

SCENES FROM A HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA

Anahita (Ana)

Kai

Marilla (Mari)

Ione

Gardner (Gard)

Dion

ACT I:

Scene 1: A high school cafeteria. Lunchtime. Two tables are on opposite sides of the stage. At the stage right table are the "water" kids: Anahita (Ana), Kai, and Marilla (Mari). At the stage left table, are the "earth" kids: Ione, Gardner (Gard) and Dion. A spot illuminates the water table. The earth table is visible, but not brightly lit.

KAI: Will he ever notice me?

ANA: You mean, like, *notice you* notice you, or just acknowledge your existence? Because I'm pretty sure the latter has already happened. You've been in school together since kindergarten. (beat) Have limper French fries ever been seen before? (waves a floppy fry to make her point.) Gross.

KAI: *Notice me* notice me. Obviously.

MARI: I'm confused. (to ANA) Stop waving that.

(Ana eats her fry.)

ANA: There. Happy? What's confusing you?

MARI: I thought they were friends.

ANA: Who. Kai and Dion? (she waits for Mari's confirming nod.) They are. Well, they were. Until ninth grade. (She stabs a fry with her fork, stares at it, and eats it reluctantly.) Everything fell apart in ninth grade. Ninth grade was...

KAI: Ninth grade was not pretty.

ANA: I remember you being *very* pretty.

MARI: (to herself) I hate being new. (to her friends) Elaborate?

KAI: Okay, I was pretty. But my life wasn't. (to Mari) It's not bad to be new, honey. New kids have the mystique advantage. When people have known you all your life, changing their perceptions is really, really hard.

ANA: What Kai is trying to say....

KAI: (cutting her off) What Kai is trying to say is that ninth grade was when I came out. And suddenly my best friend, who had come to sleepovers at my house for years, wouldn't even talk to me anymore, outside of classes.

ANA: Dion and his friends... Gardner and Ione, especially... totally gave Kai a snubbing of the kind unseen outside of Amish country.

KAI: It's been three years and... (he breaks off as GARD approaches.)

GARD: Ladies. Kai. Got a minute?

KAI: (getting up) Depends. Did you bring cash?

GARD: I have what you need.

ANA: Oh, I sincerely doubt *that*.

GARD: Really, Ana? (beat) Kai? A minute?

ANA: (to Mari) Make sure you watch them.

MARI: I'm already with you, friend.

(Kai and Gard step away from the table.)

Scene 2: The same lunchroom, but now the lights are dim over both tables and bright over KAI and GARD who are downstage center.

KAI: We have to stop this.

GARD: Stop what? You like the money.

KAI: Yeah, but I hate that I'm enabling you. (beat) Or am I enabling Dion. That *is* who you're buying for, isn't it?

GARD: Dion can't deal with truth.

KAI: Which truth. Mine? Or his?

GARD: Both. Neither. Look, not everyone has parents like yours. Not everyone has an entire circle of supportive friends. Ione and I... we're all he has. (beat) You came out and you were comfortable in your own skin.

KAI: Because I was *uncomfortable* not being out, Gard. It's not that difficult to fathom. And Dion... Dion would be happier if he'd just accept who he is. I miss him. (beat, then softly) I miss him so very much.

GARD: By "miss" you mean "want."

KAI: Well... that too. (beat) You buying?

GARD: (hands over cash) Two hundred. Two hundred fifty.

KAI: (hands over two bags. One is white powder. One is green herb.) Thank you for your patronage.

GARD: You know... there's a party...

KAI: Don't even mention it. Please?

GARD: (ignoring him) You should go. Come. Whatever.

KAI: I like 'come' and 'whatever.'

GARD: Do you have to be this way?

KAI: Bitter? Flirtatious? I'm never boring.

GARD: (annoyed) You know what I meant.

KAI: So the party... it's when?

GARD: Saturday. Seven PM. My house.

KAI: Should I bring a date?

GARD: Sure. Or your friends. Whatever.

KAI: I'll think about it. Really. (beat) You should scurry back to your group now. Surf and Turf must always be kept separate.

GARD: (stows the bags in his pocket.) Or bad things could happen... (he walks off leaving KAI staring after him, and past him, at DION.

Scene 3: The earth kids table. The same lunch.

GARD: Okay, the deed is done.

DION: You got the stuff? Awesome, man. We are gonna party hard on Saturday. (beat) You took a while. Anything wrong? Kai okay?

GARD: You could ask him yourself.

IONE: Right, like that'll ever happen.

GARD: By the way, I invited him. I invited all of them. All the surfers... Surf and Turf in the same venue.

IONE: Seriously? (singing from *West Side Story*) Boy, boy, crazy boy...

GARD: Ione. Really. We were friends...

IONE: A long time ago. I know.

DION: Did he say he'd come?

GARD: Said he'd think about it.

DION: I miss him. A lot.

GARD: You miss him. He misses you. Either admit to yourself that you're in love with him, or decide to be someone you're not and take Ione here all the way but whatever you do, stop dithering.

DION: Dither? Do I... dither? Hmm.

IONE: You dither. And vacillate. And...

DION: Okay, I get the point.

IONE: You and Kai would be cute together. Matching tuxes. You're so pale and he's all golden-brown from the sun... Aren't opposites supposed to attract? Or is it that you're *not* really opposite. And so your similarities repel each other?

GARD: I have wondered this myself.

DION: I should have asked him...

GARD: Asked him what? The party?

DION: The party. And other stuff.

GARD: The Game of Life sucks sometimes. It's not all pretty pink and blue pegs driving along in the same car, Dion. Sometimes it's pink and pink or blue and blue.... Or in the case of myself...

IONE: A little of each, right?

GARD: Right in one, Miss Bliss.

IONE: Do I get a prize?

GARD: Maybe... maybe we all do.

IONE: And we all say Amen.

END