

PLEASE...
HEAR WHAT I'M NOT SAYING

Don't be fooled by me.
Don't be fooled by the mask I wear.
For I wear a mask, I wear a thousand masks, masks that I'm afraid
to take off, and none of them is me.
Pretending is an art that is second nature with me, but don't be
fooled; for God's sake, don't be fooled.
I give the impression that I'm secure, that all is sunny and un-
ruffled with me, within as well as without; that confidence is
my name and coolness is my game; that the waters are calm and
that I'm in command and I need no one.

But don't believe it please don't.
My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask, my ever-
varying and ever-concealing mask.
Beneath lies no smugness, no coolness, no complacency.
Beneath dwells the real me, in confusion, in fear, in loneliness.
But I hide this; I don't want anybody to know it.
I panic at the thought of my weakness 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.
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 your glance will not be followed by love and acceptance.
I'm afraid that you will think less of me, that you'll laugh, and
your laugh will kill me.
I'm afraid that deep down inside I'm nothing, that I'm no good, and
that you'll see and reject me.
So I play my games, my desperate, pretending games, with a facade of
assurance on the outside 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 with you in the suave tones of surface talk.
I tell you everything that's really nothing, nothing of what's crying
within me.

So when I'm going through my routine, don't 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 I can't say.
I dislike the hiding. Honestly I do.
I dislike the superficial phony games I'm playing.
I'd really like to be genuine, spontaneous, and me; but you have to
help me.
You have to help me by holding out your hand, even when that's the
last thing I "seem" to want or need.
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, I can make it.
You can breathe life into me. I want you to know that. I want to
know how important you are to me, how you can be a creator of
the person that is me if you choose to.
Only you can wipe away from my eyes the blank stares of the breath-
ing dead.

Please choose to. You alone can break down the wall behind which I tremble; you alone can remove the mask; you alone can release me from my 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 me, the blinder I may strike back.

It's irrational, but despite what the books say about man, I'm irrational.

But I'm told that love is stronger than the strongest walls, and there lies my only hope.

Please try to beat down these walls with firm hands, but with gentle hands, for a child is very sensitive, and I AM a child.

Who am I, you may wonder? I am someone you know very well.

For I am every man, every woman, every child...every human you meet.

ANONYMOUS