

The Tragic Ecstasy of Girlhood

A poetic drama by Kira Rockwell

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AMERICA'S GIRLS

5 Young Women

CHARLIE (16) Biracial. An anxious realist.

ISABEL "IZZY" (14) Latina, Mexican-American. Audi's sister. A naive explorer.

ADRIANA "AUDI" (16) Latina, Mexican-American. Izzy's older sister. A bold general.

MERCY (15) Black. A strong-willed optimist.

AMBER (16) White. A fading memory.

SHORT SUMMARY: *After the sudden death of a housemate, four teenage girls living in a group home try to combat their grief. A poetic drama that explores the chrysalis of female adolescence and demands that our attention be on the youth of America who live in the shadows of a broken system.*

PLACE

Central Texas

TIME

Two weeks after Amber's death and two weeks before.

SET

Minimal and flexible, on the brink of disappearing

A NOTE ABOUT THE SETTING

The girls live in a residential treatment facility that houses youth who come from hard places, everyone has a different story that brings them here, whether it be unsafe family situations or personal mental health struggles. This is not an orphanage, juvenile detention center, mental hospital, or rehab facility, but at times it feels like it could be all of these things combined into one place.

AMBER

Normal is just a setting on a laundry machine.

CHARLIE

Shut the ████ up.

AMBER

Do you think you I should try and find my birth mom?

CHARLIE

Do you want to?

AMBER

Maybe? I don't know. My case worker keeps telling me I should. She's not like forcing me. She's nice, I like her. She just thinks it might help me.

CHARLIE

Personally, I think it's better to be in the dark about stuff like that.

AMBER

Yeah, maybe. (Beat) Okay, I have another question for you.

CHARLIE

What?

AMBER

It's a very serious question.

CHARLIE

Okay...

AMBER

Have you ever seen the interior of your eyelids?

CHARLIE

No, I don't think so.

AMBER

Right?! Because when you close your eyes it's just dark. But sometimes you'll see colors like red or yellow or white, and like what is that? What are you seeing? Is that my eyelid? Do my eyelids change color? And like the frustrating thing is that no matter how hard I try I can't ever actually see my eyelids. Like really see them.

CHARLIE

Are you high right now?

AMBER

No! Dude, I told you this was a very serious question. It keeps me up at night.

CHARLIE

What question are you even asking?

AMBER

Why can't we see the interior of our eyelids?! Because if there was a light inside of me then maybe I could see them. Maybe I would be able to see all inside of me. Like not only would I be able to see my eyelids but then I could see my eye sockets and my brain. But I can't. There is no light. And I don't understand why. Why is the light shut off inside of me? What if the secrets to life our written on the inside of our eyelids?

CHALRIE

Then whoever left them there is a cruel and twisted individual.

AMBER

Are you making fun of me?

CHARLIE

No. Never.

AMBER closes her eyes.

AMBER

Close your eyes, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Why?

AMBER

So we can find the answers to life.

CHARLIE

Okay they're closed. Now what?

AMBER

Try and focus. Try and turn on the light.

CHARLIE takes a deep breath. A moment passes.

AMBER

What do you see?

CHARLIE

Dots.

AMBER

What color dots?

CHARLIE

Red.

Really? AMBER

What do you see? CHARLIE

Nothing. It's just dark. AMBER

How about now? CHARLIE

CHARLIE smacks AMBER on the head.

Ow, that hurt! AMBER

Sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you. CHARLIE
(laughing)

How rude— AMBER
(jokingly)

What did you see? CHARLIE

Nothing because you hit me on the freaking head. AMBER

I'm sorry. Will you forgive me? CHARLIE

Only if you let me do it to you. AMBER

But you're going to hit me so hard. CHARLIE

No, I won't. I'll use the same amount of force you used on me. AMBER

Okay, fine. Go ahead, hit me. CHARLIE

Are you ready? AMBER

CHARLIE
Don't tell me when you're gonna do it, just do it. (*AMBER hits CHARLIE*) Ow!

AMBER
Did you see anything?

CHARLIE
No. Do it again.

AMBER
What?

CHARLIE
Hit me again.

AMBER
Okay.

AMBER hits CHARLIE.

CHARLIE
I see something!

AMBER
Seriously?

CHARLIE
Yes, hit me again!

AMBER hits her again.

CHARLIE
I see a light!

AMBER hits her again.

CHARLIE
A white light.

AMBER hits her again.

CHARLIE
And I see a message.

AMBER
What does it say?

CHARLIE

(She opens her eyes.) I don't know. I can't read it. I can feel it.

They kiss for the first time. A moment.

AMBER

Did you really see something?

CHARLIE

Yeah, but I didn't *see* it. If that makes any sense.

AMBER

Yeah, it makes sense.

CHARLIE

All I know is that I saw it best when you kissed me.

A breath. They kiss again. Softer and with more intention.

Lights transition.