

**all the rage**

emma joy hill

**Players:**

This cast is composed of 7 women.  
This cast must be diverse.  
This cast cannot be all white women. Full stop.  
This cast is composed of actors of the present.  
They represent whatever social justice women need be.  
They are playing themselves.  
They are putting on different hats from predecessors prior.  
They put on the characters.  
We see them put them on.  
We see them take them off.

**Characters:**

These are some of the figures that may be featured in the play.  
Their names are not mentioned.  
It is worth noting who we're representing on stage, though.  
Different players can play the same figure. Or not.  
Alice Paul  
Ida B Wells  
Hope  
Joan  
Sappho  
Justice  
Freedom  
Peace  
Helen Mackaye  
Lucy Burns  
Policemen  
Men

**Set:**

The play should arrive to the space.  
If the play lives outdoors it could very well be on a pageant wagon.  
If the stage is stationary, mirror that essence.  
There should be pieces of scenery scattered throughout the audience:  
Baby Carriage, Rum Barrel, Desk, etc.  
These will serve as part of the players' playing space.  
If the play lives indoors, it should consistently be fighting against the walls of the space

**Time:**

Absolutely now.  
Now playing then.

**Notes:**

This is a call to action  
This is a protest

Completely aware of itself  
The play neither ends nor begins, but carries the story  
While we, the actors, carry the change  
This is humorous and horrifying

Dashes signify a change in voice  
Divvy up the text amongst actors as you see fit.  
The prologue may be spoken by one, some, or all women.

Lines that are in bold are said in unison.

## PRE - SHOW

*The Women set up posters.*

*“Nasty Women”*

*“Our Bodies Our Choice”*

*“No to Texas Abortion Ban”*

*“Stop Voter Suppression”*

*“Pass the For the People Act”*

*Etc.*

*They hang along the walls of the space.*

*Amongst the audience.*

*One woman hangs a poster close to the stage.*

*Another approaches her. Whispers.*

- She was taken aback.
- What?
- I said she —
- Ah —
- Yes.
- She was take -
- Taken. Yes.
- By -
- Wore a bright light.
- Right.
- Not angelic, more -
- I know. I know.
- And a suit.
- Badge?
- Pin.
- When?
- Other -

- Last?
- No, 9th.
- 9th was —
- Yes.
- And today the —
- 12th.
- And we haven't heard, haven't checked, haven't
- We had the demonstration.
- Yes.
- Yes.
- And she said she would.
- Be there. Yes.
- But, we didn't notice.
- Mrs —
- The woman with the -
- Yes. Said she heard screams.
- When? When did she say?
- Last night.
- She waited. She waited to say -
- At least she said —
- But, why didn't she speak —
- Fraid of her —
- The woman with the husband.
- Right. He practices —
- Right. She's quiet.

- Reason.
- So now she's, I mean Al -
- Gone.
- Since that night.
- Yes.
- That night we were all -
- Yes.
- But, we were all.
- Yes.
- Just her?
- Just. Yes.
- For now.
- For now. Yes.
- And you're sure, I mean, you're certain, I mean —

*The Woman hands her a newspaper excerpt. She reads.*

- We have to —
- No.
- She —
- Wouldn't want us to.
- But, we need. She needs. We -
- She wouldn't want to draw away.
- Shh. Shh. The others don't know.
- Alright. Alright.
- And if we strike fear then —

- Right.
- She'll be alright.
- Yes.
- Say it. Say you think so.
- One is falling —
- What?
- The corner there.
- Oh.
- Needs more -
- Got it.
- Adhesive.
- Got it. Here.

*The Woman helps her re-tape the poster.*

- Lucy?
- Yes?
- They look good.
- I don't even know / what that
- I know.
- Means anymore.
- It means -
- I just want it to be -
- Means better than before.

*They look at the posters.*

- Still a ways to go.

*They go back to work.*

## PROLOGUE

*A woman appears onstage.  
She acknowledges the posters.  
Reads them. Smiles. Engages.  
She acknowledges the audience.  
Reads them. Smiles. Engages.  
She takes a breath.*

It's -

*She checks her watch.*

It's [time of day] on [month] [date] of [year].  
Our location is [coordinates].

*She puts her watch away.  
Takes out a piece of newspaper.  
Begins to read headlines.  
Hopefully, local.  
Particularly ones surrounding suffrage  
Or Women Or Oppression Or Humanity  
She finishes when she feels she's had enough.  
She sits facing the audience.  
She puts her head in her hands.*

*Another woman appears onstage.  
She begins to whisk eggs in a bowl.*

*Another woman appears onstage.  
She begins to whisk eggs in a bowl.*

*Another.  
Another.  
Another.  
Another.*

*They may interact with each other.  
It may be playful, fun, empowering.  
It may also be dismal, frightening, aggressive.  
Maybe some of both.*

*The following may be spoken by one, some, or all women.*



It's really quite unfortunate that we have to gather here again  
After all this time  
Or space  
Or lack thereof  
It's a heartache to find the world shifted slight  
And yet still just as belligerent as where you last left it

If you don't believe in ghosts  
You're foolish

What remains of the living has forgone the dead  
They scratch at our earlobes begging for another word  
Another chance to make the change once promised  
Nearer, farer, forgotten

When I was a child I played with two dolls  
But the boy next door took one for his army  
I raised my hand to take her back,  
But my arm grew tired hanging in the air

It's not easy to let go of bodies  
Or to accept decisions made for your own

If you don't believe in ghosts  
You're foolish

Sisters of a past war, of a same war, a sane war  
Sneak through the halls of my heart, my mind,

My voice has never trembled  
It only shakes with fury

With the unspoken memories  
The tawdry recollection  
Of what it means to be seen  
Or counted

A worry  
A word  
A woman

*They spill the contents of their bowls on the floor in unison.  
Slowly.*

*They drop the bowls.  
They exit.*

*All except the woman with her head in her hands.  
She reacts to the sound of shattering glass.*

*She takes a moment. Breathes.*

*She puts on her costume in front of us.*

*She looks for a rag.*

*She looks everywhere for a rag.*

*She can't find one.*

*She looks at one of the posters.*

*She tears one down sentimentally.*

*She begins to clean the spilt eggs with it.*

*She hums "My Country 'Tis of Thee".*

*Meanwhile, in silhouette:*

## BEAUTY PAGEANT PLAY

*Six women put on sashes. Tiaras. Wave to their fans. Goof off.*

- If I play Susan B, do I have to wear my hair like that? Because I'd really rather not / wear my hair like
- Actually in 1913 they put on a pageant and it looked nothing like this / we don't even have stairs
- There's still steps to climb / room to back pedal / put some more elbow grease into it all
- I'll be the lady who rides the big white horse / there once was a lady who rode a big white horse / and then she died -
- Well we all died
- Dying isn't the same as dreading living
- Isn't it though?
- I tried putting on my toga last night but my tit slipped out and I'm curious if that's going to hurt our cause or help it
- Hurt / it
- Help it.
- I mean we have to get the boys to pay attention somehow, right?
- It's all propaganda. Who needs em?
- Unfortunately / we do.
- Unfortunately, yeah.
- Unfortunately, the ERA was never / passed.
- Unfortunately, the double bind / exists.
- 82 Cents to the dollar.
- If you're lucky.
- If you're white.

*Beat.*

- Let's get some music.

- Yeah yeah yeah.

*They come out from the silhouette.*

*They hold a boombox. They play some tunes (Girls Just Wanna Have Fun), etc.*

- I've never been in a pageant before!

- It's a play

- Is there a difference?

- I'm so excited. I'm going to sign someone's program and / give them my autograph / and everyone will remember me as the girl who wore the veil

- Of course there's a / difference.

- I just mean all some sort of strange spectacle / is all.

- Or they'll remember me as / the girl who blank. I don't really care what they remember me for I just want to be / remembered.

- They won't remember.

- Course they will.

- How could they forget?

- We're marching to the capital in a / terrible brigade.

- Easily, easily, easily.

- Can you help me tie my / thanks.

- Sure.

- If they don't remember then what's the point.

- Very funny.

- No, I just mean / what's the difference.

- Can't think beyond your own headshot your own / voice.

- Well, yeah.

- When did you join the —

- Last week

- Last week? Oh boy

- Oh boy
- Oh boy
- Fresh meat.
- What?
- Let me guess. You want to be in pictures?
- You want to write a legacy?
- Scratch the surface of something -
- Gritty.
- Sexy.
- Exciting.
- Something -
- New.
- Well, yeah. Well / no I -

The other women laugh.

- No I just want / some
- Last week a man flung rat dung at my -
- Told me I should die in a tornado fire -
- Broke my tooth with a bible
- Hit my bike
- My boob
- My left eye still has a
- Bruise
- Scar
- On my

- Leg
- Arm
- Grabbed me by the
- Pussy
- Neck
- Spit on my
- Face
- Shoe
- Broke all the
- He broke all the
- Hell he broke me
- Me too.
- Not pretty baby
- Really not pretty kind of
- Not a beautiful thing
- Revolution isn't a
- Pageant isn't a
- Beautiful kind
- You know so you should really
- Get off the stage if you want to be remembered for the sake of memory
- No, no. I'll stay.
- Alright
- Alright
- She's staying
- Howdy ho