

Breakaway

Being 'perfect' is what everyone strives for, following the same schedule that society has planned for everyone. Since when was history made based upon what society wanted us to do? History is made because of people uncovering society's flaws. Rosa Parks made history by refusing the norms of society and taking the sanctions from that event to persuade others to see society's imperfections. What she did on that one bus ride when she didn't sit in the back triggered a very important chain of events that changed the norms of society forever. Rosa broke away. Why can't we? Imagine you are at the edge of a cliff, and society is the 100 pound hiking boots holding you down to the ground, but what you really want to do is fly away, soar to new heights, and maybe give society a little knock to the head while you are at it. Do you think that Steve Jobs got so rich by following society's life path? I think not. He chose his own life path because he didn't want to squeeze into the same box of societal norms with the rest of us. Steve Jobs got so rich because he voiced his opinion and said what ideas he had. History is created by people breaking norms, not following them. Then why do we always strive for what society wants? Now is our time to breakaway.

Like the eyes on my mask, my eyes used to be shut by society and laid on top of my eyelids was the burden of societal norms. WAS. That's not the case anymore. I have opened my eyes to look society, and all of its norms, straight in the eye and say, "No, I will not accept settling for what you want." I used to hate this scar on my chin because it separated me from the rest of the world. I always thought: *why did I have to try to skip two monkey bars? How much more stupid could I be?* Now I love my scar for the exact same reasons. You know those tears I used to wipe away the second they fell? Now I wear those tears with pride because they have shaped me to make me who I am today. Most know me as quiet Hannah or happy Hannah. It's about time that I open my mouth, say what I feel and feel what I say. People deserve to know the real me. My lips used to be shut by the thoughts of others, by the opinions of who I should be, shut by society's strict norms. Now is my time to shine. This is my time for people to know my real self, not my looking-glass self. The looking-glass self, a social psychological concept, is when your identity grows into something new because of other people's opinions of who you should be. For example, if you had never had anyone ever judge you, even if it was just inside their head, you would be exactly who YOU would want to be. But if people made assumptions about you, even if it was just, "Her hair doesn't look clean," or "That shirt she's wearing is totally last season," each time someone judges or adds an opinion about you, you morph into someone completely different than yourself, and after a while you won't even be recognized as your own person. Each of my 'flaws' are based on the norms and opinions of the people around us. These norms are so strong that, unless you know how the cycle works, it is almost impossible to break.

My mask represents my life by showing how my true self has been covered up by society; it shows how I am a victim of society. The covers on my eyelids represent how society has shut my eyes to what I want to see, and covered it up by putting strict societal norms on top of my lids. The covers say things like, *I only see what society wants me to see, and society is perfect, and conforming makes us normal.* Unless you know your eyes are closed, you don't know how to open them. If I "open my eyes" or lift the cover, it says what I think, like *open your eyes to see the REAL world, and normal is boring. Take the road less traveled by.* So we have

been living this life, thinking that we are our own people, that we can do what we want, but truthfully we are all squished into the same tiny box, and holding us inside is society. Here's the thing: even though the society has us all in a box, they make it feel like just ourselves are outside the box looking in, and all we want in life is to get inside the box.

The flowers on my chin and my cheeks represent how I have to bottle up all of my feelings and cover them up with something 'perfect'. If you look at the left cheek (your left) the flower says: *be what others want you to be*. Essentially being what other people want you to be is what you typically want because that's how you make friends; but truthfully, no one wants a cookie cutter person. If you remove the flower, it says: *don't be a copycat, be an original*. This means that one shouldn't follow a path already laid out for you. We should carve our own path, make our own history. On my right cheek (your right), the flower says, *it's not polite to cry*. For both girls and boys, crying is a sign of weakness, even if one has a perfectly good reason to be bawling. We are supposed to bottle up our emotions and emit a strong presence that say something like, "Yea, sure, my dad died, but his life wasn't my life. My life is just fine, I'm tough." Even if one says that, I would sure hope that on the inside you would be thinking: "I miss my dad so much. He was a part of me that is going to be truly hard to live without." This is an example of how much I have conformed to society. When my mom had told me my dad had passed away that morning, obviously I cried. But as the tears ran down my cheeks I would wipe them away because I felt ashamed of them. Even though it was just my intermediate family present I still didn't feel like breaking that societal norm. So if I subtract that flower, you are left with this: *emotions make us who we are*. This expresses that it is good to let our emotions out because it lets people be able to relate to us.

The flower on my chin is an extremely strong and personal flower. The flower says *strive for perfection*. If you hadn't already guessed, I am a perfectionist. Perfection is what I always want, and if I don't get it, there is always a little voice in my head saying 'you know you could've done better' or 'you are a slacker. You know you could've put more effort into that.' Deep down, (really deep down) I know that no one can be perfect, and it seems silly to try to master being perfect, but I can't help but still wish for perfection. Going back to the mask, if you and I somehow manage to remove the flower, (which believe me, it is going to be hard to do) underneath it says, *our imperfections make us perfect*. I created this quote because that is what I need to think in order to break away from society, but it is really hard to accept all of my "flaws" and make them the foundation to my life.

Finally, we come upon my mouth. If you look at it with the cover on, I look content. I am smiling and keeping my mouth shut, holding my opinions and true feelings inside. The content smile is just that: a smile. It holds no feelings and doesn't reflect who I am and what I think. My smile says (literally): *listen to others, not to yourself*. This translates to mean that we should rely on others to provide opinions for us, not provide them for yourself. Uncovering my content smile, you find yourself staring at an open mouth, not looking extremely happy or content. It says, *everyone should say what **they** think, not what society thinks*. This represents that I have completed the last step in my mission, that I have covered this last few feet to the top of the mountain, that I have finally broken away. I have at last torn away all of society's opinions about me and who I should be, and I am now strong enough to voice my own thoughts and opinions. It's like with each cover I ripped off, I created a piece of my wings. Now that I have completed my wings and have made it to the top of the mountain, all I have to do is fly, and breakaway.