Some First Drafts

Draft 1:

Of course it is. A little broach with the image of a winged elf.

“I saw it and it reminded me of you.”

I half smile. I was told to always say “thank you,” when presented with a gift, but I was tired. The little elf had green emeralds for eyes and a pointy hat and shoes to match. I don’t even wear broaches. Aren’t those the accessories of old church ladies in the south? Not a moody teenage boy.

The little elf’s wings were made of pearls. Maybe I’d be happy too if my wings were pearls or if my eyes were emeralds, but they’re not. My eyes are swamp colored and my wings are…does it even matter? They don’t work. I can’t even move them. They’re just a burden. But, if they were made of pearls or banana peels, the world would still fawn over them relentlessly. The miracle of our small town: the little angel.

Mike opened his Secret Santa and found a new guitar pick made out of his old, school ID so his face was on the pick. He almost cried at how thoughtful the gift was and showered the giver with praise. I looked back to my broach.

“I thought of you”

Really? Did you? What about this broach made you think of me? Could you picture me wearing it? Did the emerald eyes remind you of my swamp eyes? Was it the pointy shoes?

I looked at the giver and tried again. Nope, can’t do it. I suppose it was still nice of the person to get me anything, I just…

“Thank you.”
The giver looked up and smiled. I didn’t return it. I could add this broach to the countless angel paraphernalia I’ve acquired over my 15 years of life. Maybe I’ll end up on an episode of *Hoarders* someday. Silver linings.

The little elf looked so happy. I envied the little elf.

Olivia nudged me and glared. I put on a fake smile. She rolled her eyes, but she knew that was the best she’ll get out of me at that moment. I knew she was going to yell at me later. Mike didn’t notice this exchange. He was still sobbing over the guitar pick. I nudged Olivia and gestured to him. I expected a laugh, but she just nodded and I finally noticed her Secret Santa gift. A tiny tiara with pink and blue gems attached to a comb. I had to bite my lip to keep myself from laughing. Olivia was as likely to wear that tiara as I was this broach.

She half smiled at me and I leaned down and whispered to her, “I bet Mike would wear both of these.”

She laughed. Mike had no sense of fashion, but he loved to experiment with it. He would definitely wear a winged elf broach and a bedazzled tiara anywhere. More silver linings, I suppose.

Some more gifts are opened and we were set free. Olivia, Mike, and I all grabbed some hot chocolate and headed to our spot, under the back porch. In the summer, it’s a loud spot and we’re seldom left alone, but in this weather it’s perfect. Olivia and I finally got to enjoy our presents as Mike strut his way down our dirt covered cat walk.

**Draft 2:**

“No! Not again! I don’t want to!”
Maybe this year…Mike has had his eye on Dustin’s halo and white gown, but every year…

“Because it’s stupid! Please let me be a king! I’ll do it next year, don’t make me do it this year!”

“I could do it.”

Damn it! I let him get away. He’s well meaning, but it’ll only make things worse. At least with those two causing a big fuss I get to go unnoticed as a sheep. Would they notice if I went out there dressed as a lobster? Or King Spiderman? Mike was right. I did like *Love Actually*. Even Dustin liked it. When Mike told him Rowan Atkinson was supposed to have wings and be an angel, Dustin went bananas. Rowan Atkinson is now his favorite actor. Unfortunately, Ms. Feldman thought his Mr. Bean impression was inappropriate for a Nativity Play. So, here we are…again.

“I’d make a good angel.”

“He’d make an excellent angel.”

“Mike, please go and get into your Joseph costume.”

“But –”

“Go!”

I look up as Mike walks in, defeated.

“I told you.”

“Shut up, sheep.”

“Baa baa.”

He does not get into his Joseph costume. He instead sinks down and hides behind the costume box with me.

“I hate the costume…Because it makes me look stupid!” Dustin continues without Mike in the other room.
“Why is it so important for him to be the angel?”

“He has wings”

“…shut up sheep.”

I was unable to respond to Mike’s command because that’s when Dustin shouted, “Ugh! Fine!” It was clear that the ten-year-old was now crying. Neither Mike nor I envy him. Okay, Mike envies him a little. He does look good in white.

Dustin finally walks in, pulls our his shimmery white costume and throws it against the wall.

“Aaaaah!” he yells. Then he sees us. He turns away and sits by himself. I roll my eyes. The child is too proud for his own good. We’ve been friends for five years. By this point it should be assumed that he can cry on our shoulders.

I get up and sit beside him. He refuses to look at me. I put an arm around him and he sobs. No words are needed.

“What?” Well, no words were needed until Mike put his arm around Dustin after putting the angel costume on.

“Mike?”

“Shut up sheep.”

“Baa baa.”

Dustin finally laughs.

**Draft 3:**

I don’t know how he did it, but here we are. Olivia and Mike were sitting on one end of the table and I just looked at them.

“Maybe we shouldn’t do this…”
“I thought you wanted to.” Mike looks disappointed. Olivia just nods and continues drawing.

“Do you have a thin sheet? Something we could use as a parachute?

“Why does he need a parachute? He can fly!”

“How many tries were you thinking we’d do?” Why did I just ask that question?

“At least three,” Olivia said without looking up. “I’ll bring my bike helmet.”

“I can’t fly!”

“You have wings!” Mike had spent the past two weeks trying to convince me that I could fly. His logic was air tight.

1. Birds have wings.
2. Birds can fly.
3. Bugs that have wings can fly.
4. Dustin has wings

Therefore:

1. Dustin can fly.

My six-year-old mind was convinced that flight was therefore possible, even though my experiences told a different story.

Mike was dead set on unlocking my hidden super power. When jumping on the trampoline while shouting every Harry Potter incantation we knew didn’t work, Mike decided it was time to try something a bit more drastic.
“So, we’ll put the trampoline here so if he can’t fly right away he won’t land on the ground.”

“He’ll be fine!”

As much as I appreciated Mike’s faith in me, I was very thankful for Olivia’s safety measures.

We continued to plan for a few more days. Every once in a while, I would try to back out, but Mike would somehow convince me that this was important. Then the day finally came.

Mike tied his bed sheet to my back so it trailed behind me. Olivia put her helmet on my head. It was bright pink with little daisies all over it. It was quite a look.

Mike crawled out his window onto the second story roof and dropped a teddy bear which landed on the giant trampoline below. He sighed and turned to Olivia.

“Happy?”

She didn’t answer and instead turned to me and asked, “Ready?” Nope.

Mike smiled at me. “You’re going to fly.”

Olivia and I finally followed Mike out the window and onto the roof. I looked down at the trampoline.

“I can’t fly.”

“Please try. For me.”

“If it doesn’t work, you’ll just land on the trampoline. It’s perfectly safe.”

I wish I could say I chickened out. I wish I could say I didn’t fall for peer pressure, that I refuted Mike’s logic or that I’d told an adult about our dangerous plan. I can’t, though. What I can say is, don’t jump off a roof. Even if you land on a trampoline, you’ll just bounce off that and onto the ground, breaking your arm.
Ugly Swan

By Rory Kennison
Dedicated to my Great Grandmother Peggy. Thank you for seeing the swan when the rest of the world only saw an ugly duckling.
Ugly Swan

Characters:

FELIX
OLIVIA
MIKE
KAREN
HENRY
SISTER JACOBS/HOLLY/WARTHOG/DOCTOR DREW

Staging:

Ideally the staging will be reminiscent of a bad school play with minimalist cardboard backdrops and minimal furniture. The costumes are important. Felix needs to have wings, Mike needs long frizzy hair, and there needs to be a difference between Sister Jacobs, Holly, the Warthog, and Doctor Drew. Ideally, Felix will be played by a transman who wears a binder and packer throughout the show. Ideally all the actors would be around the same age. The performance space would ideally be small, intimate and performed in the round with audience on all sides.
Prologue

*FELIX enters with a book. He opens the book and starts reading.*

**FELIX:** The Boy with Wings by Felix. *(Not reading.)* That’s me. *(Reading.)*

Prologue. *(Not reading.)* A prologue is a bit of the story that the author wants you to know before they officially start telling the story.

*Felix exits.*
Is the Warthog Beautiful?

The stage is empty. MIKE walks in.

MIKE: Is the warthog Beautiful.

MIKE exits. SISTER JACOBS dressed as WARTHOG enters. FELIX, HENRY, and KAREN enter.

HENRY: Oh, look Felix! It’s the warthog.

FELIX: Oh.

WARTHOG: Ugh.

FELIX: Um…

KAREN: What is it?

WARTHOG: Rrrggghh.

FELIX: Is it…Is he…

HENRY: Is he what?

FELIX: Is he beautiful?

KAREN: Um…

KAREN stares at WARTHOG.

WARTHOG: Rrrrgghhhggg.

HENRY: Look over there! A lion!

KAREN: Oh, yes. I love lions.

KAREN and HENRY escort FELIX offstage.

WARTHOG: Mmmhg.

WARTHOG exits.
KAREN and HENRY enter.

KAREN: Once upon a time there were two people who loved each other very much.
HENRY: They loved each other so much that they wanted to have a child.
KAREN: But no matter how hard they tried, they couldn’t get pregnant.
HENRY: So, the husband went to the local witch and asked for help.
KAREN: The witch took pity on him and gave him a seed.
HENRY: She told him to plant the seed, and to love whatever sprouted unconditionally.
KAREN: The husband took home the seed and immediately planted it.
HENRY: The wife was sceptical, but she watered the seed and made sure it had plenty of sunlight.
KAREN: Slowly, a flower grew from the seed.
HENRY: It was a beautiful flower, but the husband and wife could never agree on what color it was.
KAREN: Until they discovered that the flower changed color.
HENRY: Gradually, but constantly.
KAREN: The wife loved the flower, but had given up hope that it would bring her a child.
HENRY: Until one day the wife sat by the flower and absentmindedly said
HENRY and KAREN: I love you.
KAREN: Then the flower melted away and a small baby sat in its place.
HENRY: It was a beautiful baby.
KAREN: Ten fingers, ten toes!
HENRY: And two wings!

FELIX enters with the wings on.

KAREN: That’s right, the child that the witch had gifted this couple had wings.
HENRY: But the moment the man and woman saw the baby and its wings, they knew.
HENRY and KAREN: I love this baby. I love his wings. I will never let anything harm him or his wings.

HENRY and KAREN exit.
Act 1

FELIX: (Reading from book.) Chapter one. The first day of school...or, at least, what I remember from the first day of school.

FELIX exits. SISTER JACOBS enters and prepares her classroom for the first day. FELIX re-enters with KAREN and HENRY.

KAREN: Excuse me? Sister Jacobs? I’m Karen. We called the other day about our child?

SISTER JACOBS: Ah, yes, and you must be Felix.

FELIX hides behind his mother’s leg.

HENRY: Yes. And you’re aware of his...condition?

SISTER JACOBS: Yes, yes. Don’t worry, he’ll have plenty of room for his wings and I’ll personally make sure the kids are nice to this little angel.

KAREN: Thank you very much, Sister Jacobs. (To FELIX.) Alright, it’s time for us to go.

HENRY: We love you very much sweetie, and we’ll see you soon.

FELIX continues to hide from SISTER JACOBS.

KAREN: I guess he’s a bit nervous.

HENRY: Which is understandable for a child with his condition.

SISTER JACOBS: Oh, it’s fine. Hi, Felix. Do you like books?

Beat

I’m going to read one of my favorite books out loud over here if you want to listen. (Starts reading.) Once upon a time there was an ugly duckling...

FELIX finally moves away from his parents and sits quietly in front of SISTER JACOBS. KAREN and HENRY rush out. MIKE and OLIVIA enter.

SISTER JACOBS: The other ducklings were mean to the ugly duckling, until one day the duckling grew up into a beautiful swan. Which one of you can tell me the moral of this story?

OLIVIA: You shouldn’t make fun of people ‘cause they’re ugly ‘cause they might be pretty one day.
MIKE: Ugly people can be pretty if they want to be pretty.

FELIX: I don’t get it.

SISTER JACOBS: What don’t you understand, Felix?

FELIX: Ducks can’t talk so how did they make fun of the ugly one?

MIKE: ‘cause it’s a story. Duh!

FELIX: Oh.

SISTER JACOBS: It’s just made up, Felix. It’s a pretend story that was written to teach a moral lesson.

FELIX: Oh.

SISTER JACOBS: Now, I know all your names, but do you know each other’s names?

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX look at each other.

SISTER JACOBS: I want you each to say your name and something about yourself. I’m Sister Jacobs and I have 3 dogs. Mike, what’s your name and tell us something about yourself.

MIKE: My name is Mike and I like the musical Annie.

OLIVIA: My name’s Olivia and like…. hot dogs with chili and cheese.

MIKE: That’s called a chili cheese dog.

OLIVIA: Same thing.

FELIX: Um…I’m Felix and I … have wings…

MIKE AND OLIVIA: WHAT!? Let me see! Let me see!

OLIVIA: Can you fly?

MIKE: How are they attached?

MIKE pulls on FELIX’s wing.

FELIX: Ow!

MIKE: How did that hurt?

MIKE is curious and inspects the wings.
SISTER JACOBS: Mike. Was that very nice?

MIKE: No.

SISTER JACOBS: Are you going to apologize?

MIKE: Sorry.

SISTER JACOBS: Mike. Let go of Felix. In this classroom, we keep our hands to ourselves.

MIKE: I’m not hurting him.

SISTER JACOBS: Leave him alone before I put you on a time out.

MIKE: Fine.

MIKE finally releases FELIX’s wing.

OLIVIA: Can you fly?

FELIX: No.

SISTER JACOBS: Olivia, it’s rude to ask people if they can fly.

OLIVIA: Why?

SISTER JACOBS: It just is. I think you owe Felix an apology.

OLIVIA: Sorry.

SISTER JACOBS: Thank you, Olivia. Felix, do you accept Olivia’s apology?

FELIX: Uh…yes?

SISTER JACOBS: Good. Mike, can you get out the crayons for the next activity?

MIKE: Huh?

SISTER JACOBS: Mike?

MIKE: What are they made of?

SISTER JACOBS: Mike, we do not ask people what their wings are made of. Next person to mention Felix’s wings will have letter sent home to their parents about their behaviour. Understood?

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX: Understood.

SISTER JACOBS: Good. Let’s move on. Mike. Get the crayons.
Freeze
FELIX: The first day of school. Lunch.

SISTER JACOBS exits. MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX sit in a circle.

MIKE: So… how are they attached?

FELIX: What?

MIKE: The wings! How are the wings attached!?

FELIX: Oh. Didn’t Sister Jacobs say she’d send our parents some angry mail if we kept talking about my wings?

MIKE: She can’t hear us if we whisper. So, how are they attached?

FELIX: Um…I don’t know. Magic maybe?

MIKE: Magic isn’t real.

OLIVIA: Yes, it is! My aunt said she saw the witch at the end of the forest planting flowers once.

MIKE: That’s not magic.

OLIVIA: Uh, witch! Duh.

FELIX: My parents say a witch brought me to life using a flower.

MIKE: That’s not how babies are made. I know how babies are made!

OLIVIA: Really? How?

MIKE: I…uh…can’t tell you, ‘cause, uh…you’re too young.

OLIVIA: We’re the same age!

FREEZE
FELIX: The first day of school. Pick up.

SISTER JACOBS enters. KAREN and HENRY enter.

KAREN: How was he?

HENRY: Did the other kids give him any trouble?

FELIX: Mom! Dad! Meet my friends: Mike and Olivia.

KAREN: Oh. Hi. Nice to meet you.

SISTER JACOBS: Felix was an absolute angel today.

HENRY: Thank you. Come on, honey, time to go.

KAREN: Say goodbye to your friends.


MIKE and OLIVIA: Bye!

KAREN, HENRY, and FELIX exit.
The stage is empty. FELIX enters.

FELIX: The next few chapters are not in chronological order. Their order is based on how I remember them. For this reason, the following chapters are not numbered, but instead will have a little introduction with my age and why the memory is important. For example: Sixteen years old. It was the first time I tried to hide them.

MIKE enters. Olivia enters.

OLIVIA: Birdman!

FELIX: Screw you!

OLIVIA: Is that how you treat a friend who’s letting you borrow her shirts?

MIKE: Besides, it’s commemorative. To the last time that anyone will ever call you that!

OLIVIA: Exactly.

FELIX: Don’t be too sure. The shirts might not even fit.

OLIVIA: Don’t be ridiculous.

OLIVIA tries to force a t-shirt over FELIX’s head, but the wings get in the way.

FELIX: Ow.

MIKE: Does your dad really make all your shirts?

FELIX: Yeah.

MIKE: Why didn’t you just ask him to make you one that covers up the wings.

FELIX: Because “You should be proud of your wings. They’re unique and beautiful. Why don’t you love yourself? Oh, what did we do wrong?”

OLIVIA: Oh yeah. They’re unique and beautiful…When they’re not poking people or drawing more attention than you’d like.

MIKE: Or when they’re getting caught in doorways.

OLIVIA: Or when they’re overshadowing any other traits you might have. You’re just the kid with wings, right?

FELIX: Yup. That’s it. The entirety of my being: The kid with wings. Also, they’re just not my style.
MIKE: Don’t worry. In the name of fashion, we will cover up this unique and beautiful quality.

MIKE pulls out a button-down shirt and holds it out for FELIX to try on. FELIX puts his arms in and OLIVIA buttons it up.

FELIX: Well?

MIKE: Uh…

OLIVIA: It’s…

FELIX: What?

OLIVIA: You look like a hunchback.

MIKE: Rude. He looks…fine…ish…you look super weird. Sorry.

FELIX: I guess hunchback is better than angel.

OLIVIA: I can’t believe people still call you that.

MIKE: But it’s not like they’ll forget that you have wings.

FELIX: I don’t need them to forget, I just need them to stop making such a big deal out of it.

OLIVIA: But…You’re just a pair of wings, right?

MIKE: Maybe we could tape them down.

FELIX: No! That sounds like it would hurt.

OLIVIA: I have some bandages at home I could bring in. We could use them to hold the wings down so your back looks kind of…normal under the shirt.

FELIX: Yes! Let’s do it.

MIKE: Awesome! Don’t worry, friend. Soon you will fade into the crowd like every other mediocre high schooler.

FELIX: Thanks.

OLIVIA: I mean, I will miss our Halloween costume.

FELIX: I don’t know what you’re talking about.

OLIVIA: Really? It was just a few months ago and you complained the whole time.
FELIX: I don’t recall…ever celebrating Halloween at all. Ever.

OLIVIA: That’s unfortunate. Should I pull out the pictures to remind you?

FELIX: Never mind! I miraculously remember that awful costume.

MIKE: It was the best Halloween ever.

OLIVIA: I’ll save the dress and wig if you change your mind.

FELIX: No. It’s fine. I think Peter Pan and Tinker Bell is a little over done. It’s a bit cliché, you know?

MIKE: But what will you dress as instead?

FELIX: I could dress as…Iron man! Or Captain America! Or Spiderman! A wingless Spiderman because Spiderman has no wings!

OLIVIA: Don’t be ridiculous. Who would Spiderman be without his wings?

FELIX: Or we could be Harry, Hermione, and Ron like we always wanted.

MIKE: I do have the hair for Hermione.

OLIVIA: You guys are such nerds.

FELIX: Wingless nerds.

MIKE: Not yet.

FELIX: I know.
OLIVIA has the bandages and wraps up FELIX’s torso so his wings stay flat. MIKE puts the button up shirt on FELIX and buttons it up. FELIX looks at the audience as if it were a mirror. FELIX sees someone he never thought possible. Someone that he’s not used to, but it’s the someone he wants to be. He adjusts the shirt and turns and turns and turns. He smiles. OLIVIA and MIKE give FELIX a thumbs up and pull out their phones and act as paparazzi. FELIX does his best struts and model poses.
OLIVIA enters dressed as a sheep.

OLIVIA: Ten years old. The Nativity play. The day I realized that Felix isn’t an angel.

FELIX: (From offstage.) No! Not again! I don’t want to!

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) Why wouldn’t you want to be the angel?

FELIX: (From offstage.) Because it’s stupid. I want to be a shepard or a king!

MIKE: (From offstage.) I could be the angel if he won’t. I’d make a good angel.

FELIX: (From offstage.) He’d make an amazing angel!

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) Mike. Please go get into your Joseph costume.

MIKE: (From offstage.) But –

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) Go.

MIKE enters.

OLIVIA: Told you.

MIKE: Shut up, sheep.

OLIVIA: Baa baa.

MIKE sits next to OLIVIA.

FELIX: (From offstage.) I hate the costume.

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) But you look so good in it.

MIKE: Why is it so important that he’s the angel?

OLIVIA: He has wings.

MIKE: Shut up, sheep.

OLIVIA: Baa baa.

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) Go get dressed, Felix. The show has been cast. We can’t do anything about it now.

FELIX: (From offstage.) NO!
SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) Felix.

FELIX: (From offstage.) No. I won’t do it. No.

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) Felix. Go get into costume before I decide to cut you from the play entirely. You have until the count of five before I call your parents.

FELIX: (From offstage.) No, but –

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) One.

FELIX: (From offstage.) Stop! Please!

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) Two.

FELIX: (From offstage.) Fine!

FELIX enters. He grabs the angel costume and throws it.

FELIX: AAAAAHHHHHAHHHH!!!

OLIVIA: Felix?

FELIX: Leave me alone!

FELIX picks up the angel costume, rips it and throws it again and sits down, sobbing. OLIVIA sits beside him and puts an arm around him. MIKE picks up the angel costume while FELIX and OLIVIA are distracted and puts it on. MIKE sits next to FELIX and puts an arm around him.

OLIVIA: Uh…Mike?

MIKE: Shut up, sheep.

OLIVIA: Baa baa.

FELIX laughs. FREEZE
**FELIX enters.**

**FELIX:** Fifteen years old. A neighbourhood holiday party.

I opened my secret Santa gift and just looked at it. I couldn’t bring myself to take it out of the box. Holly looked at me, smiling. She told me that she just saw it in the store and thought of me. I think I tried to smile? I don’t know. It took a while for me to actually remove the thing from the box. I know I sound like an ungrateful brat, but it...

**Beat**

The gift was a broach with a little winged elf on it. It was...pretty. The elf’s eyes were made of emeralds and its wings were studded with pearls. The little elf looked so happy. Maybe I’d be happy too, if my wings were made of pearls.

Holly was still waiting for a “thank you” that I didn’t want to give her. What did she mean she thought of me? What about this broach made her think of me? Could she picture me wearing it? Do I seem like the broach type? That’s the target audience for broaches, angst filled teenage boys. Maybe it’s the emerald eyes? My mother always told me I had the most beautiful swamp coloured eyes.

I looked at Holly, knowing full well that all she sees when she looks at me is a pair of wings. That’s why she gave me this stupid broach that was making me itchy. If she ever bothered to get to know me she might have found out that I’m allergic to gold, although I did appreciate the quality of the little trinket. I finally said the two words that she was waiting for.

“Thank you.”

She smiled and didn’t look at me for the rest of the night. She had fulfilled her obligation to acknowledge my existence and that was that. I looked to Olivia for help.

**OLIVIA enters.**

**OLIVIA:** You were being a brat.

**FELIX:** She was glaring at me.

**OLIVIA:** Because you were being a brat.

**FELIX:** I –

**OLIVIA:** You do this all the time. You get one wing related comment or present or whatever and pout for the rest of the night.

**FELIX:** Like you were any better that night.
OLIVIA: Don’t even try. You were a pouty and ungrateful child.

FELIX: And you weren’t when Isaac gave you that tiara?

OLIVIA: I smiled and graciously said “Thank you.”

FELIX: And I didn’t?

OLIVIA: You did that bratty “thank you” that you do. Holly was trying to be nice and you just sassed at her.


Beat

Of course, it wasn’t the first gift of its kind. There were three boxes in my room filled with little angel tree toppers, Barbie dolls with tinker bell wings, a few posters with inspirational quotes about flying over the moon, and not letting people clip your wings etc.

OLIVIA: I thought you gave them all to Mike?

FELIX: No, he stole them, remember?

OLIVIA: Right! Because when you tried to give them to Mike your mom stopped him.

MIKE enters.

MIKE: She said they were given to you for a reason and that it’s rude to re-gift.

FELIX: So, you had to “steal” them!

They all laugh. FREEZE.
**FELIX enters.**

**FELIX:** Twelve years old. How I remember the first time I suggested getting rid of my wings.

**HENRY enters.**

**FELIX:** Hi dad.

**HENRY:** Hello, my angel.

**FELIX:** Um, yeah, I don’t like…

**HENRY:** Are you okay, honey?

**FELIX:** I just wanted to ask if…sometimes I could…take my wings off? Or cover them up?

**HENRY:** …

**FELIX:** …

**HENRY:** …

**FELIX:** Please say something.

**HENRY:** Why?

**FELIX:** I –

**HENRY:** No.

**FELIX:** But –

**HENRY:** Your wings are a part of you. A beautiful part of you.

**FELIX:** So are my feet and I don’t show them all the time! So is my hair, but I cut it every once in a while! Please, can I just have one shirt that covers them up.

**HENRY:** I thought I raised you better.

**FELIX:** What?

**HENRY:** Don’t you like them?

**FELIX:** I –

**HENRY:** I can’t believe what I’m hearing! Were we not supportive enough?

**FELIX:** Dad –
HENRY: You mother and I couldn’t get pregnant.

FELIX: I know –

HENRY: And when we consulted the local witch she gave us a seed and told us to love whatever sprouted unconditionally.

FELIX: I know –

HENRY: That includes your wings, Felix. I love you and your perfect wings. I will always love you no matter what.

FELIX: Yes, but –

HENRY: Which is why I won’t let you mutilate yourself and destroy what’s beautiful about you.

FELIX: What?

HENRY: I love you too much to let you hide what makes you unique and I love you too much to let you remove them.

FELIX: But –

HENRY: We’re done talking about this. Never bring it up again.

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Seven years old. The day I learned that I can’t fly.

MIKE enters.

MIKE: Of course, you can fly! You have wings! Duh!

FELIX: I can’t fly you dummy!

MIKE: But…you have wings! You just don’t know how to fly yet.

OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: So…can he learn to fly?

MIKE: …yes. Uh…birds don’t know how to fly when they’re born. They have to learn it!

OLIVIA: How do birds learn to fly?

MIKE: I saw it on Looney Tunes. They jump out of the nest and flap their wings.

FELIX: I can’t move my wings. I can’t fly!

MIKE: Felix! You can fly! Birds fly and you have wings like birds!

FELIX: But –

OLIVIA: We don’t have a nest to push Felix out of.

MIKE: What about your treehouse?

OLIVIA: What if he doesn’t fly the first time?

MIKE: Then we throw him out of the treehouse again.

OLIVIA: But he could get hurt! I have a better idea. My dad read me the Harry Potter book.

MIKE: Which one? There’s more than one!

OLIVIA: The first one, duh! But they can make things fly with magic.

MIKE: Magic isn’t real.

OLIVIA: Yes, it is! My mom and dad saw a witch once!

MIKE: That’s not magic!
OLIVIA: She was a witch! Duh. Also, without magic, how does Felix have wings?
FELIX: Can we try Olivia’s idea first? Then we’ll try yours.
MIKE: It won’t work, though.
FELIX: It could be fun, though.
MIKE: …fine, but when it doesn’t work you have to admit that you were wrong and I was right.
OLIVIA: Fine.
MIKE: So, what do we do?
OLIVIA: Um…Hang on. I need to go get the book!

OLIVIA exits.

MIKE: Why don’t you want to fly? I’d love to fly.
FELIX: I can’t fly. I don’t want to fall.
MIKE: But if you could fly, then you could fly away. Far away. No adults would be able to find you.
FELIX: Yeah. I know. I wish I could fly, but I can’t fly.
MIKE: You can fly, Felix, and when you do, will you take me with you? Away from all these…adults?
FELIX: I don’t know. I don’t think I can fly, but if I can, I know I’m not going anywhere without you and Olivia.
MIKE: Really?
FELIX: I don’t want to be all alone in the sky. So I’ll take you two with me. It’ll be the three of us. Eating star dust and sleeping on the clouds.
MIKE: Like a castle in the sky. A castle with a moat made of air. No one could find us and tell us to go home.
FELIX: You and Olivia could be the King and Queen.
MIKE: I want to be the Queen.
FELIX: Mike?
MIKE: Yeah?
FELIX: Why do you want to be a girl?

MIKE: I don’t! I don’t want to be a girl! Ew! Shut up! I just want to be me. I would be a better Queen than a King, that’s all.

FELIX: Okay. I could be the prince then.

MIKE: That would make you my child.

FELIX: Would you be my dad or my mom?

MIKE: A queen is a mom. Duh.

FELIX: Okay, mom.

OLIVIA enters with the book.

OLIVIA: Got it!

FELIX: Okay, so what do we do?

OLIVIA: There’s a spell. I need to sound it out. Wii-win. winga-gar-wingarduh. Wingarduh-um...le...ve...ve-oh. Win...gard...um...le...veo...sa.

MIKE: Win...gard...um...le...veo...sa?

FELIX: Win...gard...um...uh...sa?

OLIVIA: I think we need to say it faster. Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa.

MIKE: Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa.

FELIX: Win-gard-um-le-sa.

OLIVIA: No! No, it’s Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa.

FELIX: Win-gard-um-le-

OLIVIA: Veo

FELIX: Veo

OLIVIA: Sa

FELIX: Sa

OLIVIA and MIKE: Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa

FELIX: Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa!
OLIVIA and MIKE: Yay!

BEAT.

MIKE: He’s not flying.

OLIVIA: Maybe if he’s jumping on the trampoline?

MIKE: Why would that help?

OLIVIA: If he says it while he’s in the air it might work better.

MIKE: …fine.

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX start jumping up and down.


MIKE: He’s still not flying!

OLIVIA: I have another idea. Hang on.

OLIVIA exits while MIKE and FELIX continue jumping.

OLIVIA enters with a broom.

OLIVIA: Here. Hold this. Sometimes Harry Potter uses a broom to fly.

FELIX: How?

OLIVIA: Just…hold it.

FELIX takes the broom. OLIVIA, MIKE and FELIX continue jumping.


MIKE: He’s still not flying! Admit it! You were wrong!

OLIVIA: But…we…

FELIX: I think it’s working.

MIKE: It’s not! Olivia! You were wrong!

OLIVIA: Fine! He can’t fly!

MIKE: He can fly! He has wings! And I’m going to prove it! Olivia, can we go to your room and try something?
OLIVIA: Fine.

FREEZE.
FELIX: Later that day. In Olivia’s room. Mike is proving his point.

MIKE: This should be high enough.

OLIVIA: So, he’ll jump off the top bunk and…fly?

MIKE: No, he needs to jump outside so he doesn’t hit his head when he flies up.

FELIX: So why don’t we go back to the trampoline?

MIKE: You don’t need the trampoline. You just need to jump out that window.

FELIX: I’ll fall.

MIKE: You’ll fly.

OLIVIA: What if he doesn’t fly on the first try, though?

MIKE: What?

OLIVIA: Baby birds don’t always fly on the first try. Felix could get hurt from this height if he doesn’t get the hang of it right away.

MIKE: Uh…what if he landed on the trampoline?

OLIVIA: I guess that would be safe, but how would we make sure of that?

MIKE: I’ll drop a stuffy and see where it lands, then we’ll move the trampoline there.

OLIVIA: …okay.

FELIX: Really?

OLIVIA: If you land on the trampoline you’ll be fine.

FELIX: Yeah, I guess.

MIKE: Okay! It’s decided.

MIKE takes a stuffed animal and exits through the window.

MIKE: Olivia! Can you move the trampoline so it’s over McStuffles IV?

OLIVIA: Why can’t you?

MIKE: You’re stronger than me.

OLIVIA: True. Felix: don’t go out the window until I come back.
FELIX:   Wasn’t planning on it.

       

M I K E:   Hey!  If we tie this sheet around you, then you’ll have a parachute!

              M I K E grabs a sheet and ties it around F E L I X’s neck.
              
O L I V I A:   The trampoline is in place.  What are you wearing?

M I K E:   A parachute!

O L I V I A:   …should he wear my bike helmet?

              O L I V I A puts the pink bike helmet on F E L I X.

M I K E:   Yeah!  Now he can jump!

F E L I X:   Uh…

M I K E:   Come on.  You’re going to fly.

F E L I X:   I can’t fly.

O L I V I A:   You’ll land on the trampoline.  It’ll be fine.

M I K E:   It’s perfectly safe for someone who can fly.

F E L I X:   I can’t fly!

              M I K E exits through window.    O L I V I A follows.

M I K E:   Please do it!  For me!  Do it for the castle in the sky.  We can get there, we can leave and sleep on clouds!  Just, try.  Just try to fly.

              F E L I X exits through window.

F E L I X:   (O f f  s t a g e.) I can’t fly!

              F E L I X enters.

F E L I X:   I wish I could say I chickened out.  I wish I could say I didn’t fall for peer pressure…pun intended…I wish I’d refuted Mike’s logic or that I told an adult about our plans.

I can’t though.  I can’t say any of it.  What I can say is, don’t jump off a roof.  Even if you land on a trampoline, you will bounce off that trampoline and break your arm as you land hard on the ground.
MIKE enters.

MIKE: Yeah…How many times have I apologised for that?

OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: Only a few more times than you’ve mentioned that if he’d just landed on his wings he might have had them amputated.

MIKE: It’s true, isn’t it?

FELIX: We’re not having this conversation again.

MIKE: Sorry…again.

FELIX: I forgave you thirteen years ago.

MIKE: Then why do I still feel bad?

OLIVIA: You pressured your best friend to jump off a roof?

MIKE: That might be it.

FELIX: It’s okay. I don’t know if I ever apologised for not getting you that castle in the sky.

MIKE: Well…I suppose you’re forgiven then.

FELIX: Thanks, Mike.

FREEZE.
OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: Nine years old. The Felix-is-not-a-dyke incident.

FELIX and MIKE enter and sit next to OLIVIA. Holly enters.

HOLLY: Look! It’s two fairies and a dyke!

OLIVIA: Holly was nine, and it seemed that she was awfully proud of her above grade level insult. I wouldn’t have cared or even noticed if Felix hadn’t –

FELIX: (Standing up.) I am not a dyke!

OLIVIA: Of course, everyone laughed at us, not with us, but that didn’t matter. They always laughed at us. Felix didn’t always stand up for me, though.

HOLLY: Watch out. The two fairies and a dyke are heading this way!

OLIVIA: Our new unofficial group name stuck, and Mike insisted that we form a band just to put the name to good use. It’s already put to good use, though.

HOLLY exits.

OLIVIA: Felix and Mike are easy targets, so it’s often on me to protect our little family of two fairies and a dyke. When Felix and Mike aren’t around the other kids think that gives them special permission to be nasty about my best friends. I’ve stood up for those useless fairies more times than I can count, but that day Felix stood up for me.

BEAT.

I often wonder what drew our little group together. Was it some cosmic force, or was it just coincidence? I remember Mike making Felix laugh about something other than the stupid wings. I remember Holly pulling my hair and Mike jumping in to fix it and make me feel better. I remember Felix sitting for hours listening to my rambling stories…like this one. There was no one singular force that created our friendship, but it certainly didn’t hurt that we saw past what made each of us little weirdos, and instead saw the little people we wanted to be friends with.

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Fifteen years old. Mike comes out.

MIKE and Olivia enter. MIKE pulls out a phone and types something out. FELIX and OLIVIA’s phones go off and they look at the message.

OLIVIA: So, you’re non-binary, but you still like he/him pronouns?

FELIX: That actually explains a lot.

MIKE: Excuse me?

FELIX: You just…are non-binary. It just makes a lot of sense.

OLIVIA: Thanks for telling us. If you need anything, we’ll be there.

MIKE: …Can you be a bit more dramatic about it? I thought this was going to be a whole thing, you know? Like on TV.

OLIVIA: You’re a …transgender!? For how long? Why didn’t you tell us sooner?

FELIX: Oh, my god, Olivia, we don’t know our friend Mike at all! We’re terrible friends!

OLIVIA: Mike deserves better than us!

FELIX: Yes. I’m sorry, Mike, but we can’t be your friends anymore.

OLIVIA: It’s just not fair to you.

MIKE: …Thanks guys. You’re the best!

OLIVIA: Anytime, br-can I still call you bro?

MIKE: Um…

OLIVIA: Friend?

MIKE: Yeah. I like that.

OLIVIA: Okay, friend.

FELIX: You’re still my fairy-buddy, right?

MIKE: Always.

FELIX: Good.
OLIVIA: Two fairies and a dyke.
MIKE: Two fairies and a dyke.
FELIX: Two fairies and a dyke.

FREEZE.
MIKE enters.

MIKE: Seventeen years old. Olivia comes out. We were dying our hair together.

OLIVIA and FELIX enter.

MIKE: Red Passion for Felix, Green Ivy for me and Olivia, you asked for Purple Punk?

OLIVIA: Yeah.

MIKE: Alright. Felix, I’ll start with you. Sit here –

OLIVIA: Wait!

FELIX: What?

OLIVIA: Um…I wanted purple dye because…I …

MIKE: Yeah?

OLIVIA: Purple is…one of the main colors of the asexual flag?

FELIX: Really?

OLIVIA: Yeah…purple, white, grey, and black.

MIKE: Yeah? That’s cool. And subtle. I like it. And purple would really bring out your eyes.

FELIX: So…you’re asexual?


MIKE: I totally get it. That’s how I feel about being non-binary. Like, I’m pretty sure I’m non-binary, but there’s not really a test to confirm it. I just know that it feels truer than anything else.

OLIVIA: Exactly. It just feels like who I am.

FELIX: So, you’re not sexually attracted to anyone?

OLIVIA: More like little to no attraction. And I still feel romantic attraction.

FELIX: Okay. That’s cool.

MIKE: Yeah. Because you’re cool, Olivia.

OLIVIA: Uh…thanks.
MIKE: Now sit down, Felix so I can put this awful smelling goo into your hair.

FREEZE.
OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: Eight years old. Felix comes out.

MIKE and OLIVIA enter.

OLIVIA: Birdman!

FELIX: Stop it! I’m not a birdman.

MIKE: You have wings like a bird, birdman.

FELIX: No! I’m not a birdman. You know I can’t fly or even move my wings. I’m a boy with stupid, useless wings!

OLIVIA: You’re not a magic birdman?

FELIX: No. I’m a muggle with stupid wings.

MIKE: But magic Birdman is cooler.

FELIX: No. I’m muggle Felix.

OLIVIA: Okay, fine, muggle Felix with stupid wings.

MIKE: …Birdman?

FELIX: No!

MIKE: Flightless Birdman?

FELIX: Muggle Felix.

MIKE: Muggle Felix with wings? Can we call you that?

OLIVIA: That’s your new nick name, muggle Felix with wings.

FELIX: Um…aren’t nick names supposed to be short?

MIKE: Classic muggle Felix with wings!

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Thirteen years old. The second time I suggested getting rid of my wings.

KAREN enters.

FELIX: Mom? I was just wondering –
KAREN: Yes, honey? What is it?
FELIX: I don’t like my wings –
KAREN: Not this again.
FELIX: Mom!
KAREN: No. Why can’t you just love yourself like I love you?
FELIX: I do love myself –
KAREN: Your wings are a part of you!
FELIX: I don’t like them!
KAREN: Don’t yell at me!
FELIX: ...I’m sorry, it’s just –
KAREN: Do you remember the story of Lucifer?
FELIX: The devil?
KAREN: Yes. You remember that he wasn’t always the devil, though. He was an angel like you.
FELIX: I’m not –
KAREN: Then he fell. He went against God’s intentions and now he’s the most evil being in the world.
FELIX: Mom –
KAREN: You are my little angel, Felix. A gift from god. I would be a terrible mother if I let you go the way of Lucifer.
FELIX: I don’t think covering my wings will make me the devil…
KAREN: …You’re grounded.
FELIX: What?!
KAREN: It’s clear to me that you need some time to clear your head and relearn how to appreciate your unique gift. I’m also going to take you to church three times a week.

FELIX: For how long?

KAREN: Until this unfortunate phase ends.

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Six years old. Our first Halloween.

OLIVIA and MIKE enter.

MIKE: You ask.

OLIVIA: You can do it.

MIKE: Please. You’re better at it then me.

OLIVIA: Better at what?

MIKE: Talking.

OLIVIA: You’re talking just fine now!

MIKE: Pleeeaaase, Liv.

OLIVIA: Fine. (To FELIX.) Do you know Harry Potter?

FELIX: Like…the book? Or does he go here?

OLIVIA: The book. Mike and I want to dress as Harry, Ron, and Hermione for Halloween, but there’s only two of us.

FELIX: You want me to dress as Ron or Harry for Halloween with you?

MIKE: Ron! We want you to be Ron.

OLIVIA: You have the perfect freckles for Ron.

FELIX: Ron…doesn’t have wings.

OLIVIA: So? I don’t have a scar like Harry, but I’m still going to dress up as him.

MIKE: It’s Halloween. You can be whatever you want to be. If you want to be Ron who doesn’t have wings, you should!

OLIVIA: It would suit you.

FELIX: Wait. If Livia is dressing up as Harry than –

MIKE: Don’t I have the hair for Hermione?

FELIX: …So Olivia is Harry, you’re Hermione and I’m Ron. Do either of you have a stuffed rat I could use as Scabbers?

OLIVIA: You’ll do it?
FELIX: Yeah. I'll do it.

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Sixteen years old. Our best Halloween.

OLIVIA and MIKE enter. OLIVIA wraps FELIX’s wings with bandages. MIKE puts a white button down shirt on FELIX. OLIVIA ties a red tie around FELIX’s neck and MIKE puts a shitty costume robe on FELIX. FELIX’s hair should either be natural, a cruddy costume wig or bad temporary dye. OLIVIA and MIKE then get into their costumes. MIKE as Hermione and OLIVIA as Harry.

MIKE: Finally!

OLIVIA: Let me mess up your hair a little bit more, Mike. You’re not quite to Hermione frizz yet.

FELIX: I have the eyeliner. Olivia, look at me so I can draw your scar.

OLIVIA: Okay. Mike, can you look at Felix for me and make sure he has enough freckles?

MIKE: On it! Then can you tie my tie?

FELIX: I don’t know how to tie a tie.

OLIVIA: He was talking to me.

FELIX: Right. Mike, did you bring the glasses?

MIKE: They’re on the table.

OLIVIA: You’re done with my scar?

FELIX: Yup.

OLIVIA puts on the glasses and her Harry Potter costume is complete.

OLIVIA: Come here, Mike. You are going to be Hermione this year, god damn it!

FELIX: Finally!

MIKE: I still don’t understand why it was such a big deal. I’m not hurting anyone by dressing as my favourite Harry Potter character.

FELIX: Not according to your mom.
OLIVIA: Right, you were, what was it again? Traumatizing the younger members of our good Christian town?

MIKE: I’m pretty sure I’m still technically grounded for fighting her on that.

OLIVIA: Stop it. None of that matters now. Secret Halloween!

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX: SECRET HALLOWEEN!

OLIVIA: And we have our very first wingless Ronald Weasley!

FELIX: Bloody Hell.

MIKE: I remember that year we had our costumes on and your parents wouldn’t let you leave the house until they cut holes in your robe for the wings.

FELIX: Yeah…that got ugly…

OLIVIA: Shhh. They don’t matter tonight. Secret Halloween! I’ll set up the movie. Which one first?

FELIX and MIKE: Sorcerer’s Stone!

OLIVIA: Mike, get the snacks.

FELIX: What should I do?

OLIVIA: Set up the cushions and turn out the lights.

FELIX sets up a Pinterest worthy movie watching set up with blankets, pillows, and stuffed animals. MIKE brings in a giant feast of Harry Potter themed candy, popcorn, and some Halloween treats. OLIVIA joins once the movie is “set up.”

OLIVIA: Secret Halloween?

FELIX and MIKE: Secret Halloween!

Blackout.
Act 2

FELIX enters.

FELIX: Sometimes, books have multiple parts, like acts in a play. This is the end of part one and the beginning of part two. This part of the book is going to be a bit different. Part one was a series of past events. Part two is a series of events as they happen.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Part two, chapter one. Preparation.

MIKE and OLIVIA enter.

OLIVIA: Well?

FELIX: It’s all set up. Everything’s in place.

MIKE: But –

OLIVIA: Did you tell them yet?

FELIX: I…do I have to?

MIKE and OLIVIA: Yes.

MIKE: No more hiding.

OLIVIA: You can’t tell them after the fact.

MIKE: Felix, honey, where are you going?

OLIVIA: Oh, just a secret surgery to remove the part of me that you love most. Bye!

MIKE: We will gladly take care of you afterwards –

OLIVIA: And we’re all set to drive you home –

MIKE: But they should at least know.

FELIX: I know…it’s just been so long…I’ve been keeping up this…double life for so long. It feels like my life is a spinning plate balancing on a stick and part of what’s keeping the plate up are the lies and persona I take on around my parents. Once I take those away…it feels like the plate’s going to fall.

BEAT.

OLIVIA: Then we’ll catch the plate.

MIKE: There’s a net under the stick. If the plate falls, it’ll still be intact.

OLIVIA: And we’ll help you get it spinning again.

BEAT.

FELIX: So…I just tell them…I…I don’t know how to start it.

MIKE: Do you want us to come with you? Like you and Olivia did for me?
FELIX: Your parents hated that we were there.

MIKE: But I didn’t. It was just nicer to be three against two instead of two against one.

FELIX: Yeah…I want to do this on my own.

OLIVIA: Will you, though?

FELIX: What?

OLIVIA: How many times have you tried to tell them and then at the last second didn’t? You might want us as just a little push. Just to make sure this time it happens.

FELIX: …Did you see the last episode of iZombie? Do you think Ravi –

OLIVIA: Really, Felix?

MIKE: Twenty years and you still haven’t learned a thing about subtlety.

OLIVIA: Remember “speaking of who stole your Halloween candy, did you know that children were often very short in the eighteen hundreds?”

MIKE: My favorite will always be, “Felix, what did you think of last night’s reading?”

OLIVIA: “I…can’t read. Sesame street failed me.”

FELIX: I’m not that bad…anymore.

OLIVIA: “You should tell your parents that you’re planning on cutting off your wings.” “Did you catch last night’s episode of iZombie?”

FELIX: I was just a bit…I’m not…Just –

MIKE: Felix! It’s okay. We love you and your lack of subtlety.

OLIVIA: So, do you want us there when you tell them, or not?

BEAT.

FELIX: No. I want to do this myself.

MIKE: You sure?

FELIX: Yeah.

OLIVIA: Okay. Text us as soon as it happens.
FELIX: What?

OLIVIA: We want to support you. Do you want to come over to my place afterwards? So, you don’t have to be alone and you can give them some time to digest?

FELIX: Yeah…that sounds good.

OLIVIA: Okay. Mike and I will wait for you, then.

MIKE: Good luck.

Mike embraces Felix. Olivia squeezes them both.

OLIVIA: You are valid.

MIKE: We support you.

OLIVIA: No matter what, you always have us.


FELIX: Okay. Okay. Stop, you’re making me cry. I have to get home…I love you guys.

OLIVIA and MIKE: Love you!

FREEZE.
**FELIX enters.**

**FELIX:** Chapter two. Uh…

**HENRY, and KAREN enter.**

**FELIX:** Um…

**KAREN:** You won’t believe what Jesse did today.

**HENRY:** There’s very little I wouldn’t believe when it comes to Jesse.

**FELIX:** Mom…Dad –

**HENRY:** Not now, Honey. Your mother’s talking.

**KAREN:** So, Jesse –

**FELIX:** Stop!

**HENRY:** Felix! We do not interrupt! You will wait your turn!

**FELIX:** No. I need to say something now.

**KAREN:** Whatever it is, it can wait.

**FELIX:** But –

**HENRY:** Felix, what could you possibly need to say that can’t wait until your mother is done with her Jesse story?

**FELIX:** I need to say it before I change my mind!

**HENRY:** About what?

**FELIX:** Telling you…

**KAREN:** Felix –

**FELIX:** My wings…

**HENRY:** Just say whatever it is!

**FELIX:** I’m cutting them off!

**HENRY:** Excuse me?

**KAREN:** Not this again. You are not mutilating yourself. Your wings are –
FELIX: I am! I’m...I have a...an appointment with a doctor – surgeon! I’ve been working with him for a while. I raised enough money...It’s happening next week.

BEAT.

FELIX: Please say something.
HENRY: No.
FELIX: No –
KAREN: Cancel it. The appointment.
FELIX: I –
HENRY: You are not having the surgery.
KAREN: How long have you been planning this behind our backs?
FELIX: I...two years...My therapist agrees –
HENRY: We need to get a new therapist, call up this surgeon, maybe check him into a mental facility. He’s a danger to himself.
FELIX: I...I’m an adult! I like my therapist and I’m keeping the appointment.
HENRY: See! He’s a danger to himself. He’s not in his right mind.
FELIX: Stop! I’m fine. The problem isn’t me. I know who I am and I know what I want. I want...my outside to match my inside. I want to be me! I’m not the problem. I’m...You’re the problem –
HENRY: Felix!
FELIX: Dad! I’ve known pretty much all my life that my wings aren’t a part of me. They’re extra. They hurt my back. They restrict my fashion choices. I’m not me when there are wings on my back. This isn’t something I just decided on a whim. This is what I need to be whole. You two are not going to ruin this for me.
KAREN: But, Felix.
FELIX: This isn’t a discussion. I didn’t even have to tell you. Olivia and Mike have agreed to take care of me after the surgery. I’m just letting you know so you didn’t have to find out after the fact.

BEAT.
KAREN: Why didn’t you talk to us sooner?

FELIX: …I did. I did talk to you already. I was…thirteen…You likened my desire to be wingless to being the devil himself. I got the message and stopped talking about it after that.

HENRY: This is a lot to take in –

FELIX: I know…I need to go.

HENRY: Where?

FELIX: I just… Good night. I love you.

FELIX exits.

HENRY: Do we go after him?

KAREN: Did we do something wrong?

HENRY embraces KAREN.

HENRY: Yes. I’m not sure what it was, but we most certainly did something wrong. That’s what parents do.

KAREN: Do you think the witch would ever forgive us?

HENRY: I don’t know, darling. I don’t know.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Chapter three. Debrief.

OLIVIA and MIKE enter.

OLIVIA: How’d it go?
MIKE: Sit down. We got your favorite movie set up.
FELIX: Movie?
MIKE: *Love Actually.*
FELIX: I do like that movie.
OLIVIA: What did they say?
MIKE: Would you like some ice cream? Popcorn?
FELIX: Shh. I just want to watch *Love Actually.*
OLIVIA: Okay.

*OLIVIA starts the movie. FELIX, OLIVIA, and MIKE watch silently for a while. FELIX suddenly starts laughing.*

OLIVIA: Felix?
FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* They tried to get me committed to a psychiatric facility.
MIKE: Oh, my god.
FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* I can never take it back. They know now. It’s out there.
OLIVIA: Are you okay?
FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* Danger to myself? Classic mom and dad!
MIKE: I’m sorry…
FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* I can’t take it back! I can’t take it back!
OLIVIA: Um…
FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* Yes, Bill Nighy! I feel it in my goddamn fingers and toes! Christmas is all around me so let the feeling…*(Stops laughing.)* I can’t take it back.
OLIVIA: Felix?

FELIX: I can’t – I can’t take it – I need to – Fuck you Alan Rickman! Stop cheating on Emma Thompson! You don’t deserve her! *(Starts yelling incoherently.)*

MIKE: Yeah. Fuck Alan Rickman. The dirty bastard.

OLIVIA: Alan Rickman isn’t even on screen yet.

MIKE: Sh!

FELIX: I need my phone! Where’s my phone!? Fuck! I can’t find my fucking phone! Fuck you phone! Fuck you Alan Rickman! Fuck you Mom! I don’t need you! Fuck you Dad! Weren’t you both supposed to fucking love me?!! Unconditionally?! What the fuck is wrong with you??! It’s not me. There’s nothing fucking wrong with me…well nothing much…You know what? Go fuck yourself Sister Jacobs! Fuck you for valuing my fucking parent’s and the fucking bible’s views on me over mine! They’re my fucking wings, you fucking terrible teacher!! Fuck!!! Lucifer, fuck you for giving those of us who chose not to be angels a bad name! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Shut the fuck up, Hugh Grant! Nobody fucking cares about your fucking ass! Go fuck yourself! Aaaaaahh!

OLIVIA: Uh…

MIKE: Anyone else you want to curse out, or would you like some ice cream? I have cookie dough, butter scotch, and coffee gelato.

FELIX: …coffee…

*MIKE hands FELIX a pint of ice cream. FELIX greedily stuffs the ice cream into his mouth and starts crying.*

MIKE: Hun, you don’t want brain freeze. I made you some cupcakes too, if you want.

*FELIX nods yes, he wants a cupcake and MIKE hands him one.*

FELIX: I just –

MIKE: Shh. You don’t have to say anything. It’s okay. Just eat.

FELIX: Mmmmmhm.

*BEAT.*

FELIX: Is it too late to cancel the appointment?
MIKE: What?

FELIX: If I just cancel it we can go back to normal. We can forget this ever happened. Where’s my phone? I need to call the doctor –

MIKE and OLIVIA: No!

FELIX: But –

MIKE and OLIVIA: No!

OLIVIA: You’ve always wanted this. It’s for you. You’re incomplete without it. You need this.

MIKE: The problem is them, remember? Not you. You need to take care of you first. That means getting the surgery and then dealing with their delicate feelings. You first.

FELIX: I want my mom and dad.

MIKE: I know. I know.

FELIX: I want –

MIKE: Shhh. It’s okay. It’s okay. Eat the cupcake.

FELIX: Colin Firth, stop trying to speak Portuguese. You can’t speak Portuguese. Oh, whatever. I still love you, Colin Firth.

BEAT.

FELIX: I’m scared.

MIKE: I know. I’m here for you.

OLIVIA: Me too.

FELIX: You’re my new mom and dad.

OLIVIA: I’m the dad, right?

FELIX: Of course.

OLIVIA: Good.

MIKE: Can I get a minivan and be a soccer mom?

OLIVIA: We love you.

MIKE: We love you so fucking much, Felix.

FELIX: Thank you, new mom and dad.

FREEZE.
FELIX enters. His wings are strapped down.

FELIX: Chapter four. If at first you don’t succeed, try again. I stayed at Olivia’s house that night and went home in the morning in hopes that my parents had calmed down a bit and were ready to support me.

KAREN, HENRY, and SISTER JACOBS enter.

KAREN: Oh, my god. You already got it done. We’re too late.

FELIX: No! No. I just wrapped them up with some ace bandages. See? There’s a little bump. They’re still there.

KAREN: I can’t…Why would you do that? Hide yourself from the world? I just…can’t

KAREN cries and dramatically exits.

HENRY: Are you happy? You made your mother cry.


HENRY: Can’t you see how you’re hurting us?

FELIX: I –

HENRY: Whose shirt are you wearing?

FELIX: Mine. It’s my shirt.

HENRY: You don’t own any shirts that don’t have holes for your wings.

FELIX: None that you know about.

BEAT.

HENRY: How long have you been doing this behind our backs?

FELIX: Dad, I don’t want to have this conversation with you right now. I think I need to go back to Olivia’s house so we can both calm down.

SISTER JACOBS: Hi Felix.

FELIX: Hi Sister Jacobs.

SISTER JACOBS: Please. Sit down. I’d love to talk with you.

FELIX: I’m not in the mood –

HENRY: Felix. Sit down.
FELIX: Why is she here?

HENRY: We asked her to come and talk to you. As a spiritual guide, we thought she could help you with this...moment of self-doubt.

FELIX: I’m not the one doubting me.

SISTER JACOBS: Please, Felix. I just want to talk.

FELIX: I don’t want to talk to you.

SISTER JACOBS: That’s fine. Then I’ll talk. Felix, what—

FELIX: Stop. I don’t want to listen to you. I just want to go.

SISTER JACOBS: Go where, Felix?

*FELIX starts to exit.*

SISTER JACOBS: To hell?

*BEAT.*

FELIX: Excuse me?

SISTER JACOBS: Felix, do you remember the story of Lucifer?

*BEAT.*

FELIX: Did you tell Mike he was going to hell, too?

SISTER JACOBS: This isn’t about Mike. This is about you.

FELIX: Yes, Sister Jacobs. I remember the story, and yes, I am going to hell. With Mike. We’re planning a barbecue. You’re invited if you want. Bring something, it’s potluck style.

*FELIX exits.*

SISTER JACOBS: Felix! Felix come back! (To HENRY) You were right. The child is troubled and needs help.

HENRY: What do you suggest?

SISTER JACOBS: I don’t know. I’m going to talk with the other leaders of the church and get back to you. Be gentle with him. He’s clearly unstable. Make it clear you want to help him. Good luck.

HENRY: Thank you.
SISTER JACOBS leaves.  KAREN enters.

HENRY: They left.
KAREN: I know.

BEAT.

KAREN: I don’t think we should stop him.
HENRY: I don’t think we can.
KAREN: If we try, he’ll just do it anyway, but without us.
HENRY: What changed your mind?

BEAT.

KAREN: Remember when Mike’s parents came over and they were outraged that he would dare be non-binary?
HENRY: Yeah?
KAREN: And we told them the story of Felix’s birth and how we vowed to love him no matter what? We felt so superior because if our child had come out as gay, straight, trans*, or whatever, we’d still love him because we love him unconditionally.
HENRY: We still do.
KAREN: Do we? He told us that he isn’t a boy with wings and we told him…we shut him down. We wouldn’t listen to him.
HENRY: He is a boy with wings, Karen. We aren’t the problem. He isn’t loving himself.

BEAT.

KAREN: Mike’s parents said he was a boy and not non-binary. That he was the problem. That he wasn’t loving himself for who he is.
HENRY: That’s different!
KAREN: How?!
HENRY: Because…Karen…
KAREN: Henry…
HENRY: What if he is a boy with wings and we let him destroy part of himself? Mutilate himself? Then we’ll be bad parents…Bad people…I don’t know if I could live with myself. It’s not like this is a reversible procedure! You can’t glue them back on! Once he does this there’s no going back. Is he sure enough to take that chance? How do I know? How does he know?

KAREN: I think he knows better than us and he’s been asking for this for almost a decade. How much longer does he have to consider this before you’re convinced? We can’t stop him, anyway. You said so yourself. Our choice isn’t whether we let him remove his wings or not. It’s whether we support him or not.

HENRY: Of course, we support him, but we don’t know anything about this surgery! He hasn’t told us anything about it. How safe is it? What are the risks? Isn’t it the first of its kind? Can he even survive without his wings? We don’t know anything about his anatomy. Does supporting him mean letting him do this, or does it mean guiding him to the less dangerous decision?

KAREN: That’s not how support works. We’re not the ones that get to choose what’s more helpful.

HENRY: Karen. I just don’t want to see him hurt, and…

KAREN: And what?

HENRY: And I’m scared. I’ve been scared since the day he came out of that flower. I’ve been scared every time I hear him cough. I was scared that first day of school when we dropped him off with those strangers.

KAREN: Henry –

HENRY: Remember when his friends pushed him out that window?

KAREN: He was fine and they didn’t push him. We’ve been over this –

HENRY: That day I realized I never want to see my son in the hospital again. I never want to sit helplessly by watching as other people take care of my son. He was crying, begging for the pain to stop and I couldn’t help him. I couldn’t make his pain go away. All I could do was yell out for help until a doctor came and injected something into him. I let the doctor decide what he needed without hesitation. I should have been a part of that decision, I should have asked, what’s that? What does it do? It’s my job to…to be a bumper between him and the outside world. So, he’s not facing it all alone.

KAREN: Henry, we can’t protect him forever.

HENRY: I know, but –
KAREN: And I worry…what if we’re what he needs to be protected from? While trying to protect him we…We made him feel bad for …everything. We’re no better than Mike’s parents.

HENRY: It’s not the –

KAREN: It is the same, Henry! We told him he was the devil. Sister Jacobs told him he was going to hell. We are just as bad and he deserves better.

HENRY: Well what should we have done?

KAREN: I keep running through it in my mind. Over and over. He tells me that he doesn’t like his wings. I made it about me and how he was hurting me and how I felt about his wings. If I could go back…“Mom, I don’t like my wings.” I would say…“why?” And then I’d listen. I’d hear why they bothered him and maybe at first, I’d tell him that I like them, but I’d then…try and help fix what was bothering him. But I never gave him the chance and now he has to fix it on his own because I…We’re already terrible, Henry, and we need to fix it.

HENRY: Karen?

KAREN: Henry, we can’t let him do this alone.

HENRY: So, we’re –

KAREN: Yes. We’re letting him remove the wings and we will be there. We will hold his hand. We will drive him home. We’ll take care of him and help him buy new clothes…

HENRY: Karen, I…I don’t know if I can do that…

KAREN: What do you mean?

HENRY: You’re asking me to support the destruction of my son’s beautiful wings.

KAREN: I’m asking you to support your child.

HENRY: I don’t think letting him hurt himself is supporting him.

KAREN: …How can I convince you?

HENRY: I don’t think you can. I…you can hold his hand and drive him home and buy him shirts, but I can’t. I won’t…I hand made all his shirts and he just…I can’t support this. I’m sorry.
HENRY tries to exit. KAREN stops him.

KAREN: Are you sure?

HENRY: ...I’m not sure of anything anymore. I have no idea who my own son is...I...

KAREN: You don’t want to miss being with him after surgery.

HENRY: ...I just need to...think...good-bye.

HENRY exits. FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Chapter five. I’m ready.

DR. DREW enter.

DR. DREW: Your vitals are good. How are you feeling?


DR. DREW: You haven’t eaten anything or had anything to drink for twelve hours?

FELIX: I have not. Hence, hungry.

DR. DREW: And you understand the possible risks of this surgery?

FELIX: Yes. Yes. We went over them in detail like, eight times. I’m ready.

DR. DREW: Alright. Just breathe normally and count backwards from 100.

FELIX: 100. 99…98…97…96…95…ninety…four…ninety…

FREEZE.
There is no one on stage. The stage is dark. Voices can be heard from all sides of the audience. There is a constant beeping from different parts of the room.

DR. DREW: Scalpel.

BEAT.

OLIVIA: Birdman.

DR. DREW: Clipping the wings at the base to decrease blood flow.

BEAT.

SISTER JACOBS: Absolute angel.

DR. DREW: Bone saw.

BEAT.

HENRY: I love you and your perfect wings.

DR. DREW: More suction, please.

BEAT.

HENRY: Are you happy?

DR. DREW: I need more light over here.

BEAT.

MIKE: Of course, you can fly!

BEAT.

DR. DREW: Someone read his BP to me, please.

KAREN: Why can’t you just love yourself like I love you?

BEAT.


BEAT.

DR. DREW: Two.

Long pause. Lights out.
FELIX: Is he beautiful?

Long pause. FREEZE.
DR. DREW enters.

DR. DREW: Chapter six. Post-op.

FELIX, OLIVIA, and MIKE enter.

DR. DREW: As you can see, the surgery was a success. We were able to remove the wings completely. The swelling will go down in a few days and he won’t be able to lay on his back for a while. There will be some scaring, but it will fade. We’ll want to keep an eye on him for a while, but if all goes well, you can take him home tomorrow. We’ve got him on a few medications right now, some pain killers and some antibiotics. Also, Felix asked me to read this to you, “Dear asshole friends that I love. Thank you for being here for me. I literally can’t thank you enough and I owe you lots of Halloween candy. If, however, you record me in my drugged out state after the surgery, I will be forced to throw your phones in a lake. If you post any such videos online in anyway, I will deep fry and eat your phones. Love you loads, Felix.”

OLIVIA: Damnit. I mean, yay! Felix doesn’t have wings, he’s okay and he loves us.

MIKE: Yeah. Yay…What if he doesn’t know about the video?

DR. DREW: I was just told to read his statement. I cannot speak for him.

FELIX wakes up.

DR. DREW: There he is. Our fallen angel. How are you feeling?

FELIX: Hi…I’m on my stomach…New mom and dad?

DR. DREW: Your friends Mike and Olivia are here. I was just telling them that the surgery was a success and you can go home tomorrow.

FELIX: Did you read the – success? Success? That means it worked, right? It worked? They’re…where are they? I want to stand. Let me stand! They were so heavy. Wings are supposed to make you fly, but mine were so heavy. Heavy wings plus gravity equals being pulled closer to the ground. Wings are supposed to pull you off the ground. Mine didn’t know how to be wings. Ha! And now they’re gone? Like, gone? So, they’re no longer on me? Nowhere? Not on me at all? No wings on me?

MIKE: Can we record a little bit of this?

FELIX: New mom! Is that you? Hi new mom! I need a ride. Oh, and take your stupid ace bandages! I don’t need them anymore. Woohoo.


FELIX: New dad! You’re here too! It’s a family reunion! …Is it a family reunion without spinach casserole?
DR. DREW: I'll leave you three alone.

KAREN rushes in.

KAREN: Felix!?

FELIX: That’s me!

KAREN: Felix. Are you alright?

DR. DREW: He’s perfectly fine. The surgery was a success and he can go home tomorrow.

KAREN: Oh, my god. He’s…he’s…

FELIX: Feeling lighter.

KAREN: He’s…my son. Felix.

FELIX: That’s me! I’m Felix!

KAREN: Yes. You are.

FREEZE.
FELIX, KAREN, OLIVIA, and MIKE enter.

KAREN: Chapter seven. Good night.

FELIX: Good night, mom.

MIKE: Uh-hmm!

FELIX: And new mom.

OLIVIA: Uh?

FELIX: And new dad…where’s old dad?

KAREN: He’s…he’s staying with a friend tonight. Don’t worry, he just needs some time.

FELIX: …He needs time?

KAREN: It’ll be alright.

FELIX: He needs time.

KAREN: I’m sorry.

FELIX: …

KAREN: You look beautiful. Your new night shirt…it’s looks good on you. It’s very Felix.

FELIX: Thank you, mom.

KAREN: Good night. Sweet dreams, my little an – sweet dreams, love.

KAREN exits.

MIKE: I’m sorry about your dad. You deserve better.

FELIX: I still have a home. I still have a mom. Maybe there’s hope?

OLIVIA: Yes, but don’t just wait for something that might not happen. If he wants to be in your life, that’s on him. He needs to earn a spot now.

FELIX: That’s awfully harsh.

MIKE: We’re just saying, we love you. Lean on us as much as you need. If he wants to come back, that’ll be nice, but you don’t need him.

FELIX: …okay. Thank you. I love you, and no offense Olivia, but I’m really happy I’m in my own bed tonight.
OLIVIA: Sleep well, birdman, and don’t think about how much effort I put into getting my guest room ready for you.

FELIX: I’m not a birdman anymore.

OLIVIA: I know. Sweet dreams.

MIKE: Good night.

MIKE and OLIVIA exit.

BEAT.

FELIX gets up and looks in a mirror that isn’t there. He turns. He turns. He turns. He backs up onto a wall and rubs his back against it. He bends forwards and backwards. He runs to his closet and pulls off his shirt. He tries on shirt after shirt and admires himself in the mirror. Optional: OLIVIA and MIKE enter with buckets of white feathers and pour a good layer of feathers on the floor. FELIX lies down shirtless on the floor and feels the feathers and the floor on his back. He feels how flat the floor is on his back. He takes a moment and then makes snow angels in the feathers. Black out.

FELIX: I’m beautiful.
A Censored Version of one of the scenes in Ugly Swan

FELIX enters.

FELIX: Chapter three. Debrief.

OLIVIA and MIKE enter.

OLIVIA: How’d it go?

MIKE: Sit down. We got your favorite movie set up.

FELIX: Movie?

MIKE: Love Actually.

FELIX: I do like that movie.

OLIVIA: What did they say?

MIKE: Would you like some ice cream? Popcorn?

FELIX: Shh. I just want to watch Love Actually.

OLIVIA: Okay.

OLIVIA starts the movie. FELIX, OLIVIA, and MIKE watch silently for a while. FELIX suddenly starts laughing.

OLIVIA: Felix?

FELIX: (Still laughing.) They tried to get me committed to a psychiatric facility.

MIKE: Oh, my god.

FELIX: (Still laughing.) I can never take it back. They know now. It’s out there.

OLIVIA: Are you okay?

FELIX: (Still laughing.) Danger to myself? Classic mom and dad!

MIKE: I’m sorry…

FELIX: (Still laughing.) I can’t take it back! I can’t take it back!

OLIVIA: Um…
FELIX: (Still laughing.) Yes, Bill Nighy! I feel it in my goddamn fingers and toes! Christmas is all around me so let the feeling... (Stops laughing.) I can’t take it back.

OLIVIA: Felix?

FELIX: I can’t – I can’t take it – I need to – Screw you Alan Rickman! Stop cheating on Emma Thompson! You don’t deserve her! (Starts yelling incoherently.)

MIKE: Yeah. That stupid Alan Rickman. The dirty bastard.

FELIX: I need my phone! Where’s my phone!? I can’t find my phone! Screw you phone! Screw you Alan Rickman! Screw you Mom! I don’t need you! Shut up, Dad! Weren’t you both supposed to love me?! Unconditionally?!! What the frick is wrong with you?!! It’s not me. There’s nothing wrong with me...well nothing much...You know what? Go shut the front door, Sister Jacobs! You frickin’ idiot for valuing my parent’s and the bible’s views on me over mine! They’re my fricking wings, you terrible teacher!! Lucifer, screw you for giving those of us who chose not to be angels a bad name! Shut up, Hugh Grant! Nobody cares about you! Aaaaaahh!

OLIVIA: Uh...

MIKE: Anyone else you want to curse out, or would you like some ice cream? I have cookie dough, butter scotch, and coffee gelato.

FELIX: ...coffee...

MIKE hands FELIX and pint of ice cream. FELIX greedily stuffs the ice cream into his mouth and starts crying.

MIKE: Hun, you don’t want brain freeze. I made you some cupcakes too, if you want.

FELIX nods yes, he wants a cupcake and MIKE hands him one.

FELIX: I just –

MIKE: Shh. You don’t have to say anything. It’s okay. Just eat.

FELIX: Mmmmmhm.

BEAT.

FELIX: Is it too late to cancel the appointment?

MIKE: What?
FELIX: If I just cancel it we can go back to normal. We can forget this ever happened. Where’s my phone? I need to call the doctor –

MIKE and OLIVIA: No!

FELIX: But –

MIKE and OLIVIA: No!

OLIVIA: You’ve always wanted this. It’s for you. You’re incomplete without it. You need this.

MIKE: The problem is them, remember? Not you. You need to take care of you first. That means getting the surgery and then dealing with their delicate feelings. You first.

FELIX: I want my mom and dad.

MIKE: I know. I know.

FELIX: I want –

MIKE: Shhh. It’s okay. It’s okay. Eat the cupcake.

FELIX: Colin Firth, stop trying to speak Portuguese. You can’t speak Portuguese. Oh, whatever. I still love you, Colin Firth.

BEAT.

FELIX: I’m scared.

MIKE: I know. I’m here for you.

OLIVIA: Me too.

FELIX: You’re my new mom and dad.

OLIVIA: I’m the dad, right?

FELIX: Of course.

OLIVIA: Good.

MIKE: Can I get a minivan and be a soccer mom?


OLIVIA: We love you.
MIKE: We love you so much, Felix.

FELIX: Thank you, new mom and dad.

FREEZE.
Ugly Swan as Performed on March 31st

By Rory Kennison
Dedicated to my Great Grandmother Peggy. Thank you for seeing the swan when the rest of the world only saw an ugly duckling.
Ugly Swan

Characters:

FELIX
OLIVIA
MIKE
KAREN
HENRY
SISTER JACOBS/HOLLY/WARTHOG/DOCTOR DREW

Staging:

Ideally the staging will be reminiscent of a bad school play with minimalist cardboard backdrops and minimal furniture. The costumes are important. Felix needs to have wings, Mike needs long frizzy hair, and there needs to be a difference between Sister Jacobs, Holly, the Warthog, and Doctor Drew. Ideally, Felix will be played by a transman who wears a binder and packer throughout the show. Ideally all the actors would be around the same age. The performance space would ideally be small, intimate and performed in the round with audience on all sides.
Prologue

_FELIX enters with a book. He opens the book and starts reading._

_FELIX:_ The Boy with Wings by Felix. (Not reading.) That’s me. (Reading.)
Prologue. (Not reading.) A prologue is a bit of the story that the author wants you to know before they officially start telling the story.

_Felix exits._
Is the Warthog Beautiful?

The stage is empty. MIKE walks in.

MIKE: Is the warthog Beautiful.

MIKE exits. SISTER JACOBS dressed as WARTHOG enters. FELIX, HENRY, and KAREN enter.

HENRY: Oh, look Felix! It’s the warthog.

FELIX: Oh.

WARTHOG: Ugh.

FELIX: Um…

KAREN: What is it?

WARTHOG: Rrrggghh.

FELIX: Is it…Is he…

HENRY: Is he what?

FELIX: Is he beautiful?

KAREN: Um…

KAREN stares at WARTHOG.

WARTHOG: Rrrrggghgg.

HENRY: Look over there! A lion!

KAREN: Oh, yes. I love lions.

KAREN and HENRY escort FELIX offstage.

WARTHOG: Mmmhg.

WARTHOG exits.
**KAREN** and **HENRY** enter.

**KAREN:** Once upon a time there were two people who loved each other very much.

**HENRY:** They loved each other so much that they wanted to have a child.

**KAREN:** But no matter how hard they tried, they couldn’t get pregnant.

**HENRY:** So, the husband went to the local witch and asked for help.

**KAREN:** The witch took pity on him and gave him a seed.

**HENRY:** She told him to plant the seed, and to love whatever sprouted unconditionally.

**KAREN:** The husband took home the seed and immediately planted it.

**HENRY:** The wife was sceptical, but she watered the seed and made sure it had plenty of sunlight.

**KAREN:** Slowly, a flower grew from the seed.

**HENRY:** It was a beautiful flower, but the husband and wife could never agree on what color it was.

**KAREN:** Until they discovered that the flower changed color.

**HENRY:** Gradually, but constantly.

**KAREN:** The wife loved the flower, but had given up hope that it would bring her a child.

**HENRY:** Until one day the wife sat by the flower and absentmindedly said

**HENRY and KAREN:** I love you.

**KAREN:** Then the flower melted away and a small baby sat in its place.

**HENRY:** It was a beautiful baby.

**KAREN:** Ten fingers, ten toes!

**HENRY:** And two wings!

*FELIX enters with the wings on.*

**KAREN:** That’s right, the child that the witch had gifted this couple had wings.

**HENRY:** But the moment the man and woman saw the baby and its wings, they knew.
HENRY and KAREN: I love this baby. I love his wings. I will never let anything harm him or his wings.

HENRY and KAREN exit.


Act 1

**FELIX:** *(Reading from book.)* Chapter one. The first day of school…or, at least, what I remember from the first day of school.

*FELIX exits. SISTER JACOBS enters and prepares her classroom for the first day. FELIX re-enters with KAREN and HENRY.*

**KAREN:** Excuse me? Sister Jacobs? I’m Karen. We called the other day about our child?

**SISTER JACOBS:** Ah, yes, and you must be Felix.

*FELIX hides behind his mother’s leg.*

**HENRY:** Yes. And you’re aware of his…condition?

**SISTER JACOBS:** Yes, yes. Don’t worry, he’ll have plenty of room for his wings and I’ll personally make sure the kids are nice to this little angel.

**KAREN:** Thank you very much, Sister Jacobs. *(To FELIX.)* Alright, it’s time for us to go.

**HENRY:** We love you very much sweetie, and we’ll see you soon.

*FELIX continues to hide from SISTER JACOBS.*

**KAREN:** I guess he’s a bit nervous.

**HENRY:** Which is understandable for a child with his condition.

**SISTER JACOBS:** Oh, it’s fine. Hi, Felix. Do you like books?

*Beat*

I’m going to read one of my favorite books out loud over here if you want to listen. *(Starts reading.)* Once upon a time there was an ugly duckling…

*FELIX finally moves away from his parents and sits quietly in front of SISTER JACOBS. KAREN and HENRY rush out. MIKE and OLIVIA enter.*

**SISTER JACOBS:** The other ducklings were mean to the ugly duckling, until one day the duckling grew up into a beautiful swan. Which one of you can tell me the moral of this story?

**OLIVIA:** You shouldn’t make fun of people ‘cause they’re ugly ‘cause they might be pretty one day.
MIKE: Ugly people can be pretty if they want to be pretty.

FELIX: I don’t get it.

SISTER JACOBS: What don’t you understand, Felix?

FELIX: Ducks can’t talk so how did they make fun of the ugly one?

MIKE: ‘cause it’s a story. Duh!

FELIX: Oh.

SISTER JACOBS: It’s just made up, Felix. It’s a pretend story that was written to teach a moral lesson.

FELIX: Oh.

SISTER JACOBS: Now, I know all your names, but do you know each other’s names?

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX look at each other.

SISTER JACOBS: I want you each to say your name and something about yourself. I’m Sister Jacobs and I have 3 dogs. Mike, what’s your name and tell us something about yourself.

MIKE: My name is Mike and I like the musical Annie.

OLIVIA: My name’s Olivia and like…. hot dogs with chili and cheese.

MIKE: That’s called a chili cheese dog.

OLIVIA: Same thing.

FELIX: Um… I’m Felix and I … have wings…

MIKE AND OLIVIA: WHAT!? Let me see! Let me see!

OLIVIA: Can you fly?

MIKE: How are they attached?

MIKE pulls on FELIX’s wing.

FELIX: Ow!

MIKE: How did that hurt?

MIKE is curious and inspects the wings.
SISTER JACOBS: Mike. Was that very nice?

MIKE: No.

SISTER JACOBS: Are you going to apologize?

MIKE: Sorry.

SISTER JACOBS: Mike. Let go of Felix. In this classroom, we keep our hands to ourselves.

MIKE: I’m not hurting him.

SISTER JACOBS: Leave him alone before I put you on a time out.

MIKE: Fine.

MIKE finally releases FELIX’s wing.

OLIVIA: Can you fly?

FELIX: No.

SISTER JACOBS: Olivia, it’s rude to ask people if they can fly.

OLIVIA: Why?

SISTER JACOBS: It just is. I think you owe Felix an apology.

OLIVIA: Sorry.

SISTER JACOBS: Thank you, Olivia. Felix, do you accept Olivia’s apology?

FELIX: Uh…yes?

SISTER JACOBS: Good. Mike, can you get out the crayons for the next activity?

MIKE: Huh?

SISTER JACOBS: Mike?

MIKE: What are they made of?

SISTER JACOBS: Mike, we do not ask people what their wings are made of. Next person to mention Felix’s wings will have letter sent home to their parents about their behaviour. Understood?

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX: Understood.

SISTER JACOBS: Good. Let’s move on. Mike. Get the crayons.
Freeze
FELIX: The first day of school. Lunch.

_SISTER JACOBS exits. MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX sit in a circle._

MIKE: So… how are they attached?

FELIX: What?

MIKE: The wings! How are the wings attached!? 

FELIX: Oh. Didn’t Sister Jacobs say she’d send our parents some angry mail if we kept talking about my wings?

MIKE: She can’t hear us if we whisper. So, how are they attached?

FELIX: Um…I don’t know. Magic maybe?

MIKE: Magic isn’t real.

OLIVIA: Yes, it is! My aunt said she saw the witch at the end of the forest planting flowers once.

MIKE: That’s not magic.

OLIVIA: Uh, witch! Duh.

FELIX: My parents say a witch brought me to life using a flower.

MIKE: That’s not how babies are made. I know how babies are made!

OLIVIA: Really? How?

MIKE: I…uh…can’t tell you, ‘cause, uh…you’re too young.

OLIVIA: We’re the same age!

_FREEZE_
FELIX: The first day of school. Pick up.

SISTER JACOBS enters. KAREN and HENRY enter.

KAREN: How was he?

HENRY: Did the other kids give him any trouble?

FELIX: Mom! Dad! Meet my friends: Mike and Olivia.

KAREN: Oh. Hi. Nice to meet you.

SISTER JACOBS: Felix was an absolute angel today.

HENRY: Thank you. Come on, honey, time to go.

KAREN: Say goodbye to your friends.


MIKE and OLIVIA: Bye!

KAREN, HENRY, and FELIX exit.
The stage is empty. FELIX enters.

FELIX: The next few chapters are not in chronological order. Their order is based on how I remember them. For this reason, the following chapters are not numbered, but instead will have a little introduction with my age and why the memory is important. For example: Sixteen years old. It was the first time I tried to hide them.

MIKE enters. Olivia enters. OLIVIA has the bandages and wraps up FELIX's torso so his wings stay flat. MIKE puts the button up shirt on FELIX and buttons it up. FELIX looks at the audience as if it were a mirror. FELIX sees someone he never thought possible. Someone that he’s not used to, but it’s the someone he wants to be. He adjusts the shirt and turns and turns and turns. He smiles. OLIVIA and MIKE give FELIX a thumbs up and pull out their phones and act as paparazzi. FELIX does his best struts and model poses.
OLIVIA enters dressed as a sheep.

OLIVIA: Ten years old. The Nativity play. The day I realized that Felix isn’t an angel.

FELIX: (From offstage.) No! Not again! I don’t want to!

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) Why wouldn’t you want to be the angel?

FELIX: (From offstage.) Because it’s stupid. I want to be a shepherd or a king!

MIKE: (From offstage.) I could be the angel if he won’t. I’d make a good angel.

FELIX: (From offstage.) He’d make an amazing angel!

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) Mike. Please go get into your Joseph costume.

MIKE: (From offstage.) But –

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) Go.

MIKE enters.

OLIVIA: Told you.

MIKE: Shut up, sheep.

OLIVIA: Baa baa.

MIKE sits next to OLIVIA.

FELIX: (From offstage.) I hate the costume.

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) But you look so good in it.

MIKE: Why is it so important that he’s the angel?

OLIVIA: He has wings.

MIKE: Shut up, sheep.

OLIVIA: Baa baa.

SISTER JACOBS: (From offstage.) Go get dressed, Felix. The show has been cast. We can’t do anything about it now.

FELIX: (From offstage.) NO!
SISTER JACOBS:  *(From offstage.*) Felix.

FELIX:  *(From offstage.*) No. I won’t do it. No.

SISTER JACOBS:  *(From offstage.*) Felix. Go get into costume before I decide to cut you from the play entirely. You have until the count of five before I call your parents.

FELIX:  *(From offstage.*) No, but –

SISTER JACOBS:  *(From offstage.*) One.

FELIX:  *(From offstage.*) Stop! Please!

SISTER JACOBS:  *(From offstage.*) Two.

FELIX:  *(From offstage.*) Fine!

    *FELIX enters. He grabs the angel costume and throws it.*

FELIX:  AAAAAAHAAAAAHAAAAH!!!

OLIVIA:  Felix?

FELIX:  Leave me alone!

    *FELIX picks up the angel costume, rips it and throws it again and sits down, sobbing. OLIVIA sits beside him and puts an arm around him. MIKE picks up the angel costume while FELIX and OLIVIA are distracted and puts it on. MIKE sits next to FELIX and puts an arm around him.*

OLIVIA:  Uh…Mike?

MIKE:  Shut up, sheep.

OLIVIA:  Baa baa.

    *FELIX laughs. FREEZE*
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Seven years old. The day I learned that I can’t fly.

MIKE enters.

MIKE: Of course, you can fly! You have wings! Duh!

FELIX: I can’t fly you dummy!

MIKE: But…you have wings! You just don’t know how to fly yet.

OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: So…can he learn to fly?

MIKE: …yes. Uh…birds don’t know how to fly when they’re born. They have to learn it!

OLIVIA: How do birds learn to fly?

MIKE: I saw it on Looney Tunes. They jump out of the nest and flap their wings.

FELIX: I can’t move my wings. I can’t fly!

MIKE: Felix! You can fly! Birds fly and you have wings like birds!

FELIX: But –

OLIVIA: We don’t have a nest to push Felix out of.

MIKE: What about your treehouse?

OLIVIA: What if he doesn’t fly the first time?

MIKE: Then we throw him out of the treehouse again.

OLIVIA: But he could get hurt! I have a better idea. My dad read me the Harry Potter book.

MIKE: Which one? There’s more than one!

OLIVIA: The first one, duh! But they can make things fly with magic.

MIKE: Magic isn’t real.

OLIVIA: Yes, it is! My mom and dad saw a witch once!

MIKE: That’s not magic!
OLIVIA: She was a witch! Duh. Also, without magic, how does Felix have wings?

FELIX: Can we try Olivia’s idea first? Then we’ll try yours.

MIKE: It won’t work, though.

FELIX: It could be fun, though.

MIKE: …fine, but when it doesn’t work you have to admit that you were wrong and I was right.

OLIVIA: Fine.

MIKE: So, what do we do?

OLIVIA: Um…Hang on. I need to go get the book!

OLIVIA exits.

MIKE: Why don’t you want to fly? I’d love to fly.

FELIX: I can’t fly. I don’t want to fall.

MIKE: But if you could fly, then you could fly away. Far away. No adults would be able to find you.

FELIX: Yeah. I know. I wish I could fly, but I can’t fly.

MIKE: You can fly, Felix, and when you do, will you take me with you? Away from all these…adults?

FELIX: I don’t know. I don’t think I can fly, but if I can, I know I’m not going anywhere without you and Olivia.

MIKE: Really?

FELIX: I don’t want to be all alone in the sky. So I’ll take you two with me. It’ll be the three of us. Eating star dust and sleeping on the clouds.

MIKE: Like a castle in the sky. A castle with a moat made of air. No one could find us and tell us to go home.

FELIX: You and Olivia could be the King and Queen.

MIKE: I want to be the Queen.

FELIX: Mike?

MIKE: Yeah?
FELIX: Why do you want to be a girl?

MIKE: I don’t! I don’t want to be a girl! Ew! Shut up! I just want to be me. I would be a better Queen than a King, that’s all.

FELIX: Okay. I could be the prince then.

MIKE: That would make you my child.

FELIX: Would you be my dad or my mom?

MIKE: A queen is a mom. Duh.

FELIX: Okay, mom.

OLIVIA enters with the book.

OLIVIA: Got it!

FELIX: Okay, so what do we do?


MIKE: Win…gard…um…le…veo…sa?

FELIX: Win…gard…um…uh…sa?

OLIVIA: I think we need to say it faster. Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa.

MIKE: Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa.

FELIX: Win-gard-um-le-sa.

OLIVIA: No! No, it’s Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa.

FELIX: Win-gard-um-le-

OLIVIA: Veo

FELIX: Veo

OLIVIA: Sa

FELIX: Sa

OLIVIA and MIKE: Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa

FELIX: Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa!
OLIVIA and MIKE:  Yay!

BEAT.

MIKE:  He’s not flying.
OLIVIA:  Maybe if he’s jumping on the trampoline?
MIKE:  Why would that help?
OLIVIA:  If he says it while he’s in the air it might work better.
MIKE:  …fine.

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX start jumping up and down.

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX:  Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa!  Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa!

MIKE:  He’s still not flying!
OLIVIA:  I have another idea.  Hang on.

OLIVIA exits while MIKE and FELIX continue jumping.

OLIVIA enters with a broom.

OLIVIA:  Here.  Hold this.  Sometimes Harry Potter uses a broom to fly.
FELIX:  How?
OLIVIA:  Just…hold it.

FELIX takes the broom.  OLIVIA, MIKE and FELIX continue jumping.

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX:  Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa!  Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa!

MIKE:  He’s still not flying!  Admit it!  You were wrong!
OLIVIA:  But…we…
FELIX:  I think it’s working.
MIKE:  It’s not!  Olivia!  You were wrong!
OLIVIA:  Fine!  He can’t fly!
MIKE: He can fly! He has wings! And I’m going to prove it! Olivia, can we go to your room and try something?

OLIVIA: Fine.

FREEZE.
FELIX: Later that day. In Olivia’s room. Mike is proving his point.

MIKE: This should be high enough.

OLIVIA: So, he’ll jump off the top bunk and…fly?

MIKE: No, he needs to jump outside so he doesn’t hit his head when he flies up.

FELIX: So why don’t we go back to the trampoline?

MIKE: You don’t need the trampoline. You just need to jump out that window.

FELIX: I’ll fall.

MIKE: You’ll fly.

OLIVIA: What if he doesn’t fly on the first try, though?

MIKE: What?

OLIVIA: Baby birds don’t always fly on the first try. Felix could get hurt from this height if he doesn’t get the hang of it right away.

MIKE: Uh…what if he landed on the trampoline?

OLIVIA: I guess that would be safe, but how would we make sure of that?

MIKE: I’ll drop a stuffy and see where it lands, then we’ll move the trampoline there.

OLIVIA: …okay.

FELIX: Really?

OLIVIA: If you land on the trampoline you’ll be fine.

FELIX: Yeah, I guess.

MIKE: Okay! It’s decided.

MIKE takes a stuffed animal and exits through the window.

MIKE: Olivia! Can you move the trampoline so it’s over McStuffles IV?

OLIVIA: Why can’t you?

MIKE: You’re stronger than me.

OLIVIA: True. Felix: don’t go out the window until I come back.
FELIX: Wasn’t planning on it.

OLIVIA exits. MIKE enters.

MIKE: Hey! If we tie this sheet around you, then you’ll have a parachute!

MIKE grabs a sheet and ties it around FELIX’s neck. OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: The trampoline is in place. What are you wearing?

MIKE: A parachute!

OLIVIA: …should he wear my bike helmet?

OLIVIA puts the pink bike helmet on FELIX.

MIKE: Yeah! Now he can jump!

FELIX: Uh…

MIKE: Come on. You’re going to fly.

FELIX: I can’t fly.

OLIVIA: You’ll land on the trampoline. It’ll be fine.

MIKE: It’s perfectly safe for someone who can fly.

FELIX: I can’t fly!

MIKE exits through window. OLIVIA follows.

MIKE: Please do it! For me! Do it for the castle in the sky. We can get there, we can leave and sleep on clouds! Just, try. Just try to fly.

FELIX exits through window.

FELIX: (Off stage.) I can’t fly!

FELIX enters.

FELIX: I wish I could say I chickened out. I wish I could say I didn’t fall for peer pressure…pun intended…I wish I’d refuted Mike’s logic or that I told an adult about our plans.

I can’t though. I can’t say any of it. What I can say is, don’t jump off a roof. Even if you land on a trampoline, you will bounce off that trampoline and break your arm as you land hard on the ground.
MIKE enters.

MIKE: Yeah…How many times have I apologised for that?

OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: Only a few more times than you’ve mentioned that if he’d just landed on his wings he might have had them amputated.

MIKE: It’s true, isn’t it?

FELIX: We’re not having this conversation again.

MIKE: Sorry…again.

FELIX: I forgave you thirteen years ago.

MIKE: Then why do I still feel bad?

OLIVIA: You pressured your best friend to jump off a roof?

MIKE: That might be it.

FELIX: It’s okay. I don’t know if I ever apologised for not getting you that castle in the sky.

MIKE: Well…I suppose you’re forgiven then.

FELIX: Thanks, Mike.

FREEZE.
OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: Nine years old. The Felix-is-not-a-dyke incident.

FELIX and MIKE enter and sit next to OLIVIA. Holly enters.

HOLLY: Look! It’s two fairies and a dyke!

OLIVIA: Holly was nine, and it seemed that she was awfully proud of her above grade level insult. I wouldn’t have cared or even noticed if Felix hadn’t –

FELIX: (Standing up.) I am not a dyke!

OLIVIA: Of course, everyone laughed at us, not with us, but they always laughed at us. Felix didn’t always stand up for me, though.

HOLLY: Watch out. The two fairies and a dyke are heading this way!

OLIVIA: Our new unofficial group name stuck, and Mike insisted that we form a band just to put the name to good use. It’s already put to good use, though.

HOLLY exits.

OLIVIA: Felix and Mike are easy targets, so it’s often on me to protect our little family of two fairies and a dyke. When Felix and Mike aren’t around the other kids think that gives them special permission to be nasty about my best friends. I’ve stood up for those useless fairies more times than I can count, but that day Felix stood up for me.

BEAT.

I often wonder what drew our little group together. Was it some cosmic force, or was it just coincidence? I remember Mike making Felix laugh about something other than the stupid wings. I remember Holly pulling my hair and Mike jumping in to fix it and make me feel better. I remember Felix sitting for hours listening to my rambling stories…like this one. There was no one singular force that created our friendship, but it certainly didn’t hurt that we saw past what made each of us little weirdos, and instead saw the little people we wanted to be friends with.

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Fifteen years old. Mike comes out.

MIKE and OLIVIA enter. MIKE pulls out a phone and types something out. FELIX and OLIVIA's phones go off and they look at the message.

OLIVIA: So, you're non-binary, but you still like he/him pronouns?

FELIX: That actually explains a lot.

MIKE: Excuse me?

FELIX: You just...are non-binary. It just makes a lot of sense.

OLIVIA: Thanks for telling us. If you need anything, we'll be there.

MIKE: ...Can you be a bit more dramatic about it? I thought this was going to be a whole thing, you know? Like on TV.

OLIVIA: You're a ...transgender!? For how long? Why didn't you tell us sooner?

FELIX: Oh, my god, Olivia, we don't know our friend Mike at all! We're terrible friends!

OLIVIA: Mike deserves better than us!

FELIX: Yes. I'm sorry, Mike, but we can't be your friends anymore.

OLIVIA: It's just not fair to you.

MIKE: ...Thanks guys. You're the best!

OLIVIA: Anytime, br-can I still call you bro?

MIKE: Um...

OLIVIA: Friend?

MIKE: Yeah. I like that.

OLIVIA: Okay, friend.

FELIX: You're still my fairy-buddy, right?

MIKE: Always.

FELIX: Good.
OLIVIA: Two fairies and a dyke.
MIKE: Two fairies and a dyke.
FELIX: Two fairies and a dyke.

FREEZE.
MIKE enters.

MIKE: Seventeen years old. Olivia comes out. We were dying our hair together.

OLIVIA and FELIX enter.

MIKE: Red Passion for Felix, Green Ivy for me and Olivia, you asked for Purple Punk?

OLIVIA: Yeah.

MIKE: Alright. Felix, I’ll start with you. Sit here –

OLIVIA: Wait!

FELIX: What?

OLIVIA: Um…I wanted purple dye because…I …

MIKE: Yeah?

OLIVIA: Purple is…one of the main colors of the asexual flag?

FELIX: Really?

OLIVIA: Yeah…purple, white, grey, and black.

MIKE: Yeah? That’s cool. And subtle. I like it. And purple would really bring out your eyes.

FELIX: So…you’re asexual?


MIKE: No, no, I totally get it! That’s how I feel about being non-binary. Like, I’m pretty sure I’m non-binary, but there’s not really a test to confirm it. I just know that it feels truer than anything else.

OLIVIA: Exactly. It just feels like who I am.

FELIX: So, you’re not sexually attracted to anyone?

OLIVIA: More like little to no attraction. And I still feel romantic attraction.

FELIX: Okay. That’s cool.

MIKE: Yeah. Because you’re cool, Olivia.

OLIVIA: Uh…thanks.
MIKE: Now sit down, Felix so I can put this awful smelling goo into your hair.

FREEZE.
OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: Eight years old. Felix comes out.

MIKE and OLIVIA enter.

OLIVIA: Birdman!

FELIX: Stop it! I’m not a birdman.

MIKE: You have wings like a bird, birdman.

FELIX: No! I’m not a birdman. You know I can’t fly or even move my wings. I’m a boy with stupid, useless wings!

OLIVIA: You’re not a magic birdman?

FELIX: No. I’m a muggle with stupid wings.

MIKE: But magic Birdman is cooler.

FELIX: No. I’m muggle Felix.

OLIVIA: Okay, fine, muggle Felix with stupid wings.

MIKE: …Birdman?

FELIX: No!

MIKE: Flightless Birdman?

FELIX: Muggle Felix.

MIKE: Muggle Felix with wings? Can we call you that?

OLIVIA: That’s your new nick name, muggle Felix with wings.

FELIX: Um…aren’t nick names supposed to be short?

MIKE: Classic muggle Felix with wings!

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Thirteen years old. The second time I suggested getting rid of my wings.

KAREN enters.

FELIX: Mom? I was just wondering –

KAREN: Yes, honey? What is it?

FELIX: I don’t like my wings –

KAREN: Not this again.

FELIX: Mom!

KAREN: No. Why can’t you just love yourself like I love you?

FELIX: I do love myself –

KAREN: Your wings are a part of you!

FELIX: I don’t like them!

KAREN: Don’t yell at me!

FELIX: ...I’m sorry, it’s just –

KAREN: Do you remember the story of Lucifer?

FELIX: The devil?

KAREN: Yes. You remember that he wasn’t always the devil, though. He was an angel like you.

FELIX: I’m not –

KAREN: Then he fell. He went against God’s intentions and now he’s the most evil being in the world.

FELIX: Mom –

KAREN: You are my little angel, Felix. A gift from god. I would be a terrible mother if I let you go the way of Lucifer.

FELIX: I don’t think covering my wings will make me the devil…

KAREN: …You’re grounded.

FELIX: What?!
KAREN: It’s clear to me that you need some time to clear your head and relearn how to appreciate your unique gift. I’m also going to take you to church three times a week.

FELIX: For how long?

KAREN: Until this unfortunate phase ends.

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Six years old. Our first Halloween.

OLIVIA and MIKE enter.

MIKE: You ask.

OLIVIA: You can do it.

MIKE: Please. You’re better at it then me.

OLIVIA: Better at what?

MIKE: Talking.

OLIVIA: You’re talking just fine now!

MIKE: Pleeeaaase, Liv.

OLIVIA: Fine. (To FELIX.) Do you know Harry Potter?

FELIX: Like…the book? Or does he go here?

OLIVIA: The book. Mike and I want to dress as Harry, Ron, and Hermione for Halloween, but there’s only two of us.

FELIX: You want me to dress as Ron or Harry for Halloween with you?

MIKE: Ron! We want you to be Ron.

OLIVIA: You have the perfect freckles for Ron.

FELIX: Ron…doesn’t have wings.

OLIVIA: So? I don’t have a scar like Harry, but I’m still going to dress up as him.

MIKE: It’s Halloween. You can be whatever you want to be. If you want to be Ron who doesn’t have wings, you should!

OLIVIA: It would suit you.

FELIX: Wait. If Livia is dressing up as Harry than –

MIKE: Don’t I have the hair for Hermione?

FELIX: …So Olivia is Harry, you’re Hermione and I’m Ron…Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

OLIVIA: You’ll do it?
FELIX: Yeah. I’ll do it.

FREEZE.
**FELIX enters.**

**FELIX:** Sixteen years old. Our best Halloween.

*OLIVIA and MIKE enter. OLIVIA wraps FELIX’s wings with bandages. MIKE puts a white button down shirt on FELIX. OLIVIA ties a red tie around FELIX’s neck and MIKE puts a shitty costume robe on FELIX. FELIX’s hair should either be natural, a cruddy costume wig or bad temporary dye. OLIVIA and MIKE then get into their costumes. MIKE as Hermione and OLIVIA as Harry.*

**MIKE:** Finally!

**OLIVIA:** Let me mess up your hair a little bit more, Mike. You’re not quite to Hermione frizz yet.

**FELIX:** I have the eyeliner. Olivia, look at me so I can draw your scar.

**OLIVIA:** Okay. Mike, can you look a t Felix for me and make sure he has enough freckles?

**MIKE:** On it! Then can you tie my tie?

**FELIX:** I don’t know how to tie a tie.

**OLIVIA:** He was talking to me.

**FELIX:** Right. Mike, did you bring the glasses?

**MIKE:** They’re on the table.

**OLIVIA:** You’re done with my scar?

**FELIX:** Yup.

*OLIVIA puts on the glasses and her Harry Potter costume is complete.*

**OLIVIA:** Come here, Mike. You are going to be Hermione this year, god damn it!

**FELIX:** Finally!

**MIKE:** I still don’t understand why it was such a big deal. I’m not hurting anyone by dressing as my favourite Harry Potter character.

**FELIX:** Not according to your mom. You were “traumatizing the younger members of our good Christian town.”
OLIVIA: Stop it. None of that matters now. Secret Halloween!

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX: SECRET HALLOWEEN!

OLIVIA: And we have our very first wingless Ronald Weasley!

FELIX: Bloody Hell.

MIKE: I remember that year we had our costumes on and your parents wouldn’t let you leave the house until they cut holes in your robe for the wings.

OLIVIA: Shhh. They don’t matter tonight. Secret Halloween! I’ll set up the movie. Which one first?

FELIX and MIKE: Sorcerer’s Stone!

OLIVIA: Mike, get the snacks.

FELIX: What should I do?

OLIVIA: Set up the cushions and turn out the lights.

FELIX sets up a Pinterest worthy movie watching set up with blankets, pillows, and stuffed animals. MIKE brings in a giant feast of Harry Potter themed candy, popcorn, and some Halloween treats. OLIVIA joins once the movie is “set up.”

OLIVIA: Secret Halloween?

FELIX and MIKE: Secret Halloween!

Blackout.
Act 2

FELIX enters.

FELIX: Sometimes, books have multiple parts, like acts in a play. This is the end of part one and the beginning of part two. This part of the book is going to be a bit different. Part one was a series of past events. Part two is a series of events as they happen.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Part two, chapter one. Preparation.

MIKE and OLIVIA enter.

OLIVIA: Well?

FELIX: It’s all set up. Everything’s in place.

MIKE: But –

OLIVIA: Did you tell them yet?

FELIX: I…do I have to?

MIKE and OLIVIA: Yes.

MIKE: No more hiding.

OLIVIA: You can’t tell them after the fact.

MIKE: Felix, honey, where are you going?

OLIVIA: Oh, just a secret surgery to remove the part of me that you love most. Bye!

MIKE: We will gladly take care of you afterwards –

OLIVIA: And we’re all set to drive you home –

MIKE: But they should at least know.

FELIX: I know…it’s just been so long…I’ve been keeping up this…double life for so long. It feels like my life is a spinning plate balancing on a stick and part of what’s keeping the plate up are the lies and persona I take on around my parents. Once I take those away…it feels like the plate’s going to fall.

BEAT.

OLIVIA: Then we’ll catch the plate.

MIKE: There’s a net under the stick. If the plate falls, it’ll still be intact.

OLIVIA: And we’ll help you get it spinning again.

BEAT.

FELIX: So…I just tell them…I…don’t know how to start it.

MIKE: Do you want us to come with you? Like you and Olivia did for me?
FELIX: Your parents hated that we were there.

MIKE: But I didn’t. It was just nicer to be three against two instead of two against one.

FELIX: Yeah…I want to do this on my own.

OLIVIA: Will you, though?

FELIX: What?

OLIVIA: How many times have you tried to tell them and then at the last second didn’t? You might want us as just a little push. Just to make sure this time it happens.

FELIX: …Did you see the last episode of iZombie? Do you think Ravi –

OLIVIA: Really, Felix?

MIKE: Twenty years and you still haven’t learned a thing about subtlety.

OLIVIA: Remember “speaking of who stole your Halloween candy, did you know that children were often very short in the eighteen hundreds?”

MIKE: My favorite will always be, “Felix, what did you think of last night’s reading?”

OLIVIA: “I…can’t read. Sesame street failed me.”

FELIX: I’m not that bad…anymore.

OLIVIA: “You should tell your parents that you’re planning on cutting off your wings.” “Did you catch last night’s episode of iZombie?”

FELIX: I was just a bit…I’m not…Just –

MIKE: Felix! It’s okay. We love you and your lack of subtlety.

OLIVIA: So, do you want us there when you tell them, or not?

BEAT.

FELIX: No. I want to do this myself.

MIKE: You sure?

FELIX: Yeah.

OLIVIA: Okay. Text us as soon as it happens.
FELIX: What?

OLIVIA: We want to support you. Do you want to come over to my place afterwards? So, you don’t have to be alone and you can give them some time to digest?

FELIX: Yeah…that sounds good.

OLIVIA: Okay. Mike and I will wait for you, then.

MIKE: Good luck.

MIKE embraces FELIX. OLIVIA squeezes them both.

OLIVIA: You are valid.

MIKE: We support you.

OLIVIA: No matter what, you always have us.


FELIX: Okay. Okay. Stop, you’re making me cry. I have to get home…I love you guys.

OLIVIA and MIKE: Love you!

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Chapter two. Uh….

HENRY, and KAREN enter.

FELIX: Um…

KAREN: You won’t believe what Jesse did today.

HENRY: There’s very little I wouldn’t believe when it comes to Jesse.

FELIX: Mom…Dad –

HENRY: Not now, Honey. Your mother’s talking.

KAREN: So, Jesse –

FELIX: Stop!

HENRY: Felix! We do not interrupt! You will wait your turn!

FELIX: No. I need to say something now.

KAREN: Whatever it is, it can wait.

FELIX: But –

HENRY: Felix, what could you possibly need to say that can’t wait until your mother is done with her Jesse story?

FELIX: I need to say it before I change my mind!

HENRY: About what?

FELIX: Telling you…

KAREN: Felix –

FELIX: My wings…

HENRY: Just say whatever it is!

FELIX: I’m cutting them off!

HENRY: Excuse me?

KAREN: Not this again. You are not mutilating yourself. Your wings are –
FELIX: I am! I’m…I have a …an appointment with a doctor – surgeon! I’ve been working with him for a while. I raised enough money…It’s happening next week.

BEAT.

FELIX: Please say something.

HENRY: No.

FELIX: No –

KAREN: Cancel it. The appointment.

FELIX: I –

HENRY: You are not having the surgery.

KAREN: How long have you been planning this behind our backs?

FELIX: I…two years…My therapist agrees –

HENRY: We need to get a new therapist, call up this surgeon, maybe check him into a mental facility. He’s a danger to himself.


FELIX: I…I’m an adult! I like my therapist and I’m keeping the appointment.

HENRY: See! He’s a danger to himself. He’s not in his right mind.

FELIX: Stop! I’m fine. The problem isn’t me. I know who I am and I know what I want. I want… my outside to match my inside. I want to be me! I’m not the problem. I’m…You’re the problem –

HENRY: Felix!

FELIX: Dad! I’ve known pretty much all my life that my wings aren’t a part of me. They’re extra. They hurt my back. They restrict my fashion choices. I’m not me when there are wings on my back. This isn’t something I just decided on a whim. This is what I need to be whole. You two are not going to ruin this for me.

KAREN: But, Felix.

FELIX: This isn’t a discussion. I didn’t even have to tell you. Olivia and Mike have agreed to take care of me after the surgery. I’m just letting you know so you didn’t have to find out after the fact.

BEAT.
KAREN: Why didn’t you talk to us sooner?

FELIX: …I did. I did talk to you already. I was…thirteen…You likened my desire to be wingless to being the devil himself. I got the message and stopped talking about it after that.

HENRY: This is a lot to take in –

FELIX: I know…I need to go.

HENRY: Where?

FELIX: I just… Good night. I love you.

*FELIX exits.*

HENRY: Do we go after him?

KAREN: Did we do something wrong?

*HENRY embraces KAREN.*

HENRY: Yes. I’m not sure what it was, but we most certainly did something wrong. That’s what parents do.

KAREN: Do you think the witch would ever forgive us?

HENRY: I don’t know, darling. I don’t know.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Chapter three. Debrief.

OLIVIA and MIKE enter.

OLIVIA: How’d it go?

MIKE: Sit down. We got your favorite movie set up.

FELIX: Movie?

MIKE: *Love Actually*.

FELIX: I do like that movie.

OLIVIA: What did they say?

MIKE: Would you like some ice cream? Popcorn?

FELIX: Shh. I just want to watch *Love Actually*.

OLIVIA: Okay.

OLIVIA starts the movie. FELIX, OLIVIA, and MIKE watch silently for a while. FELIX suddenly starts laughing.

OLIVIA: Felix?

FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* They tried to get me committed to a psychiatric facility.

MIKE: Oh, my god.

FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* I can never take it back. They know now. It’s out there.

OLIVIA: Are you okay?

FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* Danger to myself? Classic mom and dad!

MIKE: I’m sorry…

FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* I can’t take it back! I can’t take it back!

OLIVIA: Um…

FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* Yes, Bill Nighy! I feel it in my goddamn fingers and toes! Christmas is all around me so let the feeling…*(Stops laughing.)* I can’t take it back.
OLIVIA: Felix?

FELIX: I can’t – I can’t take it – I need to – Fuck you Alan Rickman! Stop cheating on Emma Thompson! You don’t deserve her! (Starts yelling incoherently.)

MIKE: Yeah. Fuck Alan Rickman. The dirty bastard.

OLIVIA: Alan Rickman isn’t even on screen yet.

MIKE: Sh!

FELIX: I need my phone! Where’s my phone!? Fuck! I can’t find my fucking phone! Fuck you phone! Fuck you Alan Rickman! Fuck you Mom! I don’t need you! Fuck you Dad! Weren’t you both supposed to fucking love me?! Unconditionally?! What the fuck is wrong with you??! It’s not me. There’s nothing fucking wrong with me…well nothing much…You know what? Go fuck yourself Sister Jacobs! Fuck you for valuing my fucking parent’s and the fucking bible’s views on me over mine! They’re my fucking wings, you fucking terrible teacher!! Fuck!!! Lucifer, fuck you for giving those of us who chose not to be angels a bad name! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Shut the fuck up, Hugh Grant! Nobody fucking cares about your fucking ass! Go fuck yourself! Aaaaaahh!

OLIVIA: Uh…

MIKE: Anyone else you want to curse out, or would you like some ice cream? I have cookie dough, butter scotch, and coffee gelato.

FELIX: …coffee…

MIKE hands FELIX a pint of ice cream. FELIX greedily stuffs the ice cream into his mouth and starts crying.

MIKE: Hun, you don’t want brain freeze. I made you some cupcakes too, if you want.

FELIX nods yes, he wants a cupcake and MIKE hands him one.

FELIX: I just –

MIKE: Shh. You don’t have to say anything. It’s okay. Just eat.

FELIX: Mmmmmhm.

BEAT.

FELIX: Is it too late to cancel the appointment?
MIKE: What?

FELIX: If I just cancel it we can go back to normal. We can forget this ever happened. Where’s my phone? I need to call the doctor –

MIKE and OLIVIA: No!

FELIX: But –

MIKE and OLIVIA: No!

OLIVIA: You’ve always wanted this. It’s for you. You’re incomplete without it. You need this.

MIKE: The problem is them, remember? Not you. You need to take care of you first. That means getting the surgery and then dealing with their delicate feelings. You first.

FELIX: I want my mom and dad.

MIKE: I know. I know.

FELIX: I want –

MIKE: Shhh. It’s okay. It’s okay. Eat the cupcake.

FELIX: Colin Firth, stop trying to speak Portuguese. You can’t speak Portuguese. Oh, whatever. I still love you, Colin Firth.

BEAT.

FELIX: I’m scared.

MIKE: I know. I’m here for you.

OLIVIA: Me too.

FELIX: You’re my new mom and dad.

OLIVIA: I’m the dad, right?

FELIX: Of course.

OLIVIA: Good.

MIKE: Can I get a minivan and be a soccer mom?

OLIVIA: We love you.
MIKE: We love you so fucking much, Felix.
FELIX: Thank you, new mom and dad.

FREEZE.
Chapter four. If at first you don’t succeed, try again. I stayed at Olivia’s house that night and went home in the morning in hopes that my parents had calmed down a bit and were ready to support me.

FELIX enters. His wings are strapped down.

KAREN, HENRY, and SISTER JACOBS enter.

KAREN: Oh, my god. You already got it done. We’re too late.

FELIX: No! No. I just wrapped them up with some ace bandages. See? There’s a little bump. They’re still there.

KAREN: I can’t…Why would you do that? Hide yourself from the world? I just…can’t

KAREN cries and dramatically exits.

HENRY: Are you happy? You made your mother cry.


HENRY: Can’t you see how you’re hurting us?

FELIX: I –

HENRY: Whose shirt are you wearing?

FELIX: Mine. It’s my shirt.

HENRY: You don’t own any shirts that don’t have holes for your wings.

FELIX: None that you know about.

BEAT.

HENRY: How long have you been doing this behind our backs?

FELIX: Dad, I don’t want to have this conversation with you right now. I think I need to go back to Olivia’s house so we can both calm down.

SISTER JACOBS: Hi Felix.

FELIX: Hi Sister Jacobs.

SISTER JACOBS: Please. Sit down. I’d love to talk with you.

FELIX: I’m not in the mood –

HENRY: Felix. Sit down.
FELIX: Why is she here?

HENRY: We asked her to come and talk to you. As a spiritual guide, we thought she could help you with this...moment of self-doubt.

FELIX: I’m not the one doubting me.

SISTER JACOBS: Please, Felix. I just want to talk.

FELIX: I don’t want to talk to you.

SISTER JACOBS: That’s fine. Then I’ll talk. Felix, what—

FELIX: Stop. I don’t want to listen to you. I just want to go.

SISTER JACOBS: Go where, Felix?

_FELIX starts to exit._

SISTER JACOBS: To hell?

_BEAT._

FELIX: Excuse me?

SISTER JACOBS: Felix, do you remember the story of Lucifer?

_BEAT._

FELIX: Did you tell Mike he was going to hell, too?

SISTER JACOBS: This isn’t about Mike. This is about you.

FELIX: Yes, Sister Jacobs. I remember the story, and yes, I am going to hell. With Mike. We’re planning a barbecue. You’re invited if you want. Bring something, it’s potluck style.

_FELIX exits._

SISTER JACOBS: Felix! Felix come back! (To HENRY) You were right. The child is troubled and needs help.

HENRY: What do you suggest?

SISTER JACOBS: I don’t know. I’m going to talk with the other leaders of the church and get back to you. Be gentle with him. He’s clearly unstable. Make it clear you want to help him. Good luck.

HENRY: Thank you.
HENRY: They left.

KAREN: I know.

BEAT.

KAREN: I don’t think we should stop him.

HENRY: I don’t think we can.

KAREN: If we try, he’ll just do it anyway, but without us.

HENRY: What changed your mind?

BEAT.

KAREN: Remember when Mike’s parents came over and they were outraged that he would dare be non-binary?

HENRY: Yeah?

KAREN: And we told them the story of Felix’s birth and how we vowed to love him no matter what? We felt so superior because if our child had come out as gay, straight, trans*, or whatever, we’d still love him because we love him unconditionally.

HENRY: We still do.

KAREN: Do we? He told us that he isn’t a boy with wings and we told him…we shut him down. We wouldn’t listen to him.

HENRY: He is a boy with wings, Karen. We aren’t the problem. He isn’t loving himself.

BEAT.

KAREN: Mike’s parents said he was a boy and not non-binary. That he was the problem. That he wasn’t loving himself for who he is.

HENRY: That’s different!

KAREN: How?!

HENRY: Because…Karen!

KAREN: Henry?
HENRY: What if he is a boy with wings and we let him destroy part of himself? Mutilate himself? Then we’ll be bad parents…Bad people…I don’t know if I could live with myself. It’s not like this is a reversible procedure! You can’t glue them back on! Once he does this there’s no going back. Is he sure enough to take that chance? How do I know? How does he know?

KAREN: I think he knows better than us and he’s been asking for this for almost a decade. How much longer does he have to consider this before you’re convinced? We can’t stop him, anyway. You said so yourself. Our choice isn’t whether we let him remove his wings or not. It’s whether we support him or not.

HENRY: Of course, we support him, but we don’t know anything about this surgery! He hasn’t told us anything about it. How safe is it? What are the risks? Isn’t it the first of its kind? Can he even survive without his wings? We don’t know anything about his anatomy. Does supporting him mean letting him do this, or does it mean guiding him to the less dangerous decision?

KAREN: That’s not how support works. We’re not the ones that get to choose what’s more helpful.

HENRY: Karen. I just don’t want to see him hurt, and…

KAREN: And what? Henry –

HENRY: Remember when his friends pushed him out that window?

KAREN: He was fine and they didn’t push him. We’ve been over this –

HENRY: He was crying, begging for the pain to stop and I couldn’t help him. I couldn’t make his pain go away. All I could do was yell out for help until a doctor came and injected something into him. I let the doctor decide what he needed without hesitation. I should have been a part of that decision. I should have asked, what’s that? What does it do? It’s my job to…to be a bumper between him and the outside world. So, he’s not facing it all alone.

KAREN: Henry, we can’t protect him forever.

HENRY: I know, but –

KAREN: And I worry…what if we’re what he needs to be protected from? While trying to protect him we…We made him feel bad for …everything. We’re no better than Mike’s parents.

HENRY: It’s not the –
KAREN: It is the same, Henry! We told him he was the devil. Sister Jacobs told him he was going to hell. We are just as bad and he deserves better.

HENRY: Well what should we have done?

KAREN: I keep running through it in my mind. Over and over. He tells me that he doesn’t like his wings. I made it about me and how he was hurting me and how I felt about his wings. If I could go back... “Mom, I don’t like my wings.” I would say... “why?” And then I’d listen. I’d hear why they bothered him and maybe at first, I’d tell him that I like them, but I’d then...try and help fix what was bothering him. But I never gave him the chance and now he has to fix it on his own because I...We’re already terrible, Henry, and we need to fix it.

HENRY: Karen?

KAREN: Henry, we can’t let him do this alone.

HENRY: So, we’re –

KAREN: Yes. We’re letting him remove the wings and we will be there. We will hold his hand. We will drive him home. We’ll take care of him and help him buy new clothes...

HENRY: Karen, I...I don’t know if I can do that...

KAREN: What do you mean?

HENRY: I don’t think letting him hurt himself is supporting him.

KAREN: …How can I convince you?

HENRY: I don’t think you can. I...you can hold his hand and drive him home and buy him shirts, but I can’t. I won’t...I hand made all his shirts and he just...I can’t support this. I’m sorry.

HENRY tries to exit. KAREN stops him.

KAREN: Are you sure?

HENRY: …I’m not sure of anything anymore. I have no idea who my own son is...I...

KAREN: You don’t want to miss being with him after surgery.

HENRY: …I just need to...think...good-by.

HENRY exits. FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Chapter five. I’m ready.

DR. DREW enter.

DR. DREW: Your vitals are good. How are you feeling?


DR. DREW: You haven’t eaten anything or had anything to drink for twelve hours?

FELIX: I have not. Hence, hungry.

DR. DREW: And you understand the possible risks of this surgery?

FELIX: Yes. Yes. We went over them in detail like, eight times. I’m ready.

DR. DREW: Alright. Just breathe normally and count backwards from 100.

FELIX: 100. 99…98…97…96…95…ninety…four…ninety…

FREEZE.
There is no one on stage. The stage is dark. Voices can be heard from all sides of the audience. There is a constant beeping from different parts of the room.

DR. DREW: Scalpel.

BEAT.

OLIVIA: Birdman.

DR. DREW: Clipping the wings at the base to decrease blood flow.

BEAT.

SISTER JACOBS: Absolute angel.

DR. DREW: Bone saw.

BEAT.

HENRY: I love you and your perfect wings.

DR. DREW: More suction, please.

BEAT.

HENRY: Are you happy?

DR. DREW: I need more light over here.

BEAT.

MIKE: Of course, you can fly!

BEAT.

DR. DREW: Someone read his BP to me, please.

KAREN: Why can’t you just love yourself like I love you?

BEAT.


BEAT.

DR. DREW: Two.

Long pause. Lights out.
FELIX: Is he beautiful?

Long pause. FREEZE.
DR. DREW enters.

DR. DREW: Chapter six. Post-op.

FELIX, OLIVIA, and MIKE enter.

DR. DREW: As you can see, the surgery was a success. We were able to remove the wings completely. The swelling will go down in a few days and he won’t be able to lay on his back for a while. There will be some scaring, but it will fade. We’ll want to keep an eye on him for a while, but if all goes well, you can take him home tomorrow. We’ve got him on a few medications right now, some pain killers and some antibiotics. Also, Felix asked me to read this to you, “Dear asshole friends that I love. Thank you for being here for me. I literally can’t thank you enough and I owe you lots of Halloween candy. If, however, you record me in my drugged out state after the surgery, I will be forced to throw your phones in a lake. If you post any such videos online in anyway, I will deep fry and eat your phones. Love you loads, Felix.”

OLIVIA: Damnit. I mean, yay! Felix doesn’t have wings, he’s okay and he loves us.

MIKE: Yeah. Yay…What if he doesn’t know about the video?

DR. DREW: I was just told to read his statement. I cannot speak for him.

FELIX wakes up.

DR. DREW: There he is. Our fallen angel. How are you feeling?

FELIX: Hi…I’m on my stomach…New mom and dad?

DR. DREW: Your friends Mike and Olivia are here. I was just telling them that the surgery was a success and you can go home tomorrow.

FELIX: Did you read the – success? Success? That means it worked, right? It worked? They’re…where are they? I want to stand. Let me stand! They were so heavy. Wings are supposed to make you fly, but mine were so heavy. Heavy wings plus gravity equals being pulled closer to the ground. Wings are supposed to pull you off the ground. Mine didn’t know how to be wings. Ha! And now they’re gone? Like, gone? So, they’re no longer on me? Nowhere? Not on me at all? No wings on me?

MIKE: Can we record a little bit of this?

FELIX: New mom! Is that you? Hi new mom! I need a ride. Oh, and take your stupid ace bandages! I don’t need them anymore. Woohoo.


FELIX: New dad! You’re here too! It’s a family reunion! …Is it a family reunion without spinach casserole?
DR. DREW: I’ll leave you three alone.

KAREN rushes in.

KAREN: Felix!?  

FELIX: That’s me!

KAREN: Felix. Are you alright?

DR. DREW: He’s perfectly fine. The surgery was a success and he can go home tomorrow.

KAREN: Oh, my god. He’s…he’s…

FELIX: Feeling lighter.

KAREN: He’s…my son. Felix.

FELIX: That’s me! I’m Felix!

KAREN: Yes. You are.

FREEZE.
FELIX, KAREN, OLIVIA, and MIKE enter.

KAREN: Chapter seven. Good night.

FELIX: Good night, mom.

MIKE: Uh-hmm!

FELIX: And new mom.

OLIVIA: Uh?

FELIX: And new dad…where’s old dad?

KAREN: He’s…he’s staying with a friend tonight. Don’t worry, he just needs some time.

FELIX: …He needs time?

KAREN: It’ll be alright.

FELIX: He needs time.

KAREN: I’m sorry.

FELIX: …

KAREN: You look beautiful. Your new night shirt…it’s looks good on you. It’s very Felix.

FELIX: Thank you, mom.

KAREN: Good night. Sweet dreams, my little an – sweet dreams, love.

KAREN exits.

MIKE: I’m sorry about your dad. You deserve better.

FELIX: I still have a home. I still have a mom. Maybe there’s hope?

OLIVIA: Yes, but don’t just wait for something that might not happen. If he wants to be in your life, that’s on him. He needs to earn a spot now.

FELIX: That’s awfully harsh.

MIKE: We’re just saying, we love you. Lean on us as much as you need. If he wants to come back, that’ll be nice, but you don’t need him.

FELIX: …okay. Thank you. I love you, and no offense Olivia, but I’m really happy I’m in my own bed tonight.
OLIVIA: Sleep well, birdman, and don’t think about how much effort I put into getting my guest room ready for you.

FELIX: I’m not a birdman anymore.

OLIVIA: I know. Sweet dreams.

MIKE: Good night.

MIKE and OLIVIA exit.

BEAT.

FELIX gets up and looks in a mirror that isn’t there. He turns. He turns. He turns. He backs up onto a wall and rubs his back against it. He bends forwards and backwards. He runs to his closet and pulls off his shirt. He tries on shirt after shirt and admires himself in the mirror. Optional: OLIVIA and MIKE enter with buckets of white feathers and pour a good layer of feathers on the floor. FELIX lies down shirtless on the floor and feels the feathers and the floor on his back. He feels how flat the floor is on his back. He takes a moment and then makes snow angels in the feathers. Black out.

FELIX: I’m beautiful.
Ugly Swan as Performed on April 28th

By Rory Kennison
Dedicated to my Great Grandmother Peggy. Thank you for seeing the swan when the rest of the world only saw an ugly duckling.
Ugly Swan

Characters:

FELIX
OLIVIA
MIKE
KAREN
HENRY
SISTER JACOBS/HOLLY/WARTHOG/DOCTOR DREW

Staging:

Ideally the staging will be reminiscent of a bad school play with minimalist cardboard backdrops and minimal furniture. The costumes are important. Felix needs to have wings, Mike needs long frizzy hair, and there needs to be a difference between Sister Jacobs, Holly, the Warthog, and Doctor Drew. Ideally, Felix will be played by a transman who wears a binder and packer throughout the show. Ideally all the actors would be around the same age. The performance space would ideally be small, intimate and performed in the round with audience on all sides.
Prologue

*FELIX enters with a book. He opens the book and starts reading.*

**FELIX:** The Boy with Wings by Felix. *(Not reading.)* That’s me. *(Reading.)* Prologue. *(Not reading.)* A prologue is a bit of the story that the author wants you to know before they officially start telling the story.

_Felix exits._
Once upon a time there were two people who loved each other very much. They loved each other so much that they wanted to have a child. But no matter how hard they tried, they couldn’t get pregnant. So, the husband went to the local witch and asked for help. The witch took pity on him and gave him a seed. She told him to plant the seed, and to love whatever sprouted unconditionally. The husband took home the seed and immediately planted it. The wife was sceptical, but she watered the seed and made sure it had plenty of sunlight. Slowly, a flower grew from the seed. It was a beautiful flower, but the husband and wife could never agree on what color it was. Until they discovered that the flower changed color. Gradually, but constantly. The wife loved the flower, but had given up hope that it would bring her a child. Until one day the wife sat by the flower and absentmindedly said I love you. Then the flower melted away and a small baby sat in its place. It was a beautiful baby. Ten fingers, ten toes! And two wings! That’s right, the child that the witch had gifted this couple had wings. But the moment the man and woman saw the baby and its wings, they knew.
HENRY and KAREN: I love this baby. I love his wings. I will never let anything harm him or his wings.

HENRY and KAREN exit.
Act I

FELIX: (Reading from book.) Chapter one. The first day of school…or, at least, what I remember from the first day of school.

FELIX exits. SISTER JACOBS enters and prepares her classroom for the first day. FELIX re-enters with KAREN and HENRY.

KAREN: Excuse me? Sister Jacobs? I’m Karen. We called the other day about our child?

SISTER JACOBS: Ah, yes, and you must be Felix.

FELIX hides behind his mother’s leg.

HENRY: Yes. And you’re aware of his…condition?

SISTER JACOBS: Yes, yes. Don’t worry, he’ll have plenty of room for his wings and I’ll personally make sure the kids are nice to this little angel.

KAREN: Thank you very much, Sister Jacobs. (To FELIX.) Alright, it’s time for us to go.

HENRY: We love you very much sweetie, and we’ll see you soon.

FELIX continues to hide from SISTER JACOBS.

KAREN: I guess he’s a bit nervous.

HENRY: Which is understandable for a child with his condition.

SISTER JACOBS: Oh, it’s fine. Hi, Felix. Do you like books?

Beat

I’m going to read one of my favorite books out loud over here if you want to listen. (Starts reading.) Once upon a time there was an ugly duckling…

FELIX finally moves away from his parents and sits quietly in front of SISTER JACOBS. KAREN and HENRY rush out. MIKE and OLIVIA enter.

SISTER JACOBS: The other ducklings were mean to the ugly duckling, until one day the duckling grew up into a beautiful swan. Which one of you can tell me the moral of this story?

OLIVIA: You shouldn’t make fun of people ‘cause they’re ugly ‘cause they might be pretty one day.
MIKE: Ugly people can be pretty if they want to be pretty.

FELIX: I don’t get it.

SISTER JACOBS: What don’t you understand, Felix?

FELIX: Ducks can’t talk so how did they make fun of the ugly one?

MIKE: ‘cause it’s a story. Duh!

FELIX: Oh.

SISTER JACOBS: It’s just made up, Felix. It’s a pretend story that was written to teach a moral lesson.

FELIX: Oh.

SISTER JACOBS: Now, I know all your names, but do you know each other’s names?

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX look at each other.

SISTER JACOBS: I want you each to say your name and something about yourself. I’m Sister Jacobs and I have 3 dogs. Mike, what’s your name and tell us something about yourself.

MIKE: My name is Mike and I like the musical Annie.

OLIVIA: My name’s Olivia and like…. hot dogs with chili and cheese.

MIKE: That’s called a chili cheese dog.

OLIVIA: Same thing.

FELIX: Um…I’m Felix and I … have wings…

MIKE AND OLIVIA: WHAT!? Let me see! Let me see!

OLIVIA: Can you fly?

MIKE: How are they attached?

MIKE pulls on FELIX’s wing.

FELIX: Ow!

MIKE: How did that hurt?

MIKE is curious and inspects the wings.
SISTER JACOBS: Mike. Was that very nice?

MIKE: No.

SISTER JACOBS: Are you going to apologize?

MIKE: Sorry.

SISTER JACOBS: Mike. Let go of Felix. In this classroom, we keep our hands to ourselves.

MIKE: I’m not hurting him.

SISTER JACOBS: Leave him alone before I put you on a time out.

MIKE: Fine.

MIKE finally releases FELIX’s wing.

OLIVIA: Can you fly?

FELIX: No.

SISTER JACOBS: Olivia, it’s rude to ask people if they can fly.

OLIVIA: Why?

SISTER JACOBS: It just is. I think you owe Felix an apology.

OLIVIA: Sorry.

SISTER JACOBS: Thank you, Olivia. Felix, do you accept Olivia’s apology?

FELIX: Uh…yes?

SISTER JACOBS: Good. Mike, can you get out the crayons for the next activity?

MIKE: Huh?

SISTER JACOBS: Mike?

MIKE: What are they made of?

SISTER JACOBS: Mike, we do not ask people what their wings are made of. Next person to mention Felix’s wings will have letter sent home to their parents about their behaviour. Understood?

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX: Understood.

SISTER JACOBS: Good. Let’s move on. Mike. Get the crayons.
Freeze
The stage is empty. FELIX enters.

FELIX: The next few chapters are not in chronological order. Their order is based on how I remember them. For this reason, the following chapters are not numbered, but instead will have a little introduction with my age and why the memory is important. For example: Sixteen years old. It was the first time I tried to hide them.

MIKE enters. Olivia enters. OLIVIA has the bandages and wraps up FELIX’s torso so his wings stay flat. MIKE puts the button up shirt on FELIX and buttons it up. FELIX looks at the audience as if it were a mirror. FELIX sees someone he never thought possible. Someone that he’s not used to, but it’s the someone he wants to be. He adjusts the shirt and turns and turns and turns. He smiles. OLIVIA and MIKE give FELIX a thumbs up and pull out their phones and act as paparazzi. FELIX does his best struts and model poses.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Seven years old. The day I learned that I can’t fly.

MIKE enters.

MIKE: Of course, you can fly! You have wings! Duh!
FELIX: I can’t fly you dummy!
MIKE: But…you have wings! You just don’t know how to fly yet.

OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: So…can he learn to fly?
MIKE: …yes. Uh…birds don’t know how to fly when they’re born. They have to learn it!
OLIVIA: How do birds learn to fly?
MIKE: I saw it on Looney Tunes. They jump out of the nest and flap their wings.
FELIX: I can’t move my wings. I can’t fly!
MIKE: Felix! You can fly! Birds fly and you have wings like birds!
FELIX: But –
OLIVIA: We don’t have a nest to push Felix out of.
MIKE: What about your treehouse?
OLIVIA: What if he doesn’t fly the first time?
MIKE: Then we throw him out of the treehouse again.
OLIVIA: But he could get hurt! I have a better idea. My dad read me the Harry Potter book.
MIKE: Which one? There’s more than one!
OLIVIA: The first one, duh! But they can make things fly with magic.
MIKE: Magic isn’t real.
OLIVIA: Yes, it is! My mom and dad saw a witch once!
MIKE: That’s not magic!

OLIVIA: She was a witch! Duh. Also, without magic, how does Felix have wings?

FELIX: Can we try Olivia’s idea first? Then we’ll try yours.

MIKE: It won’t work, though.

FELIX: It could be fun, though.

MIKE: …fine, but when it doesn’t work you have to admit that you were wrong and I was right.

OLIVIA: Fine.

MIKE: So, what do we do?

OLIVIA: Um…Hang on. I need to go get the book!

*OLIVIA exits.*

MIKE: Why don’t you want to fly? I’d love to fly.

FELIX: I can’t fly. I don’t want to fall.

MIKE: But if you could fly, then you could fly away. Far away. No adults would be able to find you.

FELIX: Yeah. I know. I wish I could fly, but I can’t fly.

MIKE: You can fly, Felix, and when you do, will you take me with you? Away from all these…adults?

FELIX: I don’t know. I don’t think I can fly, but if I can, I know I’m not going anywhere without you and Olivia.

MIKE: Really?

FELIX: I don’t want to be all alone in the sky. So I’ll take you two with me. It’ll be the three of us. Eating star dust and sleeping on the clouds.

MIKE: Like a castle in the sky. A castle with a moat made of air. No one could find us and tell us to go home.

FELIX: You and Olivia could be the King and Queen.

MIKE: I want to be the Queen.

FELIX: Mike?
MIKE:    Yeah?
FELIX:   Why do you want to be a girl?
MIKE:    I don’t! I don’t want to be a girl! Ew! Shut up! I just want to be me. I would be a better Queen than a King, that’s all.
FELIX:   Okay. I could be the prince then.
MIKE:    That would make you my child.
FELIX:   Would you be my dad or my mom?
MIKE:    A queen is a mom. Duh.
FELIX:   Okay, mom.

OLIVIA enters with the book.

OLIVIA:  Got it!
FELIX:   Okay, so what do we do?
OLIVIA:  There’s a spell. I need to sound it out. Wii-win. winga-gar-wingarduh. Wingarduh-um…le…ve…ve-o-h. Win…gard…um…le…veo…sa.
MIKE:    Win…gard…um…le…veo…sa?
FELIX:   Win…gard…um…uh…sa?
OLIVIA:  I think we need to say it faster. Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa.
MIKE:    Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa.
FELIX:   Win-gard-um-le-sa.
OLIVIA:  No! No, it’s Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa.
FELIX:   Win-gard-um-le-
OLIVIA:  Veo
FELIX:   Veo
OLIVIA:  Sa
FELIX:   Sa

OLIVIA and MIKE:    Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa
FELIX: Win-gard-um-le-veo-sa!

OLIVIA and MIKE: Yay!

BEAT.

MIKE: He’s not flying.

OLIVIA: Maybe if he’s jumping on the trampoline?

MIKE: Why would that help?

OLIVIA: If he says it while he’s in the air it might work better.

MIKE: …fine.

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX start jumping up and down.


MIKE: He’s still not flying!

OLIVIA: I have another idea. Hang on.

OLIVIA exits while MIKE and FELIX continue jumping.

OLIVIA enters with a broom.

OLIVIA: Here. Hold this. Sometimes Harry Potter uses a broom to fly.

FELIX: How?

OLIVIA: Just…hold it.

FELIX takes the broom. OLIVIA, MIKE and FELIX continue jumping.


MIKE: He’s still not flying! Admit it! You were wrong!

OLIVIA: But…we…

FELIX: I think it’s working.

MIKE: It’s not! Olivia! You were wrong!

OLIVIA: Fine! He can’t fly!
MIKE: He can fly! He has wings! And I’m going to prove it! Olivia, can we go to your room and try something?

OLIVIA: Fine.

FREEZE.
FELIX: Later that day. In Olivia’s room. Mike is proving his point.

MIKE: This should be high enough.

OLIVIA: So, he’ll jump off the top bunk and…fly?

MIKE: No, he needs to jump outside so he doesn’t hit his head when he flies up.

FELIX: So why don’t we go back to the trampoline?

MIKE: You don’t need the trampoline. You just need to jump out that window.

FELIX: I’ll fall.

MIKE: You’ll fly.

OLIVIA: What if he doesn’t fly on the first try, though?

MIKE: What?

OLIVIA: Baby birds don’t always fly on the first try. Felix could get hurt from this height if he doesn’t get the hang of it right away.

MIKE: Uh…what if he landed on the trampoline?

OLIVIA: I guess that would be safe, but how would we make sure of that?

MIKE: I’ll drop a stuffy and see where it lands, then we’ll move the trampoline there.

OLIVIA: …okay.

FELIX: Really?

OLIVIA: If you land on the trampoline you’ll be fine.

FELIX: Yeah, I guess.

MIKE: Okay! It’s decided.

MIKE takes a stuffed animal and exits through the window.

MIKE: Olivia! Can you move the trampoline so it’s over McStuffles IV?

OLIVIA: Why can’t you?

MIKE: You’re stronger than me.

OLIVIA: True. Felix: don’t go out the window until I come back.
FELIX: Wasn’t planning on it.

OLIVIA exits. MIKE enters.

MIKE: Hey! If we tie this sheet around you, then you’ll have a parachute!

MIKE grabs a sheet and ties it around FELIX’s neck. OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: The trampoline is in place. What are you wearing?

MIKE: A parachute!

OLIVIA: …should he wear my bike helmet?

OLIVIA puts the pink bike helmet on FELIX.

MIKE: Yeah! Now he can jump!

FELIX: Uh…

MIKE: Come on. You’re going to fly.

FELIX: I can’t fly.

OLIVIA: You’ll land on the trampoline. It’ll be fine.

MIKE: It’s perfectly safe for someone who can fly.

FELIX: I can’t fly!

MIKE exits through window. OLIVIA follows.

MIKE: Please do it! For me! Do it for the castle in the sky. We can get there, we can leave and sleep on clouds! Just, try. Just try to fly.

FELIX exits through window.

FELIX: (Off stage.) I can’t fly!

FELIX enters.

FELIX: I wish I could say I chickened out. I wish I could say I didn’t fall for peer pressure…pun intended…I wish I’d refuted Mike’s logic or that I told an adult about our plans.

I can’t though. I can’t say any of it. What I can say is, don’t jump off a roof. Even if you land on a trampoline, you will bounce off that trampoline and break your arm as you land hard on the ground.
MIKE enters.

MIKE: Yeah…How many times have I apologised for that?

OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: Only a few more times than you’ve mentioned that if he’d just landed on his wings he might have had them amputated.

MIKE: It’s true, isn’t it?

FELIX: We’re not having this conversation again.

MIKE: Sorry…again.

FELIX: I forgave you thirteen years ago.

MIKE: Then why do I still feel bad?

OLIVIA: You pressured your best friend to jump off a roof?

MIKE: That might be it.

FELIX: It’s okay. I don’t know if I ever apologised for not getting you that castle in the sky.

MIKE: Well…I suppose you’re forgiven then.

FELIX: Thanks, Mike.

FREEZE.
OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: Nine years old. The Felix-is-not-a-dyke incident.

FELIX and MIKE enter and sit next to OLIVIA. Holly enters.

HOLLY: Look! It’s two fairies and a dyke!

OLIVIA: Holly was nine, and it seemed that she was awfully proud of her above grade level insult. I wouldn’t have cared or even noticed if Felix hadn’t –

FELIX: (Standing up.) I am not a dyke!

OLIVIA: Of course, everyone laughed at us, not with us, but they always laughed at us. Felix didn’t always stand up for me, though.

HOLLY: Watch out. The two fairies and a dyke are heading this way!

OLIVIA: Our new unofficial group name stuck, and Mike insisted that we form a band just to put the name to good use. It’s already put to good use, though.

HOLLY exits.

OLIVIA: Felix and Mike are easy targets, so it’s often on me to protect our little family of two fairies and a dyke. When Felix and Mike aren’t around the other kids think that gives them special permission to be nasty about my best friends. I’ve stood up for those useless fairies more times than I can count, but that day Felix stood up for me.

BEAT.

I often wonder what drew our little group together. Was it some cosmic force, or was it just coincidence? I remember Mike making Felix laugh about something other than the stupid wings. I remember Holly pulling my hair and Mike jumping in to fix it and make me feel better. I remember Felix sitting for hours listening to my rambling stories…like this one. There was no one singular force that created our friendship, but it certainly didn’t hurt that we saw past what made each of us little weirdos, and instead saw the little people we wanted to be friends with.

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Fifteen years old. Mike comes out.

MIKE and Olivia enter. MIKE pulls out a phone and types something out. FELIX and OLIVIA’s phones go off and they look at the message.

OLIVIA: So, you’re non-binary, but you still like he/him pronouns?

FELIX: That actually explains a lot.

MIKE: Excuse me?

FELIX: You just…are non-binary. It just makes a lot of sense.

OLIVIA: Thanks for telling us. If you need anything, we’ll be there.

MIKE: …Can you be a bit more dramatic about it? I thought this was going to be a whole thing, you know? Like on TV.

OLIVIA: You’re a …transgender!? For how long? Why didn’t you tell us sooner?

FELIX: Oh, my god, Olivia, we don’t know our friend Mike at all! We’re terrible friends!

OLIVIA: Mike deserves better than us!

FELIX: Yes. I’m sorry, Mike, but we can’t be your friends anymore.

OLIVIA: It’s just not fair to you.

MIKE: …Thanks guys. You’re the best!

OLIVIA: Anytime, br-can I still call you bro?

MIKE: Um…

OLIVIA: Friend?

MIKE: Yeah. I like that.

OLIVIA: Okay, friend.

FELIX: You’re still my fairy-buddy, right?

MIKE: Always.

FELIX: Good.
OLIVIA: Two fairies and a dyke.
MIKE: Two fairies and a dyke.
FELIX: Two fairies and a dyke.

FREEZE.
MIKE enters.

MIKE: Seventeen years old. Olivia comes out. We were dying our hair together.

OLIVIA and FELIX enter.

MIKE: Red Passion for Felix, Green Ivy for me and Olivia, you asked for Purple Punk?

OLIVIA: Yeah.

MIKE: Alright. Felix, I’ll start with you. Sit here –

OLIVIA: Wait!

FELIX: What?

OLIVIA: Um…I wanted purple dye because…I …

MIKE: Yeah?

OLIVIA: Purple is…one of the main colors of the asexual flag?

FELIX: Really?

OLIVIA: Yeah…purple, white, grey, and black.

MIKE: Yeah? That’s cool. And subtle. I like it. And purple would really bring out your eyes.

FELIX: So…you’re asexual?


MIKE: No, no, I totally get it! That’s how I feel about being non-binary. Like, I’m pretty sure I’m non-binary, but there’s not really a test to confirm it. I just know that it feels truer than anything else.

OLIVIA: Exactly. It just feels like who I am.

FELIX: So, you’re not sexually attracted to anyone?

OLIVIA: More like little to no attraction. And I still feel romantic attraction.

FELIX: Okay. That’s cool.

MIKE: Yeah. Because you’re cool, Olivia.

OLIVIA: Uh…thanks.
MIKE: Now sit down, Felix so I can put this awful smelling goo into your hair.

_FREEZE._
OLIVIA enters.

OLIVIA: Eight years old. Felix comes out.

MIKE and OLIVIA enter.

OLIVIA: Birdman!

FELIX: Stop it! I’m not a birdman.

MIKE: You have wings like a bird, birdman.

FELIX: No! I’m not a birdman. You know I can’t fly or even move my wings. I’m a boy with stupid, useless wings!

OLIVIA: You’re not a magic birdman?

FELIX: No. I’m a muggle with stupid wings.

MIKE: But magic Birdman is cooler.

FELIX: No. I’m muggle Felix.

OLIVIA: Okay, fine, muggle Felix with stupid wings.

MIKE: …Birdman?

FELIX: No!

MIKE: Flightless Birdman?

FELIX: Muggle Felix.

MIKE: Muggle Felix with wings? Can we call you that?

OLIVIA: That’s your new nick name, muggle Felix with wings.

FELIX: Um…aren’t nick names supposed to be short?

MIKE: Classic muggle Felix with wings!

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Thirteen years old. The second time I suggested getting rid of my wings.

KAREN enters.

FELIX: Mom? I was just wondering –

KAREN: Yes, honey? What is it?

FELIX: I don’t like my wings –

KAREN: Not this again.

FELIX: Mom!

KAREN: No. Why can’t you just love yourself like I love you?

FELIX: I do love myself –

KAREN: Your wings are a part of you!

FELIX: I don’t like them!

KAREN: Don’t yell at me!

FELIX: ...I’m sorry, it’s just –

KAREN: Do you remember the story of Lucifer?

FELIX: The devil?

KAREN: Yes. You remember that he wasn’t always the devil, though. He was an angel like you.

FELIX: I’m not –

KAREN: Then he fell. He went against God’s intentions and now he’s the most evil being in the world.

FELIX: Mom –

KAREN: You are my little angel, Felix. A gift from god. I would be a terrible mother if I let you go the way of Lucifer.

FELIX: I don’t think covering my wings will make me the devil…

KAREN: ...You’re grounded.

FELIX: What?!
KAREN: It’s clear to me that you need some time to clear your head and relearn how to appreciate your unique gift. I’m also going to take you to church three times a week.

FELIX: For how long?

KAREN: Until this unfortunate phase ends.

FREEZE.
*FELIX enters.*

**FELIX:** Six years old. Our first Halloween.

*OLIVIA and MIKE enter.*

**MIKE:** You ask.

**OLIVIA:** You can do it.

**MIKE:** Please. You’re better at it then me.

**OLIVIA:** Better at what?

**MIKE:** Talking.

**OLIVIA:** You’re talking just fine now!

**MIKE:** Pleeeaaase, Liv.

**OLIVIA:** Fine. *(To FELIX.)* Do you know Harry Potter?

**FELIX:** Like…the book? Or does he go here?

**OLIVIA:** The book. Mike and I want to dress as Harry, Ron, and Hermione for Halloween, but there’s only two of us.

**FELIX:** You want me to dress as Ron or Harry for Halloween with you?

**MIKE:** Ron! We want you to be Ron.

**OLIVIA:** You have the perfect freckles for Ron.

**FELIX:** Ron…doesn’t have wings.

**OLIVIA:** So? I don’t have a scar like Harry, but I’m still going to dress up as him.

**MIKE:** It’s Halloween. You can be whatever you want to be. If you want to be Ron who doesn’t have wings, you should!

**OLIVIA:** It would suit you.

**FELIX:** Wait. If Livia is dressing up as Harry than –

**MIKE:** Don’t I have the hair for Hermione?

**FELIX:** …So Olivia is Harry, you’re Hermione and I’m Ron…Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

**OLIVIA:** You’ll do it?
FELIX: Yeah. I’ll do it.

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Sixteen years old. Our best Halloween.

OLIVIA and MIKE enter. OLIVIA wraps FELIX’s wings with bandages. MIKE puts a white button down shirt on FELIX. OLIVIA ties a red tie around FELIX’s neck and MIKE puts a shitty costume robe on FELIX. FELIX’s hair should either be natural, a cruddy costume wig or bad temporary dye. OLIVIA and MIKE then get into their costumes. MIKE as Hermione and OLIVIA as Harry.

MIKE: Finally!

OLIVIA: Let me mess up your hair a little bit more, Mike. You’re not quite to Hermione frizz yet.

FELIX: I have the eyeliner. Olivia, look at me so I can draw your scar.

OLIVIA: Okay. Mike, can you look at Felix for me and make sure he has enough freckles?

MIKE: On it! Then can you tie my tie?

FELIX: I don’t know how to tie a tie.

OLIVIA: He was talking to me.

FELIX: Right. Mike, did you bring the glasses?

MIKE: They’re on the table.

OLIVIA: You’re done with my scar?

FELIX: Yup.

OLIVIA puts on the glasses and her Harry Potter costume is complete.

OLIVIA: Come here, Mike. You are going to be Hermione this year, god damn it!

FELIX: Finally!

MIKE: I still don’t understand why it was such a big deal. I’m not hurting anyone by dressing as my favourite Harry Potter character.

FELIX: Not according to your mom. You were “traumatizing the younger members of our good Christian town.”
OLIVIA: Stop it. None of that matters now. Secret Halloween!

MIKE, OLIVIA, and FELIX: SECRET HALLOWEEN!

OLIVIA: And we have our very first wingless Ronald Weasley!

FELIX: Bloody Hell.

MIKE: I remember that year we had our costumes on and your parents wouldn’t let you leave the house until they cut holes in your robe for the wings.

OLIVIA: Shhh. They don’t matter tonight. Secret Halloween! I’ll set up the movie. Which one first?

FELIX and MIKE: Sorcerer’s Stone!

OLIVIA: Mike, get the snacks.

FELIX: What should I do?

OLIVIA: Set up the cushions and turn out the lights.

FELIX sets up a Pinterest worthy movie watching set up with blankets, pillows, and stuffed animals. MIKE brings in a giant feast of Harry Potter themed candy, popcorn, and some Halloween treats. OLIVIA joins once the movie is “set up.”

OLIVIA: Secret Halloween?

FELIX and MIKE: Secret Halloween!

Blackout.
Act 2

FELIX enters.

FELIX: Sometimes, books have multiple parts, like acts in a play. This is the end of part one and the beginning of part two. This part of the book is going to be a bit different. Part one was a series of past events. Part two is a series of events as they happen.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Part two, chapter one. Preparation.

MIKE and OLIVIA enter.

OLIVIA: Well?

FELIX: It’s all set up. Everything’s in place.

MIKE: But –

OLIVIA: Did you tell them yet?

FELIX: I…do I have to?

MIKE and OLIVIA: Yes.

MIKE: No more hiding.

OLIVIA: You can’t tell them after the fact.

MIKE: Felix, honey, where are you going?

OLIVIA: Oh, just a secret surgery to remove the part of me that you love most. Bye!

MIKE: We will gladly take care of you afterwards –

OLIVIA: And we’re all set to drive you home –

MIKE: But they should at least know.

FELIX: I know…it’s just been so long…I’ve been keeping up this…double life for so long. It feels like my life is a spinning plate balancing on a stick and part of what’s keeping the plate up are the lies and persona I take on around my parents. Once I take those away…it feels like the plate’s going to fall.

BEAT.

OLIVIA: Then we’ll catch the plate.

MIKE: There’s a net under the stick. If the plate falls, it’ll still be intact.

OLIVIA: And we’ll help you get it spinning again.

BEAT.

FELIX: So…I just tell them…I…I don’t know how to start it.

MIKE: Do you want us to come with you? Like you and Olivia did for me?
FELIX: Your parents hated that we were there.

MIKE: But I didn’t. It was just nicer to be three against two instead of two against one.

FELIX: Yeah…I want to do this on my own.

OLIVIA: Will you, though?

FELIX: What?

OLIVIA: How many times have you tried to tell them and then at the last second didn’t? You might want us as just a little push. Just to make sure this time it happens.

FELIX: …Did you see the last episode of iZombie? Do you think Ravi –

OLIVIA: Really, Felix?

MIKE: Twenty years and you still haven’t learned a thing about subtlety.

OLIVIA: Remember “speaking of who stole your Halloween candy, did you know that children were often very short in the eighteen hundreds?”

MIKE: My favorite will always be, “Felix, what did you think of last night’s reading?”

OLIVIA: “I…can’t read. Sesame street failed me.”

FELIX: I’m not that bad…anymore.

OLIVIA: “You should tell your parents that you’re planning on cutting off your wings.” “Did you catch last night’s episode of iZombie?”

FELIX: I was just a bit…I’m not…Just –

MIKE: Felix! It’s okay. We love you and your lack of subtlety.

OLIVIA: So, do you want us there when you tell them, or not?

BEAT.

FELIX: No. I want to do this myself.

MIKE: You sure?

FELIX: Yeah.

OLIVIA: Okay. Text us as soon as it happens.
FELIX: What?

OLIVIA: We want to support you. Do you want to come over to my place afterwards? So, you don’t have to be alone and you can give them some time to digest?

FELIX: Yeah…that sounds good.

OLIVIA: Okay. Mike and I will wait for you, then.

MIKE: Good luck.

MIKE embraces FELIX. OLIVIA squeezes them both.

OLIVIA: You are valid.

MIKE: We support you.

OLIVIA: No matter what, you always have us.


FELIX: Okay. Okay. Stop, you’re making me cry. I have to get home…I love you guys.

OLIVIA and MIKE: Love you!

FREEZE.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Chapter two. Uh….

HENRY, and KAREN enter.

FELIX: Um…
KAREN: You won’t believe what Jesse did today.
HENRY: There’s very little I wouldn’t believe when it comes to Jesse.
FELIX: Mom…Dad –
HENRY: Not now, Honey. Your mother’s talking.
KAREN: So, Jesse –
FELIX: Stop!
HENRY: Felix! We do not interrupt! You will wait your turn!
FELIX: No. I need to say something now.
KAREN: Whatever it is, it can wait.
FELIX: But –
HENRY: Felix, what could you possibly need to say that can’t wait until your mother is done with her Jesse story?
FELIX: I need to say it before I change my mind!
HENRY: About what?
FELIX: Telling you…
KAREN: Felix –
FELIX: My wings…
HENRY: Just say whatever it is!
FELIX: I’m cutting them off!
HENRY: Excuse me?
KAREN: Not this again. You are not mutilating yourself. Your wings are –
FELIX: I am! I’m…I have a …an appointment with a doctor – surgeon! I’ve been working with him for a while. I raised enough money…It’s happening next week.

BEAT.

FELIX: Please say something.

HENRY: No.

FELIX: No –

KAREN: Cancel it. The appointment.

FELIX: I –

HENRY: You are not having the surgery.

KAREN: How long have you been planning this behind our backs?

FELIX: I…two years…My therapist agrees –

HENRY: We need to get a new therapist, call up this surgeon, maybe check him into a mental facility. He’s a danger to himself.


FELIX: I…I’m an adult! I like my therapist and I’m keeping the appointment.

HENRY: See! He’s a danger to himself. He’s not in his right mind.

FELIX: Stop! I’m fine. The problem isn’t me. I know who I am and I know what I want. I want… my outside to match my inside. I want to be me! I’m not the problem. I’m…You’re the problem –

HENRY: Felix!

FELIX: Dad! I’ve known pretty much all my life that my wings aren’t a part of me. They’re extra. They hurt my back. They restrict my fashion choices. I’m not me when there are wings on my back. This isn’t something I just decided on a whim. This is what I need to be whole. You two are not going to ruin this for me.

KAREN: But, Felix.

FELIX: This isn’t a discussion. I didn’t even have to tell you. Olivia and Mike have agreed to take care of me after the surgery. I’m just letting you know so you didn’t have to find out after the fact.

BEAT.
KAREN: Why didn’t you talk to us sooner?

FELIX: …I did. I did talk to you already. I was…thirteen…You likened my desire to be wingless to being the devil himself. I got the message and stopped talking about it after that.

HENRY: This is a lot to take in –

FELIX: I know…I need to go.

HENRY: Where?

FELIX: I just… Good night. I love you.

FELIX exits.

HENRY: Do we go after him?

KAREN: Did we do something wrong?

HENRY embraces KAREN.

HENRY: Yes. I’m not sure what it was, but we most certainly did something wrong. That’s what parents do.

KAREN: Do you think the witch would ever forgive us?

HENRY: I don’t know, darling. I don’t know.
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Chapter three. Debrief.

OLIVIA and MIKE enter.

OLIVIA: How’d it go?
MIKE: Sit down. We got your favorite movie set up.
FELIX: Movie?
MIKE: *Love Actually.*
FELIX: I do like that movie.
OLIVIA: What did they say?
MIKE: Would you like some ice cream? Popcorn?
FELIX: Shh. I just want to watch *Love Actually.*
OLIVIA: Okay.

*OLIVIA starts the movie. FELIX, OLIVIA, and MIKE watch silently for a while. FELIX suddenly starts laughing.*

OLIVIA: Felix?
FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* They tried to get me committed to a psychiatric facility.
MIKE: Oh, my god.
FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* I can never take it back. They know now. It’s out there.
OLIVIA: Are you okay?
FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* Danger to myself? Classic mom and dad!
MIKE: I’m sorry…
FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* I can’t take it back! I can’t take it back!
OLIVIA: Um…
FELIX: *(Still laughing.)* Yes, Bill Nighy! I feel it in my goddamn fingers and toes! Christmas is all around me so let the feeling…*(Stops laughing.)* I can’t take it back.
OLIVIA: Felix?

FELIX: I can’t – I can’t take it – I need to – Fuck you Alan Rickman! Stop cheating on Emma Thompson! You don’t deserve her! (Starts yelling incoherently.)

MIKE: Yeah. Fuck Alan Rickman. The dirty bastard.

OLIVIA: Alan Rickman isn’t even on screen yet.

MIKE: Sh!

FELIX: I need my phone! Where’s my phone!? Fuck! I can’t find my fucking phone! Fuck you phone! Fuck you Alan Rickman! Fuck you Mom! I don’t need you! Fuck you Dad! Weren’t you both supposed to fucking love me?! Unconditionally?! What the fuck is wrong with you?!! It’s not me. There’s nothing fucking wrong with me…well nothing much…You know what? Go fuck yourself Sister Jacobs! Fuck you for valuing my fucking parent’s and the fucking bible’s views on me over mine! They’re my fucking wings, you fucking terrible teacher!! Fuck!!! Lucifer, fuck you for giving those of us who chose not to be angels a bad name! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Shut the fuck up, Hugh Grant! Nobody fucking cares about your fucking ass! Go fuck yourself! Aaaaaahh!

OLIVIA: Uh…

MIKE: Anyone else you want to curse out, or would you like some ice cream? I have cookie dough, butter scotch, and coffee gelato.

FELIX: …coffee…

MIKE hands FELIX a pint of ice cream. FELIX greedily stuffs the ice cream into his mouth and starts crying.

MIKE: Hun, you don’t want brain freeze. I made you some cupcakes too, if you want.

FELIX nods yes, he wants a cupcake and MIKE hands him one.

FELIX: I just –

MIKE: Shh. You don’t have to say anything. It’s okay. Just eat.

FELIX: Mmmmmhm.

BEAT.

FELIX: Is it too late to cancel the appointment?
MIKE: What?

FELIX: If I just cancel it we can go back to normal. We can forget this ever happened. Where’s my phone? I need to call the doctor –

MIKE and OLIVIA: No!

FELIX: But –

MIKE and OLIVIA: No!

OLIVIA: You’ve always wanted this. It’s for you. You’re incomplete without it. You need this.

MIKE: The problem is them, remember? Not you. You need to take care of you first. That means getting the surgery and then dealing with their delicate feelings. You first.

FELIX: I want my mom and dad.

MIKE: I know. I know.

FELIX: I want –

MIKE: Shhh. It’s okay. It’s okay. Eat the cupcake.

FELIX: Colin Firth, stop trying to speak Portuguese. You can’t speak Portuguese. Oh, whatever. I still love you, Colin Firth.

BEAT.

FELIX: I’m scared.

MIKE: I know. I’m here for you.

OLIVIA: Me too.

FELIX: You’re my new mom and dad.

OLIVIA: I’m the dad, right?

FELIX: Of course.

OLIVIA: Good.

MIKE: Can I get a minivan and be a soccer mom?

OLIVIA: We love you.

MIKE: We love you so fucking much, Felix.

FELIX: Thank you, new mom and dad.

FREEZE.
FELIX enters. His wings are strapped down.

FELIX: Chapter four. If at first you don’t succeed, try again. I stayed at Olivia’s house that night and went home in the morning in hopes that my parents had calmed down a bit and were ready to support me.

KAREN, HENRY, and SISTER JACOBS enter.

KAREN: Oh, my god. You already got it done. We’re too late.

FELIX: No! No. I just wrapped them up with some ace bandages. See? There’s a little bump. They’re still there.

KAREN: I can’t…Why would you do that? Hide yourself from the world? I just…can’t

KAREN cries and dramatically exits.

HENRY: Are you happy? You made your mother cry.


HENRY: Can’t you see how you’re hurting us?

FELIX: I –

HENRY: Whose shirt are you wearing?

FELIX: Mine. It’s my shirt.

HENRY: You don’t own any shirts that don’t have holes for your wings.

FELIX: None that you know about.

BEAT.

HENRY: How long have you been doing this behind our backs?

FELIX: Dad, I don’t want to have this conversation with you right now. I think I need to go back to Olivia’s house so we can both calm down.

SISTER JACOBS: Hi Felix.

FELIX: Hi Sister Jacobs.

SISTER JACOBS: Please. Sit down. I’d love to talk with you.

FELIX: I’m not in the mood –

HENRY: Felix. Sit down.
FELIX: Why is she here?

HENRY: We asked her to come and talk to you. As a spiritual guide, we thought she could help you with this…moment of self-doubt.

FELIX: I’m not the one doubting me.

SISTER JACOBS: Please, Felix. I just want to talk.

FELIX: I don’t want to talk to you.

SISTER JACOBS: That’s fine. Then I’ll talk. Felix, what –

FELIX: Stop. I don’t want to listen to you. I just want to go.

SISTER JACOBS: Go where, Felix?

FELIX starts to exit.

SISTER JACOBS: To hell?

BEAT.

FELIX: Excuse me?

SISTER JACOBS: Felix, do you remember the story of Lucifer?

BEAT.

FELIX: Did you tell Mike he was going to hell, too?

SISTER JACOBS: This isn’t about Mike. This is about you.

FELIX: Yes, Sister Jacobs. I remember the story, and yes, I am going to hell. With Mike. We’re planning a barbecue. You’re invited if you want. Bring something, it’s potluck style.

FELIX exits.

SISTER JACOBS: Felix! Felix come back! (To HENRY) You were right. The child is troubled and needs help.

HENRY: What do you suggest?

SISTER JACOBS: I don’t know. I’m going to talk with the other leaders of the church and get back to you. Be gentle with him. He’s clearly unstable. Make it clear you want to help him. Good luck.

HENRY: Thank you.
SISTER JACOBS leaves. KAREN enters.

HENRY: They left.

KAREN: I know.

BEAT.

KAREN: I don’t think we should stop him.

HENRY: I don’t think we can.

KAREN: If we try, he’ll just do it anyway, but without us.

HENRY: What changed your mind?

BEAT.

KAREN: Remember when Mike’s parents came over and they were outraged that he would dare be non-binary?

HENRY: Yeah?

KAREN: And we told them the story of Felix’s birth and how we vowed to love him no matter what? We felt so superior because if our child had come out as gay, straight, trans*, or whatever, we’d still love him because we love him unconditionally.

HENRY: We still do.

KAREN: Do we? He told us that he isn’t a boy with wings and we told him…we shut him down. We wouldn’t listen to him.

HENRY: He is a boy with wings, Karen. We aren’t the problem. He isn’t loving himself.

BEAT.

KAREN: Mike’s parents said he was a boy and not non-binary. That he was the problem. That he wasn’t loving himself for who he is.

HENRY: That’s different!

KAREN: How?!

HENRY: Because…Karen!

KAREN: Henry?
HENRY: What if he is a boy with wings and we let him destroy part of himself? Mutilate himself? Then we’ll be bad parents…Bad people…I don’t know if I could live with myself. It’s not like this is a reversible procedure! You can’t glue them back on! Once he does this there’s no going back. Is he sure enough to take that chance? How do I know? How does he know?

KAREN: I think he knows better than us and he’s been asking for this for almost a decade. How much longer does he have to consider this before you’re convinced? We can’t stop him, anyway. You said so yourself. Our choice isn’t whether we let him remove his wings or not. It’s whether we support him or not.

HENRY: Of course, we support him, but we don’t know anything about this surgery! He hasn’t told us anything about it. How safe is it? What are the risks? Isn’t it the first of its kind? Can he even survive without his wings? We don’t know anything about his anatomy. Does supporting him mean letting him do this, or does it mean guiding him to the less dangerous decision?

KAREN: That’s not how support works. We’re not the ones that get to choose what’s more helpful.

HENRY: Karen. I just don’t want to see him hurt, and…

KAREN: And what? Henry –

HENRY: Remember when his friends pushed him out that window?

KAREN: He was fine and they didn’t push him. We’ve been over this –

HENRY: He was crying, begging for the pain to stop and I couldn’t help him. I couldn’t make his pain go away. All I could do was yell out for help until a doctor came and injected something into him. I let the doctor decide what he needed without hesitation. I should have been a part of that decision, I should have asked, what’s that? What does it do? It’s my job to…to be a bumper between him and the outside world. So, he’s not facing it all alone.

KAREN: Henry, we can’t protect him forever.

HENRY: I know, but –

KAREN: And I worry…what if we’re what he needs to be protected from? While trying to protect him we…We made him feel bad for …everything. We’re no better than Mike’s parents.

HENRY: It’s not the –
KAREN: It is the same, Henry! We told him he was the devil. Sister Jacobs
told him he was going to hell. We are just as bad and he deserves
better.

HENRY: Well what should we have done?

KAREN: I keep running through it in my mind. Over and over. He tells me that
he doesn’t like his wings. I made it about me and how he was hurting
me and how I felt about his wings. If I could go back… “Mom, I don’t
like my wings.” I would say… “why?” And then I’d listen. I’d hear
why they bothered him and maybe at first, I’d tell him that I like them,
but I’d then…try and help fix what was bothering him. But I never
gave him the chance and now he has to fix it on his own because
I…We’re already terrible, Henry, and we need to fix it.

HENRY: Karen?

KAREN: Henry, we can’t let him do this alone.

HENRY: So, we’re –

KAREN: Yes. We’re letting him remove the wings and we will be there. We
will hold his hand. We will drive him home. We’ll take care of him
and help him buy new clothes…

HENRY: Karen, I…I don’t know if I can do that…

KAREN: What do you mean?

HENRY: I don’t think letting him hurt himself is supporting him.

KAREN: …How can I convince you?

HENRY: I don’t think you can. I…you can hold his hand and drive him home
and buy him shirts, but I can’t. I won’t…I hand made all his shirts and
he just…I can’t support this. I’m sorry.

*HENRY tries to exit. KAREN stops him.*

KAREN: Are you sure?

HENRY: …I’m not sure of anything anymore. I have no idea who my own son is…I…

KAREN: You don’t want to miss being with him after surgery.

HENRY: …I just need to…think…good-bye.

*HENRY exits. FREEZE.*
FELIX enters.

FELIX: Chapter five. I’m ready.

DR. DREW enter.

DR. DREW: Your vitals are good. How are you feeling?


DR. DREW: You haven’t eaten anything or had anything to drink for twelve hours?

FELIX: I have not. Hence, hungry.

DR. DREW: And you understand the possible risks of this surgery?

FELIX: Yes. Yes. We went over them in detail like, eight times. I’m ready.

DR. DREW: Alright. Just breathe normally and count backwards from 100.

FELIX: 100. 99…98…97…96…95…ninety…four…ninety…

FREEZE.
There is no one on stage. The stage is dark. Voices can be heard from all sides of the audience. There is a constant beeping from different parts of the room.

DR. DREW: Scalpel.

BEAT.

OLIVIA: Birdman.

DR. DREW: Clipping the wings at the base to decrease blood flow.

BEAT.

SISTER JACOBS: Absolute angel.

DR. DREW: Bone saw.

BEAT.

HENRY: I love you and your perfect wings.

DR. DREW: More suction, please.

BEAT.

HENRY: Are you happy?

DR. DREW: I need more light over here.

BEAT.

MIKE: Of course, you can fly!

BEAT.

DR. DREW: Someone read his BP to me, please.

KAREN: Why can’t you just love yourself like I love you?

BEAT.


BEAT.

DR. DREW: Two.

Long pause. Lights out.
FELIX: Is he beautiful?

Long pause. FREEZE.
DR. DREW enters.

DR. DREW: Chapter six. Post-op.

FELIX, OLIVIA, and MIKE enter.

DR. DREW: As you can see, the surgery was a success. We were able to remove the wings completely. The swelling will go down in a few days and he won’t be able to lay on his back for a while. There will be some scaring, but it will fade. We’ll want to keep an eye on him for a while, but if all goes well, you can take him home tomorrow. We’ve got him on a few medications right now, some painkillers and some antibiotics. Also, Felix asked me to read this to you, “Dear asshole friends that I love. Thank you for being here for me. I literally can’t thank you enough and I owe you lots of Halloween candy. If, however, you record me in my drugged out state after the surgery, I will be forced to throw your phones in a lake. If you post any such videos online in anyway, I will deep fry and eat your phones. Love you loads, Felix.”

OLIVIA: Damnit. I mean, yay! Felix doesn’t have wings, he’s okay and he loves us.

MIKE: Yeah. Yay…What if he doesn’t know about the video?

DR. DREW: I was just told to read his statement. I cannot speak for him.

FELIX wakes up.

DR. DREW: There he is. Our fallen angel. How are you feeling?

FELIX: Hi…I’m on my stomach…New mom and dad?

DR. DREW: Your friends Mike and Olivia are here. I was just telling them that the surgery was a success and you can go home tomorrow.

FELIX: Did you read the – success? Success? That means it worked, right? It worked? They’re…where are they? I want to stand. Let me stand! They were so heavy. Wings are supposed to make you fly, but mine were so heavy. Heavy wings plus gravity equals being pulled closer to the ground. Wings are supposed to pull you off the ground. Mine didn’t know how to be wings. Ha! And now they’re gone? Like, gone? So, they’re no longer on me? Nowhere? Not on me at all? No wings on me?

MIKE: Can we record a little bit of this?

FELIX: New mom! Is that you? Hi new mom! I need a ride. Oh, and take your stupid ace bandages! I don’t need them anymore. Woohoo.


FELIX: New dad! You’re here too! It’s a family reunion! …Is it a family reunion without spinach casserole?
**DR. DREW:** I'll leave you three alone.

*KAREN rushes in.*

**KAREN:** Felix!?

**FELIX:** That’s me!

**KAREN:** Felix. Are you alright?

**DR. DREW:** He’s perfectly fine. The surgery was a success and he can go home tomorrow.

**KAREN:** Oh, my god. He’s…he’s…

**FELIX:** Feeling lighter.

**KAREN:** He’s…my son. Felix.

**FELIX:** That’s me! I’m Felix!

**KAREN:** Yes. You are.

*FREEZE.*
Chapter seven. Good night.

Good night, mom.

Uh-hmm!

And new mom.

Uh?

And new dad…where’s old dad?

He’s…he’s staying with a friend tonight. Don’t worry, he just needs some time.

…He needs time?

It’ll be alright.

He needs time.

I’m sorry.

…

You look beautiful. Your new night shirt…it’s looks good on you. It’s very Felix.

Thank you, mom.

Good night. Sweet dreams, my little an – sweet dreams, love.

KAREN exits.

I’m sorry about your dad. You deserve better.

I still have a home. I still have a mom. Maybe there’s hope?

Yes, but don’t just wait for something that might not happen. If he wants to be in your life, that’s on him. He needs to earn a spot now.

That’s awfully harsh.

We’re just saying, we love you. Lean on us as much as you need. If he wants to come back, that’ll be nice, but you don’t need him.

…okay. Thank you. I love you, and no offense Olivia, but I’m really happy I’m in my own bed tonight.
OLIVIA: Sleep well, birdman, and don’t think about how much effort I put into getting my guest room ready for you.

FELIX: I’m not a birdman anymore.

OLIVIA: I know. Sweet dreams.

MIKE: Good night.

MIKE and OLIVIA exit.

BEAT.

FELIX gets up and looks in a mirror that isn’t there. He turns. He turns. He turns. He backs up onto a wall and rubs his back against it. He bends forwards and backwards. He runs to his closet and pulls off his shirt. He tries on shirt after shirt and admires himself in the mirror. Optional: OLIVIA and MIKE enter with buckets of white feathers and pour a good layer of feathers on the floor. FELIX lies down shirtless on the floor and feels the feathers and the floor on his back. He feels how flat the floor is on his back. He takes a moment and then makes snow angels in the feathers. Black out.

FELIX: I’m beautiful.
Ugly Swan Costume Notes

Warthog must be ugly, but no mask.

Sister Jacobs is a nun and should wear a nun costume

Felix’s costumes:
T-shirts without holes for the wings
T-shirts should either be nerdy, geeky, or angst-y. They can have DC, Marvel, or Harry Potter.
Button-ups in a variety of colors including white for the Secret Halloween scene
Ace bandages to go over the wings and the wings should be very durable
Angel costume should be minimal or DIY. White dress and halo would be enough
Patient costume for surgery

Sheep costume for Olivia should be made with white clothes and cotton balls

Secret Halloween Scene:
3 white button up shirts
3 red ties
3 costume robes
Harry Potter glasses
Red hair somehow
Eyeliner for scar and freckles

A doctor costume will also be needed for Dr Drew
Some original set designs for *Ugly Swan*. 
Character Break Downs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name:</strong></th>
<th>Felix Christianson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex:</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong></td>
<td>Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronouns:</strong></td>
<td>He/him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wings:</strong></td>
<td>Surgically removed at age 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion:</strong></td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexuality:</strong></td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last shower:</strong></td>
<td>Yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is that normal?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Felix showers daily and when he had wings he would wash them too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word character overuses the most:</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biggest Secret:</strong></td>
<td>Felix has a crush on Mike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hogwarts House:</strong></td>
<td>Hufflepuff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harshest curse word:</strong></td>
<td>Fuck. He only uses it on special occasions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biggest Fear:</strong></td>
<td>Heights. Ever since he jumped off a roof.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favorite subject in school:</strong></td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best birthday present ever received:</strong></td>
<td>A t-shirt that didn’t have holes for his wings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The worst thing they put in their mouth:</strong></td>
<td>Red wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favorite Food:</strong></td>
<td>Sea salt chocolate cupcakes with espresso icing (Mike makes them a lot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last thing they ate:</strong></td>
<td>Ramen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last time they ran:</strong></td>
<td>Quidditch try outs. He didn’t make it on to the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guilty pleasure:</strong></td>
<td>Rom Coms/Titanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation:</strong></td>
<td>Writer, writing tutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last time they cried:</td>
<td>Love Actually viewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit animal:</td>
<td>Penguin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last relationship:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worst day ever:</td>
<td>When he told his mom he didn’t want his wings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best day ever:</td>
<td>Secret Halloween</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last book they read:</td>
<td>His own about 58 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong></td>
<td>Mike Ugly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex:</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong></td>
<td>Non-binary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronouns:</strong></td>
<td>He/him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wings:</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion:</strong></td>
<td>Raised Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexuality:</strong></td>
<td>Bisexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last shower:</strong></td>
<td>Two days ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is that normal?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Mike showers every 3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word character overuses the most:</strong></td>
<td>Can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biggest Secret:</strong></td>
<td>Mike has a crush on Felix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hogwarts House:</strong></td>
<td>Ravenpuff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harshest curse word:</strong></td>
<td>Fuck. He only uses it when it’s absolutely necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biggest Fear:</strong></td>
<td>Loneliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favorite subject in school:</strong></td>
<td>Zoology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best birthday present ever received:</strong></td>
<td>Olivia’s Hand-me-downs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The worst thing they put in their mouth:</strong></td>
<td>Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favorite Food:</strong></td>
<td>Cake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last thing they ate:</strong></td>
<td>Grilled Cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last time they ran:</strong></td>
<td>He saw Felix down the street and ran to him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guilty pleasure:</strong></td>
<td>Glee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation:</strong></td>
<td>Costumer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last time they cried:</strong></td>
<td>Beauty and the Beast in theatres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spirit animal:</strong></td>
<td>House Cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last relationship:</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worst day ever:</strong></td>
<td>When he forced his friend out a window.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best day ever:</strong></td>
<td>Secret Halloween</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last book they read:</strong></td>
<td>Felix’s book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Olivia Swan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex:</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td>Grrrl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns:</td>
<td>She/her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wings:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion:</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality:</td>
<td>Asexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last shower:</td>
<td>She doesn’t remember. Monday?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is that normal?</td>
<td>2-3 times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word character overuses the most:</td>
<td>Dude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biggest Secret:</td>
<td>Her anxiety is more crippling than she lets on. Her parents not believing in modern medicine isn’t helping either</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogwarts House:</td>
<td>Slytherin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harshest curse word:</td>
<td>Bitch, but she only uses it to refer to herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biggest Fear:</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite subject in school:</td>
<td>Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best birthday present ever received:</td>
<td>Real Harry Potter robes from Universal Studios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The worst thing they put in their mouth:</td>
<td>Kombucha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite Food:</td>
<td>Pad Thai Tempora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last thing they ate:</td>
<td>Garlic Kale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last time they ran:</td>
<td>When she was playing tag with Mike and Felix when they were 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilty pleasure:</td>
<td>Disney Princess movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation:</td>
<td>Grad student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last time they cried:</strong></td>
<td>When her grandma died 3 years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spirit animal:</strong></td>
<td>Wolf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last relationship:</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worst day ever:</strong></td>
<td>When Mike was told he was going to hell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best day ever:</strong></td>
<td>Secret Halloween</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last book they read:</strong></td>
<td><em>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban,</em> although she did help Felix edit his book and read it several times, she always comes back to her favorite <em>Harry Potter</em> book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong></td>
<td>Karen Christianson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex:</strong></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong></td>
<td>Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronouns:</strong></td>
<td>She/her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wings:</strong></td>
<td>Her child has wings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion:</strong></td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexuality:</strong></td>
<td>Straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last shower:</strong></td>
<td>This morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is that normal?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. She showers daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word character overuses the most:</strong></td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biggest Secret:</strong></td>
<td>She’s worried that her kid is of the devil due to his origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hogwarts House:</strong></td>
<td>Slytherin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harshest curse word:</strong></td>
<td>Shit which she only utters when she drops something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biggest Fear:</strong></td>
<td>Her kid is of the devil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favorite subject in school:</strong></td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best birthday present ever received:</strong></td>
<td>The flower from the witch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The worst thing they put in their mouth:</strong></td>
<td>Cod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favorite Food:</strong></td>
<td>Sautéed mushrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last thing they ate:</strong></td>
<td>Chili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last time they ran:</strong></td>
<td>When she was chasing Felix when he was 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guilty pleasure:</strong></td>
<td>Boy bands and smutty novels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation:</strong></td>
<td>Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last time they cried:</strong></td>
<td>When her child removed his wings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spirit animal:</strong></td>
<td>Llama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last relationship:</strong></td>
<td>They broke up when he chose his music career over her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worst day ever:</strong></td>
<td>When her son showed up without his wings and her husband walked out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best day ever:</strong></td>
<td>When her child was born from the magic flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last book they read:</strong></td>
<td>A very lovely smutty romance novel set in the 1800s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong></td>
<td>Henry Christianson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex:</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong></td>
<td>Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronouns:</strong></td>
<td>He/him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wings:</strong></td>
<td>His child has wings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion:</strong></td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexuality:</strong></td>
<td>Straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last shower:</strong></td>
<td>Last night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is that normal?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. He showers every other day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word character overuses the most:</strong></td>
<td>Seriously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biggest Secret:</strong></td>
<td>He’s socially conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hogwarts House:</strong></td>
<td>Ravenclaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harshest curse word:</strong></td>
<td>Fuck. It slips out every once in a while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biggest Fear:</strong></td>
<td>His kid is Queer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favorite subject in school:</strong></td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best birthday present ever received:</strong></td>
<td>A water heater with temperature control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The worst thing they put in their mouth:</strong></td>
<td>Jellied eels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favorite Food:</strong></td>
<td>English Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last thing they ate:</strong></td>
<td>Jam toast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last time they ran:</strong></td>
<td>Ran to the toilet after trying jellied eels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guilty pleasure:</strong></td>
<td>Sleepless in Seatle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation:</strong></td>
<td>Math professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last time they cried:</strong></td>
<td>When he left his wife and son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit animal:</td>
<td>Goat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last relationship:</td>
<td>She left because she fell out of love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worst day ever:</td>
<td>When he left his wife and son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best day ever:</td>
<td>When his child was born from the magic flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last book they read:</td>
<td>An awful math textbook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Talk Back Questions

- Initial reactions?
- Should Felix have removed his wings?
- Are Karen and Henry both justified?
- How does Felix’s struggle connect to your life?
- Which story in the first act felt pivotal?
- What’s the message?
- Questions for me?
Rory Kennison

Rory’s Thesis Project Budget

Travel:

- 7 & 8 passenger van
  - $20 per day
    - 2 trips near Philly: $40
    - 1 trip to Baltimore: $20
  - Gas 5 cents per mile
    - 24 miles for the Philly trips: $1.20
    - 200 miles to Baltimore and back: $10
  - Food
    - $15 per person (7) for lunch per Baltimore trip: $105

Total maximum travel expenses: $176.20

Additional Expenses:

- Food for readings: $55

Total Expenses: $231.20
January 27, 2018 Reflection

Today I did the first read through of my play. It was amazing. I hadn’t realized how little I’d put into these characters until my actors’ voices filled in the rest. The characters came alive. I know playwriting is a small part of theatre, but the actual size wasn’t clear to me until today. A simple “no” on the page had so much more in it when an actor uttered it. This thing I’d been creating on my own for months was entirely new to me and not entirely mine. I got so lost I forgot to record how long the reading took. I will next time we rehearse. My next steps will be another full read through, timed, and then scene by scene work with the actors to get even more out of those words. I’d also like to discuss talk backs and possible questions.
February 10th Reflection

I felt like a real director today. We ran through with my blocking notes and really worked out some rough spots. I took notes and gave them right after. I really felt like I was putting together my own vision. It’s hard to truly know what that feels like. Then we discussed some character stuff. I could just correct people. It felt powerful. Then we talked through the discussion question so my actors could feel ready for them and whatever questions come up.
Ugly Swan Survey

As you listen to this reading, if anything catches your attention please write it down here.

Anything that excited you?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Any Questions that came up?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Anything you didn’t like?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Which short story in the first act was your favorite?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Any messages you have for me?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Thank you!!

Rory Kennison ☺
Reflection on Haverford Performance

When I think about this performance, one word comes up: disappointment. I spent so much time working on this show and it was a flop. Very few people showed up. It looked pathetic. I’m also being a harsh judge because I put so much of myself into this debut. Only a handful of my friends and my over enthusiastic family came to see it and then no one wanted to talk afterwards. No one touched the food I picked out, and there were significantly fewer laughs than I had expected.

Some lines just weren’t landing the way I wanted them to, so I cut them. There’s a whole scene that just isn’t working at the beginning, so I cut it. I needed to cut the run time anyway. I just can’t sit through my awkward writing again. Releasing art into the world is hard. It sounds so much worse out loud than it did on my computer. I kind of want to take it back and just have it live here on my computer. What’s stopping me? Already committed to do other performances and my actors seem to think it’s good.

Despite all that, I did notice good some things that came from giving my play to the world. The “I want my mom and dad” line is landing and landing hard. It’s hard for the actors to say and hear and it hits the audience hard. The first time I reread the play myself that was the only line that made me cry. It’s quite satisfying to hear that a line is affecting people the way you intended it to. I feel that happens rarely in art, but when it does it’s powerful.

So far, ever audience who has read or heard the play has mentioned the trying to fly scene. Not only was that my favorite scene to write, it also holds a special place in my heart since so much of it is stolen directly from my childhood memories. I have every step of that scene placed in a memory, in a yard, or in a colourful bedroom that I once knew. It’s almost like a younger Rory is brought back into reality every time we do that scene. I’m really excited to hear that the scene is affecting the audience too.
One interesting thing I learned about my actors was that they were basing their younger characters on young people they’ve seen and not their own experiences. I find that interesting because only a few lines came from observing others, everything else came from my own memories.

The next run will hopefully have more people, more discussion, and maybe rebuild my confidence in this project.
School Tour Reflection

When I started planning this weekend long trip, I had no idea how much it would change how I feel about my play. I didn’t anticipate how much this trip would bring us together as an ensemble, or how the reactions from students would impact my play. I especially didn’t anticipate how much I’d revaluate my play’s role in the world. I suppose a lot of it shouldn’t have been that surprising, but it’s hard to understand how these things will affect a piece of art before they happen.

For example, it’s often hard to understand how ensemble based theatre is different from other theatre, but I’ve seen how people click on stage and how the show feels more independent and outside of reality when it’s ensemble based. I’ve been a part of ensemble based shows and shows that weren’t, but I haven’t experienced the difference as much as I did this weekend. The first few times we all got together we were all discovering the characters and the story together. I was adjusting blocking and line delivery up until the last second, and those readings felt somewhat disjointed. They didn’t flow. It was scene after scene after scene, rather than an independent world that was existing in front of us. I was okay with that because they were just staged readings, not full performances, and I expected that kind of disjointedness. This weekend, though, felt different. As we all worked together to make sure each performance happened, we grew closer to each other and closer to the piece. The first two performances still felt like readings, but it also felt a bit more independent. It felt like my characters were really trying to exist. Then I spent a weekend with my actors. We were in one room together most of the time, we travelled together, we learned about each other and developed inside jokes. In short, we became friends. It’s a small step that’s just a part of everyday life, but it makes a difference in art. Our next performance was more blobby and gelatinous. It was forming its own shape in the space,
becoming a world. I was shocked by how much of a difference it made to have a closer ensemble.

I was also kind of shocked by the high schoolers’ reactions to my play. I honestly don’t know what I expected, but I was pleasantly surprised by how engaged they were. The first class were loud, but very engaged throughout. It created quite an atmosphere during the learning to fly scene. We could all feel the growing tension. Every persons’ breathe was audible and focused on my actors. I couldn’t help but smile when someone inhaled quickly and said “ooooh! I get it,” and then whisper to their neighbour. Yeah, it was distracting and probably much worse for my actors than me, but I loved seeing the excitement. The high schoolers also had a lot to say afterwards which was great to hear. I explained how the wings symbolize transman breasts, and was greeted with a loud, “I knew it!” These kids gave me so much hope for the future. Another child asked if they could also represent ties to how one was raised and how cutting them off was an act of declaring independence. I had to give them that. It was an interpretation that I myself hadn’t considered, but was right all the same. It was so cool to get such helpful feedback from them. They didn’t have to help, but they did and it was great! Another kid admitted that they hated it at first and thought it was cliché, but as it went on she loved it. It starts slow and fairy tale-y, but it gets more and more serious. The surveys I gave out were filled with mostly positive feedback, and of course they all mentioned the jumping out a window scene. I didn’t realize how powerful that scene would be, but it’s so far a clear favorite. It’s even my favorite scene. Something about the responses that stuck out to me, though, is that none of them misgendered my characters. I don’t have an explanation for that, but it did make me very happy. Needless to say, I walked out of those performances feeling lighter and full of good energy. I had new a confidence in what I’d written, and I felt closer to it than ever.
What was even more shocking than the high schooler reactions were the middle schooler reactions. If the high school performances gave me a new confidence, then the middle school performance increased that confidence ten-fold. We performed for a gay straight alliance who were quite quiet during the performance. After we finished their enthusiasm was set free. I know how hard it is to get the approval of a middle schooler, but these kids not only approved, they wanted more. I saw a hunger and a passion for what we were doing. A hunger I hadn’t seen myself since I was in middle school. I remember the need to cling to other worlds, the tendency to escapism, that I had as a middle schooler. Mine found Rent the movie and musical. I don’t think I’ve ever watched a movie more than I did Rent when I was thirteen. I mention this because of how important my relationship with Rent was. I don’t know how I would have gotten through middle school without it, or if I would be the same person. My world shifted when I looked at these students and saw their hunger. When I saw that something I created could become a second home for someone who needs it. I almost felt guilty for only giving them this small taste. I didn’t leave a recording or a script or anything except the memories and the selfies. That was the other important thing, though. I brought a bunch of queer college students who are living their best lives to a bunch of struggling queer middle schoolers. Saying it gets better can only go so far, but giving a struggling child a smiling face to tell them that there is a future and a friendly handshake to show them that they are worthy of respect is a step further that I very happy that I was able to give these kids.

As I looked at these kids, though, wanting to give them more, I asked myself why I wrote a play anyway. What about this medium draws me in? Is there a better way for me to tell this story? I want more stories in our media that young queer people can relate to. I don’t just want main characters who are queer, I want parents of queer characters who are multifaceted. I want more trans narratives for kids to see and relate to. A play reaches so
few people, though. I can’t help all the queer students. As a theatre student, I’ve often had to face the inherent elitism that comes with theatre as a medium. Only those with the time and money can enjoy theatre and there’s theatre etiquette that’s not clear to everyone. I haven’t truly grappled with the issue until now, though. Whatever I create in theatre will never be able to reach all the people I want it to. As I got frustrated with this thought I took a step back and tried to take in the advantages of this medium. That’s when I saw Kat, who plays Felix, taking a selfie with one of the children and giving out hugs to the kids. I remembered that when you see a real person in front of you, it’s a bit different from seeing someone through a screen or simply reading about a person. I heard the kids contribute their own thoughts on the play as my actors reacted positively them, encouraging them. A TV can’t respond to a lonely child or confirm that they shouldn’t use ace bandages to bind their chest. I can’t reach all the people the people I want to reach, but the people I do reach get more than just a story that I made up. They get so much more. And that’s why I wrote a play.

Writing a play, though, is not the task that I thought it was. Every time I listen to my play, I want to make changes. I want it to do something new, but it never does. I wrote it and finalized it, but now that I hear it, I mentally edit and adjust all of it. There’s so much I want to change and so many ideas swim through my head while I listen. I don’t know when I should put the pen down and say I’m done. My next performance is in two weeks and then I have a month. I’m not making any major changes before the next performance, but I want to have whole new scripts for the April performance. It’s surprising how close the end of this project is. It seems so much bigger, and yet when I started it, I thought it would be smaller. Does this project ever end? How long should I hold onto this play? I don’t know if I’ll have any of these answers by the end of the semester, but I’m so much closer to understanding theatre as an art than I was before I started this project. I’m asking questions I wouldn’t even have thought of before, but now they’re not only important, they’re almost impossible to
answer. There’s so much to this medium that I’ve only scratched the surface of. It seems so simple at first. I remember those first few classes and a few school plays that gave me the confidence to think I knew anything about theatre. Now, years later, I feel like I know less.

What really emphasized how little I know about the medium for me was my experience playing Mike in the middle school performance. I’ve been an actor. I’ve been a playwright. I’ve been a director. I’ve been a stage manager. I’ve been a designer. I’ve been a lighting director. I have never been more than one of these roles in one show. I know what the roles require. I know how to do each job. I didn’t know how much each role changes one’s perception of the play. When I wrote my last play, I focused on the part of me that I put in each character. I created dialogue that looked good and sounded right in my head. When I acted in my last play, I found a piece of me to put into the character. I made each line sound right as I said it and I became a person. When I write people, I create them, but I don’t have to become them. There’s such a separation between me and the characters I write, even though I created them from a piece of me, they’re still further from me than the characters I play. When I was thrown into playing Mike, a character I created from a piece of me, the play felt sideways the whole time. Suddenly, my story was narrower and more focused. I had to carefully put each line together as if it were new, even though they were all old to me. My characters reacted to me and I had to react to them. Does a painter ever feel like the image that has been created on the canvas? Do they ever get to step in and try to be the fruit in the bowl? A play is more than I can comprehend at this time. Just how many sides are there to see my art from? I will revisit these questions as I continue this project, but for now I will stew in uncertainty, letting ideas and possible answers flow through me. I think that’s all I can do for now.

This weekend definitely changed me as an artist. Unfortunately – or maybe fortunately, depending on how you look at it – I have more questions than answers now.
What I do know is that this play needed to be written. One of my performances has made at least one person feel good, be it a college student, high schooler, or a middle schooler, someone enjoyed hearing the story I had to tell. Also, as I accept the limitations of this medium, I also see the phenomenal benefits of writing a play. I’m actually very excited to see how much I grow through this crazy play creation process.
A Selection of High Schooler Responses to *Ugly Swan*

“I was very excited to see queer representation in a play and I thought that was done very well. I also love the metaphor of the wings for transness.”

“Keep doing what you’re doing!”

“The whole play was awesome!”

“THIS IS SO GOOD!”

“Good job.”

“I liked the play and its tone”

“Good job guys. You all work very well as a unit”

“Keep up the good work”

“Everything felt kind of predictable/cliché. Still enjoyable”

“I LOVE THIS”

“It was funny when the boy kept say f you”

“The comedy didn’t clash that well with the drama”

“Keep doing what you’re doing. It’s great!”

“It was a good play”

“Great job. Keep writing!”

Questions?

“What inspired this?”

“What the wings symbolize?”

**Which short story in the first act was your favorite?**

“The jumping out the window story!”

“Olivia’s. I don’t usually hear about asexual coming out stories”

“When they were trying to get Felix to fly”

“When he jumped out of the window”
“The story about Halloween and when they first discussed the characters as asexual and nonbinary”

“When Felix started to swear and say ‘F this’”

“Felix trying to fly”

“When they jumped off the roof”

“Learning to fly”

“Jumping out the window”

“Pushing out the house to fly”

“I liked the story about first Halloween and the other younger stories”

What excited you?

“When Felix cut off his wings”

“I was unsure what would happen with the jumping scene”

“When Felix had a breakdown, but his friends supported him”

“The story was different then what I expected”

“Felix’s personality”

“The theme of the play”

“The story is very personal so it’s very interesting and has depth”

“The ending. Mother was able to accept the wings”

“Making connections and realizations throughout the play”
Some Reflective Thoughts from April 4th, 2018

After the school tour through Baltimore, I didn’t think this show could surprise me anymore. I was wrong. This show constantly surprises me. The first surprise was that I wasn’t prepared for how stressful the Bryn Mawr performance would be. After doing it so many times I thought I knew how it was going to go, but as a friend of my dad said, “creating art is hard. If anyone actually knew how hard it is before doing it, then they’d never start.” I didn’t believe him, but now I think I do. It’s all so much harder than I could have ever imagined. I guess I really just feel the most vulnerable I’ve ever felt in my life, and I’m not even on stage. On the other hand, this was a great audience who only had good things to say. I was worried that it would be a pathetic crowd and that no one would want to say anything. With every performance, my feelings on my own writing are confirmed further. It’s flat, shallow, lacks subtlety, cliché, hackneyed, and dull. With every compliment, I hear my own thoughts. I take their kind words and just list it beside all the other qualities I’ve already attributed to my work. Will I always doubt myself? I hope I can grow some confidence in my work eventually, but probably not my under-grad school thesis project. Between the self-doubt and the oppressive levels of stress, I still found time to be a director. I heard every word my actors. I took mental notes of every move and smile and laugh and jump. One of my actors made some choices I didn’t agree with, and I had to figure out how to deal with that disagreement. Something else about this performance completely shook my experience with the piece: the wings. Having Felix physically have wings significantly changed the play. Some other things that have affected my journey with this play are my trip to Venice Island and a message from GLSEN. All these surprises and experiences are hard to explain, but I’m going to try anyway.

The stress was the biggest surprise. I wasn’t as surprised by the stress during my first performance. I’ve never had something I’ve written performed, so I understood the stress.
It’s a huge project and it means a lot to me, so presenting it should come with some stress.

As I said earlier, these performances are the most vulnerable I’ve ever been in my life. The funny thing is, I wasn’t as stressed during the school performances. The play was written with teenagers in mind, so that’s one possible reason why it wasn’t as stressful to do the show for the kids. I also strive to be vulnerable in front of kids. When I teach I’m very aware of the hierarchy and the inherent inequality in the relationship, so I try my best to be not be condescending, open, and truthful with them. I’m now very used to having a lot of myself available when I’m with kids. They’re struggling to grow up, which a very difficult task, and someone’s who’s already done it being open and available can mean a lot to a child. This has gone off on a bit of a tangent, but an important one. My relationship with the act of growing up is helpful for analysing why I wrote the play in the first place and how feel about the various incarnations of the play. Either way, whether my stress is dependent on the audience or not, I will be more prepared for the stress of the performance and I will continue to be curious about my physical and emotional responses to performances of things I’ve written.

The audience response was surprising to me as well. Many people came, but they were all people I knew. I guess I thought that the show would draw a broader crowd, but then again, I didn’t do much to try and get that to happen. This reading was very casual like the last one. My actors and I were goofing around as people entered and just being chill. I like a cast that seems approachable and comfortable with each other, so I thought that worked for the show. It is a very ensemble show. I snarked a bit back and forth with my actors, which is was not a great decision and not one I’d make again, but I don’t think it was awful. After the show the audience had a lot to say and it was all positive things. The ones that stuck out were how the show didn’t feel preachy and how everyone liked the window scene. It’s still a favourite. I actually think that scene could work as a stand-alone scene. It was a
nice confidence boost to have so much positive response sent my way, and I’m very happy for that.

The other thing that surprised me was how focused I could be on the performance despite all the foggy stress that was consuming my mind. I was still able to analyse every movement and line delivery my actors made. Maybe that was the stress making me more aware, but I wasn’t overly critical. There were three main notes that I felt needed to be addressed. For how stressed I was and how much I wanted to micromanage, three notes seems quite reasonable. It could have easily been ten notes for each scene. The three notes that I ended up settling on were Kat using “ace” instead of “asexual,” the ensemble feel to the second act, and Kat’s aggression in the confrontation scene. The “ace” line is so small, but it makes a difference. A lot of this process has been discovering just how much small things like a word or a prop or music can change a show. Even if the audience doesn’t consciously notice these things, they do make a difference. Kat keeps saying “ace” instead of “asexual” in one scene. “Ace” is slang for asexual which is typically only used by those in the LGBTQ community. Felix would not know the term and it’s noticeable for me when Kat uses it anyway. My problem with Kat’s aggression in the confrontation scene is less nit-picky than my issue with the term ace. Kat played that scene as an attack. It was far more defensive than I wrote it. I want that scene to be played more cautiously. Otherwise it enters an unrealistic area. The story that we see all the time in our media is the child who doesn’t agree with their parents and fights with them. The story I’m trying to tell is about the fragility of family and how children feel that too. The story of how I didn’t come out to my parents for six years because it was all too fragile and I cared more about my mother’s well-being than my own. That scene needs to be gentler. Felix needs to be focused on defusing the confrontation with every line. I must ask, though, if this play is performed with a different director will it be right for me to ask for this interpretation to be presented? I’m the
playwright, so where is the line? How much influence do I have on this play now that it’s out in the world? I don’t know if I’ll ever know or even if it’s helpful at this point to draw that line. It’s probably best if I just feel it out with every new situation that comes up.

For now, I am also the director which means I get to decide what the play looks like in the end. One thing I didn’t think I’d need or even want for my play is a pair of wings. It’s been fun not having them and turning the play into even more of a story telling over a story showing, which is the feel I want. When we added the wings, though, I was unsure about using them, but they were better for the show than I could have ever imagined. Theatre is weird like that. Small things like a prop or a song can make a huge difference in the experience. It’s so much, I don’t know how much of it I can master or even feel competent in. The binding of the wings was visually satisfying and did get the message across of how different Felix is with his friends and his parents. The scene that really sold me, though, was the removal scene. The wings came off and immediately I had a wave of emotions and Felix was completely different. I felt bad about the huge change, I felt scared, and then I felt excited and intrigued. I wanted to know more about who Felix is now without the wings. That transition was phenomenal and made me feel things I hadn’t yet even though I’ve been working on this play for almost a year. We are definitely keeping the wings for the final performance and I will remain open to all possibilities in my art in the future.
Final Reflections

I only had six performances of my play set up for this project. I hope there are future performances, and I do want to continue making this play great, but this performance felt very final. If nothing else, this was the last performance with this cast. I didn’t anticipate how close I’d get to this cast of actors. I definitely didn’t anticipate how supportive my actors would be. This was my thesis, which is a very personal project, but somehow it became theirs too. They wanted it to go well and they felt connected to the text. Theatre is collaborative, which makes it a very unique medium. I know this, and I appreciate this aspect of theatre, but that doesn’t mean it won’t continue to surprise me when the words I write turn out to be meaningful for someone else, let alone when someone else shows interest in taking ownership of the words I wrote. The connection I have with these actors is frankly unbelievable, in that if I told myself a few months ago how this whole project would go, I wouldn’t believe it. If I wanted to, I could spend hours trying to find the right words to describe our connection because, despite my many experiences being a part of casts and troupes, I haven’t had a reason to use whatever words are necessary to describe this type of connection before. I honestly have a hard time picturing my future without these wonderful actors. My strong connection with my actors is significant, but only one of the many new experiences this project has brought me.

This last performance introduced a new form of energy that I did not know could exist in my body. I was somehow stressed about how the show would go, and also the most relaxed I’ve been during a performance of my play. I had one eye on the audience and listened closely to every line and watched every move my actors made. I’d been this stressed over the play before, which was helpful for giving notes as a director, but at the same time, I enjoyed this last performance. I loved hearing the audience laugh and I caught myself wanting to hear in the stories my actors were telling, even though I wrote them and knew
every word. I had yet to experience enjoying a performance of something I’d written, and I was able to enjoy it a little this time.

That’s not the only thing that made this performance stand out from the rest. It was the first time I had ever been a part of a performance that was not school related. We were in a real theatre that open to the public. The event was not run through a teacher or professor. I kept referring to this performance as my debut. It wasn’t a very well attended debut, but I feel different and more valid as an artist now. It helps that I then got to watch other artists perform on the same stage in the same festival as me. I watched them and tried to judge if my piece was good enough to be in the same show with them, and it was. I now honestly believe my piece was good enough for the Shoe Box Collective’s Theatre Festival, which makes me good enough for a theatre festival and therefore, I am an artist. It seems silly to only realize that I’m an artist when this whole project is over, but it took doing this whole project to prove to myself that I am an artist. I apparently have high standards.

At this point I’m still recovering from the festival. I almost feel numb. The numbness that I’ve felt so many times before once a closing night of a show that I’ve worked for months on has come and gone. Every time I think I won’t be able to continue without the show, and then I do. I suppose the next step is to continue.
A Reflection on the Past Year

It’s often hard for me to remember how different my life was a year ago. Sometimes it doesn’t feel like I’ve been working on this project for that long. Sometimes I can’t imagine life without this project. What’s hardest for me to contemplate, though, is how much I’ve changed because of this project. I didn’t think art could give me this much confidence, but not only am I now out to my mother, she came to one of the readings and supported the art I created about an identity that I never wanted her to know about. I’ve seen kids connect with my art and felt like I gave them something good, something I would have wanted when I was their age. After the last performance I did this year, I didn’t feel much. I didn’t have a lot to say. It was over and everything had been said and done. It’s been a few days now and I still don’t have much to say about that performance in particular, but I do have a lot I want to say about this past year.

The Coming Out Scenes:

The first thing that comes to mind when I reflect on this process is the journey of the coming out scenes. They were added after I’d finished writing the play, but felt there was something missing in the story of our three main character’s relationships. I added coming out scenes because they represent a level of intimacy and vulnerability that I’ve only felt with my closest friends. Coming out has been a large part of growing up for me. I remember how my friends came out to me and how nervous they each were. I remember coming out to my friends and feeling like I just trusted them with a large and delicate part of me, and was rewarded for doing so. The coming out scenes were in a sense an afterthought, but they were also very important and meant a lot to me.

Catharine did not like the coming out scenes. Neither did Ryan. They felt like they were forcing an agenda on the story and they cheapened the allegory of the wings. I listened
to their concerns and I understood their points of view, but I still understood the importance of the scenes to me. I also understood the importance of the scenes to the younger people who have engaged with my play.

My actors didn’t have any problems with the coming out scenes, but they were upset when I cut them for some of the performances. A lot of my peers that came to the performances told me that the coming out scenes were important to them. One friend said that the asexual representation is so rare and it was well done in this show. One friend said that the coming out scenes were different from what’s usually portrayed and that it was powerful for them that Felix’s coming out was that he was a muggle.

Truthfully, neither Catharine and Ryan’s, nor my peers’ opinions are the ones that matter to me. I didn’t write this for them, or me. I wrote this play for middle and high schoolers. Their opinion is what matters to me and they loved the coming out scenes. Taking my play to schools was the best thing I could have done for my confidence because kids are honest and these kids loved the coming out scenes. They started telling me and my actors about their lives and how the play spoke to their experiences, which was my biggest hope when I started writing. I wanted to write something that would speak to queer youths and that’s what I did, so despite the advice from my advisor and Ryan, I left the scenes in the play.

I wonder why there’s such a divide in who enjoyed the coming out scenes and who didn’t, and the conclusion I came up with is that the scenes speak to people who have had a lot of coming out happen in their lives. Not just one person came out to them, but some of their closest friends, or they had to come out. The scenes are there because for me coming out was a large part of growing up and they speak to people who also can’t imagine a childhood without coming out being a part of it. Some people, particularly older people don’t have those experiences, so the scenes don’t seem to fit. This is my theory which may be
wrong, but it doesn’t really matter, because the scenes speak to those who I wrote the play for, so I’m leaving them in.

**The Future of the Project:**

I have been told that GLSEN is interested in hosting a few performances of my play, so my plan is to start there. The Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network works to educate students and educators in an effort to lighten the burden that queer students feel in our school environments. My play and GLSEN’s agenda seem to be very compatible. My goal for this play was always to make something that can be infused into the schools as a way to help queer students feel seen and validated. In the future, I plan to work with GLSEN, Single Carrot Theatre’s education program, and some Baltimore Schools individually to have this play performed or read by students for students. Honestly, my plans are not very specific and kind of flowery, but my bigger plans are to move on and write something new. I am a playwright, and that’s what I’m going to do.

**What worked:**

The first thing that comes to mind is the school performances. They were the purpose of my project and they went better than I could have imagined. They definitely worked and helped me figure out the future for the project and the future for my writing in general. The performance in the middle school is where the piece really found its home. That’s where it belongs.

The next thing that comes to mind is the cast. I was blessed with a beautiful cast of fantastic people who were dedicated and connected to the work. I couldn’t have asked for a better cast. I honestly did not expect anyone to be so dedicated to a project that wasn’t for
credit, money, or fame. It’s a play written by an undergraduate, and yet by pure coincidence I found people who not only wanted to be a part of it, but wanted to make it great.

Those are the big things I can think of that worked. Of course there were smaller things like scenes and props that worked, but I feel I’ve already reflected on those efficiently and to do so now would not be helpful.

**What didn’t work:**

I am not a director. I did not realize just how much I am not a director until this project, but I am really not a director. There were small moments when I felt like a director and I was able to fake it, but I’m not a director and that’s okay. It didn’t work this time, but I’ve learned for the next time. I am a playwright and an actor, but directing is something completely different which does not interest me and does not work for me.

Sending my play to people wasn’t always helpful. I sent it to friends and people who weren’t really connected to the target audience, and they’d give me advice that would make the play better for them, but when I reviewed their critiques with my target audience in mind, I ended up scrapping them. In some ways this was useful, but these critiques often would make me question my writing in ways that were not helpful.

**How would I do it differently:**

First, I would find a director. It was hard enough to find actors, but I really don’t want to direct this again. My feelings as a playwright have always been that I’m creating a blueprint, and someone else will make it even better in ways I can’t even imagine when they fill in the rest and make it a play. I’d want some input, but I don’t want to direct this again. I’d have more rehearsals, not that I’d want it to be more of a staged performance, but I’d want the ensemble to mesh more.
I have few regrets because I feel that everything I did in this project, even if it didn’t land the way I originally wanted, was important for my artistic journey. One of my favorite things that Catharine Slusar taught me is that there are no failures in art, there are just pieces that we learn from in order to create the more successful pieces. I cling to that idea. Even when things don’t land the way I intend, they were still important and make me a better artist, so I wouldn’t do much differently if I could do this project over again from the start.

**Why Staged Readings:**

Like I already explained, when I write a play, I write it under the assumption that there are elements that would be better added by someone else. Theatre is a collaborative process. It cannot be done by a playwright alone. I wanted to create the sense that there were elements missing, because there was. There’s potential, and I didn’t want any audience to get the idea that this is it for the project. One kid said she wanted to see this play on Broadway, which shows to me that she not only engaged with the play, but she also saw the potential and was already imagining where it could go next. Having staged readings was effective and I am happy with how it turned out.

**Final thoughts:**

I am proud of this piece. I don’t often get to say I made something I’m proud of, but I feel genuine pride for this. I’m proud of how much work I put into writing the play, I’m proud of the edits I made and how intentional every decision was. I’m proud of the performances. Every time I start working on an art piece, I go in with one goal: to create something I can be proud of. I’m a very indecisive person and have high standards for myself, so I don’t often definitively feel proud of anything I’ve worked on. I see places I
could have improved, or I regret not connecting to the piece as much as I could have, but this is a project that I am genuinely proud of.