

THE QUEERS

by

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CHARACTERS:

Lisa Reynolds – 26, a trans woman; her financial insecurity, familial rejection and workplace discrimination make stress and urgency her defining characteristics

Ally – 37, a trans woman; wounds from her past result in an angry pessimism that she turns on others, complicating her intense need for love

Smith – 27, AFAB nonbinary; compassionate and resourceful, their need to be helpful - and be needed – leaves them stretched thin

Pim – 26, AFAB nonbinary; Smith's romantic partner, they're closeted at work and with their family, and upset about the toll Smith's advocacy takes on them

Terry/Andrea – mid-40s, trans woman; a trans woman at the outset of her transition, she's a fish out of water, who slowly becomes disillusioned by her new surroundings

Caroline Warner – 50, a cisgender woman; a school principal with a regal manner, and a narcissistic, vengeful streak

Dennis, Wayne, Reporter 1 – cisgender men in their 30s (to be played by one actor)

Reporter 2 – (to be played by either the actor playing Pim or Terry/Andrea)

SETTING

A mid-sized urban city. The settings we encounter are routine, and even bland: a public school, a local bar, conference rooms and an apartment. What animates them is the drama of the five trans characters, whose heightened emotions, springing from the discrimination and social rejection they experience, create a drama that feels at once out of place and endemic.

TIME

Several months in 2011.

Scene 1

Caroline Warner's office. LISA REYNOLDS, 26, enters the office of CAROLINE WARNER, 50. Lisa is a trans woman in the early stages of her transition, and her masculine appearance contrasts with her feminine dress and hair. Caroline has a regal, slightly bristling air.

LISA
Hello. I was told you wanted to speak with me?

CAROLINE
(looking up)
Ah, Mr Reynolds. Please / come in

LISA
(angry)
It's "MS." Reynolds!

Caroline stares confused a moment, looking stunned, then affronted, but regains her composure.

CAROLINE
Yes, I'm sorry . . . *Ms.* Reynolds, please come in and
have a seat.

Lisa sits opposite Caroline.

CAROLINE
I imagine this is uncomfortable for you –
(checks form on desk)
"Lisa"?

LISA
(simmering)
Yes, my name is Lisa.

CAROLINE
Ms. Reynolds, I assure you I'm taking this meeting
seriously, and I'd appreciate it if you'd accord me
the same courtesy . . .
(muttering)
You don't need to jump down my throat every time
I refer to your name.
(collects self)
Now, as I was saying – I imagine this meeting may be
uncomfortable / for you

LISA
(heated)

Are we going to talk about what the students said to me? The ones I wrote up?

CAROLINE

Excuse me?

LISA

The referral I wrote . . . for the boys in 2nd period? The ones who called me “faggot” in front of the class.

CAROLINE

Well, no . . . that’s not what / this meeting is about

LISA

I assume the school has a no bullying policy, or a no transphobic policy, or something, about / things like that

CAROLINE

Ms. Reynolds! I’d appreciate it if you’d stop interrupting me!

(calming)

I am the principal here. I called this meeting, and I assure you I will let you know what the / purpose of this

LISA

Right. Sorry. I guess I’m just having a hard time being as, you know, professional as I should be when / things like that happen

CAROLINE

(annoyed)

Well, I’d like it if you tried, Lisa.

LISA

Those kids – I tell myself not to hate / them

CAROLINE

What?!

LISA

And then all the medical and legal stuff I’m dealing with around hormones and name changes, it’s / just a lot to

CAROLINE

(impatient)

Well, we're not here to talk about discipline referrals or your personal business, Lisa . . . We're here, I'm afraid, to talk about an accusation that's been made against you, and which I will share with you now, if / you'll let me

LISA

What? An accusation?

CAROLINE

Two students have accused you of touching them inappropriately during class.

LISA

What?! Which students?

CAROLINE

I can't disclose that.

LISA

Well, those students are lying!

CAROLINE

Please keep your voice down, Lisa.

LISA

I don't touch students. You don't believe them do you?!

CAROLINE

The district has a protocol for accusations like this, which we'll be following.

LISA

This is bullshit!

CAROLINE

Stop swearing Lisa!

LISA

"Stop swearing"?! These / kids are

CAROLINE

Yes, you're in an office with your / superior

LISA

They're accusing me of – this never happened before
I transitioned.

CAROLINE

(commanding)

As I was explaining, the school will follow the
district's protocol. We'll interview the students
who made the accusation, and any students who may
have witnessed the alleged / interactions

LISA

Those kids are lying.

CAROLINE

(talking over Lisa)

The alleged interactions / in question

LISA

I know people, you know.

CAROLINE

What?

LISA

People who get on tv. Activists. I know them.

CAROLINE

Is that a threat?

LISA

I don't touch kids.

CAROLINE

(stifling her anger)

Well, if that's the case, then the investigation should
exonerate you completely.

LISA

What does that mean?

CAROLINE

I've explained to you already, Mr. Reynolds, we'll /
conduct our

LISA

It's – fuck! It's "Ms." Reynolds. Jesus!

CAROLINE

I will not have you exploding at me, Lisa!

(pause)

As I was saying, we will conduct our interviews with the students, and then share the findings with you when they're / completed

LISA

Will I lose my job? If you believe the kids?

CAROLINE

(stifling annoyance, detached)

We'll make our decisions based on the / investigation's conclusions

LISA

Fuck!

CAROLINE

Lisa! Please stop / swearing

LISA

(soft, angry)

You're the one who insulted me earlier, when you told me not to /

CAROLINE

What?!

LISA

When you told me not to "explode at" you. You called me "Mr." . . . that's why I / got so angry

CAROLINE

You're a teacher, Lisa, and you're expected to maintain your decorum when / upsetting moments occur

LISA

(pleading)

What if they lie, though? The students? How can I get another job now? Looking like I do?

CAROLINE

I'll be in touch when our investigation is complete.
Good day, Ms. Reynolds.

Lisa, shaken, stands and crosses to the door and exits.

Scene 2

A bar. Later that day. A bar. A few hours have passed. SMITH, 27, stands with PIM, 24. Smith is nonbinary; they have tattoos and piercings, and their overall look is disheveled. Pim is also nonbinary. AFAB, they wear men's formal clothes in a meticulous way.

SMITH

I forgot to mention it, but Ally might be stopping
by later.

PIM

Ally? Why would / Ally be stopping by

SMITH

It's nothing. She / just said she wants

PIM

You're telling me the person you slept with while
we were dating is coming by, and / then telling me
"it's nothing"

SMITH

Pim . . . I can hear that you're upset, / but I promise

PIM

Never mind.

SMITH

Pim? . . . We can talk about it / if you

PIM

What for, Smith? So you can say, "We were in an open
relationship then," and I can say, "So what? I still don't
want / you talking to her?"

SMITH

I completely hear you. I promise . . . She's still a part
of the community, though, you know?

(quiet, sad)

And, she's having kind of a hard time now.

PIM

Fine.

Pause. Smith appears nervous and cautious.

SMITH

How was your day?

PIM

It was like they all are, I guess.

SMITH

I'm sorry. Work was hard?

PIM

It's never "hard." It's just – I feel dumb complaining . . . "I'm not out at work. No one there understands me. Blah, blah, blah."

SMITH

That's not dumb.

PIM

I know "that" isn't dumb, but staying there and not changing anything is.

SMITH

Oh, I forgot – there's a new person from the support group, Terry, who / might also stop by

PIM

Jesus, Smith.

SMITH

What? She doesn't have anyone she can talk / to about gender stuff

PIM

This is supposed to be a date, right? / For our

SMITH

I know. It / is a date

PIM

It's our fucking anniversary.

SMITH

I know, but –

(hiding nerves)

Are you . . . mad / about them coming

PIM

I'm not "mad."

SMITH

Okay . . . I just feel like, you know, Ally and / Terry are

PIM

(sardonic)

Oh good, we're talking about Ally / again

SMITH

They're asking for / help

PIM

Fuck. Let's drop it, okay?

An uneasy beat passes, as Smith hides their unsettled feelings. TERRY enters approaches. A trans woman in her mid-40s at the very beginning of her transition, she's dressed and groomed as a man, with no hints of femininity in her appearance.

TERRY

Hi Smith. It's good to see you.

SMITH

Oh, hi Terry. This is my partner, Pim.

TERRY

Hi. Nice to meet you.

PIM

You, too. Smith said you met at the trans support group.

SMITH

Yes, it was Terry's first time, right?

TERRY

Yes. Smith was so helpful. Ally, too.

PIM

So you saw Ally / last night

SMITH
Um, she's the co-facilitator.

TERRY
How you been dating long?

PIM
Exactly six months.

SMITH
(to Terry, nervous, guilty)
It's . . . our anniversary.

TERRY
Congratulations! How cool.
(to Pim)
Does he talk about gender / to you, too

PIM
Smith actually goes by "they." We both do.

TERRY
Oh, sorry, Smith. / I forgot

SMITH
It's fine. Please / don't feel bad

TERRY
There's so much to learn.

SMITH
Well, you have plenty of time.

TERRY
(tearing up)
That's true.

SMITH
Is something wrong?

TERRY
After the meeting I went home and told Gina, my wife, I was going to transition, and she asked me for a divorce.

PIM

I'm so sorry.

TERRY

She said she didn't want to be married to a woman.

SMITH

Oh, Terry. I can only imagine / how hard that is

TERRY

Thanks.

ALLY, 37, enters. A trans woman who has fully transitioned, she's a mix of neediness, cynicism, caring, and cruelty.

ALLY

Hello everyone . . . Terry, are you alright?

TERRY

Hi Ally. I was / just telling Smith and

ALLY

Oh no – did they fire you? At work?

TERRY

What? No. / I

ALLY

That's good. They love firing trans women. Take my word on / it

TERRY

Really? I haven't talked / to

ALLY

Yes, "really." Why do you think we're all broke?

TERRY

Oh, / um

ALLY

What do you do again?

TERRY

I work in accounting for a tech firm. Just, you know, number / crunching