

# “A Vulva Named Carol”

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REPORTER V.O.: Last night a woman exploded at the corner of Sunset Blvd and N La Brea Ave. Bits of her organs and flesh were found from the grounds of Hollywood High School all the way up into the hills of Runyon Canyon. One overachieving morning jogger, Tad, was hit in the face with her left breast. It turns out her vagINa was found on the O of the IN AND OUT Burger... Tad back to you *(Cuts off before Tad can properly respond)*

*Lights slowly come up on a life-size muppet vulva indeed hanging off of the bright red O of an IN AND OUT sign sadly singing "All By Myself". The ghost of Cati wanders on in a sparkly sheer slip and notices the vulva.*

CATI: Woah, vagina, is that you?

VULVA: *(pulling it together)* Umm it's like, Vulva, actually.

CATI: Oh right, sorry I knew that.

VULVA: It's alrightttt, happens like all the time, we learn alll about erections, no time for us.

CATI: Ugh, too true, Miss V.

VUVLA: My name's Carol actually, but all my friends just call me Vulva.

CATI: Oh sure, cool ya. *(awkwardly over pronouncing it)* Vuul-va. Huh. You don't sound like I thought you would.

VUVLA: *(defensive)* Oh? What'd you like, think I'd sound like?

CATI: *(realizing her judgment)* Oh I mean, I dunno-

VULVA: Do you think I sound like, dumb or something??

CATI: No!

VUVLA: What? Did you want me to sound like Madeline fuckin Albright?! *(The Vulva is very sensitive)*

CATI: No no! It's just... that is *my* stupid judg-y bullshit. I'm so sorry.

VUVLA: Yeah, well maybe you shouldn't like make all these baseless assumptions about a very dear part of you that has been forced upon this neon "O" just mocking the fact that we'll never have an orgasm again because of this girl who bottled up wayyy too much shit until she finally just went and exploded all over goddamn Hollywood hills! *(Labored panting)*

CATI: Yeahh sorry about that...

VUVLA: Ugh where's my vape. *(Takes out a vape and smokes it through her "lips")*

CATI: *(getting a whiff of the vapor)* Is that mango?

VUVLA: (*Exhaling again*) Obvi. It's the best.

*Cati shakes her head in agreement, this is just "life" now.*

CATI: So, I guess it all just doesn't matter anymore, does it?

VUVLA: Why not?

CATI: Well, because I- we? don't exist anymore, right?

VUVLA: Then how are we talking?

CATI: Oh. Huh. Ok, well, then I guess I should be going...?

VULVA: Bitch, where? You're parts are scattered from Sunset to the stars.

CATI: (*looking up*) Rightttt, yeahh...

VUVLA: No, I mean the dirty sidewalk stars- I heard your right butt cheek landed smack dab in the middle of Frank Sinatra.

CATI: Nooo! Ughh, really? Which one?

VULVA: He has more than one?

CATI: He has three.

VULVA: Ew. I dunno, I just heard it on TMZ.

CATI: Vulvaa.

VUVLA: Hey! What else am I supposed to do while I'm stuck up here heralding in these burger munching monsters?

CATI: Alright, fair.

*Pause.*

CATI: Soo, what is this exactly?

VULVA: What do you want it to be?

CATI: I mean, I dunno...

VUVLA: Well, maybe you should figure that out.

CATI: So death is just whatever we make of it?

VUVLA: There's a bulb in there!

CATI: *(slightly offended but more curious)* Okay... I guess I was always under the impression that that was life and then death was just sort of out of our hands.

VUVLA: Yeah it's a rough awakening for most people.

CATI: Yeahh... wait. How do you know all this? Are you like-

VUVLA: A magical omniscient pleasure giving life bringing sorceress!?! Guilty.

CATI: Wow. I'm sorry, I feel like I didn't take very good care of you when we were... together.  
*(gestures with her hands)*

VULVA: *(sighs)* Yeah that's another thing people realize...

*Cati looks down at where her vulva is, or was, and registers what she's wearing.*

CATI: Um, sorry for all the questions, but, why am I in this sexy sheer thing?

VULVA: It's your death outfit. *You* chose it.

CATI: I did? Huh... Well I guess that makes sense. *(Breaking the fourth wall)* I always thought if I did a one woman show I might wanna go that route. *(Winks at audience)*

VULVA: Oh yeah? How com- com- how co- *(getting emotional)* oh, I can't even say it.

CATI: Is sex all you think about?

VUVLA: Nooo. I mean, not alll. What about you, miss sexy sheer thing?

CATI: Mmm, yeah, pretty much.

*Pause.*

I mean, noo of course not alll. I also think about how much I hate men sometimes. But then I get all horny and I'm like they're not *that* bad- wait, could that be some kinda Stockholm syndrome thing you think?

VUVLA: Hmm...

CATI: Well, that might be some content for the second fold. But, why I believe I would've chosen this outfit for my death/one woman show *(winks at audience again)* is because in life, I just feel like we're always wondering what everyone else looks like naked. So this just kinda, gets it out of the way. And also challenges everyone to move past it and listen in spite of it.  
*(Looking challengingly at the audience)*

*A ding is heard.*

VUVLA: Oh shit!

CATI: What?

VUVLA: I almost forgot, we're late for death anon!

CATI: Death anon?

VUVLA: A support group for people in denial that they're dead.

CATI: Oh, I mean I don't think I need- *swift light change*

*Cati reacts as if she's suddenly in front of a large group of people, bright spot light on her.*

CATI: Oh- kayy then. Um hi, everyone, I'm Cati... and I um, I guess I'm, well, dead?

*She looks to her vulva who "nods" for her to proceed.*

CATI: Yep, yeah I'm dead. I am dead. *(Long pause, really taking that in now.)*

VUVLA: You can tell us something about yourself. Your life. Sometimes that helps make the transition easier.

CATI: Oh, ok, sure. Um, well I like- liked to have sex. I wasn't addicted or anything, I don't think. Though I did think about it quite a lot. I was listening to this podcast the other day- wow that's weird to say now- anyway it was this group of women who I really admire talking about a study where it seemed to show that men when stressed are inclined to want to have sex as a release, but for women this stress response often deactivates the inclination to. But for me that didn't resonate. I really want- wanted to have sex when I was stressed for that release. And honestly most days could've really been up for it at the drop of a hat.

*Someone in the first row slowly starts to take off their hat.*

CATI: *(Shooting a look at them.)* I will haunt you in your sleep. *(Person puts the hat swiftly back on)* It's just a shame that it could be so confusing sometimes.

VULVA: Like how?

CATI: Well, like my first experience with it was pretty, forced. We started dating when I was 13 and after a year or so he was like... I just didn't know how to navigate it all. But I wasn't ready. Even though I masturbated every night with my parent's massager. The horniness was definitely there. Which I guess is what can make it so confusing.

It's so embarrassing now. When you're a teenager you're so cocky, you think you're so stealthy and that your parents are just idiots who have no idea what's going on. I remember my parents asking me one time- so that's a uh, good massager huh? And I was so serious like yeah, yeah it's great, reallyy good at getting the knots in my uh, back there... *(Shakes her head)*

But yeah teen sex man. I imagine the only thing scarier than straight white men is straight white teenage boys. I know you English nerds in here are like “are” in your mind right now, but I intend them to be an unsettling singular entity.

My introduction to a penis IRL, before IRL was a thing, was the aforementioned teen boy closing the door to his bedroom, whipping it out, flaccid by the way, and forcing it into/onto my face as I tried to hide under the covers of his bed. Terrifying. And it makes me wonder now how in that moment, I didn’t once question my sexuality, just a little bit. Like- masturbate every night, want nothing to do with peni...

But in reality I was a bit a lesbian like I was a lot of other things in my life. I had a hard time making up my mind, and most of the time I’ve decided it’s because I was greedy. I wanted a little bit of everything. Salad or fries? A little of both please. Chocolate or vanilla? I’ll have the swirl. That’s a lie, it is only ever chocolate vanilla is the non flavor you add flavor to. See? I said most of the time. You can have vanilla. But men or women... I just liked people. Sex and snuggling with the right people. The best. That’s what all the great songs are about right? *(Starts to sing the non-existent hit “Sex and Snuggling”)* You know the one. The only thing for me is I have to like you. There’s gotta be some kind of connection beyond the pleasure, because well, it just adds *(realizing her mistake again, it really hits her now)* added to the pleasure, ya know? For me.

*Another dinging, this time sounds like chimes of a clock.*

VULVA: Oh shit! Not again!

CATI: What now??

VULVA: Um yeahh, so I forgot to mention if you *don’t* choose your death path, you get... *(chiming gets louder)* dealer’s choice.

DEALER V.O. *(slurring speech, very “merry”)*: After the lasht shtroke of midnight... shyou will be vishited by four *(hiccup)* I mean three spiruts...

CATI: Is she ok?... *(realizing excitedly)* wait, oh my god, is this gonna be like a Christmas Carol thing?? *(Realizing less excitedly)* Wait, does that mean that I’m Scrooge?

*The last ding finishes. Blackout.*

*Lights back up on an eight year old version of herself in a bright pink sweater with dogs on it and matching pink leggings sitting alone at a picnic table. It’s foggy, ethereal. We hear background noises of other kids playing while Lil Cati is alone at the table writing something on pink owl stationary. Older Cati watches from behind, slowly walking closer to look over her shoulder. We hear Lil Cati talking to herself as she writes.*

LIL CATI: Dear Sam, sometimes I like you. But some times you can be vary anying. I don’t like when you beg me to do something when I keep saying no! And the reasen I sended you this note is so when I say no don’t beg me to do it. Some times I might say yes! But some times I might say no and when I say no I don’t want you to beg me to do it evre time I say no you keep on beging me to do it. I mean some times I might say yes! Ok, but I’m really getting tired of you

beging me to do what you want me to do so if I say no, I don't want you beging me about it cause I'm really getting tired of it.

*Older Cati laughs. Lil Cati abruptly turns around, startled. Both scream.*

LIL CATI: AHH! (Same time) CATI: AHH!

LIL CATI: ExCUSE me! (Swiping the paper away, standing up) WHAT are you doing you blue haired demon woman??

CATI: Oh! I'm so sorry, I didn't think you could see me!

LIL CATI: And WHY would you think that exactly??

CATI: I- I don't know, I thought this was like a Christmas Carol thing ya know, and you were just like an echo of the past!

LIL CATI: A Christmas who?! WHAT are you talking about you large angular Smurf! (Pointing her hot pink Lisa Frank patterned pencil at her like a dagger)

CATI: I'm, well, I'm you! Just- a lot older!

LIL CATI: What??

*Lil Cati looks down at her powder pink plastic digital watch.*

Ohh rightt. Sorry. They did tell me you'd be coming, I just lost track of time writing this very important letter. And I didn't expect this giant blue raspberry.

*Lil Cati starts to circle her.*

CATI: Yeahh, I guess I just never felt like blonde really-

LIL CATI: Woahhh (Awestruck, looking her up and down) So, this is me in sixty years.

CATI: Well I mean not *quite* that-

*Lil Cati pokes at her butt.*

LIL CATI: Oo still pretty bouncy. (Lil Cati comes around to her front) Hey- what's that? (Pointing at her pubic area.)

CATI: Oh! Um, our vuulvaa. (Looking to the audience, like, see I'm gettin it, eh?) or where it was anyway.

LIL CATI: No, I know thatt. (Cati looks back at the audience like, even **she** knows??) I'm talking about that furry stuff above it.

CATI: Oh, (looking down) you can see that? Um, that's our pubic hair.

LIL CATI: Yeah, but why is it in a small rectangle-y shape type thing.

CATI: Ohh, umm, it's called a landing strip. It was in style? And well, I think I like it? I don't really... that's a hard one. It might just be some conditioning I could never quite let go of.

*Lil Cati has a blank stare.*

CATI: Like uhh, something we're told we're supposed to like, by the media, magazines, tv, porn.

LIL CATI: Corn?

CATI: Ya know, maybe we're getting off on the wrong foot here. Let's go play!

LIL CATI: Wait just a minute older self. We've got some shit to do. But first- can I give you a hug??

CATI: Oh, sure!

*Lil Cati runs up and cuddles her older self.*

LIL CATI: Ohh woman! You are so tense!

CATI: Am I?

LIL CATI: Yes! Sheesh older me what happened??

CATI: Um I dunno, life? Or death, now? Which that's kinda harsh, I mean I thought at least with death might come a little relief, Jesus. And by the way, is he here? Can we have a chat?

LIL CATI: No he's on vacation.

CATI: Of course he is... the Bahamas I suppose?

LIL CATI: Hey- how'd you know?

CATI: Lucky guess.

LIL CATI: Because you know what he's doing?

CATI: What?

LIL CATI: RELAXING, sheesh lady. Try it.

*Cati takes a couple of quick forced breaths.*

LIL CATI: Oh my lord, no wonder you exploded.

*Cati makes a cartoony sad face.*

LIL CATI: You know it's ok to be soft and messy sometimes.

CATI: I guess so. I mean I do. I just resist it.

LIL CATI: How come?

CATI: I guess I like to feel powerful. And I haven't embraced those things as a part of my power.

LIL CATI: Well we have a lot of conviction, when we want to. And that's great. But the smooshy place is the best. Lots of cool things are there: honesty, cuddles, connection, cryingggg. Lots of crying.

*Cati gives a skeptical look, then gives in.*

CATI: Yeahh. I just feel like sometimes I can't access it. Like it's stuck. Deep in here. (*She motions to her lower belly.*) And sometimes I feel like I've held so much in that if I let go I'd just- ohh yeah ok I see it now. (*Beat.*) Soo, why you exactly? I mean, it's great to see you but...

LIL CATI: Oh! I'm here so you can start your brand new death with little lesson on boundariesssss (*she smushes Older Cati's cheeks on "boundaries"*).

CATI: (*both cheeks still smushed*) Okayy...

LIL CATI: (*letting go of her cheeks*) Great! So, let's start with what *is* a boundary?

CATI: Mm, like a big unbreakable wall to keep bad things out. Brick. None of that straw shit.

LIL CATI: Well, that's a start. What bad things are we trying to keep out?

CATI: Bad people, bad energy.

LIL CATI: Well in a perfect world yes, but we can't control other people right?

CATI: (*Slightly resentful*) I guesssss.

LIL CATI: But what *can* we control?

*Pause.*

CATI: (*Reluctantly*) Ourselves?

LIL CATI: *Ourselves.*

*Cati looking skeptical at this abrupt adult turn this conversation has just taken.*

CATI: Are you actually my therapist or...? Is death just eternal therapy purgatory...? Why does this even matter if we're not alive anymore??

LIL CATI: It's never too late for self care.

*Cati just stares.*

You're *soul* is forever my dude. That's why it matters. So! Since we can only control ourselves, maybe let's see boundaries as looking deep within ourselves to stay in touch with what *we* need and how *we* feel so we can act on that to keep ourselves safe and sane.

*Cati still just stares.*

For example. Let's say someone is speaking to you in a rude, condescending manner and you get mad at them and then they say something like "Woah calm down you woman, what are you like on your period or something?" What would you do?

CATI: I'd say YOU CANNOT SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT YOU FATHER FUCKING SON OF A DICK HAVING DOG!

LIL CATI: Oo I see what you did there... alrighttty, I like that energy BUT... that's still about controlling *them*, right? Unfortunately, anyone can speak to you however they want. But what *you* can do is say "if *you* keep speaking to me like that *I* am going to leave." And remove yourself from the situation.

CATI: But, what if I don't want to leave?

LIL CATI: Sometimes we need to make sacrifices for our well being.

CATI: But why does this asshole Tad get to stay at the hoppin party spewing all this misogynist bullshit and I have to go home?

LIL CATI: Did you just say hoppin? How old were we?

*Pause.*

CATI: Thirty five. But we were never hip. I hate to break it to you but it's just not our calling. Never was, never will be.

LIL CATI: Speak for yourself woman. I am tres hip. (*Twirling her pig tails, flaunting her dog sweater.*) Anyhoo if it's between the "hoppin" party and your well being, what do we choose?

*Under her breath, even more reluctantly.*

CATI: Our well being.

LIL CATI: Yes! You're really getting the hang of it now. Ok, next example. So, you're on a date with a male identifying human. (*Cups her hand and whispers*) I'm your date.

CATI: (*Whispers back*) Okay.

*Lil Cati takes out a script to read from and deepens her voice.*

LIL CATI: Helloo Cati.

CATI: You don't have to do that with your voice ya know.

LIL CATI: *(keeps doing it)* But I'm trying to sound manlyyy.

CATI: But haven't you heard? *(all in one breath)* Ninety nine percent of humans have finally embraced the fact that gender is a bullshit construct developed and fed to us by patriarchal systems and perpetuated by rich "men" who have usurped and enjoyed this power for so long they control all the major industries that pump us full of ideas about how people should look and act and *then* have the audacity to believe they can write a soulless movie about a non dimensional female conductor who can "be bad like the famous men" and think they can call it a day!

LIL CATI: Sooo no voice then.

*Pause.*

CATI: No do the voice, men are the fucking problem.

LIL CATI: Ok. *(Going back to deepening her voice and reading from the script)*. Hello, Cati. I am your date.

CATI: *(Half-heartedly)* Hello date.

LIL CATI: I have picked this restaurant to delight and impress you. Has it?

CATI: Not really.

*She looks back at the script, it's not one of the options but she keeps going.*

LIL CATI: Wonderful. I order the shrimp puffs for us?

CATI: I mean I was kinda into the egg rolls.

LIL CATI: *(making an executive decision to go off script)* We get both? Puffs and rolls?

CATI: Actually I'm not all that hungry after all so... *(starts to get up)*

LIL CATI: *(dropping the voice)* Heyy, come on, you have to play along. *(She starts to follow her)*

CATI: I can't play along with this, you sound like some creepy AI chatbot.

LIL CATI: AI chatbot?

CATI: Yeah, it's some new unnerving human thing. Or non human thing, made by humans. Pretty on brand. But also I thought we were talking about boundaries! *(Continues to walk away zig zagging around the stage)*

LIL CATI: We were getting there!

CATI: And also I thought I was *dead* and could just like dead-flix and chill for a goddamn second!!

LIL CATI: See *this* is your problem.

CATI: What is??

LIL CATI: You don't wanna do the work! You get so close and then you just walk away all zig zaggy!

CATI: I've just decided this whole death experience isn't really working for me. (*She continues darting back and forth across the stage*)

LIL CATI : Ughh! You're trying to avoid and escape all the time!! And in doing that you're denying all that you are!! You just gotta push through the hard icky rough parts and stay the path for once in your afterlife!!!

CATI: (*abruptly stops and turns around to face Lil Cati*) IF YOU DON'T STOP SPEAKING TO ME LIKE THAT I AM GOING TO LEAVE!

*They both stop. Touché. Lil Cati slowly sits cross legged facing down stage. Older Cati eases up and slowly does the same. They're now both sitting, facing downstage a few feet apart from each other. After a short while.*

LIL CATI: Do you wanna talk about it?

*Long beat.*

CATI: No, not really.

*Another beat.*

I just wish I could protect you from all that.

LIL CATI: Well, that's how we learn right? We don't make that mistake again do we?

CATI: Mmm we kinda do. Like a few times. But I really thought I was about to get the hang of it, and then...

LIL CATI: You exploded.

CATI: I exploded.

LIL CATI: Hey, it happens to the best of us. (*Putting her arm on Cati's shoulder.*)

CATI: Does it?

LIL CATI: Oh yeah, it happened to... Lauren Bacall.

CATI: Didn't she die of a stroke?

LIL CATI: Oh, maybe it was Natalie Wood.

CATI: I think she actually drowned on a boat trip off Catalina Island.

LIL CATI: Really??

CATI: Yeah.

LIL CATI: Sheesh! Well...

CATI: It's ok.

*Pause.*

Because *this* time it really will be different. *(She starts to stand up with conviction)* Whatever this afterlife has in store for me. I AM NOT GONNA LET ANOTHER ASSHOLE CONTROL ME, SHAME ME, BELITTLE ME OR WIGGLE THEIR FLACID LITTLE PENIS IN MY FACE WITHOUT CONSENT! Because I AM A STRONG COOL PERSON ALL BY MYSELF vagine or *(looks down)* whatever this strange misty feeling down there is now.

LIL CATI: YEAH!

CATI: YEAH! And, I WON'T LET SOME LET SOME OTHER ASSHOLE PUT SOMETHING IN OUR DRINK AND- *(she starts to waver)* AND-

*She fully breaks down now, Lil Cati goes to hold her.*

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

LIL CATI: You have nothing to be sorry for.

CATI: I just don't want you to have to go through all that.

LIL CATI: *(with great tenderness)* I didn't. *You* did. And now *I* can be here for *you*.

*Beat. She let's Lil Cati comfort her.*

CATI: Thanks.

*Beat.*

LIL CATI: This is the smooshy place.

CATI: *(half laughs)* Oh yeah? It sounds a lot cuter than it feels.

LIL CATI: Well Dropsy also sounds pretty cute but it causes the tissues in your body to swell up with fluid so you feel like a wet bag of cement and if untreated is fatal.

CATI: Ya know, you really know how to cheer a gal up. *(She takes a deep breath, they cuddle a little more)* Alright, I'm starting to get the smooshy place.

*A faint dining is heard. Lil Cati looks toward it, their time is almost up.*

LIL CATI: Look, I know it can be hard to trust that boundaries will protect you because ultimately they can't, from everything. They're there to help protect your energy more than anything, but shit happens and it takes a lot of courage not to let that keep you down.

CATI: Thanks lil me. Hey, you're pretty cool.

LIL CATI: I know. *(Gives a playful swing of her pigtails)*

*Two more loud dings. Times up. Lil Cati gives her older self one last big hug. Carol appears and waves with a sense of urgency.*

LIL CATI: Okayy I'm coming! *(Back to Cati.)* See ya later spirit hater!

CATI: Spirit hater?

LIL CATI: You'll see!

*She starts to go, but sneaks hurriedly back on.*

LIL CATI: *(Whispers excitedly)* Wait! Can I tell you a secret?

*Cati nods.*

I hate pink.

*Lights out. Pink's "Raise Your Glass" plays, it starts to mingle with/fade into the jazz age tune "Shout, Sister, Shout". Lights slowly come back up on Cati and the Muppet Vulva doing a tap dance together. The lights remain in a dim, dreamlike glow. They each turn away from each other, Cati dancing SR, Vulva SL, Vulva keeps dancing all the way offstage. Cati turns around to dance back to her and realizes she's alone again.*

*Blackout.*

*Lights back up on a small table with a nice tablecloth and a candle downstage center. On it sits a book and two wine glasses, one already full. Cati is still humming the song that was playing, starts to wander toward the table, looking around.*

CATI: Whew, what a doozy. Soo who's next? *(Squinting into the distance over the audience)* Hellooo? Who... who's- *(starting to register who it is)* THAT.

Um what the fuck is he doing here.

*(Looking around) Seriously. Who let him in here??*

You've gotta be kiddingg me. *(wandering, looking anywhere but in front of her)* I mean comee onnn...

*(Finally out to front)* Look uh, Mr. Fitzgerald, I know you're like super beloved by many people and supposedly wrote the great American novel and all that jazz, but I'm just not really a fan so could we just- *(Gesturing to move on and yells to the ethers)* Next! *(Waits. Nothing happens. She starts pacing, getting worked up and uncomfortable)*

I promise we don't wanna do this. *(Getting more worked up)* I'm just, not gonna be very nice... *(pulling at her sheer slip)* Ugh it just got so hot in here! Is anyone else hot?? Woof... No? Ughhh. Wheww! Alrightyy, well this is... this is just... okay then... we're doing this. GREATTT. FanTAStic. Let's let 'er rip then shall we?

What are you doing in my vagina death story?

*Carol peeks out and quickly corrects her.*

VULVA: Vulva!

CATI: Yes, Carol, thank you. *Vulva*, I'm sorry. We're all learning here. *(Looks around.)* Ok, I'm learning. So. Why are you in my *vulva* death story?

F SCOTT: Well...

CATI: To explore my anger?

F SCOTT: Not exactly-

CATI: 'Cause it's working.

F SCOTT: No it's because well... well... *(very quickly)* you were me in your past life.

*Stunned pause.*

CATI: WHAT?? I'm sorry... WHAT?!

*She starts laughing hysterically. All the following is said through the laughter.*

This, I'm sorry this just cannot... *(looking around to the ethers like, someone's gotta be punk-ing me right now)* That is too much. *I was you!* In my previous life?? That's really a thing?

*He shakes his head.*

WHAT?! *(Continues laughing, looking around at the ethers again)* Who wrote this?? *I was F Scootin Fitzdubie?*

F SCOTT: F Scott Fitzgerald yea-

CATI: Effin Scootie McGee!

F SCOTT: Well the full name is actually Frances Scott Key Fitzgerald-

CATI: Mr. Scottie dog in the house!

*Beat. Scott waits to see that she's done interrupting.*

F SCOTT: Because I was named after-

CATI: (*Unintelligible yell/song burst interruption.*) Ah damn it! I ruined it, comedy in threes, ya know. I just couldn't help it.

F SCOTT: Are you done?

CATI: Maybeeee... yeah, yes I'm done.

F SCOTT: Ok, -

CATI: Damn, well that is just my fucking luck. I can't tell if I'm more upset that I was a man in general or if it's because it was *you* specifically.

And then, why you, specifically actually? Because I'm sure I've been other people in my past lives then, right? (*Picks the book up off the table which we now see is titled "F. Scott Fitzgerald Quotes"*) So why do I have the particular pleasure of a visit from someone who said things like, "When I like women I want to own them, to dominate them, to have them admire me."

Or in an interview with the New York World you said, "I think that just being in love, really in love- doing it well, you know- is work enough for a woman. If she keeps her house the way it should be kept and makes herself look pretty when her husband comes home in the evening and loves him and helps him with his work and encourages him- oh, I think that's the sort of work that will save her."

Shall I go on?

F SCOTT: So we weren't Prince Charming, I get that now.

CATI: We? (*Swallows hard*) We.

F SCOTT: We wrote some other stuff too, ya know.

CATI: Oh yes! To your friend Wilson in the summer of 1919 about Zelda you wrote, "I wouldn't care if she died, but I couldn't stand to have anybody else marry her." Very romantic. Is this supposed to be the hell part of the the afterlife? Where I have to come to terms with the fact that I was a classic American douchebag?! Can I pick a new death path?? I didn't even get to explore my options!

F SCOTT: Well let's see, there was eternal tango with the raging river demon Ike, reenacting your life through a series of endless improv games, or... golf.

CATI: Golf?

F SCOTT: Yep, just golf. Forever.

CATI: Oh god.

F SCOTT: So...

CATI: Fine, ok. Let's do this then, if we must.

F SCOTT: Look it wasn't all bad. Try page 4,536.

*She skeptically opens to one of the quotes.*

CATI: "The test of a first-rate intelligence is to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function."

*She gives him a look.*

CATI: I see what you're doing here...

*She goes to look for another.*

CATI: "That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong."

*This one begins to disarm her. She starts to shiver a little.*

Ooh I just got so cold all of a sudden.

F SCOTT: There's a jacket right behind you.

*She looks to the back of her chair and realizes there's a crisp oversized blazer on the back.*

CATI: Oh thanks.

*She goes to put it on.*

F SCOTT: What is that you were wearing there?

CATI: Oh this? (*Looking down at her slip a little embarrassed now*) It's just, it was my death outfit. I picked it because- oh I dunno, it's kinda silly. (*Buttoning up the blazer*). Oh, phew. I feel a little better now. Well alright then, let's see what else we wrote.

*Scott slowly starts to make his way through the aisle from the back of the audience to the stage.*

CATI: "I fell in love with her courage, her sincerity and her flaming self respect and it's these things I'd believe in even if the whole world indulged in wild suspicions that she wasn't all that she should be... I love her and that's the beginning and end of everything."

F SCOTT: *(joins in with Cati)*  
I love her and that's the beginning and end of everything.

*Scott stops just before the stage. Cati looks up, meets his gaze, swallows hard. She is caught off guard by the intense chemistry they seem to have. She takes a huge gulp of wine, self consciously tries to smooth her hair and goes back to reading. Scott recites the quote with her as he goes all the way on stage and ends sitting next to her. The electricity between them is undeniable, but she tries to ignore it because- weird?*

CATI / F SCOTT: "All life is just a progression toward, and then a recession from, one phrase — 'I love you.'"

F SCOTT: Hi.

CATI: *(Robotic)* Hello.

*Awkward pause.*

Wine?

*She goes to pour him a glass.*

F SCOTT: Oh, no thanks. *(Smoothly waving it away.)*

CATI: Oh I'm sorry, I thought...

F SCOTT: I was a raging alcoholic? I was yeah. But here I'm in SA.

*Cati looks confused.*

F SCOTT: Spirits Anonymous. It's like AA but for spirits, trying to stop drinking spirits. *(Reading another one of his quotes)* "First you take a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes you."

CATI: Wow, I didn't realize the spirit world was so complex, I'm sorry.

F SCOTT: You don't have to say sorry all the time ya know.

CATI: Ugh, I know sorry. I mean, sorry! I mean, oh my god!

*He leans in and kisses the sorry out of her - ew gross.*

F SCOTT: Don't worry about it. After all (*quoting himself once more*). "Vitality shows in not only the ability to persist, but the ability to start over."

*She's fully under his spell now, how did this happen.*

CATI: Well, here's to starting over.

*She lifts her glass to him and then dumps it out over her shoulder.*

F SCOTT: Oh, you don't have to do that. I don't mind if you drink, really.

CATI: No, I think it's cool. I've been sober curious for a long time, so why not try it now? I imagine it's easier here anyhow right? I don't imagine there's as much pressure to go out and party and all that.

F SCOTT: Oh the spirit mixers can get pretty rowdy. Hemingway hasn't slowed down a bit.

CATI: Ah, well, then it'll be a good test of character. I always thought I might start over somehow later in life, I just never thought about it being, after life.

*Beat. Cati's nervously trying to think of something else to say.*

So, who else are you in touch with here?

F SCOTT: Umm, oh Hedy Lamarr and I have been spending some time together, she's wonderful!

CATI: Oh wow, yeah she was soo-

CATI: Hot. F SCOTT: Fascinating.

F SCOTT: Did you know she was an-

CATI: Actress? F SCOTT: Inventor!

CATI: Oh.

F SCOTT: She would design and drafts inventions in between takes on set! Isn't that amazing?? And her aura! I haven't seen another like it.

CATI: Oh, wow. That's... annoying. I mean cool, really cool, would love to meet her!

F SCOTT: Ya?

CATI: Yeah! Totally! I wanna like fuck her before you do!

F SCOTT: (*Laughing*) Oh man, you're funny.

CATI: I know. (*She thinks back to Lil Cati*)

F SCOTT: You know! (*Still laughing*)

CATI: Yeah, a lot funnier than when I was you apparently. (*He laughs even harder.*)

F SCOTT: You know, you aren't like the other girl spirits here.

CATI: (*flirty*) Oh ya? How so?

*Abrupt spotlight on Cati. A piano chord rings out.*

CATI: (*Singing*) "I'm doing it again"

*She is in a "musical aside".*

CATI: (*Still singing*) "I'm letting him win"

*F Scott continues to speak but we can't hear what he's saying.*

'I'm doing it again, but I'm him, he is me, we are we, but we- aren't?'

*Back to regular lighting.*

CATI: (*Back to talking*) Wait, wait, wait. Hold the spirit portal. I'm- what is going on here?? Like are you my spirit friend, or my spirit boyfriend? Ah wait no! Youuuu this is why you're here isn't it! This is a test! And I'm failing it! I thought I was finally my own person, but I just started to disappear myself again, and I'm already a ghost! What is the matter with me?? Trying to be desirable and cool, competitive *with* and also competing *for* Hedy Lamarr- this isn't me! It's you! *You're making me like this!*

F SCOTT: Woah, calm down there. Are you on your period or-

CATI: NO I AM NOT YOU FATHER FUCKING SON OF A DICK HAVING DOG! I don't even have a vaGINA anymore!! (*To the audience*) This time it *is* vagina. Carol is out gallivanting with her mango vape and all the other phantom vulvas haunting their former humans. And YOU have done nothing but try to make me *like* you which is myself I guess, but I don't want to like this part of myself! I hate everything about the idea of you, you, you MAN!!!

*F Scott breaks down crying.*

CATI: Ah shit. (*She awkwardly pats him on the head like a pet.*) There there, it's ok, I didn't mean it, I take it back. Just please stop. (*He continues crying*) This display of feelings is making me very uncomfortable. (*She starts fanning herself, overheating again, takes off the blazer.*) I know this sounds kind of terrible but I actually kinda didn't think of you as having feelings. You were just this obnoxious frat boy from another era who had *some* talent I'll give you that. I mean "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne ceaselessly into the past."

F SCOTT: (*sniffling*) So, you did like some of my stuff?

CATI: Some. The parts that Zelda wrote. (*Beat*) Kiddinggg. Unless- is any of that actually true?

*F Scott goes back to crying.*

Oh.

F SCOTT: (*through his tears*) I mean she didn't write *everything*.

CATI: Of course, no I wouldn't have thought-

F SCOTT: Just the really thoughtful, deep, dimensional things. (*cries harder*)

CATI: Ahh. Yeah, that tracks... But hey, boats?

F SCOTT: That was the one line she wrote! (*uncontrollably sobbing now*)

CATI: Oh, damn.

*Takes a deep breath. She knows what she has to do.*

CATI: Hey, have you ever heard of the smooshy place?

*He blows his nose really loud. How can a nose make that much noise?*

F SCOTT: No. What's that?

CATI: It's, well...

*She goes and gives him a big hug. He melts into her arms.*

*The dinging is back. This time there's a beat behind it along with other faint clinking and laughing, sounds like a party. The beat becomes louder and we realize that the song playing is "Sexy Back" but the lyrics are "I'm bringing vulva back". Vulva comes on, slightly stumbling with a martini glass in her hand.*

VULA: Whew! Hey cuties!

*F Scott and Cati break the hug.*

CATI: Hey Vulvie!

VUVLA: **VAH**. Vul-**VA**. OMG, I thought she'd like learn something by now. Have you at least finally accepted that some of this great American douchebaggery lives in you?

CATI: Accepted? Um, I think I'm still digesting it...

VUVLA: Welp, that's a start. Just keep on chewin sweet cheeks!

CATI: Hey! Isn't that-

VUVLA: Ding dong baby cakes!

*She skips off with her martini.*

CATI: Alright, well I guess that's it then. This was...

CATI: Interesting. F SCOTT: Amazing!

CATI: Really gave me some things to think about. F SCOTT: So incredibly therapeutic I think I'm all better now.

CATI: Cool. Okay then.

*She puts out her hand for a hand shake but F Scott rushes back in for another hug. She's a little resistant but then gives in, patting him tenderly on the back.*

*Blackout.*

*"Sexy back" comes back on. Lights come back up into the same dreamlike glow as before. Vulva and two other muppet vulva friends come on with her, presumably from the party, and do a sexy chair dance interlude.*

*Blackout.*

*Lights back up. The stage is bare. Cati waits for spirit number three.*

CATI: Hello?

*Beat. No response.*

Helloooo?

*Still no response.*

Huh. I thought there was a third one. Maybe they were like, "she needs a break!"

*She starts to wander around a bit, touching things, taking everything in.*

Er maybe they forgot? I'm not really sure how time works here anyhow.

*She notices a light that has appeared on the wall and begins to follow it. It starts to feel meditative. Her following the light, the audience following her following the light. She ends in the center now completely engulfed in the glow. She looks out and registers the essence of the spirit she's with.*

CATI: Oh hi. I'm sorry I didn't see you there. Have you been here this whole time?

SPIRIT: I have.

CATI: I see... who, or, what are you?

*The spirit starts to giggle.*

CATI: I'm sorry didn't mean to offend you...

SPIRIT: (*Still amused.*) No not at all. It's just, of course you wouldn't recognize me. It's interesting that you asked what. We don't always know how we come across. Sometimes we make ourselves appear very human, but often we only put that on for the recently deceased. Before they get used to the idea of seeing energy. I just wanted to come to you in a more pure form. And really closer to the form you experienced me in.

CATI: Experienced you?

SPIRIT: (*Giggles lightly again.*) It sounds a little strange I know.

*Beat.*

I'm sorry I don't mean to be so cryptic. I just wanted to give you a little time to let it sink in, process it all... It's so good to see you.

*The light grows very warm and bright for a moment, like a warm hug.*

CATI: I'm so sorry, I really can't seem to place you.

SPIRIT: It's quite alright. We never actually met. I just, occupied a small space in you for a short while.

*It hits her now, all at once in her gut, almost knocking the wind out of her. The lights slowly and dramatically change to reflect this*

CATI: Oh it's you... or, the you who never was... but your energy... it was... (*she motions to her belly*) It was here, wasn't it?

*The light around her pulses in affirmation. She finally takes what feels like her first deep breath. With the exhale comes a release and with that a sense of relief, acceptance, presence.*

I'm sorry I never got to know you... Sometimes when I breathed deep into the space you would have filled I could feel the lost energy of you.

I wanted so badly to fill that space with something beautiful, to love you into something else magnificent. But I fear I tried to fill that space with so many other things. Work, drugs, sex, alcohol. Everything but creation.

SPIRIT: Well, that's what brought you here. It's hard to see out there sometimes. In the world of the living. Everyone running around buying coffee and cocktails to try to forget and then to remember again what they're doing. It's too much for the human consciousness to hold all that

is true at once. They need to break life down into bite size moments of recognition and then dissolve into “to dos” to feel more grounded and empowered. I don’t blame them. It’s hard.

*Cati takes that in.*

CATI: I don’t know how to say this but... I’ve missed you and also it’s just not what I wanted. I would’ve loved you so deeply I’m sure, but it would’ve been colored by resentment and regret. I grieved the you that might have been and also felt such immense relief not to have you.

It’s hard to put into words to this type of grief. I’ve never known how to describe it or where to hold it. It’s felt elusive yet consuming. I chose not to have you in my life. And still it felt like a loss. That part didn’t feel like a choice. *(Beat.)* It really is hard to hold all that is true at once isn’t it?

*Light pulses.*

I also wonder if this deep unnameable sadness I sometimes feel is a reverberation of the grief my birth mother felt. An echo of her loss. Her painful choice to do what was right for us both, to let me go because she wasn’t ready. I’ve loved her so deeply for that choice. But I don’t think I understood the profound gravity of it until I was met with my own. I now love her even more fiercely for it. And also would’ve completely understood if she’d made another.

*Beat.*

I also think, I’m just terrified of loving someone else so deeply.

SPIRIT: Someone else, or yourself?

*Oh shit.*

*There’s a slow rumbling, sounds like the start of an earthquake. The light starts to close in on Cati until all that is in the light is her face. All of a sudden we hear the explosion that brought her here, the lights start to flicker chaotically and we hear what sounds like wet chunks of meat splatting against hard surfaces. There goes Carol!*

VULVA: Ahh, like, ouchie!

*The sounds of the explosion continue and are interspersed with intense negative self talk.*

*“Oh god, I can’t believe you said that, that’s so embarrassing. You’re an embarrassment. The whole world thinks you’re an embarrassment”*

*“Or worse- nothing. The world doesn’t give a shit about you. You are **NOTHING**”*

*“You thought you could just follow the yellow brick road and there’d be a silly little wizard who’d grant you- what?”*

*(Voices echo)*

*“Boobs,  
boobs,  
boobs”*

*“Bigger,  
bigger,  
bigger”*

*“Thin,  
thin,  
thin”*

*“Sweet,  
sweet,  
sweet”*

*“Smaller,  
smaller,  
smaller”*

*“Nothing,  
nothing,  
nothing.”*

*A projection comes on, looks like home videos. We can see some parts of it on the back wall, some parts over her body. It feels choppy with quick static-y cuts.*

*There’s a baby crying in a comically frilly pink dress.*

*Cut.*

*The mother and father bounce her and coo “Who’s my sweet little girl!”*

*Cut. Her at 7, doing a curtsy with a hot pink tutu over her overalls.*

*Cut. Same tutu and overalls running at a little boy and pummeling him to the ground playfully.*

*Cut. The boy is crying, she’s being grounded. We hear the mother say, “We can’t beat the boys honey, it hurts their ego.” “Yes, mom.”*

*Cut. The video starts to glitch “Yes, mom, yes mom, yes mom.” Video cuts off. Back to just voices, still sounds glitchy.*

*“Yes, yes.” Like an orgasm- “Yes! yes!” “Yes I can do that.” “Sure of course!” “No that’s totally fine.” “I don’t need- I don’t need- don’t need- don’t need- ”*

*All the lights suddenly come fully up as bright as they can go, voices stop and Cati makes a face like she's screaming a word, but all we hear is the sound of the piercing ringing in your ears after a bomb. Then Cati's voice comes through.*

CATI: *(exasperated/emotional)* Chance!! Please. Can I have one more chance? At my life? I, well I don't think I have it all figured out quite yet, I don't know that I ever will completely. But I wanna do the work! I'm ready to work through the rough icky parts, but I want it to be in my *life* life. My *human* life. I miss my organs and flesh, and, I'd really like to have an orgasm again.

VUVLA: Amen!

CATI: Please?

*Beat.*

SPIRIT: Alright.

CATI: Wow that was easy. I really should just try asking for things more often.

SPIRIT: You should. Take that knowledge back with you. I have to say a lot of people at this point in the path are exhausted and don't want to go back. Mostly men I guess, but ya know.

CATI: I do. Wow, so I really can go back?? Do I need to like click my heels together or say some spooky incantation-

SPIRIT: Nope. Just relax...

*She takes a breath, closes her eyes and is sent back down to the corner where she exploded, fully put back together. Er, wait, boobies got a little mixed up. She switches them to their proper sides. There we go. She feels into her body, ecstatic and grateful. She looks lovingly up to the incredibly smoggy sky.*

CATI: Oh hello world! *(Overcome with emotion she starts to sing)* "Never knew I could feel like this, like I've never seen the sky be- "

GAL ON STREET: *(reminiscent of Vulva)* Um, like move bitch! The walk sign is on!

*Cati looks giddily at the girl, runs and gives her a huge hug scaring the shit out of her. The girl bolts quickly in the opposite direction. Cati looks back to the audience and smiles.*

CATI: It's good to be back.

*Blackout.*