

Pinky Promise

By

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Cast of Characters

<u>Anna:</u>	Has a Secret. She tells Bianca and makes her pinky promise not to tell.
<u>Bianca:</u>	Believes in keeping a pinky promises. Touching pinkies makes it sacred somehow.
<u>Carly:</u>	Believes in keeping secrets, because it leads to more people telling you secrets.
<u>Dana:</u>	Believes in keeping promises. Always. No exceptions.
<u>Esther:</u>	Believes changing circumstances can negate a pinky promise.
<u>Bianca's Mom:</u>	Calm, reassuring, and wise

ACT I

Scene 1

Anna and Bianca are in front of the curtain, lit with a spotlight

ANNA

Bianca, do you swear you won't tell anyone?

BIANCA

Anna, hello, it's me - of course I won't tell anyone.

ANNA

Promise?

BIANCA

Yes, I promise!

Pause as Anna decides whether Bianca can be trusted with the secret

ANNA

Do you *pinky* promise?

BIANCA

Oh . . . I . . .

ANNA

Never mind, it's okay . . .

BIANCA

No! I promise, I *pinky* promise)

holds out pinky

Anna hesitates, then holds out pinky

ANNA

Okay, *pinky* promise.

They join pinkys and complete the promise in the ancient customary fashion

Anna stage whispers the secret to Bianca, then runs offstage, hands over face, obviously upset.

Spotlight on Bianca as she breaks the 4th wall and addresses the audience.

BIANCA

Oh my God I didn't know it was that serious . . . a Pinky Promise? She is serious. I mean, I promise things

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BIANCA (cont'd)

all the time, but I always tell. Come on, you know? Sometimes gossip is just too good to keep to yourself. But that would be almost like lying when you say "I swear to God" you know? I would never do *that*. But come on, right? This is big. BIG. But I'm not going to tell anyone. Ever. No matter what. I pinky promised. I can't tell. I won't tell.

She turns to exit stage left, then stops, and faces the audience again.
Probably.

Scene 2

Bianca enters from stage left. She joins Carly, Dana, and Esther who are sitting at a lunch table at school.

CARLY

Oh my god did you hear about Anna?

BIANCA

Uh . . . what?

DANA

her parents withdrew her from school and no one has seen her since Friday. Have you seen her?

BIANCA

I just saw her . . .

she stops herself, remembering her pinky promise

Carly, Diana, and Esther all ask questions at once: What did she say? Where is she going? What happened? Each will ad lib several questions, which overwhelms Bianca

BIANCA

Stop! Stop! Wait!

CARLY

So?

BIANCA

You guys, I can't tell you anything. . .

They cut her off again all speaking at once

C, D, AND E:

You have to tell! Come on! What do you mean (and ad libs)

BIANCA

I promised!

C, D, AND E

(continue berating and questioning her,
ad lib)

BIANCA

YOU GUYS, I PINKY PROMISED!

(C, D, and E fall silent C and D's
expressions reflect the gravity of the
statement, while E merely looks puzzled)

CARLY

Oh. Oh, you pinky promised.

DANA

You didn't! Oh my God it must be serious!

ESTHER

So what?

CARLY

What do you mean so what?

DANA

Yeah, what do you mean so what? What's wrong with you,
girl, she pinky promised!

ESTHER

Really, you guys? Really? Like that's different than a
regular promise?

BIANCA, CARLY, AND DANA (TOGETHER)

Oh. My. God!

ESTHER

Oh, and did you cross your heart hope to die stick a
needle in your eye, Bianca? With sugar on top? Please
girl. Something is going on with Anna and we need to
KNOW. Spill, woman, spill!

BIANCA

Nooo, I didn't cross my heart and hope to die. Stupid.

Pinky Promise is different. If someone asks you to
pinky promise something, you can't go back on that.
Ever. It's not just a promise. You actually touch
someone, and give you word. It's, like, sacred or
religious or something. I don't know, like more
special.

(CONTINUED)

ESTHER

How? How does it make it different just because you grab someone's little finger?

BIANCA

I don't know. I just know it does. Look, it's like, okay: My Grampa used to take me to his car dealership when I was little. He used to make deals with people, for expensive cars, thousands of dollars, just by shaking hands with them. They didn't even write anything down or sign any papers until way later. Somehow, shaking hands made it like, holy, or honorable, or something, so they couldn't go back on it. I can't explain it right, but I know it makes a difference.

ESTHER

What? Your pinky, your hand, your elbow - what difference does it make? That's crazy, girl. You promise something because you mean it - at that moment. If things change later, you don't have to let something in the past hold you back. Nobody can tell you what to do. If you want to tell, tell!

DANA

But if she tells Anna's secret, that will hurt Anna, right? So it's wrong to tell. Not because she pinky promised, but because it would hurt her friend.

CARLY

Oooh, and if you break a pinky promise non one will ever tell you anything again, ever! How awful would that be? Ewwwww (shivers). See, that's why you have to keep a pinky promise, because it's the only way people will trust you, and if people trust you, they will tell you secrets, and if people tell you secrets, you will know what's going on, and if you know what's going on, people will want to hang around you, and if people want to hang around you, you'll be popular, and if you're popular, then -

DANA (CUTTING HER OFF)

Did I ever tell you you're the most vapid person I've ever met?

CARLY

Awwwww, you're so sweet . . .

ESTHER

Carly, vapid means -

DANA (CUTTING HER OFF)
Don't confuse her.

Carly and Esther both shrug, but for different reason. Dana sighs in exasperation, then continues

Anyway, she can't tell because she promised, that's all. The whole pinky thing is fine, but you can't break a promise, no matter what.

ESTHER
What? No matter what? You can't think of anything in the whole universe that might make it okay for her to tell us?

DANA
Of course not, it's a promise. You have to keep your promise no matter what. That's just the way the world works.

ESTHER
There is no such thing as "no matter what". There's too many things that could happen. There's a million different reasons she could tell us and it would be okay.

DANA
Don't you believe in right and wrong?

ESTHER
Of course I believe in right and wrong. That's what I'm trying to tell you. It's wrong to break a promise, unless something comes up that changes the reason you promised, then it's right.

DANA
So it's wrong

ESTHER
Right

DANA
To break a promise

ESTHER
Right

DANA
Unless it's right

ESTHER
Right

DANA

Then it's wrong

ESTHER

What?

DANA

To keep a promise. If something comes up, it could be wrong to keep a promise.

ESTHER

Right.

(She looks puzzled for a moment)

No, wrong. I'm not saying that!

DANA

Well if it's right to break a promise, it must be wrong to keep that same promise.

ESTHER

I didn't say that!

CARLY

You kinda did.

BIANCA

Yeah, that makes sense. You kinda said that when you said it was right to break a promise.

ESTHER

Well . . . maybe. But that's not what I mean. It can't be wrong to keep a promise. Can it?

ANNA

If it's right to break the promise, can it be right to keep the promise at the same time?

(they all pause)

ESTHER

(slowly and thoughtfully)

Even if it was okay to tell

(pauses to think)

. . . it would still be okay not to tell, if you didn't want to tell.

(lightbulb goes off in her mind)

If you're the one who made the promise, you're the one who gets to decide whether you tell or not!

CARLY

Ohhhhhh.....

(CONTINUED)

BIANCA

There's only one problem with that.

ESTHER

What?

DANA

It's a promise!

BIANCA

It's a pinky promise!

ESTHER

So?

BIANCA AND DANA

(together)

Promise!

CARLY

Oh! I get it!

ESTHER

Get what?

CARLY

See, you're saying Bianca should tell us based on what she thinks is right. But they're saying Bianca doesn't have the right to tell, no matter what happens, because it's Anna's secret, and only Anna can decide who gets to know it. So it's like, Anna's property or something. Telling Anna's secret would be like, stealing her purse or something.

(pauses to think)

Wait, you're not saying it would be okay to steal Anna's purse? Oh my gosh, Esther!

ESTHER

No. Duh.

BIANCA

No, but wait. If you can think of something that could happen that could make it okay to tell a secret . . . could you think of something that would make it okay to steal a purse?

ESTHER

I don't know. Probably. There's always something. You can never say never. What if you were like, starving and somebody had a candy bar in their purse, wouldn't it be okay to steal it then.

CARLY

The whole purse, or just the candy bar?

ESTHER

Well, just the candy bar, I guess. It wouldn't be right to steal the whole purse. So, maybe you could just tell us a little bit of the secret, not the whole secret!

CARLY

Please...

ESTHER

It was just a thought.

CARLY

What about to kill somebody? It could never be okay to kill somebody! Could it?

ESTHER

Soldiers kill people. Cops kill people.

CARLY

No, I mean, like innocent people, not like people in a war or people robbing banks or something. Like, little babies, or somebody's Gramma or something.

ESTHER

Well, no. I guess that's never okay.

DANA

So, there are some things you just can't do, no matter what.

ESTHER

Okay, fine. But pinky promises aren't one of those things.

DANA

Well, I think they are!

ESTHER

Well, you're wrong!

DANA

No, you are!

CARLY

Guys, guys, it doesn't matter what we think. It matters what Bianca thinks, because she's the one who made the pinky promise.

ESTHER

Hey, Bianca, I know . . . what if you tell us, and WE pinky promise not to tell anyone else?

all three just stare at her like she's nuts, and she looks embarrassed.

It was just a thought.

BIANCA

No offense, Esther, you know I love you, but if you're trying to get me to break my pinky promise, I'm pretty sure it won't take much for someone else to get you to break yours.

ESTHER

Not true, I would never tell unless, unless . . .

DANA

Someone asked?

they all laugh

ESTHER

Yeah, I kinda see your point. So you're totally not going to tell, are you, B?

BIANCA

I can't. You know I can't. You understand, dont you?

ESTHER

Not really, no. But I love that you're sticking to your promise. If I had something bad going on, and I was just dying to tell someone, I guess that would be you.

CARLY AND DANA

Hey!

ESTHER

Okay, fine, I'd tell you guys too.

DANA

Thank you, Esther, I'm honored

CARLY

Sweet! More gossip!

ESTHER

Don't make me change my mind.

CURTAIN

SCENE 3

BIANCA, CARLY, DANA, and ESTHER are having a sleepover at Bianca's house. Bianca is initially in the foreground, in front of the curtain, in a spotlight, talking on the phone to ANNA, who is not seen.

BIANCA

Yeah, we're having a slumber party. Carly, Dana and Esther. No, I haven't told them, of course I haven't, I pinky promised, Anna, gosh!. No, I'm sorry, my feelings aren't hurt. I'm just stressed out because I know they're going to keep trying to get me to tell. No, they're just worried about you. Who's the worst? Oh, I don't know, Carly just wants to know what's going on, as always, you know she's the queen of gossip. It's driving her crazy. (laughs) I know!

Dana's curious, of course, because she's worried about you, but once I told her I promised, she's been pretty cool about not bugging me.

Esther? Yeah, she's going bonkers. Not just because she wants to know what's going on. No, it's the pinky promise. I know, right? It makes her crazy that I'm keeping my promise. And especially because I pinky promised. I don't know, you know how she is.

Are you okay? Is your Mom freaking out? Yeah, I'll bet. Okay, I gotta go to. No, I won't tell, goofy, I told you a million times. Bye. Call me when you know something, okay?

She exits, stage left.

Curtain opens to reveal the slumber party

Scene 4

Carly's room is messy and filled with kids. Carly, Dana, and Esther are there, waiting for Bianca.

CARLY

Guys, I have popcorn!

DANA

For the hundredth time, I don't want popcorn. I want to know what is wrong with Anna. I'm worried to the point I feel sick. Like really physically ill.

(CONTINUED)

ESTHER

You're not going to barf, are you? There's nothing I hate worse than someone barfing at a slumber party.

DANA

Nothing? Nothing at all?

ESTHER

Well, I hate secrets.

CARLY

Only when people won't tell them to you.

ESTHER

Well, yeah. But you're one to talk! You can't stand not being right in the middle of all the good gossip. I'll bet you don't even care about Anna, you just want to know what's going on so you can be up-to-date on the latest dirt.

CARLY

Oh my gosh that is so not true!

DANA

Oh, you don't like to be up on the latest gossip?

CARLY

No, that part's true. It's the part about not caring about Anna. That's not true. How can you even say that to me Esther, what is wrong with you?

ESTHER

Sorry, girl. That wasn't cool. I know you care about Anna. My bad. Give me the secret shake.

They give each other the secret handshake

CARLY

I have popcorn!

DANA

Yes, we heard you the first ten times you mentioned it. Thank you.

Bianca enters from stage right

BIANCA

I just talked to Anna. But don't ask me what happened, because I still can't tell you.

ALL THREE:

WHAT HAPPENED!

(CONTINUED)

BIANCA

Very funny you guys. She wanted me to tell you she's fine, she's sorry she can't tell anyone what's going on, and don't worry everything is going to be okay. Eventually.

ESTHER

Aaarrgh! You're making me crazy with this stupid pinky promise. I'm dying to know.

DANA

We've been over this. She can't tell. Period. She just can't.

CARLY

Yeah, Esther, gosh. How many times does she have to tell you, she can't tell.

ESTHER

All right, all right! Geez, I get it. Bianca can't tell . . . hmmm . . . but we . . . could . . . guess!

BIANCA

No. Guys, no. Let's not go th . . .

ESTHER

(cutting her off)

No no no, Bianca. You can't tell, but no one else made any sort of promise about not guessing. If we guess and you tell us we're right, then you're not telling. Definitely not telling. Right guys?

DANA

I don't know . . . if she tells you you're right, then she hasn't exactly kept the secret a secret, has she?

ESTHER

Yeah, but she didn't tell. That's what the promise was, right, that she would. not. tell. Right? So, if one of us guesses, she doesn't even have to say we're right or wrong, she could just, like, not say we're wrong, and then we would know, and she will have kept her promise! Right? Right?

BIANCA

I don't know, I don't know. All I know is I can't be the one who lets it out. I don't even remember what the exact words were when I promised. But I don't think not saying you're not wrong is the same thing as not telling . . .

CARLY

(cutting her off and startling the other three)

ALIENS!

BIANCA

What?

DANA

What?

ESTHER

What?

CARLY

She was abducted and probed by aliens, wasn't she? Don't even lie. I know that's what it is. I know it. My Dad told me all about this. It started during World War II, and this spaceship crashed, and the little alien dudes died, but the government kept their bodies, and other little alien dudes came to get them, but they got captured, but then other little alien dudes came to rescue them, but they couldn't, because the army had them, so the alien dudes started kidnapping people and doing experiments on them and wiping their minds and sending them back among us, but some of them remembered, but nobody believed them and they made fun of of them, but then this guy who is a writer got kidnapped and probed and the aliens told him to write a book about it and he did and then there was a movie too so it must be true, and I saw it on the internet, and there was pictures of the alien dudes and they have big round heads and football shaped eyes, and little skinny bodies and long thin fingers and they're not really green more like a grayish blue and they want to be friends but everyone's afraid of them, and I know that's what happened to Anna because why else would she be so secretive and scared about the whole thing and when they probed her it probably . . . what?

she now realizes the other three girls have been staring at her with puzzled and open-mouthed looks on their faces for some time now; she blushes

Well, you have to admit, it would explain everything .

. . .

ESTHER

That is the dumbest, most ridic . . .

DANA

Cancer.

ESTHER

What?

DANA

She has cancer, doesn't she? Oh my God. Anna's going to die. Why else would everyone be so freaked out at her house? Why else would everyone be so secretive? Oh, poor Anna. What's going to happen? My Gramma had cancer and she got so weak, and her hair fell out and it was so sad and I really wanted to see her but I was afraid to see her and then she got better and I was really happy and then she got sick again and I didn't know what to do so I went to see her and she didn't look the same but she acted the same so I was happy I went to see her but I was mad at myself for not going to see her before and I was ashamed of myself and mad at myself then she figured out how I felt and told me not to feel bad but then . . .

ESTHER

OKAY! We get it. Cancer is bad. But I don't think that's it. Think about it, stupid, no one would be secretive about cancer. People tell people when a kid has cancer, so people can pray for them, and tell them about what good doctors to go to and all that stuff. They don't keep it a secret. The only thing people keep a secret about their kids is when they're . . .

BIANCA runs off stage right, unnoticed by the other three, her hands over her mouth as if trying not to be heard crying.

DANA

What?

CARLY

What?

ESTHER

Oh my God . . . Anna's . . .

DANA

Where'd Bianca go?

Curtain, and as the Curtain closes:

Scene 4

Bianca and her mother are talking at the kitchen table.

BIANCA

So I don't know what to do. I think they know, or they think they know, but I can't tell them. I can't even tell them if they're wrong, because that will just narrow down the possibilities, and then they'll know they're right. I don't want to be the one who spills things. Anna is counting on me. What do I do? I can't not talk to them, they're my friends.

MOM

Not to mention that they're all upstairs in your room.

BIANCA

Well, yes, there's that too.

(CARLY skips in from stage left)

CARLY

I have popc . . .

BIANCA

Not now!

CARLY

Sorry! (scampers away stage left)

BIANCA

But if I go up there they'll just keep bugging me. Should I even bother keeping the secret anymore? It's driving me insane. I wish she had never told me?

MOTHER

Do you really wish that?

BIANCA

No. No I don't. She really needed to tell someone. She was about to explode. I think it really made her feel better telling someone.

MOTHER

Someone she could trust.

BIANCA

Yeah. That was part of it too, wasn't it? She needed trust. She was scared and didn't know if she could trust anyone. But she trusted me. Wow.

MOTHER

Kind of answers your question doesn't it?

BIANCA

I guess so. Thanks Mom.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

That's Why I'm here.

Carly, Dana, and Esther enter from stage left

ESTHER

Look, B, we're sorry. We decided we're not going to bug you about it any more. It's not fair. We promise, we won't bring it up anymore and we won't try to guess.

BIANCA

Promise?

ALL THREE:

Promise.

BIANCA

Pinky Promise? NO! I'm sorry I asked. Never mind . . . besides, I've decided to tell you anyway.

ALL THREE:

Really? What is it? Tell us!

BIANCA

Ready?

ALL THREE

YES!

BIANCA

(pauses for dramatic effect)

Aliens!

DANA

Not Funny!

ESTHER

Shut UP!

CARLY

(Faints)

Blackout and Curtain

THE END