

# GRACE, SPONSORED BY MONTEVERDE

## First, some notes from the playwright:

This play is split up into four sections:

FRAMEWORK, PIXELS, LIGHT, and some ALGORITHMIC MAYHEM.

The idea here is that this play should feel like we are following a hashtag on Instagram, in this case, it's #ManifestYourDestiny.

The director and team should feel free to shuffle around the order of the FRAMES, PIXELS, LIGHTS and ALGORITHMS. ALGORITHMIC MAYHEM is meant to be tossed in at will. Here and there. The FRAMES should be really gorgeous. And we should see them constructed. The ones under the handle @GraceSponsoredByMonteverde are so perfect we almost hear angels singing in the background. These are the makings of a master influencer with mega style.

You'll see that the LIGHT scenes refer to certain FRAMES. Have fun with the layering here – the levels of seems and the seams that hold it all together.

In first couple productions, this playing and structuring should be done with the writer.

When the play is published, there will be a sample included (an example of how to shuffle the scenes around), which can be followed to a T or still messed around with, as the original four tier format will still be there to play with before you even read the sample.

There will always be freedom.

This play should feel different every time it's performed.

Order changes things. POV, and the way we filter info, and in what timing, alters our perspective. We will, nevertheless, always get the same information every time.

As Catherine would say, we are encouraged here to: Think for ourselves.

This piece also lends itself to many mediums:

TV, Social Media, Audio shows, and live performance.

The playwright is open to go on almost any journey with this.

Here we go!

Enjoy yourselves!

### **About the Playwright:**

Vanessa Garcia is a multidisciplinary artist working as a novelist, playwright, and journalist. Her debut novel, *White Light*, was published in 2015, to critical acclaim. Named one of the Best Books of 2015 by NPR, Al Dia, Flavorwire, and numerous other publications and institutions, it also won an International Latino Book Award.

Her plays have been produced in Edinburgh, Miami, Los Angeles, New York, and other cities around the world. These include the immersive hit, *Amparo* (“Miami’s Hottest Ticket,” according to *People en Español*); *The Cuban Spring* (a full-length Carbonell Award nominee for Best New Play, 2015), *The Crocodile’s Bite* (a short included in numerous anthologies such as Smith & Kraus’ *Best Ten Minute Plays of 2016*; the *City Theatre Anthology 2015*; and the *Writer’s Digest Annual Award Anthology, 2015*), and *Freak!*, a short play for Young Adults (anthologized in The Applause Acting Series’ *5 Minute Plays For Teens*). She has a miniseries under development with Exilium Production Company – an adaptation of Carlos’ Eire’s National Book Award Winning memoir *Waiting for Snow in Havana*.

As a journalist, feature writer, and essayist, her pieces have appeared in *The LA Times*, *The Miami Herald*, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *Narrative.ly*, and *American Theatre Magazine*, among numerous other publications. She’s also a *Huffington Post* blogger.

She holds a PhD from the University of California Irvine in English (with a focus in Creative Nonfiction), an MFA from the University of Miami (in fiction), and a BA from Barnard College, Columbia University (English and Art History).

Most recently she was a Sesame Street Writer’s Room Fellow. She’s currently a WP Theater Lab Fellow.

[www.vanessagarcia.org](http://www.vanessagarcia.org)

### **Play Development for Grace, Sponsored by Monteverde:**

Developed at WP Theater Lab 2018-2020. Staged reading of earlier draft by Thinking Cap Theatre @ The Vanguard, Ft. Lauderdale, Fl. August 3, 2015. Staged reading of earlier draft by JustA Theater & Production Company, Los Angeles. May 28 & 30, 2015

### **Characters:**

**Catherine:** 30s, reporter-turned influencer. Tough, funny, elegant yet adventurous, Cuban-American, and, of course, clever. Style matters for her. Maybe a little bit of a bad feminist. Maybe a lot of someone seeking answers.

**Lewis:** 30s, also studied journalism and believes in it. Rich kid, son of Marcos Burgos, who became famous for having the country's largest and most successful Moonshine distillery. Lewis is from Argentina.

**Blake: 16.** Queer teen, can be played by a young girl or nonbinary actor. They are a homeschooled, on the road with their mother. Blake's just lost their father to a divorce.

**Rosalie:** 30s, a wayward nun. Latin-American, speaks Spanish, and you can tell her culture is inside her. She's lived in New Orleans for a while, but is now questioning her identity. She's someone Catherine could have been, if we had a thousand lives to live.

**Marcos Burgos:** A kind of "Mr. Dos X" type. Hot. Rich. Comes from nothing. Escaped persecution against Jews in Argentina. Started the country's largest Moonshine Distillery from the ground up.

**Sebastian:** Early 40s. Strangely charming and totally awful at the same time. Might even be on the spectrum. Married to and then divorced from Catherine.

**Abbie:** Friend of Blake. We only ever meet her through text. Typical sixteen-year-old girl.

**Lulu Lemon Yogi Guru:** Your typical Instagram meditation/yoga "guru." 20s. Fit and pseudo mellow.

**Gianni:** Uruguayan Chivito stand owner in Memphis, TN. He might not be "legal." (Chivitos are Uruguayan sandwiches).

**Marty:** Blake's mother, who becomes Rosalie and Catherine's shrink.

### **For theatre:**

Marcos, Gianni, Sebastian, Abbie, Lulu Lemon Yogi Guru are all played by same actor.

### **Setting:**

A camper across America. Present time.

## RE: Frame 5

Blake

I have Instagram you know.

Catherine

So?

Blake

What you just posted. Gross.

Catherine

What? I thought you were looking at a caterpillar or something.

Blake

Right, 'cuz I'm Alice in Wonderland. You'd love that right. Fuck that.

Catherine

Why are you talking like that? And what's so gross about what I wrote? Also, that's my private account, how'd you find that.

Blake

You just follow the hashtag.

Catherine

But—

Blake

--You've been "Manifesting Your Destiny" for like a year. Way before Monteverde. When you started CatInSearchofGrace—

Catherine

Wow, I didn't even notice that. Let me see.

*[Grabs Blake's phone and scrolls. Around us a cluster of pixel images run around us like the landscape on the road]*

Shit, you're right.

Blake

Duh.

Catherine

What's gross about what I wrote?

Blake

I make you want to have a kid? I mean, like –

Catherine

Yeah. You do. So? I look at you and my ovaries hurt.

Blake

Barfola.

Catherine

But you're adorable.

Blake

Ugh.

Catherine

Can we talk seriously for a minute?

Blake

We're not talking seriously now?

Catherine

You know yesterday when we were at Gianni's stand?

Blake

Yeah...Wasn't that cool? His story?

Catherine

Yeah. It was, but –

Blake

How he was saying how they had no money in  
Uruguay and he helped his father build their house  
one brick at a time.  
How they built the fireplace first and eventually  
even built a Barbeque pit outside.  
And how the roof was last to get built.  
And how they lived for years without a roof.  
Just a tarp, that's all they had.  
But the tarp was so thick, nothing got in, because  
they knew how to secure it. And they didn't feel poor,  
only in the summer, when the tourists came out to  
where they lived – what was it called? – that place?  
Right, Punta del Este. Because when the tourists came  
to get summer tans, that's when they worked most, but also  
when they felt, Gianni felt, the most sad. Because every time  
they served the tourists Chivitos, they could see the  
the difference between them more, like where the tourists  
stayed, what they wore, versus their own shack, that's what  
made Gianni feel poor. Not the actual shack, you know?  
And then how they finally built the roof when they could  
from the money from the tourists ironically.  
And when they had enough money, they came  
here, transferred the stand here. Him and his dad.  
But his dad doesn't seem to be enjoying it, and it felt like--

Catherine

Yeah...

You know he's a lot older  
than you, right?

Punta del Este.

What I'm trying to say is that  
sixteen doesn't feel that  
different, but he has to be at  
least in his twenties,  
Probably mid-twenties and--  
Yeah, I know that's really...  
admirable. Anyway, it's,  
the age gap, is a lot  
farther than it seems.  
You have to be careful.

Blake

I want to build my own house. With my own hands.

Catherine

I know that sounds romantic, but actually it's not. Listen, I'm serious when I say be careful.

Blake

What are you trying to say that he's rapey?

Catherine

Oh my god, not at all, I just don't want you to get hurt.

Blake

I told you, I got it.

Catherine

I doubt that. I mean I hardly “got it,” let alone Lewis. And we’re a decade and a half older than you. I can’t even remember the things I thought I knew when I was sixteen.  
Driving for one. I thought I knew how to drive, which is hilarious–

Blake

--I know a lot more than you think.

I know I’m on the road with my howling mother who cries every night. I can’t pretend I know what she feels, but I know what I feel and that it hurts. I know that I’m glad I met you guys and that about a week ago I started reading Lewis and Clark’s letters thanks to you. I think they were homo, you know.

Catherine

It’s been said before.

Blake

Are you?

Catherine

Am I what?

Blake

A lesbian.

Catherine

No.

Blake

‘Cuz sometimes when I look at you, I wonder.

Catherine

Just because I have short hair doesn’t mean I’m a lesbian.

Blake

I know, I’m not an ass.

Catherine

Just making sure.

Blake

It’s just that sometimes I get confused.

Catherine

About?

Blake

About who I like, what I feel.

Catherine

That's normal. Sexuality is complicated at your...well, at any age actually, it's—

Blake

--I get confused because sometimes when you squat down to grab something, I see the way you curve and I get this tingle inside, it's —

Catherine

[*Tenderness sans sexuality. Empathy*]

Oh, Blake...

Blake

No, I do.

[*Totally vulnerable, perhaps for the first time since they met*]

And I'm not sure what it's about. And sometimes I think I love you.

Catherine

Blake...

Blake

But then sometimes I see Gianni, and his face, the way his jaw is so sharp and he's so strong. And sometimes I touch his hand when he gives me my food and it's rough, and I love that, I love...it's the same tingle. The same flicker.

[*Touches their inner thigh very quickly and lightly*]

The same butterfly flapping its wings. And sometimes I get this feeling right here

[*Touches their abdomen*] like I need something inside it and I don't know what it is, like I need to be filled up, like I'm a jar, or a vessel or something, like I'm —

Catherine

You're just hungry.

Blake

Stop joking, Cat! I'm serious. I...

Catherine

I know. I'm sorry, I'm saying all the wrong things.



*BLAKE kisses Catherine on the mouth,  
CATHERINE pulls back immediately.*

Catherine

Blake! I could be your mom, stop that!

Blake

Sorry, I suck so hard. I suck so hard.  
I'm sorry, I'm just really. I'm so confused.

Catherine

Blake...it's ok, it's just...Is it ok if I hug you.

*[BLAKE nods yes and CATHERINE takes them in her arms, like they are her daughter, placing their head on her lap]*

Can I tell you a story?

*[Blake nods their head in CATHERINE'S lap]*

When I was around your age, maybe a little younger, I had a math teacher with a really gorgeous, I mean gorgeous, really just beautiful ass. She wore these tight skirts and when she was at the board all I wanted to do was look at her butt and I always wanted to touch it, but more than that, I wanted to stand behind her and press up against her. And I got really worried, you know. Because I hadn't had these feelings before and I kept wondering: Am I gay? And then I started looking at all the girls around me and I asked myself whether I liked them or not. But I didn't feel about them the same way I felt about Ms. Suarez's gorgeous ass. And with the boys... Well, I went to an all-girls school, but I saw boys on the weekend and at parties, and there was one in particular, he was older than me and from Brazil, and he spoke Portuguese, but since I spoke Spanish we could understand each other. Somehow, he showed up at all the parties, even though he didn't go to a brother school, and then one day he asked me to dance and I remember the feeling of his hands on my back and his chest against my chest for days. It lingered. If I close my eyes, I swear I can still call back that feeling. There's something about men's chests that still get to me. Those broad shoulders, the ripple, even when they're soft and not fit, how you can still see they're sinews, it's so....I just want to put all of it in my mouth.

Blake

Disgusting.

Catherine

Anyway, I kept going back and forth between those two feelings. Marcelo's chest and Ms. Suarez's ass were see-sawing the hell out of me.

Blake

So what did you do?

Catherine

Well, I was really nervous about this, so I thought, I have to tell someone about all these feelings I have, so, one day, while my mom was vacuuming the house, I gathered up the courage to spill the beans.

Blake

You told your mom?!

Catherine

I remember it like it was yesterday. It's one of those memories in your mind that sit perfectly framed, you know what I mean?

Blake

Kinda.

Catherine

Before I decided to tell her, she was vacuuming the house like she did, like a madwoman. Her hair all over the place, her head god knows where, probably on how she was going to keep us in private school and continue to feed us with the shit money she was making, since she'd kicked my dad out.

Blake

It's like we're the same person.  
What did she say?

Catherine

I walked up to her and I stood in front of her. She didn't see me, she just kept vacuuming. So I yelled: "Mom." Nothing.

"Mom!" Nothing.

And then, "Mom!" – third time's the charm.

"What is it, Cat?" She stopped the vacuum.

And I asked her: "How do you know if you're a lesbian?"

And my mom just looked at me, nodded her head and said:

"You're not a lesbian, Catherine," and then started vacuuming again.

All I remember feeling is: Oh, ok, I guess I'm not a lesbian, and I walked away.

Later, much later, I started to ask myself whether that was right of her to tell me, and I thought – no. If I have a daughter and she asks me that, I'm not going to do that. Mind you, my mom wouldn't have cared, she wasn't even that conservative, I think it was just the default setting.

And probably mine. I think I probably would have slept with women if my mom hadn't said that to me that day, and I never did.

I think I probably would still have married a man, like I did.

But, you know, it's a spectrum.

We're all a little bit of everything, I think. Or at least me.

At least me, I can only speak for myself.

Blake

So you are a lesbian?

Catherine

I don't think so.

I'm just...myself. And that's what that is.

Blake

Did you ever tell your math teacher?

Catherine

Oh god no!

But I don't think I learned much math that year.

I was completely distracted in that class, the whole time.

*BLAKE laughs a little and squeezes  
Catherine.*

Blake

Thanks.