

ZOE. This is not a negotiation.

You shouldn't be sitting there approving or disapproving or weighing in on what *students of color need* -

JANINE. I am trying to help -

ZOE. You cannot help. You are not an expert, you don't know anything about this -

JANINE. I am an expert in change, I am an expert in university power structures, I have watched people try to change this college before - and I am telling you that many people will not be able to get on board with what you are describing -

ZOE. Fuck them for not coming on board!!

Fuck them for caring more about their own needs than they do about *people in pain*.

JANINE. Is that what you want me to write, you want me to write "Fuck all of you," you think that will be persuasive?

ZOE. Fuck them for needing to be persuaded.

JANINE. Zoe when you yell at people you do not change their minds.

ZOE. You do not get to dictate how I express myself. You want to help, okay, hear me, even if you don't like my tone, even if you *think*, based on your limited perspective, that I am getting something wrong, do the right thing anyways, help anyways, *that* is what helping looks like.

(Beat.)

JANINE. Look Zoe, my movement - my people's movement. In my own lifetime, I have seen it succeed.

Do you know how I found out lesbians existed? How I found out there was a word for what I was?

I found out from a nun who was in the process of telling my class that it was something that got you sent to hell. The birth of my own identity came in the very moment when someone called my identity vile. I didn't have a chance to take one second of happiness from the fact

that there was a word for it! Which also meant there were more of us!

That happened to me when I was fourteen years old. And this year, the Supreme Court upheld my marriage!

ZOE. ~~That's amazing~~

JANINE. But if I had given up on everyone who hurt me, I would not currently have a single friend, or family member, or colleague.

And if we had all done that, if we'd said, "Fuck you for not already caring, *you need to be punished for what you think*" -

We would never have gotten sixty percent of the country to agree with us.

It's the reality of being gay in America. Or black in America. It's the pain of being ten percent. You need other people on your side.

ZOE. Some people aren't trying to win over friends. And family members.

Some of us have *enemies* who hate us on sight.

Some people don't get to stay in a closet and come out when it looks safe.

JANINE. That only makes it more important that you be careful, and that you be strategic. Is that fair? No, no part of it's fair, it's not fair that you have to win over people who have hurt you, it's not fair that you have to prove your *humanity* to people who get to withhold their help, and quibble and disagree, and offend, while you're fighting for your dignity, for your *life*, it's not fair.

It's infuriating. But it *works*. It works it works it works it works. It works to find language that appeals to people, it works to compromise, it works to play nice.

ZOE. I should not have to try to appeal to people who have made themselves comfortable in a white supremacist world.

JANINE. No. You shouldn't have to.