

Pretty Theft

By Adam Szymkowicz

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ALLEGRA-----	18
SUZY-----	18
JOE-----	20s to 30s
MARCO/ALLEGRA'S FATHER-----	30s to 40s
BALLERINA 2/ALLEGRA'S MOTHER/SUPERVISOR/DOCTOR 2/ CUTOMER 2 and 4-----	20s to 50s
BALLERINA 1/PSYCHIATRIST/DOCTOR 1/WAITRESS/ CUSTOMER 1 and 3-----	30s to 40s
BOBBY/INTERN/JOE'S FATHER/BARTENDER-----	20s to 30s

More BALLERINAS are nice but not necessary.

(As the lights rise, two BALLERINAS enter and stretch. Perhaps they have been stretching when

the audience arrives. Classical music. THEY begin to dance gracefully.)

(ALLEGRA enters wearing something inappropriate for a ballerina. SHE tries to join the BALLERINAS but she makes mistakes. The dance continues. ALLEGRA goes to make a leap but she lands wrong and falls, hurting her ankle. The BALLERINAS continue their dance as ALLEGRA eventually gets up and hobbles around. The dance comes to an end and the BALLERINAS pull aside the curtain or otherwise reveal the set for scene one. ALLEGRA walks into the scene and sits down.)

SCENE 1

(The Group Home.)

(SUZY sits at a table. ALLEGRA sits across from her and finishes filling out a form. Their dialogue overlaps at first—neither of them hear the other.)

ALLEGRA

I'm talking too much, aren't I? I'm sorry about that.

SUZY

It's really cool that you came in.

ALLEGRA

It's just that I feel invisible.

SUZY

I feel like you and I never really got to know each other.

ALLEGRA

Even in my nightmares lately, I'm conspicuously absent. What does it mean when you no longer play a prominent role in your own dreams?

SUZY

I'd be really psyched if, we, like became friends.

ALLEGRA

I guess I'm just not good enough. You know what that's like to never be quite good enough? I should be better. I should be stronger. I just don't know if I can do anything. *(beat. To SUZY.)* I can't work here.

SUZY

You totally should work here. That would be cool. I mean, if you want to. Do you want to?

ALLEGRA

I'm just not a very worthwhile human being.

SUZY

(not listening)

Yeah. You still going out with Bobby?

ALLEGRA

Yeah.

SUZY

He's so cute.

ALLEGRA

Yeah.

SUZY

I just want to tear him apart. Just sink my teeth into that muscular thigh of his, and just tear him into little bits. I just want to gnaw him till there's nothing but bone. I would live on that flesh of his forever, but I mean, you know what that's like. You can do that whenever you want.

ALLEGRA

Is this job hard?

SUZY

It's fine. Especially if you fuck with them. Like the ones who hallucinate. You can pretend like you see shit and then they start to see it. It's a fucking riot.

ALLEGRA

Are they all crazy?

SUZY

Some of them, sure. It's like babysitting and then you go home and you don't have to worry about it cause it's all contained here. Sometimes if I don't like the night girl I get all the clients riled up. I put the two guys together who think they're Jesus and watch them fight about it. And then I just clock out. *(quickly)* Course I wouldn't do that to you.

ALLEGRA

It sounds kind of intimidating.

SUZY

No, it's not. Most of them are afraid anyway. Especially if you say you killed someone or like, I tell them I carry a knife.

ALLEGRA

I should just work at Harry's again. I'm useless.

SUZY

This place is better. I got into UConn because of it. You going to college?

ALLEGRA

Yeah.

SUZY

Which one.

ALLEGRA

Dartmouth.

SUZY

(unenthusiastic.)

Oh.

ALLEGRA

I think I want to study psychology. Be a therapist or something.

SUZY

There's some real nut jobs here.

ALLEGRA

But what if I'm not cut out--

SUZY

It's all instincts.

ALLEGRA

I think my instincts are bad.

(JOE enters carrying an open cardboard box.)

SUZY

Joe, you're not supposed to be here.

ALLEGRA

Hi.

(JOE stands and stares at the girls.)

SUZY

Sometimes he doesn't talk. Joe, you're not supposed to be in here. Joe. Joe, go back to where Melody is.

JOE

My box is empty again.

SUZY

I know, Joe. It's just something that happens in the night-time.

JOE

I don't think it should still.

SUZY

You going to say hi to Allegra? She's gonna work here.

ALLEGRA

I'm not sure actually.

SUPERVISOR

(Off.)

Joe!

(As the two girls look towards the voice, JOE snatches ALLEGRA's pencil and puts it in his box.)

JOE

Pretty.

SUZY

(Allegra)

So come in at like nine and I'll get Melody to hire you.

SCENE 2

(On one side of the stage, JOE is seen in the glow of a TV. Faintly, we can hear what sounds like a ballet. JOE watches very intently. The BALLERINAS dance around him as he watches the TV. One BALLERINA becomes the WAITRESS.)

(On the other side of the stage, MARCO is at a table in a Diner. The WAITRESS approaches.)

What can I get ya?

WAITRESS

You here alone?

MARCO

Why? You lonely?

WAITRESS

I'll have some coffee.

MARCO

That it?

WAITRESS

I need to peruse the menu. I want just the right combination. I'm celebrating.

MARCO

Yeah?

WAITRESS

I am as of this moment, officially retired.

MARCO

Aren't you kind of young for that?

WAITRESS

I'm sick of the game.

MARCO

Which game is that?

WAITRESS

I'm an art dealer.

MARCO

WAITRESS

No you're not.

MARCO

What do you mean?

WAITRESS

I can tell when someone's lying to me.

MARCO

You ever get sick of it all?

WAITRESS

Yup.

MARCO

I had a good run, though. When I started, Christ, I was a kid. I didn't know anything. Sometimes the best way to learn is to make many very bad mistakes. Don't you think?

WAITRESS

No.

MARCO

I'm going to miss it of course. The adrenaline rush, the danger, the moment you know for sure what you're made of . . .

WAITRESS

What are you made of?

MARCO

What are you made of?

WAITRESS

I'll come back when you're ready.

SCENE 3

(The Group Home. Daytime.)

(SUPERVISOR enters followed by ALLEGRA. JOE is seated silently holding his box in his hands.)

SUPERVISOR

We're going to start you off with Joe here. Morning, Joe.

(JOE doesn't respond)

SUPERVISOR

He's free to move around as he likes but he spends a lot of his time in this room, I'm afraid. Joe! Joe! Allegra's going to be looking after you today. You hear me Joe? He'll be fine. If you have a problem, just shout. Someone will come eventually.

ALLEGRA

Um.... But . . .

(Exit SUPERVISOR, ignoring ALLEGRA. JOE watches ALLEGRA.)

ALLEGRA

Hi Joe. Remember me?

JOE

. . .

ALLEGRA

We met the other day. You like that chair, huh?

JOE

. . .

ALLEGRA

What do you keep in your box, there Joe?

JOE

. . .

ALLEGRA

Are you going to just going to stare at me like that?

JOE

. . .

ALLEGRA

Fine then.

*(ALLEGRA sits down. Pulls out a book to read.
After a few moments, JOE speaks.)*

JOE

Are you or have you ever been a ballerina?

ALLEGRA
(startled)

I'm sorry?

JOE

Are you or have you ever been a ballerina?

ALLEGRA

I took ballet for a while in middle school.

JOE

OK. What's your favorite color?

ALLEGRA

Purple.

JOE

OK. Do you take any medications?

ALLEGRA

No.

JOE

OK. Is there anything broken at your house that you could bring in that I could fix?

ALLEGRA

I don't think so.

JOE

OK. I like ballerinas. Especially the pink ones.

ALLEGRA

Yes, they're very nice.

JOE

Would you consider yourself a communist, socialist, libertarian, or are you a member of the green party?

ALLEGRA

No.

JOE

OK. Have you spoken to my mother?

ALLEGRA

No. I just started here.

JOE

What do you think she thinks?

ALLEGRA

About what?

JOE

About everything?

ALLEGRA

I don't know Joe. Maybe you should ask her.

JOE

OK. When you were a ballerina did you learn how to leap?

ALLEGRA

I jumped.

JOE

OK. Do you think you could jump higher than my mother?

ALLEGRA

I don't know, Joe.

JOE

OK. Can you jump higher than two meters?

ALLEGRA

I guess.

JOE

Wow. Two meters?

ALLEGRA

Is that high?

JOE

What happened to all the things I collected in my box?

ALLEGRA

I don't know, Joe.

JOE

OK. Are you sure there's nothing broken at your home?

(JOE disappears. ALLEGRA puts her book down and moves to her MOTHER in scene 4.)

SCENE 4

(ALLEGRA's home. ALLEGRA'S MOTHER sits watching TV, probably facing away from the audience.)

ALLEGRA

They all think I'm just wonderful. "You're just wonderful," they said. "You sure you've never done this before?" I must be a natural at seeing problems and helping—

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

What are you babbling about?

ALLEGRA

My first day at work.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

Oh. Was that today?

ALLEGRA

They said I was wonderful.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

Everyone likes to exaggerate.

ALLEGRA

It's something I'm really good at. Suzy Harris works there, you know. We had lunch together and she gave me pointers.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

Isn't she the girl that had that abortion?

ALLEGRA

No.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

No? Wasn't that Suzy Harris?

ALLEGRA

(lying)

That's the other Suzy Harris.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

They arrested her for vandalism. It was in the paper.

ALLEGRA

That wasn't her. The other Suzy Harris gives her a bad name.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

...

ALLEGRA

I feel like I'm being shown a new world of people. Like I was put here to understand people's inner workings. And help them.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

What are you getting all excited about? Is there some sort of man there?

ALLEGRA

Mom!

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

Because the worst thing you could do is cheat on Bobby. He's an angel. You'll never find a man like that again. Not one that'll put up with you. God knows it's a cross I must bear.

(pause.)

ALLEGRA

She invited me over.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

What?

ALLEGRA

I'm going over Suzy's tomorrow.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

Don't you usually spent Fridays with Bobby?

ALLEGRA

I can do something else.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

Don't take him for granted. You don't give him what he needs and before you know it he'll be chasing anything in a skirt.

ALLEGRA

Why did you say that?

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

Let me watch the TV.

(They are both quiet for a while.)

ALLEGRA

Suzy wants to go to the hospital with me sometime.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

There's no reason. He'll be out soon.

ALLEGRA

He's not coming back.

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

He'll be out soon.

ALLEGRA

Who said that?

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

He'll be back here soon. On the couch, making us both miserable.

ALLEGRA

A doctor told you that?

ALLEGRA'S MOTHER

Will you let me watch the TV?! Christ!

(ALLEGRA walks away from her mother. SUZY joins her and taking her hand, drags her into Scene 5.)

SCENE 5

(The Health and Beauty Aid section of a Pharmacy.)

SUZY

This is where I go for all my beauty needs. It may not be the best stuff, but you can't beat the price.

ALLEGRA

It's cheaper at Brooks.

SUZY

(trying on a lipstick)

I get incredible discounts. What do you think of this one?

ALLEGRA

It's good.

SUZY

Is it provocative?

ALLEGRA

Somewhat.

SUZY

Is it tarty enough? Would the cops stop me in this lipstick? That's what I want to know.

ALLEGRA

I think it's stronger than a slut but not quite a whore. A harlot?

SUZY

Perfect. Harlot red. *(SUZY puts the lipstick in her bag.)*

(Pause.)

ALLEGRA

I used to want to be your friend.

SUZY

What?

ALLEGRA

In like the sixth grade.

SUZY

You would have been the only one.

ALLEGRA

No. All the attention you got . . .

SUZY

(putting other items in her bag.)

Well I wouldn't shut up, would I? When you don't shut up, the boys notice you. Course, eventually you realize no one was really listening. And you stop speaking up in class—realize maybe you weren't saying anything anyway—not something someone else couldn't say better--usually a boy. And the boys who seemed to be listening to you weren't quite the right boys.

ALLEGRA

Sometimes I wanted to hit you.

SUZY

(Stuffing her pockets.)

So you stopped talking. But then you realize if you lift up your shirt there are boys that like that too. But maybe those aren't quite the right boys either because then later those boys want to see what's in your pants. And want to put themselves in you even if you're not ready and maybe those aren't the right boys either but at least they need you for a few minutes.

ALLEGRA

And you wore those skirts.

SUZY

(Stuffing her bag.)

Then you go after your friend's boyfriend because it's wrong and it's fun and because your friend is pretty. And you get him but once you have him, you realize he's no good. And your friend hates you. But you do it again anyway to another friend. And the girls all begin to hate you. They call you a skank. But some of the boys like you some of the time. But they think you're a whore. So you embrace it because what else can you do? You buy a t-shirt that says "Fuckdoll" and a series of short skirts and you try on provocative lipsticks.

ALLEGRA

Help me pick out a provocative lipstick.

(SUZY selects a lipstick for ALLEGRA. Then SUZY empties the whole shelf into her bag.)

(ALLEGRA leaves SUZY and walks into Scene 6 while putting on her new lipstick.)

SCENE 6

(The Group Home.) (JOE is humming and rocking on his feet, back and forth. ALLEGRA watches him.)

(Enter SUZY.)

SUZY

Hey.

ALLEGRA

Hey.

SUZY

They want you in the kitchen. They're going to *train* you.

ALLEGRA

Oh.

SUZY

I'll watch him.

ALLEGRA
(Rushing out.)

Thanks.

SUZY
(Shouting after her.)

Love the lipstick.

ALLEGRA

Thanks. *(off)*

So you're humming today. SUZY

(JOE continues to hum.)

I hate it when you do that. SUZY

(JOE continues to hum.)

Stop humming. SUZY

(JOE continues to hum.)

I bet if Allegra told you to stop, you would. She likes you, you know. SUZY

(JOE stops humming and looks at SUZY.)

SUZY
She said to me just yesterday, she said, "I like Joe. I think I'll purchase a new lipstick so that he will see it on me and like me all the more." "There's something about Joe," she said later. "There's something about him that's different from other boys, even my current boy-toy, Bobby." You should try to kiss her. That's what girls like.

I'm going to get a plant. JOE

Did you hear what I said, Joe? SUZY

What? JOE

Allegra likes you. SUZY

We have a professional relationship. I am a client and she is part of the staff. JOE

SUZY

Have you ever had a girlfriend?

(JOE starts humming again.)

SUZY

If you had a girlfriend you would know that girls want you to kiss them. Allegra especially. She told me.

JOE

She told you?

SUZY

Yeah.

JOE

She's a member of the staff.

SUZY

Have you ever had a kiss, Joe?

(JOE begins to hum.)

SUZY

Do you know how? You want to do it right for Allegra, don't you? Stop humming.

(JOE stops humming.)

SUZY

Close your eyes. Put your lips together.

(SUZY kisses him. A long and powerful kiss. SUZY stumbles away from it and sits down. She is shaken.)

SUZY

That was good.

(JOE begins humming again. He looks down at his box as though it may have collected the kiss. He starts rocking his body back and forth. He stands and rocks forwards and backwards in big jerky movements. ALLEGRA returns.)

ALLEGRA

Hey. You OK?

SUZY

Yeah.

(SUZY stands and drops a barrette into JOE's box.)

SUZY
(Exiting.)

See you later.

ALLEGRA

Joe, are you upset or something?

(JOE doesn't respond.)

(ALLEGRA watches him for a minute then picks up her book to read.)

(A long silence.)

JOE

There are things that are untouchable aren't there?

ALLEGRA

What?

JOE

Like a ballerina while she is spinning. You can't touch her.

ALLEGRA

I guess.

JOE
(Stops rocking.)

Ballerinas are pretty, aren't they? Aren't they, Allegra?

ALLEGRA

Yes. Except the ugly ones.

JOE

The professional ones have to be pretty. Right Allegra? Or else no one would pay to see them.

ALLEGRA

Sure.

JOE

(Trying a new tact.)

What did you have for breakfast today?

ALLEGRA

I didn't have breakfast.

JOE

OK. You should always have breakfast. I had a banana and some oatmeal. That sounds like a good breakfast, doesn't it? Doesn't it?

ALLEGRA

Uh huh.

JOE

What did your mother have for breakfast today?

ALLEGRA

I don't know, Joe.

JOE

OK. What do you think my mother had for breakfast today?

ALLEGRA

I've never met your mother, Joe.

JOE

But what do you think she had?

ALLEGRA

I don't know.

JOE

(Thinks.)

I think she had a banana and some oatmeal. Do you think she likes raisins in her oatmeal?

ALLEGRA

Hard to say, Joe.

JOE

I think she probably does because I like raisins and we are partially made of the same genetic material.

(SUPERVISOR enters.)

SUPERVISOR

How's everything in here?

ALLEGRA

Fine.

SUPERVISOR

What are you doing, Joe?

(JOE doesn't respond.)

ALLEGRA

He's been very talkative.

SUPERVISOR

Joe, I was wondering if you could fix the TV like you did before. Remember what you did last time? Well it's gone all fuzzy again. Joe? Joe? You think you could do that for me?

ALLEGRA

Joe?

JOE

What?

ALLEGRA

Will you please fix the TV?

JOE

OK.

(JOE exits to fix the TV.)

SUPERVISOR

(Following JOE out.) (A warning)

He seems quite taken with you.

ALLEGRA

I'm working on my people skills.

(ALLEGRA goes back to her book. A moment. JOE re-enters and snatches ALLEGRA's bookmark)

*without her noticing. ALLEGRA continues to read.
SUZY enters.)*

SUZY

So I was thinking we could go see that movie. What's it called? James Spader's in it. Just you and me.

ALLEGRA

(Looking up.)

We're going to the hospital today.

SUZY

Oh.

ALLEGRA

What?

SUZY

I forgot about that.

ALLEGRA

Maybe we could still see the movie after.

SUZY

Yeah, I guess.

(Silence.)

ALLEGRA

What happened this morning with Pat?

SUZY

She threw her cup at me. She's getting an assessment for it.

ALLEGRA

Finally.

(BOBBY enters.)

BOBBY

Hey. You ready?

ALLEGRA

Oh.

SUZY

Hi Bobby.

ALLEGRA

You're not supposed to be here today.

BOBBY

Whatever. I don't care. You and me are gonna go see that new movie with James Spader.

ALLEGRA

Suzy and I are going to the hospital.

BOBBY

No, no, no. Go another day.

ALLEGRA

But Suzy and I had it planned.

SUZY

Yeah, I don't think I really want to go.

ALLEGRA

Oh.

SUZY

To the hospital.

ALLEGRA

Oh. But you said. . .

SUZY

Sometimes I get caught up in the moment. Sorry.

ALLEGRA

Oh. OK.

SUZY

Sorry.

BOBBY

All right. So get your stuff.

ALLEGRA

No. I'm gong to the hospital.

BOBBY

I'm not dropping you off.

I'll take a cab.

ALLEGRA

Come on. I already bought the tickets.

BOBBY

I'll go with you.

SUZY

You already bought the tickets?

ALLEGRA

I'm gonna buy them. Get your stuff.

BOBBY

No.

ALLEGRA

Well, fuck you then.

BOBBY

You're an asshole. You know that?

ALLEGRA

I'll go with you.

SUZY

Yeah. All right.

BOBBY
(looks her over)

Cool. Can we get popcorn?

SUZY

Yeah, all right.

BOBBY

Wait.

ALLEGRA

What?

BOBBY

Nothin'. Never mind. Go.

ALLEGRA

BOBBY
(mumbling.)

Crazy fucking . . .

(BOBBY and SUZY exit. ALLEGRA watches them go.)

(JOE renters.)

JOE

I fixed it. Allegra, I fixed it.

ALLEGRA

He's an asshole anyway, isn't he?

JOE

OK. Did you want to see the TV I fixed?

ALLEGRA

Not now, Joe.

JOE

OK.

ALLEGRA

But he has to put up with me too.

JOE

OK. *(looking at his watch)* Your shift was over three minutes ago.

ALLEGRA

Yeah.

JOE

You can stay here with me. I won't tell.

ALLEGRA

It's not like I'm Suzy and can get whoever I want.

JOE

You were seven minutes late this morning. You can get in trouble for that. The present administration does not look too fondly on tardiness.

ALLEGRA

Why don't I have that?

JOE

Plus I have to wait seven minutes for you. Maybe tomorrow eight or nine or who knows.

ALLEGRA

I'll see you later

JOE

You have to come in at nine a.m.

ALLEGRA

Uh huh.

JOE

You should come on time. Allegra?

ALLEGRA

What?

JOE

I'm very smart you know, Allegra, and I'm very strong.

ALLEGRA

(As she exits.)

Uh huh.

SCENE 7

(BALLERINAS wheel out a TV and JOE sits in front of it and begins to watch more ballet.)

(On the other side of the stage, MARCO and the WAITRESS in the diner. MARCO sits at a table drinking coffee. WAITRESS approaches him.)

WAITRESS

More coffee?

MARCO

How many's that been?

WAITRESS

My guess between eight and twelve.

MARCO

It's too many, don't you think?

WAITRESS

So you don't want more?

MARCO

Is it always this empty?

WAITRESS

There ain't nothing here. People only come here by accident.

MARCO

I came here on purpose.

WAITRESS

Really?

MARCO

To get away.

WAITRESS

Oh. But how'd you know it was here?

MARCO

I came here by accident once.

WAITRESS

That's what I'm saying.

(Pause.)

MARCO

Let me ask you something, you ever been kidnapped, held hostage, anything like that?

WAITRESS

Why, you want to take me away from this hell hole?

MARCO

Just wondering.

WAITRESS

You say the word and I'll up and pack. Don't have to point a gun or nothing.

MARCO

You're just looking for an excuse.

WAITRESS

We're all looking for an excuse.

MARCO

I will have another cup.

WAITRESS

It's your body.

MARCO

Nothing's mine.

(Pause.)

WAITRESS

I never been kidnapped. But I saw a man get shot once. A stranger too. You be careful here.

MARCO

You're here to protect me.

WAITRESS

If you're that kind of man, there's no way I'm going anywhere with you.

MARCO

What kind's that?

WAITRESS

A mama's boy. You especially close to old women, hide in their skirts?

MARCO

I like young girls, actually.

WAITRESS

(Laughing.)

I don't want to know about that.

SCENE 8

(The Movie Theater.)

(SUZY and BOBBY sit, the glow of the screen on their faces.)

SUZY

Allegra says you're going to UConn in the fall. I am too! Isn't that great?! We could even have some of the same classes.

BOBBY

Shut up. I want to see this.

SUZY

It's just the previews. That's gotta be rough though--you going to one school and Allegra going to another. Something like that really takes a toll on a relationship. No matter how strong it is. Because you have separate experiences and you know a lot of girls are going to be paying attention to you. Like more than in high school. And that's hard on a relationship.

BOBBY

You done?

SUZY

I know a lot of couples who broke up because—

BOBBY

Listen, I didn't know you were going to talk the whole time. I wouldn't have asked you to come.

SUZY

I'll be quiet. *(After a pause.)* You don't think I'm a bad person, do you?

SCENE 9

(On the other side of the stage.)

(In JOE's room. JOE is asleep in bed. The BALLERINAS dance around JOE's bed. The music swells. They lift JOE's box in the air and dance with it. One of the BALLERINAS becomes the

*SUPERVISOR. She speaks to the other
BALLERINA or to the audience.)*

SUPERVISOR

(As she takes objects out of JOE's box.)

We no longer wonder where the pens go, the pads, the rubber bands, the paper clips and Mrs. Palmer's dentures. All of us know they're in Joe's box. When he first came here, we tried to get him to give back his pilfered items. But that was a disaster.

It's the only thing that upsets him. If he doesn't see you, he doesn't care, but if he does, he screams and cannot be consoled. So it was just easier to let him keep things until the night-time. Even Evelyn's phone. Because it's just easier. I have a home, a husband a kid. I don't need any more screaming in my day than I already have. So we let him keep whatever he gets in his hands. Until the night when he's completely knocked out and I take it all back.

Once I found a pair of women's underwear in the box. I suspect Suzy. But I can't accuse her and I've learned not to ask him about things in the box. He won't speak of them, won't let you touch them. The only thing I leave in the box, is his ballerina doll. A gift from the former supervisor, now deceased. He likes it. I've always felt there's no harm in it. I've always felt there's no harm in him. His mother disagrees.

SCENE 10

(The Movie Theatre.)

(SUZY and BOBBY stare at the screen.)

BOBBY

This sucks.

SUZY

I liked the last one he was in.

BOBBY

Huh?

SUZY

Bobby, what do you look for in a girl?

BOBBY

I don't know. What kind of question's that?

How did you decide on Allegra? SUZY

What do you care? BOBBY

Is it her lips? SUZY

I don't know. BOBBY

Do her lips taste good? SUZY

I guess. BOBBY

Is it her breasts? SUZY

What? BOBBY

She's sexy. SUZY

I guess. BOBBY

Do you think I'm sexy? SUZY

You're OK. BOBBY

Do you wish you could touch me? Just reach out and touch any part of me like it belonged to you? You're the kind of person who takes what he wants, aren't you? SUZY

I dunno. BOBBY

I think you are. I like that very much. SUZY

BOBBY
This movie sucks. Let's go.

SUZY
It's a shame to waste the dark.

BOBBY
Huh?

SUZY
You can kiss me, if you want.

BOBBY
You trying to get me in trouble with Allegra?

SUZY
I won't tell.

BOBBY
Aren't you her friend?

SUZY
I want to be your friend too.

BOBBY
I got friends.

SUZY
You have friends you kiss in the dark when no one's looking?

BOBBY
I could have those if I wanted them.

SUZY
I bet you could.

BOBBY
If I kissed you, you'd never be the same. My kiss is devastating.

SUZY
I don't believe you.

BOBBY
Dude, what did I just say?

SCENE 11

(What was JOE's bedroom is now a hospital room. ALLEGRA at a bed talking to her FATHER who faces away from us. He does not move.)

ALLEGRA

And I'm working at this like group home with Suzy Harris. We hang out a lot. You know who she is? I think you'd like her. She's a lot of fun. She was supposed to come here with me today but . . . she couldn't make it.

Bobby's good. He works at the garden place in Salem sometimes on the weekends. He wishes he could be here too. He's uh . . . a good boyfriend. I think it'll last for us. One of the great . . . things.

Fuck! It's just as hard to talk to you now that you can't talk back. I can't ever say the right thing to you. You're just so . . . not there, aren't you. You always ignore me. I know even if you can hear me right now, you're not paying attention. You never . . . Why don't I matter to you? What do you want from me?!! Maybe you just want to be left alone.

Well, that's what I'll do then. I'm sorry I disturbed your death bed you selfish fucking bastard! You self-centered egotistical, pompous fucking bastard! I don't care what you want! I hope you die! I hope you fucking die real soon! You can fucking rot and be eaten by worms! I hope fucking worms eat you! Worms with big fucking teeth! And rats and flies and vultures! I hope vultures dig you up and take you out of the casket and fly away with you! You fuck!

(Pause)

I miss you.

I've always missed you. I'm sorry. I don't want you to die. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Oh, Christ, I'm so sorry. Please don't die. You're so small. Please, Daddy.

(ALLEGRA kisses his forehead.)

SCENE 12

(The Movie Theatre.)

BOBBY

A kiss from me would ruin a girl like you.

SUZY

Oh God. Never mind. Never mind. Let's just watch the movie.

(BOBBY and SUZY stare at the screen for a minute. Then BOBBY leans over and kisses her. They start making out—really going at it. They break.)

SUZY

Did someone tell you you were a good kisser?

BOBBY

What do you mean?

SUZY

You're kind of bad. You can't just stick your tongue in and not move it.

BOBBY

You have to let the experience wash over you.

SUZY

It's not my fault you're a bad kisser.

BOBBY

I am not a bad kisser. You wiggle too much.

(BOBBY grabs her and kisses her again. She kisses back. They break.)

SUZY

That was a little better.

BOBBY

A little? Damn, woman. I can't believe I'm wasting this talent on you.

SUZY

I hope that's not your only talent.

BOBBY

Every girl I've ever kissed said I was the best kisser.

SUZY

They were lying to you. I'm sorry but you are really bad at that. Maybe with time, and practice . . . In any case I wouldn't go around bragging about it. It tends to raise expectations and that's exactly what you don't want. Maybe you should practice on some inanimate objects before you get into a spin the bottle game or something in college. Whatever you do, don't let go of Allegra. Any girl that lets you kiss her is a keeper.

(BOBBY kisses her again. This time it's more intense. They break. BOBBY waits for her reaction.)

SUZY

Yeah, I mean that was OK.

BOBBY

(getting up.)

This is bullshit.

SUZY

(following him out.)

Wait for me. I still need a ride. Hey, mush-mouth. Wait for me.

SCENE 13

(The Group Home.)

(JOE is staring at ALLEGRA who tries to read. After a while, she drops the book, distracted.)

JOE

You were early today. Almost ten minutes early. Did you get up earlier? Allegra? Did you get up earlier?

ALLEGRA

I dunno. I didn't sleep.

JOE

You should always sleep. I always go to sleep at eight and wake up at five. Do you think my mother gets up at five?

ALLEGRA

How come you treat me different than the other girls?

JOE

...

ALLEGRA

Like you pretend you can't hear them if you don't want to do what they want.

(pause.)

JOE

Well, you were a ballerina so you're different.

ALLEGRA

But I'm not a ballerina.

JOE

I think you're a ballerina.

ALLEGRA

What does that have to do with anything?

JOE

Don't yell at me.

ALLEGRA

I'm not yelling at you.

JOE

OK.

ALLEGRA

You'd do whatever I told you, wouldn't you?

JOE

OK.

ALLEGRA

Stand on one foot.

(JOE looks at her.)

(JOE stands on one foot.)

ALLEGRA

Get on all fours.

(He does.)

ALLEGRA

Tell me a secret.

JOE

(thinks.)

Sometimes I don't get up until five thirty a.m.

ALLEGRA

Never mind.

(JOE stays on all fours. Seeing that JOE isn't getting up, ALLEGRA sits on his back. She sighs. Stares off numbly.)

ALLEGRA

My father died last night.

JOE

OK. *(Long pause.)* My father died too.

ALLEGRA

Oh.

JOE

Before I came here.

ALLEGRA

Oh.

JOE

He was tall.

ALLEGRA

My father was too.

JOE

OK. They say I look like my father. But only sometimes.

ALLEGRA

They say I look like my father.

JOE.

OK. Who?

ALLEGRA

People.

JOE

OK.

(BOBBY enters. ALLEGRA gets off JOE's back.)

BOBBY

Hey.

JOE

(From the ground.)

You're early. He's early.

ALLEGRA

I'm so glad you're here.

(ALLEGRA goes to hug BOBBY. BOBBY doesn't hug back as much as he could.)

BOBBY

(Breaking the hug.)

Listen we gotta talk.

ALLEGRA

Thank God. I need someone to talk to.

BOBBY

Not in front of the retard.

ALLEGRA

He's not . . . Joe, will you go find Melody please.

(JOE gets up and exits.)

BOBBY

It's just . . .

The funeral's tomorrow.

ALLEGRA

We'll be going to different schools.

BOBBY

What?

ALLEGRA

I don't know. Maybe it's not such a good idea.

BOBBY

What's not a good idea?

ALLEGRA

Us staying together.

BOBBY

You just thought of this?

ALLEGRA

Yeah.

BOBBY

Today?

ALLEGRA

You always want me to tell you how I feel. These are my feelings. Don't you want to hear about them?

BOBBY

Your feelings?

ALLEGRA

Yeah.

BOBBY

What feelings?

ALLEGRA

Well, you know. I been thinking.

BOBBY

You don't love me. I'm no good.

ALLEGRA

BOBBY

No, it's just . . .

ALLEGRA

You don't want me.

BOBBY

No, it's not that. It's just . . . We're young. I want to fuck other girls. I want to be free to do that at school. There's lots of different kinds of girls out there and most of them I've never even kissed. I'm sorry. Now you're mad at me.

ALLEGRA

What are you talking about?

BOBBY

You know, girls with longer legs, or bigger breasts. Blondes, brunettes, redheads, like girls who play field hockey. Um, girls who wear those shirts that show their stomachs, uh . . . girls--

ALLEGRA

So we're taking a break?

BOBBY

Yeah, you can call it that if you want. I just really need to experience lots of stuff you know, like other girls. Hopefully lots of other girls. You know, while I'm still attractive.

ALLEGRA

Wow.

BOBBY

Yeah.

ALLEGRA

I can't believe you.

BOBBY

I can be pretty unbelievable.

ALLEGRA

You . . . You're a fucker!

BOBBY

I thought you'd be mad.

ALLEGRA

Get out of here!

BOBBY

I can still give you a ride.

ALLEGRA

I don't want a fucking ride. You fucking cocksucker. Get the fuck out of here!

BOBBY

Whoa there.

ALLEGRA

Get out! Get out!

BOBBY

You don't have to be so angry. Is this about your dad, cause I'm sorry that he's dead and everything.

ALLEGRA

(Picking up objects and throwing them at him.)

Get! Out! Get! Out!

BOBBY

Fucking nutjob. You belong here!

(BOBBY exits.)

(ALLEGRA collapses in a chair. After a while, JOE returns.)

JOE

He was early.

ALLEGRA

Come here. *(He does.)* Hold me.

(JOE holds her. ALLEGRA sobs.)

JOE

Your shift is over in two minutes.

ALLEGRA

Hold me tighter.

JOE

Is that man your boyfriend?

(ALLEGRA sobs louder.)

JOE

I'm going to buy a cactus for my birthday. Cause I should have a plant. Everyone should have a plant, don't you think, Allegra?

ALLEGRA

(between sobs.)

Uh huh.

JOE

I'm going to order it through the mail so I have something.

(ALLEGRA sobs.)

JOE

I want something of my own that won't disappear at night. Something alive.

(ALLEGRA sobs.)

ALLEGRA

Hold me tighter.

JOE

OK. I'm strong.

ALLEGRA

Ow. *(He let's go.)* Tighter. Hold me 'til I don't know who I am.

JOE

I know who you are.

ALLEGRA

You do, don't you.

(ALLEGRA looks at him. JOE kisses her. She kisses back. He holds her tightly. Suddenly, ALLEGRA screams.)

ALLEGRA

Get away. Get away from me! Don't touch me! Get your hands off me!

(The SUPERVISOR and SUZY run in to see ALLEGRA hitting JOE who is trying to hold her.)

*ALLEGRA frees herself and runs from the room.
JOE watches her go)*

JOE

I may have held her too tightly.

If you want to read the rest of the play, please send me an email:

adamszymkowicz@yahoo.com