

## PIPELINE by Dominique Morisseau

Nya, an inner-city public high school teacher, is committed to her students but desperate to give her only son Omari opportunities they'll never have. When a controversial incident at his upstate private school threatens to get him expelled, Nya must confront his rage and her own choices as a parent. But will she be able to reach him before a world beyond her control pulls him away?

With profound compassion and lyricism, *Pipeline* brings an urgent conversation powerfully to the fore. Morisseau pens a deeply moving story of a mother's fight to give her son a future — without turning her back on the community that made him who he is.

Jasmine: Omari's girlfriend at boarding school ; 16, African-American

This monologue takes place when Omari's mother, Nya, comes to Jasmine's dorm room looking for Omari. He has run off after pushing his teacher against the whiteboard in class. Nya is asking Jasmine to tell her where Omari went.

JASMINE: What you gonna do if you know? Go follow him? Convince him not to do something he set his mind to? You really think that's possible?

(*pause*)

Miss Joseph, I know you think maybe I'm not good enough for your son. My parents think nobody's good enough for me. I get it. Nobody's good enough for nobody. But me and Omari, we got something real and even if you think I'm worthless, I'm still gonna love him. Nah, you do. You don't want to, but you do. I can smell when I don't make sense to somebody. I make you afraid. Just like O makes my parents afraid. It's like you send us here to become these different people. You want us to have so much and you want to protect us from ourselves. You love us and we know that. But you hate us too. You hate us having a mind of our own. You hate that we can't be exactly what you imagined in your head. And that scares you. That we don't belong to you. That someone can come along and we might love them more than we love you. You hate us for that. We can feel it inside and it will make us leave and never come back.

## GAME CONSOLE

David L. Epstein

Dramatic

GENEVIEVE, 14

*GENEVIEVE has been watching Mack play Xbox for too long. In this monologue, she gives him an ultimatum.*

**GENEVIEVE** I'm so sorry that you won't make it to the boss level, I really am! I've watched you play this stupid computer game for hours on end, every day, all summer long, and I'm completely sick of it! I can't do it for another minute! Don't you know why I come over here? Doesn't the thought even cross your mind? It certainly isn't to watch you hit buttons and scream at the screen! [Beat.] I come over here because I like you, Mack. I always have. And I thought there was something between us. Ever since we were young we've been close. Water balloon fights. Touch football. All those summer nights catching lightning bugs and playing in the yard . . . But I see it now. You are still dumb and immature and haven't realized what matters. You are just a kid and you'll keep going this way until you become one of those guys whose brains have turned to mush because you haven't opened a book in ten years—or maybe you won't even remember how to read! And women won't give you a second thought because it will be too late—they'll see exactly what you are because, by that point, they'll all have been through exactly what I'm going through now! Don't you see how lucky you've got it? Don't you see that I'm standing right in front of you? That I've been sitting beside you on this couch waiting for you to do something and you barely look my way? I can't do this anymore. I've waited so long. Boys call me, Mack. They call and e-mail and text

... What do you want? Hmm? What is important? Gaining experience points in a game? What about real life, Mack? Does experience matter there?

## WAR IN PARAMUS

*Barbara Dana*

Serio comic

THELMA, 15

*THELMA is a rebel. She is speaking to her school friends, Harry and Philip. THELMA's older sister is getting married. THELMA, Harry and Philip are hanging out in THELMA's living room.*

**THELMA** She's marrying this guy? She doesn't even know if she likes him. And this thing . . . God. I didn't tell you about this. This thing about the silver bowls! She's all excited because her friend, Bev, got these wedding presents, a whole bunch of shit, including seven silver bowls! She registered at Orbachs, you may be interested to know. Why Orbachs didn't come clean and say Bev didn't need so many silver bowls I couldn't tell you. Anyway, Jennifer thinks these bowls are the best thing in the history of recorded time. It doesn't matter that Bev didn't know who the hell she was marrying, or why. She got seven silver bowls! So now she's a slave. She has to thank the seven people who sent the silver bowls she doesn't want and doesn't need. That's only polite. She has to buy the stationary, which has to be engraved with her new name because her old name isn't any good anymore because now she belongs to somebody else, she has to write the seven thank-you notes, she has to mail the seven thank-you notes, and then . . . care of the bowls! She has to polish these stupid bowls she doesn't want and doesn't need. That means getting the money to buy the polish, and replacing the T-shirt she tore up to make the rag she used to do the polishing. [*With growing intensity.*] See, it's not just the bowls. This kind of thing passes for life and it gives me the creeps. I get hamsters in

my veins. Bev's life! I'd rather kill myself! But that's what she wants. She doesn't have a clue. She's shriveled and died inside her idea of herself.

polio, but toenail fungus? Actually, I guess he'd be really rich. But where would Marie Curie be if she hadn't poisoned herself with radioactivity? Maybe those aren't great examples. The point is that Project Space Squeaky is science, and you can't argue with science. Everybody knows that! If you stand in the way of science, science will just run you over like a big submarine on wheeled tracks . . . not that I'm threatening to run you over. Although wow, a submarine on wheeled tracks would be really cool. Think of it this way: by punishing the well-meaning, or at least mostly polite scientist (me) who almost helped Mrs. McPickles travel to the very stars, you stomp all over the greatness of Mrs. McPickles' grand gesture, her heroic flight to altitudes attained—even with the, uh . . . technical problems—by very few guinea pigs! By punishing me, you soil the memory of this singular rodent, this sweet little explorer, this . . .

*[She begins to get a little teary-eyed.]*

. . . fluffy little ball of bravery . . . this . . . this . . .

*[MARTA breaks down in sobs.]*

Mrs. McPickles!

## MADISON

*Deanna Alisa Ableser*

Dramatic

MADISON, 12 to 14

*MADISON wears long dark clothes that cover up her arms and legs. She as been pulled out of class for "attitude issues." She is speaking to a school counselor.*

**MADISON** You really think you're going to swoop in here and make things all okay, don't you? You have your stupid little degree in counseling and you're here to solve the problems of all the poor little teenage girls that go around and look all sad and everything, right? Is that what they told you in your fancy little counseling school? Go out and make a difference, right? Go out and fix the world's problems. You can do it. We believe in you. *[Beat.]* All right, go ahead. I'm here. I'm waiting . . . sitting here. Go on. *[Beat.]* What? You don't have the magic answer at your disposal? You can't immediately solve my horrible teenage angst? You mean I'm still going to be stuck in my stupid life, pissed off and angry at the world? Wow, what an amazing concept. I'm so thrilled that I'm sitting here wasting my time in your nicely designed office. Do I get the requisite candy now? Mmm . . . let's see. Oh no, I'd better be careful which candy I pick. You might go and get all psychoanalytical on me or something. What if I choose the one with peanuts? Oh no, what could that possibly mean? *[Beat.]* Not talking again? Really? Could I seriously have you that stumped? Great, the little psycho girl who cuts herself has the super amazing counselor all stumped? I'm good . . . I mean, really good. *[Beat.]* Okay, I've got you all figured out. You're just going to continue to sit there and look all smug and satisfied, like the poor girl's

just going to spill her beans and you're going to end up as the hero. Yeah, that's your plan, right? Huh? [Beat.] Would you just fucking say something? [Beat.] Seriously, you're not a mute, are you? [Beat.] Look, I'm not playing this stupid game. Maybe other people will buy your moronic "I'm going to sit here and say nothing" game, but not me. No way. It's not going to work with me. I'm stronger than that. Much stronger . . . and if you think I'm going to break down and let you in . . . well then . . . [Beat.] Would you just say something? Anything? [Beat.] Look here, Mrs. "Super Counselor," I'm telling you I'm not liking this. I'm really not liking this. Could you just for once . . . [Starts crying.]

This is the ugliest office I have ever been in at this ugly place. You can't even make sure there's enough sunlight coming in through the windows. Couldn't the stupid school get some garish windows that fuckin' let in the sun for once in a while? Maybe if there were some windows that let in the sun, there would be some small amount of hope for us "poor little teenage girls" that are forced to sit in here and blabber on like someone really actually cares about us.

## MARGO MAINE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE

Kayla Cagan

Dramatic

ANNIE, 12 to 15

*ANNIE tells her sister, Margo, why she shouldn't go to college out of state.*

**ANNIE** I know you're going away. And I'm really happy you got into Stanford. Mom said she knew the whole time that you were going to be accepted and Uncle Marshall and Aunt Barbara said they expected nothing less from you. [Pause.] But I did. [Pause.] I was secretly hoping you wouldn't get in, that somehow you'd flunk Latin or Calculus and then we could . . . you could . . . stay at Franklin High one more year. [Pause.] It's not that I don't want you to go off to school. I just don't understand why you have to move a whole state away. You've always been here. What if I need you? [Pause.] How am I going to know what to wear? I won't! Who's going to pick me up from parties? Not Mom and Dad! Who's going to help me sneak into R-rated movies? Nobody! You're the one with the fake ID! [Pause.] I don't care if I can have your room. I don't care if I can use the computer all the time now. None of that matters to me if you're not here. It will be too quiet. What am I supposed to do? Talk to Mom? No, thanks. You say we can talk and text and it will be just like normal, but it won't be for me. [Pause.] Believe it or not, even when I am being a jerk, I like having you as my older sister. I know I'm supposed to be too cool to admit it, but I'm not. I'm telling you the truth for once. Without you here, I'm just me. And that's not enough.