
#whatsurbox
a journey about fitting in

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*Originally produced at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, PA
Bernard Havard, Producing Artistic Director
Mark Sylvester, Managing Director
Thomas Quinn, Director of Education*

Author note: This piece was constructed based on interviews with 50 middle school students ranging from 6th-8th grade. Students from public & private schools were interviewed. Majority of the student information was recorded at a traditional public middle school. The final scene is comprised of quotes from students. Many of the ideas contained are compiled from existing ideas on social media, or, ideas that are not so far off in the future (we guess). The villain is the voice inside our heads that tells us we need to take that step to “fit inside the box.” Outdated cultural references or youthful slang can and should be updated with full permission. Ideally the setting would consist of a screen behind the actors as a backdrop where various interfaces could be projected. If this is not a reality then the director should take it upon themselves to make something creative including visual references wherever possible. The website- urbox- should feel elusive, dangerous, exclusive. The target audience for this performance is 6th-8th graders.

*“... And these children
that you spit on
as they try to change their worlds
are immune to your consultations.
They're quite aware
of what they're going through...”
— David Bowie*

Character Breakdown

4-13 Actors

Girl 1- ***Commercial actor***

Girl 2-***Commercial actor***

Boy 1-***Commercial actor***

Boy 2-***Commercial actor***

Kylie-***A middle school student***

Janelle-***A middle school student***

Cristina-***A middle school student***

Oscar- ***A middle school student***

Shawn- ***A middle school student***

Ryan- ***A middle school student***

Max- ***A middle school student***

Mom-***Janelle's mother***

Urbox Voice-***This can be recorded, done on video or live by one actor or split up between actors***

Comment 1-4- ***Can be a recorded voice or done live by any of the actors.***

Doubling with 4 Actors:

Actor 1: Commercial actor/Janelle/Cristina

Actor 2: Commercial actor/Oscar/Shawn

Actor 3: Commercial actor/Ryan/Max

Actor 4: Commercial actor/Kylie/Mom

Urbox voice can be split up between actors, recorded, or done by the same actor each time.

Optional Introduction (Ideal if being performed for younger students as TYA)

Screen displays urbox interface. Ideally the words below are on the screen popping up, being typed in.. something to give the illusion of technology. Can also be spoken live.

Voice: Imagine your favorite social media site announces a contest- all you have to do is get the most likes and you could be an exclusive winner. The contest comes with an opportunity to create your own vlog with millions of followers and fans. Winning means instant success and popularity. No more trying to fit in at school- everyone would be following you. How far would you go to win?

URBOX COMMERCIAL MUSIC

OPENING

(urbox commerical, can be filmed or live or a combination. Actors should be “real people” that have the “right clothes” a “perfect smile” and a “cool” manner about them. The website is all about fitting into the right box. It should be ambiguous- less selling something, more lifestyle oriented.)

ALL: What’s urbox?

Girl 1 steps forward

Girl 1: *perfect*

(They all shift as GIRL 1 steps forward)

Girl 1: I have the best hair, makeup and clothes... not to mention a hot boyfriend.

(One of the male actors stands close to her like a boyfriend) Like I said-

ALL: Perfect

Boy 1: Funny

(They all shift and BOY 1 steps forward)

Boy 1: When teachers tell me “School isn’t a place to sleep” I say-If school isn’t a place to sleep then home isn’t a place to study ***(They all laugh)*** Like I said-

ALL: Funny

Boy 2: Athletic

(They all shift and BOY 2 steps forward)

Boy 2: I'm open! *(He does a basketball trick and they all cheer)* Athletes are the heroes of any school.

Girl 2: Different

(They all shift and GIRL 2 steps forward)

Girl 2: I will be live streaming for the next 24 hours! Who's with me out there.

(All show excitement and agreement)

ALL: Dare to be different...

Boy 2: Where do you fit in?

Girl 1: Everyone has one. Discover yours

ALL: @whatsurbox

LIKING ME VAMPING TRACK

SCENE 1-Home

(Each character enters their filming space preparing to film their daily vlog or post a photo to their URBOX profile)

Kylie: Good morning my lovies! Are you ready for the next video in the make my life awesome series? Today it's my make-up secrets. TBH¹ friends i thought i would have at least 400 likes by now for the last video... Tag your comments F4F or L4L² and I will totally follow you! Now, you're going to school you need a beat face which means you need these 3 things-

LIKING ME TRACK

SONG-LIKING ME

Kylie: *(As she continues to do her makeup routine)*

It's not always easy to show all my fans

How to let their beauty shine.

Not everyone's lucky enough to have makeup

And style like mine.

¹ To be honest

² Follow for follow; Like for Like

***But without me these girls would have nowhere to turn
To feel pretty, strong, and free.
So I post every week,
And they keep liking me.***

Your kabuki brush will be your best friend-

Oscar: *(He pulls out a can of tuna and places it on a toy car.)* Oscar calls this series cartuna network. Get it-- because the car... and can of tuna... ***(He begins to take a series of selfies.)***

Kylie: Plumping gloss to get perfectly kissable lips...

**Oscar: *How many hashtags do I have to use
To get people to like my stuff?
Cartuna Network has seventy-five,
So I guess that's not enough.***

***Everyone used to crack up at my jokes,
And my pranks were sights to see.
Now I'm alone.
When did they stop liking me?***

Janelle: *(She begins reading comments on her recent post)* aggrogirl's new video is a cheat, I saw metagame do the same video last week. She's such a scrub. ***(Looking up)*** Is that so coolguy87?

(Sets up to make her daily gaming video)

Hello nerdz. When we left off yesterday I just entered The End. coolguy87 lot to say but has he ever defeated in this level? He would probably just die or try to respawn ***(she laughs)***

Oscar: *(Posting his selfies)* #cartunanetwork #istunaevenafish #isanyoneoutthere. Seriously, is there anyone out there.

Kylie: Finally lovie ***(she holds a beat)*** you can't go anywhere without a smile...

(She blows a kiss and waves to the camera. She stops filming. She posts the video.)

**Kylie, Oscar, and Janelle: *Find the right box and your worries will disappear,
Knowing there's so many people like you in here,
You'll fit in so perfectly.***

*In here I'm never alone and I never feel down, cuz I
Always like everyone, and I'm surrounded by
People who are liking me.*

Ryan: (He begins recording himself) Good morning team! Remember to wake-up inspired a workout's required! Lace up your Jordans and let's go. Today let's shred it with some crossovers

*There's no better way to start a new day
Than by working up a sweat.
"To wake up inspired, a workout's required"
Is a rule you won't regret.*

*I love to be fit, but I wish I could quit
With all these hashtags, and just be.
But then I'd be ignored...*

And I need her liking me.

Janelle: Defeated. (*She posts her video*) suck it coolguy87.

*Keep all your makeup, keep all your sports,
Keep all your fancy clothes.
All that they're good for is drama and pressure,
And who needs those?*

*So while they play "who's hotter and got the new Jordans"
I'll play my RPG.
I've got my fans,
That's who I want liking me.*

ALL: *Find the right box and your worries will disappear,
Knowing there's so many people like you in here,
You'll fit in so perfectly.*

*In here I'm never alone and I never feel down, cuz I
Always like everyone, and I'm surrounded by
People who,
Yes it's true,
People who are liking me.*

LIKING ME UNDERSCORE

SCENE 2-School Cafeteria

(JANELLE and OSCAR sit together. KYLIE is at a table fixing her make-up)

Oscar: GOOD MORNING!

Janelle: What's so good about it? *(Clutches algebra book)* This book will be the death of me.

Oscar: Someone's got a case of the Mondays... How about a joke? Did you hear the one about the meatloaf?

(Janelle shakes her head)

Oscar: Alright stop me if you heard this one, what the meatloaf is made out of?

Janelle: What?

Oscar: Meat... a duh! *(He cracks up)*

Janelle: That joke smells worse than your Spiderman sheets.

Oscar: *(he attempts a selfie with Janelle in the photo)* #roasted

Janelle: Put your phone away before someone catches us... and FYI Oscar, you don't say "hashtag."

Oscar: Oscar didn't hear about #notusinghashtags!

(Janelle buries herself in her algebra book)

Oscar: What's going on with you and Algebra *(He steals her book)*

Janelle: Give it back, Oscar.

(He plays keep away)

Janelle: Oscar, I'm serious, I gotta finish this assignment.

Oscar: You're no fun anymore... *(Hands the book back)*

Janelle: Algebra is what's no fun. I could really use your help, I feel like I'm drowning--I need to talk to you about something, important--

(RYAN enters and OSCAR moves to him)

Oscar: RYAN! The mixtape is dropping it's going to be FIRE! *(He goes in for the high five, Kylie interrupts them)*

Kylie: Ryan! I saved you a seat!

(RYAN moves to KYLIE)

Oscar: By the way those sneakers are on fleece!!!!

Kylie: I think you mean on fleek...

Oscar: Fleece... fleek... it's all the same to Oscar...

Janelle: Why do you even try with him? He's one of "them."

Oscar: I don't think he's like "them." I think Ryan's okay. I'm trying to get some more people to like posts and follow me...

Janelle: He's not even on urbox. I really need to talk to you about something--

Oscar: Can it wait until later?

(OSCAR has already moved over to KYLIE and RYAN)

Janelle: I guess it will have to.

Oscar: What's up fam! Let's selfie this moment **(Attempts a photo)**

Kylie: **(To Oscar's selfie)** Ummm bye.

Oscar: Good idea, don't want to get caught with our phones out! Be sure to send some likes my way--cartuna network! **(OSCAR exits)**

Kylie: You're welcome for saving you btw...

Ryan: From what?

Kylie: Oscar. He is forever alone.

Ryan: **(Uncomfortable)** Why does everyone act like he's diseased or something...

Kylie: We aren't in 3rd grade...you can't go around acting like **that** all the time.

Ryan: Yea- you're right, I guess.... I just don't think we should treat him--

Kylie: **(Flirtatious)** I've been trying captain bball's cross-over drill **(She grabs the basketball and messes up)** I guess I need to keep practicing.

Ryan: **(Nervous)** Uh, I can show you, if you want **(he shows her)**

Kylie: That is totes amazing. We should hang out and play sometime...

Ryan: Uh- yea- we should- definitely do that!

Kylie: See ya.

(KYLIE begins to leave)

Ryan: ***(He has never asked for a phone number before)*** Hey-should I get your number so I can text you...

Kylie: Sure- ***(Janelle interrupts Kylie actually putting her number in)***

Janelle: No! Why is everything lagging right now!

URBOX AD MUSIC

(A sound interrupts them all. It is a urbox message coming through on their phones)

Urbox Voice: The Ultimate box is here

Choose a category, make it go viral

You get points for likes, follows, shares and creativity....

You have 4 options:

Are you:

The biggest troll...

The perfect body

Can you...

Start a new trend...

Create a new world...

You have one week. Get the most points and you'll be one of our exclusive winners...

KYLIE/RYAN/JANELLE/OSCAR: 1 winner will be chosen from each school!

Voice: Ultimate boxers will receive a brand new camera and laptop, exclusive urbox swag and best of all- ***you'll get to stream for us.*** Always dreamed of having your own channel with millions of followers? It could be you.

Show everyone how exclusive you can be.

TO BE EXCLUSIVE TRACK

SONG-TO BE EXCLUSIVE

Kylie: *(She squeals with excitement and begins texting unable to complete a thought)* this is so-i have!-to-eeeeeee!!

Ryan: Do you think it's real?

Kylie: Why would they make something like **this** up?

Oscar

*A chance to let this whole school see
How cool and funny I can be.
A thousand people following
My comedy debut!*

Janelle

*You'd know, if you had paid attention:
It's all exclusive, I hate to mention.*

Oscar

Well I can be exclusive too.

Kylie

*Lots of people know my clips
With style guides and makeup tips.
I know that I'm the best, and here's my
Chance to prove it's true.*

Ryan

*I know this challenge sounds exciting,
But I could see it lead to fighting.*

Kylie

But you can be exclusive too!

Oscar

*I'll fin'ly get to show off my
Hilarious abilities.*

Ryan (to Kylie)

*If we can work together,
There's so many possibilities.*

Janelle

*This has a chance of being more
Than just another game.
I'll build a world so perfect
Things will never be the same.*

Oscar + Kylie +Ryan

*Ignore it and you're passing up
A special opportunity.*

Janelle

I'll make the rules.

Oscar + Kylie

*To win respect and influence,
To join the chosen few.*

Ryan

There's more important things.

Kylie

I have to be unique.

Oscar

You'll see how cool I really am.

Janelle

And whether you like my rules or not,

Ryan

But we could do so much together, so...

Kylie

I have to prove that...

Oscar

I'll get to prove that...

Janelle

I know that...

ALL

I can be exclusive,

It has to be conclusive

That I can be exclusive too.