

FIRST LOCKER

A play in one act
by
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PREVIEW ONLY!

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SYNOPSIS

As eight teenagers open their lockers and their hearts, the intense feelings of eighth grade bubble to the surface. This abstract look at the moment childhood cracks open shows these teens looking for the combination that unlocks their true selves.

CHARACTERS

(4M + 4F)

BEATRICE.....Confident & pretty, female, 13.
CHESTER.....Smart & sensitive, male, 13.
EVELYN.....Insecure & restless, female, 13.
FRANK.....Quirky & nostalgic, male, 13.
NEWTON.....Tough & sporty, male, 13.
RUTH.....Sweet & organized, female, 13.
STANLEY.....Charming & dramatic, male, 13.
VERA.....Unsure & sarcastic, female, 13.

SETTING

A bare stage.

RUNNING TIME

10 minutes.

(AT RISE: The stage is completely bare. STANLEY enters. He faces forward and reaches into the empty air. He mimes the motion of spinning a combination lock, enthusiastically.)

STANLEY

Thirty-six. Twenty-four. Eleven. Thirty-six reasons why this year is going to be a masterpiece! Twenty-four carat gold energy! Eleven out of ten on the fabulous scale!

(He mimes pulling open the door of his locker. A bright light hits his face.)

Oh, look at you. So clean. So empty. Ready for the collection!

(He begins "unloading" invisible items from his heart into the locker.)

I'm putting away the summer sun. I'm packing up the freedom of July. And in you go, my beautiful anxieties! I leave you here, my fear of being too loud. Stay in the corner, butterflies. Let the costume change begin! Eighth grade is a stage, and my name is on the marquee! Leave it all inside, make room for the show!

(EVELYN enters. She reaches forward and opens her combination lock, nervously.)

EVELYN

Fifteen. Four. Thirty-two. Fifteen seconds before anyone notices I'm standing here. Four times I changed my shirt this morning. Thirty-two ways to look like Beatrice so someone might actually say hello to me.

(She opens her locker. A bright light hits her face.)

It's so small. If I fit inside, would anyone look for me?

STANLEY

Leave it all inside, make room for the show...

EVELYN

I'm unloading the feeling of being invisible. I'm putting away the girl who sits on the edge of the bench. I leave you here, my quietness. Please see me. Don't look past me.

(FRANK enters. He reaches forward and opens his combination lock, carefully.)

FRANK

Nineteen. Fifty-eight. Seventy-four. Nineteen fifty-eight, the year my wool cardigan was made. Seventy-four memories of my dad that haven't been painted over yet.

(He opens his locker. A bright light hits his face.)

Smells musty, like someone used to live here. Good.

EVELYN

Please see me. Don't look past me.

STANLEY

Leave it all inside...

FRANK

I'm cramming my locker with the things they want me to forget. I'm stuffing you in the back, brand new sneakers that hurt my arches. I'm keeping the old watch that doesn't tick anymore, because the silence makes sense to me. Don't throw away the ghost.

(RUTH enters. She reaches forward and opens her combination lock, quickly.)

RUTH

Five. Ten. Fifteen. Five colour-coded binders. Ten perfectly sharpened pencils. Fifteen minutes early to first period, because punctuality is a love language.

(She opens her locker. A bright light hits her face.)

Oh, a blank slate. Delightful!

FRANK

Don't throw away the ghost.

EVELYN

Don't look past me...

STANLEY

Make room for the show...

RUTH

I'm organizing the chaos. In goes the summer reading list, completed in June. In goes my devotion to Stanley, which he will not notice because he's busy being fabulous. Keep it clean, keep it safe, keep him happy!

(NEWTON enters. He reaches forward and opens his combination lock, roughly.)

NEWTON

Ninety. Ten. Zero. Ninety miles an hour into the boards if you look at my family the wrong way. Ten knuckles, clenched and ready. Zero patience for the guys in the back of the bus.

(He opens his locker. A bright light hits his face.)

Get in there, loser.

RUTH

Keep it clean, keep it safe...

FRANK

The silence makes sense to me...

EVELYN

Please see me...

STANLEY

A masterpiece...

NEWTON

I'm jamming my anger all the way to the back. I'm throwing in my mom's expectations, and the broken arm from football camp, and the stupid, soft, melting feeling I got when a girl smiled at me last week. I hate it. I love it. Touch anything and I'll break you.

(VERA enters. She reaches forward and opens her combination lock, passively.)

VERA

Three. Two. One. Three filters to make my skin look like porcelain. Two hashtags about miracle hair serum. One mom who thinks a pyramid scheme is going to pay for my college.

(She opens her locker. A bright light hits her face.)

VERA

(Continued)

Perfect. A metal box. Just like home.

NEWTON

Touch anything and I'll break you.

RUTH

Punctuality is a love language...

FRANK

Don't throw away the ghost...

EVELYN

Thirty-two ways to blend in...

STANLEY

On the marquee!

VERA

I'm packing away the joyless lifestyle. I leave you here, my forced internet smile. Everything is perfectly fine and completely fake.

(CHESTER enters. He reaches forward and opens his combination lock, delicately.)

CHESTER

Ninety-nine. Forty-five. Eight. Ninety-nine percent on the placement exam. Forty-five degrees of separation between my mom and the rest of her family. Eight physical weaknesses, including my lack of a dominant wrist.

(He opens his locker. A bright light hits his face.)

A storage unit.

VERA

Everything is perfectly fine and completely fake.

NEWTON

Ninety miles an hour...

RUTH

Keep it clean, keep it safe...

FRANK

Smells musty...

EVELYN

If I fit inside...

STANLEY

Thirty-six reasons to smile!

CHESTER

I'm parking the drama. I'm storing the arguments from Sunday dinner where everyone screamed and nobody listened. I'm putting away the encyclopedias I read because fiction makes me cry and I don't like the tears. Analyze the facts, hide the heart.

(VERA enters. She reaches forward and opens her combination lock, gracefully.)

BEATRICE

Twenty-two. Sixteen. Five. Twenty-two lingering stares from boys who used to throw rocks at me. Sixteen tubes of Blush and Bashful lip gloss to keep from getting chapped when I smile at people I don't like. Five seconds of wishing I was still twelve.

(She opens her locker. A bright light hits her face.)

It's a mirror. Everything is a mirror now.

CHESTER

Analyze the facts, hide the heart.

VERA

Everything is perfectly fine.

NEWTON

I hate it, I love it.

RUTH

In goes the devotion...

FRANK

A history they want to erase...

EVELYN

Beatrice, look at me...

STANLEY

The costume change begins!

BEATRICE

I'm giving up the roughness. I'm packing away the girl who played in the mud, because the dirt doesn't wash out of pretty dresses. I leave you here, my childhood. Everyone is watching me now. I have to be sharp, or they'll see how scared I am of my own skin.

(The lights suddenly shift. The individual lights become a collective glow across the stage. The voices begin to weave together, as do their movements. They cross paths in a variety of choreographed formations throughout.)

STANLEY

Thirty-six reasons!

EVELYN

Four seconds!

FRANK

Nineteen fifty-eight!

RUTH

Five binders!

NEWTON

Ninety miles an hour!

VERA

Three filters!

CHESTER

Ninety-nine percent!

BEATRICE

Twenty-two stares!

EVERYONE

Left. Right. Left. Click.

END OF PREVIEW

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