

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 unruffled with me, within as well as without; that confidence is my name and coolness is my game; that the waters are calm & that I'm in command & I need no one.

But don't believe it please don't.

My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask, my evervarying and ever-concealing mask.

Beneath lies no smugness, no coolness, no complacence.

Beneath dwells the real me, in confused, afraid, alone.

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 free me from myself, from my own self-built prison walls, from the barriers I so painstakingly erected.

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 whole 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 my survival I need to say - but I can't say.

I hate the hiding. Honestly I do.

I hate the superficial phony games I'm playing.

I'd really like to be real, spontaneous, and me; but I need help.

If someone could help me by holding out their hand, even when that's the last thing I "seem" to want or need.

Each time you are kind & gentle and encouraging,

Each time you try to understand because you really care, my heart grows wings.

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.