



STRIKE: ALL WOMEN STAND UNITED

by Karen Cecilia

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# STRIKE: All Women Stand United

By

Karen Cecilia

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Dedicated to the Women of Brooklyn

“I declare to you that woman must not depend upon the protection of man,  
but must be taught to protect herself, and there I take my stand.”

~ *Susan B. Anthony*

**CHARACTERS:**

\*All characters were born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y.

**WORDS** (Mid 30's) African-American. Leader of the strike. The "in-charge" type. She has 5 kids. 2 biological, 2 from boyfriend Lou and she takes care of her nephew. Graduated high school. Full-time employee.

**BLUE** (Early 40's) Any ethnicity. Doubts the strike and herself. Always wears something blue (i.e. eye-shadow, nail polish, jewelry.) A singer who never got her dream. She has one teenage Autistic son. Divorced, does not date. Didn't finish high school. Full-time employee.

**PEGGY** (17 years old) Chinese-American. Petite. A senior in high school. Unsure of herself. Lives with her parents and younger brother. First generation American. Part-time employee.

**GLADYS** (Late 20's) Latina. Recent widow and has 2 young daughters. Graduated high school. Full-time employee. Dedicated mother.

**ZASA** (20 years old) Any ethnicity. Girlfriend of Honey. In a CUNY college and lives with Honey. The wisecrack. Always the "life of the party" type looking to make a joke. Always wears her trademark dark red lipstick. No children. Part-time employee.

**HONEY** (21 years old) Caucasian. "Tom boy" type. Always wears a baseball cap and some sports gear. Girlfriend of Zasa. In the same CUNY college and lives with Zasa. No children. Part-time employee.

**GABRIELLA MARIANNA** (Known as Gabby) (24 years old) Puertoricana. The "gossip." High energy. Single, no children. Lives with her elderly mother she takes care of. Always going on dates. Graduated high school, went to some college. Full-time employee.

**TIME and PLACE** Present day on the sidewalk in front of the Save Fare Supermarket in Brooklyn, N.Y.

*ALL the characters emerge onto an empty stage that has no masking of the theatre's elements and no set. They are all wearing a one-size-fits-all type of red t-shirt that says "STRIKE" on the front and it is worn over their regular street clothes. They are all holding home made signs. BLUE and GLADYS' sign reads, "STRIKE" WORDS'S reads, "All Women Stand United" HONEY'S reads, "Cashiers Want Equal Pay As Stock Boys Equal Work" ZASA'S reads, "Shop At The Food Store Around The Corner" PEGGY'S reads, "Don't Support An Unfair Workplace" and GABBY'S reads, "Mujeres En La Lucha"*

*As they dramatically emerge, they ALL chant the word "STRIKE" speaking directly to the audience, as if the audience were people on the street walking by a picket line. They have been striking for several hours today.*

ALL

STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! (*overlap WORDS following line*)  
STRIKE! STRIKE!

WORDS

WE RAISE OUR KIDS, WE DO WHAT'S RIGHT!

ALL

SIDE BY SIDE WE'RE READY TO FIGHT!

WORDS

STRIKE!

ALL

STRIKE!

WORDS

ALL WOMEN STAND UNITED!

ALL

WE WILL NEVER BE DIVIDED!

WORDS

STRIKE!

ALL

STRIKE!

WORDS

READY, FOR A FIGHT?

ALL  
DA-A-AM RIGHT!

WORDS  
STRIKE!

ALL  
STRIKE!

WORDS  
WOMEN'S WAGES ARE UNDER ATTACK! WHAT DO WE DO?

ALL  
FIGHT BACK!

WORDS  
STRIKE!

ALL  
STRIKE!

GLADYS/GABBY/ZASA  
ESCUCHA! ESCUCHA! MUJERES EN LA LUCHA!

ALL  
STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE!  
STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! *(Cont'd)*

WORDS  
*(overlap)* Come on women! Come on, look alive! Look alive!

ALL  
STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE!  
STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! *(Cont'd, ALL chant with exuberance, then after a while, the chants begin to fade from that same energy.)*

WORDS  
Come on!...Okay let's try that other one again.... WE RAISE OUR KIDS, WE DO WHAT'S  
RIGHT!

ALL  
SIDE BY SIDE WE'RE READY TO FIGHT!

## WORDS

STRIKE!

## ALL

STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! (*Cont'd ALL chant with exuberance, then after a while, the chants begin to fade from that same energy.*)

## GLADYS

Some days I can barely get myself here...but, I have to remind myself of my girls...they're my everything. And I do things to...to make it through the day. Every item I scan, I imagine where it came from. I think, what kind'a person picked it? Who cut it up? Butchered it? I wonder how they're living. What's their family like? Do they wake up every day like me, still tired from the day before, feet hurting so bad shoes feel like torture? Are they waking up before the sun comes round and before their two little girls get up, so they can figure out what there is for them to eat before school? Thinking these things keeps me scanning and on my feet standing in one spot for eight hours a day. It's what I got to think about between walking my girls to school and picking them up. (*beat*) They ask me what I do all day, and I got to tell them something. I make it sound like a bedtime story for them...try anyway. They go to bed and don't know what I really think about (*beat*) How my gonna show them what a woman can do when they got a mom like me? Every day, every single day, I try to get them through it. And when I walk up all those stairs and come through the door, I ain't thinking about myself no more. (*beat*) Well...then there's these times when there's this shampoo commercial on, you know the one, where the lady is all lathered up in some nice shower...then I think about myself...but, just that second. (*beat*) Before bed, we sometimes paint our nails or braid our hair. We sing and laugh too...those are good times. (*beat*) I got more than my Mama' did by making it all the way through high school. And maybe, they can get more than me, cause I want to give them...the thinking that, they matter...that's all. They matter. And with all us being on strike and all, trying for the money like this stock boys get, I can start to change things for us. Maybe, I'll sleep a little better at night.

## ALL

STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! (*overlap WORDS following line*)  
STRIKE! STRIKE!

## WORDS

WE RAISE OUR KIDS, WE DO WHAT'S RIGHT!

## ALL

SIDE BY SIDE WE'RE READY TO FIGHT!

## WORDS

STRIKE!

ALL

STRIKE!

WORDS

ALL WOMEN STAND UNITED!

ALL

WE WILL NEVER BE DIVIDED!

WORDS

STRIKE!

ALL

STRIKE!

HONEY

People always just believe what they want to believe. I been told shitty stuff my whole life and some days, you believe it. *(beat)* Be nice. Look pretty. Don't slouch. Wear some makeup for Christ-sakes. Smile. Twenty-one years and it's all I been hearing. Then I come here and say to customers, *(talks to a person in the audience as if they were a customer)* Thank you for shopping at Save Fare. *(to a different person)* Thank you for shopping at Save Fare. *(to a different person)* Thank you for shopping at Save Fare. *(beat)* I'm just doing my job. Doing what I've been told. Telling them what they want to hear. *(beat)* I don't really care if you shop at Save Fare. *(imitates a customer)* Thank you honey... That's how they talk back, or sometimes, they just ignore me all together. *(to herself)* Thank you honey. It's what my mom used to say...makes me feel weird hearing it now. It's one of the only things I remember her saying to me before...*(pause)* Anyway, she'd say it everyday after I cooked breakfast. She called it breakfast, I was so little milk and cereal was what I though cooking was. It was what I did before me and my two brothers would walk to P.S. 197 in the morning. I cooked cereal cause she couldn't get out of bed after her medicines. In and out of the hospital, I got used to cooking and being called Honey. *(beat)* After she went, our dad used to take us to see the Cyclone's play baseball down at Coney Island to make us feel better. He grew up seeing the Dodgers when they was over at Ebbet's Field, not far from here. Then my brothers joined baseball and I joined softball. Damn softball...huh, they didn't even have baseball for girls. I wanted to be like the boys, even learned to throw like them. Cause when I didn't, they told me to stop throwing like a girl. *(beat)* But I am. Is something "like a girl" a bad thing? Anyway, I changed and started throwing like the boys did, then I got picked on for being like a boy. So, do they want me to be like a girl or a boy? And throw like a girl or a boy? What the fuck! *(beat)* The boys call me all types of things...and these past two years with Zasa, they been calling me something else. And when I told my dad about Zasa, he said, "Well, at least you can play ball." *(beat)* Damn, I just want to be myself. *(pause, walks away, then turns back to the audience)* Thank you for shopping at Save Fare.

ALL



STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! STRIKE! (*overlap WORDS following line*)  
STRIKE! STRIKE!

WORDS

WE RAISE OUR KIDS, WE DO WHAT'S RIGHT!

ALL

SIDE BY SIDE WE'RE READY TO FIGHT!

WORDS

STRIKE!

ALL

STRIKE!

WORDS

ALL WOMEN STAND UNITED!

ALL

WE WILL NEVER BE DIVIDED!

WORDS

STRIKE!

ALL

STRIKE!

PEGGY

I always think of value... 1.99 a pound of bananas, produce code 624. Two for \$3 this week on sale. Everyday low price of 2.49... Every price that goes by, I read. I imagine the total value of everything, if I added up the entire store. I don't know if my numbers are close yet, but I try to do it every shift when I get here after school. Everything has a value. Everything makes cents... everything, except me. Thinking about things like that is what I do when I help my mother every morning make a meal for my father, and my brother, before they get up. We cook, serve them, do the dishes. Then off to middle-school for my brother and work for father. When they leave, we clean up the apartment, then my mother starts laundry right before I leave for high school... it's my last year finally. (*beat*) When I was a Freshman, I used to sit in the front in all of my classes, raise my hand... but that's not cool. Being smart isn't cool. Being cute is what matters. I used to get in fights with the boys who would say I was ugly, that's why I sat in the front. I told my mother this when my grades started dropping. She said, I should have been a boy because I have the perfect personality for a boy. (*beat*) This year, I sit in the back. It's just easier that way. (*beat*) My parents want me to go to college so that I can meet my husband and start a family. My father tells me, (*imitates father*) "You better stop being so independent and outgoing, you'll have a