

LIFELIKE
by Stephen Gnojewski

Cast of Characters

MIMI, Bebe's best, best, best-best friend

BEBE, Mimi's best, best, best-best friend

CECE, Mimi's identical secret self

DIDI, a mannequin

GIGI, a mannequin

Setting

A shopping mall

Time

Now

All are equalized by the mark of sameness,

By the law of the divine hand.

One enormous orphanhood,

One enormous emptiness.

‘At the Crossroads’ by Yu Baltrushaitis

PART I

SETTING: The food court of a shopping mall. Everything is artificial and plastic. In each part of the play, there are cliques of mannequins lounging in various poses—eating, walking, shopping, talking on the cell phone, etc. Gradually, the mannequins begin to appear more and more like MIMI. This transformation should be subtle, until, by the end of the play, everyone is absolutely identical.

AT RISE: MIMI and BEBE are seated at a café table. MIMI and BEBE are best friends. It should be difficult to determine if they are adolescents or adults. Their costumes should be outrageous, cutting-edge eccentric, but bordering on bad taste. MIMI is deeply troubled, suffering from a severe anxiety attack. She is downcast and haggard, as if she hasn't slept in several days. BEBE, on the other hand, is bright and chipper and eagerly browses through her magazine. The sterile sound of muzak occupies the air.

Clooney or Cruise? BEBE

Clooney. MIMI

George Clooney or Daniel Craig? BEBE

George Clooney. MIMI

George Clooney or Brad Pitt? BEBE

(Both giggle.)

Brad Pitt. BEBE & MIMI

Brad Pitt or Bradley Cooper? BEBE

Brad Pitt. MIMI

Brad Pitt or David Beckman? BEBE

MIMI

Brad Pitt.

BEBE

Brad Pitt or Leonardo DiCaprio?

(No response.)

Mimi. Brad Pitt or Leonardo DiCaprio?

MIMI

Oh...uhh...Leo.

BEBE

WHAT!? Leo DiCaprio over Brad Pitt? Are you for real?

MIMI

Well, I was just thinking...I was just thinking that...

(Changing her state of mind.)

Oh, you're right, you're right, you're absolutely right. What *was* I thinking? Brad Pitt, of course.

BEBE

(With a roll of her eyes and a sigh of reassurance.)

Brad Pitt or Ryan Gosling?

MIMI

Ryan Gosling.

BEBE

Ryan Gosling or Ryan Reynolds?

MIMI

Ryan Reynolds.

BEBE

Ryan Reynolds or Hugh Jackman?

(No response.)

Mimi! Ryan Reynolds or Hugh Jackman?

MIMI

Well, I'm not sure? I mean, Ryan Reynolds IS Ryan Reynolds, but Hugh Jackman is HUGH JACKMAN.

(To herself.)

Ryan Reynolds or Hugh Jackman, Hugh Jackman or Ryan Reynolds, Ryan Reynolds or...oh, what's the difference, Bebe? Really? I mean, I have much more important *things* on my mind right now besides Ryan Reynolds or Hugh Grant.

BEBE

Ryan Reynolds or Hugh Jackman.

MIMI

WHATever or whatEVER.

(With superiority.)

I mean, has it ever dawned on you how totally stupid and superficial you sound?

BEBE

Well, I NEVER...

MIMI

You know, maybe these silly celebrity fantasies of yours are what's keeping you from having a REAL relationship with a REAL boyfriend.

BEBE

Oh, and look who's talking? As if Ryan Reynolds or Hugh Jackman would EVER be seen with the likes of someone like you.

MIMI

Oh, yeah?

BEBE

Yeah.

(She stands up and is about to leave but then turns back.)

(Viciously.) You know, I thought you were someone different. Someone I could trust. Someone I could just be myself around. I guess I was wrong. I guess I was REALLY wrong. You're just another phony, like everyone else. I mean, who do you think you are?

(MIMI bursts into tears—real tears.)

MIMI

Oh, I wish I knew, Bebe. I wish I knew.

(BEBE takes in MIMI's breakdown for a moment. She returns to the table and offers MIMI a tissue.)

MIMI

Thank you.

(Pause.)

I'm so sorry. I never should have said those things to you. Those terrible, terrible things. I mean, it's not like me.

(She blows her nose.)

It's like I haven't been myself lately.

BEBE

Well I'll say, Leonardo DiCaprio over Brad Pitt? What were you thinking?

MIMI

That's just it, Bebe. I don't think that I have been thinking...for myself that is.

(MIMI looks around to see if anyone has noticed her breakdown and then leans across the table in confidence.)

MIMI

In fact, if I really think about it, it's as if I am not even myself anymore. It's as if something or someone else made me say those things to you. Those terrible, terrible things...

(Grabbing BEBE's hand.)

... to my best, best, best-best friend in the whole entire world. It's as if something totally against my will just rose up inside of me like some evil alien or something.

BEBE

You mean, like in that movie, like in that movie with Winona Ryder and Johnny Depp?

MIMI

Oh, I loved that movie.

BEBE

(Grabbing MIMI's hand.)

Me too. I loved Johnny Depp in that movie.

MIMI

(Grabbing BEBE's other hand.)

Me too.

BEBE & MIMI

(Privately.)

I love Johnny Depp.

(A brief moment of harmony.)

MIMI

Oh, Bebe, I am such a horrible friend.

BEBE

Don't be ridiculous.

MIMI

But it's the truth. That is, it's the true truth. (Pause.) Bebe, do you know what I see when I look in the mirror?

(BEBE shakes her head 'No'.)

MIMI

The truth...but twisted...turned inside out. It's as if the person staring back at me is some stranger. Some stranger, instead, that just looks like me.

BEBE

Well, of course it looks like you, silly.

MIMI

No, don't you get it? This person...here before you...is not the REAL me.

BEBE

(Uneasy.)

Really?

MIMI

(MIMI takes a deep breath in order to calm herself.)

Ever since I could remember, I have always had this image of myself as someone else. Someone other than me – a better me. An image that is larger than life. An image that no matter how hard I try, I can never quite live up to.

BEBE

You mean, like Pamela Anderson?

MIMI

Sort of...only bigger.

BEBE

Bigger than Pamela Anderson?

MIMI

Well, the other day, after our yoga, I was totally wiped out, so I stopped by Starbucks for a little pick-me-up. Now all I wanted was a cup of coffee, but I couldn't decide if I wanted a Grande Carmel Frappuccino or a Grande Carmel Macchiato, a Tall Skim Café Latte or a Tall Skim Café Mocha? So I stood there – stoned – completely overwhelmed by all these choices. Did I want a Venti Vanilla Cappuccino or a Venti Café Americano, a Tall Tazoberry or Tall Tazo Chai? I stood there thinking to myself that I wasn't really thinking for myself. That someone else somehow knew what it was I wanted.

BEBE

Creepy.

MIMI

So I freaked out and I ran out of the store like some psycho. And that's when I first set my eyes on her.

BEBE

On who?

MIMI

On her. From across the street. I must have been blind before not to have noticed. Blind or just oblivious. But there she was towering high above me on a great, big billboard. A super-hero, super model beaming sex and confidence at every angle.

(A moment of contentment.)

And she was looking at me, Bebe. Right at me. I turned around to see if maybe I had been mistaken, to see if maybe she was looking at someone else. But sure enough, it was me. It was Mimi. I had caught her attention as she had caught mine. And in her eyes, those mirrors to the soul, I saw myself. Or that is, I saw, at last, who it was I was meant to be. My true self. My secret self! Happy, confident and carefree!

(As if in a trance, she sings a jingle that spiritually lifts her out of her chair.)

THE DIFFERENCE YOU KNOW IS REAL
LIKE NOTHING YOU EVER KNEW
THE FREEDOM TO BE YOURSELF
FOR SOMEONE... (BUM-BUM)
SOMEONE LIKE YOU. (DING)

(A long pause as MIMI gazes off beyond.)

All the way home, I kept humming that tune, over and over in my head, like some skipping CD.

(Mimi dances around BEBE, singing the jingle like she is in love.)

THE DIFFERENCE YOU KNOW IS REAL
LIKE NOTHING YOU EVER KNEW
THE FREEDOM TO BE YOURSELF
FOR SOMEONE... (BUM-BUM)
SOMEONE LIKE YOU. (DING)

(Back to BEBE with an unbridled passion or madness.)

The answers are in that jingle, Bebe. I am sure of it. She is trying to tell me something. Somehow, she is trying to help me to help myself.

BEBE

To become a better woman...

MIMI

The woman I have always wanted to be. If only I could figure out the message.

(She sings the jingle again. This time, she stresses different words and syllables in the hopes that the hidden message will be revealed.)

THE *DIFFERENCE* YOU KNOW *IS* REAL
LIKE NOTHING YOU *EVER* KNEW
THE *FREEDOM* TO *BE* YOURSELF
FOR SOMEONE... (*BUM-BUM*)
SOMEONE *LIKE* YOU. (*DING*)

(Pause.)

BEBE

You know, maybe it's like some sort of prayer or something. Like some kind of magic spell. Like if you repeat it over and over and over again, she will come to life.

MIMI

Who? The super model?

BEBE

No, silly, your self. Well, that is your other self. I mean, your secret self. Like an incantation or something like that.

(They ceremoniously join hands and sing the jingle with total reverence.)

MIMI & BEBE

THE *DIFFERENCE* YOU KNOW *IS* REAL
LIKE NOTHING YOU *EVER* KNEW
THE *FREEDOM* TO *BE* YOURSELF
FOR SOMEONE... (*BUM-BUM*)
SOMEONE *LIKE* YOU. (*DING*)

(The spiritual moment is interrupted, by the ringing of a cell-phone. BEBE and MIMI regard the ringing suspiciously, as if the call has some cosmic connection with the jingle. It takes several rings before BEBE finally answers.)

BEBE

(Tentative.)

Hello?

(Louder.)
I can barely hear you. Didi? Gigi?
(To MIMI.)
It's Didi and Gigi.
(Back to cell phone.)
You are not. You are not. No way, you are not. You're kidding me. You're kidding me.
You've got to be kidding me. Are you kidding me?
(To MIMI.)
They're in the back of Steven Tyler's limousine. Steven fucking Tyler!?
(Scream of excitement. Back to cell phone.)
You two... you know, I wish I could be you two, for just one day. For just one day, I
wish – What? Nevermind. Eleven? Eleven o'clock? All right, but I thought you said the
party wasn't really getting started until Two? All righty. Whatever you say. Yeah.
Eleven. Bye-yee.
(Putting away the cell-phone. To MIMI.)
Those two...Steven fucking Tyler. Can you believe the crazy things those two get
themselves into?

MIMI

I'm not going.

BEBE

What?

MIMI

I'm not going to the party.

BEBE

But you just have to go. I mean, everyone who is anyone will be there.

MIMI

But not me, Bebe. Not me. I just can't bear face all those picture-perfect faces. It's all so
pretentious.

BEBE

Well, speak for yourself, but I happen to think it'll be a blast. Just imagine. The
champagne, the red carpet, the champagne, the paparazzi, the champagne... Besides, Didi
and Gigi had to exchange a lot of favors, and I mean, a LOT of favors, to get our names
on that list tonight, and I for one, am not, I repeat, NOT going to disappoint them.

MIMI

But I just can't make myself be someone I'm not.

BEBE

Then pretend! It's a world of surfaces, Mimi. Nobody expects the truth anymore.
Besides, how do you expect to find your soul mate, the love of your life, staying home

alone, night after night, all by yourself? Is that what you want? Is that what you really want?

MIMI

(Defensively.)

All I know is that I don't want to go to the party.

BEBE

(Exasperated.)

Are you for real? No really, I mean it. I mean, call me crazy, but just the other day weren't you dying to go?

MIMI

But that was before.

BEBE

Before what?

MIMI

Before the billboard.

BEBE

Forget the billboard!

MIMI

But I bought the product, Bebe! Took it home, 'used as directed', and look at me. You said so yourself. I am an absolute wreck.

BEBE

Only on the outside.

MIMI

And on the inside as well. On the outside everything's just numb. Hell, I don't feel a thing. But on the inside, just below the surface, there's this desperate, burning desire to become a perfectly normal, natural woman.

BEBE

Perhaps some medication might—

MIMI

I have tried everything I thought would cure this craving. Group therapy, Aromatherapy, Hormone Replacement therapy... Why, I have prescriptions for Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft, Xanax... I have dedicated myself to strict regimens of self-improvement, and nothing works. Nothing makes me feel like the way that everyone else feels, or that is, the way everyone else LOOKS like they feel. And the more I desire, the more I consume. And the

more I consume, the more this desire is consuming me. Eating away at me from the inside until there is nothing left but the LIKENESS of a woman!

(MIMI collapses in her plastic chair completely exhausted. BEBE stares at MIMI as if she was a stranger.)

MIMI

Don't look at me like that.

BEBE

Like what?

MIMI

Like you don't recognize me.

BEBE

Well, excuse me. It's just that I've never seen this side of you before.

MIMI

This side of me? This side? Are you saying I'm fat?

(A sudden realization.)

Oh god, I'm fat too.

(BEBE gently embraces MIMI from behind.)

BEBE

Mimi, Mimi, Mimi... You are my best, best, best-best friend in the whole entire world. Why, if I had a choice, I would rather be you, in a heartbeat. Don't you see that you are a beautiful and intelligent woman. A self-made woman. Even underneath all your designer labels, I can still see the real you. And if I can see it, then surely others can as well. You are unique. An original. A one-of-a-kind. Why, you know everything about everything about fashion and style.

MIMI

(Removing her sunglasses.)

Do you really think so?

BEBE

Now, Mimi.

(Striking the same position as MIMI.)

Do I look like I'm mocking you?

(Pause.)

MIMI

It's just getting so hard to tell the difference these days.

(As a demonstration, BEBE quickly turns to a quiz page in her magazine.)

BEBE

All right then, if you don't believe *me*, then you've got to believe Cosmo. Now tell me, which hat is the must-have accessory this season:

- A chic black beret
- A rolled cowboy hat in a leopard skin print
- Or a newsboy cap in a buttery tweed?

MIMI

(Without hesitation.)

A rolled cowboy hat in a leopard skin print.

BEBE

What is the killer lip color for fall:

- Baby-doll pink
- Racy red
- Or deep dramatic plum?

MIMI

Deep dramatic plum.

BEBE

And which pattern are the stars most likely to be seen wearing this summer?

- Bohemian florals
- Camouflage
- Or...

MIMI

Bohemian florals.

BEBE

Why, Mimi, you're a fashion aficionado of the fiercest kind. According to Cosmo, your style sisters with the likes of Lady Gaga, Beyonce, Madonna...even Sarah Jessica Parker.

MIMI

Sarah Jessica Parker?

BEBE

Even Sarah Jessica Parker.

(A brief moment of harmony.)

MIMI

Oh, I loved her in that movie with Johnny Depp.

BEBE

Me too. I loved Johnny Depp in that movie.

MIMI

Me too.

MIMI & BEBE

(Privately.)

I love Johnny Depp.

(A brief moment of harmony.)

MIMI

You know, you're right, Bebe. You're absolutely right. I'm being utterly unrealistic. I AM the real deal, and I shouldn't spend one more moment thinking otherwise.

BEBE

It's like what Didi and Gigi always say, 'Life is like money. You can spend it anyway you want...

MIMI & BEBE

...but you can only spend it once.'

(They continue their celebrity game as the muzak becomes louder and the lights slowly fade.)

BEBE

Now, Ryan Reynolds or Hugh Jackman?

MIMI

Hugh Jackman.

BEBE

Hugh Jackman or Chris Evans?

MIMI

Hugh Jackman.

BEBE

Hugh Jackman or Lenny Kravitz?

(Both giggle.)

MIMI & BEBE

Lenny Kravitz.

BEBE

Lenny Kravitz or Robert Pattinson?

MIMI

Lenny Kravitz.

BEBE

Lenny Kravitz or Ben Affleck?

(Blackout.)

END OF PART I

PART II

SETTING: A trendy boutique in the mall. Long racks of garments on hangers and full-length mirrors divide the space in different directions. There is a curtained changing room stage left and an identical curtained changing room stage right. The mannequins in the boutique are lined up in rows like mannequins. The mannequins wear wigs in the same style and color as MIMI.

AT RISE: BEBE stands center casually browsing through various garments on the racks. MIMI is in the changing room on the right, while CECE, who looks exactly like MIMI, is in the changing room on the left.

BEBE

(To MIMI.)

You know, it just amazes me how constantly things keep changing. Like in an instant. Why only yesterday, it was all leather and lace and legwarmers, and today it's skinny jeans and jeggings. I mean, it just amazes me how often we are asked to accept all these new images of ourselves. As if our lives themselves were plastic.

(MIMI does not respond. BEBE continues browsing, occasionally trying on different accessories and examining herself in the mirrors.)

We are constantly moving on to the latest trend, the newest style, the next best chance to get it right, and only briefly looking back to realize that our one real reality is that everything is temporary. Bellbottoms and dirty denims, Mohawks and miniskirts... Everything is always in motion, while we're caught in a current of fads and fashion that carries us along from image to image.

(Pause.)

Mimi? Is everything all right in there?

MIMI

(Timidly.) I think so?

BEBE

Well, come on out and let me have a look.

MIMI

All right, but only if you promise you won't get personal.

BEBE

(Slyly.) I promise.

(With much difficulty, MIMI slowly makes her entrance from the stage right changing room in an outrageous outfit. Pause.)

BEBE

Hmmm. Turn around.

(MIMI turns around awkwardly.)

It's just not... you.

MIMI

That's exactly what I was thinking.

BEBE

Quick, quick take that off before anyone sees you and try this outfit on instead.

(BEBE presents MIMI with an equally ridiculous pink outfit.)

MIMI

I don't know, Bebe. Pink really isn't my color.

BEBE

Of course, it isn't...but Didi and Gigi were saying that everybody, who is anybody, will certainly be somebody, if they're wearing pink this season.

MIMI

All right, if Didi and Gigi say so, but I am beginning to believe this is hopeless.

BEBE

Shame on you, shopping is never hopeless.

(MIMI exits with the pink outfit into the stage right changing room, while BEBE admires herself in a mirror.)

We'll find you that perfect outfit for the party. Don't you worry. Why, I still have plenty of time before my hair appointment with Raul. You know, I've been thinking about getting that new Jennifer Aniston look.

MIMI

(Off-stage)

Oh, that new Jennifer Aniston look will look great on you. I am so jealous. I wish I could carry that off.

(BEBE continues her browsing.)

BEBE

It's all about confidence, Mimi. You're just suffering from low self-esteem. Why, when Gigi broke up with Marky Mark... I mean, what am I saying, when Gigi broke up with

Mark Wahlberg, she was completely devastated. Didi was telling me how totally lifeless she seemed. But eventually, she got over him and hooked up with Mark Ruffalo.

(Beat)

Now, of course they just broke up about a week ago, but she'll get over him too. The thing is; we get over things and move on.

(CECE, who looks exactly like MIMI, enters from the stage left changing room in the same pink dress that MIMI just left to try on.)

And now look at her, happily hung over in the back of Steven Tyler's limousine.

(To CECE, laughing.)

Those two, I tell you... Do you remember that New Year's Eve party in New York when Didi and Gigi locked themselves in that go-go cage?

CECE

I...uh...no.

BEBE

Oh, come on, now. We were making out with that hunk in the plastic parachute pants, and Didi and Gigi were so doped up that they accidentally locked themselves in that go-go cage.

(Laughing.)

Those two... Why, we didn't even find them until the following morning.

CECE

But I was never at a New Year's Eve party in New York.

BEBE

What are you talking about? Of course, you were. I mean, we were all "someplace else" that night, but that was definitely all you in that hotel room.

CECE

But I don't even know who you are?

BEBE

Ha-ha. Very funny. We were absolutely inseparable that night. Why you even tried to...

(BEBE whispers something provocative into CECE's ear.)

CECE

(Gasp of shock.)

But I would never-

BEBE

(To herself.)

Or was that the hunk in the plastic parachute pants.

CECE

No, really, I think you must have me mistaken with someone else.

BEBE

OMG. Don't start with that nonsense all over again. You know, you really need to stop comparing yourself with everyone else. I wish you would realize that there is no one else quite like you in the whole entire –

(BEBE is interrupted by the ringing of her cell phone. She hands CECE a ridiculous yellow outfit.)

BEBE

Here, try on this outfit, while I take this call. You were right...pink is definitely not your color.

CECE

But I really think you have me confused with—

BEBE

(Answering cell phone.)

Hello?

CECE

I really think you have me confused with someone else.

BEBE

All right, all right. You're someone else. Now would 'someone else' go and try on a certain outfit before I am late for my hair appointment with Raul?

(To cell phone.)

Hello? I can barely hear you.

(CECE reluctantly exits with the yellow outfit back into the stage left changing room.)

BEBE

Didi!? Gigi!?

(New tone of voice. Calling after CECE.)

It's Didi and Gigi.

(Back to cell phone.)

He is not. He is not. No way, he is not. You're kidding me? You're kidding me? You've got to be kidding me? Are you kidding me?

(To CECE.)

Steven Tyler just passed out in the back of the limo.

(Back to cell phone.)

What? Twelve? Twelve o'clock? All righty, whatever you say. Twelve. Yeah. Bye-yee.

(MIMI now enters from the stage right changing room in the same pink dress that CECE had just been wearing.)

BEBE

Mimi, Didi and Gigi want us to meet them at the club around twelve now, instead of-

(Beat.)

What are you doing?

MIMI

What do you mean, what am I doing?

BEBE

What are you doing wearing *that*?

MIMI

Wearing what?

BEBE

Why are you wearing that outfit?

MIMI

I'm wearing this outfit because you told me to try on this outfit.

BEBE

But what happened to the other outfit?

MIMI

What other outfit?

BEBE

The other outfit I just gave you.

MIMI

But you never gave me another outfit.

BEBE

I most certainly did to give you another outfit. Now look, if you didn't want to try on the other outfit, then why didn't you just say so yourself in the first place?

MIMI

But you never gave me any other outfit to try on in the first place...second place?

BEBE

Oh, never mind. Forget that outfit.

(Frustrated, BEBE continues browsing through the racks.)

I was thinking, I was thinking that you ought to go for something a little more elegant. Something with a little more class. Something a little more like Julia Roberts.

MIMI

Julia Roberts? But, Bebe, I will never, ever in a million years look like Julia Roberts.

BEBE

Here.

(BEBE hands MIMI a black outfit.)

Stop selling yourself so short and try on this outfit instead.

(BEBE rushes MIMI off into the stage right changing room and continues browsing.)

BEBE

It's an age of ideals, Mimi. And the best part is, is that if you're not 100% completely satisfied, then you can just change into a new image. Why, it's clinically proven. Just look at Angeline Jolie, Cher, even Juliette Lewis.

MIMI

(Off stage left.)

Juliette Lewis? Oh, I loved her in that movie with Johnny Depp.

BEBE

Me too. I loved Johnny Depp in that movie.

CECE

(Off stage right.)

Me too.

BEBE & MIMI & CECE

I love Johnny Depp.

(CECE now enters from the stage left changing room in the yellow outfit. Pause. BEBE notices her and becomes irritated.)

BEBE

Oh, so *now* you decide to try on the other outfit. What are you trying to do to me!?

CECE

What do you mean, what am I trying to do to you?

BEBE

Why are you wearing THAT?

CECE

Wearing what?

BEBE

Why are you wearing that outfit?

CECE

I'm wearing this outfit because you told me to try on this outfit.

BEBE

But that was before.

CECE

Before what?

BEBE

Before I told you to try on the other outfit.

CECE

What other outfit? You never told me to try on any other outfit.

BEBE

I most certainly did to tell you to try on another outfit.

(BEBE frantically roots through the rack.)

I was standing here, right here, and I was saying to you how you ought to try on something a little more elegant. Something with a little more class, something a little more like Julia Roberts.

CECE

Julia Roberts? But I will never, ever in a million years look like Julia Roberts.

BEBE

We are all well aware of that, thank you very much, but that is when I handed you an outfit just-like-this-one.

(BEBE finds another black outfit that is identical to the one she just gave MIMI, and hands it to CECE.)

CECE

Look, I don't understand why you are getting all bent out of shape? I mean, I really appreciate all the attention. I do. But I am completely capable of choosing my own outfits for myself. Not to mention that, I for one, was quite content with the pink outfit.

BEBE

The pink! But you said so yourself, pink is not your color. Besides, you haven't even *considered* all your option yet.

CECE

All my options?

BEBE

(BEBE rushes CECE off into the stage left changing room with the other black outfit and closes the curtain.)

Yes. That's what I've been trying to tell you. It's all about options. That's why I have decided to finally get those implants I've always wanted.

MIMI & CECE

Implants?

BEBE

Bigger boobs. I've always wanted bigger boobs. And I've been saving up, little by little, and now I can finally afford my fantasy. I mean, why should I be content with this borrowed body, which never really belonged to me to begin with? Why should I be content when everybody else is doing it? And it's about time, don't you think?

(Noticing the time.)

Good heavens, it's about time for my hair appointment with Raul!

(BEBE quickly collects herself.)

Look, whatever you do, don't buy anything. I'll be back before you know it.

(BEBE exits the boutique in a flurry. Long silence. In the same black outfits, MIMI and CECE enter from their respective changing rooms and casually walk towards each other. They stop in the center and stare at themselves, as if they are looking into a large full-length mirror.

The following is a suggestion for a choreographed pantomime:

Hands on hips. Pause. Look down then up. Pivot front facing audience. Pause. Quick side-look. Pause. Small sigh. Suck in stomachs. Pivot side facing each other. Pause. Shoulder rolls. Pivot front facing audience. Pause. Let out stomachs with a deep sigh. Pause. Pivot side facing each other again. Tilt heads right. Tilt heads left. Heads center. Pause. MIMI pushes her breasts together from the side, while CECE pushes her breasts up from below—three pushes. Hands at side. Deep sigh. They both casually turn away and walk back to their changing rooms. Stop. Slow look of shock toward audience. Scream. They both quickly retreat into

their changing rooms. They both jump out of their changing rooms at the same time wielding plastic hangers.

CECE

If I were you, I wouldn't do that.

MIMI

Well, I wouldn't do that, if I were you.

CECE

Wait a minute.

(Pause. Taking a brief moment to collect herself.)

If you are me, and I am you...then that would mean that we were...

MIMI

No. Now, you wait a minute. (Beat.) Are you saying what I think you're saying?

CECE

(Thinking.)

I think so?

MIMI

But if you are me and I am you... then that would mean that we were...

CECE

Whoa! Let's just think this through, thoroughly.

(Pause.)

If you're thinking what I'm thinking...

MIMI

And I'm thinking what you're thinking...

CECE

Then you're thinking...

MIMI

That I'm thinking...

MIMI & CECE

That this isn't happening!

(MIMI and CECE face the audience. Scream. Pause. MIMI and CECE face each other. Scream. Pause. MIMI and CECE face the audience. Scream. Pause. MIMI and CECE face each other. Before MIMI can scream again, CECE quickly covers MIMI's mouth with her hand.)

CECE

Oh, for cryin' out loud, pull yourself together.

MIMI

Pull myself together? And just who do you think you're talking to?

(A profound realization.)

CECE

I have no idea? Look. Perhaps we got off on the wrong foot. Let me introduce myself.
I'm Cece.

MIMI

And I'm Mimi.

(They shake each other's hands tentatively.)

CECE & MIMI

Pleased to meet you?

(An awkward pause.)

CECE

First impressions...

MIMI

You never get a second chance.

CECE

(Testing MIMI.)

Tell me, Mimi. What's your karmic color?

MIMI

Purple.

CECE

I thought as much. And what do you have the most of in your closets?

MIMI

Why, shoes, of course.

CECE

Of course. But, what's your makeup philosophy?

MIMI

Well, personally, I think that every woman should experiment. Makeup should be fun, don't you think?

CECE

I do. I really do.

MIMI

(As a challenge.)

All right, then. What's your life's theme song?

CECE

Well, if you must know, it's, 'I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For' by U2.

MIMI

Me too? And what's your favorite drink in the morning?

CECE

In the morning? Please. I rarely up before noon.

MIMI

(Jumping up and down with excitement.)

Me too!

CECE

Me too!

MIM & CECE

Me too!

(They hug each other in a moment of genuine harmony.
Discomfort soon sets in, and they quickly abandon their embrace.)

MIMI

Maybe, just maybe you're my secret self. I mean, the me I have always wanted to be.

CECE

Your secret self? And, why would you assume that I am YOUR secret self? Couldn't you just as easily be MY secret self? Or couldn't we even be the secret selves of someone else?

MIMI

Someone else? Good heavens, Cece, but who? In whose image were we created?

(Pause. MIMI gasps in horror.)

You don't suppose that there are others of us out there?

CECE

(Admiring herself in a mirror.)

Most likely. I mean, why make only one?

MIMI

Then somewhere, there must be an original.

(Running with her idea.)

Perhaps if we tried to trace it back, back to the beginning, we might be able to find our self.

CECE

I wouldn't bother, if I were you.

MIMI

(Slightly irritated.)

What do you mean, you wouldn't bother, if I were you?

CECE

All right then. I wouldn't bother, if you were me.

MIMI

But don't you want to know more about who you are and where you came from?

CECE

All I am saying is that the past is of no importance.

MIMI

How can you say that?

CECE

Look. Haven't you ever had the feeling that everything's been done before? That everything's just a repetition.

MIMI

Say that again?

CECE

Haven't you ever had the feeling that everything's been done before? That everything's just a repetition?

MIMI

Come to think of it, I'm having one right now!

CECE

Well, if we really are the same, the same self, that is, then hasn't our whole history been an imitation that just keeps recycling itself over and over again?

MIMI

Our whole history? But, if what you are saying is true, that is, if what you are saying is the true truth, then my whole life has been completely false.

(A deep realization.)

CECE

(Confused.)

Is that what I said?

MIMI

And if my whole life has been completely false, then nothing is as it seems to be...and to be it seems is nothing.

(Pause.)

CECE

I'm just trying to be realistic.

(MIMI starts to exit the boutique.)

MIMI

Well, stop being so sensible, for goodness sake!

CECE

But Mimi-

MIMI

Leave me alone, you imposter. I wish I had never met you!

(MIMI runs off in hysterics and bumps into BEBE, who has just returned from her hair appointment with Raul. MIMI notices that she now has the same hairstyle as CECE, the mannequins, and herself. MIMI screams and quickly exits.)

BEBE

Does it really look that bad?

CECE

Not on your life. Why, you look just like Jennifer Aniston.

BEBE

Do you really think so?

CECE

The spitting image.

BEBE

Well, thank you.

(Admiring herself in the mirror, BEBE notices CECE standing behind her.)

And let me say that you look absolutely incredible in that outfit. Why, I almost didn't recognize you. You look like a completely different woman.

CECE

The same to you. The same to you.

(Black out.)

END OF PART II

PART III

SETTING: A gigantic billboard of a supermodel in her underwear hangs before the stage. A slogan in large, bold print reads, 'FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU!'.

AT RISE: MIMI kneels before the billboard. The supermodel with hypnotic eyes bears a striking resemblance to MIMI.

MIMI

(Softly singing. Almost like praying.)

THE DIFFERENCE YOU KNOW IS REAL

LIKE NOTHING YOU EVER KNEW...

THE FREEDOM TO BE YOURSELF...

(MIMI struggles to restrain her emotions.)

THE FREEDOM TO BE YOURSELF...

(MIMI cries—real tears.)

MIMI

Oh, look at you. So tall and statuesque. From up there, my troubles must seem so small that you could almost step right over them. Do you really believe that someone like me, someone as silly and insignificant as I am, can really become someone like you?

(No answer.)

I know, this may sound crazy, but in your eyes, that is, through your eyes, I thought I caught a glimpse of the woman I've always wanted to be, the woman I wish I was.

(Beat.)

Am I really nothing more than what my wishes are worth?

(No answer.)

THE DIFFERENCE YOU KNOW IS REAL

LIKE NOTHING YOU EVER KNEW

THE FREEDOM TO BE YOURSELF

(BEBE appears stage right with DIDI, a mannequin.)

BEBE

FOR SOMEONE

(CECE appears stage left with GIGI, who is also a mannequin.
They all look exactly like MIMI.)

BEBE & CECE

SOMEONE LIKE YOU

BEBE

Oh, Mimi. We've been looking for you everywhere.

CECE

All over the mall.

BEBE

And then I asked myself, I said, 'Now, Bebe, if you were Mimi, where would Cece go?'

CECE

And then I remembered the billboard.

BEBE & CECE

(Noticing the billboard.)

The billboard.

(They all regard the billboard for a moment.)

CECE

She sure is striking.

BEBE

So sexy and self-assured.

(MIMI tries to distance herself from BEBE, CECE, DIDI and GIGI.)

MIMI

Please. I would really like to be left alone.

BEBE

But, Mimi, the party.

(Whispering.)

We promised Didi and Gigi; we would go to the party.

MIMI

Just go away. Please.

BEBE

But Didi and Gigi-

MIMI

Just go away and leave me by myself.

(BEBE leaves DIDI to confront MIMI, privately.)

BEBE

Why are you treating me like this, in front of everyone?

(CECE leaves GIGI to confront MIMI and BEBE.)

CECE

Excuse me, but Gigi would like to know what's going on?

BEBE

Why are you acting all crazy, all crazy like Lindsay Lohan?

CECE

Lindsay Lohan? Oh, I loved her in that movie with Johnny Depp.

BEBE

Me too. I loved Johnny Depp in that movie.

CECE

Me too.

BEBE & CECE

(Privately.)

I love Johnny Depp.

MIMI

(Sound of frustration.)

AHHHH! Just listen to yourselves? Aren't you the least bit embarrassed at how totally fake and superficial you sound?

BEBE

(To DIDI and GIGI, embarrassed.)

Pay her no attention. She doesn't know what she is saying. Really.

MIMI

But I do. I do. For the first time in my life, I have never been so sure of myself. Of me. Of MIMI. Let me make myself perfectly clear. I-don't-want-to-go-to-the-party.

(To DIDI and GIGI.)

I DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANY PART OF YOUR PARTY!

(MIMI screams the jingle defiantly, while BEBE and CECE try to silence her.)

MIMI

THE DIFFERENCE YOU KNOW IS REAL!
LIKE NOTHING YOU EVER KNEW!
THE FREEDOM TO BE YOURSELF!
FOR SOMEONE!

SOMEONE LIKE YOU!
(Triumphantly.)
My mind is made up.

CECE
You mean...you mind has been made up for you.

MIMI
(Exasperated.) What?

BEBE
To go to the party.

CECE
You have always wanted to go to the party.

MIMI
And how would YOU have any idea about what I have always wanted?

CECE
Oh, come on, Mimi. You're not the only one who has ever wanted to be someone else.
Why, I once wanted to be a pop star.

BEBE
A pop star? You mean, like Britney Spears?

CECE
Sort of... only bigger.

BEBE
Bigger? Bigger than Britney Spears?

CECE
I once wanted to be a famous pop star. It was my dream to sing my songs in stadiums
before millions and billions of adoring fans all wanting, all wishing that they were just
like me.

BEBE
You gotta be kiddin' me, I too had an identical dream.

CECE
But it never came true. It never came true, because it never was truly mine to begin with.

(Pause.)

MIMI

That can't be. I mean, I made my choice.

CECE

But you couldn't have, when there was never a choice to make. The differences have all disappeared. There is nothing beyond that billboard, Mimi. Nothing, except maybe another billboard.

MIMI

You mean...even my wishes aren't real?

CECE

They were never yours to begin with. You are merely a reflection. A reflection of the world around you.

MIMI

And all I ever wanted wasn't even real?

BEBE

The differences have all disappeared. Everywhere you turn.

CECE

And everywhere you look. You will only see yourself.

(MIMI turns to face BEBE, CECE, DIDI and GIGI. They all look exactly like MIMI.)

MIMI

I will only see myself.

(Bewildered, MIMI looks to the billboard for guidance.)

CECE

You are a reflection. A reflection of the world around you.

BEBE

And you really want to go to the party.

MIMI

And I really want to go to the party?

(Convincing herself.)

And I really want to go to the party!

BEBE

(Joyous.)

Oh, Mimi! I am so glad that you finally came to your senses.

(BEBE embraces MIMI.)

My best, best, best-best friend in the whole entire world. Why, the party just wouldn't be the same...

CECE

It just wouldn't be the same without you.

BEBE

Oh, we'll have a blast! We'll be the life!

MIMI

We'll be the life of the party!

(Beat.)

CECE

Although, I wish I could say the same about Didi and Gigi.

BEBE

What do you mean?

CECE

Is it me, or do they look like they're really bored?

BEBE

Why, with those two, it takes a couple more drinks before they really come to life.

(Loud club music begins to play. The billboard slowly ascends to reveal a crowd of mannequins at a party that all look exactly like MIMI. As the lights fade, MIMI, BEBE, CECE, DIDI and GIGI slowly mingle among the other mannequins and are eventually lost in the crowd.)

BEBE

All right, now tell me the true truth...who would you rather hook up with tonight Justin Timberlake or Taylor Lautner?

MIMI & CECE

Justin Timberlake.

BEBE

Justin Timberlake or Orlando Bloom?

MIMI & CECE

Justin Timberlake.

BEBE

Justin Timberlake or Gerard Butler?

MIMI & CECE

Gerard Butler.

BEBE

Gerard Butler or Matthew McConaughey?

MIMI & CECE

Gerard Butler.

BEBE

Gerard Butler or Channing Tatum...

(Blackout.)

END OF PART III

END OF PLAY