DYNGUS DAY

A 10 Minute Play

by

Eric Coble

Kate Navin
Abrams Artists Agency
275 Seventh Avenue
26th Floor
New York, NY 10001
Phone: (646) 461-9372
knavin@gershny.com
DYNGUS DAY

CHARACTERS:

LAQUANDA: A woman with a dream, African American.

CHERISSE: A woman with accomplishments, African American.

PLACE:
A city in the U.S.

TIME:
The first Monday after Easter.
(LAQUANDA carries a box, handing out small packages wrapped in paper)

LAQUANDA
(Calling out to unseen party people)
Pierogi? Fresh and mostly hot - absolutely -- Kielbasa? Remember to vote for me! Happy Dyngus Day!

(CHERISSE walks up)

CHERISSE
What the hell are you doing?

LAQUANDA
What are you doing here??

CHERISSE
Mom said she thought you’d be down here causing trouble-

LAQUANDA
I’m not causing any trouble, get out of here-

CHERISSE
Sorry, I can’t let you-

LAQUANDA
You promised:
(Gestures between them)

CHERISSE
Yeah, so much for my New Year’s Resolution.

LAQUANDA
Go away --
(waving to someone)
Happy Dyngus Day! Pierogi?

CHERISSE
“Dyngus Day”? Stupid people finally got their own holiday?

LAQUANDA
It’s Polish.

CHERISSE
Oh, sure, let’s play to the stereotype.

LAQUANDA
It’s Christian.
CHERISSE
So Polish Christian is cool but Baptist Christian is out? We couldn’t even get you to wear a nice Easter hat to church yesterday.

LAQUANDA
Those hats always make me look like a flower.

That’s the point-

LAQUANDA
I’m afraid some bee is gonna pollinate me.

So-

LAQUANDA
So Dyngus Day has no hats -- it’s just fun! It’s called “Wet Monday”!

CHERISSE
I think you stumbled into a porn movie.

LAQUANDA
(Slaps Cherisse’s arm)
Christian!
There’s nothing pornographic about it! Guys get to soak girls in water, and whip their bare legs with palm leaves... and... spray their beer foam all over girl’s faces... and...
Okay, it sounds very pornographic, but it’s quaint! It’s charming!

CHERISSE
It’s “Fifty Shades of Gratowsky”.

LAQUANDA
You know nothing. Go. Home.
Calling out
Have a pierogi, ma’am?

CHERISSE
Where’d you get the pierogies?

LAQUANDA
I made them.

CHERISSE
You? Miss “How do make Swiss Miss Instant”?
LAQUANDA
(Smiling and waving out at the crowd)
I read a recipe. Please go away, you’re killing my vibe.

CHERISSE
Last time I checked I only improved your image.

LAQUANDA
Not anymore. Go away.
(Calling out)
I’ve got blood sausage right here!

CHERISSE
Ewww.

LAQUANDA
It was supposed to be Kielbasa but I don’t think I cooked it enough...

CHERISSE
You can’t sell that! You’re gonna poison people!

LAQUANDA
I’m not selling it, I’m giving it away. And food poisoning is a time-honored part of Dyngus Day.

CHERISSE
How do you even know Dyngus Day? Do you know a Polish person?

LAQUANDA
Mr. Wisnewski from high school.

CHERISSE
He was from Detroit.

LAQUANDA
But he inspired me!

CHERISSE
He was arrested for taking photos of wrestlers in the locker room.

LAQUANDA
And when he was in prison I have no doubt he ate Kielbasa and pierogies and blood sausage.

CHERISSE
I don’t know if the kind of blood sausage your sellin’ was the kind he was gettin’.
LAQUANDA
I have other Polish friends!

CHERISSE
Who?

LAQUANDA
...Wikipediaaski.

CHERISSE
...you’re a freak.

LAQUANDA
I’m a freak on a mission, my mission-

CHERISSE
Oh no.

LAQUANDA
Will you please go home?

CHERISSE
That’s exactly why Mom sent me, you had that “mission” look in your eye.

LAQUANDA
I don’t-

CHERISSE
The same look you had when you were like, “How come the Gorton Fisherman is a man? Why isn’t it a Gorton Fisherwoman? I’m starting a campaign, I’m writing letters!”

LAQUANDA
You were just jealous of how hot I looked in my yellow hat and rain slicker.

CHERISSE
It’s the same look you had when you were like, “How come there’s no black leadership in the KKK? Black people can hate too!”

LAQUANDA
You’re just jealous of how hot I looked in my robe and hood-

CHERISSE
You cut holes in Mom’s best sheets!

LAQUANDA
I’m a fighter. Like my Polish brethren.
CHERISSE
That’s what this is, isn’t it - “Where are all the black Polish people on Dyngus Day”-

LAQUANDA
I am expanding the palate.

CHERISSE
What’s in the pierogies?

LAQUANDA
...they’re fusion pierogies.

CHERISSE
It’s supposed to be potatoes and cheese. What’s in ‘em?

LAQUANDA
...collard greens and sweet potato pie mix.

Jesus Christ!

LAQUANDA
It’s Polish soul food-

CHERISSE
And your blood sausage kielbasa?

LAQUANDA
Ham hock kielbasa.

CHERISSE
You are insane. You are frickin’ insane.

LAQUANDA
I am expanding our world!

CHERISSE
You’re frightening all the poor old Polish men.

LAQUANDA
I’m not frightening, I’m enticing.

CHERISSE
Then why are they all waaaay over there?

LAQUANDA
You’re scaring them.
CHERISSE
What are you even trying to do??

LAQUANDA
I want to be Miss Dyngus!! Okay?? I’m trying to be voted Miss Dyngus!

(Pause.)

CHERISSE
But you’re black.

LAQUANDA
Breaking color barriers...

Your name is Laquanda. Johnson.

LAQUANDA
Shut up. They all think I’m Laquandawski Johnsonczyk.

I do not believe you.

LAQUANDA
Of course you don’t! You never do -- you don’t have to! You were a finalist for Miss Teen Ohio! You were Miss Sweetheart! Miss Pre-Teen Person of Color! You were Miss Black Dodson County!

I earned those!

LAQUANDA
No one said you didn’t! But I couldn’t! I came in fourth place for Miss Healthy Cholesterol, Central Division! I didn’t even place in Miss Oral Hygiene 2014! And there were only three of us!

CHERISSE
So...

LAQUANDA
So Miss Dyngus is my last shot at Miss Anything! Once, just once in my life I want a tiara and a sash - I don’t care if it’s for Best Polka In the Under 60 Age Range. I want this.

CHERISSE
...I’m sorry. I had no idea.
LAQUANDA
You never asked. You were too busy winning every award you went for.

CHERISSE
Do you really think you have a shot? You are... you know... not Polish.

LAQUANDA
(Pointing)
That candidate over there keeps telling Pollack jokes.

CHERISSE
That’s probably not gonna help...

LAQUANDA
And she’s messed up every single punch-line.

CHERISSE
Okay.

LAQUANDA
(Pointing)
And that one over there is so drunk she puked on the judges during the accordion portion.

LAQUANDA
And that one’s from Poland, but she was a collaborator with the Nazis back in ’44.

CHERISSE
So she’s old. And offensive.

LAQUANDA
She keeps “Sieg Heil”ing Jesus and the Easter Bunny.

CHERISSE
So...

LAQUANDA
I think I got a shot?

(Cherisse pauses... they watch each other... Cherisse nods.)

(Cherisse turns out and holds up a paper-wrapped pierogi)

CHERISSE
(Yelling out)
Get your Fusion Pierogies and Kielbasa right here from the future Miss Dyngus! Right Here! Vote now!
LAQUANDA

(Hugs her)

I love you.

CHERISSE

Luquandawski Johnsonczyk for Miss Dyngus! Wet Monday for Everybody!

CHERISSE AND LAQUANDA

Happy Dyngus Day!!

END OF PLAY