



## Sample Pages from Monster Problems

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# MONSTER PROBLEMS

A DRAMEDY IN ONE ACT BY  
*Lindsay Price*



*Monster Problems*

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## Characters

13W+9M+2 Either

**Brooke:** 14. Will do anything, or so she thinks, to be popular.

**Zombie:** Monster. Follows Brooke around. Can be male or female.

**Cress:** 14. Until this summer, Brooke's best friend.

**Amber:** 16. Amber, Hailey, and Shivon are the "popular" girls Brooke latches onto.

**Hailey:** 16.

**Shivon:** 16.

**Brody:** 16. Brooke's brother.

**Gavin:** 16. Brody's friend.

**Drew:** 16. Brody's friend.

**Mom:** Brook and Brody's mother.

**Olivia:** 14. Wants to look perfect because a good reputation is based on looks.

**Medusa:** Monster. She follows Olivia around. Her head is covered in snakes.

**Heather:** 14. Olivia's cousin. Heather doesn't care what she looks like.

**Ryder:** 14. Heather's friend. Can be male or female.

**Em:** 14. Girl that Olivia wants to hang out with.

**Mike:** 16. The kind of guy who would believe rumours about a girl.

**Sam:** 14. Wants to be normal, and by normal he means invisible. Sam is not normal.

**Leana:** Monster. The Irish Vampire who follows Sam around. She does not have an accent.

**Ethan:** 17. A senior who knows what Sam is going through.

**Parker:** 14. Parker, Wade and Peri are Sam's nerdy friends.

**Wade:** 14.

**Peri:** 14. Female.

**Rachel and Noah:** Sam's parents.

## Casting Notes

NOAH and MIKE can be played by the same actor. The role of GAVIN can be cut by dividing his lines between BRODY and DREW.

## About the Monsters

It is important that the Zombie, Leana, and Medusa look, sound and move differently than the others. Give them a different skin tone and costume colour palate. It has to be clear that they're not human and that no one can see them (other than Sam with Leana). The more different they are, the easier it will be for the audience to connect with their monster identity.

## Premiere Production

*Monster Problems* was premiered by Governor Simcoe Secondary School on May 30, 2013 with the following cast:

**LEANA:** Jennifer Drakeford

**ZOMBIE:** Robert Maisonneuve

**MEDUSA:** Brandie Gaspich

**SAM:** Mackenzie Kerr

**BROOKE:** Rachel Kelly

**OLIVIA:** Dayna Prentice

**MOM:** Marion Penzenstadler

**BRODY:** Dylan Hodges

**DREW:** Bennett Berg

**GAVIN:** Thomas Dakers

**HEATHER:** Bella Klassen

**RACHEL:** Andrea Sandoval

**NOAH:** Ryan Howarth

**WADE:** Adam Parsons

**PERI:** Marion Pensenstadler

**PARKER:** Ben Pinfold

**CRESS:** Carly Botbyl

**RYDER:** Connor Pace

**EM:** Jessica Buckle

**AMBER:** Rebecca Wall

**HAILEY:** Fitore Aliu

**SHIV ON:** Madison Steele

**ETHAN:** Cameron McKay

**MIKE:** Ryan Howarth

**STUDENTS:** Marc Plamondon & Katherine Jones

**Director & Technical Work:** Rassika Risko

**Backstage Assistant:** Chasity Sanderson

## PROLOGUE

*Creepy music plays. Creepy lights come up. Three MONSTERS (a ZOMBIE, MEDUSA, and LEANA Sidhe, a vampire) enter. They move slowly centre, staring at the audience, looking as monsters do. When they get downstage, the music screeches to a halt and we hear OLIVIA in full rant.*

OLIVIA: (offstage) There is no way I'm wearing that. I don't care how much it cost, I'm not wearing it.

*The MONSTERS react with a groan. They've heard all this before. LEANA gets out a nail file and starts doing her nails.*

MEDUSA: (everything she says sounds like a snake's hiss) Sssssssshe complainssss sssssssso much.

BROOKE: (offstage) I'm not friends with her anymore, OK? Stop asking me about it.

ZOMBIE: (responding to BROOKE's whine) Ice. Cream. Headache. Right. Between. Eyes.

SAM: High School? You want me to go to high school? Insania! (insanity in Latin)

MEDUSA: Insssssssanian? He sssssssspeaks Latin?

LEANA: A precious little nerd. (beat) It's a good thing they do complain. We monsters need jobs too. If they didn't complain, they'd have no problems and we wouldn't exist in their tiny minds.

ZOMBIE: When. Pigs. Fly.

*The three laugh. LEANA & MEDUSA exit. ZOMBIE slowly makes his way over to where BROOKE will enter. NOTE: Unless specified no one sees the MONSTERS.*

## ONE – The Summer

*MOM and BROOKE enter. MOM holds a laundry basket. They start folding laundry.*

MOM: But why?

BROOKE: Because.

MOM: Because why?

BROOKE: Because. Just because.

*They continue folding laundry. On the other side of the stage BRODY, DREW and GAVIN enter in mid-conversation. They are carrying a bottle of Mountain Dew and bags of chips.*

GAVIN: Lara Croft is not real.

DREW: She seems real.

GAVIN: She's not real, dude.

DREW: She talks to me.

GAVIN: She's in the computer.

*They sit on a couch.*

BRODY: She talks to all of us.

DREW: She talks to all of us, man.

*They start playing a video game.*

MOM: I need more of an explanation.

BROOKE: Why?

MOM: Cress is your oldest friend.

BROOKE: It's my birthday I should be able to say who comes and who doesn't.

MOM: Did you two have a fight?

BROOKE: No.

MOM: You don't just magically stop being friends with someone.

BROOKE: Sometimes you do, OK?

MOM: No.

BROOKE: (exiting) I don't want to talk about this anymore.

*BROOKE exits toward the kitchen. MOM throws up her hands and exits in the other direction with the laundry basket. ZOMBIE follows BROOKE into the kitchen. DREW catches the ZOMBIE out of the corner of his eye and turns to watch the ZOMBIE.*

BRODY: Yeah but why?

GAVIN: Because.

BRODY: Because why?

GAVIN: That's the way it is. Alien blood is green.

BRODY: Just because they're green on the outside, doesn't mean they have to be green on the inside.

GAVIN: It looks good splattered over things.

DREW: Dude. A zombie just followed your sister into the kitchen.

GAVIN: What? Where? How?

BRODY: When did you become zombie-conscious?

DREW: I'm always on the look out for zombies. *(he stands and poses as if listening really hard)*

BRODY: What are you doing?

DREW: If a zombie attacks your sister, she's going to start screaming.

GAVIN: That makes sense.

*The three lean in, straining toward the kitchen. MOM enters and is confused by their bizarre stance.*

MOM: What are you doing?

*Startled, all three fall over.*

BOYS: Ahh!

MOM: What are you doing?

BRODY: Nothing.

GAVIN: Yoga.

DREW: Listening to see if Brooke has been eaten by zombies.

MOM: Maybe that's enough with the video games for one day, hmmm?  
*(she carries on into the kitchen)*

DREW: You should stop her.

BRODY: Why?

GAVIN: Dude! What if your mom and your sister get turned into zombies?

BRODY: That would be pretty cool.



DREW: That would be ultimate.

*The three nod their heads in agreement. They freeze as OLIVIA enters on the opposite side of the stage with HEATHER. HEATHER sits and is instantly focused on her phone. OLIVIA faces downstage as if looking at herself in the mirror. MEDUSA enters slowly behind with a slither and watches the scene, always staring at OLIVIA. Neither HEATHER nor OLIVIA see or hear MEDUSA.*

*NOTE: Once the scene starts, BRODY, DREW and GAVIN exit quietly.*

OLIVIA: How do I look?

HEATHER: (*not looking*) Fine.

OLIVIA: (*turning around*) You're not looking.

HEATHER: (*looking up*) Fine. (*she goes back to her phone.*) When are we going to be done? I'd like to leave this room before Christmas.

OLIVIA: Almost done. You look like you just rolled out of bed.

HEATHER: You look like you spent a week getting ready.

OLIVIA: Really? Hmmm, that's not good. I don't want to look desperate. Just naturally perfect.

HEATHER: I don't think that's possible.

OLIVIA: If I don't get my first day look absolutely perfect, I'll be totally ruined.

MEDUSA: (*softly*) Looookssssss.

HEATHER: Olivia. It's a building. Four walls, a ceiling and a floor. That's all.

OLIVIA: (*sitting*) What are you going to wear?

HEATHER: Clothes.

OLIVIA: You need to think about your first impression.

HEATHER: Clean clothes.

OLIVIA: You have to take this seriously. What do you think people will say about that shirt?

HEATHER: It's cool, I love vintage too, let's hit a thrift store?

OLIVIA: Who is going to say that?

HEATHER: Ryder would say that.

OLIVIA: Ryder has his own problems.

HEATHER: I'll let him know.

OLIVIA: That shirt says I don't care. It says, "I don't want you to take me seriously."

HEATHER: I think you're asking a lot of a shirt.

OLIVIA: The way you look is a direct link to the way people talk about you and that's how you get a reputation. People judge you based on how you look. What you wear.

HEATHER: Right now I'm wearing a headache.

*MEDUSA stands behind OLIVIA.*

MEDUSA: You need the right lookssssss.

OLIVIA: If you look right, people treat you right. If you look like a nerd, people treat you like a nerd. And if you look like a thrift store reject...

HEATHER: Are embarrassed of me? Because of how I look?

OLIVIA: (*not definite*) No...

HEATHER: You can't dump me you know. We're family.

OLIVIA: Just cousins.

MEDUSA: Jusssssst cousssssssssinsssss.

HEATHER: I thought we were more than just cousins. I thought we were friends.

OLIVIA: We are. And as your friend I'm telling you the way you look is important.

HEATHER: *People* are important.

OLIVIA: When people see me, talk about me, they're always going to say something good.

HEATHER: You could give them something outrageous to say. Something wild.

OLIVIA: Uh, no.

HEATHER: Do you know Heather Gallo? She had an affair with a circus clown.

OLIVIA: Heather.

HEATHER: Did you know she wears Spider-Man pyjamas?

OLIVIA: You cannot say that.

HEATHER: Did you know she's on an all-protein diet? Bug protein.

OLIVIA: Stop it.

HEATHER: She eats nothing but bugs.

OLIVIA: Don't you dare.

HEATHER: Picks them right off the sidewalk.

OLIVIA: You can't say that! You'll ruin me.

HEATHER: (*looking at OLIVIA and folding her arms*) And why would a story about me, ruin you?

OLIVIA: Promise me you won't spread any crazy rumours about yourself. OK?

*They exit. On the other side of the stage SAM enters stiffly and sits. LEANA strolls on and sits. NOTE: SAM is the only one who can see and interacts with his MONSTER.*

SAM: High School. Staggering.

LEANA: (*she strokes his hair*) You'll never survive, Sammy. (*SAM looks at her*) Just saying...

SAM: I like being homeschooled. But no. I have to go to school and interact with humanity. What about humanity interacting with me?

LEANA: Shoves. Upended lunch trays. Flushes. Wedgies. (*SAM looks at her*) Just saying...

SAM: Pathetic.

LEANA: You're pathetic, Sammy. So sad.

SAM: I'm pathetic? Me? Who's the Irish vampire here? Huh? It should be easy to spot her 'cause she has an Irish accent. (*accusing*) Oh wait, no she doesn't.

LEANA: That's your fault. I'm in your head, your imagination. *(she taps his forehead)* You want me to have an accent, give me an accent.

SAM: I want you to go away. I hate that I can see you.

LEANA: I know. It's so much fun.

SAM: That's me. Party Sam. Wheee.

LEANA: How could I ever live without your sunny disposition, Sammy?

SAM: You're not alive.

LEANA: Details.

SAM: *(with a sigh)* I hate "Sammy."

LEANA: *(with glee)* I know.

*RACHEL and NOAH sort of hover in the doorway.*

RACHEL: Sam?

NOAH: Hey, Sammy...

LEANA: *(with a hiss)* Speaking of pathetic.

RACHEL: We heard you... *(looking around)* ah, who were you talking to?

SAM: The physical manifestation of my problems caused by the actions of my misguided parents who are forcing me to attend the archaic and barbaric institution that is high school.

*RACHEL and NOAH look at each other.*

NOAH: That's very specific.

SAM: I'm very smart.

RACHEL: And how have your problems, ah, manifested?

SAM: *(world weary sigh)* Vampire. Female Vampire.

LEANA: Hello idiots!

*RACHEL and NOAH do not react to LEANA. They don't see or hear her.*

SAM: She says hi.

NOAH: That's quite the... *(looking around)* imagination you have there Sam.

SAM: Which will no doubt be crushed the seven hundredth time I am shoved into a locker with my underwear around my ears.

RACHEL: Oh Sam, they don't do that anymore, right Noah?

NOAH: Right. High schools are a bully-free zone. Zero tolerance.

SAM: Yes everyone holds hands and sings *Kumbaya*.

NOAH: Listen kid, you're going to high school.

RACHEL: Your little bowling friends are going to be there. Don't you want to, ah, see them?

NOAH: We want you to even things out, socially. Give you a chance to be a normal teenager.

SAM: Swell. I'll prepare for my doom then.

NOAH: That's the spirit.

*NOAH and RACHEL exit.*

LEANA: They are not giving up.

SAM: (*with disgust*) Normal.

LEANA: They must think you're so weird. (*she pats him on the head*)  
Poor old sod.

SAM: How could I be normal?

LEANA: You're going to get beat up every day. You smell like prey.

SAM: The only way I could be normal is if I was invisible.

LEANA: Invisible. Hmmmm. There's a thought.

SAM: (*starting to think*) Huh.

LEANA: What are you thinking about, Sammy?

SAM: I'd give my eye teeth for an invisibility cloak.

LEANA: Too bad. So sad.

SAM: People won't bother me if they can't see me. I'd be normal then.

LEANA: How are you going to do that?

SAM: Stop everything that makes me stand out. That's the only way.  
Totally and utterly invisible.

LEANA: You're going to fail boyo. You know that.

SAM: Shut up Leana.

*A bell rings and the stage crowds with students moving through the halls on their first day of school.*

## **TWO – The First Day**

*Everyone freezes as BROOKE talks to the audience. Her ZOMBIE is behind her.*

BROOKE: They're not hard to spot. The right crowd. They walk with confidence. Their smile says 'I am popular.' Everyone says hi as they walk down the halls. They always have a place to sit in the cafeteria and something to do on the weekend. (*ZOMBIE grunts behind her*) You can't start off on the wrong foot with the right crowd.

*Everyone starts moving again. BROOKE crosses away. Her ZOMBIE grabs after her, but misses. He follows slowly behind. OLIVIA and HEATHER come downstage. MEDUSA is not far behind.*

*OLIVIA is constantly scanning the crowd.*

OLIVIA: Are you nervous?

HEATHER: No.

OLIVIA: Why?

HEATHER: It's school. Depressed, yes. Nervous, no.

OLIVIA: Look!

HEATHER: What?

OLIVIA: Em McDonald.

HEATHER: Dumb McDumb-erdon? Old Mc Dumb Dumb had a farm?

OLIVIA: I'm going to go talk to her.

*OLIVIA crosses away. Everyone freezes. OLIVIA talks to the audience.*

OLIVIA: Looks are everything. I know it, the world knows it. If Heather wants to get left behind... (*she looks at HEATHER briefly and then quickly looks away*)

MEDUSA: Looooksssssss.

OLIVIA: There's nothing I can do about that.

*Everyone unfreezes and is on the move. OLIVIA turns away. MEDUSA grabs after her with a hiss but misses. She follows OLIVIA. WADE, PARKER, and PERI scurry onstage. PERI is buried in her phone.*

WADE: Say it again.

PARKER: It's exactly the same each time.

PERI: I'm telling you, I saw him scratching his arm.

WADE: Say it again.

PARKER: Why?

PERI: This is an extreme reaction to some kind of bite. Anaphylaxis.

WADE: Totally Bardus. (*stupid in Latin*) Say it, Parker.

PARKER: He said and I quote: "I'm quitting bowling. Don't call me."  
Click.

WADE: Nothing else?

PARKER: That's it.

WADE: Are you positive?

PARKER: Yes.

WADE: One hundred percent positive?

PARKER: I didn't perform a clinical trial or analyze the data.

PERI: Didn't he say there were fire ants in his backyard?

WADE: He's not suffering from a mental breakdown because of a bug bite. This is a concussion. Brain Trauma.

PARKER: He's got something. You don't just quit bowling for no reason. You don't cut your friends out of your life for no reason.

PERI: (*looking up from her phone, excited*) Black widow! (*disappointed*) No he'd be dead already. (*she's back on her phone*)

WADE: Here he comes.

*PERI and PARKER look up. SAM enters. Everyone freezes. SAM turns to the audience.*

SAM: Operation Invisible is in effect.

LEANA: Normal people don't give code names to their life.

SAM: I have normal clothes, a normal haircut, normal shoes, and a normal backpack.

LEANA: What is an abnormal backpack?

SAM: Shut up, Leana.

*Everyone comes to life. SAM turns and marches by his former friends. He does not look at them as he goes past. LEANA follows behind. She waves at the friends, even though they can't see her.*

PERI: Hi Sam.

PARKER: Hi Sam.

WADE: Samuel.

LEANA: They look so sad Sammy. Sad little nerdy puppies.

WADE: Concussion.

PERI: Bugs.

PARKER: He's not joining the robotics club.

WADE: No bowling... no robots...Calamitas! (*disaster in Latin*)

PERI: If only we could get a blood sample.

PARKER: I get nauseous at the sight of blood.

WADE: Do you think we're obsessing over this?

*As they continue talking to themselves BRODY, DREW and GAVIN stroll in.*

BRODY: Here we are again. Last first day of high school.

GAVIN: Smells like... hot pockets and chocolate pudding.

*They all take in a deep breath and sigh with total satisfaction. DREW sees BROOKE and her ZOMBIE*

DREW: Dudes! Zombie at... at...

GAVIN: Where?

DREW: (*pointing*) Whatever o'clock is over there.

*They all turn to watch BROOKE. CRESS approaches BROOKE as BROOKE scans the room.*



CRESS: Hi Brooke.

BROOKE: Cress! (*now frantically looking around*) I told you, we can't talk anymore.

CRESS: We're not talking. I just said, "Hi." Actually *you're* the one talking, you took it further than hi. You could have just said, "Hi!" and moved on. "Hi!" doesn't even require you to stop walking and if you had just said, "Hi!" and kept moving, then you wouldn't be standing beside me all this time, looking like you're talking. Since that's probably what you don't want to be seen doing.

BROOKE: Ah!

*She runs away. The ZOMBIE grabs after her and follows. CRESS shakes her head and laughs. She's not upset by the situation at all. RYDER approaches HEATHER. They hug.*

RYDER: Heath-a!

HEATHER: Ryd-a! I am so glad to see you.

RYDER: Having fun with Sunshine Barbie?

HEATHER: Has my brain completely leaked out my ears?

RYDER: She's your cousin, not your friend. You don't have to hang out with her.

HEATHER: I like her. When she's not talking about hair and clothes.

RYDER: Isn't that all she talks about?

HEATHER: Lately. She's not always like this.

RYDER: Look at her. I can tell from way over here she's talking about hair and or clothes.

*The focus shifts to OLIVIA and EM mid-conversation.*

EM: I hate flyaways. They drive me mental.

OLIVIA: A little hand cream, just a smidge.

EM: I love that top.

OLIVIA: Thanks.

EM: Finally, someone who knows how to dress. I mean, look at those two.

OLIVIA: Who? *(she turns to see that they're talking about HEATHER and RYDER and turns quickly back around)* Oh.

EM: Did they pick those clothes out of the garbage?

OLIVIA: *(stepping away from EM)* I... don't know.

*MEDUSA slithers around and pushes OLIVIA back toward EM.*

MEDUSA: Lookssssssssss.

EM: I mean Ryder Weer has an excuse, I guess. When your mom's a crackhead...

OLIVIA: Actually...

EM: What?

OLIVIA: *(looking back toward HEATHER and RYDER)* Nothing...

*MEDUSA hisses in OLIVIA's ear and pulls her back to face EM.*

OLIVIA: *(she plunges in)* I hear he's on his fourth foster home.

EM: Really? No wonder he dresses like that.

OLIVIA: Ryder Weerdo.

*This makes EM laugh. OLIVIA looks uncomfortable. BROOKE walks up to AMBER, HAILEY, and SHIVON. The ZOMBIE hovers behind.*

BROOKE: *(too much energy)* Hi! *(toning it down)* I'm Brooke.

HAILEY: So?

AMBER: Who cares?

*They turn away.*

BROOKE: *(blurting out)* Teach me how to be popular.

*They turn back.*

SHIVON: What?

BROOKE: I want you, I'm asking you to teach me how to be popular.

AMBER: Are you for real?

BROOKE: You're it. I can tell. I've been watching.

SHIVON: That's weird.

BROOKE: Sorry, sorry. I don't mean, watching, I mean...observing. I mean...you're the real deal. You've got it, I want it.

*The ZOMBIE groans.*

HAILEY: Why don't you go bother one of your little –

AMBER: OK.

HAILEY: Amber?

AMBER: We'll teach you. But you have to do everything we say.

BROOKE: I'll do whatever you want, whatever it takes.

AMBER: Everything. *(she looks meaningfully at HAILEY and SHIVON)*  
Right girls?

HAILEY: *(getting it)* Right... Everything...

SHIVON: *(not getting it)* She can do my laundry.

AMBER: Not that. *(with an unkind smile)* Other things.

SHIVON: My mom's making me do my own laundry. Like on purpose.  
Someone has to do it.

*The bell rings and everyone scatters offstage except for ZOMBIE. ZOMBIE comes downstage.*

ZOMBIE: *(he grunts)* Time. Pass. *(he grunts)* Month. Later. *(he slowly holds up a finger)* One.

*From offstage there is the sound of girls laughing. ZOMBIE groans at the sound and holds his head.*

ZOMBIE: Ice. Cream. Headache.

*ZOMBIE staggers off as EM and OLIVIA enter.*

### **THREE – The Bathroom**

*EM and OLIVIA are in the girls' bathroom checking themselves out in the mirror. MEDUSA hovers.*

EM: Did you see what she was wearing?

OLIVIA: I know.

EM: Total train wreck.

OLIVIA: She was drowning in sleeve.

EM: So much sleeve. I heard she's got a skin rash that covers her entire body.

OLIVIA: No wonder she can't get a date to save her life.

EM: Did you see Heather Gallo?

OLIVIA: No...

EM: Thrift store loser. Ugh. Hey. I just realized. You and Heather Gallo have the same last name.

OLIVIA: (*not thinking*) Sure she's my... (*she stops and grimaces*)

MEDUSA: (*making the same grimace and hissing*) Thrift store losssssssssser.

EM: She's your what?

OLIVIA: (*trying to make light*) Cousin. But we hardly talk.

EM: Cousin?

OLIVIA: Didn't I mention that?

EM: No.

MEDUSA: (*slithering*) Losssssssssser.

OLIVIA: We hardly ever speak. I mean I've tried to help her, you know. She refuses to listen. Did you see that skirt?

EM: I know.

OLIVIA: She looked like a bag lady.

EM: Gypsy tramp is not a fashion statement.

*The girls freeze. On the other side of the stage, SAM staggers in. He sets himself up downstage left, which is the boys' bathroom. LEANA strolls in behind.*

SAM: I can do this. I can do this. I can do this.

LEANA: They're going to get you, Sammy.

SAM: Shut up. I can do this.

*ETHAN enters.*

ETHAN: Do what?

SAM: Nothing! Nothing! I'm not doing nothing.

LEANA: Double negative, Sammy? (*singsong*) Losing it.

SAM: I am not doing anything. Thank you for asking. Go about your business.

ETHAN: So you're just standing in the bathroom... for no reason.

SAM: What? No. Why would I stand in the bathroom?

LEANA: This one's cute. Bring him closer. His neck is lovely.

ETHAN: You're not hiding in the bathroom, are you?

SAM: Ha ha! Ha ha! Ha ha! Why would I do that? Why would anyone do that? (*pointing at ETHAN*) Don't ask questions that your checks can't cash... (*he has no idea but keeps going*) Yeah! Go Timberwolves!

LEANA: What are you talking about?

ETHAN: Relax, it's OK. I'm just asking a question. Just talking.

SAM: You're talking to me?

ETHAN: That's what it's called.

SAM: Well I'm not hiding. That would be abnormal.

ETHAN: So why are you in here instead of lunch? Why are you spending every lunch in the bathroom, Sam?

SAM: I'm working up to it.

ETHAN: You're working up to lunch?

SAM: That's what I said. (*realizing something*) How do you know I spend lunch in the bathroom? How do you know my name? (*pointing*) That's not normal. That is the epitome of abnormality...

LEANA: (*singsong*) Dead giveaway.

SAM: (*realizing*) Epitome is not a normal word.

ETHAN: Not really. More of a ten dollar word.

SAM: (*with a sigh*) Totally bardus.

LEANA: (*singsong*) Dead giveaway...

SAM: (*he hits his forehead with his palm*) Agh!

ETHAN: Why do you care about being normal?

SAM: Are you obtuse?

LEANA: (*singsong*) Dead giveaway...

SAM: Are you stupid? That's how you survive.

ETHAN: And hanging out in the bathroom is...

SAM: I'm working up to it! (*he takes a breath*) Look, you seem like a decent guy. You're swell for talking to me and not shoving my head in the nearest toilet. But you don't look like someone who ever gets picked on or hit or cornered.

ETHAN: I'm not that different.

SAM: (*pointing*) Mendax! (*liar in Latin*)

ETHAN: What?

LEANA: You suck at this.

SAM: Agh! I keep forgetting!

LEANA: That Latin thing makes you and your little nerd friends stick out a mile.

ETHAN: You don't look normal, Sam. You look miserable.

SAM: You have no idea what I'm going through. (*SAM exits*)

LEANA: Bye boyo. (*she follows SAM out*)

*ETHAN stands there shaking his head. WADE, PARKER, and PERI (who has her hands over her eyes) enter slightly.*

WADE: We saw him storm out.

ETHAN: Peri you can't be in here.

PERI: I have my eyes shut, I can't see anything. (*she steps on PARKER's foot*)

PARKER: Ow!

PERI: Sorry. I can't see anything.

WADE: Well?

ETHAN: Not yet.

PARKER: I thought you were supposed to be persuasive. (*to PERI*) You said he was persuasive.

PERI: He always persuades Mom to give him the drumstick. (*she steps on PARKER's foot*)

PARKER: Ow! Stop doing that.

PERI: It's really dark with your eyes closed.

ETHAN: Out. All of you. I won't give up.

*They exit. On the other side of the stage, the girls unfreeze and make to leave. As EM and OLIVIA exit, BROOKE enters. ZOMBIE is not far behind.*

EM & OLIVIA: Hi Brooke!

BROOKE: (*all smiles*) Hi!

*BROOKE drops her smile as soon as the girls are gone. She stares into the mirror for a moment. She scrunches her eyes up tight.*

BROOKE: It's worth it, it's worth it, it's totally worth it.

*ZOMBIE groans. BROOKE looks around but sees nothing. CRESS enters.*

CRESS: Hi!

BROOKE: Ah! Don't scare me like that.

CRESS: I just said, "Hi."

BROOKE: I can't talk to you, Cress.

CRESS: I know. But there's nobody here. (*calling out*) Anybody here?

BROOKE: (*looking around*) Shhh!

CRESS: See? No one. So... how are things?

BROOKE: Fine.

CRESS: Looks like you got into that crowd thing you wanted. Must be fun.

BROOKE: (*defensive*) Of course it is. (*softer*) It's great.

CRESS: You got exactly what you wanted then. OK, see you. (*turns away*)

BROOKE: What did you come in here for?

CRESS: Just checking in.

*CRESS leaves. BROOKE turns as if she wants to stop CRESS and say something, but doesn't. She puts her face in her hands for a moment. She doesn't look happy.*

BROOKE: I will be popular. It's all worth it. *(she gives a sigh)* Who knew popular girls were so mean.

*The ZOMBIE groans.*

BROOKE: I don't know who's making that noise but you're creeping me out.

*AMBER, HAILEY, and SHIVON enter. AMBER is wearing a scarf.*

AMBER: There you are.

HAILEY: Thought we lost you.

BROOKE: *(big smile)* Hey girls!

AMBER: You weren't at lunch.

SHIVON: Are you hiding out? In the bathroom?

BROOKE: Of course not, I had to stay behind after Dexter's class. She's after my "attitude."

AMBER: Girls, do you know what would make Brooke really popular? If she got Mrs. Dexter in trouble.

HAILEY: What a great idea, Amber.

SHIVON: How is that going – *(HAILEY elbows her to shut up)*

BROOKE: Me?

AMBER: You could get her fired. Text something and let nature take its course. It'd be all over school like wildfire. Say you saw her stealing. Or kissing a student.

HAILEY: You'd be the hero of the school.

SHIVON: Hero? How is that going – *(HAILEY elbows her)*

BROOKE: I don't know. It feels weird. I'd be lying.

AMBER: Awww. You poor little kid. Worried about lying.

BROOKE: I'm not a kid. I stole that scarf, didn't I?

HAILEY: You said you'd do anything.



BROOKE: I know but...

AMBER: Maybe you're just not cut out for this. (*They turn to leave. AMBER turns back at the last second.*) Oh. For the party this weekend? Bring a bottle.

BROOKE: What?

AMBER: Vodka. Or Bourbon.

HAILEY: I like Vodka.

AMBER: Vodka then. OK? Good.

BROOKE: Where am I supposed to get that?

AMBER: Don't show up without it. And if you don't show up...

*AMBER and the other girls move to exit. BROOKE is alone.*

HAILEY: (*whispering*) Do you think she'll do it?

AMBER: (*whispering*) She better.

HAILEY: She'll do anything. She's that stupid.

*They laugh and exit. SHIVON looks back at BROOKE and then exits with them. BROOKE slowly exits.*

## **FOUR – The Homefront**

*OLIVIA enters on the other side of the stage. She puts a plastic bag down and starts to pace back and forth. MEDUSA enters, watching, slithering around her.*

MEDUSA: She'sssssss wrong, Olivia. You're sssssssssso right. Lookssssssss.

*HEATHER enters. OLIVIA stops. There is a moment of tension between them.*

HEATHER: Your mom sent me up. (*pause*) She seems a little weirded out by her birthday.

OLIVIA: She's been wearing these skin tight jeans all weekend. She can't sit down. (*pause*) I wasn't sure you'd be here.

HEATHER: I couldn't really get out of it.

OLIVIA: I was hoping you'd come.

HEATHER: (*a little hopeful*) Oh yeah?

OLIVIA: (*she picks up the plastic bag and hands it to HEATHER*) Here. It's a present.

HEATHER: It's in a plastic bag.

OLIVIA: I didn't have time to wrap it.

HEATHER: It's not my birthday.

OLIVIA: Can't I just give you something? "Thanks for being my cousin," something?

HEATHER: "Sorry for ignoring you," something?

OLIVIA: Open it. (*HEATHER does*) I know, I know, it's pink but it's a dark pink. And I thought, you know, I bought it for you. I was thinking of you. And I thought...

*HEATHER looks right at OLIVIA, causing OLIVIA to falter. She turns away.*

MEDUSA: Looookssssssss. (*she turns OLIVIA back*)

OLIVIA: I thought you could wear it at school. It's a... dark... pink.

*HEATHER drops the bag on the ground and turns away.*

OLIVIA: Heather, come on! I bought it for you.

HEATHER: (*turning*) No you didn't. You bought it for you. You want me to look like you.

OLIVIA: So what if I did?

HEATHER: You dress however you want. I don't care. But this, (*pulling at her own shirt*) this makes me happy, and you should be OK with that.

OLIVIA: It's just that...Em and some of the other girls were...maybe...

HEATHER: What?

OLIVIA: They might have been laughing. Making fun of the way you dress and I just thought...

HEATHER: A true friend would have told those "girls" to shut up. A true friend would have stood up for me. Did you?

*OLIVIA says nothing. HEATHER stares at her a moment and then exits. MEDUSA hisses after HEATHER. OLIVIA exits.*

*As they leave, BROOKE enters arguing with MOM. The ZOMBIE hovers behind. BRODY, GAVIN and DREW enter. They sit and start gaming.*

MOM: This is very alarming, Brooke. What is up with these grades?

BROOKE: It's nothing.

MOM: You're grounded till they improve.

BROOKE: What? There's a big party this weekend.

MOM: Which you won't be going to. Which I don't recall being asked if you could go to.

BROOKE: That's not fair.

MOM: This is not like you at all.

BROOKE: High school is different.

MOM: It certainly is.

*MOM exits. BROOKE plops down on a seat. DREW stares at BROOKE intently, which she finally notices.*

BROOKE: Brody, your weirdo friend is staring at me.

BRODY: It's not you. Drew is zombie-conscious.

BROOKE: What are you talking about?

DREW: You've got a zombie. He follows you around and you still have your brain. How does that work?

BROOKE: Get away from me.

*The ZOMBIE groans.*

DREW: Rock on, zombie.

BROOKE: *(moving away)* Brody, can I talk to you?

BRODY: Sure.

BROOKE: In private.

BRODY: Why?

BROOKE: It's private.

BRODY: Are you going to ask me about girl problems?

BROOKE: Ew, gross, no! Forget it, forget it.

*She turns to leave and as she does so the ZOMBIE spins her around so that she's back in the conversation. BROOKE has no idea that the ZOMBIE is doing this but DREW sees it.*

DREW: *(hitting GAVIN)* Dude! The zombie turned her around. The zombie turned her around!

GAVIN: I would kill to be zombie conscious.

BROOKE: OK, I don't have a choice. I need a bottle.

BRODY: What?

BROOKE: Vodka. Can you get me one? I need it for Saturday night.

BRODY: Aren't you grounded?

BROOKE: What do you care? I'll pay you. Don't be a jerk, I know you can do it. You do it all the time. That or get high. *(pause)* Why are you staring at me?

DREW: *(shaking his head)* Dude.

BROOKE: What?

BRODY: You're fourteen.

BROOKE: So? I know what's going on.

BRODY: So, we MUST be drunk or high. Maybe we're drunk AND high! There's obviously no other explanation.

GAVIN & DREW: *(shaking their heads)* Dude...

BRODY: We're drinking Mountain Dew 'cause it's tasty, and gaming. That's what we're doing. You're getting grounded, you're going to parties while grounded, *(pointing an accusing finger)* you're stressing mom out and that's not nice.

BROOKE: I don't believe this.

BRODY: You're travelling down a dangerous road, sister. A muchos dark, twisty, pothole infested road. And there are no streetlights. None. You fall into one of those mother potholes, game over.

BROOKE: I am doing what I have to, what is necessary to – *(she grabs her head)* Why, why am I trying to explain myself? I don't have to explain anything to you. If you're not going to help me. I'll get it some other way. *(she turns away and turns right back)* Although the fact you won't help me, that you are lecturing me – *(turning*

on DREW) And you see zombies! You have to be high to see zombies!

DREW: (*standing*) Maybe the question isn't why I'm seeing zombies but why you're NOT seeing zombies. And it's not even zombies plural, there's just one, one zombie following you around. What kind of problems do YOU have that a zombie would follow you around and not even TRY to eat your brain? Big problems. Something is seriously up in your little 'I know what's going on' world. You have got your head wrapped in some serious bubble wrap missy ma'am, and that bubble wrap is going to pop in your face. In. Your. Face. This has nothing to do with me and what I MUST be doing and everything to do with YOU and your bubble wrapped out to lunch life. (*he points off*) Good day!

BROOKE: But this is my house.

DREW: I said good day!

*BROOKE runs off and the ZOMBIE follows. DREW sits, wasted from his efforts.*

GAVIN: Dude.

BRODY: Whoa.

DREW: She really pissed me off.

*The action moves to the other side of the stage. HEATHER enters pacing. She wipes her eyes as if she's been crying. RYDER enters.*

RYDER: Whoa. What happened?

HEATHER: Nothing. Thanks for coming over.

RYDER: Yeah. I kinda got the impression it was important. Why are your eyes red?

HEATHER: Allergies.

RYDER: I didn't know you had allergies.

HEATHER: They just sort of happened.

RYDER: Spontaneous allergies? I never heard of those.

HEATHER: I shouldn't have texted.

RYDER: In all caps.

HEATHER: I shouldn't have all-capsed you.

RYDER: So, these spontaneous allergies. Do they rhyme with Snow-pliv-ia?

HEATHER: Snow-pliv-ia? You're the worst rhymers ever. What about Bolivia, that's actually a word.

RYDER: I'm the one who broke seven speed limits on my bike responding to all caps.

HEATHER: Or chlamydia. You could have used that.

RYDER: That's just mean.

HEATHER: She deserves it.

RYDER: Chlamydia? Can you imagine if that got around? She'd have a stroke.

HEATHER: It'd ruin her precious reputation... (*this stops her*) huh.

RYDER: Heather.

HEATHER: (*thinking*) You know, it's such a shame the way rumours get around. Spread. Spontaneously.

RYDER: What are you going to do?

## **FIVE – The Halls**

*The bell rings and the stage fills with students going to class. In the middle of the melee MIKE trips SAM and he goes flying. Everyone freezes as SAM pulls himself to standing.*

SAM: They shouldn't be able to pick me out of the crowd like that. They shouldn't see me at all.

*Everyone starts moving again. Now BROOKE moves downstage. Once she's in place, everyone freezes.*

BROOKE: Brody and his friends are dead wrong. So what if I have to do a couple of... Bubble wrap. What does that even mean?

*Everyone starts moving again. Now OLIVIA moves downstage. Once she's in place, everyone freezes. This time, everyone freezes in whispering clusters of people. As if they're all looking at, laughing at, and talking about OLIVIA.*

OLIVIA: I look awesome. This is going to be the best day. I can feel it. (*she looks around and looks puzzled*) Why is everyone looking at me...like that?

*The bell rings and everyone scatters. OLIVIA is alone on stage and MIKE approaches her. MEDUSA hovers in the background. HEATHER and RYDER stand at the far side of the stage watching the action.*

MIKE: Hey.

OLIVIA: Oh hi, uh...

MIKE: Mike.

OLIVIA: Mike. Hi! You're on the basketball team.

MIKE: Yeah. Smart. *(he snickers, not kindly)*

OLIVIA: Is... something funny?

MIKE: So I heard about you.

OLIVIA: You know who I am?

MIKE: Sure. I heard you're up.

OLIVIA: Up?

MIKE: You know.

OLIVIA: No.

MIKE: Up for it. You know.

OLIVIA: Up for, a date?

MIKE: Yeah, that's it. I'm free Friday.

*MIKE runs a finger down her arm, which causes OLIVIA to jump back.*

OLIVIA: What is that? What are you doing?

*MIKE snickers.*

OLIVIA: *(gets a look of horror on her face)* That? You're talking about that? You think that about me? Are you out of your mind? I am not up. I am not down. I am not side to side. I am not any movement whatsoever. And whatever you heard? Whatever you think you heard about up-ness? You, and anyone else who heard that, are wrong. Look at me. Look at me. What about this *(referring to what she looks like)* says anything about being up? Friday night? Up? Never.

MIKE: If you say so. *(he snickers, not kindly)*

OLIVIA: And you can stop that. Stop that snickering! Who snickers in front of a girl unless they're a complete and total pig? (MIKE walks away) Friday night? Up for it? Pig! This is a nightmare.

*EM walks by, not looking at OLIVIA.*

OLIVIA: Em! I am in a nightmare.

EM: Uh huh. I heard.

OLIVIA: What is this with everybody hearing stuff about me?

EM: There's something going round.

*EM snickers, not kindly.*

OLIVIA: Why are you snickering at me?

EM: I don't know.

OLIVIA: You believe what's going round? Em? How could you?

EM: Well, why wouldn't I?

OLIVIA: Because I'm your friend. I'm telling you it's not true.

EM: I guess.

OLIVIA: No, no, no, no! There is no guessing. I am telling you with the utmost certainty. You believe me, right?

EM: It's all over school.

OLIVIA: This is a nightmare.

EM: I have to go. (exits)

OLIVIA: Don't go. Don't leave me.

MEDUSA: Looookssssss. Your loooooookssssss.

*OLIVIA runs off and MEDUSA follows.*

HEATHER: I think I created a monster.

RYDER: Feeling guilty?

HEATHER: No... She really hurt me.

RYDER: And you really hurt her. Feel better?





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