

Man Up

a coming out tragicomedy

by
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CHARACTERS

TITUS	20s, Agender, Queer, but they don't know it yet. Pronouns she, they, he. Only called he, him by others
DYLAN	20s, Cis man, Queer, but refuses to acknowledge it
GAVIN	20s, Cis man, homophobic, team captain
JIM	20s, Cis man, incel, hates all things woke
QUINN	20s, Cis man, hates Titus, best friend is Chuck
CHUCK	20s, Cis man, Queer playing straight, Quinn's best friend, Secret crush on Titus
ADRIAN	19, Cis man, deeply religious, homeschooled
BRANDEN	19, Cis man, try hard, aspiring fuckboy
MILOS	50s, Cis man, Serbian, broken nose, misses glory days

SETTING

A pool office.

Metal chairs, whiteboard, a door to the pool, a desk, a lost and found. Not much else.

TIME

The school year of 2018-2019

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The punctuation indicates line rhythms rather than grammatical correctness.

Stage directions are not italicized on purpose. Blame Sarah Ruhl's book of essays.

This play has some messed up things. Please steer clear of actors who are too young, make sure everyone's comfortable being in speedos for two hours, and please please please, don't hire any creeps to the creative team. This play needs to be safe to be effective.

Feel free to hire masc enby actors for any role, as long as they feel comfortable in a speedo for two hours.

Titus must be played by a trans person. That includes non binary people.

KEYNOTE SYNOPSIS

St. Catherine's Water Polo team is ready to win a championship. They have all the pieces, the talent, everything they need. But when Titus, one of the players, discovers they have feelings for another player, and that they may be trans, Titus has to choose between what's most important to them, winning a championship as part of the team, or being true to himself. Man Up is about how sometimes when we become most ourselves, we lose people and things we thought we loved.

ACTS AND SCENES

ACT ONE: A Happy Beginning

SCENE 1: Noises in the dark

SCENE 2: I feel you

SCENE 3: A romantic bashing

SCENE 4: A sharp beautiful pain

SCENE 5: Early morning Lovers

SCENE 6: Love can't save you,
Only my new powers can do that.

SCENE 7: Euphoria

SCENE 8: The fall

ACT TWO: A Happy Ending

SCENE 9: Our list of allies grow thin

SCENE 10: I am an island

SCENE 11: Turn, turn, turn

SCENE 12: I am nothing, I am nowhere, I am nobody

SCENE 13: The World Series

SCENE 14: Exodus

EPILOGUE

SCENE 4: A SHARP, BEAUTIFUL PAIN.

The team stands in clumps in the office. They all talk over one another.

GAVIN

Ay. Ay. AY! AY SHUT UP YOU KUSOGAKI!

The team goes silent.

GAVIN

We're gonna be mature about this shit. I know that's not our usual thing, but that's what we're gonna do here.

JIM

Titus fucking lost us that game.

TITUS

We shouldn't have been in that position to start with.

QUINN

But we were, and you hero balled.

CHUCK

Titus was just trying to make something happen. Nobody else made anything happen.

BRANDEN

I was totally open.

DYLAN

You couldn't get shit past the goalie.

ADRIAN

I've done a lot of conflict resolution in my church group. How do you think God would feel if he heard you arguing?

JIM

Nobody cares about your dumb God.

ADRIAN

(small)

My God is an awesome God.

QUINN

Can we get back to the matter at hand?

JIM

Please.

TITUS

Listen, I tried my best, but we didn't lose the game in the last 10 seconds. We lost it in the first 32 minutes.

JIM

We were down by one.

DYLAN

Yeah to La Salle. Those guys eat ass.

QUINN

Well what's that say about us?

CHUCK

That we eat extra ass.

BRANDEN

I mean I was wide open.

ADRIAN

I thought you were in the backcourt.

BRANDEN

What does that matter?

ADRIAN

How were you gonna score from half court?

JIM

Your hero ball fucked us, Titus.

BRANDEN

I've got my patented skip shot, I can get it past any goalie with -

GAVIN

My hallowed bros, shut your holes. Branden you couldn't have done shit, you shot four times, each one blocked, shooting from three quarters court would not have tied it up for us. Jim, Quinn, I know its fun to blame someone when shit goes south, but Titus is right. We were down 1 to La Salle, of all teams, we shouldn't have been there to start with. Titus. You shouldn't have shot that. We had 8 seconds left, you could've drawn a penalty shot, or gotten us man up, but you didn't. You took an ill advised shot. Now.

We've been on a negative trajectory the past few games. We've lost to three teams, each worse than the last. We're the 10th seed after this game, and we cannot keep spiraling downwards. We need to right the ship.

BRANDEN

Maybe if I got more shots up -

ADRIAN

You're not making your shots.

BRANDEN

You're not even a starter.

ADRIAN

But I play as many minutes as you do.

GAVIN

THIS SHIT. Has got. To stop. We need to take a long hard look at ourselves and decide if we want to be serious this season. Milos was right, we can win, but not like this. Not with all this petty bullshit, and finger pointing.

CHUCK

Agreed. I mean what the hell does it accomplish blaming this loss on Titus?

QUINN

It lets us know where we need work. Or to move up a certain bench player.

CHUCK

Titus is a junior, he's got three years of college ball under his belt-

QUINN

And Adrian already plays better than him.

CHUCK

Come on, Quinn.

QUINN

You come on. I thought the team was your priority not your little boy friend.

CHUCK

He's not my boy friend.

JIM

Should've said butt buddy.

TITUS

Just because Chuck's not a total dick -

QUINN

You know all about dicks don't you, Titus. Constantly looking down while we shower.

CHUCK

NOBODY'S gay.

BRANDEN

Yeah, I love being cock deep in beaver.

ADRIAN

Have you even had sex?

BRANDEN

I explode pussies every day.

ADRIAN

You just remind me of this virgin I played club with.

BRANDEN

You're the fucking virgin!

ADRIAN

Yes. I am.

BRANDEN

He admitted it.

ADRIAN

I'm saving it for marriage. What are you saving it for?

BRANDEN

I'm not saving it! I score constantly!

ADRIAN

Not during games.

CHUCK

Dude's getting dismantled by The Pope.

QUINN

Unlike you who gets dick mounted by Titus.

CHUCK

I'M NOT FUCKING GAY!

Milos enters.

MILOS

All right circle up.

The team doesn't move.

MILOS

What is this shit? I said circle up.

The team drags chairs into a circle.

MILOS

You are all mopey gremlins today. We lose one game -

JIM

Six games.

MILOS

You cannot think like that. Every game it resets. You go back to square one. The next game you win or you lose. You win, great. Happy times. Back to reset. You lose, bad. Sad times. Back to reset. If you don't reset after every game, you are constantly looking forward and back and not at game in front of you. We lost. You all cried. Boo hoo. Now we reset. The only teams that ever win big are the ones that only exist in the present. Tell me I'm right, Gavin.

GAVIN

Milos is right.

MILOS

Thank you, I know this. In spirit of living for the present, we've got early morning tomorrow. 4 am we are in this pool office watching tape. We watch this game, we watch Jesuit's last game, and tomorrow we focus on tomorrow. If anybody complains about today, tomorrow, or any of the past four weeks, they will run until they have no legs left to run with. If you want to win, you will be there and you will only be there. Gavin. Get little girls to stop crying, eh, and then you all go home.

GAVIN

Yes, coach.

Milos exits.

GAVIN

You heard the man. Anybody shows me the least emotion, I'm towel whipping their nuts. And when I rat tail an aho, they bleed. You want to show the scar to the newbies Dylan.

Dylan shows their inner thigh, where a wet towel whip left a scar.

ADRIAN

Oh my God.

Chuck smiles.

CHUCK

Dylan had to wrap it. Three times. Kept bleeding through the bandages.

GAVIN

(re: bags)

So get your shit together,

(re: emotions)

and get your shit together, and be back here at 3:45. 4 am is late in my book. 3:55 am is late in my book. 3:50 am? Late. Tomorrow, you're all early morning lovers, and you must be moving on.

ALL BUT BRANDEN

Goodbye stranger it's been nice. Hope you find your paradise.

Everyone packs up their swim bag. Some deck change (changing out of swimsuit under their towel).

BRANDEN

(to Adrian)

How the hell do you already have this shit memorized?

ADRIAN

I turned it into a Spotify playlist. I can send it to you.

TITUS

Dylan. You've got a certified gusher on your back.

DYLAN

White head?

TITUS

Ooh yeah.

DYLAN

It's all yours, girl.

Titus smiles.

They approach Dylan

JIM

I have class at 9 am.

CHUCK

So?

Titus runs their hands along Dylans back positioning them around the zit.

JIM

It's almost midnight. I need to go home, eat, and be back here at fucking 3:45? And then go to class at 9?

QUINN

You signed up for this shit.

Titus squeezes Dylan's back zit. Dylan squeezes his eyes shut in pain.

ADRIAN

Isn't this part of being on the team?

GAVIN

It is. Adrian gets it after a month, why doesn't Jim after four years?

JIM

Three years, I haven't graduated yet, get your math right.

BRANDEN

What class you got at 9 am.

Dylan lets out a little grunt/moan of pain.

TITUS

Should I stop?

DYLAN

No, keep going.

Titus redoubles their efforts on Dylan's zit.

JIM

(to Branden)

Accounting.

BRANDEN

You're a business major, right?

JIM

Yeah?

BRANDEN

Any suggestions for professors to take.

Dylan's zit pops, squirting Titus in the face, as
Dylan has one final paroxysm of pain.

JIM

There's only like two who actually know anything.

Jim and Branden exit.

DYLAN

Is it over?

TITUS

It got on my fucking cheek.

DYLAN

A little facial for you.

Titus blushes.

TITUS

You're empty. Just blood left.

DYLAN

Thanks, sailor.

Titus beams at Dylan

TITUS

Any time.

Lights.