



The Skin of Other Men

by fig lefevre

CHARACTERS: PLAYERS 1-5

Players can be of any race, but should NOT be all white.

Players can be anyone who identifies with maleness at least a little bit, or at least part of the time, but they should NOT be all cis or all straight men.

Aim for a variety of bodies.

NAMES

First names used throughout the play can be changed to suit whatever community you are in.

Last names are names of queer & trans ancestors, please leave them be or replace them with your own queer & trans ancestors.

SETTING

Present day. The recent past. The near future. Several locations.

Various pieces of furniture can stay on the stage or be moved on and off, including a couch, toilet stalls, chairs.

NOTES

Hire an intimacy coordinator. And a dramaturg.

Some scenes might be satirical, but the characters are sincere. Lean into their realness.

This play is very physical, but the movement doesn't need to be exactly as described. If your actors have special skills or your community has particularly coded gestures, use them!

There are a ton of props in the script, but most (if not all) can be mimed. Play with available materials. Use items for other than their intended purposes. Make it work.

1. A ballet.

PLAYERS cross the stage in short bursts of play: they jostle and shove, they chase and tackle, they wrestle over a ball. They play fight. They tug of war. They play war. It gets more violent. They cross back and forth, at first just in pairs and then more and more, the energy escalating until

PLAYERS 1 & 2 enter waltzing, holding hands, a joyful dance with spins and turns. PLAYER 1 dips PLAYER 2 and everyone freezes, entranced.

PLAYER 1 & 2 share a slow, sweet kiss in their stolen moment. The lead up is everything. When their lips meet the world restarts.

PLAYER 1 & 2 pull apart, finally aware of their surroundings. They exit opposite directions.

2. Locker room talk.

PLAYER 3: Did you see that bro?

PLAYER 4: Shit EVERYONE saw that, bro!

PLAYER 3: They were all like (*exaggerated kissing gestures*) !!

PLAYER 5: No it was more like (*different exaggerated kissing gestures*)

PLAYER 4: Bro don't forget the sounds (*mimics small, high pitched moans*) they were practically mouth fucking!

PLAYER 3: DAAAMN bro you made those sounds like you've done that before

PLAYER 5: Yea that was fuckin GAY bro

PLAYER 3: You gay?//You liked watching those two boys go (*makes kiss faces at PLAYER 4*)

PLAYER 5: He is! He's fuckin GAY!

PLAYER 4: Oh yea I'm SOOOO gay, bro!// give me that boy boy shit all DAY! (*Makes grabby hands at other players*)

PLAYER 3: (*shaking his ass at PLAYER 4*) Yea you are! You are so fucking gay!

PLAYER 5: You're BOTH so fucking gay! Look at you grinding on his dick like you like it!

PLAYER 4: (*grinding into PLAYER 3's ass*) Yea you like that, don't you bro? You like my thick cock in your ass you fucking fag!

PLAYER 3: (*in a high pitch*) //Oh yea, give it to me daddy!

PLAYER 5: (*at the same time*) Hey, not cool man, my brother's a homosexual man, you can't use that word. (*Is he serious? Is he playing? They don't know*)

PLAYER 4: (*still grinding away*) Oh does the little fag not like that word? // Does the faggotty fag need a thick cock to shut him up?

PLAYER 3: Mhmm he wants that glizzy guzzler gluck gluck deep throat action

PLAYER 5 grabs his things and leaves.

PLAYERS 3 & 4 still their movements and watch him go.

PLAYER 3: *(giving one last bump to PLAYER 4's groin before standing)* Whatever man, he's just so uptight

PLAYER 4: Yea he needs to get laid

PLAYER 3: Don't we all, bro?

PLAYER 4: Not me, I got big plans this weekend

PLAYER 3: Oh shit! Damn you always pull the hottest bitches, how do you do it?

PLAYER 4: No one can resist this drip, man

PLAYER 3: Females just falling to their knees for you left and right

PLAYER 4: *(conspiratorial)* Not just females, bro!

PLAYER 3: Oh shit!

PLAYER 4: *(sinister)* No one can resist. No one.

PLAYER 3: oh shit *(sinking to his knees, as if under a spell)* oh no, I can't resist!

PLAYER 4: *(using his water bottle as a stand-in penis)* Open wide, you know you want it

PLAYER 3: Give it to me Big Guy, I wanna gag I wanna choke

PLAYER 4 mimes face fucking PLAYER 3 with the water bottle. PLAYER 3 gives outstanding head, he really gets into it. They are both moaning.

After longer than feels comfortable, PLAYER 4 "climaxes," squeezing the water bottle so it sprays all over PLAYER 3's face and chest.

PLAYER 3: YES DADDY get it all over me!

PLAYER 4: Just like that, they're all begging me for it, they'd kill to be covered in my nut!

PLAYER 3 is ravenous, shrieking as if each spirt of water is incredible pleasure.

The water bottle empties, and PLAYER 4 squeezes out the last couple drops, then puts his water bottle away.

PLAYER 4: I hope that was as good for you as it was for me.

PLAYER 4 touches PLAYER 3's face. It's light, tender. Maybe it lingers.

PLAYER 4: Have a good weekend, bro

PLAYER 4 exits, leaving PLAYER 3 on the ground, soaked. PLAYER 3 sits in this for a moment. Maybe he wipes some water off and licks it from his fingers. Maybe he touches the spot where PLAYER 4 touched his face. Maybe he just breathes.

3. Contact.

PLAYERS 1 & 5 stand looking at a glowing console. They occasionally click things and make adjustments. PLAYER 1 has a Russian accent.

PLAYER 1: Ya lyublyu tebya

PLAYER 5: Ya loo-blue tibia?

PLAYER 1: Teh-bya. Teh. Taaayyhh.

PLAYER 5: Tebya?

PLAYER 1: Horosho! Again!

PLAYER 5: Ya looblue tebYA I did it!

PLAYER 1: Close, close. Again with me.

PLAYERS 1 & 5:

Ya.

Lyu-blyooo

Ya lyublyu

PLAYER 1: Very good! Horosho!

PLAYER 5: Spasseeba!

PLAYER 1: We'll work on this one later.

PLAYER 5: Ya..lyublyu..tebya.

PLAYER 1: Perfect!

PLAYER 5: Thank you so much, my son is obsessed with languages.

PLAYER 1: You come all the way to space and your son wants only Russian phrases? No space rocks? Pictures with little green men?

PLAYER 5: It's his special interest. Last week I had Tanaka teach me hello and goodbye and he wasn't impressed at all. He said he learned that in third grade.

PLAYER 1: What grade is he now, your son?

PLAYER 5: Sixth. I'm going to miss his graduation.

PLAYER 1: Americans graduate after only six?

PLAYER 5: No no—well sort of. We do a graduation for sixth and then again at twelfth—that's high school, and then after college too.

PLAYER 1: It is important, this graduation you are missing?

PLAYER 5: I guess not as important as missing six months of his life but yea, it's pretty important to him.

PLAYER 1: *(after a moment)* We will need more phrases then.

PLAYER 5: What's next?

PLAYER 1: Ya gorzhus' toboy syn.

PLAYER 5: Ya gorgeous tuh-boi sin. What is it?

PLAYER 1: I'm proud of you, son.

PLAYER 5: Ya gorgeous tuh-boi sin. I'm proud of you son. It's perfect, thank you.

PLAYER 1: Eh it's not so perfect yet, but with practice.

They work on their console.

PLAYER 5: You ever get lonely out here? I mean—the Ruskies stay out here a lot longer, right? And—

PLAYER 1: No. Russians never get lonely. We drink vodka, kill bear, prepare for long winter. *(At PLAYER 5's reaction)* Kidding, kidding. Americans are all so gullible. Of course I get lonely. I didn't leave a son down there, but I do miss home. My family. And not shoving your cock in a Hoover every time you need to piss.

PLAYER 5: Right, the little things.

PLAYER 1: Other things too, sometimes. Contact.

PLAYER 5: Contact?

PLAYER 1: Russians are very touchy—I know you Americans only punch this, shoot that, but where I come from, contact is biiiig hugs.

PLAYER 5: How do you deal?

PLAYER 1: I find a sleeping bag gives me a nice firm swaddle when I need it.

They work.

PLAYER 1: I did a spacewalk once. On my first tour? There was trouble with a vent and it was my unit and I was out there for a while alone, just waiting. Man in my ear had the whole schematics binder, was going to talk me through it from inside, but it takes him a while to find it. Old filing system. So I just...waited. We were carving across the Eastern Hemisphere, somewhere above China I suppose. It was nearly sunrise, our third or fourth of the day, but this one—it struck me right behind the ribs. I watched the light crawl across the planet beneath me and I knew it was the same sunrise I'd seen countless times, but—

PLAYER 1 is quiet for a moment.

PLAYER 5: *(hesitant to push/break the spell)* ...but?

PLAYER 1: You feel lonely, you come to me. I will tell you all the reasons that planet down there is shit and you are lucky bastard to be up here.

*PLAYER 1 wraps PLAYER 5 in a tight, brief hug.
He releases him and turns back to the console.*

PLAYER 1: You ask the Canadian to teach you words yet?

PLAYER 5: Oui. But he was not nearly as helpful with the more existential lessons.

PLAYER 1: Ahh. You Americans talk mental health this and depression that, but Russians? We invent this “depression.” No one better than Russians at finding our way in the dark.

PLAYER 5: Must be why there are so many of you in the Station.

PLAYER 1: This, and Russians do not make waste of our rations, do not guzzle down three meals like a *(he overemphasizes)* Big Mac.

PLAYER 5: You're just bitter they don't stock Stoli outside the atmosphere

PLAYER 1: A man can dream

PLAYER 5: Speaking of, it's my break rotation. Think I'll try the sleeping bag swaddle.

PLAYER 1: Ah, well preyatnykh snavediny!

PLAYER 5: *(no idea what he said)* Spasseeba!

*PLAYER 1 claps PLAYER 5 on the shoulders as
PLAYER 3 leaves.*

*PLAYER 1 stares at the stars until they are all we
see.*

4. Urinals.

Four urinals.

PLAYER 1 enters and crosses to the last urinal, unzips and starts urinating.

PLAYER 5 enters and crosses to the first urinal, unzips and starts urinating.

PLAYER 3 enters and goes to the urinal next to PLAYER 1. They exchange looks. PLAYER 3 moves to the urinal next to PLAYER 5. They exchange looks.

PLAYER 3 moves to face away from the urinal and waits.

PLAYER 1 does a finish peeing routine (something like hip thrust, shake shake, wiggle butt, leg kick, zip, and flush). The more elaborate and specific the better.

PLAYER 1 moves to face away from the urinals and begins washing his hands.

PLAYER 3 goes to the urinal PLAYER 1 just vacated. PLAYER 1 and PLAYER 5 both look at him. PLAYER 3 moves to the urinal next to it, still one away from PLAYER 5. He unzips and stands in silence.

PLAYER 5 finishes, following the exact routine PLAYER 1 used. He turns and washes his hands.

PLAYER 2 enters, drunk. He takes the urinal next to PLAYER 3. Maybe he even uses PLAYER 3 to steady himself. He leans heavily against the urinal while he pees. He groans. Maybe he talks to himself. Everyone ignores him.

PLAYER 1 finishes washing his hands and leaves. So does PLAYER 5.

As soon as they are gone PLAYER 2 sobers up fully.

PLAYER 2: You been in here a while, you ok?

PLAYER 3: Yea, just not used to urinals yet.

PLAYER 2: Want me to stay here while you finish?

PLAYER 3: Thanks

PLAYER 2 does the routine PLAYER 1 & 5 did while they finished up, and turns to wash his hands.

PLAYER 3: Are there other rules I should know?

PLAYER 2: ?

PLAYER 3: The whole musical urinals thing and the two shakes rule and like no talking, no eye contact obviously but like is there other stuff?

PLAYER 2: Never thought about it

PLAYER 3 urinates and finishes up. It's different, not fully memorized. He turns to wash his hands.

PLAYER 2: You don't have to do that stuff you know

PLAYER 3: I kinda do tho
Like for safety

PLAYER 2: ...yea. Yea.

PLAYER 3: This helps though

PLAYER 2: Yea? Well great, man! We can be bathroom bros! Piss pals?

PLAYERS 2 & 3 exit, while PLAYER 2 continues his ideas. Feel free to improv.

PLAYER 2: Fart friends! The Brotherhood of the Urinal Cakes. The Boys of Bathroom B. I dunno if bathrooms have letters but that one could still be good. No no—The Defecating Delinquents YES that one is good!!

5. Father son lessons, tactical excretion extraction.

PLAYER 5: You sure you want to wear that shirt?

PLAYER 2: What's wrong with my shirt?

PLAYER 5: Nothing, nothing. But it might get dirty.

PLAYER 2: I know how to do laundry, dad

PLAYER 5: You're the boss

PLAYER 2: Ok just show me how to do this

PLAYER 5: I thought you'd never ask

PLAYER 2: Well I wasn't going to ask mom

PLAYER 5: Your mom's not as namby-pamby as all that

PLAYER 2: This feels like a father-son sort of thing

PLAYER 5: Alrighty then, let's get into it

PLAYER 2: Ok I think I've got everything laid out.

PLAYER 5: That's good, a boy scout comes prepared.

PLAYER 2: I was never in the boy scouts

PLAYER 5: No? Well the lesson still applies.

PLAYER 2: Ok what first

PLAYER 5: Hold this in one hand, and don't stand too close—

PLAYER 5 demonstrates and PLAYER 2 copies. It might look like surgery. Or fixing a tire. Or origami.

PLAYER 5: Then undo that side there first—no not both!

A spray of fluid.

PLAYER 2: Shit shit shit!

PLAYER 5: You're gonna let it leak everywhere!

PLAYER 2: I got it, I got it!

PLAYER 2 stops the spray.

PLAYER 5: Then get that wipe in there, no deeper, like that

PLAYER 2 copies and grimaces.

PLAYER 5: Don't let him fight you, you gotta be the boss!

PLAYER 2: I'm the boss!

PLAYER 5: Righty tighty lefty loosey!

PLAYER 2: I'm doing it! I think I'm doing it!

PLAYER 5: Don't get cocky, this is crunch time kid, seal it up tight

PLAYER 2: Oh my god, Dad, I did it!

PLAYER 2 pulls up a perfectly diapered baby.

PLAYER 5: I knew you could do it.

PLAYER 2: I couldn't have done it without you. I can't do any of this without you, dad.

PLAYER 5: You can do this. You have your own son to care for now. It's going to be your job to teach him. Your job to make sure he becomes the kind of man you want him to be. The kind of man that you can be proud of.

PLAYER 2: That's a whole lot of pressure.

PLAYER 5: "With great power—"

PLAYER 2: Spiderman? Is that where you get your parenting advice?

PLAYER 5: I think the saying is a bit older than Spiderman, but the point stands.

PLAYER 2: All you've told me so far is the responsibility part. When do I get the powers?

PLAYER 5: (*deeply sincere*) You've always had them. You come from a long line of fathers. A long line of men who've raised men who've raised men. And look at you now. You have your own son to add to this line. Your mom, your wife—they have their own powers. They made you and they made this little guy. But men? We make societies. What kind of society are you going to make?

A long moment. PLAYER 2 rocks his baby.

PLAYER 2: One where he has less weight on his shoulders. One where he can just be.

*PLAYER 2 sings a soft lullaby while rocking the baby. It's tender, quiet, and intimate. Maybe it's You are My Sunshine or **Three Little Birds** or something along those lines.*

6. A scrimmage.

PLAYERS 2, 3, 4 & 5 grab chairs and put them in a line.

They all get into position, and in slow motion they lunge forward, pushing the chairs like a football sled.

They get back into position and this time push a little harder, a little faster.

They do it again, now at regular speed.

And again, faster than necessary. PLAYER 4 falls. Everyone else freezes and looks.

Everyone gets up and resets the chairs, moving into a new position.

PLAYER 1 passes through the space, calling orders as he goes.

PLAYER 1: Alright pair up! Stretch it out then set for scrimmage. #5 Feinberg! # 2 Levine! Shirts. #3 Osborne! # 4 Wachowski! Skins.

PLAYER 1 exits.

PLAYER 4: *(calling after Coach)* Aw C'mon Coach! No one wants to see Osborne's hairy man titties!

PLAYER 3: So you don't like tits?

PLAYER 3 rips his shirt off shimmying his chest at PLAYER 4.

PLAYER 1: *(unseen)* STRETCHES! NOW! Or you're all doing suicides!

PLAYERS 3 & 4 move to one side of the stage to do partner stretches.

PLAYERS 2 & 5 move to another spot and do similar stretches. The kind where a partner has to push your leg closer and closer to your chest.

PLAYER 3: Your knee ok?

PLAYER 4: Fine

PLAYER 3: That was a rough fall, isn't that your bad knee?

PLAYER 4: I said I'm fine. *(referring to the stretch)* Now push, cmon I can take it

PLAYER 2: There's something going on with you today

PLAYER 5: I know I know I'm just in my head

PLAYER 2: I can feel how tense you are dude, your muscles are like bricks

PLAYER 5: It's just some family stuff, you don't want to hear about it

PLAYER 3: I can't believe they let you play again this season after that last one

PLAYER 4: They didn't, I faked the form

PLAYER 3: Are you serious? How long were you supposed to stay benched?

PLAYER 4: I'm not supposed to do anything

PLAYER 3: Are you still in physical therapy?

PLAYER 4: Look, I'm fine, I know I'm fine, and there are only two more weeks of the season so if you will kindly shut the fuck up and stretch my glutes

PLAYER 5: I know I should hate him, I should

PLAYER 2: He's your dad, it's not your fault you still love him

PLAYER 5: Mom says I look like him, you know? Like she looks at me sometimes and her eyes look like she's seeing him and she's surprised he's back and she's scared and it all happens in just a second but I see it

PLAYER 2: Yikes dude. Are you talking to anyone about it?

PLAYER 5: I'm talking to you

PLAYER 1 whistles several times and the players all rush to their scrimmage positions.

PLAYER 3 squats down, holding a football. He hikes the ball to PLAYER 4 behind him.

PLAYER 4 takes off but is immediately shoved back by PLAYER 5. PLAYER 5 grabs for PLAYER 4's flag, grabbing his butt instead.

A scuffle ensues until PLAYER 5 tackles PLAYER 4 to the ground.

PLAYER 1 blows his whistle.

PLAYER 1: #5 FEINBERG, FOUL, UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS, 10 YARD PENALTY

PLAYERS 4 & 5 get off the ground, face to face in a standoff that looks like it could turn to blows or kissing at any moment.

The remaining players shuffle ten-ish yards one way.

PLAYER 4: What the hell was that man?

PLAYER 5: I got your flag, didn't I?

PLAYER 4: (*gripping his genitals*) I got your flag right here

PLAYER 1: #4 WACHOWSKI, FOUL, UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT, 5 YARD PENALTY

The PLAYERS shuffle back five yards.

PLAYER 3: Damnit man, just get back on the line

PLAYERS 4 & 5 give one last look or gesture and return to their sides.

PLAYER 2: You need to walk it off?

PLAYER 5: No, no this is exactly what I needed

PLAYER 2: To beat someone up?

PLAYER 5: I'm not like him, I'm not—

PLAYER 2: Not what I meant *at all*

PLAYER 1 blows his whistle.

PLAYERS get in position, PLAYER 4 ready to hike to PLAYER 3, opposite PLAYERS 2 & 5.

PLAYER 5 makes rage-filled battle faces at PLAYER 4, grunting and growling at him, practically vibrating to start the play.

PLAYER 4: *(low enough that only PLAYER 5 can hear)* What's the matter? Lemme guess. Daddy issues?

PLAYER 5 scream-roar-growls.

PLAYER 2: Whoa whoa timeout! *(he makes a T gesture with his arms)*

PLAYER 1: You can't call timeout in a scrimmage!

PLAYER 2 yanks PLAYER 5 away anyway, a quiet huddle where the others can't hear.

PLAYER 1 blows his whistle.

PLAYER 3: You're being a dick

PLAYER 4: I'm getting in his head

PLAYER 3: In his head?

PLAYER 4: You ever heard of strategy? Psych him out, you know?

PLAYER 1 blows his whistle.

PLAYER 2: Maybe you should go home, maybe you should tell Coach you're still feeling emotional over everything—

PLAYER 5: I'm not fucking emotional I'm just pissed!

PLAYER 2: Um, anger is an emotion, fam

PLAYER 1 whistles a long note, finally getting everyone's attention.

PLAYERS resume their positions.

PLAYER 5 makes a war face. PLAYER 4 laughs. PLAYER 5 makes a bigger face, adds a low growl. PLAYER 4 laughs harder.

PLAYER 1 blows the whistle.

PLAYER 5 screams.

PLAYER 4 hikes to PLAYER 3. PLAYERS 4 & 5 completely ignore the play, only focused on each other.

PLAYERS 4 & 5 lock in an embrace that is equal parts violent and tender. Hands on the backs of necks. Forehead to forehead. Their own little world. They both push forward with all their weight, neither making headway.

PLAYER 3 takes the opportunity to run offstage with the ball, PLAYERS 1 & 2 following behind.