

The Marginals
by Kate Brennan

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CHARACTERS (12+)

LANEY - new to school, expressive, can make people sneeze

D'NAY - student body president, used to dance, can move time forward or backward 3 seconds

HALE - 62 year old professor, erudite, good-humored, perpetually looks 17

VEN - has a heart of gold, looks like a different person every day

VEN2 - Ven on another day

VEN3 - Ven on another day

CRUX - a good friend, but distant, from a family of fly-ers, claims to hover 5 millimeters

FITZROW - goes with the flow, can zoom from one destination to another, but can never choose where

TRUNE - straightforward, D'Nay's second in command, can make people forget what they are about to say

GRAYNE - woke enough to need a nap, completes Kelton's sentences, can smell big emotions

KELTON - has the other half of Grayne's friendship necklace, loves a good idiom, can make people 20% sleepier

CHARTREUSE - a jaded unicorn, inherently artistic, can make everything...chartreuse

ENSEMBLE - rockstar singer(s)/movers for the *Plantae Lingua* sequence, also to play students throughout

NOTES

Characters and the actors who play them can be any race/identity/gender/orientation. Ze, Zer, Zers are the pronouns of the play. All characters appear between the ages of 16-21. When characters are first introduced in the text, it is poetic, not literal.

Laney does Art Abandonment (abbreviated as AA) throughout the play. Art Abandonment is a real art experiment in which people from around the world create art of all kinds and abandon it with kind notes for strangers to find.

SYNOPSIS

In a world of superhuman strength, flying and time travel, it's hard not to feel inadequate when all you can do is make grass grow 5% faster. The School for the Marginally Magical helps the...less amazing students reach their potential, whatever it may be. When a new student immigrates to school bringing more art than practical magic, the world turns inside out. Will the students' marginal abilities be enough to save their classmates from a horticultural nightmare, or will this stranger show them a deeper shade of magic that is part of their very nature?

Saved by the Bell meets *The Owl House* in this offbeat genderless take on how growing up in the margins doesn't mean you can't become something extraordinary.

SCENE 1: Welcome Back, Losers

The auditorium at the School for the Marginally Magical. D'NAY takes the podium in front of the assembled student body. D'Nay is a firework that has been set off too many times. It is the first day of class.

D'NAY

The end of the world is upon us.

Climate change is irreversible, gun violence is ubiquitous, our leaders are corrupt and our representatives are for sale. Our oceans are polluted, our lands abused, our natural resources taken for granted and squandered like opportunity after opportunity to change our ways. There is plastic in our blood and there are microchips in our pockets. We are products of the quick fix, the fast food, the unnatural high, the self-medicated sedation, and we believe that more is more is more is more is more while nothing is ever is ever is ever enough.

Corporations are people, but people are robots. And the robots with all the money are robbing us blind and making us pay for the privilege to do so. Our planet is dying while we sip overpriced iced caramel lattes and big business is profiting while we subscribe and save to keep them in the black.

Our generation has the highest rates of depression and anxiety ever recorded, we have lost the ability to make art, to make eye contact, to communicate, to feel - feelings, empathy, community. Community is a word we use liberally but don't actually take the time, effort or focus to understand because it might mean we have to look at ourselves, our habits, our shortcomings, our wrongs, and change.

We stuff ourselves full of sugar, celebrity, and questionable content and then wonder why we feel anxious, inadequate and alone. We are slaves to the unending scroll, disciples of demagogues and lackeys to likes. We are champions of a comparison culture that punishes us with every post and we are victims of the chaos we ourselves create at every opportunity to do so.

Laney enters late.

There is minor hub bub "excuse me," "sorry" etc.

D'Nay sneezes.

'Scuse me. Our spines are degenerating like the Neanderthals we are becoming, and we respond to clicks like the Pavlovian dogs we are. We have a million online friends but no one to call in a crisis. We have a thousand followers but no one's got our back. We are tired and wired, stretched and depressed, overcommitted and undernourished. We are so woke we need a nap.

We are quick to cancel, slow to move and impossible to change. I get up here every year hoping for a radical transformation, but we are so mired in self-loathing and enamored with self-deception, we continue to dig our own graves while we are killing ourselves to shovel the dirt.

So, welcome to another year at the School for the Marginally Magical. Hope we can make this year different, but it doesn't seem likely.

D'NAY begrudgingly takes a seat onstage.

Slow clap from scattered students.

HALE takes the podium.

Hale is a nonfiction library book in human form who looks 17.

HALE

Thank you, D'Nay, as always, for that uniquely bleak, albeit not inaccurate sentiment. Let's hear it for our student body president, D'Nay Johns.

Unenthusiastic clap.

D'NAY

Calling from seat

Only cause *literally* no one else wanted it.

HALE

Harsh but true, D'Nay. Harsh but true.

D'NAY

Literally. No one.

HALE

Thank you, D'Nay.

Welcome, everyone, particularly to our new students. As you can see, we are committed to freeing the opinionated, if often stark, perspectives of the student body, whatever your magical ability may be. Some final announcements before we adjourn:
1. You (SKIP 3 SECONDS) course schedules at the—

*Hale eyes D'Nay. D'Nay shrugs like "What?!"
(D'Nay in fact made time jump forward 3 seconds.)*

(Clears throat) *As I was about to say*, 1. You can pick up your course schedules from the front office if you have not yet done so and 2. The new course "Maximize your Marginality" taught by Professor Jinks still has a few slots available if you find you have room in your schedule. And a friendly reminder to all students— new, old, even dare I

say, student body representatives, (eyeing D'Nay) *please refrain from using your MAs during school hours unless explicitly instructed in class to do so.*

Thank you all and have a great year!

SCENE 2: Well that was...

The hallway before class. LANEY is a young octopus- cute, investigatory and unusual. CRUX is an understated diamond -cool, but created under pressure.

Well that was

LANEY

boring?

CRUX

Informative. Now I feel even worse for being late. What did I miss? Were there performances? Dance numbers? Other speeches? We didn't have student government at my old school.

LANEY

No, there definitely weren't any dance numbers. There is literally nothing even vaguely (*can't find the word, gestures instead and makes a noise*) at this school.

CRUX

Well in any event that was

LANEY

Typical? Meaningless?

CRUX

Oh - I was gonna say, uh,

LANEY

*VEN enters.
Ven is a slap bracelet that changes colors with the wearer's mood - quick to jab but holds on tightly.*

Rough? Painful? Depressing?

VEN

Ven.

CRUX

Crux.

VEN

How was your summer?

CRUX

Rough, painful, depressing. How was yours?

VEN

CRUX
Boring, typical, meaningless. This is Laney. Laney, Ven.

VEN
Laney.

LANEY
Ven.
Laney slips art abandonment into a locker, or drops it on a bench, the floor.

CRUX
What was that?

LANEY
Oh, nothing.
FITZROW zooms by as if traveling fluidly by hover board.
*Fitzrow is an inflatable tube figure blowup from the 60s -
wacky, lovable and hard to hold down.*

VEN & CRUX
Fitzrow!

FITZROW
Ven!

LANEY
Catching up
Fitzrow?

FITZROW
Crux!

CRUX
This is Laney!

VEN
That's Fitzrow. Ze can -

FITZROW
What up, Laney! Later!

Fitzrow is gone.

VEN
See ya, dude! Fitzrow can -

CRUX

Not for us to say, Ven. Not for us to say.

VEN

Right. Sorry.

CRUX

Rule number one here at SMM: do not *out* another marge.

LANEY

Marge?

VEN

“Marginally Magical Person.” Individual. Entity. You. Me. Crux. The lucky ones. The —

LANEY

Ah, I see.

CRUX

OK ok we get it.

CRUX

So don't like divulge what someone else can do. It's rude.

VEN

But you can share *your MA* if you want.

LANEY

My -

VEN

You know, your MA, your *Magical Ability*.

CRUX

Pressuring others to divulge their MAs, also: not cool.

VEN

What?

CRUX

Oh please.

VEN

I wasn't doing anything of the sort. Besides, I'm an open book. I'm happy to share what I can do.

CRUX

Laney's not interested.

LANEY

I'm kinda interested.

VEN

See.

CRUX

Plenty of time for you to talk about yourself later, Ven. Right now, I have to get Laney to class. Ze's new. Obviously. I'm showing zer around.

VEN

Of course. Welcome, Laney, welcome. As you can see, we are vaguely disgruntled, moderately disillusioned, and completely average here. Congratulations on your enrollment. How are you feeling on your first day?

LANEY

Really considering

Uuuuh. Excited, nervous. A little overwhelmed. Grateful to Crux for being so generous with me—

VEN

Oh, wow. You really answered the question. I wasn't —I thought you would say something like "good" or "fine." Is your MA that you have to share all your feelings or something?

LANEY

Uh no.

CRUX

(to Ven for continuing to prod)

C'mon!

Chartreuse walks by.

*Chartreuse is a jaded unicorn -
colorful but completely pissed about it.*

VEN

What up, Chartreuse!

CHARTRUESE

Don't talk to me.

Chartreuse is nearly gone.

VEN

Given the fact that people around here have the emotional range of like a doorknob, that was not an unreasonable question.

CHARTREUSE
without missing a step

I heard that Ven!

VEN
teasing Chartreuse

Omigod, is your MA that you can hear extremely well?

CHARTREUSE

You know it's not.

Chartreuse is gone.

VEN

So I guess you seem, uh, emotionally evolved in the greater context of here.

LANEY

I will take that as a compliment.

Noticing Hale off and clearly taken.

Who is *that*?

CRUX

Who?

LANEY

The uh, the one with the, uh -

(gestures to indicate something indicative of the individual playing Hale, perhaps great hair, glasses, or outfit)

CRUX

Hale?

VEN

Weren't you at assembly?

LANEY

I came in late.

VEN

Ah.

CRUX

Oh no.

LANEY
increasingly enamored

Hale, did you say?

VEN

Cute, right?

LANEY
back pedaling

Well, uh, I guess.

CRUX
chastising

Ven.

VEN
to Crux

What? Laney is new. We should introduce zer to everyone. (to Laney) You should totally ask Hale out.

LANEY

I wouldn't -

VEN
Calling

Hale!

LANEY

Omigod, don't.

CRUX
Knowingly

Seriously, don't.

HALE enters.

HALE

Vendyn. Cruxley.

CRUX

Hello.

VEN

Good to see you.

HALE

What discoveries did you make over summer recess?

CRUX

I conquered my fear of heights. My sister took me flying.

HALE

Well done.

VEN

to Laney

Crux's sister can fly. Like, in the air.

CRUX

Yeah, I think ze got it.

LANEY

Oh I thought we weren't supposed to out another marge.

HALE

Still following that archaic rule, are we?

VEN

It's fine to talk about people with *real* magical powers.

CRUX

It's rude to out people who only have marginal abilities.

LANEY

Like us.

HALE

And why is that exactly? Shame? Embarrassment?

VEN

I'm not embarrassed. Like I told Laney here, I'm an open book. / I would happily —

CRUX

Some of us —

HALE

What do I always say? "Marginal" does not only mean insignificant. "It is in the margins

—

VEN & CRUX

by rote

—that we take the notes."

HALE

And?

LANEY
Pipes in

And a marginal is a plant that grows in the water next to the land.

HALE
Precisely! A very unique and beautiful ability if I do say so. (to Laney) Hello, I don't believe we've met.

VEN
Oh, right. This is Laney. (suggestively) *Ze was interested* in meeting you.

LANEY
Oh, I —

HALE
Laney, you must be new.

LANEY
Hi. Hello. Yes.

HALE
eyeing Ven
The joke never gets old I see.

A pleasure to meet you, Laney. I will be upfront with you and share, though you are under no obligation to do so, as Cruxley would indubitably state, that my MA is that I do not physically age beyond 17 years old. My mind continues to mature, naturally, but this “quintessence of dust” remains frozen in time.

LANEY
Oh, uh, then how old are you actually? Wait, I'm sorry- was that rude to ask.

HALE
Not at all, it's natural for young minds to be curious. We encourage that at SMM.

CRUX
Under zer breath
And here it comes...

HALE
I am 62 years of age and I am your biology and sexual education professor.

LANEY
Omigod.

HALE

Now, if you will head into the room, (*calling*) class, are you all ready to begin?

VEN

to Crux

I think Hale secretly loves tricking newbies.

HALE

Or perhaps it is you who delights in tricking “newbies,” as you call them, Vendyn—, but one must take advantage of enjoying one’s MA, don’t you think, rather than live in shame of it?

Fitzrow overhears while zooming by.

FITZROW

Rock on, Professor Hale.

HALE

Rock on, Fitzrow.

Hale enters class with Ven & Crux. Laney trails behind.

FITZROW

Have a great first day, Laney!

LANEY

Omigod I almost hit on my sex ed professor.

FITZROW

Aw man, we’ve all been there.

LANEY

Have we though?

FITZROW

Uh, I gotta get to Calc! (*frustrated by zooming in the wrong direction*) Come on!

Fitzrow is gone.

LANEY

I feel. I feel. I feel....so embarrassed.

(sigh)

And that’s ok.

Laney slips another AA into a locker, drops on floor, places on bench etc.

Here we go.

& heads into class.

SCENE 3: Participation is Fun

Students mill about an activity fair. The student government is one of several tables set up. Others may include Photography Club, Mathletes, Chess Club, The Yearbook, Improv Club or more apropos or funnier clubs. The Dance Club and all arts clubs are conspicuously empty. Throughout, the other tables are consistently better populated than the student government table. D’Nay persons a table with TRUNE, a computerized magnifying glass, unsuccessfully trying to recruit for student government.

Change begins with you!

D’NAY
calling to passing students

Change begins with you.

TRUNE
echoing unenthusiastically

The bees are dying.

D’NAY

The bees are dying.

TRUNE

Join student government.

D’NAY

Join student government.

TRUNE

Chartreuse passes by.

Wild horses couldn’t drag me.

CHARTREUSE

D’Nay has flyers or folders or a banner or something that is definitely white.

C’mon, Chartreuse, use your powers for good.

D’NAY

Left ya a little present.

CHARTREUSE

When D’Nay pulls out the flyers or folders or unrolls the banner they have turned from white to chartreuse. (Chartreuse can turns things...you guessed it, chartreuse.)

Come on!

D’NAY

CHARTREUSE

Sashay Sashay, D’Nay, D’Nay. Go back to ballet, ballet. Student government doesn’t look good on you.

D’NAY

Neither does lime green!

CHARTREUSE

Next time it’ll be your pants.

Chartreuse exits.

D’NAY

I hate this color.

TRUNE

It really doesn’t look good on anybody.

*Grayne walks by, escorting a potted plant.
Grayne is super woke and offended by what you said.
The potted plant is, in fact, a professor.*

TRUNE (cont.)

Hey Grayne, Professor.

D’NAY

Trying to recruit Grayne

Grayne, you are very - you have a distinct- you- I literally cannot think of what to say that would sound complimentary right now. Join student government. You can give speeches and people have to listen to you.

GRAYNE

(sniffs) Something around here stinks.

D’NAY

Grayne, you always say that.

GRAYNE

D’Nay, student government is not inclusive of me and my perspective.

D’NAY

That’s because you won’t be in it!

GRAYNE

It’s because it is part of a hierarchical system that oppresses people and I don’t feel represented.

D'NAY

That's because - omigod, I feel like I just had this conversation and I didn't even go back in time!

GRAYNE

See you later, Trune.

TRUNE

See you. *(Acknowledging the plant:)* Professor.

Grayne exits with Professor (plant).

D'NAY

Whatever. You pay taxes while corporations don't.

TRUNE

You pay taxes while corporations don't.

Turning to D'Nay

Wouldn't you rather just go back to dancing?

*D'NAY glances wistfully
towards the Dance Team booth,
which is abandoned.*

D'NAY

You know it's not *encouraged* and I kinda want my kids to have potable water so.

Calling to passersby

25 million hectares of the Amazon have been lost to soybean growth.

TRUNE

25 million - what?

Laney wanders by and stops.

LANEY

What's a hectare?

D'NAY

A lot.
You're new.

TRUNE

Want to join student government?

LANEY

Uh, maybe. I - Don't you have to be elected, though?

TRUNE

Not here, you don't.

D'NAY

Wait. You're serious.

Laney shrugs. Why not?

D'NAY (cont.)

Hold up. Who are you? Ven?

LANEY

What?

D'NAY

Ven, come on.

LANEY

What are you -

D'NAY

Not missing a beat

Forget it. You're really new, huh.
Did someone put you up to this?

LANEY

No.

Trune's questions are quick-fire.

TRUNE

Wait. Is your MA that you have the ability to believably feign interest in things you don't care about?

LANEY

No.

TRUNE

Is it that you are obligated to say yes to everything people ask you?

LANEY

No.

TRUNE

Is it that you can make people believe things that aren't true?

LANEY

If I could do that, would I be at *this* school?

TRUNE

Fair point.

D'NAY

And no one put you up to this, not Ven, not Chartreuse, not Kelton?

LANEY

No. Really.

TRUNE

So then. You just say what you feel?

LANEY

Generally. Yes?

TRUNE

Interesting.

D'NAY

Well then, it's a pleasure to meet you.

TRUNE

Like anything you feel. You just *(express it)*

LANEY

I. do.

D'NAY

I'm D'Nay. This is Trune. We are student body president and -

TRUNE

—vice president, secretary, treasurer, representatives and whatever else student government is supposed to do.

LANEY

Where's the rest—?

TRUNE

No. We are all of those things. D'Nay is president and I'm the rest of the positions.

LANEY

Oh, I'm Laney. I just moved from the Boundary (back in time 3 seconds, repeated exactly:) I'm Laney. I just moved from the Boundary (again) I'm Laney. I just moved from the Boundary Terr-i-tor-ies—-Whoa. What just happened?

D'NAY

Nice. My MA is I can make time jump forward or backward in time 3 seconds.

LANEY

Wow. And you just did that. That's pretty amazing. I could see that coming in useful for like... tripping and when you have to get needles. But I tho—-(suddenly confused) I'm sorry. I just forgot what I was about to say.

TRUNE

I'm Trune. I can make you forget what you were about to say.

LANEY

Ok. I — I thought. (*trying to recombobulate*) Just a sec.

TRUNE

Yeah, it'll only last for a few seconds.

D'NAY

Like all the changes we are capable of making.

TRUNE

So what's your party trick?

LANEY

My—? Oh, my MA? Ok, now I remember what I was going to - . Aren't you- . I'm sorry - someone told me that it wasn't uh, appropriate to talk about our MAs.

D'NAY

Lemme guess.

D'NAY & TRUNE

Crux.

D'NAY

That is because Cruxley can hover 3 millimeters above the ground and is embarrassed because I can make - (*makes time skip 3 seconds*)

LANEY

—because you can — wait. Did you just do it again?

D'NAY

Guilty. 90% of the hummingbird's natural habitat will be destroyed in 70 years. Does talking about a little trait you were born with seem important on a grand scale?

LANEY

Well, when you put it that way...

TRUNE

But really. Do you want to be on student government. You can be Treasurer. Or Secretary. Honestly you can be Vice President if you want.

Laney slips AA on the table.

D'NAY

What's that?

LANEY

Oh, it's this little. Project. I do. It's called art abandonment.

TRUNE

reading

"Be the change" Hey, this one's for you D'Nay. Cute.

LANEY

Have you heard of it?

D'NAY

Don't let anyone see you doing this.

LANEY

Oh, uh...

TRUNE

Technically, artistic behaviors are

D'NAY

banned.

LANEY

Banned?

TRUNE

Frowned upon.

D'NAY

(reading an AA) "You aren't alone" Apparently, you aren't familiar with the mentality here at SMM.

We're totally alone.

TRUNE

They'd like us to engage in more "worthwhile" pursuits.

D'NAY

Like student government?

LANEY

(reads another) "Express yourself."

TRUNE

Try again.

D'NAY

Actually, I think this one is for you, D'Nay.

LANEY

*Laney hands D'Nay a bookmark.
D'NAY takes it and reads.*

"Be your own art."

D'NAY

D'Nay glances toward dance table.

"Be your own art"

TRUNE

Reading over D'Nay's shoulder

That's....

D'NAY

Fitzrow zooms by.

Wicked speech, babe! Got you this. It's organic, vegan and sustainably made. *(Passes D'Nay something while zipping by - a smoothie, a trinket, a flower.)*

FITZROW
(to D'NAY)

Thanks, babe. You make this uninhabitable world more habitable.

D'NAY

So do you babe, so do you! Hey Trune! What up, Laney!

FITZROW

Should I join student government?

LANEY

Truth to power!

FITZROW

FITZROW is gone.

I don't know what that means.

LANEY

It means

D'NAY

YES!

D'NAY & TRUNE

SCENE 4: The Plants Can Talk

The next day. Professor Jinks' "Maximize your Marginality" Class. Students (VEN2, GRAYNE, KELTON & D'NAY) are standing arms akimbo, palms splayed, with eyes closed in a Tai-Chi-esque meditative state. A potted plant (Professor Jinks) sits prominently at the front of the room. Ven2 is Ven but portrayed by an entirely different actor.

Laney rushes in.

LANEY
to Kelton

Is this "Maximize your Marginality?"

KELTON nods.

Kelton is a pin art mold and takes the impression of whoever is around.

LANEY

Thanks.

Laney is discombobulated.

VEN2

Psst. Laney. Over here.

Laney is surprised to be recognized, but slips next to Ven2.

LANEY

Um. Thanks. Sorry, have we (*met*)—

D'NAY opens an eye and spies Laney.

D'NAY

Hey, Lane. Took my suggestion, I see.

LANEY

Yeah, there was still room, so I just registered and —

GRAYNE is a blowfish, prickly at the slightest touch.

GRAYNE

trying to pay attention to something

SHHHHH - -

LANEY

Oh, sorry.

Laney is perplexed.

Why the shushing?

VEN2
to Grayne

Ze's new.

GRAYNE
Cry me a river. I'm trying to pay attention over here.

LANEY
Um. I'm sorry. What exactly -

KELTON & GRAYNE
SHHHHHH!

GRAYNE
What is that smell?

LANEY
What is going on?

VEN2
Raising hand politely, addressing the plant
'Scuse me, Professor.

*Students all relax and open their eyes to look at Ven2
who has been called upon by the plant professor.
Ven2 is now speaking to Professor Jinks who,
just to reinforce, is an actual, literal potted plant.*

There's a student talking to a plant.

VEN2
addressing plant
Laney is not from here and I -

LANEY
Who are you (*talking to*) —

GRAYNE
Man, you are rude and (recognizing smell is coming from Laney's general direction) Oh.

LANEY
What?

VEN2
Unruffled

Laney is from the Boundary Territories where I'm guessing they don't have Plantae Lingua.

LANEY

Plantae —?

KELTON

GRAYNE

What, did you grow up
— in a barn?

— under a rock?
“Rock” is better./ They don't have -

Is it though?

LANEY

trying to say the words she just heard

We don't have Plllll— (Plantae Lingua)

VEN2

To professor

Do you mind if I take a second to explain?

Ven2 receives an answer from the professor.

Thank you, Professor.

Ven2 turns to Laney.

OK.

Tries to explain.

It's sort of hard to explain.

D'NAY

Professor Jinks turns into a plant on every new moon.

LANEY

Wait, what?

VEN2

You know how there are eight stages to the moon: new Moon, waxing crescent, first quarter, waxing gibbous, full Moon, waning gibbous, third quarter and waning crescent?

It's the new moon tonight.

LANEY

Yeah, that's not —

D'NAY

And *this* is our professor who turns into a plant when the moon is hidden from the sky. During the new moon.

LANEY

Wait. *There are people who turn into plants!?*

KELTON

What, were you raised under a rock?

GRAYNE

Yes! Yes, that was more appropriate.

VEN2

Not really by choice. Some other times of the month maybe too; I'm not clear on the details.

D'NAY

So when Professor Jinks is in plant form, we learn in *Plantae Lingua*. Which is a language we learn in elementary school in this country, like I think you all learn Latin or something in the Boundary Territories.

LANEY

Ancient Greek, but.

KELTON

Whatever.
It's all Greek to me!

GRAYNE

Yes, yes!
There will literally never be a better time to use that line!

VEN2

Ignoring them

OK. Crash course in *Plantae Lingua*: stand like so (*demonstrates*) and close your eyes.

LANEY

I didn't know that plants could—

GRAYNE

What, talk? Communicate? Have feelings? You are really insensitive.

KELTON

What, were you raised by wolves?

GRAYNE

“Raised by wolves!” Good one.

LANEY

I'm insensitive?

GRAYNE
God, half my friends are plants.

Ok.

LANEY

Fitzrow zooms through.

D'NAY
To Grayne and Kelton
Hey, Dynamic Duo: I feel like your inclusivity has become exclusive.

FITZROW
Extremes meet!

D'NAY
You know it, babe.

FITZROW
I'm trying to get to Hale's class, but it's totally not happening. Don't let 'em get ya down, Laney.

LANEY
Thanks!

D'NAY
Be where you are.

FITZROW
You are so right.

Fitzrow is gone.

LANEY
Can I just - one thing at a time: why is Fitzrow always moving?

D'NAY
Oh, yeah, ze can zoom anywhere within a quarter mile, but can never choose the destination.

LANEY
That's - ok.

VEN2
Back to...

D'NAY

Yes.

VEN2

Your first experience with Plantae Lingua might be a little, uh....

LANEY

A little what?

VEN2

Well, sometimes people -

D'NAY

Best not to set up any expectations....

LANEY

Sometimes people what?

VEN2

Yeah ok.

D'NAY

You'll be fine. You are pretty evolved.

VEN2

Just stand like so.

They all do so.

D'NAY

Close your eyes.

VEN2

It might help if we hold hands.

BAM. Once VEN2 & D'NAY take Laney's hands, there is a cataclysmic shift. Lights, sound, atmosphere. Laney is catapulted into a different realm. The following Plantae Lingua sequence involves the entire company and is a psychedelic ritual rock concert performance art piece. It may include, but is not limited to: dance, ritual movement, pyrotechnics, shadow puppetry, light show, mask work, animation. Think Hedwig and the Angry Inch and Greek theatre meet psychedelic mushrooms.

It is otherworldly and strange.

Even stranger than that.

VOICES

THE EARTH THE SKY
THE SUN AND MOON

FARE THEE WELL
WE'LL BE BACK SOON

THE OCEAN, TREES,
THE ROOTED CLOUDS
THE CALLING WINDS
THEY WHISPER LOUD

THE LIFELONG FATES
LEFT UP TO CHANCE
THE EARTH, THE SKY
THE MOON AND **PLANTS**

MUSIC

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WERE PLANTS
AND THERE WAS WIND AND THERE WAS FIRE
AND THERE WERE OCEANS AND SKIES AND BEYOND
THEN THE PEOPLE CAME WITH PLANS
AND WITH THEIR EGOS AND DESIRES
AND SHRUNK THIS WONDROUS WORLD TO A TINY MONDE

AND THERE WAS MAGIC IN THE AIR
AND IN THE TRUNKS AND IN THE ROOTS
AND THE BROWN EARTH – IT WAS TRAMPLED
UNDER BLINDED BURNING BOOTS

AND THEY CUT ALL THE WISDOM DOWN
THEY BURNED ALL THE KNOWLEDGE TO THE GROUND

SO THEY SEVERED THE TIES
TO THE NATURE IN THEIR LIVES
AND THE WORLD SPLIT IN TWO IN THE FRAY
THERE WERE THE ONES WHO HAD IT ALL
AND THE ONES OUT OF CONTROL

THE MARGINALS ALL MOVE SIDEWAYS
THE MARGINALS ALL MOVE SIDEWAYS
THE MARGINALS ALL MOVE SIDEWAYS

It is the most outrageous thing Laney has ever experienced and ze lives in a world of magic.

Suddenly: back to the classroom. All are gone, but Laney, flanked by D’Nay and Ven2. Laney is out of sorts throughout the following.

Laney comes to.

WHAT THE ACTUAL — LANEY

Oh good. We were getting worried. D’NAY

See I told you - VEN2

WHAT WAS THAT!?!?!? LANEY

D’NAY
OK. I told you Laney would come around. I’ll leave you then. I gotta get to the forum on Students Against Everything and explain why they should be *for* something. (to Laney)
You might wanna hydrate, take a little rest.

Cool, see ya. VEN2

See ya, Ven. D’NAY

What? LANEY

What what? VEN2

Um, where’s Ven? LANEY

Yeah. Here. VEN2

You’re. LANEY

VEN2
Ven. Remember? Tried to get you to date our sex ed professor yesterday. It was awesome.

But you—

LANEY

VEN2
realizing
Oh, right! Yeah, this is my MA. I look different every day.

You -

LANEY

VEN2
It sounds cool but it's a total drag. The shoe sizes alone. Plus, this is always happening.

You're. Ven.

LANEY

VEN2
Yeah, we met with Crux. I was going to tell you my MA, then we got sidetracked. Outside Bio.

I thought you were just a really helpful stranger.

LANEY

Yeah. No.

VEN2

Wow. Last time I saw you, you were -

LANEY

VEN2
Taller? Shorter? Fatter? Thinner? Lighter? Darker? Queerer? Straighter? More attractive? Less- c'mon, I'm always attractive though.

You look different. Every day.

LANEY

That is the takeaway here. Yes.

VEN2

How do-
How does everyone know it's you?

LANEY

VEN2

We don't get many new students here. So I stand out. I guess. I mean, once the government allowed parents to genetically engineer their fetuses, who would choose us, right? Design your kid to have green eyes and perfect teeth and like, spin straw into gold. We are a dying breed, I guess.

LANEY

In my country we're not allowed to...

VEN2

To genetically engineer the unborn?

LANEY

Not so much.

VEN2

But you can use magic to change things though, right? Improve the way people live.

LANEY

Yeah. It's -

VEN2

Amazing.

LANEY

But the Boundary Territories are -

VEN2

A utopia I bet.

LANEY

It's nice, but I didn't belong there. I mean, the whole country is super small - it's a postage stamp compared to this place. Screw up once, you'll never live it down.

VEN2

Yeah, but you actually use magic for something meaningful - promote peace, reduce pollution, avoid all bad hair days.

LANEY

I guess. But not here?

VEN2

Not here. No. "No significant use of magic may be made in the government or execution thereof" blah blah blah. It's a list a mile long.

LANEY

I don't get it.

VEN2

Created by people who lived hundreds of years ago. In a different time. There wasn't indoor plumbing or flying cars or colonies on the moon or anything back then. Why the heck would you come here?

LANEY

Banished from utopia I guess. I mean— My family thought it'd be good for me to be around more marginals. Here. That's why. I'm here. There isn't really a whole school dedicated to us back home.

VEN2

How's that working out?

LANEY

Honestly, you are all anything but marginal. Look at you.

VEN2

Awww. You're not so marginal yourself.

LANEY

What do you think the professor meant by that: "The marginals all move sideways."

VEN2

Honestly? I only understand about 50% of what goes on in this class at any give time.

Laney lists a little and drops a bunch of AA from zer bag.

Are you ok?

LANEY

I guess. I feel a little funny though.

VEN2

Yeah, probably should have warned you. The aftereffects of Plantae Lingua set in about 15 minutes after a session and they are sometimes...

LANEY

Are sometimes....?

VEN2

Sit. I'll get it.

LANEY

Are sometimes...?

Ven2 picks up AA.

VEN2

What is all this?

LANEY

Oh, it's nothing. It's called Art Abandonment. I create these little bookmarks with sayings and then drop them anonymously for people to find. People do it all over the world - pottery, crochet, paintings. I even saw someone making little dolls out of pipe cleaners. I'll zing you the info if you want.

VEN2

These are really cool. (reading) "Be who you are." "You have everything you need." Very ar-tis-tic. You are definitely not from here.

LANEY

I was gonna sneak this one into your bag.

VEN2

"Be the change."

LANEY

Which is retrospect seems...

VEN2

Prescient?

LANEY

referring to another bookmark

I guess. I made this one for Crux.

Crux pops in.

CRUX

You called?

LANEY

Hey.

CRUX

Oy, you don't look so good.

LANEY

I don't feel so good.

VEN2

Plantae Lingua.

CRUX

First time? First time's the worst. Ven and I were headed to grab some food on the way to D'Nay's "Do something" or "Stop doing nothing" or "Quit Cancelling" talk. I dunno. What's it called?

Oh, ok. Ven was just --- LANEY

Oh, do you think THAT's Ven? CRUX

Yeah, ze just explained. LANEY

That's not Ven. CRUX

Hold up. LANEY

No, I'm totally screwing with you. It's Ven. CRUX
Isn't it obvious?

Very funny, Crux. / VEN2

I feel funny. LANEY

/Oh, c'mon, mate, I'd know you anywhere. CRUX
to Ven

Yeah, I know. I know. VEN2

remembering the AA from Laney for Crux

I almost forgot, Laney made you this.

Gives it to Crux

Awww. CRUX
(reading) "You are enough."
That's. *(stalled for a moment)*
Thanks, Laney.

LANEY

What if we could taste clouds?

CRUX

Uh oh. I know that look. Plantae Lingua hangover on the horizon. Let's take a detour to find somewhere calm for this little birdie to lie down. I have a feeling it's gonna be a wild ride.

They usher Laney out.

LANEY

I think my tongue is too big for my mouth.

CRUX

Ok, little frog. OK.

LANEY

Ribbit.

They exit.

SCENE 5: The Room is Spinning

20 minutes later. Laney is on the floor, suffering the aftereffects of the Plantae Lingua experience. It is a strange trip. Crux, Ven2 and Kelton are attending to zer. They are in the art room, trying to manage Laney who has become a wandering drunken toddler. Crux and Ven2 are in the middle of a friendly, but heated discussion.

CRUX

To Ven

Oh please, the first time you did Plantae Lingua at this school you hugged every person you saw for the rest of the day and said “science is magic” about a hundred times. (to Laney) Try not to touch everything, Laney. You’ll be fine.

VEN2

(to Crux)And you, -
(to Laney) Laney, climbing is a bad idea-
(to Kelton) Kelton, could I get some help here?

KELTON

On it.

VEN2

(to Crux) - you - wait, what did you do?

CRUX

Nothing. It didn’t really affect me.

VEN2

No no! Now I remember. You laughed so hard you peed your pants. Then we stole new pants from the lost and found and you did it AGAIN. Twice. You peed your pants two times.

KELTON

(to Laney)

You don’t have to pee, do you?

VEN2

(continuing to Crux)

No, wait! Three! Three times. Cause there was that other time —

CRUX

You cried at lunch and said the salad was depressed.

VEN2

It was. It was depressed.

Laney spins.

The room is spinning. LANEY

No, honey, you're spinning. CRUX
Laney goes down.

It's like Christmas. LANEY
Laney tries to get up.

It'll pass. Just stay down. VEN2
D'Nay finds them.

What the heck happened? D'NAY

D'NAY!!!!!! LANEY

This. CRUX
referring to Laney

D'Nay is like a firework. Boom. Boom. Boom. LANEY

This happened. CRUX

When I left class everything was fine. D'NAY

Plantae Lingua effects different people different ways. KELTON

I have forgotten to water so many plants. LANEY

Oh really? I didn't think it was that trippy this time. D'NAY
(responding to Crux)

VEN2

It was Laney's first experience. Ever. Do you remember your first time?

LANEY

Do you think I'm a murdered.

Murdred.

Murderrrrer.

Why are words so hard!?

D'NAY

Uhhhhh.

KELTON

I got something that'll make you feel better. I can give you a sample - first one's on me.

Kelton tries to offer Laney pills that look suspiciously like mints.

LANEY

Oh, I thought you were mean, but maybe you're not.

Laney goes to accept.

KELTON

Wow. You just say whatever you think don't you.

Crux, Ven2 and D'Nay shut it down.

CRUX

No no no no. Don't pull /that sh—

D'NAY

Oh, *hell* no. What are you —

VEN2

Kelton can make people 20% sleepier.

KELTON

Awww, what'd I ever do to you?

CRUX

Ze pawns mints off to newbies and then uses an MA to make it seem like they are on sedatives.

Scandalized.

LANEY

Oh my gosh, did you just offer me drugs?

KELTON

Technically no?

LANEY

clingy

Does this mean I belong?

Chartreuse enters.

CHARTREUSE

Yeah, you're not supposed to be in here.

D'NAY

Who died and left you in charge?

CHARTREUSE

Just saying.

Not that anyone ever comes into the *art* room anymore. Or does actual art at this stupid excuse for a school.

D'NAY

Why are you looking at me?

CHARTREUSE

To D'Nay

Project much?

Ya'll remember art, right?

VEN2

Laney here just experienced *Plantae Lingua* for the first time.

LANEY

Hi. I'm Laney. I just did a plant thing. (*Imitating plant*) Shhhhhhh Shhhhhhh Shhhhhh.

CHARTREUSE

Awww, you're cute.

LANEY

I feel like a beached jellyfish./ Blub blub blub.

CHARTREUSE

You are really feeling it, huh.

LANEY

Did you know magic is real?

CHARTREUSE

Take that child to the nurse. I've never seen a reaction this severe.

VEN2

Ze'll be fine.

Laney is on the ground looking at Crux's feet.

LANEY

Omigod, Crux, I can totally see you hover from here.

CRUX

What! Who told you that.

Looking at D'Nay.

D'NAY

Oh come on. Why do you always think it is me.

CRUX

Because it always is you.

CHARTREUSE

looking at Laney's level, regarding Crux's hovering

Honestly, I've never seen it.

LANEY

To Chartreuse

You're like a snarky unicorn.

CHARTREUSE

Awwww, #goals. Enchanté. Je m'appelle Chartreuse.

LANEY

Like the color?

CHARTREUSE

So my Dad can turn anything orange and my other Dad can turn anything purple so they thought it'd be fun to engineer me to be able to turn anything -

LANEY

chartreuse!

CHARTREUSE

Check out your underwear.

All look.

Disgruntled responses simultaneous to:

LANEY

WOW.
That is very
bright. I'm a rainbow bunny!

CRUX

Are you kidding me!
That is like the fourth
time you've done this to
me. I just got these.

D'NAY

Why couldn't you be
like Indigo? I like
indigo.

CHARTREUSE

Don't get your panties in twist.

KELTON

regarding the pun

Excellent idiom use right there. Where's Grayne?!

LANEY

to Chartreuse

So your parents

CHARTREUSE

made me this way. Yeah. They thought I'd feel out of place if I wasn't like them. So they made me completely average like you losers.

D'NAY

Harsh, Char.

CHARTREUSE

Nothing says love like squelching someone's potential in utero.

LANEY

Is that why the school is so

CHARTREUSE

ugly?

CRUX

Hideous?

LANEY

Vibrant. I was going to say vibrant. Like a kaleidoscope.

VEN2

Festive, really. It's super festive.

Laney gives Chartreuse an AA.

LANEY

Oh I made this for you.

CHARTREUSE

reading

"You are allowed to be more than one thing." Honey, you just met me.

LANEY

I feel so many things.

CHARTREUSE

That's really sweet

or really creepy.

LANEY

Singing from the Plantae Lingua

“The Marginals all move sideways/ The Marginals -”

CHARTREUSE

What’s that now?

CRUX

Where did you hear that?

VEN2

In Jinks’ class today.

CRUX

That’s weird.

LANEY

I thought it was weird too. Why, why is that weird??

CRUX

Because I’ve been thinking that phrase all day.

CHARTREUSE

OK. Hold up. Me too.

Through the following Laney becomes more manic.

LANEY

Ohmygosh I knew it meant something. I’ve been waiting for this this this this like beacon no this uh, sign, a sign, that we all can amount to more ya know like we are all cogs in the machine, but together we make the machine go. And I feel like- *bam*- the Plantae Lingua made it all clear. It was right here like RIGHT HERE can you touch it NO NO you can’t because there’s this veil see and WE we are on this side and the ANSWER is on that side and we just don’t like REACH OUT and — we have to go SIDEWAYS see? “The Marginals all move SIDEWAYS” Wait. WAIT.-I have an idea and I’m going to sketch it out in a 47-part diagram.

D’NAY

Kelton, I hate to say this, but I think we need you to do something.

LANEY

Now, does anyone have PAPER? I’m sorry about the rainforests, D’Nay, but I need PAPER.

KELTON

Say no more.

Kelton gently touches Laney

or makes a deliberate motion to make Laney 20% sleepier.

LANEY

Actually.

Laney is suddenly much more tired.

LANEY (cont)

I'm gonna (*lay down*)

*Kelton does it again.
Laney is suddenly asleep.*

D'NAY

Thanks, Kelton.

CRUX

It's for the best.

VEN2

What do you think the 47-part plan was?

All look to VEN2.

What?! Was no one else curious?

SCENE 6: Someone is Lying

The next morning. Outside the school. D’Nay, Trune, Laney, Ven3, Fitzrow, Crux are coming in for the school day one by one. They ultimately gather in a huddle to plan something big. D’Nay & Trune are onstage to start. Others straggle in.

D’NAY

Now we’re organized. We got the platform. We got the people. I can’t believe we figured this out overnight. I AM SO PUMPED I could -

TRUNE

Dance?

Ven3 & Laney enter.

D’NAY

Oh please. There’s no time.

VEN3

I still think that Laney’s 47-part plan from yesterday was strong up until point twenty-three.

Fitzrow enters.

LANEY

Very funny, Ven.

FITZROW

I got lost at point nine but solid effort, Laney.

D’NAY

(continuing from before)

“The Marginals all move sideways!” Why didn’t I think of it before? The law states:

Crux enters.

TRUNE

-“no significant use of magic may be employed to change the government or the laws thereof” — (looking at D’Nay) What? I listen to you.

VEN3

But we are insignificant!

CRUX

Well done, Ven. We are totally insignificant.

FITZROW

“The marginals all move sideways” - what a poetic interpretation of the path towards progress Laney.

LANEY

Oh, uh. Thank you.

D'NAY

We are gonna take this school out of the dumpster fire of misery and into the realm of empowering possibilities in which student government is relevant and being *for* something matters.

TRUNE

By?

D'NAY

We talked about this! Don't you read my zings?

TRUNE

Of course I read your-

D'NAY

By sharing our ten-point plan at this morning's assembly and demonstrating how even *marginal* abilities can coalesce to affect change.

TRUNE

Ok. Then we need to know what everyone can do.

D'NAY

What?

TRUNE

If we are going to share this manifesto or whatever with the whole school to galvanize the efforts of the masses and save the rainforests, we need to know everyone's MA.

All look to Laney.

LANEY

Oh, uh.

FITZROW

"There is no 'i' in team!"

D'NAY

Ok. (*As in: reign it in, Fitzrow.*)

VEN3

I agree with Trune.

FITZROW

But there is in "individual." In fact there are 2 - no wait (*counting*) 3.

VEN3

C'mon. We all know and trust each other here, right? We got your back, Laney, whatever your MA is.

CRUX

Calm down, Ven. Laney will tell us when ze's ready.

VEN3

I just don't know what the big deal is. Ze is here because ze's like us. Why do you care so much?

D'NAY

It's not *that* important.

TRUNE

It kind of is. It's part of /who we

VEN3

It IS important. It's a deep-seated part of a person's identity.

CRUX

Is it really? What - we *are* our MAs now? It shouldn't matter what ze can —

VEN3

I just don't understand why -

CRUX

Some things are private, /people!

TRUNE

Nothing is private these days.

VEN3

Why do you even care so much?

CRUX

It's just - dude, let it be —/

LANEY

OK ok. I get it. You don't trust me cause you don't know my MA.

CRUX

You don't have to tell us if you aren't ready. God, Ven, you are so insensitive. Not everyone wants to be an open book.

VEN3

Well some of us can't help it!

LANEY

It's fine. It's fine.

CRUX
No it's not. Take a walk, Ven. Pushiness doesn't look good on you.

VEN3
Doesn't look good on me? That's low.

LANEY
Stop fighting!
I can make people sneeze, okay?

A moment.

CRUX
Great.

D'NAY
Oh.
Ok.

VEN3
You can-

FITZROW
Brilliant.

D'NAY
Whoa. *(remembering)* Was that you in Bio?

VEN3
See? *(to Laney)* Thank you for sharing. *(Sneeze.)* Now we can all move past this *(sneeze)*-

LANEY
It's hilarious, isn't it?

D'NAY
It's not. Not hilarious. *(sneeze)*

TRUNE
Well, it's kind of- *(sneeze)*

D'NAY
What did I do? *(sneeze)*

CRUX
See, this is why - *(sneeze)*

VEN3

See, now we are all on the same (sneeze) page (sneeze)

All sneeze and fall silent.

LANEY

My whole family is extraordinary. My sister can change the weather, my brother talks to freakin' animals. My mother got a special dispensation to restore the polar ice caps and my father is reinforcing the ozone layer above the Boundary Territories. And I essentially give people allergies. I'm a waste. I'm pollen. I'm like human pollen.

Everyone sneezes.

VEN3

If you could- (*stop making us sneeze*)

TRUNE

Does anyone have a tissue?

Laney produces a box from zer bag.

LANEY

Hazard of the job.

TRUNE

Thanks.

VEN3

Yeah.

D'NAY

Thanks.

LANEY

I thought. I thought it'd be different here. But I see all of you. You are all so extraordinary. I mean. Even without your MAs. D'Nay, you single-handedly organized all this. Ven, you are funny and likable no matter your appearance. Crux, you are so cool and principled and honest. You are smart and funny and dedicated and kind. All of you. Just by being yourselves. I just. I wanted to feel like I was part of something. But I never fit. I never fit anywhere.

Silence.

CRUX

Check your pocket.

LANEY

What?

CRUX

Look in your pocket.

LANEY

Why...

Why is there a potato in my pocket.

VEN3

Whoa. There's one in mine too.

TRUNE

Bizarre.

CRUX

That's what I can do.

ALL

What?

Wait, what?

VEN3

CRUX

I can make potatoes appear in people's pockets.

LANEY

But.

TRUNE

You can hover.

VEN3

Hold on.

FITZROW

I thought you could/ hover, man.

VEN3

But you told us - you told me that you could hover. We've seen you hover./ I've seen it.

D'NAY

Honestly, I've never seen it.

CRUX

My family can FLY. *Fly*. My little sister. Can fly.

TRUNE

So you...

LANEY

Oh, Crux.

VEN3

You lied to me? To all of us.

FITZROW

checking pocket

Whoa. I got potato chips! And honestly, I was really hungry. Thank you, Crux.

VEN3

How could you? We trusted you. I trusted you.

CRUX

I - I don't know. It was easier to be extremely mediocre in a family of fly-ers than be the butt of a joke and not belong anywhere.

VEN3

That's BS.

D'NAY

C'mon, Ven.

VEN3

You let me believe that you had a different MA this whole time?! You know how hard it is for me to be like like like— this. What else haven't you told me? — (back 3 seconds) What are you keeping from me? — (back 3 seconds) Why don't you trust me?

D'NAY

There it is.

VEN3

to D'Nay, who has been messing with time

STOP DOING THAT!

CRUX

To Ven3

I do trust you. I just couldn't tell you.

VEN3

Whatever.

CRUX

There was never the right time. Things were always different.

VEN3

You mean, / was always different, don't you?

CRUX

No, I know you were always you. I know that. I just wasn't ready. I trust you; I just couldn't tell you.

VEN3

Yeah? Potato, potahto.

Drops potato on the floor and exits.

CRUX

Ven! C'mon, Ven!

*Crux rushes after Ven.
Fitzrow has just finished eating the bag of chips.*

FITZROW

Look, I know things are super tense right now, but, I gotta say, that was, hands down, the best bag of chips I've ever had.

LANEY

Oh, this is complicated.

D'NAY

Yeah it is.

LANEY

No, I mean, Ven has long-held romantic feelings for Crux, and was about to reveal them - but now feels wounded, a feeling exacerbated by a natural tendency to deflect using humor. And Crux has also always wanted to confide in Ven, but thought ze would think less of zer for lying in the first place. This is only further complicated by the fact that they are best friends and neither wants a romantic relationship to get in the way of their friendship but both are madly, deeply, irrevocably in love with each other.

TRUNE

Whoa. How do you know all that?

GRAYNE & KELTON wander in.

LANEY

I can read minds.

ALL

WHAT???

LANEY

For the love of - If I could read minds, would I seriously be at this school?! (referring to Ven/Crux relationship) Anyone can see that. Can't you all see that.

FITZROW

Laney, dude, I think you are on a different emotional level than we are.

D'NAY

Yeah I did not pick up on that.

TRUNE

I'd rather go to the dentist than talk about my emotions.

KELTON

Me too.

GRAYNE

Me three.

D'NAY

Where'd you two come from?

GRAYNE

We were invisible.

LANEY

You can become — !?!

KELTON

If we could be invisible, do you think—

LANEY

OK ok. I get it.

GRAYNE

It's a feeling. Metaphorical invisibility.

KELTON

I thought you were all emotionally leveled up and stuff.

LANEY

I get it. I get it.

GRAYNE

We came to get you. Something weird is happening.

D'NAY

What's happening?

GRAYNE & KELTON

It's the plants.

SCENE 8: Jet Lag

Inside. The next moment. All run by the room where Ven is to see what is going on with the plants. Laney pokes in to talk to Ven.

LANEY

Ven, hey. (calling to others) I'll be right there. (to Ven) Where's Crux?

VEN3

Potato farming I guess.

LANEY

Come on.

Are you ok.

VEN

I don't wanna talk about it.

LANEY

OK. Look, I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner. You and Crux and D'Nay and everyone have been so good to me. Well, not Grayne. Grayne has been miserable, but even Kelton tried to offer me drugs, ya know. Which seems like an effort.

VEN3

It's not you I'm upset about.

LANEY

It's hard to be completely embarrassed by what you're capable of.

VEN3

referring to Ven's own appearance

You don't think *this* is embarrassing?

LANEY

The way I feel about my MA does not invalidate the way you feel about yours.

VEN3

Seriously, you should be a therapist.

LANEY

You are not the first person who has said that to me. Today.

VEN3

How could ze (*referring to CRUX*) I just don't get it- we tell each other everything. We're best friends. I feel so -

LANEY

Betrayed, listless, unmoored.

VEN3

If I don't know Crux, I feel like...like.... I don't know myself.

LANEY

Before I came here, I didn't have a clue who I was. I felt like a different person every day.

VEN3

Ha ha.

LANEY

No, I felt.

I read this book once where they said that we get jet lag because when we travel really fast- by plane or rocket or flying car or whatever - that we leave our souls behind. And they need time to catch up. That's how I've always felt. Like if I could just slot everything into place, I'd be a person, but it's like - like the parts of myself are those opposable magnets and they keep pushing each other away. But here. Well. It's the first time I felt like everything fell into place. Like, the magnets turned around, and suddenly I'm a whole being.

VEN3

I'm not sure what that has to do with anything.

LANEY

We're all connected, don't you think? All of us just trying to slot into place.

You know who you are. You're just out of sync for a moment.

You and Crux are magnets. Right now maybe you are just facing the wrong directions.

VEN3

(Sneeze)

LANEY

Gesundheit.

VEN3

'Scuse me.

LANEY

Bless you.

Must be allergies. VEN3

Yeah, we don't get those back home. LANEY

Lucky. (sneeze) Wait, are you using your— VEN3

I'm not — LANEY

Let me (sneeze) get a (sneeze) VEN3

Ven3 drops below a table or behind closet door to get a tissue while sneezing. Ven2 (Ven from the Plantae Lingua scene) emerges. As the Vens switch around in this and the subsequent scenes, they are all wearing what Ven3 wore, in the same size. It may end up being oversized or way too small. Embrace it.

It's really not (sneeze)— — VEN2

Ven. LANEY

Yes. VEN2

You are —you're different. You — LANEY

Ha ha./ (to Ven's next line) VEN2

You were -/ (to Laney's next line) LANEY

/Every day I look— VEN2

—this is how you looked yesterday. LANEY

Now I know you are joking. Cause that *never* happens. VEN2

No - you -
LANEY

Joke's on you. I'm like stepping into a river - I'm never the same person twice.
VEN2

LookLookLOOK! (*Forcing Ven2 to see*)
LANEY

I - What?!
VEN2

Look, I think there's a mirror somewhere over—
LANEY

*Laney guides Ven2 to a mirror that is conveniently located behind a desk/door/locker.
Make magic happen however you need to!*

What on earth
VEN2
Off

Ven (from the first scene) emerges.

—is going on?!!!
VEN
continued seamlessly

You - You changed again!
LANEY

I-(*looking down*) oh, come on!
VEN

Something weird is happening.
LANEY

Honestly, it always feels like something weird is happening.
VEN

Let's find the others.
LANEY

Oh this (*pants/dress/whatever Ven is wearing*) is really uncomfortable! Why did I wear this?!
VEN

They run out together.

SCENE 9: What am I looking at?

The art room. Grayne, Kelton, D’Nay, Fitzrow and Trune have just arrived. Grayne is overwhelmed by smells in the scene; Grayne’s MA is: can smell big emotions. They are taking in the scene: a lot of potted plants - Professor Jinks plus a bunch more.

Chartreuse is doing art.

There are a lot of plants.

More than that.

D’NAY
Taking in foliage

What am I looking at?

FITZROW
I like that they added more nature to this place. Feels very relaxing.

CHARTREUSE
So the prodigal children return home.

FITZROW
Looking at Chartreuse’s art
Chartreuse, what psychedelic artwork, brah.

CHARTREUSE
Don’t worry. I don’t expect you all to actually create anything.

Chartreuse continues to do art, unfazed.

TRUNE
(to Professor Jinks the plant)
Hey professor.

GRAYNE
To all
You know how Professor Jinks turns into a plant every new moon?

TRUNE
Wait a second... — *(calculating)*

GRAYNE
Yeah, it’s not the new moon anymore.

D’NAY

So....

FITROW

So Professor Jinks never changed back into a a a... professor?

D'NAY

Okay.

And.

Wait. *(taking in other plants)*

What about all this?

KELTON

(gesturing to a plant)

That's Hale.

D'NAY

Professor Hale. Okay. That's.

TRUNE

(to the plant)

Hey Professor Hale.

Sorry about that paper. I'd give you some excuse, but I know you value honesty: I procrastinated until the last minute and then I really enjoyed the writing process and want to make it something I'm proud of and something worth reading. I'll get it in to you tomorrow.

D'NAY

What about --

FITZROW

This is a lot of greenery.

VEN and Laney rush in to join the others.

TRUNE

gesturing to another plant

Then who is this?

VEN

recognizing Crux as a plant at once

CRUX!

LANEY

Why are there so many *(plants)*—

Chartreuse, are you practicing still life or something?

Oh my god, what happened? Crux!

VEN

But it's not just/—

TRUNE

This is like half the school.

D'NAY

These are all people?! Wicked.

FITZROW

Why did half of the school turn into plants??!!!

D'NAY

And not wicked in a good way wicked. Wicked like *wicked* wicked.

FITZROW

In the art room.

D'NAY

I think... I think they're all hopeless.

GRAYNE

What?

LANEY

I can - I mean, my MA is... I can smell big emotions.

GRAYNE

Oh, that's interesting. Is that why you're so prickly?

LANEY

You just get right to it, don't you.

KELTON

I don't think it's a secret.

LANEY

I mean, I guess. I never thought of it that way. It is a lot to handle.

GRAYNE
responding to Laney

KELTON

We were talking to Jinks and then we realized that normally there aren't any plants in here. And when Crux ran by all upset, that was it. Boom, Crux turned into a plant. So we dragged zer in. And when we started to look closer —

FITZROW

I think that Philodrendon's in my Calc class.

KELTON

To Ven

What happened between you and Crux?

LANEY

Uuuuhh

VEN

Oh no. It's my fault. I was awful. Crux, I'm so sorry!

D'NAY

What the hell are we gonna do with all this...foliage? We have to change them back.

Blip in time. Time abruptly jumps back to 15 minutes ago. We are back to the fight between Ven3 and Crux.

VEN3

But you told us - you told me that you could hover. We've seen you hover./ I've seen it.

D'NAY

Honestly, I've never seen it.

CRUX

My family can FLY. *Fly*. My little sister. Can fly.

TRUNE

So you...

DELANEY

Oh, Crux.

VEN3

You lied to me? To all of us.

FITZROW

checking pocket

Whoa. I got potato chips! And honestly, I was really hungry. Thank you, Crux.

VEN3

How could you? We trusted you. I trusted you.

Time speeds forward to now and repeats exactly, but Kelton has now changed into a plant and Ven is different.

Uuuuhh
LANEY

Oh no. It's my fault. I was awful. Crux, I'm so sorry!
VEN3

What the hell are we gonna do with all this...foliage? We have to change them — WAIT.
D'NAY

Didn't this already happen?
TRUNE

Wicked. I thought you could only go back and forth 3 seconds, D'Nay!
FITZROW

I can only go back and forth 3—
D'NAY

LANEY
Noticing present-moment Ven has changed again to Ven3

VEN!

Everything smells really confusing. Wait, where's Kelton?
GRAYNE

*Time abruptly jumps back to the post-Plantae Lingua exchange.
Exactly as before:*

That's not Ven.
CRUX

Hold up.
LANEY

No, I'm totally screwing with you. It's Ven.
Isn't it obvious?
CRUX

Very funny, Crux. /
VEN2

I feel funny.
LANEY

CRUX

/Oh, c'mon, mate, I'd know you anywhere.

*Abruptly back to the present.
GRAYNE has also transformed into a plant.
Now with Ven2:*

D'NAY

What the hell are we gonna do with all this...foliage? We have to change them — WAIT.

TRUNE

Didn't this already happen?

FITZROW

Wicked.

LANEY

Ven.

VEN2

Yes.

ALL

Whoa.

TRUNE
to D'Nay

Are you doing this?

D'NAY

I can't do this. Can I do this?!

VEN2

Where's Grayne?

Time Travel flips back to Laney's first day.

CRUX

So don't like divulge what someone else can do. It's rude.

VEN

But you can share *your MA* if you want.

LANEY

My -

VEN

You know, your MA, your *Magical Ability*.

CRUX

Pressuring others to divulge their MAs, also: not cool.

VEN

What?

CRUX

Oh please.

VEN

I wasn't doing anything of the sort. Besides, I'm an open book. I'm happy to share what I can do.

CRUX

Laney's not interested.

LANEY

I'm kinda interested.

VEN

See.

CRUX

Plenty of time for you to talk about yourself later, Ven. Right now, I have to get Laney to class. Ze's new. Obviously. I'm showing zer around.

VEN

Of course. Welcome, Laney, welcome. As you can see, we are vaguely disgruntled, moderately disillusioned, and completely average here. Congratulations on your enrollment.

*Abruptly back to present with VEN.
Trune and Fitzrow have also become plants.*

D'NAY

I can't do this. Can I do this?!

VEN

Where's Grayne?

LANEY

And Trune? And —

D'NAY

Trune! And Fitzrow. Fitz!

VEN

They are all

D'NAY

PLANTS!

LANEY

Oh no. This is -

VEN

We gotta -

LANEY

Oh no ohnoohnoohnoohno.

D'NAY

What do we do?

LANEY

This is all my fault. I'm so sorry.

Laney runs out of the art room.

VEN

Laney, wait!

D'NAY

What the hell is going on?

CHARTREUSE

Still doing art

Nature, baby. Nature is reclaiming what is due.

D'NAY

Why aren't you freaking out?

CHARTREUSE

It's just another day that ends in Y in magicville.

VEN

Chartreuse, practically the entire school has has has become vegetables.

CHARTREUSE

So the million dollar question is: why are we still here?

D'NAY

Why *are* we still here?
I'm going to get Laney.

D'NAY runs off.

CHARTREUSE

This is the most action the art room has seen in years. Maybe I'll paint me a biiiiig still life.

Scene 10: All the Feels

Laney is beating zerself up/weeping/upset in the bathroom.

Mind if I come in? D'NAY

Oh hey. LANEY

Why um
Why do you think this is your fault? D'NAY

Oh uh LANEY

Cause if you have any ideas about how to get everyone back - I don't really have a green thumb, so. D'NAY

I - ok
I
Please don't hate me.
At my old school -
I told Ven that I came here because my family wanted me to be around more marginals.
But I
I was kicked out - well, ok, *asked to leave* my old school because I apparently
Madepeoplefeeltoomuch LANEY

Come again? D'NAY

I
I make people feel too much. LANEY

Is that
Like
Some kind of secondary MA? D'NAY

No, I don't know. That's just it. I was just LANEY

Just being myself. I can really only make people sneeze but something about having me around made other people go a little um haywire. And once the school figured out it was me, they uh, strongly suggested I find another educational institution.

D'NAY

Okay.

LANEY

You hate me now. No one wants to feel anything these days. I guess. I don't know how it happens. I'm just me.

D'NAY

Well. You do tend to just say what you feel.

LANEY

Yeah and what's wrong with that?

D'NAY

Nothing. It's great. I wish more people would be like that.

LANEY

So that's my grave offense? I say what I feel and I make stupid bookmarks. I'm a real renegade, right?

D'NAY

Wait.

Yeah. You do.

It's like your secret MA.

LANEY

My secret -

D'NAY

Not a real magical ability, but like a little secret one. Your little bookmarks —

D'NAY removes the bookmark Laney made from earlier: "be your own art."

(cont)

I have been carrying this bookmark around since

Since you gave it to me. "Be your own art." And you know what I actually did last night? I danced. I danced for the first time in years.

LANEY

That's cool.

D'NAY

It is. I mean, I gave up dance to run student government. Everyone gave up something when we were told to focus on more "worthwhile pursuits." And honestly? I haven't felt like myself since I gave it up. You did that. You reminded me. About how I loved it. And I thought: why not?

LANEY

Wait. What if we all have a secret MA?

D'NAY

What?

LANEY

You just said it. What if we all have a kind of secret —
(figuring something out)

Chartreuse is doing art, right? That's ALL Chartreuse does: art.

D'NAY

Yeah so?

LANEY

We gotta go find Ven and Chartreuse right now. Come on.

*Laney starts to pull D'Nay off.
Before they get out the door, they run into Ven2 in the hallway.*

VEN2

Hey, I was just coming to find you two.

LANEY

What are you doing that is artistic?

VEN2

Um what?

LANEY

You - do you I dunno sculpt or like yodel or make papier mache masks or something?

VEN2

I - how - ??

I just picked up my guitar this week. I stopped playing last year, but earlier this week your little bookmark thinger fell outta my bag and -

LANEY

“Be the change”

VEN2

I used to write music. I wanted to be one of those singer-songwriters who spoke about the truth you know? Who rallied crowds in peaceful protest. So I I picked it back up....

D’NAY
(to Laney)

How did you know -

LANEY

I think I know how to un-pot those plants.

D’NAY

Not sure that’s exactly the phrase, but ok.

LANEY

Let’s go!

All three run off back to the art room.

SCENE 11: Time to Grow

Several hours later. The art room. It is transformed into a magical artistic wonderland. VEN has a guitar. Use whichever Ven can play the guitar for this scene. Oh, right: one of the Vens needs to play the guitar like a heartbreaking singer-songwriter troubadour from Shakespearean times. Cast that person.

LANEY

Are you almost ready? It's getting late and we don't want them to stay in herbal form too long. Who knows what it'll do to them?

VEN

All good here.

CHARTREUSE

Evaluating the artwork

I think my work here is done.

D'NAY

Did you put all of your bookmarks in their soil?

LANEY

Sticking the last ones in like plant markers

Yep yep. I got "wake up" for Kelton, "remember who you are" for Trune, "age is just a number" for Professor Hale, "You are the calm you seek," for Grayne, and "slow down" for Fitzrow.

VEN

Nice.

LANEY

D'Nay, are you ready?

D'NAY

Are you kidding? I was born ready.

LANEY

OK. I'm gonna hit the lights! Chartreuse, let's go.

Laney dims the lights.

Candles illuminate the space.

It is beyond an artistic wonderland.

Maybe the art glows.

*It is magical: fairy lights, wonder, and possibility -
it is inside the mind of a child kind of magic.*

Ven begins to pluck the guitar.

It is the most gorgeous melody:

simple but increasingly yearning.

*During the music, D'Nay starts to dance.
The dance and song manifest the years of emotion
they have all held just beneath the surface.
It is rebellious and sad, joyful and plaintive, angry and beautiful.*

During the dance, the plants magically return to human form, save Jinks.

*When the dance ends, they are all all a little bit dirty
but transformed in more ways than one.*

They all wonder and check in with each other. Murmuring etc.

D'Nay runs to Fitzrow and throws arms around Fitz.

BABE!
FITZROW

You're back! Trune!
D'NAY

Trune runs to join them in a hug.

That was the best rest I've ever had.
KELTON

Honestly, didn't mind it. Kinda nice to feel a little more grounded, ya know.
GRAYNE

I feel older. *(hopeful)* Have I aged?!
HALE

You still look 17 to me professor.
KELTON

I dunno. I think you could pass for 21 now.
GRAYNE

21. That's a major win, right Professor Hale?
FITZROW

Major win, Fitzrow. Major win.
HALE

Ven runs to Crux.

VEN

Crux, I'm so sorry. Are you ok?

CRUX

I'm sorry. I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner. I was I was I was ashamed. How could you like someone who who

VEN

Who can give me French fries any time I want?

CRUX

Very funny.

VEN

Do you think I care about your stupid MA? Do you think that's who you are?

CRUX

I - I don't know who I am

VEN

I'd recognize you anywhere, mate.

CRUX

Ha ha.

D'NAY
To Laney

How did you know that would work?

LANEY

Honestly, I didn't.

CHARTREUSE

I did. Have you seen the lame vacuum of feeling and expression this place has become since they abandoned all the arts at this bizarro school. It's no wonder we didn't turn into stone or house plants or accountants before this.

LANEY

But that's what art is isn't it? It's a risk. The risk of expressing who you really are. And that's what we did.

FITZROW

Looks like Professor Jinks is still a plant though. Bad luck, Professor dude.

KELTON
Consulting Jinks

It turns out, Professor Jinks actually prefers being a plant. Ze says it's a constant reminder of original magic.

TRUNE
(to Jinks)

Professor, I'm sorry about that project. I'll get it to you tomorrow. I'd give you some lame excuse, but honestly, I was turned into a house plant all day.

VEN
(to Crux)

Hey Crux, you wanna dance?

CRUX

Me?

CHARTREUSE

Best idea I've heard all day. Professor Jinks, could you provide us with some Plantae Lingua tunes? Laney, will you do me the honor?

LANEY

Totally.

CRUX

I - I can't actually -

VEN

What? Dance?

CRUX

Yeah, I cannot dance. And I feel —

LANEY

What - what do you feel?

CRUX

Uh, I dunno. Totally discombobulated? Terrified? Excited?

LANEY

Me too!

VEN

OK. Let's dance anyway.

They do. Music thumps, lights go crazy. A la the end of a Shakespeare play, all dance. Throughout the following and with the magic of theatre, each Ven dances with Crux at some point. It is expressive, exuberantly joyful and fun for everyone.

END OF PLAY