

KISS AND CRY

synopsis

(Three men and three women)

FIONA, an actress, 25

STACY, a male figure skater, 22

LAUREN, a playwright/director, 35

TRENT, a college student, 21

BRITTANY, a skater, Stacy's pairs partner, 16

ETHAN, a skater, 27

SETTING: The play moves swiftly back and forth between Los Angeles, New York, Denver, Las Vegas, and Seattle. Numerous locations are suggested, each by one or two furniture pieces. Scene changes are accomplished during the music cues and "voiceovers" (prerecorded excerpts from TV and radio broadcasts, etc.) that are played during the blackouts.

The play begins at three a.m. at the premiere party for the movie *Vampire Campus*. Fiona Blake, the film's beautiful young star, has escaped from the drunken revelry to a balcony overlooking the Hollywood Hills, where she's joined by Stacy Clifford, an Olympic-class figure skater who is equally uncomfortable with the scene inside the house. They strike up a friendly conversation and discover that each is a fan of the other's work; then Fiona, out of the blue, confides in Stacy that she is a lesbian. Not wishing to brave the party again, she asks him to escort her to her limo and a quick escape into the night.

Somebody snaps a picture of them leaving together, and the tabloids immediately begin to speculate about a hot affair. A few days later, Fiona makes a surprise visit to Stacy's practice rink in Denver with a business proposition: why not go along with the rumor and pretend it's true? Fiona thinks it could be good for her career (or so says her agent); sensing Stacy's closeted sexuality, she claims he too would benefit, but he plays dumb. She leaves and, left alone for a moment, he's accosted by his teenaged skating partner, Brittany, who informs him that her fundamentalist Christian parents—with whom he lives—have been asking questions about where he goes at night. Feeling the pressure, Stacy agrees to play along with Fiona's scheme, at least for a while.

Things go well at first, as Stacy and Fiona become fast friends. Fiona snags the lead in *Moonlight on a Ranch*, a big studio film of a romantic bestseller, and Stacy and Brittany continue to win competitions on the road to the Olympics. But the game starts to get out of hand, as TV spots and magazine articles about the hot young "couple" proliferate. Fiona's lover, Lauren, a very out New York playwright with a politically-minded conscience, is kept in the dark for a while (she's out of the country doing her play at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and she'd never be caught dead reading a movie magazine anyway), but when she finds out what's been going on, she feels deeply betrayed, both emotionally and ideologically, and kicks Fiona out of their Greenwich Village apartment. Stacy's new boyfriend Trent, a wisecracking college student, has no problem with the arrangement—because it leaves him free to mess around with other guys; that relationship ends too.

Realizing that they're letting the ruse run away with their lives, Fiona and Stacy are on the verge of calling the whole thing off when Fiona's agent calls with disturbing news: Lauren has written a new play that bears a scary resemblance to the events of their lives. Feeling she could be in the running for an Oscar nomination for her first serious screen role, Fiona is terrified of being outed

at the worst possible time. Feeling desperate, she decides to try to seal the deal by persuading Stacy to run off with her to Las Vegas—to get married. Having become surprisingly attached to her, he proves only too willing.

Meanwhile, Stacy and Brittany win the U.S. National Figure Skating Championship and find themselves headed for the Olympics. (The couch beside the rink where they wait for their scores is known in the skating world as the “Kiss and Cry Area.”) One day at practice, Stacy’s buddy Ethan, another skater on the team who has always appeared straight, comes out with a passionate confession of love for Stacy, who pushes him away in fear of having his secret revealed right before the Olympics.

Fiona spends a weekend in New York, where she sees Lauren’s play, entitled *Kiss and Cry*. She goes out for drinks with Sara, the play’s director, who persuades her that, on the eve of the new millennium, it’s hip to be gay; her career could take off in a whole new way if she were to start being herself. Fiona agrees, and comes out on a cable TV interview show hosted by Trent—Stacy’s ex. She calls Stacy to break the news and he’s stunned, both by the fear of being outed himself and by Fiona’s “offer” to divorce him. Feeling lonely and betrayed, he calls Ethan, and they go out together to a dance club, where Stacy gets drunk for the first time. On leaving the bar, the two are approached on a dark street by a pair of gay bashers; the press reports that Stacy’s injuries are serious enough to keep him out of the Olympics, though the truth of what happened proves more complicated than that, and even more disturbing. Feeling responsible for the whole disaster, Fiona shows up at the hospital in Denver to find Stacy, with Ethan by his side, trying to find the courage to face a life without skating. Ironically, Ethan learns that he will be taking Stacy’s place on the Olympic team. More irony follows as Fiona fails to get her much coveted Oscar nomination, but Lauren, who’s always scorned the competitive, commercial Broadway scene, ends up winning a Tony Award for Best Play—an honor that, given everything else that has happened, leaves her completely at a loss.