

Please Hear What I'm Not Saying

Author unknown

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, for God's sake don't be fooled!
I give you the impression that I'm secure,
That all is sunny and unruffled in me,
Within as well as without,
That confidence is my name and coolness my game,
That the water's calm and I'm in command,
And that I need no one,
But don't believe me.

My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is a 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 panic at the thought of me weakness and fear being exposed.
That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind,
A nonchalant, so sophisticated facade to help me pretend,
To shield me from the glance that knows.
But such a glance is precisely my salvation.

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,
Form the barriers that I so painstakingly erect.
It's the only thing that will assure me of what I can't assure myself...
That I'm really worth something...
Don't I tell you this, I don't dare... I'm so afraid to.
I'm afraid your glance will not be followed by acceptance and love.
I'm afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh...
And your laugh will 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, I play my game, my desperate pretending game,
And my life becomes a front.

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 are kind and gentle and encouraging,
Each time you try to understand because you really care,
My heart begins to grow wings...
Very small wings, very feeble wings, but wings.
With your sensitivity and sympathy, and your power of understanding,
You can breathe 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 in me, if you choose to...

It will not be easy for you.
A long conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls.
The nearer you approach me, the blinder I may strike back;
It's irrational, but despite what the books say about man,
I'm irrational!!!

I fight against the very thing that I cry out for.
But I am told that love is stronger than those strong walls, and this is my hope.
My only hope.
Please try to beat down those walls with firm hands,
But with gentle hands – for a child is very sensitive.
Who am I, you may wonder?
I'm someone you know very well....
For I am every man or woman you meet.

Source: Bemistry 1973