

CAMP

A one-act play

By Makeda M. Declet

CAST OF CHARACTERS

RUMOR, 29. White. An enthusiastic camp coordinator.

TAYSHANA, 54. Black. A very concerned mother.

SETTINGS

In the woods on the first day of Camp.

Uh Huh her's 'Explode' is playing on a nearby boombox. A banner hangs on a sign-in table that reads "WELCOME TO CAMP".

RUMOR stands downstage left, wearing a STAFF t-shirt with a name tag and khaki shorts. A lanyard with a whistle hangs from their neck.

RUMOR

(yelling O.S.)

Biiitch! I fucking love you! I will fucking kill you, I love you so fucking much!

(O.S. person replies)

Whaaat? Yes...Yes... haha. You're so fucking dumb. We still on for Frozen at Kitty Karaoke?... Whaaat? No. For real?

They waive person 1 off. They spot someone else.

RUMOR

Candace? Yo, fucking Candace Grace. Where have you been?!

(O.S. person 2 replies)

What? Your mom died? No shit. I'm sorry, Bro...Ok...I'll see you at candle-making.

They waive person 2 off. They spot someone else but before they can call out, Tayshana approaches.

TAYSHANA

Excuse me -

RUMOR

Yes! Yes! Absolutely.

TAYSHANA

I'm looking for -

RUMOR

Culture, diversity, age-versity. This is what camp is all about. Welcome. Name?

TAYSHANA

Tayshana Smith but -

RUMOR

Tayshana. Tay Tay.

Rumor writes ‘Tay Tay’ on a name tag and hands it to her.

TAYSHANA

Can you help me find someone?

RUMOR

Oooh. Tay Tay. How very...forward of you! But yes, they don’t call me camp coordinator for nothing, mkay? How may I assist you?

TAYSHANA

I’m looking for a girl.

RUMOR

Mmm. What might this girl look like?

Rumor gestures “tell me more”.

TAYSHANA

She’s about this tall. Brown skin. I think her hair is in braids, down to about... here... Her nose is pierced.

RUMOR

Wow. Wow. The specificity. The certainty in wants and needs.

TAYSHANA

Listen –

RUMOR

Rumor.

TAYSHANA

Rumor. I’m –

RUMOR
(pulls out a pamphlet)

Tay Tay, you have set forth a challenge for me which I am more that willing to accept. Now look. Brown skin? As in - Black?

Tayshana nods, reluctantly.

TAYSHANA

Yeah.

RUMOR

You may find the womyn or self-identified Hooman you are looking for here in the Black Queer Womyn and female-Identified orientation.

TAYSHANA

Where's that?

RUMOR

That way.

Tayshana heads off.

RUMOR

But wait! You mentioned her braided hair. You may find *that* Hooman in SSAACC. Safe space for African-Americans that can't cornrow. Apparently... they exist.

TAYSHANA

And where's that?

RUMOR

That way!

Tayshana heads off.

RUMOR

Oh oh oh, but you mentioned her nose ring. You'll find the Pierced Queer knitters group alllll the way down by the showers –

TAYSHANA
(overlapping)

Ok, wait –

RUMOR

Come to camp, knowing what you want.

TAYSHANA

Listen!

RUMOR

Huh?

TAYSHANA

I'm just looking for –

RUMOR

Yes?

TAYSHANA

My... daughter!

RUMOR

We don't have a workshop for daughter/Mommy kink just yet but at Camp, your yuck is our yum... I mean, we don't yuck your yum.

Tayshana begins to walk away.

RUMOR

Wait!

TAYSHANA

What?

RUMOR

What am I missing here? I'm here to help.

TAYSHANA

I don't think you can.

RUMOR

You're looking for your... *actual* daughter?

TAYSHANA

Yes.

RUMOR

Ok. Are you supposed to be meeting her here?

TAYSHANA

No, but I'm gonna ...take her ass home.

RUMOR

Aw that's nice but pick-up's in two days.

TAYSHANA

I'm taking her home as in **away** from here. She's young and impressionable and I don't know what y'all do here, but we don't do that in our house. Oh no!

RUMOR

Young campers come all the time but rest assured, no one under the age of 21 can drink or ... stuff. We have special counselors for them and they all bunk together.

TAYSHANA

I'm not worried about her drinking.

RUMOR

Ok then...

TAYSHANA

Ain't nobody in my family act the way she do. So wild and hard-headed. I told her, "hell no you can't go to no Gay camp in the middle of the goddamn woods. No way!"

RUMOR

Oh.

TAYSHANA

No offense to y'all. Just ... not my child.

RUMOR

This is a pretty cool place, no offense to you. Your daughter is probably fine.

Tayshana reads a button on Rumor's shirt.

TAYSHANA

"Ass plugs 4 lyfe".

RUMOR

That's clearly a hyperbole.

(sotto)

A couple of hours tops...maybe.

TAYSHANA

And this?

She takes the pamphlet from Rumor.

TAYSHANA

"Be all you can BEE- A kinky slut's guide to Honey play".

RUMOR

(sotto)

They're an endangered species.

TAYSHANA

I can't with all this. It's a joke, you know that, right?

RUMOR

I don't think it is, no.

TAYSHANA

Look at all these banners! Free speech. Equality. Gender awareness. You're fighting for things, are you? You're indignant about how progressive and helpful you are, tucked away in your \$200 a night gay camp?

RUMOR

That includes food, lodging, and activities! We don't get paid for being here. We're just trying to make a safe space for people who need it.

TAYSHANA

You're just trying to make a safe bubble! A bubble! That's what you're making.

RUMOR

Ok... But we're not hurting anybody. Your daughter isn't hurting anybody. Are they?

TAYSHANA

She wouldn't hurt anybody. It ain't in her.

RUMOR

Ok. Then why not let her have some fun with people who understand her.

TAYSHANA

You don't understand her. Miss, I'm young, white and got the world at my feet.

RUMOR

Hold on now –

TAYSHANA

How tough is the world for a white woman today, period?

RUMOR

I identify as –

TAYSHANA

Still pretty easy, huh?

RUMOR

I identify as –

TAYSHANA

It may be two thousand and twenty but it still ain't easy being a queer, black, woman in America? A queer, black, woman in America checks too many boxes. You think it's easy for her, even now? That's what you think, lady?

RUMOR

(firmly, but not mean)

I identify as non-binary. My pronouns are they and them. And at Camp we respect that.

Beat.

TAYSHANA

(sincerely but still fired up)

Is it hard for you, Them?

RUMOR

(sotto)

Close enough... Sometimes –

(a diplomatic answer)

I think I try to check my privilege.

Beat.

TAYSHANA

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you.

RUMOR

Have you tried talking to her?

TAYSHANA

Who? Oh. Yes.

Tayshana sits on her suitcase.

TAYSHANA

Your mom okay with you being here?

RUMOR

Well, ma'am –

TAYSHANA

Ohhh, it's Ma'am now –

RUMOR

Tay...tay...my parents don't really get a choice in the matter. I mean, I love it here.

TAYSHANA

Where you from?

RUMOR

Tulsa. Oklohoma.

TAYSHANA
And that's where your people are?

RUMOR
Mhm.

TAYSHANA
You go home often?

RUMOR
Not as much as I used to.

Rumor moves the chair from behind the sign-in table and sits next to Tayshana.

RUMOR
Where are you from?

TAYSHANA
Atlanta.

RUMOR
Oh, what part?

TAYSHANA
McDonough.

RUMOR
You go home often?

TAYSHANA
Not as much as I used to.

RUMOR
Is that hard for you?

TAYSHANA
Only because I miss it.

RUMOR
When'd your daughter tell you she was queer?

TAYSHANA
Oh, I knew for a while. She said...um... she said she was a Cis-gendered, queer fem with an attraction to non-binary queer masculine leaning individuals. I looked those up on Google.

Rumor checks the pamphlet.

RUMOR

Ah, those guys are meeting at 12:30 over near the ax-throwing court.

TAYSHANA

(slyly)

Guys?

RUMOR

I'm working on a more inclusive term for a group of people.

TAYSHANA

What do you have so far?

RUMOR

Hey, You's! Or People's come here!

Tayshana laughs. She swats at a bug on her arm.

RUMOR

Oh, here...

(rumor grabs a can of bug spray)

Lemon-Eucalyptus oil. 100% natural bug repellent. Go on, try it.

Tayshana does.

TAYSHANA

Thanks.

RUMOR

What was the plan? Drive all the way out here, kidnap your adult daughter and head back to Atlanta?

TAYSHANA

I actually live here now.

RUMOR

Oh, whereabouts?

TAYSHANA

Temple and Bellevue, on the East Side.

RUMOR

Shut up! I'm on Glendale and Echo Park Lake!

Neighbors!

TAYSHANA

They laugh. Tayshana points at Rumor's clipboard.

Tayshana Smith.

TAYSHANA

RUMOR

That's both your names? Your daughter's a Junior? Haha. Sweet!

TAYSHANA
(pointing to the clipboard again)

Please, just check it.

RUMOR

I'm sorry. I can't give out her information. It's against camp policy.

TAYSHANA

I... I am Tayshana Smith and I am... here to check in.

Rumor does a gag bit where they look at the clipboard, then back to Tayshana, then back to the clip board, then back to Tayshana.

RUMOR

Shut up! Shut up.

TAYSHANA

Yup.

RUMOR

No daughter then?

TAYSHANA

Nope. Just... nerves, I suppose.

RUMOR

Holy, holy! ... Can I see some ID?

Tayshana shows her ID to Rumor. It pans out.

RUMOR

Tay, Tay! Wow. Bunk 12 is always lit but not too rowdy and it has a lot of older woman who come to camp so you won't feel so alone or out of place or –

TAYSHANA

That's why I chose it. I did some research but still .

RUMOR

Nerves.

TAYSHANA

I don't know what I'm doing here.

RUMOR

Well, it's a good place to start. Oohh!

Rumor grabs another clipboard.

RUMOR

Can you sing?

TAYSHANA

A little.

RUMOR

Do you know 'Show Yourself' from Frozen two?

TAYSHANA

My grand-baby loves that song. My son's baby.

RUMOR

I'm hosting Kitty Kat Karaoke on the final night at 8pm and it just so happens my partner is a flaky bitch. Do you want to...?

Tayshana signs up.

RUMOR

PERFECT! DUDE! I'm so excited. I'll track you down for rehearsals after you get settled. It's gonna be dope.

TAYSHANA

Deal. Bunk 12?

RUMOR

That way, to the left of the Spellbound and Down, kinky rope-play and witchcraft table. You can't miss it. And Tay Tay?

TAYSHANA

Yeah?

RUMOR

Welcome to Camp.

END OF PLAY