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A.K.A. (Also Known As)

de
Daniel J. Meyer

(fragmento en inglés)

Foreword

I read this text without being able to put it down. And without even realizing it, I finished it with a heartache in my chest that made me know immediately that I wanted to be part of this project, because I felt I could speak through its words. It made me say yes, without even thinking about it, to the author's proposal to direct it.

Dani's writing just flows, without stopping, without pause, just how he works and lives; you can see the inner workings of the stories he tells because he does not dress it up as literature. He's dropping bombs, weaving the path of where he wants to take you to, and he knows very well how to do it. "I wrote it in just one night," he confesses—" and you may think it's unprepared, poorly structured, or with a lot of holes to fill in..." He typed it in one night but he knew Carlos, the protagonist of the play, very well and his constraints. You read the play and you know that the author has long been touched by a concern about the subject.

And me, who lives in my birthplace and the birthplace of my parents and grandparents, who never felt the gaze of other people questioning my origin or deciding for me to which section of society I belong, remained trembling. We all ask ourselves once in a while: Who am I? Who do I want to be? How do others see me and define me? What part of society do I belong to? Did I choose this? Am I able to change it if I want to? And even if I too ask myself, the unheard answers that define me in the minds of others - those which I might or might not agree with - don't shake my foundations, my *roots*. Because "I'm from here, I feel from here", as the protagonist claims, and no one doubts it; but Carlos has a past that he doesn't even remember, yet it will leave a mark on this little piece of life that Dani conveys so well, and it's going to change the way he looks at things forever.

And since we have to correctly classify the context of each character and their situation, as that defines what happens, we find ourselves with a character who is in a stage of life full of doubts, feelings, changes, first times, of changes in relationships, and the need, especially at that time, to define our own identity, to put a label on the group to which we belong.

Carlos is an endearing boy, and Albert Salazar, who embodies this character in our staging of the play, enters in to the role taking charge of the character and understanding him as if it were his own life. Albert and Carlos; Carlos and Albert, one and the same person in this role. Albert plays with the audience; Carlos tells us his story. Carlos dances and Albert does it masterfully. What more can a director ask for than to have a text that moves them, an author who is open to any change or proposal, and an actor who breathes life into the scene and lets himself be carried away by me and by his feelings, who listens and proposes, who takes risks and more risks?

Thank You, Dani J. Meyer, for lending me your creation, and thank you Albert for giving your all, for putting all your talent and your being at the mercy of this precious character who has robbed the hearts of all three of us.

Premiering in Sala Flyhard with the same production company is the greatest luxury, due to the great professionalism of Clara, Sergio, Roser and Eli and, most of all, due to their human touch.

Thank you all!

Montse RodRíguezClusella

A. K. A.

First performed on 9th February, 2018 at L'Antantida in Vic, Barcelona.

The official premiere took place on 16th March 2018 at Sala Flyhard in Barcelona, and was re-released in the Teatre Lliure on 14th December 2018 and Teatre Villarroel on March 2019.

Cast

Carlos

Albert Salazar

Director

Montse Rodríguez Clusella

Artistic and technical data

Assistant director

Daniel J. Meyer

Choreography

Guille Vidal-Rivas

Lighting

Xavi Gardés

Sound Design

Xavi Gardés and Daniel J. Meyer

Scenery

Anna Tantull

Social networks

Daniel J. Meyer and Elisenda Riera

Photography

Àgata Casanovas / Roser Blanch

Poster Design

Roser Blanch and Quim Àvila

Distribution

Elisenda Riera / Sala Flyhard

Production

Sala Flyhard

Character

Paul: Between 16 and 25 years.

Notes for reading and performance

Given that the play was developed to be performed in Catalonia, it alternated the use of Spanish and Catalan as a reflection of the language registers that are characteristic of the different voices present in the text. Full representation in Spanish or in any other language should tend to present the same expressiveness and distinctive features.

It's important to use local youth slang so that the character is relatable. It's also recommended that where the mother and father come from is changed to a place that is near where the play is being performed.

The blank lines indicate silences, or that the character is listening to a question he answers on the next line.

The horizontal lines mark time-space changes that are expressed on stage, according to the director's criterion.

Staging: it is recommended that the actor be surrounded by the audience; on two or three sides of the stage.

Scene 1

Paul, the protagonist, is possibly sitting in the audience.

—Paul, my name is Paul.

—I don't know.

—I don't know. I was told to come here by the English Lit teacher. So here I am...

—I don't know. I've already told you!

- No, I don't feel like talking.

- Yeah, I'm angry.

- Because I shouldn't be here. Me, I'm fine.

(To the audience) I am angry. But it'll pass. I'm not a guy who gets angry often. You've only got one life and you have to enjoy it...*YOLO*. Right, bro? *(To a member of the audience)* Your haircut is fresh, man!

I'm a happy person. I'm 15, and I can't really complain about anything. I live in a house that's not too shabby, and my parents... do my head in, like everyone's 'rents, man, but we get on great, sometimes.

I go to school, I get bored and I go home. Then, I hang out in the park with my mates sometimes, and do the homework that the maths teacher always gives us. Because it's always the maths teacher that gives us homework. The others are either too busy or can't be bothered. Lately, some teachers just can't be bothered ... that's cool with me. Actually, there are classmates who are always messing with them and... They don't care. Typical. Poor things.

I'm a good student most of the time. Except in P. E., That... *ooft*... running and sports ... *ooft*, can't be arsed, man. That running and sweating bullshit isn't for me, and... I'm alright chillin' here; *(to someone else in the audience)* Am I right?

I love a bit of footie, me, but just a kick-about, and definitely not in P.E. They make us wear a uniform that is, *ooft* ... *(makes a thumbs down gesture)*

So I play it, but in my own clothes, and when I start to sweat...timeout. I always tell the teacher I feel awful. Then she looks at me like she knows I'm taking the piss, with this face of "processing info; now I'm going to fuck you over", this face of "I know you're lying to me" but...what can she say?

— Right, Sean Paul. Back to the field and keep running.

Yeah, she calls me "Sean Paul" or whatever comes to her at that moment. She must think that all the names of her students are double-barrelled ... even though my name is just Paul. It doesn't bother me, but she...

—My name is Paul.

—Okay, John Paul.

And then she gestures to me to sit down and rest. (*Does the gesture*)

The other day she told me that this happens 'cause I smoke.

- You what!?

I denied it, dude.

Why's she all up in my face about me smoking?

She told me I reeked of tobacco and that next time she'd tell my Folks.

—*Pah!*

I sit on the bench and watch my classmates run about. She always lets the girls finish first. Or she lets them make up dances and other things because she says dancing also counts as exercise. No shit?! That's way cooler I wanna dance too! (*Does some dance moves*) But me, I say nothing, man. I keep it zipped and watch them dance and play football. Suckers!

There goes Marty. I don't understand why he's running up and down like a loser. It's too funny, man, seeing him running about, not even touching the ball, and just watching it go from one side to the other, from one side to the other, from one side to the other. He passes it up or down the side and looks at it; from one side to the other side, from one side to the other...

(*To someone in the audience*) No! Don't look at me like that. You think I'm here because I'm antisocial? The *weirdo* of the class?

I mean, it really pisses me off having to come to these meetings, but ...'cause I don't have nothing to say, and it's embarrassing having to come here and not talk about any problems. That's it.

—Thanks.

- Yes, I'll stay and listen to my mates' stories.

The woman who coordinates these meetings is so annoying. She's a good person but well annoying.

She gets on well with my Old Dear. They went to the gym together or something and became friends.

The meeting finishes. I go home.

- Hi, Mum!

- Yeah, all's good!

— Yeah. Let me know when dinner's ready!

I lock myself in my room.

I play music.

And dance.

Music. He sings and dances.

Scene 2

I'm in my room, I lie in bed, and I pick up my mobile. My Folks are pretty cool and they let me use my phone and do my stuff and they stay out of it. I don't give them too many reasons to interfere either. I get good marks, or OK ones. I don't have problems with people... *(It's addressed to the same audience member as before)* no matter how much you think I do.

Seriously. *(Laughs)* I have no beef with anyone and I have quite a lot of mates. I don't have a problem with drugs either, *(looks at the audience member)* even if you think that too; the odd joint, but I don't drink alcohol and I never smoke a spliff on my own. It's something to do with friends... *(to the audience member)* just like you, *(to others in audience)* or you or him.

In bed, and I get my mobile out. And I download the app. Johnny told me that Tinder is now for us young folks too. It's cool, man. *Ooft...* much better than the shit I was using. There are several *hotties* nearby. I know most of them because they're neighbours, I've already seen them, or some of them are from school. Fuck! Everyone's on it, everyone and their cousin. *(To another audience member)* Does this happen to you, too? You know them all?

As a nickname I put... *(to another member of the audience)* You think I'm gonna tell you? You stupid or what? I don't want you to know who I am... I don't put face pictures either. I put on one that you can only see my profile, and ... I look well *hENCH*: tensing up the abs, showing off the ol' six pack.

On his mobile phone.

Hot.

Like

Well fit.

Like

Alright, blondie.

Like

Thank you...next.

Cool.

No!

No, get lost!

Mordor Orc

Mmm...Pass.

Wow!

BEEP

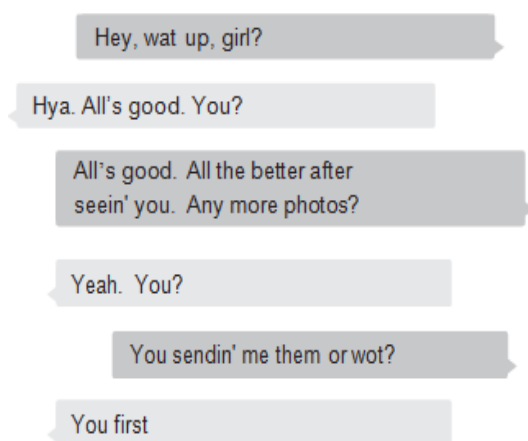
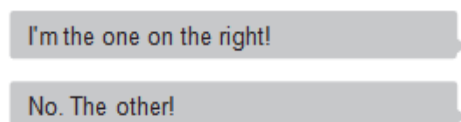


Photo of me in my swimming trunks. (*Pose*)

Photo of me and my boys. (*Pose*)



And we spent the afternoon chatting.

—Diiiiinner Tiiime!

- Coming!

My Old Dear, who's calling me for dinner.

Scene 3

Next day. School. Classes. I'm bored. But I'm thinking about Claudia. Her name's Claudia. (*Shows his mobile*) Fuck, she's a 10!

Marty asks me to meet in the afternoon to watch a series we're watching on Netflix: *Stranger Things*. Marty's brother says it's amazing and he studies film, and everyone says that it's unbelievable, but I... I don't know. I don't really see why it's amazing. It's weird and kinda creepy, but... I wouldn't say I'm crazy about it. I don't think Marty is either, but he always wants to copy his brother. If his brother says, "You'll pull for sure in this shirt", it's cool and he puts it on, and if the brother asks us keep a *bag* for him but not to say anything to their mum, we keep it for him... but it's also true that sometimes he gives us a joint and we accept it.

- Come on! You love all this.

I don't like this dude, at all.

- Marty, mate! Next time, tell your brother to keep it for himself. You're gonna get into trouble 'cause of him one day.

The other day I ended up with the bag, because their mum appeared and he threw it to me.

FUCKS SAKE, DUDE! I hate hard drugs and shit like that.

As soon as their mum left the room, I opened the window and threw it away.

- Fuck that shit!

—FOR FUCKS SAKE! Messing with the fuckin' *Muzzie*!

I told Marty not to keep it for him again, and that if his brother wants to get it back, to go look for it and he can look after it himself.

Fuck Marty's brother!

Umm...Why was I talking about that?

Oh, yeah! Because that Marty invited me to see *Stranger Things*, *Stranger Sings*... Shhhiiit, man, I can't pronounce it right. *Stranger Things*, *Stranger Sings*, *Stranger Sings*.
(Paul struggles to say the 'Th' in 'Things' and says 'Sings' instead)

(To one of the audience members) You try saying it correctly, fast. Trust me! *Stranger Things*, *Stranger Sings*, *Stranger Sings*...

Well, he invited me and I said no. I had to come to ... the meeting again, and...

Here I am.

—Hello.

Honestly, I'm fine. Because...

(He gives a knowing look to an audience member) I am a bit embarrassed to explain to all these people about this *bird*, but I am happy because yesterday we continued chatting after dinner. I didn't say it before because I was embarrassed, but... she's cool.

Look how they look at me... they're depressed. Always come to these meetings and tell depressing stories. I wish they were as happy as I am.

Because... I met an absolute 10. Sorry, a girl.

Yeah. Well, I don't know her yet, but we were talking all night.

Well ... first, we introduced ourselves. She is called Claudia. She's blonde, blue eyes, the girl is super hot. Thin, with some pair of tits...

Sorry! She's got a nice body. Kind. Yeah, she's very smart.

She goes to All Saints' Academy and she must have some money. Well, you can see the money, and besides, she showed up as a mile away on Tinder, so it must be up north. The other side is the rough area, and I'm telling you, she *ain't* from the rough area. And in her photo, she was in the Caribbean or something.

- Me, a photo of me in my swimming trunks.

- Yeah, no shirt. What's wrong, man? Am I not *hench*? Ah!

We're getting to know each other.

The meeting finishes. It's a drag, though there are nice people. Sad, but cool. They talk about their family and how they feel about them and other weird stuff. Me, luckily, at home ... it's all good, and with the Folks... all good.

- Hi, Mum!

This time I don't call her Old Dear. I'm in a good mood.

— Yeah. Let me know when dinner's ready!

- Yeah, I've done my homework.

I want to get to my room, turn on my mobile and get chatting to Claudia.

- Yes, Mum. The meeting went well. But I don't understand why I have to go.

- I don't... I don't want to talk ... about anything. Can I?

Finally, I lock myself in my room.

I pick up my mobile. I go online.

Hello

She doesn't say anything. She's not online. Fuck! I re-read yesterday's chat. Cool.

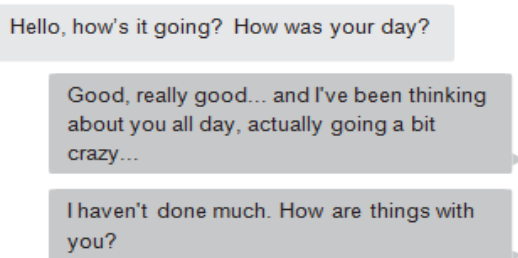
I play music.

Music plays and he dances.

I was thinking this whole using your mobile at home is a little bit like that thing they have in *Stranger Things*, *Stranger Sings*, *Stranger Sings*, *Stranger Sings*, *Stranger Sings*... Impossible to say it right, fast. (*Asks the same audience member from before*) Am I right? I told you!

It's like that *Stranger Things* walkie-talkie thing. My Folks let me use it at home and take it to school, but now the new Head Teacher doesn't want us to bring mobile phones to school, so... we leave them and only talk at home. So we don't get distracted. Come on, it's a fucking walkie-talkie to talk with your mates and, and instead of interference, you can look at things on the internet or... Well, they don't hook up with anyone using the walkie-talkie in the series. It's cool... I actually think she's right and that classes are better off without our phones. The classes go smoother.

BEEP



Then she asks me if I have Instagram. She sends me her username. She asks me for mine and I give it to her. Shit! On Insta it says I'm 15 and she's gonna see it, and on Tinder, 16.

I get on Instagram. I hope she doesn't realize I'm disconnecting for a minute.

I go into Settings, Edit.

Paul, 15 years old. 'Life is for living and enjoying, *bro!*'

The same but...

16 years old.

No. Shit! My mates will notice, and my mum...

Yes, I have a modern mother who has Instagram and forced me to let her follow me.

I leave it as:

Paul, I like living life and....

No!

Paul, *Viva la Vida, HOMIE.*

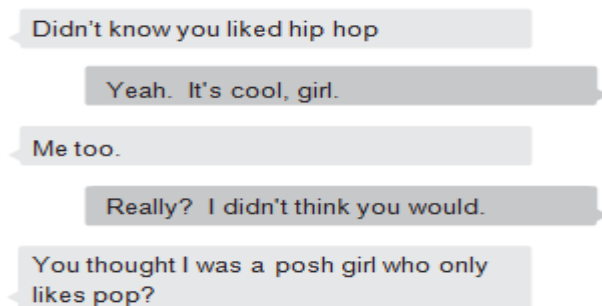
Yeah. Perfect.

It's the first sentence that came in Google when I typed "phrases *vida*+spanish+happiness". I had to put something on, and ... okay. Spanish is always a winner, and Coldplay is neutral enough, man.

I look through her profile and start to work my magic on her: I'm giving "Likes" on the photos of just her.

She's also giving "Likes" on my photos.

BEEP



WOOWWW. She's sassy and funny. I'm freaking out!

Like
Like
FAVE
Screenshot.
Like



Like
Like

She's killing it. This *chick* is killing it.

Is there a special reason you always wear hoodies? Hip-Hop styyyyle!

—DIIINNER TIIME!

—COMIING!

I'm going to have dinner. Let's continue later + Smiling Emoji with Rosy Cheeks.

Heart Kiss Emoji

Ohhhh... love it.

I go to have dinner, with my hood up. I never take it off. Maybe it's time to...

BEEP

You didn't answer my question about your hoodie.

I've always got my hood up. I love it.

Cool. + I like it + Heart Eyes Emoji

— Yeah. I always wear my hood up. It's for a lot of reason, or, like, so many reasons all at once. But... I explained it, didn't I?

- For new members of the group? *Ooft...* Can't be arsed!

- Me, I'm fine, I'm happy. Why do I have to come here again?

- Okay, go on. I wear my hood up because when I was little I was too embarrassed to show myself. In the neighbourhood they knew I wasn't my Old Folks' son, and I hid myself. Then I got over it and I didn't care anymore, but I started liking hip-hop and... It's cool.

- They adopted me when I was three.

- No, it wasn't here. (*Breathes heavily*) It was in Greece. I think... or around there.

I mean, I feel like I'm the son of my Old Folks, I mean, my parents, my... parents. I don't feel like an Arab, or, well, Syrian or whatever, or anything like that. I don't really know the story that well. It was the time of the Balkans war, it happened in Greece. I think...or around there somewhere (*he is confused*); they'd already moved about a bit... They were already immigrants in the Balkans; I don't really know very well why they were there and... I don't really know and I don't really care, and I don't why we're talking about this.

- I think these meetings that you do are great, and the truth is every time I come I like you even better, but I don't want to talk about bad stuff or nothing. I'm fine and... There's been progress with Claudia and I'd rather tell you guys about that.

Before I go any further, I have to tell you that it's been three weeks since I started talking to Claudia, and ... things have progressed, a lot. You want to know, don't you?

Scene 4

The other day Claudia asked me to meet her. It went like this:

—Hello, Old Dear.

This time I call her Old Dear because I've had a bad day. The maths teacher made me go talk to the Head Teacher at school because she caught me chatting with Claudia on my mobile.

- Yeah, we've already shared phone numbers and talked on Whatsapp, and over the phone. And her voice... But meeting up... *ooff*, I dunno. I'm too embarrassed.

I'm too embarrassed...I'm scared I won't like her or she'll freak out 'cause I look like a *Muzzie*. But I'll deny saying that last thing 'cause, if not I'll have twenty more years of meetings.

—Hello, Old Dear.

— Yeah. All's good. Let me know when dinner's ready!

I lock myself in my room. Music. Friday night. A *lil'* bit of music.

Music plays.

Message from Marty.

BEEP

Hey, bro! Meet in the park later + spliffs and chatting shit

I don't know, man...

Message from Claudia.

BEEP

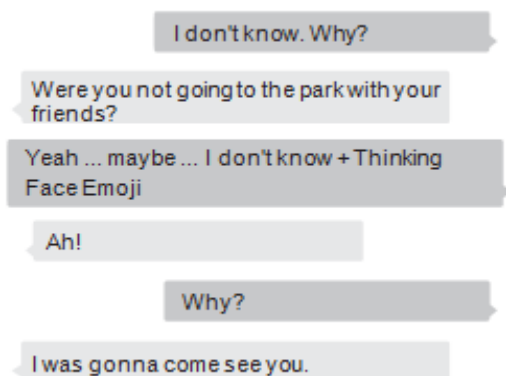
You there?

Yeah. Call me!

I can't. My Dad's around.
Whatsapp is better

Okay

What are you doing tonight?



Woooooah!

I answer Marty.

Yeah, bro, I'll come.

Yaaaas!

Woooh,woaaah! What do I do? What should I wear? *Ooft*, she's not gonna like me. Come on, come on...

Turns up the music. Dances.

I get changed.

Shirt or t-shirt?

Tight or not?

Plain or patterned? No, no.

I had everything under control on Instagram.

Hoodie.

Better keep with the same style.

I get together with the *troops*. It's me, Marty, Johnny and Joe. The *Mandem*. I haven't told you who Joe is, but... it doesn't matter.

Well... maybe it does. He's your typical beefcake with his tight shirt and trousers, and perfect hair. I mean, the guy's *hench* and he's got the *hotties* going crazy, but man, you don't have to come here like that just to chill with your mates in the park. He's always bragging, and it does my nut in...chill out bro! He's funny and he always cracks me up.

They light up a spliff but I give it a miss. I don't want it to go to my head and lose the plot.

She appears with her friends.

Oh my days! She's much hotter than in the pictures, and her friends are all *Barbies*. They're a little nervous, I guess 'cause they're in the park or because we're here. They're not "park girls".

You can see them asking "Which one is he? Which one is it?" And Marty, who's the only one who knows about her and I told him not to say anything, also asks me "Which one is she?" and then we're the same as the girls.

We're going into *battle*.

The ambassadors of both sides courageously take a few steps forward.

Under the eyes of the two armies, we greet each other in the centre.

We look at each other.

There is tension in the field.

Two nods and we continue looking at each other.

We smile.

"*Woooo!*" you hear from the boys' side, "*hahahahaha*" from the girls' side. The troops relax and the tension goes.

We both blush and smile.

I tell her let's go to the kid's play area and we sit in the middle of a seesaw. The boys and girls just watch us, until Joe invites the girls to sit with them and offers them a joint. They're not sure... not only have they never been to a park, but a stranger has never offered them a joint ... two seconds of doubt, and in ten minutes they are all as high as a kite. Not only have they never been to a park, never met up with strangers, they've never even smoked a joint. They're going for it. Better that way though; they're distracted.

Claudia and I chatted, laughed, looked at each other. She asks to take off my hood. She says it's not raining, it's not windy, it's not sunny...

I take it off. She's... one of the few people who've seen me without my hood up. Damn, my hair! I haven't done anything with it; I can just imagine Marty's fuckin' brother doing his usual, telling me "put on a hat, Aladdin; cover up that bird's nest".

I don't care, I'm comfortable and I like it. We look at each other again. Do I have to make my move? She smiles at me, she realizes what I'm thinking and... She puts her hand on my knee.

I put my hand on top of hers. She really likes me! "Come on, Paul, be brave, no fear, man!"

Our fingers touch. I look at her face again. She looks at me. I get close and ...

Ooft... MAGIC. An explosion of magic.

Dancing and singing. It sinks in. It's a very private moment.

"*Wooooo!*" Now everyone's laughing. Claudia and I decided to go with them. We walk five metres

holding hands, but then we realize we look a right sappy pair. We both decide to stop holding hands.

Pepe puts on some music. Calle 13! We dance and sing...

The song "Atrévete te-te" is playing.

Paul dances and describes the party scene: his friends flirting with her friends. Paul and Claudia dance together.

Party's over.

To the audience.

- You understand me? I'd rather tell you this. It would be good for us to hear about the good things that happen to us in these meetings, right?

- Yes, sure I've kissed other girls, but with Claudia it was different; with Claudia I wanted to sing.

—I don't know. I understand people talking about what they all feel, but I don't have any problem with being discriminated against or anything. Or fitting in, even less. I feel like I'm from here, I am from here... I don't know. I'm happy to live here.

- Well ... see you next Thursday.