

Birthday in the Bronx

For Raquel

By Paul Hufker

Characters: Rocky, 14, LatinX

Kayster: 50's white male radio host

LaBarrera: 50's white male radio host

*Two additional actors, 1m, 1w, can double for a number of different roles, like:

TEETH, LIPS, and HAIR – ROCKY'S roommates, 3 similar white girls, 15 years old, all played by one actress

MI MAMA – ROCKY'S Puerto Rican mother

DOCTOR – a white (ostensibly male) DOCTOR

CITY COUNCIL PERSON – 30's-50's – LatinX

TEACHER – A white, 50's-60's teacher

COACH – a white (ostensibly male) COACH

BABY LAMB – a baby lamb ROCKY finds and saves

Author's Note:

This play centers around a bright and brimming-with-talent LatinX girl named – Rocky (Raquel) born in a really tough neighborhood in the South Bronx. She gets a scholarship to a fancy prep high school (the kind presidents attend). She's damn good at field hockey, and that's what her scholarship is for, but she's plenty smart too, although no teachers seem much concerned with that. And the girls here – the mostly all-white girls here – sure, they call her sp*ck behind her *back*, but...are things getting worse? They're angrier and more aggressive by the second. Did they pee on Rocky's bed sheets?

Meanwhile, two white, male sports radio hosts (big personality, fast-talking, always over the top) are intently following Rocky's career, as Christmas approaches and they begin to assemble a model train town in their studio called *KayVille* (after one of the hosts names', *KAYSTER*) – you know the kind – picture-perfect, plastic – a model train town which their station makes a big deal out of every year (they're simulcast on radio and TV at the same time so they want the radio booth they broadcast in to be nice and Christmasy) when *KayVille*, their annual tradition, seems to take on a dark new meaning...

Wouldn't it be nice, one of them wonders, if the world were an all-plastic, all-white, all-control-able train town, always at Christmas?

Scene I:

Lights up on a bloody, brown girl, in a field hockey uniform, holding a field hockey stick and running in place. Fierce.

Elsewhere, lights up on two white, male, 50+ radio hosts in a darkened, small radio booth. They have headphones on and mikes in front of their faces. They are in the middle of calling an exciting game.

KAYSTER: *(beside himself)* ay yai yai, it's MUD, her little legs are pumping away but she's running in place because of the MUD – no grass, no green, just divots of brown and dead, dead earth – wait now, wait, there she goes in her plaid skirt three inches below the knee and her angry black hair and her Harrow stick and she's in full blur, running like the police are after her – her team is LOSING, way behind -- oh they're catching up! -- It's tied! Because of HER, because out of nowhere, her feet are no longer caked in the mud and it's up! It's up! It's up in the air! Where will it land? Oh god, everything rides on this one moment as the ball goes up...

...UP...

...AAAAAAND...

IN! SHE'S PUT IT IN, SHE'S BURIED IT, DEEP IN THE BACK OF THE NET, GO GET THE PALLBEARERS BECAUSE THIS ONE WAS BURIED, TURN OUT THE LIGHTS, THE PARTY'S OVER, THAT'S ALL SHE WROTE, KISS IT GOODBYE, BURIED IN THE BACK OF THE NET.

...buried...

Pause as KAYSTER pants and catches his breath.

KAYSTER: That's the way this one ends.

The lights change—ROCKY slumps into an exhausted pile, head down, crumpled in a small spot, while the radio hosts go from in-game broadcast to post-show.

LABARRERA: Ya know this team is *stuck* and I don't see a way around it. They're caught in the / Stone Age.

KAYSTER: /well look at the *field*, I mean.

LABARRERA: The conditions of the field, yea, right, exactly, my point is that this team/ is stuck in the *Stone Age*.

KAYSTER: Tell me how you expect me to *get up every day* and root for this high school girl's field hockey team when they

LABARRERA: When the other team's field is as pristine as

KAYSTER: like *my father* rooted for this girl's field hockey team, when

LABARRERA: My father, too.

KAYSTER: When they won't simply

BOTH: *Spend the money.*

KAYSTER: Spend the /money.

LABARRERA: /spend the money.

KAYSTER: The condition of the field! Would Babe Ruth walk ou—would *Tom Brady* walk out there

LABARRERA: Jerry Rice!

KAYSTER: Would *Tom Brady* walk out there if conditions were /

LABARRERA: /God no, *jesus* no!

The KAYSTER takes a breath to really lean in and tell us something.

KAYSTER: I understand it's a public high school. I understand funding is tight. I'm not so naïve that I -- but when I am expected to put my hard-earned integrity, carry my hope around in a basket, and just *dump* it at the feet of the teams I love,

LABARRERA: and they won't even put a proper *playing surface* down

KAYSTER: It's embarrassing. While the *other team's* field is /immaculate.

LABARRERA: No, no, it's worse. It's *subversive*.

LABARRERA loves his word, KAYSTER contemplates.

KAYSTER: Well, one thing is for sure, number ten is going places.

LABARRERA: Rack-I.

KAYSTER: The turf quality couldn't even *slow her down!*

LABARRERA: She's playing for a losing school, but that number 10 -- what's her last name?

KAYSTER: Even the bigs of field hockey aren't very big, admittedly, but it's players like -- that can't be her name -- Rack-I? --

LABARRERA: Rhymes with tackle.

KAYSTER: ...but she, *she* can make them come, if only they'll build it.

LABARRERA: Did we get a *last* name?

KAYSTER: (*suddenly holding a piece of paper and reading copy*) Meyer's lamb chops -- when a night out hunting turns into a night in foraging, make sure to buy the freshest, juiciest lamb chops -- (*he goes off script*) you can tell by the marbling, the way the fat looks -- do you know about marbling? -- *Like lambs to the slaughter*, Meyer's.

LABARRERA: (*gimmie a break!*) Do I know about marbling?

The red light goes off, and we know they're off the air for just a moment. KAYSTER puts down the ad, takes a breath.

KAYSTER: Ya know, I've seen a lotta bodies come through this school. I've seen a lotta good teams, a lotta bad teams, and more teams I've forgotten than I can remember. I've seen seventy-one players wear number ten, I've seen fifty-two players wear number twelve. But I've never seen anything like her. Today is her birthday. Fourteen. Her present? Four solo goals, two assists and one defeat.

LABARRERA: She even gets back on defense.

KAYSTER: She *even gets back on defense*. But one thing's for sure and certain: wherever she's going, she can't go there with this team. The – what – isn't there anymore. The heart?

LABARRERA: The funding.

KAYSTER: The *funding*. Compare it to – I mean, the team she played this afternoon looked like *goddesses* in their uniforms. And she. She looked. Half blood, half dirt.

They both take a deep breath and marvel at her. Then, the red light returns -- they're back on air and KAYSTER is reading more copy.

KAYSTER: (*reading*) Coming up on AM 820 our sister station, *deportes*

LABARRERA: No se vayan! Quedesen ayi!

KAYSTER: (*looking at him, amazed*) *Not bad*, buddy! Is that a nod to your—

LABARRERA: I *think* I said it right.

KAYSTER: Is that a nod to your

LABARRERA: Nah, I'm American. I was just trying to - I mean, my great, *great* grandparents, maybe, but not me. I -- *(laughs)* I'm not sure what I was trying to do.

KAYSTER: We'll be right back, and we're gonna take calls from the Meyer Lamb Chops listener hotline. I'm the Kayster with LaBarrera, and you're listening to one oh two point nine FM.

And they're off air.

Lights shift, and ROCKY enters the locker room. She's in her uniform, after the game, putting small bandages on her many cuts.

LABARRERA picks up the copy KAYSTER was reading.

LABARRERA: *(mmmmm)* Grass fed.

KAYSTER: You tried?

LABARRERA: Juicy. Bloody.

KAYSTER: *(distant)* Yea? Yea? Good.

LABARRERA: Summin wrong? You look more palefaced than usual.

KAYSTER: ...yea... I, uh I went to the market.
The uh, meat market. I figured with the new ad and all, Jodie and I could pop over to Meyer's new location

BOTH: in the Bronx

KAYSTER: I drive by it every day so I figured I'd – and she nudges me while the guy is chopping, and I follow her eyes and we both watch a worker, some young Mexican kid, drop a live baby lamb Into the trash.

LABARRERA: *(laughing)* Oh jesus, nancy woulda got the kid FIRED

KAYSTER: We don't say anything. He hands us the chops, we walk out. But that live baby lamb. Crying in the trash can...

The lights go down and out on them, and up on ROCKY who is standing in her field uniform in her kitchen. Her mother, MI MAMA, circles her.

Mi MAMA: Tu crees que eres mejor que mi porque eres blanca? White ghost. Quieres regresar a un hogar que tú no quieres.

ROCKY: I *do* want to be here.

MI MAMA: I did my best to take care of you. I wish you loved me.

MI MAMA turns on her heels to leave. ROCKY pleads.

ROCKY: Mama! I DO love you! I just wanted...SOMETHING...

ROCKY crumples. MI MAMA stands over ROCKY, runs her fingers gently through ROCKY'S hair a moment, and leaves. ROCKY stands and pulls herself together. She brings out a bucket of white paint and a brush.

She dips the brush in the paint. Then paints a few thick streaks across the floor, the walls, the kitchen table, the chair. She sits in the chair. Rubs her bottom against the fresh paint. She stands, and presses her bottom against the wall, squishing and swirling with her backside. She steps back to admire her art.

She paints while she talks.

ROCKY: The field *is* in bad shape. Which is why – and again, I'm super sorry I am not delivering this in Spanish, but my Spanish isn't very good – which is why I think it would *behoove* you all to maybe, put some of the city funding towards replacing the field.

She starts calmly painting her skin white.

ROCKY: There's more brown than green, now. There's more dead than alive. And cheap paint. Lines that wash away with the rain. So, I guess what I'm saying is ... lo que estoy diciendo es... it needs to be replaced. Or we'll never win. Ever.

She's done painting herself. She looks at the board members.

ROCKY: Wanna go over my broken bones?

CITY COUNCIL PERSON: *(the decision said without interruption)* Lo sentimos, pero en este momento el ayuntamiento del Bronx ha decidido mantener la financiación donde está. Apreciamos sus esfuerzos por utilizar el proceso democrático para --

ROCKY points to herself.

ROCKY: Clavicle: twice, fibia: twice, tibia: once--

CITY COUNCIL PERSON: Apreciamos sus esfuerzos --

ROCKY: All fingers, *both hands*, just to--

CITY COUNCIL PERSON: (fed up) Gracias por tu tiempo.

ROCKY: Just because I don't speak Spanish doesn't mean I wasn't born here!

CITY COUNCIL PERSON: *Gracias por tu tiempo.*

A beat of silence.

ROCKY: I stole a baby lamb from a trash can and now it's in my room.

ROCKY turns around, the lights turn with her, and she's back in her kitchen. MI MAMA appears.

MI MAMA: (*broken english*) Happy Birthday.

ROCKY: Two more lame ones until I can drive.

MI MAMA: I hear your father coming up the steps. He will have your present.

ROCKY: I've never met my father.

MI MAMA: He got you a new field stick. A new white field stick.

ROCKY: All I want is a new field. And a little extra food.

MI MAMA: Your father will have dinner.

ROCKY: A little extra I can take to my room.

MI MAMA's eyes go dark.

MI MAMA: Porque eres ingrata?

Stunned.

ROCKY: I'm *grateful*.

MI MAMA: You want to leave when your new stick white comes?

MI MAMA stands off with her daughter.

ROCKY: It will. Help me score.

MI MAMA: Go. Go have a nice life. We will rot here.

ROCKY loves her mom and makes familiar excuses.

ROCKY: You're confused. That's all. You're a confused immigrant, doing the best that you—

MI MAMA: Maybe your brother will raise you.

ROCKY: A single mother, speaks no English, trying to put foo

MI MAMA: Is that why you want to go to a white school?

ROCKY: Their field is much better.

MI MAMA: Your white skin makes me sick.

ROCKY: This is. Just paint. From our field. It was muddy. We lost.

MI MAMA turns away.

ROCKY: Presidents went to this school. CEO's.

MI MAMA: So. Why you?

ROCKY: Because I'm good at field hockey, mami. Really good. And they want to win. At everything.

Silence.

ROCKY: I went to the city council. They won't give our school any more money. A lady from the white school came and offered me a place there. I'm going.

MI MAMA darkens.

MI MAMA: At Christmas. You will crawl home. And not go back. Because they will take a razor and shave off all that white. And see what's underneath.

Lights down on them and up on KAYSTER and LABARRERA in the studio, after hours, sitting on the floor, setting up an intricate model train town.

The studio is decorated for Christmas. It's late, most employees have gone home.

LABARRERA: Bar. Think like you're going to a *bar*. Then think get some *air*, then go *uh*. Bar. Air. Uh. Barrera.

KAYSTER: And the guy *still* couldn't say it.

LABARRERA: *Bear?* No, not *bear-era*...

They laugh.

KAYSTER: Every window-breather in the city calls up and wants to call you a fraud, or *me* a fraud, but—

LABARRERA: (*tired of that word, of defending himself, even if it is only sports radio*) I'm a fraud, you're a fraud, we're all frauds!

KAYSTER: But I can't help *anyone* who thinks your name is *bear-era*.

KAYSTER looks at the train and track pieces scattered in front of him.

LABARRERA: (*the train town, the decorations*) Not even *Halloween* and I've got to choke down Christmas. I have no *agency*. I have no *agency* in my life.

KAYSTER: Alright, how are we settin up *Kayville*?

LABARRERA: You're the kayster. You tell me.

They assemble the train and tracks to KayVille. It ought to look nice, as it's featured everyday on local cable TV along with the two host during their 4-hour afternoon sports show. Their show is simulcast on radio and TV.

Lights stay on the studio as they simultaneously come up on a running, bloody ROCKY in a muddy field hockey uniform, broken old brown stick in hand.

ROCKY: (*running in place, dark and fierce*) They gave a brown, broken stick to my father and said "here, provide for your family with this."

She bumps an unseen defender's body off her own, and keeps running.

ROCKY: They gave my mother a brown, broken stick and said, "here, cook with this."

She grunts hard as she knocks an unseen defender from each side of her to the ground. She keeps running. And panting.

ROCKY: They gave *me* a brown, broken stick and said, “here, learn with this.”

She winds up big and takes a hard shot.

ROCKY: I couldn’t.

She scored. She stops running. She smiles. In the auditory background, a crowd cheers her goal.

A white girl with a pretty white smile comes out and hands her a shiny white field hockey stick, taking her broken, brown one.

ROCKY smiles. The crowd is still cheering. ROCKY holds up her white stick in victory. The PRETTY WHITE GIRL claps and smiles and comes close to ROCKY. Closer. Does she want to hug ROCKY? Closer. PRETTY WHITE GIRL is awkwardly close to ROCKY. ROCKY wants to play nice, opens her arms like “are we gonna hug?” PRETTY WHITE GIRL leans in and spits in ROCKY’s face.

The crowd keeps cheering. PRETTY WHITE GIRL goes to leave, stops, and turns to an utterly heartbroken ROCKY.

The crowd music lowers so we can hear...

PRETTY WHITE GIRL: Audits. Audits and yachts. Inheritance offshore? Offshore? Tennis camp kale au pair escrow. Aspen. Aspen and audits.

She exits. ROCKY is as confused and broken as she can be – but by god she’s got that shiny new white stick.

Lights out on her.

KAYSTER: (*some progress made on Kayville*) Was that our guy? Did he unlock the bathroom door?

LABARRERA returns from the bathroom and sits, helping KAYSTER assemble.

LABARRERA: Like talkin to a wall.

KAYSTER: I feel horrible. What's his *name*?

LABARRERA: Like talkin to a wall that – when it finally *does* talk back – doesn't talk in ENGLISH. Jesus.

KAYSTER: He was a doctor in his country.

Silence. They assemble.

KAYSTER: He was telling me about his daughter's student loans.

LABARRERA: His daughter is in ... Mexico...?

KAYSTER: (*nope*) They're not *Mexican!* She's at UC Berkley. And she

LABARRERA: He *just* said Mexico!

KAYSTER: He's *eastern European* – *nothing like Mexican*, and he tells me they're gonna make her leave school. Something with her forms and he's screaming *she's legal, she's American* but

LABARRERA: (*shaking his head*) See, restrictions aren't meant to *impede*. Restrictions have a place, but when they *impede*, they

KAYSTER: So now she's thinkin she'll learn her father's trade and take over. When he retires. And I said Berkley has a lot of good

LABARRERA: Heyheyhey, lotttttttttta people skipping college these days. (*the model train town*) Do you want the post office over here? Or

KAYSTER: She's gonna what? Grow up and be her dad?

LABARRERA: Imagine her in the outfit.

KAYSTER: Her father's moustache.

LABARRERA: And then her daughter will take over for her.

KAYSTER: And her daughter for her and one day someone comes in out of the blue and asks innocently enough, what can you tell me, about oh, say, the Crimean War? And whatever she's doing, in that moment, she comes to a complete halt and thinks *oh my god, I only know how to clean a radio station.*

Lights shift.

ROCKY drags a school desk center stage and sits facing the audience.

TEACHER'S VOICE: What can someone tell us about the etymology of the surname *meyer*?

Silence.

TEACHER'S VOICE: You. What's your name? I don't know your name.

ROCKY: My name is

TEACHER'S VOICE: Stand when addressed.

ROCKY stands.

ROCKY: My name is

TEACHER'S VOICE: What can you tell us about the etymology of the surname, Meyer?

ROCKY: It's Germanic. English. Dutch. It means mayor.

TEACHER'S VOICE: Legal matters.

ROCKY: Yes. It also means, a person who is in charge of legal matters.

TEACHER'S VOICE: Anglo-Saxons. A powerful people.

ROCKY goes to sit.

TEACHER'S VOICE: You have young, strong legs, and I am asking you to use them in this class.

ROCKY: My. Bones hurt.

TEACHER'S VOICE: Flying number ten! Antoinette Concello. Shall that be your new name?

ROCKY: My name's not

TEACHER'S VOICE: *Antoinette please tell us more about the surname Meyer.*

ROCKY: The name also has Jewish origins in

TEACHER'S VOICE: (*singing*) Flies through the air with the greatest of ease, the daring young girl on the flying trapeze. (*talking*) Ms. Concello was a pioneer. Sports. Acrobatics. Trapeze.

ROCKY: I play field hockey.

TEACHER'S VOICE: (*sharply*) No. No, young Antoinette. You don't just play field hockey for your new illustrious school. No, no. For us, you play field hockey *very well*.

Silence as ROCKY feels all the eyes of the classroom on her. Her emotions overtake her.

ROCKY: May I be. I need to. My bones. Really hurt.

In tears, she slumps in her desk.

The TEACHER'S VOICE talks on as the stage is transformed to be a girl's dorm room. Four beds: two empty, one with a sleeping girl's back to us, and one with ROCKY lying in it.

TEACHER'S VOICE: *(over the transition)* Cage-free spa, board of directors heirloom tomatoes, commodity strategies. *Downsize?* Ha! Investor relations!

ROCKY is crawling into bed.

TEACHER is full of fire.

TEACHER'S VOICE: Investor. Blood. Relations.

ROCKY slumps into bed, exhausted.

Silence. Lights out on the classroom, and up on the dorm room.

TEETH, a pretty white girl of 14, is asleep in her own bed. She rolls over after ROCKY crawls into her own bed.

She shows her teeth a lot when she talks – and she smiles wide a lot.

TEETH: *(whispering)* Rock?

Silence.

TEETH: *Rock?*

Silence.

TEETH: What do you *want*? Also *which* day is it? Not tomorrow, but—Rock? *ROCK?* What day is exactly your birthday and what do you want for it?

ROCKY: *(mumbles)* Your pretty teeth.

TEETH: *Huh?*

ROCKY: I want my bones to heal.

TEETH: My mom said you could have your birthday at my house if you want.

ROCKY: These sheets *stink*.

TEETH: You know who's gonna be in town? Noam Chomsky! He's old. He's *way* older now, so he. But he used to come over all the time and tell these funny stories at dinner and my mom said maybe he can tell *you* some stories at din-

ROCKY: *Someone peed in my sheets?*

ROCKY jumps out of bed.

ROCKY: SOMEONE PEED ON MY SHEETS!

TEETH: No one would pee on yo—

TEETH gets out of bed and goes to inspect.

TEETH: *(smelling)* Oh, no.

ROCKY: *Why would anyone PEE on my sheets?*

TEETH: Maybe it's like. Someone had a dog in, and it—

ROCKY: *(falling into tears)* I can tell the difference between animal pee and human pee and this is HUMAN. Why????

TEETH tries to hug her, ROCKY pulls away.

TEETH: All the girls like you.

ROCKY: *One of them peed on my bed.*

TEETH: It was probably an accident. You can have my sheets.

ROCKY: I don't want your sheets, I want your TEETH.

TEETH: *Huh?*

ROCKY: My brother peed the bed. Blamed it on me once.

TEETH: I peed the bed when I was little, too.

ROCKY: *(bearing teeth)* That's not the same *at all*.

TEETH: It's not? I'm sorry.

Silence.

TEETH stands.

TEETH: I'm gonna get you some water. I'll be right back.

TEETH exits the dorm room. In full view of the audience, but not ROCKY, TEETH puts on glasses and transforms into LIPS.

LIPS enters the room. She purses her lips the whole conversation.

LIPS: Hey.

ROCKY: Did you get the water?

LIPS: Water? I was just skyping with my dad. He's being *super fucking unfair* about winter break. If I wanna go see Donnie, I should be able to. I'm practically an adult. Anyway my aunt *lives* in Corona Del Mar, so why would it be an issue?

She sees ROCKY has been crying.

LIPS: What're you doing for winter break?

ROCKY: I guess. Going home.

LIPS: The, um, Bronx?

Silence.

LIPS: You can come with me if you don't mind being a third wheel.

A lifesaving proposition. ROCKY jumps on it.

ROCKY: Oh. Well. Maybe I wi-

LIPS: Gotta pay your own way, though.

ROCKY: *(broken in half)* Oh.

Silence.

LIPS: I heard padding fell outta your bra.

ROCKY: It wasn't *padding*. Sometimes I write notes to myself. And I keep them. Close.

LIPS: I heard you couldn't score a single goal against the first defensive line, and then in the locker room everyone saw padding fall outta your bra.

ROCKY is floored at how dramatically rumors evolve.

LIPS: Where's your sheets?

ROCKY: I'm cleaning them.

LIPS: Hey, what do ya want for your birthday?

ROCKY stares hard at LIPS.

ROCKY: Nothing. I like my lips.

LIPS: Huh? Not even a *cake*?

ROCKY: (*a smile*) I guess, I always wanted. Fudgey the whale.

LIPS: HAHAAHA No I mean a cake from like a *real bakery*. Like one time when Arthur Miller came to my house, he wanted a *proper dessert* he kept saying so my dad took us to –

ROCKY buries her hands in her face and cries.

After a moment of hesitation, LIPS crosses to ROCKY and rubs her back.

LIPS: Me'n the girls were gonna take you to dinner.

ROCKY lifts her head and looks LIPS in the eyes.

LIPS: And now obviously we can't. And that sucks and I'm sorry.

ROCKY: Why...can't you?

LIPS: I don't like to fight. You know me, I don't ever wanna fight. But when it's like, I hear about, how oh, you couldn't score on the field, people were like, *why did we even take this girl, I guess we were wrong about her*. Like oh, she's a fake at field hockey, and she's a fake in her bra, like where else is this new girl lying to us?

ROCKY: I'm not. *Lying*.

LIPS: Of course not! But you know, like, I stay outta fights.

LIPS goes to the door.

LIPS: I just needed my night stuff. I'm going to Donnie's.

She exits. She takes off her glasses and puts her hair in a ponytail. She is now HAIR.

HAIR does that thing people with long hair do where they shake their head while talking to show it off

She's carrying an ice pack.

HAIR: I could only find one.

She tosses it to ROCKY who was in no way prepared to catch it.

HAIR: Super star can't catch?

ROCKY puts the pack on her aching legs.

HAIR: No, here, like *this*.

HAIR puts the pack properly on ROCKY'S aching body.

HAIR: I'm your nurse. Coach said, keep an eye on her, she's *your* roommate, so. Here I am. Friday night. Two big parties. And here I am.

She pets a sad ROCKY.

HAIR: Shhh. Shhh. You're OK, Rock. Shhh. Did your dad get your tuition thing fixed?

ROCKY: I haven't. Talked to my dad. In years.

HAIR: Your mom, then. Did your family get your tuition thing taken care of?

ROCKY: In the office they told me not to worry.

HAIR: I'm not saying *worry*, I'm saying take care of this money thing so we can all *be sure* you're on the team. Cause like, it's frustrating to bust your ass all day at school and all night at practice and like *finally* we get a solid attacking presence only for her maybe to be kicked off the team because she can't pay her tui—her, uh. Because she had issues with paperwork.

ROCKY: I couldn't even score on the first-team defense.

HAIR takes a breath.

HAIR: Yea. And like. There's a problem there, too. Because we already have a really solid defense. So if you can't *score* for us...then...like...

Silence.

HAIR: You just gotta make sure you score. Cause if not. Like.

She grabs the bottle of hair product she was looking for and goes to the door.

HAIR: The kinda stuff that happened today?

...

To your sheets?

...

That's not good.

She exits.

ROCKY slumps.

Then...

A baaing is heard. ROCKY goes to a box under her bed. She pulls it out. The baaing gets louder. She removes the box's lid and pulls out the baby lamb.

She picks it up, pulls it close to her chest. She loves it dearly.

The lights on the radio studio flash on, and KAYSTER and LABARRERA are in the middle of an on-air conversation.

KAYSTER: and there are to be some allowances made here/

LABARRERA: Oh, absolutely.

KAYSTER: Let's start with the fact that she's working with a new coach.

LABARRERA: She's two hundred and twelve miles from home!

KAYSTER: It's a *translation* issue. When a quarterback goes pro, he's gonna have an adjustment period. Where it's all about getting him up to the *speed* of the bigs.

LABARRERA: You go from six seconds to make a decision with the ball to about, oh, *one point two*.

KAYSTER: And so of course Rack-I – why can't I say this girl's *name*? – Rack-EL is going to have some adjustment issues. New school, new coach, new speeds on defense. I'm just really, really happy for her. Aren't you?

The lamb baas in ROCKY's arms.

LABARRERA: She's an offensive player and she couldn't score in practice. They don't need defense. She better mind her p's and q's. Watch her back.

The lamb baas in ROCKY's arms.

LABARRERA: (*reading copy*) Meyer lamb chops. We hunt, you gather. The finest lamb chops this side of the mississip. One-oh-two-point-nine FM, Sports 360.

And they're out. The red light goes off.

LABARRERA picks up a train piece.

LABARRERA: I can't stay late tonight.

KAYSTER: The annual LaBarrera retreat is upon us already?

LABARRERA: A father. A son. Two guns. We kill it, the wife grills it.

KAYSTER: It's funny you say that, because last night we were sitting down to dinner-

LABARRERA: Last year the deer bucked on the table! My wife thought it was alive. I'm jabbing the knife in (*he jabs*) See? (*he jabs*) It's *dead*, just nerves (*he jabs*) just gas. But my wife...

KAYSTER: That's really funny, because. Jodie and I, last night, are about to take our first bite of her chicken, and I hear. Sorta. Not *gobble*, *gobble*, but. What sound do – *cluck, cluck*. It was like I heard *cluck cluck* not coming from the chicken, or the plate, but. From my own stomach. *Before* I'd eaten. Already *inside* my stomach, was. *Cluck, cluck*.

The lamb baas in ROCKY's arms. She puts it under her coat and goes out into the night, and onto the grounds of the school.

KAYSTER: At bed time, Callie asks me, *Daddy, if chickens have wings, how come they don't fly?*

LABARRERA: *(fiddling with train pieces)* It's good to be putting this together. Like the old days.

KAYSTER: *(at a loss)* That's a question, I can't answer. I mean, why *would* god give anything wings, just so it can't fly?

LABARRERA: We're back in 20. Read the next Meyer copy for me, will ya?

KAYSTER has had a realization.

KAYSTER: You do it. I don't think. I can sell meat anymore.

LABARRERA gives him a look like

DoyourealizethatishowwemakeourMONEY? You'veGOTtobekiddingme.

Lights out on them. ROCKY is in the dark school grounds, near a tree, with her pet baby lamb under her coat.

HAIR appears and watches a minute as ROCKY slowly, delicately, removes the lamb from the jacket, sets it on the ground, and begins to pet it.

ROCKY: Eat the grass. It's green and fresh. I'll get you clover tomorrow. Eat the green grass.

HAIR: Que pasa?

ROCKY turns, frightened.

ROCKY: You scared me.

HAIR: Neustras amigas y yo, estabamos hablando.

ROCKY: Huh?

HAIR: y pensamos que si no juegas mejor van a ser consecuencias.

ROCKY: Consequences for *what*?

HAIR: You gotta play better, Rock.

ROCKY: I'm getting my grades up.

HAIR: What ya got there?

ROCKY: It's just a. I found it.

HAIR comes closer to inspect.

HAIR: You're out late.

ROCKY: So are you.

A beat.

HAIR: What is it? Can I touch it?

ROCKY: It's just something I found. It was gonna die.

HAIR: (*peering*) Baby sheep? That's perfect.

ROCKY: ...for what...?

HAIR: Rock, the girls are back in the room, looking for you.

A beat.

HAIR: They wanna play a game.

ROCKY: The same game that made me change my sheets?

HAIR: Let's go. They're waiting for you.

ROCKY: I'm gonna stay out here.

HAIR: I'm here to *heal* you. Member?

ROCKY: I feel fine.

HAIR: But your ankle. You're limping around at practice.

ROCKY: It's better.

HAIR: But *there's no speed*. There's no power on your shot. And me and the girls just wanted to see if. There's a way to make you. Heal up faster.

ROCKY: I feel *fine*.

HAIR: But you're not *playing fine*. Maybe there's an incentive. Can I see the baby sheep?

ROCKY: It's a lamb.

HAIR: Can I see the baby lamb?

ROCKY looks down, pets the lamb, is silent.

HAIR: Maybe it can be a sub. Like sub in for you. Like English in place of Spanish.

ROCKY meets HAIR's eyes, darkly.

HAIR: And maybe. Instead of *you* getting hurt— cause we *need* you — maybe instead. Your sub? Gets hurt.

A beat.

HAIR: Like maybe you don't score and we don't break *your* ankle...

A beat. ROCKY is horrified. She holds her baby lamb friend close.

HAIR: Like. I bet your parents. I bet their bodies were broken and cracked by all the things it took to give you this life. And like, instead of *you* being broken, *they're* broken for you?

A beat.

HAIR: Let's go back.

A beat.

HAIR: It was just a thought. Let's go back.

HAIR sees ROCKY won't come. HAIR starts to leave, turns back.

HAIR: (*sing-song*) The girls have been planning. For your birthday. They've been plannnnnn-iiiiing.

HAIR is gone.

Lights rip up on KAYSTER and LABARRERA mid-call of an exciting game.

KAYSTER: And she's out all night finding green, green grass, pulling it up by the roots.

ROCKY drops to the ground and frantically pulls up green, green grass, tossing the pieces into the air.

KAYSTER: And she force feeds her baby lamb that grass and they snuggle up under that tree but Rocky doesn't sleep, she hears the girl's peeing on her sheets, so she's searching for clover, trying to pull it up by the root, will she collapse? No, she pulls and pulls, around the big tree, while her teammates call her *dirty poor spick* behind her back but she pulls up all the green until the sunlight reveals only a dead brown patch surrounds the whole thing.

Daylight.

A beat. ROCKY stands, looks around, then puts on the jacket, and walks to her mother's kitchen.

KAYSTER: Until it's already fall break and she is going home.

Lights out on LABARRERA and KAYSTER and up on MI MAMA in her kitchen.

MI MAMA: (*singing*) Feliz cumpleaños a ti, feliz cumpleaños a ti, feliz cumpleANNNNOS

ROCKY walks into the kitchen. Her mother sees her, stops singing.

MI MAMA: La hija prodigal.

A beat.

MI MAMA: *(her name pronounced correctly for the first time)* Raquel.

She holds out her arms and moves towards her daughter. It looks to ROCKY like the hug/spit from before. But, MI MAMA hugs her daughter. ROCKY is stunned. The hug ends. They stare.

ROCKY: Mom. School. Is really hard.

MI MAMA: Cuantos anos?

ROCKY: I'm fif-

MI MAMA: *(I almost forgot!)* Fudgey the whale!

MI MAMA searches the kitchen drawers.

ROCKY: Mom, I'm not getting good grades.

MI MAMA searches.

ROCKY: Mom, I can't even score on the first team defense.

MI MAMA searches.

ROCKY: Mom, some of the gir—some *white girls peed on my sheets.*

MI MAMA stops, her back to us. She turns slowly. Her face shows concern. Then, she opens her hand, reveals three candles, and gets a big smile on her face.

MI MAMA: Quince. Pero, only three candle.

She smiles at her daughter and says...

MI MAMA: You came home. Good.

She goes to the fridge, opens it, and brings out a Fudgey the Whale cake. MI MAMA puts the candles in it, humming Feliz Cumpleanos.

MI MAMA: Lo siento que no podemos tener una Quinceanera. I'm sorry.

ROCKY: It's OK. I don't really want one.

MI MAMA lights a candle and presents the cake to her daughter.

MI MAMA: Aqui. Wish.

ROCKY thinks a moment, closes her eyes, takes a deep breath, begins to blow out the candle, stops. Opens her eyes.

ROCKY: Mom. You know I'm going back, right?

MI MAMA dips the angles of her wrists and lets Fudgey the Whale slide onto the floor.

A door opens offstage. We hear it close.

MI MAMA: (through her teeth) Su hermano.

ROCKY: You said he wasn't coming!

Footsteps approach the kitchen. They are like those of a giant, shaking the earth with each approaching thud.

Thud. THud. THUd. THUD.

A giant SHADOW washes ROCKY and most of the kitchen. She is in the presence of her unseen older brother.

She stares up at him, trembling.

MI MAMA: Ella va a regresar a esa escuela. Your sister is go back to that school.

ROCKY's face shows horror, but also her substantial resolve.

ROCKY: I like it there. The people can help me. Be something.

MI MAMA: They pee on your sheets.

ROCKY: *Just some mean girls did that there are other girls who like me and are my friends and take me to their houses to meet Arthur Mill--*

The SHADOW cocks it's hand back as though it might hit her. She flinches, but then shows resolve.

ROCKY: *(more resolve, she looks up)* I am not seven anymore. I'm not scared.

A faceoff. The lamb BAAS from ROCKY's bag.

They all look at the bag.

Lights out on the kitchen, and up on ROCKY, hours later, in her bed with the lamb at night. She holds it tight.

ROCKY: I love you, Meyer. I love you, *Mayor*.

She settles on his name.

ROCKY: *Mr.* Mayor.

She smiles.

ROCKY: This is my room. What do ya think?

She kisses his nose.

ROCKY: G'night.

She rolls over, goes to sleep.

The rumble of a small crowd is heard.

A small light hits the lamb, who speaks.

LAMB: As the legislative representative of this great

The crowd quiets.

LAMB: As the legislative representative of this great Bronx district, let me first say, that my priorities lie firmly with *you* in these less-than-certain times. This new administration seeks to

Shouts from the crowd. Hablan Espanol! No podemos entenderte!
(*speak Spanish, we can't understand you!*)

LAMB: Seeks to...seeks to...

The shouts intensify.

LAMB: I'm sorry?

The crowd begins to chant Es-Pan-Ol, Es-Pan-Ol

LAMB: I don't *speak Spanish*, I'm sorry.

ES-PAN-OL, ES-PAN-OL

LAMB: *Where the hell is my translator?*

ES-PAN-OL, ES-PAN-OL

LAMB: *I CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOU AND NEITHER CAN SHE.*

LAMB points to a sleeping ROCKY but the crowd's chanting is overwhelming.

LAMB: She's doesn't speak...her mother never taught her to...SILENCIO.

The crowd quiets.

LAMB: Fine. We're leaving. I am no longer your district representative. We don't speak Spanish and we don't speak rich, but we're willing to learn rich.

Lights shift.

ROCKY is in the school nurse's office, sitting on an exam table, alone.

She's freezing.

The school DOCTOR walks in – he's 39, handsome, in an all-white coat, and he carries a clipboard.

DOCTOR: Now *Antonio Brown* is a different story. Here's a guy who who – it's a break, by the way – who can still make cuts like a nineteen year-old.

ROCKY: A break?

She holds her wrist. He hangs x-rays of the break.

DOCTOR: I mean by the time a cover corner realizes that there *is no help* over the top, it's too late. Brown is celebrating six.

ROCKY: (*her wrist*) It really hurts.

DOCTOR: It's broken. That's the risk you run. Playing a sport. Antonio Brown may *run* like a nineteen-year old, but not if but *when* he gets hit, his family's gonna feel it three generations back. What I'm saying is: you gotta know when to hang it up.

ROCKY: Do I...need to hang it up?

DOCTOR: That wrist is six-to-eight weeks.

ROCKY lets this sink in. She starts to cry and covers her face.

DOCTOR: Heyheyhey don't cry. Be like Brown. Make that your motto. Just out-jump, out-run, out-think every single person you come across, from now until the moment you die, and you should be OK.

ROCKY: What if *he* gets hurt? What happens to *Brown*?

A beat.

DOCTOR: He's got thirty-six million guaranteed.

A beat.

DOCTOR: (*excited, not angry*) Goddamn I wish I worked with REAL athletes.

Jazzed, he points to her x-ray.

DOCTOR: Had you broken it *here*, you'd be OK. Here, too. But where *you* broke it? I mean, *here*, fine. Here, preferable, even, but *here*? All I can ask is: are you right-handed?

She nods a sad yes.

DOCTOR: Well. Then. Hm. You may consider. Learning lefty.

He sees she's upset.

DOCTOR: These heal. The body heals. Yea, you'll have arthritis when you're older, but Christ, you won't be as bad off as football players. *Jeez-us.*

ROCKY: I've got nothing guaranteed.

DOCTOR: No, but. You *made* a guarantee. You said you'd play no matter what.

ROCKY: (*hates this fact*) And *now my wrist is broken and I can't play.*

DOCTOR: Don't you want an education?

ROCKY: Do I have to be on the team to get an education?

DOCTOR: What did your contract say? When you signed? What was the *fine print*?

ROCKY: ...contract...?

A beat. He takes a cast out of a drawer. It has the visual effect of a large, hard, club of a bandage that is wrapped around the hand.

DOCTOR: What's this? Don't say *boxing glove*.

He takes her hand in his.

DOCTOR: Imagine I break all your fingers. Snap, snap, snap. But, coach, what does *he* say?

DOCTOR puts ROCKY's good hand inside the cast.

DOCTOR: He tells ya to use that club to club the hell outta your opponents. Take away your opposable thumb, sure, but replace it with blunt trauma. Hit me.

She's confused.

DOCTOR: Hit me with this.

She hesitates.

DOCTOR: *Oh for god's sake just hi-*

She hits him in the face with the club. Hard.

He stumbles backward. He's momentarily dumbstruck.

DOCTOR: Did it hurt?

ROCKY: A little.

DOCTOR: It'll hurt less and less each time. Until every bone in your body goes to dust. And comes back.

He checks his watch.

DOCTOR: Doesn't practice start at 3?

They stare. He wins. She looks down.

DOCTOR: We'll put it in an air cast for now.

Lights change.

They come up on KAYSTER and LABARRERA, on-air, sitting behind their fully-completed KayVille train town. It says "KayVille" in blinking lights. LABARRERA is about to do his "laws of KayVille" bit he does every year.

LABARRERA: (*jokey*) And I want to be *clear* that anybody caught breaking the law in Kay Ville will be subject to the

KAYSTER: (*jokey*) You're pedantic, ya know that? You're a *pedant*. Go ahead, read the rules.

LABARRERA: My *first* decree as Mayor of KayVille

KAYSTER: I don't understand how I'm not the mayor of my own town but go head.

LABARRERA: You wanna be mayor?

KAYSTER: Go *head*.

LABARRERA: My first decree: no whining. You got a good life, people. I don't care who ya are or where you're from. You got *some* goodness in your life and instead of complaining or wanting more, just BE HAPPY.

KAYSTER: Be happy? Is it that easy? OK so fine, so what's rule number two.

LABARRERA: Oughta call this *law* number two, cause that's what it is.

KAYSTER: I'm not doing this next year but go head.

LABARRERA: The station'll make us do it every year until we die. *Law number two*: you can't leave KayVille. If you're born here, you die here.

KAYSTER: Lovely dictatorship you're running.

LABARRERA: I don't want my team breaking up! If I get a squad I can *count* on, I

KAYSTER: You'll need new blood at some point.

LABARRERA: The whole town raises football players! That's all they do.

KAYSTER: Surrounding cities will have better teams than you. They'll integrate.

LABARRERA: I'd rather lose with my people than win with theirs.

KAYSTER: So, what you're saying is, KayVille is attainable by magic of birth only, and that --

LABARRERA: Exactly.

KAYSTER: and that you'd rather lose surrounded by brothers, than win surrounded by strangers.

LABARRERA: *(a deep, contented sigh)* After fifteen years, you finally get me.

KAYSTER: *(his nightly sign off)* In the words of Billy Joel, *I've been gone for a while, made some changes in my style, and they say you can't go home again.* We hope you feel at home here with Kayster, Labarrera, and you, one oh two point nine FM. See ya tomorrow.

And they're off-air. The two wordlessly pack up for a moment.

LABARRERA: You two wanna do dinner with me and Nancy? Pork boarder wall.

KAYSTER looks up.

KAYSTER: Huh?

LABARRERA: She's gonna cook green card, real low and slow, and it gets papers, where are your papers until you gotta stab it with a fork!

KAYSTER: No, I'm. Gonna stay here.

LABARRERA: *(putting on his jacket)* Put everybody in KayVille just where you want em, huh?

KAYSTER, packing, doesn't look up. LABARRERA tries to entice.

LABARRERA: C'mooooooooon. Green sauce? DACA dripping down your chin?

KAYSTER stops packing, gets frustrated, finally asks...

KAYSTER: *What are you...is there...something wrong?*

LABARRERA: *(innocently) Wrong? Nope.*

LABARRERA opens the door to the studio, turns back.

LABARRERA: Ya know, if anyone *does* get in. Climbs the fence. It's *always* barbeque season in KayVille. Just kill em an grill em.

He exits.

Lights up. We watch as DOCTOR takes off his white coat and reenters as COACH. The actor does not alter a thing between how they played DOCTOR and how they play COACH – it's only the addition of a baseball cap and a whistle that tells us this is a different character.

COACH blows hard on the whistle, yells at the team.

COACH: Take a lap. For every mistake you made out there. Take two.

ROCKY starts to take her laps.

COACH: Rock. Stop.

She stops. COACH waves her over.

COACH: Jump.

ROCKY does jumping jacks while COACH talks.

COACH: Rock, rock, you're all float and no *sting*. You're all butterfly. You move out there like a gazelle ducking a hungry pack, but there's no *sting*. Mohammed Ali, *he* was black, and he had *sting*. The big gorilla

lines up the human in his sights, then he *stings*, then no more human. See, something is lost in translation. Stop.

She stops. She pants.

COACH: Something is lost in translation. For my people. We look in the mirror and see Walter Payton staring back. But *our* Sweetness turns bitter when we come up against *your* people. And we see who we *really* are.

ROCKY: (*used to telling these people that...*) I'm not bla—

COACH: *We're* up against a people that have been out-jumping lions for the last forty thousand years. Of *course* you all dominate sports. My job isn't to fix that. My job is to take who I'm given, identify their deadliest weapon, and sharpen it until it can draw blood.

He puts his hand on ROCKY's shoulder.

COACH: But Rock. You're all hilt and no blade. Where's the *hate*?

ROCKY has barely been able to contain her pain in practice.

ROCKY: My wrist is on fire.

COACH: Cause if you don't have venom, if you don't have *real attack*, then I wonder – is this the right school for you?

A beat.

ROCKY: I'm leaving here. And never coming back.

She turns to exit. A loud train whistle is heard. A baby lamb cries. ROCKY spins on her heels.

COACH blows hard on the whistle, yells to the rest of the team.

COACH: Take a lap. For *every* mistake you made out there. Take *two*.

ROCKY starts to take her laps.

COACH: Rock. Stop.

She stops. COACH waves her over.

COACH: Jump.

She does a jumping jack.

COACH: Stop.

She stops.

COACH: Rock, you look into the mirror, you oughta see Cassius Clay swinging back. Not a fourteen year old who likes butterflies.

ROCKY: I don't like butte—

COACH: *We're up* against a people that have been out-jumping lions for the last forty thousand years. Of *course* you all dominate sports. My job is to make you draw blood. And *smile* at it. Where's that pretty smile?

COACH waits. ROCKY eventually forces a smile.

COACH: (*unimpressed*) Rock, if you're not a gorilla,

ROCKY: *I am. I AM a gorilla!*

COACH: Well then *forget about your wrist and MAKE SOMETHING HAPPEN out on that field, ya big dumb animal.*

ROCKY stands lead-footed. COACH gets in her face.

COACH: **YOU'RE A BIG DUMB ANIMAL**

They stare.

COACH: You gonna let that wrist be your excuse?

ROCKY hesitates, then, very firmly...

ROCKY: No. I'm staying on this team. And never leaving.

She takes a breath and turns to exit.

COACH blows on the whistle. Train whistle + baby lamb noise is heard.

ROCKY turns on a dime.

COACH: ROCK. Stop. Jump. Stop.

He touches her shoulder.

COACH: Where's the blood, where's the club, where's the HATE?

ROCKY: I need to *heal*.

COACH: Hate *while* you heal.

ROCKY: My wrist needs rest!

COACH: Your wrist was fine when it signed on the dotted line.

ROCKY's first sign of defiance.

ROCKY: Where's my education?

COACH: (*losing it*) ON THIS FIELD.

A beat.

COACH: Say, *I'm a dumb gorilla.*

A beat.

ROCKY: I'm a dumb gorilla.

COACH: *I will club my enemy to death.*

ROCKY: I will club my enemy to death.

COACH: *That's the only education I need.*

ROCKY: That's the.

She holds back tears.

ROCKY: Only education I need.

COACH softens, takes a breath.

COACH: Cause it's the only way, right? The only way. For your scholarship.

ROCKY nods. She knows.

COACH: And my job.

She looks up at him.

COACH: Pinky promise. Whatever I need, you give, no problem. OK?

He means it, holds out his pinky.

She pinky shakes it. It hurts like hell. COACH jerks his hand so that her wrist really feels it.

COACH: No problem?

She shakes her head no.

COACH relieved, releases ROCKY'S pinky, starts to exit, turns, tries to comfort her.

COACH: Heyhey. You like Mohammed Ali, right?

She nods.

COACH: Everybody used to say he resembled a gorilla. That was a – it wasn't *mean*. Everybody used to say it. So.

He walks off and leaves her with her eyes welling.

The lights go out on ROCKY but come up on the baby LAMB in front of a podium. He's giving a rah rah campaign speech at a political rally.

LAMB: And I *do not* see why you, the people of the great state of Massachusetts are not ready to be leaders in the nation – to have a

representative who looks how *you* look, who came from places like those *you* came from. She may be from the Bronx, but she's ready to be *Boston Strong*.

The crowd cheers.

LAMB: The question becomes: will you have us?

The crowd cheers.

LAMB: Will you have *her*?

The crowd cheers.

LAMB: Then go to the polls and elect her!

The crowd cheers its loudest and the lights fade.

The lights come up on ROCKY's dorm room.

It's dark. She enters and flips on the light.

A large banner hanging from between the bunk beds reads "Happy Birthday, Rock"

A table is set with a single chair, a cheap-but-clean, plastic table cloth, a vase with a single flower in it, and a plate covered with a silver serving lid, stolen from the student kitchen. A small cake with a single candle is also on the table.

ROCKY is stunned to see the banner. She stops dead in her tracks and stares at the table for a long moment, deciding what she thinks.

We hear the shared suite toilet flush.

HAIR enters.

HAIR: (*startled*) Hey. Hungry? Dinner.

ROCKY: Who. Did this?

HAIR: All of us. Sit.

She pulls ROCKY's chair out. ROCKY sits.

HAIR: (*big smile*) You're speechless?

ROCKY opens her mouth, nothing comes out.

HAIR: Try saying it in Spanish.

A beat.

HAIR: You don't know Spanish. I forgot.

HAIR puts her hand on the handle of the silver serving lid.

ROCKY: I know some.

HAIR lifts the lid.

It reveals arroz con pollo, y frijoles.

HAIR: Sorry if it's cold. I didn't know where you went. Eat.

ROCKY slowly takes a bite, smiles, chews. HAIR lights the candle.

HAIR: We were wondering what you'd wish for. Like, if you'd wish to be a politician one day like you told us. Didn't you tell us once you wanted to be a politician?

ROCKY: I think I could help.

HAIR: The Bronx, right?

ROCKY: Maybe. Or Boston.

HAIR stifles a laugh, stares at ROCKY who picks at the food.

HAIR: Eat.

ROCKY takes a bite, smiles, chews.

HAIR: How's the *arroz*?

ROCKY: Good. Thanks.

HAIR: So, are you gonna wish to be Mayor of Boston?

HAIR gets in ROCKY's face, playfully shakes ROCKY by the shoulders, too hard.

HAIR: *Huh? What are you gonna wish for?*

ROCKY starts to tear up, covers her face.

HAIR: I think you should wish to be Mayor of *the Bronx*. You could walk down the street, and every person you see would like you. And they'd feel good, and you'd feel good. Your wrist wouldn't matter. None of your bones would.

ROCKY sniffles, locks eyes.

HAIR: I think you should take a big bite of those *frijoles* and scream out this window *I am going home and I'm gonna be QUEEN*. Right?

ROCKY nods.

HAIR: You can be *queen* at home. Here, at best, what?

A beat.

HAIR: Not much.

A beat.

HAIR: Are you gonna try and play in districts?

ROCKY: I dunno.

HAIR: Cause the last I heard, coach was pretty adamant about letting you heal. But now, it's like, *Rocky is fine, she'll heal, she can play, she'll leave it all on the field*. And I dunno...we dunno how we feel about that.

ROCKY: If I don't play. I lose my scholarship.

HAIR: rightrighttrightright but. That doesn't mean you can't still run for Mayor of the Bronx, right? One day? Staying here, what's the most you can achieve? The *most*?

ROCKY: I guess. Not much.

HAIR: Right. I think that's right. Where are you keeping that lamb?

ROCKY: It's safe.

HAIR: (*looking around*) Yea, but where *is* it?

A beat. They stare.

HAIR: Why aren't you eating?

ROCKY: I ate already.

HAIR: The dining hall is closed.

ROCKY: I'm not hungry.

ROCKY stands.

ROCKY: I'm gonna. Take a walk.

HAIR: *Jeez-US*, Rock. We're all pulling for you. We're all thinking about what's best for you. And we make you this meal and put up this—

ROCKY: Thank you for making the meal. It was really go—

HAIR: And we *pay to make this fucking banner*, and you sit and pick at the food, and are *ungrateful*. It's fucking beans and rice! Isn't that your *favorite???*

ROCKY: No.

HAIR: Oh-oh *no*? What is?

ROCKY: Pizza.

HAIR: *Pizza? Who the fuck ever heard of Puerto Rican pizza???*

ROCKY is getting more and more uncomfortable. She makes cautious, backward steps towards the suite door.

HAIR presses her.

HAIR: You can't score, Rock. You're taking goals outta *my hands*. And it needs to stop.

She's backed ROCKY into a corner.

HAIR: Just make the wish. Just close your eyes. And *wish*.

ROCKY doesn't close her eyes.

HAIR: (*deadly serious*) Close your eyes.

ROCKY won't.

HAIR: *HAPPY BIRTHDAY!*

The suite door bursts open. Three girls in field hockey masks which cover their entire faces rush in. They're carrying field hockey sticks. They rush ROCKY. They drag her to the table. They pull pieces of chicken apart and stuff it in her mouth. ROCKY simply repeats "No", even with her mouth full. Eventually, they dump the rice and beans on her head.

Someone flips off the lights. An open and glowing laptop and the single lit candle provide the only light for the attack.

They chant:

GIRLS: Rice and beans. Rice and beans, bitch. Rice and beans. Rice and beans, bitch.

...over and over while they hit her repeatedly with the field hockey sticks.

When the attack is over, three masked faces stand panting around ROCKY's limp body, crumpled on the floor.

The three faces who charged in, exit casually.

HAIR, never-masked, blows out the candle, picks up the cake, scoops icing with her finger, and goes to the door. She opens it. Light from the hall is thrown onto a bloody, broken ROCKY.

HAIR: ..who wants lamb chops...?

She licks the icing off of her finger, laughs, and exits.

Lights out.

Lights up on KayVille, perfectly constructed. The lights blink, the train hums through the town, on-time too. Everything in their model train world is just as they'd have it.

KAYSTER stands over the town, pleased and smiling.

The door to the studio bursts open and LABARRERA enters. He carries a crumpled fast food bag and drinks from a giant soda. He sees the completed KayVille, stops dead in his tracks, and beams.

LABARRERA: All hail god.

He pats KAYSTER on the shoulder.

KAYSTER: I didn't want to start, and then I couldn't stop.

LABARRERA: Even god took Sunday off.

He sets down his food, settles in.

LABARRERA: You told the—the what, the *Mexcian*? – you told the Mexican cleaning guy not to bump the cameras right?

KAYSTER: (*for himself*) He's Czech.

LABARRERA: Cause it's like nobody in the place understands that we're on radio *and* TV.

He answers theoretical questions he's answered 1000x's before.

LABARRERA: Yes, at the same time. Yes, there are cameras that broadcast us talking on radio. *I dunno why it's on*, I guess 'cause people watch!

LABARRERA puts on his head set.

LABARRERA: Don't bother telling our Mex-ee-cahn-oh friend. The pipeline has him (*whispers*) on his way out.

KAYSTER'S head whips up.

KAYSTER: Fired?

LABARRERA: He kept bumping the cameras. I guess his daughter won't get the chance to grow into her old man.

KAYSTER is effected.

KAYSTER: I'm gonna. Give her a call.

LABARRERA: No ya won't.

KAYSTER turns to challenge him. Nothing comes out.

LABARRERA: Nope. People eventually turn into their work. I'm gonna look over there at you in a few days and you're gonna BE a giant microphone. How you gonna call her *then*?

LABARRERA noisily unwraps his greasy, meaty fast food.

LABARRERA: Anyway, how's your hand?

KAYSTER examines his hand.

LABARRERA: Now we *know* why you're the mayor.

KAYSTER: *What* about my hand?

LABARRERA: Did you hear the *crack* when that guy hit the ground?
When somebody hurls an insult at Labarrera, there are consequences.
That's why you're the may--

KAYSTER: *I didn't hit anyone.*

LABARRERA: The mayor who shows up *four minutes* after a text to help his buddy out. They said *I* made it a racial thing. Nonononononono, I was just out to dinner, (*points at imaginary foe*) you made it racial, pal. You and your fri—

KAYSTER: I was here all last night, setting up *this*.

LABARRERA is getting angrier, talking to his imaginary aggressor.

LABARRERA: *You* made it racial the second you said the word “white.”
He turns on a dime to KAYSTER.

LABARRERA: You hungry? You wanna bite?
He holds up the sandwich.

KAYSTER shakes his head no. He spins back on a dime.

LABARRERA: *I* never said *brown*, *I* never said *Mexican*, *YOU* made it racial.

This time he points at KAYSTER.

LABARRERA: And then *someone who I can actually consider a FRIEND* in this world. Comes. And gets my back. That. That's why. You're the mayor.

Before KAYSTER can again say, 'I was here all last night', LABARRERA changes gears.

LABARRERA: I think if you ran, you could win.

KAYSTER: My own fake town, maybe.

LABARRERA: I think you could run here.

KAYSTER: But. I feel like. I'm *lost*.

LABARRERA: Wanna bite?

He holds it up.

KAYSTER: I stopped eating meat.

LABARRERA is stunned, jaw agape. His half-chewed food hangs from his teeth.

KAYSTER: Two weeks. No meat. Lamb chop commercial. Last straw.

LABARRERA sets down his food, stands up, and goes to KayVille.

LABARRERA: Last night. I text you. From *that* bar.

He points to a corner building in the model town.

LABARRERA: Because three white-hating immigrants are harassing me at dinner, dinner at *that* restaurant.

He points again.

LABARRERA: And my friend, *the mayor*, defends our way of life, jumps in with his *own fists*, let's me off without a warning, and then comes in here and tells me that this *fundamental* part of him, a part I've known for twenty years, *has changed*? No *meat*? No *lamb*? Do you even wanna be *mayor* anymore?

The mood has grown darker.

LABARRERA takes a step toward KAYSTER.

LABARRERA: Who helped you campaign?

KAYSTER: It's a fake town...

LABARRERA: Who caught those black teenagers stealing your signs?
Huh? And now you don't eat meat?

He takes another step in, shouts to heaven.

LABARRERA: SOMEBODY TELL ME WHO THE HELL THIS GUY IS!

KAYSTER: (*cautiously*) It's not real. I'm not a mayor.

LABARRERA: YOU'RE NOT THE MAYOR? WELL WHO THE FUCK IS?

KAYSTER is speechless, stutters, shrugs.

LABARRERA is incensed. He lunges at KAYSTER, grabs him by the throat.

LABARRERA: *Guy had me like this.*

KAYSTER struggles, chokes, tries to pry off LABARRERA's hands.

LABARRERA: *Was gonna kill me*

Choking KAYSTER more.

LABARRERA: *Right in KayVille*

KAYSTER choking, going to his knees.

LABARRERA: *Why do you let people like that in?*

KAYSTER on his knees.

LABARRERA: *WHY DO YOU LET PEOPLE LIKE THAT IN?*

He releases KAYSTER who clutches at his throat, and gasps.

LABARRERA sees the hamburger and fries, crosses to it, takes it, wads and mashes the fries in with the burger, and walks back to a struggling KAYSTER.

He watches KAYSTER breathe a moment, and paw helplessly at his throat.

He then stuffs the mashed hamburger and fries into KAYSTER mouth.

He forces and forces, stuffs and stuffs.

LABARRERA: You're the mayor. You're the mayor. SAY IT.

Stuffing. KAYSTER choking.

LABARRERA: Kayster runs the show.

Stuffing. KAYSTER is flat on his back, LABARRERA standing over him.

LABARRERA: Say I'M THE MAYOR AND I EAT MEAT

He's jammed in all that he can. He straightens, stands over KAYSTER, pants. After a few breaths, he moves away from KAYSTER.

He offers his version of apology.

LABARRERA: Sometimes I'm just a. Big bear of a man.

KAYSTER coughs, rolls over. Too exhausted to move and too grateful to be breathing to do anything else.

LABARRERA sits in his chair, his microphone in front of him. He puts on his headphones.

Lights change to let us know we're 'on air.'

LABARRERA: *(instant radio voice)* As we get ready to call the girl's state field hockey finals, one slot remains blank on the lineup card. Will the coach unleash the Bronx bruiser, or will her scoring troubles of late keep her off the field? Our coverage begins at seven eastern. You're listening to Kayster, and Labarrera – that's *la, bar, era*, for those of you who are challenged by other languages (*chuckle*) - on one oh two point nine FM.

The lights on the radio station go out.

ROCKY enters in her field hockey uniform, stick in hand, mask on. Her eyes show oceans of determination.

She stands center stage. She starts running in place, like before. Sounds of a field hockey match are heard.

A spotlight hits the trashcan where BABY LAMB was found. BABY LAMB pops up and talks as ROCKY plays.

BABY LAMB: Mom, why did you change on me?

ROCKY bumps off a pursuing defender.

BABY LAMB: When you found me, you were one thing. When you came to get me after that match, you were another.

ROCKY stops running, looks at BABY LAMB. She's jostled on both sides from defenders who push past her to follow to ball. The field hockey sounds continue. ROCKY's focus has left the game. She divests herself of her mask.

She looks at BABY LAMB a moment longer. We hear "GOAL!" and the crowd cheers. ROCKY is motionless, her eyes fixed on BABY LAMB.

BABY LAMB: I needed grass and you never came.

ROCKY drops her stick.

BABY LAMB: I needed protection and you never came.

ROCKY stars to slip on a set of blue overalls.

BABY LAMB: You played in a game while they came for me.

ROCKY zips up her blue overalls. The name patch reads "Jose."

BABY LAMB: I watched you speed away in the taxi. Are you coming back next year?

ROCKY wipes motor oil on her face and hands. She wipes her hands with a greasy towel and starts to walk slowly, casually off stage.

BABY LAMB: Rocky?

Their eyes lock again.

BABY LAMB: Raquel?

...

are you

...

are you ever

...

A beat. BABY LAMB'S voice changes.

BABY LAMB: Yea, hi, I'm here to get my oil changed.

ROCKY stares at BABY LAMB, motions for him to follow her, and wordlessly walks offstage.

The lights fade as ROCKY disappears.

They come up on LABARRERA who is standing in front of a podium.

A crowd of plastic townspeople gather. We watch the actors, wearing different outfits which make them unrecognizable from the characters they've played all along, sink into their plastic motionlessness. They're each caught in the everyday motion of life.

LABARRERA puts on a sash that reads "Deputy Mayor." He addresses the plastic town.

LABARRERA: K means strikeout, in baseball. Put *three* K's in a row, and you have an *entirely different* group. But *here*? K only means the past.

That letter moved elsewhere on the dial and we wish him well. May the entire rest of your life, be medium rare beef.

A train whistle is heard.

LABARRERA: Ah, but *that* sound, means the future. A red-blooded future. Where a young Bronx bruiser can attend one of the finest prep schools in the country, bungle the state finals, and *still* go on to be a doctor. Or a drummer? Or. Exactly, *exactly*, her father. Who, I'm told, she never knew. Following in the footsteps of ghosts. What a story.

He sees her in the crowd.

LABARRERA: (*pointing*) *Oh Christ*, there she is! C'mon up here!

The crowd cheers.

LABARRERA: I don't remember your -- c'mon up -- oh, it's. You're. Not her? No? My mistake, my mistake.

The chug-chug of the train is heard approaching. He cups his hand around his ear as he says:

LABARRERA: The sound of twenty-first century progress!

He listens for a moment as a smile beams across his face.

LABARRERA: Before I introduce your new mayor, I'd like to take a moment to speak to *every single* member of this diverse crowd, for it is *you* who will build the cities of tomorrow. (*deep breath*) To you, I say: *Bunt. Bunt, then appeal play. Cameras at every bag. The clean-up is in the box but even a check swing sets up the double play. Go yard. Go yard, or your owner will look to sell. Your owner will look to trade. Get PED's and clean urine. And go yard. Go yard, go yard, go yard!*

The plastic crowd is motionless but we hear applause. LABARRERA steps back as politicians do to revel in the clapping.

He looks to bring on the Mayor.

He leans in as someone is talking in his ear.

Over the light and pleasant sound, we watch LABARRERA step back up to the microphone to say:

LABARRERA: Looks like the Mayor will speak at the catered lunch.
Invited guests should head to the LambShack.

The crowd applauds, the plastic people don't move, LABARRERA smiles, interacts with the invisible people onstage, and the lights fade.

THE END.