



Acceptance By 8th Grader Lucy Palandro

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CHARACTER LIST:

Aurelia Ramos: (age 17, female, Mexican American, wavy auburn hair, golden brown eyes, tanned skin, short, artistic, curious, optimistic, selfish, self conscious, stubborn)

Camila Ramos: (Aurelia's mother, age 38, female, Mexican, curly dark hair, golden brown eyes, tanned skin, curvy body, short, stern, stubborn, independent, careful, judgemental, caring, traditional, Catholic, nurse)

Andrés Ramos: (Aurelia's father, age 42, male, Mexican, tall, short auburn hair, large hands, shaven, pale brown skin, light blue eyes, calm, thoughtful, accepting, selfless, independent, quiet, humorous, caring, Catholic, carpenter)

Isabella Ramos: (Aurelia's older sister, age 19, female, Mexican, tall, thin, long dark hair, light blue eyes, tanned skin, humorous, playful, loving, intelligent, athletic, stubborn, energetic, doubtful)

Mae Diya: (age 17, female, African American, short curly hair, dark eyes, short, thin, musician, humorous, daring, sensitive, self centered, flirtatious, forward, playful, impatient)

Olivia Fletcher: (age 17, female, Mae's friend, white, long blonde hair, sky blue eyes, pink lips, thin, medium height, writes poetry, plays tennis, impatient, sensitive, quiet, clingy)

Note: This play contains both English and Spanish language. If the director/actors are comfortable with adding improvised lines of Spanish throughout their scenes, they are more than welcome to do so.



Scene 1

(It is a cloudless afternoon in Tucson, Arizona. The date is Saturday, March 23, 2017. The Ramos family, minus their oldest daughter, is lounging in their southwestern style home. CAMILA has recently started cooking dinner in the kitchen as her husband ANDRÉS types away at his computer in the study. Their daughter AURELIA is up in her room, stretched across her bed as she draws in her sketchbook. At that moment, ISABELLA, the oldest child of the Ramos family, knocks on the front door, suitcase in hand. Her family rushes to greet her)

CAMILA

(Opens the door with a large smile) Mija, so happy to see you! How is college, how are your classes?

ISABELLA

(She hugs her mother hurriedly and grabs food from her mother's cooking.) Hi Mamí! I have so much to tell you! *Donde esta Papá?*

(CAMILA points towards ANDRÉS and continues cooking)

ANDRÉS

(He takes ISABELLA'S suitcase) Isabella, we miss you so much, Estoy muy feliz de ver a mi hija otra vez, I am very glad to see you again.

ISABELLA

Dad, it's only been a few months since I visited for Christmas break!

CAMILA

We know, but the house is not the same without you here.

ISABELLA

Oh, thanks Mom. I've missed you at college.

CAMILA

We missed you, too, Isabella. Te quiero. I love you,

ISABELLA

(She exchanges a gentle touch with her mother) Te quiero.

(ISABELLA turns to AURELIA and hugs her quickly before pulling away and ruffling her sister's hair)

ISABELLA

And how've you been, Aurelia? Miss me while I've been gone?

AURELIA

Not really, I like having our room to myself.

(ISABELLA scoffs playfully)



AURELIA

(Giggling) Kidding, of course I miss you. Mom's right, the house isn't the same.

ISABELLA

(In an effort to lighten the mood) Well I'm here now and for the rest of spring break. There's no getting rid of me.

ANDRÉS

As if we'd ever want to.

(CAMILA hugs her daughter once more before exiting to the kitchen. ANDRÉS proceeds to carry ISABELLA'S suitcase upstairs to AURELIA'S room.)

AURELIA

(Leading ISABELLA to the gray sofa stationed against the wall, facing the television)
So, how is it? Being a freshman in college, I mean.

ISABELLA

It's amazing! I feel so...mature.

AURELIA

(Letting out a puff of breath) I wish I could feel grown up like that, but ever since you left for ENMU, Mom and Dad have started treating me like I'm their only child. Like they have to protect me. This morning at breakfast, Dad gave an entire speech about how I'm not allowed to have a boyfriend until (She begins to create air-quotes with her fingers) *ya no vive aquí*. Until I don't live here anymore.

ISABELLA

Well, do you want to?

AURELIA

Want to what?

ISABELLA

Want to have a boyfriend, Aurelia.

AURELIA

(In an appalled manner) Ugh, no!

ISABELLA

Then are there any boys you like?

AURELIA

(Quietly) No.

ISABELLA

(Leaning in closer to her sister and lowering her voice) Aurelia...do you even like boys?



AURELIA

(Turning away from her sister) What do you mean?

ISABELLA

I *mean*, you never talk about boys, you haven't had a boyfriend in so long, you make a face when I ask about a crush, you-

AURELIA

(Seeing where ISABELLA is leading, she interrupts her) -So...?

ISABELLA

So, do you like...girls?

CAMILA

(She pokes her head into the living room, her body half-hidden by the wall separating that room from the kitchen. Her arms are crossed, a spoon dangling from a fist) Niña tonta, Isabella. Aurelia nunca haría algo tan estúpido como eso. Aurelia would never be stupid enough to love a girl that way.

(CAMILA turns back to her pot in the kitchen as if nothing had happened, quickly tying her hair into a knot.)

ISABELLA

(She places her arm across AURELIA'S shoulders, speaking quietly with an apologetic expression on her face) Sorry, I wouldn't have said anything if I knew she was listening.

(Then, seeing how disappointed her sister is, she grips her hand)

Aurelia, I'm really sorry, alright?

AURELIA

(Clearly upset) No, it's fine. Here, come upstairs with me. I can show you how I redecorated our room.

ISABELLA

(She stands up from the couch slowly, still worried about AURELIA) Okay...are you sure?

AURELIA

(She wipes an obviously fake smile onto her face, struggling to hold her appearance together)

Yeah, of course. It's not like I was going to say "yes" anyway. I'm not...like that.

(Then, grabbing ISABELLA by the arm, she drags her toward the staircase.)

Come on, you'll love the color Dad and I painted the walls.

(ISABELLA and AURELIA exit the living room and begin walking up the stairs to AURELIA'S bedroom)

End of Scene 1



Scene 2

(It is around midnight. Everything is silent. The Ramos family is asleep, except for AURELIA who is sat on the front porch in a wicker rocking chair, her sketchbook in hand. A group of friends, including MAE and OLIVIA, stand on the sidewalk near AURELIA'S house, laughing. AURELIA begins to draw MAE, every so often glancing up to study her features.)

MAE

(She notices AURELIA and raises her arm in a wave, a grin on her face)
Hey!

AURELIA

(Glancing up from her sketchbook and flashing MAE a quick embarrassed smile)
Oh! Uh, hi.

(AURELIA continues to draw, assuming MAE has turned away)

MAE

(She motions to her friends that she'll be gone for a moment and approaches AURELIA, stopping at the steps leading to the front porch)
What are you drawing?

(AURELIA hides her sketchbook from view, sheepishly eyeing MAE)

MAE

(Persisting) What are you drawing?

(AURELIA shows MAE the sketch as MAE climbs the steps to get a better view)

MAE

(Flattered) Wow. You, um, you drew me.

AURELIA

(Embarrassed) Yeah...

OLIVIA

(From the sidewalk in front of AURELIA'S house, her hands raised in annoyance) Mae! Are you coming?

MAE

(She turns her back to AURELIA, responding to her friend in a distracted way) Yeah, hold on, I'll be there in a second.

(She turns to AURELIA, her voice gentler and more vulnerable) Do you want to hang with me and my friends? We're, uh, going to this house party if you wanna tag along and maybe draw another picture of me? (MAE laughs shortly)



AURELIA

Um, I don't know, I'm not really supposed to leave the house after eleven. And you're still kind of a stranger to me...

(She laughs shyly and continues to sketch)

MAE

Clearly I'm not that much of a stranger.

(MAE gestures to the drawing)

Please? Come on, you have to come! It's just a few blocks from here. It'll be fun, I promise.

AURELIA

Um... I'm not sure.

MAE

Why not? You're going to stay here just because your parents told you to?

AURELIA

(Thinking briefly about what her mom said earlier) Okay. Yeah, you're right.

(She stands up) I'm coming.

MAE

(Grabbing AURELIA'S hands) Yeah, come on.

(MAE and AURELIA approach MAE'S small group of friends. They seem skeptical, considering AURELIA doesn't seem like she'd fit in with them.)

MAE

Guys, this is...*(She turns to AURELIA, slightly embarrassed)* Sorry, what's your name?

AURELIA

Um, Aurelia.

MAE

(She stares at AURELIA for a moment, a small smile gracing her lips, before she snaps out of her thoughts, grins widely, and attempts to pronounce AURELIA'S name)

Ow-rell-yah, That's really cute.

(MAE winks at AURELIA, then turns to face her pack of friends to reintroduce their new guest)

MAE

This is Aurelia. She's coming with us tonight, so make her feel welcome.

(They all nod or show some sign of understanding before the entire group begins to walk down the street towards the party.)

AURELIA

(Walking besides MAE) That really wasn't necessary, you know.



MAE
What do you mean?

AURELIA
How you said I have to "feel welcome"? I don't want them to feel like they have to treat me special.

MAE
(She lets out a breathy laugh, rolling her eyes playfully)
I just wanna make sure you have a good time, Ellie. Can I call you "Ellie"?

AURELIA
Sure, I guess.

MAE
(She places her arm across AURELIA'S shoulders. AURELIA clearly notices but doesn't object)
Great. So Ellie, have you ever been to a party?

AURELIA
(Hiding her face in her shoulder out of embarrassment) No, not really...

MAE
(Laughing) I could tell. You're going to have a lot of fun. All right, come on.
(She notices that they've fallen behind the rest of the group and grabs AURELIA'S hand)
(MAE and AURELIA run after MAE's group of friends, holding hands and laughing.)

End of Scene 2



Scene 3

(AURELIA, MAE, and MAE'S friends have arrived at the house party. Colored lights are bouncing against walls and ceilings. Music is playing, just loud enough that everyone can hear, but quiet enough that they can enjoy their conversations as well. People are milling around the house in groups, red plastic cups held lazily in their sweating hands. AURELIA and MAE are sat next to each other on a surprisingly uncrowded leather couch, surveying the room. Every so often someone approaches them to talk with MAE and smile politely at AURELIA. AURELIA is beginning to get bored.)

AURELIA
So...is this it?

MAE
What?

AURELIA
(Gesturing to the people in front of them with her hand) Is this it? Do we just sit here and watch people talk to each other?

(MAE smiles tightly, annoyed that AURELIA isn't as excited as she thought the girl would be)

MAE
Well, go talk with them then.
(She nods her head toward one of the clusters of people in front of them)

AURELIA
No.

MAE
(Aggravated) Why not?

AURELIA
I don't know them. The only person that I know here is you, and you've barely told me anything about yourself anyway!

MAE
(Crossing her arms) It's not like I know too much about you either, Aurelia.

AURELIA
You know I like to draw.

MAE
And...that's about it.

AURELIA
(Rolling her eyes) Fine, Mae, what do you want to know?



MAE

(She sits up straighter on the couch, a small smile touching her lips) Why don't we start with your family. What are they like?

AURELIA

Well, my mom is a nurse and my dad works as a carpenter. I have an older sister who just started college this year, her name is Isabella, she's 19. I have a cat named Simba.
(Then, embarrassed) Lion King is like my favorite movie.

(MAE and AURELIA sit quietly for a moment, MAE not knowing what to respond with and AURELIA not having much else to say. Then AURELIA smiles awkwardly before speaking again.)

AURELIA

What about you, Mae? What's your family like?

MAE

(She begins to glance around the room, avoiding AURELIA'S eyes) Oh, they're really not that interesting. Ask me something else. Please.

(AURELIA realizes that she has struck a nerve with MAE and reaches forward to brush MAE'S hand with her fingers. As AURELIA pulls away, MAE reaches forward and grabs AURELIA'S hand, holding it tight in her own. AURELIA doesn't say anything, but is clearly nervous.)

AURELIA

(Staring at their entangled hands) Um, what do you like to do? For fun.

MAE

(Laughing at AURELIA'S nervousness) Well, I just started playing guitar.

AURELIA

You play guitar?

MAE

(She looks down at her lap, smiling) Yeah, I do. Maybe I could play you a song some time?

AURELIA

(Looks down into her lap, smiling.)
Yeah, okay.

MAE

Can I ask you a question now?

AURELIA

(She adjusts her position on the couch so that her legs are folded beneath her) Sure, go ahead.



MAE

Ellie, have you ever kissed someone?

AURELIA

(Surprised by the question, her eyes widen, but she doesn't move away) Yes. Have you?

MAE

Yes...

AURELIA

What was his name? Your first kiss.

MAE

(Smirking) Julia.

AURELIA

(Taken aback, she leans away from MAE and snatches her hand back) Oh! You're....

MAE

Gay?

AURELIA

(Shock still apparent on her face) Yeah...are you?

MAE

(Her eyes squinted in apprehension) Yes. Does that bother you?

AURELIA

No. I don't think so, at least.

MAE

(Moving even farther away from AURELIA) What does that mean? You don't think so?

AURELIA

(Panic strikes her face and she attempts to cover up what she just said) No, I don't mean it like that. It's my mom. She has always told me that being gay isn't right. My family's Catholic, especially my mom. She uses her religion to justify everything she does. She's just so conservative and traditional, and I've always believed what she said. But lately...

MAE

(Her anger begins to be replaced by confusion) Lately...?

AURELIA

(AURELIA casts her gaze at the floor) Lately I've been seeing girls in a different way.

MAE

(Her expression softens) Do you think you're...?



AURELIA

I'm not sure. I don't want to be, though. I can't be.

MAE

Because of your mom?

AURELIA

Yeah. Because of my mom.

(MAE places her hand on AURELIA'S shoulder. She's not sure of what to say, so she tries to convey her compassion and empathy through touch.)

AURELIA

(Very anxious) Mae, can we leave now?

MAE

(She sighs and glances around the room, wanting to stay but knowing she has to leave with AURELIA) Okay. Come on, Ellie. I'll walk you home.

(They stand up from the couch. AURELIA reaches forward and grabs MAE'S hand. MAE turns around, confused, and AURELIA stares at her for a moment before smiling)

AURELIA

Thanks, Mae.

(MAE smiles and nods as she turns her back to AURELIA, leading her through the house by her hand to the door. They exit.)

End of Scene 3



Scene 4

(MAE and AURELIA are walking slowly towards AURELIA's house. It's early in the morning, 1:30 or so, and the night is quiet. Every so often a car drives by, briefly dousing MAE and AURELIA in light. They're sharing secrets with each other the way someone does when they're tired and vulnerable. All of a sudden, AURELIA stops walking, confusion in her eyes.)

AURELIA

Mae, how old are you?

MAE

Seventeen, I told you that already.

AURELIA

I know but... do you live around here?

MAE

Yeah, a few blocks from your house actually. Why?

(They start walking again)

AURELIA

How come I've never seen you at school, at Santa Rita? You should be in my class.

MAE

Well, I don't go to Santa Rita. I go to Empire.

AURELIA

(Beginning to get frustrated) But how? Everyone goes to the high school closest to their house. The one that's closest to my house is Santa Rita. If you live near me, you should be going to there, too. How do you go to Empire?

MAE

(Laughing to herself) I was trying to avoid talking about this, Aurelia.

AURELIA

But I want to know.

MAE

Why should you know? Ellie, we met like two hours ago. Why do I have to tell you anything?

AURELIA

Because I'm curious. Because we've shared enough about each other that I figure talking about what high school you go to isn't that big of a deal.

MAE

(She looks away for a moment, out at the street) But it's not just that. It's way more than what school I go to.



AURELIA
What is it, then?

MAE
(Sighing) Do I really have to tell you?

AURELIA
Please.

MAE
Okay. Okay, I will.
(She exhales deeply before beginning her story, clearly nervous)
When I was really young, like four years old, my mom left.

(AURELIA gasps, but quickly recovers from shock)

MAE
So after that, it was just me and my dad. We lived near that paintball place, which is why I go to Empire. Because it was closest. But last year, sophomore year, I made the mistake of coming out to my dad. He told me I had the rest of the week to find another place to stay.

AURELIA
You mean, he made you move out?

MAE
Yeah. He did. I haven't seen him since then. But my aunt also lives in Tucson, near your house, so that's where I stay for now. That's why I go to Empire, because I never transferred schools after my dad...after I left.

(AURELIA realizes they've arrived at her house, before turning to MAE and placing her hand gently on her shoulder)

AURELIA
We're here, Mae.

MAE
(Looking up from the ground, she attempts to resume the casual flirtiness she embodied earlier)
Oh! Okay, cool.

AURELIA
(Tilting her head to show that she feels pity for MAE) I'm sorry about your dad. That really sucks. More than sucks. I wish I could do something.

MAE
No, it's fine.



AURELIA

(She grazes MAE'S hand with her fingers) It's not. Mae, it's just -

MAE

(MAE interrupts AURELIA and brushes her hand away) Ellie, I said it's okay.

AURELIA

Mae...

(AURELIA stares at MAE for a moment before leaning in quickly, kissing her square on the mouth. They stay like that for a few seconds, before MAE steps closer, attempting to deepen the kiss. At this, AURELIA backs away, regret and slight fear written across her face.)

MAE

Ellie, what's wrong?

AURELIA

(Bewilderment in her tone) I don't know why I did that. I'm sorry Mae, I really...I shouldn't have.

MAE

Aurelia, it's -

AURELIA

*(Turning towards her house and rushing up the stone steps) Bye, Mae. I...
(She turns back to MAE quickly, as if she might run right back to her, but then she glances down at the floor of her front porch and bites her lip)...goodbye.*

(AURELIA enters her house quietly, as not to wake her parents. MAE stands in front of AURELIA'S house for a minute before turning away and beginning to walk towards her own house)

End of Scene 4



Scene 5

(It is the next morning. The Ramos family is sat around the dining table enjoying breakfast, which CAMILA has prepared. AURELIA is eating her food slowly, her head resting in her hand. She isn't contributing much to the light conversation being made and it is clear that something has upset her.)

ANDRÉS

Aurelia, what's wrong?

AURELIA

(Without meeting his eyes) Nothing, Dad. I'm just tired.

(CAMILA tsks loudly without looking up from her plate as she scoops some scrambled egg onto her fork)

AURELIA

(Slowly raising her head to eye her mother) What is it, Mom?

CAMILA

(Passive-aggressively) Nothing, chica.

AURELIA

Come on, Mom. What is it?

CAMILA

(Making eye contact with her daughter) I would just like to know why you mientes a tu padre.

AURELIA

(Her eyes become a bit more alert, panic brewing in her stomach) What do you mean, Mom? I didn't lie.

ISABELLA

(In an effort to cover for her sister) Mom, Aurelia's just tired. She's not lying to Dad.

CAMILA

(Without looking away from AURELIA) Isabella, you do not know what I saw.

AURELIA

(Fear flooding her face) Mom, what are you talking about?

CAMILA

(Her expression growing more serious) Do not play stupid. You know what I'm talking about.

ANDRÉS

Camila, she doesn't. None of us do.



CAMILA

(Breaking eye contact with her daughter to lock eyes with her husband) Is that right, Andrés? So you're telling me our daughter doesn't know that last night, at two in the morning, she was with a girl in front of our house? She doesn't know that she kissed that girl? I think she is very much aware of that, Andrés.

(Everyone at the table turns to AURELIA, who looks sheepishly down at her plate)

ISABELLA

Well...is she right, Aurelia?

(AURELIA sits with her brow furrowed and her eyes downcast in shame for a moment before she bites her lip and nods. There is silence in the room for a few seconds)

ANDRÉS

(Surprised) Oh.

AURELIA

Oh?

ANDRÉS

I just wasn't expecting that.

CAMILA

Aurelia, how could you ever choose to live your life this way?

AURELIA

I didn't choose, I -

CAMILA

(Interrupting AURELIA) Of course you chose, I just don't understand why you'd want to be a...a dyke.

(The word hangs in the air, uncomfortable, AURELIA shrinks back in her chair, tears coming to her eyes. The room is silent.)

ANDRÉS

(Quietly, to his wife) Camila, maybe now isn't the time for this.

CAMILA

(Her voice growing angry and defensive, she stands from her chair) Yes it is. I just want to know why *mija* está besando chicas en vez de chicos! Why is my daughter kissing girls? What would people think if they knew our child was a lesbian?

ISABELLA

(Trying to calm her mother down) Mom, it's okay. Aurelia is still the same as she's always been. She just -



AURELIA

(Interrupting her sister, a blank look in her eyes) No Isabella, Mom is right. But I can fix it.

ISABELLA

(Interjecting) Aurelia, you can't just change who you are!

AURELIA

(As if trying to convince herself) It's fine. I can make it go away.

ISABELLA

Aurelia...

AURELIA

I can. I can.

(CAMILA begins to cry; ANDRÉS stands up and wraps his arms around her. He mumbles small reassurances in her ear as ISABELLA stays in her seat, staring at her sister with intense worry. AURELIA calmly walks to the front door and leaves the house with the intention of finding MAE. CAMILA calls after her daughter, her voice wet with tears, but ANDRÉS holds her back.)

CAMILA

Aurelia!

ANDRÉS

Let her go, Camila.

End of Scene 5



Scene 6

(AURELIA is walking in her neighborhood, trying to find MAE. The streets are lined with small trees, and cars occasionally drive by. AURELIA has her hands coiled into fists; a look of anger, determination, and sorrow is vividly painted on her face. Finally, she stops at a house that looks much like her own, as do most of the houses in the neighborhood, with faded brown steps leading to the front porch. On those steps is MAE, her guitar in her lap. AURELIA, without hesitating, strides quickly up to MAE.)

MAE

(Smiles welcomingly) Oh, hi Ellie!
(She places her guitar down beside her) I was thinking about before and I wanted to apologize. I understand that I moved the kiss a little too fast, so I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset you.

AURELIA

(Without the anger fading from her face) Is that all you're going to apologize for?

MAE

(Bewilderment and slight irritation contort her face) What are you talking about?

AURELIA

(Angry tears forming in her eyes, she steps closer to MAE) You messed me up last night, Mae. Before you, I would have been perfectly fine with dating a guy. A guy that would please my family. Everything would've turned out okay and...normal. But you screwed that all up!

MAE

(Standing from her spot on her front steps, anger taking over her features) You screwed that up, Aurelia. I didn't make you gay, you just are!

AURELIA

(Defensively) I am not gay!

MAE

Yes you are, Aurelia! Why else would you kiss me?

AURELIA

(Some of the rage leaves her face as she tries to piece together an acceptable answer) I...I felt bad for you.

MAE

So you kissed me?

AURELIA

I don't know, you're gay. I figured...

MAE

(Crossing her arms) You figured what?



AURELIA
That you'd want me too?

MAE
Aurelia, that is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. Do you really think that just because I like girls, the only way to make me feel better is for you to kiss me?

AURELIA
(Her anger intensifies) Well it worked, didn't it? Or did I just imagine you kissing me back?

MAE
(She throws her arms in the air, not having any argument to defend herself) Fine, Aurelia. You got me. I wanted you to kiss me and when you finally did, it helped me forget about my dad for a second, after you forced me to talk about him. It -

AURELIA
(Interrupting MAE, her voice softer) You wanted me to kiss you?

MAE
(Rolling her eyes) Yes, Aurelia. Is that what you wanted?

(AURELIA and MAE stand there staring at each other, MAE'S last words hanging between them. AURELIA looks away, unsure of how to respond)

MAE
I can't even take you seriously. I guess you believe what your mom says more than you thought.

(AURELIA is extremely hurt by this, and stands silently, not knowing what to say or if she even has anything to say. MAE holds eye contact with her before shaking her head dismissively and walking inside her house. AURELIA watches MAE turn away, tears threatening to spill over onto her cheeks.)

End of Scene 6

Scene 7

(Meanwhile, as AURELIA is finding her way back home, CAMILA and ANDRÉS are sat at the dining table discussing their youngest daughter. CAMILA has her lips set in a straight line, while ANDRÉS is calmly holding her hands in his own from across the table. ANDRÉS breaks the silence.)

ANDRÉS

Camila, you can't be mad with Aurelia.

CAMILA

(Pulling her hands away from her husband) It isn't right, Andrés!

ANDRÉS

(Calmly) Why do you say that?

CAMILA

It's a disorder, Father De La Rosa says to treat it as a mental disease, a...sickness.

ANDRÉS

But Aurelia is our daughter. Mi pequeña sol dorado. My little golden sun.

CAMILA

(Trying to reason with her husband) We can help her, Andrés. They have therapy for people like her,

ANDRÉS

(Finally showing signs of anger) My daughter doesn't need therapy!

CAMILA

She has an illness.

ANDRÉS

All she's doing is loving people, the same as us.

CAMILA

(Placing her hands firmly on the table) Andrés, she's loving the wrong people, it says so in the Bible!

(ANDRÉS shakes his head, annoyed with his wife, and rubs his forehead with his middle and ring fingers. He says nothing, disregarding CAMILA'S last statement. CAMILA takes offense to this and leans towards ANDRÉS incredulously, responding to her husband's look of exasperation.)

CAMILA

Have you no faith in the Bible? In God Himself?



ANDRÉS

I believe that God makes no mistakes. If He created Aurelia this way, if He made her homosexual, then I have faith that she is meant to live her life that way.

(CAMILA sits back in her chair, unsure of how to respond. There are a few beats of silence before ANDRÉS stands up from his seat and walks over to his wife, wrapping his arms around her in an embrace.)

CAMILA

(Her voice sounding much more vulnerable) I love Aurelia. I only want what's best for her.

ANDRÉS

(Pulls away from the hug and holds his wife at an arm's length) Maybe what's best for her isn't what's best for you. As her mother, you have to allow her to be herself.

CAMILA

But Andrés...

(Pulling away from her husband) What will our neighbors think? Or her friends at school?

ANDRÉS

(He shakes his head) That shouldn't matter, Camila. Yes, she might be judged by her friends or by our family. But in the end, all that matters is that she's happy.

CAMILA

(Frustrated) But what about everything the Bible say-

ANDRÉS

(Slightly raising his voice) Why should the Bible decide how we love our child? Why are you letting your religion control you like this? Camila, I love you and you know this. But this...
(He waves his hand at her dismissively)...this is not the woman I married.

CAMILA

(A sob erupts from her throat) Stop! That isn't fair, Andrés! I only want-

ANDRÉS

(Interrupting his wife once again) Want what, Camila? For our daughter to think her feelings are wrong?

CAMILA

(Shrinking back into herself) No, I...you're right, I know that. But no matter how hard I try, I can't seem to be alright with it. With her.

ANDRÉS

(Pushing his hair back, frustrated) I don't know how to fix that.

CAMILA

I don't either, Andrés. I wish I could be more like you. You're strong and accepting and I can't



bring myself to be either of those things, not even for my own daughter. I keep asking myself if I am supposed to be a mother or a follower of God. Am I supposed to love Aurelia no matter what, or am I supposed to fix her? Does she even need to be fixed? God makes no mistakes, so how can I ask for Aurelia to change when she was made this way? I used to be so sure of what was right and wrong. But how can I call my daughter wrong? How can I choose between family and religion? How can I question God? It isn't easy to forget how you were raised. It isn't easy to reject what you were taught. But I know in my heart that I have to try for Aurelia. I just wish I could accept this as easily as you have. Andrés, I need you to show me how. Please.

ANDRÉS

Camila, I know this isn't easy for you. I wish with all my heart that I could make this less complicated, but I don't think I can.

CAMILA

I'm not asking you to. I just need you to be here for me.

ANDRÉS

(Half-smiling) That's easy. I'll always be here.

CAMILA

I want to try and be okay with this. I want Aurelia to know I'm going to try.

ANDRÉS

You need to talk to her when she gets home.

CAMILA

I know. I need her to know that I want to try my best with this.

ANDRÉS

She might not know that right now.

CAMILA

(Glancing down at her lap) I know, I shouldn't have said those things in front of her. She must hate me.

ANDRÉS

(Gripping CAMILA'S hands tighter) Camila, she doesn't hate you! You made a mistake and that's why you have to apologize. But Aurelia does not hate you.

(CAMILA and ANDRÉS stare at each other for a moment before ANDRÉS leans forward and pecks his wife on the lips.)

ANDRÉS

(Adamantly) Aurelia loves you and I love you. So much, okay?

CAMILA

(Smiling gratefully) Thank you, Andrés. I love you, too.



(ANDRÉS wraps his wife into another hug. They stay like that for a long time, holding each other tightly.)

End of Scene 7



Scene 8

(AURELIA is walking up the path to her front porch, her eyes cast down at the ground. She reaches the steps before realizing that ISABELLA is sitting in the wicker rocking chair. ISABELLA seems to have been waiting for the arrival of her sister and motions for AURELIA to join her in the second chair.)

ISABELLA

Hey, Aurelia. Before you go inside, can we talk about before?

AURELIA

(Without meeting her sister's eyes) Can it wait? I just got into a fight with the girl I...

ISABELLA

The girl you kissed?

AURELIA

(Finally looking up at her sister and blushing slightly) Yeah.

ISABELLA

That's kind of what I wanted to talk about. Could you please sit down with me? I promise it won't take long.

AURELIA

(She nods, then sits in the second wicker chair beside her sister. She speaks as if she's afraid of the conversation to come) What is it?

ISABELLA

Aurelia, do you regret kissing that girl?

AURELIA

(Her eyes widen and she sits up straighter. Her voice becomes defensive) Yes, of course! I don't even know what happened; she kissed me and I didn't want to pull away and hurt her feelings, so I just...stayed there.

ISABELLA

(As she gives AURELIA a knowing look) Are you sure that's what happened?

AURELIA

What do you mean?

ISABELLA

I mean, did she kiss you?

AURELIA

(Shame softens her features) Yes. Maybe?



(ISABELLA eyes AURELIA suspiciously)

AURELIA
(Sighing) No.

ISABELLA
(She smirks slightly) Why did you kiss her?

AURELIA
(Her eyes trained on the floor) Because I felt bad for her. She told me this really sad story about her dad and I wanted to make her feel better, I guess.

ISABELLA
So you only kissed her because you felt bad for her?

AURELIA
(Unsure) Yes...?

ISABELLA
Aurelia, did you really?

AURELIA
(Frustrated with herself) I don't know! I think so? She was so sad and I wanted to fix it. I wanted her to smile again. She has such a nice smile.

ISABELLA
(Grinning wildly) Aurelia, it sounds like you like this girl.

AURELIA
Well yeah, she's really cool.

ISABELLA
No, I meant like like her. You know, as a crush?

AURELIA
(Shaking her head quickly) No, she's a girl, I...I can't like a girl,

ISABELLA
(Confused) Why not?

AURELIA
Because it goes against everything Mom believes in. And maybe Dad, too.

ISABELLA
So the only thing that's holding you back is our parents?



AURELIA

And myself, too, just a little. I guess kissing her was nice at first, but when she kissed me back, I got scared. Really scared, Isabella.

ISABELLA

Well, why were you scared?

AURELIA

I guess because it was better than I thought it would be? Like, I thought I could kiss her and then it would be over with and I could move on with my life without this constant curiosity, this idea that I'm missing out.

ISABELLA

(Crossing her legs on the chair and resting her head in her hand) Missing out on what?

AURELIA

(Giggling) Girls!

(She bites down on her lip, suddenly deeper in thought) I've kissed boys before and it was okay, but nothing really special. So I wondered what it would be like to kiss a girl. If it would feel different, maybe more like the kisses people describe in books and stuff. But I didn't really expect it to feel like that, because of the kind of things Mom says about being gay.

ISABELLA

So then what did it feel like? To kiss a girl.

AURELIA

(Her face lights up with a warm smile) Amazing. Like, tingly and nervous and like...like outer space.

ISABELLA

(Sitting up straighter in her chair, laughing out loud) I know what you mean.

AURELIA

Is that what it felt like when you kissed your boyfriend for the first time?

ISABELLA

Yeah, just like that. Like outer space.

(The sisters stare at each other for a moment, faint smiles on their faces. ISABELLA tucks her hair behind her ear and speaks, her eyes intently watching AURELIA)

ISABELLA

Aurelia, you don't have to hide who you are, If you enjoyed kissing that girl, then there is no reason to keep it a secret. Even if some people might not think it's right.



AURELIA

But it's scary! We've been told the same things our whole lives: at church, at home. I feel like I'm programmed to be disgusted by it.

ISABELLA

(Nodding her head agreeingly) I know what you mean. The first few months at college, I was so surprised about how open-minded everyone is. And it took a lot of time to get used to it, to accept it and begin to think like them. But I'm a better person because of it, Aurelia.

AURELIA

(Standing up and hugging her sister, smiling as if she might cry) Isabella, thank you so much! I think...I think I'm going to try to do that. To be like you and your college friends. To be more open minded.

ISABELLA

(Pulling away to look AURELIA in the eye) And to accept yourself?

AURELIA

(Smiling) And to accept myself.

ISABELLA

(Leaning back into the hug) Good. You're so brave, Aurelia, okay? So brave. I love you.

AURELIA

(Laughing into Isabella's shoulder) Thanks, Isabella, I love you, too.

ISABELLA

(Releasing AURELIA from the embrace, she smiles encouragingly at her sister) Now, I think someone might want to talk to you inside.

AURELIA

(Groaning) Ugh, is Mom going to yell at me or something?

ISABELLA

You might be surprised...

(She stands up from her chair and grips her sister 's hand in her own. They face the front door, ISABELLA with a face of certainty and AURELIA with an expression of fear)

ISABELLA

Come on, I'll go in with you. It's really not as bad as you think it's going to be.

AURELIA

(Eyeing her sister with suspicion) Are you sure?

ISABELLA

(Chuckling) Yes, I'm sure, Aurelia. I promise. Now, let's go. I'm right here with you.



(The girls walk into the house with their fingers laced together. The door slams shut behind them)

End of Scene 8



Scene 9

(AURELIA and ISABELLA stand in the living room, at the front door. CAMILA and ANDRÉS are sat beside each other on the couch, talking to each other with serious expressions on their face before they realize, after hearing the front door close, that their daughters are stood in front of them. ANDRÉS stands from the couch, while CAMILA looks towards the floor.)

ANDRÉS

Aurelia, your mother has something she'd like to talk to you about.
(Then, looking down at his wife) We both have something we'd like to talk to you about.

(AURELIA nods, then lets go of ISABELLA'S hand and steps closer to her parents. She does not sit down.)

AURELIA

(Confidently) Okay. But before you tell me to change myself, just know that I am comfortable with who I am.

(She looks briefly back at her sister) Or at least I'm trying to be. My point is, you can't change me.

(The room is silent for a few beats before ANDRÉS shares a quick look with CAMILA and sighs.)

ANDRÉS

Aurelia, we aren't trying to change you. Eres perfecto como eres. You're perfect the way you are.

AURELIA

(Crossing her arms) But then why...why did Mom say all that stuff before?

CAMILA

(Exchanging a glance with her husband before standing from her seat on the couch) I'm so sorry for that, Aurelia. Your papá talked to me earlier and I am going to try to be more accepting. I shouldn't let my religion decide how to treat you. I love you, and I never meant for you to feel like I didn't.

AURELIA

(Clearly not expecting this from her mother, she uncrosses her arms and steps forward) You don't hate me?

CAMILA

(Gasping) Aurelia! I will never hate you, no matter what you do or who you are. You are my daughter, mija, and I will love you forever and always.

AURELIA

(Smiling as tears prick her eyes) Thank you, Mom. That means so much. I love you, too.



(AURELIA steps closer to her mother and wraps her in a tight embrace before stepping away and smiling at her dad)

AURELIA

Thanks, Dad, for changing her mind. For accepting me from the start.
(Looking at both of her parents) I know it will probably take a while for you to get used to it. I appreciate that you're trying. Thank you so much.

ANDRÉS

Aurelia, you do not have to thank us for loving you. We are your parents and we will never turn our backs on you because of who you love.
(Then, turning to ISABELLA) That goes for you as well, Isabella. We will love you *pase lo que pase*. No matter what.

ISABELLA

(Smiling in an embarrassed way, looking towards the floor) That's great, Dad, thank you. But I'm, you know...straight?

(ANDRÉS laughs and shakes his head.)

ANDRÉS

That's not what I meant, Isabella. I said "no matter what": no matter what happens, I will always be here for you. *(He wraps his arm around CAMILA'S waist)* And your mamá will be, too.

ISABELLA

(She raises her eyebrows, a smirk on her lips) Dad, you're getting a little too...cheesy.

AURELIA

(Laughs) Yeah, Isabella's right, Dad. This is a lot.

ANDRÉS

(He pulls his daughters into a spontaneous hug, along with CAMILA, clearly trying to be overdramatic) But chicas! I love you so much and I am so proud of you! You are my sun, my stars, my moon, my -

AURELIA

(Pulling away from her father with a look of mock disgust on her face) Dad! Stop it! I love that you accept me for who I am and all but...please. Tone it down.

(ANDRÉS smiles, releasing ISABELLA and CAMILA from his embrace.)

ANDRÉS

(Speaking with a sarcastic tone) Okay, Aurelia. I'm sorry.

AURELIA

(Smiling gratefully) No, don't be sorry. You're taking the seriousness out of this really serious thing that was so scary for me and...and I really appreciate it. Thanks, Dad.



ANDRÉS

(Hugging AURELIA, without the over dramatization, as he mumbles his next words) Who's being cheesy now?

AURELIA

(Looking up at her dad) I know, I...Oh my God! Mae!

(The rest of the family look at AURELIA with confusion, worry, and surprise as AURELIA pulls away from her father's hug)

AURELIA

(As she runs towards the front door) I need to go see Mae, I'll be right back!

(The front door slams behind her and ISABELLA, CAMILA, and ANDRÉS share confused looks)

CAMILA

Who's Mae?

ISABELLA

I think that's the name of the girl she kissed last night...?

CAMILA

(As she walks into the kitchen) Well I already don't like her. Any girl who makes my daughter run out of the house nearly screaming is an alborotadora! A troublemaker!

End of Scene 9

Scene 10

(AURELIA, for the second time that day, is racing down the street in search of MAE. Her Converse sneakers pound against the sidewalk and her hair blows behind her in the wind. The sky is overcast with gray clouds, Rain begins to fall in fat, heavy drops as AURELIA near's MAE'S house. When AURELIA finally arrives at her destination, MAE is lounging in her porch swing, leaning against OLIVIA. The two are laughing and whispering to each other as they play with the other's hair. AURELIA stands in front of the house, watching them, before slowly approaching them. MAE purposely ignores AURELIA until AURELIA politely clears her throat.)

AURELIA

(Wringing her hands) Um...hi, Mae.

MAE

(Not meeting AURELIA 'S eyes) Hi.

AURELIA

Could we talk somewhere else? Like, privately?

(AURELIA motions to OLIVIA)

MAE

(Looking up at AURELIA) No. I don't see any problem with staying right here.

AURELIA

But your friend... I just want to talk to you.

MAE

I'm not going to make her leave. If you want to say something to me, you can say it now.

(OLIVIA looks awkwardly down at her lap, letting her hands fall away from MAE'S hair.)

AURELIA

(Sighing) Okay. That's fine. Mae, I just wanted to start out by saying I'm sorry.

(MAE chuckles humorlessly and AURELIA stops speaking)

AURELIA

Why are you laughing?

MAE

(Her tone gradually loses all sense of humor as she speaks) Oh, I don't know. Maybe because less than twenty-four hours ago I said the exact same thing and you didn't care.

AURELIA

But that's what I'm apologizing for! Please, Mae. Hear me out.

MAE

(Rolling her eyes) Okay. Go ahead.



AURELIA

When I got home after this morning, my sister was sitting on the front porch. She said she wanted to talk to me and then told me that it's okay to accept myself and to be who I am. It was really cheesy now that I look back on it, but it helped. A lot. And when I went inside the house, my parents basically said the same thing. They support me, Mae! And because of that, I realized that what I said to you earlier was wrong. I'm sorry for fighting with you. It was out of fear, really. I'm so sorry, Mae.

MAE

Look, Aurelia. I forgive you. And I understand that it was hard for you to accept yourself or whatever. But I don't think I want to hang out with you anymore.

AURELIA

(Her shoulders fall) No. That's not what was supposed to happen.

MAE

(Adjusting her position on the swing to face AURELIA more directly) What was supposed to happen, then?

AURELIA

Well, for starters, your friend wasn't supposed to be here.

(OLIVIA stands up from the swing and walks down the front steps)

OLIVIA

Um, I'll just...go. I don't wanna cause any more arguments. I already feel pretty insulted anyway. Bye, Mae.

(OLIVIA gives MAE a small wave before leaving.)

MAE

(MAE points at OLIVIA as she speaks angrily to AURELIA) Now are you happy?

AURELIA

(Crossing her arms) Yeah, now I can finally talk to you alone.

MAE

Talk to me about what? I already said I don't wanna be with you.

AURELIA

(Arms falling to her sides) But why?

MAE

(Standing up from the porch swing) Because I can't take you seriously.

AURELIA

(Taking a step back, insulted) What's that supposed to mean?



MAE

You change your mind so quickly; how can I know when to actually believe you? One minute you want to kiss me, the next you run away out of...disgust or something. You yell at me for *(creates air-quotes with her fingers)* “making you gay”, whatever that means. But then like two hours later, you apologize and say you accept yourself! I just don't know when you're being real with me.

AURELIA

(Stepping closer to MAE, her face open with emotion) Mae, I am being real with you. Right now. I have never been more real with someone in my life. I am gay...
(AURELIA pauses, as if feeling the weight of those words for the first time)...and I really like you. I like you so much, Mae.

(AURELIA, now standing very close to MAE, reaches for the other girl's hands. MAE pulls away)

MAE

(Sympathetic) Aurelia, you know that girl that was here before?

AURELIA

(Confused) Yeah, what about her?

MAE

After you left this morning, I was really upset and asked her to come over.
(She sighs, running her palms down the legs of her jeans) She got here and I...I kissed her.

AURELIA

(It feels like a stab in the gut. AURELIA steps back as if MAE had slapped her across the face. Her eyes well up with tears) Um. Okay. Okay, I'm gonna go now. Bye. Um...yeah, bye.

(AURELIA turns around, prepared to leave, before MAE runs up behind her and reaches for AURELIA 'S forearm. AURELIA shrugs it off, but turns around.)

MAE

You and I only kissed last night, Ellie. It was just a kiss.

AURELIA

(Face and voice devoid of emotion) Don't call me Ellie.

MAE

(Her eyebrows lift, as if surprised and saddened) But, Ellie, I

AURELIA

(Voice raised) I said, don't call me Ellie! Give that girl some nickname instead.

MAE

(Quietly) Her name's Olivia...



AURELIA

(Turning back around) Oh my God! Goodbye, Mae.

MAE

Aurelia, wait!

AURELIA

(Walking towards the sidewalk) No, I'm leaving. Bye. I'm done.

MAE

(Shouting) You can't just decide when this is done! I was done first!

AURELIA

(Rolling her eyes as she walks away) Give me a break, Mae.

(MAE stands there for a moment, watching AURELIA go. AURELIA stops walking once she reaches the sidewalk. They stand like that for a few seconds.)

MAE

Hey, I'm glad your parents accept you.

AURELIA

Whatever.

(Silence. MAE doesn't respond)

AURELIA

(Softly, so that MAE can hardly hear her) Thank you.

(MAE smiles as AURELIA walks away. Things feel resolved and finished between them, despite the argument that took place only moments before. The rain has slowed to a drizzle, and AURELIA stops walking just past MAE'S house to spread her arms wide and calmly feel the rain soak into her skin and clothes. MAE is watching AURELIA from her yard. There are no cars, no noise.)

AURELIA

(Head tilted to the sky) Thank you.

End of Play