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MASQUERADE



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Synopsis

Our words and actions directly influence and strongly impact the lives of those around us. Although we have the ability to offer life, too often our school hallways are wrought with bullying and damaging cruelty. This one-act conveys the message that by choosing to love we can help a hurting generation.

Cast of Characters

BROOKE	A high school bully who has a wealthy but difficult home life.
SIERRA	A high school girl who desperately wants Brooke's approval.
EMMA	A high school girl with a stutter.
PENNY	A high school girl who wears glasses; she is also Brooke's cousin.
TRICIA	Penny's older sister.
KATIE	A recent college grad and high school teacher.
CAMERON	Katie's older sister.
MADISON	A high school girl who has a flare for the dramatic.
CASSIDY	A high school girl who needs an A in AV class.
BROOKE'S MOM	This is an offstage voice and can be played by any actress other than Brooke and Sierra.

Place

The stage is divided into five separate bedrooms.

When

Present Day

Director Notes

Nine different girls prepare for a high school dance.

THEMES

Friendship, Bullying, Kindness, Forgiveness.
Mark 12:31, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 4:6

SET IDEA

If needed, there doesn’t have to be a set for the final scene. The bathroom stalls can simply be off stage.

SOUND EFFECTS

Music, Cell Phone Ring, Car Pulling into a Driveway, Toilet Flushing

Props

Hair brushes
Clothes (on the floor in BROOKE's room)
Cell Phone
Laptop
iPod or Stereo
Lipstick
Straightener
Curling Iron
SIERRA's Bag (can be a purse)
Video Camera
Three Chairs
Make-up
Mic
Magazine
Earrings
Piece of paper for CASSIDY

ACT I

Scene 1

Setting: Brooke's bedroom

At Rise: Lights up center stage. The scene opens with a song blaring from a computer or iPod. BROOKE enters singing into her hairbrush and dancing to herself. She picks up some makeup and looks downstage as if into a mirror. She seamlessly puts the brush down and grabs her lipstick, which now becomes her mic. Suddenly the phone rings. BROOKE scrambles to turn her computer off and grab her cell phone. She cannot find her cell phone in the mess of clothes. As it continues to ring, BROOKE becomes more and more panicked to find it. She finally finds it and picks it up.

BROOKE

(into phone)

Hello!

(Lights down.)

Scene 2

Setting: Katie's bedroom.

At Rise: Lights up upstage right. KATIE enters. She stands looking downstage as if looking into a mirror. She puts on an ugly cardigan.

KATIE

Breathe. Just breathe, Katie. They're kids. Just kids.

(She adjusts her skirt.)

KATIE

I look too grown up.

(to herself)

You are grown up! I just don't want to look...

(She adjusts her skirt once again.)

KATIE

Boring. Lame. Old.

(beat)

KATIE

Who cares, Katie! You're the teacher. You're the teacher.

(beat)

KATIE

I thought teachers were supposed to be less nervous than the students.

(CAMERON enters.)

CAMERON

(clearly not impressed with KATIE's outfit)

Wow.

KATIE

How do I look?

CAMERON

Like a teacher.

KATIE

Good. I want to look in charge.

CAMERON

But at what fashion risk?

KATIE

I wear this all the time.

(KATIE looks back into the mirror.)

KATIE

It looks that bad?

CAMERON

Ditch the shawl.

KATIE

My sweater? It's a cardigan.

CAMERON

Well, whatever you call it.

KATIE

What if I get cold?

CAMERON

Then you get cold.

KATIE

I hate being cold.

(KATIE looks back into the mirror.)

KATIE

It really looks that bad?

CAMERON

Not if you're going for pilgrim.

(KATIE turns to face CAMERON.)

CAMERON

Hey, if your sister can't tell you the truth, who can?

KATIE

It's just-

CAMERON *(interrupting)*

It's your first year teaching, and you don't want the kids to know you're only twenty-one. Yadda. Yadda. Yadda. You've been telling me that since you moved here. You're finally out of college and out on your own.

(teasingly)

Although moving in with your older sister really isn't that big of a leap from living with mom and dad.

KATIE

(knowing CAMERON is just kidding, she jabs back)

Cam, you'd miss me if I left.

CAMERON

Just because you're out on your own doesn't mean you have to dress-

KATIE

(finishing her sentence, as if she's heard this all before)

Doesn't mean I have to dress like a schoolmarm. I know. I know.

CAMERON

Or in this case, a pilgrim.

(Lights down.)

Scene 3

Setting: Madison's bedroom.

At Rise: Lights up downstage left. MADISON enters holding a mic.

MADISON *(dramatically)*

This is Madison Jackson, reporting live. In this dark and stormy age, there seems to be a creature lurking in our midst, a terrifying, horrific phenomenon of a monster haunting our school halls. We've all felt its presence, smelled its spine tingling breath, and have heard the clenching of its decapitating jaws. But from whence did it come? And more importantly when will it leave? These are the questions this broadcast intends to answer.

(Lights down.)

Scene 4

Setting: Emma's bedroom.

At Rise: Lights up downstage right. EMMA is sitting in a chair facing downstage.

EMMA

(focused she looks at the audience as if into a mirror.)

If Stu chews shoes, should Stu choose the shoes he chews? If Stu chews shoes, should Stu choose the shoes he chews? If Stu chews shoes, should Stu choose the shoes he chews?

(She puts her hands on her cheeks and squeezes them together, while still trying to say the following.)

How many cookies could a good cook cook if a good cook could cook cookies? A good cook could cook as much cookies as a good cook who could cook cookies. How many cooks-cookies could a cood gook?

(She pauses briefly and tries another tongue twister. She says the following using various pitches.)

Nick knits Nixon's knickers. Nick knits Nixon's knickers.

(She begins to have trouble.)

Nit kicks Kixon's kickers.

(frustrated)

This is not working!

(Lights down.)

Scene 5

Setting: Brooke's bedroom.

At Rise: Lights up center stage. BROOKE is on her phone, roaming her room trying to get a better signal.

BROOKE

Dad? Dad, can you hear me now? I'm here. I'm here. Sorry, I couldn't find my phone, but I knew you were going to call. I was waiting for you, actually.

(She listens, clearly having been interrupted.)

BROOKE

I can be ready in five minutes, less than that if you need me to be; my bags are already packed!

(She listens.)

BROOKE

Tonight? Oh just a school dance. But that's not important. I wasn't going to go. I'd rather be with you.

(She listens.)

BROOKE

But I really didn't want-

(She listens.)

BROOKE

Ok. So, you'll just pick me up tomorrow morning instead of tonight? That's fine.

(She listens.)

BROOKE

But- but Mom's gone and I thought I could stay with you this time. I really don't want to go to Uncle Jack's.

(She listens.)

BROOKE

You already called them?

(She listens.)

BROOKE

Uncle Jack will pick me up later. Ok. Sure. I understand things come up. Maybe next time.

(She hangs up.)

BROOKE

(muttering to herself)

It's just been months since I've seen you.

(Dejected, BROOKE grabs her brush and throws it to the ground.)

(Lights down.)

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for the preview.

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Scene 15

Setting: Katie's bedroom.

At Rise: Lights up upstage right.

KATIE

This is going to be a disaster.

CAMERON

What are you talking about? You're just chaperoning a school dance.

(KATIE sits, deflated.)

CAMERON

Here's what you do. When you get there go to the bathroom, and look in the mirror. Reapply your lipstick, remembering that everyone looks bad under those gross fluorescents, and then take a deep breath. You'll be fine.

(beat)

CAMERON

Just ditch the cardigan thing. Then you'll be fine.

KATIE

I just wanted to be the cool teacher, you know? And instead I'm–

CAMERON

You're what?

KATIE

Me! I'm me. The kids don't respect me. I have no control over the classroom. They know I'm afraid of them. I'm

KATIE (CONT)

insecure, ineffective-

(referring to her cardigan)

and apparently I give off a Mayflower-ish vibe.

CAMERON

Give yourself some credit. It's your first year. You're the one and only Katie Peterson, teacher extraordinaire.

KATIE

You're biased.

CAMERON

Just a little.

(KATIE takes off the cardigan.)

(Lights down.)

(Scene change: the bedroom sets are removed, while three chairs, one placed in front of the other two, are set downstage center to portray a car.)

Scene 16

Setting: a car

At Rise: EMMA and PENNY sit in the backseat of a car driven by TRICIA. TRICIA holds a steering wheel.

EMMA

Th-Thanks for picking me up.

TRICIA

No problem.

EMMA

(to PENNY)

Are you Ok? You look ne-n-nervous.

PENNY

It's nothing.

(pause)

It's just my dress, my hair, everything.

EMMA

You're w-worried about Brooke?

PENNY

I hate her.

EMMA

N-no you don't. Y-you just hate the w-way she m-makes you feel.

(beat)

PENNY

Then I hate me for being so easy to make fun of.

(PENNY shrugs.)

EMMA

P-p-people make fun of me all the time.

PENNY

That's because they don't really know you.

EMMA

But I know me. And I-I like who I am. It d-doesn't matter w-what anyone else thinks.

(pause)

PENNY

Can you fix my hair when we get there?

EMMA

Sure.

(Lights down.)

Scene 17

Setting: High School Bathroom

At Rise: There are three stalls in the background. The middle one has KATIE's feet visible. SIERRA and BROOKE are facing the audience, using downstage as a mirror. They are putting on the rest of their make up and are clearly unaware that KATIE is in the restroom as well.

BROOKE

(while putting on lipstick)

I can't believe I have to put my makeup on under these fluorescent school bathroom lights.

SIERRA

I'm sorry your mom came home. Next time, we can just get ready at my house.

BROOKE

Like I would ever step foot in that shack. And don't you dare talk about my mom ever again, or I'll tell Mike how grossly obsessed you are with him. He barely even knows you exist.

SIERRA

Please don't tell Mike anything. He is just starting to notice me.

BROOKE

Only because you hang with me.

SIERRA

I know. I know.

(PENNY and EMMA enter. TRICIA follows after them.)

TRICIA

Pen, what time do you want me to pick you up? Remember, you have to be in by eleven-thirty.

(TRICIA looks around the bathroom.)

TRICIA

Are they ever going to fix these lights? They've been flickering since I graduated.

PENNY

(to TRICIA, embarrassed)

Eleven is fine. Thanks.

TRICIA

See you then.

(TRICIA exits.)

BROOKE *(mockingly)*

Penny. Penny. Don't stay out too late. We don't want you catching a cold.

(to PENNY)

Nice dress!

(PENNY ignores her. BROOKE grabs Penny's sleeve.)

BROOKE

My mom just dropped a bunch of my old clothes off at Salvation Army. I wore this to my elementary school graduation.

(sarcastically)

You have great taste.

(SIERRA and BROOKE laugh. EMMA and PENNY wander to the other side of the mirror. EMMA helps PENNY fix her hair.)

BROOKE

(to SIERRA, referring to PENNY)

She looks like Ms. Peterson. Her hideous sweaters are straight from *Little House on the Prairie*.

SIERRA

Do you know Ms. Peterson's barely twenty?

BROOKE

I heard she didn't even graduate college. Dropped out.

SIERRA

How is she teaching if-

BROOKE

(ignoring SIERRA)

Probably flunked out. She has no idea what she's doing in class. She's so nervous. In study hall, I can see her sweating.

SIERRA

Gross

BROOKE

She is.

EMMA

Ms. P-Peterson is a great teacher.

BROOKE *(mockingly)*

N-no. S-s-he's not

EMMA

S-stop it.

BROOKE

You didn't say p-p-please.

PENNY

Leave her alone.

(A toilet flush is heard and KATIE (Ms. Peterson) enters.)

SIERRA

Ms. Peterson. We didn't know you were in here. We were just having fun.

(KATIE goes to leave, then takes a deep breath and turns around. She takes control.)

KATIE

Were Penny and Emma having fun? Because, it sounded like bullying to me.

(The girls are shocked to see her take charge.)

SIERRA

We're really sorry.

KATIE

Sorry enough to have a talk with Principal Jones? You ladies know his bullying policy. I'll see you both in detention on Monday.

BROOKE

You're kidding right? I can't get another detention! I'll get suspended and thrown off the cheerleading team.

(KATIE stands her ground.)

BROOKE

Seriously?!

SIERRA

Ms. Peterson we were just messing around. Please. Please. We need Brooke if our team is going to win our competition next weekend.

KATIE

Well, I may have another option for you girls. This bathroom is going to be in need of a good scrubbing after tonight's dance. I'm sure our custodian would welcome a couple volunteers to help clean on Saturday morning.

BROOKE

Gross. No way.

KATIE

Be here tomorrow morning by 8am, or I'll see you in detention on Monday.

BROOKE

(snobbishly, thinking she found a way out)

I can't. I'm staying with my Aunt and Uncle while my mom is out of town. I don't have a ride.

KATIE

Then I'll see you on Monday.

BROOKE

What? That's not fair.

SIERRA

But the cheerleading competition-

KATIE *(interrupting)*

Will just have to continue without Brooke.

(KATIE exits. SIERRA runs after her, hoping she'll convince her otherwise. EMMA looks at PENNY and BROOKE.)

EMMA

(to PENNY)

I'll give you a sec.

PENNY

Thanks.

(EMMA exits.)

PENNY

Brooke, you know my dad will give you a ride. He doesn't have to work tomorrow morning.

BROOKE

Why? So, your lame cousin doesn't get kicked off the cheerleading team?

PENNY

That competition means a lot to you.

BROOKE

Little Brooke is in trouble again. Uncle Jack to the rescue. Your parents have got to be sick of always having to watch me. I know my parents are.

PENNY

Brooke, you're family. You're always welcome at our house.

(pause)

If you want a ride, Tricia is going to pick me up at eleven.

(PENNY starts to leave and then turns to face BROOKE.)

PENNY

Umm I know how you hate sharing a room, so I just moved my stuff to Tricia's. You can have my bedroom for the week. See you at home.

(PENNY goes to leave.)

BROOKE

Penny-

(PENNY turns around.)

BROOKE

Thanks.

PENNY

Sure.

(PENNY exits. BROOKE looks at her reflection, then sighs and picks up her makeup and exits.)

(pause)

(Two bathroom stall doors open, revealing MADISON and CASSIDY wide-eyed, standing on top of the toilets, crouched down so that they were sure to be hidden. CASSIDY holds a video camera in her hand.)

MADISON

Please tell me you got all of that!

CASSIDY

Every word.

MADISON

Ok. Final shot.

(CASSIDY turns the video camera to face MADISON.)

CASSIDY

Rolling.

MADISON *(dramatically)*

Through the twists, the turns, the highs and lows of this broadcast, I have concluded these final thoughts. Words have the power to hurt or heal. A kind gesture, even if small and humble, can soften even the hardest heart. In short, evil will be found out, good will prevail, and none of us should ever underestimate the drama that ensues under the lights of a high school girl's bathroom.

(Lights down.)



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