

CAST:

VELVET VALENTINE - Frontman. Spanish is her first language and she speaks English with an accent. 20's. Female. Spaniard.

MAGGIE 'MERCURY' MARTINEZ - Drums. 20's. Female. Hispanic/Latina.

CARMEN PALMER - Lead Bass. 20's. Female. Hispanic/Latina.

PEBBLES 'THE CALICO' CRIMSON - Keys. 20's. Female. Any ethnicity.

LAURA MAGNUM WEEKS - Lead Guitar. 20's. Female. Any ethnicity.

SETTING:

Late at night in a hotel room in New York.

ACT 1, SC. 1

LIGHTS UP. It's nighttime, around two A.M. There are two beds onstage, one in complete disarray but the other untouched. The room looks heavily lived in, but only for a brief period of time. We can tell there is another room attached to this room. VELVET and MERCURY enter the hotel room with the rest of the band just down the hall. As they enter, MERCURY falls onto VELVET in a familiar and telling way, and they're both stumbling a bit.

VELVET

(sing-songy, soothing)

Mercury, *Mi bebe...*

MERCURY

How controversial.

VELVET

Settle down now, *cordera*.

MERCURY

Velvet, I don't know a damn word that comes out of your mouth, but I love it.

Laughter radiates from offstage to signal the entrance of the other three. VELVET and MERCURY straighten up to not get caught. Coming in the room first is LAURA with a bright blue guitar on her back. She looks down the hall at something.

LAURA

Can The Calico do it? Do the keys stand a CHANCE?

Sliding in from offstage is a big silver keyboard. It flies through the door of the room.

LAURA

Holy shit, Peps!

PEBBLES runs inside the room holding an empty keyboard case.

PEBBLES

It's a good thing I have a backup keyboard.

PEBBLES picks up the keyboard and begins to put it back in the case. CARMEN enters as if she were running for her life with a bass strapped to her back. She slams the door shut behind her. As the girls talk, they're changing, taking off their makeup, and brushing their hair.

CARMEN

Well thank you ladies, for the help out there!

LAURA

When it's the clickers taking our pictures, it's every man for themselves. Besides, it's our security's job to protect you.

MERCURY

You were just far too darling tonight, Carmen. We made it out unscathed.

LAURA

You're fresh in the news, you're the target right now.

MERCURY

You're the woman, the price tag, the place to be.

CARMEN

Oh, shut up. You left me in the hands of the hearsay. That's dangerous and cold-blooded.

LAURA
(almost to herself)

Hearsay? Likely story.

Everyone but CARMEN laughs at
LAURA's aside.

CARMEN
You know what? Let's not talk about it.

MERCURY
Talk about what, the footage of you beating the reporter to near death in
Houston?

CARMEN
Let's just not talk.

PEBBLES
If it's any consolation, some have spoken up about how you did the right
thing. Not all, of course. Not even a majority. But some.

CARMEN
Yeah, yeah.

LAURA
She's right, Carmen. Don't get me wrong, the men are very offended at a
video of a woman fighting. But, some can tell you're at the defense of your
husband -

MERCURY
Oh yes, her melancholic lavender marriage -

PEBBLES
Plus, I hadn't thanked you yet for doing that. Took all the attention right off
me.

CARMEN
That's a first.

LAURA
Absolutely spiteful. Pebbles is just as coked-out and bimbo-ed as you are.

VELVET slips off her shirt so that she is shirtless. MERCURY is earnestly trying not to stare, but failing.

CARMEN

Christ, am I faced.

PEBBLES

Better get some rest then. We have to be up in three hours for *Good Morning, New York!*

The four other girls groan aggressively.

CARMEN

That completely escaped my mind.

MERCURY

Anything but *Good Morning, New York!*

CARMEN

It's mind-escaping.

PEBBLES

But let's not forget the call time for the tour bus, which we have to wake up even earlier for.

LAURA

What a life of being on the road. We're expected to party all night, and then be up at the ass crack of dawn.

MERCURY

Expected? No one held a gun to your head and said "Pebbles 'The Calico' Crimson, load up on the strawberry vodka in the atrium of the Roosevelt with the three girls who seemed intrigued with the keys after the concert."

PEBBLES

What can I say, I'm a sappy sucker for a girl who pretends to care about the damn keys. Also, it's Pebbles Crimson. I'm trying to drop 'The Calico.'

MERCURY

You've been trying to drop 'The Calico' ever since you were endowed with 'The Calico.'

PEBBLES

I'm serious about it now. It's Pebbles Crimson. 'The Calico' is just not a name to take seriously.

CARMEN

Like anyone takes us seriously anyways. We're a girl group.

PEBBLES

Girl groups don't play instruments. And we don't dance. We're just a band.

CARMEN

The way we're looked at and portrayed is consistent with that of a girl group, Laura Magnum Cocks.

MERCURY

Carmen is right. We are a bimbo girl group, crafted at the hands of rich men, with no sense of remorse, but all the sense of intention.

CARMEN

And, we sure are thankful.

LAURA

When will you idiots get sick of Magnum Cocks?

MERCURY

Oh, Carmen here can't go without them. Wait, did you mean your nickname?

CARMEN

Big talk, Mercury. Real big talk.

MERCURY

You could almost call it MAGNUM talk.

CARMEN

And you could almost call it pillow talk, isn't that right, Velvet?

This is in reference to something they don't want to talk about.

VELVET

'Much rather eat dirt than *Good Morning, New York*.

LAURA

Nonsense, Velveteen. We've had some great laughs on that show.

MERCURY

Yeah, offstage, in regards to Thing 1 and Thing 2 that do the interviewing.

LAURA

Oh please. They just see right through our years of relentless media-training.

PEBBLES

But, tomorrow is going to be a relatively hard show. We've all got our own scandals in the news these past few weeks.

MERCURY

What does that matter? All the interviewers care about is Velvet.

CARMEN

(aside)

You and the interviewers have that in common, then.

MERCURY

(mimicking the voice of an
interviewer)

“Velvet Valentine, when will you go solo?” “Velvet, who's the new man in your life?” “Velvet Valentine, is it true you got lunch with Stevie Nicks the other day?”

LAURA

“Velvet Valentine, you were spotted in Barbados kissing fellow band member Maggie ‘Mercury’ Martinez - is there a secret band romance going on?”

PEBBLES

Velvet is our frontwoman, that is frontwoman territory.

CARMEN

The frontwoman, or just the French-kisser?

LAURA

Velvet is the only one people hear on stage, and we are her lowly surrounding band.

(poking fun at PEBBLES)

What's the instrument that has the white rectangles and makes all the intergalactic noises?

PEBBLES

Sorry we can't all play the guitar, the true instrument of seduction.

MERCURY

I'm just saying, I could speak in only scandals, and no one would hear a damn thing. I could get up onstage and claim to be the Zodiac Killer, but the tabloids will all be hung up on what lucky American kissed Velvet this week.

VELVET

Unfunny, Mercury.

CARMEN

Why does it matter? No one can understand Velvet's accent anyways.

VELVET

I'm not as Spanish sounding as I once was. I've been in the states many years.

CARMEN

Oh sure, but first tell me this - if I'm describing where I am, is the correct grammar 'on the house' or 'in the house?'

MERCURY

Oh, give the Spaniard a break.

CARMEN

And here is Mercury Martinez yet again, defending the Spanish.

MERCURY

I am at the defense of nothing. Velvet gets it the worst from me, so get off your accusatory, tabloid-bled language. Or should I bring up Houston?

CARMEN

Shut up, Mrs. Manhattan.

MERCURY

With pleasure, Mrs. Cellophane.

LAURA

We should all probably get to sleep anyways, and maybe rehearse our answers for the morning. Sleep is calling my name.

MERCURY

It's the only thing ever calling your name, Laura.

PEBBLES

Don't worry I've got my answers all down. "So Pebbles, there were sightings of you leaving a rehabilitation center in London! Are you doing all right?" to which I say solemnly, "I cannot recall."

LAURA

It's *Good Morning, New York*, not a court-based drama. What you're really going to say is, "I'm good." and then play a wicked 'riff' on the synth.

PEBBLES

Yeah, and let me practice that 'riff.'

She grabs her keyboard and plays one loud synthesiser key, ironically.

PEBBLES (CONT'D)

There you go, I just played a whole blasted song. What am I here for, anyways?

MERCURY

To be our blasted Calico. And the Calico can't go without her bowl of milk, hm? A pitcher of scotch or a mountain of blow?

CARMEN

Oh sure, can't make fun of a girl's accent, but a girl's addiction is on the table.

LAURA

That's a mighty good one, Mercury, especially since we all know the one that's blowing all the coke in this room, and on that bus.

They all look to CARMEN, who assumedly is the one that's blowing all the coke in this room and on that bus.

MERCURY

Oh please, not anymore! Not if her new girlfriend has anything to say about it.

CARMEN

(jocular)

Please, I'm married.

MERCURY

Mhm, and that is a great shade of lavender you're wearing.

CARMEN

Want to get slapped?

LAURA

Speaking of your girlfriend, Carmen, out of all the women in this world who probably want you, you had to get close to our goddamn bus manager? I get on that bus, ready to conk out for the night, but my sleep is interrupted by the sound of McKenna making Carmen moan louder than any note I've ever played. Makes me grateful for hotels, I'll give you that.

CARMEN

I am not that loud. And neither is McKenna.

MERCURY

It's the physics of it all, Carmen - if we're in the confines of a bus, trust that no amount of WHISPERING will help.

CARMEN

Also, if you think I'll let McKenna tell me what drugs I can and can't do, you're out of your coked-out minds. I've been doing this far too long. She tried to give me a lecture the other day about how I'm young and don't know things, and I was like, what are you, my mom?

MERCURY

You talk a big game, but if McKenna came in right now while you were doing blow, you'd get right on your knees and, well..

CARMEN

Charming, Mercury. Very, very charming. Don't you find that charming, Velvet?

VELVET

And why am I to find it charming?

CARMEN

You're just awfully quiet, Velveteen.

VELVET

Resting my voice. Did a lot of screaming onstage tonight.

CARMEN

You sure do a lot of screaming, but I don't think it was the screaming onstage that tuckered out your voice.

MERCURY

(clearing her throat
inconspicuously)

That's accusatory. Never thought you were one to believe bad press, Carmen Palmer.

CARMEN

I don't believe bad press, but what I DO believe is evidence.

VELVET and MERCURY share a look.
CARMEN, in a sick way of building
suspense, pours herself a cup of
Babycham from the fridge, with all eyes
locked on her.

MERCURY

You don't drink Babycham.

CARMEN

Oh, I don't, but this is the room you and Velvet share, and I know you and Velvet like to share a glass of Babycham every now and then, so that's all that's in your fridge. But that isn't all you share, huh?

VELVET

Carmen -

CARMEN

(half-serious)

If you're not together then let me ask you this - why is there two beds in here, and only one has been used? Because if I know bloody well, the both of you never make your beds in the morning, ESPECIALLY when we're late for a 5am call, which we were this morning. So, the fact that this bed is made may well be the beating heart in the floorboards.

MERCURY

Not that I owe you much, but I fell asleep on top of the sheets like that. I was pissed.

CARMEN

You sure were pissed.

MERCURY

If Velvet and I were fucking, well, you're in the room over, wouldn't you hear something?

CARMEN

Sex is quieter when it's a secret.

MERCURY

You think an impassioned Spaniard like Velvet over here fucks quietly?

VELVET

Let's not talk about how I fuck. Let's just not talk.

LAURA

Velvet doesn't want to talk about fucking? Never thought I'd see the day...

VELVET

Salaud. That's bastard.

CARMEN

I'm sure Mercury loves it when you speak Spanish to her.

VELVET

(between gritted teeth)

I have a couple for you, too.

LAURA

I'm just saying, Velvet, you can't deny you're a bit of a pervert.

VELVET

Me?

PEBBLES

I think Velvet just knows that sex sells. All rockstars perform the way she does on stage.

LAURA

Yeah, except we're not rockstars. Rockfairies, maybe.

PEBBLES

Velveteen is smarter than she lets on.

LAURA

No she isn't, she lets on to be very smart. She changed her last name, didn't she? That was smart.

VELVET

Only because nobody could not say my real one.

LAURA

That's how you sell a Spaniard in the states. Make her pretty, but Americanize her just enough.

VELVET

Nice. I am only a pretty exotica, and that's all I offer to America.

MERCURY

Come on now Velvet, you don't want to lose face, or your beautifully creative voice.

VELVET

You know I'm one-fourth Parisian.

LAURA

Please, you also offer us some flustering hip thrusts, smutty lyrics, and a great cheeky laugh.

VELVET

One-fourth English too.

MERCURY

Okay, maybe I don't want to lose face, or my beautiful creative voice.

CARMEN

Can't lose what you didn't have.

MERCURY

Now how do you have room in that mouth for all this talk, with all the bullshit you put into it every day?

CARMEN

Tell that to the earring in your right ear.

LAURA

Gentleman, I hate to be a mom, but before this catfight - no pun intended, Calico - can continue, we must decide - will we sleep, or will we blow, fellas? Will we blow?

PEBBLES

It's almost three A.M., so by the time we actually fall asleep, we'll only have about an hour and a half for some Z's.

CARMEN

So then I guess we'll blow.

MERCURY

Oh, go get Madam White! Madam Madonna!

CARMEN

Let's hope the teen fans don't find out about this.

PEBBLES

You say that every time.

MERCURY

But wait, guys... Pebbles left rehab not too long ago, and maybe we should, y'know, take it easy tonight.

A beat. They all start laughing.

MERCURY (CONT'D)

I know, I almost couldn't even get through it.

CARMEN

Let me go grab the snow.

VELVET

I'll put on a pot of coffee, as well.

CARMEN goes into the aforementioned other room to get cocaine. VELVET, still shirtless, puts on a pot of coffee.

MERCURY watches her unintentionally.

LAURA

Merc, I hate to throw you under the bus, but as much as I love disagreeing with Carmen, the staring that you're doing at Velvet's tits is making things perfectly obvious.

VELVET's curiosity is peaked, and cheekily, she glares at Mercury.

MERCURY

I was checking to see if that was my bra.

VELVET blushes, and MERCURY blushes too, but in a different way. VELVET slips on a shirt. CARMEN, who has heard the conversation, enters with a couple small baggies and some razors.

CARMEN

Oh, Velvet has put on a shirt. MERCURY! Your girlfriend is just the cutest.

MERCURY

I could kill you, pretty-girl bass-playing Carmen Palmer. I could kill you dead.

CARMEN

Oh, don't let the clickers hear that one. Gotta keep up appearances.

CARMEN sits on the floor in front of the coffee table, and prepares lines of cocaine with razorblades.

There is a knock on the door of the hotel room. They look to each other.

They look to CARMEN.

MERCURY

That has to be McKenna. You better hide all of those fucking blades.

CARMEN

(panicked)

I will open the door. You... do something with this.

She motions to the table. CARMEN exits the stage.

MERCURY

Now who can reckon what's going on out there?

LAURA

Not much, they're in the middle of the hotel hallway, and there's fifty clickers downstairs, dying to get pictures of us in compromising situations.

LAURA

The hell does Carmen see in that old lady anyways?

PEBBLES

She's not that much older than Carmen.

LAURA

Carmen is 23, McKenna is 41. Prehistoric.

PEBBLES

Your thinking is prehistoric.

LAURA

It can't even be like a sugar mommy type situation, considering Carmen makes more money than she'll ever need.

MERCURY

On the contraire, I think it is *very well* a sugar mommy situation.

VELVET

Very cheeky.

MERCURY

This is New York, Velveteen Rabbit. It's FUNNY! Not CHEEKY!

VELVET

You guys use British *argot* more than I do.

PEBBLES

I think it came out of the one night we hung out with those Brit friends you had.

VELVET

Brit friends? They are a famous popband, and I didn't not know them before that night neither.

MERCURY

Whoever they were, they were *absolutely bloody brilliant, innit?*

PEBBLES

Wait, I'll be Velvet - *ah, mis amigos! Si si! These are my Europeans!*

VELVET

Why don't you bite me, with that perfect American dialect.

PEBBLES

If I bit you, I'd end up with just a funny accent as yours.

CARMEN enters from offstage.

MERCURY

Where's McKenna?

CARMEN

She just came -

LAURA

That was fast!

CARMEN

Ha-ha. She came to warn us about Good Morning, New York! And kiss me goodnight. But mostly the former.

LAURA

What's to warn? We've done this same interview millions of times.

CARMEN

Yeah, but we're all in scandals right now. How we handle tomorrow can very well be the break-all of our careers. Our fleshed-out, well-respected, A-list rock careers.

VELVET

What?

LAURA

Yeah, I'm clean, always am.

CARMEN

Well, there's my incident in Houston, Pebbles leaving rehab in London, the rumours about Velvet and Mercury being together after Barbados, Velvet's rumoured solo career, and, Laura, well...

LAURA

What? Oh, God, what?

CARMEN

You've been caught... doing something.

LAURA

Doing what? Drinking? Blow? Masturbating? WHAT?

CARMEN

What do you know of an Irish girlband called Work Shirt?

LAURA's eyes go wide. Clearly, she knows them well.

LAURA

No.

CARMEN

Oh, yes.

MERCURY

Now this, I gotta know.

CARMEN

Apparently tomorrow there are some pictures printing of our Laura in the complete nude with the four members of Work Shirt.

PEBBLES

Nude, as in...?

CARMEN

Oh yes, nude, as in.

The girls laugh. LAURA expresses a strong, visceral reaction.

LAURA

I have no choice but to off myself. There is no possible way I can face being on television tomorrow with that picture out there.

PEBBLES

Laura, when did you do this? Why did you do this?

LAURA

Why do any of us do anything? I was drunk and high in London and they were there.

PEBBLES

Where were we?

LAURA

Pebbles, you were in rehab, Carmen was going at it with McKenna on the bus, and Mercury and Velvet had disappeared, mysteriously.

MERCURY

(on the defense)

Oh but that's no excuse. Where was Declan? Halsie? Arlet? The usual entourage we have surrounding us for things like this?

LAURA

I don't know where they were, I was wasted, it was late!

MERCURY

You are going to get sunk so hard.

LAURA

What do I do? What did McKenna say?

CARMEN

Well, McKenna was just relaying a message from our higher ups. She has no tips, she just takes care of the bus.

MERCURY

And of Carmen.

LAURA

I'm going to puke.

MERCURY

Self-induced, or anxiety?

LAURA

Ha-ha. Now Mercury, that rod up your ass - self-induced, or anxiety?

CARMEN

Laura, you need to just call Georgia. She works for us for this very reason.

MERCURY

She's probably asleep. Probably had a hard time watching us tank interviews all day and throw all of her media-training out the window.

LAURA

No, this is an emergency! I'm calling her.

LAURA goes into the adjoining room,
and closes the door.

CARMEN

I should probably call Victor myself. Make sure we're on the same page before tomorrow.

MERCURY

And don't you think your husband is asleep by now?

CARMEN

Are you kidding? That man gets paid good money to pretend to be my husband, so all he does is party. Speaking of fake husbands, you definitely need to call Oliver.

VELVET has a subtle, but telling reaction to this. MERCURY decides to play up her answer.

MERCURY

Gosh Carmen, we're still fake dating. I haven't popped the fake question to get us fake engaged yet. Not all of us get fake married at 23. And I don't feel like calling him. Georgia will call him and tell her the rundown.

CARMEN

Be a big girl and give Georgia one less thing she has to do for us monkeys.

MERCURY

I'm not pretending to date Oliver by my choice, so I don't see why I'm in charge of him.

CARMEN

Maggie, don't be a fucking brat, okay? Establish some... rapport. Some chemistry.

VELVET

Go on, Mercury. Some rapport. Some chemistry.

CARMEN heads out into the hallway to make her phone call. LAURA sticks her head out the door of the second room.

LAURA

Hey Calico, Georgia has a bone to pick with you.

PEBBLES

I told you I'm dropping The Calico...

PEBBLES exits, and it's just MERCURY and VELVET. They look at each other. Hesitantly, MERCURY sticks her hand out to VELVET as a gesture of timorous intimacy.

VELVET

Should you not use this hand to call Oliver?

MERCURY

You act jealous like I had any part in the hiring of Oliver.

VELVET

Not jealous. Just a pretty Spanish girl.

VELVET slights MERCURY and falls
back into the bed.

MERCURY

Velvet -

VELVET

Quiet, am sleeping now. Picturing little sheeps with berets.

MERCURY

Being one-fourth Parisian sounds so... exhausting. So, self-aware.

VELVET

If anyone can do it, it is me, the exhilarating, exhausting frontwoman.

MERCURY

(sweetly)

It is I, not it is me.

VELVET

You really let them at me about this whole accent thing, yet when we are in the private, you help me so much with English.

MERCURY

You know the reason for that, Vel. If I start being nice to you, they'll know.

VELVET

They already know!

MERCURY

They may have ideas, but the only proof they have is the Barbados picture and that could be anything. To what extent is where it's foggy.

VELVET

Mhm, and to what extent are we talking?

MERCURY

Really? You're going to ask me to define the relationship, while I'm cross-faded at 3 in the morning?

VELVET

Cross-faded at 3 on the morning is like a song to me, because that is the only time we can be together.

MERCURY

You shut it up with that shit.

VELVET

I admit in English its sound terrible, but if I said it in Spanish...

VELVET sits up.

VELVET (CONT'D)

I should use language differences to my advantage.

MERCURY

Don't start.

As VELVET talks, she gets closer to MERCURY, as if to seduce her.

VELVET

Eres la chica de mis sueños. Te has metido bajo mi piel. Me haces actuar como un tonto

MERCURY appears mesmerized.

MERCURY

And... what does that mean?

VELVET

Who's to say?

MERCURY

VELVET!

VELVET

Maybe I told you that you are the girl of my dreams, and you've gotten under my skin and make me act a fool. Or perchance, maybe I just said you were ugly.

MERCURY

I'm sure you find me a real clydesdale.

VELVET

Drummers often are.

MERCURY

Listen, someone's gotta do it. Not all of us can be bitchin' frontmen, with vocal chords like gold.

VELVET

Not gold. Copper maybe.

MERCURY

Shut up. Save the cutesy humble shit for *Good Morning, New York!*

VELVET

Your loud, rowdy voice compensates for your small, short body.

MERCURY

Small? SHORT?

VELVET

I have been use little names for you in Spanish all this time, you don't know.

MERCURY

Velvet! You can't use Spanish against me and remind me that I was socialized as white! The fuck do you call me?

VELVET

My tigress. My babygirl. My angel. My cabbage.

MERCURY

Cabbage?

VELVET

Bit of a rough translation.

MERCURY

(embarrassed)

Why don't you use those cute little names on one of those girls back in Spain then?

VELVET

I like my American girl.

MERCURY

Your American girl?

VELVET

Oh, you will not even remember I said that.

MERCURY

Hmm. Maybe not.

A beat

MERCURY

Are you nervous for tomorrow? When they ask us about the picture?

VELVET

We have our stories straight.

MERCURY

We were wasted, and just having fun.

VELVET

Right. Are you?

MERCURY

Am I what?

VELVET

Nervous?

MERCURY

I just hope they buy it. We have been a little obvious lately. Now, even Carmen thinks we're together.

VELVET

You know she is kidding.

MERCURY

Still. I don't want the band to suffer for what we did.

VELVET

It'll be okay, *mi conejo*.

MERCURY

And what does that one mean?

VELVET

Wouldn't you like to know?

MERCURY giggles in an affectionate way and leans in to kiss VELVET, but then hears a door open as CARMEN is entering, and automatically tries to cover it up.

MERCURY

There ya go bud, got the snow on your face.

CARMEN

Did you get the egg on her face too?

MERCURY

And what did Mr. Victor Palmer say when you called him, Carmen?

CARMEN

Miss. Martinez, you know Victor Palmer is a man of very few words.

MERCURY

Of course, I had forgotten that the higher ups ripped out his vocal cords.

CARMEN

And he's on vocal rest till death!

LAURA enters from the other room.
PEBBLES is in tow, and appears in the doorway.

PEBBLES

Vel, Georgie wants to ask you something.

CARMEN

Uh-oh, Claudette's in trouble.

VELVET gets up from the bed and follows PEBBLES into the adjoining room. LAURA sits back down.

LAURA

Well guys, hot off the presses - If-and-or when I'm asked about the picture, I'm told to say simply "hey, wild times, right?" finger gun, or some variation of the two, and then get drowned out by the convincing audience laughs.

CARMEN

That's not going to work -

LAURA

To which I said, "Hey Georgia, nobody's gonna buy that cheap answer!" and she had stated simply, to improvise.

MERCURY

Higher ups pay her fatloads to tell us to improvise?

LAURA

I kind of get it. I wouldn't know what the fuck to tell me if I were her.

CARMEN

You're completely sunk, dude.

LAURA

With no doubt.

MERCURY

And we're a band, so if you get sunked, we all get sunked.

LAURA

That's right.

CARMEN

So we're all fucked.

LAURA

Correct.

CARMEN

(in complete seriousness)

Dammit, dude. WHY'D YOU HAVE TO HAVE AN ORGY WITH WORK SHIRT? YOU KNOW THAT HOLLYWOOD HATES LESBIANS!

LAURA

Fuckin' A, Carmen, WHY'D YOU BEAT UP THAT CLICKER! THAT'S JUST AS BAD!

MERCURY

She was at the defense of her husband!

CARMEN

Or so they say, but was bassist Carmen Palmer really at the defense of someone else? Maybe, a homosexual lover in which she has an affair with? Is Carmen Palmer a FAIRY?

LAURA

Say it isn't so!

CARMEN

Find out on *Good Morning, New York!*

MERCURY

Good idea, Carmen. Come out as gay on *Good Morning, New York!*

CARMEN

Fair - maybe you'll come out as straight.

LAURA

"Maggie Martinez, to what do you have to say about these photos of you and fellow bandmate Velvet Valentine, kissing in Barbados?"

MERCURY

"I cannot recall."

CARMEN

All wrong. You need to go for a more blunt approach. Tell them it's not Velvet, it's some wonderfully feminine guy you picked up on the island before you and Oliver got together.

LAURA

That's honestly not the worst lie. Your face is the only clear one in the photo.

MERCURY

I'm going to say nothing but the truth, which is that we were wrecked, and being stupid, and someone shouted at us to kiss. Then I'm going to add that my beautiful, stunning, and totally legitimate boyfriend was also there, and found it funny.

LAURA

Cop out.

MERCURY

It's the truth!

CARMEN

Mercury, you know better than to tell the truth! They don't like it when women have fun.

MERCURY

You're right. Well guys, it was nice being famous. It did lead me to develop many issues with my body and my reputation, but you know, the drums are cool.

LAURA

We'll still have our careers after this. Don't you remember that huge media blow-up with that indie band, Salve? They bounced back.

CARMEN

Well of course they did, they're cute men that can do no harm. We are women, equipped to do nothing but wrong. No one will give us the benefit of the doubt.

MERCURY

Carmen's right, for once. Nobody wants to empathize with a wannabe rock girlband.

LAURA

But we haven't done anything offensive. We're just being stupid young girls.

CARMEN

And when has that ever been a valid excuse in the past?

LAURA

(distressed)

Fuck, I'm really craving a cigarette. But the clickers are probably still down there.

CARMEN

Go through the back.

MERCURY

Not the first time Carmen's said that.

LAURA

Will you come with me, Merc? You're worse about nicotine than me.

MERCURY

Oh sure, but if I see one clicker, I might have to pull a Carmen in Houston.

CARMEN

Don't call it that as if it's some sort of wrestling move!

As MERCURY and LAURA head out the door, PEBBLES and VELVET come in from the adjoining room.

CARMEN

How'd it go?

PEBBLES

Where'd Mercury go? Georgia had something to tell her.

CARMEN

Went out for a gasper.

PEBBLES

With all those clickers down there? Suicide.

CARMEN

They went through the back.

PEBBLES

Guess Georgia will wait then.

VELVET pours herself a cup of coffee
from the pot she put on a while ago.

VELVET

Café?

PEBBLES

Sure.

VELVET pours two more cups of coffee
and adds sugar to them. She does not add
sugar to her own. She distributes the two
cups to PEBBLES and CARMEN.

CARMEN

What did Georgia tell you, Velvet?

VELVET

Same thing she always tells. Exaggerate the accent so the Americans will
think I'm cute. Then, my answers will not even matter.

PEBBLES

That is a foolproof plan.

VELVET

It always works.

CARMEN

Us Americans do find you absolutely adorable.

VELVET

I argue that you are pretty girl of the band, Carmen.

CARMEN

Are you kidding? How can I compete with you, Velvet Valentine?

VELVET

Hmm, and you are woman after my own heart.

PEBBLES

Velvet, there's no denying you're the heartthrob.

CARMEN

She doesn't care. There's only one person she wants to impress.

VELVET

You are relentless.

CARMEN

And you, are obvious.

VELVET

And what have I done that is so obvious?

MERCURY and LAURA come running
back into the hotel room.

LAURA

Fuck me.

PEBBLES

What happened?

MERCURY

The clickers found us in the back, mid-drag.

LAURA

It got a bit hostile, and they grabbed photos of us smoking, which isn't the worst, but certainly does not help.

CARMEN

Georgia's going to have a rough morning after.

PEBBLES

Speaking of, Georgia's on the line waiting to speak with you, Mercury.

MERCURY

What? I don't want to talk to Georgia.

CARMEN

If you don't want to talk to Georgia, then don't do what you did with Velvet.

PEBBLES

And hurry up! She's sleepy.

MERCURY heads into the adjoining room begrudgingly.

VELVET

Bit of coffee, Laura?

LAURA

Yes please. And I just love it when you say my name; makes me feel exotic.

VELVET

Laura Magnum Cocks.

LAURA

Ruined it.

VELVET pours LAURA a cup of coffee, and adds milk, but no sugar.

LAURA

Nothing like a warm cup of coffee before ending your career on live television in two hours.

CARMEN

Maybe they'll just be uber interested in Pebbles' recovery.

PEBBLES

They haven't been yet.

LAURA

How can they? With Velvet and her magnificent hair sitting right next to you.

CARMEN

I know, right? Why would they care about Pebbles going to rehab in a literal life-or-death situation, when Velvet looks like that?

PEBBLES

All the better; I hate answering with one of Georgia's plastic lines. Maybe next time I'm asked I'll tell them that they can find out more in my catch-all exposé I'm releasing about Hollywood.

CARMEN

And what exactly are you catching and exposing?

PEBBLES

Are you kidding? Just your relationship with McKenna alone will make me a bestseller.

CARMEN

Don't expose me for some cheap reads.

PEBBLES

Okay, but you're on thin ice.

LAURA

If I threaten to release an exposé about you and McKenna, will you stop fucking on the bus?

CARMEN

Oh come on, where else can we go? Could you imagine the headlines if we got caught checking into a hotel room together?

LAURA

I'm begging you to take that risk.

CARMEN

I guess I can ask Velvet and Mercury how they manage to do it so quietly.

VELVET

It's simple really - we have quiet sex by not have sex at all.

CARMEN

Defensive.

VELVET

Mercury is straight.

LAURA

Oh no, Mercury has definitely had her fun with girls.

CARMEN

Besides, sexuality is fluid. McKenna thought she was straight until she met me.

LAURA

Aww, and then she committed adultery and left her family for you, how sweet!

CARMEN

Laura, you know I'm sensitive about being a homewrecker.

VELVET

What women has Mercury had fun with?

CARMEN

Uh-oh, trouble in paradise?

PEBBLES

Didn't she hook up with that one Australian actress?

LAURA

Luna Langdon. What a night.

VELVET

Wait, I remember that night we met Luna.

CARMEN

The whole Australian leg of that tour was madcap.

VELVET

She hooked up with Mercury?

PEBBLES

You don't remember?

VELVET

No.

PEBBLES

She was at our concert, and then she invited us to that party in Perth, and she got Mercury WRECKED.

LAURA

I think that was the drunkest I've ever seen her. And then they disappeared, came back a few hours later, and the next day Mercury told us everything.

CARMEN

All the dirty little details.

VELVET

Why I don't remember?

CARMEN

Pretty sure you had 'disappeared' with someone yourself.

VELVET

Hm.

CARMEN

Someone seems a little jealous?

PEBBLES

Let up on the accusations. It's kind of uncomfortable to relentlessly accuse them of being together.

CARMEN

They know I'm only teasing, but I just want to hear what Velvet has to say about it, since Mercury has been the one denying all night.

VELVET

Continue to talk as if I am not in the room.

CARMEN

What are you going to say about it now that Mercury isn't here to do all the talking?

VELVET

She puts too much effort into denying. Believe what you want.

LAURA

Believe what you want. So simple, and says it all.

MERCURY comes back from the adjoining room, and in some telling fashion, she seems off, as if her conversation did not go well.

MERCURY

Carmen, Georgia wants to talk to you again.

CARMEN

Perfect timing, Mercury. We were just reminding Velvet about the time you hooked up with Luna Langdon.

CARMEN exits the room.

MERCURY

What could have possibly possessed you guys to bring up Luna Langdon? Wait - scratch that. I shouldn't ask the questions I don't want to know the answer to.

VELVET

I had said you were straight, and they filled me on your, how you say, conquests.

MERCURY

Conquest. Singular. I leave the damn room for one minute and you guys speculate on my sexuality?

LAURA

It was either that, or listen to Carmen talk about McKenna some more.

MERCURY

Suddenly, I understand. Ahhh, Luna Langdon. What a weird night. And oddly kinky.

PEBBLES

What did George tell you?

MERCURY

Apparently, the rumors about me and Velvet are more serious than I had thought. She said it's likely that Velvet and I'll get followed by clickers while we're in New York. Like, more than usual.

PEBBLES

Seriously?

MERCURY

They want to catch us being romantic. So, after the interviews, I'm due to parade around Hell's Kitchen with Oliver for some paid Backgrid photos. Christ.

VELVET

Café?

MERCURY

Please.

VELVET prepares MERCURY a cup of coffee. She goes to put milk in it, but MERCURY stops her.

MERCURY

Don't. I'm... learning to drink it black.

VELVET

Alright.

MERCURY

What did Georgia say to you about this?

VELVET

The same, except I have no beard. But, also I have my 'solo career' to worry about.

LAURA

That's easy, though - all you tell them is that you're a dedicated part of this shitty band, and all that nonsense. Fans eat that up. We are *sisters*, after all. Thank you, delusional false narratives.

VELVET

They never buy it. Or maybe they do not know what am I saying.

PEBBLES

I doubt they'll even ask you, with all of the leaked orgy photos, fights in Houston, and rehab sightings. This interview is going to be horrendous, can I call in sick?

CARMEN re-enters the room.

CARMEN

Welp, I'm fucked!

LAURA

What was said?

CARMEN

Unsurprisingly, the public is not a big fan of watching women fight, even if self-defense. The tabloids are calling me unhinged. The doctors are calling me insane. The police are calling me out on bail.

MERCURY

I don't know what you expected. We cause mass hysteria whenever we do anything that is not mannequin-like.

CARMEN

My bad. I forgot I'm not human.

MERCURY

How could we be? We're perfectly hairless and totally adorable.

PEBBLES

There's still a chance that they'll forego all the gossip and ask us about our actual music.

LAURA

Our MUSIC? Get real, Calico.

PEBBLES

Just once, I want to be plastically asked about our musical influences.

CARMEN

Gotta be mindful of those damn influences. I love being asked what inspired me to write a song that I didn't write.

LAURA

Yeah, well, this is stardom. Most of the people that interview us don't even listen to our music beforehand. They just want to know what dicks we've seen.

MERCURY

A small price to pay for the opportunity to be followed constantly, play music we don't even like anymore, and go places we can't even enjoy.

CARMEN

Remember when the four of us started out? We sounded so different back then.

MERCURY

Right, well, the higher ups told us they were going to make us famous, so we would've played anything.

LAURA

We also didn't have the vocals that Velvet brought to the band when we met her in Madrid.

PEBBLES

Aww Velvet, you remember that?

VELVET

Never will I forget. There I am, playing miserable music in coffee house. Then I am hounded by four American tourists, which was not the attention I had hoped for.

CARMEN

And those four American tourists made you a celebrity!

VELVET

And now I can afford the snow I buy.

LAURA

That's true. At least we can afford cocaine.

CARMEN

I don't think we'd be buying as much as we do if we weren't on tour constantly.

The girls mumble in agreement. The phone starts to ring in the room that they're in. MERCURY answers it.

MERCURY

Hello?

(She waits for a response.)

Yes, she's here, who's calling? ... Hmm, okay. And when was that? ... Gotcha. Yeah, let me hand off the phone. One second. Oh, VELVET? It's for you. It's a girl claiming she got this number from you earlier tonight after the concert.

PEBBLES, CARMEN, and LAURA react. VELVET, sheepishly, takes the phone.

VELVET

I will take this... in the toilet.

VELVET grabs the phone and heads into the bathroom. In the bathroom, she leans against the sink, and talks into the receiver. We can't hear what she's saying.

CARMEN

Is Mercury Martinez a bit... jealous?

MERCURY

Maybe of Velvet; you can call it, a change of heart.

CARMEN

How 'bout I call it a spade?

MERCURY

I can't tell if you're joshing or not anymore.

CARMEN

Neither can I.

MERCURY puts her coffee down, takes a beat, and then enters the bathroom where VELVET is. VELVET is finishing up her conversation. As the two talk, PEBBLES, CARMEN, and LAURA pantomime a conversation.

VELVET
(on the phone)

Alright then. *Gracias*.

VELVET hangs up. MERCURY and
VELVET look at each other.

MERCURY
You don't owe me an explanation.

VELVET
We hit it off, and I told her I would give her tickets. That's as far as it goes.

MERCURY
So then why is she calling at almost four in the morning?

VELVET
She did not say.

MERCURY
(unconvinced)
Right, well, as I said, you don't owe me an explanation.

VELVET
But I do, *angelita*. As well as you owe me one. Because we respect what we
have.

MERCURY
And what am I due to explain?

VELVET
(hushed, almost embarrassed)
You said I was the first girl you ever had. Not that it does matter. I just do
not know why you would lie.

MERCURY
What? You were the first, trust me.

VELVET
Not according to Luna Langdon.

MERCURY is quiet, as if she does not
want to say the truth.

MERCURY

That happened... after you and I happened.

VELVET

Oh. *Oh*.

MERCURY

Yeah.

VELVET

That's much worse.

MERCURY

Hey, you fucked someone that night too!

VELVET

No, I did not.

MERCURY

We aren't exclusive. I was wrecked. I was confused. I was seduced.

VELVET

Which is it?

MERCURY

I don't know.

VELVET

(hurt)

Well, you did not break any rules.

MERCURY

You cannot stand there and say you haven't fucked anyone but me since we first happened!

VELVET

And what if I haven't? Does that make me the exclusive fool to the million dollar drummer?

MERCURY

I don't buy that for one second, Velvet. You've fucked more people than Carmen, Pebbles, Laura, and I combined.

You had someone in your room almost every night. You'd disappear for hours with someone at parties all the time. You think I don't notice? You think I didn't stand there and accept it?

VELVET

I won't deny that, but that was before we happened, and I realised how I felt for you.

MERCURY

So what, we start hooking up, and you're Mrs. Monogamy?

VELVET

I thought it was more than that.

MERCURY

I'm not your girlfriend, Velvet. I don't claim to be and I don't want to be. I can't be. It'd be too fucking complicated. This is all too fucking complicated!

VELVET

It doesn't have to be.

MERCURY

Are you talking out of your ass? The entire world thinks I have a boyfriend, who I'm probably going to have to pretend to marry at some point, just like Carmen.

VELVET

Carmen still has girlfriend.

MERCURY

Yeah, a girlfriend she has to keep so under wraps she's practically a mummy. The only place they can be together is the fucking tour bus.

VELVET

I'm okay with tour bus.

MERCURY

We got caught in Barbados and are now dealing with backlash the size of Asia. I just got told we're most likely going to be followed relentlessly tomorrow because of it. And you want to be exclusive?

What happens when we get caught again? We're not careful enough to be serious about each other.

VELVET

So we get careful. We put the work in.

MERCURY

Velvet, I am up at the ass crack of dawn every day, if I go to sleep at all. I do interviews all day and play the drums till my hands crack and bleed at night. I'm constantly going from bus to hotel, to bus to hotel. I have to do copious amounts of drugs just to continue working. I don't want to put the work in. I can't handle putting the work into anything else but looking cute and playing the drums.

VELVET

We live the same exact way, and here I am, heart on my sleeve, saying I am willing.

MERCURY says nothing.

VELVET

Do you really mean the things you said just now?

A beat.

MERCURY

No.

MERCURY exits the bathroom, leaving
VELVET standing alone.

MERCURY

It's always the worst when you have to pee during a session of phone sex with Velvet.

PEBBLES

And you couldn't hold it?

LAURA

Who the hell is she talking to?

MERCURY

One of her after concert party bimbos. She sounds exceptionally fascinating.

CARMEN

She hasn't had one of those in a bit.

MERCURY

Her tits needed a holiday.

VELVET emerges from the bathroom.

VELVET

Clearly you biscuits have not much better to do than to talk about my tits.

PEBBLES

Biscuits?

VELVET

Bit of a rough translation.

MERCURY

They're famous tits. Home to many.

VELVET

Jealous?

MERCURY

Worried, maybe. You don't use protection nearly as much as you should. I wouldn't be surprised if you tested positive for every STD ever.

CARMEN

This argument is feeling a bit... domestic.

MERCURY

You shut up, Palmer. I wouldn't fuck Velvet if she were the last woman on Earth, and I was WRECKED beyond repair.

CARMEN

Oh, you could do worse than Velvet.

MERCURY

That girl will let anything that moans into her *proper Parisian pussy*. She could be a beach with all the crabs living on her crotch.

VELVET

You've done worse than me. We haven't forgotten about Space Boy.

LAURA, CARMEN, and PEBBLES
burst out laughing.

PEBBLES

Not Space Boy!

LAURA

That dude was bonkers! Like, cut off your ear with a knife type bonkers.

CARMEN

Remember when Mercury got caught with another boy so he snapped all her drumsticks in half right before our concert? She had to go on with taped sticks! We sounded so wack.

PEBBLES

Remember when he broke into our tour bus and stole Mercury's dress before that award ceremony in LA? She had to wear a T-shirt and jeans instead, and got ranked number one on the Worst Dressed List after.

LAURA

Remember when he tried to convince our crew that Mercury was colorblind, and they all believed it? Our hairstylist kept trying to explain colors to her.

CARMEN

Remember when -

MERCURY

I GET IT!

VELVET

You sure know how to, how you say, pick them.

MERCURY

And as do you, Velvet. You want to get dirty? Let's get dirty. Blasey Clement and Charles Dupree.

PEBBLES, LAURA, and CARMEN
laugh even harder. VELVET is mad.

VELVET

We agreed to not ever speak of that.

MERCURY

And I just don't play fair.

PEBBLES

I completely forgot about Blasey and Charles. That was entirely nuts.

LAURA

It was so fucking strange when they were photographed in London holding hands and kissing each other.

CARMEN

That follow-up interview was ridiculously awkward. "So Velvet, you were photographed kissing and touching both Blasey Clement AND Charles Dupree of the band, Salve? What's going on there?" and Velvet, who was embarrassed, had said so simply, "Friendship, right?"

LAURA

It was made fun of on the late nights for months!

MERCURY

And just to find out, they both threw Velvet COMPLETELY under the bus at their next interview, and said that Velvet had started kissing the both of them and said that he said it was a French thing. And America bought it! The tabloids called Velvet a French tricycle for close to a year!

VELVET

Americans are so BORING. The things you consider NEWS. In Madrid, that's just another Tuesday!

MERCURY

Oh sure, tricycle.

VELVET

Okay, Mercury. Juno Rocks.

LAURA

Juno Rocks? The ice skater?

VELVET

Mercury did him when we did the show on ice. She cut his leg with an ice skate, because they did it in a closet!

PEBBLES

Merc, a CLOSET?

CARMEN

You must have felt right at home.

MERCURY

Well thanks for that, Velvet. And now, I'll say the name that I know you've been trembling with fear that I'd say. Victor Palmer.

They all look to VELVET.

CARMEN

No.

MERCURY

Oh yeah.

CARMEN

No.

MERCURY

Oh, yeah.

CARMEN

Velvet, you fucked my husband?

VELVET

You're not really together! You have girlfriend!

CARMEN

Velvet, that is so reckless. What if you got caught? What if you fucking got caught? That could've ruined the band entirely!

VELVET

We didn't! We were smart!

CARMEN

Where? Where'd you fuck him?

VELVET
I don't know, Dublin?

CARMEN
DUBLIN?

LAURA
Didn't you stage your wedding in Dublin?

CARMEN
YOU FUCKED MY HUSBAND THE WEEKEND OF OUR STAGED WEDDING?

VELVET
He's not really your husband! Why are you angry?

CARMEN
So, nothing's off-limits to you? You'll really fuck anything that moves?

VELVET
Carmen, come on.

CARMEN
I'm not upset you fucked him. I'm just upset you'd do that, knowing how risky that is, knowing that could ruin reputations. It's like getting off is more important than the band.

VELVET is hurt by this.

VELVET
You know this band is my everything. I gave up my entire life to join this band. I immigrated to the states, without knowing the language, leaving everyone I have love behind, to join a bunch of girls I did not even know.

CARMEN
And now that we made you the elusive and famous Velvet Valentine, you don't need us anymore?

VELVET
Did I say that?

CARMEN

Oh come on, Vel. You've been swimming gloriously in these solo rumours. You've been dismissive and careful.

VELVET

You really think I would go solo and not tell anyone of you guys?

PEBBLES and LAURA exchange looks.

CARMEN

You were a solo artist before we met you.

VELVET

And then we met, and I knew where I belong! Is this really what you guys think of me?

A beat. VELVET looks to MERCURY, who offers no help.

VELVET (CONT'D)

Do you not trust me after all these years?

PEBBLES

Of course we trust you, Velvet.

VELVET

You doubt my intentions.

PEBBLES

Oh come on guys, let's not do this. If we make fun of each other's sex lives and question our loyalties, we're no better than the tabloids.

CARMEN

I'm not apologizing.

LAURA

And why should you? You haven't apologized for a single thing in your entire life.

CARMEN

What exactly does that mean?

LAURA

You started all this media bullshit with that stupid fight in Houston! Not only that, you're constantly throwing us under the bus and undermining us. You basically run the band when we're supposed to be in this together.

CARMEN

Yeah, and if I didn't do that, we wouldn't be where we are right now.

LAURA

What, yelling at each other off a cocaine comedown while trapped by clickers in a hotel room?

CARMEN

That is so ungrateful.

PEBBLES

She's right.

MERCURY

Oh shut up, Pebbles. Think for yourself for fucking once.

PEBBLES

Oh sorry, Mercury, but the role of cold-hearted bitch was taken by you.

MERCURY

Real original. Publish that one on a Bazooka wrapper.

LAURA

Don't bother with her, Pebbles. Mercury will never be sympathetic with you, even after you've overdosed and we're singing our song in front of your casket.

MERCURY

That's completely unfair! I'm just not soft like the rest of you!

LAURA

Mercury, we're no strangers to your cold, unloving heart. Empathy doesn't make you weak, you know.

MERCURY

Shut up, Laura. Don't you have more orgies to host?

LAURA

I take back what I said. You have no heart. There's nothing there but a tennis ball.

MERCURY

Look, can everyone just shut the fuck up?

PEBBLES

Why, because your opinion is the only one that matters?

MERCURY

The day you have an opinion let me know, I'd love to hear it.

PEBBLES

Okay, here's my opinion: in a few hours we're about to get our careers ruined on live television so instead of turning on each other we need to think of a way out of this!

CARMEN

No amount media training will fix this shit. They've got photos. Laura's just made it all worse.

LAURA

Me? Mercury and Velvet's photo is objectively worse!

VELVET

Nuh-uh!

MERCURY

Yeah, at least we didn't go off the rails and attend rehab. The media would rather see a successful overdose than see a woman get help.

PEBBLES

Okay, would you rather I had died from it then?

CARMEN

At least they would've been a little sympathetic!

VELVET

Carmen!

LAURA

Fucking hell, Carmen. What are you, out for blood?

PEBBLES

No, I get it. It makes perfect sense. Carmen can't handle not having the same perfect girl reputation she's had since we started. She's mad that the whole world hates her now.

CARMEN

Oh come on. Unlike you losers, I can handle some bad press.

PEBBLES

You can't take what people are saying about you, can you? "In a shocking new video, bassist Carmen Palmer exhibits the most unladylike, unadmirable, and *barbaric* side of herself -"

CARMEN

Fuck off, Pebbles. *I* was defending my husband. What were you defending? What were any of you defending?

VELVET

Does it really matter who did worse?

CARMEN

No, I guess not. But you know what? Even after every mug up and dirty look I've ever received from Hollywood, I can still admit who I am at the end of the day, unlike some people in the room.

MERCURY

(defensive)

Velvet and I being together doesn't make you any less of a rigid bitch!

VELVET

MERCURY!

A beat. Everyone processes MERCURY's admission. Then the phone starts to ring. It rings once, twice, three times, until MERCURY picks it up, irritated.

MERCURY

WHAT?

A pause.

Georgia? I... what?

Another pause.

Yes, we were arguing, how did you...

A third pause.

What do you mean they're listening downstairs?

Another pause as MERCURY, seemingly under the instruction of Georgia, approaches the window to the left of the stage. She sees a long, black wire, and picks it up. She presents it to the other girls.

MERCURY

The room is bugged.

BLACKOUT.