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Dramatic Publishing

dont u luv me?

By
Linda Daugherty



Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(dont u luv me?)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-637-1

This play is dedicated to:

Susan Sugerman, MD, MPH, FAAP, FSAM
Girls to Women Health and Wellness, PA, Dallas, Texas

Kate Dodd, LSCW
Director of Youth Educational and Prevention Services
The Family Place
Dallas, Texas

Kenneth Latimer, Dramaturge and Friend

Robyn Flatt, Executive Artistic Director
Dallas Children's Theater
Dallas, Texas

and, once again, Nancy Schaeffer

A special thank you to Laurie VanderPol (Director of Theatre, Blue Valley West High School, Overland Park, Kansas), Skip Gordon (Tech Director) and actors Aaron Craven, Alyssa Hamedi, Meredith Ashley, Josh Mayernik, Taylor Luther, Gage Adams, Laila Al-Kashti, Brittany Stahly, Morgan Carter, Melissa Mayer, Mary Sapenoff, Michael Shoemaker for the first reading of
dont u luv me?

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THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

dont u luv me? premiered at Dallas Children's Theater (Robyn Flatt, Executive Artistic Director) from April 3 through April 26, 2009, directed by Nancy Schaeffer.

Original Cast

Angela Lauren Rosen
C.J. Montgomery Sutton*
Jen. Meg Showalter / Kelly Brooks
Sam. Josh Blann*
Candice Kimberly Kottwitz / Alexandra Mutti
Erika Amanda Rojas / Alexis Zollicoffer
Sara. Jourdan Stein / Lindsay Woodmansee
Brad. Senam Dey
Duffy Jackson Currie / Paolo Sintobin

Original Production Staff

Set Design Randel Wright
Lighting Design Linda Blase
Costume Design. Laurie Land
Properties Design. Caleb W. Massey
Sound Design Marco Salinas
Video Imagery Design Yueming Peng
Stage Manager Dwight Sandell*

* *Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union for professional actors and stage managers in the United States.*

dont u luv me?

CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)
4m., 5w.

ANGELA [*xoxoangelaxo*]

ERIKA [*erikaluvsyou.:*]

CANDICE [*candygrl24*]

C.J. [*bballCJ800*]

BRAD [*BRADtheBEAST34*]

JEN [*peanutbutterandjenny99*]

DUFFY [*theduffyreport411*]

SARA [*sarabear123*]

SAM [*SAMsession3*]

dont u luv me?

SETTING: UC is a large scrim on which images (text messages, instant messages, photographs, letters and statistics) are projected. The scrim is also lit from behind. This area upstage of scrim represents various locations: at school, homecoming dance floor, C.J.'s house, ANGELA's house, and C.J. at college. The open space downstage of scrim also represents several locations: ANGELA's house, JEN's house, C.J.'s house, homecoming dance, the mall and locations at school. Benches and/or chairs are positioned and moved as needed. Contemporary music underscores several scenes and transitions, becoming more grating, dark and explicit as the abuse escalates.

AT RISE: Music underscores as lights rise on ANGELA stage R dressed for school in her room, listening to music on ear buds and sitting before her "mirror" with makeup bag, iPod and cell phone. Her backpack is nearby on the floor. Bubbling over with happiness, she applies finishing touches to her makeup, moving slightly to the music while excitedly checking herself out. After a moment, ERIKA rushes on upstage followed by CANDICE holding her cell phone. BOTH are unnoticed by ANGELA.

ERIKA (*annoyed*). Angela, didn't you hear us honk? (*No reaction from ANGELA. ERIKA and CANDICE exchange a look. ERIKA moves behind ANGELA, waving hands in "mirror."*) Angela, hello.

(*ANGELA looks up startled and takes out ear buds. Music stops.*)

ANGELA. Oh, hey, guys. Sorry.

ERIKA. We've been sitting out there honking forever!

ANGELA. Sorry.

CANDICE (*looking at cell phone*). It's seven twenty-eight!

ANGELA (*putting on gloss*). Just let me put on gloss.

CANDICE (*dabbing her finger into ANGELA's gloss and applying it to her own lips*). You've got one minute. I don't want to be late the first day.

ERIKA. Come on, my brother's already pissed. My parents'll kill him if he gets another ticket.

ANGELA. Okay, okay.

CANDICE. What's the deal anyway?

ANGELA. How do I look? (*She stands, showing off. ERIKA and CANDICE exchange looks.*)

ERIKA (*impressed*). You look...really good. So what's up?

(*ANGELA's cell phone beeps, indicating an incoming TEXT MESSAGE that appears on large scrim as she opens phone.*)

TXT MSG FROM: CJ

hey beautiful – meet me wst entrance 7:45

ANGELA (*reading message on cell phone*). Oh, my God! He wants me to meet him before school! (*Frantically collecting her stuff and backpack.*) We gotta hurry!

CANDICE. Who? Who texted you?

ANGELA (*proudly*). C.J.

CANDICE. C.J.?

ERIKA (*overlapping with CANDICE*). C.J. Mitchell?!

ANGELA. Yeah.

CANDICE. Oh, my God!

ERIKA. Are you kidding?!

ANGELA. Come on, I don't want to be late. (*ANGELA starts off.*)

CANDICE. Ange, you're meeting C.J.? He's like the hottest thing ever!

ERIKA. Like when did this happen?

ANGELA (*excitedly*). Will you guys come on?! I can't be late!

(Music underscores as ANGELA rushes off, followed by ERIKA and CANDICE. Lights cross fade, revealing C.J. stage L with messenger bag, pacing while checking his cell phone. Scrim fades to black as BRAD enters with backpack, intently studying his schedule. Music fades.)

BRAD (*noticing C.J.*). Oh, hey, man, what's up?

C.J. Not much.

BRAD. Man, the first day sucks. (*Checking schedule.*) You got lab first?

C.J. Yeah.

BRAD. Me, too. (*He starts to go, then realizes C.J. isn't coming.*) You waiting for someone?

C.J. (*smiling*). Yeah. Angela.

BRAD. Angela? She a sophomore?

C.J. Yeah.

BRAD. She's my little sister's friend. I drove them today.

Huh. When did you hook up with her?

C.J. Just last week.

BRAD. No kidding. (*Slapping C.J. on back.*) Watch out, Angela!

(BRAD and C.J. share a laugh. BRAD exits. Music underscores. C.J. checks phone, pacing, as ANGELA, breathless, enters carrying backpack. She rushes to him. Music fades.)

ANGELA. Hey—hey, C.J.! Sorry I'm late.

C.J. (*taking her hand and looking in her eyes*). Hey...you look...good! (*C.J. circles ANGELA while she speaks.*)

ANGELA. Thanks. I—I got your text. I didn't know you wanted to meet and then Erika and Candice just kept talking and—

C.J. (*gently pushing her hair behind her ears*). I like your hair like this.

ANGELA. Oh...thanks.

C.J. Where's your first class?

ANGELA (*off balance*). Uh, um, it's math—in 201. Where's yours?

C.J. Science lab. I'll walk you. (*He takes her backpack.*)

ANGELA. But your lab's in the other wing.

C.J. Hey, first day of school. Maybe I got lost.

ANGELA (*giggling*). You? A senior?

C.J. (*taking her hand*). Maybe I want everybody to see who I'm with.

(ANGELA smiles shyly. JEN enters followed by DUFFY. BOTH have backpacks and are unseen by ANGELA. C.J. gives them a glance.)

C.J. *(cont'd., leading her by the hand)*. Hey, come here.

(C.J. pulls ANGELA behind scrim. Lights rise upstage of scrim. DUFFY watches dumbfounded as C.J. pulls ANGELA to him and kisses her gently.)

DUFFY. Oh, man, is that our little Angela?

JEN *(glancing at them)*. What's she doing with C.J.?

DUFFY. Looks like she's doing the nasty.

JEN. Shut up, Duffy.

(Lights fade upstage of scrim as CANDICE rushes on to JEN and pulls her away. DUFFY listens.)

CANDICE. Jen, I've been looking all over for you! Why didn't you tell me about Angela and C.J.?

JEN *(flatly)*. What about 'em?

CANDICE. They're like *together*. Why am I telling you this? You're like her best friend.

JEN. I just got back from vacation last night.

CANDICE. Well, it's like serious.

JEN. Yeah?

CANDICE. Yeah. They've been going out like a week already.

JEN. Yeah?

CANDICE *(annoyed)*. Yeah. So we're picking her up this morning and he texts her to meet him. God, how lucky is Angela! C.J. is so freaking hot!

DUFFY. Yeah, he's a regular McStudy.

JEN & CANDICE. Shut up, Duffy.

DUFFY. Oh, I'll shut up but she better watch herself. He's got a real reputation.

CANDICE. Yeah, like you wish you had. (*Waving good-bye.*) See ya, Duffy. (*DUFFY exits, annoyed.*) Listen, seriously, Jen, maybe you better talk to her. I mean, you know, Ange's never gone out with anyone like C.J.

JEN. I gotta get to class, Candice. (*JEN exits.*)

CANDICE (*checking time on cell phone*). What?! I'm gonna be late! (*Calling off to JEN.*) Jen, why didn't you say something?!

(CANDICE exits. Bell rings, lights cross fade and music underscores as ANGELA and C.J. enter on opposite sides of the stage and stare at each other. As they speak they step closer and closer. Music fades.)

C.J. Hi...

ANGELA. Hi...

C.J. How was your day?

ANGELA. Cool. Math seemed good. And I really like Ms. Melton's history.

C.J. Yeah?...I really like you.

(ANGELA looks down, happy and embarrassed.)

C.J. (*cont'd., lifting her chin*). You like me?

ANGELA. You know I do.

C.J. A lot?

ANGELA (*giggling nervously*). Yeah...really a lot. (*They stare at each other a moment.*)

C.J. I wish it was Friday!

ANGELA. Yeah, me, too. That was so fun last week.

C.J. I've never met a girl who could keep up with me on a go-cart.

ANGELA. Yeah, well, I had years of experience beating my dad.

C.J. Hey, I got to get to practice.

ANGELA. Yeah, I've got to meet Jen and Erika and everybody.

C.J. What for?

ANGELA. I'm working on the paper. We're all on staff.

C.J. Oh. That must take a lot of time. Hey, I'll call you later. I'll pick you up and maybe we'll go study somewhere.

ANGELA. Sorry. My parents don't let me go out on a school night.

C.J. *(taking her hands)*. Just to study?

ANGELA. I—I really can't. Not on school nights. Sorry.

C.J. *(kissing her gently on the forehead)*. Oh. I'll call you later.

ANGELA. Okay, great! *(ANGELA, thrilled by his attention, starts to go.)*

C.J. *(assertively)*. Hey, you. *(ANGELA stops and turns.)*
You think about me, okay?

ANGELA *(happily)*. Okay.

(ANGELA exits. From another direction, ERIKA, CANDICE and SARA with backpacks enter gossiping loudly about ANGELA and C.J. Seeing C.J., they all try to contain their excitement. C.J. gives them a smile and wave and exits. They burst into laughter.)

CANDICE. Oh, my God, I nearly lost it!

SARA. He is so sexy!

ERIKA. Yeah, well, he sure wants everyone to think so.

SARA. Whatever. So when did you guys find out?

CANDICE. Just this morning.

SARA. You could have texted me! How did Angela get with him? I mean, face it, she's never been that popular with guys. And he's a senior.

(JEN enters.)

SARA *(cont'd)*. Hey, Jen, where's Angela?

JEN. I don't know.

SARA. Well, she's supposed to be here. C.J.'ll have practice, right? Hey! Maybe she'll hook us up with some serious hotties!

ERIKA. Right, Sara.

(ANGELA rushes on.)

ANGELA. Hey, guys.

SARA. Well?!

ANGELA. Well, what?

SARA. C.J.? You're going out with him? Seriously?

ANGELA. Well...yeah, I guess I am.

ERIKA. Well, are you or aren't you?

SARA. He's like a senior. That's kinda old.

ANGELA. Yeah, but he doesn't treat me like he's older.

SARA. Yeah, I heard he couldn't keep his hands off you this morning.

ANGELA. What?!

SARA *(teasingly)*. Never mind. So?

ANGELA. So... (*Bursting.*) So, he's like amazing! He's so romantic. I can't believe it. He's like calling or texting me like all the time!

(*GIRLS squeal with excitement.*)

SARA. How did you hook up?

(*As scene continues, following INSTANT MESSAGES appear, one at a time, on scrim.*)

CANDICE (*jumping in and "romantically" imitating ANGELA.*)
"We were at the movies and I was just in line for some popcorn and suddenly I hear this...voice whispering in my ear—"

***bballCJ800: jus got home.
had 2 msg u***

SARA. Blowing in your ear.

ANGELA. Whatever. He just said something and—

xoxangelaxo: :) !!!

SARA. What did he say?

ANGELA. Well...

***bballCJ800: hey baby i had
so much fun 2nite***

SARA. Tell me. Come on, you told them.

ERIKA. Tell her. She'll drive us nuts.

ANGELA. Well, he just said, “Hi... beautiful.” Like real soft and I turned around—

xoxangelaxo: hey me 2!

SARA. Oh, my God!

ANGELA. And there he was. I was like shaking all over.

bballCJ800: realy?

CANDICE. I guess!

SARA. He was alone?

ANGELA. Yeah.

xoxoangelaxo: it wz awsum!

SARA. I thought he was with that cheerleader.

CANDICE. That was last year.

ANGELA. I don’t know. I mean he wasn’t with anybody.

bballCJ800: i luvd being w/u. ur sooo gorgeous

SARA. And then—

CANDICE (*dramatically*). And then?! And then?!

xoxangelaxo: lol ur so funny

SARA. Shut up, Candice!

ANGELA. Well, he just stepped up and bought my popcorn. I mean he really wouldn’t let me pay so—

bballCJ800: no seriously. ur different frm other girls. ur special. realy special

SARA. So did you sit with him?

ANGELA. Well, yeah. I was with my cousins so—and then, well...

JEN. Hey, guys, I think we better get to the meeting.

(Scrim goes black.)

SARA. Uh, the meeting. *(Whining.)* The first day of school's so tiring. I just want to go home.

JEN. I'm going in. *(JEN exits upstage.)*

SARA. I hope working on the paper's not boring. I don't really like writing stuff.

ERIKA. That's what you mostly do on a newspaper, Sara.

SARA. Well, I want it to be fun. You guys talked me into it.

CANDICE. Yeah, right.

ANGELA. It'll be fun, Sara, really. I did it last year.

SARA *(grabbing ANGELA's arm)*. Hey, sit by me, Angela! You gotta tell me everything!

End of excerpt. Following pages contain production notes and after show discussion.

Production Notes

It is suggested that the play program contain the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline toll-free telephone number, 1-866-331-9474.

Screen, Projections, Sets and Lights

A large scrim, on which text messages, instant messages, photographs, letters and statistics are projected, is UC. In the Dallas Children's Theater premier production, the screen was gray and the projector, hanging from the grid, was run by a DVD player. A Microsoft Powerpoint software program may also be used.

The area upstage of the scrim must be large enough to serve as a small acting area and the lighting of this area must allow for its being lit while projections are viewed on the scrim.

To avoid interrupting the action with blackouts, lights generally cross fade and projections on scrim go black after lights rise for the upcoming scene.

The Dallas Children's Theater set consisted of two black benches, stage R and stage L, that were not moved.

Music

Contemporary music underscores several scenes and transitions, becoming more grating, dark and explicit as the abuse escalates.

Costumes

Angela has several costume changes. Except for the homecoming scene, she wears jeans throughout the play with different tops, sweaters, hoodies or coats. To indicate time passing, it is important that a definite costume change for Angela be made between the seduction scene at C.J.'s house and the makeup scene with girls. After makeup scene with girls, Angela's costume must cover her bruises.

Erika, Candice, Jen and Sara have fast costume changes between the homecoming scene and Jen's birthday party scene. After completing their action in the homecoming scene, each girl should cross upstage and exit for costume change.

Makeup

After the makeup scene with girls, Angela needs to apply the bruise makeup to her arms and chest. For subsequent scenes, the bruises must be covered by coats or hoodies. Bruises are revealed during scene when Angela writes "SLUT" on her forehead and phones Jen.

After the balloon scene with C.J., Angela must apply blood to her lip and a bruise to her face. During Angela's phone call to Jen in blackout, Jen can bring a bloody washcloth and stage blood and bruise makeup to Angela which Angela applies.

Balloons

Red, helium-filled balloons should be blown up immediately before the performance so there will be sufficient pressure in them to produce a loud popping effect when burst. Balloons are popped with a heart pin taken from the teddy bear C.J. gives to Angela.

The Color Red

To heighten the dramatic effect of the color red in the roses, balloons, C.J.'s flashing red text message, Angela's blood, and the word written with lipstick by Angela on her forehead and projected on the scrim, no other costumes, props or scenic elements were red in the Dallas Children's Theater production except Angela's shimmering, red dress and C.J.'s red tie at the homecoming dance and the addition of more red elements to C.J.'s costume as the play progressed, culminating with his red shirt in the final balloon scene.

Statistics

Statistics at the end of the play should be updated. Websites containing current statistics are <www.loveisnotabuse.com> and <www.loveisrespect.org>.

After-Show Discussion From Dallas Children's Theater Production

NOTE: Due to the play's strong content and likelihood that some audience members, both young people and adults, would have emotional responses as well as questions and concerns needing to be addressed, it was felt that an after-show discussion facilitated by community-based, health-care professionals specializing in the field of teen dating violence would be productive. After the curtain call, cast members remained on stage in order to encourage the audience to remain in the theater for the discussion. Facilitators were provided with the following questions and comments and also took questions from the audience. The discussion lasted approximately twenty minutes.

THEATER REPRESENTATIVE: At this time we invite everyone to stay for a discussion about issues raised in the play. It is my pleasure to introduce our facilitator, _____.

FACILITATOR: Hello, my name is _____. I am a [physician/psychiatrist/psychologist/counselor/other healthcare professional] OR I am with/from _____. [At this time you can also say a few words about your organization or the work you do.] I am here today to facilitate a discussion with you about issues raised in the play. Please direct all questions to me, not to the cast. And we need comments to be as brief and to the point as possible. Let's begin.

Raise your hand if you recognized any of the behaviors or situations from the play.

Why was Angela attracted to C.J.?

What were some of the red flags that made you think that this relationship could be abusive?

How did Angela's relationship with C.J. affect other areas of her life?

Who was responsible for the violence in the relationship? C.J., Angela, or both?

“Victim blaming” is a term we use when victims are blamed for abuse. In this play, Angela was the victim and C.J. was clearly the abuser. If we blame Angela for the abuse, we are taking the responsibility away from C.J. No matter what she may have done, it is always the abuser's choice to be violent and abusive. It is never the victim's fault.

So, let's ask that question again, who is responsible for the violence in the relationship?

During the play we saw C.J. pressuring Angela sexually. At first, Angela may have wanted to be sexual with C.J., but did she always consent to sex?

It is important to point out that “no” means “no” at any stage of a sexual encounter even if a partner has consented earlier in the encounter or if the parties have had sexual relations before. A partner must be permitted to change his/her mind at any time.

What was the meaning of C.J.’s letter?

During the play, we saw Jen and Sam involved in a healthy relationship. What made you know this relationship was healthy?

What can you do if you know someone who is in an unhealthy or abusive relationship?

At this time I’d like to open it up for you to share thoughts, comments or any questions.

Remember, the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when a couple breaks up. If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship, please talk to someone and make a plan to leave the relationship safely. For more information on safety planning or to get more information on teen dating violence, please stop by the resource table in the lobby. [Printed resources included materials from local domestic violence agencies and information about dating violence websites such as <www.loveisnotabuse.com> and <www.loveisrespect.org>. In addition, the play program contained the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline toll-free telephone number, 1-866-331-9474.]

This play deals with a difficult and important subject. It would be very normal to have a strong emotional reaction when thinking about the story and the characters, while you're watching it or later on. If you do, please make sure you talk to a close friend, trusted adult or professional counselor.