

# Nannerl

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*(Talking to her brother, Wolfgang Mozart, in 1762.)*

NANNERL: “Momma, I don’t think I want to perform tomorrow. I’d rather just watch.” That’s what I said to her, Wolfgang. You were there! Or were you so lost in your music that you didn’t hear me! Maybe you’ll miss me when I’m no longer next to you. We’ve always performed together. Me singing and you at the harpsichord. Remember our concerts in Munich? They were so beautiful! But that was before. Before Poppa began to see only you. To hear only you. “Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.” “The most talented child in the world!” Why must I be forgotten? I can compose. I play four instruments, just like you. Is it because I am the *sister*, and not the *brother*? I don’t understand. Is your light so bright that I can no longer even stand in your shadow? Wolfy, please. I just want us to be happy. To be a family! Wolfy, why won’t you answer me?!

# Ellie

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*(Talking to her Dad.)*

ELLIE: Please, Dad, it doesn't cost that much. It's the coolest thing. It's a set — twenty different nail polish colors and matching tattoos. Of course they come off! Look, I'll make up my bed. Promise. Take the garbage out twice a day. Never be late for the bus. And Karla and I will never fight again when she comes over, because now I'll be Karla's best friend instead of Tracy because now I'll have the best stuff. *(Pause.)* Didn't you know that's why she comes over? That's why anybody comes over. If you've got good stuff, you've got friends.

# Maureen

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*(Talking to her best friend, Shay.)*

MAUREEN: How's this? "So, Dylan, I'm having a Halloween party on Friday. Wanna come?" No way. I'd faint. He'd run! OK, how 'bout this: "So, Dylan. Stop by my house on Friday. Maybe I'll be having a party or something...maybe." And maybe the earth will open up and swallow me! Oh Shay, I might as well face it. I just don't know how to say, "I like you, Dylan. For over a year. I know we're just friends, but I'd like to be more." I said it. I just *said* it! Where's the phone?!

# Sally

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*(Talking to her Grandmother [“Abuela” in Spanish] who is leaving to live in a nursing home.)*

SALLY: I've finished, Abuela. I put your things in this suitcase. It's not too heavy. See? Your little china dog — I wrapped it in newspaper so it won't break. You can put it on the shelf by the window in your new room. Nursing homes have windows. Sure they do. You can look out. Remember how you used to show me pictures in the clouds? Of hats, and dogs and... Don't you remember, Abuela? Abuela! It's me. Sally. “Sally Sue and her quacking quacker-oo?” Don't you remember *me*? *(Pause.)* Vamanos, Abuela. Dad's waiting.

# Aury

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*(Talking to her Mom.)*

AURY: I'm not going back to that camp, Mom. You can't make me. I told you what happened! We were on the bus to go swimming. Kalila and I were talking. Then this kid behind me taps me on the shoulder and asks, "Were you adopted?" I said, "No!" He says, "But weren't you raised by white people? You don't talk like us." I tried to defend myself. I made some smart remark, but they just made fun of me. They've been asking me questions like that all summer! Why do they have to tease me? I feel like I'm not black enough for them...or for me.

# Chase

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*(Talking to a new friend.)*

CHASE: Look, I like being a tomboy. I like to play sports. And I like to wear these jeans and this shirt. So what's the problem? My Dad understands. He thinks it's OK for me to have boys as friends. But my Mom, she drives me nuts!! Like the other night, we were at the dinner table, when the phone rings. Mom gets it, then I hear her say, "Chase, it's a boy." Then all my brothers, even my father, break out into this chorus of "Oooooos." "A guy, Chase, Oooooo." "Is it your boyfriend, Chase? Oooo." I mean, come on! I've always had guys as friends. Why do they have to tease me like that? Except...I don't think Mom is teasing. She wants me to have a boyfriend so I'll be more of a girl. I wish she would just leave me alone! *(Pause.)* But she's right. I do want a guy to like me for more than being...one of the guys. I just don't think it will ever happen.

# Karina

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*(Talking to a rather eccentric girl she has just met.)*

KARINA: You wanna know why I never talk? Because people don't listen to what I say. Sure, it hurts to be left out of all the games or the boyfriend talk. Not much I could say about boyfriends even if I was left *in*. The only guy who ever asked me to go with him — when he asked me, I said, “Go where?” But hey, I'm used to being left out. But, see, that never happens to you. Cause you're the kind of weird that people think is interesting. I'm just weird.

*(Thoughtfully.)* Isn't it weird being weird? You know...we could be weird together. That sounded weird. What I mean is...friends. Wanna come over after school?

## Elena

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*(Talking to her best friend, Roberto, whose wealthy parents are hosting a Christmas party.)*

ELENA: How do you *think* I feel? You're lying to me, Roberto! You tell me to meet you here — that we'll go to your Christmas party, and now you say: "My mother is sick. There's not going to be any party." I don't believe you! You're mother's not sick. You just don't want me to come. You never really wanted me to come. You were just making fun of me! *(Throwing down a small bundle.)* Here. These are oranges I picked from my garden. I hope you and your parents enjoy them at your party! Why would I want to be with a bunch of rich people anyway! *(Pause.)* I thought you were my friend. We were going to do the play for everyone that we practiced. I put on my best dress, see? Why can't I come?



# Mia

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*(Talking to her drama teacher.)*

MIA: Please, Mrs. Duarte. Don't cast me as the kid! I always have to play the kid. But I can play anything! Watch. I can be a Mom: "Oh honey, welcome home from school. Here are some cookies I just baked for you." Or a real Mom: "Hey honey, jump in, bus is leaving, brought you a snack, how was school, did we lose your brother?" Or wait. A dog. I love playing dogs. "Yip. Yip. Yip. Where's my ball? Just let me play catch. I love to play catch." Or a villain: "Give me the money, and give me it now! No questions and nobody'll get hurt." See! I have great range! *(Pause.)* It's just...I'm the littlest in everything. Nobody ever gives me a chance... in anything. Please. Just let me try.

# Lep

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*(Talking to a classmate.)*

LEP: Listen, please. I want you to understand! I don't remember much before I was five. I know we lived in many different camps. Refugee camps. But I do remember the night that everything changed. We were sleeping, my sister and I. We could hear footsteps coming closer to our tent. We'd heard footsteps before, but they'd never stopped for us. Then a man, with a clean face and shiny glasses, handed us two airline tickets. He said, "You're coming to the United States." And then he gave me a little American flag. I thought it was a toy, so I played with it, and my sister shined the embassy man's flashlight on it, like a spotlight. It was so small. So beautiful. That one little flag held all my hopes. How could I ever say anything bad about this country? It still holds my dreams. Maybe not yours, but *mine*.

# Lindsey

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*(Talking to her friend.)*

LINDSEY: I had a boyfriend when I was five. Why can't I get one now? I had them lining up! In kindergarten, I got married. It was just pretend, but we kissed and walked all the way to the circle-time spot holding hands. Then in first grade, three boys all wanted to marry me at once. I was adored! What happened? *(Pause.)* Maybe I don't deserve a boyfriend now. Back then I was little and cute and smart. Now I'm the tallest girl in my state. People think I'm twenty, but I'm thirteen. You don't get glasses, braces, and pimples all in the same month unless you're thirteen. Oh, I wish I could snap my fingers and the right-now-ugly me would just disappear! Then I'd be the next me — whoever that is. Who do you think I'll be when being thirteen is over?

## Lilly

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*(Talking to her teacher. It is 1943, during World War II.)*

LILLY: I heard him! I heard President Roosevelt on the radio. He said every American who has a scrap of land should plant a victory garden. If we grow our own food, then the big farmers can send the food they grow to the soldiers. That'll help us win the war, won't it? My yard's only five by five from back porch to alley. But Momma says I can plant beans, maybe some squash. It won't be much, but I know it'll help. It's gotta help. I'll do anything! Cause...my brother's over there. In Germany or somewhere. We used to get letters from him, but we haven't gotten one in a long time. I get so scared every time I see a car comin' down the road. That's how you find out. A man in a uniform brings you a telegram if...I can't think about it. I'm gonna plant every patch a' dirt I can. What do I do first?

# Kara

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*(Talking to her Mother.)*

KARA: What business? What business is it of mine that you drink yourself stupid almost every night? It's my life, too, Mom. I can't bring anybody here. Because I never know what you might say to one of my friends. I can't have a party. I can't do anything like a normal kid because my Mom's a drunk! *(Pause, as she sees her Mother begin to cry.)* Mom. Oh, Mom. Don't cry. I'm sorry. Have you had a really bad week at work? Let me get you something to eat. A sandwich? Or some chips? I'll get you anything. I'll do anything...to make you better. Please, Mom. I need you. Don't do this anymore. Please.

# Shelly

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*(Talking to her friend, Clara.)*

SHELLY: It was weird, Clara. Here we were on this great class trip, and I couldn't see anything. We were in the art gallery. I knew we were supposed to be looking at the paintings. I had my sketchbook, and I tried to sketch some of the figures, but all I could see was me — me standing there looking. It's like there's a camera outside my body, and it's always playing the film of my life in my head. I try to turn it off, or at least change the channel! But in my head, it's always playing. It's not like I think I'm so great that I deserve a movie about me. Right! Who'd come to see it? It's more like I'm watching my life, waiting to see what's going to happen next. Does that ever happen to you?

# Tasha

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*(Talking to her Mother.)*

TASHA: Why does Uncle Zeke have to move, Momma? I know he got a good job, with *(Quoting the adults.)* “lots of opportunity.” But it’s Kwanzaa! We’re supposed to be together to honor our families and celebrate our ancestors. And Uncle Zeke’s my favorite ancestor — dead or alive! You know what he told me? He said I was one in a long line of great black musicians. Famous ones, who used to play in fancy clubs right here in our neighborhood a long time ago. He said if I keep practicin’ my piano, I can be as famous as Jelly Roll Morton. Call myself “Cinnamon Bun.” *(Laughing.)* He says the best things. *(Pause.)* You think he left because I wasn’t practicin’ hard enough? I was tryin’, really I was. Oh, Momma! Maybe I can catch him. He just left! *(She runs to the door and stops.)* He’s gone.

## Alana

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*(Talking to her friend.)*

ALANA: You start with just little lies. Like goin' out to the store without askin'. Or steppin' out with somebody, but tellin' your Momma you're at church. She wouldn't have known, but my old nosy neighbor lady's always sittin' on her porch. Always in my business. Why's she have to watch me every time I come and go? Callin' the police, sayin' we're makin' too much noise on the corner. Me and my girlfriends, we weren't doin' nothin'! She don't call the police when the boys are out there. No, she's too scared to do that, but she'll call 'em on us. She's just lookin' to feel some power. *(Laughs a little.)* Power. That's what lies give you, too. Where else in this world am I ever gonna get any power? Can you tell me that? I got me a secret world. Nobody is takin' that from me. Nobody!!



# Jennifer

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*(Talking to her friend.)*

JENNIFER: What do you think of my plan? This really big piece of material (*Showing her friend.*) is for the hallway mirror. And this lacey one (*Showing her.*) will cover the mirror in the dining room. In my room, it was easy. I just took the mirror off the wall. I haven't figured out what to do in the bathroom yet. That mirror is huge and my least favorite. Maybe I could accidentally break it. No wait, that's bad luck, isn't it? Who cares. How could my luck get any worse! I look like *me* and my sister could win every beauty contest in the universe. I don't ever want to look at myself next to her again. So I'll just make all the mirrors in the house disappear. You think Mom will mind?

# Jasmine

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*(Talking to her little sister.)*

JASMINE: You gonna let them tell you that? Then you are no little sister of mine. Sure, if you listen to some folks, yeah, our chances are crummy. You look in the newspaper, and it'll say we're not supposed to graduate high school without a baby, that someone in our family is on drugs, two others are locked up, and we all got an abusive, hustling boyfriend. But that, sister, is not the story the newspapers will write about me. Not today or ever! My mind is set. I can achieve. I'm not gettin' stuck in anybody's profile because I have potential! Look into my eyes. Do you see it, little sister? It's my fire. Mark my words. I am gonna be somebody. You need to make up your mind if you're gonna be somebody, too.

# Meg

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*(Talking to a friend who has just rejected her.)*

MEG: Sure, I'm a clown! I'm a joke a minute! No, Gina, wait! Don't turn away, too. I wanna explain! See...I used to have a great group of friends. We did everything together. But something changed. I don't know what I did, or what I said. But one day I walked up to my friends in front of school. They were laughing and talking like we always did. But they were standing in this tight little circle, and when I tried to stand next to somebody, they wouldn't let me in. They didn't really push me out. They just wouldn't let me in. I thought maybe they were playing or something, so I started to laugh. But they weren't playing. I wanted to cry, but instead...I just kept laughing. I've tried to keep laughing ever since. Now do you understand?

# Franny

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*(Talking to her friend.)*

FRANNY: What if I had all the money in the world? That's easy. Bet you think I'm gonna say, "Buy a sports car," cause I like your brother's so much. But what would I do? Look at it? I can't drive yet. Maybe you think I'll say, "A trip to Tahiti or Hawaii!" But you know my parents. They won't let me go around the block by myself, much less to Hawaii. No. I would spend my money on *(Big dramatic pause.)* facial surgery. Sure! They can make you look like the magazine models. If you don't like your nose, they change it. Or your chin? Well, *(Making the motion of a magic wand.)* Zing! You get a new one. Me? I'd have a total remake. Then all my problems would be over. Zing!