

The Art of Falling Apart

By Yolanda Williams

NOTES

The Art of Falling Apart is a short play about interracial dating, and it should be entered in either Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting. Due to its sensitive subject matter, this play should be performed by two mature performers. While the role of Marla could be played by a young woman of varying ethnicity; the role of Calvin should definitely be portrayed by a young African-American male. There is a lot of humor found within this play—play it! The one common denominator that both of these young characters possess—is *likeability!* They both should have *great* personalities! During the course of their relationship, Calvin and Marla obviously struggle with some important issues. Play those dramatic moments with honesty and never underestimate the power of a well-placed pause. As Calvin and Marla come to terms with their inner-most feelings and move deeper into the uncharted territories of interracial dating, the audience should feel as if they've been on an emotional roller-coaster! This is a tour-de-force play for two performers willing to take the time to invest in their characters. This is a play about first dates, flirtation, romance, racial jokes, alienation, and the discovery of self; however, in that discovery lies an epiphany—while skin color may vary—everyone's tears—whether in sadness or joy—are the very same color.

Characters:

Calvin, a young black man

Marla, a young white woman

Time: The present

Locations: A park. A picnic. Calvin's apartment. Marla's apartment.

Scene One: Marla taking pictures of Calvin in the park.

Calvin: I know why you chose '*taking pictures in the park*' as our first date.

Marla: Why?

Calvin: You, like many girls, just can't seem to get enough of my super-fly bod. (*Calvin laughs.*) You're smarter than the others though.

Marla: Smarter?

Calvin: (*Teasing.*) Oh, yeah. As an aspiring artist, you've probably thought this through! You take some pictures of me. Have the best one

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blown up life-sized. Tack it to the ceiling. Then you have me floating above your bed every night—thus assuring yourself you'll have sweet dreams forever.

Marla: You are—

Calvin: Humble? Yes, ‘mam. Humble as the night is dark!

Marla: You do that a lot, don't you?

Calvin: What? Tease?

Marla: No. I mean, you have a tendency to use—*colorful* references.

Calvin: Colorful references? Girl, you're talking like a *white* girl now!

Marla: There you go again! No, seriously. You tend to make a point of letting everyone know you're—you know—

Calvin: Black?

Marla: Black. Right. I mean, I know you're black.

Calvin: And I know I'm black. So what's the big deal? I've dated plenty of white girls before. I've also dated a couple of Hispanic girls, one Asian girl, and one girl—I don't know *what* she was. The point is—

Marla: You've dated a lot of girls!

Calvin: No, the point is that color doesn't mean anything to me. True, I jive around sometimes, but that's just me being silly. (*Looks Marla up and down.*) Now, you on the other hand—

Marla: What's that supposed to mean?

Calvin: I think you're cool. But I also think you are a little nervous about this whole interracial-dating-experiment of yours.

Marla: It's not an “experiment.” Okay. I admit this is all new to me, (*Defensively.*) but I'm not prejudiced!

Calvin: Prove it.

Marla: How?

Calvin: We'll do a little test. I'll ask you a series of questions, and you answer as quickly as you can with the first thing that pops into your head. Game?

Marla: (*Pause.*) Game.

Calvin: What's your favorite cookie?

Marla: Oreos.

Calvin: Mine's strawberry wafers. What's your favorite animal?

Marla: Zebra.

Calvin: (*Surprised.*) Me too. What's your favorite sitcom from the 70's?

Marla: *The Jeffersons.*

Calvin: *Sandford and Son.* Although my mother's favorite was also *The Jefferson's*. She's watched that show so many times that she thinks the only way a black man can get ahead in life is to open a dry cleaning business.

Marla: Okay. Your turn.

Calvin: Shoot. Ask me anything.

Marla: No. (*Laughs.*) I mean, it's your turn to take pictures of me. (*She*