

Woke

By Avery Sharpe

Synopsis

Two best friends named Jesse Blanche and Adrian Strong are making the rocky transition from high school to college. Jesse is white and Adrian is black, but their different backgrounds have never stopped them from loving each other like family. In fact, Adrian is simply counted as another Blanche family member. However, after the shootings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile happen within just hours of each other, the ripple effects rock their whole community down to the core of who are—or at least— who they think they are. Through romance, family, and freestyle rap, they all comically struggle to understand what it truly means to be woke.

Characters

Jesse Blanche	A young white man. 17-19 years old. Has an incredible amount of charm. Smart and knows it.
Adrian Strong	A young black man. 17-19 years old. Thoughtful and passionate. Has underlying swag.
Martha Blanche	Jesse's mother. Overly affectionate and full of energy.
Frank Blanche	Jesse's father. Something about him says "all-American".
Tanisha McCoy	A young black woman. 17-19 years old. Genuine and undeniably the finale of a fireworks show.
Natasha Boyd	A young black woman. 17-19 years old. Outrageously sweet. Has an aura that is calming with a dash of sass.

Notes

- The "a" in the name Blanche is pronounced like the beginning sound of "Autumn"
- **A beat** is a brief time of non-verbal communication
 - **A spell** is a beat that lasts longer
 - **A moment** is a beat that lasts longest
- A line that contains // denotes where the next line begins to overlap
- **CHARACTER A // CHARACTER B** denotes that the characters speak different things simultaneously.

Place and Time

An Atlanta upper middle class suburb, Summer 2016

Act 1 Scene 2

Graduation night. It is very late. ADRIAN and JESSE are inside the Blanche living room. They have had several beers apparently.

ADRIAN

You sure she's not up?

JESSE

I'm sure. She's been texting me all night, but she's not anymore which means she must've passed out.

ADRIAN

Like on a scale of one to ten, how sure are you?

JESSE

Dude, stop being paranoid.

ADRIAN

Man, you know my mama. I'm not being paranoid, I'm just feeling my self-preservation instinct kick in.

JESSE

Dude, remember when I used to sneak out and steal my mom's car and we would go to waffle house?

ADRIAN

Yeah, All-star breakfast breakouts was my shit.

JESSE

We only did it when Dad was on a business trip.

ADRIAN

um...?

JESSE

When my mom was sleeping like a rock in a diabetic coma.

ADRIAN

Okay listen I'm just saying sneaking out is one thing but girls sneaking // over here—

JESSE

She's not going to find out, man.

ADRIAN

Just text her one more—

JESSE

HEY MOM!!! // ARE YOU UP? WE'RE ABOUT TO SNEAK GIRLS OVER, AND ADRIAN'S BEING A PUSSY!!!

ADRIAN

Whoa! Yo yo yo hey man! What the—

They listen.

JESSE

See? Not a peep.

ADRIAN

Don't you do no dumb shit like that ever again.

JESSE

Dude, breathe. At least, you're not going be a third wheel.

ADRIAN

How am I not? Who's coming?

JESSE

You'll see.

ADRIAN

For the love of God! Why won't you just tell me?!

JESSE

Patience, grasshopper.

ADRIAN

You gonna make me chop yo throat! Just tell me this...is it Holly Peterson?

JESSE

What? No, it's not Holly Peterson.

ADRIAN

Then it has be...

ADRIAN and JESSE share a beat.

JESSE

I didn't want to lie to you.

ADRIAN

You didn't wanna lie? Oh well great. Now you're not a punk ass bitch anymore.

JESSE

I just figured you might bail if I told you.

ADRIAN

I think I should bail.

JESSE

How would you get home? You rode with me.

ADRIAN

I don't give a damn. I'll catch an Uber or fuckin hitchhike.

JESSE

Dude, it's not that bad. She's pretty, and you guys would be great together.

ADRIAN

Man, I'm not getting with Natasha fuckin Boyd.

JESSE

What's wrong with Natasha Boyd? I thought you guys had fun at prom.

ADRIAN

She wanna get too serious, man.

JESSE

What's wrong with that?

ADRIAN

We're all about to go to college.

JESSE

But she's going to Spelman, right? Isn't that right down the street from Morehouse?

ADRIAN

It don't matter, man. I'm not trying to be tied down to nobody in my first year.

JESSE

Whatever, bro. Listen, don't give up a good thing just because you're a dumbass.

ADRIAN

Ain't nobody got time for yo hopeless romantic shit, Jesse.

JESSE

Dude, I'm just saying you should give her // a chance—

ADRIAN

Lemme call this damn Uber so I—

JESSE

Come on, Adrian. Do me this favor.

ADRIAN

You should be alright without me, bruh.

JESSE

No, you don't understand. Tanisha said she would only come if Natasha could too.

ADRIAN

So all y'all bitches set me up?

JESSE

I think I really like her.

ADRIAN

Tanisha is outta your league.

JESSE

You said you love us together.

ADRIAN

That doesn't mean you're on her level though.

JESSE

Maybe I'm just lucky. Let's find out.

ADRIAN

Nobody's luck is that good. I hope she shuts you down.

JESSE's phone gets a text.

JESSE

Hey, they said they're pulling up. You're staying, right?

ADRIAN

Jesse, look man—

JESSE

Just do me this solid, please.

ADRIAN

You're such a triflin bitch...

JESSE

After all these years, you're going to leave me hanging like this?

ADRIAN

Man, if you // do some shit like this again, I swear to God I will bounce.

JESSE

Please, please, please, please, please, please, please, please—

ADRIAN

Yo! Chill, nigga! I said I would do it!

(JESSE laughs)

What?

JESSE

You sound so ridiculous saying that word, bro.

ADRIAN

You lucky you my boy—

JESSE

Hey, I owe you one. I really do appreciate it.

(They do their special handshake)

Let me go get them. Wink wink nudge nudge.

ADRIAN

I hate you.

JESSE exits. ADRIAN checks his appearance on his phone. He thoroughly makes sure that he looks and smells good because no matter what... girls are still girls. JESSE enters with TANISHA MCCOY and NATASHA BOYD.

JESSE

Adrian, may I proudly present to you the most attractive part of the 2016 graduating class!

TANISHA and NATASHA

Heeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeey!

ADRIAN

Sup y'all.

NATASHA

Hey Adrian! It's so good to see you!

ADRIAN

Hey Natasha. You look really nice.

NATASHA

Thanks! I'm trying to be cute or whatever.

TANISHA

Yeah you know we had to come correct for graduation.

JESSE

Well, Tanisha McCoy you came one hundred percent correct if you ask me. Would you ladies like some beer or some wine?

TANISHA

OOO what you got?

JESSE

A few ciders, some PBR, and some cabernet.

TANISHA

Yaaaas! I'll take some of that Cabernet.

NATASHA

I'm good. I'm driving us.

TANISHA

Girl, get you something. We ain't got no more parties to hop to so we can take our time.

NATASHA

Well still I—

TANISHA

Natasha, stop tripping. We graduated! You need to get in formation. Get her a cider.

JESSE

Yes, ma'am! You need another PBR, bro?

ADRIAN

Yeah, man. Gimme two. I'm gonna chug em.

JESSE

That's what I'm talking about! Double fist it!

ADRIAN

That's right. Grown man status.

JESSE

We're about to get so lit!

JESSE exits to get drinks.

ADRIAN

He is so white sometimes.

TANISHA

So are you.

ADRIAN

Woooo // oooow.

TANISHA

I'm just playin! I'm just playin!

NATASHA

Don't pay her no attention. She's been drinking. Driving her around has been a trip.

TANISHA

Girl, shut up. Driving me around has been a privilege.

NATASHA

What have you guys been doing tonight?

ADRIAN

We did some party hoppin. Y'all shoulda been at Justin Wilkerson's party though. It was so turnt.

TANISHA

Yaaaas! Wilkerson's party was everything! We were there.

ADRIAN

Oh. We must've left before we saw you.

NATASHA

Aww that sucks. The music was so good.

ADRIAN

...Yep...

TANISHA

I honestly could still hit a mean twerk right now. Y'all got a speaker?

NATASHA

Oh Lord.

ADRIAN

Well, we would have to check with Jesse about music but I don't think—

JESSE enters with all the drinks.

JESSE

God please yes! Music is a great idea!

ADRIAN

Um, don't you think—

JESSE

We should have a toast together, and then Adrian will chug his beers as promised, and then we back that ass up.

ADRIAN

But isn't it gonna—

JESSE

Hey bro it's going to be fine. Wink wink nudge nudge.

ADRIAN

Okay whatever, man.

JESSE

You know, all of this is really reminiscent of prom. That was such a great night.

TANISHA

It really was a perfect night. You and that damn white tux. You looked good though.

JESSE

Well, honestly I was just trying to keep up with you.

TANISHA

Boy bye.

JESSE

You're a lot to keep up with so...

ADRIAN

So we were toasting, right?

JESSE

Yes a toast! Would you like to do the honors?

ADRIAN

No thanks. You do it.

JESSE

Dude, you know I hate public // speaking.

ADRIAN

Oh my God. Stop trippin, man. It's literally just us.

TANISHA

Yeah, you'll do great.

JESSE

Well damn...okay... how about to us graduating?

TANISHA

And to you giving that dope ass salutatorian speech. It was so good.

JESSE

Wow really? Thanks. I wasn't sure how it came out.

TANISHA

It deserves a toast.

JESSE

Okay well let's toast to that too. Anything else?

NATASHA

To exciting new beginnings and to wonderful possibilities in the future.

JESSE

Hell yes I'll toast to that! Anything else?

ADRIAN

Let's just get on with it.

JESSE

Class of 2016! // Woooooo!

TANISHA and NATASHA

Class of 2016!!!

They all take a generous gulp of their drinks while ADRIAN chugs one of his beers. Everybody watches and cheers him on. ADRIAN makes a face of disgust for a moment, but the prodding of his peers propels him into chugging the next one. When ADRIAN finishes, they all laugh and applaud him.

ADRIAN

(With a disgusted face)

That's right. Grown man status.

NATASHA

I can't believe you just did that!

TANISHA

Yeah, that shit is so nasty.

JESSE

Nasty? Oh well nasty's my second middle name.

JESSE turns on music and begins to dance.

TANISHA

Okay! What you know about that, Jesse?

TANISHA starts dancing with JESSE. ADRIAN and NATASHA awkwardly try not to look at each other. Another song begins to play.

JESSE

Hey Adrian! This is your song, right? Come dance, man!

TANISHA

Yeah, y'all acting brand new. I know you can dance, Adrian. Show Natasha a few things.

ADRIAN

Yeah, no. I'm okay.

NATASHA

Yeah, you know I don't dance, Tanisha.

TANISHA

That's why I told Adrian to show yo ass.

JESSE

I don't believe for a second you can't dance.

NATASHA

Not all black people are just born knowing how to dance, Jesse.

JESSE

I wasn't saying that at all—

NATASHA

Then what's your point?

TANISHA

Girl, you need to stop trippin! Tryin to play yo race card and shit.

NATASHA

I ain't trippin I—

TANISHA

Adrian Xavier Strong. Get yo off-brand, Carlton Banks ass up and dance with this girl!

JESSE

Yeah, let's see that grown man status.

A beat. ADRIAN gets up and offers his hand to NATASHA. She takes it. They get verbal affirmation from JESSE and TANISHA as they begin to dance. At first, it is awkward, but they do eventually find a rhythm between them that is complimentary. ADRIAN breaks away abruptly.

ADRIAN

I gotta pee.

JESSE

Uh-oh. Don't break the seal, bro.

(ADRIAN exits)

It doesn't stop once you do.

TANISHA

What's his problem?

JESSE

He had to pee.

TANISHA

He had to pee?

NATASHA

He had to pee.

TANISHA

Look, I've been sayin it this whole time. Do you still not believe me?

NATASHA

Don't start, okay? Just drop it.

JESSE

You've been saying what this whole time?

TANISHA

Nothing apparently. I'm just tryin to keep this buzz goin.

JESSE

You're only buzzed? You need to catch up. Oh! I know what would help. So Tanisha... truth or dare?

TANISHA

Oh nuh-uh!

JESSE

Aw come on. Do it for the buzz. Truth or dare?

TANISHA

This game is just an excuse to get me to flash my titties or something. You ain't slick.

JESSE

Look, if there's something you don't want to do or don't want to answer, then you just have to chug your drink for three seconds. One way or another it's fun for everybody.

ADRIAN enters with another beer.

NATASHA

Okay let's do it. I love truth or dare.

ADRIAN

Wait, truth or dare?

JESSE

Yeah, bro. It'll be fun.

TANISHA

Natasha, yo non-dancing ass loves truth or dare though?

NATASHA

I love the boldness. It takes guts to do a dare, and it takes guts to tell the truth.

TANISHA

Um, it takes guts to twerk, bitch.

JESSE

Listen, how about we start off easy and work our way up, okay? Natasha: truth or dare?

NATASHA

Truth.

JESSE

Is it true you really can't dance?

NATASHA

Yes, it's true. I love to dance, but I just don't have rhythm for whatever reason so I get self-conscious when I have to.

JESSE

Well okay then. See? Easy enough. But in your defense, I think you look absolutely fine when you dance so don't be so self-conscious. Right, Adrian?

ADRIAN

Right.

JESSE

Now it's your turn to ask somebody.

NATASHA

Truth or dare, Tanisha?

TANISHA

Dare.

NATASHA

I dare you...to kiss Jesse.

They all talk trash.

TANISHA

Okay. Let me show you a few things.

TANISHA and JESSE kiss. It's actually a really sweet and passionate kiss.

JESSE

Whew. Wink Wink nudge nudge.

TANISHA

Sorry, not sorry. Now it's my turn, right? Adrian, I dare you to kiss Natasha.

ADRIAN

You didn't even ask me // truth or dare.

NATASHA

Yeah, you have to ask him truth or dare first.

TANISHA

Oh my God, whatever. Truth or dare?

ADRIAN

Truth.

TANISHA

You lil punk bitch. That's okay though...is it true Adrian that you don't date black girls?

ADRIAN

Is it true that's really your question?

JESSE

Remember, if you don't want to answer the question, you just have to chug for three seconds.

TANISHA

Remember, if you don't wanna be a punk bitch, you just have to answer the question.

NATASHA

Why you starting stuff?

TANISHA

I'm just playing the game. It's all about having guts, remember? So guts or not, Adrian?

A beat.

ADRIAN

It is true that I do date black girls. I date all types of girls // regardless of—

TANISHA

Let me rephrase. Is it true you prefer other races over black girls?

ADRIAN

I already answered your question. This ain't Law & Order.

NATASHA

Tanisha—

TANISHA

Okay, okay. I'm done. Go ahead, Adrian.

ADRIAN

Okay. Jesse, truth or dare?

JESSE

I'll do truth.

ADRIAN

Tell us the truth about what's goin on with you and Tanisha.

NATASHA

OOO that's a good one, Adrian.

JESSE

Well...we both just graduated, and we are both going to college—

ADRIAN

Man, stop it. You know what I'm asking.

JESSE

Yeah okay...grown man status. Um...Tanisha and I are dating.

TANISHA

Wait, what? Are we?