

E-Scape

By Kerry Kazmierowicztrimm

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DEDICATION

To Dylan

STORY OF THE PLAY

Dee has recently come out to his entire school as transgender. After his former friend Riley harasses him about his trans identity on social media, Dee uses an undercover pseudonym to post embarrassing secrets about her. The revealing post quickly circulates among the student body. Soon, Dee and Riley realize they have said more than they can take back. In this interactive performance, students will be prompted to think about the unintended consequences of cyberbullying and the ways that social media can strain relationships. This show can be produced using a mix of projections, puppetry, and live actors. Approximate running time: 35 minutes.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN
(1 w, 3-10 flexible.)

DEE: 13, transgender male. Recently came out as trans and is disheartened and frustrated by the way his friends are responding. This character can be played by a male or female, but they should be presenting as a male in this role.

JO: 13, male or female. Has spent much of her life working to blend in at school. Jo physically looks different than Dee and Riley. It could be a different race, nationality or be a physical impairment. (Adjust the pronouns for your cast.)

RILEY: 13, female. Has worked hard to make herself a force to be reckoned with at school. Dee's former best friend.

BANANA782: One of Dee's Instagram accounts. Portrayed by an actor wielding a banana puppet.

THREEDEE123: Dee's other Instagram account. Can either be played by the same actor playing Banana782, or a different performer (again, while wielding a puppet of some kind).

JUSTJO111: Jo's Instagram account. Can be portrayed by the actor playing Jo, or another performer operating a puppet.

RILEYBANKS92: Riley's Instagram account. Can be portrayed by the actress playing Riley, or another performer operating a puppet.

INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS: Represented by puppets. Can either be played by one actor who becomes the different accounts in quick succession, or by multiple actors. The accounts include:

NACHOS801	DOUBLEDOUTROUBLE
AVOCADO36	COMEDYKING999
IAMROCK889	SQUEALS4HEELS
PANDA851	BEDHAIRDONTCARE
2COOL4SKOOL	HEYHEYPITZAALLDAY
T_REXCHEXMEX	NEWHANDLEWHODIS
1MEANJELLYBEAN	QUATS4DAYS
CMSCHOOL	SELFIEQUEEN888
NOTIME4BOYZ	BESTBRITTANY12

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

The world of E-SCAPE was originally written to be produced using a mix of projections, puppetry, and live actors. However, if you have a different idea you'd like to try, by all means, go for it!

The show should move seamlessly between locations including the school hallway with lockers, the art room, and Dee's bedroom.

Effects: Projections to show a smartphone notification: there's a new comment on one of your posts! The screen becomes an ethereal glow of endless notifications.

Sound Effects: "Bing!" - notifications of various speeds and amounts, school bell.

Props: phones, a "like" (a paper heart that looks like one of those Instagram hearts) heart-eyes emoji, chair, pile of bras and note, a duffel bag full of "likes."

Scene 1

(AT RISE: SFX: Bing! A smartphone notification pops up - there's a new comment on one of your posts! Bing! A second notification. Bing! Bing! Bing! Bing! Then several. Bingbingbingbingbingbingbingbingbing! So many there's no chance of reading them all. The screen becomes an ethereal glow of endless notifications. Standing in the glow is BANANA782, an Instagram account portrayed by an actor holding a banana puppet.)

BANANA782: June fifteenth: "Hi! I'm Banana782 and this is my new Instagram account. I'm gonna post the same pic of a banana every day and offer some #bananawisdom - hope it doesn't drive you BANANAS!" *(Changes their spot onstage, indicating that they're starting a new post.)* September twelfth: "That feeling when all the guys DM'ing you are a bunch of monkeys - literally! #bananawisdom #monkeybusiness #bananaproblems." *(Changes their spot.)* November second: "When life bruises your banana, make banana bread! #bananawisdom #..." *(Repeating.)* "#...#..."

(BANANA782 freezes as DEE, a transgender male of 13, comes out. He speaks directly to the audience.)

DEE: Quick, I need some more hashtags for my post. What do you think?

(DEE gets some suggestions from the audience.)

DEE: *(As he types.)* Nice, lemme add those. *(Continues to type on his phone.)*

BANANA782: *(Lists some of the hashtags suggested by the audience.)*

DEE: And - posted.

(NACHOS801 comes onstage.)

NACHOS801: Nachos801 likes your post!

(NACHOS801 tosses a "like," a paper heart that looks like one of those Instagram hearts, to the audience.)

DEE: *(To audience.)* Sweet! People are already liking it.

(NACHOS801 is replaced with AVOCADO36.)

AVOCADO36: Avocado36 likes your post!

(AVOCADO36 tosses a "like" out to the audience. AVOCADO36 is replaced with IAMROCK889.)

IAMROCK889: IamRock889 commented on your post:
"Banana782 one way to bruise a banana is with a rock! I AM ROCK!!!! lol!"

DEE: *(To audience.)* Was that comment funny enough to deserve a like?

(If the audience agrees it deserves a like, DEE presses a button on his phone as BANANA782 tosses a "like" to IAMROCK889, frisbee-style, then IAMROCK889 exits. If the audience feels it doesn't deserve a "like," IAMROCK889 just exits, slightly dejected. Then, BANANA782 happily exits.)

DEE: *(To audience.)* Thanks! *(Realizing.)* Oh, hey - I haven't introduced myself. My name's Dee. It's still pretty new. The name, I mean. About six months ago, I came out as transgender. And with it, came my new name. *(With pride.)* "Dee." I was so happy when I chose it. There's something about picking your own name, about just, like, having that much control, that's so exciting. And rare.

(SFX: A school bell rings.)

Scene 2

(DEE moves to the “school” as JO enters. They stand at their lockers.)

DEE: Hey, Jo.

JO: *(Subtly glances around to make sure no one else is in earshot before responding.)* Hey, Dee.

DEE: How’s it going?

JO: Okay, I guess. Struggling with the math homework.

DEE: Yeah?

(RILEY enters and goes to her locker. Dee’s locker is between Riley’s and Jo’s. The moment Riley comes in, Jo makes noticeably less eye contact with Dee. Dee hasn’t noticed Riley yet.)

DEE: *(Cont’d.)* I found it really helpful when we used to go over math assignments together. If you ever wanna—

RILEY: Careful, Jo. You let Denise help you with math, you’re doomed. She’ll try to convince you a zero is a one even though it’s *clearly* a zero.

(JO, feeling uncomfortable, becomes very focused on her locker.)

DEE: ...How’s it going, Riley?

RILEY: Oh, hey, Denise, didn’t see you there.

DEE: It’s...it’s Dee. Just Dee.

RILEY: *(Fake innocent.)* That’s what I said: Dee. Nise.

(DEE, deciding to ignore RILEY, turns back to his locker. This irritates her a little.)

RILEY: *(Cont’d.)* You going to class, Jo?

JO: Oh, uh, yeah, I—

RILEY: Great! I’ll go with you. *(As SHE and JO exit.)* Bye, Denise.

Scene 3

(DEE, alone, takes a chair and brings it downstage. He sits.)

DEE: *(To audience.)* Lunchtime. Which means I hang out in the art room. Mrs. Johnson is really cool about letting me come here whenever I need a break from everyone. Not that anyone's saying anything mean. In fact, no one's saying anything to me at all. Thanks to Riley. She's made sure they all know they're not allowed to talk to me, or she'll spread rumors about them, too. And the worst part? She and I used to be best friends. Jo and I were close, too, until... *(An idea.)* Actually - lemme show you.

(DEE takes out his phone and types. As he does so, Dee's Instagram account, THREEDEE123, comes onstage.)

DEE: *(Cont'd.)* This is my Instagram account, ThreeDee123. *(Beat as THREEDEE123 doesn't say anything.)* I haven't posted on it since coming out as trans. Jo never posted much...

(Jo's Instagram account, JUSTJO111, comes onstage.)

DEE: *(Cont'd.)* But we did DM quite a bit. This is from seven months ago.

THREEDEE123: What are you thinking about?

JUSTJO111: How the internet can connect us to anyone in the world, but the person I most wanna talk to lives six blocks away.

(THREEDEE123 holds up one of those heart-eyes emojis, tosses it to JUSTJO111.)

DEE: Jo won't respond to my DM's anymore. *(Sad beat.)* But Riley? She is very active on her account. And even pulls Jo into it.

(Riley's Instagram account, RILEYBANKS92, comes onstage.)

DEE: *(Cont'd.)* She'll post stuff like...

RILEYBANKS92: October sixth: "JustJo111 says ThreeDee123 wears all those boy's clothes 'cuz she's pretending to be her own boyfriend. #sosinglesosad"

(A beat as RILEYBANKS92 looks at JUSTJO111, waiting for a response. Finally...)

JUSTJO111: JustJo11 likes RileyBanks92's post. *(Hands RILEYBANKS92 a "like.")*

DEE: I went through Riley's posts, and Jo is only liking the ones she's tagging her in – 'cuz Jo knows it would be worse if she didn't respond to Riley at all. But Riley didn't even *talk* to Jo before I came out. She's only doing it now to make sure Jo isn't talking to me. I've seen Riley do this sort of thing to others, but I... *(Lying.)* I didn't know how bad it was. *(A slight beat.)* But for every awful thing Riley's said about me in the last six months, there are a dozen posts from when we were best friends.

RILEYBANKS92: February second: "Let it be known! This is THE BEST DAY IN THE HISTORY OF DAYS 'cuz it's the day my #bffThreeDee123 was born! idk what I'd do without you!!! #girlpower #thebig13"

(DEE scrolls back and forth between new and old posts at a faster and faster pace.)

RILEYBANKS92: October tenth: "Be careful JustJo111 - I hear ThreeDee123 is #contagious"

JUSTJO111: JustJo111 likes RileyBanks92's post. *(Hands RILEYBANKS92 another "like.")*

RILEYBANKS92: February sixteenth: "Look at this cute top ThreeDee123 is wearing! #fashiongoals"

JUSTJO111: "-the person I most wanna talk to-"

RILEYBANKS92: #deniseistheworst

JUSTJO111: JustJo111 likes-

RILEYBANKS92: #bestfriend

(Overwhelmed, DEE stops scrolling. RILEYBANKS92 and JUSTJO111 exit.)

DEE: I get so confused, that I need to escape to my *other* account.

(BANANA782 enters.)

DEE: *(Cont'd.)* You saw it earlier. Banana782. No one knows it's me. I just post silly stuff, like:

BANANA782: "So what if a banana strips? I don't understand the a-peel. #bananawisdom"

DEE: I'm proud that I came out, but it can be exhausting. Like being afraid that I'll be dead-named every time a substitute teacher does roll call. Or correcting strangers when they misgender me. So Banana782 is, like, a vacation. A chance to be invisible, but still *be*.

(SFX: The school bell RINGS.)

DEE: *(Cont'd.)* Back to reality.

(BANANA782 and DEE exit the stage.)

Scene 4

(The school. RILEY comes on and starts messing around in Dee's locker. She closes the locker as JO enters.)

JO: What are you doing at Dee's locker?

RILEY: There you are. Here, I need you to hold my phone.
(RILEY hands JO her phone.)

JO: What are—

RILEY: Just point it at Denise's locker. She'll be here any sec.

JO: ...B-But...

End of Freeview

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