

FOUNDERS, KEEPERS

By Aurora Behlke

WHO

Tabitha - 12 ½. Prettiest. An unreliable voice of reason who clings onto her friends for dear life. Favorite animal: dolphins and sharks. Tabitha is BIPOC.

Gillian - 12. Has probably read Harry Potter 5 times. Hides her weirdness in order to stay "popular". Favorite animal: foxes.

Nicole - 11. Class clown. Powerful, but extremely insecure. Really wanted her own youtube channel but her mom wouldn't let her have one. She still pretends to make youtube videos in the bathroom mirror. Favorite animal: tigers and other big cats.

Imogen - 10. Wears the same cardigan every day. Hasn't washed her hair today. Always tense because she carries a lot of grief in her little body. Favorite animal: betta fish.

Winnie - 11. BRACES. Has a lot to say but isn't sure how to say it. Unapologetic when she can afford to be. Favorite animal: she is connected to horses on a spiritual level but is NOT a horse girl. Winnie is white passing, but not anglo saxon.

Mysterious woman - Come on, not *that* old. She hasn't lost her love of sea creatures.

Woman - Old. Animals are messy. Played by the same actor who plays the Mysterious Woman.

WHERE

An abandoned elementary school classroom, downtown DC. somewhere in the unspecified (yet dangerously close) future.

HOW

1. The constitution has been interpreted many different ways. Let this play live a similar life.
2. Although this play can realistically be performed by anyone, I find it's most effective when the actors playing these girls have just earned their right to vote (around 18-20 years old). Though the characters are younger, there is no need to 'play young'.
3. While we're at it, I feel like I should note that I don't care whether the actors in this play are all women or not. While the characters are all young women, they can be brought alive by actors from a myriad of gender expressions.
4. Winnie and Imogen's ethnicities can be replaced in the script to better match the actors' identities.

WINNIE & GILLIAN

Behlke 21

GILLIAN retrieves a small pouch and leaves before they can see her burst into tears.

GILLIAN runs into the bathroom, where IMOGEN and WINNIE are washing their hands. She rushes into a stall, and is very obviously crying, though she tries to cover it up.

WINNIE mouths to IMOGEN: *is she ok?*
IMOGEN shrugs.

Start

... Gillian are you ok?

WINNIE

... yeah

GILLIAN

... are you sure?

WINNIE

... yeah

GILLIAN

... Ok

WINNIE

... I have a friend named Gillian from school which is crazy because there aren't that many Gillians but we call her Gillie Giraffe because she's tall and looks like a giraffe
... You don't look like a giraffe though

... Thanks

GILLIAN

... Do you want us to leave?

WINNIE

... no

GILLIAN

... ok

WINNIE

An awkward silence

WINNIE
For the record I couldn't even tell you were on your period.

Nicole is flippin' scary. Sometimes she stares into your *soul* and suddenly knows everything that's wrong with you.

Another awkward silence.

WINNIE

You know I think Nicole is intimidated by you.

GILLIAN

... really?

WINNIE

Oh *yeah*

You're definitely her Artemis heel or whatever

GILLIAN

You mean like an Achilles heel?

WINNIE

Yea that

See?!?! You're so smart

GILLIAN

Well I mean I read all of Percy Jackson

Another silence.

GILLIAN

they were making fun of me.
Nicole. And Tabby.

WINNIE

Tabby?

GILLIAN

Tabitha.

WINNIE

Oh.

Right cuz you guys are like BFFs

GILLIAN

... yeah...

WINNIE

Well if she's your BFF, she was probably just laughing with you!

GILLIAN

Maybe...
... I wasn't laughing

WINNIE

Oh

GILLIAN

I'm ugly. Look.

She opens the stall door and points at her face.
IMOGEN and WINNIE strain to see what she's pointing at.

WINNIE

What, a zit?

GILLIAN goes back into the stall and shuts the door.

WINNIE

Omygosh Gillian It's really not that noticeable.

...

You're not ugly, Gillian.

...

Is this your first period you don't have to answer that

GILLIAN

... yea

WINNIE

Do you need...
Products

GILLIAN

... no I had a tampon in my bag

WINNIE

A tampon?!?

GILLIAN

... yea

WINNIE

So you just like
First period BOOM tampon like a boss

GILLIAN

... I practiced

WINNIE

That is so *cool*.
I'm still on pads because I'm freaked out by *that*.

GILLIAN

... Yeah it's actually pretty comfortable once you get used to it. Like if you're brave enough to do it.

Awkward silence.

WINNIE

You know a guy could write the constitution no sweat but he could NEVER do it with blood coming out of his hoo-ha.

GILLIAN opens the stall door.

GILLIAN

So you don't think it's that big?

WINNIE

You are really pretty.

A smile creeps on GILLIAN's face.

end

GILLIAN

Guys would *freak out* if they had a period

WINNIE

How would that even *work*?

GILLIAN

Maybe it would come out of the...
Out of the--

IMOGEN

PENIS!

NICOLE and TABITHA storm out of the room.
As the doors click shut, the girls break into a laugh.

WINNIE

Can we be friends?

GILLIAN

Yeah!

WINNIE

Blood oath?

GILLIAN / IMOGEN

EWEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!

TABITHA

Start

They scream, laugh, and burst out of the doors to return to the room.

The moment the three of them open the doors to the classroom, their energy changes. Tension is high.

TABITHA

Okay! Glad you're all back. let's... uh...

Gillian, can you go over your notes for what we have done so far today?

GILLIAN

Wait can I say actually something first?

Because we came up with an idea in the bathroom,

It was about what Nicole said earlier about girls not being able to write the constitution because of their periods. And--

(she looks to TABITHA, who is toying with her friendship necklace.)

Well... um...

Women... are...

WINNIE

Come on Gillie you got it

TABITHA

Did you just call her Gillie?

Please don't do that.

GILLIAN

Um...

Women are...

(again, off of TABITHA'S look of disgust:)

Nevermind.

TABITHA

Why did you call Gillian by her nickname?

WINNIE

Um,

TABITHA

That's my thing. She's my best friend. You're not allowed to do that.

WINNIE

ok

TABITHA

Thank you Winnie! :)

Great!

Great! So today, let's work on chapter one of the constitution.

GILLIAN

(article one)

TABITHA

Article one. What did I say? Whatever.

Um, so we don't have a constitution to look at... so... Gillie! you're smart! Do you know what article one says about the government?

GILLIAN

(she does.)

I dunno

It probably says something about

The president

Maybe Congress

I dunno

Silence.

TABITHA

Well, great.

Okay Gillie can you write that down?

GILLIAN does not respond.

TABITHA

Gillian?
Gillie did you write that down?

...

Okay so
Okay so let's take a break

NICOLE

But we just had a--

TABITHA

Okay
I just
Can we
Please

The girls all shuffle out of the classroom.
TABITHA catches GILLIAN before she leaves.

TABITHA

Wait Gillian
What's going on? You've been acting seriously weird all day
Are you like mad at me or something?

GILLIAN

No you're literally my best friend I can't be mad at you

TABITHA

Oh ok

GILLIAN

I just really wish
That you were more
Um
I wish you would listen to me more

TABITHA

Wait so did you just lie to me

GILLIAN

What

TABITHA

About being mad at me
You lied to me you're totally mad at me

GILLIAN

No! I mean,
Like,
Like I love history and I think I have some super valuable insights to offer and sometimes it just feels like this whole project is *your* thing and not *our* thing like I'm not *mad* but--

TABITHA

You're totally mad.
You know being a leader is really hard

GILLIAN

Nobody asked you to be a leader nobody elected you
In fact, the way you rose to power is technically *unconstitutional*--

TABITHA

Well at least I'm more mature than you--

GILLIAN

No you're not--

TABITHA

I'm older than you--

GILLIAN

Tabitha you do not have a *modicum* of maturity--

WINNIE pops her head through the door, about to say something stupid.

TABITHA

AND AT LEAST I HAVE A FACE THAT PEOPLE CAN LOOK AT WITHOUT PUKING

WINNIE, eyes wide, closes the door. This goes unnoticed by TABITHA, but very noticed by GILLIAN.

TABITHA

We've been best friends since kindergarten. We need each other.
You need me.

(Silence as TABITHA bares a hole through GILLIAN:)

We're still best friends right?

GILLIAN

... sorry.

Are we still best friends?

TABITHA

GILLIAN is silent. TABITHA pulls her heart shaped necklace out from under her shirt and holds it.

... yeah.

GILLIAN

They leave together.
A moment.
Then, the door opens.

end

Heyyyy is anybody in here?
I came up with a funny joke in the bathroom

WINNIE

Silence.
WINNIE creeps into the room. She is drawn towards the windows. The fires reflect on her face.

Yeesh. It's like a Marvel movie out there.
It's like a Marvel movie in here too.

WINNIE

She hums the *SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK PREAMBLE* to herself.
She digs around her backpack for a granola bar. As she unwraps it, she looks around the room to make sure she's *alone* alone. Then, reaching deep into her bag, she pulls out a ratty looking pile of papers. She runs her hand over the paper as she mouths the contents.

Oops

WINNIE

She cleans up a smudge of chocolate from the paper, licks her fingers, and wipes them on her shirt.

IMOGEN

Behlke 38

You were all there.
You were all--
We watched her bleed.
And I tried to stop it because
I knew it was wrong
But I couldn't move
I couldn't,

...
Do you guys actually, *actually* care about other people?
We all have dreams that are scary. Okay. I hear Imogen crying from her dreams all the time

IMOGEN

(I don't--)

WINNIE

But *this* dream--
I'm scared of what we are.

Silence.
TABITHA runs out of the room crying.

NICOLE

We're kids.
We're just kids.
That's all we are. We're just kids.

NICOLE follows TABITHA. So does GILLIAN,
with a little more hesitation.
WINNIE stands in the center of the room.
Alone.
(or, almost alone.)

Start

IMOGEN

Hey
If I had that dream
I would have been really scared too
But in real life
I don't think you're
Evil?

WINNIE
(a faint smile:)

Thanks Imogen.

(a realization:)

This is the first time I've heard you
Like
Talk

IMOGEN

... yea.
I don't like to talk too much because...
(she gestures out the door.)

WINNIE

Yeah I get it.
Like I thought...
You know the apocalypse sucks but at least there wouldn't be any more *girl drama*...

IMOGEN

You were totally wrong

WINNIE

I was *totally* wrong.

Silence.

IMOGEN

I drew you

WINNIE

Huh

IMOGEN

In my sketchbook

IMOGEN digs into her bag and pulls out a ratty old booklet. She flips past pages and pages of drawings. She holds one page in particular for WINNIE.

IMOGEN

See

WINNIE

Whooooaaa you're really good
Why do I have horns

IMOGEN

Oh I dunno

I like to draw my friends
But as fairies

WINNIE

Oh
I didn't know fairies had horns

IMOGEN

Some do

IMOGEN puts the book away. Silence.

IMOGEN

The crying isn't from my dreams

WINNIE

Huh?

IMOGEN

I actually don't remember my dreams

WINNIE

Why do you cry at night?

IMOGEN shrugs.

IMOGEN

Sometimes I miss my--
I miss how everything used to be.

WINNIE nods.

end

IMOGEN

Tell me more about your dream.

WINNIE

Seriously?

IMOGEN

Yeah!

WINNIE

Okay so first of all I seriously think it was a vision...

IMOGEN

Is that your mom again

NICOLE

Yeah

IMOGEN (drawing)

Why is she on a unicorn

NICOLE

That's a *pegasus*.

IMOGEN

So she can get to the Mystery Garden safely

The where?

NICOLE

IMOGEN

Oh, it's just a place that I imagine in my head
Where she doesn't have to pay for water and like
There are plants *everywhere* like when we were young
And... *red pandas*

Oh

NICOLE

Can you draw my sister like that

Like...?

IMOGEN

Like on a pegasus

NICOLE

Because...

Can you just do it

NICOLE digs the framed photo out of her bag
and hands it to IMOGEN. IMOGEN flips the
page and begins drawing.

Hey um thanks for um

NICOLE

IMOGEN stops drawing.

Um

NICOLE

Helping me
With

...
Can we be friends?

IMOGEN

We're already friends

NICOLE

But we never like talked about it

IMOGEN

You don't need to talk about friendship.
Friendship can be silent.
Like a nod

IMOGEN nods to NICOLE. NICOLE nods back
tentatively.

NICOLE

It would really suck to lose Tabitha too.

IMOGEN

Yeah that would really... suck.

NICOLE

Imogen?

...
Do you believe in God?

IMOGEN

No

NICOLE

Oh

...

...

...

...

So you believe in like
Fairies
Though

IMOGEN

Yeah.

NICOLE

Do you ever think about your mom?

IMOGEN

Yeah every micro-mili-second

NICOLE

Do you ever, like
Talk to her in your dreams?

end

IMOGEN

... I don't remember my dreams

GILLIAN stands up suddenly and goes towards
the window, breaking up IMOGEN and
NICOLE's conversation.

GILLIAN

Where is she

WINNIE

You forgot your blanket

GILLIAN

The blanket isn't helping Winnie it's not helping

NICOLE

Gillian, Bathroom.

(to IMOGEN, before she leaves:)

Think about her voice
Before you sleep
She'll come.

NIGHT.

IMOGEN shuffles in her sleeping bag. She jolts
up and looks around.

IMOGEN

Mom?
Mom!?

...

WOMAN

Behlke 77

THAT IS SO COOL

WINNIE

START

The door cracks open. A woman enters in a GIANT SCARY GAS MASK. ALL THE GIRLS SCREAM. The woman sheds the mask, revealing an overdone full face of makeup.

WOMAN

Knock knock! Hi, hello, I'm here to collect your pages?

The girls stare at WOMAN.

WOMAN

Your pages for The Constitution Project?

WINNIE hands them over. WOMAN begins to look over them.

NICOLE

So you're from the government?

WOMAN

You could say that, yes.

(about the cover page:)

Aw.

More silence as WOMAN reads.

WINNIE

So...

When will this become a *thing*?

WOMAN

What?

GILLIAN

When will this constitution go into effect?

WOMAN

Oh honey, sweet baby.

We have to look at everyone's submissions first. Then we'll have a think tank... er... a *group discussion* to identify the most common ideas and then maybe we'll propose a bill or something.

Of course, this is all boring political talk. I'm sure you girls are completely uninterested, and I don't blame you! It's hard for someone your age to understand these types of things.

NICOLE

Wait... so we're not the only ones rewriting the constitution?

WOMAN

No, of course not! We have hundreds of these set up all across the country. Even in Fairbanks! Alaska! Do you girls know where Fairbanks is?

NICOLE

Was.

WOMAN

Excuse me?

NICOLE

I said. Was.

WOMAN

What are you—

NICOLE

Why are you telling us there are girls in Juneau doing stupid this project when Fairbanks is GONE?

IMOGEN

Nicole...

WOMAN

Where did you get that inform--
It's not polite to lie to your friends like that.

NICOLE

There was FIRE.

WOMAN

What fire. There was no--

NICOLE

Oh, yes there was.
Which, I'm pretty sure COULD have been avoided if YOU PEOPLE stepped in to help. Where were you guys? PEOPLE DIED. And what did the families get? A letter. And a medal. And then we're supposed to "move on". As if NOTHING--

Where did you- WOMAN

MY SISTER DIED. WITCH. NICOLE

SO WHAT? WOMAN

(after a long, ugly silence, she recollects herself:)
Snappy attitude isn't going to get you far, young lady.

Just then, as WOMAN flips through the pages,
she goes sheet-white.

Ohhhh my god. WOMAN

She takes a checklist out of her bag and
compares it with the writing in her hand.

Ohhh this is definitely not happening. WOMAN

What is it? Is it the spelling? WINNIE

WOMAN pulls out a lighter. She flicks it on.

NO! TABITHA

DON'T YOU EVEN DARE, WOMAN! WINNIE

I HAVEN'T CUT MY FINGERNAILS IN A MONTH AND YOU BET I WILL BE USING
THEM NOW. GILLIAN

I do not want to be liable for this. Any of--
This is an extremely dangerous document, and-- WOMAN

How? GILLIAN

WOMAN

I'm not going to--

GILLIAN

How? Tell us *how*. What did we write that's so dangerous?

WOMAN

I'm not--

GILLIAN

READ IT.

WOMAN

I CAN'T--

Listen. I'm not going to speak this out loud. This is--
You don't know what you've written.

NICOLE

Yes we do we wrote it

WOMAN

This is extremely illegal, and dangerous, and I have to--

IMOGEN

LISTEN TO US!

You have to listen to us.

We wrote this because we're *hurting*. If you burn this, you're killing people. And you're silencing us, and worst of all, you're silencing your own nieces, nephews, children--

WOMAN

Do *not* talk to me about my kids.

WOMAN lights the papers on fire. She drops them in the trash can. A scream from all of the girls.

WOMAN

Your guardians will be here in 30 minutes.

(suddenly swinging around to TABITHA:)

And you, young lady,

I've already had quite the conversation with your parents about how you'll be paying for that *stunt* you pulled.

They stare at each other, trying to place a memory.

TABITHA

Who are you?

WOMAN

I'm the person in charge.

She coolly walks out of the room. The door locks behind her.

end

NICOLE

She locked the door.
Are we dangerous?
Are we bad people?

Each girl hides her utter devastation with little success. They each begin packing up their little belongings. GILLIAN packs for TABITHA. Finally, IMOGEN speaks, though none of the girls can hear her.

IMOGEN

(looking up at the sky:)

Are there laws in heaven?
To ourselves and our posterities,
do or dain, and establish...
Establish...
What.

She spots a paper next to the trash can. It's a fraction of her pages, scorched around the edges.

She runs her fingers over her writing, sniffs it, folds it into a tiny square and places it in her pocket.

END