

Excerpt terms and conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest you read the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

**American Association of
Community Theatre AACT
NewPlayFest Winning Plays:
Volume 5 (2022)**

Escaping the Labyrinth by
THOMAS HISCHAK

Unpacking Mother by
KAREN SCHAEFFER

MLM Is for Murder (or, Your Side Hustle Is Killing Us) by
JOHN BAVOSO

The Café Mocha Murders by
DEANNA STRASSE

Of Men and Cars by
JIM GEOGHAN

Launch Day (Love Stories From the Year 2108) by
MICHAEL HIGGINS

Dramatic Publishing Company
Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., 311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMXXIII by
DRAMATIC PUBLISHING

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved

(AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE AACT
NEWPLAYFEST WINNING PLAYS: VOLUME 5 [2022])

ISBN: 978-1-61959-279-7

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., of Woodstock, Illinois.”

MLM Is for Murder (or, Your Side Hustle Is Killing Us)

By
JOHN BAVOSO

©MMXXIII by JOHN BAVOSO

Printed in the United States of America

All Rights Reserved

(MLM IS FOR MURDER [OR, YOUR SIDE HUSTLE IS KILLING US])

For inquiries concerning all other rights, contact

Dramatic Publishing Company

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098 • Phone: (815) 338-7170

MLM Is for Murder (or, Your Side Hustle Is Killing Us) received its world premier production at Center Stage Theatre at the Midland Center for the Arts in Midland, Mich., opening on Feb. 25, 2022.

CAST:

MINERVA ROSS Aja Jade Philpot
FELICITY EVANSTON Ashley Potts
JASON EVANSTON Dan Kettler
SIENNA ROSS Stephanie Wimer
WOMAN..... Lindsay Van Arsdale
UNDERSTUDY..... Rebecca Krohn

PRODUCTION:

Director Chad William Baker
Dramaturg Kathy Pingel
Scenic Design..... Evan Lewis
Lighting Design JR Bornemann
Sound DesignMaxie Froelicher
Costume Design.....Stephanie Wimer
Properties Design..... Chad William Baker
Intimacy Director..... Elaine Dougherty
Fight Director..... Tommy Wedge
Stage ManagerKatie Short

In addition to the information on the Important Billing and Credit Requirements page (p. 3), all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“MLM Is for Murder (or, Your Side Hustle Is Killing Us) was premiered in the American Association of Community Theatre’s AACT NewPlayFest by Center Stage Theatre at the Midland Center for the Arts in Midland, Mich.”

MLM Is for Murder (or, Your Side Hustle Is Killing Us)

CHARACTERS

FELICITY EVANSTON: A white woman. Stay-at-home Mormon mother and the latest independent fashion consultant for Linen & Fate. Outwardly bubbly and mild-mannered, she was very popular in high school.

MINERVA ROSS: A woman of color, the same age as Felicity. Never fit in in her small, Utah hometown and is proud of how far she's come—even if she desperately wants out of her “career.” Easily obsessed, she's searching for her passion.

JASON EVANSTON: A white man, Felicity's husband. An unassuming but well-meaning man who's happy acting out the script that's been written for his life. Is more than a little wary of his wife's new business venture.

SIENNA ROSS: A woman of any race, Minerva's wife. Has a time-consuming job she loves, but works to find some balance. Encouraging of her wife's passions to a point, but also concerned about how they threaten to consume her.

WOMAN: A woman of any age and race who plays a variety of unnamed characters as well as **FOUNDER**, **CHERYL**, **BIANCA** and **AMBER**.

TIME: Right now.

PLACE: A small town in Utah; Washington, D.C.; the Internet; memory.

PRODUCTION NOTES

There are a variety of voices (mostly those of podcasters) and projections. These are merely suggestions. If you'd like to replicate these with an actor on stage or a similarly low-tech solution, go for it.

“Work is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying.”

—Studs Terkel

“America loves a whore. We’re a nation of whores, after all—just try holding down a job in this great land of ours without compromising your values and shortchanging your best ideas.”

—Heather Havrilesky

MLM Is for Murder (or, Your Side Hustle Is Killing Us)

Scene 1

(A single spotlight appears on a dark stage into which the FOUNDER walks. She is wearing way too much makeup and brightly colored clothing in an array of cacophonous prints in stark contrast to the darkness that surrounds her. Some generically New Age or innocuously upbeat music plays softly in the background.)

FOUNDER. Linen & Fate. *(Beat.)* Linen ... and fate. I'm here to tell you what those two little words mean to me. Linen. And fate. The number-one question I get from new independent fashion consultants is, "Why the name 'Linen & Fate'?" So, let's break it down for a moment. Linen. *(Puts her right hand out.)* Fate. *(Puts out her left.)* I see them as two sides of the same coin. *(Brings her hands together like she's praying.)* Because this company—this *opportunity*—isn't about clothes, not really. Clothing is temporary—although Linen & Fate fine apparel is made from only the highest-quality fabric using the most state-of-the-art techniques to last a lifetime ... given proper care. Fashion changes by the season, but we give you, our independent fashion consultants, something that will last a lifetime—the freedom and resources you need to take control of your destiny and hunt down your dreams.

(FELICITY EVANSTON enters and begins slowly and silently circling the FOUNDER. The FOUNDER does not see or acknowledge her.)

FOUNDER *(cont'd)*. I met a woman the other day at one of our Super Success Saturday workshops, and she just came right up to me, tears running down her face, saying that I changed her life. That before she joined Linen & Fate, she had been working herself to death behind a desk day in and day out at a corporate job, creating success and blessings for her bosses and their families—people who would replace her tomorrow without another thought if she

dropped dead today. The worst part, she said, was that she had to leave her only child—her beautiful baby boy, Jaxton—every morning to repeat the same day over and over. Then, one day, when he’s a little older, he called the woman at the daycare “Mommy.” Can you imagine that? I’m sorry, it just tears my heart into little pieces thinking about it.

(She takes a moment to collect herself.)

FOUNDER *(cont’d)*. Anyway, she went home that night and after she put her son to bed, she saw one of her girlfriends go live on Facebook. This woman was standing in a room full of beautiful clothes, and hundreds of people were watching her and leaving comments and buying these pieces. And, so, she immediately shot her friend a Facebook message and ... well, you can probably guess how the rest goes, can’t you?

(As she’s speaking, FELICITY exits and returns wearing the same outfit as the FOUNDER, whom she continues to circle, unseen.)

FOUNDER *(cont’d)*. So, this woman finally says to me that with the money she’s making from her Linen & Fate online boutique, she could quit that job she hated so much and spend all day with her son. And she gets to make other women—other busy moms—smile with comfortable, stylish clothing that fits their bodies and makes them feel gorgeous. And by now she’s stopped crying and she’s beaming ear to ear, and she says, “And that’s how you changed my life.” And I took her by the hands and I looked into her big, beautiful eyes and I said, “No, that’s how *you* changed your life!” And then we both just turned into the biggest crybabies you’ve ever seen! Am I telling you this to toot my own horn? Of course not. *I’m* just the messenger—and Linen & Fate is merely a way of tapping into your true potential and opening doors for your family you never dreamed possible. And so, my fellow #BossBabes, I’m here to welcome you to the Linen & Fate family, and let you know that I will walk with you every step of the way. The only question left to ask is: Where will this journey take you?

(The spotlight on the FOUNDER goes out and flashes on FELICITY, standing behind bars, as the sound of a jail cell door being closed can be heard. Then, blackout.)

Scene 2

(Lights up on MINERVA ROSS sitting at a computer at a nondescript desk. She's scrolling through her Facebook news feed, then her Twitter feed. She switches back and forth aimlessly until CHERYL appears over her shoulder, causing her to jump in her seat.)

MINERVA. Cheryl, hi! You scared me.

CHERYL. Sorry! I tend to sneak up on people. My husband says I should wear a bell. *(Beat.)* You know, like a cat.

MINERVA. Got it, yeah. Not a bad idea.

CHERYL. I'll be sure to tell Todd you think so!

MINERVA. So, uh, is that it / or ... ?

CHERYL. Sorry! I have a terminal case of the Mondays! I'm here to chat about the Peterson report, if you've got a minute?

MINERVA. I'm actually kinda buried—

CHERYL. Don't worry, this will only take a minute.

MINERVA. Alrighty then ...

CHERYL. Awesome! So, you know I think you do great work here, and we're *so* lucky to have you—

MINERVA. But ...

CHERYL. But, well, we've been working on this project for months, and we really want to “wow” this client—it's a big one, you know.

MINERVA. I've heard.

CHERYL. Yeah, so, the draft you sent us this morning—

MINERVA. Yeah?

CHERYL. Well, we were hoping for something more ... design-y?

MINERVA. Design-y?

CHERYL. You know. A little ... jazzier?

MINERVA. Jazzier?

CHERYL. More bells and whistles? Maybe an icon or two? There's just so much ... *white space*. Could we maybe add some photos, to break up the text a little bit?

MINERVA. I looked in the folder and I didn't see any / photos—

CHERYL. Yeah, we don't have any. We just figured you could ... find some?

MINERVA. Where, exactly?

CHERYL. How should I know? You're the expert, aren't you?!

MINERVA. Am I?

CHERYL. Look, I would never tell you how to do your job—there’s a reason I sit upstairs, not down here—but we can’t show this to the client. We promised them a slick, highly designed product / and ...

MINERVA. *We* promised them?

CHERYL. It doesn’t matter who promised them—a promise was made. And if we want them to ever hire us again, we need to deliver on our promise. When can I have a new draft?

MINERVA. Hmmm, sorry, Cheryl, I’m totally slammed this week. I can probably get you something to look at by COB Friday?

CHERYL. There’s no way we could get it sooner?

MINERVA. Sorry, I’m juggling several other deadlines.

CHERYL. OK, I’ll give the client a heads-up that the designed draft will be a few days late. Any strings you could pull would be much appreciated.

MINERVA. Yeah, sure. I’ll keep you posted.

CHERYL. Thanks, Minerva. I don’t know what I’d do without you!

MINERVA. No worries. Happy to help.

(CHERYL exits. MINERVA returns to her social media feeds and generally wasting time. Then, a message pops up on her Facebook page. As she reads it, FELICITY enters to narrate, using hand gestures to indicate what’s being typed. The WOMAN stays on stage and recites the names of the emojis in an affectless voice.)

FELICITY. Minnie Meyers! *[Three waving hand emojis.]*

MINERVA *(out loud)*. Ugh, not this bitch.

FELICITY. It’s Felicity Buck!! *[Sun with face emoji.]* From high school!! *[School emoji; women with bunny ears emoji; sparkling heart emoji.]*

MINERVA. Hey, Felicity. Yeah, I remember. It’s Minerva Ross now ... nobody’s called me Minnie since I was a teenager.

FELICITY. Congrats!! *[Party popper emoji.]* I’m married, too!! *[Ring emoji; couple with heart emoji; family: man, woman, boy, boy emoji.]* U remember Jason?? *[Flexed bicep emoji.]* From the swim team?? *[Man swimming emoji; 1st place medal emoji.]*

MINERVA. You married Jason Evanston?

FELICITY. About two weeks after he got back from his mission!!
[Latin cross emoji; airplane emoji; wedding emoji.] But u were long gone by then. *[Woman running emoji.]* What's ur lucky guy's name?? *[Exclamation question mark emoji.]*

MINERVA. Her name's Sienna.

FELICITY. Oh ... ur still ...

MINERVA. Going to hell? Yep. You still Mormon?

FELICITY. We just did Baptism for the Dead last week. *[Smiling face with halo emoji.]*

MINERVA. *[Thumbs up emoji.]*

FELICITY. I know it's been a minute since we've chatted, *[Hourglass not done emoji.]* but I wanted to personally invite u to join my group!! *[Women holding hands emoji.]*

MINERVA *(out loud as she cracks her knuckles)*. Here we go! *(Via Messenger.)* What kind of group?

FELICITY. Oh, it's just a group of rly gr8 gals who like to chit-chat about fashion and silly stuff!! *[Nail polish emoji; dress emoji; woman tipping hand emoji.]*

MINERVA *(out loud)*. Come on... you can do it... close the loop.

FELICITY. Have u heard of a company called Linen & Fate?
[Shopping bag emoji.]

MINERVA *(out loud, with her hands over her head)*. The eagle has landed! *(She realizes she's shouting and pretends to be working intently. She resumes typing.)* Nope. What's that?

FELICITY. It's only the comfiest clothes in the whole world!!
[Woman's clothes emoji.] Their leggings are INSANE!! *[Jeans emoji; raising hands emoji.]*

MINERVA. I don't wear leggings ... I have a job.

FELICITY. Lol *[Rolling on the floor laughing emoji.]* Ur not in the office 24/7 are you? *[Woman office worker emoji; office building emoji; five o'clock emoji.]*

MINERVA. You got me there.

FELICITY. So, can I add you to my group? No strings! *[Woman gesturing NO emoji.]* But once u see how cute and flattering the clothes are, I promise I'm not going to be able to stop u from ordering. *[Money with wings emoji.]* I swear!! *[Raised hand emoji.]* They're ah-mazing!! *[Heart exclamation emoji.]*

MINERVA. Sure, go ahead. I'm always down to help a friend.

FELICITY. Really?! [*Astonished face emoji.*] Omg, thank u! [*Folded hands emoji.*] I promise u won't regret it! [*Heart eyes emoji.*]

(FELICITY and the WOMAN exit as MINERVA clicks away from the website.)

MINERVA. You bet I won't. *(Her cellphone rings, and she answers.)*
Hey, babe. Not much, just watching a car crash in real time. No, sorry, never mind. Yeah, I'll pick something up on the way. Get home as soon as you can. Love you. Bye.

(She hangs up the phone and turns off her computer, putting her earbuds in and grabbing her messenger bag as she walks out. As she walks, she listens to a series of podcasts and stops to pick up some takeout food. The following can either be a voiceover recording, or the actors can come out and perform them live.)

PODCASTER 1 (*V.O., could be SIENNA*). Yo, yo, yo, welcome to another episode of *Homicide Makes Me Horny!* (*Kiss and moan sound effect.*) I'm your hostess with the moistest, Jen.

PODCASTER 2 (*V.O., could be WOMAN*). And I'm her bosom buddy, Jackie. And today we're playing our favorite game—"Who'd You Rather: Serial Killer Edition."

PODCASTER 1 (*V.O.*). OK, let's go big with the first one. Jackie, who'd you rather: Ted Bundy or Jeffrey Dahmer.

PODCASTER 2 (*V.O.*). Oh, damn! This is tough!

PODCASTER 1 (*V.O.*). Come on, just talk it out with me.

PODCASTER 2 (*V.O.*). I mean, Dahmer is like a Nordic god, all blond-haired, blue-eyed snackiness. And, um, he'd know how to eat me out ...

PODCASTER 1 (*V.O.*). OMG, you're so bad!

PODCASTER 2 (*V.O.*). But Bundy has that hot-professor-on-spring-break kind of look? You know I love a zaddy.

PODCASTER 1 (*V.O.*). I know you do, girl! But you've got to choose one.

PODCASTER 2 (*V.O.*). This is so hard! OK, this is a total cop-out, but ... I'm pretty obviously not Jeffrey's type—so, I'm gonna go with Ted!

PODCASTER 1 (*V.O.*). Winner, winner, you're no man's dinner!

(Radio static.)

PODCASTER 3 (*V.O., could be JASON*). How well do you know your neighbors? What secrets are hiding behind front doors and lace curtains? That's what we're going to try to discover during this season of *Small Town Sleuth*. My name is Tom, and I have no journalistic or investigative experience, but you'll come with me as I wander around an unsuspecting rural area, annoying everyone with questions about a very old cold case while talking in this voice, which is meant to convey how serious I am about this project. Follow along in real time—since I don't know how this story will end, I'm gonna keep going until neither of us are satisfied and we both just kind of give up.

(Radio static.)

PODCASTER 4 (*V.O., could be FELICITY*). Welcome to *Bad, Bad Man*, a last-ditch attempt by a failing print newspaper to stay relevant with people who don't like to read. The story you're about to hear would take about five minutes to tell you in a bar, but we're going to stretch it out to at least eleven forty-minute episodes, each of which are approximately sixty-five percent ads for mattresses and meal kit delivery services. This will still not get you to subscribe to our newspaper. *Please* subscribe to our newspaper.

Scene 3

(MINERVA arrives home to find SIENNA ROSS waiting for her.)

MINERVA. Hey! What are you doing here?

SIENNA. Nice to see you, too!

MINERVA. I thought you had a ton of work to take care of ...

SIENNA. I do, but I heard the disappointment in your voice and decided it could wait until tomorrow.

MINERVA. Huh. I'll have to keep that in mind for the future.

(They kiss.)

SIENNA. What's for dinner?

MINERVA. New Vietnamese place opened on the corner. The orange shrimp looked phenomenal.

SIENNA. It smells *incredible*. Thank you.

(The following occurs as MINERVA goes about transferring the food from the takeout container to two plates, and SIENNA opens a bottle of wine and pours two glasses.)

SIENNA (*cont'd*). So, how was your day?

MINERVA. Oh, you know, living the nightmare.

SIENNA. That bad?

MINERVA. Not really, just the same. Cheryl again. She actually used the word “design-y” today.

SIENNA. Oh! I think that’s the last square on my bingo card! The one of things not to say to a graphic designer.

MINERVA. I don’t know why I spent all that money on art school when, apparently, everyone with an Instagram account is an expert at design.

SIENNA. I’m sorry. You know how talented I think you are—

MINERVA. You wanna hire me instead?

SIENNA. Sure. But then we’d need to stop sleeping together.

MINERVA. Ugh. Not worth it. (*Beat.*) How was *your* day?

SIENNA. Oh, um, the absolute worst. It’s like ... every five minutes Mark comes running into my office screaming about fire drills and tight deadlines, and it’s like, well if you didn’t sit on the syllabus for eight days, then we wouldn’t have any fires to put out / in the first place—

MINERVA. *Such* a Mark move.

SIENNA. So, yeah. Just terrible.

MINERVA. It’s super adorable, but you don’t have to pretend to hate your job just to make me feel better.

SIENNA. OK, thank you, because Mark is actually *very* responsible. (*Beat.*) I’m sorry. Is it time to start job searching again?

MINERVA. I don’t know. I’m just not sure I’m ever going to find something better.

SIENNA. Don’t say that! There’s gotta be something out there that’s the right fit.

MINERVA. Does there, though? I’m not so sure anymore. You know that bullshit cliché, “Do what you love and you’ll never work a day in your life?” I’m starting to feel like I could be doing my favorite thing in the whole world, but because some

middle manager with a God complex is telling me when to do it and what to wear while doing it, I'll end up hating it. It's like how I despised every book I read in college, even though they were objectively very good books, just because they were assigned to me by some professor. No offense.

SIENNA. OK, but you've still gotta work ...

MINERVA. Only because you're not holding up your end of the sugar mama bargain.

SIENNA. Ha! You're shit out of luck, kid.

MINERVA. In that case, you're lucky you're hot. *(They kiss.)* I just ... I get so sad thinking about how many years' worth of boring, unfulfilling workdays I have in front of me.

SIENNA. You know what, let's change the subject. Anything good happen today?

MINERVA. Yes! I got to play my favorite game again!

SIENNA. Field hockey?

MINERVA. Ha ha. Even better: Fucking with a hunbot!

SIENNA. Come again?

MINERVA. This girl I went to high school with—who I hated, obviously, because she was a girl who went to my high school—invited me to join her Linen & Fate group.

SIENNA. Linen & Fate? That sounds like a farm-to-table restaurant in Shaw.

MINERVA. Nowhere near that cool. It's just the latest in a long line of pyramid schemes my former classmates have been scammed into joining. Eye-searingly ugly leggings is the flavor of the month, I think.

SIENNA. Ohhhh. One of those ... there's an acronym for that, I think?

MINERVA. MLM—multilevel marketing. Or “direct sales” if you're trying to be fancy and/or fool the FTC.

SIENNA. Right, yes! I got asked to join one of those once.

(MINERVA gestures for her to go on.)

SIENNA *(cont'd)*. This woman in grad school I had a huge crush on invited me to this wine-and-cheese party at her apartment. And when I get there, all dressed up and chenin blanc in hand, there's this lady doing a presentation about some snake oil skincare products. At one point, she actually pointed to me and told me I could “really benefit from the Hydro Blast Rejuvenation Serum.”

MINERVA. She didn't!

SIENNA. She did, which is just a small step below “bless your heart” on the passive-aggressive scale.

MINERVA. What did you do?

SIENNA. After about ten minutes of her driveling on, I walked up to the hostess and said, “Don't ever invite me to a party where you expect me to buy something again,” grabbed the bottle of wine I brought and stormed out. We never spoke again.

MINERVA. Badass! (*They high-five.*) Is that seriously the only time you've been hit up?

SIENNA. Yeah, I think so.

MINERVA. That's amazing. I get like three invites a day. And there's an MLM for everything now—makeup, jewelry, clothes, essential oils, weight loss shakes, body wraps, supplements, candles, sex toys—you name it! Before we met, I used to join all the groups just to mess with them until they kicked me out.

SIENNA. Mess with them how?

MINERVA. Just stupid stuff. I'd try to add a bunch of dudes to the group or leave dumb, random comments on their albums. Sometimes, if I was really annoyed, I'd claim tons of items and then never pay my invoices. It wasn't exactly mature, but it helped to pass the time. I mostly stopped when we got together, because I had you to entertain me.

SIENNA. I can't believe you got propositioned enough to make a game of it.

MINERVA. Sometimes I forget you didn't experience the joy of growing up in the beehive state.

SIENNA. What does that have to do with it?

MINERVA. Fun fact—direct sales is the number-two industry in Utah, and it has more MLMs per capita than any other state.

SIENNA. OK, random.

MINERVA. Except not really. Utah has lots of Mormons and they are every MLM's wet dream.

SIENNA. I bet you're gonna tell me why ...

MINERVA. Just think about it ... a huge number of well-educated stay-at-home moms, evangelists who know how to have a door slammed in their face and keep on smiling, and a community already accustomed to a hierarchical structure that preaches the prosperity gospel.

SIENNA. That's ... wow. I guess I never thought of it that way.

MINERVA. The saddest part is, a huge number of these companies are owned by members of the LDS church, so they're taking advantage of their own communities. It's a perfect storm of predation.

SIENNA. If I didn't know any better, I'd think you ... felt bad for these women?

MINERVA. In general, sure. It's fucked. The specific women who made my life a living hell in high school? Let's just say their exploitation isn't keeping me up at night.

SIENNA. *You* let the Stepford Daughters push you around?!

MINERVA. Again, you obviously didn't grow up as an atheist, [actor's race/ethnicity], baby dyke in the middle of Mormon Disneyland.

(A school bell rings. FELICITY enters, dressed as she would be in high school. MINERVA throws on a black hoodie and becomes the younger version of herself as well, all nervous introversion.)

YOUNG FELICITY. Hey, Minnie.

YOUNG MINERVA. M-me?

YOUNG FELICITY. Yeah, of course you, silly. Do you know any other Minnies? *(Beat.)* How fun was the cast party this weekend?!

YOUNG MINERVA. W-what cast party?

YOUNG FELICITY. Wait, you weren't there?

YOUNG MINERVA. I didn't know there was a cast party?

YOUNG FELICITY. How could you not know? We announced it at the preshow prayer circle. *(Beat.)* Oh, that's right, you refuse to join those.

YOUNG MINERVA. This is a *public* school, Felicity.

YOUNG FELICITY. So, you think that makes it OK to be *(Shouting.)* a devil worshiper?

SIENNA. Wait, she straight-up called you satanic?

(FELICITY exits, and MINERVA takes off the hoodie.)

MINERVA. That may have been some editorializing on my part, but those were the vibes, yeah.

SIENNA. Wow. I had no idea. So, no high-school reunions for you?

MINERVA. Oh, they had a reunion last year—I wasn't invited! It was just a very lonely way of growing up.

SIENNA (*wrapping her up in a hug*). Yeah, but look how far you've come, while she's stuck in the same small town trying to sell crappy clothes. Living well really is the best revenge.

MINERVA. I know! But that doesn't mean actual revenge can't also be pretty good revenge.

(They laugh and share a lingering kiss, after which MINERVA gets up and starts to clear the table.)

SIENNA. Want me to do the dishes since you picked up dinner?

MINERVA. That's OK, I've got it. I've got a podcast to finish.

SIENNA. Let me guess, a hagiography of some mass murderer?

MINERVA. Come on, you know they're not like that.

SIENNA. I just don't like how they turn these terrible men into celebrities.

MINERVA. Can't you just let me have this one small bit of dark joy? Please?

SIENNA. Fine. (*Beat.*) But the writing on some of them is so bad!

MINERVA. Here we go ...

SIENNA. All I'm saying is, just because anyone *can* make a podcast, it doesn't mean everyone *should*.

MINERVA. Are you done?

SIENNA. Yes. I'm sorry. I'm going to take a shower. Join me when you're done?

MINERVA. Obviously.

(SIENNA kisses her on the cheek and exits. MINERVA resumes clearing the table.)

MINERVA (*cont'd*). Alexa, play *Stranger Danger*.

(The theme song starts to play, but MINERVA freezes in her tracks.)

MINERVA (*cont'd*). Alexa, Google "How to start a podcast."

(The lights fade as she continues to clear the table.)