

ALL OF THE ABOVE

A dramedy in one act
by
Bradley Hayward

PREVIEW ONLY!

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SYNOPSIS

When a high school election shifts from policy to personality, Lauren finds herself fighting a charismatic opponent who uses digital rumours and tyrannical tactics to divide the student body. Through a metaphorical multiple choice test, the play examines how easily truth is traded for a vibe and how silence can become a vote for the loud. In a world of rigid categories, these students must decide if they'll fill in the answers they're given or find the courage to write their own.

RUNNING TIME

30-35 minutes.

CHARACTERS

Entirely gender flexible cast of 6-38+

THE CANDIDATES:

LAUREN, 17, reserved and responsible
CHASE, 17, confident and charismatic

THE MULTIPLE CHOICES:

For the sake of simplicity, the ensemble of MULTIPLE CHOICES has been written in the script as 4 actors; however, this ensemble may be infinitely larger. Feel free to distribute the lines to as many actors as you would like to include.

CHOICE 1
CHOICE 2
CHOICE 3
CHOICE 4

THE STUDENT BODY:

The following 32 roles may be assigned individually, played by as few as 3 actors, doubled by the ensemble of MULTIPLE CHOICES, or any combination in between.

BELLA*	NATE*	TYLER*	AMIRAH*	DANIEL*	COREY*
SAM	IVY	OMAR	FELICITY	MARK	FOLLOWER 1
JESS	XANDER	KELCE	HOPE	BRYAN	FOLLOWER 2
GABBY	QUENTIN	WALKER	REBECCA	LUCAS	NAOMI
PENNY	VIOLET	PHOEBE	YASMINE	EVAN	RIOT
ULANI	ZOE				

The starred characters (*) have monologues, and re-appear later in the play. The other characters only appear once, to suggest a large student body.

CASTING NOTE

The gender identity of all characters is non-specific. Please feel free to change the names and pronouns to whatever feels most comfortable and appropriate for the cast.

SETTING

There are various locations in the script. Each scene may be fully realized, simply suggested by blocks, or performed on a completely bare stage. What's most important is that the scene changes are performed quickly, to keep the play moving forward at a steady pace.

LIGHTING/SOUND

The play can easily be produced with no special lighting or sound effects whatsoever. It may also be presented as elaborately as your budget and creativity allows.

COSTUMES

The STUDENT BODY all appear in modern attire. They each carry different coloured backpacks at the start of the play, which are gradually replaced by bright red backpacks as the story progresses. The MULTIPLE CHOICES ensemble wears matching white lab coats, which switch to pink.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The play's structure is built on short, staccato scenes designed to mimic the rapid fire nature of a digital feed, intentionally stripping away most stage directions to prioritize pace. Directors are encouraged to come up with inventive locations and physical business that personalize the characters' lives, but please do not let these ideas impede the swift pace of the script.

SCENE 1
Test: Media

The MULTIPLE CHOICES stand in a rigid line, wearing matching white lab coats, each holding a tablet. They speak with the clipped precision of standardized test administrators.

CHOICE 1

Pop quiz.

CHOICE 2

Put away your phones.

CHOICE 3

Close your books.

CHOICE 4

Pick up your pencils.

CHOICE 1

Question one.

CHOICE 2

You see a post from a friend.

CHOICE 3

You disagree with the premise.

CHOICE 4

Do you --

CHOICE 1

A) Ignore it and move on with your life.

CHOICE 2

B) Type a thoughtful rebuttal that respects their humanity.

CHOICE 3

C) Screenshot it, post it to your story with a clown emoji, and let the algorithm do the rest.

CHOICES

All of the above.

CHOICE 4

Question two. Your self worth is currently measured in --

CHOICE 1

A) Likes.

CHOICE 2

B) Shares.

CHOICE 3

C) Views.

CHOICE 4

D) The terrifying silence of a post that gets zero engagement.

CHOICES

D. Definitely D.

CHOICE 1

Question three. The truth is --

CHOICE 2

A) Objective.

CHOICE 3

B) Subjective.

CHOICE 4

C) Whatever gets the most shares before the fact checkers wake up.

CHOICES

C. Always C.

CHOICE 1

There are no points for being right.

CHOICE 2

There are only points for being loud.

CHOICE 3

If you're not trending, you don't exist.

CHOICE 4

Please fill in your existence now.

The CHOICES tap on their tablets and the lights shift to the next scene.

SCENE 2Lauren: The Candidate

LAUREN stands at a podium. She rehearses a speech.

LAUREN

"Northern District, we are at a crossroads."

She stops. Shakes her head.

No. Too dramatic. "Students of Northern District, look at the vending machines."

She groans.

That's too small.

CHASE enters. He doesn't walk, he struts. He's filming himself on a cell phone, and carries a bright red backpack on his back.

CHASE

(To his phone)

And that's why the cafeteria food is actually a metaphor for the current administration. Soft, mysterious, and definitely past its expiration date. Stay tuned for the rally. Hashtag Chase the Change.

LAUREN

The election isn't until Thursday, Chase. You're going to run out of hashtags.

CHASE

(Lowers the phone)

Information warfare, Lauren. If I'm not in their pockets every five minutes, I'm yesterday. You should try it. Your last post was a list of policy proposals. Pfft!

LAUREN

It was a plan for the student budget. You know, the thing we actually have to manage?

CHASE

People don't want a budget. They want a vibe. They want to feel like they're winning again.

LAUREN

Winning what? We're in high school. The only thing to win is a better locker.

CHASE

It starts with the locker. Then it's a parking spot. Then it's making sure the right people are representing the school.

LAUREN

You sound like a recruitment video for a movement I don't want to be part of.

CHASE

(Snickers)

Check the comments on your budget post. Or don't. It's getting ugly out there. And I'm just the guy holding the camera.

SCENE 3

The Echo Chamber

SAM

Did you see what they said about her?

IVY

Who?

SAM

Lauren. Someone posted a photo from middle school. She's wearing a shirt that says "Save the Trees."

IVY

So?

SAM

The caption says she wants to ban paper in the classrooms. "Lauren wants to snatch your notebooks," it says.

IVY

That's a reach.

SAM

It has four hundred likes.

IVY

Whoa, really? Then I should probably delete my "Save the Manatees" sticker. Just in case.

SCENE 4
The Notification

BELLA

My phone buzzed at 2:00AM. Then 2:01. Then 2:02. It was a group chat I didn't ask to be in. They were talking about a girl in my Chem class. Someone had edited her face onto a video. It looked so real. I knew it wasn't, but it looked real. And if it looks real, even if it isn't real, what's the difference? I stared at the report button. My thumb hovered. If I report it, I'm a narc. If I don't, I'm a witness. And if I leave the chat, I'm just a coward who didn't want to see it. So I didn't do anything. I just turned the phone face down. But the light from the screen kept bleeding out from under the edges, hitting the ceiling. Even in the darkness of my own bedroom, I couldn't get it to stop glowing.

SCENE 5
The Comment Section

OMAR

"You're a loser." Send.

FELICITY

"Kill yourself." Send.

OMAR

Whoa. That's a bit much, isn't it?

FELICITY

It's a meme, Omar. It's not literal.

OMAR

But you're saying it to a person.

FELICITY

I'm saying it to a profile picture. There's a difference.

OMAR

Is there?

FELICITY

(Scrolls)

Oh, look. Someone called me a "cry bully" for liking Lauren's post. See? It's just a game. We're all just characters in a game.

OMAR

I don't like the controls of this game.

FELICITY

Then stop playing. But you won't. You want to see what happens next just as much as I do.

SCENE 6

Test: Relationships

The MULTIPLE CHOICES return to their line. Their movements are slightly less robotic, but still synchronized.

CHOICES

Clear your desks. It's time for the practical exam.

CHOICE 1

Question four. Your partner hasn't texted you back in forty five minutes. Do you --

CHOICE 2

A) Assume they're busy living their life.

CHOICE 3

B) Check their location to see if they're at Chipotle without you.

CHOICE 4

C) Post a depressing song lyric to bait a reaction.

CHOICE

C. Always C.

CHOICE 1

Question five. You're texting every day. This means --

CHOICE 2

A) You're dating.

CHOICE 3

B) You're exclusive, but allowed to look.

CHOICE 4

C) You're trapped in a psychological thriller with no ending.

CHOICES

All of the above.

CHOICE 1

Question six. "I love you" is best expressed via --

CHOICE 2

A) Saying it out loud.

CHOICE 3

B) A red heart emoji.

CHOICE 4

C) A blue heart emoji. It's more chill.

CHOICE 1

D) Removing your single status, but only after they do it first.

CHOICES

D. Don't show your cards.

CHOICE 2

Love is a transaction.

CHOICE 3

Loyalty is a subscription.

CHOICE 4

If the seen receipt is on, the clock is ticking.

CHOICE 1

Please fill in the partner that best fits your philosophy.

SCENE 7

Lauren: The Optics

LAUREN paces back and forth. She's with MARK, a quiet boy who's holding one of her campaign posters. CHASE enters, flanked by FOLLOWER 1 who's filming his every move. FOLLOWER 1 wears the exact same bright red backpack that CHASE has on his back.

CHASE

Look at this! The front runner and her...

(To MARK)

What are we calling you, Mark? The chief of staff? Or just the guy who carries the heavy stuff?

LAUREN

He's my friend. Go away.

CHASE

(Snickers)

Friend. Interesting choice of words. See, I did a poll on my page. People find Mark a bit, how shall I say it? Unvetted. He's very quiet. Very anti social. People are asking if a leader should be dating someone so gloomy.

MARK

I'm right here, Chase. I'm not a poll.

CHASE

(Ignores him)

It's about the optics, folks. A president needs a first gentleman who reflects the strength of the school. Mark looks like he's one bad grade away from a breakdown. Is that the energy we want in the office?

LAUREN

You're attacking my personal life because you can't argue with my proposal for the library hours.

CHASE

I'm not attacking anything. I'm just asking questions. That's what a democracy is, right? If you can't handle a few questions about your choice of company, how can you handle the school board?

LAUREN

My relationship has nothing to do with my ability to lead.

CHASE

Everything is connected. If you can't manage your own boyfriend's image, how can you manage ours? See you at the debate. Or see half of you, anyway. Mark, maybe stay in the back? The lighting is better for people like you.

He exits, snickering.

MARK

Maybe I should stop helping with the posters.

LAUREN

No. That's exactly what he wants.

MARK

It's not about what he wants. It's about the fact that I'm now Option B on his latest story. I didn't sign up to be a multiple choice question.

LAUREN

You don't have to help me if you don't want to.

MARK

I want to. But I also want to help myself.

SCENE 8
The Ghost

JESS

He didn't block me.

XANDER

That's good, right?

JESS

No, it's worse. He just stopped. But he still watches my stories. I can see his little bubble at the front of the list. He's there. He sees me go to the mall, sees me eat Twizzlers, sees me cry post at 1:00AM.

XANDER

Just text him.

JESS

I can't! If I text him, I lose the silence war.

XANDER

The what?

JESS

The person who breaks the silence first is the one who cares more. And the one who cares more is the loser.

XANDER

So you're just going to sit here and watch him watch you not talk to him?

JESS

Exactly. It's the most romantic thing we've ever done.

SCENE 9
The Screenshot

NATE

She sent me a picture. Just a normal picture. Her in her room, wearing a hoodie. But there was a look in her eyes, like she trusted me. Like I was the only person in the world who was supposed to see that specific version of her. And for five seconds, I was. Then I thought about the guys. I thought about how much clout I'd get if I showed them. Just a quick screenshot. A little trophy. My thumb vibrated over the buttons. I could hear their voices in my head, the laughing, the "Good job, man." I realized I wasn't looking at a girl anymore. I was looking at a currency. I could spend her to buy five minutes of being "the man."

He looks at his hands.

I didn't do it. But I thought about it. And now, every time I look at her, I feel like I've already betrayed her. Because in my head, she's already been sent.

SCENE 10
The Standardized Match

KELCE

He's a 94% match.

HOPE

Based on what?

KELCE

The app. We have the same values. We both like John Hughes movies, we both hate fuchsia, and we both think volleyball is overrated.

HOPE

Do you like the way he laughs?

KELSE

The app doesn't have a data point for laughter.

HOPE

Do you like the way he smells?

KELCE

That's weird.

HOPE

It's not weird! It's human.

KELCE

Being human is messy. I want tidy. I want the 94%. I want to know the ending before I start the book. It's safer that way.

SCENE 11

Test: Facts

The MULTIPLE CHOICES enter wearing matching sashes that say "OFFICIAL." They carry megaphones but speak into them softly, creating a creepy contrast. One of them has switched their white lab coat for a pink one.

CHOICES

This section is timed. There are no right answers, only winning ones.

CHOICE 1

Question seven. A fact is --

CHOICE 2

A) A verifiable piece of information.

CHOICE 3

B) A suggestion.

CHOICE 4

C) A hate crime against my personal vibes.

CHOICES

C. My feelings don't care about your facts.

CHOICE 1

Question eight. If you tell a lie three times in the hallway, it becomes --

CHOICE 2

A) A rumour.

CHOICE 3

B) A legend.

CHOICE 4

C) The official platform of the pep squad.

CHOICES

B and C are interchangeable.

CHOICE 1

Question nine. Freedom of speech means --

CHOICE 2

A) The right to express opinions without interference.

CHOICE 3

B) The right to scream "lame" at anyone who uses proper grammar.

CHOICE 4

C) The right to play your playlist in the library at max volume because it's your truth.

CHOICES

D) All of the above, as long as you're the one holding the megaphone.

CHOICE 2

If you repeat it, it's real.

CHOICE 3

If you capitalize it, it's law.

CHOICE 4

If you don't agree, you're the enemy.

CHOICE 1

Please fill in your allegiance. If you go outside the lines, you're disqualified.

SCENE 12Lauren: The Debate

A spotlight hits LAUREN and CHASE behind two podiums in front of a CROWD. A handful of people in the crowd wear bright red backpacks. LAUREN reads from a clipboard, while CHASE eats a Snickers bar.

LAUREN

...and by reallocating the dunk tank funds, we can actually afford toilet paper that doesn't feel like sandpaper. That is my promise. Actual comfort. Actual logic.

CHASE loudly chews into the microphone.

CHASE

Boring!

LAUREN

It's not boring. It's hygiene.

CHASE

(Snickers, to the crowd)

Did you hear that? "Logic"? "Hygiene"? Lauren thinks you're all dirty, illogical peasants who can't handle a little sandpaper. She wants to take away the dunk tank! The one tradition that keeps this school from becoming a literal prison!

LAUREN

I didn't say take it away, I said --

CHASE

She hates the dunk tank because she hates fun. And if she hates fun, she hates you.

LAUREN

The school is six thousand dollars in debt because you convinced the junior class to invest in crypto named after your dog.

CHASE

It's called GooberCoin and it's going to the moon! Don't let T.P. Lauren tell you how to live. She wants to regulate your snacks. She wants to monitor your DMs, not to mention your BMs. And I heard she wants to make glee club mandatory for everyone.

LAUREN

I never said that! Where are you even getting that?

CHASE

People are saying it. Everyone is saying it. I saw it on a bathroom stall, and you know that's where facts begin.

LAUREN

You're making things up to scare people into voting for someone who doesn't even know where the student council office is!

CHASE

I don't need an office. The hallway is my office. The parking lot is my kingdom. And on Thursday, we're going to take back the gym! From who? Doesn't matter! We're taking it back!

CHASE throws the empty Snickers wrapper into the air. The CROWD cheers wildly.

LAUREN

It's just a gym! We already have the gym!

CHASE

That's exactly what an insider would say.

The CROWD cheers, boos, and applauds.

SCENE 13

The Revisionist

BRYAN

I remember last year's prom being okay.

GABBY

No, it was a disaster.

BRYAN

We had a 360 photo booth.

GABBY

That wasn't just a photo booth.

BRYAN

What?

GABBY

Chase posted a video saying the camera was collecting images of our likeness for AI training.

BRYAN

I literally spun around in that thing for half an hour. Am I on a list?

GABBY takes a granola bar out of her pocket, opens the wrapper, and takes a bite.

GABBY

Probably.

BRYAN

Yikes! That's scary.

GABBY

I know. That's why I'm protesting. I haven't eaten since Tuesday. I'm fasting for freedom.

BRYAN

You're eating a granola bar right now.

GABBY

(Her mouth full)

No, I'm not.

BRYAN

It's in your mouth.

GABBY

Prove it.

BRYAN

You're chewing it!

GABBY

(Stares him dead in the eye)

This is a symbolic protest. Stop gaslighting me!

SCENE 14

The Uniform

TYLER

I started carrying the red backpack because everyone else was. It was a joke at first. Then, it wasn't funny at all. I'd spent the last year finally getting comfortable with my look. You know, the in between stuff. High waisted trousers here, scoop neck collar there. Purple hair. Things that didn't scream boy or girl, but didn't have to. I felt kinda balanced for the first time ever. Then I went to school with my lavender tote bag and nobody sat with me at lunch. It was weird, like I had a glitch. My best friend, Daniel, he asked me, "Are you carrying the load or are you just in the way?" I laughed, but he didn't. He just stared at my tote bag like it was a ticking time bomb. He stared at my scoop neck like it was a confession. So I bought the red backpack. I pulled a plain hoodie out of the drawer. My khakis returned. The backpacks are so ugly. And not just heavy, they're stiff. The zippers catch if you move too fast. It's amazing how much unity you can buy for fifteen bucks at Walmart. I don't even like red. But I just keep my head down, pull the straps until my shoulders ache, and make sure I'm carrying the same weight as everyone else.

SCENE 15
The Fact Checker

QUENTIN

Lauren is a lizard person.

WALKER

Source?

QUENTIN

My cousin's boyfriend saw her blinking sideways in the cafeteria.

WALKER

That was just a piece of dust in her eye.

QUENTIN

That's exactly what a lizard supporter would say.

WALKER

I have a photo of her birth certificate. She was born in a human hospital.

QUENTIN

Photo shop.

WALKER

I have her DNA results!

QUENTIN

(Laughs)

You believe in DNA? That's so old school. DNA is just a system construct. I believe in VNA.

WALKER

What's VNA?

QUENTIN

It's a vibe check. And her vibes? Scaly. Very scaly.

WALKER

I give up.

QUENTIN

Victory! Another win for the truth!

SCENE 16
Test: Home

The MULTIPLE CHOICES enter carrying domestic items. A spatula, a laundry basket, a coffee pot, a plunger, etc. Two of them are now wearing pink lab coats.

CHOICES

The following is a take home test. You may consult your parents, but they're likely busy.

CHOICE 1

Question ten. When you get home from school, the first thing you hear is --

CHOICE 2

A) How was your day, darling? I made cupcakes.

CHOICE 3

B) The sound of the TV at full volume to drown out the silence.

CHOICE 4

C) The sound of your own keys in the lock because you're the first one there and the last one to leave.

CHOICES

C. Responsibility is the ultimate elective.

CHOICE 1

Question eleven. Your future is --

CHOICE 2

A) A paved highway with a trust fund at the end of it.

CHOICE 3

B) A gravel road made of student loan applications.

CHOICE 4

C) A glass bridge that breaks if you make a single mistake.

CHOICES

Watch your step.

CHOICE 1

Question twelve. Dinner is --

CHOICE 2

A) A debate about philosophy over chicken fingers.

CHOICE 3

B) A frantic race between the microwave and the bus.

CHOICE 4

C) A conversation about why we can't speak in our native language outside the house.

CHOICES

D) All of the above. Depending on which side of the tracks the bus stops on.

CHOICE 2

Your front door is a firewall.

CHOICE 3

Your dinner table is a courtroom.

CHOICE 4

Your bedroom is the only place the wi-fi doesn't reach.

CHOICE 1

Please stay within your assigned square footage until the sun comes up.

SCENE 17Lauren: The Safety Net

LAUREN is in her bedroom at home, which is cluttered with campaign posters and textbooks. Her mother, REBECCA, stands in the doorway holding a smoothie.

REBECCA

Lauren, honey, you're vibrating. Take a sip of this. It's prickly pear. The antioxidants will relax you.

LAUREN

Mom, Chase is winning. He's telling people I want to ban lunch. Not the food, but the concept of lunch. He called it procrastination hour, and they're believing him!

REBECCA

(Sighs)

It's just a high school election, sweetie. If you lose, it's a

learning experience. It'll look great on your college essay.

LAUREN

It's not just an essay to me.

REBECCA

I know, I know. But look, even if this goes south, your father and I already talked to the dean at Sterling. You have a spot there next year regardless. You don't have to save the world this Thursday.

LAUREN

That's the problem. I have a Sterling to catch me. Chase has a dad who owns three car dealerships to catch him. We're playing a game where the floor is made of foam for us. But everyone else? They're playing over a canyon.

SCENE 18

The Discovery

AMIRAH

People like Chase talk about taking back the school like it's a game of capture the flag. They think risk is saying a swear word in the assembly or wearing the wrong backpack. They have no idea.

She adjusts her hijab.

My father told me today to stay away from the podium. He saw the videos. He saw the way the red backpack kids look at anyone who doesn't cheer loud enough. He said, "Amirah, we are guests here. Even with the green cards, even with the taxes I pay, we are guests. And guests do not make noise." He's terrified. He spends his nights checking the locks and his mornings checking the news. He sees a high school election and he doesn't see leadership skills, he sees a target on my back. He sees a multiple choice test where the only safe answer is "none of the above." If I stand up for Lauren, I'm not just a brave student, I'm a liability. If I get suspended for a protest, does that affect my father's visa? Does the red bag mob follow me home to the apartment where my grandmother is hiding because she's afraid of the doorbell? Chase says he wants to make the school great. But I'm still trying to figure out if I'm allowed to be in the school at all. I want to be loud. I have so much to say. But every time I open my mouth, I feel the weight of my father's hand on my shoulder, pulling me back into the shadows. I'm not choosing between Lauren and Chase. I'm choosing between my voice and my family's safety. Which bubble do I fill in for that?

SCENE 19
The Hand-Me-Down

LUCAS

My dad says Chase is a breath of fresh air.

NAOMI

My dad says Chase is a symptom of a failing education system.

LUCAS

My dad says your dad is a bleeding heart.

NAOMI

My dad says your dad has never read a book.

LUCAS

(Laughs)

They're just repeating the news, aren't they?

NAOMI

Yeah.

LUCAS

You want to go play video games and ignore them?

NAOMI

Can we?

LUCAS

For an hour. Before the red backpacks take the controllers.

SCENE 20
The Allowance

VIOLET

I get twenty dollars for every A.

PENNY

I get twenty dollars if I don't get arrested.

VIOLET

I'm saving up for a car.

PENNY

I'm saving up for the electric bill.

VIOLET

Do you want my twenty?

PENNY

No. I want the A. But I was too busy working the late shift at the car wash to study for the test.

VIOLET

Who owns the car wash?

PENNY

Chase's dad.

VIOLET

(Small realization)

Oh.

SCENE 21

Test: Decisions

The MULTIPLE CHOICES enter. They no longer stand in a line. They are scattered across the stage, looking over their shoulders. They speak in frantic whispers. Now they all wear pink lab coats.

CHOICES

This is the final minute of the exam. There are no erasers.

CHOICE 1

Question thirteen. You see a group of students being harassed in the hallway. Do you --

CHOICE 2

A) Intervene and risk being targeted next.

CHOICE 3

B) Film it for accountability, but stay safely behind your screen.

CHOICE 4

C) Stare at your shoes and walk faster.

CHOICES

C. Safety is a quiet walk.

CHOICE 1

Question fourteen. The ballot is in your hand. The curtain is closed.

You vote for --

CHOICE 2

A) The person who has a plan.

CHOICE 3

B) The person who has a megaphone.

CHOICE 4

C) Blank. If you don't choose, you can't be blamed when things break.

CHOICES

C. Neutrality is just a slow motion yes.

CHOICE 1

Question fifteen. Courage is --

CHOICE 2

A) A noble virtue found in history books.

CHOICE 3

B) Trending on Instagram.

CHOICE 4

C) Too expensive for a Thursday.

CHOICES

All of the above.

CHOICE 2

Decisions are permanent ink.

CHOICE 3

Silence is a signature.

CHOICE 4

Fear is the only supervisor.

CHOICE 1

Please hand in your soul.

CHOICES

Time is up.

END OF PREVIEW

For a complete script, or to apply for production rights, contact:
haywardb@hotmail.com