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# Best and Most Beautiful Things

By Unknown

You gonna light this candle?  
Don't you  
think lighting a candle  
is kind of cliché?  
What do you mean?  
Everyone does that in movies.  
"Concentrate on the candle.  
Concentrate  
on the flame."  
It's works.  
Really?  
Have a candle.  
I feel it's getting warmer.  
Is this my imagination?  
No, honey.  
It's not... it's not lit.  
I can't see anything.  
I'll help you.  
I'll talk you through it, OK?  
- OK. - So here's the match...  
- Oh, OK.  
And the matchbox comes  
with a striker on the side.  
It... it's scary.  
Yeah.  
You just do this like that  
and light on fire...  
and harder.  
I'm afraid of it.  
Why are you afraid of it?  
Because I'm afraid of fire.  
Now hold on to the candle  
with the other hand,  
almost there, and you'll  
see when it lights.  
Up a little bit higher.  
Now just keep it right there.  
Keep your... keep your  
match right there.  
It'll light that on fire.  
It's getting shorter  
and shorter.  
Yeah. Good.  
Good. See?

When can I blow it out?  
Want to blow it out now?  
Daria, on computer:  
I can't believe you're trying  
to bribe me with singles.  
Sweetie, it's not a bribe.  
It's a deal. Honestly...  
Oh, my God,  
did I really just say that?  
Excuse me.  
Excuse me.  
I have the cutest,  
little pores, don't I?  
You really do.  
I wish I had pores  
like yours, Daria.  
Michelle, voice-over: It's...  
it's a freaking genius show.  
It's a show about outcasts  
that tells you  
it's OK to be an outcast.  
Make lots of noise  
Kiss lots of boys  
Or kiss lots of girls if  
that's something you're into  
When the...  
Michelle, voice-over:  
I've always felt  
like I was not normal,  
like I did not fit in.  
First of all,  
I am legally blind.  
I cannot see your face  
from this distance at all  
unless I'm literally  
almost nose to nose with you.  
I forget that the camera's  
over here, not up there. Ha ha!  
Oh, crap.  
Michelle, voice-over:  
I have something called  
Asperger syndrome,  
otherwise known  
as high-functioning autism.

It's that I get very obsessed  
with things in my head,  
and, um, like, it takes over  
my brain, basically.  
I'm a little surprised, Daria.  
That makes two of us.  
I didn't figure you to believe  
in all that  
mumbo-gumbo.  
Gee...  
I hope this  
won't lower your opinion of me.  
Ha ha ha!  
La la la la la...  
Michelle, voice-over: Basically,  
my childhood, it was mostly  
things that were...  
quote, unquote... "normal"  
for little girls to like,  
but I liked them in the extreme.  
Hello, Mumsy.  
Hey, honey.  
Um, smells like sandwiches.  
Yeah. It's roast  
beef and salami...  
Ooh, yummy.  
And... yes,  
and tomatoes.  
Michelle, voice-over: Nowadays,  
I feel like I need to have  
some tangible success  
in my life.  
What about, uh, banana peppers?  
Top shelf on the right.  
Oh.  
Michelle, voice-over:  
When I get up in the morning,  
pour myself a cup of coffee  
and think,  
"OK. I'm going to work,"  
and when I come home  
in a evening, feel like I've...  
you know, I've had a...  
you know, a long,

fulfilling day  
and I'm earning my money,  
that... that feeling  
that all kids want,  
which is to be an adult.

Woman, voice-over:  
Michelle was a very good baby.  
She didn't cry a lot.  
She did a lot of looking around,  
and we didn't...  
we didn't know until  
she was 3 months old  
that she even had  
a vision problem.

Michelle, voice-over:  
When I was in kindergarten,  
my parents said, "If the kids  
laugh at you, just ignore them,"  
and I was thinking,  
"Why would they laugh at me?"  
Pick up the pace.  
Well, this is an exciting day.  
Huh huh!  
What are you gonna do today?  
I don't know, but  
I'm a little nervous.  
You are?  
Yeah.  
How are the first day of school?  
Going back is a little  
nervous, isn't it?  
Yeah...  
especially in fifth grade  
because fifth grade...  
Pump up...  
Pump up the volume,  
pump up volume  
Pump up the volume,  
dance, dance, dance  
Ha ha!  
Ha ha ha!

Michelle, voice-over: I was  
never popular in public school.  
The kids'd literally be like,

"Ew, there's Michelle.  
We're gonna catch her disease,"  
and then just, like, run away.  
That was probably the worst,  
um, because I couldn't  
see the faces people made,  
but I could hear the words,  
and that... that hurt the most.  
I wasn't angry at them.  
I didn't want to go punch them,  
but it felt like emptiness.  
Woman, on computer:  
Hey, guys, it's Nik here,  
and, as requested,  
I'll be doing...  
Michelle, voice-over:  
When I'm on the computer,  
I can see things,  
for the most part,  
the way the sighted world  
see things,  
and people talk to me online,  
a lot of times,  
they don't even know  
that I'm blind,  
and so I feel like it...  
it equalizes me,  
but then when I leave the house  
and... and go out into the world,  
it's not like that.  
Hey, Mom, do you know what  
happened to my backpack?  
No.  
Ohh...  
Ohh...  
uh...  
Ohh!  
Uh, can't find it, like, at all.  
Wonderful. I didn't...  
haven't gone anywhere.  
I didn't left...  
left the house.  
No. I don't  
see it anywhere.

Yeah. Yeah. I know.

Ohh...

You didn't go...

No.

I didn't go anywhere

for, like, a week.

I don't know what to do.

It isn't anywhere.

It's just nowhere.

Ohh...

This is my life.

Oh, why are you guys

still filming me?

I mean, there are

less than 4 things

I could think of

that could've happened.

And so what?

There it is.

Oh, my God.

I found it, and I'm so sorry

that I freaked out at you guys.

Michelle, voice-over: I want

to see all aspects of life.

Just because I'm legally blind

doesn't mean I have to miss out

on what the world has to offer.

This is Picture Day

Abbey Bominable.

Abbey Bominable is the daughter

of the Yeti,

and she's, like,

my favorite character

because she's really blunt,

plus she has a cool accent,

so 7, 6, and 4,

then 4, then two.

Michelle, voice-over: I want

to experience, you know, like,

working and... and romance

and partying and all that stuff,

going to bars, going to museums.

20, 21, 22, 23...

23 dolls.

Yay. I'm in doll heaven.  
Michelle, voice-over: I'm ready  
for the uncensored world...  
you know what I mean?  
Even the good, bad,  
and the ugly...  
so I went and got a job,  
uh, working for this woman  
and a, um... a post office,  
and every Wednesday and Friday,  
I would come in  
and wash my hands and say,  
"What do you want me to do?"  
and I would do it.  
I would do it to the best  
of my abilities,  
and sometimes I would get  
a little nervous  
and a little bit, "Oh, I feel  
like I'm not doing this right."  
I did all these little things,  
apparently.  
Like, I made excuses when  
they said I did something wrong.  
I freaked out.  
I went into another room  
and cried,  
and then I got fired from it.  
That's basically my first  
job experience.  
The really pathetic thing is  
that it wasn't even a real job.  
It was training.  
I got fired during training.  
Like, uh...  
Julie, voice-over: The thought  
that Michelle had was,  
"If I can get fired from that,  
where do I go from here?  
What do I do now?"  
Like when you wake up  
behind the bar  
Trying to remember  
where you are



Julie, voice-over:

She certainly does feel  
that the struggles and losses  
in her life

have, um, helped define her.

Each and every one of you  
has the talent

and the ability to create  
your own life.

Know yourself and know  
all the challenges you face  
and don't put yourself  
on the sidelines.

Not everybody's  
gonna understand you  
or see you as capable,  
or, in some cases,  
they may even pity you,

God forbid,

but you can't let that  
stop you from being  
the most important person  
in your own world.

You know, all people  
are great in their dreams.

The point that I want  
for you guys

is to be important  
in your own life,  
not just in your dreams,  
but in your real life,  
you know, that it is,  
in fact, up to you.

Perfect diploma  
to Michelle Anne Smith.

Michelle, voice-over:

I'm gonna miss this place,  
but in some ways I feel like  
I've almost outgrown it.

I want to leave,  
and I want to take on the world.

The world will be my burrito.

Hi, Fran. Hi, Maxwell.

Michelle, voice-over: I would

wake up, go on the computer,  
take my meds, have some coffee,  
go on the computer,  
take a shower,  
go on the computer,  
but I've probably spent  
an entire year in my room...  
and... and now I'm...  
I'm sort of feeling  
like I'm ready to step out again  
into the world  
and... and be social.  
I am not alone  
I am not alone  
I am  
not alone  
I am  
Thank you so much.  
That was fun.  
Julie, voice-over: It's been  
really hard for Michelle  
to find a job  
that she's able to do.  
They're just not out there  
here in Bangor,  
and I don't think there's  
gonna be a lot of employers  
that are going  
to give her the chance  
because she's going to need  
a lot of assistance  
and a lot of time.  
I don't know if, you know,  
someone has the patience  
for that  
or if she has the patience  
in herself for that.  
I'm cold, and I am shamed  
Lying naked on the floor  
Illusion never changed  
Into something real  
I'm wide awake, and I can see  
the perfect sky is torn  
And don't forget to wish

Michelle a happy birthday,  
2-1 birthday right here.  
How'd I do?  
Whoo!  
You rocked it.  
Yours is the birthday, honey?  
Happy birthday.  
You can sing so beautiful.  
Thank you.  
Aw, I'm gonna cry.  
You can.  
I, um... I actually...  
You sing better than me.  
I... I can't...  
I can't see the screen.  
I'm legally blind,  
so any more...  
any song that I know  
I have to memorize  
all the words to, so, uh...  
I know that, honey.  
You're amazing.  
Aw, thank you so much.  
Keep it up.  
You do a great job.  
I found out about an opportunity  
that I think would be  
really amazing for you.  
The guy that created  
the "Rugrats"...  
do you know that cartoon?  
I very well know it.  
Um, he would really love  
to have you be an intern  
there in Los Angeles  
either this summer  
or this fall if you  
would be interested.  
I'm shaking.  
I'm gonna sit down.  
I... I... uh, are you sure  
I'm not dreaming?  
What would he want me  
to do as, like, an intern?

Does... he knows I'm blind,  
right? Like...  
He knows you're blind.  
OK.  
Maybe you would get  
to voice characters.  
Oh, my God, do you know  
how much I want to be  
a voice actor since I was,  
like, a little, little kid?  
Oh, my goodness.  
Ha ha ha!  
I don't really have  
the money to really be...  
I... I live on SSI  
right now, so...  
We want to work with you  
to figure it out.  
And I'd... yes.  
What?  
Seriously.  
Ha ha ha!  
Ha ha!  
No.  
I'm not even...  
No. Your...  
your mom...  
your mom doesn't  
want to lose you.  
Wow. Ha ha!  
Yeah.  
Honey, that's awesome.  
Yeah.  
Yeah.  
Crazy.  
I know. Yeah.  
It's crazy talk.  
Yeah. I know.  
That's awesome, honey.  
Are you really considering it?  
Yeah.  
All right.  
Yeah. I really am.  
It's, like, my...

my big break.

He wants me

to come to L.A.

and live in L.A.

and be a voice actor,

be his intern

and do voice acting.

Oh, wow.

That's really big.

Yes.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I'm gonna move to L.A.

sometime in January.

Well, uh, congratulations.

Thank you.

Maybe I might even do,

like, some singing and stuff.

I might even do some,

like, screen acting.

I really don't...

I really don't know.

Think you'll just

stay out there?

You think you'll come

back home and visit?

I don't know. I'm...

I'm probably gonna

come back home and visit,

definitely, but...

So if we want to see you,

we're gonna have

to come see you?

Uh, yeah.

Come visit me. Heh.

That's big news.

Mm-hmm.

In some ways, it's

a little bit scary.

Mm-hmm.

Yeah. I'll be

stressing about things.

"Oh, my gosh, she's gonna

forget to do this,"

or, "She's... you know,  
she's gonna"  
"be listening to her headphones  
or something on the bus  
and miss her bus stop,"  
or, you know, stuff like that.  
Migliozzi, voice-over:  
It sounds kind of crazy.  
Uh, the woman from  
the Communications Department  
is going on her own time.  
This isn't  
a Perkins-sponsored event.  
The cold reality of it is,  
there's just a lot of pieces  
that have to be put in place...  
the transportation,  
where are you gonna  
get the food,  
do you know anybody  
to live with,  
uh, if something goes wrong,  
where the support's gonna be.  
You know, I don't want her  
to be crushed,  
and we don't want it  
to fall apart.  
I don't want that  
for Michelle...  
Hopefully, I won't get  
fired from this one.  
Well, you'll always  
be awesome to us.  
Yep.  
Migliozzi, voice-over: but I  
also always tell my students,  
the future is theirs, and  
this is what she wants to do.  
It just seems like there's just  
not enough in place here  
to make me say that, you know,  
I can give my blessing  
to what's going on.  
Julie, voice-over: Emotionally,

I think it would be  
a huge setback for her  
if it didn't work out,  
and it would take her a while  
to get back on track...  
you know?  
Well, guess  
who's coming to dinner.  
Hello.  
Hey, how are you?  
I'm doing well.  
Well, good.  
I love the new glasses.  
Thank you.  
Come on in.  
Ah, this place  
smells like nostalgia.  
Julie, voice-over: Lori Spencer  
was Michelle's  
Division of the Blind teacher.  
I'm very appreciative of what,  
you know, Lori did for Michelle,  
but she kind of had  
low expectations of Michelle.  
I came here  
because I want to, uh,  
for lack of a better word,  
um, confront you  
on some things,  
but I want you to know  
that you were... you were  
a great teacher to me  
in a lot of ways.  
You taught me, and...  
and I... I think that now  
I can sort of, uh, talk to you.  
OK.  
Um, I think a lot  
of people who work  
with people with  
disabilities don't really...  
they tend to think  
that our pers... certain...  
certain personality

quirks that aren't  
considered "normal"  
are just a side effect  
of our disability that  
needs to be changed  
and fixed, and our individuality  
is not considered as important  
as someone without a disability  
because a lot of it  
is considered, like,  
a side effect of our disability.  
"Oh, she doesn't know  
that it's weird  
to like to collect dolls  
when she's 21"...  
which I do, like,  
collect dolls...  
and it's like, no,  
I know that people  
are gonna think it's weird,  
but it's who I am,  
and I feel like other  
people's ignorance  
should not be my burden to bear.  
I should be able to be myself.  
I'm not hurting anyone,  
and there's so many people  
who are trained to work  
with people with disabilities  
telling me, "You will  
never be a real adult."  
People are always gonna talk  
to you like you're a child,"  
and so when we were  
at that meeting and I said,  
"Is there any way  
I could get a new cane,  
"or is there anywhere  
that I can go  
to get a new cane,"  
I wasn't telling him,  
"Get me a cane now,"  
and then you went,  
"Puh, puh, puh, puh, puh,"



that was, like,  
the final straw in my head  
of all the condescension  
and patronizing stuff,  
and so, yeah,  
I kind of blew up at you,  
and I know I prob...  
I probably could've dealt  
with it better,  
but it just kind of, like,  
was the final straw for me.  
OK, and... and I will...  
I will just tell you  
where I'm coming from  
because I certainly  
didn't mean to hurt  
your feelings.  
Um, it's...  
it's not you.  
It's the autism speaking,  
and so I don't take  
anything personally.  
Spencer, voice-over: Her world  
is so small, the knowledge  
that she is lacking  
between the vision loss  
and not seeing everything  
that goes on  
but then also because  
of the autism...  
that neurological, mental,  
whatever you want to call it...  
she doesn't get it,  
and that's why I don't see her  
as being totally independent.  
I just don't.  
It feels like she  
looks at your condition  
in black or white.  
You're either  
perfectly independent  
and you know everything  
or you don't know anything  
and are not capable

of living alone.

Yeah.

No, but that's

what's being insinuated,  
and I don't... and I don't  
really appreciate it.

That's... that's

what you're reading into it,  
and we've... and we've had  
this conversation many times.

It's not...

You're not...

you're not going to  
convince me that I...  
that I should go and  
go to basketball games.

I know it sounds rude  
because I know Jordn's,  
like, in it and  
everything, but...

Jordn gets a lot  
of playing time now.

Like, he's the starter.

I can't tell who  
is he out there.

You never tried to  
convince me to do...  
to go to any sport...

any sporting events  
for, like, the last  
5 years of my life,  
and I don't think  
that makes me...

I don't think that  
makes me a bad person.

It's not about making  
you a bad person.

It's just supporting  
your brother.

I'm not saying at all  
that, hey, you should  
become a sports fan because...

Imagine if you can...

if... if all you can do

is hear, rrr!,  
squeak, squeak,  
squeak, squeak,  
squeak, aah!,  
people screaming, and  
you... there's no input.  
It's just loud, loud,  
offending sounds  
to your ears and you  
have to sit there  
for two hours on a hard bench  
listening to that while  
everyone around you  
is all excited and you  
just feel left out  
and slightly uncomfortable  
and you feel like  
you're supposed to feel  
like you're supportive  
but you don't.  
That's the rest of us, too.  
That's the rest of your group?  
Oh, OK. The rest  
with them.  
They're with them.  
Wow.  
Because you guys  
are all set, OK?  
You're all set.  
Oh, my God.  
Hey, you.  
Hi.  
Nice to see you.  
Yeah.  
And at center, a junior,  
number 52... Jordn Smith.  
All right, Jordn!  
Now introducing the  
home team for tonight's game...  
your Bucksport Golden Bucks.  
Starting at guard, senior,  
number 4... Josh Gray.  
Whose broad stripes  
and bright stars

Through the perilous...  
Here we go! Whoo!  
"Hello. There are a few things  
I need to get out of the way"  
"before I start prattling on  
about myself and my interests."  
"I'm legally blind, and I have  
Asperger syndrome.  
"This has seriously  
turned some people off.  
"Some people have  
the misconception that,  
"because I have  
dis... disabilities,  
"that means I can't consent.  
"I'm actually a very fun,  
friendly, accepting,  
"and... and approachable person.  
"I'm curious about all kinds  
of age play...  
"sexual, nonsexual, dark,  
light and fluffy, and more.  
"When I first got into  
this lifestyle,  
"I was convinced that no one  
would want to play  
"with some blind chick.  
I'm so happy I was wrong."  
Now, this is a word  
you never say.  
Michelle, voice-over:  
This... this is my first  
real relationship as an adult.  
Really, I can't see it.  
Can you see this, too?  
I still can't see it.  
How about now?  
Michelle, voice-over: It's very  
sort of special relationship,  
and, um, it's kind of hard  
to explain it.  
"Fluff shoes"?  
"F... fuddlesh..."  
Oh, "fiddlesticks."

"Fuddle shoes"?

Ha ha ha!

"Fuddle shoes."

Michelle, voice-over: We're both very, very open-minded.

It's... it's a great feeling.

It really is.

"Fuddle shoe."

Ha ha ha!

That's the best thing ever.

Want to do rock, paper, scissors?

Rock, paper, scissors, shoot.

Dang it.

Yay.

I get to go first.

Whoo! OK.

You're gonna find some really weird stuff in there.

OK. Oh, it's a train.

It's a train.

Oh, my goodness, it's a train.

Oh, which train?

Rheneas!

Yes.

Yay! Rheneas!

Here we go, here we go, here we go.

No, we don't, no, we don't

No, we don't, don't, don't

All right. There's one more thing in the bottom, and it feels kind of heavy.

That... that one will require a little bit of context.

Oh, my goodness, what...

Oh, you... you found it.

Ay, oh, is it a flogger?

It is.

Oh, my goodness.

Hang on. It looks  
a little crooked.  
Let me try to straighten it out.  
No. You're just  
going to...  
you're just going to  
hit... hit me with it.  
Yeah. I...  
Thank you.  
Michelle, voice-over:  
Ooh, BDSM, it's, like,  
uh, this taboo thing.  
There are lots of different ways  
that people choose to be  
dominant or submissive.  
I sort of see it  
as an adventure.  
It's not about, like, abuse  
or anything like that.  
It's about you hand over  
your free will.  
You hand o... you have  
so much trust in that person  
that you... you can hand over  
your free will to them and say,  
"You are now in control of me,"  
and it's... it's very liberating,  
and it's very amazing feeling.  
Some people might be like,  
"Ew, that's weird.  
That's gross,"  
but it's really not.  
It's an alternative lifestyle.  
It's a different kind  
of relationship.  
It's very special to us.  
What are we gonna do  
about L.A., Michelle?  
Like, I would just kill  
to just drop everything,  
go out to L.A.,  
pursue my dreams  
as a computer scientist-  
slash-voice actor, but...

Um, cat. Cat.  
I, uh...  
Kitty.  
Ah!  
Ooh! Sorry.  
Ooh! Uh, cat...  
The... the way  
I see it is, um,  
it's so far away and our  
relationship is so new  
that we can't say for definite,  
but we're hoping  
to move to L.A.  
Hopefully, that works out  
the way I want it to.  
Uh, I need more hangers.  
Then again, I have a lot  
of jeans on those hangers  
that I never wear  
and that don't fit me,  
so there are options.  
What are you looking  
under my bed for?  
That's not something  
you should be seeing.  
I was worried you'd  
find those one day.  
Honey, it's about to be...  
It looks like a strap to a...  
I thought you'd...  
I thought you'd  
noticed them before  
and just ignored them.  
Them what? It's a strap  
to a suitcase.  
No, it's not.  
OK. That's...  
Do you seriously  
want to know what it is?  
No...  
OK.  
I didn't think you did.  
But to me, I didn't  
find anything.

It looks like a strap  
to a suitcase to me.  
It's not.  
OK.  
Today we are going  
to a BDSMcentric munch.  
It's like  
the "Fifty Shade of Grey" stuff.  
It's where people who like  
to be tied up and beaten  
or tying up  
and doing the beating,  
like, go to meet, hang out,  
oh, talk about stuff.  
Michelle, every time  
she goes into little mode...  
i.e., the baby... I have to take  
the role of the daddy...  
Bada bing, bada boom.  
Michael, voice-over: which means  
I have to, uh, basically  
take care of my...  
my little girl,  
like, whether it be  
play with her nonsexually.  
You can believe it or not,  
but I'm still trying  
to dip my toe into it, so  
there's a lot I have to learn.  
Will you open the jar up for me?  
Mm-hmm.  
We... we need to get, like,  
the jar-opener thing.  
I knew you'd like it.  
OK.  
Item one... the switch.  
That'll be good for when  
you're really, really bad...  
or if I just feel like using it.  
Guess which one I'm probably  
gonna go with today.  
I don't even have to guess.  
I'm usually not that bad.  
I'm usually a good, little girl.



Ooh, the flogger...  
nice little...  
little, spiky thing.  
Yes?  
Hello.  
Hello.  
Howdy, howdy.  
How you guys doing?  
Not too bad...  
Getting ready.  
Beautiful Sunday morning.  
Getting ready?  
Saturday.  
Getting ready for what?  
We're getting ready  
for the... the partytytyt.  
We're gonna run into our  
friend Caitlyn down there.  
She'll... she's gonna  
buy us a present.  
Mm-hmm.  
What?  
You really got to stop  
using names, you know?  
Heh heh.  
That's right.  
Whew...  
So is there anything  
special going on?  
What's...  
what are you guys...  
what are you guys  
gonna be doing?  
Well, it's gonna be...  
like, it's sort of...  
sort of like a costume party,  
but not like Halloween  
costumes, more like...  
Like, what's the...  
what's the theme of...  
Well, you know, it's a...  
well, it's, you know...  
it's a... it's a BDSM  
and kink and fetish group.

Hmm.

I was nervous to tell you,  
but there was also  
a part of mind  
that says, "If she finds  
restraints on my bed"  
"or a flogger in my closet,  
I don't want her to  
assume the worst."

Yeah.

I know that this  
makes you uncomfortable,  
but I also... I feel like  
if I didn't tell you,  
it would make things  
more uncomfortable.  
And I trust you in your...  
your intuition  
and your... your ability  
to express yourself and what  
you are comfortable with  
and what you're not  
comfortable with  
and not let people  
take advantage of you.

Ever, ever.

Yes, so...

but, yeah, I don't...

I don't go there in my mind...

And that's...

that's good.

You know, I... I don't...

I don't want...

because you're my...

my little girl and...

I know. I know,

and I don't... I don't...

see things from my point

of view, too,

a little bit, so...

Michelle, voice-over:

We went over to a party

in their house,

which is sort of in a secluded,

undisclosed location.  
It was starting to get dark,  
and people were starting  
to show up in droves.  
We went downstairs  
to the basement,  
which is where  
the big sitting area is  
and also the dungeon,  
and I was wearing a little skirt  
and a little shirt  
with nothing under it  
except for a diaper,  
or dider, depending on  
how old I am in my head  
when I say it.  
It's just in case,  
but I'm a big girl.  
I can go to the potty.  
I had hot dogs for dinner  
and Oreos.  
They actually called me  
little girl and asked me,  
"What are you drawing?  
Oh, it's a cat.  
What does a cay say?"  
and, you know,  
"You're so cute,"  
and things like that.  
This girl came over  
who was in puppy mode.  
She was barking and stuff  
on all fours,  
and she wanted to cuddle  
with us,  
and she really, like,  
you know...  
she was being really cuddly  
with me.  
Baby, don't cry  
Oh, my darling  
You're a dying red star  
Michelle, voice-over:  
It was very wonderful.

Darling...  
How are you feeling?  
Light. I feel light  
and floated,  
divine almost.  
Feel like I'm  
on top of the world.  
Boop. That's how  
you're supposed...  
that's how... that's  
a good way to feel.  
I shouldn't say  
that's how you're  
supposed to feel,  
but that's definitely  
a good way to feel after one  
of these kinds of parties.  
Michelle, you were great today.  
Yeah.  
"Men and women  
indoor pool."  
Yes, for men and women.  
What about people  
who are nonbinary?  
Can't they swim, too?  
Oh, my goodness,  
it feels so warm,  
it's like bath water warm.  
I don't believe you.  
Aah! I didn't know  
there was another step.  
Ha ha!  
I seriously, like, was telling  
my friend Sam about you.  
Mm-hmm.  
I told him about all  
these different things.  
You've got, like,  
a great personality  
You are... you're  
really funny.  
She's sexy.  
Ha ha ha!  
Ha ha!

It wasn't until  
he made a joke like,  
"Why would she date you?  
Is she blind or something?"  
I'm like, "Oh, yeah.  
She's blind."  
Ha ha ha!  
1, 2, 3, cannonball!  
Uh!  
She's  
the one for me  
And I just can't  
live without her  
My arms belong  
around her  
I'm so glad I found  
her once again  
I'm going toward the bottom.  
Yeah?  
I am.  
Oh, I'm...  
I'll follow you.  
I don't care  
what you do. Ha!  
Well, I'll... I'll do  
whatever you do, Miss Suzy.  
Ha ha! OK.  
Where are you in the...  
in the world right now?  
What is it that you're...  
Um, well,  
I'm not really doing much,  
but I'm... that's  
gonna change soon.  
Right.  
I'm...  
I... I'm kind of living  
with my mom right now,  
and I was living  
in some isolation,  
hardly ever going out.  
I didn't really have any friends  
except for this one community  
that I was involved in.

I... I was just...  
So what's this community  
that you were talking about?  
Uh, this has been...  
this is going on  
in my head far before  
I graduated, uh, high...  
Perkins, but I knew  
I couldn't get involved.  
I wanted to get involved  
with the BDSM community,  
so when I moved to Maine,  
I did get involved,  
and I found extreme happiness,  
catharsis, and freedom  
through that community.  
OK, so, uh, I mean, I'm...  
I'm not... I'm not,  
uh, shocked  
or appalled or anything.  
I mean, I...  
I don't know  
a lot about that community.  
I know enough to include it  
in my sex ed.  
discussions,  
and people have very different  
opinions about it.  
You know, everything's  
on a continuum,  
so there's degrees...  
Exactly.  
So there are degrees of things,  
so sounds to me  
like you're safe.  
I'm very much so,  
Right. OK.  
And I only give up power  
to people who have earned it.  
I don't, like...  
because I don't...  
You know, it's like  
I don't give up power  
to people who think that

I don't deserve power,  
and, um, there's this  
wonderful term I've heard  
from another blind person  
in the kink world.  
She has this term called  
nonconsensual age play,  
which is what she calls it  
when people on the street go,  
"Oh, sweetie, honey,  
let me help you,"  
and treat her like  
a little 5-year-old.  
The thing is, she likes  
to be treated like that  
by the people in her life  
that... that...  
who respect her  
as an adult and who are...  
she's in kink  
relationships with,  
but when people  
do it on the street,  
she kind of wants to punch them  
a little bit, you know?  
Nonconsensual...  
...sensual age play.  
Age play.  
I like that.  
Age play is... is a kink term  
which basically means,  
like, being treated like a baby  
or like a child, and...  
I just... I really like  
that power thing.  
I really like that.  
I really...  
I am very curious to see  
where... where you go with it.  
Wallet,  
retainer, headphone case.  
That's all in there.  
Actually, somebody  
is meeting her at the gate,

so if someone could just  
get her from security  
to the gate, she'll be all set.  
I just want to  
say that I hope you  
have the best of time  
and that you get  
to meet everybody  
that you want to meet...  
I hope so, too.  
And I would wish you to  
make a big impression,  
but I already know you will.  
Ha ha ha!  
I love you.  
Love you, too.  
Where are you?  
"In Spain."  
Ha ha! "In Spain," she says.  
She's here.  
Ahh! Whoo whoo!  
I was trying  
to call you this week.  
You called me twice.  
Yes.  
Both times, I was at work,  
but I got your voice mails,  
and both times, I tried  
to call you back,  
and you didn't answer your phone...  
- Oh, I'm sorry.  
So I figured you had  
your ringer off or whatever,  
I was busy. - so have a seat.  
- Surprise! Oh, man, give me a hug.  
I can't believe you're here.  
Yes, you can.  
I know, but when  
you weren't here  
to begin with, I was...  
OK, so, um, uh...  
so sit down.  
Oh, boy, this is gonna be great.  
OK, so I went to L.A.,



and, uh, basically,  
everything's so spread out there  
and the... and  
the transportation  
is not nearly as good  
as I was told it was,  
and it would be  
really, really hard  
for me to live there  
independently  
without someone to  
drive me around...  
and so I realized  
that the... that,  
I mean, I might not have  
to give it up entirely...  
I mean, there might  
be opportunities  
in the future... but  
I am giving up acting,  
and I'm not  
moving to L.A.,  
so that's what I have  
to tell you guys,  
and I'm sorry if you  
guys all expected me  
to come back and  
tell you that I was  
moving out in two months  
and that everything  
went amazingly,  
but it really didn't.  
Happy birthday,  
dear Michelle  
Happy birthday to you  
Make a wish.  
Yay!  
She's staying. Yay.  
Before I went to L.A.,  
I kind of told everyone  
in my life that it was a...  
that it was a done deal  
that I was gonna be living there  
and that that was just it,

but it was just going to be  
generally a lot more difficult  
than I thought it was.  
I saw a lot of cracks  
in my plan,  
so hypothetically,  
I go out there,  
give up everything  
that I'm about, and become...  
and... and... and try  
to become an actor.  
There's no guarantee that I'm  
going to have success with that,  
whereas I'm already  
living my dream of being myself.  
I'm already a kinkster.  
I'm already a nerd.  
I'm already pansexual.  
I want to be able  
to live on my own.  
That doesn't necessarily mean  
making gourmet meals.  
I might still just be  
a, you know,  
microwave master chef,  
but I want to know  
that I have the capacity  
to live on my own...  
and I've realized that  
I want to write  
and be an activist  
for women's rights,  
for LGBT, and for kink awareness  
and sex positivity,  
and I think if I say something,  
it might give the courage  
to other people to say things  
because they think, "Well,  
if that young, blind woman"  
can do it"... you know, because  
people think in those terms  
sometimes...  
"if a blind girl can do it,  
then I guess I can do it."

Miss...

Miss Beautiful.

How could you hear me?

I couldn't, but I just knew  
it was Miss Beautiful.

Aww.

So my name is Michelle Smith.

This is "Unlearning Normal,"  
a bit of a story about my life  
and some people who have tried  
to stand in my way.

Boo. All right.

Boo.

OK. Thank you.

When I was 17,  
the head house parent  
in my cottage, which is kind of  
like a dorm but different,  
she was kind of, uh,  
let's just say, closed-minded.  
She kind of had this idea  
that when you're an adult,  
you do very adult things,  
and you don't like Hello Kitty,  
so what I did was, I went home,  
and I got all  
of my Hello Kitty stuff  
and brought it back  
to school with me  
and arranged it just so.

Whoo!

Whoo!

You know, there are gonna be  
people in... in your life  
who are gonna tell you that you  
have to be a certain way  
because your age, your gender,  
your race,  
your sexual orientation,  
whatever, and I...

there's a wor... there's a word  
for people like that.

They're called ass.

I mean, I'm... I'm a female.

I identify as female,  
but I don't think about that  
all the time.  
I don't let my gender  
or my age or my disability  
or any other factor about me  
that's just a fact...  
I don't let that dictate  
any other parts of who I am.  
I just be me, and I feel like  
that has made me more happy  
than any popularity I ever got  
being someone else.  
Hi. What  
brings you here?  
Friends.  
I'm here for pride.  
I thought so. I know  
a lot of people are.  
Stop saying that.  
You don't have to...  
Yes, it is. I was supposed  
to dress up for this.  
It's not the end of  
the world, Michelle.  
It... it... it's symbolic  
of the fact that  
I'm not independent and  
I can't take care of myself.  
I can't see anybody  
that really dresses up  
too much to go to  
Bangor Housing Authority  
to fill out application  
for housing, Michelle.  
That's what I'm saying.  
I can't pick out my own clothes.  
I would've walked  
out of the house  
with a too-low-cut top and  
short pants that don't fit me.  
Should I have not said anything?  
I'm saying that I was  
just ready to walk

out the door in this.  
I can't live by myself.  
I can't survive.  
Why are we even going  
to the apartment place  
if I can't even dress myself?  
You get dressed  
every day by yourself.  
Obviously not today,  
not when it count...  
not when it matters.  
Well, and I won't be far away.  
I can't drive.  
How am I gonna get...  
come and see you every day  
and make sure I'm OK?  
How am I gonna be OK?  
Do you want me to help  
you find something else?  
Yes.  
You can still wear that sweater.  
Just wear, like,  
a different tank top  
underneath it.  
OK.  
One thing you didn't  
realize is that when you  
turned sideways, your right...  
Boob?  
yes...  
was really hanging out,  
and you couldn't  
tell that, Michelle.  
I felt like this  
was the test to see  
if I was... that I could  
be independent,  
and I felt like I failed.  
Do you think I can  
really live by myself?  
I really do.  
I do, and I think  
living close by  
here in Bangor

for a little while  
is... is the best way.  
You know, that way, you have me,  
the support system  
that when things come up  
that you're not sure of,  
that you...  
I really do... I really  
do want to live  
in an apartment in Bangor...  
I really do... for  
at least 6 months.  
I really want it for you.  
I love you, Mi.  
Love you, too.  
Oh...  
Sorry I had to...  
And then there's orientation  
and... and  
an apartment.  
All right. Excellent.  
Excellent.  
Thank you so much.  
You're very helpful.  
Thank you. Have  
a nice afternoon.  
Something plastic.  
Plastic.  
Here. Do you want  
a sippy cup?  
I have one already.  
Ha ha ha!  
You're just goofy.  
OK.  
Michelle, voice-over: I feel  
like at this point in my life,  
I'm not the only one.  
I'm not the only one  
who loses their keys,  
frantically looking for them,  
probably way overreacting.  
I know I'm not the only one...  
Hi.  
Hi, Josie.

How are you?

I'm great.

How are you?

Good.

Michelle, voice-over: and I'm not the only one who wakes up in the morning sometimes and wonders,

"I wonder what everyone thinks of me.

I wonder if everyone thinks that... that I'm... I'm a failure."

You know, I know I'm not the only one

who goes through bouts of depression

when things change in their life and they don't understand it.

I don't know

what's right

I don't know what's right

Michelle, voice-over: All of these people could relate to me in one way or another,

even if it's something small or something that's big as,

"My parents got divorced when I was 13 or 14."

"Oh, mine did, too," you know?

It doesn't matter if it's a big thing or small thing.

Everyone can relate to each other in one way or another, and that's something very beautiful.

It's good to think about whenever you're thinking

that you're all alone in the world,

and, trust me, if you think you're all alone,

think about how many, you know, billions of other people

think they're all alone...

6 billion, to be precise.

Ha ha ha!

Oh...

I know.

Oh, my goodness.

All your waking dreams

Were passing by

I don't know what's right

I don't know

what's right

All your laughing

All your bleeding

All the steps that

seem misleading

You walk with friends and

play like children

Travel high and

lose your sense of mind

I don't know what's right