

## POTUS Sides

### Act 1.1 (Harriet, Jean)

Page 1 – Harriet: Top of scene thru Page 3 – Harriet: “He was standing, so the diplomats felt like it would be rude to sit, so they were all standing, they were all standing in front of her, blocking his view and she was sitting”.

### Act 1.1 (Jean)

Page 6 – Jean: (monologue) “WANT to know?” thru “Or is everything *fine*?”.

### Act 1.2 (Stephanie, Harriet, Margaret)

Page 8 – Margaret: “What do *you* think, Stephanie? You think this was *my* idea....” thru Page 10 – Margaret: “He wants to PARDON/BERNADETTE?”.

### Act 1.4 (Stephanie, Dusty)

Page 16 – Stephanie: Top of scene thru Page 18 – “They’re *all* intense here, *everyone’s* intense here!”.

### Act 1.6 (Chris, Margaret)

Page 26 – Chris: “How do you decompress after a long day?” thru Page 27 – Chris: “I would if I wasn’t still paying off the hospital bills for my C-section. Speaking of cunt”.

### Act 1.6 (Bernadette, Jean, Dusty)

Page 30- Bernadette: “SURPRISE! Jeanie, baby, how are you!....” thru Page 32 Dusty: “Awww.”

### Act 1.6 (Dusty)

Page 40 – Dusty – the rap.

### Act 2.1 (Chris)

Page 52 – Chris: (monologue) “DON’T. YOU. DARE”. thru “but don’t think for one second I am marching to that stake by myself!”.

**Bring Bitch Beats music and have Dusty, Stephanie and others dance.**

Harriet, Jean

ACT I

1.1

START  
└─┘

(HARRIET vs. JEAN.)

HARRIET. Cunt.

;

JEAN. What?

HARRIET. Cunt.

JEAN. No.

HARRIET. It's not a question.

JEAN. No.

HARRIET. It's not a yes or no question.

JEAN. Publicly?

HARRIET. Yes.

JEAN. No.

HARRIET. Please stop saying no.

JEAN. How public? Who exactly was there?

HARRIET. *Washington Post*.

JEAN. Well

HARRIET. *Huffington Post*.

JEAN. They're hardly

HARRIET. CNN.

JEAN. Okay

HARRIET. *New York Times*, BBC, and three Chinese diplomats.

JEAN. The ones who speak English?

HARRIET. They all speak English.

JEAN. I think there was one last year who struggled with idioms, you know, like, slang, so it might have gone over / his head

HARRIET. Everyone heard it, everyone got it, two people *gasp*

JEAN. No.

HARRIET. *These are not questions, Jean, stop saying no.*

JEAN. He said the words, "My wife's a cunt?"

;

HARRIET. He said, "Please excuse my wife's absence. She's having a cunt morning."

;

JEAN. Well that's not so bad

HARRIET. Wow

JEAN. It's not! We can contain that. We all have cunt mornings sometimes. My son has them every week. You're clearly having one today

HARRIET. She was in the room.

JEAN. What?

HARRIET. Margaret wasn't absent, she was in the room. She entered late but she had been there for ten minutes when he

JEAN. Called her absent.

HARRIET. And a cunt.

JEAN. Cunt-y.

HARRIET. If this is you workshopping your response to the press right now

JEAN. I'm just processing, I'm trying to – Why didn't he see her?

HARRIET. She was sitting.

JEAN. And therefore invisible?

HARRIET. He was standing, so the diplomats felt like it would be rude to sit, so they were all standing, they were all standing in front of her, blocking his view and she was sitting.

END

JEAN. He stood for the entirety of the meeting?

HARRIET. He can't sit right now because of / the thing on his

JEAN. The thing on his – right.

I thought they were removing it.

HARRIET. Well they couldn't remove it last week because of the / shit with Israel

JEAN. Shit with Israel

HARRIET. And there was talk of doing it today but he got booked up: nine a.m. briefing, ten a.m. China, non-proliferation discussions in an hour

JEAN. Okay, but then

HARRIET. Two p.m. Leslie Hopper endorsement

JEAN. Okay, but afterwards

HARRIET. Three p.m. handshakes with the Jacobson twins

JEAN. Can't we reschedule them?

HARRIET. The two veterans who were blinded and maimed while saving their units in Iraq? I'm gonna say no



~~JEAN. Why would she know that?~~

~~HARRIET. Because it's HIM and it's HER and it's their weird marriage with all their weird "arrangements"!~~

~~JEAN. Well she and I don't have an "arrangement," so I can't just go up to the First Lady and ask if her husband is getting into rough ass play with some other~~

~~HARRIET. I'm just saying if you want to know~~

START

JEAN. WANT to know? I don't WANT to know. In the last three years, I've had to bail on seven first dates and my sister's mastectomy just to spin shit I don't WANT TO KNOW.

And right now I'm trying to figure out if my biggest problem today will be explaining why the President of the United States used the word "cunty" to describe his wife to three diplomats - OR if there is still something MORE awful involving ASS PLAY that I need to know about!

END

IS there, Harriet? Is this day about to become an oozing pustule on the anus of my week?

Or is everything *fine*?

STEPHANIE,  
HARRIET, MARGARET

STEPHANIE. Okay

MARGARET. (*Bitterly.*) Because apparently these days it's not enough to be wildly accomplished and deeply effective

STEPHANIE. Ohh is this about the

MARGARET. I've launched free lunch programs in 6,000 public schools but all the tweens can meme about are the stilettos I wore to one homeless shelter

STEPHANIE. Is that why you're wearing

START

MARGARET. (*Scathingly.*) What do *you* think, Stephanie? You think this was *my* idea? You think when I gave my speech as Valedictorian I said, "One day I will walk the halls of the White House in shoes that can double as flotation devices"? No! But there are children to feed, funds to raise, and *Time Magazine* is interviewing me today for their Women of Excellence series so I will not allow anything to distract from my work - (*Going for the door again.*) - *least of all*

STEPHANIE. Ma'am - Margaret - Margie - I am the Presidential Secretary and nobody enters that door without my say-so!

(*She hits a wide stance, arms above her head in a V, hands clenched into fists.*)

MARGARET. What's happening?

STEPHANIE. Harriet gave me a book about women taking up space in the workplace and I've read it twice!

MARGARET. Are you having a stroke?

STEPHANIE. I'm power-stanceing, I am decreasing my cortisol levels and increasing my testosterone, thus increasing my confidence!

(*HARRIET opens the door, hitting STEPHANIE hard in the back and knocking her over.*)

OW!

**HARRIET.** Jesus. Stephanie, what the hell are you doing?  
(*To MARGARET.*) What's on your feet?

**MARGARET.** Does *anyone* read my memos?

**STEPHANIE.** (*Frantically, to HARRIET.*) She wanted to see the president and I said no! My spine was in alignment and I used declarative sentences!

**HARRIET.** (*Soothing.*) That's great – Have you been listening to that playlist I recommended?

**STEPHANIE.** BitchBeats, yes Ma'am, very empowering, I listen to it every morning while I eat my overnight oats.

**HARRIET.** Why don't you go practice your power stances in the bathroom.

(*STEPHANIE scurries to the door, then turns back to say something.*)

**MARGARET.** *That* trash fire *must* be extinguished.

**HARRIET.** She's still in the room, Margaret – Yes, Stephanie?

**STEPHANIE.** (*A whimper.*) The merch for the Female Models of Leadership Council arrived.

**HARRIET.** Thank you.

(*STEPHANIE flees.*)

**MARGARET.** She's like a menopausal toddler.

**HARRIET.** Stephanie has a photographic memory and speaks five languages. To what do I owe the pleasure, Margaret?

**MARGARET.** I actually need a chat with POTUS, so if you'll just / excuse me

**HARRIET.** (*Blocking the door.*) He didn't mean it. He's in a lot of pain and it's clouding his judgment.

**MARGARET.** Your loyalty to my husband is admirable, and I hope you continue to feel fulfilled by your choice to trade youth and beauty for a life of service to him.



HARRIET. (*Darkly.*) Thank you

MARGARET. But if you do not let me speak to POTUS right now, I refuse to attend the Female Models of Leadership dinner this evening.

HARRIET. We both know that would hit your ratings harder than his.

MARGARET. Dammit, Harriet, you cannot prevent me from having a marital discussion with my husband!

HARRIET. I absolutely can, on any day during his term in office, but especially today, when he has a nuclear non-proliferation meeting in half an hour, a gubernatorial candidate endorsement in two, and an oozing pustule on his anus. I finally got him calmed down from your argument this morning

MARGARET. What argument? / It wasn't an argument

HARRIET. When you told him to stop behaving like his father, grow a pair, and have the procedure without anesthesia.

MARGARET. I had two natural births and one root canal with no drugs, he can certainly

HARRIET. He's not in his right mind and he's making terrible decisions

MARGARET. What else is new

HARRIET. (*Low.*) He wants to pardon Bernadette

MARGARET. He wants to PARDON / BERNADETTE?

HARRIET. Lower your voice! He had a phone call with her yesterday and you know how manipulative she can be, especially when he's feeling vulnerable

MARGARET. We've talked about this! You can't pardon someone just because she's your baby sister!

HARRIET. I know.

END

STEPHANIE,  
DUSTY

(STEPHANIE vs. DUSTY.)

(STEPHANIE power-stances in the bathroom, earbuds in her ears, meekly singing along to an aggressive pop song from the BitchBeats playlist.\* DUSTY runs in and vomits [REDACTED]. She clutches an oversized blue slushy.)

START

STEPHANIE. Oh!

DUSTY. Frick. I'm so sorry.

STEPHANIE. Are you okay?

DUSTY. Frick, I got it on my sleeve.

STEPHANIE. Is that a normal color to be coming out of a person?

DUSTY. It was buy-one-get-one-half-off for blue raz slushies. There wasn't even a line!

STEPHANIE. Okay.

DUSTY. Slushies are the only thing I can eat right now. Everything else makes me totally sick. I was feeling great after the blushies – that's what I call blue raz slushies – and then I ate a baby carrot and it all went to frick.

STEPHANIE. Do you need a doctor?

DUSTY. Oh my gosh you're the cutest to worry, but I'm fine! It's for a beautiful reason! I'm pregnant!

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STEPHANIE. Wow. That is

(DUSTY vomits blue.)

beautiful.

DUSTY. Gross. Sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt your dance practice.

STEPHANIE. I / wasn't

DUSTY. Whatcha listening to? Oh my gosh – BitchBeats is my favorite playlist! You know they have a karaoke version?

(She grabs one of STEPHANIE's earbuds and starts loudly singing along.)

STEPHANIE. Um, are you an intern?

DUSTY. (*Delighted.*) Oh my gosh do I look like an intern?

STEPHANIE. Not at all.

DUSTY. I'm just visiting.

STEPHANIE. Are you important or are you lost? Did you get separated from a tour? Sorry, it's just you're not allowed to be in this wing unless you have the proper clearance.

(DUSTY holds up a pass.)

DUSTY. I thought that's what this is for.

STEPHANIE. How did you get that? Who are you?

DUSTY. I'm Dusty.

;

STEPHANIE. As in

DUSTY. Dusty.

STEPHANIE. Okay.



DUSTY. I'm here about the position.

*(She winks.)*

STEPHANIE. What position?

DUSTY. The position.

*(She winks again.)*

STEPHANIE. Why are you winking.

DUSTY. I was told to be *discreet*.

STEPHANIE. So why are you winking.

DUSTY. Do you mind just, like, pointing me towards the president?

STEPHANIE. *Point* you towards the *president*?

DUSTY. I feel dumb, this is all new to me. I'm supposed to tell the lady that I'm here about the position.

STEPHANIE. Which lady? What lady? The First Lady?

DUSTY. I can't remember her name, but she's, like, I don't know, she's like really intense?

STEPHANIE. *(Shrill.)* They're *all* intense here, *everyone's* intense here!

*(CHRIS enters, on the phone, breastmilk leaking through her shirt.)*

CHRIS. Greg, I swear to god if you don't cancel your date and pick Kenny up from dance class tonight, I will feed our children nothing but prunes for the two days leading up to your weekend with them and they will blow ass on that new white leather couch you think makes your shitty studio look like a bachelor pad!

*(Unable to mop up the stains, she shoves some paper towels into her bra and exits.)*

END

CHRIS, MARGARET

CHRIS. Nope. All the women we are interviewing for this series excel in their respective fields, but you have broken glass ceilings in so many different areas.

MARGARET. You're too kind

CHRIS. Politically, culturally, philanthropically

MARGARET. Joyful work

CHRIS. (*Joking.*) Why aren't *you* president?

MARGARET. (*Joking.*) That's the eternal question, isn't it?

*(They laugh gaily for a moment, then fall into dismal silence.)*

CHRIS. / Anyway

MARGARET. Anyway

CHRIS. How do you decompress after a long day?

MARGARET. You're a mother, Chris, so you know there is nothing more relaxing than spending time with your family

*(As her phone buzzes:)*

CHRIS. So relaxing.

MARGARET. But also, I hunt!

CHRIS. Hunt. As in

MARGARET. My Ladies Big Game Hunting Club! For ladies who love to hunt! You should join! Nothing helps you cast off a hard day like stalking your prey, listening for the slightest crack, sniffing for that faintest whiff of musky, gamey smell – and then once you have the beast in your crosshairs, feeling the force of the gun as you pull the trigger, and squinting in the hopes of seeing that splash of blood, that moment of animal shock, as the bullet enters the creature, penetrates the flesh, snuffing out his small, mediocre life once and for all.

START

;

CHRIS. That is, um, really

MARGARET. Earthy.

CHRIS. Right. You've spent your three years in the White House focusing your energy on child hunger

MARGARET. (*Revving up for her grand speech.*) Yes, and when I think of the ten million children living in poverty

CHRIS. Totally. And since seventy-one percent of those kids are children of color, I was wondering if you had any plans to spend your last year in office

MARGARET. Before reelection

CHRIS. (*Over her.*) Using your position as a Black First Lady to push our president towards addressing systemic issues impacting the Black community and marginalized groups in general?

MARGARET. (*Through a tense smile.*) Well, Chris, perhaps *you* consider your Black readers a monolith

CHRIS. (*Through a tense smile.*) That's not what I

MARGARET. (*Over her.*) But I have spent a lifetime fighting that kind of generalization by subverting stereotypes, rejecting identity politics, and being, across the board, *un fucking-paralleled.*

CHRIS. (*Briskly.*) Right, so was that a "no" on, say, Black maternal health, voting rights, abolition, reparations

MARGARET. Sounds like you got your stump speech! Maybe *you* should run for president.

CHRIS. Ha! – I would if I wasn't still paying off the hospital bills for my C-section. Speaking of cunt

(~~STEPHANIE~~ *careens into the room, carrying a large inner tube.*)

END

Bernadette,  
JEAN, Dusty

~~JEAN. Cock-sucking fuck me with a flaming screwdriver~~

~~BERNADETTE. Now that takes me back.~~

~~(JEAN whirls around. BERNADETTE's standing there in cargo shorts and a trench coat, an overstuffed duffel slung over one shoulder, an ankle monitor on her leg, and a lit cigarette in her hand.)~~

~~JEAN. Bernadette~~

START

BERNADETTE. SURPRISE! Jeanie, baby, how are you! What's *happening*? Fuck, what a dump. You gotta start hiring hotter interns – all your staff look like sweaty Beanie Babies. (*Aggressively to a passing intern.*) YOU: coffee. Seven sugars, dash of triple sec.

DUSTY. Sorry, but would you mind putting out your cigarette? I'm pregnant.

BERNADETTE. And I'm constipated. We all have our trials.

(*To JEAN.*) Who's the Prosti-Tot?

DUSTY. I'm Dusty.

BERNADETTE. What'd you do – blow a Smurf?

JEAN. What's happening how is this happening

BERNADETTE. I banged one of those Blue Man guys once – you know, in my experimental phase: stamina like a bull but I was queefing cobalt for days.

JEAN. You're in PRISON!

BERNADETTE. *Was* in prison.

DUSTY. Has anyone ever told you you look so much like the president? Like, you could be his sister.

BERNADETTE. Holy tits, he's screwing her, isn't he?

DUSTY. / Actually the president and I are in love, so it's a lot more than just



JEAN. LOWER your voice, oh my god keep it down SHUT UP.

(To BERNADETTE.) How are you here?

BERNADETTE. My presidential pardon, baby!

JEAN. For the last time, he's not going to pardon you!

BERNADETTE. Babe, he basically already has. Pulled some strings with the warden and judge so I could get out today, and so long as he makes it official in the next twenty-four hours, they cut this ankle shit off and then it's free Bernie howling at the moon all night every night Ow OWWWWW – give me a howl Prosti-Tot!

DUSTY. Ow / OWWWWWWW

BERNADETTE. Ow / OWWWWWWW

JEAN. Stop it STOP howling NO HOWLING in the White House!

DUSTY. She's so FUN!

BERNADETTE. (*Viciously, to a passerby.*) Yo, what you looking at? Did I say you could film me, bitch? / I will cut that phone out of your hand

JEAN. They're *fifth-graders* – they're on a *field trip*!

Listen to me: I don't know what "sibling bond" bullshit you fed POTUS to guilt him into this one but there is no way anyone here is letting him pardon an international drug mule

BERNADETTE. (*Winking at DUSTY.*) I prefer "drug stallion."

JEAN. You're not seeing him.

BERNADETTE. That's not up to you.

JEAN. It's up to Harriet, which is why I know you're not seeing him.

BERNADETTE. Harriet works for my brother.

JEAN. Harriet *works* your brother. Harriet's the number one reason this country continues to function.

BERNADETTE. So why isn't she president?

JEAN. That's the eternal question, isn't it?

DUSTY. Is she the one with the man's haircut?

JEAN. (*At DUSTY.*) Don't

BERNADETTE. This is a bitter fucking welcome, you know that? You know how many favors I had to call in just so I could see you today on our anniversary?

DUSTY. Awwwww

JEAN. Ex-anniversary! And the only reason you ever do *anything* is for you and if you think I'm going to fall for your star-crossed lovers, Bonnie and Clyde bullshit

(BERNADETTE *slowly backs JEAN up.*)

BERNADETTE. Come on, Jeanie. Those were some long, wet nights on the campaign trail. Don't tell me you've forgotten

JEAN. (*Struggling to stay strong.*) I-I-I'm not saying I've forgotten, / I just

BERNADETTE. Prison changed me. I'm looking for commitment and intimacy, a second chance at life and love. I mean, think of what this pardon could mean for *us*.

JEAN. (*Melting.*) Us?

BERNADETTE. I missed you.

JEAN. Did you?

BERNADETTE. You look great.

JEAN. Do I?

BERNADETTE. Love the suit.



Dusty

START

DUSTY.

HEY THERE, FRIEND, WHAT'D YOU SAY?  
 YOU SAY YOU'RE HAVING A REAL BAD DAY?  
 LET'S SIT DOWN AND CHAT AWHILE  
 WE'LL FIND A WAY TO MAKE YOU SMILE  
 'CAUSE CONFLICT CAN BE HEALTHY  
 CONFLICT CAN BE TRUE  
 CONFLICT CAN BRING ME CLOSER TO YOU  
 SO LET'S COGITATE AND ARTICULATE  
 DON'T MONOLOGUE, LET'S DIALOGUE  
 BUT IN ORDER TO GROW, FIRST WE MUST LISTEN  
 AND IN ORDER TO LISTEN  
 FIRST WE MUST HUSH  
 FIRST WE MUST HUSH  
 FIRST WE MUST HUSHHH

END

*(Silence. They stare at her. DUSTY nods encouragingly.)*

That's great, guys, really good stuff.

**BERNADETTE.** I've dropped acid on Air Force One on three separate occasions but that was by far the most out-of-body experience I've ever had.

**STEPHANIE.** *(At HARRIET.)* HER? SERIOUSLY?

**MARGARET.** *(Re: DUSTY.)* What is this?

**DUSTY.** It seems like there are a lot of strong feelings in the room right now, but the good news is I am a certified conflict resolution mediator and I'm happy to provide my services.

**STEPHANIE.** *(Desperately.)* I could be a mediator! I'll get certified! I'll do whatever you want!

*(Everyone is now looking at STEPHANIE, except for MARGARET, who continues to stare at DUSTY.)*

**HARRIET.** What are you / talking about?

CARIS

*(They high-five, grim.)*

**CHRIS.** We are talking about the secret service here! They're not going to be sucked in by some kid trying to suck 'em off

**BERNADETTE.** Is she like the last idealistic journalist in Washington?

**CHRIS.** This is a matter of national security! We need to notify the vice president right now.

**JEAN.** Are you out of your / mind?

**HARRIET.** You've got to be / joking.

**MARGARET.** That man is as useful in a crisis as a turnip.

**CHRIS.** Someone ELSE, then. We need a PLAN. Dusty can deep throat her way through the White House, but that won't change the fact that we MURDERED the PRESIDENT

**JEAN.** You mean YOU murdered the president

*(CHRIS snaps. With the rousing fury of a mother unleashed.)*

START

**CHRIS.** DON'T. YOU. DARE. If he was doing his job he would be across the White House right now making peace treaties! Why was he even here? He should not have walked in this room, he should not be living in this house, he should not be running this nation, and YOU KNOW IT! He's the pyromaniac, but *you* gave him kindling, you gave him matches, you figured he'd burn his fingers and learn his lesson - Well he DIDN'T, and now the WHOLE FUCKING WORLD IS ON FIRE! So we will douse those flames, or we will burn in them together, but don't think for one second I am marching to that stake by myself!

END

**DUSTY.** *(Deeply inspired.)* Holy frick, why isn't SHE president?