

Dogface

By Kelli Powell

In this play a girl goes by the name Dogface because she was mauled by a dog as a child leaving a disfiguring scar. Now 23, she confronts Ethan, who after allowing their previously platonic friendship to get more physical. She thought that implied that their relationship was moving to a new level, but Ethan has instead been ignoring her and pretending that nothing happened.

DOGFACE:

I don't want to get all Hallmark card on you, but you're my best friend. We've been through so much together. You know me better than I have ever let anyone know me. You're the first person I've ever met who understands me, who thinks the way I do, who *gets* me. Am I crazy? Am I wrong? Because... you're important to me.

If you just aren't attracted to me... I could understand that. I know you can't choose who you want, you can't control those feelings. The heart wants what the heart wants. If we could choose... then I could stop wanting you. I know it doesn't work like that. So, if you just don't like me that way... but, you do, don't you? You must. I mean, at least a little? You can't find me *too* repulsive, you're the one who kissed me...

Did I do something wrong? I mean, was I not... good? Was I too easy? Was I supposed to play hard to get? I don't know how to be coy and play games. No one ever explained the rules to me. All I know how to do is be honest. And you said that was something you loved about me.

Is it... are you ashamed? Is that why you're pretending like it didn't happen? That's it, isn't it. You're ashamed. Right. I mean, who wouldn't be ashamed to be with me? I'm Dogface. You can kiss Dogface behind closed doors, but you can't introduce her to your friends. You can't bring her home to meet your mom.

You said... you're not ready. Is anyone ever ready for their life to change? How do you expect to learn anything? We'll make all kinds of stupid mistakes and feel like idiots and - welcome to the human condition! Trial and error, it's the only way to learn. No one's ever ready.

You said... you don't want to get serious. But how am I supposed to act casual about something this intense, this *rare*? You're the first person to *see* me - how can that not be a big deal? Look at me. How many chances am I going to have in life? I think I could love you. I think you could have loved me.

And if I'm crazy, then I'm crazy. If I'm wrong, then, okay, I'm wrong. But if I'm right, and you're just too chicken to deal with the possibility of something real and rare and dangerous and life-altering, then... then I'm not even sure I would want to love someone so stupid!

(*Beat.*)

I do feel like I have lost something. Not my purity or innocence or any of that... dogmatic crap. I've lost... the walls I built to protect myself from feeling... *this*. I've lost the ability to distance myself from the rest of the lowly humans... my position of self-deprecating superiority that let me live without hope for all those years...

I lost my isolation. I let you in. And I gave you the power to hurt me.

See, I want to be a cat. Because... most cats are very independent creatures. They can be domesticated, but, for the most part, they don't really act like pets as much as they act like caged predators. They fend for themselves. And sometimes, sometimes, when they want you to give them a little affection, they crawl into your lap, and they purr, and they let you pet them, and love them. And then, after a little while, they get sick of you, and they scratch you, and they jump up and they run away. Cats are fierce. Cats get what they need from you, and then they just move on.

I'm not a cat. I'm a dog. Dogs are not independent. Dogs love you, pretty much unconditionally. They are so loyal, it defies all logic. Dogs need you, and they let you know that they need you. They need you to love them. They cry when you leave in the morning, and they jump for joy when you come home at night. They always want your attention. They can't get enough of your love.

I don't want to be a dog. But I am. I think I always will be.