

LOVE, THE SINNERS
By Maggie Smith

Love, The Sinners © June 19, 2024
Draft Eleven
Maggie Smith
maggiesmithwrites@gmail.com

[SAMPLE ENDS]

THE UNDERGROUND QUEER ALLIANCE

ASH (they/them) — senior; the president of the Underground Queer Alliance; strong, loud, a natural-born leader; must be played by a non-binary, agender, genderfluid, or otherwise gender non-conforming performer

RICHIE (he/him) — sophomore; has only recently come out; lighthearted, kind, stubborn when he wants to be; still gives everyone the benefit of the doubt; must be played by a transgender performer

LAINE (they/them) — junior; viewed as a rebel, doesn't care enough to be one; always lounging, constantly getting written up for violating the uniform, must be played by a non-binary, agender, genderfluid, or otherwise gender non-conforming performer

WILDE (she/her) — senior; outspoken and hardworking; always ready to say yes to anything; thinks outside of the box

PERCY (she/he/they) — junior; all smiles but unfortunately cares about being polite more than his own well-being; not yet out to their parents; always has snacks or a pen to lend someone; must be played by a genderfluid, or otherwise gender non-conforming performer

CAM (he/him) — senior; the absolute most fun to be around; full of energy, laid-back, and charismatic; must be played by a transgender performer

THE FACULTY

MIA ROCKWELL (she/her) — a guidance counselor who is genuinely good at her job; keeps everything students tell her confidential, even if it could come at the cost of her job; must be played by a transgender performer

AMANDA GARRETT (she/her) — the head of administration stuck between following the policies set in place by the Archdiocese and protecting her students

SETTING

An “all-girls” Catholic high school

NOTES

There's a lot to go over, here.

I say what I say always— Race and disability are not reasons to not cast a performer. This show not only encourages diverse casting, but needs it. Please keep this in mind.

Gender is very important to this piece, as I'm sure you can tell. I've specified which actors should be trans, which ones should be gender non-conforming, genderfluid, nonbinary, etc. And then the rest are open. But there are specific roles for non-cis performers, here. Please cast accordingly.

Switching gears, this play is meant to make a statement on something very real and very harmful. I'm not here to say, "Anyone identifying as a Christian is bad." That's not the case, I know very nice, kind, Christian people who are genuine allies. I know nice, kind Christian people who are queer. This isn't a thing to say that religion as a whole is bad. This is meant to talk about an intersection of religion and queer identities, having to do with sexuality and gender. I grew up Catholic. I'm queer. I still believe in God. And if you don't, that's totally cool, too! But this isn't a play that's meant to critique a religion, it's meant to critique anti-queer policies put into place by the people in charge of and in the name of religions. It's meant to open eyes and hopefully start a real conversation to explain why so many queer people feel ostracized by the Church.

Finally, I'm aware that this play has strong language. I don't want that to deter anyone from performing it. This is a story for every community, and if the biggest issue in all of this is the cursing involved, please reach out to me and we can come up with solutions. I do ask, though, that you keep everything I've written above in mind when censoring these words. You cannot change the identities of any characters without explicit permission, and you cannot change the identities of these characters to silence any particular voices.

ACT ONE
SCENE ONE
DO YOU REMEMBER FANTINE IN LES MIS?

[Underneath a stairwell, in a cramped and windowed nook, sits the UNDERGROUND QUEER ALLIANCE. It is filled with couches, armrest touching armrest. Each student is wearing a variation of the school uniform, WILDE and PERCY in skirts, ASH, RICHIE, and CAM in pants. LAINE, is wearing a pair of pants made out of the same fabric as the uniform skirts. That is not allowed. The kids are clustered around ASH, who is sitting on the back of a couch against the wall, and RICHIE, who is sitting in a chair in front of them. They're cutting his hair.]

ASH

Would you stop moving around? It's going to be uneven.

RICHIE

I'm trying! The hair keeps getting underneath my collar.

ASH

Well, if it's uneven I'm going to have to buzz it.

WILDE

It's already uneven.

RICHIE

It's what?

WILDE

I said it's already uneven.

RICHIE

No, I heard what you said. I just need some clarification as to whether this haircut is or is not uneven.

ASH

It is not uneven!

LAINE

It looks fine from the front. Just make sure no one is behind you and you're good to go.

RICHIE

I'm in the front row of all of my classes!

CAM

Don't have a last name that starts with an A and you won't have that problem. Percy, tell him. You're in the last row of every class.

PERCY

I don't want to be involved in this.

CAM

Have a little fun.

PERCY

Class starts in five minutes and you all are deciding that now is a good time to start playing hairdresser. I'm not going to be late, I need to make a good first impression.

CAM

Suit yourself.

WILDE

It looks like he has a bald patch.

ASH

It's not a bald patch!

WILDE

What is it, then?

ASH

It's just... A part of his hair... That's shorter than the rest.

RICHIE

So, it's uneven?

ASH

No!

CAM

Hand me the scissors.

WILDE

Don't hand him the scissors.

CAM

I've done this, like, fifty times to myself. I'm a professional.

RICHIE

You have to wear a hat for at least a week after cutting your hair!

CAM

You could pull off a hat.

PERCY

No he can't. Hats aren't allowed with the uniform.

RICHIE

But Laine gets to wear a hat.

PERCY

Laine doesn't get to wear a hat. Laine chooses to wear a hat. Laine should not be wearing a hat.

LAINE

The consequences don't outweigh the actions.

RICHIE

I'm supposed to volunteer at the school's open house next month! They're never going to let me give tours if I look sloppy.

CAM

I don't really think they're in a position to turn away volunteers.

WILDE

Have you ever thought of just shaving it all off? You'd look like a celebrity.

RICHIE

Really? Which one?

WILDE

Caillou.

ASH

Okay, enough. Does someone have a comb?

[The students look to each other.]

ASH

Really? No one? Come on, Percy, I know you have one somewhere.

PERCY

I said I don't want to be a part of this.

ASH

Please.

PERCY

It's aiding and abetting and I'm already nervous enough as it is just watching you do this. I cannot participate.

RICHIE

Perce. Please?

PERCY

But I don't... Fine. Fine. Just don't say you got it from me, okay?

ASH

Give it.

[PERCY pulls out a comb from their bag. ASH takes it and uses it to align the edge of RICHIE'S hair. Their hand slips.]

ASH

Uh oh.

RICHIE

“Uh oh” what?

[The kids are silent, looking at his hair.]

RICHIE

“Uh oh” what? “Uh oh” what? Someone tell me what the “uh oh” is!

WILDE

I don’t... Want to.

ASH

Shut up, I can fix this.

WILDE

Good luck.

RICHIE

What happened?

CAM

I don’t think it’s that bad.

WILDE

That wasn’t convincing.

CAM

No, it wasn’t.

PERCY

Richie, do you want a fruit snack?

RICHIE

Why?

PERCY

I always feel better about bad news if I have a fruit snack before I hear it.

RICHIE

What?

LAINE

Oh my God, give me the scissors.

[No one fights LAINE on this. It takes them three snips. The kids murmur to themselves that, yeah, LAINE actually fixed the problem.]

RICHIE

I want to see!

[PERCY hands him a mirror that was sitting to the side.]

RICHIE

Oh, yeah, that actually looks pretty good. Nice job, Laine.

ASH

I laid the groundwork.

RICHIE

My bad. Mediocre job, Ash.

ASH

Mediocre? What do you mean, “mediocre,” I did fine. The haircut was fine. You said it looks good, how the hell can it / be mediocre?

WILDE

Does anyone have a broom?

CAM

Do I look like I carry around a broom?

PERCY

Hold on, there’s a dustpan somewhere under the couch. Wilde, get it.

ASH

Are we going to acknowledge what Richie just said to me?

[WILDE is half underneath the couch, searching for the dustpan.]

WILDE

Play stupid games, win stupid prizes.

CAM

And in this case the stupid game is...?

[WILDE emerges from underneath the couch with the dustpan.]

WILDE

Cutting Richie's hair.

CAM

And the stupid prize?

[WILDE hands the dustpan to ASH.]

WILDE

They get to sweep all the hair off the ground.

ASH

This is what I get for being kind?

WILDE

This is what you get for being bad at what you volunteer to do.

[MIA ROCKWELL walks by, clearly intending on passing the students, only to see the mess on the floor.]

MIA

[Excited] Richie! Your hair!

RICHIE

We just cut it.

MIA

I can see that. It's all over the floor.

ASH

Yeah, I'm working on it.

MIA

Well, I'd work faster, the bell's ringing soon.

ASH

I'll just leave it. It's not like they can prove whose hair it is.

WILDE

You're going to lose your mind when you find out about DNA testing.

MIA

I think it looks great. Very you.

LAINE

Thank you.

MIA

But, you know, normally students get their haircuts before the first day of school, not during it.

CAM

Yeah, but this was cooler. And there's nothing against it in the handbook. Not this year's, at least.

MIA

Just clean up the evidence and it won't show up in next year's, either.

[The bell rings.]

MIA

Alright, sweep it under the couch for now, then.

[ASH does exactly that. The rest of the students grab their backpacks and begin to exit.]

MIA

Hey, Laine. Ms. Garrett's making rounds today, checking to see who's out of uniform. I'd suggest you don't let her see the pants you made.

LAINE

[An excuse] I don't have time to change. I'm gonna be late for physics.

[MIA sighs and pulls a notepad from her pocket. She scribbles a note, then hands it to LAINE.]

MIA

Give this to your teacher. Just... Don't be super late, okay?

[Everyone exits. Before leaving, LAINE begrudgingly grabs approved uniform pants. Transition into:]

ACT ONE
SCENE TWO
ONE OF THE FEW GOOD GUIDANCE COUNSELORS IN ACADEMIA

[MIA'S office. It's comfortable. There's a sofa, an arm table, and other decor that makes it feel safe. MIA sits at her desk on her computer while ASH, WILDE and CAM lounge around.]

WILDE

Right, so, the four humors— It's blood, black bile, yellow bile, and phlegm. And if your body has too much of one of them, you'd get sick. So, like, if you had too much blood, they'd put leeches on your skin until you'd get better. Or just get rid of the blood. That's how Raphael died.

CAM

The Ninja Turtle?

WILDE

The painter.

ASH

So, you spent all summer just learning about the four humors?

WILDE

No, I spent all summer making a list of famous people who died of bloodletting.

MIA

Do you not all have something better to do than sit around doing nothing?

CAM

No. Having a free period first thing in the morning is kind of bullshit.

MIA

I'm not your friend, you don't get to curse with me.

CAM

Noted.

MIA

Do you plan on spending all of your free periods in my office?

CAM

I mean, I'm missing school for a dentist appointment next week, so I guess not all of our free periods.

ASH

But Wilde and I will still be here.

CAM

Well, I invited you guys to come with me.

MIA

What if I have a student that needs to talk?

WILDE

We're good at group therapy.

MIA

Wrong answer.

ASH

We'll leave. If we have to.

CAM

But in the meantime, can we stay? Because otherwise we'll just be roaming around the school... All alone... Absolutely unsupervised—

MIA

Fine. Just... Don't be too disruptive.

ASH

We won't.

[WILDE stretches and knocks a stack of papers off of a table.]

ASH

Starting now.

MIA

Hmm.

CAM

Do you want to come to my house after school today?

WILDE

Yeah. My mom dropped me off today, though. Do you have your car?

CAM

I walked today.

WILDE

That's, like, a twenty minute walk.

CAM

Thirty. I stopped for coffee on the way.

WILDE

And are you stopping again on the way back home?

CAM

Probably. They know me there. They give me free drinks half of the time, I could get you one, too.

WILDE

And if they don't give you free drinks?

CAM

I'll pay, then.

WILDE

Okay, that works.

ASH

I'm assuming this invitation is not extended to me?

CAM

I mean, if you want to come you can.

ASH

No, I'm busy.

WILDE

Busy with what? It's not like you have anywhere else to be.

ASH

I can have plans.

CAM

Alright, then.

WILDE

Are we having a meeting after school tomorrow?

ASH

No. We're starting meetings on Thursday. I'll let everyone know at lunch.

WILDE

I thought we were doing Tuesdays too. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

CAM

The gayest days of the week.

ASH

Yeah, I know. Laine and I just thought it would be better to give everyone time to adjust to classes again before we started. We'll do Tuesday and Thursday next week.

WILDE

Oh, but I cleared my whole schedule for a meeting tomorrow.

ASH

I mean, we could still hang out tomorrow, if you wanted to? Just unofficially.

WILDE

Isn't every meeting already unofficial?

ASH

It is. Unless...

[ASH looks at MIA.]

MIA

No.

ASH

Come on.

MIA

I already told you the past two years. I'm not mentoring your unsanctioned club.

WILDE

It's only unsanctioned because you refuse to moderate it.

MIA

It's unsanctioned because Ms. Garrett hasn't signed off on it. I told you, you need the Dean of Students to—

CAM

You know that Ms. Garrett isn't going to sign off on a Queer Alliance. The last time we asked, the school board broke for recess and didn't come back.

MIA

I'm in your corner. I'll stand up for you when I can. But Ms. Garrett and I have already butt heads more than she has with any other teacher— This might be the final nail in the coffin.

CAM

Come on.

MIA

Don't you have any other teachers that you could ask? It's a big school.

ASH

It's not that big. We've only got eighty-seven people graduating in our senior class this year.

WILDE

Eighty-six.

ASH

Right. Eighty-six.

MIA

I don't want to get fired over this. I'm sorry.

ASH

It's fine. I'm going to make sure that the members next year bother you about it, though.

MIA

And I'd imagine my answer will be the exact same as this year's.

WILDE

Boring.

[The bell rings. ASH, WILDE, and CAM gather their belongings.]

CAM

See you later.

WILDE

Bye.

[CAM and WILDE exit. ASH begins to leave, but stops at the door.]

MIA

Ash, wait a sec.

ASH

What's up?

MIA

I know things have been rough since Eloise left last year—

ASH

She didn't leave. She got pulled out.

MIA

Right. I know we were doing weekly appointments last year, and I wanted to see if you were interested in starting those up again? We don't even have to talk about any of that, if you don't want to. There's gotta be a million other things on your mind— I can help with those, too, if you needed.

ASH

I have to get to class.

[ASH exits, leaving MIA alone in the office. Transition into:]

ACT ONE
SCENE THREE
OH GROSS, SO I HAVE TO GO AGAINST MY JOB TITLE?

[GARRETT sits in her office with MIA across from her, in the middle of a heated discussion.]

GARRETT

While I appreciate your concern, Ms. Rockwell, I don't think you have much say in the matter regarding these policies.

MIA

Much say? I'm here to counsel teenagers. I feel like any ruling made by the Archdiocese that directly inhibits my ability to do my job gives me a lot of say, wouldn't you, Ms. Garrett?

GARRETT

I am not the decision-maker on what is and is not allowed in the Catholic Church. While it may be well-within your boundaries to discuss this issue, I am not the one to take it up with.

MIA

These policies are targeting queer and trans teenagers in your school. Look at this.

[MIA pulls a copy of the document that is sitting in front of her.]

MIA

The first page. "All students must act in accordance with the Archdiocesan rulings on gender and sexuality. In doing so, students are expected to conform to their biological sex." Conform to their biological sex— Do you understand how damaging that is?

GARRETT

I don't like this any more than you do. But the Archdiocese is entirely within its right when making rules for students while on school grounds.

MIA

But it's not just on school grounds. The final paragraph on page 7: "All students are expected to be representatives of not only the school of which they attend, but the Catholic Church as a whole. Schools are not to tolerate any behavior that challenges any Catholic beliefs, whether that be verbal, physical, or through social media." They can't do that. Students deserve a private life.

GARRETT

A student can be expelled for bullying online. This is no different.

MIA

It's severely different. This whole document is based on discriminating against students. It's dividing.

GARRETT

There is no discrimination.

[GARRETT pulls the document from MIA.]

GARRETT

On page 3. There is a specific note that no student will be denied entry because of their gender identity.

MIA

Right. Considering that that student will be willing to ignore that gender dysphoria and agree to be dead-named and misgendered for the next four years. Glad we have that covered.

GARRETT

And then on the final page— “At its core, Catholicism fundamentally teaches that every creature on earth is worthy of love. As such, all members of any Catholic institution, regardless of identity, are expected to follow this teaching. Should a student experience any dysphoria in regards to their gender they are still worthy of God’s love.”

MIA

Right. And then it goes on to say that gender dysphoria isn't real and can be fixed. Because that's how God's love works.

GARRETT

Ms. Rockwell, please.

MIA

Because nothing is more dignifying than telling someone that the way they exist isn't valid— That they as people are not valid.

GARRETT

It is not them as people.

MIA

No, just their love, and their gender, and their bodies, and their minds—

GARRETT

Ms. Rockwell, it is—

MIA

It is endangering them. It is telling them that there's something wrong with them. It is telling other students that there's something wrong with them. It is creating a divide and othering students and regardless of the anti-bullying policies schools have, it won't stop anything. You know that. They know that.

GARRETT

I assure you, we will take any complaints of harassment seriously.

MIA

Harassment at school, sure. But what about cases at home? Last year, Eloise Hammond—

GARRETT

Ms. Hammond's situation was regrettable, I agree. But the parents' reactions to their child's identity is not our responsibility. They have a right to know about their children, just as they have the right to take them out of the school if—

MIA

They don't have a right to anything! Their children have a right to privacy! And when did the parents become the focus of this? Why do they matter?

GARRETT

All of them, regardless of their child's involvement in this document, had a vision of the type of education their daughters would be receiving when they were enrolled in an all-girls school.

MIA

But we aren't an all-girls school anymore! You have trans students, non-binary students, students that are looking for your support during all of this. And you care more about their parents instead of them!

GARRETT

I am not asking you to turn away students in need of support. I'm asking you to do your job.

MIA

My job is to help, not to force them into a dangerous situation!

GARRETT

Your job is to watch the kids, advise them, and tell their parents if they become a threat to themselves or our community!

[A beat.]

MIA

Being queer is not a threat. To the community or otherwise.

GARRETT

My... Apologies, Ms. Rockwell. It wasn't my intention to be so forceful on the matter. I understand you're upset about this situation, but my hands are tied, here. This ruling didn't come from me. It came from the Archdiocese. I didn't write it, and I never would have. But we are walking a very fine line here when it comes to following these rulings. And if I hear of you or any other teacher breaking these rulings, then the only options left will be to fire you or lose our official standing as a Catholic institution.

MIA

But the students—

GARRETT

Can choose what is right for them. If we have a student who disagrees with the ruling, they are more than welcome to enroll with a different school. And I don't doubt some will. And we will hold nothing against those students who choose to remain true to themselves.

MIA

So then what about me?

GARRETT

What about you?

MIA

Are they going to fire trans faculty, too?

GARRETT

This document is only regarding the students. Faculty haven't been mentioned.

MIA

You know they aren't going to stop at students, though!

GARRETT

I cannot sit by and ignore direct orders given to me by the Archdiocese. Imagine how that would look. I am the Dean of Students.

MIA

Exactly. Imagine how that would look to the students that need you to protect them.

[A beat.]

GARRETT

Ms. Rockwell, I'm not telling you what to do. If you break the rulings, that is your own choice. But I had to make you aware of the consequences you'd be facing if you choose to do so.

MIA

Thank you for your time.

[MIA gets up to leave.]

GARRETT

Ms. Rockwell. For what it's worth, I also wish it didn't have to be this way.

MIA

Then do something about it.

[MIA exits the office. Transition into:]

**[END OF SAMPLE. FOR THE FULL WORK, PLEASE CONTACT:
maggiesmithwrites@gmail.com]**