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Excerpt from the play COSMICA

First Day

- Dear shit world, today is the first day of my last year in this hellhole.
- Reunited with the gang, with your friends.
- The bell rings and everyone yells like imbeciles.
- This uniform thing is bullshit.
- They run, they shove, they kiss, they hug.
- As if we were children.
- A place to feel important.
- It's the final year, the final year.
- I raise my skirt mid-thigh.
- I hide behind my sweater.
- Everyone says hi and that's how you know you're the shit.
- The final year. Final. Year.
- I love my legs. They see them and fall in love.
- They're like apes, punching each other to see who's the strongest.
- Everyone should obey me, be afraid of me.

BARRIENTOS: Shit. First day of class and I'm already late.

- In here, you are great.
- This year I'm going to fall in love.
- In here, you matter.

MEISA: I'm a mistake. An accident. I've always been that.

Welcome

- I'm not naturally punctual, it's more out of amusement. I like to be the first to arrive and see everyone get there, one by one. Even the teachers. Their tired and worn out faces. Or their expressions of panic when the Hyena begins to draw the main door shut, the door as old as she is. She closes it slowly as the wood creaks, the Hyena amused by the faces of the tardy.
- Seven o'clock on the dot.
- From between the two doors a girl enters.
- Beautiful.
- I see her and let out a gasp.
- She almost ran over the Hyena.

- Everyone turns to see her.
- Some laugh at her scared expression.
- To me, she looks like she's floating.

JUAN: A nebula...

- Did you see her stupid haircut?
- She's hot.
- I've seen better.

JUAN: She must give birth to stars from her womb.

- They look at her like...

MEISA: They don't recognize me. I don't recognize myself either.

- Those silences are not good. I would know. People who live silence like that carry death on their backs.

MEISA: It's just me, Meisa, the same mistake as always.

MEISA: Thank you.

Encounter

MEISA: It's Meisa.

- Right: Melisa.

MEISA: Without the "L"

- Why must you complicate things?

MEISA: I'm a mistake.

- They all laugh.
- What?

MEISA: It was a mistake. On the birth certificate, they didn't add the "L" so... Everyone looks at me as if I had the answers. But I don't, I don't know who you're looking at.

JUAN: Sometimes mistakes are better than being right.

MEISA: What did you mean?

JUAN: It was no mistake. Meisa is the name of a star.

MEISA: A star?

JUAN: A very beautiful one.

MEISA: Is that supposed to make me happy?

JUAN: You have Orion on your forehead.

Orion

MEISA: Orion on my forehead?

JUAN: The three wise men.

MEISA: The three wise men. I wish I could punch him.

JUAN: Hold on. I'm serious. When you smile, on your forehead, three identical freckles light up just like the stars of the three wise men.

MEISA: So idiotic.

JUAN: You have the sky on your face.

MEISA: SO idiotic. And I laugh like an idiot.

JUAN: She leans over when she laughs. Between buttons on her blouse, a small freckle peeks out. Rounded, perfect. She must have a galaxy on her chest.

MEISA: He's looking at my boobs. I'll punch him.

JUAN: Meisa is one of the stars in the Orion constellation. In reality, it's two different stars, separated by a 4.4 second angle. Of the three wise men, it's Balthazar who stands out on your forehead. And so it's no mistake that you are named what you are: as if you had yourself on your forehead, duplicated.

MEISA: How can so much bullshit come out of your mouth at the same time?

JUAN: I read a lot.

Starry Night

JUAN: If there's something I like about school, probably the only thing I like about school, is the starry night event. I know, super dorky, but to be near her, in the dark, it's heaven.

- I don't understand what kind of idiotic adult thinks it's smart to get a bunch of teenagers together on a rooftop at 3 am.
- It's tradition.
- It's stupid.
- There's a meteor shower tonight.
- Meteor shower. What do I care.
- I'm sleepy.

MEISA: We are sitting very close to each other. I can smell him breathing. His heart is beating fast, losing its rhythm. Or is it mine?

- Lies. There won't be a meteor shower tonight.
- Of course there is.
- Says the teacher. But never speaks the whole truth, like all grownups.
- The internet says it will only be visible in Asia.
- Really?
- The ideal place to see it is Asia...
- So we won't see anything?
- North America has a less than optimal spot for viewing. But there will be a dark sky. So hopefully...
- Hopefully?
- It's always the same. I suppose being young means just that: To always be in the wrong place at the wrong time.
- I'm going home.

- You're staying or I'm flunking you.
- You wouldn't dare.
- I would dare and I will do.
- I hate being too young for everything.
- Now, sit down like good idiots looking up at the idiotic sky to see, if perhaps, just maybe, an idiotic star, even an idiot ray of light from an idiot star that passes through the idiotic Asian sky, perhaps decides to illuminate our idiotic night.

Pause.

- It's not even dark.
- We are the children of a city that never sleeps.
- Shut up and watch.
- Watch what? I can't see anything.
- There's a swamp of smog over our heads.
- This city no longer looks at the sky, it's flooded with lights that compete with the stars.

JUAN: None as beautiful as you.

MEISA: Again I wish I could hit him.

JUAN: I don't need shooting stars.

MEISA: I want you to kiss me and you keep talking about stars.

JUAN: She looks at me with furious eyes.

MEISA: I'm thinking: isn't it the boys who are supposed to take the initiative. Isn't it? And this one! I wish I could hit him.

JUAN: Come on, Juan. Discretely move your hand closer to hers. Touch her barely with your pinky. Barely graze her. Absorb her heat. She takes my hand. Sweat. Trembles. She turns her head. She puts my hand on her face.

They kiss.

The Kiss

MEISA:

I am a nebula.

JUAN:

I run my fingers through her hair.
It is made of stardust.

MEISA:

I reflect the light from his fingertips.
They light the way towards a place under my skirt.

JUAN:

I squeeze her thighs
I want to condense her
so that she may fit in my pocket

MEISA:

I want to ask him
What nebula am I?

JUAN:

She won't let me

She's made of hydrogen.

MEISA:

Am I one of those young stars
massive and hot?

JUAN:

No, you are lighter
And I get lost in the galaxy on her chest.

MEISA:

Wait, I'll burn.

Exchange

JUAN:

What they say about butterflies in the stomach is a lie.
I feel a dragon in my stomach
It breathes fire
It destroys my insides.

MEISA:

To kiss him is to vibrate
I hug him and it all makes sense
Even my weird taste in music
by bands no one wants to listen to with me
whose names I can barely pronounce.

JUAN:

Days feel like hours.

MEISA:

Hours feel like minutes.

JUAN:

I wish I could condense you
Shrink you
So I can put you in my pocket.

MEISA:

And take me everywhere?

JUAN: Always. Let me take you with me always.

MEISA:

I send him pictures.
I'm embarrassed
I'm still so, so much me
but he insists.

JUAN: I want to take you with me wherever I go.

Come on, don't hide from me.

MEISA:

No, not that. I'm embarrassed.

JUAN: Don't you love me?

MEISA:

I adore you.

JUAN:

She says.

But she won't let me tell anyone about us.

MEISA:

My parents will kill me.

JUAN: Or you're embarrassed of me.

MEISA:

They'll never let me see you again.

JUAN: You're embarrassed because I'm a dork. Because of the stupid things

I'm into.

MEISA: I love you.

JUAN: Then, let me have you completely, condensed, in my pocket.

Explosions

- Whore.
- Easy.
- Skank.
- Floozy.
- That sounds very grandma.
- Loose woman.
- I want to really stand out. Something no one else has said.
- Us girls have way more imagination, I think. Boys limit themselves to:
- Prostitute.
- Tramp.
- I know I have more imagination.
- Do you think maybe there's more trust among girls so we call each other more names?
- Or we know where it hurts.
- I think we have more imagination.
- Share. *Like*
- I look for more options on Google. No juicy words. Only: "Women must not, Women cannot, Women have to..."
- Let's go viral.
- Look in the dictionary.
- Let everyone know: from 6th grade to seniors.
- I don't know what word to search for.
- Send it to all your contacts.
- Whore: feminine noun: prostitute.
- Attach. *Send*.
- Updated definition—Whore: Denigrating adjective
- Send. Click. I love that sound. Pure pleasure. Feeling/ click/ powerful/ click.
- Search for synonyms.
- I showed my parents the pictures. They're the ones who taught me most of the bad words I know anyway.
- The amount of synonyms for a word like this, it's incredible!
- Hey, Whisper, Meisa is a whore.
- The Spanish teacher says that dictionaries are the memory-keepers of who we are.
- So, we're basically a bunch of synonyms of bad words.
- One that will make her cry.
- Begging for mommy.
- Meanwhile we gang up on her in the bathroom so we can call her all the synonyms.
- And put the photos of her as a...
- Whore.
- ...on her back
- She takes them off, crumples them, and throws them in the trash.
- What a dumbass. They're online.
- There is yelling in the bathroom. Like howling monkeys on top of their trees. Fucking teenagers.
- Then the girl with the silence glued to her back leaves the bathroom.
- In the courtyard she finds more of her pictures...
- Naked
- We put them up everywhere.
- For the first time in three years, the students of 3B actually got together to do

- something.
- Hey everyone! Chip in to print the photos
 - Poster size
 - We even started a special group.
 - Meisa, the whore from 3B.
 - Meisa, smile for the camera.
 - Then, upload it to YouTube.

Pistol Shrimp

MEISA:

The other day I watched a documentary
 I missed you
 “The Most Scandalous Animals”
 The most interesting?
 The pistol shrimp.
 5 centimeters long
 but a total sonic weapon,
 they said.
 With its claws
 it creates a bubble that changes pressure
 or something like that
 and is capable of killing
 any fish
 within a two meter radius
 just by the violent shock wave it creates
 Something like
 an explosion
 more powerful than a gunshot
 200 decibels
 They said humans can only withstand 55.
 Can you imagine that?
 200 decibels
 like taking a shot to the head.
 I can imagine it.
 Something like a loud hum
 like words
 Capable of killing
 any fish
 within a two meter radius.

6:58

BARRIENTOS:

The champion of the 100-meter dash
 Josael Barrientos
 He gets near the finish line
 He jumps over fences
 Avoids puddles
 And now the last obstacle
 The Orc Bridge

the one that smells like drowned engines
 Step on the clutch!
 Behind me, the queen of the Orcs
 My mother
 Josaito, your lunch
 A paper bag
 dripping in grease
 between my mother's fat fingers
 Pretend you didn't hear her
 Useless
 She runs faster than a hungry lioness
 Five minutes I've been yelling after you, Josaito
 She kisses you on the lips
 Mom, I'm a grown up now
 Very grown up, yet you forget your lunch
 it's getting late
 6:58
 shit, shit
 on the bridge
 the girl from the photos
 so beautiful
 now
 just a rung out rag
 she holds on to the railing
 as if it were the only solid thing in her life
 Talk to her
 No, it's too late
 6:59
 triple shit.

From white dwarf to black hole

JUAN:

My room
 the only habitable space
 with its own set of laws
 almost
 at least without questions
 my mom believes that I'm sick
 Good
 How can I explain shame?
 Fear?
 that finite region in space
 that is my center?
 In my bellybutton
 I have a black hole
 A gravity field that devours everything else.
 Not even light can escape it.
 I wish I could explain, say I'm sorry
 but everyone says: it's too late
 And so
 like a coward

I lock myself in my room
 To wait
 for the moment
 that my own gravity field
 perhaps
 will devour me at last.

What happens when a star dies?

MEISA:

A star's fate depends on its mass.
 You'd say
 If its mass is limited
 it consumes itself until it collapses
 until it becomes a white dwarf
 with time it cools off
 and after that
 it stops shining.
 Here, on the edge
 I finally understand your dorky obsession
 with stars and gravity.
 Here,
 on the edge of this bridge
 I feel the force
 the pull
 the call from the ground.
 How much time do you think will pass
 before,
 over there on Earth,
 they notice my death?

7:00 a.m.

BARRIENTOS:

I run towards the railing
 the lunch bag flies through the sky
 I take her tense hand
 My arm around her neck
 Throw your body backwards, Josaél
 Don't let her pull you
 You feel your own weight
 fight against the pull from the universe
 and you beat it
 Two light bodies
 small

fall on the ground
backs first
onto the Orc bridge
far away from them and the smell of drowned engines
Don't cry, Meisa
we can still get there in time
7:00 am
Shit.

*Translated from the Spanish by Georgina Escobar
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