

HOT SEAT

AN IMMERSIVE PLAY

A minimalist yet immersive play where the audience watches the characters onstage play Hot Seat and then they themselves take a turn in the chair. Experience the game and the community that comes with it!

Characters:

Darlene

Jake

Amanda

Jarell (Black/AA)

Chance

Saniyah (Black/AA)

This should be a group of diverse individuals AND Jarell and Saniyah are specifically Black/ African American

List of Acts and Scenes:

Prologue, Act 1 Round 1, Act 1 Round 2, Act 1 Round 3, Act 1 Round 4, Act 1 Round 5, Act 1 Round 6, Intermission, Act

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Notes from the playwright

This play is simple in that it is only questions and answers, but I do encourage actors to take the questions and answers their characters have to flesh out who that person is. On that note, actors are also encouraged to engage in light improvisation in the form of reactions to answers, short side conversations, quick chats before or after rounds and the like. Let the characters play the game, let them enjoy the game or maybe let some of them hate the game and pass more often; this script can and should be an invitation for the production to delve into characterization, intensity of game, place, and more. Play and have fun!

Each round should be seven minutes long, either the actors can literally keep time on some hand held device, or maybe there is a large timer somewhere that everyone can see, let the production decide that. This means that for every round there will be text not spoken/used, so the production should also feel free to change the order of the questions and answers as they see fit or where in the text the start of the round happens. The characters can even make up additional questions and answers that are not written in the script.

Act 1 Prologue

Saniyah:

The rules are simple.

Chance

Each round one person is in the Hot Seat.

Jarell

When you're in the Hot Seat, everyone else is going to ask you a bunch of questions.

Amanda

You must answer honestly.

Jake

We'll set every round to be seven minutes long.

Darlene

Everyone must have a round in the hot seat.

Act 1 Round 1

When time is up, proceed to Round 2 (starts pg 14)

Amanda:

You know what? I'll go first.

Jarell:

Perfect. I will do time. Okay is everyone ready? *[everyone nods, says yes ect]* Alright let me get my timer ready. Okay cool. Ready, set, start.

Darlene:

Who is on your mind right now?

Amanda:

Well actually a few weeks ago I wanted to get a dog, so I went to a shelter and saw the cutest bulldog named Bongo and he has been on my mind a lot today.

Saniyah:

Are you going to adopt him?

Amanda:

Ugh I really wanted to but I feel like I just don't have time for a dog. I'm also thinking of becoming a travel nurse, so it just wouldn't work out for me to have a dog right now.

Chance:

What brought about the idea of being a travel nurse?

Amanda:

Mostly just cause I want to try something new, but also because a good travel nurse can make a lot of money.

Jarell:

How much did you make last year?

Amanda:

About 70k.

Jake:

What's your favorite part and least favorite part of your daily routine?

Amanda:

Going to bed and Waking up, respectively.

Jake:

Who was the last person you had a deep conversation with?

Amanda:

Hmm Someone who became a friend through an old job. Her name's Imma.

Darlene:

What did you two talk about?

Amanda:

Yeah she was the supervising nurse and I worked under her a couple of years ago. We still get coffee every now and then. This time we talked, she told me she was finally retiring from nursing. But we mainly talked about generational friendships. I mean she has children who are my age and I consider her a great friend. We talked about the lessons friendships like these can teach you. You get a perspective on life from someone in a totally different place as you, and vice versa. I don't know, I just sometimes think about how our world view changes the older we get.

Jarrell

Are you in romantic love with anyone?

Amanda:

God no.

Chance:

When's the last time you got laid?

Amanda:

Uhh like three months ago I think?

Jake:

How was it?

Amanda:

Mediocre?

Darlene:

Where have you found unexpected joy recently?

Amanda:

I've tried to add moments of calm and stillness into my life whenever I can as of late, and right now that has been looking like me sitting outside and drinking my coffee. No phones, or tablets, or emails or calls or anything. Just me and my coffee. I've started to notice things in nature. Like there are some squirrels that love to play in the tree outside. And I just look at them and I feel the weight of the world and I see that they don't feel it. They look for food and run around and play with each other. And, yeah, I just get so amazed watching them live life in a beautiful way that I wish I could.

Jake:

If you were a plant what would you be?

Amanda:

I think I'd be a daffodil.

Saniyah:

How do you take your coffee?

Amanda:

Hot coffee black with sugar, Iced coffee with almond milk, caramel drizzle, some caramel or chocolate syrup, and a quick foam in a mason jar.

Jarell:

What's a hobby you want to pick up?

Amanda:

I, randomly, have always wanted to make a ship in a bottle so maybe that. Oh, I've also always wanted to get a junk car and slowly fix it up. Even though I know nothing about cars.

Saniyah:

What is the thing you are working on the most in yourself right now?

Amanda:

Hmm actually I don't know if I can name a specific area. I feel like for the last maybe year and a half I've been going through an overhaul of self, where I've been reevaluating who I am. So yeah.

Jake:

Alcohol preference?

Amanda:

Whatever is going to get me buzzed the quickest.

Chance:

What was your hardest day at work?

Amanda:

Hmm I don't know if I have a specific worst day on the job yet, but I have had patients die on me at the hospital. The most heartbreaking times are when it's some kid's parent. I remember one patient, I think her name was London. Um and yeah she had some sort of autoimmune disease. We knew she was dying. She knew she was dying too. She somehow still maintained this beautiful positive aura about her that just made everyone's day better. And her family was always visiting. She was in the hospital for about three weeks before.. You know. And she always had family there. I got to meet her mom and dad and her sister and a whole conglomeration of cousins. Her wife barely left the hospital at all. She had two beautiful children who were just becoming adults, I think one was 16 and the other was like 19 or 20. They weren't even little kids but they were scared like little kids. One day she went to sleep and didn't wake up and we knew it wouldn't be long before her heart would just stop. She had about fifteen people in the room

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or right outside in the hallway. Her kids were there to say goodbye. When her vitals machine started beeping, we ushered everyone out but her wife refused to leave the room. We tried to resuscitate and then she was pronounced dead. I just remember the look on her kids' faces. One was stone. The younger one looked confused, like he just stopped understanding what was happening. And they were raised so well. When we walked out of the room to break the news and to give them her final heartbeat they looked at us, holding back tears and smiled and thanked all of us for doing our best. I still think about London sometimes and you could tell that everyone lost someone very special that day.

Chance:

What's the last thing you bought?

Amanda:

Paper towels.

Darlene:

What are your thoughts on carrots?

Amanda:

Uhh good I guess?

Jake:

Favorite piece of furniture?

Amanda:

I'm always a sucker for those ottomans that are also for clothes storage.

Jarell:

Are you happy with where you are right now?

Amanda:

Hm. yeah. I'm coasting right now.

Saniyah:

How do you react to your mistakes?

Amanda:

Um, I don't know, I guess. I mean if I know that I did my best and my intentions were in the right place I don't beat myself up too much about anything.

Jarell:

Have you ever had imaginary friends?

Amanda:

Not that I remember.

Jake:

What's your guilty pleasure?

Amanda:

I don't have any. Why should pleasure be guilty?

Chance

Do you think you'll ever get married?

Amanda:

I don't know, maybe? I don't really think about what ifs like that too much. I mean sure getting married would be great but I'm more interested in finding love in whatever way that manifests.

Saniyah:

How has love manifested in your life?

Amanda:

Yeah, well. I'm learning to find love in the small things. The moments where someone thinks specifically of you. A friend of mine's ex texted her about her favorite artist dropping a new album. That ex didn't have to do that at all, but still decided 'hey I know this person really likes this artist and even though we may no longer associate with each other I still want to make sure they see this cause they'll get enjoyment from this thing.' That is love to me. Or like when I was younger my older brother loved to cook and the first Friday of every month he would cook dinner for the family whatever we wanted. This meant he would cook at least four different meals in one day, and would spend hours

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in the kitchen. Mom loved a nice burger so that was usually her choice, and dad would ask for a lamb curry. I had a very specific favorite meal back then red sausages, rice, and french fries smothered in gravy. And he would make himself loaded nachos or sometimes a steak. There's love in that. Or even when someone tags along with you while you're running errands for no other reason than to just keep you company.

Saniyah:

Are you close to your brother?

Amanda:

Not really.

Darlene:

How come?

Amanda:

I don't know, sometimes things just happen that way I guess..

Jarell:

What is the last thing you lost?

Amanda:

One of my slippers. I eventually found it under the couch but I swear I looked in that same spot at least ten times.

Chance:

Do you lose things often?

Amanda:

No. I'm usually pretty organized. But that makes it more frustrating when I do lose something.

Jarell:

Do you know the correct way to make sweet tea?

Amanda

Uhh well I didn't know there was an incorrect way so I guess I'll say no?

Darlene:

What's your least favorite animal?

Amanda:

Whales.

Saniyah:

Why don't you like whales?

Amanda:

I mean I don't have a personal vendetta against whales, they just creep me out.

Jake:

If you could go back in time and change something from your past, what would it be?

Amanda:

In college I was dating some guy who was more into me than I was into him. We went to different schools. Well he asked me to come home with him to meet his family, and I just really didn't want to, so I stood him up and just never talked to him again.

Jarell:

What would you change though?

Amanda:

Yeah, I'd like to think that I'd have a conversation with him and break it off, but sometimes I think I'd probably just go to meet his parents.

Darlene:

How do you want to die?

Amanda:

Hopefully in a way where I won't know it's happening.

Saniyah:

Are you afraid to die?

Amanda:

No, but I don't want to deal with the uncertainty of what might come next.

Jake:

Do you bite your nails?

Amanda:

No.

Chance:

Have you ever stayed up for 48 hours before?

Amanda:

I'm a nurse..

Jake:

If your name wasn't Amanda what would it be?

Amanda:

Storm or Stormy, something like that.

Jarell:

If someone paid you a hundred bucks to wear your clothes inside out would you do it?

Amanda:

i've done it for free accidentally.

Chance:

Do you consider yourself a happy person?

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Amanda:

Um maybe not necessarily happy but I consider myself a balanced person.

Saniyah:

What's something that you've done that you never thought you would do?

Amanda:

Bungee jumping. I did it once because a friend wanted a group of us to go for their birthday. One time was more than enough.

Jake:

Are your parents alive?

Amanda:

My mom is.

Darlene:

What is your least favorite color?

Amanda:

Dark green.

Saniyah:

How often do you go to the gym?

Amanda:

I don't go to the gym.

Jarell:

Alright, that's time.

Act 1 Round 2

When time is up, proceed to Round 3 (starts pg 26)

Jake:

Okay I guess I'll go next.

Saniyah:

I'm doing time this round. Ready, set, start.

Darlene:

What do you do for a living?

Jake:

I work in construction, but aside from that I'm pretty into fitness, I like doing Ironmans and marathons, stuff like that.

Jarell:

How many races do you usually do a year?

Jake:

That depends but I try to do one or two big ones a year and then a bunch of smaller ones too.

Saniyah:

Why did you choose construction?

Jake:

I kind of didn't. When I was old enough to work I got a kind of job, kind of apprenticeship thing in construction and at first that's just how I started to make my own money. I was never too into school and always had bad grades. When it was time for everyone to apply to college I didn't want to and my parents were always busy with my siblings so they didn't really care what happened to me. So I just decided to start working full time.

Amanda:

Do you like it?

Jake:

Yeah it's fine i guess. It's a lot of hard work though. My bills are paid, and I don't want for much. And the upside is that whatever company I work for will pay any expenses if I need to get certified for anything which I can use for other jobs.

Jarell

What's something you never thought you'd see?

Jake

Twenty-five.

Chance:

Why do you like fitness so much?

Jake:

I actually never liked it that much. I liked it when people checked me out. After I started to work construction my body began to change cause of what I was doing. People started to think I was attractive, so then when I found that out I started also working out to really shape my body. And I love when people check me out. It makes me feel good. And since working out does that for me I guess I just jumped in the deep end with it.

Saniyah:

How do you take your coffee?

Jake:

I'm more of an energy drink guy, but if it's around i'll drink it with some cream and sugar I guess.

Jarell:

When did you move away from home?

Jake:

Right after i graduated high school.

Saniyah:

Do you want children one day?

Jake

I don't know. Maybe. Probably not. The idea is nice but I don't want to be a single parent and I'm not really looking for a serious relationship right now. Also I feel like if I bring kids into this world I have a good chance of fucking them up somehow.

Amanda

Are you into guys at all?

Jake

No i'm straight.

Jarell:

What's the last thing you ate?

Jake:

Some fried rice.

Darlene:

What makes you jealous?

Jake:

I don't really think im a jealous person so I really don't know.

Chance:

What satisfies you the most?

Jake:

I like watching those time lapse videos online of someone making a painting or sculpture or something.

Chance:

Are you into art?

Jake:

I don't know, it was never something that I really had much of a knack for.

Saniyah:

Do you feel lonely?

Jake:

Not anymore. I used to. I used to not have anybody close to me and I would beat myself up about it. Its stupid to say but it was always the worst when youre with people and i don't know you just feel a distance there. I don't know. I'm not lonely anymore though.

Amanda:

Do you resent anyone?

Jake

No I don't think so.

Jarell:

What's your favorite ice cream flavor?

Jake

Pistachio.

Jarell

What's your least favorite?

Jake

I had a cherry cordial ice cream once and that shit was fucking terrible.

Darlene:

Who was the last person who you talked on the phone with?

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Jake:

One of those automated voices that always ask about my car's extended warranty. I don't even have a car but I do like to wait until an actual person comes on the line so I can waste their time.

Chance:

Do you believe in true love?

Jake

Yes. But I don't think it's always romantic. And I also don't think that everyone will find a true love.

Jarell:

Do you think you will find your true love?

Jake

Probably not.

Amanda:

Do you bite your nails?

Jake

Ew. No.

Darlene

What can you not leave the house without?

Jake:

Um as long as I have my wallet and my house keys I think I'm good to go.

Saniyah:

How many siblings do you have?

Jake

Two.

Saniyah

Are you close with them?

Jake

No.

Amanda:

Are you close with your parents?

Jake

No.

Jarell

What was your favorite childhood toy?

Jake

Hmm I had this Simon game that I really loved as a kid. It's like this little saucer looking thing that has four colors, green, yellow, red, and blue i think. And the game is really simple. It's just a memorization game where you have to press the colors in whatever order the machine makes and see how far you can get. It was great because it's a game that you can play completely by yourself and if you ever had others to play with you could do that too. It was also just one console that wasn't too big so it was pretty portable too.

Saniyah:

What's your least favorite chore to do?

Jake

I hate raking leaves. I always have. I'm okay with doing just about anything else but I hate that shit. If I ever have to rake leaves again then I'll happily find some kid and pay them to do it.

Amanda

Do you have any pets?

Jake

I've got a couple of fish.

Chance:

What are you going to eat for dinner tonight?

Jake:

Probably one of those frozen lasagnas you get from the store.

Jarell

Do you not cook?

Jake:

I mean not really. I cook every now and then, but I don't really want the hassle of cooking and washing dishes and all of that. And it's time consuming. I'd rather just throw a frozen meal in the oven and not have to think about how I'm going to eat for the next few days. Or get some take out.

Darlene

What's the greatest act of kindness someone has done for you?

Jake

When I was younger I had the label of the 'troubled' kid. One of those kids that the teachers and guidance counselors were wary of, whatever that means. And to be fair I probably did fit the description back then. Well when I was in ninth grade some teacher I guess went to my parents and urged them to put me in therapy. My parents weren't very happy about it, but they did end up getting me a therapist. Therapy turned out to be really great for me. It was nice to have time to tell someone how I felt, what I was going through, my thoughts, ambitions, my insecurities. Someone was finally there who was willing and even excited to listen to me, to my life.

To be noticed and loved in my family was transactional and I didn't have anything to offer in exchange. My sister was always the smart one. When I started therapy she was applying to colleges. My dad would brag to anyone who would listen about how much of a genius she was and that she was so obviously ivy bound. My mom on the other hand was your classic sports parent. She made sure my brother was in swim lessons when he could barely even walk. Her investment paid off; my brother really took to swimming and he just loved it. By the time I went into therapy, he and our mom were busy with his travel team and his training to compete in his first World Junior Championship. My parents' time always went to my siblings. They didn't have time for their last child, the one who barely scraped by in

school and had no athletic ability. The unremarkable one. I didn't have anything to offer up in exchange for being remembered.

That wasn't a problem with my therapist. For one hour every Tuesday there was time set aside for just me. That had never happened before. It was almost unreal. I told her about my dysfunctional family and she empathized with me without saying I should just try harder. She told me that I didn't need to be a genius or a world class athlete. She didn't encourage me to do drama or debate or student government, or to find an internship. She helped me understand that I didn't need to be especially remarkable to be acknowledged. I felt comfortable around her. I knew that when I walked into that office I was safe. I didn't need to be anything that I wasn't. And I needed that. She helped me start to heal.

The problem ended up being the time and space that had to be carved out for the unworthy child. The fact of the matter is that therapy costs money, money that ninth grade me did not have. On top of that, my family's busy schedule could barely accommodate my weekly therapy session. My parents made sure to remind me of these things as often as possible. Every week as they drove me to therapy they would talk to each other in the front seat as if I weren't even there. They would talk about how they didn't have the time to take such an ungrateful child to therapy. They'd question why their valuable energy was being siphoned away from my siblings unfairly because I wanted the spotlight. They made sure that I knew exactly how they felt about me without saying a word to me. After my sessions they would leave me stranded at my therapist's office for hours; they were just entirely too busy to pick me up right away. So I did my homework in the parking lot until they came. At home, I became a source of blame for being such a financial burden. Mom made sure to inform the whole household that the singular reason my brother couldn't get a new pair of goggles or couldn't enter some competition, or couldn't take any extra specialized lessons, was because of all the money each week that was going down the drain all due to my therapy. According to dad, my sister wouldn't be able to visit as many colleges as she wanted and might not be able to take any more extra classes at the community college because all of our money was being sucked up by me. Eventually my siblings started to turn against me. I couldn't handle it. I just wanted it to stop. So after four or five sessions I told my therapist about everything that was happening. I begged her to just tell my parents that I got better. That I didn't need therapy anymore and that I was cured. I had nothing left in me and it was probably more harmful for me to continue therapy than it was to stop it.

And she did. This woman looked at me and listened and believed me. She could have thought I was lying or that therapy was exactly what I needed but she backed me and told my parents that I didn't need any more therapy. I never even got the chance to really thank her, but what she did utterly changed my life. That was and probably will remain the greatest kindness that someone has ever done for me.

Saniyah

What's your favorite dinosaur?

Jake

The spinosaurus.

Jarell

Do you have a preferred mode of transportation?

Jake

Maybe trains? I'd love to ride a bullet train one day.

Chance

Are you afraid of heights?

Jake

No.

Amanda:

How many pillows do you sleep with?

Jake:

Two but kind of one. So there are two pillows on my bed but I only actively use one at a time.

Jarell

Are you religious?

Jake

No. I like the idea of religion and sometimes I wish I was more spiritual. But we weren't raised religious and I never really had a way into it.

Darlene:

Do you believe in god?

Jake

I don't know. Sometimes I really don't want to know. I guess there is something comforting about thinking that there is a higher power watching over us all and protecting us right? But also isn't that terrifying? That some god powered being is just watching over us like I watch my fish swim around. And then what happens when that being gets angry with us and decides to kill us all. I mean hasn't that happened in like every religious text? I think i'd rather exist in a not knowing space rather than believing there is someone or something up there that could just take me out at any moment.

Chance:

Have you ever broken someone's heart?

Jake

Yeah I think so. One of my ex girlfriends. I was with her for almost a year. But recently we realized that we just had different timelines. I think that she was in love with me and I just wasn't there. She wanted us to get serious and move in together and start planning our future together and I just was not ready for that. I didn't want it. I don't want it. We decided to just part ways. It wasn't a drama filled split or anything like that. It was probably as mutual as it could be and she never said anything like it but I think I probably broke their heart. I feel bad about it but I think it was the right move rather than lead her on or something.

Saniyah:

Do you want to get married one day?

Jake

Sure, one day.

Jarell

What's your favorite snack?

Jake

Beef jerky.

Amanda:

What's your favorite type of cheese?

Jake
Gouda.

Chance:
What would be the worst thing to put in a pinata?

Jake
Probably like grenades or something, but more seriously umm. Water I guess? Cause then if the water doesn't melt the paper before someone hits it, someone is going to hit it and then get drenched. It might be a good prank though. Or maybe tootsie rolls.

Darlene:
Have you ever been pranked and hated it?

Jake
Yeah once my dad and mom brought all of us water guns one summer. So me, my brother and my sister were playing with them and then they came out with their own guns. We thought they were just joining the fight but they had filled their water guns with hot water. So eventually that looked like us running away terrified. They thought it was hilarious though.

Saniyah:
What is a movie that holds a big significance for you?

Jake
Weirdly, *The Little Rascals*.

Amanda:
What's something small that you take pride in?

Jake
I don't dress up very often, but when I do I'm always really proud about how well I clean up.

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Jarell

What's a sound that is really satisfying to you?

Jake

I love the sound a bag of chips makes when you open it the first time.

Saniyah:

Okay. and that is time.

Act 1 Round 3

When time is up, proceed to Round 4 (starts pg 36)

Darlene:

Looks like i will go next.

Chance:

And I'm on time this round. Ready, set, begin.

Amanda:

If you could live anywhere, where would you go?

Darlene:

I think I'd like to live somewhere on the coast of Maine. I've always really liked nature and cold weather and Maine is really beautiful in the spring and summer.

Jake:

Do you have a nickname?

Darlene

Not currently, but back in college I wanted to reinvent myself so I went by Lena.

Saniyah:

Why did you feel like you needed to reinvent yourself in college?

Darlene:

Well I wasn't too happy with who I was. I always worked so hard to fit into a specific mold that I think I just wanted to become a new person. Just be a totally different person who wasn't expected to be anyone ya know?

Jarell:

What happened after you graduated?

Darlene:

I went back to being Darlene.

Chance:

Why?

Darlene:

I learned what I needed to as Lena. And, besides, I put a lot of time into being Darlene, I earned that name.

Saniyah:

What do you do for a living?

Darlene:

I'm a manager at a call center.

Jarell:

What's your favorite animal?

Darlene

Probably the sloth.

Jake:

Have you ever broken the law?

Darlene:

Technically yes.

Amanda:

What time do you usually go to bed at night?

Darlene:

Around 10:30 or 11.

Jake:

What's your biggest pet peeve?

Darlene:

People who chew their food really loud. It's disgusting and it freaks me out. Also it's not that hard to just chew your food quietly.

Saniyah:

What do you always go all out for?

Darlene:

Giving gifts. I love to find the perfect gift for someone that just matches them ya know? Something that just screams their name. I've put in a lot of time finding the perfect gift for people before.

Chance:

What's the weirdest food you've ever eaten?

Darlene:

Fish eyeballs.

Chance:

What's a food you thought you wouldn't like but did?

Darlene:

Balut. It tastes just like chicken soup.

Amanda:

Are you a collector of anything?

Darlene:

Not purposely, but I have so many water bottles my partner has banned me from buying anymore.

Jarell:

How long have you and your partner been together?

Darlene

Tate and I have been married for four years and have been together for seven.

Chance:

Are you happy?

Darlene:

Usually.

Jarell:

What motivates you?

Darlene:

Doing fun, meaningful things. I don't know when it happened but I really internalized the phrase 'work hard, play harder.' So I try to work hard and make money so that I can go on vacations or take fun classes and things like that.

Amanda:

What are some cool activities that you have done?

Darlene:

Okay! so i've taken some pottery classes, jewelry making, glass blowing, scuba diving, and a couple of others but those were my favorites. I'm not actually good at any of them though!

Chance:

Has anyone ever thrown a surprise party for you?

Darlene:

No.

Chance:

Would you want someone to?

Darlene:

Hmm. yes I think so, but the fun part for me would be trying to figure it out before the party. Like a little mystery game.

Jake:

Do you have any fun traditions?

Darlene:

Yeah, I love redecorating my house and my yard for the different holidays. I really like decorating for Valentine's day and Halloween.

Chance:

If someone wrote a book about your life what would it be called?

Darlene:

Um hmm. The first thing that comes to mind would be to call it something like 'Pathways: how Darlene Lived and Died.

Saniyah:

Do you think your death will be a big part of your life's story?

Darlene:

Well how couldn't it be? Death might just be the only thing that every person, every living being (and you could even argue non living things too) experiences. I mean it's almost like the grand finale of our life you know. The moment where everything both matters the most and the least ya know?

Amanda:

What does that mean?

Darlene:

Just that how you live your life and every decision you made during it now make up the entirety of your existence once you die. There is no more adding or changing things. In a way, your history is set once you take your last breath.

And I hope to live and die in a way that I'd be considered a strong, respected person who gave love freely, who enjoyed adventures, and who had an impact on someone.

Jarell:

How close do you think you are to solidifying that as your history?

Darlene:

Well I don't know yet. Hopefully I won't be worrying too much about my legacy just yet. And I mean that's the gamble right? Because I could want to be remembered in whatever way, but I won't really know how others will look at me on account of being dead.

Jake:

Do you think anything happens to us after we die?

Darlene:

I don't know, maybe. On paper I'm religious, but I don't know if I'm really sold on the idea of heaven and hell. Maybe nothing happens and that's just it. Or maybe we are stuck in limbo, or maybe even some of us decide to stick around as ghosts for some reason or another. I think I'd like to believe in the idea that all of our souls are being reincarnated into a new body whenever we die. I like the possibility that I might come back as maybe a moth in Victorian England or maybe a cartoon character or just another person two hundred years from now.

Saniyah:

So you think that we would be able to be reincarnated anywhere in time and as anything?

Darlene:

Why not? The whole thing is just a big thought experiment and it's not like we can ask anyone with experience of it so why not?

Chance:

Would you rather die before or after your partner does?

Darlene:

Well that's a hard one. I don't know, either way that's gonna be a really hard time for either of us. But honestly I think that I probably eventually find a new partner if mine dies first and I hope the same would happen vice versa.

Jarell:

Do you know the correct way to make sweet tea?

Darlene:

Well yes, you just make iced tea and when you're serving it, put out sugar and agave for people who want to sweeten theirs.

Amanda:

If you were a US state which would you be?

Darlene:

Probably Virginia only because I like its shape.

Amanda:

If you were a state of matter what would you be?

Darlene:

I think I'd be a gas.

Chance:

Have you ever killed anyone?

Darlene

No, of course not.

Jake:

Do you want kids?

Darlene:

No, never have.

Jarell:

How do you feel about pineapple on pizza?

Darlene:

It's not really my thing, but I understand why people like it.

Amanda:

If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Darlene:

I think French fries.

Saniyah:

Have you ever been in any awkward situations with roommates?

Darlene:

Maybe one or two. One of the first places I rented was a room in someone's apartment after their previous roommate had relocated. The lady who I rented it from was nice enough and we got along well. But for the most part we kind of did our own thing. She did one thing that I hated though. She would never use a dryer for her clothes, so she just just strung up a bunch of clotheslines all over the place and hung everything up. It got old very fast.

Amanda:

What language do you want to learn?

Darlene:

Sign language, ASL.

Chance:

What chore do you hate doing?

Darlene:

OH i hate dusting. I don't know why but it annoys the hell out of me.

Saniyah:

Do you have a go to song or tv show that you like to put on when you want background noise?

Darlene:

Yeah I actually like to put on either children's cartoons or stand up comedy specials. Cause with both of those I can zone in and out and I wouldn't really be missing anything important.

Jarell:

Do you go to sleep with the Tv on?

Darlene:

No, I like everything to be off when I'm about to go to bed.

Chance:

What is your earliest memory?

Darlene:

Huh.. well it's not even a full memory i guess, but i just remember this house with white walls and carpeted floors. There was a couch and a tall shelf right by the couch. And I was playing with something right by the shelf and I ended up knocking something down. And I guess my dad was sitting on the couch cause all I remember is his arm shooting out of nowhere and catching whatever fell before it could fall and break.

Jake:

What makes you feel loved?

Darlene:

I think I feel loved when people remember me. Sometimes I worry that people forget I exist. When someone says something like ' oh me and this other person were talking about the time you did this' or when they say ' hey I was shopping around and I picked this thing up for you' I feel really loved. Just the thought of someone thinking about me when I'm not with them is special to me.

Amanda:

What's your least favorite feeling?

Darlene:

Feeling anxiety. I have dealt with mental health stuff for a while but the thing that is always the most incapacitating for me is when my anxiety gets really bad. I don't even know how to describe it but it just makes me want to crawl into bed and get under the covers and hide from the rest of the world. And then it's just hard because when it gets bad i end up self isolating and canceling a lot of plans, which doesn't actually even help anything. And I don't know, I get worried that even though the people in my life have been really gracious about it, they might not always be so cool about it.

Saniyah:

What's something you think about way too much?

Darlene:

Light bulbs. Specifically when the laws changed about lightbulb requirements and the whole country had to stop using the incandescent bulbs cause they were too expensive to make or used too much energy or something like that. I still like those bulbs better because they were just brighter than the bulbs we had to switch to. I was so upset that I wouldn't be able to have the bulbs I liked that when the law changed, I went to like 7 different stores just to buy up all of their bulbs so I had a store of them for a while.

Chance:

Okay great and that is time.

Act 1 Round 4

When time is up, proceed to Round 5 (starts pg 47)

Chance:

I guess it's my turn now.

Amanda:

I've got time.

Saniyah:

What's your best birthday experience?

Chance:

I actually have never liked birthdays. It's just symbolism of getting a year closer to death right? I don't know, they have just never been a big deal for me.

Jarell:

Are you dating?

Chance:

No.

Jarell:

Is there a reason why you aren't?

Chance:

Not really I guess.

Darlene:

What would be your ideal first date?

Chance:

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Hm something simple probably. Like maybe we could go and get coffee in the morning and then take a walk after. A simple date that's filled with conversation.

Jake:

What's something that makes you angry?

Chance

The fact that I have to wash dishes so often. Adulthood kind of just feels like some endless cycle of washing dishes and buying toilet paper. Actually also the fact that I have to pay extra rent if I want to get a cat in my apartment. Like cats don't have a job and literally sleep all day. Shit is ridiculous.

Darlene

Do you have a cat?

Chance:

No. That shit is still stupid though. I actually kind of hate cats now. A roommate in college had one and the thing terrorized me for months before I finally moved out. The worst part of it all was that thing was a flea magnet so even now I'm a little wary every time I see any small bugs.

Saniyah:

What's your favorite Ice cream flavor?

Chance

Well my go to is always pecans and pralines but lately i've been really into this fancy rosemary lemon shortbread ice cream so that's been good.

Jarell

Do you always eat fancy ice cream?

Chance

Kind of? I'm a baker so I like to try a bunch of different flavors of desserts.

Amanda

What is your favorite meal to eat?

Chance

I'm a huge fan of breakfast food so like pancakes, waffles, bacon, eggs. Things like that.

Saniyah

Do you prefer pancakes or waffles?

Chance

Oh definitely waffles.

Jake:

What do you want to be the crowning achievement of your life?

Chance:

I think it would be having a successful bakery. Food has always been a big thing for me. And I think making food, especially baking is probably the most common way I show love. So I kinda like the idea that during these big events like birthdays, weddings, baby showers, or even funerals that even though I may not know the people who hired me to make their cake or whatever, I'm still there giving them love and being a part of their experience.

Darlene:

What is something that instantly annoys you?

Chance

Those slow walkers who you always end up walking behind when you're in a rush.

Jarell

If you were losing one of your senses and you could choose which one, which would it be?

Chance

I think it would kill me to lose any of my senses but I think the only one I'd be able to bear losing might be my hearing. If I had to lose something though in real life I'd probably hope to only lose the ability to speak.

Amanda

What's something that freaks you out?

Chance

Bugs. ugh. Bugs. spiders really freak me out. The fucking idea that one could be crawling on me at any point is scary as fuck. One of my worst fears is that I'm going to wake up in the middle of the night in a dead sweat or something with a spider crawling out of my mouth. Even if it isn't true that we swallow eight spiders a year or that we are never even more than six feet away from a spider. That shit makes me gag. I was at a sleepover when i was young and they really wanted to watch this scary movie and part of it is just kinda burned into my mind of these roaches coming out of faucets and drains and shit and they like swarmed this house or apartment or something and ate the people inside and it just made me want to puke. To this day I still have nightmares about that. Yeah they're the fucking worst.

Saniyah:

Are your parents alive?

Chance

No.

Jake:

Have you ever thought of having children?

Chance

I've thought about it, yes. But I don't really think I want children. Nothing about raising children has ever been appealing to me and I'm not gonna just bring some kid into the world and not take care of it. I would maybe reconsider if I was with a partner who really wanted kids, but still the idea of signing my life away for the next 20 years makes me kind of sick. I read this book where a father was talking to his adult kids and was saying something along the lines of While I love all of you and would give my life for you, I never wanted to be a parent and I didnt like being one and I'm glad that that part of my life is essentially finished. He didn't say those exact words of course but the thing is even being a grown up, hearing that from a parent probably isn't the easiest thing to take and I'd hate to be in that position and put my theoretical children in that position as well.

Amanda

What's your favorite color?

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Chance
Emerald.

Darlene:

If a genie popped up out of nowhere right now, what would be the first thing that you would wish for?

Chance;

Oh! Okay. so I would probably be trying to think really practically cause I know that genies like to trick people into making bad wishes. I think the first wish would be wisdom enough to make wishes in the way where I'd actually get what I wanted. Then maybe for the other two it seems fair if one is a personal wish for myself and the other is like an end world hunger type of one.

Jarell

Do you know the correct way to make sweet tea?

Chance

I don't really drink too much tea so no.

Amanda:

Do you like board games?

Chance

I do actually! Yeah there is something about the physicalness or tangibility or something about the feeling of a board game. My favorite board game is weirdly monopoly, but not too many people ever want to play it with me cause it just takes such a long time to finish a game. I also really like card games though.

Jake:

Do you not consider Card games board games?

Chance

No Not really. I think of board games as a specific thing. Then, in their own categories are like card games, video games, and puzzles I guess.

Saniyah:

What does your morning routine look like?

Chance:

I don't really have one. I'll wake up and wash my face and brush my teeth and then put on clothes. Sometimes I'll grab a shower if I need one but yeah nothing much there.

Jarell

How do you feel about thrill rides?

Chance

Oh you mean like roller coasters and shit? They're okay. Some roller coasters I probably just won't get on. It's not like I go to amusement parks that much anyways so-- but hmm yeah those roller coasters where your feet are just dangling under you freak me out, so I definitely stay away from those. Other ones are pretty okay I guess.

Jarell

Would you call cereal a soup?

Chance

What? No. soup is hot cereal is cold.

Darlene

If you could say something to your younger self what would it be?

Chance

Uhhh I'd probably tell him that he doesn't need to rush through life.

Amanda:

What is your blood type?

Chance

AB.

Saniyah

What's the sickest you've ever been?

Chance

I was a pretty sick kid. I guess I had a weakened immune system or something cause I always had something. I was also allergic to a bunch of things so there's that too. I grew out of it mostly though.

Darlene

What is a quality that you hope to have?

Chance

I'd like to be someone who is really good at seeing all sides of a situation. Kind of like being able to put myself in other people's shoes. Yeah I think it's a really good quality to have when you're making decisions or you just want to make sure that you have many perspectives on things.

Jarell

When was the last time you were really scared?

Chance

Last summer late one night I was watching Tv before bed. And then suddenly I hear all of this banging noise coming from outside and all over the roof. And I had no idea what it was but it was very loud and super jarring. And I remember thinking oh my god are we getting bombed right now? Do I need to go hide in my bathtub or something? Like what is happening right now? Yeah for a good ten minutes I was terrified.

Jake

So what was it, what happened?

Chance:

Oh it was one of those flash thunderstorm hailstorms.

Amanda:

What is your favorite article of clothing?

Chance

I like a nice pair of tailored dress pants.

Jake:

How do you decorate your house?

Chance:

Hm. I don't think too much about decorations and it's not like too many people come to my house. So I have like a poster of some band and a couple of pictures but I guess other people would call it bare.

Saniyah

What deadly sin would you be?

Chance:

Maybe Sloth.

Amanda

What do you want your last words to be?

Chance

I don't know. Hopefully I won't have any cause I'll die in my sleep.

Jarell:

What do you think is the worst way to die?

Chance

Aside from like torture or something I think drowning.

Amanda:

What kids movie has always stuck with you?

Chance

I don't think I remember the name of it but I don't know, it was this movie where some kids were riding around on like a bug or something? Yeah it was an ant. And then there was this huge ass fight with I think a scorpion for some

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reason? Anyway I remember the ant sacrificing itself to save the kids from the scorpion and i just felt so devastated when the ant died which is weird cause fuck bugs.

Darlene:

What is the last thing you do before going to bed at night?

Chance

Pee.

Jake

What's the first thing you do after you wake up?

Chance

Pee.

Jarell

What's your favorite type of cheese?

Chance

Sharp cheddar.

Amanda

What job would you hate to do?

Chance

Probably like a live-in nanny or babysitter, something like that.

Jake:

What is the most important object you own?

Chance

Actually objects are really sentimental things for me. I still have my first baby blanket. I keep all of my concert tickets and stuff. Shirts, gifts, little trinkets, all of that stuff. I think the most important things that I have are the postcards people have sent me over the years.

Amanda

What's the worst outfit you ever wore?

Chance

Oh gosh. I went to this ABC costume party once and-- that's a party where you are supposed to wear anything but clothes as the costume-- and I decided to just cover my body in like feathers. Yeah i don't know it just looked really stupid and at the end of the night the feathers started just falling off and well a couple of people got accidentally flashed that night.

Jarell

Would you call yourself a spontaneous person?

Chance

I don't think so but I would consider myself a committed sort of person. Like I maybe wont go to Paris suddenly but if I want to do something I'll put it on my list and make sure that I commit myself to doing whatever that thing is.

Darlene:

Do you have a favorite saying?

Chance

Yes! Shit balls, spit fire.

Saniyah

Where does that come from?

Chance

I don't know, I heard a waitress say it once.

Saniyah:

Uh yeah and that is time.

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Act 1 Round 5

When time is up, proceed to Round 6 (starts pg 59)

Jarell

I'll go.

Darlene

I'm on time this round.... And Go.

Jake

Are you currently in romantic love with anyone?

Jarell

Kinda. I have an ex-girlfriend that I am madly in love with still. Actually uh we broke up over a year ago.

Amanda:

Does she know that you're still in love with her?

Jarell

Ooh uh. I don't think she does and I desperately want to reach out to her and shoot my shot one last time but I also—
I feel like it would be wrong of me to do so?

Darlene:

What's your worst first date?

Jarell

Uhh a random hook up that I guess I shouldn't actually call a first date but yeah that I guess?

Chance:

If you were a plant what would you be?

Jarell:

Maybe a cactus. I like that they are all prickly and I've always had the fantasy of chopping one of them open and drinking water out of it like in one of those westerns.

Saniyah:

How do you take your coffee?

Jarell

When I was younger I used to like go straight black, now I like it a little bit sweeter so I pour in a bunch of sugar. I don't really do milk though unless it's almond.

Darlene

How do you feel about Oat Milk?

Jarell

I don't know, I never really got into it.

Amanda:

What's the story of your first kiss?

Jarell

Um yeah I was at a party in college, so I was like 20. No, I was 19. So I was 19 at this party in college and I actually kissed a girl who ended up becoming my girlfriend later. I also randomly kissed my best friend that night too and now me and him have a running joke that one day we'll end up together so yeah.

Jake

What is your biggest regret?

Jarell

Uh I don't know, maybe I don't really have any regrets right now. I think I'm happy with where my life is right now. I think I've ended up in the right place and surrounded by the right people so right now I don't think there's anything for me to regret. I think at different points in my life though I've definitely had different sorts of regrets.

Saniyah

What do you mean by different sorts of regrets?

Jarell

Oh I don't really know. I guess I kind of look back at my life as if it was a book series or a TV series. Something like that. So I feel like at this current chapter I don't really have any regrets right now—it's probably more even just like a new book like I just finished book one of the series and now I'm done. so since I'm at the beginning of this new book I don't really have any regrets. I feel like in the previous book though every different chapter came with its own list of regrets and yeah I mean I feel like at one point my biggest regret maybe at some point was me choosing the wrong college to go to or regretting not being as extroverted or even the hobbies I had or the lack of hobbies. So yeah I guess I'm hoping that at least this chapter of this new book stays kind of regret free.

Darlene:

What would be the names of these two book, the one you just finished and the one you just started?

Jarell

Hmm well I think the first would be called 'The Road to Endurance or Jarell', and maybe this current one would be called ' Jarell Start or Stay Truthful And Remain Thoughtful' I also kind of have a thing for 'or' titles.

Chance

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Jarell

I hope to grow up to be a thoughtful person. Someone who's kind to people even if I'm not always nice to them.

Amanda

Do you think you're a mean person?

Jarell

No. Not necessarily. I'm a black man who speaks his mind so to some people that reads as really mean.

Saniyah

What is your proudest moment?

Jarell

I think in hindsight it's not the hugest thing but it's still really big to me. So this was years ago when I was graduating from my undergrad. You know how sometimes they will have school specific awards right? Well I received the school's mascot medal. It actually doesn't mean that much, but it's only given to like two students a year and I don't know but when I got it it felt like people believed in me and for the first time like I had this community that was supporting me.

Darlene

Who was a mentor of yours and what did they teach you?

Jarell

I haven't really had the chance to call too many people mentor. Um. I had a chance to do a week long job shadow once and that was pretty big for me cause I was shadowing this queer black guy and just being able to talk with and learn from someone who had experiences close to mine for the first in my life was really cool.

Jake

What's the issue you're most working on in yourself right now?

Jarell

Ugh. gosh. Okay. I'm so lonely. It sounds stupid to even say it but yeah I'm so lonely. But I also just hate people. Um so I really want to be in a romantic relationship but I hate people. And I'm also really awkward so like I don't even know how to start that process. You know, I don't know how to be like 'hey let's start talking so we can eventually start dating' or whatever and it's something that I'm really— I'm tired of being single I guess. And then the whole fact of being with anyone having to have the conversation about sex and my own asexuality and what that may mean for us slash the relationship. Ugh. It's a lot and something I'm still trying to work through myself so bringing a partner into that mess seems like a bad idea and yeah. So I guess that.

Chance

How do you feel about love bots?

Jarell

Eh. To each their own I guess. If I was rich I'd probably have one just to say I had one.

Saniyah

Do you know the right way to make sweet tea?

Jarell

Of course. You take your black tea and boil it on the stove. While it's doing that you add the sugar while the waters hot so it dissolves into everything. And it should be sweet. Not lightly sweetened or anything like that, this isn't a health drink it should be SWEET. After it's done on the stove, put it in the fridge until it's cold.

Amanda

Do you know how to play spades?

Jarell

Mhm.

Amanda

Will you teach me how to play spades?

Jarell

Nope.

Darlene

Do you believe in aliens?

Jarell

Yes but I kind of hope I never experience them. I'm kinda terrified of aliens coming to take over the planet or something.

Jake

What's something that you've worked really hard to become good at?

Jarell

Being with myself. I'm a natural loner. And I'm not always very kind to myself. So it used to be that being alone was almost torture for me combined with the fact but I am just about always alone. So I had to learn and work with myself and figure out how am I able to exist with myself. And sometimes it's still painful. But I have learned how to

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sit with myself and just be. I've learned how to not judge myself for how I make my way through the world and I've learned how to start to let myself win which I haven't always done. I hadn't been told anything positive about myself for the majority of my life so now it has just been a process of I'm learning and I'm learning and figuring out how not to be so critical and harsh on myself. And I'm proud of myself because I look at who I am now and I can tell that some good—hard, but really important work has been done and that right now I have more to do still but..yeah.

Amanda:

What's your favorite animal?

Jarell:

The Jellyfish.

Darlene

When do you think you'll know you've found the one?

Jarell

Well I think that I'll know that when I can be comfortable enough to be fully myself around them. Like one of the things that I guess is a habit of mine is that before I take a shower I turn on my music and I just dance around my apartment totally naked and that's a really fun little happy thing that I've developed and if I feel comfortable enough with someone that I can do that with them around then that's probably a good sign.

Chance

Do you think you'll ever find one?

Jarell

Oh I really hope so. I don't think so but I really do hope so. I don't know, when I think of relationships and romantic partners and all of that stuff, it— I don't know I always think of an eventual conversation I'm gonna have to have with this partner about my sexuality or lack of it. I don't know like how do you tell somebody that oh I am asexual in that while I have sex and will have sex or whatever um I'll also go long stretches of time not wanting to have sex and even being sex repulsed. Yeah I don't know I think I just learned or associate romantic relationships with having sex inside that relationship so the thought of having now to approach the person I'm with and say oh hi don't always wanna have sex or maybe won't wanna have sex for a while and it's not on you or anything like that. but that is something that I have to deal with and I'm still coming to terms with and it's hard. And then I think about the fact that this other

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person might have a really high sex drive or even just a regular sex drive and I will not be able to satisfy them and yeah I don't-- I don't know.

Saniyah

What would someone have to do to convince you that the rapture will happen tomorrow?

Jarell

Wait until tomorrow.

Amanda

If you could time travel where or when would you go?

Jarell

Um I'd probably stay in the present.

Saniyah

What is one of your pet peeves?

Jarell

It's so small, but when someone hands me the blunt lit part first.

Jake:

What's your least favorite scent?

Jarell

The smell of cut grass.

Chance

What's something that a lot of people love but you never got behind?

Jarell:

Picnics. They are really just not fun or romantic or anything like that to me. Like I don't want to sit on the ground for hours with bugs crawling on me and my food. It's just an experience that feels not worth the work put in.

Amanda:

What's your favorite food?

Jarell

I love love love a big slice of cake.

Jake

How do you feel about amusement parks?

Jarell

I like them for the most part. There are usually a bit too many people for me but I like going on roller coasters and eating funnel cakes and stuff.

Saniyah

Do you usually not like being around a lot of people?

Jarell:

Uhh no not really. I don't mind being around people for a little bit but I am definitely more of a homebody. I'm also protective of the energy that I'm around and I don't want to be around people that might mess that up.

Amanda

How do you want to die?

Jarell

I think it would probably be really cool to die after hitting 100. Hopefully it would be peaceful like I'd be asleep or at least surrounded by my family.

Jake

Do you think that dying in your sleep would be peaceful?

Jarell

Yeah I hope so. Or at least painless.

Darlene

What's the last thing you ate?

Jarell

Chicken nuggets.

Saniyah

Are you scared of dying?

Jarell

No. Not anymore at least. I used to be really scared of just the idea of life leaving someone's body and the body I don't know, becoming cold. Lately I've really fallen in love with the idea of ancestors though and that all of my ancestors are still with me in a way pushing me forward and supporting me. It feels safe in a way that I don't think I've ever felt in this world. Like I have this amazing force watching my back. I think the idea of me dying and becoming an ancestor to support and push forward my people is really beautiful and makes dying a lot less of a thing to fear for me.

Amanda

Do you really want to live until 100?

Jarell

I don't know, maybe. As long as I'm not terminally ill and suffering for the last decade of my life or something. But yeah I don't know. I think there might be something cool or even profound looking back on the life I would have experienced in 100 plus years of life. Like maybe it would give me some unique perspective when I'm on my deathbed. I think it might also be interesting to see what kind of legacy I would be leaving behind at that point assuming I leave a legacy at all. Also I think it's kinda badass to say that you've been alive for a century.

Chance

What kind of person are you?

Jarell

Huh. I think I'm a person who tries to be ruled by my own morals or principles. I try to be. I want to be both compassionate and no-nonsense. I want to be fiercely loyal to the people I care for. I want to live with integrity. I want to be radically truthful and also not be unnecessarily hurtful. I want to stand up and fight for people who are typically forgotten, I want to be kind. But I don't want that taken advantage of.

Jake

Do you think that you are often taken advantage of?

Jarell

I don't fucking know.

Amanda

Do you think there is a difference between being kind and being nice?

Jarell

Yeah. I mean I aspire to be kind and not nice for a reason. I've never even been considered nice. And I don't think it's something I want to be anyway. Niceness just feels performative to me you know? Like surface level. And I don't know, I feel like I have to perform niceness around white people cause otherwise I'm just the aggressive black. And it's not even like I mean it just- I don't know whatever. I do want to be kind. That feels like a core quality that someone is, and not something manufactured.

Darlene

Do you think you would be more of a superhero or villain?

Jarell

Neither. I would probably want to be a figure that is more hero adjacent. Like when needed I'd ally myself with the heroes but I'd more likely walk my own path. Cause I don't know, some of those heroes be doing some shady shit that makes me think they should have been villains anyway.

Saniyah

What do you think is a really good thing your parents did for you?

Jarell

Well it was just my mom. But she made sure that her children would not be taken away from her for any reason. When I was growing up one big way that kids would hang out is that they'd just go to the mall and walk around for a couple hours. My mom hated that. I was never allowed to go because that would have been me looking for trouble to find me. We had a bunch of rules in my house and a bunch of things we couldn't do which I think looking back was her way of making sure the cops or anyone else wouldn't take us away. When I was in 6th grade I took the bus to school

every morning. And there was another family with like three kids whose house was right in front of the bus stop. So I eventually made friends with the kids and I ended up looking forward to the wait at the bus stop. One day it was raining really hard out of nowhere and nobody expected it. So I'm sitting at this bus stop in the pouring rain with only my hoodie as cover and the family decided to just take their kids to school and they were so nice and offered to take me as well. But I couldn't. I knew my mother would have killed me if I got in that car. So I just waited for the bus to come in the pouring rain. And spent most of the school day damp all over cause I just knew I wasn't supposed to get in that car. When I got home I told my mom about it and she told me I did the right thing but see I always thought that it was super excessive and that I could have gotten a ride from the nice neighbors and not had a miserable day at school but I can at least credit my mother with doing what she thought was best for me.

Chance

Are you and your mother close?

Jarell

Not super close, but we talk every now and then, I'll maybe visit home once a year.

Amanda

How come you only visit home once a year?

Jarell

Well it's not like I live close to home so that makes going back just a big hassle. Also I don't know, I don't have any bad blood with anyone or where I grew up or anything like that but eh I also went through a lot as a kid and distancing myself from the place where it all happened has helped. I think actually since I spend so little time in my hometown, I'm more fond of it.

Jake

What's your favorite color?

Jarell

I actually don't have a favorite color.

Saniyah

How often do you listen to music?

Hot Seat

Jarell

All the time. I love just putting in headphones and relaxing.

Darlene

Time is up!

Act 1 Round 6

When time is up, proceed to Intermission (pg 70)

Saniyah

My turn now.

Jake

I can be on time this round.. And start.

Chance

Who is somebody you wish you could get back in contact with?

Saniyah

Umm. I don't think there's anyone I want to— oh wait, yeah I guess so. When I was in first grade I had this friend named Peter and we were close for first graders. Yeah, I wonder how he's doing.

Darlene

What is a strange habit you have?

Saniyah

Um I don't think I have any strange habits. I mean who calls their own things strange? It's just I don't know. I'm not going to judge someone or myself for doing what they have to do to get through life you know?

Jake

Who is your emergency contact?

Saniyah

My friend Jackie.

Amanda

Why aren't your parents an emergency contact?

Saniyah

Because Jackie makes more sense. She's a good friend who lives close to me and my parents don't. Also, my parents are not good in emergency situations.

Jarell

What is one of your pet peeves?

Saniyah

People who don't realize their trauma so they project it onto other people.

Darlene

What do you procrastinate about the worst?

Saniyah

I'm not too big of a procrastinator usually, but whenever I get any type of due date I automatically wait until the last minute to get whatever it is done. I don't know I like doing things at my own pace and due dates just mess that up for me.

Chance

What do you like to do when it rains?

Saniyah

Go inside and nap all day. Or if I have a porch, sit outside and listen.

Jake

If you had to pick a word to describe your year so far what would it be?

Saniyah

Widdershins.

Amanda

What is a skill you have that you no longer use?

Saniyah

Writing in cursive, also reading maps.

Jarell

Would you consider yourself a decisive person or indecisive?

Saniyah

I'm definitely a decisive person but sometimes I like to be able to just not make decisions.

Amanda

When was the last time you just sat in a moment and just felt happy?

Saniyah

A couple of weeks ago with my now ex. He was on a group call with a couple of his friends from high school and they were you know, chatting and watching movies together and I was just doing my own thing, listening to music on my headphones and doing whatever. And yeah it was just really nice to share space with someone you care about while you're both being your own people you know.

Jake

When did y'all break up?

Saniyah

Like a week and a half ago.

Amanda

Why?

Saniyah

That's a good question. We had been dating for a couple of months but I think it really just came down to us not communicating effectively with each other and both of us not putting in the care or effort enough to listen to each other and fix the problem.

Hot Seat

Chance

If y'all had fixed that problem do you think that it would have become a serious long term relationship?

Saniyah

I don't know. Maybe. But also if we didn't care to work on it enough for the last problem, who's to say that we would on future problems. And another deal breaker with him was that I get hot really easily and he gets cold really easy so we never figured out a good temperature for the house for us. And that still being a deal breaker for me tells me that the relationship ended at just about the right time.

Darlene

Do you date women?

Saniyah

Yeah. I date people of all genders.

Chance

Do you think that money can buy happiness?

Saniyah

Well I don't think money can literally buy happiness. But it can buy security. It can buy comfort. It can make life infinitely easier to live. So I don't think money buys happiness per-se but money can buy all the ingredients on the pathway to happiness.

Jarell

What is your favorite dessert?

Saniyah

Cheesecake.

Jake

A certain kind of cheesecake or just any one?

Saniyah

Any one I think. I've yet to have a cheesecake I didn't like.

Darlene

When's the last time you had sex?

Saniyah

Yesterday.

Chance

Are you in therapy right now?

Saniyah

No.

Chance

Do you want to be?

Saniyah

Yes.

Darlene

Why aren't you?

Saniyah

Finances.

Amanda

If you could live anywhere where would you?

Saniyah

Berlin, I have a fantasy of living out my Bowie years in Berlin but long term I think somewhere warm and probably near water.

Hot Seat

Darlene

Do you live alone?

Saniyah

Yes.

Jake

Do you gamble?

Saniyah

No. I would never gamble with my money.

Chance

What's the last thing you bought?

Saniyah

Food.

Darlene

Do you cook often?

Saniyah

Sometimes. I love the process of cooking, and I love sharing food with others but cooking for myself just feels like a chore so when it's just for me I'll usually order something from somewhere.

Amanda

What's the last thing you decided against buying?

Saniyah

A concert ticket.

Jarell

Where would you take someone if you were trying to impress them?

Saniyah

Maybe like a rooftop bar or something like that, I think the idea of a rooftop date is really cool.

Darlene:

What was the last thing that you broke?

Saniyah

A cup. I was on the couch with it but I was falling asleep and it fell out of my hand.

Jake

What does your dream home look like?

Saniyah

I think for me that has changed a lot throughout my life. Right now I'd love to buy a home that has like three bedrooms so I have my room, a home office, and maybe a guest room. I don't really think it even matters because I doubt I'll be able to buy a house anytime soon.

Amanda

Where do you think is the most worthwhile place to find meaning in life?

Saniyah

In the relationships we make and keep. I would say they are the cornerstone of our humanity.

Chance

Have you visited anywhere that was better than you expected?

Saniyah

Yeah I visited a really cool library once. It was like six stories and had a garden on the roof and really nice workspaces. And a small thing that I really liked was that you could self check out books and you could just put like ten of them on the scanner and it would just get them all and yeah it was really cool. I hadn't been in a physical library for a while before then and I was expecting six floors of book shelves so it was a cool surprise.

Darlene

How does your memory work?

Saniyah

I think my memory is very timeline based. I Guess it's like I don't necessarily focus on the people involved and the emotions from the time aren't really present either. For me It's more of an 'oh this thing happened this many years ago', or 'I was this old when this thing happened for the first time'. So yeah I think it's more of the when and where for me.

Jarell:

So do you no longer feel emotion when you remember the past?

Saniyah

Not really, no. Which is of course a little weird for me cause recalling things is almost just factual for me. So I try more to remember the emotion that I felt since I don't really feel it. But that's hard I guess on both ends of the spectrum of having both really good and really traumatic experiences you know. So if I'm remembering a really bad experience it's more like Oh I remember feeling hurt and angry maybe, but mostly it'll be something like oh this experience happened last summer and It was just really not a good time. Yeah I just feel no real attachment emotionally to memory which sometimes makes me feel uhh weird I guess about it.

Amanda

Would you generally consider yourself an emotional person?

Saniyah

Not anymore. I think I used to be more influenced by emotion when I was younger but I think I'm in a much more mellow place currently.

Chance

Do you think that something externally changed that allowed you to become more mellow?

Saniyah

Yeah I think so. I used to live in a place and work in environments that I think looking back are just pressure cookers that put everyone on edge, stresses everyone out and just becomes a really unhealthy environment. Leaving those situations combined with intentionally doing a lot of self work has definitely changed me a lot.

Darlene

What were those situations that you left?

Saniyah

Hmm Actually I prefer not to say.

Jarell

What do you do for work?

Saniyah

I'm a biologist.

Jake

What do you find disgusting that other people love?

Saniyah

Newborns. They aren't disgusting, but they are definitely not cute. They literally look like little aliens. I think babies get cute after about four or five months but before then... keep those things away from me.

Jarell

Is there a food that you just refuse to eat?

Saniyah

Yeah, liver.

Amanda

Do you like trying new things?

Saniyah

Yeah but usually with people. I like to try new things at least once with other people before I do it by myself.

Jake

Do you like waking up early and watching the sun rise?

Saniyah

Sure, in theory. But I try not to be awake before the sun if I can help it at all.

Jarell

What does it take for you to cut someone out of your life?

Saniyah

Hmm I'm more of a 'the straw that breaks the camel's back' type of person. Like I think most things don't bother me too much for me to cut someone off but I do start to notice patterns in the ways people treat me and if there are multiple problems or whatevers that keep happening eventually one thing that wouldn't normally make me cut off a person will be the final strike.

Darlene

Did you have pets growing up?

Saniyah

Yeah I had a box turtle for a bit. His name was Skippy.

Chance

If you have children will you let them have pets?

Saniyah

Yeah. for better or worse, I think pets serve as good educational and maturation lessons for kids. So In a perfect world I'd get either a puppy or a kitten right before or right after my first child is born so that by the time they are in highschool it will most likely die. It may sound morbid but I'd rather my child or children learn about and how to cope with death by experiencing the family pet dying than their first experience being my death or some other important person in their life. Also, Ideally, when my child or children are teenagers i'd probably let them get a pet that is solely theirs. Totally their own responsibility so they learn the importance of taking care of something other than themselves.

Chance

What do you buy every time you go to the grocery store?

Saniyah

Hot Seat

Some sort of drink usually.

Darlene

What smells bring about good memories for you?

Saniyah

The smell of cooking bacon, or maybe the smell of slow cooker meals. It brings me back to when we used to have family meals.

Jake

Time is up. That's the game..

Intermission

Note: Intermission is probably a good time to separate the audience into groups for the second act.

Act 2

There is no written text for this act, this is where it gets immersive.

In this act the audience becomes participants in the game and each member should take a turn.

Group up the audience in groups of six people (or the size that makes sense for that production) and play the game.

The production should decide how to split up the audience in a way that is most efficient. I would suggest putting some indicator of what group people will be in for the second act on the tickets.

The fact that the audience will be playing Hot Seat should not blindside anyone, maybe an announcement can be made beforehand, or in the program, or when people go to get tickets, or something like that.

7 minute rounds, everyone should take a turn. Audience can pass on any question they don't want to answer for any reason.

I think the production should either give each group a timer or time all of the groups together.

You have not experienced the full play if you have not experienced Act 2.

If reading the play, it is suggested that the reader find 2+ other people in which to play Hot Seat to experience the full play.

END OF PLAY