

BEAUTY AND THE BEE

Sample Pages from Beauty and the Bee

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BEAUTY AND THE BEE

A BEE-RIFIC COMEDY IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



Beauty and the Bee

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Characters

2M, 6W + 9 Either

Catherine Godenot-Fry

Oldest. 17. A cheerleader. Used to be involved with pageants. Godenot is pronounced Goh-de-no.

Julian Godenot-Fry

Middle. 15. Laid-back and easygoing, on a never-ending quest to add processed junk food to his parentally-enforced healthy diet.

Cosette Godenot-Fry

Youngest. 14. A homeschooled national spelling bee champion. A genius.

Bethany

Catherine's friend.

Lauren

Catherine's friend.

Peg

Cosette's friend.

Louis

Cosette's friend.

The Bee-Muses

Queen Bee, Chew, Daze, Bean, Reve, Mare, Cogi, Tate, Rumi, Nation.

All the bees, except for the Queen Bee, can be played by either gender. For less characters, feel free to combine Bees.

Author's Note

Lindsay would like to thank the students of Lakewood Ranch High School and Atlantic High School for working with the script.

Set

Platforms, steps or risers on stage left and right. Centre stage is clear. When you put your set together think levels. There are 10 Bee-Muses and the last thing you want is for them to stand in a line for the whole play. Create a variety of multi-level playing areas so that you have more options for groupings.

Furniture

- A bench that fits three actors (or cubes).
- A table with three stools.

All furniture must be light enough to be carried by the actors. All furniture enters and exits during musical moments and NEVER in a blackout. Make the scene changes part of the action.

Props

- Three cereal bowls with spoons
- Big knapsack for Cosette with big notebook and big pen
- Small purse for Catherine
- Cell phone for Catherine
- Bag that holds healthy snacks
- Corn Dog, paper plate, napkin

Costumes

Catherine: Popular girl attire. Has sunglasses in her small purse.

Julian: Old t-shirt, old jeans, Converse sneakers. Adds a baseball cap at the ball game.

Cosette: EXTREMELY odd clothes. Clashing bold colours.

Bee-Muses: All dress the same in some fashion of black and yellow. The bees can be literal with wings and antennae, or more symbolic with black pants, and black and yellow shirts. The Queen Bee wears a red sash.

Peg/Louis: Nerdish attire.

Bethany/Lauren: Popular girl attire.

In the darkness there is the sound of buzzing. Bee buzzing to be precise. It is varied and overlaps.

THE BEE-MUSES: Bzzzz, buzz, buzz, bzzzzzzz, bzz, bzz...

The lights snap to full to reveal a tableau. A family portrait. Everyone is smiling nicely, posed nicely, standing nicely. The thing is, it's a family of bees. Life-sized bumble bees.

THE BEE-MUSES: Say cheese!

Blackout.

In the darkness the opening breakneck strains 'Flight of the Bumblebee' are heard. Lights rise to reveal chaos. Everyone in the play moves in industrious patterns about the stage.

The music stops and everyone freezes. CATHERINE and COSETTE end up side by side centre stage.

BOTH: Photograph.

CATHERINE: I love having my picture taken.

COSETTE: *(very good naturedly)* I hate it.

CATHERINE: That was the best part of pageants.

COSETTE: Pictures are frozen *(she bounces and wiggles)* Nowhere to go!

CATHERINE: *(with a sigh)* Pretty pictures.

COSETTE: Unchangeable.

CATHERINE: We all look normal in pictures.

COSETTE: *(turning to CATHERINE)* I don't.

CATHERINE: *(not turning)* You don't look normal anywhere.

'Flight of the Bumblebee' plays, everyone moves.

JULIAN sits at a table downstage centre and plunks his head down, asleep. There are three cereal bowls with spoons in them on the table. The BEE-MUSES circle the stage and exit.

Stage left, COSETTE sits with her two friends, PEG and LOUIS. Stage right, CATHERINE stands with her

two friends, BETHANY and LAUREN. Once in place, the music pauses and everyone else freezes. Both conversations happen at the same time; it's important there are no spaces between lines. Keep it snappy!

LOUIS: Reading Pushkin in the original Russian is a whole different experience.

CATHERINE: And then did you see?

LAUREN: The shoes?

COSETTE: You're always trying to push Pushkin on us.

BETHANY: Girl, don't get me started on the shoes.

LOUIS: He's the genesis of Russian Literature. The alpha, the nascence!

CATHERINE: So did not go with her outfit.

PEG: So I should, should I, why should I, maybe I should –

LOUIS: Spit it out!

LAUREN: Shoes make or break an outfit.

COSETTE: Pushy.

CATHERINE: And don't even get me started on the purse.

'Flight of the Bumblebee' strikes up again. Everyone moves. The music pauses, everyone freezes. We again hear the conversations.

COSETTE: Word of the day! Scherenschnitte. S-C-H-R-E-N-S-C-H-N-I-T-T-E. The cutting out of paper designs with scissors. (*she pumps her fist in the air*) German words are the ultimate.

LOUIS: At least I'm not pushing asinine German words on anybody.

COSETTE: Hey!

BETHANY: Hey, did you hear? The Schmidt twins?

LAUREN: Did they get it for the party?

COSETTE: They're not asinine, they're beautiful.

LOUIS: They're lunatic!

BETHANY: Grounded the whole year.

Both COSETTE and CATHERINE inhale in shock.

COSETTE & CATHERINE: Are not!

LOUIS & BETHANY: Are too!

'Flight of the Bumblebee' plays again, LOUIS and PEG exit.

The music pauses, everyone freezes. There is a moment of silence and we hear JULIAN snoring loudly. He talks in his sleep.

JULIAN: *(muttering)* The bees... wear... bowling... shoes...

The music plays again and concludes. The group scatters. CATHERINE sits at the table. JULIAN stays where he is. COSETTE moves centre (she stands by the table) and addresses the audience.

COSETTE: I don't have a favourite picture. My mom blew up this one, a photographer took it at the National Spelling Bee, right after I got the winning word. I didn't even know he was taking it. Everyone's hugging and my mom's mouth is open, huge, you can tell she's screaming. It's the first thing you see when you walk in our house. It's a good picture, I guess. *(she crinkles up her nose)* It's really big.

COSETTE sits. JULIAN snores. CATHERINE texts. COSETTE eats her cereal with a big grin on her face. She bounces and hums loudly.

CATHERINE: *(not looking up)* Stop that.

COSETTE: *(looking up)* What?

JULIAN gives a loud and particularly gross snore.

CATHERINE: Disgusting. Julian. Julian!

CATHERINE kicks the table, JULIAN jolts up.

JULIAN: *(sitting up, dazed)* What?

CATHERINE: You're snoring at the table.

JULIAN: Where?

COSETTE: The kitchen.

JULIAN: Oh. *(he yawns)* I dreamed,

COSETTE: *(unconsciously automatically correcting)* Dreamt,

JULIAN: A bowl of Fruity-Oh's magically appeared in front of me. (*he looks in his bowl*) No such luck.

CATHERINE: Fruity-oh's are processed cardboard.

JULIAN: I dream of processed cardboard.

CATHERINE: Cardboard is bad for you.

JULIAN: (*sighing*) Like twigs and moss are so much better.

CATHERINE: Oat bran is not twigs and moss.

COSETTE: (*suddenly*) Did you know oat bran picks up the bile in your intestines? And it helps bulk up the bowel so you go more frequently.

Both CATHERINE and JULIAN were in mid-bite. Together they drop their spoons and push their bowls away. CATHERINE's phone rings and she leaves the table.

CATHERINE: (*exiting*) Hey. I am in hell. Total hell. Did you get the practise schedule?

JULIAN: (*yawning and stretching*) So Co, what's on the agenda for today?

COSETTE: (*she bounces up and down*) Registration!

JULIAN: Right, it's regi day.

COSETTE: I can't wait to get my student ID card and my locker...

JULIAN: (*yawning*) Cool to see you so excited.

COSETTE: Very. (*wild bouncing up and down*) I can't believe I'm going to high school! Whoo!

JULIAN: (*laying head on the table*) Big difference from the homeschool scene. There's much... less... home...

JULIAN immediately falls asleep. From offstage, there is the sound of buzzing.

COSETTE: (*looking around*) Hello?

The sound of buzzing gets louder.

COSETTE: (*looking around*) Is somebody there? Julian do you –

JULIAN snores. The buzzing gets louder and continues.

COSETTE: Hello?

The BEE-MUSES leap on stage surrounding COSETTE. They channel the three-stooges, and ill-prepared swashbucklers.

THE BEE-MUSES: *(just like pirates)* Ah ha!

QUEEN BEE: Hello Cosette.

CHEW: Or should we say Cozzzzzzette.

BEAN: Don't try to run.

REVE: Don't try to hide.

DAZE: Best beware my sting! *(Taming of the Shrew, Act II, scene i)*

COSETTE: What are you doing in my kitchen?

RUMI: This is not your kitchen.

QUEEN BEE: You're in dream land.

MARE: Dead asleep.

TATE & COGI: Sweet dreams!

COSETTE: I'm not asleep.

MARE: Yes you are.

TATE: Don't deny it!

NATION & REVE: Don't deny us!

BEAN, MARE & CHEW: We will not be denied!

DAZE: O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me! *(Richard III, V, iii)*

QUEEN BEE: *(swatting DAZE)* Would you cut that out? You're a bee, not Shakespeare.

DAZE: *(pouting)* I can be a Shakespeare quoting bee.

QUEEN BEE: *(to COSETTE)* Look kid, you're asleep. We wouldn't be here if you were awake so –

COSETTE: Julian's asleep. Are you supposed to talk to him?

JULIAN lets out a loud snore; the BEE-MUSES jump back.

REVE: Nasty.

COGI: Boss! (*stage whisper*) x-nay on the alk-tay when (*pointing right at COSETTE*) she's wake-ay...

QUEEN BEE: Who's got the schedule? How did we screw up the schedule?

The BEES all talk at once coming up with excuses.

QUEEN BEE: (*over top the BEES*) Never mind! (*pointing to COSETTE*) We'll be back.

DAZE: (*in a ghostly way*) Remember meeeee.

QUEEN BEE: (*slugging DAZE on the shoulder*) We don't want her to remember! We want her to forget she ever saw us. (*to COSETTE*) Got that? You never saw us. We were never here.

MARE: Never.

NATION: No-see-oh.

BEAN: Got it?

Music plays. Everyone enters moving in industrious patterns. The music pauses, everyone freezes. COSETTE and CATHERINE end up downstage centre.

COSETTE & CATHERINE: Photograph.

CATHERINE: Christmas.

COSETTE: I'm ten.

CATHERINE: Fourteen.

COSETTE: I get the dictionary I asked for.

CATHERINE: (*disbelief*) She asked for a dictionary.

COSETTE: That's when I really started getting serious with the spelling bees. Whoo! (*emulating the joy in the picture, she throws her arms up*) Arms to the sky!

CATHERINE: (*emulating disgust, folding her arms across her chest*) Arms folded.

COSETTE: Hungry for the infinite!

CATHERINE: Freak.

COSETTE: Is the truth in the picture?

CATHERINE: Or just outside the frame?

Music plays. Everyone rushes off. COSETTE, PEG, and LOUIS sit stage right. LAUREN and BETHANY and CATHERINE stand stage left. Music fades.

COSETTE: (*bouncing up and down*) I'm official! I've got an ID card and everything. Tonight's the open house. (*PEG and LOUIS stare at her*) What? Say something.

LOUIS: You are out of your mind.

COSETTE: Louis.

LOUIS: You have won a national competition. A National competition. And your follow up is high school?

PEG: Cosette don't... don't you... don't you have... any... uh...

LOUIS: Spit it out!

PEG: (*all in one breath*) Don't you have any concerns about what it might be like? How you might be, uh, treated?

LOUIS: Have any nightmares?

COSETTE: Like what?

LOUIS: Like having your head repeatedly shoved in a toilet?

The focus shifts stage left.

BETHANY: I can't believe it. The summer just started.

LAUREN: The beach is going to be so sad next week. The saddest place ever.

CATHERINE: And I won't be there.

LAUREN: I can't believe you're not allowed to go! What's with your parents being so (*makes a face like she's swallowing medicine*) 'family' all of a sudden?

CATHERINE: I don't know. It's hell. Total hell.

BETHANY: Is something wrong?

CATHERINE: Other than they're making my life a living hell?

LAUREN: I never see my parents.

BETHANY: Why not?

LAUREN: I don't know. They're busy I guess. (*pause*) I wonder what they're doing?

The focus shifts stage right.

PEG: Cosi you have to... you really should... People like us don't... we don't really... we shouldn't...

LOUIS: Spit it out!

PEG: (*all in one breath*) We don't belong in high school, we're not like other people. Teenagers.

LOUIS: Now is the time to speak with candour and open honesty. Wahrheit! (*German for 'truth'*)

COSETTE: (*mocking*) German, Louis? Gee you're serious.

LOUIS: And you are living in a dream world. A bubble. A dream world surrounded by a bubble wearing a sweater vest. There are no sweater vests in high school! It's a vicious place where the weak get tossed onto the tundra to be devoured by wolves.

PEG: Louis! Ew!

COSETTE: That's harsh.

LOUIS: We're not the wolves Cosette, we are not the wolves.

The focus shifts left.

BETHANY: Hey, is your sister really going to Chapman?

LAUREN: She is? She's going to our school?

CATHERINE: Yeah. She is.

BETHANY: I thought she homeschooled.

CATHERINE: Yeah. She did.

LAUREN: Homeschoolers are so weird. They always look so pasty. Like they only move around at night, cause they can't bear the light of the sun.

CATHERINE: That's a vampire.

LAUREN: Oh. (*with wide eyes*) Is your sister a vampire?

The focus shifts stage right.

LOUIS: Look I know the horror. I have been in the building of horror.

COSETTE: You went for five minutes.

LOUIS: That's all I could stand! One spitball on the back of my neck and I was out of there.

COSETTE: I have my whole life to be smart! My whole life. I have one tiny window to experience high school. I want to slam my locker, and complain about the math test, go to football games, and eat yesterday's fries with last years gravy...

PEG: You'd never... you would never... never... mom never...

LOUIS: Spit it out!

PEG: *(all in one breath)* Your mom would kill you if you ate french fries.

COSETTE: She's all for it. She's one hundred percent happy for me.

LOUIS & PEG: *(disbelieving)* Really?

COSETTE: Well, she's given up trying to change my mind. You should too.

LOUIS: Sweater vest bubble dream world. *(pointing at COSETTE)* Living it.

COSETTE: I'm going to high school. *(pointing at LOUIS)* Deal with it.

LOUIS: Fine. When the wolves tear your arm off, don't come crying to us!

Music plays. Everyone enters, moving in industrious patterns. In the middle of the movement, the BEE-MUSES and CATHERINE meet face to face. The music pauses, everyone freezes.

CATHERINE: Hey! Watch where you're going.

QUEEN BEE: Hello Catherine.

MARE: Sweet dreams?

CATHERINE: *(with scorn)* Nice outfits.

BEAN: *(looking down)* What outfits?

CHEW: Is she insulting us?

NATION: Not for long.

CATHERINE: I don't dream of Giant Bees. Shoo!

CHEW: We're the buzzing in your brain.

TATE & COGI: Buzz, buzz!

REVE: (*sing song*) We know what you're thinking.

RUMI: Why you toss and turn.

DAZE: (*taunting*) We know everything.

CATHERINE: (*pushing past*) Shut up!

Music plays, everyone moves in industrious patterns. In the middle of the movement, the BEE-MUSES and COSETTE meet face to face. The music pauses, everyone freezes.

QUEEN BEE: Hello Cosette.

BEAN: Cozzzzzzzette.

NATION: Told you we'd be back.

MARE: Sweet dreams?

COSETTE: (*very cross, turning away*) What do you want?

THE BEE-MUSES: Awwwwwwwwwwww.

DAZE: (*patting COSETTE on the head*) So grouchy tonight!

BEAN: (*like talking to a child*) Something on your mind?

QUEEN BEE: A buzzing in your brain?

TATE & COGI: Buzz, buzz!

CHEW: Why are you tossing and turning?

REVE: (*innocently*) How was the open house?

COSETTE: Leave me alone!

She pushes past them. Music plays. Everyone exits. JULIAN sits at the table and falls asleep. COSETTE stands beside the table with her back to the audience. The music pauses. CATHERINE steps forward.

CATHERINE: My favourite picture is our family portrait. We get one done every year. Everyone looks their best. It's the only time... we look like a family. Like a family is supposed to look. I like that. A perfect family picture. I want to be a part of the family in that picture. (*she sighs*) Why can't everything stay the same? Why do things have to change? If my parents think for – (*she inhales sharply, catching herself*) Nothing's wrong. Everything's fine. It's all perfectly fine.

CATHERINE sits at the table, buried in her cell phone. COSETTE paces beside the table. She hums unconsciously.

CATHERINE: *(not looking up)* Stop that.

COSETTE: *(not stopping her pacing)* What?

JULIAN gives a loud and particularly gross snore.

CATHERINE: Disgusting. Julian. Julian!

CATHERINE kicks the table, JULIAN jolts up.

JULIAN: *(sitting up, dazed)* What?

CATHERINE: You're snoring at the table.

Suddenly, COSETTE erupts in a spelling explosion.

COSETTE: Meseems! M-E-S-E-E-M-S! Mesembryanthemum! M-E-S-E-M-B-

CATHERINE: *(breaking into the explosion)* What are you doing!

COSETTE stops in her tracks losing her balance.

COSETTE: *(falling over)* Gack!

CATHERINE: Freak.

CATHERINE's phone rings and she gets up.

CATHERINE: *(as she leaves)* Hey. I'm in hell. Are you serious? I can't believe she'd do that!

COSETTE picks herself up. She slumps into her seat with a groan and puts her head on the table. JULIAN stares at her.

JULIAN: Cossi-fan-tutti. I'm sensing... there's something's... awry.

COSETTE: *(with her head on the table)* Really? Whatever gave you that idea?

JULIAN: Awww sarcasm? I thought you were above the sarcasm stab.

COSETTE: I am, I am, it was a moment of weakness. Sorry.

JULIAN: What's going on?

COSETTE: *(sitting up)* The open house was Friday, at the school?

JULIAN: Oh yeah. Casa de opena. How was that?

COSETTE groans and puts her head on the table.

JULIAN: Whoa. I'm sensing... issue.

COSETTE: It was horrible. I've been, all weekend, worried, I can't, I just – I don't know what to do!

JULIAN: Breathe Cosi, breathe!

JULIAN and COSETTE inhale and exhale together.

COSETTE: Did you know I'm different?

JULIAN: *(he shrugs)* You're you.

COSETTE: Yes, but you wouldn't say I'm normal, average, typical. I'm different, weird, bizarre, unusual!

JULIAN: I don't think about it Co.

COSETTE: *(she stands and starts to pace)* I never thought, I didn't think that different doesn't matter when you're the only type of person in the room or you've always been surrounded by the same kind of different. Did you know there's no different in high school?

JULIAN: What happened?

The lights change slightly. MARE (or any female BEE-MUSE) enters. She and COSETTE stand side by side.

COSETTE: *(in her bouncy, in your face way)* Hello!

MARE: Hi.

There is a pause. COSETTE continues to bounce, trying to think of something to say.

COSETTE: *(plunging right in)* Did you know that the Norwegian Rat, which is weird in itself because the Norwegian Rat doesn't come from Norway at all, is found everywhere except the Arctic, the Antarctic and Alberta?

MARE: *(scornfully laughing, sizing up COSETTE)* Right.

MARE turns her back on COSETTE and exits. The lights change back and COSETTE sits at the table.

JULIAN: See, that's not the first thing I'd say to someone after 'hello.'

COSETTE: I've never had anyone look at me like that. Like an icy cold wind on my spine. That look, that look, is that going to happen again? I'm not sure I can see that again. Is Louis right? Am I going to last five minutes? Am I living in a sweater vest bubble world? I don't want to lose my arm to the wolves!

JULIAN: Breathe Cosi, breathe!

JULIAN and COSETTE inhale and exhale together.

COSETTE: People don't look at you like that do they? Icy wind on your spine?

JULIAN: (*shrugs*) I don't think about it.

COSETTE: That's because you never talk about rats to strangers.

JULIAN: True. But I might talk about wombats to a bus driver.

COSETTE: And nobody would dare look at Catherine that way.
(*groaning*) I'm making a big mistake.

JULIAN: Hey, hey. Whoa. Whoa. You gotta do... (*Pause. COSETTE stares waiting for infinite wisdom, which is...*) what you gotta do.

COSETTE: (*sighing*) I don't know what to do.

Music plays. Everyone enters moving in industrious patterns. COSETTE and CATHERINE end up downstage. The music pauses, everyone freezes.

CATHERINE & COSETTE: Photograph.

CATHERINE: I love feeling pretty. The girl in the picture.

COSETTE: Pictures say nothing.

CATHERINE: I look happy.

COSETTE: The moment's gone.

CATHERINE: Mom took all my pageant pictures down when I quit.

COSETTE: I wish I could take down that Bee picture.

CATHERINE: Nobody loves a quitter.

COSETTE: You can never go back.

CATHERINE: Why do things have to change?

CATHERINE & COSETTE: Photograph.

CATHERINE: Is the truth in the picture?

COSETTE: Or just out of frame?

Music plays and everyone moves.

NOTE: In this next section the table, chairs, and bowls need to be moved out of the way, and a bench moved downstage centre.

The BEE-MUSES jog on stage in a line. CATHERINE turns to see the BEES coming.

CATHERINE: (*thrusting out her hand*) Stop right there!

Everyone freezes. The music pauses.

CATHERINE: You are not coming into my dream again. No way.

QUEEN BEE: Too late Catherine.

THE BEE-MUSES: Photo op!

The BEE-MUSES crowd around CATHERINE and pose for a picture. CATHERINE stands with her arms folded.

CATHERINE: I do not dream of Giant Talking Bees.

THE BEE-MUSES: Say cheese!

CATHERINE: It's weird.

QUEEN BEE: And you're not weird.

CATHERINE: Of course not.

QUEEN BEE: Or different.

CATHERINE: That's the same as weird.

THE BEE-MUSES: (*changing their pose*) Say potato!

QUEEN BEE: Still, your brain is buzzing pretty bad. Otherwise we wouldn't be here. You're on the schedule.

CATHERINE: You've got the wrong brain. I never think about anything.

DAZE: (*leaning in*) Really? That's weird.

CATHERINE: (*leaning in right back*) I'm NOT weird!

THE BEE-MUSES: (*changing their pose*) Say eggplant!

QUEEN BEE: If you don't think, then what's up with Cosette?

CATHERINE: Why would I waste time thinking about Cosette?

QUEEN BEE: Or your parents?

THE BEE-MUSES: (*changing their pose*) Say omelette!

CATHERINE: (*breaking away*) There's nothing wrong with – Get out of my head you stupid bees!

Music plays. Everyone moves. The BEE-MUSES come face to face with COSETTE.

COSETTE: (*thrusting out her hand*) Stop right there!

Everyone freezes. The music pauses.

COSETTE: I don't have time to deal with you. (*she rubs her head*) My brain's too full.

THE BEE-MUSES: We know!

The BEES gather around COSETTE.

DAZE: (*patting COSETTE on the head*) Poor Cosette.

CHEW: (*knocking COSETTE on the side of the head*) Your head must hurt so bad.

MARE: Usually you think so good.

COGI: (*trying to correct*) Think so well.

NATION: All those thoughts flying around.

REVE & MARE: Buzz, buzz, buzz!

TATE: Sucks to be you.

BEAN: Different good... different bad...

BEAN, DAZE & TATE: That's what makes Cosette so sad!

RUMI: I call bull. (*to QUEEN BEE*) Can I boss?

QUEEN BEE: Go ahead.

RUMI: (*loud and clear*) Bull!

The BEE-MUSES applaud in approval. RUMI beams.

RUMI: You REALLY thought Cosette and high school would fit comfy cosy like bees and honey? Really, really?

COGI: Yeah! Don't you ever watch teenagers on TV?

REVE: (*poking COSETTE*) They don't look like you.

COGI: (*poking COSETTE*) Or talk like you.

COSETTE: Mom doesn't let us watch TV.

BEAN: What if high school isn't all you imagined it to be?

REVE: What if it sucks?

TATE: Sucks to be you.

QUEEN BEE: What are you going to do, Cosette?

COSETTE: I don't know. (*she rubs her head*) My brain hurts, I can't think.

MARE: That's a switch.

CHEW: You're always thinking.

NATION: Isn't that what you do?

DAZE: You're not turning stupid are you?

QUEEN BEE: Better come up with an answer quick. You're about to wake up.

Music plays. Everyone moves. CATHERINE, JULIAN and COSETTE sit on the bench. Once they are seated, everyone exits. Music fades.

The three stare at a piece of art. CATHERINE and JULIAN slowly turn their heads to the side, as if that could help them understand. COSETTE bounces.

JULIAN: (*still with his head to the side*) Is it upside-down?

CATHERINE: It's not art. It's a blob. A big blob of lines and things and there's no paint.

COSETTE: It's done on computer. Fractals.

CATHERINE: How can it be art if it's done on computer?

COSETTE: You still need to tell the computer what to do. It's math art. Exploring infinite possibilities.

JULIAN: (*switching his head to the other side*) Whoa. I have no idea what that means.

CATHERINE: I can't believe I'm being forced to miss the beach for this.

COSETTE: "What is art but life upon the larger scale, the higher, when, graduating up in a spiral line of still expanding and ascending gyres, it pushes toward the intense significance of all things, hungry for the infinite?" *(she sighs)* Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

CATHERINE: *(muttering to herself)* Kill me now.

JULIAN: Hmmmm. Hungry.

CATHERINE: You're always hungry.

JULIAN: There's a hot dog stand outside...

CATHERINE: Mom'll catch you...

JULIAN: You won't cover for me, Cathy?

CATHERINE: Not when you call me Cathy.

JULIAN: Where'd they go?

COSETTE: Egyptian art.

CATHERINE: Unbelievable. We need to be a *(mocking)* 'family' and they take off? This blows.

JULIAN: *(grabbing his stomach and groaning)* I could die without a dog. *(looks left and right)* Must... dash. *(he stands)*

CATHERINE: Mom'll catch you...

JULIAN: I leave myself to the whims of fate. Rat on me if you must. It's Dog Time.

JULIAN exits. CATHERINE looks at her nails, bored. COSETTE keeps darting unsubtle looks at CATHERINE. Finally, CATHERINE rolls her eyes.

CATHERINE: What?

COSETTE: What?

CATHERINE: You're staring at me.

COSETTE: Sorry. So... soooooo. *(she exhales loudly)* Are you going to... 'rat' on him?

CATHERINE: *(still examining her nails)* I don't know. *(she looks up)* Are you going to tell her?

COSETTE: No. Why?

CATHERINE: You might. (*slightly tight*) You're close to her. Closer than I am.

COSETTE: Oh. (*She exhales loudly again. She inhales, and speaks fast and furiously.*) Did you know the Latin terminology for the Norway Rat is *Rattus Norvegicus* and –

CATHERINE: (*interrupting*) What are you doing?

COSETTE: (*off track*) Um, um... they're good swimmers...

CATHERINE: What are you doing?

COSETTE: I – I want – I wanted to – I have –

COSETTE erupts in a spelling explosion, leaping to her feet.

COSETTE: Ectogenesis! E-C-T-O-G-E-N – !

CATHERINE: (*breaking into the explosion*) Stop that!

COSETTE: Gagh! (*she topples back onto the bench*) Blood rushing from the head.

COSETTE puts her head between her hands.

CATHERINE: (*in teenaged horror*) You can't do that! Randomly spell in public. Nobody does that! Are you gonna do that at school? I swear Cosette if you ever –

COSETTE: (*yelling, leaping up*) That's it!

CATHERINE: (*falling back*) Gagh!

COSETTE: (*moving back*) Sorry, sorry. I'm messing this up in colossal proportions. (*she takes a breath*) I want to talk to you about school. Fitting in at school.

CATHERINE: Good luck with that.

COSETTE: Ah ha! You know. You know! I know, that you know!

CATHERINE: Know what?

COSETTE: Catherine. I am different.

CATHERINE: Uh huh...

COSETTE: It has been brought to my attention that different and high school don't necessarily gel. Or fit. Or mesh. Or meld, and I was

wondering... I was thinking... (*increasing speed*) bubble wolves sweaters mom white flag forget it.

CATHERINE: (*standing*) OK.

COSETTE: (*standing*) Will you help me?

CATHERINE: With what?

COSETTE: Fitting in pointers. Please?

CATHERINE: (*sitting*) You're kidding.

COSETTE: (*sitting*) I am steadfast with solemn seriousness.

CATHERINE: (*standing*) You're beyond help!

COSETTE: (*standing*) A little alliteration and I'm beyond help?

CATHERINE: (*sitting*) You say and do weird things at all the wrong times, you know too much about rats! I'm not trying to be mean but... (*she shrugs her shoulders*)

COSETTE: (*sitting*) You don't think I should try high school.

CATHERINE: Nobody gets to 'try' high school. You sink or you swim.

COSETTE: (*leaping up*) That's it!

CATHERINE: (*hissing and looking around*) People are staring.

COSETTE: I don't want to sink. I want to swim and you are an excellent swimmer. Just like the rats.

CATHERINE: Can we not talk about rats?

COSETTE: You do high school better than anybody. You're an expert.

CATHERINE: It's just school.

COSETTE: It's more than that. We could put these family outings to good use by discussing how to not get my head flushed down a toilet.

CATHERINE: Only boys do that.

COSETTE: (*happy*) Oh good.

CATHERINE: Girls will just be mean to you till you cry.

COSETTE: (*less happy*) Oh good. See I didn't know that. Will you help me? Please? I'll get on my knees and beg, right in front of the fractals.

CATHERINE: (*looking around*) Don't do that. Don't. (*pause*) And what does mom think, about all this?

COSETTE: She wanted me to throw in the towel weeks ago. Regular high school isn't exactly in her 'plan' for me. But I convinced her otherwise.

CATHERINE: Oh did you. (*pause*) All right.

COSETTE: (*bouncing up and down*) Really? Really? That was a yes? You're really going to help? (*she lunges at CATHERINE*) I can't believe you said yes! I have so much to learn and... (*she pats herself down*) I don't have a pen. (*panic*) How can I absorb your wisdom without a pen! (*she runs in a tight circle*) A pen! A pen! My kingdom for a pen!

CATHERINE: COSETTE!

COSETTE freezes in place.

CATHERINE: Chill out.

COSETTE: Right. (*she exhales really slowly and sits*) I am chilled... (*pause – take the pause!*) out.

JULIAN runs in.

JULIAN: Mom and Dad are in a throw down outside ancient artefacts.

CATHERINE: What?

COSETTE: They're fighting? Fighting, fighting?

JULIAN: Oh no. (*sitting*) But wouldn't that be awesome? Just some verbal fencing.

CATHERINE: He's being over-dramatic. Let's find them and get this stupid day over with. (*she exits*)

COSETTE: Thank you Catherine! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

COSETTE's yelling makes CATHERINE exit faster.

COSETTE: Julian, Catherine's going to help me fit in at school.

JULIAN: Oh yeah? Sounds like a plan. Come on, Co; let's blow this abstract popsicle stand.

COSETTE: Do you hate the gallery?

JULIAN: No way. Every time I burp today I'll think of fractals.

COSETTE: Eww.

'Flight of the Bumblebee' plays. Everyone enters, moving in industrious patterns. The BEE-MUSES jog in a line coming face to face with CATHERINE. The music pauses, everyone freezes.

THE BEE-MUSES: (with a French accent) 'Allo Catherine!

CATHERINE: You bees are really starting to bug me.

QUEEN BEE: (to the other BEES) We're irritating!

MARE: That's all a bee can hope for!

The BEES whoop and hi-five each other.

CATHERINE: I don't know why you're bothering. Everything in my life is fine. Just fine.

THE BEE-MUSES: Uh huh.

TATE: So you keep saying.

DAZE: Denial is not just a river in Egypt, Catherine.

NATION: I can't believe you just said that.

DAZE: Denial is very relevant. Deny that it's not!

'Flight of the Bumblebee' plays. Everyone enters moving in industrious patterns. The BEE-MUSES jog in a line and come face to face with COSETTE. The music pauses, everyone freezes.

COSETTE: When am I going to stop dreaming of Giant Bees?

QUEEN BEE: When you're happy.

COSETTE: But I am happy. I'm going to experience high school and Catherine's going to give me tips so I won't get my head shoved in a toilet.

RUMI: That's sure a surprise huh? Catherine offering to help you.

COSETTE: Catherine's the best.

COGI: She is?

BEAN: Who knew?

COSETTE: What are you saying?

QUEEN BEE: We don't say anything. It's your brain Cosette.

COSETTE: (*speaking quickly and unconsciously*) Did you know they used to say bees couldn't fly? A bee shouldn't be able to support its weight with its wings. But they were comparing the bee to the airplane and hadn't factored in that bees don't fly the same way that planes do.

The BEES stare at COSETTE.

CHEW: Boy. You can't turn that off, can you?

Music plays. Everyone moves. PEG, LOUIS and COSETTE sit stage right. CATHERINE, BETHANY and LAUREN stand stage left. The music pauses, everyone freezes.

There is a pause as PEG and LOUIS stare at COSETTE. She has just said something.

COSETTE: (*bouncing up and down*) What? Say something!

LOUIS: You are out of your mind.

PEG: Louis!

LOUIS: She's going to the head wolf. She's offering her limbs up to the chopping block.

COSETTE: Catherine is going to help me fit in.

PEG: Why? I mean, what I mean is how? No, what I mean –

LOUIS: (*interrupting*) You're going to listen to some pompom robot who isn't even going to a real school next year?

COSETTE: It's a real school. It's a Fashion... institute.

LOUIS: Ha!

The focus shifts left. CATHERINE paces back and forth. BETHANY and LAUREN watch. BETHANY gets more and more annoyed by the second.

CATHERINE: It's a complete and living hell. This week has been a complete disaster. You know what I have to do today? A baseball game. I have to go to a baseball game. The gallery is one thing, no one I know is going to go to something so stupid as a gallery, but I could be seen at a ballgame. With my family. What if Troy goes to the game? And sees me with my family? What if?

BETHANY: (*blurting out*) Who cares?

CATHERINE: What?

BETHANY: (*eyes wide, realizing she spoke out loud*) Nothing.

CATHERINE: What did you say?

LAUREN: She said –

BETHANY: Nothing! I didn't say anything –

CATHERINE: I heard you –

BETHANY: I didn't say anything. (*finally giving in*) Why would I say anything? Why would I bother saying anything? All day every day is filled to the brim with how every freaking second of your life is an endless torture and the worst ever and your family sucks. You think your life is the worst ever? You think your life is just, you are just, it's just – Oh just forget it.

BETHANY storms off.

CATHERINE: Bethany. Bethany!

LAUREN: (*calling out*) Are we going to the beach tomorrow?

Music plays and everyone moves. JULIAN sits on the bench centre stage. He pulls out a baseball cap and puts it on. He gets right into the game.

CATHERINE sits. One of the BEE-MUSES passes her a purse and a small cloth bag. CATHERINE pulls sunglasses and a phone out of the bag. She starts to text.

Everyone exits. The music fades.

JULIAN: (*yelling*) Hey batter, hey batter, swing! Hey batter, hey batter, swing!

CATHERINE: (*pushing JULIAN*) Not in my ear.

JULIAN: (*trying to look over her shoulder*) What are you doing...

CATHERINE: (*turning her back to him*) None of your business...

JULIAN: (*à la Bohemian Rhapsody*) I see a little silhouette of a cell phone...

CATHERINE: Shut up. It's my phone. I bought it. I can do whatever I want.

JULIAN: Uh huh. You gonna say that when mom sits down?

CATHERINE: Maybe.

JULIAN: (*hoots with laughter*) Can I watch? Sell tickets? Take pictures?

CATHERINE: Shut up.

JULIAN: (*yelling out*) My grandmother can hit harder than you!

CATHERINE: Not in my ear!

JULIAN: (*groaning*) Oh my stomach, commander in chief, what can I feed you! (*elbowing CATHERINE*) Hey. What treats in the land of the bland and unprocessed are we eating today?

CATHERINE: (*looking in the bag at her feet*) Sunflower seeds, dried apricots, dried chickpeas, baked pita, fruit leather.

JULIAN: Just what a growing boy needs. Fruit leather. (*he sighs*) Why don't you ever complain about this bounty of baked and dried?

CATHERINE: Why would I? (*sincere*) I look amazing. I have the best skin of anyone in my class.

JULIAN: (*bowing*) The ever-humble Cathy Godenot-Fry.

CATHERINE: (*elbowing JULIAN*) Don't call me Cathy.

COSETTE enters. She carries a large backpack.

JULIAN: Where are the 'rents?

COSETTE: They sent me down.

CATHERINE: (*annoyed*) They're not coming?

COSETTE: They didn't say.

JULIAN: Do you hear that? (*softly calling out*) Julian... Julian...

COSETTE: (*actually listing*) What?

JULIAN: Nachos calling my name. (*he stands and takes a deep breath*) Fake cheese, here I come.

CATHERINE: Don't get caught...

JULIAN: Don't lose that phone...

JULIAN exits.

COSETTE: (*she reaches into her bag and pulls out a big notebook and a BIG pen*) I. Am. Ready!

CATHERINE: (*slowly looking up*) What?

COSETTE: I am ready. I have a pen. I have the focus of a laser beam ready to absorb your words of fitting in wisdom. Fire away!

CATHERINE: You're not.

COSETTE: What?

CATHERINE: You're not ready.

COSETTE: (*looking around*) We've hardly started and I'm already sinking? How?

CATHERINE: (*slowly*) You look eager to learn.

COSETTE: Oh. (*trying to grasp*) That's bad?

CATHERINE: Very.

COSETTE: But I like learning.

CATHERINE: No. You don't.

COSETTE: (*writing this down*) Never admit I like learning. Got it.

CATHERINE: Are you going to write everything down?

COSETTE: Of course. (*concentrating*) I have to figure out how to look like I hate learning, while learning at the same time. (*leaning forward*) What next?

CATHERINE: Stop that! Never lean forward. Never look eager. Never raise your hand in class.

COSETTE: But what if I know the answer? Can I raise my hand once a month?

CATHERINE: Cosette.

COSETTE: Every other month?

CATHERINE: No!

COSETTE: OK, OK, (*writing this down*) no answers.

CATHERINE: Fitting in means you don't do anything to make you stand out. When you stand out people notice you and it gives them a chance to realize you're a space alien.

CATHERINE notices COSETTE focusing on something to the front and right of them.

CATHERINE: What are you looking at?

COSETTE: The wave's going around. Here it comes!

COSETTE stands up and throws her arms in the air. CATHERINE does not.

COSETTE: Whoo!

She sits and looks sheepishly at CATHERINE who stares at her stonily. COSETTE clears her throat.

COSETTE: The wave is wrong. Let me write that down.

CATHERINE: *(standing)* If you don't want to take this seriously—

COSETTE: Wait! Don't give up. I'm ready to learn. I'm not admitting I'm ready to learn, and I will lean back and scowl at you as I learn but I am deadly serious about all this not learning. Is that OK?

CATHERINE: *(sitting)* I have no idea. OK. Start hating mom and dad.

COSETTE: What? Why?

CATHERINE: People who like their parents stick out.

COSETTE: *(an innocent question)* How come you and mom don't spend more time together?

CATHERINE: *(thrown by the question)* What?

COSETTE: *(not noticing CATHERINE is thrown)* You both have such pulchritude. It makes so much more sense that you and mom would get along. *(she sighs)* Pulchritude. I love words that don't look the way they sound. How could something that has 'ritude' in it mean physical beauty? *(CATHERINE stares at COSETTE)* Sorry. Sorry, sometimes my brain just *(she wiggles her fingers)* goes places.

CATHERINE: Well stop it.

COSETTE: *(leaning right in)* Would you go shopping with me?

CATHERINE: *(leaning back)* What? Why?

COSETTE: Please? Tomorrow?

CATHERINE: No!

COSETTE: I was thinking I need a fitting in outfit. If I look like I fit in, then everyone will assume I fit in and before they find out I'm different it'll be too late and I'll have everyone totally in love with me.

CATHERINE: That's not how high school works.

COSETTE: One hour. Less than an hour. One store. I'll take whatever you throw at me.

CATHERINE: But I – *(she exhales in frustration)* Fine. One store.

COSETTE: *(sincere)* That's great. I feel great about this. This is going to all work out great.

CATHERINE: *(thinking back)* That word you said. That punch word?

COSETTE: Pulchritude.

CATHERINE: You think I'm pretty?

JULIAN enters groaning in his good-natured way.

JULIAN: Totally denied! Mom yanked me out of line. I was so sure I had their location locked and loaded. Grabbed me like a linebacker. Totally airborne.

CATHERINE: Did you get grounded?

JULIAN: *(sitting)* She didn't even pause for thought. Pushed me toward the seats and stomped right back to Dad. Man. Nacho-less. Nacho empty. *(calling out)* We want a pitcher, not a belly itcher! Hey, hey, here comes the wave. Whoa!!!! *(He leaps up with his arms in the air. The girls do not move.)* Whoa. Glum sisters. What gives?

Music plays. Everyone enters. The BEE-MUSES jog in a line across the stage. CATHERINE and COSETTE end up side by side downstage centre.

The music pauses, everyone freezes.

BOTH: Photograph.

COSETTE: Mom thinks we're the same but we're not.

CATHERINE: Mom never understood.

COSETTE: She thinks I like winning. That winning the Bee was big for me.

CATHERINE: She wanted me to win those pageants.



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