

THE BEST THING IN THE WORLD

EXT. RAWLEY ACADEMY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Snow covers the ground and falls from the sky.

MUSIC: THE BEST THING BY RELIENT K

INT. ART ROOM - DAY

Hamilton stands with his mom, staring at a huge pile of boxes.

KATE

You have a lot of photographs.

HAMILTON

Yeah...

KATE

Well, start sorting through them.
Do you have any time before English starts?

HAMILTON

A little.

KATE

Get started here then we can move
this over to the house later, okay?

Hamilton nods.

HAMILTON

Thanks, Mom.

She smiles and leaves him to his work. He opens the first box and pulls out pictures one at a time.

WILL(V.O.)

Elizabeth Barrett Browning asked
"What's the best thing in the
world?..."

The first picture is a close-up of a dewy leaf. Hamilton tosses it down. The next shows a large, pink flower.

WILL(V.O.)

June-rose, by May-dew impearled;
sweet south-wind, that means no
rain...

Hamilton looks at the next picture: a clear, blue sky sets the background for a large oak tree. Hamilton adds it to the pile of foliage.

WILL(V.O.)

Truth, not cruel to a friend...

Hamilton finds a picture of Scout and Will in front of a canoe in the summer. Hamilton smiles and starts a new pile.

WILL(V.O.)

Pleasure, not in haste to end...

Next in his stack is a picture of Alyssa in her room, candid and carefree. Hamilton puts it down alone.

WILL(V.O.)

Beauty, not self-decked and curled
till its pride is over-plain...

Hamilton looks at the next picture for a long time: a shot of Jake taken from behind. She wears a tank top and looks over her shoulder at the camera, at Hamilton. Hamilton starts to set it down with the photo of Alyssa. He changes his mind and moves it to the stack started by the Will/Scout photo, but again picks it back up. He starts a new pile, nodding at his decision.

WILL(V.O.)

Light, that never makes you wink...

Hamilton finds himself looking at yet another photo of Jake, dressed as a boy and almost a shadow in front of a bright window. He puts this picture with the other one of Jake.

WILL(V.O.)

Memory, that gives no pain...

The next photo makes Hamilton laugh: a photo of a framed picture of he and Kate when he was a little boy. They stand in front of a canvas, Hamilton is covered in paint. Kate kisses him, making him laugh for the picture. Hamilton starts yet another pile.

WILL(V.O.)

Love, when, so, you're loved
again...

The next picture is of Hamilton. He smiles at the photographer. He sets this one down and finds a sideways close-up of he and Jake, taken by Jake.

WILL(V.O.)
 What's the best thing in the
 world?"

He puts this on top of the picture of himself then rethinks things. He puts down the stack in his hand then merges the Jake pile with the newest pile.

WILL(V.O.)
 If someone like Browning couldn't
 figure it out, how do we?

INT. CLASSROOM - RAWLEY ACADEMY - DAY

MUSIC: THE WORLD BY THE STARTING LINE

Alivia Dalton stands at the front of the room as students enter. Jake and Scout sit next to each other near the back. Will sits in front of Scout, but turns around to chat. A few rows up, Tyson, Alyssa and Dexter take a group of seats. Tyson is out of the wheelchair and has his cast off.

Jill enters the room, looking around. Jake waves her over and points to an empty seat next to Will. Jill makes her way over. She smiles and nods hello to everyone along the way.

JILL
 (to no one in particular)
 So, is this class hard?

SCOUT
 Hard is an understatement.

WILL
 It's not hard, just tedious and
 time-consuming. And, don't expect
 to have many opportunities to
 infuse your own opinions into your
 work because Ms. Dalton doesn't
 care what you think--

JAKE
 And she'll tell you that.

WILL
 She just wants to hear whatever she
 thinks is the right answer.

JILL
 Sounds like every English teacher
 I've ever had.

WILL

No. Not like every one you've had.

Jill tilts her chin and her head, but Will turns to the front when Alivia clears her throat.

ALIVIA

Good afternoon.

SCOUT

(quieter)

Yeah, it's too bad you don't remember Finn. He was the best.

JILL

Finn?

ALIVIA

Excuse me, Miss Thomas?

Jill turns to the front.

ALIVIA

I appreciate your condition as much as anyone, but surely you won't be using it as an excuse to talk while I'm talking.

JILL

No. Sorry.

Jill looks down, flushed. Behind her, Scout and Jake exchange a glance. Scout shakes his head. Jake nods in agreement.

ALIVIA

And, since you've had an additional week out of class despite being back on campus...

Her head still down, Jill tucks her hair behind her ear.

ALIVIA

From your John Stuart Mill readings, what can you surmise is Mill's opinion on individuality?

Jill looks up at Alivia now.

JILL

Um...I didn't--

ALIVIA

See me about what you needed to do to prepare for class? No, you didn't, hence why you are unprepared for class now.

Alivia glances around at the class. Most people avoid making eye contact with her, but some look back with scowls or grimaces.

SCOUT

You know, Ms. Dalton, Jill was in coma so maybe you could cut her a little slack.

Jake smiles at his boldness.

ALIVIA

Fine, perhaps you can tell us what Mill's views on individuality were.

Scout stares at her.

SCOUT

By your tone, I can already tell that you're going to mock anything I might have to say, so...

ALIVIA

Perhaps someone less confrontational would like to answer the question. What did Mill think of individuality?

She looks around, but all students avoid her gaze. She finally settles her eyes on Alyssa. Alyssa glances at her, but shakes her head.

ALIVIA

Alyssa? What do you think?

Will watches Alyssa with sympathetic curiosity.

JILL

Hey, wait a second. Wasn't John Stuart Mill the guy that took the petition for women's suffrage to the House of Commons?

ALIVIA

That is true, but hardly relevant--

SCOUT
How'd you know that?

JILL
I...don't know.

WILL
We learned about it from Finn at the beginning of the year. After we studied Rossetti from the women's lib perspective.

ALYSSA
You're right. I definitely remember Finn mentioning that.

ALIVIA
(calmly)
Okay...that's enough.

SCOUT
Have you ever studied the Victorian Era before?

JILL
I don't think so...

JAKE
Okay, from chemistry, what's Avogadro's number?

JILL
The number of atoms in 12 grams of Carbon-12...and if there are that many things in a substance, then that is one mole of the substance.

Jill shakes her head and blinks several times.

JAKE
We learned that last year.

Another buzz runs through the room. Alivia looks around, folding her arms and practically fuming.

Tyson turns around in his seat.

TYSON
Jill, estoy hablando en español.
¿Puedes entender lo que estoy diciendo ahora?

JILL
No. Wait...yes. Yes, I do
understand what you are saying.

TYSON
Yeah, you've been tutoring me in
Spanish. Gracias.

Everyone laughs.

JILL
Wow, I've always taken French. I
can't believe I know Spanish.
That's--

ALIVIA
(shouting)
That is quite enough.

Everyone turns back to the front of the room.

ALIVIA
This is my class, and I'll have no
other interruptions.

The classroom door opens and Hamilton enters with flushed
red cheeks and snowflakes in his hair. Everyone laughs.

Hamilton looks around at them all, but then hands Alivia a
pass. She snatches it from him and tosses it on her desk.

ALIVIA
Have a seat, Hamilton.

Hamilton stares at her then looks around at the class.

ALIVIA
Sit down!

He turns away with a pleased smirk and finds a seat on the
other side of Jill and in front of Jake.

ALIVIA
Perhaps now someone can address
Mill's opinion of individuality.

Jake leans forward as Hamilton sits down.

JAKE
(whispered)
You have no idea how perfect your
timing was just then.

Hamilton leans back and turns his head just slightly.

HAMILTON
(whispered)
Yeah, I do. I was listening
outside.

Jake smiles as do Scout, Jill and Will.

ALIVIA
Anyone?

The room is silent. Hamilton rolls his eyes.

ALIVIA
Hamilton?

Hamilton tips his head back and sighs, but then looks at Alivia.

HAMILTON
Mill basically thought people were like plants. Just like different types of plants need different conditions, we all need different things to help us prosper and reach our full potential.

WILL
Mill also believed it was very important that people be given the freedom to think and choose for themselves. That is how we truly become individuals.

ALIVIA
But what's the problem with Mill's argument?

No one answers.

ALIVIA
Aly, what do you think?

ALYSSA
Um, I mean...whatever the flaws in his argument are, I like to think he's right. That choice really--

ALIVIA
I wasn't asking for your opinion. I was asking for your analysis. What is wrong with Mill's argument?

ALYSSA

(monotone)

He confuses individuality with eccentricity. He implies that you have to be far away from the norm in order to be unique.

JAKE

But, everyone tries to conform to the norm.

ALIVIA

In high school, maybe.

A beat.

ALIVIA

Perhaps that's why it's so hard to find any individuality in high schools like this one.

The class sighs collectively.

ALIVIA

You will use the remainder of your class time to write an analytical essay comparing Mill's views on individuality to those of another author of the period.

WILL

Couldn't we just compare his views to our own opinion on the matter?

ALIVIA

I said author...as in writer. Last time I checked, Will, you weren't a writer.

Will stares at her, a dark scowl forming. He shrugs it away and pulls out a piece of paper, beginning his essay.

Around him, Jill, Jake, Scout and Hamilton trade displeased looks.

FADE OUT

COMMERCIAL BREAK

FADE IN

INT. CLASSROOM - RAWLEY ACADEMY - DAY

MUSIC: HATE(I REALLY DON'T LIKE YOU) BY THE PLAIN WHITE T'S

As the class files out, Alivia makes eye contact with Hamilton. She nods for him to stay. He rolls his eyes, but steps aside as everyone else leaves. Jake looks at him with raised eyebrows, but he shrugs and looks away.

When everyone is gone, Alivia points to a desk. Hamilton reluctantly sits down.

ALIVIA

Don't be late to my class again.

HAMILTON

I was working on my photograph portfolio...which is ultimately more important to me than listening to you humiliate your students.

ALIVIA

Teaching is about challenging your students to think.

HAMILTON

You don't have to explain what teaching is about to me. My mom's a teacher, a good one...and I've never heard her treat a student the way you treat us.

ALIVIA

She teaches art, Hamilton. It's not exactly intellectual.

HAMILTON

My mom makes her subject matter intellectual. And interesting. And, fun, by the way. Our former English teacher managed to do that, too. You, on the other hand--

ALIVIA

Speaking of your mother and Peter Finn. Your father told me about their affair. How sordid.

Hamilton looks away then back at Alivia, grinding his teeth.

HAMILTON
Can I leave now?

Alivia laughs meanly.

HAMILTON
What?

ALIVIA
Didn't you dump my daughter because
you were in love with someone else?

Hamilton closes his eyes, his cheeks brightening.

HAMILTON
What's your point?

ALIVIA
I guess infidelity runs in the
family.

Hamilton opens his eyes, staring at her with a crooked jaw.

HAMILTON
First of all, I wasn't unfaithful
to your daughter. I respect her.

ALIVIA
And how many "respectful" nights
did you spend in her dorm room?

Hamilton stands up and heads for the door.

ALIVIA
It wasn't the first time, you know.
With your father, I mean.

Hamilton spins around.

HAMILTON
(icy)
I don't care.

ALIVIA
Yes, you do. You care that it
happened. You care that it wasn't
the first time. You care that it
started years ago.

Hamilton squints, but does not otherwise react.

HAMILTON
 (confused)
 Why are you telling me this?

ALIVIA
 Because your father isn't man
 enough to do it himself.

HAMILTON
 Look at that, we finally agree on
 something.

He turns and walks out. Alivia watches the door with a
 satisfied smile.

INT. ONE-HOUR PHOTO - DAY

MUSIC: OBVIOUSLY BY MCFLY

Tyson is behind the counter, running the photo machine.
 Will, in a Friendly's uniform, leans against the counter.
 Tyson spins around to grab some Scotch tape.

WILL
 You're moving around pretty well on
 that leg.

TYSON
 I know. The doctor said I should be
 good to go by the time soccer
 conditioning start in February.

Will smiles.

TYSON
 Which is perfect because what girl
 can resist a soccer prep?

WILL
 Speaking of impressing a girl.
 How's it going?

Tyson stops working.

TYSON
 What? With Alyssa?

Will nods.

TYSON
Oh, dude, motion suspended in the
friend zone.

WILL
Hmm...

TYSON
Why? You interested?

WILL
In Alyssa?

TYSON
No, in me.

Will furrows his brow.

TYSON
Dude. Yeah, in Alyssa.

Will laughs.

WILL
Well, either way, no. You're not my
type and I've barely even spoken to
Alyssa.

TYSON
Well, she's cool. Wicked smart,
too. Intimidatingly so at times.

Will nods, looking around.

TYSON
If you can think of any smart stuff
I can say to win her over...

Will chuckles.

WILL
I'll work on it. Right after I work
on her crazy mom's research paper.

TYSON
Oh, yeah, that lady is totally
nuts. Maybe it's better I stay
friends with Alyssa because...could
you imagine having the Wicked Witch
of the West Coast as your
mother-in-law.

WILL
Scary thought.

Tyson nods knowingly. After a beat, they both laugh.

INT. DEXTER'S ROOM - DAY

Grace and Dexter are sprawled out on the floor, working on homework.

GRACE
You will not believe my English teacher. I have an eighty-nine right now and she told me that I probably won't get an A for the semester.

Dexter glances at her.

DEXTER
Should be mathematically possible.

GRACE
I think she was implying that I'm not capable of getting an A. This lady is nuts. Sean's taking it for elective credit and he has this missing assignment that she won't let him make up.

Dexter shakes his head.

DEXTER
Bad year for English teachers, I guess. Mine is really mean.

GRACE
To you?

DEXTER
To everyone. I just try to lay low and hope she doesn't call on me.

GRACE
Good plan.

Dexter nods as they each turn back to their work. A beat.

GRACE
Hey, Dex?

DEXTER

Hm?

GRACE

I know we got distracted by the accident and everything, but...remember at the cabin...how we talked about...I mean...

Dexter chuckles.

DEXTER

Are you really segueing from English to sex?

Grace blushes. He looks over at her, his own face falling. He moves over to sit right next to her.

DEXTER

Sorry. I didn't know this was a serious conversation.

GRACE

Well, it is.

DEXTER

I don't exactly...I mean, I still want to, if that's what you're asking.

GRACE

You do?

DEXTER

Well, yeah.

He looks at her with an innocent, but yearning look. She smiles, tucking her hair behind her ear and drawing a leg up to her chest.

DEXTER

I mean, do you?

GRACE

Yeah...of course.

DEXTER

I mean, but not right now, though?

GRACE

Oh, God no. But, I mean...I don't want to, like, plan it either. I was just...I wanted to know your opinion, that's all.

Dexter chuckles, leaning over to kiss her neck.

DEXTER

My opinion is that I have the most
adorable girlfriend in the world
who I can't wait to...be with.

She bites her lip and looks over at him. They kiss.

EXT. FRIENDLY'S - DAY

Jill enters through the front door.

MUSIC: SAY BY JOHN MAYER

INT. FRIENDLY'S - DAY

Sean sits at the counter. Jill spots him and takes a place
on the high stool next to his.

JILL

Hi. Thanks for meeting me.

SEAN

My pleasure.

His smile is genuine.

SEAN

I ordered you a milkshake.

A girl behind the counter brings up an Oreo milkshake with
whipped cream on top. A red straw sticks out. Jill grins.

JILL

Oh, I love you.

Sean grimaces at her wording as the waitress walks away.
Sean watches Jill pull out the straw and lick off some of
the whipped cream. She puts it back in and takes a sip.

JILL

Very good. Have I had this before?

SEAN

Of course.

She laughs.

JILL
Weird. I don't remember this at all. It's like I'm tasting it for the very first time.

Sean cocks an eyebrow.

SEAN
Did you forget that you have amnesia?

Jill looks at him with an amused smile. She makes the sound of a drum rim shot, causing Sean to roll his eyes and smile.

JILL
No. I didn't forget that I have amnesia, but in English today, we figured out that I pretty much know everything I learned in school this year and over the past two years. Like, okay,
(she grabs his arm)
I know Spanish. How cool is that?

Sean glances down at her touch then looks back up at her.

SEAN
That is pretty cool.

She lets go of Sean and continues to sip her milkshake.

JILL
Did you know that Jacqueline drives a motorcycle? I rode on the back of it just now.

SEAN
How was it?

JILL
Fun. But freezing.

Sean nods, licking his lips. He watches Jill take another sip of the milkshake.

SEAN
Maybe I should have ordered a hot chocolate instead.

JILL
No way. This is awesome.

A beat. Jill takes one more sip then swivels her chair to face Sean. He stays facing the counter, but turns his head.

JILL
I really want to know about us.

Sean glances off then back at Jill. She looks at him, searchingly, expectantly.

SEAN
What's the point? It'll just be another story to you. About that other Jill Thomas.

Jill closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. When she opens them again, she leans closer to Sean.

JILL
Try me.

Sean stares straight ahead, not saying a word.

JILL
You already told me how we met...just go from there.

SEAN
The story doesn't go from there. It picks up, like, a year later. And, it's way more complicated than you and Sc--

JILL
Complicated. There's that word again. I'm starting to hate that word.

SEAN
You're the one that always made things complicated between us, Jill. Even now, you're doing it.

JILL
Why? Because I want you to tell me what I can't remember?

SEAN
Exactly. Can't we just start over?

Jill folds her arms and slumps down in her chair.

JILL
No, we can't just start over.
(she leans over to him)
We had sex...and I want to know about it...and everything that led up to it.

Sean sighs, shaking his head.

SEAN
I'm not doing this.

He gets up.

JILL
But, Sean...

He looks at her with a sorrowful expression.

SEAN
I'm sorry.

Before she has time to say another word, Sean is gone.

Jill sits, staring at her milkshake.

EXT. RAWLEY ACADEMY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

EXT. BENCH BY WOODED AREA - DAY

MUSIC: NOT OVER YOU YET BY KEVIN DEVINE

Hamilton sits on the snow-covered bench wearing a heavy winter coat. In the distance, the sound of a motorcycle gets closer and closer until it stops. Hamilton looks back at the woods with a curious smile on his chapped, red lips.

A moment later, Jake tromps out of the snowy wood. She wears jeans and her heavy leather jacket. She steps back, startled to find someone there...until she realizes it's Hamilton.

JAKE
Hey.

HAMILTON
A little cold for the motorcycle,
isn't it?

Jake shrugs.

JAKE
Jill wanted a ride into town.

A beat as Jake walks over to the bench. She raises her eyebrows and Hamilton nods. She sits.

JAKE

Why do we keep meeting on cold,
snowy benches?

HAMILTON

Maybe 'cause we're in the middle
of...the winter of our discontent.

Jake laughs lightly.

JAKE

What are you doing out here?

HAMILTON

I dunno. Just...chillin'?

Jake laughs harder this time. A pleased smile graces
Hamilton's mouth. A beat.

JAKE

So, what'd Ms. Dalton want earlier?
To yell at you for being late?

HAMILTON

Yeah, that...and to tell me how she
started sleeping with my dad "years
ago." I mean, what does that mean?

JAKE

Alyssa's mom and your dad used to--

HAMILTON

No, not "used to." Currently. Last
week, I walked in on them--well,
they weren't quite going at it, but
they were pretty close. On his
desk, no less.

(he sighs)

My mom picked out that desk.

Jake puts her knee up on the bench as she turns toward
Hamilton. She reaches out to put a hand on his leg. He
glances down then back up at her.

JAKE

Are you...okay?

He sticks out his lip as he considers her question.

HAMILTON

Yeah.

Jake looks into his eyes. He smiles.

HAMILTON

It's weird. With my mom and Finn, I was so angry--and I'm angry now, too--but before I felt like I was being ripped apart from the inside. Like there was a tornado inside me, you know?

JAKE

I think I recall that storm, yes.

HAMILTON

But now it's like I'm just watching it twist by in front of me. And the only thing that really, really concerns me is how to keep my mom out of the path of destruction.

Jake leans back, looking him over.

HAMILTON

And I'm starting to see that Finn probably gave my mom something that my father will never give her.

JAKE

What?

HAMILTON

His love. Unselfish. Unattached. Mom and Finn were together because they enjoyed each other, not because they had to be together because of their jobs or their kid. They didn't have to make it work; it just did.

Jake nods, but skepticism clouds her face.

JAKE

Are you sure you're not just romanticizing their relationship? I mean, isn't an affair still an affair? No matter who has it? No matter who it's with?

Hamilton shrugs.

HAMILTON

It's like what we talked about in class today. Every person has a different set of requirements. You can't just make one stringent rule for everyone.

JAKE

Hmm.

HAMILTON

Plus, it's all about choices, too, right? Making the right choice to make you into a better person. My mom is a better person today than she was before Finn. She's...I mean, she's really awesome these days, Jake. I love being around her.

JAKE

But that wasn't a direct result of Finn. It's been a long time since--

HAMILTON

I know, but it was part of the journey. And the series of choices she's made have transformed her into an amazing lady.

Jake smiles.

JAKE

How do you know it won't turn out like that for your dad, too? He makes some mistakes now that eventually lead to making him a better man?

HAMILTON

I'd almost have to agree with you, except for one thing.

JAKE

What?

HAMILTON

There's no way you can be around that woman for an extended period and walk away a better person.

JAKE

She is a bit oppressive, isn't she?

HAMILTON

A bit?

(he shakes his head, beat)

Finn, on the other hand? Pretty decent guy. Excellent teacher.

Jake looks at Hamilton for a long beat.

JAKE
Despite a slight bias--

HAMILTON
It's more than slight.

JAKE
Despite that, you're being
incredibly objective and...mature.

HAMILTON
Don't sound so surprised.

JAKE
I'm not surprised...just impressed.

He nods with a chuckle as he leans forward and rubs his hands together. He glances at her. A beat.

JAKE
I guess there's just something
about those Dalton women, huh?

Hamilton's already red face turns a shade brighter.

HAMILTON
That is not funny.

Jake lifts one eyebrow.

HAMILTON
Okay, it's a little funny.

JAKE
And a lot true.

HAMILTON
(more serious)
Yeah, I guess it's a good thing you
got out when you did...I'm probably
genetically programmed to be
unfaithful.

JAKE
Come on, Ham. It was a joke.
Besides, who's to say if cheaters
are born...or created. Nature
versus nurture.

HAMILTON
Maybe you forgot, I was natured and
nurtured by cheaters. I'm doomed.

JAKE

Might as well start the playboy
lifestyle while you're still young.

He laughs. A beat.

HAMILTON

I'm glad you gave Jill a ride
today. I needed to talk
and...you're the only one I would
ever talk to about this.

JAKE

Consider the line of communication
completely and officially open,
okay?

He nods.

HAMILTON

Thanks. Same goes to you. Not that
I'm dying to hear about you and
Scout, but...with my new-found
objectivity and maturity, I'm sure
I could manage.

She smiles.

JAKE

Thank you.
(beat)
Now can we go inside? It's
freezing.

INT. BOYS' DORM - DAY

MUSIC: MEMORY LANE BY MCFLY

Jill and Scout walk along the corridors together.

SCOUT

I wish I could just wake up one day
and know a whole bunch of stuff.

JILL

Like Spanish?

SCOUT

Exactly, but I was thinking more
like...instant law degree.

JILL
I thought you wanted to be an
architect.

Scout shrugs.

SCOUT
My father would be happier with
lawyer.

JILL
But, what would make you happier?

Scout looks over at her. She smiles sweetly.

SCOUT
I don't know right now. Lately, I
find myself more and
more...confused about the future.

JILL
Well, my advice is to follow your
heart.
(she laughs)
Of course, I probably feel that way
because all I have is my heart...

SCOUT
Your brain seems to be functioning
just fine.

She laughs.

JILL
Heart? Check. Brain? Check. Now...
(singing)
If I only had the nerve...

Scout grins. A beat.

JILL
Thanks for the ride, by the way.

SCOUT
No problem. I'm not sure what
happened to Jake.

JILL
There she is.

As they reach the end of Scout's hallway, both pause.

Down the hall Jake and Hamilton hug in front of Jake and
Scout's room.

HAMILTON
Thanks, Jake.

She nods, giving him an extra squeeze. They part slowly.

At the other end of the hall, Jill looks over at Scout.
Under Jill's gaze, Scout's scowl flips into an easy smile.

JILL
(loud)
Hey, guys.

Hamilton and Jake look down the hall. Jill waves as the
pairs move closer together.

JAKE
Hey, didn't I just drop you off?

JILL
Yeah. Then my ride home ditched me.

Jake looks concerned, but Jill's smile is reassuring.

JILL
I tried to call your cell, but I
couldn't get you so I called Scout.

HAMILTON
How'd you know Scout's number?

JILL
God, Conspiracy Theorist, it was in
my phone. I have your number, too.

Everyone laughs. Hamilton shrugs then turns to Jake.

HAMILTON
Thanks again. Seriously.

She smiles and nods. Hamilton punch-taps Jake's shoulder
lightly then turns away from the group.

HAMILTON
Later guys.

Jill stands there for a second, but then also turns away.

JILL
Hang on, I'll go with.

Everyone says their goodbyes as Scout and Jake exit into
their room.

Once inside, Scout arches an eyebrow.

SCOUT
Hamilton okay?

JAKE
Yeah. Just...family stuff.

Scout nods. He opens his mouth again, but Jake silences him with a kiss. She leans away, but he steps up to her, continuing the kiss. Grinning, she kisses him back as they make their way to Jake's bed.

EXT. QUAD - RAWLEY ACADEMY - DAY

MUSIC: THE DENIAL TWIST BY THE WHITE STRIPES

Jill and Hamilton walk through the snow together.

JILL
So what was up with that hug?

Hamilton smiles shyly.

HAMILTON
What hug?

Jill rolls her eyes.

JILL
You're the ex, aren't you?

HAMILTON
Um...

JILL
The one who cheated on her.

HAMILTON
I didn't exactly--

JILL
Yep. You're the one. Damn.

She shoves his shoulder, causing him to step sideways.

HAMILTON
Ow.

He rubs his shoulder.

JILL

She didn't offer too many details.

Still rubbing his shoulder, Hamilton looks at her out of the corner of his eye.

HAMILTON

Then I won't either.

JILL

Who'd you cheat with?

Hamilton sighs as they get to the path to the girls dorm.

HAMILTON

This is your stop.

JILL

Bella?

HAMILTON

No. Bella wouldn't--

JILL

Alyssa?

Hamilton takes a deep breath.

JILL

Alyssa? Really?

(Jill shakes her head)

I knew there was something I didn't like about her.

HAMILTON

Go back to your room, Jill.

He points down the trail. She looks at him with playful disdain then turns to walk down the trail. She turns back.

JILL

Do you still love her?

HAMILTON

No. I never loved her. It was something dumb that I shouldn't have done. I regret it every day. Hurting Jake like that--

JILL

I meant...do you still love Jacqueline?

(she smiles)

JILL
But I guess you answered that, too.

Hamilton lifts one shoulder, smiling sadly. Jill looks at him with a smile and tilted head then turns around.

JILL
(to herself)
So cute...

She walks away.

INT. JAKE AND SCOUT'S ROOM - DAY

On Jake's bed, Scout is on his back. Jake lies next to him, an arm and leg draped over him as they kiss. Jake pulls back, taking a few breaths. Scout looks at her, confused. She avoids eye contact and instead kisses his neck. He closes his eyes, smiling. She stops abruptly.

SCOUT
Oh, don't stop now.

He looks over at her with a smile.

SCOUT
You okay?

Jake smiles and moves in to kiss him again. Scout backs away and sit up in the bed. Jake scoots up with him.

JAKE
What?

SCOUT
Well, I'm assuming you started
kissing me to shut me up about that
hug you and Ham had going--

JAKE
That was just--

SCOUT
A hug?

Jake chuckles.

JAKE
Exactly.

SCOUT

I know. And, as we've already established, you're not the jealous type. But, I am. So, it makes sense to kiss me instead of facing a barrage of questions.

Jake looks down, a guilty smile on her lips.

SCOUT

But what I can't figure out is why you keep stopping.

JAKE

I...I don't keep--

SCOUT

Yes, you do.

Jake frowns. Scout shakes his head and hops up.

SCOUT

Let's go get dinner. Maybe we can try this again later.

Jake offers a quiet nod, rising and moving toward the door. Scout follows. They exit.

FADE OUT

COMMERCIAL BREAK

FADE IN

INT. HAMILTON'S BEDROOM - FLEMING HOUSE - EVENING

MUSIC: PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE STARTING LINE

All around the room there are piles of pictures of all sizes. Hamilton sits on the floor with several stacks in front of him and a huge bunch in his hand. He looks at each picture and places it into a stack in front of him. He comes across a close-up photo of Jake. Her smile is bright and her eyes passionate. Hamilton stares at the photo, smiling.

MUSIC: HATE(I REALLY DON'T LIKE YOU) BY THE PLAIN WHITE T'S

Without a knock, Steven enters.

STEVEN

There you are. Hamilton, I want to talk to you.

Startled, Hamilton puts the photo of Jake face down on one of the stacks and sets his handful aside. He stands up and walks over to his father.

HAMILTON

Please, get out of my room.

Hamilton tries to push the door closed on him, but Steven enters the room and closes the door behind him. Hamilton steps back, glowering at his father.

STEVEN

What are you doing in here anyway? This place is a disaster.

Hamilton rolls his eyes.

HAMILTON

I'm sorting pictures. Mom's going to help me re-do my portfolio. You know, for college.

STEVEN

Majoring in photography is absolutely ridiculous.

HAMILTON

So's screwing my English teacher, Dad. Now, are we done here?

STEVEN

Sit down, Hamilton.

HAMILTON

Do I have to?

STEVEN

Please. Just give me a few minutes.

Hamilton reluctantly sits down on his bed.

STEVEN

I appreciate that you haven't said anything to your mother.

HAMILTON

I hope you don't think that's something I'm doing for you.

Confusion clouds Steven's face.

HAMILTON

I'm doing it for mom.

Steven stares at Hamilton, uncomprehendingly.

HAMILTON

Mom has put so much into this family. She went to counseling with you. She's tried so hard to make it work...for you...and for me.

STEVEN

Maybe if she didn't screw your former English teacher, as you so crudely put it, she wouldn't have had to work so hard to fix things.

Hamilton stands up again.

HAMILTON

Don't you dare try to justify what you've done. There's no excuse.

STEVEN

I'm not making excuses.

HAMILTON

Yes, you are. You're saying that since Mom slept with Finn, you get to sleep with Alivia Dalton.

Steven scoffs. Hamilton takes a step closer, getting in his father's face.

HAMILTON

But what you aren't saying is that you're nothing but a hypocrite.

Steven leans away, uncomfortable.

HAMILTON

You had an affair with that woman way before Mom cheated on you.

Steven eyes widen slightly. Hamilton steps up.

HAMILTON

Didn't you?

STEVEN

You need to back off, Son.

Hamilton shakes his head, his nose inches from his father's.

HAMILTON

No, you need to back off. You came here into my room to what, Dad? Make sure I won't say anything to Mom?

STEVEN

(uncomfortable)

I just wanted to talk to you and make sure you were okay...

Steven leans away until his head touches the door. Hamilton stares into his eyes.

HAMILTON

Don't try to talk to me about this again until you can tell me it's over between you and Ms. Dalton. In fact, don't try to talk to me about anything, including my college major. Do you understand?

Steven closes his eyes, inhaling and exhaling heavily. Finally, Steven nods. Hamilton holds his gaze.

HAMILTON

And, if Mom finds out before I graduate...and I get stuck here with you...I promise you, your life will be a living hell. Do you understand?

STEVEN

(loud)

Okay, Hamilton. That's enough.

HAMILTON

(louder)

Do you understand?

Steven's face is red and sweat beads on his temple.

STEVEN

I'm warning you, back off.

HAMILTON
(shouting)
Do you understand?

Steven shoves Hamilton hard. Hamilton stumbles back, knocking over all the stacks of photographs. He trips backwards and lands on the floor with a loud thud.

Hamilton stares at his father. Steven stares back, his eyes wide. He lifts a hand to his mouth, shock in his eyes.

Hamilton gets up, his face flushed.

HAMILTON
So now you cheat on your wife and
beat your kid?

STEVEN
(quiet)
I warned you to--

Without warning, Hamilton lunges at Steven, swinging back and punching him in the face. Steven cries out in pain.

STEVEN
(near tears)
Oh my God, you broke my nose.

His face a deep scarlet, Steven swings at Hamilton with an open hand, hitting him across the side of the head and ear.

At the moment of contact, the door opens to reveal Kate.

KATE
What is going--

She sees Hamilton fall to his knees, clutching his ear.

KATE
Steven! Stop. Oh my God! What are
you doing to my son?!

Kate steps in front of Hamilton. Steven staggers backward, holding a hand up to his nose. When he pulls his fingers away, they are bloody.

Kate looks back at Hamilton with a look of concerned horror, but Hamilton looks down, rubbing the side of his head.

KATE
(to Steven)
What the hell is going on?

STEVEN

We were arguing over this damn college major thing.

Hamilton's look is filled with hate, but when his mom looks back at him, he nods. Kate turns to Steven.

KATE

You need to get out.

STEVEN

I didn't mean to hurt him--

KATE

Get out. Now.

Visibly shaken up, Steven takes a few steps back. He lingers.

STEVEN

(whispered)

Kate, I didn't--

KATE

Now!

Steven finally exits. Kate closes the door behind him then kneels down with Hamilton, putting a tender hand on the side of his head.

KATE

Are you okay?

Hamilton nods, but wraps his arms around her, hugging her tight.

HAMILTON

I love you, Mom.

She smiles, surprised.

KATE

I love you, too, Munchie.

He laughs lightly, burying his head in her shoulder.

HAMILTON

Mom, are you ever going to drop the "Munchie?"

Kate laughs along with him.

INT. RAWLEY LIBRARY - EVENING

MUSIC: LEAVING SO SOON? BY KEANE

Between the stacks and by a large, stain-glassed window, Alyssa sits in a big, leather chair, curled up with a large volume.

Will enters the area, searching the shelves. He looks over and sees Alyssa.

WILL

Hi.

Alyssa looks up.

ALYSSA

Hi, Will.

WILL

Hey...

He walks over, eying the book curiously. She shrugs.

ALYSSA

Elizabeth Browning.

(reading)

What's the best thing in the world?
June-rose, by May-dew impearled;
Sweet south-wind, that means no
rain; Truth, not cruel to a friend;
Pleasure, not in haste to end;
Beauty, not self-decked and curled
Till its pride is
over-plain; Love, when, so, you're
loved again. What's the best thing
in the world?

WILL

Something out of it, I think.

Alyssa looks up at him, her chin tilted down.

ALYSSA

(doubtful)

You know this poem?

He shrugs.

ALYSSA

Let me guess...former girlfriend
got you interested in Ms. Browning?

WILL

Well, I must admit, I did try to use Elizabeth Browning to impress a girl once, but I think I was the one that ended up teaching her a few things. In fact, I hope so because I was tutoring her at the time.

Alyssa chuckles.

ALYSSA

Okay, Will, here's a pro-tip. If you have to tutor the girl to make her smart enough to date...it's probably not going to work out.

Will laughs. A beat.

WILL

Hey, you know who else loves Elizabeth Browning...and Robert Browning, for that matter?

ALYSSA

Who?

WILL

Tyson.

ALYSSA

Really? He's never mentioned it.

WILL

He pretty much knows Love Among the Ruins by heart.

ALYSSA

(surprised)

That's one on my favorite Robert Browning poems.

WILL

Mine, too. I mean, thanks to Tyson. You guys should have a poetry night or something. I'm sure Tyson would love to pick your brain about all his favorite Browning poems.

Alyssa looks at him with curiosity in her eyes.

ALYSSA
 Maybe I'll bring that up.

Will nods.

WILL
 Cool.
 (beat)
 Well...gotta get back to the
 stacks. Research for your mom's
 project.

Alyssa blushes slightly, but nods politely. Will backs away slowly, watching Alyssa curl back up in the chair and pick up her reading.

INT. JAKE AND SCOUT'S ROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC: SAVE IT FOR LATER BY FIVE TIMES AUGUST

Jake and Scout enter the room together.

JAKE
 Did Jill say anything about what
 happened with Sean, by the way?

SCOUT
 Nope. Well, other than he bought
 her an Oreo milkshake and she loved
 it.

Jake laughs.

JAKE
 Whatever does it for you, I guess.

SCOUT
 I love how she gets excited over a
 milkshake, though. I mean that's
 so...

JAKE
 Retro-Jill?

They laugh.

SCOUT
 Exactly. Plus, it's like she's
 rediscovering the world and loving
 every minute. It was so fun telling
 her all those stories last week.
 She wanted to know every detail.

He smiles to himself. A beat.

Scout grins at Jake and walks over to her. Without preamble, he kisses her. She giggles in surprise, but quickly kisses him back.

JAKE
(mumbles through kisses)
You are such a good kisser. Have I
told you that?

Scout smiles sliding his hands to her waist. After a moment, he drops his hands and steps back.

JAKE
What?

SCOUT
I just remembered...I didn't tell
Jill about prom. How we jumped in
the lake while I was in my tux...

Jake pushes her eyebrows together, confused. Scout backs toward the door.

SCOUT
I'm just going to run over really
quick and tell her because I think
she'll really like the story.

Jake nods, dropping her arms disappointedly to her sides. Scout plants a quick kiss on her cheek then exits.

Jake stares at the door. Her frown eventually disappears. She smiles sadly at the door then plops down on her bed, laying back with a groan.

FADE OUT

COMMERCIAL BREAK

FADE IN

INT. JILL AND ALYSSA'S ROOM - RAWLEY GIRLS - NIGHT

MUSIC: BETTER IN TIME BY LEONA LEWIS

Jill sits at her canvas, painting a row boat in the middle of the Rawley Lake. She leans back, looking at it critically. She adds a few strokes to the boat.

A knock at the door interrupts her concentration.

JILL

Come in.

Scout enters, smiling immediately at the painting.

SCOUT

Oh, my God.

JILL

Hi. What?

Jill looks around, but Scout is focused on the picture. He walks over, looking at it more closely.

SCOUT

This is exactly...you painted this for me. Exactly this.

JILL

Really? Weird.

She looks at the boat, thinking.

JILL

Like the rowboat you told me about. Where you took me so we could talk and I couldn't run away.

Scout smiles.

SCOUT

Right.

She looks at the canvas.

JILL

That's so weird. I wonder if I'm painting the memory or remembering the painting.

Scout shakes his head, still examining the painting.

The door opens and Alyssa enters.

ALYSSA
Hi...guys.

They both wave, but continue looking at the canvas.
Curiously, Alyssa creeps over and looks at the painting.

ALYSSA
Oh, Jill...that's really good.

JILL
Thanks...

A beat.

ALYSSA
Hey, Scout?

He tears his gaze from the painting. Jill picks up the brush again, adding more details.

ALYSSA
I know about you and Jake.

Scout's face turns pink.

SCOUT
(annoyed)
Yeah, Sean told me.

ALYSSA
It's cool. That actually explains a lot about last summer...

Jill holds back a laugh. Scout shoots her a glare before staring at Alyssa. Alyssa glances at Jill.

ALYSSA
You told her, right?

SCOUT
(reluctant)
That I'm gay?

Jill pretends to paint, but can't help choking on a chuckle.

ALYSSA
No...about us.

Jill glances over, her smile gone now.

JILL
Yeah, he told me.

SCOUT
 (to Alyssa)
 What do you mean "that explains a lot?"

ALIVIA
 Why you weren't so into it when we--

SCOUT
 I was into it.

Jill gives him a raise of her eyebrows, but Scout continues to look at Alyssa.

SCOUT
 I mean, if I wasn't into it...it was because I was still in love with Jill...

Jill looks over out of the corner of her eye, but continues painting.

SCOUT
 It wasn't because I was gay.

Alyssa rolls her eyes at the denial.

JILL
 Oh, come on, you've probably always had a crush on "Jake," right?

Jill looks over with a teasing smile, but Scout looks at her seriously.

SCOUT
 No, I haven't.

Jill looks down a moment then back at the painting.

JILL
 Well, I think you two make a cute couple.

ALYSSA
 Definitely.

Scout forces a smile, but shifts awkwardly.

SCOUT
 Well, speaking of my, uh, other half...I guess I better get back.

JILL
Was there something you wanted,
though? We got distracted.

SCOUT
It was just a story I forgot to
tell you. We can talk later,
though.

Jill nods and smiles at him. Scout nods to Alyssa.

ALYSSA
See ya, Scout.

Scout hurriedly exits.

ALYSSA
He's so weird lately.

JILL
Just what happens when you come out
of the closet, I guess.

Alyssa nods acceptingly. A beat.

JILL
So, you and Scout?

ALYSSA
Yeah?

Alyssa grabs her laptop and climbs onto her bed.

JILL
You had sex, right?

Taken off guard by the question, Alyssa nods, but avoids eye contact with her roommate.

JILL
Do you know if Scout and I ever--

ALYSSA
You didn't.

Jill nods.

ALYSSA
He was a virgin.
(a beat)
My last two relationships have been
with virgins, actually.

JILL
Hamilton?

Alyssa nods.

ALYSSA
I mean, unless he was specifically
talking about girls when he said
that. I wonder if he and Jake
ever--do you know if--

JILL
I...don't remember.

She points at her head and taps her temple.

ALYSSA
Right.

Alyssa looks down at her laptop. A beat.

ALYSSA
You know Tyson?

Jill smiles.

JILL
Yeah, he's cute.

ALYSSA
Yeah...

Jill grins.

JILL
You like him?

Alyssa shrugs.

ALYSSA
I mean, I like him. He's really
cool. And, funny.

JILL
But you just like him as a friend,
or what?

ALYSSA
I think so. But then I talked to
Will today and he told me that Ty
is into Elizabeth Browning.

Jill thinks.

JILL
Hmm. Vaguely familiar.

ALYSSA
Well, she's my favorite poet.

JILL
So this information is just enough
to tip the scales from friend to
lover?

Alyssa wrinkles her nose, but smiles.

ALYSSA
I think so...

Jill smiles.

JILL
Another virgin bites the dust.

Alyssa drops her jaw in mock offense, but then gets serious.

ALYSSA
You think Ty's a virgin?

Jill laughs.

JILL
Uh, yeah.

Alyssa covers her face.

ALYSSA
Oh, no...

Jill laughs with her.

INT. TYSON AND WILL'S ROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC: BEAUTIFUL GIRLS BY FIVE TIMES AUGUST

Tyson is sprawled out on his bed. Will sits at his desk.

TYSON
Oh, man. Poetry?

WILL
Yeah. Have you noticed her reading
anything in particular?

Tyson shrugs.

TYSON

If she could, that girl would do nothing but read. What she reads? I have no clue.

WILL

Maybe you should pay attention...you know, so you can play to her interests.

Tyson considers.

WILL

I saw her in the library today. Curled up in this big leather chair, shoes off, reading this huge volume of Browning. That was her happy place. If you can insert yourself into that place, she'll be putty in your hands.

TYSON

Isn't there another way?

WILL

I'm telling you. I could hear it in her voice. Browning is the way to this woman's heart...or at least a foot in the door.

TYSON

And you told her that I like Browning?

Will nods.

TYSON

What did he even write?

WILL

Well, actually, there are two Brownings. Elizabeth Barrett Browning and her husband, Robert. Alyssa likes Elizabeth the best, but she seems to know her Robert Browning, as well.

Tyson groans.

WILL

I printed out a ton of poems for you to look through.

Will hands a stack of papers to Tyson.

TYSON
You're giving me homework? Man...

WILL
They're all really simple to understand.

TYSON
Maybe for someone who cares.

WILL
You said you wanted me to think of something smart you could talk to her about.

Pouting, Tyson flips through the poems.

WILL
I think tomorrow in English, you should ask if she wants to come over sometime. Read some poetry.

TYSON
Read poetry? That sounds so...it's just...it's not my style.

WILL
Your style has gotten you exactly squat...unless you're suddenly happy in "the friend zone."

Tyson scowls at the papers in front of him.

TYSON
No.

WILL
Okay, then read tonight. Ask tomorrow. And hopefully we can get you ready for poetry night.

Tyson sighs and looks through a few more poems. Will smiles, clearly pleased with his plan.

FADE OUT

COMMERCIAL BREAK

FADE IN

EXT. RAWLEY ACADEMY - ESTABLISHING - MORNING

Students walk through the snow, headed for various buildings.

INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

MUSIC: LITTLE LIES(COVER) BY ARI HEST

Steven sits at his desk, reading from a folder. A butterfly bandage strip does little to hide the damage to his nose. The areas below both his eyes are a deep shade of purple.

ALIVIA(O.S.)
Jesus, what happened to you?

Steven looks up, his eyes widening at her presence. He jumps up and heads to the door. He grabs her arm and pulls her into the office, closing and locking the door behind her.

STEVEN
You have to stop coming here.

Alivia toys with his tie.

ALIVIA
If that's really what you want...

STEVEN
I'll come to your place tonight.

Alivia smirks then nods.

ALIVIA
I look forward to it.
(beat)
What happened to your nose?

She touches it gingerly; he winces.

STEVEN
Hamilton...

ALIVIA
You let your son break your nose?

STEVEN
He knows about us.

ALIVIA
I know. I was here, remember?

STEVEN
No, I mean, he knows that we were
together in the past...so my excuse
that Kate had an affair
first...well, let's just say that
didn't exactly fly.

Alivia laughs.

ALIVIA
So, I take it, he didn't tell her?

Steven shakes his head.

STEVEN
And, he won't.

Alivia nods, leaning toward him. She puts her lips to his,
just touching.

ALIVIA
So...my place?

Steven nods, breathing erratically. He takes a deep breath
and a slight step back. He grabs her by the shoulders.

STEVEN
Listen to me. You have to stop
this. You can't toy with me like
this at work, make me want you like
this...

She runs her hand down the front of his shirt, stopping at
his belt.

ALIVIA
I want you, too.

STEVEN
This is the last time.

ALIVIA
At work.

He nods, his lips finding hers. He pulls back.

STEVEN
From now on, you don't contact me.
I'll call you when I can see you.

She leans in to kiss him again, but he pulls away.

STEVEN
Do you understand?

She laughs softly, touching her lips to his, but he continues to prevent the kiss.

STEVEN
You want me so badly, Alivia, you play by my rules.

ALIVIA
God, fine, whatever you want. I'll sit around by the phone like a little school girl, waiting for you to call.

She pulls at his belt. He swallows and looks at her sternly.

STEVEN
And you don't speak to Hamilton again unless it has to do with Victorian literature.

She shrugs.

ALIVIA
Fine.

He nods, satisfied. He presses his body into hers, kissing her passionately. She begins pulling at his clothes.

INT. JAKE AND SCOUT'S ROOM - MORNING

MUSIC: SAVE IT FOR LATER BY FIVE TIMES AUGUST

In a brightly lit room, Scout sits at the end of his bed, putting on his socks and shoes.

In her bed, Jake is still asleep. After a moment, she opens one eye to look at Scout.

JAKE
(groggy)
What the hell are you doing,
Calhoun? Turn off the damn light.

Scout laughs and gets up. He walks over to Jake's bed and kneels down in front of her.

SCOUT
You're extremely grumpy in the morning.

He pushes her hair out of her face and gently touches her cheek. She opens both eyes, blinking hard.

SCOUT
I thought we could go to breakfast.

JAKE
Breakfast? No. Pass. Huh uh.

She pulls the covers up over her head.

SCOUT
Come on...

He pulls gently at the covers. After a second, she pulls the covers away from her face.

JAKE
Okay, how about this? You take your shoes back off...and climb in.

She pulls the covers back, revealing herself in shorts and a t-shirt. Scout grins, taking in the sight of her body.

SCOUT
Done.

He kicks off his shoes, crawling over Jake and sliding down next to her. She pulls the covers completely over both of them. The sound of giggling and kissing is muffled by the covers until it eventually stops abruptly. Scout pulls the covers back to reveal both of them, flushed.

JAKE
So...breakfast?

Scout nods as Jake hops up. Scout props himself up on his elbow.

SCOUT
You drive me crazy, you know?

Jake searches through her closet, pulling out a few random pieces.

JAKE
Yeah, ditto.

SCOUT
Maybe if you didn't keep kissing me
like that only to stop just when--

JAKE
Whoa, whoa. Back up.

Jake turns to him.

JAKE
(pointing at the bed)
You think I stopped that?

SCOUT
Yes?

JAKE
I was all over you. You were being
all weird and pulling away.

SCOUT
When you stopped kissing me.

Jake stares at him, her jaw agape. A beat. She turns back to the closet.

JAKE
Why don't you just go ahead to
breakfast without me. We can catch
up later.

Scout sits up, looking uncertain. Jake turns back to him.

JAKE
Seriously. It's cool. Just go.

Scout slips his shoes back on, grabs his books then takes one last look at Jake before heading out the door.

Jake stares at the door for a long beat then starts to get dressed.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. COMMON ROOM - MORNING

MUSIC: CARRY YOU BY JIMMY EAT WORLD

Hamilton sits in a chair with a textbook open in his lap. He stares out the window.

Jake walks by the doorway, but stops when she sees Hamilton. She hesitantly enters.

JAKE
Hamilton?

Startled, Hamilton looks up. He smiles when he sees her.

HAMILTON
Good morning.

JAKE
Questionable.

He laughs.

HAMILTON
Yeah, I know the feeling.

She looks him over. His hair is more disheveled than normal and his eyes are red and slightly puffy. Jake slides down onto the couch.

JAKE
Everything okay?

He closes the textbook and sets it aside.

HAMILTON
Yeah.

She narrows her eyes.

JAKE
In other words...no?

Hamilton shrugs, looking out the window.

HAMILTON
My dad and I got into a little bit
of a scuffle last night.

JAKE
A scuffle? Like a fight?

Hamilton nods, unintentionally touching his hand to his ear.

JAKE
Did he hit you?

HAMILTON
Oh yeah...

Jake is completely speechless. A beat.

JAKE
Why? I mean, did you bring up the
affair or something?

HAMILTON
(offended)
No. He did.

Hamilton folds his arms defensively.

JAKE
I didn't mean...God, Hamilton. Did
you tell your mom?

Hamilton nods.

HAMILTON
She walked in on it.

JAKE
(extremely concerned)
Did he hurt you?

Hamilton shrugs, pulling back his hair to reveal his ear. It is still bright red and has just a tiny cut across the lobe.

Jake hops up and makes her way over to him, examining his ear. She pushes his hair aside herself and touches his earlobe. He closes his eyes at the contact.

JAKE
(shocked and upset)
I can't believe he did this to you.

HAMILTON
Yeah...Mom was pissed.

Jake leans closer. Hamilton glances at her.

JAKE
Looks painful.

Hamilton laughs lightly.

HAMILTON
You should see the other guy.

Jake steps back, looking at Hamilton seriously.

JAKE
You didn't hit your dad...

HAMILTON
Pretty sure I broke his nose.

JAKE
Hamilton! Oh my God...

Hamilton looks down, a look of regret and shame on his face.

JAKE
Not that he didn't deserve it.

Jake looks at him until he makes eye contact.

JAKE
I'm sorry this happened.

Hamilton nods, but look down once more.

JAKE
And it's not your fault.

HAMILTON
I know...

Jake raises her eyebrows. She briefly, gently touches his chin, tilting his head up. He looks at her for a long moment, his eyes searching deeply in hers.

HAMILTON
Really, I know that.

He closes his eyes.

HAMILTON
But I hit my own dad...

He slumps his shoulders and buries his face in his hands.

HAMILTON
I can't believe I...

Hamilton rubs away a few tears that form in his eyes. Jake kneels in front of him, putting her hands on his knees.

JAKE

Hey?

With his chin on his chest, Hamilton shakes his head.

JAKE

Hamilton?

With effort, he looks at her, his eyes still wet.

JAKE

You stood up to your father. Have you ever really done that before?

Hamilton considers it.

HAMILTON

Not really.

JAKE

(light, but kind)

I guess that was your rite of passage. Now you're a man.

He chuckles.

HAMILTON

Shut up...

She grins. A beat.

JAKE

Seriously, though, you're so grown up these days. I mean that.

HAMILTON

She says to the guy who's crying like a baby...

He wipes away more tears.

JAKE

Showing emotion doesn't make you less of a man.

Jake reaches up and wipes away a stray tear from Hamilton's face. He leans into her touch. Neither of them move for a long moment.

Jake suddenly hops to her feet.

JAKE

Now, come on. I've got to see your
dad's nose.

Hamilton smiles and stands with her, ready to go.

FADE OUT

COMMERCIAL BREAK

FADE IN

EXT. RAWLEY ACADEMY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. DINING HALL - RAWLEY ACADEMY - DAY

MUSIC: SENTIMENTAL SPELL BY FIVE TIMES AUGUST

Scout sits alone at a table with a soggy bowl of cereal in front of him. He scoops up some with his spoon then lets it fall back into the bowl.

Jill walks up with her tray.

JILL

Scout?

Scout looks up, smiling.

SCOUT

Hey. Hi.

JILL

Hi.

She stands awkwardly for a moment.

SCOUT

Would you like to join me?

JILL

Sure.

Scout stands until Jill has taken a seat then takes his own seat. Jill smiles at his manners.

JILL

Where's Jacqueline?

Scout shrugs. Jill looks at him suspiciously.

SCOUT
I think we had a fight.

JILL
You think?

SCOUT
Well, it wasn't really a fight.
(he sighs)
I can't even explain what's going
on between us right now.

He picks up his spoon then puts it down again.

JILL
(hesitant)
You don't think she's mad that
we've been hanging out?

SCOUT
No. I don't think so.
(he leans back in his chair)
She's not really the jealous type.

JILL
Are you?

Scout looks at her with a confused smile.

JILL
I mean, maybe she thinks you're
jealous about her talking to
Hamilton yesterday. Maybe you are
jealous?

Scout considers this.

SCOUT
(surprised)
I'm really not.
(beat)
You think she wanted me to be
jealous? That she's upset that I'm
not?

Jill shakes her head.

JILL
No girl wants a jealous boyfriend.

SCOUT
Well, then, I have no clue what's
up with her.

A beat.

JILL
Wasn't there some story you wanted
to tell me.

Scout beams.

SCOUT
Yeah...

Scout starts to relay the story.

INT. HALLWAY - RAWLEY ACADEMY - DAY

MUSIC: SENTIMENTAL SPELL BY FIVE TIMES AUGUST (CONTINUED)

Jake and Hamilton walk down a hallway near Steven's office. The office door opens so they duck down another hallway and peek around the corner.

Down the hall, Alivia exits the office, leaving the door open behind her. She straightens her clothing and walks away in the direction opposite of Hamilton and Jake.

JAKE
(whispered)
That's not subtle.

Hamilton smiles, suddenly aware of his proximity to Jake.

JAKE
Could they be any more obvious
about it?

HAMILTON
I told my dad that if my mom found
out, I'd make his life hell.

Jake looks back at him curiously.

JAKE
You don't want your mom to know?

HAMILTON
She'll leave him for sure.

JAKE
Oh...

She thinks it over.

JAKE
And why would that be bad?

HAMILTON
If she leaves him, she leaves
Rawley. If she leaves Rawley...

JAKE
She leaves you.

He nods, blushing.

HAMILTON
From mature to selfish little kid
in a matter of minutes, huh?

Jake shrugs.

JAKE
Who am I to judge when it comes to
selfishness and parents?

Jake looks down. Hamilton looks at her longingly. He reaches for her, but draws back his hand. He settles for a quick, soft squeeze of Jake's shoulder. A beat.

JAKE
Okay, I'm going in...

Hamilton chuckles as Jake walks casually down the hallway. She peeks into the dean's office, nodding a nonchalant hello. When she is a few steps past, she turns around to face Hamilton, still at the other end of the hall.

JAKE
(mouthing)
Oh my God.

Hamilton shrugs. Jake, wide eyed and open mouthed with just the slightest of smiles, shakes her head.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CLASSROOM - RAWLEY ACADEMY - DAY

MUSIC: THAT GIRL BY MCFLY

Hamilton and a few others are already in their seats. Will enters the room and spots Hamilton. He takes the seat next to him.

HAMILTON
Hey, Will. What's up?

WILL
Alyssa.

Hamilton tilts his head, but smiles.

HAMILTON
Yeah...?

WILL
I didn't know she was
so...well-read.

HAMILTON
Oh, dude. She's a super-dork
masquerading as a hot girl.
(beat)
You know, actually, she'd be
perfect for you--

WILL
Oh, I'm not...I mean, I'm kinda
helping Tyson figure out...a
competitive edge.

HAMILTON
Tyson?

Will nods.

HAMILTON
I knew he liked her, but I thought
they were pretty settled into a
platonic beat right now...

Will smiles.

WILL
You know, you're kinda witty
sometimes, Ham.
(beat)
And, yes, they are. That's the
whole problem. Tyson wants to move
out of the "friend zone."

Hamilton nods, chewing on a pencil.

HAMILTON
Okay, I think a lot of who Tyson is
fits with what Alyssa wants. He's
funny and goofy. He's eclectic and

HAMILTON
cool. She definitely appreciates
all that about him already, but if
he's really serious about this,
he's got his work cut out for him.
There's a side to Alyssa that is
way over his head.

(beat)

At least, it was way over my head
most of the time.

(absently)

I don't know. Maybe she just wasn't
my type.

WILL
Please, this is high school. It's
not about "type."

Hamilton looks over at him with an arched brow.

WILL
It's about sex.

Hamilton laughs.

HAMILTON
(skeptical)
Yeah, I used to think like that.

WILL
Really, though. You ask out a girl
because you want to have sex with
her. She says yes because she
thinks she might want to have sex
with you. Then you spend your whole
relationship wondering when you're
going to have sex the first
time...then, after you do, when
you're going to have it the next
time.

HAMILTON
So...you can't find love in high
school? Just sex?

WILL
That's how you know you have found
love...when it stops being about
sex.

Hamilton looks at him skeptically, but is distracted when
Scout and Jake walk in. Jake gives him an encouraging smile
as she and Scout find a seat together.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. BANKS' GARAGE - EVENING

MUSIC: ULTRAVIOLET BY MCFLY

Grace and Bella sit on the bench together. The sun shines and the snow has melted in the background.

BELLA

I don't know what to tell you,
Gracie. I mean, do you want to have
sex with him?

GRACE

Yes...and no.

BELLA

Why, yes?

GRACE

Hormones?

Bella laughs.

BELLA

Not love?

GRACE

Of course, I love him, but...is
love really what drives sex?

Bella tilts her head from left to right, considering.

BELLA

Okay. So why no?

GRACE

I'm afraid that if we do it before
we're ready, then that's what our
whole relationship will be about.

BELLA

Hmm...

Grace sighs.

GRACE

You're supposed to be the older,
wiser sister. Come on. What was
your first time like? With Nick?

BELLA
My first time...with Nick?

GRACE
First time. First time with Nick.
Same thing, right?

Bella looks away, blushing.

GRACE
(mouth agape)
Oh my God.

Bella rolls her eyes.

GRACE
Who?

Bella sighs.

BELLA
Will. Right before we broke up.

GRACE
You lost your virginity to Krudski?
Ew. Double Ew.
(she shakes her head)
You're blowing my mind, Bella.

Bella laughs.

BELLA
Will's not that bad.

GRACE
He wasn't good in bed, though. You
cannot tell me he was good in bed.

BELLA
He was good. It was...good.

Grace narrows her eyes.

BELLA
Okay, it was bad, but it wasn't
him. We were both just...

GRACE
Virgins. Just like me and Dex.
Great. Another reason not to sleep
with him.

Bella laughs, giving Grace a half-hug. A beat.

GRACE
Is that Jill?

Bella looks up as Nicholas' car pulls into the driveway. Jill is in the passenger seat. Bella and Grace glance at each other and stand up as Jill and Nicholas exit the car.

JILL
Hi, guys.

Bella looks at Nicholas. He smiles.

NICHOLAS
Jill here wanted to come into town and catch up.

JILL
I bummed a ride from Mr. Mann when I saw him headed for the parking lot.
(she turns to him)
Do I call you "Mr. Mann?"

NICHOLAS
Um...usually at school. You can call me Nick here, though.

JILL
Okay, Nick, feel free to take off. I can probably find a ride back.

Nicholas sighs, looking at Bella longingly.

GRACE
You might as well tell her.

Bella nods in agreement.

NICHOLAS
Okay.

JILL
Tell me what?

She looks around at the three of them.

BELLA
Nick and I...we're sort of...

GRACE
They're engaged.

Taken off guard, Jill turns to Nicholas. He smiles and nods. Jill turns back to Bella with a smile.

JILL
You hooked up with your acting
teacher? That's so New York.

BELLA
It's a secret, though.

GRACE
That, like, everyone knows.

NICHOLAS
Not everyone.

GRACE
Okay...Will...Scout...Sean... Dex...Jake...Hamilton..

NICHOLAS
And Jill.

BELLA
And that's it.

Jill nods, her eyes glancing upward.

JILL
Sean, Scout, Jacqueline, Hamilton,
Dexter and...Will?

BELLA
Right.

JILL
And me.

NICHOLAS
Right.

Jill smiles at Bella then at Nicholas.

JILL
Your secret's safe with me.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. LIVING ROOM - BANKS' HOUSE - NIGHT

MUSIC: DIRTY GIRL BY THE EELS

Bella, Grace and Jill sit around the living room. Nicholas walks through with Charlie, running his hand across Bella's shoulder as he walks by.

BELLA

Have fun.

GRACE

I can't believe Dad's taking him to poker night. He's never taken Dexter.

Bella rolls her eyes. A beat.

JILL

So...do we do this sometimes?

BELLA

Do what?

JILL

Girl talk. Hang out.

Grace and Bella exchange an uncertain glance.

JILL

That's what I thought. You guys hate me, right?

GRACE

Well, you used to be kind of annoying, but...you seem chill now.

Jill sighs. Bella shoots her sister a dirty look.

BELLA

It's more like you hate me.

JILL

I do? Why? Over the Nick thing?

BELLA

Oh, our tense history began long ago. Way before Nick.

JILL

Oh, the Scout thing.

Bella nods. Jill closes her eyes, conjuring up the story.

JILL
 You guys kissed and I saw...and
 then I dumped him.

GRACE
 You kissed Scout? All these
 hook-ups I didn't know about...

BELLA
 (to Jill)
 I don't think you ever got over
 that.

JILL
 Well, I'm over it now, if that
 means anything.

Bella smiles genuinely.

BELLA
 It does, actually.

A beat.

JILL
 So, are you guys friends with Sean?

GRACE
 You think all townies know each
 other? Like we have a secret townie
 club and--

JILL
 I saw Bella talking to him at my
 party.

GRACE
 Oh.

Bella laughs, shaking her head.

GRACE
 In that case, Bella used to date
 Sean, but...who hasn't Bella dated?

BELLA
 Hey!

GRACE
 Let's see...Sean, Will, Scout--

BELLA
I never dated Scout.

GRACE
No, you just kissed him. But was that before or after Sean?

BELLA
(embarrassed)
Both, actually...

GRACE
(joking)
Man, and people think I'm a slut.
(to Jill)
I'm actually a virgin.

JILL
So...I didn't like you over the Sean thing?

BELLA
It was really the Scout thing that did it. You never really cared about Sean.

Jill's face falls.

BELLA
I mean, that we dated. You didn't care that I went out with Sean. You cared about Sean, obviously.

GRACE
Not as much as he cared about you, though. Actually, I should say, "not as much as he cares about you." Present tense.

BELLA
Grace...

GRACE
Well, she dumped him. Broke his heart. And now she can't even remember him. Poor Sean.

Jill looks down, blushing.

BELLA
Excuse my little sister, subtlety isn't her strong suit.

GRACE

I'm sure she knows how Sean feels.

Jill bites her lip.

JILL

I've been trying to figure that out, actually.

Bella looks at her sympathetically.

BELLA

Jill, I've known Sean a long time and...the way he cared about you--

GRACE

The way he cares about her...

BELLA

It's unparalleled.

Jill chews on her lip.

JILL

I wish he'd be willing to tell me about it.

BELLA

He won't tell you?

Jill shakes her head.

JILL

I'm starting to think he just doesn't remember all the little things. Scout, on the other hand, could give a play-by-play of our entire relationship. In a way, it's really sweet, but it's also weird to have a guy Jacqueline's dating look at me like that. It kinda creeps me out.

GRACE

Scout is pretty creepy.

She laughs, but Bella scowls.

GRACE

Oh, what? Scout's obviously being a freakshow.

BELLA

Sean and Scout are just different.
Scout wears his heart right there
on his sleeve while Sean is a
little more guarded.

Jill nods.

GRACE

Plus, okay, think about it like
this. You and Scout are like an old
scar. You might have an amazing
story to tell about it, but that's
only because it's healed, it
doesn't hurt any more.

Bella nods along.

BELLA

And with Sean, the wounds are still
fresh, very much open--

GRACE

Still really, really painful.

Jill nods, thinking it over.

FADE OUT

COMMERCIAL BREAK

FADE IN

EXT. RAWLEY ACADEMY - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

INT. JAKE AND SCOUT'S ROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC: SAVE IT FOR LATER BY FIVE TIMES AUGUST

Jake sits on her bed with a textbook in her lap. Scout
enters with his backpack on.

JAKE

There you are.

SCOUT

I wasn't sure you wanted me around.

Jake scoffs.

JAKE
Why wouldn't I want you around?

SCOUT
You kicked me out this morning.

Jake sits up and puts the book down.

JAKE
Well, you have to admit, that was a really weird conversation.

SCOUT
Because I called you out on the fact that you were acting like you didn't want me to kiss you?

JAKE
But you were the one...

She sighs in frustration.

JAKE
I swear, Scout. You were the one pulling away.

Scout takes off his backpack and pulls a chair over to Jake's bed.

SCOUT
Maybe it was both of us.

Jake scoots up to the edge of the bed, sitting Indian-style in front of Scout.

JAKE
Okay. Maybe.

Scout sighs. He looks her over, thoughtfully.

JAKE
What?

SCOUT
It's just so weird.

JAKE
What?

SCOUT
Okay, like, I'm sitting here in front of you, looking at you, even in those horrible clothes...and I

SCOUT
 can see you so clearly: amazingly
 hot girl that I want to touch and
 kiss and...

(he puts a hand on her knee)
 To be honest, Jake, most of the
 time when I'm with you, all I'm
 thinking about is how much I want
 to...

(he looks down, his face red)
 ...have sex with you.

Jake covers a laugh with her hand. Scout also laughs.

JAKE
 Well, Scout, I think I can safely
 say that I think about that a lot,
 too. Our chemistry is...

SCOUT
 Unexpectedly good.

Jake nods.

SCOUT
 But...I'm starting to wonder--

JAKE
 If it's ever going to be anything
 more than that?

Scout looks at her, surprised.

SCOUT
 Yeah, exactly.

Jake nods. A beat.

JAKE
 Come to any conclusions?

Scout shakes his head.

SCOUT
 You?

JAKE
 No...

SCOUT
 (joking)
 Maybe we should just have sex and
 see where it leads us.

JAKE
I know that was a joke, but I
actually considered that today.

SCOUT
(nodding)
Yeah...me, too.

They both laugh.

SCOUT
Guessing you decided against it?

JAKE
I decided it would make me feel
extremely...

Jake searches.

SCOUT
Guilty?

Jake nods.

JAKE
(surprised)
Yeah. Exactly. Guilty. But, why? I
can't put my finger on it.

SCOUT
(matter-of-fact)
Because it would feel like you were
cheating on Hamilton.

Protest is all over Jake's face until she thinks about it.

JAKE
(quiet)
Because it already feels like I am.

Scout nods.

SCOUT
Yeah...

JAKE
Oh my God. How'd you know that? I
couldn't even figure it out...

Scout looks off. A beat.

JAKE

Oh...you feel that way, too.

He almost protests, but then nods.

SCOUT

Uh huh.

(he looks up at Jake)

Ever since Jill woke up, she's been the girl I fell in love with. I can't shake that feeling of connection...even though she doesn't seem to feel it...

Jake looks at him sympathetically.

SCOUT

Hamilton, though, I mean obviously he's been waiting in the wings for awhile--

JAKE

Scout...

SCOUT

I'm just saying, I would totally understand if you walked out the door right now to go find him.

JAKE

(certain)

You actually mean that.

Scout chuckles and stands.

SCOUT

I do.

Jake shakes her head.

JAKE

You're a really good guy, Scout.

SCOUT

I know...

She stands up. They look at each other.

JAKE

So...I guess we're officially breaking up now?

Scout nods. They look at each other, still close. Jake laughs awkwardly as they move a little closer.

SCOUT
This is hard...

Jake nods, leaning even more toward him. Finally, they kiss. It is long and intense. When they part, Jake smiles.

JAKE
Still feels like cheating.

They kiss again.

SCOUT
God, but it's so hot. How can something be so good and so bad all at once?

They lean toward each other again, but then mutually step back.

JAKE
We're going to have to do something about this.

Scout nods then looks at her with a tilted head.

SCOUT
Our relationship or our sleeping arrangement?

Jake laughs.

JAKE
Both?

Scout smiles, but nods in agreement.

INT. DEXTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC: HANDS DOWN BY DASHBOARD CONFSSIONAL

On Dexter's bed, he and Grace make out. Intensely. Grace pulls back only to pull Dexter's shirt over his head. He starts kissing her again, sliding his hands under her shirt.

A sudden knock at the door breaks them apart.

GRACE
What the hell?

DEXTER
I'm, uh...

GRACE
(whispered)
Busy.

DEXTER
(loud)
I'm busy. Come back later.

JAKE(O.S.)
Oh, come on, Dexter. You gotta let
me in.

Annoyed, Grace sits on the side of the bed, but nods for
Dexter to get the door.

DEXTER
Okay. Just a sec.

Shirtless, he walks over to the door. Just before he opens
it, Grace clears her throat. He turns back to find his shirt
flying at his face. He catches it then quickly pulls it on,
inside out. He takes a deep breath then opens the door.

DEXTER
Yeah, what's up?

Dexter stands in the door, blocking Jake's entrance and
view.

JAKE
God, are you okay? You look like
you just ran a marathon.

Dexter laughs and lets the door fall open to reveal Grace in
his bed.

JAKE
(embarrassed and amused)
Oh. Oh...God. Sorry.

A beat as Grace gives her an annoyed smile.

JAKE
I know this is really bad timing,
but...can I move in?

Confused, Dexter turns back to Grace. She shakes her head.
Jake notices, but looks back to Dexter.

DEXTER
Uh...right now?

GRACE
What he means is "no."

Jake looks at Dexter hopefully.

DEXTER
Jake, why?

GRACE
She dumped Scout.

DEXTER
(to Grace)
She did?
(to Jake)
You did?

Jake looks past Dexter to Grace.

JAKE
It was mutual.

GRACE
Well, whatever. You can't live with
Dexter because you're a girl and
I'm his jealous girlfriend...and I
say you can't move in.

Dexter's red face turns a shade deeper, but Jake can only laugh.

JAKE
Okay.
(beat)
Dex, your shirt's on inside out.

Dexter looks down. Jake smiles at him apologetically then walks back across the hall. Dexter closes the door and faces Grace. She gets up and walks to him.

GRACE
I don't even let cross-dressers
scam on my man.

Dexter laughs.

DEXTER
I really don't think she was--

A knock at the door interrupts. Grace and Dexter trade a confused look. Dexter opens the door again. Scout stands outside.

SCOUT
What about me?

DEXTER
What about you?

SCOUT
Want to be roommates again?

Dexter glances back and Grace.

SCOUT
Can't you make your own decisions,
Dexter?

DEXTER
(smiling)
Fine. I don't want to be roommates
again. Bye.

He starts to close the door.

SCOUT
Wait.

He holds the door open and looks at Grace.

SCOUT
Come on. Make him say yes. Please?

Grace stares at him, unimpressed for a beat.

GRACE
Tell you what. Go away and don't
come back for, oh, let's say an
hour.

DEXTER
Two. Two hours.

He cast a knowing glance toward Grace.

GRACE
Don't come back for two hours. Make
sure know one else knocks on the
door. Then you can move in.

Scout smiles, relieved.

SCOUT
Thanks. Thank you, guys. Really.

GRACE
Buh-bye.

He steps back.

SCOUT
I think your shirt's on inside--
Dexter closes the door.

SCOUT
Out.

Confused and amused, Scout walks back to his room.

INT. SEAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC: SO MUCH BETTER BY COWBOY MOUTH

Sean has several books in front of him and sits in front of a computer, typing an essay. A knock sounds at his door.

SEAN
Yeah? Come in.

Jill walks tentatively into the room.

SEAN
Jill, I'm trying to write an essay.
Why are you here?

JILL
Because I have questions.

Sean lets out a griping sigh.

JILL
I know...you hate me. You've made
that quite clear, trust me.

Sean closes his eyes, taking a deep breath.

JILL
Which is so weird because everyone
I talk to tells me how much you
care about me.

SEAN

Well, they're wrong.

Jill's face fills with genuine hurt. She turns to the door.

SEAN

I don't just "care about" you.

She turns back. He looks down.

SEAN

Jill...

(he breathes through the beat)

I love you.

(he looks up at her)

Madly and hopelessly. This version of you. The old you. Who you used to be. Who you're yet to be. You. All of you. Every single bit...of you...I love.

JILL

(pleasantly surprised)

Sean...

SEAN

And I find it hard to sit down with you and tell you about the things we experienced together because you aren't going to feel it like I feel it.

JILL

Maybe I will.

SEAN

When Scout told you what he told you...did you really connect or...were you just listening to a story about some girl that was kind of you, but not really?

Jill looks down.

SEAN

Exactly.

She looks at him again.

JILL

But when you told me how we met...and I closed my eyes...
(she closes her eyes)

JILL
I could feel it.

Sean looks at her uncertainly. She opens her eyes and looks determined.

JILL
I really want to know everything.
The highs. The lows. Everything.

Sean massages his temples.

JILL
But. There are a few things I want
to tell you first.

He waits. She marches over to his bed and takes a seat. He raises his eyebrows. She takes a deep breath.

JILL
The other day, Jacqueline told me
all about the accident.

Sean nods, his look distressed.

JILL
That night, I dreamed about it. I
don't know if I was dreaming what
Jacqueline told me or if I was
remembering. But...this is what
happened.

Sean leans forward in his chair, listening.

JILL
I was in the car. I was talking to
Grace and the car started sliding.

Sean nods, listening.

JILL
I ended up flying through the
windshield. That part didn't hurt,
but when I landed, it was the worst
thing I ever felt. I flipped over
and the back of my head hit the
pavement.

Sean winces.

JILL
The momentum of my body made it
feel like I was being driven into

JILL
the ground. And I wanted to scream,
but I couldn't. My brain was trying
to make me get up, but my body
wouldn't listen.

SEAN
(distant)
That's how I found you...

JILL
And I tried to tell you that I
wasn't hurting anymore.

SEAN
You were in shock.

JILL
And I tried to talk to you, but I
couldn't. Then...

SEAN
Your eyes rolled back and you were
out. I thought...

He doesn't complete the sentence.

JILL
I kept floating in and out. You
were doing CPR and I could feel you
put your lips on mine...
(she closes her eyes)
I could feel your hands here.
(she touches her sternum)
I wanted to tell you I was okay. I
wanted to tell you..

She looks at him. He is listening raptly.

JILL
I kept thinking that if only I
could tell you...I had to stay
alive because I had to tell you...

SEAN
You had to tell me what?

She pauses, biting her lip nervously.

JILL
That I love you.

She looks away, but he continues to watch her.

JILL
The whole time in the ambulance,
you were holding my hand.

Sean's jaw drops slightly.

JILL
And then...I woke up.
(she sighs)
I almost thought I got my memory
back, but...obviously I didn't.

She looks around the room then back at Sean.

SEAN
I don't know what to say.

JILL
There's one other thing.

SEAN
Okay...

She inhales then exhales, wrapping her arms around herself.
Sean timidly moves from the chair to the bed, seating
himself near, but not too near, Jill.

JILL
I didn't tell the doctor about
this, but...

Sean raises an eyebrow at the comment.

JILL
When I woke up from the coma, it
wasn't like I just suddenly woke
up. I was laying there and it was
like...my brain was all mushy. I
could hear your voice, but it was
like you were talking Japanese.
Then the words started making
sense. And your voice--I knew I was
supposed to know your voice, but I
couldn't think of who you were. And
I heard you say...I heard you
forgive me.

Sean tilts his head, intrigued.

JILL
I didn't know who you were, much
less why you were forgiving me...

SEAN
It was because--

JILL
I know. Now.
(beat)
But do you want to know the really
weird part?

SEAN
I don't know...

JILL
Well, I'm telling you anyway.

Sean smiles.

JILL
I kept wanting to tell you that...I
kept thinking that I should
say..."I love you." It just kept
popping into my head. I had to stop
myself from saying it and...I
didn't even know who you were. It
was so freaky. Of course, this
whole amnesia thing is a little
freaky, in general.

Sean nods, staring at the floor.

JILL
Now you know why I've been so
desperate to hear about you and me.
You wake up from a coma in love
with a boy you don't even know--you
get kind of anxious to hear the
history.

Sean laughs softly.

SEAN
Jill, I'm sorry I've been--

JILL
No need to apologize.
(she smiles genuinely)
And if you ever feel like
explaining to me why I feel the way
I do, feel free. Please.

She stands up and heads for the door. Sean, still in shock,
watches her until she reaches for the handle.

SEAN

Wait.

She turns back.

SEAN

Wait. I'll...I...I want to tell
you.

She grins and runs at him, throwing her arms around him.

JILL

Thank you, thank you, thank you,
thank you, thank you.

SEAN

(laughing)
Okay...

He gently pushes her off and down onto the bed next to him.

SEAN

Ready to listen?

She nods eagerly, but then seems to reconsider.

JILL

Wait. Actually...don't tell me.

Sean looks at her in disbelief.

SEAN

That's a joke, right?

JILL

(realization)
It really doesn't make any sense at
all for you to explain why I was in
love with you because...I really
think it'll ruin the experience
this time around.

She stands up. Sean stares up at her from his seat, totally
bewildered. They look at each other for a moment.

JILL

I'm going to go now.

SEAN

But--

JILL
Thank you, Sean.

SEAN
You did most of the talking.

JILL
Don't I always?

He smiles, but doesn't answer.

JILL
You're the one that said the
important stuff, though. The most
important thing.

He swallows, standing up.

SEAN
Jill...

She waits.

SEAN
I'm really glad you came tonight.

JILL
Me, too.

She leans toward him, aborting a kiss on the cheek at the last minute and settling for a hug. Sean holds her tight for a long moment. When they part, both are blushing.

JILL
I should go.

SEAN
You could stay.

JILL
What about your essay?

SEAN
You could write it for me.

Jill laughs and takes a few steps toward the door.

JILL
I'll see you soon.

SEAN
Not soon enough.

Jill beams as she backs out of the door. Sean stands there smiling and shaking his head.

FADE OUT

COMMERCIAL BREAK

FADE IN

EXT. ALIVIA'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

The house is the only one in a patch of woods. One light, the bedroom light, is on.

INT. BEDROOM - ALIVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MUSIC: HATE(I REALLY DON'T LIKE YOU) BY THE PLAIN WHITE T'S

Alivia lies in bed, covered only by a sheet. Steven sits on the edge of the bed wearing boxers and an undershirt, his head in his hands. When he looks back at Alivia, the bandage is still on his nose. She smiles.

ALIVIA

Your nose looks ridiculous.

Steven ignores her and pulls a sock onto his naked foot.

ALIVIA

I think you should allot some money
in the budget for teacher housing.
Maybe some condos on the edge of
the lake.

Steven looks around.

STEVEN

This house is beautiful.

ALIVIA

This house was built in 1926.

Steven pulls on his other sock.

STEVEN

Does Alyssa stay with you
sometimes?

ALIVIA
Rarely. Never without asking.

Alivia sits up, still covered by the sheet, leaning on Steven's shoulder.

ALIVIA
You don't have to go just yet.

She nibbles at his ear. He pushes her off.

STEVEN
I told you. Kate will be home from teaching her class at nine.

ALIVIA
I can't believe she teaches a community college class. That's so...pedestrian.

STEVEN
It's part of our community outreach effort. She does it because I asked her to. And now, you're going to start doing a few things I ask you to.

Alivia leans back against the pillows, laughing.

ALIVIA
I know your new rules. Don't call you. Don't stop by your office. Don't talk to your son.

Steven nods.

ALIVIA
I assume you'll be over every Tuesday night?

He nods then stands, grabbing his pants from a nearby chair and pulling them on.

STEVEN
On Mondays and Wednesdays, I get up at 4:30 and run.

ALIVIA
I hope you don't expect--

STEVEN
I'll tell Kate I'm going to start running on Friday morning, too.

Alivia smiles smugly, but her face falls slightly as she watches Steven button up his shirt.

ALIVIA

You know, I'd rather be more spontaneous. It's part of the appeal of having an affair.

Steven slips on his shoes, not looking at Alivia. He looks around. She gets out of bed, wrapping the sheet around herself. He watches her walk to her dresser and pick up his tie. He reaches for it, but she walks up to him, wrapping it around his neck, under the collar of his shirt.

From the shoulders up, we watch Alivia drop the sheet and begin tying Steven's tie for him. He glances down at her naked body, looking at her lustfully. She finishes with the tie and glances up at him, intentionally coy.

ALIVIA

There you go.

He grabs her shoulders, kissing her with anger and passion. Together, they move back toward the bed.

INT. KITCHEN - FLEMING HOUSE - NIGHT

MUSIC: PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE STARTING LINE

Hamilton's photographs are spread out all over the kitchen. Kate leans against the refrigerator, waiting as Hamilton searches through the photos.

KATE

I wonder where your father is.

HAMILTON

Probably working late.

KATE

I don't think he's ever gotten home after me on a Tuesday...ever. He usually makes dinner.

HAMILTON

Mom...

He looks at her with a frown.

HAMILTON

Are you saying you didn't like my
mac and cheese?

Kate laughs. Hamilton smiles.

KATE

It was delicious.

Hamilton grins and walks up to her holding two pictures,
both of Rawley Academy. One is a bleak winter scene, the
other a bright summer landscape.

HAMILTON

Which one?

Kate looks at them carefully.

KATE

They're both beautiful.

A beat as she thinks about it.

HAMILTON

(out of the blue)

Dad's probably just avoiding me.

Kate looks up at him, thoughtful.

KATE

No. We discussed it. He feels
terrible about what happened and
he's promised to support you in
whatever you plan to pursue.

HAMILTON

(surprised)

Really?

Kate points at the winter scene.

KATE

This one's better. When did you
take this?

HAMILTON

Two weeks ago, I think.

KATE

I can see so much improvement just
from there
(she points at summer)
to here.

(she points at winter)
I'm really impressed with your
latest work. I'm really starting to
see your point of view.

Hamilton beams.

HAMILTON
Thanks, Mom.

She runs a hand through his hair as she walks past him and picks up another stack of photographs.

The back door opens and Steven enters, clearly in a rush. He stops in his tracks when he sees his wife and son.

KATE
You're home.

STEVEN
Yeah...I had some budget stuff that
couldn't wait.

Kate nods acceptingly. Steven looks around at all the photographs. Hamilton ignores him and searches through a stack of photos. Kate gives Steven a pointed look.

STEVEN
Son? I'm sorry about last night.

Hamilton turns to look at Steven. His look is intensely hateful for just long enough to give the effect...then he smiles.

HAMILTON
(phoney)
Thanks, Dad. I'm sorry, too.

Hamilton walks over, hugging his father. Kate smiles at the gesture. Steven returns the hug with sincerity.

HAMILTON
(whispered to Steven)
I hate you for this.

They part. Hamilton offers his dad one more fake smile, but Steven's face shows only hurt and shock. Confused, Kate raises her eyebrows at her husband. Steven quickly plasters on a smile. Hamilton turns back to his pictures.

KATE
Would you like to help us pick out
some things for the portfolio?

HAMILTON

No.

He turns around. Kate is disappointed.

HAMILTON

I mean, he's probably busy still.
 (to Steven)
 Right?

Steven nods reluctantly.

STEVEN

Uh...right. Right.

He sighs, watching his son for another beat. He walks past Kate, grazing her arm with his hand. She smiles at him. With effort, he returns the smile then exits the room.

Kate walks over to Hamilton.

KATE

That was a nice gesture. The hug.

Hamilton shrugs.

HAMILTON

Oops. How'd this get in there?

He holds up the same picture of Jake from the night before.

Kate smiles as Hamilton sets it to the side. A beat.

KATE

I wanted to tell you...it seems
 like you're really come into your
 own lately.

HAMILTON

With my photography?

KATE

Yes. And with yourself.

He smiles slightly. Another beat.

KATE

(probing)

It seems like every time I see Jake
 these days, Scout's with her.

Hamilton nods, looking only at the photographs.

HAMILTON
Yeah...Scout and Jake are...

KATE
An item?

Hamilton chuckles.

HAMILTON
Who says that? You're so old.

Kate shoves him playfully, but then looks more serious.

KATE
Do you want to talk about it?

HAMILTON
It didn't just happen, Mom. It's
been, like, two months.

KATE
Why didn't you tell me?

Hamilton shrugs.

HAMILTON
I was in denial?

KATE
And now?

HAMILTON
I've moved on to acceptance.

Kate is skeptical.

HAMILTON
Not endorsement. Just acceptance.

Kate laughs.

KATE
Okay.

She rubs his back as they stand together, looking through
photographs.

INT. DORM HALLWAY - NIGHT

MUSIC: HANDS DOWN BY DASHBOARD CONFSSIONAL

Dexter's door opens. Dexter and Grace exit together, smiling.

GRACE

I'll see you later, Dex.

He nods then grabs her before she can walk away, planting a kiss on her lips. She kisses him back, giggling.

Across the hall, Jake and Scout's door opens. Scout walks out carrying a box of stuff. He rolls his eyes at the kissing and walks past the couple, into his new room.

Down the hall, Tyson and Will walk quickly.

TYSON

This was a terrible idea.

WILL

Well, I didn't know you were going to ask her to come over tonight.

TYSON

I didn't. She suggested it. Oh my God, this is a disaster.

WILL

No, it's going to be fine. Look, there's Dexter. This will work.

As Tyson and Will reach Dexter and Grace, Scout walks out of Dexter's room and back into his old room. Tyson and Will watch him, but are focused on Dexter, who is still kissing Grace. Tyson clears his throat. Dexter and Grace part.

GRACE

What?

WILL

We need to talk to Dexter.

Scout walks back out carrying his bedding in a big bundle. He walks past the group and into Dexter's room.

WILL

Scout, what the hell?

Scout pauses and looks at Will.

Grace and Dexter go back to kissing. Tyson watches, disgusted.

SCOUT
(to Will)
I'm moving back in with Dexter.

WILL
Why? What's wrong?

Scout glances at Tyson then back at Will.

SCOUT
Nothing's wrong.

WILL
(concerned)
We'll talk later.

Scout presents an honest smile.

SCOUT
Seriously. I'm good.

Will is skeptical, but Scout continues to smile as he re-enters Dexter's room with his stuff.

Grace and Dexter part again.

GRACE
If you boys will excuse me...

She gives Dexter one more kiss before sauntering off down the hallway. Dexter watches her the whole way.

TYSON
What...was that?

DEXTER
What?

Scout emerges from Dexter's room.

SCOUT
Either of you guys have air freshener?

Tyson and Will shrug. Scout smirks.

SCOUT
Too bad because it totally smells like sex in that room.

Mortified, Dexter turns to him.

DEXTER

Scout!

Tyson and Will look at each other then burst out laughing.

WILL

You guys seriously...

TYSON

Dex...nice.

DEXTER

Shut up.

Scout opens his mouth--

DEXTER

(to Scout)

You especially...or you can take yourself right back across the hall.

SCOUT

Okay. Point taken.

He smiles to himself and goes back to his old room.

Dexter turns to Will and Tyson.

DEXTER

What do you guys want?

They trade a mischievous look.

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC: ALWAYS BE BY JIMMY EAT WORLD

Tyson sits on the couch alone, tapping his hands on his thighs. There are a few books next to him.

TYSON

This is not going to work.

INT. CUSTODIAN'S CLOSET - NIGHT

Dexter and Will sit on stools in front of a high work table. A silver suitcase is open in front of them. A black box inside has several buttons on top and wires going into and out of it. A speaker in the middle emits static. Dexter adjusts a few dials.

WILL
Is this thing from 1987 or what?

DEXTER
What do you expect? My dad can't
bring home the new equipment.

TYSON
(from speaker, garbled)
Guys? Can you hear me?

WILL
Hey. It's working.

Dexter turns a few dials.

TYSON
(from speaker, clear)
Will?

WILL
Yeah. Can you hear me?

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

Tyson grabs his ear, in pain.

TYSON
Owwwww. Turn it down!

INT. CUSTODIAN'S CLOSET - NIGHT

Will looks at Dexter impatiently. Dexter turns another dial.

WILL
Better?

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

TYSON
Yeah. Thanks.

He takes a deep breath.

TYSON
Will, you better get me through
this.

Footsteps make him look up.

TYSON
Here she comes...

Alyssa enters the room a second later, carrying a few books.

ALYSSA
Hey.

She walks over to the couch joining him.

ALYSSA
I thought someone else was here.

Tyson looks around.

TYSON
Just me.

ALYSSA
Were you talking out loud?

TYSON
Oh. That. Yeah. I was
just..reciting a few lines. You
know, of poetry...

ALYSSA
Oh. What was it?

TYSON
What? Uh...what was it?

INT. CUSTODIAN'S CLOSET - NIGHT

Will flips several pages then stops, pointing at a verse.

WILL
"And this dog was satisfied if a
pale thin hand would glide down his
dewlaps sloping--which he pushed
his nose within, after--platforming
his chin on the palm left open."

Dexter looks at him with an arched eyebrow. He shakes his head.

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

Alyssa laughs.

ALYSSA
You open with a poem about her dog.
I love it.

She continues laughing. He smiles, more at ease.

ALYSSA
I picked out one for you.

She opens one of her books to a dog-eared page. Tyson waits.

ALYSSA
(reading)
" 'Yes,' I answered you last night;
'No,' this morning, Sir, I say.
Colours seen by
candlelight, Will not look
the same by day..."

INT. CUSTODIAN'S CLOSET - NIGHT

WILL
The Lady's Yes. Ty, it's great that
she picked this. Throw her the last
stanza. "By your truth she shall be
true--"

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

TYSON
"Ever true, as wives of
yore-- And her Yes, once said
to you, shall be Yes for evermore."

Alyssa bites her lip.

ALYSSA
Will was right.

Tyson's face fills with momentary panic

ALYSSA
You really know your Browning.

TYSON
Where'd you learn so much about
her?

ALYSSA

Oh, my Mom. When I was a little kid, she took me to her college classes. It was great.

TYSON

Are you guys close?

ALYSSA

Not like we used to be. Since my dad left her this summer, she's been...a bit of a wreck.

INT. CUSTODIAN'S CLOSET - NIGHT

WILL

Her parents just split up. How did we not know that?

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

TYSON

How come you never told me that?

Alyssa shrugs.

ALYSSA

I try not to make excuses for my mom. I mean, trust me, she really is a bitch. It's just gotten worse lately. I think she's depressed.

INT. CUSTODIAN'S CLOSET - NIGHT

WILL

She's opening up to you, Tyson. You gotta tell her she can talk to you about this. That she can trust you.

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

TYSON

You know you can talk to me about stuff like this, right?

She nods, looking down.

INT. CUSTODIAN'S CLOSET - NIGHT

DEXTER

Maybe you should try to kiss her.

WILL

No. But some contact would be good.
Try taking her hand.

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

Tyson gently takes Alyssa's hand, pulling it close to him.

ALYSA

Thanks, Ty.

They smile at each other.

INT. HALLWAY IN FRONT NICHOLAS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

MUSIC: HATE(I REALLY DON'T LIKE YOU) BY THE PLAIN WHITE T'S

Alivia stands at the door, knocking. Eventually, Nicholas comes to the door. He is taken aback by her presence.

NICHOLAS

Ms. Dalton?

ALIVIA

Hello, Mr. Mann. Might I come in?

NICHOLAS

Oh, um...

ALIVIA

I wanted to discuss your
girlfriend. Oh, what's her name?
Bella, right?

NICHOLAS

(keeping his cool)
You're mistaken.

ALIVIA

You're cute when you act.

He narrows his eyes.

ALIVIA
Actually, you're cute all the time.

NICHOLAS
What are you getting at? Why are you even here?

ALIVIA
I've known the dean for a long time and he has high moral standards. I really don't think he'd approve of one of his teachers sleeping with a high school student.

NICHOLAS
God, will you be quiet? Just...come in, okay?

He steps back, allowing Alivia entrance into his apartment.

NICHOLAS
Not that what you've implied is true, but my personal life is just that...my personal life.

ALIVIA
Well, then, you won't mind if I tell the dean?

Nicholas glares at her.

NICHOLAS
What do I need to do to keep you quiet?

ALIVIA
Now we're getting somewhere.

NICHOLAS
Did you really come here to blackmail me?

She nods nonchalantly.

NICHOLAS
What do you want? Money?

ALIVIA
(laughing)
Please, I don't need money.

NICHOLAS
The only thing you really seem to
need is attention.

She smiles wryly.

ALIVIA
Exactly. And right now, I want
yours.

NICHOLAS
You've got it.

ALIVIA
I want you to kiss me.

NICHOLAS
(quietly disgusted)
No...

ALIVIA
Just one little kiss and your
secret is safe. For tonight.

NICHOLAS
You're delusional. I think you need
to leave. Actually, I know you--

She cuts him off by grabbing his face and forcing a kiss
upon him. He pushes her back.

ALIVIA
Thanks.

NICHOLAS
I didn't...don't ever do that
again.

He wipes his mouth, disgusted.

ALIVIA
You're safe...for now. But I'm onto
you, Mr. Mann. And I will be back.

She turns and walks out, leaving Nicholas in a state of
shock. He locks the door and steps back, looking a little
frightened.

FADE OUT

COMMERCIAL BREAK

FADE IN

EXT. RAWLEY ACADEMY - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Hamilton walks across the quad, his breath visible in the cold night air.

INT. CUSTODIAN'S CLOSET - NIGHT

MUSIC: THE BEST THING BY RELIENT K

Dexter looks around, bored, but Will is listening intently, enthralled in the conversation.

ALYSSA
(on speaker)
"What's the best thing in the world? Something out of it, I think."

WILL
She recites that beautifully, like she wrote it herself and means it with all her heart...

Dexter shoots him a curious look.

TYSON
(on speaker)
You recite that so beautifully. It's like you wrote it yourself.

DEXTER
He's getting good at paraphrasing you.

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

Tyson and Alyssa sit on the couch, each with a leg up and arm on the back of the couch. Their arms touch and their knees are just inches apart. Alyssa blushes.

ALYSSA
It's just my favorite, that's all.

HAMILTON(O.S.)

Hey, guys.

They look over to the door where Hamilton leans on the frame. Tyson watches Alyssa carefully. When she doesn't move, he doesn't either. Hamilton smiles pleasantly.

HAMILTON

What's up?

ALYSSA

(pointing to Ty)

He likes Browning.

Hamilton rolls his eyes, but smiles playfully.

HAMILTON

Oh, her. Well, you guys enjoy.

He nods politely then exits.

ALYSSA

(whispered)

I knew that would get rid of him.

TYSON

You wanted to get rid of him?

Her smile is coy as she nods. She leans a little closer.

WILL

(ear piece, filtered)

Segue back to the poem. I want to hear her thoughts on it.

Tyson's sighs to himself.

TYSON

You know, I'm almost poetry-ed out.

ALYSSA

(disappointed)

Really?

TYSON

I mean, reading it. I still want to talk about it. I really want to hear your thoughts on "The Best Thing in the World."

WILL

(ear piece, filtered)

Nice recovery.

INT. HALLWAY BY CUSTODIAN'S CLOSET - NIGHT

Hamilton walks by, but pauses. He leans in and puts his ear to the door.

WILL(O.S.)

(muffled)

Ask her what she thinks Browning really means by that last line.

Hamilton pulls his head back, smiling curiously. He knocks the "shave and a haircut" beat. A second later, Dexter opens the door.

DEXTER

Uh...yeah?

Hamilton pushes past him and closes the door behind him. He looks around the room, spotting Will and the box.

TYSON

(speaker)

So, what do you think she means with that little punchline at the end?

Hamilton drops his jaw in mock awe. Will shrugs.

HAMILTON

(quiet)

I am so staying for this.

ALYSSA

(speaker)

Well, see, she lists all these things that are impossible: truth that's still kind, pleasure that's long-lasting, beauty that's not vain. In the end, with that last line, she emphasizes the point that these things can't exist in the world. They're just hopes, but they can't be real.

HAMILTON

(whispered)

Man, she's so smart.

WILL

She's wrong.

TYSON
 (on speaker)
 You're wrong.

WILL
 Oh, no, don't...

TYSON
 (on speaker)
 I mean, you're not wrong.

Will gives Hamilton and annoyed look. Hamilton shrugs innocently. Dexter looks at Will to see what he'll say.

WILL
 Okay, let's just go with it. Tell her you disagree.

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

TYSON
 It's not that you're wrong. It's just that I disagree.

ALYSSA
 (slightly offended)
 Okay, what's your interpretation?

WILL
 (ear piece, filtered)
 All the things Browning lists are possible...just rare.

TYSON
 The things she talks about are possible. They're just not very common.

WILL
 (ear piece, filtered)
 There are memories that give no pain. Love that is returned.

TYSON
 Memories that aren't painful. Love that's reciprocated. They're possible, right?

Alyssa considers this then nods, her concentration high.

ALYSSA
 (realization)
 They're just rare...

WILL
 (ear piece, filtered)
 But the best thing is even better
 than all these idyllic ideas.

TYSON
 But the best thing goes beyond all
 that.

WILL
 (ear piece, filtered)
 The best thing transcends the
 physical world. It's better than
 the best things we can hear or see
 or touch. It's something that
 exists on a different plane. Faith,
 maybe...or love that's beyond a
 physical exchange

TYSON
 The best thing in the world is
 something out of this world.
 Something that exists on a higher
 plane.

ALYSSA
 Like faith, maybe?

Tyson nods.

TYSON
 Maybe. Or...love. Not physical
 love, but...some kind of...

WILL(O.S.)
 (ear piece, filtered)
 Out of this world connection.

TYSON
 Out of this world connection.

Alyssa looks at him with appreciation.

ALYSSA
 I can't believe I never read it
 like that. You're amazing.

Tyson smiles bashfully.

TYSON

But, I mean, you could still be right.

WILL

(ear piece, filtered)
She's not.

ALYSSA

No. You're right. You are...

She leans toward him.

ALYSSA

...so right.

When he realizes what she is doing, he leans toward her as well. They meet in a sweet kiss.

INT. CUSTODIAN'S CLOSET - NIGHT

HAMILTON

Did they just kiss? Was that just a kiss?

DEXTER

I think so.

Will smiles, pleased.

WILL

I told you this would work.

Hamilton leans over toward the speaker.

HAMILTON

Hey, Tyson? Can he hear me?

DEXTER

Yeah, stop talking so loud or she'll hear you, too.

HAMILTON

(whispered)

Ty, when she kisses you, let her kiss you, but don't touch her at all. At all, okay? You'll love this.

Dexter and Will look at him suspiciously.

INT. COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

Tyson and Alyssa still kiss. Just as he is about to move his hands to her face, he pulls back. He consciously puts his hands on his lap as they continue to kiss. Alyssa begins to kiss him more fervently, but as instructed, Tyson keeps his hands to himself. After another second, Alyssa moves toward him, wrapping her arms around his neck, practically crawling into his lap as their kiss gets serious.

INT. HALLWAY - RAWLEY ACADEMY - NIGHT

Dexter, Hamilton and Will stand in the hallway near the common room. They each keep glancing toward the door. After a moment, Alyssa exits the room with her books. She stops when she sees them.

HAMILTON

Oh, you guys, I might go to NYU.

WILL

Cool. I'm applying to a bunch of places, but Worthington's at the top of my list.

DEXTER

Don't your friends from Capeside go there?

Alyssa takes another step out of the room.

ALYSSA

Hi, guys.

They all feign surprise.

WILL

Alyssa? Hi.

HAMILTON

What are you doing over here?

DEXTER

Such a surprise...

She blushes slightly, smiling and looking down. She shakes her head then looks back at the boys.

ALYSSA

Bye, guys...

She walks away. The guys all look around at each other then watch her walk down the hallway and around the corner. A moment later, Tyson exits the common room. They rush him.

WILL

I told you this would work.

HAMILTON

How about that kissing thing, huh?

DEXTER

Who kissed who?

WILL

I wonder if she's into Shakespeare?

HAMILTON

Something else you can try--

DEXTER

I'm surprised that equipment even worked.

WILL

You should try to get some with video next time. That would be--

HAMILTON

While your kissing her, she--

TYSON

(shouting)

Guys!

They all look at him. He smiles.

TYSON

Can you just let me enjoy this?

They all laugh, patting on the back, rubbing his head, etc.

INT. DORM HALLWAY - NIGHT

MUSIC: LUCKIEST OF SUCKERS BY FIVE TIMES AUGUST

Jake walks out of her dorm room with Scout. Scout has a small box of computer equipment.

SCOUT

I think this is the last of it.

JAKE

Well, if you forgot anything...you know where to find it.

Scout nods, a bittersweet smile on his lips.

SCOUT

I think this is going to be a good thing. For both of us.

Jake nods.

JAKE

It's what makes sense. Definitely.

He nods. A beat.

SCOUT

Well, I guess I should...

He nods toward Dexter's room. Jake looks around then wraps her arms around his neck, giving him a long, heartfelt hug. He holds his box with one arm so he can hug her back with the other arm.

SCOUT

You shouldn't get close to me like this, Pratt. Makes me forget why we're breaking up.

Before Jake can react, they are forced apart by voices from down the hall. They look up to see...

Will, Dexter, Hamilton and Tyson make their way down the hallway. They are being rambunctious, teasing and messing with Tyson.

TYSON

Can I remind you all, Dex is the one that got the real action tonight.

WILL

Oh, yeah...

HAMILTON

What?

He looks at Dexter playfully.

HAMILTON

You and Grace...

TYSON
They got freaky in his dorm room!

HAMILTON
No way.

DEXTER
God, Tyson, shut up!

WILL
It's cool, Dexter, because you love
and respect her.

Tyson puts an arm over Dexter's shoulder.

TYSON
And it's even cooler 'cause she's
so smoking hot.

Dexter pushes him off. They all laugh, stopping when they reach Scout and Jake, who are listening in amused horror.

SCOUT
You guys are being really loud.

DEXTER
Tyson made out with Alyssa.

Tyson glares at him, but Dexter smirks...they both crack up.

Amidst the teasing and loudness, Hamilton glances at Scout and his box. He looks at Jake questioningly. Scout notices.

SCOUT
Hey, guys? Let's take this party
inside, okay?

He nods over to his new room and herds the other boys inside, leaving Jake and Hamilton alone in the hallway.

HAMILTON
What was with that box of stuff?

JAKE
He's moving back in with Dexter.
Well, not exactly "back in" since
Dexter's the one that moved out to
begin with so now I guess...they're
actually both going to be living
in--

HAMILTON
Our old room.

They both look at the door of their old room.

HAMILTON
But, why's he moving at all?

Jake looks at him, licking her lips.

JAKE
We broke up.

He raises his eyebrows.

HAMILTON
Oh...

A beat.

HAMILTON
Are you okay?

JAKE
One hundred percent.

He scowls, looking at the door then back at her. She, on the other hand, is serene.

HAMILTON
I guess it was...amicable?

Jake nods.

JAKE
And mutual.

HAMILTON
So I don't need to go beat him up
for breaking your heart?

JAKE
Your fists of fury have already
broken one nose this week. I think
that's about enough.

Hamilton blushes, but smiles. A beat.

HAMILTON
Well, he's probably better off
without you.

Jake folds her arms and looks down her nose at him.

HAMILTON

Sometimes it's good to find out who
you are when you're all on your
own...

Jake grins.

JAKE

I must say, you wear your
independence well.

HAMILTON

Oh, me? Yeah, I'm basically done
with the journey of self-discovery.

He looks at her for a long moment then takes a few steps
backward.

HAMILTON

I should probably head back home
now, but if you need to talk about
anything...you can talk to me.

JAKE

Thank you, Hamilton.

WILL(V.O.)

What's the best thing in the world?

He nods, looking at her for another moment.

WILL(V.O.)

Something out of it, I think.

HAMILTON

Well... 'Night, Jake.

JAKE

Goodnight, Hamilton.

He turns around and walks away. Jake watches him get all the
way to the end of the hallway. When he is gone, she sighs
and re-enters her room.

THE END