

INFLATED EGO

A comedy in one act
by
Bradley Hayward

PREVIEW ONLY!

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SYNOPSIS

Best friends Evelyn and Beatrice confront the overwhelming pressures of growing up when their bodies suddenly begin changing in bizarre ways. Together, they must find a way to balance their shifting egos and maintain their bond.

CHARACTERS

(2F)

BEATRICE.....Confident & pretty, female, 13.

EVELYN.....Insecure & restless, female, 13.

SETTING

A bare stage.

RUNNING TIME

10 minutes.

(AT RISE: BEATRICE stands center stage, proudly beaming from ear to ear. She has helium balloons tied up and down both arms, on long strings. She stands with perfect posture, shoulders straight and back arched. She can't stop smiling. EVELYN stands next to her, wearing a chunky, oversized wool sweater, and carries a backpack. She's not impressed.)

BEATRICE

Notice anything different?

EVELYN

Did you do something to your hair?

BEATRICE

No.

EVELYN

Your skin?

BEATRICE

Guess again.

EVELYN

Your teeth?

(BEATRICE turns dramatically and tries a different pose.)

BEATRICE

What about now?

EVELYN

Did you grow?

BEATRICE

No.

EVELYN

Did you shrink?

BEATRICE

No!

EVELYN
Did you lose weight?

BEATRICE
NO!

EVELYN
Did you gain weight?

BEATRICE
Closer!

EVELYN
Are you constipated?

BEATRICE
COME ON!

EVELYN
(Loses her composure)
What do you mean, do I notice anything different?! Of course I notice something different! How could I not notice something different?! You've got a goofy grin on your face and a million balloons hanging off of you!

BEATRICE
Finally!

EVELYN
Where did you get them?

BEATRICE
I have no idea.

EVELYN
What do you mean, you have no idea?

BEATRICE
I just woke up this morning, and there they were.

EVELYN
There they were?

BEATRICE
Poof.

EVELYN

Poof?

BEATRICE

Just like that.

EVELYN

I don't understand.

BEATRICE

Me neither. Last night, I did my homework. I watched TV. I brushed my teeth. No balloons. This morning, my alarm goes off. Balloons.

EVELYN

And...?

BEATRICE

And what?

EVELYN

Do you like them?

BEATRICE

Do I like them?

(She laughs.)

Do I like them?!

EVELYN

Well...?

BEATRICE

This is the best day of my entire life!

EVELYN

I guess that's a yes.

BEATRICE

Of course it's a yes! I've been waiting for balloons ever since I turned eight.

EVELYN

You have?

BEATRICE

For my birthday, Mom took me to the circus.

EVELYN

Your eighth birthday?

BEATRICE

(Nods)

Catch up. We entered the tent and I was actually kind of disappointed. Grossed out, really, because it was dirty and smelled like elephant poop. I asked Mom if we could go home, and she was plugging her nose, so I was pretty sure she was going to say yes. But just as we turned around to leave, there she was.

EVELYN

Who?

BEATRICE

The most beautiful woman I had ever seen. She had curly red hair, all the way down to her waist. And teal blue ostrich feathers sticking out of her curls. And not just any feathers. They were huge feathers. Long feathers. Sticking out from her head in all directions. She looked like a bright red sun rising into a teal blue sky. Mom and I both stopped dead in our tracks, then took our seats. Suddenly, all we could smell was perfume.

EVELYN

(Impressed)

Wow.

BEATRICE

Wow is not enough. There were three rings in that circus, but I only ever had my eye on hers. I watched in awe as the first teal blue balloon magically drifted down from overhead. It floated towards her, as though it defied gravity. She gently grabbed the balloon with her long fingernails, then kissed it with her lips, leaving a smear of bright red lipstick. She handed the balloon to a man sitting in the front row, and I swear to god, he fainted.

EVELYN

(Less impressed)

Wow.

BEATRICE

Again, not enough. We watched her balloon act for the next ten minutes, although it felt like ten seconds, and it hardly felt like an act at all. The balloons were a part of her. She had the undivided attention of every single person in that tent. From the man in the front row to the spot light operator hanging from the striped canvas.

It was at that moment, I started waiting. Waiting for the day my balloons would arrive. Waiting for the day I would stop being invisible. Waiting for the day I would capture the attention of every person I know. And today, that day arrived. Like a bright red sun, I rose into the teal blue sky.

EVELYN

(Not impressed at all)

Wow.

BEATRICE

Wow is right.

EVELYN

Did you practice that speech in the mirror?

BEATRICE

Hey! Let me have my moment.

EVELYN

Sorry.

BEATRICE

Besides, don't you also want balloons?

EVELYN

Of course I want balloons. Ever since I was little, I've wanted balloons. But my story isn't quite so dramatic.

BEATRICE

What's your story?

EVELYN

An unfortunate incident with my aunt Phyllis.

BEATRICE

I don't think I've met her.

EVELYN

She had the nicest balloons in my entire family.

BEATRICE

Had?

EVELYN

(Nods)

Until my uncle Burt took her to the county fair.

BEATRICE

What happened?

EVELYN

You know that carnival game where people hurl darts at balloons?

BEATRICE

Yeah.

EVELYN

End of story.

BEATRICE

Tragic!

EVELYN

Exactly.

BEATRICE

I don't know if I want to become a target.

EVELYN

Speaking of, what did your mom say?

BEATRICE

About what?

EVELYN

When she saw them.

BEATRICE

Oh. She hasn't. I hid them before I left for school.

EVELYN

How did you hide them? They're huge!

BEATRICE

She doesn't pay super close attention.

EVELYN

Oh. I'm sorry.

BEATRICE

No need. She's the one who should be sorry.

EVELYN

I didn't mean to bring it up.

BEATRICE

It's okay.

EVELYN

It's not okay.

BEATRICE

Let's just change the subject.

EVELYN

Okay.

(Awkward silence.)

Well, I wasn't going to say anything, but I've also been waking up to surprises lately.

BEATRICE

You have?

EVELYN

Surprise after surprise after surprise.

BEATRICE

What kind of surprises?

EVELYN

I can't say. It's too embarrassing.

BEATRICE

I won't laugh.

EVELYN

I know you won't laugh. But you might judge.

BEATRICE

Since when have I ever judged you?

EVELYN

Never, I guess.

BEATRICE

Never is right.

EVELYN

But now...

BEATRICE

Now, what?

EVELYN

Well...

BEATRICE

Well, what?

EVELYN

You've got balloons.

BEATRICE

So?

EVELYN

You've got them, and I don't.

BEATRICE

What does that have to do with anything?

EVELYN

It changes things.

BEATRICE

No, it doesn't.

EVELYN

It changes everything!

BEATRICE

I haven't changed.

EVELYN

Everything about you has changed.

BEATRICE

Really?

EVELYN

You're lighter than air! You've slouched since kindergarten, but today you're standing upright.

BEATRICE

I am?

EVELYN

Face it. You've had an ego boost. And I'm happy for you. But I'm afraid.

BEATRICE

Afraid of what?

EVELYN

Afraid you'll start thinking you're better than me.

BEATRICE

Did I say something to make you think that?

EVELYN

No.

BEATRICE

Do something?

EVELYN

No.

BEATRICE

Then what is it?

EVELYN

Jealousy.

BEATRICE

That's what I thought. So out with it!

EVELYN

(Finally blurts it out)

I've been finding yarn!

BEATRICE

Yarn?

EVELYN

Everywhere!

BEATRICE

What do you mean, yarn?

EVELYN

I mean yarn.

BEATRICE

Yarn yarn?

EVELYN

(Nods)

Yarn yarn. I wake up in the morning, knee deep in the stuff.

BEATRICE

Like, actual yarn?

EVELYN

Pieces of yarn, balls of yarn, spools of yarn. I'm constantly tangled in it.

BEATRICE

You're kidding.

EVELYN

I could open my own craft store.

BEATRICE

Be serious.

EVELYN

I *am* serious.

BEATRICE

But why are you so upset about it? Yarn is just yarn. It's soft. It's cozy.

EVELYN

Because your outside finally matches who you think you are on the inside! You get to walk around like an exclamation point, pulling everyone's eyes up to the sky. And what do I get? Tied down. Literally tangled in the itchy reality of my own self doubt. Your outside is lifting you up, Beatrice. Mine is turning me into upholstery.

BEATRICE

That's not true.

EVELYN

You're floating! If a gust of wind comes right now, you're an event. If a gust of wind hits me, I just collect lint.

BEATRICE

You think my ego is floating? Evelyn, look at my arms. If I don't hold them down, they drift upward. Do you know how hard it is to eat cereal when your arms are trying to escape to the stratosphere?

EVELYN

Meanwhile, I've got yarn coming out of my eyeballs.

BEATRICE

Better than coming out of your nose.

EVELYN

It might start coming out of my nose?!

END OF PREVIEW

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