





Monologues



1. An Astronauts Guide To The Stars: They say space smells like seared metal and scorched steak. I wouldn't know yet. But I've spent enough time in flight simulators and breathing recycled air in training pods to know this: space might not kill you quickly, but it will try.

All I have wanted in my life is to be an astronaut. When I say astronaut, I mean a true American hero. Not a galaxy print nerd, or a halloween costume freak—and definitely not one of those children who say they want to be an astronaut then the next day are dressed up in a police badge.

As a young child I looked up to Barbie and her catch phrase, "You can do anything!" I am no Barbie. I am the farthest thing from a stereotypical beauty queen doll. I'm just a girl with a dream. With that in mind, I truly believe that I can be one of the four chosen pioneers to go out and do good for the world. Do good for a world so full of hate.

Interviewer: "Why do you think you are qualified for this job? What makes you the perfect candidate?" I sit in the interview room, trying to come up with the perfect responses.

Aria: "I don't have all the perfect answers or experience, but I try very hard—I've done all the training, all the research, and all the effort. I would make a great astronaut."

Interviewer: "We will keep you in mind," he says—but I can tell he doesn't exactly mean it.

Space might not kill you quickly, but it will try. What does this even mean? To me, this means that following your dreams always has the potential to end up failing. With a job that millions broadcasts; that means going from hero to villain if one thing goes wrong. Space may not ruin your career, but it most likely can't save it either. To the families of all the lives lost in the disasters, my heart and soul goes out to you. They will never be forgotten.

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." - Neil Armstrong

2. One of Us Died, But We Both Stopped Breathing: July 18, 2004. Both of us died, but only one of us stopped breathing that day. Cancer is described in the dictionary as a group of diseases characterized by the uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells. I don't believe that's what cancer is when you really think about it. Cancer, to me, is the most evil spirit who rips families apart. Cancer is what took my best friend away from me.

"I'm scared, Lily. I'm scared. I don't want to die. I am only seventeen." She was seventeen, and was worrying about when she would go to sleep and not wake up. Most teenagers worry about stuff like whether or not their crush likes them back or if they look fat in these jeans. Things that seem so big at the time but are actually so small. Leukemia is a cancer found in your blood cells, that's what she had. To me, to her family, to her friends—Leukemia was what we felt in our hearts every single beat. We may not have had cancer, but we felt and went through it with her. It was through her but a part of all of us, everyday.

Doctor: "I'm very sorry Ms. Anderson, but your best friend didn't make it throughout the night. If you have any questions, her doctor should be here soon to explain everything."

I just lost it.

I'm not a big dreamer, a big believer. But if I could have one wish, it would be for me to die instead of her. She wanted to live, and I wanted to die. Now she's alive in me, and that might be the only living part in me. I look back and realize just how bad of a friend I was to her. I talked about wanting to die when she was truly dying. And that's the weight I'll carry with me for the rest of my life because I truly believe that if I tried longer and harder I could've saved her...

3. Vienna: I get told I'm crazy, and that I need to slow down. "Juvenile" the older gentleman says—even though I'm almost 23. "What's the hurry about? Why are you so afraid? How are you going to do this all in one day?" The only question I have personally is whether or not this is an interrogation.

When the truth gets told you can get what you want or you can just get old. Truth is—I'll probably give up halfway through like I always do. Maybe one day I'll realize that people do care about me. People will wait for me.

Should I slow down? Am I doing fine? Why am I so ahead of myself? That's what people say about me. Everytime I'm wrong it lingers with me for months on end, but I can't think of one time I felt good or right.

I have passion. I have pride. But maybe I'm a fool—that's why I'm satisfied. Maybe I am just a crazy child who needs to slow down, but that's just too hard to do.

I'm that older gentleman now, telling people who are at least 20 to slow down and enjoy life. I didn't listen to the man who told me these things, and that's my only regret. What was the hurry about? Why was I afraid? The world doesn't slow down for you—you have to learn to slow down and savor it. You can afford to lose a day or two doing stuff you enjoy, doing stuff you love. Maybe time does slow down for you?

4. Change: Society has us in a cage full of expectations, and only us within olds the key. If only we knew how to find the key; how we find our true selves.

Social norms are defined as unwritten rules for appropriate behavior and beliefs within a group of society. When I think of these I think of holding the door for someone behind you, saying “please” and “thank you” and staying in your place in a moving line. If you don’t follow these you won’t get arrested, but you also won’t be respected.

To be “approved” or “allowed” you have to be one person today but another person tomorrow—but also you can’t be a liar or act like somebody you are not. You simply have to be every version of everyone in the entire world at the same time. You must constantly be a shifting blend of contradictions—but you also cannot be a hypocrite.

My favorite quote that I have ever written is, “Whenever It comes down to love versus loneliness, love always wins.” Finding love is hard, especially when you don’t know what version of yourself you need to be, but at the same time being the version of yourself you truly are so you don’t deceive them. There is no normalcy to this society. There is no perfect way to live, or an imperfect way to live.

Simply be. Simply exist.

5. Lingering: In 8th grade I switched from private to public school. In 9th grade I switched again. I always thought that school was the problem—that they people were the problem. I finally realized that the outcome is the same no matter where you go, it's your effort and strides that change.

23 missed days, 15 doctors appointments, 8 call in days. That's how my 8th grade year went. Waking up in the morning knowing you will end up sobbing in the parking lot, begging your mom not to make you go inside. But when you really get inside and sit down—it usually goes away. Not always, but usually.

Counselors, Doctors, Psychiatrists, and Parents. Those are the friendships possessed when you live like this. You can't express how you feel—if you had a bad day, if you don't feel good. It gets to a point where all you get asked is "Are you going to school tomorrow?" not "Are you doing okay?"

People start to notice. People start to wonder. People start to get scared and pity you, so then you decide to leave again. It was never the school, was it? Wasn't it just you? Aren't you the problem?

Making it a whole week deserves a cake. It is a celebration. That week turns into two, then three, then you look and realize you made it through a month. Then a break comes. Then another month. Then another. Then a break.

Sometimes when you take a look in the mirror you will realize that only you have control over your problems.

6. Andrew: When I was 17 years old I met this boy named Andrew at a football state title game. I had just recently got out of an abusive relationship—and nothing broke me more than watching him play that day with his new girl in the stands, the new girl he treats perfectly.

Andrew saw me walking through the stadium sobbing, regretting most of the choices I've made in the last year. He came up to me, shook my hand, and introduced himself. I remember vividly what he said next.

Andrew: "Whenever you find somebody who truly treats you right, you remember my name. I believe that you will find somebody. We are young, we have time."

I met my husband Peter in college two years later, and we got married two years after that. I never forgot that name, and I spent many years trying to find a way to tell him how much hope he gave me during those years. Peter got shot and died on our 5th wedding anniversary. I was lucky enough to find somebody who loves me for me, and even though we only got 9 years together—it is still a love that lasts a lifetime.

Peter's shooting made the news that month, and at the visitation I found someone I never thought I'd find. I look into the corner and see Andrew, and his beautiful wife waving in the corner. He stepped aside with me for a moment and told me he was glad I found somebody, even though it was a short time—and that he found someone too, and they metaphorically carried my name.

I remarried 12 years later, and everything did end up okay, just like my good friend Andrew said it would.

7. November Nothing: October has Halloween, and December has Christmas—November brings Thanksgiving in between. Thanksgiving doesn't bring me the joy or gratitude it is supposed to bring—November brings me *nothing*.

Thanksgiving is a time to show thanks for those who you love, but it's a lot easier whenever you have people who love you back. Most of my life I have been alone, and the only word from family I receive is a lousy call from my brother.

Rod: “Jamie, it's Rod. Momma's in the hospital, and probably won't make it through the week.”

Jamie: “Rod, maybe if Momma called and checked up on me once in a while I'd go visit her, but the last time we talked was 8 years ago.”

Rod: “The phone goes both ways, J. I know you two had your problems, and I know you don't come around anymore—but it's your momma. You should come say goodbye.”

I hopped on the first plane back to Arkansas to visit my momma, but it was too late. I walk up to her room and see the sign, “Time of Death: 8:23” It was 9:04.

“*Nothing Last Forever, Even Cold November Rain.*”

8. The Girl In The Movies: I've always wanted to be one of the girls in the movies; a huge glow up overnight, the most popular boy, a nice house, and the best of friends! I'm not one of those girls. I am plain, simple, and a little bit lonely.

Derek: "Come on, Victoria! You should come hang out with us tonight at the drive in."

My best friend, Derek, tells me. Derek is the only person who sees me as one of those girls—especially more than me.

Victoria: "I don't feel like going out tonight. I mean—what if there's people from school there!"

Derek: "Come on, V. It will be fun—besides, who cares what other people say!"

I went to the movies with Derek that night to watch "*She's All That*" and I think that's enough context. After the movie Derek asked me what I thought.

Victoria: "I don't look like Laney. I look plain and stupid and ugly!"

Derek: "I think you look fine how you are. You shouldn't look like a professional actress who is years older than you and has professional hair and makeup done. You do look plain, and I love that."

That day I realized that we all want to be the girl in the movies, until you actually become one. When I made it big—all I wanted to be was that 15 year old girl in the drive