

Nothing Tastes as Good as Skinny Feels

A Myth for Two Women

By Katie Hileman

Characters

BEFORE - Fat. Smart. Wishes she was thin.

AFTER - Thin. Smiles a lot. Wishes she was happy.

Both characters are teetering on the edge of their own version of a nervous breakdown.

Notes from the Playwright

BEFORE and AFTER should have the same costume. The same workout clothes/hair/bag/makeup.

Do whatever you want with the set. It's just important that we see bodies in space. Both bodies. Always.

Be sure that the actress playing BEFORE self-identifies as fat. That is not a label for you to thrust upon her physical body without her acceptance and permission. Our society likes to fuck up what that word really means and it can be scary and harmful to throw around.

See? It's like the play has already started.

CONTENT WARNING: Talk of eating disorders, trauma, negative body image, fatphobia.

Gym lights up hard on a bare stage and cardio dance music in LOUD. We are at the end of a cardio dance class (like Zumba, or something).

BEFORE and AFTER are following along and performing the cardio routine perfectly in sync.

The music ends. Class is over. We see them catch their breath, smiling to others in class. They turn to each other.

*They look at each other.
They know each other.
There is only each other.*

They each walk to their respective gym bag and pick up a towel to wipe their faces in unison.

Beat.

AFTER talks to herself in the mirror (which is the audience). BEFORE stretches out. Or just sits. Something harmless.

AFTER

(overexaggerated) PHEWWWW!

Wow! What an incredible work out! Right? I love breaking a sweat. I only did 3 miles before this, but maybe I'll do 3 miles later. Yeah, I should do 3 miles later.

Can you believe these yoga pants?
I got them from *(whisper)* Fabletics.
Can you believe?
They were on sale.
CAN YOU BELIEVE???

They're sooooo comfy and don't they make my butt look so cute?

Right? I know they do. I don't normally buy things on sale but I just had to have them. I had to have people look at my butt in these yoga pants. I have to advertise that I work out and that I take care of my body or else no one will love me.

I need more yoga pants. I need more exercise. I need to be smaller and for you to know that I am making myself smaller. If I am not trying to make myself disappear than like what am I doing.

LITERALLY.

I need you to look at me. I know you want to be me. I know you want to know where I got these yoga pants.

I don't eat any carbs because they'll make me fat and that's gross.

(Indicating BEFORE)

To be honest she's kind of fat and gross... Like, has she heard of the paleo diet? Hello!!!!!! Like I get it she's allowed to exercise here or whatever but I can definitely tell that she's struggling. But like good for her for trying. It's really cute how she just swings her arms around and doesn't care about those flabby bits.

I just wish it wasn't in my face all the time. There's just so much of her.

She probably doesn't take care of herself. She's probably here because a doctor told her to be here. She probably has diabetes and heart disease and like so many cholestorols.

Not me.

I'm fit.

I have a workout *REGIMENT*.

I play SPORTS... *SOMETIMES*.

I JOG... *OUTSIDE*.

I EAT... *KALE*.

I am the ideal.

I am the girl on Instagram who you won't follow but you watch all of her stories.

I am the other woman your boyfriend is peeking at in line for the show. It's because I'm wearing my yoga pants. It's because he can tell I'm fit. I care about myself and the way I look.

Tell me my butt looks cute.

Actually don't, just look at me and don't say anything so I can see how jealous you are.

(Maniacal) I love that.

(Empty) And I love me.

AFTER starts posing to herself in the mirror. BEFORE notices, and approaches the mirror. She begins to pose in the same manner as AFTER. Eventually they both take off their shirts and look at their stomachs in their sports bras.

AFTER retreats. BEFORE talks to herself in the mirror.

BEFORE

Exercise is fucking terrible.

I mean, who likes to sweat?

On purpose?

Seriously?

Especially in front of other people.

Especially in front of her *(referring to AFTER)*.

She looks so happy in those stupid yoga pants.

With her stupid smile.

She was probably a cheerleader.

Or an athlete.

This is easy for her.

She has permission.

She's allowed to take up so much space even though she's so small.

Meanwhile, I enter a room and it's like I've insulted everyone.

There's no space for me.

For this body.

Doing a very obvious and grossly overexaggerated imitation of AFTER:

"Ugh why is she here?"
"Ugh look at what she did to herself"
"Ugh she must not take care of herself"
"UGH she's so gross"
"UGH I hope she doesn't get in my way"
"UGH does she really think she can wear something like that?"
"UGH she's so unhealthy"
"UGH SHE'S JUST SO FAT"

Why do I feel like I'm not allowed to be here?
I just like this class.
I just like to move.
Why am I not allowed to move?

And why am I like this?
Why was this chosen for me?
Because that's what it feels like.
Chosen. Fate. Destiny.

I am the "poor, sad, fat girl" full stop.
No more to her story.

And that's not what this weight is.

This is my mom taking me to weight watchers when I was 12 and 13
and 14 and 15 and 16.
This is having to wear maternity clothes in high school because
nothing else from Target would fit.
This is my fingers down my throat everyday because society has
told me I don't deserve to be full, and I DEFINITELY don't
deserve to eat what I want.
This is going on a liquid diet and losing 80 pounds and learning
that THAT is when the world sees you.

And how dare you feel like you can comment on it.
How dare you feel like you can judge me.

Why can't I be the ideal?

And like, I get it, right...
I know that I need to be smaller and for you to know that I am
making myself smaller. I know that if I am not trying to make
myself disappear than it's like "what am I doing".

But maybe I'm okay being the Before picture.
 Maybe I like to live in this body.
 Maybe I like to eat pizza and drink beer.
 Maybe I like to live my life just like the rest of you.
 Maybe I deserve to be here.

So.
 I'll keep coming to class.
 And I will keep on moving.
 And I will keep on fighting every day to take up more and more
 space.

This body is mine.
 And I'm trying.

And I mean.. I guess I do like these yoga pants. I got them from
 Torrid. They look *just like* Fabletics.

Don't you think they make my butt look kind of cute?

BEFORE takes a final look/pose and shrugs. Goes back
 to her gym bag. Pulls out her lunch: pizza. At the
 same time, *AFTER* pulls out her lunch: salad.

*They sit across from one another watching each other
 eat.*

*They get into a little competition of who is enjoying
 their food more. They get really into it.*

*Obviously, pizza is winning. AFTER can't take it
 anymore.*

AFTER

(inappropriately loud; throwing her salad) Oh fuck you!

BEFORE

Sorry?

AFTER

This is a gym! Come on! I'm trying to be healthy here!

BEFORE

Who's being unhealthy? It's just food. No one's stopping you.

AFTER

I know I know I know I know I know I know I know I know.

I KNOW.

It. Just. Smells. Amazing.

BEFORE

It is amazing.

AFTER

Don't you feel gross?

BEFORE

Feel great.

AFTER squirms.

Do you... want some?

AFTER

Oh, me? No. No no no no no no no no no.

No no no no no no no no no.

No thank you.

I am dieting.

Bread is the enemy, ya know?

BEFORE

No, I don't know. *(still enjoying herself)*

I know that this pepperoni is pretty fucking great.

AFTER

Yeah?

BEFORE

Best I've ever had.

It's SO fucking good.

I just wanna like... rub it all over my body. *(This both grosses out and entices AFTER).*

Everything sucks, but at least there's pizza, right?

Come on, have some.

Join me.

AFTER

Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels.

BEFORE

Excuse me?

AFTER

Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels!

BEFORE

Bitch, what?

AFTER

NOTHING TASTES AS GOOD AS SKINNY FEELS!

BEFORE marches over and forces the pizza into AFTER's mouth. Maybe there is a chase? In any case, it's a drama.

At first AFTER resists, but then she gives in... to the pizza.

They eat and look at each other, they laugh.

BEFORE

Tastes pretty good huh?

Beat.

They look at each other.

AFTER smiles.

AFTER

Tastes like skinny.

They continue eating.

Blackout.