An aerial, high-angle photograph of a dense city, likely New York City, with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. In the foreground, the tips of two feet wearing white sneakers are visible, suggesting the person is standing on a high ledge or rooftop. The image has a warm, slightly desaturated color palette with hints of blue and orange.

this is what i chose  
no i'm not sorry and  
yes if you'd ask i'd  
do it again

BY DARIA MIYEKO MARINELLI

Resource  
Packet



# welcome

## ***this is what i chose no i'm not sorry and yes if you'd ask i'd do it again***

*is a new play about choice that offers agency to young actors, flexibility to educators, and tries to make sense about making sense about loss*

*the play focuses around the choices of its characters and likewise lets the actors, audience, or production team chose how to move through the story*

This resource guide, written by playwright (Daria Miyeko Marinelli) and director (Will Kiley), is intended to help prospective teachers, directors and producers approach the world of this bifurcating\* and modular\* play.

*this is what i chose...* has been written with the excitement that every production or classroom exploration will modify the script to best serve their environment.

Some will choose to explore the work in its 220+ page entirety while others will pick one or several of the eight storylines as works for the time allotted. We're game for whatever's best for you.

The experimental nature of this play offers a variety of performance, rehearsal, and theatrical experiences and aims to honor the wide range of lived experiences that any group of young people would bring to the table, be it full of heartbreak, heartthrob, anxiety, bravado, or new teen speak.

This guide contains classroom-tested resources and strategies for approaching this unconventional script with the intention that a new wave of high school, university, and professional theater artists will continue to find innovative ways to explore, rehearse, reimagine, refine, and perform this story.

*take what you need, leave the rest,  
make it fun-*

DMM & WK

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# why this play in schools?

the script offers

## ***students the chance to***

- play characters their age
- analyze characters who live and love in a high school that is like (or nothing like) their own
- incorporate their racial / gender / sexual identities without constraining / racializing or outing themselves
- share a role with classmates while customizing it to their own liking
- lean into their lived experience // or avoid it entirely

## ***teachers support in***

- acknowledging the specific personalities and identities of whomever is present in class that day
- tailoring the scope and sequence of a play exploration to fit their specific timing parameters
- devising a bespoke theatrical play while having a strong pre-scripted framework
- produce an interactive play where actors and audiences have a say in how the story unfolds



# what's going on?

## (the story)

With a changing storyline based on moments of choice, *this is what i chose and no i'm not sorry and yes if you'd ask i'd do it again* is a bifurcating modular play that explores

who has ownership over a tragedy?

when do you stand by your friends?  
*even when you have your own feelings*

what it is to try and make sense of a massive loss?  
*when you still have to show up (and survive) school each day*

### The Opening Circumstance:

*useful when reading the play with a new group*

**Vivian's** brother **Will** committed suicide. About 7 months ago. It's been long enough that it's not "the thing" that everyone's talking about. But it's still close enough that, like, it's still sort of a thing, at least for Vivian. And also, **Sara**. Who maybe had something going with Will?

When Sara & **Aimée** start planning an "Alive Together" assembly to honor Will, Vivian takes a stand and ask-demands Sara to cancel it. (Well, Vivian actually sends **Rachel** and **Lindsay** to do it – who have their own opinions, but are trying to support their friend.)

Should Vivian really get to decide, given that Will and Sara were "a thing, like romantically" and also The Band (**Paul Flo Tegan** and **Kim**) have been planning their debut around the "Alive Together" event? (Plus Paul was like actually Will's best friend growing up, so?)

And what about the fact that Aimée's just using co-organizing this event for their college applications?? And did anyone think to ask **Brett** and **Aüge** who really, really knew Will, but have been cutting class since like junior high? What's going on between Brett and Aüge anyway?

# how to make it your own (it's modular)

*This script is a living, fungible document and should be constantly reshaped by the unique perspectives of each company performing it.*

## on role as springboard

Characters in this story should not be seen as containers for actors to shrink themselves into, but rather foundations for each actor's unique characterizations to rise out from.

Any actor should be able to step into any character in this play without being asked to reject or diminish an aspect of their identity that they'd prefer to shine through.

## on language/teenspeak

If any language feels inauthentic or stale, change it! (And feel free to let us know! Daria is obsessed with evolving language). This play is not intended to be a period piece and will need to be constantly updated to feel current out loud.

## on pronouns and names

This is a play for everyone. While the names of the characters acknowledge the deep bench of female-identifying actors in high school settings, each of the eleven characters have been written as gender-neutral.

Feel free to change character names as best honors your actors.

## on high school signifiers

If there's high school elements that feel alien or disingenuous to your high school, feel free to change them! If there's high school additions or customizations that offer a fun wink or nod to your audience, feel free to substitute them in. Truly, we want the high school in this play to feel as close or as far from your high school as is comfortable for your acting ensemble.



# what about the choices

## (it bifurcates)

**There are three moments in this play where the trajectory of the story splits in two and a choice of direction must be made** (either by the actors, the production team, or the audience). Off this choice, distinct events happen, changing the narrative arc.

**In total, the three bifurcating moments result in 8 possible endings.**

The story asks the characters and the audience how they handle facing a choice wherein there is seemingly no way out but to risk betraying themselves or others. In writing these scenarios as actual choices, rather than inevitabilities, the actors and audience are invited to deeply engage in the tension of these moments.

Each production is welcome to learn all three choices or perhaps limit it to two choices (four endings) or a single lineage with one choice (two endings).

If only one plot line (one ending) is ultimately decided as the best fit for a cast, the playwright asks that the actors be central to the choice of which ending to perform.

Things to consider when deciding how much of the play to take on:

*How do we make the act of choosing feel alive to both the actors and audience?*

*How many actors are playing each role?*

*How much bandwidth do the actors have to prepare outside of rehearsal?*

*Is it imperative to this production that actors are off-book?*

*How did the first week(s) of rehearsal go?*

# ways to make it make sense

(additional resources)

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making the  
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# making the choice

## actor – real time

**We can conceive of the actor making the choice in real time (!)**

Sara intentionally has a light presence across the play due to the completely colossal nature of their 1st choice.

## audience – real time

**We can also conceive of the audience perhaps making the choice for the actors / ensemble in a Drood like style.** Whether this then requires an actor to step out or ask, or if the choice is tallied via technology or one single audience members decides– is left up to the parameters and abilities of each production.

## production – predetermined

**Or, does a production decide which track (or tracks) it will rehearse and share?** Is a different track performed each night? Does a distinct ensemble perform each track? Are multiple tracks prepared and the ensemble decides together each night before curtain? Or has the ensemble picked a single track and simply prepared that one for presentation?

# choice summaries

## **sara cancels/continues “the event”**

Sara is working alongside their best friend, Aimée, to plan a school-wide assembly to address and mourn the suicide of one of their classmates.

When Vivian, the sibling of the student who died, asks Sara to cancel the event, Sara is torn. On one hand, Sara feels entitled to serve their school and mourn their friend and serious high school crush, on the other Vivian is Will's family (even though they never really got along) and also one of the most socially powerful students on campus...

*when a community needs healing, who should lead?*

## **flo picks kiss/no kiss or flo picks solidarity with paul/the band**

Kim and Flo are best friends. They play in a band with Tegan and Paul. Kim definitely has a crush on Paul and is the reason Flo's even in the band. Paul is kind of flirty with Flo. (Drama.)

In one version, the band is positioned to play at the event and Tegan suggests that their final song should end with a stage kiss between Paul and Flo. Flo must decide whether to let Kim dictate their choice (don't kiss Paul) or whether to listen to themselves and take a risk.

In a second version Paul quits the band, and Tegan thinks they should perform without Paul. It is up to Flo to decide whether to take solidarity with Paul (who they have a crush on) or stay with the band.

*is true friendship selfless?*

## **aüge admits crush or plays it cool**

Aüge, Brett, and William were best friends. Aüge always had a crush on Brett but never admitted it, partly because they didn't want to ruin the dynamic the three of them had together. Now William is gone and William's sister (Vivian) is starting to flirt with Brett.

Does Aüge admit their crush on Brett and risk losing their friendship, or play it cool and watch Brett fall for someone else?

*how do you decide when to confess or conceal your feelings about someone?*



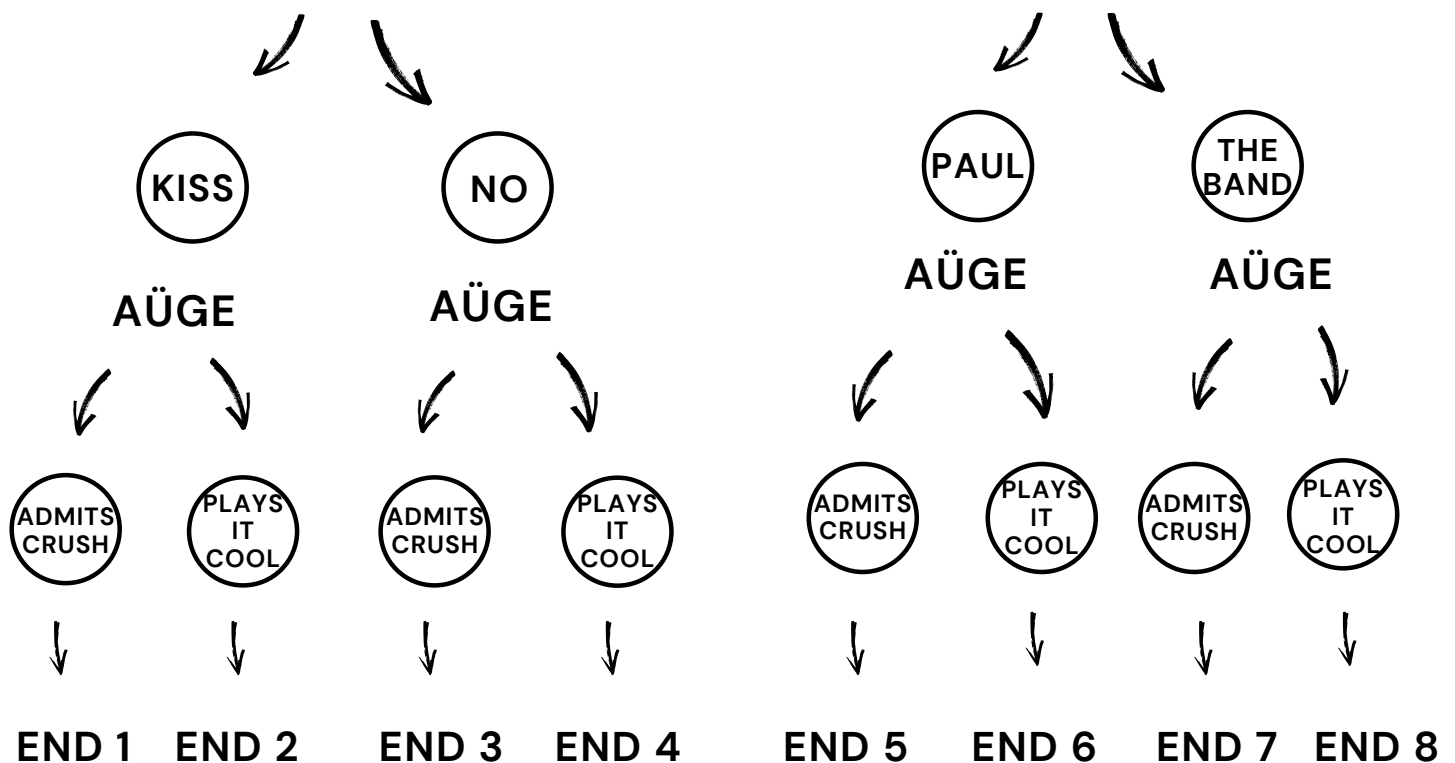
# CHOICE TRACKING CHART

SARA CANCELS THE EVENT



FLO PICKS KISS / NO KISS

FLO PICKS SOLIDARITY WITH



## NOTE:

This chart illuminates which choices lead to which endings.  
Every branch of the play consists of 13 scenes.  
This chart only displays the scenes which bifurcate.

# classroom provocations

*this is what i chose...was developed at Weiss high school in Pflugerville, Texas during the '20-'21 school year.*

**As we navigated the struggles and inconsistencies of learning during a pandemic the script's adaptability of offered much needed support. The following exercises proved beneficial and may spark an idea for your own.**

## **Character Description Customization**

We introduced the script by asking the students to add more to each character description. *Who do you imagine when you read this character description? Can you add any details that help us see who you see?* This process allowed us to begin with an understanding of the modular nature of the script.

## **Iterative Script Analysis**

The play's multiple pathways provided a fantastic opportunity to learn script analysis techniques in the I do/we do/you do model. Script analysis skills can be applied first together as a class on a particular track leading to a particular ending and then that same skill could be used on other tracks in smaller groups or as individuals. This is unique because of the way the world and style of the play remain the same while the events of the play shift in each track.

## **Given Circumstances Dramaturgy**

We encouraged actors to trace the ways William's death is directly or indirectly affected their character in each scene. Their answers were rarely obvious and often opened meaningful conversations on the unique ways we each process and relate to grief.

## **Full Class Scene Study**

The adaptability of each character allowed us to cast the entire class in the play's two-person scenes. We allowed each student to choose and customize their character and then proceeded into a scene study where they could be partnered with anyone in class who chose the opposite role. This resulted in a world of rehearsal possibilities and also helped us accommodate for when students were absent. With contextual understanding, students were having lot's of "a-ha" moment when watching other pairs work.

## **Experimenting With Choice**

One of the most pressing questions for a production team is *how will the choices be made*, we found this an exciting question for small groups to experiment with and showcase. It also proved especially exciting to work on the Aüge and Brett scene and allow the actor playing Aüge to make their choice about whether to confess their crush in the moment based on how the scene was going. This caused both actors to really listen to, and stay present with, one another.

## **Honoring The Script**

As artists customize the play to fit their ensemble it's important that the foundations at the heart of the play remain intact. It's important for each ensemble to consistently reflect on how they might honor the unique given circumstances of each character while simultaneously building upon them.

## **The Acting Paradox**

Not every cast will want to perform a story about their specific environment. How might each performance honor the lived experience of the actors in the ensemble AND allow the actors to play characters that aren't necessarily exactly the same as themselves?



special thanks to

**The Team of Teachers and  
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Naomi Taylor

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# and thank you for your interest in this play

## development

*this is what i chose...* was originally commissioned and developed in 2017 & 2018 in partnership with **Broadway Training Center** of Westchester under Artistic Directors Jason Brantman and Fiona Santos.

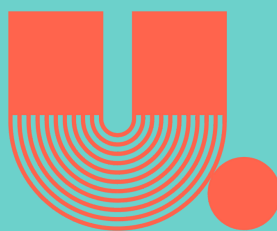
Through a collaboration with Director Will Kiley, *this is what i chose...* has since received a reading at the **University of Texas at Austin**, acceptance into the 2020 Cohort of **The Kennedy Center & TYA-USA's New Visions New Voices** via **Jackalope Theatre**, and a year-long workshop at **Weiss High School**.

## obtaining rights

to obtain rights to performance please contact **Uproar Theatrics**. their contact information can be found below.

rights to both performance and classroom engagement come with a **digital script set** as well as **dramaturgy charts that identify:**

- which scenes are in which track*
- which characters are in which scenes*
- each character's specific contextual information for every scene*



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