

## SCENE ONE

*The scene begins in a backyard where two boys, both Mexican American, are philosophizing about girls. They are sloppy-looking, with holes in the knees of their pants. Stage right, two girls are silhouetted on a couch in a living room. The room is dim. Lights come up on RUDY and ALEX. RUDY paces back and forth and ALEX tries to keep up with him. RUDY throws himself down on a lawn chair. ALEX keeps pacing for a moment and then, noticing that his friend has sat down, joins him.*

**RUDY:** What am I gonna talk about? She's older than me and good-looking.

**ALEX:** Just level with her. Tell her you're sorry you look like you do.

**RUDY:** Sorry? You mean I should be sorry that I look like Tom Cruise? *(pause)* You're cold, homes. You're no help at all.

.....  
*two girls are silhouetted the shapes of two girls are seen paces walks*

*Just level with her. Just tell her the truth. You're cold, homes. You are mean, friend.*

ALEX: (*giggling*) Just joking, Rudy. Listen, man, you got to start simple. **Break the ice.** Ask her . . . what her favorite color is or something.

RUDY: Color?

ALEX: Yeah, color. Like, red or white.

RUDY: You mean, like, blue or yellow?

ALEX: Lavender!

RUDY: Purple!

ALEX: Forest green!

RUDY: Chevy **chrome**!

ALEX: That's it, man.

(*RUDY gets up and starts to pace. ALEX gets up, too.*)

RUDY: (*incredulous*) Colors?

ALEX: Colors. I picked up this little *secreto* from Mamma Rosa on the Spanish **station**.

RUDY: Mamma Rosa! You get your advice from her?

Break the ice. Just start the conversation.  
chrome silver

(*incredulous*) (*doubtful*)  
station radio station

ALEX: She's **for real**. She's an expert about love and things. She says you got to get your *boca* rattling. One thing leads to the next, you know.

RUDY: No, I don't know.

ALEX: Listen, man. Sometimes I'm talking about nothing and the next thing I know people are listening. Like I'm the president or something.

RUDY: You're not the president.

ALEX: I know that. What I'm saying is that you got to just talk stuff—anything!

(*Pause. RUDY reflects.*)

RUDY: I just start talking?

ALEX: That's right.

RUDY: Just . . . say things?

ALEX: Colors, start with colors. Just ask, "Patricia, what's your favorite color?"

RUDY: She won't think I'm weird?

for real serious  
reflects stops to think

...and I know immediately you're trying to start something, so she'll **play along**. She'll say something like "Green" or "Pink."

**RUDY:** And I'll tell her that my favorite color is dark blue.

**ALEX:** **There you go**, homes. *(pause)* So guess mine.

**RUDY:** Your what?

**ALEX:** My favorite color!

**RUDY:** Black and silver, like the Raiders?

**ALEX:** Nope.

**RUDY:** Blue and gold, like the Chargers?

**ALEX:** **Nah**. It's red, like my tongue.

*(ALEX wiggles tongue at RUDY.)*

**RUDY:** *(punching ALEX)* That's asco!

**ALEX:** *(chuckling)* Don't worry, homes. Just be **cool**.

**RUDY:** Cool.

**ALEX:** Like an iceberg.

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play along answer your questions  
There you go You understand  
Nah. No.  
cool calm

*(The boys pace around the stage. They stop.)*

**RUDY:** Man, I can't believe I'm **going out** with a girl in the eleventh grade. And yesterday, guess what I was doing.

**ALEX:** Helping your dad pour cement at a job site?

*(RUDY shakes his head.)*

**ALEX:** Lifting weights?

**RUDY:** You won't laugh if I tell you?

**ALEX:** Laugh at my best friend?

**RUDY:** *(hesitates, long pause)* I was playing **G.I. Joes** with my cousin Isaac. Man, it was fun. G.I. Joe was beating up Ken, and Barbie was kicking back watching the *pleitos*.

*(ALEX laughs.)*

**RUDY:** I got another problem. I told Patricia I was taking her to **grub** at Steaks, Steaks, y Más Steaks.

**ALEX:** You told her you were taking her there? What's wrong with you, homes? Those hamburgers cost twice as much as McDonald's. And you got to **tip**, too.

*(RUDY reflects on his error.)*

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going out going on a date  
G.I. Joes with action figures, with dolls  
grub eat  
tip Pay extra money for good service

ALEX: You got enough money?

RUDY: How much do you think I'll need?

ALEX: At least fifteen bones.

RUDY: Fifteen dollars!

(RUDY shakes his head and shrugs his shoulders. ALEX starts to go through his pockets.)

ALEX: (teasing) Here, this should help.

(RUDY takes ALEX's quarter and looks at it.)

RUDY: (sarcastically) You're cool, Alex. This quarter might get me a piece of gum.

(They sit and reflect on the dilemma.)

ALEX: (perks up) Let me give you some advice. You got to talk intelligent, like you know something.

RUDY: Like I know something?

ALEX: Remember, she's two years ahead of you and in eleventh grade. You got to be *suave*, kind of like—*pues*, like me. (hooks a thumb at himself)

(sarcastically) (jokingly)

dilemma problem

(perks up) (gets more excited)

*suave* polite, charming

RUDY: Help me then, Alex.

ALEX: (thinking about it) It so happens I got this love letter from Sylvia Hernandez. Remember her?

RUDY: No.

ALEX: Yeah, you do. She threw up *huevos con weenies* in fifth grade. (imitates someone vomiting) It was all over the classroom and down the hall. It was like that old movie *The Blob* after she was all done.

RUDY: (reflecting) Yeah, I remember that girl now. She got some on my shoes. (pause) So what did the letter say?

ALEX: (reaches into his pocket) Got it right here.

(ALEX sniffs the letter for perfume, and RUDY sniffs it as well. ALEX starts to read letter.)

ALEX: "Alex, I think you have the coolest eyes. And the cutest nose."

RUDY: You got a fat *huango* nose.

ALEX: Hey, **dude**, you want me to help you or not?

RUDY: I take that back. You got a real cute nose. (pulls up his own nose into the shape of a pig's snout)

It so happens I got this I received a

weenies hot dogs

dude man, friend

I take that back. I did not mean what I said.

ALEX: That's better. *(continues reading)* "I really care about you a lot, Alex. I really don't know how to say this, but here goes. I think that you like me but don't want to tell me because of what your friends might say. Forget them. They don't have to live your life. You do! Last year I fell totally in love with this guy Kendall—"

RUDY: What kind of name is Kendall?

*(ALEX gives RUDY a look.)*

ALEX: *(continues reading)* "At first Kendall was nice to me. Then he started being mean to me and **talking behind my back**. It hurt me when he told this girl from Selma that I **was stuck-up**. I guess it was to get me to stop liking him. But I didn't stop liking him for a long time. Now I like you, Alex. I dream about—"

RUDY: Man, she knows how to talk.

ALEX: ¡*Callate!* You're interrupting the flow of my love letter. *(pause)* Here's a good part. "Alex, you're nicer than Kendall. You're cute, too. All the boys from Roosevelt are cute, but you're the cutest. Please don't be like Kendall. I will **shower you with kisses** forever and ever."

RUDY: *(takes the letter and examines it)* Sounds like poetry. No, like *mi abuelita's telenovelas*.

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*gives RUDY a look looks meanly at RUDY*  
*talking behind my back saying mean things about me*  
*was stuck-up thought I was better than everyone*  
*shower you with kisses give you many kisses*

ALEX: This letter should be the **floor plan** for your love life. You got to **lay it on thick**. Be romantic, *ese*. *Suave*.

RUDY: *(reflecting)* *Suave. (pulls out a small notepad)* I better write some of this stuff down so I don't forget: "Be romantic." "Lay it on thick."

ALEX: I went on a date once.

RUDY: You're lying.

ALEX: No, I did. *(pause)* It wasn't exactly a date. Me and this girl went to the playground.

RUDY: Get serious.

ALEX: Yeah, I picked her up on my bike and . . . don't laugh.

RUDY: Why would I laugh at my best friend?

ALEX: I can see it. You're gonna laugh!

RUDY: No, I promise.

*(RUDY and ALEX trade glances.)*

ALEX: She had to pedal the bike because I didn't have enough leg strength. It's hard with two people!

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*floor plan example you follow*  
*lay it on thick be extra nice to her*  
*trade glances look at each other quickly*

(RUDY chokes, muffling his laugh.)

ALEX: (continuing) It was a lot of fun. We spent a couple hours on the **monkey bars**. Then we played tetherball, and then a game of chess. Yeah, it was going pretty good—until Frankie Torres came by and started teasing me.

RUDY: Frankie did that?

ALEX: Yeah. Because I was **all dressed up**. (laughs) I had on this pink shirt, and a bow tie, and **buckets of my dad's Aqua Velva**.

RUDY: Dressed up at the playground?

ALEX: Yeah, plus . . .

RUDY: What?

(ALEX kicks at the ground, embarrassed.)

RUDY: Hey, I'm your carnal.

ALEX: She was getting a drink of water, so I was holding her purse.

RUDY: And that's when Frankie saw you.

ALEX: (nodding his head) He called me a girl because I had her

purse on my shoulder. (Pause. ALEX stands up.) That was my first date. Age nine.

(RUDY shakes his head sympathetically. He takes the letter from ALEX and reads it silently. Lights fade.)

sympathetically understandingly, with care

Lights fade. The lights go dim, and the scene ends.

muffling trying to hide the sound of  
monkey bars playground equipment  
all dressed up wearing nice clothes  
buckets of my dad's Aqua Velva too much cologne