

DON'T HIDE

By Gabby Rooney

Issue: Homophobia, Bullying

84% of LGBT youth report verbal harassment at school because of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation, and 25% of LGB students have been physically hurt by another student because of their sexual orientation.¹ “Results from the [2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey](https://www.courts.oregon.gov/programs/crb/training/Training%20Center/W11.YouthRiskFactorsHO.pdf) show that, nationwide, more U.S. high school students who self-identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) report having been bullied on school property (33%) and cyberbullied (27.1%) in the past year, than their heterosexual peers (17.1% and 13.3%, respectively).”²

Characters:

GABE: 14-16 years old, short for his age, feminine

NATALIE: 14-16 years old, best friend of Gabe, pretty, social

TYLER: 16-18 years old, bulky, athletic, loud

Setting:

Suburban High School & Tyler’s Bedroom, Late October

Performance Location:

Grade Schools (Middle Schools & High Schools)

¹ <https://www.courts.oregon.gov/programs/crb/training/Training%20Center/W11.YouthRiskFactorsHO.pdf>

² <https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/lgbtq>

GABE and NATALIE are sitting in an empty classroom. It's your average high school classroom with desks, chairs, and motivational posters on the wall. Gabe and Natalie are eating lunch.

GABE

I saw you staring at Grace again in English today... You're not subtle ya know. You should just say something to her.

NATALIE

You know I can't do that. You're the only one who even knows I like girls in that way.

GABE

It's a wonder how nobody knows. You stomp around in those boots and blast Paramore all day.

NATALIE

Don't come for Paramore.

GABE

I really don't see what the big deal is. People have to assume at this point, right? I mean, you hang out with the only gay guy at school.

GABE winks at NATALIE. They laugh. NATALIE's laughter dissolves.

NATALIE

You know why no one else wants to come out? Because they see how you're treated, Gabe. The same guys that are texting you are the ones who can't stand to be near you at school. They act like you're some weirdo... I don't want that to happen to me.

As NATALIE finishes, TYLER enters. He's making a big commotion as he walks in - laughing, hooting & hollering at the boys outside the door.

TYLER

Ayyyy Natty Light!

GABE chuckles at the nickname. NATALIE gives GABE an annoyed glance.

TYLER

And there's GAYYYYBE!

TYLER laughs. He thinks he's funny.

GABE

Tyler... Always a pleasure.

GABE starts to pack up his lunch.

TYLER

You mind if we get a second, Gayybe?

GABE

Don't worry, sweetheart, I'm already going.

GABE glances at NATALIE who returns a concerned look. It's like she's begging him not to leave. GABE exits. TYLER moves closer to NATALIE, sits on the desk in front of her.

TYLER

So... I'm throwing this Halloween party at my house this weekend with the boys. My parents will be out of town, so we're trying to get a bunch of people to come.

NATALIE

(Disinterested) Sounds fun.

TYLER

I was wondering if maybe you wanted to come? Grace and Emily will be there. You're cool with them, right?

NATALIE

Yeah. Yeah, I guess.

TYLER

I thought it'd give us a chance to hang out, too, ya know. It should be fun. You gotta dress up, though. I'm gonna be Hugh Hefner.

TYLER laughs and smiles at NATALIE as if he's being clever. NATALIE half heartedly chuckles at him.

TYLER

And you can bring Gayybe, too. Tell him not to bring all that gay shit, though. He doesn't always have to dress like that ya know... it's weird.

NATALIE

Stop calling him that. It's not funny.

TYLER

Whatever. Are you coming?

NATALIE

Yeah. Sure.

TYLER

Sweet! And don't tell Gayybe but me and the boys might have a little surprise for him.

The bell rings to signal the end of lunch.

TYLER exits before NATALIE has a chance to say anything.

NATALIE packs up her lunch and exits.

The scene changes. TYLER's house. Loud music plays.

Laughing, bottles clinking, etc. can be heard. GABE is in a bedroom. It's gross - unclean, cluttered, definitely a teenage boy's room. GABE is dressed as an angel, covered in glitter, completely over the top. GABE is sitting with cup in hand.

TYLER enters.

TYLER

Gayyybe! There you are!

GABE stands up. He moves towards the door.

GABE

Hey. Sorry. I didn't know who's room this was. I just came in to hang out until Natalie gets here. It's loud out there.

TYLER blocks GABE from exiting. He's standing in front of the door.

TYLER

No worries, dude. *(pause)* I'm actually kind of glad I found you in here.

GABE

You are?

TYLER

I know I make fun of you a lot at school but honestly... it's just because I think you're hot.

GABE chokes on his drink. TYLER moves closer to GABE. They're near the bed.

TYLER

I know what you do for other guys. You can keep quiet, right?

GABE

I... I don't know what you're trying to say.

TYLER

I'm saying you can keep this our little secret.

TYLER moves even closer to GABE. TYLER starts to unbuckle his belt. GABE moves around TYLER towards the door.

GABE

I'm actually not feeling well. I think I need to get some fresh air.

TYLER grabs GABE. He tries to push GABE down onto his knees. GABE shoves TYLER.

GABE

Stop! I'm not doing this. I have to go.

TYLER

What's your problem, man? I heard you do this all the time. Come on, gay boy. Just 5 minutes.

TYLER moves towards GABE again.

GABE

GET AWAY FROM ME!

GABE throws the rest of his drink on TYLER.

TYLER punches GABE. They fight. GABE throws a few good punches but can't keep up with TYLER. GABE ends up on the ground.

NATALIE enters. NATALIE is dressed as a hippie. She's not paying attention as she walks in but quickly notices the altercation. TYLER is standing over GABE. They're both cut up.

NATALIE
Oh my god! Gabe!

NATALIE runs to GABE.

NATALIE
(to TYLER) What did you do?!

TYLER
I- I... I don't know. Natalie, I'm sorry.

GABE groans. NATALIE stands up to confront TYLER. GABE is able to reach a sitting position.

NATALIE
What the hell is wrong with you?

GABE
Natalie. It's fine.

NATALIE
(to GABE) It's not fine! You're hurt! (to TYLER) What did he ever do to you? HUH?

TYLER
(stammering) Uh- Uh... He was trying to come on to me! I told you that he couldn't bring that gay shit here! I needed to teach him a lesson.

NATALIE looks at GABE. They exchange a knowing glance. NATALIE understands. She scoffs.

NATALIE

(to TYLER) You disgusting homophobe.

TYLER

He should know better than to be like that around here.

NATALIE

I'M GAY!

Pause. TYLER is shocked.

TYLER

Wha-

NATALIE

I'm gay. If you're going to give him hell then you have to do it to me, too. *(Pause)* Go ahead. Hit me.

TYLER

I'm not going to hit you.

NATALIE

Oh now you're too scared? Now you have nothing to say? Piece of good for nothing, you piece of sh-

TYLER

I'm gay too. *(Pause)* At least I think so. I don't know. I know I like girls but... I don't know.

TYLER looks at GABE. GABE is standing now.

NATALIE looks at TYLER then at GABE.

TYLER

(to GABE) I'm so sorry.

Silence.

GABE

Why did you spend so much time torturing me? You could have just come out.

TYLER

I was scared... I didn't know what those feelings meant. So I took it out on you.

GABE

It would've made life easier if you just said something... Those other boys would have left me alone, too.

TYLER

You don't know them. They wouldn't have accepted me. They hate you more than I pretended to hate you.

GABE

Then they're not friends worth having.

GABE glances NATALIE. He smiles.

TYLER

I'm sorry.

GABE

I get it, Tyler.

TYLER

So you'll forgive me.

GABE

I didn't say that. *(Pause)* You'll need to give me a minute... In the meantime, you can tell your buddies to stop picking on me.

TYLER

I will.

NATALIE

Let's go, Gabe.

GABE

What are you talking about? You just got here. I saw Grace hanging out in the kitchen. You have to talk to her. You're out, baby.

GABE smiles at NATALIE.

TYLER

You're into Grace? She definitely seems gay.

GABE and NATALIE give TYLER a nasty look.

TYLER backs off.

TYLER

Sorry.

GABE

(to NATALIE) You do need to fix my makeup, though. I'm a wreck.

NATALIE

(laughs) Sure. Maybe we can say you got in a fight with the devil or something? Some heroic story like that.

GABE

We can say whatever you want as long as you fix this mess. *(gestures to face)*

GABE and NATALIE laugh.

TYLER

I'm gonna go.

GABE

Wait. *(Pause)* I know how hard it is to say it out loud but... you'll feel better.

GABE smiles at TYLER. He smiles back.

TYLER exits.

GABE

Wow. Everyone's a queer!

GABE and NATALIE laugh uncontrollably.

Blackout.

End of Play.