

The Marginals
(The School for the Marginally Magical)
By Kate Brennan

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CHARACTERS

LANEY - recently immigrated, new to school, can make people sneeze

D'NAY - student body president, aches for change, can move time forward or backward 3 seconds

HALE - 62 year old professor, charismatic, loquacious and erudite, perpetually looks 17

VEN - isn't caught up on appearances, looks like a different person every day

VEN2 - Ven on another day

VEN3 - Ven on another day

CRUX - cool, principled, from a family of fly-ers, supposedly can hover 5 millimeters

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

TRUNE - serious, particular, meticulous, can make people forget what they were about to say

GRAYNE - woke enough to need a nap, can smell big emotions

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

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

ENSEMBLE - rockstar singer(s)/movers for the *Plantae Lingua* sequence, also 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.

Laney does Art Abandonment (abbreviated in play 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 leave them 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 has this stranger brought 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

An auditorium. D'NAY takes the podium in front of the assembled school. 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 eye contact, to communicate, to speak, 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 the comparison culture that punishes us with every post and we are victims of the chaos we ourselves create at every opportunity available.

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 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.)*

As I was saying, 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 (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

fun? CRUX

Ok. LANEY

Typical? Meaningless? CRUX

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

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

Laney. VEN

Ven. LANEY

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

What was that?
CRUX

Oh, nothing.
LANEY

*FITZROW zooms by.
Fitzrow is an inflatable tube figure blowup from the 60s -
wacky, lovable and hard to hold down.*

Fitzrow!
VEN & CRUX

Ven!
FITZROW

Fitzrow?
LANEY
Catching up

Crux!
FITZROW

This is Laney!
CRUX

That's Fitzrow. Ze can -
VEN

What up, Laney! Later!
FITZROW

Fitzrow is gone.

Not for us to say, Ven.
CRUX

Right. Sorry.
VEN

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

Marge?
LANEY

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, 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

C'mon!

Chartreuse walks by.

VEN

What up, Chartreuse!

Chartreuse keeps walking.

CHARTRUESE

Don't talk to me.

Chartreuse exits.

VEN

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

LANEY

I will take that as a compliment I guess. *Noticing Hale off and clearly taken.* Who is *that?*

CRUX

Who?

LANEY

The one with the, uh - *gestures vaguely*

CRUX

Hale?

Weren't you at assembly?

VEN

I came in late.

LANEY

Ah.

VEN

Ah.

CRUX

Ze, uh. Do you know zer?

LANEY
In reference to Hale

Cute, right?

VEN

Well, uh, I guess.

LANEY

Ven.

CRUX

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

VEN

I wouldn't -

LANEY

Hale!

VEN
Calling

Omigod, don't.

LANEY

Seriously, don't.

CRUX
Knowingly

HALE enters.

Vendyn. Cruxley. HALE

Hello. CRUX

Good to see you. VEN

What discoveries did you make over summer recess? HALE

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

Well done. HALE VEN
to Laney
Crux's sister can fly. Like, in the air.

Yeah, I think ze got it. CRUX

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

Still following that archaic rule, are we? HALE

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

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

And why is that exactly? Shame? Embarrassment? HALE

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

Some of us — CRUX

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

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

I can’t do this.

FITZROW

You can do this!

Fitzrow is gone.

LANEY

I can do this.

*Laney slips another AA into a locker,
drops on floor, places on bench etc.
then 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. Throughout, the other tables are consistently better populated than 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.

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 conspicuously chartreuse. (Chartreuse can turns things...you guessed it, chartreuse.)

Come on!

D'NAY

CHARTREUSE

Next time it'll be your pants.

Chartreuse exits.

D'NAY

I hate this color.

*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

Hey Grayne, Professor.

D'NAY

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

I can't even. 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.

D'NAY

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

25 million - what?
TRUNE

Delaney wanders by and stops.

What's a hectare?
LANEY

A lot. You're new.
D'NAY

Want to join student government?
TRUNE

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

Not here, you don't.
TRUNE

Wait. You're serious.
D'NAY

Laney shrugs. Why not?

Hold up. Who are you? Ven?
D'NAY (cont.)

What?
LANEY

Nothing. Did Ven put you up to this?
D'NAY
Not missing a beat

No.
LANEY

Trune's questions are quick-fire.

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

No.
LANEY

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 Ven really didn't put you up to this?

LANEY

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. 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 jumping backward or forward in time 3 seconds.

LANEY

Oh, 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

Never. *(reading another)* "You aren't alone" Apparently, you aren't familiar with the mentality here at SMM.

TRUNE

We're totally alone.

Fitzrow zooms by.

FITZROW

to D'NAY

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.)*

D'NAY

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

FITZROW

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

LANEY

Should I join student government?

FITZROW

Truth to power!

FITZROW is gone.

I don't know what that means.

DELANEY

It means

D'NAY

YES!

D'NAY & TRUNE

SCENE 4: The Plants Can Talk

The next week. Students in 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 sits prominently at the front of the room. Ven 2 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 someone recognizes her, but slips next to Ven2.

LANEY

Um. Thanks. Sorry, I —

D'NAY opens zer eyes 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 are they shushing?*

VEN2
to Grayne

Ze's new.

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

LANEY
Um. I'm sorry. What exactly -

KELTON & GRAYNE
SHHHHHH!

LANEY
What is going on?

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

Students all open eyes and look at Ven2 who has been called upon.

VEN2
addressing plant
Laney is not from here and I -

LANEY
Who are you (*talking to*) —

GRAYNE
Man, you are rude.

LANEY
What?

VEN2
Unruffled
Laney is from the Boundary Territories where I'm guessing they don't have Plantae Lingua.

LANEY
Plantae —?

KELTON
What, did you grow up
— in a barn?

GRAYNE

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

Is it though?

LANEY

We don't have —

VEN2
To plant

Do you mind if I take a second to explain?

Receives an answer.

Thank you, Professor.

OK.

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

There are people who turn into plants!?

KELTON

What, were you raised under a rock?

GRAYNE

Yes! Yes, that was more appropriate.

VEN2

Not 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 we all learn in elementary school in this country.

VEN2

Crash course: 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.

LANEY

Ok.

Fitzrow zooms through.

D'NAY

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 - 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

It might be a little, uh....

LANEY

A little what?

D'NAY

Best not to set up any expectations....

LANEY

A little 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 meets 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 classroom. All are gone, but Laney, flanked by D’Nay and Ven2. Laney is out of sorts throughout the following.

WHAT THE ACTUAL — LANEY

Oh good. D’NAY

See I told you - VEN2

WHAT WAS THAT!?!?!? LANEY

D’NAY
See 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

Where? LANEY

What? VEN2

LANEY

Ven?

VEN2

Yeah.

LANEY

You're.

VEN2

Ven. Remember? Tried to get you to date our sex ed professor on your first day. It was awesome.

LANEY

But you—

VEN2
realizing

Oh, right! yeah, this is my MA. I look different every day.

LANEY

You -

VEN2

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

LANEY

You're. Ven.

VEN2

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

LANEY

Wow. Last time I saw you, you were -

VEN

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

LANEY

You look different. Every day.

VEN2

That is the takeaway here. Yes.

LANEY

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

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 your country though, right? Improve the way people live.

LANEY

Yeah. 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 then.

LANEY

I dunno. We came here to...I dunno. There isn't anyone like me back home. My family thought it'd be good for me to be around more marginals.

VEN2

How's that working out?

LANEY

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

VEN2

Awwww. 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

Yeah, I feel a little funny.

VEN2

Sit. I'll get it.

Ven2 picks up AA.

What is all this?

LANEY

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.

VEN2

These are really cool. (reading) "Be who you are." "Be your own art."

LANEY

I was gonna sneak this one into your bag.

VEN2

"Change is an illusion"

LANEY

Which is retrospect seems...

VEN2

Prescient?

LANEY

I guess. This one is for Crux. (referring to another AA)

Crux pops in.

You called? CRUX

Hey. LANEY

Oy, you don't look so good. CRUX

I don't feel so good. LANEY

Plantae Lingua. VEN2

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?

Sure. Ven and I --- LANEY

Oh, do you think THAT's Ven? CRUX

Yeah, ze just explained. LANEY

That's not Ven. CRUX

Hold up. LANEY

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

Very funny, Crux. / VEN2

I feel funny. LANEY

CRUX

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

VEN2

Yeah, I know. I know.
remembering the AA from Laney
I almost forgot, Laney made this.
Gives it to Crux

CRUX

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

LANEY

What if we could taste clouds?

CRUX

Uh oh. 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.