

# GRAY MATTERS

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A short comedy by  
Lucy Wang

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

GRAY, basketball player.

ISABEL, bookish overachiever, Miss Smarty Pants.

## SETTING

Gray's bedroom. Very messy. Painted gray. Basketball.  
Hoop. Superhero posters.

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*(GRAY is checking himself out in the mirror when ISABEL knocks on Gray's bedroom door.)*

**GRAY:** Who is it?

**ISABEL:** Hey, Gray. It's Isabel. We had an appointment.

**GRAY:** Oh. Right. Just a minute.

*(Gray looks around at his mess, kicks some dirty clothes under his bed before opening up.)*

Did anyone see you come in?

**ISABEL:** See me? You mean, besides your mother?

**GRAY:** Yeah. Anyone from school notice?

**ISABEL:** Are you embarrassed to be seen with me? For real?

**GRAY:** Well. We're not exactly friends.

**ISABEL:** You invited me here.

**GRAY:** It's bad enough my team is on a losing streak—I don't want to invite more ridicule in my life.

**ISABEL:** I'm here to change your luck. Change your future. That's what you're paying me for.

**GRAY:** Oh yeah. Here's your fifty bucks. You can go. Sorry I bothered you. Thanks.

**ISABEL:** You want me to leave?

**GRAY:** I'm sorry, I'm not sure I can believe in fang-schway. It sounds so foreign, so...Chinese.

**ISABEL:** *(Correcting Gray's pronunciation:)* Feng-shui.

**GRAY:** Whatever.

**ISABEL:** You promised to be open-minded.

**GRAY:** I looked it up. Feng-shui means wind water. How is wind water going to help our team win? I'm not a sailor. We

play basketball indoors.

**ISABEL:** Have you ever tried to play during a tornado? Flood? Hurricane?

**GRAY:** The game would probably be canceled. Who would come?

**ISABEL:** Exactly. You upset nature, nature will upset you. Your future.

**GRAY:** OK, feng-shui master, change my luck, change my future.

**ISABEL:** Your mom doesn't mind us being up here?

**GRAY:** Not as long as the door is wide open. (*Raising his voice and moving closer to the door:*) Not as long as she can hear us. Loud and clear. Speak up. Not down.

**ISABEL:** Wow. Your mom is cooler than mine. She even gave me a cookie.

**GRAY:** Chocolate chip?

**ISABEL:** Oatmeal raisin. Mine likes to hover, and no sweets. Make sure I'm studying. I don't think she trusts me.

**GRAY:** My mom trusts me. She knows my type.

**ISABEL:** Oh.

**GRAY:** Yeah.

**ISABEL:** I'm definitely not your type. Too brainy.

**GRAY:** Too something.

**ISABEL:** You like your girls dumb so they look up to you. (*Mocking:*) Oh, Gray, you're so strong.

**GRAY:** Hey, it's kind of nice when a girl thinks you're better than her at something.

**ISABEL:** I get it. You're jealous. I don't blame you. I'm a

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winner. Whatever contest I enter, I win. Whatever game you play, you lose.

**GRAY:** I hate losing. I'm a terrible loser.

**ISABEL:** Then you must repaint your walls. Gray is such an indecisive color. Gray is dull, neutral, dismal. You want to get out of the gray area as soon as possible.

**GRAY:** My bedroom is painted gray for a very good reason. Gray. (*Pointing to himself:*) Gray. (*Pointing to the walls:*) We match.

**ISABEL:** Yes, you're one with boredom.

**GRAY:** Harsh.

**ISABEL:** What were your parents thinking when they named you Gray? Take Isabel, for example. Means Is a Belle. Isn't that great?

**GRAY:** I have to change my name too?

**ISABEL:** How do you feel about Gary?

**GRAY:** Gary?

**ISABEL:** You get to keep all your letters. Plus it means "spear."

**GRAY:** Did you hear that, Mom?

**ISABEL:** Shut up. I was just kidding. You don't have to change your name.

**GRAY:** Thank God.

**ISABEL:** You need a warm inviting color. I envision a bright sunny yellow.

**GRAY:** No freaking way.

**ISABEL:** How about red? Red is the color of fire and celebration in China.

**GRAY:** Cool. I like maroon.

**ISABEL:** Yes, but do you like championships?

**GRAY:** Why do you think I hired you?

**ISABEL:** Maroon is the color of University of Chicago. Do you know how many athletes go there? How many championships the Maroons win? Zip.

**GRAY:** Then Crimson. Harvard. Didn't Jeremy Lin play basketball at Harvard? I could be the next Jeremy Lin. Gray-sanity!

**ISABEL:** Number of NCAA championships for Harvard basketball...zero. Besides, do you really think you're going to get in to Harvard? With your grades?

**GRAY:** Cruel.

**ISABEL:** It is. I might not even get in. Me.

**GRAY:** I can't do "hello yellow," Isabel. It's against my nature. Some of us, we like it dark. It's how we see.

**ISABEL:** Can't is loser talk, Gray. Is it in your nature to lose? Think of the Los Angeles Lakers.

**GRAY:** That's yellow and purple.

**ISABEL:** Purple is the color of wealth. Self-confidence. Abundance. Purple is strong, vibrant, powerful.

**GRAY:** I could just write on my walls. Like *Harold and the Purple Crayon*.

**ISABEL:** Very powerful. Perhaps, too powerful. Should be used in moderation.

**GRAY:** Oh no, I'm not afraid. Bring it on. The money, the championships, the good vibrations!

*(He picks up his basketball and puts it through the hoop.)*

Slam dunk! What's next?

**ISABEL:** The bed is placed in the proper position. Away from the door. So you can see who comes in or out.

**GRAY:** At least I got something right.

**ISABEL:** Oh my. What's all this under your bed?

**GRAY:** I'm a guy.

**ISABEL:** It stinks!

**GRAY:** Well, it'll get washed eventually.

**ISABEL:** Disgusting.

**GRAY:** It's not a big deal.

**ISABEL:** You can't sleep on top of filth. That's extremely bad chi to have all those fumes and germs floating around.

**GRAY:** I can sleep anywhere.

**ISABEL:** I wouldn't let that get around. (*Coughing:*) Geez, how can you breathe in here? Noxious.

**GRAY:** Seriously? Oh crap, here, have some water.

*(He hands Isabel a drink, then goes to the door.)*

Mom. Could use your help. Are you there?

**ISABEL:** You make your mother rummage through this skanky pile of dirty laundry?

**GRAY:** She loves me.

**ISABEL:** Winners take control. Winners are not mommy's boys.

**GRAY:** I'm not a momma's boy. How dare you.

**ISABEL:** Prove it.

*(Gray takes pile of dirty clothes and puts it outside the door, then*

*slams the door.)*

**GRAY:** Satisfied, Miss My Clothes Never Wrinkle Never Stink?

**ISABEL:** Don't you feel better? Ah, before you answer, deep breath. Deep, deep breath. *(Inhales:)* Focus.

**GRAY:** *(Inhales, then exhales slowly:)* I do feel a little calmer. I'm sure I'll feel a lot better when you leave.

**ISABEL:** We're almost done.

**GRAY:** There's more.

**ISABEL:** There's always more, Gray. Winners never quit.

**GRAY:** Fine. Hit me.

**ISABEL:** The mirror – it's so large. Too large.

**GRAY:** I like to look at myself. Check out my moves.

*(Gray does some fancy dribbling/footwork.)*

See what I'm doing wrong, if anything. I'm a perfectionist. Aren't you impressed with my work ethic?

*(He flexes or lunges.)*

**ISABEL:** Very.

**GRAY:** *(Showing off:)* You'd root for me. Cheer me on.

**ISABEL:** I have.

**GRAY:** You have?

**ISABEL:** All the time.

**GRAY:** Really. You go to all the games.

**ISABEL:** Well, not all. Most. My parents say I have to have priorities.

**GRAY:** Where do you sit?

**ISABEL:** In the back.

**GRAY:** That's where the losers sit! Is a Belle.

**ISABEL:** I wouldn't want to embarrass you.

**GRAY:** Isn't that bad feng-shui? To sit in the back.

**ISABEL:** You want me to sit up front next time?

**GRAY:** Darn straight. I'm paying you for results.

**ISABEL:** Oh. Of course.

**GRAY:** We are going to win Saturday night, aren't we?

**ISABEL:** You have to get rid of that large mirror.

**GRAY:** The beauty of a full-length mirror is we can watch where we step. Retrace our steps. Step forward in time.

**ISABEL:** A mirror like that screams look at me, I'm vain. I'm so vain, I can't stop looking at myself.

**GRAY:** Hey, have you looked at yourself in the mirror lately?

**ISABEL:** Not really.

**GRAY:** Your parents?

**ISABEL:** My priorities.

**GRAY:** Shall we dance?

**ISABEL:** I don't know how.

**GRAY:** It's easy. One two three. One two three. You can count, can't you?

*(Gray extends his hand to Isabel. They dance. Gray is a better dancer, but both check out their steps and reflections in the mirror.)*

**ISABEL:** Oops. Sorry.

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