

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

exposed brick theatre*

TRANSFORMATION

ADDRESSING GENDER ISSUES IN SCHOOL

A play written by Anton Jones, Suzy Messerole, and Aamera Siddiqui based on the stories, experiences, and perspectives of transgender and gender non-conforming youth.

Commissioned by the Program in Human Sexuality at the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, University of Minnesota Medical School. This project was made possible through a donation from Stacey Mills and Sam Heins.

*Trans/formation:
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Commissioned by the University of Minnesota's Program in Human Sexuality

Written by Anton Jones, Suzy Messerole & Aamera Siddiqui

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1. Opening: Specimen #1

(Ensemble enters. Three members of the ensemble, "One," "Two" and "Three" sit on stools. The rest of the ensemble acts as scientists with magnifying glasses or notebooks and pencils. The scientists begin to examine the three individuals who are seated as well as the audience.)

One: This is how I feel. Most of the time.

Scientist 1: What are you?

Scientist 2: What is it? He? She?

Scientist 1: She? He?

Scientist 3: It?

One: Everyone said I was I girl, but I knew I was a boy.

Scientist 3: What are you?

Three: A sophomore.

Scientist: No, what are you, really?

Two: I used to ask my parents, so when do I get to be a girl?

Scientist 2: You can't be...can you?

Scientist 1: What are you?

Scientist 3: There's a 50-50 chance. It's one or the other... right?

Three: I feel both masculine and feminine. Some days both. Some days neither.

Scientist 3: What are you?

One: This feeling. That someone is always looking. Always trying to uncover.

Three: What?

One: The truth. About me.

Scientist 1: What are you?

One: As though truth lies in the chromosomes.

Two: As though there's this truth that is separate from me.

Three: As though my truth isn't enough. For others.

Scientist 3: What are you?

Scientist 2: What are you?

All Scientists: WHAT ARE YOU?

2. Hallway Interactions #1

(School bell. Science attire is replaced with school attire and we are in a hallway. Ensemble moves in a floor pattern simulating the bustling hallway during passing time. Garry & Liz emerge. They are two teachers)

Liz & Garry

Liz: Hi, Garry, I am so glad I ran into you. I am in a bit of a conundrum with Carol Peterson in my 3rd hour Spanish class.

Garry: Oh, Carol, sure she was in my Spanish 1 class last year. Great student.

Liz: I'm sure she is, but, well, I am a bit confused. *(whispering as if saying something horrible)*. When students were asked to choose their Spanish names she chose Carlos. I suggested Carolina, but she insisted on Carlos.

Garry: So what seems to be the problem?

Liz: Carlos is a *male* name.

Garry: Uh huh...so what seems to be the problem?

(The floor pattern in the Hallways resumes. Two students emerge.)

Maya & Jesse

Maya: Wait. So you don't use ANY pronouns.

Jesse: No, I use pronouns – just not he or she. I use the pronoun ze instead of he or she; or hir instead of him or her.

Maya: Hir like “we are here now.”

Jesse: No, hir like a combination of him and her.

Maya: But that's confusing. Can't I just use your name?

Jesse: What's confusing is that someone as smart as you can't figure out a couple of simple pronouns. It's just two words – I think you can handle it.

(The floor pattern in the hallway resumes. Mark and Lisa emerge from the pattern. They are two students in a heated conversation.)

Mark & Lisa

Mark: I still don't get it.

Lisa: I identify as female. The gender that was assigned to me at birth doesn't feel right.

Mark: So you're gay?

Lisa: No, this isn't about sexual orientation.

Mark: Okay, so—you're a crossdresser?

Lisa: No, I am a female. I'd be crossdressing if I wore a suit and tie.

Mark: I...I don't get it.

Lisa: Clearly.

(Mary & Lisa join the floor pattern. Out of this, Toni approaches the women's bathroom.)

3. Bathroom Panic Part I

As she stands outside the women's bathroom, Toni is in a predicament. Her internal voice is represented by two actors... sometimes simultaneously. Words in bold are spoken by the Actor playing Toni. As she stands there, other students enter the bathroom, give her strange looks, etc. The bathroom can be represented by a box with the female bathroom sign drawn on it.)

TONI

Why did I drink that orange juice?! Because I was thirsty that's why. Thirsty people drink things. But now I have to use the bathroom. **Damn!** I knew this would happen. What do I do? Do I go in? **I can't hold it all day.** But there are so many people around. **Maybe, I should just** hold it for awhile – until it's less busy in the halls.

(Bell Rings. A classroom is set up.)

4. Classroom: The Substitute Teacher

Jenny and Kris (a transgender female) are sitting in a class waiting for it to start. Mark is seated close by.

Jenny: Talk to him!

Kris: He doesn't even know my name.

Jenny: So tell him.

Kris: Shut up! He might hear you.

Mark: Hi Kris!

Kris: *(In shock)* Uh...

Mark gets up and walks to Kris.

Mark: Great Job in *Midsummer* last night. You were awesome as Helena!

Kris: Uh..

Jenny: *(whispering)* Say thank you.

Kris: *(Still in shock)* Thank you.

Mark: You were so funny!

Kris: Thanks.

Mark: You were seriously the best part of the play.

Kris: Thanks.

Jenny: Say something besides "Thanks".

Kris: Uh...

Awkward Silence

Mark: So anyway...Are you studying for the Chem Test tonight?

Kris: Huh?

(Jenny shakes her head)

Mark: *(thinking maybe Kris didn't hear the question)* Are you studying for the Chem Test tonight?

Kris: I was planning on it.

Mark: Me too.

Kris: Oh

Mark: Do you want to study?

Kris: Together?

Mark: Only if you want to.

Ms. Lapinski enters. Mark begins to head back to his desk.

Kris: Yeah...Okay. Sure!

Mark: Cool, I'll be at the downtown library at 7.

Kris: Okay—me too.

Mark turns and walks to his desk. Kris and Jenny high five or some other happy gesture with an audible sound.

Ms. Lapinski: Quiet everyone! Quiet please! Okay class, as you know, Mr. B is out for a few weeks. I am Ms. Lapinski. That's Ms., not Miss or Mrs. Please. Let's begin, indicate your presence with a hand or a here. Roy Barrett.

Roy: Here.

Ms. L: Mark Bingham

Mark: Here

Ms. L: Kris Crane

Kris: Here

Ms. L: *(looking up)* Very funny, Kris Crane.

Confused looks and shrugs.

Kris: I'm here.

Ms. L: You're Kris Crane?

Chris: Yeah...

Ms. L: But Kris Crane is a boy.

Kris: I'm Kris Crane.

Ms. L: But it says here right on the roster – "Kris Crane, grade 10, male.

Kris: Hmm...Well two out of three isn't bad. I am Kris Crane and I am a sophomore.

Laughter.

Ms. L: Hmm...it says male.

Kris: Must be a mistake.

Ms. L: I guess, how odd.

Kris: Yeah, weird...

Ms. L: Anyway moving on...Don Cryer, Jessie Davis...

(The rest of the class freezes. Kris addresses the audience.)

Kris:

People keep telling me they saw me doing my best work last night. In *Midsummer*...as Helena. They're wrong. What you just saw—now that is some award winning stuff. Acting like I am not scared has always been my best work. Because I am scared. Most of the time. Look, I have always been a girl. The gender I was assigned at birth was just plain wrong. I have been living as a girl for four years now, but I STILL can't get the letter M removed from my school forms... And right there, when the sub insisted that Kris Crane is a male, I was scared that I would have to go back. Back to when people kept telling me I was a boy. Back to when I couldn't convince them that I wasn't. Back to trying to figure out how to live in a world where people can't or won't see who I really am. Back to when well-meaning family members thought if they just handed me enough footballs that I would be who they wanted me to be: Kris Crane: male. But that's not who I am. And just now all of this *(gestures to the existence around her)* almost came crumbling down around

me. Just because a sheet of paper insists on putting “male” or “female” next to our names.

(The rest of the class unfreezes. The bell rings signaling the end of class. All except Mark, Jenny and Kris exit. Kris is clearly shaken.)

Mark: Kris? Earth to Kris?

Kris: Uh...yeah?

Mark: See you at 7 tonight?

Kris: Oh...uh...you know, I just remembered...I actually have plans already.

Mark: *(hiding disappointment)* Oh...okay. Um, okay, bye.

Mark walks out. Jenny looks at Kris like “Are you crazy?!!!!” Kris shrugs her shoulders and heads out.

5. Box Dance

The stage is set with 2 kinds of boxes. One kind is marked “boy” and another is marked “girl.” Music plays. As different actors approach, they fit specific gender roles and fit into the box that they match. Many, however, have trouble fitting into the male or female box and are struggling with both boxes. Those who try to identify with the boxes choose other tactics. Examples may or may not include:

- *An actor entering the stage and sitting in a box that meets the expectation of others, but feels very uncomfortable (itchy, can’t get comfortable, fidgety etc...)*
- *Next actor comes in and looks over their shoulder, hesitant, hoping others aren’t watching. First they walk to a box that represents the gender expectations of others but they decide not to get in. Looking over their shoulder the whole time they choose the box of their preferred gender, but the first two actors try to persuade them to get out.*
- *Another actor walks over to a box they feel most comfortable with, but several others at the box push them away—back to the box THEY want the person to be in.*
- *Another actor comes in and tries to decide which box to choose. Not finding one that fits, they deconstruct one of the boxes, maybe decorate it, color it, cross of the label.*
- *Perhaps some of the other actors on stage see this example and start customizing their own box or move to another box.*

Throughout the scene, it gets more and more chaotic until both boxes burst to create one giant box... or a 3rd box is made and labeled ... they label it transgender... erase it... other... erase it... gender queer... erase it... transexual... erase it... gender neutral... erase it... or the actors take both boxes and dump out signs and hold them up. Signs could read MTF, FTM, Transgender, Gender Queer, Gender Neutral. The box dance ends, back to the 3 stools and the lab...

6. Specimen #2

(All the people come back out of the boxes as scientists and we are back at the stools.)

One: This is how I feel. Most of the time.

Scientist 1: What are you?

Scientist 2: What is it? He? She?

One: Am I male enough?

Two: Am I female enough?

Three: Am I enough?

Scientist 3: What are you?

Scientist 2: What are the odds?

7. Odds Monologue

THREE

I thought I was the only one...

But really I'm one in 1 hundred.

Now, I took math and this school has 800 students
And you divide that by 100 and it makes me wonder...

Where the other 7 are.

But I've never seen one...

Never met one...

Never heard of One...

That's why I don't believe in odds.

I don't believe in them one bit.

Don't believe in odds

They're nothing more than myth.

Odds?

Just the other half of evens.

Even so...

It would be nice to know

Just one other like me.

8. Bathroom Panic Part II

(Toni stands outside the women's bathroom once again...same predicament. The two actors playing her voices are with her. Again, words in bold are spoken by the Actor playing Toni. As she stands there, other students enter the bathroom, give her strange looks, etc. These bathrooms can be represented by the boxes that were used in the box dance.)

Toni

Okay, the coast is clear. This is ridiculous. I am going to use the bathroom. **I am.** I have been holding it for 4 hours. **This is a bathroom.** It is a room for people who need to go to the bathroom. And **I am a person** who needs to use the bathroom. **Okay, I am going in.**

She reaches for the door handle, enters. Another student looks confusedly Toni. Toni turns around and runs out.

Toni

Guess I'm holding it - again.

(School Bell)

9. Classroom: What's in Your Pants

(The stage transforms into classroom. Ensemble is in rows resembling a classroom. Joe (a trans male) and Greg are working on a math assignment.)

Joe: Alright. So what formula did you use for number 17?

Greg stares at Joe – examining him closely. As the scene goes on, Greg gets more and more invasive and Joe becomes more and more uncomfortable.

Joe: For number seventeen did you use one of the differentiation formulas? (Beat) What's wrong? Is there something on my face?

Greg: So you were born a girl?

Joe: Yeah. *(Looks back down at his book)*

Greg: Oh. *(Beat)*

Joe: So, I really just need to see what you found in....

Greg: Do you like girls or guys?

Joe: Guys.

Greg: Oh, so you're straight.

Joe: No. See I'm a guy. I'm a guy who likes other guys. Last time I checked, that makes me gay.

Greg: Oh. OH. That's cool. I've got no problem with gay people.

Joe: Congratulations. That's great. *(tries to go back to the math.)*

Greg: Did you always sound that way?

Joe: What way?

Greg: Like a dude.

Joe: I sound how I sound.

Greg: Oh..that's cool. It's cool.

Joe: Glad you think so. *(going back to the homework)*. So this differential...

Greg: So, what's your real name?

Joe: Joe.

Greg: No really

Joe: Joseph. Look, don't you think we should....

Greg: *(look down at his notes a moment)* So have you had any uh...surgeries?

Joe: Surgeries? Yeah, I had my appendix removed two years ago.

Greg: Oh...well, I meant...you know. *Surgeries*...uh, down there. Like do you have a ...you know. Do you have junk?

(As Joe Speaks, rest of classroom begins to morph into a new shape. The intent is to create a hyper real world. This shape freezes once they are done transitioning.)

Joe: *(stares at Greg a moment)* Are you seriously asking me what I have in my pants? Why do people think it's okay to ask me that? Don't you have any boundaries?! What does it matter to you? *(Joe then bends down and stares at Greg's crotch)*. You don't hear me asking you "Hey, what's between your legs?" No, I don't ask that because I respect your privacy. Can you please return the

favor and respect mine?! Besides, I don't care what you have between your legs. Why the hell do you care so much what's between mine?!

Joe stands and faces the audience.

Nah...I didn't actually say all of that. I wanted to. It would have felt great in the moment...But I know that if I do that, well then it'll just go around school...and people would say that "he was just asking because he's interested" and "why do I always make a big deal out of things" ...I just can't afford to get angry, no matter how great it would feel, no matter how much it's justified. I survive by keeping my cool. So instead I said:

(Joe gathers his books and notes, as ensemble snaps back into their normal classroom positions.)

Joe: *(To Greg)* Hey I gotta run. I forgot this form I have to turn in. So...

Greg: Everything cool man?

Joe: Yeah... everything's... cool.

10. Bathroom Panic , Part III

(Toni stands outside the women's bathroom once again.. same predicament. Her voice is represented by voices of both genders... sometimes simultaneously. Words in bold are spoken by the Actor on Stage as well. As she stands there, other students enter the bathroom, give her strange looks, etc. These bathrooms can be represented by the boxes that were used in the box dance.)

Toni:

If I don't go now, I am going to explode. **Oh no**, what if I get another bladder infection? Then I'll have to go all the time. **I am going in and staying in. This is ridiculous. I have a right to use the bathroom when I need to go.**

She reaches for the door handle, opens the door and enters. People stare exaggeratedly. Whisper to each other etc...

Keep going. Hold your head up high. You can do this.

Toni enters a "stall" briefly and then comes out. And slowly walks to the sink. Looking in the mirror while delivering the lines below.

Okay, walk to the sink, and wash your hands. It's a sink, that's what it's for. Take a deep breath. Turn on the faucet. **Good**, get some soap, wash your hands. **Okay, good. I did it.** I did it and no one actually beat me up or anything. Today. No one beat me up today. But I hear stories, see it in the paper. It may not have happened

today, but there's always tomorrow. **I better getta get the hell outta here before this takes a very wrong turn.**

11. Erased Monologue

I think I was absent the day they taught us all how to be a boy or how to be a girl. I missed the very crucial lesson on how to be the gender I was assigned at birth. I just don't know how to be in this body and feel like me. Is this confusing you? Try living this way. All the time. Mirrors play tricks on me. It's like they are mocking me. When I stand in front of them, looking for answers hoping to see the real me, they reflect someone else—a person that's not me. They show me hair, a face, a body that I can't identify with. This body—parts of which, I wish would disappear or I wish I could cut off like tumors. The whole time the mirror laughs at me.

Sometimes at night, I lay in bed and practice. I practice how to be what the world expects me to be—like rehearsing a part in a play. I rehearse how I am supposed to sound, how I should stand and how I should move. I think about what I'm supposed to wear to do the best job I can at being what you expect me to be. *I try so hard.* And I fail no matter what. If I do what feels right to me I fail you, my parents, my little sister. If I do what everyone expects, I fail myself. Maybe I should just erase myself altogether... I don't make sense to you, much less to myself. Man, I just wish I hadn't missed that day of school. Maybe now I'd know how to be...Excuse me? There wasn't a day you were taught all of this? Really? You mean it just comes naturally to you to feel right in your body? Wow...you are so lucky.

12. Hallway Interactions #2

(School Bell. Ensemble moves in a floor pattern simulating the bustling hallway during passing time. Jesse & Mary emerge. They begin heading to class.)

- Jesse: Oh hey Mary, I was wondering if you wanted to go to a poetry slam with...
- Mary: (interrupting) Did you get my messages yesterday?
- Jesse: Uh, I think so...
- Mary: I sent you that article about that trans student. You know like you. Did you see that?
- Jesse: Yeah, you've sent me like 7 articles... anyway about that poetry slam...
- Mary: And there's this blog that I found too. I think you'd like it. Here let me write down the link. And when I was looking up stuff, I found this youth support group. It sounds great. I mean there are so many resources out there. If you want I can give you the names of them.

Jesse: Hold on Mary. Look, I think it is great that since I came out to you that you've been really into trans issues. I do appreciate it—don't get me wrong. But I think you've forgotten that I am a whole person—not just a trans person.

Mary: Huh?

Jesse: Well, like, I am into poetry, theater, and a lot of other things. It would be nice if we could talk about other stuff sometimes too.

Mary: Oh my God! I am so sorry! I was trying to be supportive.

Jesse: I know. And I appreciate it. I just want you to be supportive of all of me.

Two students walk by Mary and Jesse. They look at Jesse.

Student 1: Hey, look it's the "it" kid.

Student 2: *(to Jesse):* Hello, It.

They laugh. Mary turns to Jesse.

Mary: Just ignore them. *(yells in their direction).* THEY'RE IDIOTS.

(Bell rings.)

13. Classroom: Gender Queer

(Marcus and Talia sit together on one side of the stage. Jesse, from the earlier hallway scene sits on another.)

Talia: Hi Jesse.

Jesse: Hi.

(Marcus turns to Talia)

Marcus: How do you know her?

Talia: I've known Jesse since grade school.

Marcus: Isn't she a tranny?

Talia: Tranny? Are you kidding me? Don't you even know how offensive

that term is?

Marcus: Oh. My bad... I mean... “Transgendered.”

Talia: Transgender.

Marcus: That’s what I said.

Talia: No you said transgendered.

Marcus: There’s no difference!

Talia: Really? Think about it. Transgendered is PAST tense. Transgender is present tense and last time I checked, Jesse is PRESENTLY transgender.

Marcus: Fine... She’s “A Transgender.”

Talia: Jesse is a transgender person – but transgender is an adjective, not a noun.

Marcus: What’s the big deal?

Talia: The big deal is that Jesse is a PERSON first. You wouldn’t call an older person “an old” right?

Marcus: You’re driving me crazy! Do I need like a Grammar class to talk about sexuality?

Talia: Do you mean gender?

Marcus: Ahhh! Why do we have to get so hung up on words!!!

Talia: Exactly! Why is it so hard to get it right and move on. Jesse is a transgender person!

Jesse: Actually... I prefer gender queer!

(School Bell Rings. Jesse steps forward.)

14. I Choose Neither Monologue

There is this belief that if you’re a transgender person, you must have known immediately. Or, you know, at the VERY latest, age 5. And that story is true for a lot of transgender people—knowing early that the gender assigned to them at birth just wasn’t right. But its not everyone’s story. Being trans just isn’t as clear cut as it’s often made out to be. For me, I didn’t know. I didn’t really think about it when I was

young. I was definitely assumed to be a tomboy, but I never felt like I wanted to be in a different body. And then puberty hit and well, let's just say that it was pretty monumental. I suddenly felt very uncomfortable at the way my body was sexualized and the whole notion of male and female just felt wrong to me. And it's not that I wanted to trade in the model of body I had and get a different model – it's that I didn't want either one. I still don't want either one. Neither gender, by itself, feels whole to me. I don't want to be either a boy or a girl. I just want to be me.

And maybe that sounds really weird to you – but I am comfortable in the borderland between boy and girl, male and female. And while I know that that is scary terrain for you, it's where I feel at home.

15: Dating Scene

(4 teens are on the phone. Note: references to specific hairstyles in the text may be changed to fit your specific actors.)

ALL: *(on phone)* Okay... you'll pick me up at 8:00? Can't wait. Yup... See you tomorrow.

(They all Hang Up.)

1: Oh

2: My

3: God!

4: Ahhhh!

1: What am I gonna do?

2: What are we gonna talk about?

3: Should I get flowers?

4: Is he gonna pay? Should I expect him to?

1: If I let him pay will he get the wrong idea?

2: We're definitely paying for our own tickets... But I'll get a medium popcorn and we can share that. Wait -- is that gonna make me look cheap?

4: What if he has bad breath? Do I tell him?

- 3: What if I have bad breath?
- 1: Why is my Adam's apple the size of a freaking cantaloupe!!! He's totally going to freak out... maybe I should wear a turtleneck? A scarf?
- 2: At least I have an Adam's apple... that'll help. Is it pronounced enough?
- 4: Hair down? Hair up? Hair down? Hair up?
- 1: I'm gonna need to shave! Why did I quit that job? Just 4 more months and I would have been able to afford laser treatments! How am I gonna explain a razor burned face?
- 3: Is my fro intact?
- 2: Is my Mohawk Green enough?
- 3: Okay... okay... I can do this. I just have to make sure I look good.
- 4: Just have to be myself... be myself... and make sure I look good.
- 2: Okay... don't over pack.
- 1: Okay, don't over stuff.
- 2: Binding is so uncomfortable!
- 4: What if his jokes aren't funny?
- 3: What if my jokes aren't funny?
- 2: Don't giggle... whatever I do... don't giggle!
- 1: Don't speak too low... keep that voice high. But not too high!

(1 & 2 practice their voices and conversation as 3 & 4 practice laughing)

ALL: Ahhh! This is such a bad idea!

- 1: Did I put too many smiley faces in that last message? I mean, am I coming on too strong? I mean... I like her... I really like her but... but.. I don't want her to think I'm coming on too strong... That might give the wrong impression and scare her off and I don't want to scare her off... and... Crap! I hope I don't ramble on and on and on and on and on and on like I always do and scare her away.

4: What if he wants to kiss on the first date! I don't kiss on the first date!

2: What if she wants to kiss on the first date! I don't kiss on the first date! Will she believe me? What guy DOESN'T want to kiss on the first date? Will that scare her away?

3: If we become facebook official...

4: Am I ready for facebook official?

1: Facebook official? I'll be lucky to make it through tonight.

ALL: Ahhhh!

16. Happy Thanksgiving Part I

We are in Alex's house, in the kitchen. His mom is making the Thanksgiving meal.

Mom: Okay, turkey looks good. Mmmmm...potatoes are creamy. Homemade cranberry sauce is done. Both pumpkin and pecan pies are ready. Ali...uh...Alex, can you get the dinner rolls from the fridge?

Alex: Sure Mom...wow this all looks great.

Mom: *(cold, blaming Alex)* Well...it's unfortunate that you won't be here.

Alex: I can be here, Mom.

Mom: You know that's impossible.

Alex: It's not impossible.

Mom: You have made your choice and we can't have this...*choice* ruining Thanksgiving for the whole family.

Alex: This is your choice, Mom. I still want to be a part of this family. It doesn't have to be...

A sibling from the other room enters.

Lisa: Grams and Poppa are here.

Mom: *(pushing Alex out the back door)* Oh God! Quick, grab the keys. Get out the back door before they see you!

Alex: Can I at least get my coat?

Mom pushes Alex out and throws the coat out after him. She slams the door, sighs and then puts on her best fake smile.

17. Happy Thanksgiving, Part II

On one part of the stage, a happy family sits down to have a feast. One chair remains empty. They silently smile and pass food to one another. They indicate how delicious the food is. At some point one of the family members raises a glass. The others do the same. Together they say:

“Happy Thanksgiving”

On another part of the stage, Alex is sitting in a car, driving around town.

Alex: *(toasting with a water bottle, addressing the audience)* Oh, Happy Thanksgiving. This thanksgiving I am thankful for ...well—this car. I am thankful for this car because it keeps me warm. At least I am not walking around in the cold, right? Since I can't be at home today, eating with the family. I get to drive around town until my mother texts me and tells me it's okay for me to come back. I am the big family secret. Now that I have transitioned and present as male, I am something to be ashamed of... and feared. The source of pain and heartache. The walking sin. People need to be protected from me like I am a monster. Right now, I am a hungry monster. I wish I could eat, but everything is closed. Anyway, this all means I will never get to see some of my family members again. And for the rest of our lives, my mother and father will lie to them and tell them things like: “Ali didn't come home for the Holidays this year.” Or, “She's busy with school.” And, “She's spending Thanksgiving with friends.” The lies, they say, are the lesser of two evils. What hurts the most, is not being able to see my grandparents. We were really close and now they think that I don't care whether I see them or not. And this couldn't be farther from the truth. I still want to be a part of the family. I still want to spend summers at the cabin with Grams and Poppa and see them on Christmas and their birthdays. But I can't.

Alex adjusts the rearview mirror to see his own reflection.

They see a secret, something to be ashamed of...and I just see a boy.

Alex pulls out his phone and looks at the screen.

Alex: Mom says I can come home now. Everyone's gone. She saved me leftovers. Happy Thanksgiving.

18. Specimen #3

One: This is how I feel. Most of the time.

Scientist 1: What is it he? She?

One: Am I female enough?

Two: Am I male enough?

Three: Am I enough?

Scientist 2: There's a 50-50 chance. It's one or the other... right?

Scientist 3: Right?

Scientist 1: What are you?

One: I moved schools.

Two: I stayed. Everyone knows.

Three: I don't know. Move? Stay?

Scientist 2: What are you?

Scientist 3: What are you?

ONE, TWO, THREE: What am I?

19. Rumors by Text

Setting: In the school cafeteria. Students are sitting around at tables. One is going through the lunch and gets a text. Student rushes to another student to show the text.

Student 1: Oh my gosh. Look at this. *Shows text.*

Student 2: I don't even know what that means.

Student 1: It means there's a guy at our school who used to be a girl.

Student 1 sends the text to someone at another table.

Student 3: Whoa. Look at this.

Student 4: I just got the same thing. Mine says he's on the soccer team.

Student 3: Let me see that.

Text messages land at a third table.

Student 5: Have you seen this? I wonder who it is.

Student 6: This text says it someone from band.

Student 5: This says it's a freshman.

Student 1: Oh, oh, this names the school he went to last year.

Students start walking around to different tables, trying to guess who it might be, showing each other their texts. Sending more texts.

Mike has not been participating, looking very uncomfortable. Mike gets up to leave as Liam, heads into the lunchroom. Mike stops Liam.

Mike: You don't want to go in there. Let's go somewhere, we need to talk.

Liam: What's going on? I'm hungry, I want to...

They transition to another part of the stage.

Mike: There's rumors going around school. I got this today *(shows him the text.)* And this. And this one. Look, I don't know how people found out. It's says the middle school you went to last year—and I know none of us told anyone.

Liam: Yeah, no, of course. I know you wouldn't do that.

Mike: Do you want me to lie? If someone asks me directly?

Liam: *(thinks about it.)* No. Tell them that if they want to know, they can come and ask me directly.

20. Facebook Scene

(Up on the screen is a Facebook page. A girl's Facebook page. This Facebook page can be an image projected on the wall or it can be created in a more theatrical way. The original production had nine posterboards that when put together created the Facebook page.)

(Liam is downstage. He has just finished composing a message. He reads the message.)

Liam:

“As you know, I’ve never been much of a stereotypical girl. What you probably don’t know is that I really do feel like I’d be more comfortable as a guy than a girl. Because of that, I’ve gone through quite the journey trying to figure out how I see myself and who I think I am. I’ve realized that between the ears at least, I really am a guy. The technical term for this is someone who is ‘transgender.’ From this point on, I am going by the name of Liam and male pronouns. I’m getting a new Facebook page and I really hope you friend me. If you have any questions, feel free to ask. I’m hoping for you to accept, but I don’t expect you to understand, at least not right away. So please ask questions, and thank you for listening.”

(Liam mimes hitting the “send” button. We see a screen to delete this facebook account. A new account comes up – same picture with Liam as the name. Again, this can be highly theatrical rather than a digital image. Wall posts begin to appear.)

“Love your new facebook page.”

“I think you are very brave and courageous.”

“Ok, sure, no prob.”

“Cool new page. Love your new name.”

“It really doesn’t matter right? I mean you are still the same person.”

“Good to see you on here, bro.”

Actor playing Liam turns around to the audience.

LIAM

The irony is, within a month, I had more friends with my new page than I had with the old one. There were some people who didn’t friend me, and that’s ok, that’s their choice...but there were so many more who did. It was nice that first month being seen as just a one of the guys in school. No one seemed to notice that I had a key to the accessible unisex bathrooms. Or that I appeared in gym class from nowhere having changed in a private room. Kids are, mostly, caught up in their own storylines and little things like that go under the radar. Probably not anymore. Now...well, now I just hope people can see me for who I am. What I don’t want is to become that TRANS KID, you know, where I might as well wear a cape with a big T on the back ‘cuz that’s all people think of when they see me. I am that, but I am also way more than that. *(He sees a text message, reads it, shows it to the audience.)* Did

you know, there's some kid in the school who used to be a girl? *(replying to the text.)* Yes, and I know who it is. *(hits send.)* Yes... I know who I am.

Bell Rings. The bustling hallway again. Liam is a part of it. Everyone heads off to class.

End of Play.