

The Pop Off

author credit: Ariel Mary Ann

published by the Educational Theatre Association - 2022

This monologue is copyrighted and remains the intellectual property of the author, used by permission under an agreement with the Educational Theatre Association for educational use exclusively by students of color. Any use by non-BIPOC students is a violation of copyright.

*A note from the playwright: This monologue tackles fatphobia from the perspective of a fat high school student and therefore, the actor playing this character must not be a thin individual. In short, **this monologue is explicitly for fat identified individuals ONLY**. In this monologue, Kaira is talking to her Mom. Kaira's mom recently purchased a swimming suit for her. Since she can remember, her mom has always made rude comments about her body essentially telling her she's too fat. This monologue represents Kaira's breaking point where she questions why she has to wear this bathing suit. As the monologue continues it shifts into a cry for help and a rant of sorts where Kaira begins to call out how she's always been made to feel small as if her feelings towards everything that's happened just doesn't matter.)*

Mom, you can't make me wear this bathing suit. I hate how it looks on my body. Why can't I just wear a t shirt with shorts?! Since I was a kid, you've tried to make me into this... pretty girl and that's not me. The dresses, the makeup, family members telling me how 'beautiful' I am - just makes my skin crawl. I don't want to be... beautiful. I just want to be myself. Did you know Aunt Ricky told me, "Kaira, you have such a pretty face and if you lost some weight you'd look ever better" I mean... do I not look great now?! I know everyone wants me to be this thin tiny girl but I'm not her and I never will be. I've felt this way my entire life. Thin people can walk around while not having to deal with people making mean comments about how their bodies look but meanwhile, I have to tolerate the stares, the secret laughter, and people telling me how 'brave' I am for wearing something form fitting. When I eat food, I feel so self-conscious because it's as if all the eyes are on the disgusting fat girl. If I want food then I have to suffer at the hands of thin people. What I choose to eat is somehow their business because they're simply "concerned" for my health even though I know for a fact that my classmate, Liza, lives off Taco Bell for lunch but no one wants to talk about that. Why is it okay for her to eat a Chalupa but when I do it, it's a health crisis? I love you Mom but I'm not going to let you treat me like this. You see it as having my best interests at heart but do you really? because I have the scars on my wrists that say otherwise. *(Beat)* Well, are you going say anything? *(Beat)*

You know what, don't even answer because I know it's just going to be you telling me that I'm overreacting and not to take things personally. What, you and the rest of the family, don't seem to understand is that it's not overreacting when I deal with this day in and day out. You know what that's called mother? It's called fatphobia.



The Educational Theatre Association was awarded an ARI Community Arts Projects grant by the Ohio Arts Council to complete this work in the spring of 2022, under a project known as "Finding Voice".



And I know what you're thinking, "How dare you speak to me like this, I am your mother" but at this point, I have had it with having to hold my tongue so you can ground me, you can complain to Aunt Ricky and Uncle Sam but know that I meant every single word I've said. I don't know how else to explain to you that I feel uncomfortable when you make these comments about me. It hurts and I would think you would understand considering I'm your child but it's as though you don't even care. When I was 15 you told me, "*Careful honey, you don't want to gain any weight, you know summer is right around the corner*" When I was 10, you put me on WEIGHT WATCHERS and told me, "*Honey, make sure you're watching your points*" Last Thanksgiving, when I got a second plate of food - which by the way consisted of me telling myself, "*It's okay to want food*" - you looked at me, smiled, and said, "*I see you're really enjoying that food. I'm glad you like it but it's probably why you're chunky now*" and you said it so casually without even considering how that would make me feel. My fat body is not an invite for you to try and *fix* me. I didn't need to be fixed, I needed you to love me. Mom, my fat body is not an example of imperfections but rather, my fat body is a symbol of liberation and home.



The Educational Theatre Association was awarded an ARI Community Arts Projects grant by the Ohio Arts Council to complete this work in the spring of 2022, under a project known as "Finding Voice".

