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betweenity**

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betweenity

A VIGNETTE PLAY BY
Lindsay Price



betweenity

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Printed in the USA

bih-tween-it-ee

The state or quality of being between.

Characters

There are twelve named speaking parts in this version of *betweenity* but this can easily be expanded to accommodate a large cast. Simply divide the scenes among more actors.

WOMEN: Gap, Hitch, Space, Stay

MEN: Breath, Still, Freeze, Thick

EITHER: Beat, Hold, Rest, Pause

The Pauses

There are many, many beats, pauses and silent counts in this play. Being a play about those spaces in-between words, it's very important that they are considered carefully, especially the particular length of pause. There are three types of silences:

Beat: A beat is a one count silence. Usually the amount of time it would take to say one word.

Pause: A pause is a three count silence. Make sure it's not a 123 count but one-one thousand, two-one thousand, three one-thousand.

Count to...: Some silences have a specific length of count which actors will need to do in their head. (count to five, count to ten) Some of these counts will feel quite long, and that's intentional! Don't cut these short because it feels uncomfortable. That's the point. Remember not to mouth the numbers, say them in your head.

Once the length of pause is established, the next step is to act in the pauses. What is the character actually thinking during the silence? This is the most important part of the process. What is going on in the character's head when they're not saying anything?

First Production

betweenity was premiered by Governor Simcoe Secondary School under the direction of Rassika Risko on May 15, 2012 with the following cast:

Fitore Aliu, Nicolas Argentino, Alexa Beals, Vincent Bertoia, Carly Botbyl, Thomas Dakers, Caitlin Doede, Jennifer Drakeford, Madison Fishleigh, Katelyn Groombridge, Matthew Guthrie, Rebecca Hammond, Dylan Hodges, Katrina Holmes, Ryan Howarth, Troy Humber, Katie Hutchinson, Katherine Jones, Mackenzie Kerr, Ryan Malcowski, Cameron McKay, Tanya Najarian, Dayna Prentice, Chasity Sanderson, Danika Stevenson, Terry Suk, and Cori Tompkins.

Lights up on a bare stage. There are three cubes (or a bench) stage left and three cubes (or a bench) stage right.

Group One enters and stands looking at the audience. Silently count to five. Group Two enters and stands looking at the audience. Silently count to five. Group Three enters and stands looking at the audience.

The sound of obnoxious conversation is heard from offstage.

GROUP FOUR: *(all talking over each other)* Did you see what she said about me? No I know, I can't believe it. I would never wear that. Did you see it though? I can't believe I have to re-do that math test, I'll never get...

Those onstage turn to look as Group Four enters talking animatedly to each other. Group Four immediately sees everyone staring at them. They clam up and scurry into position.

Group Five enters and stands, staring out. Lastly, BREATH enters on the run from upstage and lands downstage centre.

BREATH: Sorry! Sorry I'm late.

BREATH stands front and centre smiling. After counting silently to five, BREATH starts to look around, waiting for something to happen, getting impatient.

BREATH: Hey. *(whispering)* Hey! What are we –

BEAT: Wait for it.

Everyone on stage silently counts to ten. BREATH can barely wait.

BREATH: But how do I –

BEAT: *(holding up a hand)* Wait for it. *(silently counts to three and then smiles)* There.

BREATH: *(looking around)* What?

BEAT: There.

BREATH: *(still looking around)* I don't get it.

STILL: There.

BREATH: Where?

PAUSE: Can you hear it?

BEAT: Yeah.

BREATH: (*listening really hard*) What? What is it?

PAUSE: That.

Everyone on stage silently counts to five. BREATH looks baffled.

THICK: Awesome.

BREATH: Somebody better tell me.

THICK: Shh!

Everyone on stage silently counts to three. BREATH lets out an exasperated noise of frustration.

BREATH: How can I hear it, if I don't know what I'm listening for?

Everyone snaps for a count of eight. During the following lines, everyone speaks and moves, creating two circles moving in opposite directions.

There is a rhythm in these lines, but don't get caught in speaking in monotone "poem voice." Keep the awe in the voice. In this moment these characters admire the silence in-between. Think "wow" as you speak.

REST: It's the grace in-between.

FREEZE: It's the breath left unseen.

GAP: It's the catch and the (*everyone snaps once*),

REST: And the hole in the screen.

FREEZE: It's the (*everyone snaps once*) where everything slips through.

GAP: No words left to fill the space,

REST: Between me and (*everyone snaps once*).

FREEZE: How do I fill the space,

GAP: Between me and (*everyone snaps once*).

The two circles stop as HITCH in circle one comes face-to-face with HOLD in circle two.

HITCH: Hi.

HOLD: Hi...

There is a pause. The two try to think of something to say.

HITCH: Hmm.

HOLD: Yeah.

HITCH: So...

HOLD: Cough.

There is a pause.

HITCH: See ya.

HOLD: Right.

HITCH: (*muttering*) You haven't changed.

HOLD: (*hearing*) What?

HITCH: Forget it.

Everyone turns downstage to face the audience. The rhythm of this should be exactly the same as above, except now there are gaps.

STILL: It's the (*beat*) in-between.

SPACE: It's the (*beat*) left unseen.

STAY: It's the (*beat*),

STILL: And the (*everyone snaps once*),

SPACE: And the (*beat*) in the screen.

STAY: It's the (*everyone snaps once*) where (*beat, beat, beat*) through.

STILL: No (*beat*) left to (*beat*) the (*beat*)

SPACE: Between me and (*everyone snaps once*).

STAY: How do I (*beat, beat, beat*)

STILL: Between me and (*beat*)

Everyone exits except for two – FREEZE and SPACE. They are standing at a bus stop. They smile at each other.

SPACE: Hi.

FREEZE: Hi.

Silently count to five.

SPACE: Been here long?

FREEZE: Couple minutes.

Silently count to five.

SPACE: Bus is late again.

Silently count to ten.

FREEZE: Nice day.

SPACE: Yes.

Silently count to five. Then FREEZE coughs.

SPACE: Yes?

FREEZE: What?

SPACE: You were going to say something? No?

FREEZE: No.

SPACE: Oh.

Silently count to five.

SPACE: Sorry.

Silently count to ten.

SPACE: Cheese!

FREEZE: What?

SPACE: (*scrunching her face up*) Uh...

FREEZE: What was that?

SPACE: Nothing...

FREEZE: Did you just say cheese?

SPACE: For no reason?

FREEZE: Yeah.

SPACE: No.

FREEZE: Oh?

SPACE: Of course not.

FREEZE: (*smiling, getting it*) Right.

SPACE: Why would I?

FREEZE: Exactly.

SPACE: That would be stupid. That would be really stupid.

There is a pause.

SPACE: That was so stupid.

FREEZE: Don't stress.

SPACE: It just... (*beat*) flew out of my mouth.

FREEZE: Everybody says stupid things.

There is a pause.

SPACE: I was thinking about lunch. And I remembered there was some old cheddar. In the fridge. I guess I got (*pause*) excited. Over cheese. (*pause*) Yeah.

FREEZE: Why not.

SPACE: Yeah?

FREEZE: Sure.

There is a pause.

SPACE: Thanks.

FREEZE: No problem.

Silently count to ten after which FREEZE coughs again.

SPACE: (*fast*) Are you going to ask me out?

FREEZE: What?

SPACE: You're here and you're not leaving. You never take this bus. You always take the 17.

FREEZE: I – wait, what?

SPACE: And these pauses are freaking me out. The pauses made me say cheese!

FREEZE: How do you know what bus I take?

SPACE: So if you're going to ask me out, just do it, OK? Just do it. Do it. Do it. Dooooooooo it.

Silently count to ten.

FREEZE: I have a dentist appointment.

SPACE: Huh?

FREEZE: I was just making conversation.

SPACE: Oh.

FREEZE: I don't think this bus is coming. (*exits*)

There is a pause.

SPACE: (*calling after*) Is that a no then?

Everyone skips on stage and forms various tableaux. They babble with childish glee till they get into position.

This is a children's camp song with actions. As you repeat the verse over and over, a section of song is done only with the actions, no sound, until eventually the whole song is just actions. Only in this version of the song, when the rest of the group is doing the actions, we actually hear a character speak aloud something that no one was supposed to hear. Have you ever said something and then realized the person you were talking about heard you?

Visit <http://tfolk.me/p224> for a video of the actions.

EVERYONE: Swimming Swimming

In my swimming pool.

When days are hot when days are cold,

In my swimming pool.

Breast stroke, side stroke, fancy diving too.

Oh don't you wish you never had, anything else to do

BUT –

Everyone does the action for the first line while PAUSE is heard loud and clear. PAUSE should end the

sentence just in time for everyone to come in vocally with the second line, while continuing actions.

PAUSE: Wow, that dress really makes her look fat!

EVERYONE: When days are hot when days are cold,
In my swimming pool.
Breast stroke, side stroke, fancy diving too.
Oh don't you wish you never had, anything else to do
BUT –

Everyone now does actions only (no vocals) for the first two lines and we hear BEAT loud and clear. Again, time it so that the lines finish just in time for everyone to chime back in.

BEAT: Everyone knows he's been cheating on her. He's been cheating on her for months.

EVERYONE: In my swimming pool.
Breast stroke, side stroke, fancy diving too.
Oh don't you wish you never had, anything else to do
BUT –

Everyone now does actions only (no vocals) for the first three lines and we hear THICK loud and clear. Again, time it so that he's finished just in time for everyone to chime back in.

THICK: His dad bought his spot on the team. There's no way he'd be able to make first string. His dad just buys him whatever, he's got divorce guilt. His dad does. Big time.

EVERYONE: Fancy diving too.
Oh don't you wish you never had, anything else to do
BUT –

Everyone now does actions only (no vocals) for the first four lines and we hear HOLD loud and clear. Again, time it so that the line finishes just in time for everyone to chime back in.

HOLD: What did you say about me? What did you say? Come on, I heard you. Say it. Say something. You can't just stand there. I'm right in front of you, cat got your tongue? You had lots to say before when you didn't know I was listening. Come on. Come on!

EVERYONE: Oh don't you wish you never had, anything else to do
BUT!

Everyone starts to chatter as if they are in a cafeteria. The childish tableaux change to groups of teenagers talking – each group is talking about someone in another tableau. As they chatter, STILL moves forward awkwardly – take your time! He sits slowly on a cube.

STILL: Hi. *(everyone stops their chatter. STILL counts to five as he sits awkwardly)* Do you... *(silently count to five, during which he looks around desperate for a way in)* So. Cafeteria. Great cafeteria. Come here often? Of course you do. We all do. Every day. Gotta eat. Eating is important. Don't eat, you die. *(pause)* That's unpleasant. *(pause)* Of course we're not going to die. *(pause)* Well, we ARE going to die. Someday. We can't help that, but we can eat and we can prevent that kind of death. The starvation kind of *(pause)* death? I should stop talking about death. *(pause)* It's morbid. *(pause)* I should stop. *(pause)* I'll *(beat)* stop. So. Do you shower? Oh my god, oh my god, I didn't say that. I didn't just – *(beat)* Of course you do. You smell very nice! *(pause)* I just meant... *(beat)* This is not going the way I imagined. Actually, it's going exactly the way I imagined. *(beat)* You're disgusted. Aren't you. *(pause)* You're not saying anything because you are absolutely disgusted. *(beat)* I don't blame you. I don't blame you. *(suddenly standing)* Wait! Don't leave. Please? Give me another chance. I can be normal. I can avoid all abnormal conversation surrounding death and showering, and showering when you're dead. *(beat)* That was a joke. That wasn't an actual topic of conversation. *(beat)* I don't think the dead think about body wash. Ah ha. A smile! Sorry. *(He sits. Silently count to five.)* I *(beat)* just wanted to ask you to the movies. That's all. That's what all this is leading up to. So.

Everyone turns facing front as they snap for eight beats, then hold.

STILL: *(clears throat)* OK.

Everyone moves to form two lines from upstage to downstage as they snap for eight beats.

STILL: Would you like to go to the movies? *(beat)* With me?

Everyone snaps for eight beats. STILL moves to stand in one of the lines.

The audience should now see REST, the first person in line one, and BREATH, the first person in line two and not anyone else.

REST: I looked at him and he looked at me and there was so much I wanted to say. This fight has gotten out of control. I wanted to

say I'm sorry. I didn't think. I didn't think and the words just flew out of my mouth. The wrong words. I stood there and I wanted to say that. (*everyone snaps for three beats*) But I didn't. (*everyone snaps for three beats*) I said –

Everyone snaps for eight beats. The two lines fan out to form a V.

REST moves to the back of the line.

BREATH: I looked at him and he looked at me and I wanted to confess. I wanted to say he had accused the wrong guy. I stole the secretary's purse. I wanted to confess and turn that corner to being a better person. I think I'm ready. I'm sick to my stomach, the purse is in my locker and they have the wrong guy. And I'm here, sitting right here and I could confess everything. All I have to do is open my mouth. It wasn't Mark. It was me. It was me! I stood there and I wanted to say that. (*everyone snaps for three beats*) But I didn't. (*everyone snaps for three beats*) I said –

Everyone snaps for eight beats. The two lines move back to their first position. BREATH moves to the back of the line.

STAY: I looked at him and he looked at me and I wanted to say, "I don't want to do gymnastics anymore. Dad, it makes me ill. I don't want to spend hours and hours practising. It doesn't mean anything to me anymore, even though it seems to mean so much to you. I don't want to compete. I don't want to be your star. I don't want to live your life. I don't want to be a winner. When do I get to do something for myself?" I wanted to say, "please be proud of me, who I am, not who I'm supposed to be." I stood there and I wanted to say that. (*everyone snaps for three beats*) But I didn't. (*everyone snaps for three beats*) I said –

Everyone snaps for eight beats. As they snap, everyone moves to form a tableau.

GAP and HITCH move to the cubes and sit side by side. They are mother and daughter in the front seat of a car. Silently count to five before starting.

GAP: Do you want to talk about it?

HITCH: (*arms firmly crossed*) No.

Silently count to ten.

GAP: We should, a little.

HITCH: I don't want to.

Silently count to ten.

GAP: I respect that...

HITCH: Good.

GAP: Except that I do. Want to talk. (*pause*) Just a little.

HITCH: I have nothing to say.

GAP: Yeah. Well, I'm the mom.

HITCH: (*rolling her eyes*) Figures.

GAP: And, might I add, you're not grounded. Yet.

HITCH: I didn't do anything wrong.

GAP: Driving without a license is pretty wrong.

HITCH: He was drunk.

GAP: I'm aware of that.

HITCH: What else was I supposed to do?

GAP: That would be one of the questions I had.

HITCH: I don't want to talk about it.

GAP: Did I mention you're not grounded?

HITCH: Yet.

Silently count to five.

GAP: This is the part where you're supposed to be talking.

HITCH: I don't want to talk about it.

GAP: Why?

HITCH: Why what?

GAP: If you tell me why you don't want to talk, maybe I won't press.

HITCH: Promise.

GAP: Can't do that.

HITCH: (*rolls her eyes*) Figures.

GAP: I think you'd hate it more if I broke a promise.

HITCH: This is so unfair.

GAP: I know, you showing up past curfew, driving up past curfew when you don't have a license, with your drunk boyfriend puking on the lawn. That is a bummer.

HITCH: No one says bummer.

GAP: I'm bringing it back.

Silently count to five.

HITCH: I don't want to talk about it, because *(pause)* talking about it, makes me *(pause)* think about it. About what happened. And I don't want to. I never want to think about it again. It makes me... *(pause)* The whole thing... everything... *(pause)* Makes me sick.

Pause.

GAP: OK. *(she takes a deep breath, lets it out)* OK.

Silently count to five.

HITCH: That's it?

GAP: For now. *(she has questions)* I have... *(she shuts her mouth)* Did he... *(She shuts her mouth. There is a pause.)* OK.

HITCH: Oh. *(silently count to five)* He's not my boyfriend.

GAP: No?

HITCH: Not anymore.

GAP: Does he know that?

HITCH: He'll figure it out. Or maybe he won't, I don't know. *(beat)* I don't care. *(pause)* He said, he promised he was going to take me out for a nice dinner, romantic, just me, not his stupid friends, and where do we end up? And I'm the bitch when I get upset. I'm the one in the wrong when he said... *(pause)* He got mad. *(pause)* He took my phone.

GAP: And your father wouldn't let me run him over last night.

HITCH: I knew... *(silently count to five)* Soon as they started drinking I knew *(pause)* all I had to do was wait them out. *(pause)* I thought I might be able to get away, but he... *(silently count to five)* So I did the next best thing. Waited till he fell over and grabbed the keys. I'm not sorry I did it and I'd do it again. Am I grounded?

GAP: Are you really done with him?

HITCH: Dating sucks.

GAP: It gets worse. You think football players are bad, wait till you meet lawyers.

HITCH: Dad's a lawyer.

GAP: Exactly.

Everyone snaps for eight beats. Nothing happens. Everyone looks around at each other. Silently count to ten. Do this very slowly. This is The Awkward Pause. Let it feel awkward.

BEAT: *(clearing throat)* A-hem! *(clears throat louder and exaggeratedly)* A-hem! *(silently count to five and then loudly whispering)* Go!

HITCH: *(looking back)* Are you a-heming at us? *(to GAP)* Is she a-heming us?

BEAT: *(whispering)* Go!

Silently count to five.

BEAT: *(whispering)* Somebody? Anybody? Go!

Silently count to five. Everyone is intensely awkward. At the end, HOLD of all of sudden bolts up.

HOLD: Oh! Me! Sorry!

Everyone groans in relief.

BEAT: *(muttering)* About time.

HOLD: *(to PAUSE)* It's our turn. Sorry, everyone! Sorry! *(to PAUSE)* Ready? Go!

PAUSE moves forward to sit on a cube and acts as if watching TV. HOLD sits down beside PAUSE. PAUSE does not look at HOLD.

HOLD: What's on TV? *(PAUSE does not answer, nor look at HOLD)* So... Mom says dinner'll be ready in five minutes. *(pause)* Sweet potato casserole. *(pause, PAUSE still does not look at HOLD)* So... She says it's vegetarian, the casserole? But I think she's secretly hiding the meat. I don't know how, and I can't see it, but something's off. There have just been way too many mystery casseroles lately. And she hasn't freaked out at all – "Vegetarian? Sounds like fun!

Here's your casserole!" (pause) So... how long is this not talking thing going to go on? I said I was sorry, I don't know what else to – (PAUSE gets up abruptly and leaves) I guess we're still not talking. Yeah.

Everyone snaps for eight beats, individually moving in straight lines around the stage.

This is another section to watch for monotone "poem voice." Focus on the concern in the statements – these characters are worried that they are not getting their intention across. Think "so worried" as you speak.

FREEZE: How will I know if I'm getting through.

EVERYONE: Am I getting through?

GAP: How will I know if I'm getting through.

EVERYONE: Am I getting through?

Everyone snaps for eight beats, forming a tableau. THICK and STAY move forward. THICK ahead, STAY lagging behind.

THICK: (sing song as he moves) Burger time, it's gotta be burger time, it's gotta be... (seeing STAY is lagging) Come on, burger time!

STAY: What are we doing?

THICK: Huh?

STAY: What are we (beat) doing...

THICK: Aren't we eating?

STAY: Yes. In a second, I have to (beat) Will you sit down, for a second?

THICK: I thought we were going out to eat.

STAY: We will.

THICK: I'm kinda hungry.

STAY: In a second, would you just, (pause) sit down? For a second.

THICK: I don't do well on an empty stomach.

STAY: You can't wait five minutes? Are you wasting away or something? (beat) Come sit down.

THICK: OK. Five minutes. But then I get cranky.

STAY and THICK move to sit on cubes.

STAY: What (*pause*) are we doing?

THICK: Sitting.

STAY: Not literally, not physically. What (*pause*) are we (*pause*) doing in, you know, (*silently count to five, THICK says nothing, just looks expectantly*) You don't know?

THICK: You lost me.

STAY: Do I really have to spell it out?

THICK: (*sincere*) That would help.

STAY: OK. What (*pause*) are we (*pause*) doing (*pause*) here. (*THICK opens his mouth*) Besides sitting, besides sitting, I'm aware we are in fact sitting down. (*pause*) What are we doing here with (*pause, she really doesn't want to say this...*) us.

THICK: Us?

STAY: Our (*pause*) you know...

THICK: (*he really doesn't*) No.

STAY: You don't?

THICK: Should I?

STAY: I thought you might.

THICK: I'm trying. Thinking about burgers makes everything else fuzzy. What about us?

STAY: You don't know? (*pause*) You're going to make me completely humiliate myself here, aren't you.

THICK: No! Why would I want to do that? You're my best friend.

STAY: Yeah. About that. Do you (*pause*) think of me as... (*count to five*)

THICK: As what?

STAY: (*standing*) Let's go eat.

THICK: Awesome! (*standing, and moving*) I am totally getting the Monster Burger. (*sing song*) Burger time, it's gotta be burger time... (*stops, STAY hasn't moved*) Coming?

*Everyone snaps for eight beats, facing the audience.
GAP and STILL move to the set of cubes stage right,*

FREEZE and HITCH move to the set of cubes stage left. NOTE: If you want to change the gender of the monologue, see monologue with changes on page 30.

STAY: How will I know if I'm getting through.

EVERYONE: Am I getting through?

STILL: *(as if talking to GAP)* Blah, Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, *(continues quietly underneath GAP)*

GAP: *(turning to audience)* I think I have to break up with Blake. We don't have anything in common. Sometimes, I can't even hear what he's saying. It all just runs together, blah, blah, blah, like wet gravy and cranberry sauce. I know gravy is normally wet, you don't eat dry gravy, but if the consistency is overly runny cause Jimmy likes runny gravy and you don't make a big enough well in your mashed potatoes *(at this point STILL stops talking)* so the gravy just runs all over your plate right into the cranberries – it looks like a crime scene. I don't like eating a... he's stopped talking. *(her eyes go wide)* When did he stop talking? What did he say? Did he ask me a question? I have to say something, otherwise it'll look like I haven't been listening. Even though I haven't been listening. How long has it been? Are we just staring at each other? Say something, anything! *(turning to STILL, speaking very tentatively)* Yes?

STILL: *(grabbing GAP in a hug)* You rock!

GAP: I do?

STILL: Death metal weekend here we come! *(he gives a whoop and returns to the group)*

GAP: *(calling after)* Wait! *(runs after him)*

Everyone snaps for eight beats as they move into a horizontal line left to right.

SPACE: How will I know if I'm getting through.

EVERYONE: Am I getting through?

BREATH: Am I hitting stone?

SPACE: Do I break *(everyone snaps twice)*

BREATH: Am I clear enough?

SPACE: Will you break?

The focus shifts to FREEZE and HITCH. Keep in mind these are the beginning of sentences. Fill in the blanks of what you're saying, even though it's never heard.

FREEZE: Do you... (pause)

HITCH: Will you... (pause)

FREEZE: I can't... (pause)

HITCH: Where do... (pause)

FREEZE: I don't... (pause)

HITCH: So this... (pause)

FREEZE: I guess... (pause)

HITCH: I guess... (pause) Is there...

FREEZE: No.

HITCH: No?

FREEZE: No. (pause) Sorry.

HITCH: OK... (pause)

FREEZE: So... (pause)

HITCH: (standing) So. (pause)

FREEZE: (standing) OK. (pause) OK.

FREEZE and HITCH move to join the line. Everyone starts to bounce up and down with excited expectation. Then BEAT enters with an envelope.

BEAT: And the winner is... (opens the envelope) Chris—

REST: (runs forward) Yes! Yes! Yes! (grabs the envelope) I win! I win! I so deserve to win. (laughs a little meanly and waves the envelope) Read 'em and weep suckers, read and weep. I won, you didn't and it's about time. Finally someone is acknowledging my talent in this stupid play. Finally, someone is realizing the genius they have in their midst. (yelling offstage) There are going to be some changes around here, some big, big, (BEAT steps forward and takes the envelope) Hey!

BEAT: (reading) The winner is Christina Hitch.

Silently count to twenty. Everyone stares at REST. REST looks around, trying to figure out how to get out of this gracefully. She can't. HITCH steps forward and takes the envelope.

REST: Well. (*overcompensating opening arms wide*) Congratulations!

Everyone snaps for an eight count then exits off in different directions. BREATH, SPACE, BEAT stand in a row. BREATH holds a jar of jellybeans.

SPACE and BEAT stare at each other. They are focused. They are in competition with each other. They are saying much with their eyes and their bodies. BREATH stands off to the side. He holds a large jar of jellybeans. He looks like he's working up the nerve to say something. At the same time a small group enters and crosses the stage. SPACE and BEAT instantly change their demeanour. They straighten up, wear sunny smiles and try to catch the attention of the people passing by.

SPACE: Raffle ticket?

BEAT: Walkathon!

BREATH: (*halfheartedly*) Guess the jellybeans...

The group passes by without stopping. SPACE and BEAT instantly change their demeanour back to trying to trying to stare each other down. There is a silence (count to five). After the count, another small group enters and crosses. SPACE and BEAT instantly change their demeanour – they straighten up, wear sunny smiles and try to catch the attention of the people passing by.

SPACE: Raffle ticket?

BEAT: Walkathon!

BREATH: Guess the jellybeans...

The group passes by without stopping. This frustrates both SPACE and BEAT. They turn away from each other, fuming, arms crossed. There is a silence (count to five). BREATH looks at the other two and then plunges in.

BREATH: Here we are. (*pause*) Here... we... are... Fundraising. Whooh! Go charity. All in one place.

BEAT: If someone hadn't ticked off the janitors, we wouldn't have to be all in one place.

SPACE: Sweating are we?

BEAT: In your dreams.

BEAT and SPACE are glaring at each other again. Silently count to five. BREATH plunges in again.

BREATH: It's been a while. We haven't talked, in a while, all together. In one place. How's everyone doing? (*Pause. No one answers.*) Yeah, I'm fine too. (*pause*) So. (*pause*) How are things?

SPACE: You already asked that.

BREATH: First, I asked how everyone was doing. Which is directed at you, the person. Which no one answered. Then I asked how are things. As in the events in your life. (*pause*) Two different questions. Two different concepts.

No one responds. Silently count to five.

BREATH: So. The weather seems kinda cool. Coolish. I'm not complaining. I hate being hot.

SPACE: What are you doing?

Another small group enters to cross in front of them. SPACE and BEAT leap into action.

SPACE: Raffle ticket?

BEAT: Walkathon!

BREATH: Guess the jellybeans...

They pass by without stopping. This frustrates SPACE and BEAT. They stand side by side, with their arms folded. There is a silence (count to five) After that SPACE shakes her head in disgust which BEAT picks up on.

BEAT: What?

SPACE: What, what?

BEAT: You shook your head.

SPACE: I can't shake my head?

BEAT: You shook your head in disgust.

SPACE: Did I?

BEAT: You shook your head in disgust at me.

SPACE: Don't flatter yourself.

BEAT: I know what I saw. You know, I know Jennifer Stephenopoulos.

SPACE: (*rolling her eyes*) Walkathon.

BEAT: What?

SPACE: Please.

BEAT: Please, what?

SPACE: You hate exercise.

BEAT: It's not exercise, it's walking.

SPACE: That's hardly a winning attitude.

BEAT: Who's got the "winning" record? That's right, me.

SPACE: My raffle is going to kick your walkathon to the curb.

BEAT: No one cares about your stupid raffle.

SPACE: I'm going to win and you'll be walking in my dust.

BEAT: I'm going to beat you so bad you'll be crying raffle ticket tears.

SPACE: That makes no sense.

BEAT: Don't talk to me.

Silently count to five. BREATH looks left and right and plunges in.

BREATH: My brother lost his toe in a freak anvil accident last week.

(*pause*) That's something new in my life, not really my life but in my immediate world view. Something you might not know seeing how caught up you've both been. (*pause*) I suppose all accidents involving anvils are of a freakish nature but this one was quite unexpected. The toe turned black and just fell right off. Really gross, but fascinating too in a freakish unexpected way.

SPACE: What are you doing?

BREATH: Talking.

SPACE: Why?

BEAT: We're not talking.

BREATH: I know.

BEAT: Talking is a distraction.

SPACE: Hey I'll talk. I'll talk about how you're going to lose so bad you'll be crying walkathon tears.

BEAT: I know what you're doing. I know Jennifer Stephanopoulos, oh I know. You think you can wig me out? You think you can make me lose my focus, lose my cool? (*getting louder, losing her cool*) I am über cool Missy ma'am. I am ultra über cool and don't you forget it!

SPACE: That doesn't make any sense. You make no sense, Sleet.

BEAT: Don't call me that.

SPACE: Would you prefer, Drip?

BEAT: No.

SPACE: Sprinkle?

BEAT: You know my name!

SPACE: Shower?

BEAT: You're going down!

BREATH: OK, stop talking, stop talking! You stop talking now!

There is a pause as SPACE and BEAT turn to look at BREATH.

BREATH: We're going to have a conversation like regular human beings because there is something I want to discuss. No head shakes, no snide chirpy comments. I will talk and then you will talk back in a moderate and pleasant tone. That's how normal people do it.

BEAT: Snide chirpy?

BREATH: No talking! Not yet. There will be talking. You will talk. Oh, you will talk. Right now, it's my turn. (*takes a deep breath and lets it out*) You two suck at fundraising. Not because you can't sell the most raffle tickets or walk the most miles but because once a year you two become total monsters. "We're not talking"

monsters. “I’m going to sell more than you” monsters. Forget your friends monsters. And for what? You don’t even get anything good if you raise the most.

SPACE: Well, it’s for charity.

BEAT: They say your name on the announcements...

BREATH: And I don’t get it. I don’t get why you can’t be normal people and compete like normal people, and talk like normal people. I like talking, that’s what friends do, they talk. And I thought you were my friends. I thought... *(there is a pause)* You didn’t say anything. Neither of you.

BEAT: What are we talking about?

SPACE: The screenplay.

BEAT: *(realizing what they’re in the middle of)* Oh...

BREATH: I kept waiting and waiting and then it was so long. And then, then I had to find out from Paula’s sister’s boyfriend’s cousin that you had read it and you didn’t like it.

SPACE: Paula’s sister’s boyfriend’s cousin is a troublemaker.

BREATH: Maybe. But is she a liar? *(no one answers)* No. You are.

BEAT: We didn’t lie.

BREATH: Not talking is lying. Not saying what you really feel is lying. *(there is a pause)* I hate jellybeans. I could care less how many were in this jar. It’s 387. There. Now you know. Do with it what you will.

BREATH turns away. There is a pause.

SPACE: We didn’t want to hurt your feelings. That’s why we didn’t say anything.

BEAT: I’ve never read a full screenplay before. A 200 page screen play. *(SPACE pokes BEAT)* Ow!

BREATH: A friend would have talked to me about it, not leave me in the lurch. Not tell someone’s sister’s boyfriend’s cousin instead.

BEAT: She is such a troublemaker.

SPACE: OK. You want to know what we thought.

BEAT: Jen, don’t!



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