

THAT LITTLE VOICE

One Act

By

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Characters:

Taylor: A person in their early 20's with crippling self-doubt. Nervous but also strong-willed and determined to make the most of an awkward situation.

Taylor's Brain: A snarky personification of Taylor's chaotic and pessimistic thoughts. Taylor's brain looks and makes gestures similarly to Taylor, but more extreme.

Will: An awkward 20 something year old with little dating experience. Will is kind and patient, but the more Taylor talks to herself, the more nervous he becomes.

Taylor: Five minutes late, but that's fine. Everything's fine I'm sure he's coming.

Taylor's Brain: Or *maybe* he already came, saw you for the first time and left!

Taylor: Shh! Don't think that. He'll come.

Taylor's Brain: If you say so.

Taylor: Well, I do.

Taylor's Brain: And now he's six minutes late.

Taylor: It's *fine*, it's totally fine, this means he's got a life. He's probably just busy doing something cool.

Taylor's Brain: Something cooler than a first date with you... alright, that's not hard to do.

Taylor: Can you stop? What was all that before on the way here about confidence and how great my hair looks?

Taylor's Brain: Lies mostly.

Taylor: What's wrong with my hair!?

Taylor's brain: It's just sooo...

Taylor: What?

Taylor's brain: I just mean a ponytail really? Isn't that a bit basic?

Taylor: YOU TOLD ME TO DO IT LIKE THIS!

Will: Taylor?

Taylor and Taylor's brain: Oh my god!

Taylor shoves Taylor's brain behind her.

Taylor: Will hi!

Taylor's brain looks around.

Taylor's brain: Did he teleport?!

Will: Sorry I'm late, I just- well I wasn't sure...Were you talking to someone just now?

Taylor turns quickly to Taylor's brain, then back to Will laughing nervously.

Taylor: Nope! Just, you know, reading the menu.

Taylor gestures down at the table, and everyone follows her gaze. They all stare awkwardly at the menu-less table for a moment. Will bobs his head, slightly afraid.

Taylor's brain turns mockingly towards Taylor.

Taylor's Brain: Off to a great start, good job.

Taylor: Well I would be if it weren't for you.

Will: I'm sorry?

Taylor: No nothing! Let's sit.

Taylor's brain: Jeez so bossy.

Taylor: Or erm, I mean would you like to sit... that is with me at this table...now?

Will: I mean yeah sitting would be good.

The two sit down across from each other leaving Taylor's brain to steal a chair from a nearby table and sit diagonally behind Taylor.

Will: Should I get us something to drink?

Taylor: Yeah I think I'll get a lemonade.

Will: You sure? This place does great milkshakes?

Taylor's brain: Lemonade? Are you six?

Taylor: Can you not? Everyone loves lemonade!

Will looks startled

Will: I'm sorry I didn't mean to imply that I didn't like your choice of drink...I mean yeah lemonades good and all, I only meant-

Taylor: No, I knew what you meant, I'm sorry Will I guess I'm just a bit jumpy right now.

Will: Hey, it's all good. One lemonade and a milkshake coming right up.

Will goes up to the counter to get their drinks and the focus turns to Taylor and her brain.

Taylor: What was that?

Taylor's brain: What was what? You clearly need my help.

Taylor: Oh, is that what you call undermining everything I say? Help?

Taylor's brain: I'm just here to make sure things don't go as badly as last time. You know, with *Max*.

Taylor: Alright alright! You don't have to bring that up every time we disagree.

Will turns from the counter, two drinks in hand.

Taylor: Now shh! He's coming.

Taylor's brain: Then quick! Back straighter! Fix your hair! And stop that knuckle cracking thing it's off putting.

Taylor: You're doing it again! The undermining thing!

Taylor's brain: Sorry sorry, I'll stop. Oh, but Taylor?

Taylor: Yes?

Taylor's brain: Just generally you should act like 90% cuter, or if nothing else at least be funny.

Will sits down passing Taylor the lemonade. Taylor, still reacting to what her brain just said, rakes her fingers through her hair.

Taylor: That's enough, okay!

Will: Oh shoot, did they mess up your lemonade? I-I can take it back for you and complain! I mean you seemed pretty intense about the whole lemonade thing before so...well if it means that much...

Taylor fully realizing that Will's back.

Taylor: Oh no the lemonades perfect thanks.

Taylor glares back at her brain.

Taylor: Sorry my brain can be a bit of a headache.

Will: You mean it has a bit of a headache?

Taylor: Yeah sure, that's what I meant.

Will: Well anyways I'm glad the lemonade is fine. I'm not really one to want to start a confrontation surrounding citrusy beverages.

Taylor: Really? Shoot, I had you pegged as exactly the kind of guy would wanna create citrusy beverage confrontation.

Will laughs and they both take a sip. Taylor's brain leans in.

Taylor's brain: You actually have him thinking you're funny! Well done! He's clearly more easily fooled than I thought.

Taylor: Well anyways Will, what do you like to do? You know, like for fun?

Will: Well, I don't know if most people would classify it as fun, but I read.

Taylor's brain: Hey he likes books, you've heard of those! Tell him you like to read too!

Taylor: Oh well that's plenty fun! I read as well.

Taylor's brain: Plenty fun?

Taylor: Shh

Will: What do you read?

Taylor: ...Umm

Taylor's Brain: Come on name a book.

Taylor: Well I...

Taylor's brain: Literally any book! Just name *any* type of book.

Will: Yes?

Taylor: I-I guess I don't read as much as I thought I did ha...

Taylor's brain: Are you kidding me? You couldn't name a single book? Well, this is just great, now you look like the person that lied about reading books for fun!

Will: Oh...

Taylor: I walk though!

Taylor's Brian: Oh well that is *fascinating!* You do what the vast majority of the human population also does! Well done. You might as well have told him you breathe air for fun.

Will: That's cool... I guess. Where do you walk?

Taylor: Oh, you know... here to there.

Taylor's brain: Here being your car and there being your house?

Will laughs again.

Will: You're a little odd, you know that Taylor?

Taylor's brain: Finally, this guy's speaking some sense, least he didn't call you a freak! We remember Max, don't we?

Taylor: Will you shut up!

Will: Whoa hey, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you. I meant odd like good odd, like cute odd.

Taylor and Taylor's brain: Cute odd?

Will: Well yeah, I mean I think you're pretty great.

Taylor: Uhh

Taylor's brain: I believe the word you're looking for is thanks.

Taylor: Thanks.

Will: Sure

Taylor's brain: Aren't you gonna say something nice to him now? I mean come on this guy's got to be like the only person who doesn't think you're entirely lame.

Taylor: I-

Taylor's brain: Remember flirty!

Taylor: You're-

Taylor's brain: Make it something personal

Taylor: I like your-

Taylor's brain: And again with the posture!

Taylor: I can't! I'm sorry Will. I can't do this!

Will: What's happening, Taylor, are-are you alright? Are you leaving?

Taylor: No! I mean yes! I- I'm going to the washroom don't follow!

Will: Why would I-

Taylor: Come on let's go!

Will stands up.

Will: Ok now I'm confused.

Taylor: No Will. You stay.

Taylor marches Taylor's brain away from Will and the table and into the diner's washroom. Focus shifts back to Will.

Will: Alright...

Will adjusts his chair awkwardly

Will: Well, I'd say this is going pretty good. I mean it's not a complete mess, I haven't bored her to death yet. And it's going better than it went with Riley. At least Taylor hasn't made up some excuse about going to the bathroom just so she can leave me to sit here for

an hour until a snickering waiter finally has to come tell me my date left...

Will falls deep into this thought, shaking his head.

Yeah, things are going much better this time. And Taylor's great she's so...she's...wait a sec, did she take her stuff? She took her purse, didn't she! Oh god ok, don't overthink it Will, just relax...Was it something I said? No, it's fine, I'm sure its fiiinee she'll be back. Besides she wouldn't leave behind her lemonade.

Will reaches across the table to fidget with her glass, accidentally knocking it to the floor. The lemonade spills and Will frantically falls to the ground to clean it up.

Will: OH God! Oh god oh god!

Will freezes mid mopping up the lemonade. The scene cuts back to Taylor and her brain entering the washroom.

Taylor's brain: Good thing you didn't make a scene or anything.

Taylor: Ok what's your problem?

Taylor's brain: What?

Taylor: Don't be like that, you know exactly what I mean! You're sabotaging me!

Taylor's brain: You're sabotaging yourself!

Taylor: Precisely! Why do you not want me to be happy?

Taylor's brain: I want you to not make a fool of yourself!

Taylor: I wasn't!

Taylor's brain: You sure? Because we could march back in there and get Will's opinion on the matter.

Taylor: Well for your information, he seems to like me! He called me cute odd!

Taylor's brain: An adorable cover for what he really meant to say, which is that you're a freak!

Taylor: I'm not!!

Taylor's brain: Ok then and if someone walked in here right now and saw you talking angrily to yourself in the bathroom of a diner instead of being out there enjoying your date, which is your first date in a year, you know what they'd think, FREAK!

Taylor slumps to the floor, her voice is strained and a little bit desperate.

Taylor: You're supposed to make me better. You're supposed to make me likeable; we're supposed to be in this together.

Taylor's brain: I-

A new resolve washes over Taylor.

Taylor: I'm gonna tell him.

Taylor's brain: Ok calm down. I want you to think about this and I mean really think about it.

Taylor: I have. He has to know why I snapped back there.

Taylor's brain: You wouldn't. You know he'll think you're crazy. He'll never understand. You *need* me.

Taylor: Actually, if he does understand I think I'll never need you again. You'll be powerless.

Taylor's brain shrinks to the floor beside her.

Taylor's brain: You wouldn't.

She tucks a piece of hair behind Taylor's ear, almost whispering in it.

Taylor's brain: After everything I've done for you, everything we've been through. I'm the only one that will ever truly understand you.

Taylor pushes her brain away and stands up brushing herself off.

Taylor: NO.

Taylor's brain: No What?

Taylor: No. You don't understand. If you did, you wouldn't spend every second of everyday wishing I could be somebody else. I'm going back in there now and I'm going to be honest with Will, I don't want a single sound from you, do you understand?

Taylor's brain: Not a sound, got it.

Taylor: Good

Taylor's brain: But I'm warning you, he's not going to get it, he's not like you, he deserves better. Someone more... normal.

Taylor: He deserves to be happy. And so do I. Are you coming or not?

The two exit the bathroom and walk towards Will who looks up desperately from the lemonade.

Will: It jumped! I mean fell! It-I knocked it over. I'm sorry, you know what I'll get you another, or as many more lemonades as you like for that matter!

Taylor: No Will that's ok, no more lemonade.

Will: Oh well alright... You aren't leaving, are you?

Taylor: Not at all.

Will: I was starting to get worried. I thought maybe you'd snuck out the bathroom window and I wasn't gonna get to see you again.

Taylor's brain: Thought or hoped?

Taylor: No nothing like that. I just got kinda freaked out before when-

Will: When you felt pressure to say you liked me or something. Hey, it's fine, we just met, you're allowed to not have everything worked out yet.

Taylor: I *do* like you Will. A lot actually.

Will: Really!? Okay that's-that's fantastic, I'm not gonna lie I was kinda getting the feeling that you didn't.

Taylor: No, you seem great, maybe even a little odd too-

Will: Cute odd?

Taylor: Yes, very much cute odd.

Will: Good good.

Taylor: It's just, I've been with people in the past and it didn't always end that great.

Will: I'm sorry. I have some experience in the whole not ending great thing too.

Taylor: And now...well actually for as long as I can remember...

Taylor's brain: Don't you dare! Things are going well right now! Are you really gonna throw that all away for honesty?! And why? What is it you think this'll do? Liberate you? Free you from me?! I'm you! The voice in your head...

Taylor: I've had this voice in my head...

Taylor's brain: I don't ever leave you!

Taylor: It tells me I'm not enough.

Taylor's brain: You're stuck with me.

Taylor: That I'll never be enough.

Taylor's brain: Forever! I won't leave, I won't stop.

Taylor: And sometimes I- I wish it would just shut up! But it's a part of me, and despite everything it says I'm trying to learn that-

Taylor's brain: You're nothing without me!

Taylor: That I'm-

Taylor's brain: Pathetic

Taylor: I'm-

Taylor's brain: A FREAK! YOU'RE A FREAK!

Taylor: ENOUGH!

Blackout or some sort of strobe effect. The lights slowly come back on. Taylor is curled on the ground with Will's arms around her. Her Brain looks scared for once and lingers in the distance. A new character has entered stage right lingering as well in the background, dressed the same as Will.

Taylor speaks in almost a whisper.

Taylor: I just want to be enough. But then I have- I have this little voice...

Will: Hey, it's okay.

He looks behind him at the character dressed the same as him.

Will: I have that little voice too.

