

Excerpt From:  
RevelARTionary

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Trigger Warnings: sexually suggestive content, mentions of  
transphobia/homophobia, alternative interpretations of  
Christianity

## ACT ONE

### SCENE ONE: VISION THEATRE MAIN STAGE

*Open on a small professional theatre stage. There are chairs set up in a circle where AMIRA, EVA, NOAH, DREW, AUDREY, TREVOR, ZEPHYR, and TYLER sit, looking at scripts, reading through a new play. In this scene, AMIRA reads for JESUS, EVA reads for ATHEIST WOMAN 1, NOAH reads for JUDAS, and DREW reads for STAGE DIRECTIONS. The rest watch.*

DREW (as STAGE DIRECTIONS)

*(Drew's nerves come through as they read this.)*

"The Jesus Show." Act 1 Scene 2. Lights up on a small, run down gay bar in Portland, Oregon. The year is 2023. Jesus enters, in modern day clothes, looking uncomfortable and out of place. Atheist woman one, who has been sitting in the bar already, notices this and goes to speak to her.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

*(Flirtatious)*

Hey. Haven't seen you here before?

AMIRA (as JESUS)

*(Oblivious to the flirting. Still nervous.)*

You must come here a lot if you know who has and hasn't been here before. Sorry, was that rude?

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

All good. I do come here often. I might be a little bit of an alcoholic. Who's to say? Mostly I just like the community.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

That's why I chose this place. I heard these groups tended to be the most accepting.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

Alcoholics or queers?

AMIRA (as JESUS)

Queers. Um... aren't we... not supposed to say that?

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

Oh you're adorable.

*(Sly.)*

What brings you to this place seeking acceptance? I consider myself an accepting person, shoot.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I have... a bit of a unique story to tell... I'm a bit nervous to speak up about it as not everyone will believe me. But my message is important.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

*(This is not the direction she expected this to go.)*

Oh, okay. Sure. I'm a good listener. Can I get you something to drink first?

AMIRA (as JESUS)

Some red wine?

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

Woah, bougie. We are ballin' on a budget tonight, I don't think I can do that for you. How about a beer?

AMIRA (as JESUS)

Nevermind that.

DREW (as STAGE DIRECTIONS)

Jesus pauses before deciding to just go for it and launch into a prepared speech.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I am the return of Jesus Christ. I am here to continue to spread my message of love and acceptance for each other and for my father in a world that has seen much progress in those areas but still has a ways to go.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

*(Still processing the words that were just spoken.)*

Well that one wasn't on my bingo card. Only in fucking Portland.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

You don't believe me.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

I mean... not to discredit you... but you do know Jesus was...

AMIRA (as JESUS)

A man?

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

Yeah.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I knew my choice in physical form would be a hindrance to my message. But alas, another form just wouldn't fit. This is the most authentic to me. In my time watching over the Earth, deciding on the right time to return, I noticed the way the world seemed to shift in its definition of "manhood" and "womanhood." In my time, I wore what you would now call skirts, my hair was long, things which men could not do after my time up until very recently. Things which men get odd looks for doing now. Noticing these changes, I did some introspection on myself and the way I would feel most comfortable being perceived, I realized some things that I hadn't had the time or language to explore in my first life, and this is what I decided felt authentic.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

So you spirit realm transed your gender, is what you're trying to say?

JESUS (as AMIRA)

I'm not a hundred percent sure what that means but I think yes.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

God, what a time to be alive. Sorry to take uh... your dad's name in vain.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

You are forgiven. Although I am still sensing disbelief. I do agree that this is a time to be alive, hence why I chose it to do just such. I hope you will move past the initial oddness of the situation and hear me out.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

Hey, I'm hearing you out, aren't I? I'm listening. No, you haven't fully sold me, but I'm listening.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I appreciate that.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

Why womanhood? Other than skirts and long hair? I mean don't get me wrong, I'm a *big* fan of women, that's why I'm here. Just curious though.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

Men cannot express emotions. They must live inside this little box where they like the things they are supposed to like and look the way they are supposed to look. They must be stoic, strong, forceful. They must favor violence. All these things that I do not align with. There is also something to be said about the feminine body... I am rather comfortable in this skin.

DREW (as STAGE DIRECTIONS)

Jesus moves around, still getting used to this physical form. Atheist woman one watches, kind of loving this scene playing out before her while also being concerned. This is certainly not something she sees every day. Even in Portland.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

I see... I see... pop off gender abolitionist Jesus. What's your goal coming back here? Are you about to send us nonbelievers to hell and all that? Create a heaven on Earth? I don't know, I never read the bible.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I'm... not quite sure. I was waiting for the time where that felt earned, but it's odd. I don't really feel as if my "believers" are always the ones perpetrating my message. I've watched my name for years be used to spread hatred and... bigotry I believe you call it. It's been hard to watch. I guess I just got sick of it. The progress and the backlash to that progress and the way things move but never really move far enough. The fact that its followers of my words who often use my name to set this progress back. All of it. I felt that this was a time where the world was open enough to hear my message again yet closed enough to still need it.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

I see. I see. Go off I guess. I was never really all that religious but Jesus - you - did kinda eat with all that "love thy neighbor" stuff.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

Eat?

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

It's slang. Or more realistically it's African American Vernacular English appropriated into the mainstream so maybe you don't need to worry about learning it.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

There's so much I still don't know about this modern society.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

*(Going back to flirting.)*

I could help teach you. What are you doing tonight?

AMIRA (as JESUS)

Just spreading my message of peace and acceptance to the world.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

*(Doubting herself but continuing.)*

Maybe you could take a day off?

*(Under her breath to herself.)*

What am I doing?

AMIRA (as JESUS)

Well, I did just start this journey today, that would be rather quick of me to rest.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

Let me be clear, uh... Jesus. I am very lonely and you are hot. Would you like to have sex with me?

DREW (as STAGE DIRECTIONS)

Jesus freezes for a bit. Caught off guard.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

*(Unfreezing.)*

Wow... Uh... Thank you...

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

I mean if you've got the abs you have in all those paintings of you on the cross like damn.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I mean, it's been a couple thousand years since I worked out.

*(Looking at her stomach.)*

Hmmm, not too bad for that many cheat days. I suppose it's been a while since I experienced such Earthly pleasures?

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

Yeah. Exactly. Earthly pleasures. A couple thousand years gotta leave a lot of things... pent up.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

You do get lonely sometimes up there.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

I'm sure.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

Hmm... I suppose I have plenty of other nights to spread my message.

*(Trying to make a joke.)*

Unless I get crucified again.

DREW (as STAGE DIRECTIONS)

Jesus freezes. 2000 years is still too soon and the trauma hits.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

I promise not to crucify you. How's that sound?

DREW (as STAGE DIRECTIONS)

Atheist woman 1 freezes. We are now in Jesus's mind. Judas appears.

NOAH

*(Going off the script.)*

Ooh my turn!

DREW

Noah, we talked about breaking character.

NOAH

Right, sorry, I'm so in character right now.

*NOAH dramatically takes a deep breath before beginning to read for his part.*

NOAH (as JUDAS)

Really? After all we had?

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I'm sorry, who betrayed who first?

NOAH (as JUDAS)

I'm just saying, after all the love we had for each other-

AMIRA (as JESUS)

*(Mocking.)*

After all the love we had for each other?

*(Back to just plain accusatory.)*

After all the love we had for each other you sent me to die.

NOAH (as JUDAS)

Hey, I knew you would come back eventually. You were the one who preached that. And I was desperate. I was in a bad place and they were offering a hefty reward.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

So my life was worth a hefty reward?

NOAH (as JUDAS)

You're alive now, aren't you?

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I'm alive and I'm lonely. It's been 1,990 years. And you're just a figment of my imagination that's not going to cut it.

NOAH (as JUDAS)

Then ask yourself why, as a figment of your imagination, are you having me come judge you for this?

AMIRA (as JESUS)

Okay now you're a philosopher.

NOAH (as JUDAS)

And you're a slut, Jesus.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

That's not very "love thy neighbor" of you.

NOAH (as JUDAS)

You're loving thy neighbor a little too much.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I am an empowered 21 century woman. Well, I am as of today.

NOAH (as JUDAS)

I'm just saying. Those magical nights we had together. She can't do for you what I did for you.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I'm not looking for your replacement.

*(Suddenly genuine.)*

I couldn't find one if I tried. You're...

*(Snapping out of it.)*

An asshole.

NOAH (as JUDAS)

She's only using you. She doesn't believe you. She's probably never going to talk to you after tonight.

*(Small pause.)*

She's not going to love you like I did.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I know. Nor will she get me killed hopefully.

NOAH (as JUDAS)

You send someone to their death one time. After years of good memories. And that's all that ever gets harped on. I just hope you really understand what you're doing.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

I do. I mean, I don't really understand a word she's saying. But if I may try out my 21st century lingo, she's looking for a quick fuckin and duckin and so am I.

NOAH (as JUDAS)

Okay. Slut.

DREW (as STAGE DIRECTIONS)

Atheist woman 1 unfreezes. Judas disappears.

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

Are you okay? You kinda zoned out there for a moment.

AMIRA (as JESUS)

Yeah. I'm fine. Ready to go. Your place right? I don't exactly have a home on this Earth so...

EVA (as ATHEIST WOMAN 1)

Uh... are you sure... I mean... You know what? This'll be one hell of a story. Let's go.

*End of scene within scene.*

DREW

Okay, "they exit together. End of scene." Great work guys! Next scene?

TYLER

*(Visibly annoyed.)*

Actually, can I steal you for a minute Drew? Zephyr can fill in for stage directions.

DREW

*(Nervous.)*

Um... okay... Generally it's probably a good idea for the director to be in the room for the first ever read through, you know, get a feel for the actors and everything but... it's fine. Yeah.

TYLER

You all did a read through before this, no? With all the same people? So you've gotten a feel for them.

DREW

*(Rambling.)*

I mean there's been some edits. And I imagine the actors have looked it over and gotten more of a feel for their characters since we're like actually doing this now and..

*TYLER glares. The actors look guilty because they have not in fact done that at all. Duh, they're actors.*

DREW (cont.)

*(Tense.)*

Yeah, yeah. All good.

*(Even tenser.)*

You're the boss.

TYLER

Great.

*TYLER and DREW exit. End of scene.*

SCENE 2: AUDREY'S DORM

*Lights up on a typical, small, liberal arts school single dorm. It is heavily decorated. AUDREY lounges on the bed while DREW sits on the desk chair, slightly rocking, anxious. They are frozen. ZEPHYR enters with a sign reading TWO MONTHS EARLIER.*

ZEPHYR

God. They make the stage managers do everything. Even the fourth wall breaks are our responsibility.

*ZEPHYR exits. AUDREY and DREW unfreeze.*

AUDREY

So? What do you think of my new baby?

DREW

It was... uh... it was. It certainly was.

AUDREY

I mean, it's a little out there I know.

DREW

Transgender Jesus was not exactly a story I expected to explore in my time as a theatre artist. But hey, I'm a director, I'm

open to lots of projects... I just have to ask, have you ever read the bible?

AUDREY

Not since Sunday school when I was very young. And I blocked those memories out. That pastor was... Well he was a youth pastor, I'll let you fill in the rest.

DREW

Yeah, well... I sent you some edits. It's not the most biblically accurate play ever written. And that's coming from a Jew.

AUDREY

Thanks. I don't really think it needs to be super biblically accurate. But yeah, I mean, I just found out that Jesus comes back after being crucified? Like immediately after? I called my friend in a panic like "I didn't have that written into the plot" and she was like "no it was just for three days, don't worry." Wild.

DREW

I mean, I'm just curious, why would you choose to write a play about Jesus if you don't really know that much about Jesus?

*(People pleaser panic.)*

Like, not that it's not good! It was really funny. I loved reading it. And other than fact checking stuff, I didn't have that many notes. Just seems like an odd choice.

AUDREY

I'm tired of writing shit that nobody reads.

*DREW clears their throat  
aggressively.*

AUDREY (cont.)

Other than you of course. But if I want the world to see my work I have to get their attention. How do you get people's attention? Piss them off. What pisses people off? Trans women and alternate interpretations of Christianity. It was a simple choice, really.

DREW

It's definitely an interpretation alright. And you've never really shown your work to anyone other than me before? I mean, I'm honored to be the one person who you trust with these works. But I'm just saying, who's to say none of those other plays wouldn't be a hit?

AUDREY

Me. I am to say. Those plays might be good or they might be trash. I don't know. And honestly it doesn't even matter. Lots of people write good plays. Plus I submitted that one play to that thing once.

DREW

I mean, if this is your truth, speak it.

AUDREY

Think about it. Nobody knew who Dylan Mulvany was when she was playing the gay guy in Book of Mormon. Then, boom, gender transed, and suddenly her name is everywhere. And all she did was make a few tik toks and do an ad with bud light. Imagine the buzz for something like this.

DREW

Dylan Mulvany was in the Book of Mormon? I love that musical!  
How did I not know that? She must have been so good!!

AUDREY

Exactly my point.

DREW

She did get a bunch of harassment for posting about her transition. And those videos were so inoffensive. Is this really what you want?

AUDREY

I want to be known. Every day graduation creeps closer and closer and the question becomes realer and realer: what am I going to do with my life when I get out of here? I'm graduating with a major in theatre concentrating in playwriting and a minor in creative writing. I somehow managed to major and minor in writing. I basically set myself up for a lifetime of customer service. Unless somehow, by some stroke of incredible luck, I get myself known. I can write all of the beautiful, artistic bullshit that lives in my soul or whatever after I'm known.

DREW

I understand, the idea of graduating is terrifying. I hear Market Basket calling out to me in my nightmares. Telling me it will get me eventually. The most lines I'll be memorizing after I get out of here are, "hi, how can we help you today?" "Would you like to pay with cash or card?"

AUDREY

So be my director. You know you always have first dibs on my work.

DREW

Okay so does that mean you're gonna put this one out there?  
That's the first step to being known.

AUDREY

Um... maybe after the next 10 drafts.

DREW

Hello Market Basket.

AUDREY

Come on.

DREW

Audrey, listen to me. You're a talented playwright. And you clearly have the desire to have your writing seen. Plus, I mean, if hell is real, this play is sending you to it. Do you want to do all that and not have anyone see it?

AUDREY

I was already condemned to hell before this if what the Christians say about queer people is true.

DREW

Queerness was not in the bible. From the little I know about religion, God's kind of a narcissist in all that old testament shit, and I know Jesus was trying to paint him as nicer but I'm pretty sure it's still true for y'all that if you say anything that paints him in a bad light you go to hell or whatever.

AUDREY

Who's y'all?

DREW

Christians.

AUDREY

I'm not a Christian.

DREW

That much is clear from your writing. But you know what I mean. God was pretty harsh in my people's book, I don't know how much that could have changed in yours. Just because he's a father and stuff now doesn't mean he's not still pretty self centered. And you're twisting his message or something. That's for sure a sin.

AUDREY

Who says I'm twisting the Bible? We don't know what happened then or what will happen when Jesus comes back. Maybe I'm just a profit.

AUDREY

*(Mock offended.)*

Okay, so you don't believe my prophecy, that's fine.

DREW

The image of Jesus sinning like *that*, not something I needed in my head. I mean, the details...

AUDREY

So you think being gay is a sin?

DREW

Being gay is the least sinful part of whatever you've got going on there. I mean, *on the cross*? Damn.

AUDREY

It's honestly convenient. With him being raised up there. Judas would barely have to bend over to do it.

DREW

Wouldn't that make it worse? I mean, I don't exactly know the logistics of this... action, but if he had to crook his neck... I don't want to think about this anymore.

AUDREY

And that means I made you feel something.

DREW

Sure, sure. Your art... had its ways of speaking to me. Many of which will be spoken to me in my nightmares for years to come. You wanna make others... feel something? You have to show them something.

*(Launching into a bit of a prepared speech.)*

Let's do a read through. I'll organize it. Get a group of students together. We can post the clips on TikTok. That platform was meant for making nobodies viral. It's the future of art and the artist. All you have to do is bring your writing talent and I'll do the rest.

AUDREY

God, you're such a business bro sometimes.

DREW

*(Jokingly.)*

Excuse you. I'm a business *them*. Watch out or the woke media is gonna cancel you.

*(Serious again.)*

And, like it or not, marketing is an important part of creating theatre. You want to be seen, I'll make you seen. By the time I get enough actors together and work out a time that fits for everyone, you'll be able to incorporate my edits and whatever else you want to change. Let's do this together.

AUDREY

*(Chuckling.)*

I love you so much, but sometimes I really feel like there is some guy named Brad who took two marketing classes and thinks he's an expert just waiting to jump out of you at any moment.

DREW

Don't be so quick to criticize Brad. He might be onto something.

AUDREY

Fine. I'll hear Brad out. But I do NOT want to hear about his startup idea. Got it.

DREW

Deal.

AUDREY

*(Suddenly genuine.)*

I appreciate you for trying to make this happen. I couldn't do anything without you.

*(Deflecting.)*

Even if you're a dork.

DREW

Of course. I'm a dork who believes in you.

AUDREY

God what is that gonna say about my target audience? I'm gonna get a bunch of fucking nerds like you coming to watch my show? The future really is grim.

DREW

You know what, fuck you. I hate you, anyway, asshole.

AUDREY

And yet you're obsessed with putting on my work.

DREW

You're a talented asshole.

AUDREY

You also keep hanging out with me.

DREW

You got me there.

*They share a look that's a bit more than platonic. Eventually, DREW snaps out of it and speaks.*

DREW

So I can start getting actors?

AUDREY

I guess. But if it goes terribly wrong and all of them hate it I'm suing you. And I already know who's gonna play Jesus. You can choose the rest.

DREW

First of all, sue me for what money? Second of all, awesome. If you have someone for Jesus that's a huge weight off my shoulders. The rest of the group won't exactly be my top choices for actors, more like just whoever is available. So please get someone you think is suited for Jesus.

AUDREY

Well, she has to actually say yes.

*End of scene.*