

PLEASE HEAR WHAT I'M NOT SAYING

Don't be fooled by me.

Don't be fooled by the face I wear.

For I wear a mask, I wear a thousand masks, masks that I'm afraid to take off, and none of them are me. Pretending is an art that's second nature to me, but don't be fooled.

I give you the impression that I'm secure, that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without, that confidence is my name and coolness is my game, that the water is calm and I'm in command, and that I need no one.

But don't believe me. Please.

My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask, my ever-varying and ever-concealing mask. Beneath lies no smugness, no complacency. Beneath dwells the real me, in confusion, in fear, in aloneness.

But I hide this.

I don't want anybody to know it.

I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear being exposed.

That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind, a nonchalant, sophisticated facade, to help me pretend, to shield me from the glance that knows.

But such a glance is precisely my salvation. My only salvation.

And I know it.

That is if it's followed by acceptance,

if it's followed by love.

It's the only thing that can liberate me from myself, from my own self-built prison walls, from the barriers that I so painstakingly erect.

But I don't tell you this. I don't dare.

I'm afraid to. I'm afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh, and your laugh would kill me.

I'm afraid that deep down I'm nothing, that I'm just no good, and that you will see this and reject me.

So play my game, my desperate pretending game, with a facade of assurance without, and a trembling child within.

And so begins the parade of masks, the glittering, but empty parade of masks.

And my life becomes a front. I idly chatter to you in the suave tones of surface talk.

I tell you everything that is really nothing, and nothing of what's everything, of what's crying within me. So when I'm through my routine, do not be fooled by what I'm saying. Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying, what I'd like to be able to say, what for survival I need to say, but can't say.

I dislike hiding, honestly. I dislike the superficial game I'm playing, the superficial phony game. I'd really like to be genuine and spontaneous, and me, but you've got to help me. You've got to hold out your hand even when that's the last thing I seem to want or need. Only you can wipe away from my eyes the blank stare of the breathing dead.

Only you can call me into aliveness. Each time you're kind, and gentle,

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and encouraging, each time you try to understand because you really care,
my heart begins to grow wings, very small, very feeble, but wings.

With your sensitivity and sympathy, and your power of understanding, you
can breath life into me. I want you to know that.

I want you to know how important you are to me, how you can be a creator
of the person that is me if you choose to. Please choose to. You alone
can break down the wall behind which I tremble, you alone can remove
my mask, you alone can release me from the shadow world of panic and
uncertainty, from my lonely prison. So do not pass me by. Please do not
pass me by.

It will not be easy for you. A long conviction of worthlessness builds strong
walls; the nearer you approach to me, the harder I may strike back. It's
irrational, but despite what books say about people, I am irrational.

I fight against the very thing I cry out for. And in this lies my
hope. My only hope.

Please try to beat down those walls with firm gentle hands.

For a child is very sensitive.

Who am I, you may wonder? I am somebody you
know very well. For I am every person you meet.

- Author Unknown -