



We Are Masks

by Lindsay Price

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WE ARE MASKS

A DRAMEDY IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



We Are Masks

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Printed in the USA

Characters

8W, 4M, 5E

- Foster (F):** A super smart girl who loves musicals but has stopped doing them so that she can meet her parents' expectations. She suffers from imposter syndrome.
- Paloma (F):** A girl who has recently found a love of music. She struggles with her old sour persona of dressing in black, having black hair, black makeup and complaining a lot.
- Nolan (M):** A guy who secretly has a passion for design but has always been a slacker. It's better not to try.
- Macy (F):** A girl who's hiding her home life while presenting a pretty, perfect life to anyone and everyone.
- Drama Students:** Quinn, Jess, Gray (3 any gender)
- Dance Committee:** Ryder, Alan, Mal (1M, 2 any gender)
- The Drains (2F):** Raven and Xandra
- Zuzu (F):** Macy's friend
- Link (M):** Noland's friend
- Ms. Berg:** The drama teacher who is always positive. Or is she?
- Macy's Mom (F):** She's mean and drinks to deal with her son's death.
- Foster's Mom (F):** A doctor. Overly-enthusiastic.
- Foster's Dad (M):** A doctor. Overly-enthusiastic.
- Mask Ensemble:** Five people who can also double up the smaller roles above.
 Mask one: That I know what I'm doing
 Mask two: My mask gives me a voice
 Mask three: That I'm unhappy
 Mask four: That I'm happy
 Mask five: That I'm strong
 Rogue Mask: The destroyer. Only shows up once. Consider doubling this mask from the cast (someone we've already met).

Set and Costume Ideas

Use a unit set with a variety of levels and cubes that remain in place throughout the play. Create the play's many locations through the use of light and sound rather than realistic set pieces.

Play with the idea of mask. At the very beginning, the characters wear neutral white masks to show the "everyone wears a mask" concept. But after the opening consider allowing each mask character to design their own. You can even have the minor characters in mask if you choose. What kind of mask would Macy's Mom wear? Or Link?

Everyone should be in a half mask in the opening montage. I suggest that everyone wears the same neutral white mask - so everyone looks the same.

The mask characters (Mask one, etc.) can have their own decorated mask, or wear the neutral mask.

The characters who appear once can be played by the ensemble either in or out of mask.

Lights come up with everyone onstage in tableaux. Everyone wears a white neutral half mask or holds a white stick mask. The masks look all the same so we can't see any individuals in the characters.

FOSTER: I don't believe it. I don't deserve it. They'll all find out. They'll all find out.

PALOMA: This isn't me. This isn't me anymore. If they find out, they'll hate me.

MACY: I'm so tired. But I'll never show what's going on. They'll never see me.

NOLAN: It's better not to. It's better not to try. Because if I fail, they'll all laugh.

MASK ONE: The mask I wear is that I know what I'm doing.

MASK TWO: The mask I wear gives me a voice.

MASK THREE & FOUR: The mask I wear is that I'm—

MASK THREE: Unhappy.

MASK FOUR: Happy.

MASK ONE: A's are easy all the time.

MASK FIVE: That I'm strong all the time.

MASK FOUR: The mask I wear keeps me safe.

MASK FIVE: Makes life easier.

MASK THREE: I don't even notice anymore. I wear it all the time.

A bell rings. Everyone moves and transitions, some characters take off their masks and hand them off to other characters. There are three scenes set up on the stage: dance committee, the DRAINS, and the cafeteria. We start in the cafeteria.

QUINN: You have to admit, if we're going to compare, if we're going to make a comparison...

GRAY: Should I draw a graph?

QUINN: If we're going to compare monsters, vampires are the coolest.

JESS: You do this every year.

The focus shifts to the dance committee meeting.

RYDER: All right everyone. Dance committee meeting come to order.

LINK: Do we really have to be so formal about this? It's dancing. Relax.

RYDER: Why are you here? You're not even on the committee.

LINK: I gots to support my man. My boy. My Nolan. Hi-five! (*NOLAN does not hi-five*) No five.

The focus shifts to the DRAINS. RAVEN, PALOMA, and XANDRA complain.

RAVEN: I can't believe we have to sit in this chair, in this room, in this building for seven more months.

XANDRA: It's the worst.

PALOMA: I'm dying.

XANDRA: The worst.

PALOMA: Totally dead.

The focus shifts to the cafeteria. QUINN, GRAY and JESS talk while playing cards. FOSTER is off to the side trying to work.

JESS: You do this every year.

GRAY: It's Halloween. (*standing and announcing*) This is the time to debate monster coolness.

QUINN: I'll talk about monsters anytime. I don't know why we're limited to October.

JESS: And I don't think Vampires are the coolest.

GRAY: (*sitting*) You can't say that.

JESS: And yet... here I go... vampires... are not...

GRAY: They've got the outfit, the demeanour—

QUINN: They've got the magnetism.

GRAY: They've got the teeth.

JESS: Yeah, teeth get me every time. (*putting a card down*) Out!

GRAY: You're cheating!

JESS: Why would I cheat at crazy eights? That's total sadness.

QUINN: And it's not total sadness that we're playing crazy eights?
(*beat*) Just sayin'.

MS. BERG enters.

JESS: Berg!

BERG: Quinn, what are you doing after school?

QUINN: Bleeding out the eyes at my mom's violin lesson. The usual.

BERG: I need someone to re-teach Angela how to set up a prompt book.

QUINN: She's not stage manager material... Just sayin'...

BERG: I'm not giving up yet. Pretty please?

QUINN: Sure.

BERG: You're a lifesaver. (*as she exits*) Hi Foster! Hope to see you at auditions! (*FOSTER does not even look up*)

JESS: Zombies are cool. A zombie would eat a vampire's brain without thinking twice.

GRAY: Technically, zombies don't think about anything.

JESS: And you can't reason with them, you can't change their mind. They will eat your brain. So Vampire voodoo is pointless. I'm a zombie, you're toast.

QUINN: And that's cool?

JESS: Yes.

QUINN: (*going through the deck*) There's cards missing.

JESS: I didn't cheat!

GRAY: Turning into a werewolf is cool.

JESS: Too much fur. A werewolf is hairball city.

JESS starts dramatically coughing as if hacking up a hairball. FOSTER has had enough. At the same time MASK ONE comes to stand beside FOSTER.

FOSTER: Can you please stop talking? I am losing it. You three are causing me to totally lose it.

JESS: So go somewhere else.

GRAY: Why are you trying to study here? Go to the library.

FOSTER: The library, how stupid of me!

MASK ONE speak to the audience. The rest do not acknowledge the MASK.

MASK ONE: The mask I wear is that I know what I'm doing. All the time.

FOSTER: (*looks at watch*) Dance committee! Ugh!

MASK ONE: Organized. Harmonized. Realized...Paralyzed.

QUINN: Are you auditioning for the musical this year?

FOSTER: Of course not.

FOSTER exits.

MASK ONE: One of these days it's going to fall apart. You can't fake it forever, right? I try not to think about that. (*exits*)

GRAY: That girl is tense.

QUINN: She wasn't like this last year.

JESS: You never tried to sing with her.

GRAY: She needs to figure out if she's a vampire or a zombie. Or a werewolf.

JESS: Too much fur.

The focus shifts to the DRAINS.

RAVEN: This building.

XANDRA: It's a jail. A prison.

PALOMA: Depressing.

RAVEN: Depleting.

PALOMA: Totally.

RAVEN: I'm dying.

PALOMA: It's the air. They recycle it. On purpose.

XANDRA: We should do something about it.

RAVEN: What for? No one cares.

MASK FOUR enters and stands by the DRAINS.

PALOMA: I hate my mother so much.

XANDRA: I hate mine more. She wants me to change the eyeliner I use. She says it's too expensive. Hello? Rabbit torture device?

RAVEN: Dead bunny mummy.

XANDRA: I will not be a party to the toxic poisoning of a defenseless animal. I'm skipping math.

PALOMA: Math is so useless.

RAVEN: Numbers. I'm dying.

MASK FOUR: It's safer this way. No one knows the real me.

XANDRA: It's unfair that society forces us to take useless subjects. Is there a save the whales course? No.

PALOMA: School sucks.

They exit.

MASK FOUR: The mask I wear is that I eat healthy and I look after myself. It's an easy mask. I eat salads for lunch. I'm happy eating salad! I look like I don't eat junk food. Sure, I'll have a cookie or a fry. It's important not to deprive yourself. That's how you stay happy! They don't see what's under my bed. They don't know what happens at night. No one knows.

MASK FOUR exits as ZUZU and MACY enter from opposite sides. They see each other.

ZUZU: Macy!

MACY: Zuzu!

ZUZU: We have got to go shopping for Halloween.

MACY: We have got to match.

ZUZU: My sister's been watching these Harajuku videos, you should see their outfits.

MACY: We would be the talk of the school.

ZUZU: The whole world!

MASK FIVE comes to stand beside MACY. They do not look at each other.

MASK FIVE: The mask I wear is that I'm strong. Inside and out. Why wouldn't I be? Isn't that what I look like?

MACY and MASK FIVE exit in opposite directions.

RYDER: All right everyone. Dance committee meeting come to order.

LINK: Do we really have to be so formal about this? It's dancing. Relax.

RYDER: Why are you here? You're not even on the committee.

LINK: I gots to support my man. My boy. My Nolan. Hi-five (*NOLAN does not hi-five*) No five.

NOLAN: I told you not to come.

FOSTER: (*running in*) Sorry I'm late.

MAL: We just started.

FOSTER: (*seeing NOLAN*) What are you doing here? (*to RYDER*) What is he doing here, I didn't know he'd be here.

RYDER: Welcome to dance committee.

MAL: Nolan designs our haunted cafeteria.

FOSTER: You do?

LINK: Designs?

NOLAN: It's just a couple drawings.

RYDER: (*looking at the drawings*) Maybe last year, but you really outdid yourself.

ALAN: He's the best. The absolute best.

FOSTER & LINK: You are?

RYDER: Didn't you go to the Halloween dance?

ALAN: Don't you live in the same house? Oh—are your parents divorced?

MAL: Do you live in separate houses? I would kill to have my brother live in another house. In another city. In another country.

LINK: I thought this was a goof.

NOLAN: I told you not to come.

RYDER: Guys, let's get going.

ALAN: This is my favourite meeting all year!

MAL: Are you doing the possessed doll hallway? Zombie principal under the stage?

ALAN: Bloody stumps. I got to have me some bloody stumps.

FOSTER: But you're a slug. The biggest slug in the universe.

RYDER: Foster, that's not exactly—

FOSTER: You did this on your own?

NOLAN: It's just drawings.

FOSTER: (*looking at drawings*) This is a ground plan. You made a ground plan. To scale.

LINK: I thought this was a goof.

ALAN: Oh no. This is serious stuff. (*he is serious*) Serious. Stuff.

RYDER: We'll talk logistics next week. Can you bring me a crew job list?

NOLAN shrugs.

RYDER: Great.

RYDER exits. MASK THREE enters to stand beside NOLAN.

ALAN: It's not going to be the same without you next year. You couldn't fail, just for me?

MAL: Stop being creepy.

ALAN: I can't help it. I'm a sucker for a bloody stump. (*he and MAL leave*)

NOLAN looks at FOSTER.

FOSTER: Do you have anything to say about this?

NOLAN shrugs. FOSTER leaves.

MASK THREE: If people laugh at my mask, it hurts less. I know the truth. They don't know who I really am. If I take the mask off and they laugh, what then?

MASK THREE and NOLAN look at each other. MASK THREE exits as LINK approaches to clap NOLAN on the back. NOLAN flinches.

LINK: Hey buddy. You seem super off.

NOLAN shrugs.

LINK: Your shrug is usually uber fluid. This shrug is unhealthy. This shrug is tense. Tension is for suit losers. Suit wearing losers at the game of life.

NOLAN: *(with a sigh)* We don't stress.

LINK: That's right. And what's the one thing we do so we don't stress?

NOLAN: We don't try.

LINK: We don't try. We skate through on life's dime. Easy.

NOLAN: Easy.

LINK: I'm starving. You got any good cereal? My mom went gluten free so all we've got is crap.

FOSTER's MOM and DAD approach.

MOM: Hello, dear! Greetings Link.

LINK: Hey Mrs. K.

MOM: How's your mother?

LINK: *(overboard)* Aw, she's swell.

DAD: Are you guys hitting the books?

LINK: We sure are!

MOM: *(calling off)* Foster! Dinner time!

DAD: Foster got another A, did you see that Nolan?

LINK: Another A. Imagine that.

MOM: She's going to be the best doctor.

LINK: The best!

DAD: Do you have anything you want to share, Nolan? How was your day?

NOLAN turns, he starts to exit.

MOM: Nolan? Nolan, honey? Uh, where are you going?

NOLAN: Out.

LINK: Aren't we staying for dinner?

Music plays. NOLAN and LINK exit one way. MOM and DAD the other.

The MASKS flood the stage moving in patterns. MACY and QUINN enter in the middle of the movement. They are surprised to see each other. MACY is more upset than surprised. The MASKS form a tableau upstage for the following scene. Note: One of the MASKS can come downstage to play MACY's MOM if you're doubling roles.

MACY: What are you doing here?

QUINN: What?

MACY: What are you doing here? No one from school lives over here. What are you doing?

QUINN: Grocery shopping?

MACY: Why?

QUINN: It's a grocery store?

MACY: Not here. Not in this store. This side of town. What are you doing here?

QUINN: Oh! My dad just moved. He's in produce loading up for a juice fast. 77 carrots and a boat load of spinach.

MACY: *(more to herself)* Your parents are divorced. Why didn't I know that?

QUINN: Because, um, we're not friends? I mean, we're not enemies. You're always nice. But I wouldn't expect you to know about my life.

MACY: *(distracted)* I'm nice. Yes. That's right.

QUINN: Macy, are you OK? You seem—

MACY'S MOM: *(offstage)* Maaaaaacy!

QUINN: Who's that?

MACY'S MOM: *(offstage)* Maaaaaacy!

MACY: No one.

QUINN: She's calling your name.

MACY: There can't be more than one Macy in this entire—

MACY'S MOM enters/comes forward. She is wearing/holding a mask. She weaves a little bit.

MACY'S MOM: Macy! I was calling and calling and calling for you.

MACY: I got the pasta.

MOM swipes the box from MACY.

MACY'S MOM: Elbow macaroni? You think I want this?

MACY: That's what you—

MACY'S MOM: Rigatoni. I said Rigatoni, stupid. *(she throws the box back at MACY)* Get it right.

MACY flees. MACY'S MOM turns to QUINN. ROGUE MASK enters wearing a half mask.

MACY'S MOM: What are you looking at? *(stumbles off)*

QUINN turns upstage.

ROGUE MASK: *(to audience)* None of you know me. Not the real me. You see someone who is meek. Someone who doesn't stand out. Class to class, day to day. Do you even know my name? I know yours. You don't know how much I know about you. How easily I could destroy you. One click. One line of code. Everything you know—gone. And you'd have no idea how or why. Pick up the pieces and I do it again. And again. No one knows the real me. A swipe of a finger is all it would take and you would bow to my power. All of you will be on your knees to the destroyer. Think about that the next time you laugh at someone in the hall.

The MASKS change their tableau. ROGUE MASK exits. JESS and GRAY enter from the opposite side. QUINN walks over to them. GRAY holds up a garment bag.

GRAY: Who is ready for my costume reveal? It's— *(Choose a costume that combines a modern pop culture reference twisted with a popular movie/tv/song. For example, Michonne from the Walking Dead seen through a Snapchat filter. Change this to fit the references of right now. If you want to add a third twist, go ahead. It's your choice.)*

JESS: That's... something.

GRAY: I know! Took me three months.

QUINN: That seems excessive. Just sayin'.

GRAY: Nuances and attention to detail take time. *(beat)* Am I a loser?

JESS: Of course not.

QUINN: You're paying attention to nuance and detail.

PALOMA enters. She sees the three and stops dead.

PALOMA: Hey—oh—you're all—I have a question? You're busy. Never mind. Forget it. *(she exits)*

GRAY: What was that?

JESS: What question could one of the drains possibly have?

QUINN: I heard them complaining about air last week.

JESS: Two of them are in my English class. "What's the point in writing this essay? The world doesn't care if we compare and contrast."

QUINN: *(imitating a dying swan)* The world is dying. The world is dying.

JESS: This essay is contributing to the slow death of the world.

MS. BERG enters.

BERG: Alright guys, I need my classroom. Don't you have math?

JESS: Math is contributing to the slow death of the world.

BERG: I can't argue with that. *(beat)* Don't tell Mr. Mousseau.

JESS: Later, Berg.

QUINN and JESS exit.

BERG: Gray, do you want to talk about your costume to my grade 9's?

GRAY: That would be awesome!

GRAY exits as NOLAN hovers at the edge of the stage.

BERG: *(calling after)* 4th period OK? *(to NOLAN)* Nolan, come in.

NOLAN: Mrs. Pinto said you wanted to see me?

BERG: Yes. I understand you're behind the haunted cafeteria. I'm always knee deep in musical auditions around Halloween so I've never

been fully aware, and frankly it terrifies the snot out of me. My imagination can only take so much. But your sister—

NOLAN: What?

BERG: Foster told me what you've done and I asked Ryder to show me your work. Amazingly detailed and well drawn. Where did you learn to draw like that? Do you take art classes?

NOLAN: No.

There is a pause.

BERG: OK, Well I was wondering if you'd be interested—

NOLAN: I'm not.

BERG: Let me tell you what it is first—my regular set design student graduated and I think you have the skills to—

NOLAN: I said I'm not interested. Can I go? Is that it?

BERG: That's it.

He leaves. BERG stands looking after him before leaving.

The MASKS change their tableau. GRAY enters from the other side of the stage. PALOMA sneaks on behind.

PALOMA: Psst! Psst! *(she chickens out and runs off)*

GRAY: Hello? *(looking around)* I heard a psst. I'm not crazy. I don't think I'm crazy. Am I sure that I don't think I'm crazy?

PALOMA: *(re-entering)* Hey.

GRAY: Oh hi! Was that you? Psst?

PALOMA: Yes. I, uh, have a... I have a...

GRAY: What's the matter?

PALOMA: What do you think? I'm nervous.

GRAY: Nervous? You? Really?

PALOMA: I'm not allowed to get nervous?

GRAY: No, sure. Take a breath and let it all out in one go. That works for me.

PALOMA: *(she takes a breath and goes fast)* Do you ever use original music for your shows? Would you like original music?

GRAY: Our shows?

PALOMA: I went to music camp this summer. It was the best time I've ever—

RAVEN: *(offstage)* Paloma.

PALOMA makes a frustrated facelnoise and changes her body as the DRAINS enter.

PALOMA: Hey.

XANDRA: What are you doing?

PALOMA: Nothing. You goin' to lunch?

XANDRA: So I can eat government issue chicken fingers? No thanks.

RAVEN: They're trying to kill us.

XANDRA: Slow death chicken.

RAVEN: Processed food is the devil.

XANDRA: Corn syrup.

GRAY: In the chicken fingers?

RAVEN: You have no idea what's in your food.

They turn and exit. PALOMA looks back but exits with them. QUINN approaches.

QUINN: Were you actually talking to the drains?

GRAY: I'm not sure. I feel like a door opened to another dimension but then slammed shut.

MACY and ZUZU enter. The MASKS change their tableau.

QUINN: Speaking of other dimensions... I'll see you later. *(heads toward MACY)*

GRAY: Where are you going?

QUINN: Later!

GRAY: When did we get all cross cultural? I'll have to start talking to jocks.

GRAY exits. QUINN approaches MACY and ZUZU.

ZUZU: We were princesses last year.

MACY: We could be princess cats. We could be cat fairies—cat ears, tails and fairy wings.

ZUZU: Or cat butterflies. Oh! Bunny Butterflies!

QUINN: Hey... Macy...

ZUZU: What do you want?

QUINN: (to MACY) Can I talk to you?

MACY: (smiling, pleasant) Gee, I can't imagine why. There must be some mistake.

ZUZU: You can't talk to us. Get back to where you belong.

MACY: Zu don't be mean.

ZUZU: Why not? This is a prime opportunity for putting someone down.

MACY: Zu...

ZUZU: Fine, fine, fine. (turning to QUINN with a huff) Macy said there must be a mistake. Mistakes happen all the time. Even I am capable of mistakes so you see, we are not all that different. (not quite sincere hand gestures) So I hear you, I see you, and I hear you. Have a nice day. (to MACY) How was that?

QUINN: Still a whiff of mean. Just sayin'.

MACY: It did Zu.

ZUZU: I'm getting a headache. (she takes a breath) Macy is my best friend and she doesn't want to talk to you. Another time OK?

QUINN: That was better. You can stand by that one.

ZUZU: Yeah? Thanks. Being nice is exhausting.

MACY and ZUZU leave one way, QUINN the other.
The MASKS come forward. FOSTER enters and tries to move across the stage but the masks keep getting in her way.

MASK ONE: We can't be who we are.

MASK TWO: We can't be who we want to be.

MASK THREE: It's too easy to be laughed at.

MASK FOUR: The butt of the joke.

MASK FIVE: The one held accountable.

MASK FOUR: Ridiculed.

MASK THREE: The one in the wrong.

MASK ONE: The masks we wear are the masks we wear.

MASK FOUR: The masks we have to wear to get through the day.

MASK FIVE: What's your mask?

Music plays and the lights change. We are in a dream sequence. FOSTER moves into a spotlight. The MASKS surround FOSTER. They torment her, push her, poke her, circle her.

MASK ONE: Imposter Foster.

MASK TWO: Everyone's going to find you out, fraud.

MASK THREE: Imposter Foster.

MASK FOUR: Everyone's going to learn the truth.

MASK FIVE: You're no good.

FOSTER: No!

MASK FOUR: It's just luck you've got where you are.

MASK ONE: You're going to be found out.

MASK TWO & THREE: It's all a lie.

MASK FOUR & FIVE: You're a liar.

MASK TWO: You're a fraud.

FOSTER: They'll all find out.

MASK THREE: You're going to disappoint everyone.

MASK FIVE: Imposter Foster...

MASKS: Imposter Foster... Imposter—

NOLAN storms into the circle and shoves FOSTER. The lights snap to full. The MASKS fade back. FOSTER stumbles back. NOLAN stands over her.

FOSTER: What? What? Where am I? Nolan? Did you shove me?

NOLAN: Why did you talk about me to Ms. Berg?

FOSTER: Hey! I didn't do anything wrong. You could actually—

NOLAN: I could be nothing. Stay out of my life. Got it?

FOSTER: Ugh! You are impossible!

NOLAN: Me? Why do you always do what other people tell you?

FOSTER: Don't make this about me.

NOLAN: You do whatever Mom and Dad want. You pretend it's what you want.

FOSTER: What?

NOLAN: You're no better than me. *(he storms off)*

FOSTER: *(calling after)* Something is better than nothing! At least I'm doing... something.

FOSTER exits. GRAY and MS. BERG enter carrying a couple of costumes and hangers. PALOMA sneaks on after them and then runs off.

GRAY: This is a total sty.

MS. BERG: I was hoping the cleaning fairies would take care of it. Don't stay past your spare OK? I can't stand any more disapproving looks from Mr. Mousseau. Don't tell him I said that.

MS. BERG exits. GRAY starts folding costumes.

PALOMA enters. She sees GRAY. The MASKS come forward.

MASK ONE: Persona Paloma.

MASK TWO: You'll never be able to change.

MASK THREE: Persona Paloma.

MASK FOUR: You might as well face it.

MASK FIVE: You're no good.

PALOMA moves forward and the MASKS fade back.

PALOMA: Psst. Psst.

GRAY: What are you doing?

PALOMA: Shhhh!

GRAY: You can talk to me whenever, you know.

PALOMA: You don't understand. My friends are everywhere. They could be just around the corner in their black clothes and their black hair and their slow death chicken. It's all very—

GRAY: Draining.

PALOMA: What?

GRAY: Draining. Your friends. That's what it looks like.

PALOMA: (*fast*) I want to write music. I play the piano and I just started learning guitar and I would love to write music for a show, any show, it could be in the background but I want to practice. I want to practice before I go to college (*or university*). I'm going to go to music school and I want to write music!

*PALOMA weaves and falls over. There is a pause.
GRAY looks over her.*

GRAY: Did you die?

PALOMA: (*from the ground*) I don't think so.

GRAY: (*helping her out*) Did you do a Grinch thing? Your heart grew two sizes in a second?

PALOMA: I've never said it out loud like that.

GRAY: You sucked yourself out of the drain.

PALOMA: (*laughing*) I'm out! I'm out of the drain!

GRAY: You should tell your friends. The music part. Not the drain part.

PALOMA: Huh.

GRAY: Tell them you're going to do music for the student directed one acts next semester.

PALOMA: That would be a cool—wait. I can do music for the student directed one acts next semester? Wait—who put you in charge of who can do music for the student directed one acts?

GRAY: Ms. Berg. I'm the production manager for the student directed one acts.

PALOMA: That's amazing! (*excitedly moving back and forth*) That's—oh I'm going to make great music—oh—I don't know what to do!

GRAY: Go tell your friends.

PALOMA: (*stops dead*) Right. That's... tricky.

PALOMA exits. MASK TWO moves forward. GRAY exits.

MASK TWO: Masks aren't all bad you know. There's a lot of power in a mask. The power to stand up and say things you wouldn't normally say. The real me? I hate public speaking. Haaaaaaate it. The real me is curled up in a corner of the room screaming *Don't make me talk to people!* And one day I just decided, I'm going to put on the mask of someone who's freaking awesome at public speaking. I put on that mask and Bob's your uncle! Tammy's your aunt! And Bob-Tammy is a fabulous public speaker. The mask-me has done so many speeches now that the real me has to believe I can do it sooner or later. Pretty soon it's the real me who's a great public speaker, and then who needs Bob-Tammy. It'll be all me.

The other MASKS comes forward as ZUZU and MACY enter. The MASKS taunt MACY.

ZUZU: My mom is being the worst. She won't let me go out this weekend. I mean, so what I missed curfew five days in a row.

MASK ONE: (*singsong*) Macy Maintains.

MASK TWO: How much longer though?

ZUZU: It wasn't by a lot and if she had gone to bed like a normal person instead of staying up till I got home she never would have known.

MASK THREE: Macy Maintains.

MASK FOUR: You're barely holding it together.

MASK FIVE: You're no good.

ZUZU: Your mom is amazing... I would kill to have your mom, Macy. I mean I might really—

MACY slams her textbooks on the ground in pure anger at her friend. The MASKS fade back.

MACY: You don't— (*she cuts herself off*)

There is a pause and MACY regains herself. She kneels and picks up her books.

ZUZU: Macy?

MACY: Ugh—Sorry this math is the worst. I've been... thinking about math.

ZUZU: Oh! Math. Math is the worst. I got Mr. Mousseau. He hates me.

MACY: He doesn't.

ZUZU: He does. I can hear his thoughts. He thinks so loud.

MACY: *(looks at her phone)* I gotta go. I'm, uh meeting with Mrs. Cord.

ZUZU: Why?

MACY: Why...? Future planning meeting. Ugh.

ZUZU: Oh! You'll be great whatever she says. We should go costume shopping this afternoon.

MACY: Great.

ZUZU exits. MACY puts a hand to her head. QUINN approaches.

QUINN: Hey...

MACY: Spying on me now?

QUINN: It wasn't hard. You slammed your books on the ground.

MACY: It's none of your business.

QUINN: Why can't you let your friends know bad things are happening?

MACY: You don't know me. You have no idea what's going—

QUINN: *(interrupting)* We could talk about brothers.

This rocks MACY. It looks like she might cry. She turns away and folds her arms around her chest. She steels herself.

MACY: *(talking to herself)* Keep it together. Keep it together.

QUINN: *(reaching out)* Macy...

MACY: Don't touch me! *(beat)* Sorry. I'm fine. That was mean. I'm tired. That's all. *(she smiles)* Everything is fine, Quinn. Thank you for your concern, but it's not necessary.

MACY exits. QUINN slowly follows. JESS enters from the opposite side of the stage and sits with some sheet music. FOSTER enters and tentatively approaches JESS. The MASKS watch.

FOSTER: Hey, uh, Jess?

JESS: *(turning)* Oh hi.

FOSTER: I wanted to ask you about... Uh, how did you do on the Chem test?

JESS: I passed.

FOSTER: *(sitting)* I'm never going to get it. I don't belong in the class.

JESS: And yet... Top grade... you...

FOSTER: It's luck.

JESS: You know, it's super annoying the way you talk. Luck. You always get A's.

FOSTER: Not always.

JESS: You get more A's than me.

FOSTER: Well, I don't deserve them. I'm not as good as you think I am.

JESS: The only way that's possible is if you've been cheating on every single test this year. Have you ever cheated on a test?

FOSTER: No!

JESS: There you go.

FOSTER: I wouldn't even know how.

JESS: It's easy. The Trask Twins have an in at the school board. They can get any test you want.

FOSTER: Why do two twin teenagers have access to whatever test I want?

JESS: Don't ask questions.

FOSTER: Have you ever bought one? If it's so easy.

JESS: *(shaking head)* Too much Catholic guilt.

FOSTER: Right. (*thinking*) Right...

JESS: Foster.

FOSTER: I have to get more than an A on the next test. My parents...

JESS: If you cheat your way through, you really will be an imposter.

FOSTER: What did you say?

JESS: If you cheat your way through, you'll never be able to live with yourself.

FOSTER: Oh.

JESS: What did you want really want to talk to me about?

FOSTER: Huh?

JESS: When you first came in. You started to ask about something else.

FOSTER: Oh. I just wondered about the musical. (*with a sigh*) Auditions are this week right?

JESS: (*handing over the sheet music*) Learning my song now.

FOSTER: (*looking at the song*) This is good. It'll suit your voice.

JESS: Why don't you try out?

FOSTER: (*handing the music back*) I can't.

JESS: Then why'd you ask?

FOSTER: See you Jess.

JESS: You look miserable.

FOSTER: Yeah.

JESS exits. FOSTER stands thinking as MASK FIVE enters to stand beside FOSTER.

MASK FIVE: There's always someone telling me what to do. "This is the best for you. You're going to get into the best program if you do this. You're the best, you're the best." And I just keep nodding my head. And I just keep treading water. There's so much for you "out there." What if I don't want to go out there? What if out there is a scary place and I fall on my face. When do I get to decide what I want to do?

MASK FIVE exits as the DANCE COMMITTEE members get into place. FOSTER joins the group.

The MASKS lurk at the edge of the scene. If you're doubling MASKS with MAL and ALAN, they simply take their masks off and hand them to other MASKS.

RYDER: All right everyone. Dance committee meeting come to order.

FOSTER: I have to quit.

RYDER: What?

FOSTER: I know I'm supposed to look well rounded... I'm supposed to be well rounded, but this is interfering with my school work. My parents... Sorry. *(she exits)*

RYDER: We've barely started. *(NOLAN enters)* Nolan! Just the person I want to talk to. Let's talk about—

NOLAN: Yeah. I can't do it.

ALAN: What?

NOLAN: It's not that good. And I don't want to.

RYDER: What are you talking about?

ALAN: You have to!

RYDER: Nolan, it's going to be amazing.

NOLAN: *(yelling)* I don't want to be amazing. Don't you get it?

MS. BERG approaches, she has been listening to this conversation.

BERG: Hey gang, how's it going?

ALAN: This is the worst day of my life!

BERG: Can you give me a moment with Nolan? *(to RYDER)* Is that OK?

RYDER: It is if you change his mind.

NOLAN: I have somewhere to be.

BERG: Sit.

RYDER: Run the dance committee they said... It'll be easy they said...

MAL: Easy Ryder. We'll figure it out.

ALAN: *(begging NOLAN)* Please don't deny me the bloody stump forest. It's one of my only joys.

MAL: (*pulling him away*) Maybe you need a hobby.

They exit. The MASKS surround NOLAN.

MASK THREE: Nolan No-try.

MASK FOUR: That's what you want to be, right?

MASK FIVE: That's what you want to be...

The MASKS fade back. There is a moment of silence as NOLAN refuses to look at MS. BERG.

BERG: What's going on? (*NOLAN shrugs*) A person doesn't shout "I don't want to be amazing" for no reason.

NOLAN: You don't get it.

BERG: I get that you try pretty hard to be a certain type of person.

NOLAN: No. I don't try at all. (*throwing his drawings away*) This was a mistake.

BERG: (*picking up the drawings as she talks*) Trying, not trying, it's all the same. It's a mask. You don't want people to see who you really are. (*holding up the drawings*) This is the real you. There's a lot of precision, a lot of joy, a lot of detail. Not exactly a slacker look is it?

NOLAN: You don't get it.

BERG: Everyone wears a mask, Nolan. You're not special. (*pause*) Here's my mask. I got divorced last year.

NOLAN: What?

BERG: And it was bad. My ex hates me. For good reason. And 99% of the people around here don't know because I pretended everything was absolutely A-OK.

NOLAN: You're always annoyingly positive, how could anyone hate you?

BERG: You'd be surprised.

NOLAN: So okay. (*referring to the haunted caf*) You know I can't do this.

BERG: Nope. You have to.

NOLAN: But you just said—

BERG: My mask hid something bad. Your mask hides something good. You tried and I think you liked it. You could go back, but I'll tell you this. The more you hide, the more unhappy you'll be.

There is a pause.

NOLAN: My parents are doctors. My sister's going to be a doctor, even though I think she doesn't want to be one. I'm nobody. I'm not smart. Foster is—

BERG: Foster is Foster and you are you. She has her own mask to deal with. *(beat)* Give me five minutes. Let me talk about the musical for five minutes and see if you get any ideas.

NOLAN: If I try I won't be able to go back.

BERG: Probably not.

NOLAN: I don't... I mean...

The MASKS wave at NOLAN. He looks at them.

MASKS: Nolan...

NOLAN: *(they start to exit)* Do you really think Alan's life will be over without a bloody stump forest?

MS. BERG: Alan needs a hobby.

They exit. The DRAINS (including PALOMA) enter. The MASKS run over to join them.

PALOMA: So I wanted to tell you guys something.

RAVEN: Is it about how this school is completely losing the waste disposal battle?

XANDRA We're dying a slow death under improper waste disposal.

PALOMA: No. It's not about that. It's about music. I'm going to...

MASKS: Paloma... Paloma...

PALOMA: I'm going to write some. Music.

RAVEN: Why?

PALOMA: Because... Because I went to music camp this summer and I liked it.

XANDRA: You told us you were forced to go to your grandmothers.



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