

A Sense of Belonging

by

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Cast of Characters

MOM:

45 years old, mother.

BEVERLY:

15 years old, daughter.

Place

Glen Cove, New York

Time

Late Evening

Setting: Middle-class family home in the suburbs of Long Island.

At Rise: Mom and Beverly are sitting at the dining room table facing one another.

Mom: Okay, so, what's up?

Beverly: Well, I'm not gonna talk to you if you're like that.

Mom: I'm exhausted, Bev.

Beverly: Fine! We don't need to discuss this right now.

Mom: No, listen it's just been a long day but---I'm sorry, can we—tell me what's going on with you?

Beverly: This is serious, Mom.

Mom: Alright. Talk to me.

Beverly: *(sighs)* ...it's school.

Mom: ...Okay.

Beverly: I'm not happy at school.

Mom: No one's ever happy at school.

Beverly: But, I'm worse. *(beat)* I want to feel at ease when I go to school. I want to feel like I fit in. I'm never part of that crowd, always on the outskirts looking in. I'd like to be part of the action for once and not so in my head.

God, I hate being this shy and you know, I just hate how everybody seems to think that they have me figured out..like, I'm that girl to them and there's no second chance at ever being included in something because I'm that girl...the girl who never goes to parties cause I'm never invited to any, the girl who doesn't talk to guys because guys don't ever talk to me...

I want to change people's perspective of who I am and I don't know how to make that work. It's like I'm there but in a non-existent in a way. Does that make sense?

(beat)

I just want to be involved, be accepted and get on with everyone but it just doesn't seem like there's ever any room for me...like all the seats have already been taken. It sucks.

Mom: Since when did you start feeling like you don't fit in?

Beverly: Since High School started.

Mom: You're in your second year already. You've waited this long to tell me?

Beverly: I had to be sure.

Mom: Sure? What's to be sure? If you don't like the school we can change it. But where you are is really great for college.

Beverly: I know. My grades are fine.

Mom:...What happened to that girl you brought over...what's her name...Emily?

Beverly: Emilia.

Mom: Right, whatever happened to her?

Beverly: I don't know, she just sort of faded. Like, over time we slowly stopped talking. We don't even look at one another anymore.

Mom: And what about those girls, there was a whole group of them, you were all talking to when I picked you up last week. Aren't they---

Beverly: Mom, no...no, it was just small talk...they asked me if I had a lighter and---

Mom: A lighter?! For what?

Beverly: I guess they smoke cigarettes or something.

Mom: Stay away from them.

Beverly: That's not my issue.

Mom: Who wants to be around friends that smoke?

Beverly: Mom, are you serious right now?

Mom: Alright, I'm sorry...*(sighs)*...alright, so, what's the real problem then? You're surrounded by assholes, basically.

Beverly: Well---

Mom: Look, if they're not good enough to see how cool of a person you are then who needs them?

Beverly: Yeah, but---

Mom: I mean, what do you have, a couple more years of this shit and you will be off to college somewhere, making new friends, real friends, friends that come from all over and have ambition to be something...that's where you will make a ton of life long friends.

Beverly: I don't know...I always thought i'd find my friends earlier in life, I want to have some kind of group I belong too...another home in a way. I mean, maybe you're right, maybe i'll find them in college, never really looked at it like that before.

Mom: You should. High School basically sucks for everybody. I hated it, too. It was such bullshit but like you, I had to get through it and I never looked back.

Beverly: Really...

Mom: Sure. Life doesn't end at High School, Beverly...it's the beginning of teaching you an understanding of people.

Beverly: What do you mean?

Mom: You have a clear advantage. You come off like the quiet type. That's a significant sign of intelligence. You are behind the scenes looking in and studying. You observe life and it gives you the edge.

Beverly: What edge?

Mom: When you peer into life, you get to see things that most people don't see. It's like having a super power. Seeing people behave, it sharpens you up for the real world.

Beverly: You think so? Cause I feel like I'm missing out on life if I'm not experiencing it.

Mom: But you are...you are witnessing it and then as you grow and get older you get to pick and choose the experiences you wish to have. You will be smart enough to stay away from the crap and only partake in the good stuff.

Beverly: So you don't think I'm wasting my youth?

Mom: Youth? *(she laughs)* Oh, how I wish I was your age again. You're about to have a good twenty year run of youth, kiddo. High School is a blip along your youth. It's going to go by *(snaps her fingers)* like that.

Beverly: I just don't want to miss anything, Mom. I feel like I'm missing out.

Mom: Tell me, what have you really missed out? Tell me...

Beverly: Well, I...I never get to hang out with anybody after school...like, I always see patches of people grouping up and chilling out on the street corners or by the bleachers, talking. I'd like to just hang out, too.

Mom: So, why don't you?

Beverly: Cause they've formed their own group already, I don't feel invited...

Mom: Who said you can't invite yourself? I'm sorry, but no one owns conversation. You can chime in with whomever and whenever you please. Be who you are and chime in. You ever do that?

Beverly: Never.

Mom: Well, there you go. Best thing to do. Give it a try and see what happens.

Beverly: I don't know.

Mom: People will get used to you and when they see you enough, they are going to like you more because what's not to like. Look at you, you're beautiful, talented, smart young woman and you're my daughter and I love you.

Beverly: Oh, Mom...don't get me...I love you, too.

Mom: There's no reason why you don't have the right to do as you please. If you want to hang out after school, do it. Just do it and tell me what happens.

Beverly: Okay. I will.

Mom: Is there anything else upsetting you?

Beverly: No, that was it.

Mom: Not so bad after all, right?

(Beverly nods her head)

Good. Confidence. Have the confidence to be you, Bev. I didn't raise a weak woman. You're a strong one and you take after your mother. You have everything you need to make it in this world. You hear me? (beat) I'm always here for you honey. Mom's always here for you, remember that.

Beverly: I know Mom. Thanks.

(they hug)

END OF PLAY