like--sorry.
I need to stop apologizing
Sorry!

ALEXIS: Sorry! I have to say again how glad I am that this day has come. Tomorrow, we're going to have our first female president!

NEFERTITI: You mark my words. They're going to elect the man.

ALEXIS: You're crazy, Naffertutu. She's at 80%. There's no way.

NEFERTITI: It's Nefertiti, and I'll believe it when I see it.

ALEXIS: *He's* going to win? that's hysterical.

The ensemble starts to giggle. They keep laughing, but it becomes anxious. They keep laughing, but it becomes crying. They keep laughing, but it becomes more like screaming.

Sound of a ding!
All snap to, models of the perfect woman.

The Cult of Domesticity: An Educational Film

*The ensemble acts out a 1950's-style educational film titled, *The Cult of Domesticity and True Womanhood*. A man narrates, while June Cleaver leads the ensemble in choral movements.*

RECORDED NARRATION: Between 1820 and the Civil War, the growth of new industries, businesses, and professions helped to create in America a new middle class. When husbands went off to work, they helped create the view that men alone should support the family. This belief held that the world of work, the public sphere, was a rough world, where a man did what he had to in order to succeed, that it was full of temptations, violence, and trouble. A woman who ventured out into such a world could easily fall prey to it, for women were weak and delicate creatures. A woman's place was therefore in the private sphere, in the home, where she took charge of all that went on. A new ideal of womanhood and a new ideology about the home arose.

JUNE CLEAVER: This new ideal of womanhood has four characteristics any good and proper young woman should cultivate. Ideal Number One: Piety

NARRATOR: The modern woman of the 1820's has a particular propensity for religion. She is the new Eve working with God to bring the world out of sin through her suffering, and through her pure, and passionless love.

CHORUS: Men try to be religious, but they depend on you to help them be good people. Remember—it's a rough and sinful world out there!

JUNE CLEAVER: Ideal Number Two: Purity

NARRATOR: Female purity is of the utmost importance. Without sexual purity, a woman is no woman, but rather a lower form of being, a “fallen woman,” unworthy of the love of her sex and unfit for their company. A woman must guard her treasure with her life. Despite any male attempt to assault her, she must remain pure and chaste.

CHORUS: Men try to be chaste, but *if you lead them on*, they just can't help but grab women! Remember, boys will be boys.

NARRATOR: If tempt them, you'll just end up a common slut and die in poverty.

NARRATOR: The marriage night is the greatest night in a woman's life, the night when she bestows upon her husband her greatest treasure, her virginity. From thence onward, she is dependent upon him, an empty vessel without legal or emotional existence of her own. Be careful, women. You know not what power you yield. Don't use your sexual powers for evil! And please don't cry. Otherwise men will feel bad.

CHORUS: And if men feel bad, they will get angry. It is their right.

JUNE CLEAVER: Ideal Number Three: Submissiveness, the most feminine of virtues.

NARRATOR: While Men are the movers and shakers in life, Women are the passive bystanders, submitting to fate, to duty, to God, and to men.

A woman walks out from the crowd. Ensemble members lace tight corsets on her, put her in high heels and layer on petticoats, garments, bustles and multiple skirts. She can't breathe and is weighed down. She ultimately hyperventilates and faints.

NARRATOR:

“Women are so delicate.”

“She needs a protector.”

“True feminine genius is ever timid, doubtful, and clingingly dependent; a perpetual childhood.”

The woman faints.

And for this protection, she is willing to repay it all by the surrender of the full treasure of her affection.

A woman from the chorus, playing a man, walks out and sees the other woman, passed out with her feet in the air. He decides to casually take advantage of her. The ensemble shrieks and cover the sex act.

WOMAN (*playing man*): “Women despise in men everything like themselves. It is enough that she is effeminate and weak; she does not want another like herself.”

JUNE CLEAVER: Ideal Number Four: Domesticity

NARRATOR: Woman’s place was in the home. Housework is an uplifting task for the modern woman.

CHORUS: “There is more to be learned about pouring out tea and coffee than most young ladies are willing to believe.”

JUNE CLEAVER: The Cult of True Womanhood protects women from all that is bad in the world. Unless you are poor and have to work outside the home, then you aren’t a true woman and don’t deserve to be protected. You aren’t safe. Or if you are a person of color, then you are a second-class citizen and don’t deserve to be protected. You aren’t safe. Or if you have unnatural impulses that cannot be quelled by marriage, then you aren’t a true woman and don’t deserve to be protected. You aren’t safe.

Each crumbles to the floor when her group is mentioned, until there is no one left standing, except June Cleaver.

JUNE CLEAVER: Thank goodness I’m a healthy middle class white woman.

NARRATOR: Unless you break one of the rules of the Cult of True Womanhood, then you aren’t safe.

June Cleaver crumbles to the ground. Projected on the wall the words, “YOU AREN’T SAFE.”

Sound footage of Trump election swells: cheers at the rallies, MAGA, Build a wall, grab ‘em by the pussy, Comey and emails, cheers of Trump’s win.

The ensemble looks up, one by one and rise to their feet, watching an imaginary screen above them. We hear the sounds of the election results coming in, announcing Trump’s win.

After the Election

The ensemble stares, dumbfounded. They look at the audience.

If possible, lights up and lights down on different areas of the stage, seeing how the election has affected these people. We shift from monologue to scene to monologue.

MARIA: I stayed up until 3am, hoping the results would be different. Even when I knew they wouldn't be, I prayed for a miracle and went to bed.

Betty works in her garden, preparing it for winter. Alexis and Jessica stand by the garden.

BETTY: The plants won't grow if you watch them. Got to get through the winter first.

ALEXIS: I can't comprehend, Betty. How did this happen? She was going to win. She was going to fucking win. There has never been anyone more qualified to hold office in the history of this stupid-ass fucked up country.

BETTY: Ah, but those emails.

ALEXIS: Emails? Emails? What, the email asking Huma, her *own advisor* if they should "be bad" and split a crème brulee? The email asking if there was any way to help a 10-year old child bride out of her enforced marriage? I don't understand. How could he win? How could he win?

BETTY: Racism, misogyny, fear, violence.

JESSICA: But we made so much progress.

BETTY: I'll believe it when I see it.

ALEXIS: I'm ready. I'm ready to fight. Did you see there's going to be a women's march on Washington the day after the inauguration?

BETTY: I remember marching in the 1980's, the 90's and the 00's. March and march and march again. All that stomping and we're still getting stomped. That's why I worked so hard to keep my house. If you're a property owner, they have to listen to you one-one hundredth of the time. Got my house and got my garden.

JESSICA: Growing hope, right?

BETTY: As long as I have my house and my garden, I'm doing ok.

WILLOW: This election is the end of health insurance. My IUD expires in a year. When I get a new one, will my employer say that my rights violate their religious beliefs? Out of pocket an IUD is \$1,000. I already in so much debt from college, I can't pay for that.

NEFERTITI: Hey Regan, what's up?

REGAN: Just taking out the trash.

NEFERTITI: Are you feeling heavy?

REGAN: It is what it is.

NEFERTITI: I'm glad you're back, community is important. More important, now that things are changing so much on the street. I asked Ms. Betty and she says it's like Reaganomics all over again.

REGAN: Look, I'm not upset. I exercised my rights by voting. Whatever the results, we must continue to lift ourselves, work hard, and rise above. Instead of whining, people should put their voices to work and benefits will spill into our community. And THAT'S Reaganomics. See ya.

MAYA: I heard what he said at the rallies, all Mexicans are rapists and all Hatians have AIDS, build a wall, kick them out, keep 'em out. I'm not a criminal; I'm a valedictorian. This morning, someone threw a glass bottle at me from a third story window and yelled, "go back to your own country." I've lived here since I was five, this is my country.

LOLLY: Hey kiddo, why the long face?

SARAH: I can't believe it. I can't believe he won.

LOLLY: Well, he did. And now we've got to give him a chance. We have to believe that he's good at heart.

SARAH: Do you really think he's a good man at heart?

LOLLY: He's a flawed person, but I think in his heart he's a good man who wants the best for this country.

CHORUS

I went to bed a citizen and woke up in a country that told me
My body isn't mine.
My body isn't free.
That in America, women's bodies are the site for war.
Political battles happen on women's bodies,
Men take their frustrations out on women's bodies
Nations are built on women's bodies.

JESSICA: I've been crying all morning. My partner didn't understand why I was so upset. We argued and he left. I just started my third trimester.

DEVIN: I can't believe he won. Things aren't great now, but if he rolls back trans and gender protections, I could lose my job. He basically gave permission for anyone threatened by my existence, to beat the crap out of me.

KIMBERLY: People aren't going to randomly beat people up. And look, if anyone tries to mess with you at work, I will have my ex-husband hit them with a lawsuit the size of Texas. He owes me that much. Alimony law might have screwed me over, but we won't let the system screw you.

ALEXIS: Oh my god, I'm screwed. I could have gotten married, but we weren't quite ready. We thought we had time. Now, they can kick us out of our jobs, out of the military, what if go back to refusing us service or even healthcare? We fought for our rights, what if they take them away? I can't go back.

MARIA: I woke up today with graffiti on my parent's restaurant. "Go back to Mexico" My parents came here legally, from Honduras. I'm an American citizen.

BETTY: (*to Sarah*) How's the little miss?

SARAH: She's doing alright. She's doing alright. Disappointed about the election.

BETTY: Mm.

SARAH: Did you know that Lolly is ok with this? That she thinks he's a good man at heart?

BETTY: Mm. I'm not surprised.

JESSICA: Lolly's pretty old.

BETTY: Lolly's really white.

SARAH: So maybe she's a little racist; she's old, she doesn't know better, but to vote that way when she's a woman!

BETTY: You think Lolly doesn't know better?

SARAH: I guess...I just...well, those flowers will look pretty in here.

BETTY: It's finally getting to be winter around here. When it's spring, I'm going to get some of those, what they call 'em, the ones that come around every year...perennials.

SARAH: Well, I'm marching on January 21st. Every time he tries to do something, I'll be there. I owe it to my daughter. I should have given more money. I should have been knocking on doors.

ALEXIS: You have a young kid. You did everything you could.

SARAH: I thought about doing the phone banks but I didn't want to pay for a sitter. I can't believe I didn't just pay for the sitter.

BETTY: Where's your husband?

SARAH: Babysitting is not his thing.

BETTY: You can't babysit your own child.

SARAH: Cadence is behind on the developmental curve and, it's not his thing.

ALEXIS: You know those bastards are going to cut education. God, I hope your child doesn't have special needs.

SARAH: My child is fine.

JESSICA: I'm actually pretty worried; the bakery doesn't provide benefits, so I've been getting my insurance on the health exchange. I'm going to have to quit and get a job that can offer benefits. I've been a baker all my life, I'm not sure what else I can do. I love baking. You think you can create something. Make something. Something that will make people feel happy. I guess not.

NEFERTITI: I told you all it was going to happen and no one believed me. People said, "oh, yeah, Hillary," in public, but behind closed curtains... I'm going to play a game. It's called, "Let's guess who voted for Trump."

Grief

BETTY: I know that when a storm comes which sailors think they can ride out, they do their best, one by the sail, another at the helm, and others bailing. But if great ocean's raging overwhelms them, they yield to fate. They give themselves up to the racing waves. So in my many sorrows I am dumb. I yield, I cannot speak.

The ensemble melts into the classic tableau of the Trojan Women we saw at the beginning of the timeline. They are silently screaming.

Stockings and Red Lipstick

The ensemble looks at the audience. They pull out red lipstick. They all apply it. They smile at the audience.

One woman pulls out nude stockings (whatever reflects their nude). It turns out that they are tied to someone else's stockings, which are tied to someone else's stockings, which are tied to someone else's stockings. They pull on the stockings without realizing that they are affecting each other. They get

angry when they are pulled about, but they can't seem to perceive the cause. Hilarity ensues. Or something.

Gentrification

A ensemble member walks over to an area of the audience. She turns around and surveys the view of the stage.

DEVELOPER: Wow. I didn't realize what great seats these were.

Whistles. Construction workers approach with chairs and create a new row, in front of the existing row.

DEVELOPER: *(Naming the chairs)* Seats West.

Three others come in, sit in the seats and talk to each other, admiring the audience members, but not interacting with them.

THREE WOMEN: Wow, yeah, these are great seats. I love them. The view is so authentic. The audience is so diverse here.

Block Party

"Party In the USA" blasts. Jenny starts to set up for a block party, put on by the Home Owners Association but paid for by the developers who are about to build in the neighborhood. There's a lot of "fancy" stuff: flavored seltzer, cookies from Whole Foods and a raffle for something that sounds good, but is actually useless. In this case, it is a Walking Desk.

Alexis and Betty are sitting by the garden. They move some chairs in the audience, if available. They're hanging out in the fall air.

BETTY: How are you holding up after the election? That can't have been easy.

ALEXIS: It's the great unknown. Nobody knows what will happen. I know a bunch of strong people who are seriously scared about losing their rights. How are you holding up after the election? I've been thinking about you; I saw that the school board candidate supports school vouchers.

BETTY: We shall see, but I anticipate that vouchers will hit the poorest kids hardest.

ALEXIS: When are you running for school board? You've been in the system long enough; you could make a difference.

BETTY: Since I was passed over for promotions, and those younger guys got the positions, I decided to stay a teacher.

ALEXIS: That was unethical of them, Betty.

BETTY: I can make more of a difference in the classroom. Most effective work you can do is in the classroom.

ALEXIS: You do love the children.

BETTY: I love the children.

ALEXIS: Where is your daughter now?

BETTY: Annie moved to Maryland. She got a place with deer.

ALEXIS: And may your son rest in peace. I'm still so shocked.

BETTY: Hector was a good boy. A real warrior. I miss his spirit.

ALEXIS: Me too.

BETTY: The ways of fate are the ways of the wind. Drift with the stream—drift with fate. (*pause*) Those children at school are a lot to handle. I love them, too; they need a lot of help.

ALEXIS: You, you don't speak up.

BETTY: Students of mine have been principals ahead of me.

ALEXIS: Yeah, but there's something wrong with that.

BETTY: Yes, ma'am.

ALEXIS: I wish you'd let me bring that lawsuit.

BETTY: Oh, I don't know.

ALEXIS: I wish you'd let me bring that lawsuit.

BETTY: You get attention but you don't want to get the wrong kind of attention.

ALEXIS: You'd have gotten more money for your garden. A lot more.

BETTY: Or, I would have lost my job and I wouldn't have my house.

ALEXIS: We did win some, you know.

BETTY: Yes, we did, we did.

ALEXIS: We did win some.

BETTY: You just keep fighting the same thing over and over again, don't you feel that?

ALEXIS: I do feel that. I feel that if I could take myself out of today (*gestures*) and put myself back...all the same thing, 20 years ago. Sexual assault--

BETTY: It's back!

ALEXIS: Violence against the LGBTQ community--

BETTY: It's back! Racism--

ALEXIS: It's back.

BETTY: Of course, it never went anywhere. But now it feels like it can step out and proudly go to church in broad daylight.

ALEXIS: Abortion. Didn't we win that one? Why are we still talking about it? We marched.

BETTY: In '68. In '95, it was the Million Man March.

ALEXIS: I remember that. There were two huge gay marches.

BETTY: I went to one of those...with the quilt!

ALEXIS: Yeah, we had the numbers at the first one, but here were are...

BETTY: The same old stuff.

ALEXIS: It seemed like we won for eight years. But now we're back to where we were.

BETTY: Worse than before.

ALEXIS: We're back to the 1800's...

BETTY: That's right.

ALEXIS: Betty, I wish you would let the young people know what you've done. They think you just sit up here and garden. They don't know that you were a pioneer.

BETTY: Look, I own this house. And I owned the one next door. I sold it, and that's how I can afford to stay in this house. So whatever happens out here, I got garden and I got my house. They can't take it away from me. They can't make me go.

ALEXIS: You're part of the history of this city.

BETTY: So are you, you started that bar here. And sponsored the Pride festival. But I guess it's not trendy enough for the young folk...doesn't have enough...fake authenticity.

ALEXIS: Only actual authenticity.

They laugh. Enter Willow and Jenny, carrying cases of fancy seltzer, Las Cruzas.

WILLOW: So it's like a pop-up bar. All pink. It was a trashy, really ghetto, abandoned building and they threw pink paint on the walls and now it's amazing.

JENNY: Sounds cool.

BETTY: What building was that?

WILLOW: On the other side of the 'hood. It was like, nothing. But now it's...can I show you the Instagrams? There was a hot pink neon uterus behind the bar. Alexis, you would have loved it.

JENNY: Thanks for helping me carry these can of Las Cruzas.

WILLOW: I love this stuff.

JENNY: I can't believe Smith and Sons offered to pay for the entire block party. We're really going to start some neighborhood pride for Seats West. You can start by taking a selfie at the selfie station #iamseatswest!

WILLOW: Cute!

MARIA: What's going on here?

JENNY: The HOA is having a block party—neighborhood pride!

MARIA: I'm a neighborhood business, right over there. I have pride. Would have been nice if they had asked me to cater. Certainly could use the paycheck since rent went up.

JENNY: Well, the developers, Smith and Sons, paid for it and I think they have vendors they already use.

MARIA: You know Jessica, the pregnant lady, she's a baker. Got any of her stuff out here?

JENNY: Smith and Sons took care of it all, so I'm not sure. But make sure to sign up for the raffle! You can win a walking desk!

MARIA: I get enough exercise waiting on my customers. Could be doing it today for neighborhood pride, but I guess not.

SARAH: (*Calling off*) Honey, just stay with Cadence for a minute. I'll just be a minute. Sorry, I can only stay a minute, but I brought soy-free poppers! We've got Cadence on a new diet. we're going to see if that helps her anxiety. We're not sure what's wrong, I've fed her organic since day one, starting with these. (*Indicates her breasts*). Oh, I've got organic elimination cookies, too. They're full of protein and will really help you poop. Can I put them out?

JENNY: Sure! Seats West pride!

Enter Kimberly, Betty, Lolly, Maya, Nefertiti.

KIMBERLY: Chicken wings! And a piñata!

MAYA: I feel like hitting something.

NEFERTITI: Seats West? The neighborhood is gone. This is over the edge.

JENNY: This is off the hook! Make sure you sign up for the raffle. Walking desk! So cool!

NEFERTITI: Hey, Maya. What's going on? You haven't been in class for two weeks. Miss one more and you're going to fail.

MAYA: I know. I'm trying to decide whether I keep investing in school or save money and hire an immigration lawyer. Our rent went up last month. My parents are thinking about moving. I'm pretty sure I'm going to drop out.

NEFERTITI: Oh shit.

MAYA: Free food is cool and all, but I have to go. Take a selfie.

NEFERTITI: This neighborhood is under attack, Ms. Betty.

BETTY: Ok, Cassandra.

NEFERTITI: That's not my name.

BETTY: When you were young, you were called Cassandra, Cassandra Johnson. (*to Alexis*) Now she's Nefertiti.

NEFERTITI: I go by my first name now, Ms. Betty. I'm not Cassandra.

LOLLY: Who are all these people? What is Seats West?

JENNY: It's where we are!

JESSICA: I made a cake. I made a seven-layer cake! I can't bend over.

KIMBERLY: It's almost time! When do you have to go back to work?

JESSICA: Right away.

KIMBERLY: How much leave do you have?

JESSICA: I don't have any. I'm going to take three weeks off without pay.

Devin enters. They are banged up.

KIMBERLY: Good Lord. What happened to you? Are you alright? Can you give her--them a little space, please?

Everyone backs off.

KIMBERLY: Sorry, honey. You look really shaken. What can I do? I'm here if you need to talk, or if you need to sit.

DEVIN: It was a co-worker.

KIMBERLY: Mercy, you're kidding.

DEVIN: Do I look like I'm kidding?

KIMBERLY: No.

DEVIN: I came out at work and this guy, started complaining.

KIMBERLY: About what?

DEVIN: That using the pronouns "they" and "them" was too confusing, why didn't I pick a side, that I can do what I want in my home, but don't expect the world to pander to me. And then he pushed me off my bike.

KIMBERLY: That's messed up. Can you report it? I've said it before and I'll say it again, Mama Bear will litigate limb from limb if you need her to.

DEVIN: I don't want to say anything. I'm scared to go back to work.

KIMBERLY: You can do it. I'm an old bird, so I don't always understand the gender stuff, but I do know that *you* know *you* and therefore, it is incumbent upon you to do you. You do you. As the kids say.

Kimberly puts her arm around Devin. Regan enters.

JENNY: Hey Regan! So glad you could come, Miss DC of 2012!

REGAN: Hiiii! I brought some brochures for the raffle. (*Waves and spins in her sash*)

NEFERTITI: Hey Regan. How's it going?

REGAN: Having it all. How are you?

NEFERTITI: Surviving. So, back from Princeton.

REGAN: And an internship.

NEFERTITI: Impressive. So what brings you back to DC?

REGAN: I guess you could say I moved for a guy. And a job. I'm working on the hill. What are you up to?

NEFERTITI: Studying psychology at Howard, working at the Bravo Bean and Yes! Organics.

REGAN: Howard, wow. Do you like it?

NEFERTITI: I do. Classes are great, but it's hard to make it work. I mean, I have a couple of scholarships but they only go so far. And DC's not cheap.

REGAN: Admiration. You gotta work. You gotta work to get your education.

NEFERTITI: I haven't seen you in forever.

REGAN: Yeah. Long time now. 2007? 8?

NEFERTITI: Eight. It was hot that summer. Remember that one day when the fire hydrant exploded and we played in the water all day?

REGAN: Yeah. That was so unsanitary.

NEFERTITI: We had fun though.

REGAN: We did.

Jenny runs in.

JENNY: Don't forget to get people to sign up for the raffle.

REGAN: Ok

JENNY: And can we get a selfie for the newsletter?

REGAN: Sure!

NEFERTITI: What a user. I hate that.

REGAN: What do you mean?

NEFERTITI: Snap a photo with you. To make them seem diverse.

REGAN: We're Americans first. I don't want to let race be a barrier.

NEFERTITI: I would like to be American first, but society tells us that we're black first.

REGAN: It's not about society. It's about you, first. It's about working hard for what you have, what you're going to have and what your children are going to have.

NEFERTITI: So you want to ignore race and the years of oppression, oppression that's existed from the first moment our ancestors stepped on these shores, oppression that we still feel the echoes of today—

REGAN: I get that. I get all of that. But sometimes you have to play the game.

NEFERTITI: So what about you Regan, you put on your crown and your little sash and say thank you for being here today—

REGAN: Just the sash, only the reigning queen can wear the crown, I wouldn't pose in that way—

NEFERTITI: Oh, you're not a poser? Come on, Miss DC. You're objectifying yourself, letting them use you as an object.

REGAN: You want to know what I got for winning Miss DC? Twenty-thousand dollars. That got me to Princeton. What got me through my next three years at Princeton, were events like this. If you have twenty-thousand dollars to give to me so I can wear sweatpants and sneakers and sit on the couch? I'm happy to take it.

NEFERTITI: You're supporting the system.

REGAN: I'm putting black women in the spotlight. I'm changing the system.

NEFERTITI: And on your off days, you're prancing around in a sash and asking people to commodify black women's bodies.

REGAN: It's not about bodies, or being black. It's about working for it, pulling yourself up by your bootstraps and working for it.

NEFERTITI: Look, I'm pulling. I'm pulling hard. I work two jobs so I can put myself through school. Do you know how much that costs? I don't have a booty that can pay my way. I'm living on the street I grew up on but I can't even afford to be here anymore! Do you know how much that costs?

REGAN: Yes, but you're headed in the right direction! Where's your internship?

NEFERTITI: At the Bravo Bean. What are you doing back here?

REGAN: I wanted to give back to my community.

NEFERTITI: You're acting like you don't want to be a part of our community, hanging out with Jenny at the Home Owners Association all the time. What is that?

REGAN: That's the how you get your foot in the door, that's how everyone does it. What's your goal, what's the thing you want the most.

NEFERTITI: Equality. I want not to be kicked out of my neighborhood. I want this community to stay as knit together as possible. Ms. Betty, her garden, kids playing on the street, feeling safe, knowing you can make rent. What do you want?

REGAN: I want a community center. For kids to have a place to go to learn to code, or get into politics, or how to play chess. A place that's their own, where they can be seen and heard.

NEFERTITI: That's what I'm saying--

REGAN: Just hear me out. Do you really think I like Jenny? Do you really think she's my best bud? Jenny works with the HOA and they have funds to build a center and I can make that happen by making up a bullshit proposal like "We need a place for our town halls or for the neighborhood watch to meet". Everyone gets what they want. You may call it shuckin' and jivin' but THAT'S playing the game.

NEFERTITI: I'm not here to shame you, but playing a system that is built on racism is not what I'm into. I work all the time, I study when I'm not working and when I'm not studying, I'm in class. So I don't have time to go around kissing ass.

REGAN: Oh, you can kiss my ass.

JENNY: It's time for your speech! Ladies and gentleman. Thank you for supporting Seats West pride! I'm happy to introduce one of our neighborhood residents, Regan Butler, Miss DC 2012!

REGAN: I'm so happy everyone came here to Seats West for this fun party, sponsored by Smith and Sons. (*claps*) and we're going to do a raffle today. We are raffling off a walking desk. So you can support health, while supporting yourself.

Let me tell you a little about myself. I'm Regan Butler, representing as Miss DC 2012. I'm so pleased to be here on the street I grew up on. Hey Kara!

SARAH: It's Sarah.

REGAN: Before we begin the raffle, I want to talk to you about something important. It's inside of you and inside of me. The Heart. Any strong hearts out there?

BETTY: You got a teacher.

REGAN: Thank you for your work with students. (*claps*) I'm here to talk about a cause that affects everyone, Heart Disease. Heart Disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, striking someone every 42 seconds. The Smart Heart Association has been working to save people from strokes and heart attacks for over 50 years. Now, we can reduce those statistics by changing our diets, drinking in moderation, and being active- (*Looks down at Lolly on her stoop*) because sitting is the new smoking. And we are taking the first step, by raffling this walking desk! So don't forget to enter your raffle, and remember: Do your **part**, and take care of that **heart**. I'm Regan Jones. Thank You.

NEFERTITI: Heart Health?? You couldn't pick something else?

REGAN: Like what?

NEFERTITI: What about supporting black girls?

REGAN: What would I say?

NEFERTITI: I don't know, you could talk about how black girls are sexualized by the time we're five, or how black girls receive harsher punishments in school than girls of other races, how nobody in this city cares when a black girl goes missing? Not relevant enough? What about the number of black women who die in childbirth, due to poor care by doctors? how white women earn 79 cents on the dollar but black women only earn 66. And how we have to work twice as hard, and be twice as good to get half what they have. I don't know. What could you possibly talk about?

REGAN: I don't want to be a revolutionary, or cause trouble, or set things on fire or stick out like a sore thumb!

JESSICA: Is that a piñata??

BETTY: That's a big horse.

Everyone gathers around the piñata.

NEFERTITI: (*mutters*) Fuck that horse. (*out loud*) Don't buy into that horse. That horse is not a horse. That horse is the man!

BETTY: Come on, Cassandra.

NEFERTITI: My name is Nefertiti!

JENNY: Does everyone know how a piñata works? So, there's something fun inside, I don't even know what it is; the board filled it, but you take a swing at it and whomever breaks it open, wins!

KIMBERLY: Come on, Devin. Give it a swing. It will make you feel better to whack something.

DEVIN: Ok. Slow clap me in.

They swings and whacks. The horse remains whole.

JENNY: Who's next?

JESSICA: I'll go.

A rhythm is clapped. She swings, pitifully.

BETTY: Take another swing for the baby. You're hitting for two.

JESSICA: Somebody pinch hit for me?

WILLOW: I'll do it.

KIMBERLY: Get those prizes!

NEFERTITI: You don't want what's in there.

A rhythm is clapped. Willow swings and the piñata bursts open. Prizes rain down.

CHORUS

And out of the horse came
Bits of cheap cardboard
Colored paper
Key chains
Cheap multi-tools
Tote bags
Thumb drives
Flashlights
Rape whistles
And pamphlets
Brochures
Thick and glossy
In full color
Bearing the name
Of their new neighbor
A new building—

Cassandra Burns It All Down

Out of the piñata comes brochures for the new development to be built in 2020. Also key chains and other plastic tomfoolery, all labeled with the name of the development, the Chuck Brownstones.

NEFERTITI: (*Picking up the brochures*) “The Chuck Brownstones, for those living life on the Go-Go?!” Granite countertops, hardwood floors, gym and pool, rent, a mere \$2,500 a month for a one-bedroom apartment? What is this?

REGAN: It’s for the apartments they’re building next year. Pre-sales are available now!

NEFERTITI: Everyone on this street is going to be priced out in three years.

JENNY: It’s marketing, everyone does it; it doesn’t mean anything.

NEFERTITI: Yes, it does. This is for real. Can you see what’s happening here? Do you see it? I told y’all this was going to happen, and now it’s here. But it’s cool. I’m used to debasing myself; it’s no problem. I can take it. When the Bravo Bean came, I worked at the Bravo Bean. When the Yes! Organics was hiring, I worked at the Yes! Organics. When the Home Owners Association comes and asks us all to maintain Namaste households and all paint our windowsills blue--

KIMBERLY: I think you need to calm down.

NEFERTITI: Don’t let that building in this neighborhood. Don’t let it--

REGAN: She’s crazy. She doesn’t know what she’s saying.

CHORUS

It’s her background

It’s her wacky ways

It’s because she needs to get laid

Oh I don’t know about that, I heard she got laid too much and it made her crazy.

She’s crazy

Crazy

That girl is crazy

She’s nutso

She’s emotional

She doesn’t have it together

Damn, that bitch is crazy

She once wanted something

An answer

An apology

An aspect of a ratio

A modicum of respect

She got upset

It was embarrassing

Standing on the side
We were comparing
Her to Brittny, Mariah, Joan
Anyone who went crazy
Crazy
That stupid bitch is crazy.
Nobody listens to her because the girl is crazy.

REGAN: You need to stop freaking out.

BETTY: Come on now, Cassandra. Don't be crazy.

NEFERTITI: My name is Nefertiti.

REGAN: The gods have made her mad.

NEFERTITI: Fuck y'all. I told you the neighborhood was over, but this is it. Don't bring that building in here; it will be nothing but death.
The rough edges of culture and
Strength and
Fierceness
Smoothed out by the holy dollar
Faceless residences
Phony retail palaces with nothing that anyone can afford--

JENNY: I can see that this is very emotional for you. Nothing is going to happen to the neighborhood.

NEFERTITI: My neighborhood is my space. My place. We lose spaces all the time and I don't want to lose anymore. This is the only space I own. I can't even hold onto the space inside my body because magazines, TV, coffee shops, everywhere tells me that black skin is not white skin, that black skin is dangerous, that black hair is not beautiful, that black culture is not high culture. I don't pass the paper brown bag test. I don't even own the space inside my skin. I try to go deep inside and hold onto it but people pull me out—even well-meaning people. You're so exotic. Exotic. I hate that word. That means you are an outsider and you don't belong in this space. My neighborhood is my space. If I have to lose another space, I'm going to make sure that I lost it myself. I lost it. I lost it. No one is going to take my childhood home from me, I am going to lose it myself.

Nefertiti runs to the end of the street. She lifts a torch high. Flame lifts to the sky. The dress starts to shake and ripple, until the entire thing is shaking like fire and is bright red. The sound of burning wood crashing to the ground, sirens.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Blackout

CHORUS

Did you hear what she did?

Who?

Nefertiti

The crazy black girl

She set fire to her house

Her own home?

Why would she do that?

The dust is rising, spreading out like a great wing of smoke. I cannot see my house.

Blackout

Terror

Blackout

Surprise

Blackout

Fire

It is night. The neighborhood comes out of their homes. They all carry flashlights. Over the course of the scene, people will illuminate those they think should be heard and leave others in the dark.

BETTY: Is that smoke? (*illuminate face*)

LOLLY: Is something burning? (*illuminate face*)

KIMBERLY: Oh, my God, that house is on fire! (*illuminate face*)

BETTY: That's Nefertiti's house! (*illuminate face*)

REGAN: What did that girl do? (*illuminate face*)

JENNY: Did anybody call the fire department? (*illuminate face*)

MARIA: Oh, look, you can see flames! (*illuminate face*)

LOLLY: Oh no, no, no! (*illuminate face*)

ALEXIS: Who called the fire department? (*illuminate face*)

DEVIN: Where's Nefertiti? (*illuminate face*)

BETTY: I don't know... (*illuminate face*)

JESSICA: Should we look for her? (*illuminate face*)

WILLOW: Do you think she's inside? (*illuminate face*)

SARAH: We can't go in there. That's the first rule of safety, make sure you stay safe yourself. (*all lights on Sarah*)

KIMBERLY: She committed arson. (*all lights on Kimberly*)

MAYA: And probably ran away.

REGAN: We need to move to a safe location, away from the fire. (*illuminates self. No one else does.*)

JENNY: Shhh, I'm trying to hear what Kimberly is saying. (*illuminate self*)

KIMBERLY: What are we going to say when they get here? (*all lights on Kimberly*)

MAYA: Don't say anything. (*all lights on Maya*)

DEVIN: But she might still be in the house!

LOLLY: Turn her in, she's a criminal. (*all lights on Lolly*)

ALEXIS: Don't turn her in, she's just a kid who did something dumb. She needs help.

LOLLY: She needs to get locked up. (*light stay on Lolly*)

SARAH: She put all of us in danger. (*all lights on Sarah*)

DEVIN: My house is next door, what am I going to do? My whole life is in that house. (*all lights on Devin*)

JESSICA: Why don't the fire trucks get here? Did somebody call them?

BETTY: Are we safe out here? (*some lights on Betty*)

WILLOW: We should go back into our homes.

MAYA: We're safer out here together.

SARAH: Unless someone tries to take advantage of this blackout and cause trouble. Thank god Cadence is at a sleepover. (*all lights on Sarah*)

LOLLY: Oh God, Oh God...

KIMBERLY: We should stick together. I'm sure no one would try to rob us while we're together. *(all lights on Kimberly)*

LOLLY: Oh, Athena.

MAYA: Lolly, calm down.

MARIA: You should all come to my place. I can make everyone some food. *(all lights on Maria)*

SARAH: What if the fire spreads and we get trapped in there?

KIMBERLY: If we're together as a group, WE are safer.

LOLLY: But our houses are exposed!

SARAH: Oh, thank God, there's the sirens! *(Everyone swings lights around their heads, mimicking siren lights)*

KIMBERLY: Okay, one question for you. *(all lights on Kimberly)*

ALEXIS: Yes?

KIMBERLY: What are we going to tell the police?

DEVIN: Let her go. *(all lights on Devin)*

KIMBERLY: She broke the law, turn her in. *(all lights on Kimberly)*

ALL: *yelling (lights at the ground)*

MAYA: Okay, let's take a vote! Everyone who wants to leave Nefertiti's involvement out of this, point your flashlights at me. *(some point at Maya)*

KIMBERLY: And anyone who wants to turn her in, point your lights at me! *(some point at Kimberly)*

The ensemble members point lights at their choice.

JENNY: Can we abstain?

WILLOW: Yes!

ALL: UGH!

KIMBERLY: Well, maybe it's not as clear cut as you'd like to believe!

REGAN: Okay. Number one, we need to relax. Number two, we need to listen to each other. Number three, we all live in this neighborhood, so we all get a say. (*illuminates self, no one else does*)

SARAH: I think that Alexis should be our neighborhood leader. (*all lights on Alexis*)

MAYA: I second that.

REGAN: And that's fantastic, I wasn't trying to be your leader, I was trying to help—

ALEXIS: Let's stick together. The first thing we need to do is move to a safe location, away from the fire.

ALL: My gosh, yes, that's a great idea.

Everyone exits, leaving Regan alone.

REGAN: That is what I said to begin with. Literally, the first thing I said. Is anybody listening here? Is anybody listening?

Regan illuminates herself.

I wanted to speak up.

My curly coils were too unprofessional
So I straightened my hair for you
And you STILL reached to grab it
My personal space
But I never pulled or pushed your hand away
I just smiled and answered your question, calmly
(grabbing hair) “Yes, it's all mine”

I wanted to be heard during the meetings

The meetings where you greeted everyone in the room
By their first name and a friendly handshake
And greeted me “Damn Gina” as you snapped in a Z formation
A meeting where we were discussing serious legislation
You were nudging me with “Bye Felicia's” and other sayings
THAT I DON'T SAY!

And I never said “shut the fuck up” or begged you to treat me the same as everyone else
Instead sunk down in my seat and counted the 5 neck rolls and 3 times you smacked your lips
Because I was embarrassed

I wanted to be seen

But you treated me like a commodity
The first time you saw my body
You exclaimed “Oh my God, they're so different a white girls”
You inspected me like I was a slave on the block
I never told you that that would be the first and last time you would see my body

I didn't furiously scream and grip your balls as tight as I could
I just left
I played the game, I won the title, I code switched
Allowed you to hurt me, ignore me, talk over me, down to me, to interrupt me
I did everything right
I did everything right
I did everything right
And I'm still just seen as the black girl
You. Don't. See. Me.
Me
I want you to see **me**.

Working On a Ship

The ensemble works together on a ship in the future. They are connected by silver threads of breath, movement and intuition. One woman falters. Even though no one is looking at her, everyone knows. They stop and tend to her until she is better. Then work begins again.

Special needs meeting with school Counselor (Disregard Male)

Sarah enters the school counselor's office. Her daughter, Cadence has been diagnosed with autism. Sarah and her husband are at the school to have their first meeting about an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Sarah sits next to a male audience member who becomes her husband.

COUNSELOR: Hi, I'm Cathy. You're Cadence's mom?

SARAH: Yes, and my husband. *(She refers to the male audience member she's sitting next to)*

COUNSELOR: Our goal today is to set up an IEP for Cadence.

SARAH: An IEP?

COUNSELOR: An Individualized Education Plan. It's so we can take Cadence's autism into account over the course of her day and help her get the accommodations she needs.

Sarah winces at the word autism

SARAH: Isn't she just, "on the spectrum?"

COUNSELOR: She is high functioning. I understand, it can be hard to hear for some moms. Parents. *(Giving a nod to Sarah's "husband.")*

SARAH: Yes. It's hard to hear.

COUNSELOR: Barriers we've noticed during school: she tends not to speak much, she's unusually obsessed with the Frog and Toad books and is easily frustrated, to the point of tantrum.

She has trouble making friends and because she's easily frustrated, she has trouble keeping friends. Are those familiar behaviors?

SARAH: We've noticed those things. (*she looks to her husband, who does not respond*) I've noticed these things.

COUNSELOR: We're going to want to look at several categories of development: Social, motor, communication and increasing self-management. There will be goals and benchmarks that we're trying to achieve. Consistency is important to her. It will be helpful if you adopt the same language at home that we use at school. We're partners in this effort.

SARAH: So if I do these things, she'll be better?

COUNSELOR: These are strategies to help your child navigate the world, it's not a cure.

SARAH: What are the options here?

COUNSELOR: If you're not getting the support you need, you can move. Fairfax, Loudon and Montgomery County public schools have more resources for students like Cadence.

SARAH: That's like an hour outside the city.

COUNSELOR: She'll get more support there.

SARAH: If you have to do this special stuff all day, will she ever get a break? When does she get to just be a little girl?

COUNSELOR: Always. We're trying to help her early so she can be in mainstream classes. It's going to require some extra work on your end to reinforce language and behaviors that we use here. I can recommend a speech therapist who does beautiful work with special needs students. She's a former drama teacher, so she does great social-emotional work for kids with autism. She's not covered by insurance and it would require some driving. I think it would be great for her.

SARAH: (*She turns to her husband; he doesn't respond*) I can take her.

Prices Go Up

An ensemble member comes out and surveys some other audience chairs. The ensemble moves out swiftly and starts to rearrange the chairs, clearing some and building more seating in another part of the theatre.

DEVELOPER: You have two hours notice and then the price of these seats will go up to \$75. Let me know if you want to stay.

More people come out and put signs that say "Available Now!" and "\$75" on all empty chairs.

A Woman Comes Home Hurt

Willow struggles to get into her house. Jenny sees her.

JENNY: Whoa, hey, hey. Are you ok?

WILLOW: *(Shakes her head no)*

JENNY: What happened?

WILLOW: I don't know...it's um...it's um

JENNY: Are you ok?

WILLOW: I don't know, it's uh...

JENNY: You're bruised. Oh god, your arm. Who did this to you?

WILLOW: Oh..uh...

JENNY: I'm going to call the police.

WILLOW: No, no, no, no. It's not like that. It was just like um. Just like a thing that happened. It's not like really hurt, it's like...it's like..uhhhhh

JENNY: Did someone do this to you?

WILLOW: Not really.

JENNY: Let me get you a wet cloth...

WILLOW: It's ok. Can I, um...Ok. I should just go home and take a shower.

JENNY: You seem really out of it. Can you look at me?

WILLOW: Uh, I was...I was just...

JENNY: Your leg is bleeding. Somebody beat the crap out of you.

WILLOW: It was like, um, uh, like we, planned. He, we were going to try this thing. It was going to be a fun, like uh,

JENNY: Eric?

WILLOW: Derek. It was going to be this fun, like role play

JENNY: I think this may have gone too far.

WILLOW: Well, like I said he could, like that we could do this thing. Like it wasn't what we said, but still I said he could do it. Sort of, kind of.

JENNY: He shouldn't have done this to you.

WILLOW: He said that this is what we planned all along, so maybe I didn't think we did but maybe it was.

JENNY: I'm going to take you to the hospital.

The Chorus starts to speak as doctors, friends, relatives, officer.

CHORUS

Can you tell me what were you wearing?
How long have you been in a relationship with him?
How sexually active are you?
How often do you have sex?
How many sexual partners have you had?
What did you do to provoke this?
You must have done something to provoke this?
Were you drinking?
How many drinks have you had?
How well did you know him?
Why did you go out with him?
Did you actually say no?
Did he actually pull you down?
Did you fight back?
What words did you use?
Take me through the sequence?
Where did he touch you?
Are you bleeding?
Did you take a shower?
Did you urinate?
Did you change your clothes?
Are you sure that really happened?
Are you sure you're remembering correctly?

WILLOW: I'm not going to the hospital. Who would believe me? And he's my boyfriend and I love him and I don't want to go to the hospital and I, and I said we planned it. What would the hospital even do?

JENNY: We don't have to tell them why. This isn't ok. We need to report it.

WILLOW: But they'll know and say who are you dating and call him in and I don't want that. I don't want that. Can I take a shower please and just go to bed?

JENNY: Are you sure you want to take a shower?

WILLOW: I just don't want to feel this right now and I sort of want to get it off.

JENNY: You don't deserve this.

WILLOW: I want to go to sleep, please.

JENNY: Stay at my place. Do you want to stay at my place?

WILLOW: Yes.

Willow comes forward and speaks directly to the audience.

WILLOW: I'd like to share with you what it's like when I have a panic attack. I'm going to walk you through the experience from my perspective. I'll need a volunteer from the audience who is comfortable with touch.

An audience member volunteers.

WILLOW: Thank you. I'm going to let you know what I'm going to do before I do it and you'll be very safe the whole time. I'm going to put a hand on your back and your chest. The first thing that happens is that my breath starts to quicken. I'm going to ask you to take a few deep breaths into my hands. Now I'm going to touch your face. The next thing that happens is that tears start to roll down my face. It's not like normal crying, where you feel a pin prick and a tear starts to roll down your face, suddenly my face is drenched. I'm going to hold your hands. The next thing that happens is that my hands and feet start to go numb. This is when I know that I'm having a panic attack and I'm not just upset. I'm going to give you a hug. When I realize I'm having a panic attack, the first thing I do is try to get out of it. You can lightly push against my arms. But the more I try to get out of it, the worse it becomes. You can come back to standing. Then a voice in my head says, "stop it. Stop being delicate. You're being stupid. No one is looking at you, no one is hurting you, nothing is actually wrong. You're being stupid, you're being delicate and you need to stop. Just stop being stupid." I'm going to brush down your body. And before I know it, I'm completely wrapped up in the panic attack. The only thing that helps me come out of it is talking to another person. (Speaking to audience volunteer) Hi, what's your name? Are you ok? What's your favorite color? Where are you from? Oh, that's interesting. Do you need a hug? Where is your seat? I'm going to walk you back to your seat now. Thank you for helping me.

He Doesn't Hit You

Jenny watches Willow.

JENNY: I have anxiety like that. Because of an ex.

CHORUS: He hit you?

JENNY: No.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but before you started dating he said you looked ugly with chipped nails and acne.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but he tells you that you look ugly.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but he tells you you look beautiful with a lot of make up on.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but you start wearing makeup every time you FaceTime him.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but makes you feel bad for not calling him when he asked.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but he tells you you would look better if you gained weight, that he likes girls who look like your best friend.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but he tells you he thinks stretch marks and sagging boobs are ugly, so you hide your body when he asks you to undress.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but he tells you about him beating a woman up before.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but he makes you feel like he should.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but he tells you you are worthless.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but he said why would someone like me want someone like you.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but he says he wants to beat the shit out of you.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but he threatens to come to your house and pull you by your hair and make you tell everyone that he wasn't your boyfriend.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but he tried to talk to me a week after we broke up.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but maybe if he did people would have believed he said this to me.

CHORUS: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but for 2 years I looked over my shoulder thinking he would make good on his threat.

ALL: He doesn't hit you

JENNY: but I had a nightmare that he found my new address and beat the shit out of me.

Walking at Night/Why the Phrase, "walk me to my car" Is Not Romantic

WOMAN: Walk me to my car?

WOMAN: Walk me to my car?

WOMAN: Walk me to my car?

WOMAN: Walk me to my car?

WOMAN: No? Don't worry, I'll be fine.

The ensemble moves in a choreographed pattern. They move, they stop and they look over their shoulder, over and over and over again.

Special Needs Mom; I Did Everything Right

Betty in her garden. Sarah walks by. She breaks down.

BETTY: Hey now. Hey girl. It's ok now.

SARAH: My baby. We got the test results. Cadence is...is...is...

BETTY: I know. It's ok now.

Sarah cries. Betty holds her. Sarah calms down.

BETTY: Did you have your first meeting with the school counselor?

SARAH: Yes.

BETTY: Did they go over your IEP?

SARAH: Yes. It's long and we have to use specific words to talk to her to keep things consistent and it's confusing and why are things like this, but then I think, maybe this is how she's supposed to be and what's wrong with that?

BETTY: Listen Honey, take the advice, but don't let them tell you who your child is. Cadence is perfect, just the way she is. The educational system isn't built for her, so they're modifying the system. Smart, right? I'm not sure the system is built for anyone.

SARAH: But I did everything right. I aimed my shaft at good repute. I gained full measure—then missed happiness. For all that is called virtuous in a woman I strove for and I won. I played Mozart when she was in the womb, I breastfed, I only ever fed her organic food, I bought all the brain-stimulating toys...I did everything right and still my child has a disability.

JESSICA: I was a manic pixie dream girl, living my passion, even though it didn't make any money. I wanted to be a mom. I found the right guy, I waited until I was ready. When he left, I gave up my vocation to support my baby. I did everything right and I lost myself.

WILLOW: I was in a relationship, I wore the right clothes. I walked safely at night. I didn't make unnecessary eye contact. I did everything right and I was still raped by the person closest to me.

JENNY: I was a strong, empowered woman, a superwoman, I multi-tasked, I took on extra projects, I innovated and organized and I'm still paid less than men.

MAYA: I worked hard

REGAN: I followed the American dream

MAYA: I became a model citizen

REGAN: I beat the odds

MAYA: I gave back to my community

REGAN: I got a fancy degree from a great school--

MAYA: And I'm still seen as an intruder.

REGAN: And I'm still seen as a sellout.

ALEXIS: I obeyed the law, I tried to pass when asked me to pass, when I no longer had to pass, I showed my pride, and lived fully, without shame. I protected my city, I gave to my community. I loved my partner. I did everything right and I'm still not equally protected.

MARIA: I kept traditions alive, I fed the neighborhood, my parents came here legally and I still lost our store.

KIMBERLY: I was the perfect wife., My longing I set aside and kept the house. Silence, a tranquil eye, I brought my husband. I did everything right and he still traded me in for a younger model.

LOLLY: I told him to keep his nose clean, to stay away from drugs, I gave him a curfew, I supported him through troubled years, I took out loans I couldn't afford so he could go to rehab. I did everything right and addiction still killed my son.

BETTY: I told him to stay calm, don't get into verbal confrontations, to keep his hands in plain view, to move slowly, to speak clearly, to de-escalate, I did everything right and they still shot my son.

The ensemble looks at the audience.

Under the Dress

The ensemble lifts the dress several times, each time they lift it, the dress reveals a different intimate moment.

Underneath we see:

**Mother with her child—*

- *Women adjusting their breasts, trying to make them bigger or smaller.—
- *Eating, loving food, hating it, rationing it—
- *An older woman braiding a younger woman's hair—
- *A woman holding the hair back of another woman throwing up—
- *Women picking wedgies, looking at their stomach fat, trying to make their chins look less saggy, examining eye circles.—
- *Women sitting with their legs open, looking at their own vaginas in a mirror—
- *Women having hot flashes—
- *A woman taking sexy selfies—
- *Women praying—
- *Women cuddling and laughing—

A Song of Praise // Sphere

The ensemble breaks from work to look out to sea and sing a song of praise.

A sphere is a three-dimensional object filled with an infinite number of coordinates

We are in a sphere
 We roll within
 Welcoming the waves that trace back upon us
 We are reflected in our own curves
 Gender is a sphere.

Let love be my mistrex:
 a woman skilled in anything;
 a person who governs;
 a woman beloved;
 a person who is free
 The natural order is ours to make
 Gender is a sphere.

Your sexuality is yours to discover
 Your vulnerability is yours to discover
 Your sex is private
 Your shit is private
 Gender is a sphere

Sexual desire is a reflection of desire, not identity
 Those with wombs are trusted to make decisions for their own bodies
 Bodies are trusted to ask for consent from each other
 Gender is a sphere

Children are respected and are one with daily labor
 Responsibility, Equity, Balance, joyful labor, all
 Everyone walks freely without fear and though

Death will come, we do not fear it.
Gender is a sphere

Love is not just a word mentioned to ignite emotions or drive revolutions,
Love is action, so desirable that people will be willing to make sacrifices to show it.

I am a warrior
I am a warrior
Let me braid your hair
Let me hold you
I am ready to remake the world
As a sphere.

Women's March/I voted for Trump

Sounds of the women's march – speeches, chants, cheers, etc.

*Betty dumps compost in her compost pile, next to the garden. It is the day after the inauguration.
Alexis and Sarah enter in pussy hats, cheering and breathless.*

BETTY: You're back.

ALEXIS: Whoo!

BETTY: I looked for you on TV.

ALEXIS: Did you see us?

BETTY: Well, no. You carry some signs?

ALEXIS: Mine said "Power Pussy."

SARAH: Mine said, "For My Daughter."

ALEXIS: I wasn't going to wear one of those hats, but I did. It was amazing. There were close to like...a million people there.

SARAH: I couldn't believe it. I felt a little claustrophobic, but it's so important to be there.

ALEXIS: The only problem, nowhere to pee.

BETTY: They didn't have the Don's Johns there?

ALEXIS: We don't want no MR. Don's Johns. Gimme a Miz Johns!

BETTY: We can't just go off in a bush.

ALEXIS: I feel 20 years younger! My partner and I marched hand in hand. It was so empowering!

SARAH: Did you go to the march, Ms. Betty?

BETTY: I did not, I had work to do.

MARIA: How was the march?

DEVIN: We were there and for the first two hours and every speaker was...white person, white person, white person...they're all cis, they're all white. Can there be more representation at this thing? Last I checked, women aren't only white.

MAYA: I saw no Hispanics at this thing.

MARIA: Maybe they were all in disguise.

MAYA: Maybe it was the person in the sombrero and poncho.

ALL: Nooooo.

DEVIN: I hate those hats. Do you understand how insulting that is? This whole idea that to be a woman that you have to have a vulva. So, I'm not invited.

MAYA: Can we talk about the sense of entitlement? Look at the time they scheduled the march—only a time that a certain class of woman could go. Look at Doña Maria. She wanted to go, but she wasn't able to.

MARIA: Business doesn't stop for marches. My landlord calls the shots in that regard.

JESSICA: You were at the march this morning?

SARAH: I was. I took Cadence with me and I felt like I was doing something positive for her. There were a lot of great things to say by being there. I felt like I was at least showing up. That's the thing right? You show up.

JESSICA: I consider myself a feminist but there's no way I could have made it today.

SARAH: I'm not blaming you--

JESSICA: Because I feel like you were actually talking about me. I'm really stressing. I have to do so much with so little. I have to make a home for my baby and I don't have a--

SARAH: I was talking about the younger kids in the neighborhood. They say it's isolating. I am still trying to fight the fight that I've been fighting since I was a teenager. The problems are still

there. They are still the same problems and I don't understand how it's isolating if it's for All Women.

JESSICA: I think all women is where it is isolating

SARAH: Encompassing everyone who has XX chromosomes, how is that not all-encompassing?

JENNY: It was really inclusive. Anyone who wanted to be there could be there. I can't believe how peaceful the march was. Get a bunch of women in one place, you'll have peace. I was expecting the police to show up in riot gear, but they were so supportive.

REGAN: There were no cops in riot gear.

JENNY: None. We even took pictures together.

REGAN: REALLY?? A bunch of white women show up for a march and SOMEHOW nobody gets upset? Put a few black bodies in the same space and they bring out the riot gear and tear gas.

LOLLY: Women are doing fine.

WILLOW: Which women? Who is fine? The women who clean hotel rooms while guests expose themselves to them? The women who can't go to work without someone making a sexual comment about their bodies? The women who are abused by their partners? Women who are forced to give birth even at the risk to their own lives? They want to control your body. Don't you care about reproductive rights?

LOLLY: I don't care about reproductive rights; look at me, I'm not having a baby any time soon. If I'm going to stump for anything, it would be legalization of marijuana, because I'd like to go in the privacy of my own home, smoke a joint and chill the fuck out.

REGAN: I'm not going to the march and I'm not going to chill the fuck out. Yes, I believe in access to birth control and choices on abortion, but I'm also fighting people who are jumping through hoops to keep me sterile, hashtag Eugenics. Yes, I'm tired of being harassed, especially when I'm pulled over and I don't know whether or not I'm going to be alive afterwards. I support you being a woman and how the march is to your benefit, but I damn sure won't apologize for not fitting into your group of feminists. And that's why I voted for Trump, so you can shut up.

SARAH: Stop telling me to shut up. For years, men told me to shut up, sit down, take it and shut up. Placate, placate, take care of my feelings, make it all about me, soothe my wounds, make things easy for me, don't talk about your needs, your feelings, your thoughts, stay quiet and shut up and now we get it from the other side, women telling me to shut up, you had it easy, you didn't

suffer enough, so shut up. I am tired of shutting up. I am not going to shut up. I just want to be heard. For two seconds. Just two goddamned seconds!

MARIA: You want to talk about the American Dream and pulling yourself up by your bootstraps? My mother was an immigrant and SHE pulled herself up. SHE got kicked out of her country, came here, bought this business and passed it on to me. I am a business owner and I work here every day. So you don't get to come in here and tell me my work is worth less than yours. I feed this neighborhood.

JESSICA: I can't believe it. It's because I was nervous, isn't it? I jinxed the whole thing. If I had just believed in Hillary, she would have made it.

BETTY: She's not tinker bell, Jessica.

ALEXIS: And you are not some child who can clap away thousands of years of misogyny.

JENNY: I couldn't vote for either of them. Hillary was so establishment, I had to protest. Aren't we ready for something new? Even if it's at the expense of losing our first female president? And it wasn't even at the expense of a woman. I voted for Jill Stein. It was the best vote I could make, considering I didn't believe in either candidate. If we vote for the major parties because we're afraid the other party will win, how will anyone know that we want change? Maybe this is the year something will change! If we all voted what we actually felt, things might actually change.

LOLLY: I don't understand any of you. You use big words to talk about things that are plain and simple. Times are changing, They change so fast. I don't recognize the world any more. Who is supposed to be a boy or a girl. Who loves who. Next thing you'll see are people loving animals. People already treat them better than humans--And young people who don't even know what they are, telling me who to be or what to think. I've lived 72 years. I've seen a lot. I watched this country go to war and kill its sons. I watched my own son become a drug addict. And I watched him kill himself with them. What is this place? (referring to the neighborhood) I don't recognize it anymore. It moves too fast.

KIMBERLY: I voted for an ideal. For a party that upholds values that mean the world to me. I appose abortion. Being a Christian is at the core of who I am. I listen the you rail on and wring your privileged hands bemoaning misogyny hating on the Patriarchy as if you have no free will. Wallowing in being a victim focusing on yourselves not listening to others! That's why I go to church. God listens to me he sees me, loves me faults and all! In church I can escape your hive minded judgmental crap!

ALEXIS: If all women actually voted in their interests, we'd have a female president—

ALL: (*except Devin*) I am a woman. I am a woman. I voted in my interests. I am a woman.

DEVIN: I AM A PERSON!

ALEXIS: I'm going to march. I going to have my own march. A march of one. Not a march for women, a march for me. I am a person. I am a person. Look into my eyes. I am a person. Love is love! Marriage equality!

KIMBERLY: I'm marching, too. Marching against all of you ridiculous people. Life matters!

MARIA: I'm going to have a march too! Support small business! Shop local!

The ensemble all start their own individual marches, screaming their separate slogans, but marching together. They freeze in tableau, like the statue of The Trojan Women from the beginning, the screams of agony from the beginning are now screams of rage, of joy, of buoyant noise-making.

We Are Nothing Alike

Devin and Kimberly meet, face to face.

DEVIN: How could you vote for him? Do you hate me?

KIMBERLY: I don't hate you. I would help you because you're my friend.

DEVIN: You vote for someone who creates legislation that makes it hard for me to get a job, get medical care or even feel safe and you also want to help me? What are you going to do, hide me like Anne Frank?

KIMBERLY: The Jews don't like it when you compare things to the Holocaust.

DEVIN: My God, Kimberly. We are nothing alike. Nothing. Nothing. I am gender fluid. There's nothing more distancing than waking up one day and realizing there's no place for you in society. They would prefer I would just go away. I know you don't understand, but I thought you were trying to understand. Trying to understand what it's like to wake up in a body that doesn't feel like yours. Everywhere I go, people ignore me because they don't know what to do with me. Look at me. Look at me.

KIMBERLY: Look at me. Look at me. Everywhere I go, people ignore me because they don't know what to do with me. I thought you were trying to understand what it's like to wake up in a body that doesn't feel like yours. I know you don't understand, but I thought you were trying to understand. There's nothing more distancing than waking up one day and realizing there's no place for you in society. They would prefer I just go away. I am an aging woman.

Devin and Kimberly move together. They mirror each other, we see them brushing their hair, pulling odd, unwanted hairs out of their chins, looking at their genitals, making love, rolling into fetal

position, finding the experiences that a gender-fluid person and an aging woman have in common, the ways in which these characters share feeling uncomfortable in their own bodies.

Hips

There is a whoop and the ensemble dances. The dance celebrates their hips. They end in the Trojan Women tableau. This time it is one of joy.

Losing the Garden

Betty stands with a paper in her hand. She stares dumbly. Alexis enters.

ALEXIS: Betty, what's wrong? You look at though the weight of the world is on your shoulders.

BETTY: They're taking my house and garden.

ALEXIS: What? Who?

BETTY: The city. They say they need it.

ALEXIS: They need it? If anyone needs anything, you need a place to live. You own your house. How can they take it?

BETTY: It's called eminent domain. When the government needs your land and pays you whatever they think is fair. What is considered fair, minus the taxes I'll have to pay, is what the house was worth in 1992.

ALEXIS: That's insane. You can contest. Ms. Betty, you wouldn't let me file a suit last time, but this time, we are going to court.

BETTY: I can contest, but the government will always be able to prove necessary use. It's for a new road and a pedestrian overpass to Union Market. To relieve traffic congestion around Dave Thomas circle, caused by all these people with money and cars moving to the city.

ALEXIS: Ms. Betty, you are a part of this neighborhood's culture.

BETTY: Men in suits make culture. Money talks and Betty walks. This is no longer home. And we are not its owners. Endure. The ways of fate are the ways of the wind. Drift with the stream—drift with fate.

ALEXIS: Ms. Betty.

BETTY: I've got 30 days to move.

The Trojan Women gasp and raise their arms to the sky, similar to the first moment of the play. They become the plants in Betty's garden.

BETTY: The end then. Well—the height of sorrow, I stand there. But—hurry old feet, if you can, a little nearer— Hey garden, you sweet thing. Goodbye perennials. You won't be coming back this year. Goodbye winter squash, you would have been good. Goodbye odd little plant with no name. What did I call it? Oh yes, goodbye hope.

The plants wither and die. The ensemble rises into the Trojan Women tableau. It is the one from the beginning, classic, the height of tragedy, a scream. It becomes music, underlying the next chorus.

Who Carries Culture

CHORUS

Who carries culture?

Is it in the braids I wear?

Is it in the skin I wash nightly,

Piling on creams and unguents of smiling chemicals

That wear, whiten and thin

Is it in my dress, my smile, my shoulder

Shoulders that have carried--

Is it in—

My name

The holidays we celebrate

The stories we tell to each other

The clothes I wear

The breakfast I eat

How I hold my spoon

The colors I favor

BETTY/HECUBA: I lose my position – I become common—we no longer have men to stand for us.

Who are the men that stood up for me? Who are the men that stood up for me?

CHORUS

All the folks should die on that fucking ship.

What do we do now?

Does a woman have to become a man to wreak revenge?

A woman is a man, a man is a woman, born blessed to stomp and step and crush

I see what society's trying to do, but all I see is that shit's not getting done without the women.

BETTY/HECUBA: You kill someone's child, you take her home – that mother's going to come after you.

CHORUS

We women lamenting—it's some male fantasy.

ALL: I am Cassandra

NEFERTITI: and I am not crazy

ALL: I am Andromache

SARAH: and I refuse to be perfect

ALL: I am Helen

REGAN: and I am not a pawn

BETTY/HECUBA: I'm Queen Hecuba, what the fuck are you doing.

You have killed my son, you have destroyed my home and now I will kill you

But not like a man, noisy, loud, calling attention to itself

Not like a woman either, such a thing does not exist

There is only you and you and you and you

Goddesses, creating, like God, clearing like Kali

Destruction, rebirth, begin again

We are the entry point, we close the loop

I looked at Hector when he was born and thought, you sweetest of souls, you smallest of beings

You have nothing, you will never achieve greatness, because you cannot create, but I, Hecuba

Have pushed life through my body, I have made the world

And I will kill for you

I am Hecuba and I will kill like Hecuba.

(to audience) You see the public space-we weep, we moan, we tell our stories

because that's what the men would have us do.

Hating on Helen is part of the game.

CHORUS

It has been proven, the amazons stemmed from the leftover women of Troy

I am a woman of Troy. I will hunt, dance, dream, sleep, love, live and die.

ALL: I carry the culture

BETTY/HECUBA: I made it here, in my womb and I create it every day. So women, let us smear our faces with mud and tears and go with those Greeks to their ships -

Killing/Release

They take their lipstick and reapply it boldly, messily. They wipe it away. Their faces are stained with red. They begin to vocalize, turning their tears into flame.

They look at the audience.

Hopes for the Future

The Trojan Women stand on the deck of the ship, bloody.

CHORUS

The future is ours.

Ours. I hope.

My hope for the future is small and soft, and warm. With brilliant eyes and a tiny nose. She is red-faced from screaming.

She screams because she wants to, not because she has to. She is listened to and believed.

She has a strong clear voice, and mind to match.

She will grow with strong legs like a tree trunk, and be prouder than an old oak.

These legs take her around wherever she likes, and she is not afraid.

My hope for the future is small, and soft and warm. She is immense.

I know how she feels, how she smells, but she is not mine.

She is not my daughter.

It costs too much.

You cannot ask me to give up everything and then ask for more, and then call my job “the most important in the world”

She is not my daughter. She is not my great granddaughter, but maybe.

She is yours.

Your, your daughter.

Or maybe your great granddaughter.

ALL: But we really hope it is you.

CHORUS

We should sing.

What should we sing? What do we have but old war songs?

A new song.

How will we make it?

We will discover it.

How will we discover it?

I will listen to you and you will listen to me and we'll find it together.

The ensemble starts to sing The New Song (“Sail On”). They sing and sing.

Sail on to a new shore

Sail on to a new shore

Sail on, sail on (claps x3) sail on, sail on

Sail on, sail on to a new shore

(repeats)

End of Play