

NO MORE CANDY

by

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## CHARACTERS

DESIREE – 19, a trans woman; sensitive and volatile, she has trust issues and a sardonic wit stemming from a traumatic past

BELINDA – 19, a cis woman; bright and open, she grows from resignation to revolt as her history surfaces

Characters who can be played by two cis male actors:

MASON, 20

DARREN, 20

NEIL, 19

SAM, 19

TANNER, 19

DAVID HEATHERINGTON, mid 40s

BRIAN, 20

ERIC, 20

KEVIN, mid 20s

Characters who can be played by one cis woman actress:

DELIA, late 40s

DIANE, mid 40s

TALIA WEBBEY, early 60s

ELLEN WILCOX, mid 40s

MARIAN, early 50s

## SETTING

A university in a U.S. city, and the neighborhood that surrounds it. Although the apartments, campus buildings and parties the protagonists occupy may appear familiar or ordinary, that's not how they're experienced by them. Rather, a specter of menace and danger permeate them, given the history of sexual assault and transphobia each has experienced. A specter they face and, eventually, fight back against.

## TIME

Present day over the course of several months.

## PUNCTUATION NOTES

A stroke (/) marks the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue.

A dash (-) marks the halting of a thought.

*"Ain't got . . . no more . . . no more candy for you!"*

– Bikini Kill, "Jet Ski"

Scene 1

A college party. DESIREE stands reading her phone. BELINDA enters, a little tipsy, and, seeing her, crosses to Desiree.

BELINDA  
Hi.

DESIREE  
Hello?

BELINDA  
You're in Ms. Wilcox's class, right? Women's Studies?

DESIREE  
Oh . . . yeah. Are you / in that, too

BELINDA  
You're that cool, feminist chick, who always seems  
pissed.

DESIREE  
(self-deprecating)  
If you say so.

BELINDA  
She really likes you – Ms. Wilcox, I mean.

DESIREE  
She's just generous to the downtrodden.

BELINDA  
Oh, so you've got this, Ms. Modest-thing going, huh?

DESIREE  
No, I mean it. The wretched benefit from grade  
inflation here.

BELINDA  
I'm Belinda.

DESIREE  
Oh, fuck. Sorry . . . I should have / asked

BELINDA  
It's fine.

(pause)

And you / are

DESIREE

Jesus. Now you know I have no social / skills

BELINDA

It's completely fine.

DESIREE

I'm Desiree.

BELINDA

Cool. Do you like this party?

DESIREE

Um . . . sure.

BELINDA

It's like all the others, right?

DESIREE

I wouldn't really know.

BELINDA

You're not a "party girl"?

DESIREE

I'm more of a borderline-shut in . . . that probably sounded weird.

BELINDA

No. It fits with the, "I'm a sad sack" vibe you're showing.

DESIREE

You can flee now, if you want. There's no judgement about it on my / part

BEILNDA

Because you're a "shut in" who attends / parties

DESIREE

Well . . . there's more to it than that.

BELINDA

I'm not scared . . . I told myself I wouldn't come here tonight and here I am. Does that ever happen to you?

DESIREE

Where you do what you don't want to?

BELINDA

Yes. You spend all day swearing you won't make some choice, then you make it?

DESIREE

Have you been reading my mind?

BELINDA

It's infuriating. Like my brain's a haunted house, or something.

DESIREE

My brain is one hundred percent a haunted house. No one should live there.

BELINDA

Not even you?

DESIREE

Especially not –

Pause. Desiree stops, ashamed, before beginning again, nervous and awkward.

DESIREE

I mean, I guess I don't have a choice.

BELINDA

Oh, right. Same.

DESIREE

Is there some reason you didn't want to be here?

BELINDA

It's gross. It's a waste of time. Everyone here is dumb – I mean, not you, / but

DESIREE

Um, thanks.

BELINDA

You know what I mean. I was like, "Belinda, you know you'll just be sorry at the end."

DESIREE

Sounds familiar.

BELINDA

About the party, you mean?

DESIREE

No, attending this party is like . . . progress for me – toward healthy mental choices, in the big picture.

BELINDA

How so? You don't seem like the "keg and frat guy" / type

DESIREE

What gave me away?

BELINDA

Maybe your lengthy, impassioned takedowns of the patriarchy in Ms. Wilcox's class.

DESIREE

(embarrassed)

I'm amazed I don't get kicked out. Or beaten up, or / something

BELINDA

Yeah, right.

DESIREE

Anyway, I do things I don't want to at least once a week, but usually more as the result of a dissociative episode.

BELINDA

Like . . . a blackout?

DESIREE

Jesus, now you're really going to / flee

BELINDA

I'm just asking.

DESIREE

It's more like . . . if I'm being optimistic, I'd say something happened to me, and – I've never tried to put this in words before – something happened that wasn't alright, and a part of me is trying to confront or resolve it, only the attempted resolution takes the form of some humiliating present day encounter I haven't consciously set out to create, and don't really understand.

BELINDA

Wow.

DESIREE

I told you you're way ahead of me, mental health-wise.

BELINDA

That's not what I meant. It's more like, I get what –

Belinda stops as MASON and DARREN, two cis men, both 20, enter and approach. Seeing them, Desiree stiffens.

MASON

Hello, you two. How are your evenings going?

Belinda looks uncomfortable, but plays along.

BELINDA

Fine. How about you?

MASON

Great. Even better now that we're talking. I'm Mason and this is Darren. And you are?

BELINDA

I'm Belinda.

DARREN

(to Desiree)

What's your name?

DESIREE

I thought you'd remember, Darren.

DARREN

Oh shit. My bad. Have we met?

DESIREE

We have. But your life is probably filled with glamorous, interesting people, between the frat house and wherever you buy all those tan khakis, so I can see how you'd forget.

DARREN

What did you just say?

MASON

(to Darren)

Calm down. It's okay.

(to Desiree and Belinda)

Darren's very embarrassed. Can we make it up to you by getting you some shots?

DESIREE

Maybe, as long as we don't have to drink them with you two.

DARREN

What's your fucking problem?

BELINDA

Hey! Don't talk to her like that!

MASON

I think we've gotten off on the wrong foot just now. What if we cut out of here and go back to our house? How does that sound?

DESIREE

If getting date raped was on my sophomore bingo card it would sound perfect, but since I value my bodily autonomy, / I think I'll pass

DARREN

Bitch, I've had about enough of / your shit

MASON

(to Darren)

Hey, / settle down

BELINDA

(to Darren)

Fuck you, dickbag! You bothered us. Why don't you find some other / undergrad chum to

DARREN

What?!

MASON

(to Darren)

Forget it. It's -

(to Desiree and Belinda, insincere)

I hope you two have a wonderful evening.

BELINDA

Thanks. We'll be role playing as you two while we fuck each other's brains out.

Mason and Darren glare at them and then exit.

BELINDA

You're a fucking badass. I can't believe you just ridiculed them to their faces like that.

DESIREE

Oh . . . um, it didn't feel "badass."

BELINDA

Really? I don't want you to know how many times I've humored assholes like them. Did you really know that guy?

DESIREE

"Mr. Dickbag," you mean? Yeah. We went to school together . . . I was afraid he remembered me.

BELINDA

"Afraid" why?

DESIREE

(pause, embarrassed)

You know I'm trans, right?

BELINDA

Huh? Oh /

DESIREE

You're like, "Yes, Ms. Obviously Trans Non-Passing Person."

BELINDA

Um, actually, I had no idea / before you

DESIREE

Anyway, Darren and I went to school together until ninth grade, when I started transitioning and got bullied so badly I had to transfer to the alternative high school.

BELINDA

Oh . . . I'm sorry.

DESIREE

Thanks.

BELINDA

Well, you roasted him just now, if that's a consolation.

DESIREE

I don't know how that happened. It was just pure adrenaline and spite.

BELINDA

Really? And what would you say this is?

Belinda leans over and kisses Desiree. The latter seems surprised at first, but reciprocates.

DESIREE

I'd call it nice.

BELINDA

I was hoping you would . . . what you said before, about how part of you is trying to fix something that happened, I understand that.

DESIREE

That was probably just – I'm not a psych major, or – I'm not even mentally stable, I don't think.

BELINDA

I mean it, though. I'll get a glimpse sometime,  
like maybe there's some path inside me, and if  
I took it, everything wouldn't be so – I wouldn't  
be hurting or debasing myself –

(embarrassed)

Fuck, I should just shut up.

DESIREE

No, I get that. I mean, if you don't want to talk  
about it, you don't have to, / but

BELINDA

I never do it, though . . . I'll think I will, by  
yelling at myself inside, or saying I won't do  
something that I do anyway –

DESIREE

I – the reason I came here tonight . . . never mind.

BELINDA

You can say it.

DESIREE

I like talking to you.

BELINDA

Me, too.

Pause. Desiree struggles before speaking.

DESIREE

I was worried . . . about what might happen if I  
stayed by myself – tonight, I mean.

BELINDA

Oh . . . thanks for telling me.

DESIREE

Otherwise I might not have come.

BELINDA

Do you get that way a lot?

DESIREE

No . . . what you said about the path inside you,

do you feel like you know where it leads – like what’s at the end of it?

BELINDA

No. I mean, maybe . . .

(looks down)

I don’t know if I . . . want to talk about it. What about you?

DESIREE

I have an idea. I mean, I definitely don’t think I can talk about it.

Belinda laughs, softly.

BELINDA

That idea – of the path, I mean. It was from a dream I had. Every step I took in the dream there was some fucked up, scary bullshit assailing me, but in the end it was like none of it had really happened – I mean, it had happened, but, when I remembered it, it felt like a mask for something else.

DESIREE

The dream, you mean?

BELINDA

Well, the dream, maybe – I meant the bullshit, though.

DESIREE

What was it a mask of?

BELINDA

The same thing neither of us wants to talk about, I think.

DESIREE

Oh.

BELINDA

(smiling, mischievous)

I really hate this party.

DESIREE

It completely sucks.