

SCRIPT TITLE

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INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The locker lined hallway of Howard Middle School is crowded and noisy as students empty out their lockers on the last day of class. CARA, an eighth grader is busy cramming the contents of her locker into her backpack as her best friend BECKY is doing the same with her adjoining locker.

BECKY

We did it! No more homework, no more books-

CARA

Until the fall.

BECKY

Kill joy. That's like forever away.

CARA

If forever is three months.

BECKY

Yeah but we won't be here. We'll finally be high schoolers. That's nearly grown up.

CARA

Hardly, we'll be the ones everyone picks on. Pranks in the lunchroom, shoved into lockers-

Cara and Becky close their empty lockers, shoulder their bags and walk down the hallway.

BECKY

We're too young to be so pessimistic. Hey I used a word from Mrs. Paige's vocab list!

CARA

Make sure to thank her for that.

BECKY

You just want to talk to Ian.

CARA

No I don't!

BECKY

Don't worry you'll see him tonight at the dance. You can make kissy face then.

CARA
He doesn't even know I exist.

BECKY
Well tonight's your perfect chance.
Anyway I have to finish cleaning
out my gym locker.

CARA
For the first time all year.

Becky gives Cara a playful shove.

BECKY
Shut up! See you tonight.

Becky disappears down the hallway. Cara takes a deep breath and exits the school.

EXT. HOUSE FRONT YARD - DAY

Cara opens the front gate to her house. From within she hears her mother SARAH and her father DANIEL ARGUING LOUDLY.

As Cara approaches the steps up to the front door she pauses hearing the argument more clearly.

SARAH (O.S.)
Fine, leave! Run away that's what
you're best at!

DANIEL (O.S.)
That's it! Since that's the only
thing I'm good at, I'm outta here!
Have a nice life!

Daniel opens the front door almost breaking it off it's hinges and storms out right past Cara who stands mutely on the walkway. Daniel pulls the front gate open and storms out of view. A moment later the sound of his car starting and peeling off down the street can be heard.

Cara watches all of this in silence before turning back and walking into her house softly shutting the front door behind her.

INT. MAIN HALLWAY - DAY

Taking care to remain as quiet as possible Cara closes the front door. She passes by the kitchen where Sarah is standing at the kitchen sink her back to Cara crying.

Cara takes another step and her mother turns around surprised. She dabs at her eyes trying to pretend she isn't crying.

SARAH
Oh, you're home early.

CARA
Yeah it was the last day.

SARAH
Really? Of course. So what now?

CARA
(annoyed)
The dance.

SARAH
Of course at six. Well we'd better get you ready.

CARA
That's alright I can do it by myself.

SARAH
Why? Just because your dad and I had- a little spat? Nonsense.

Sarah guides Cara up the stairs maintaining the false sense of gaiety.

SARAH (CONT'D)
So do you know what you're going to wear?

EXT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

A large banner hangs over the entrance saying "Congrats Grads". Middle school graduates are dropped off by their parents and greet fellow graduates before entering the gym.

Sarah pulls up to the curb and Cara dressed up for the dance hops out. Sarah calls out after her.

SARAH
Have fun! Call me when you're ready to come home.

Cara waves back over her shoulder before entering the gym.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

The gym has been decorated with balloons and the lights dimmed as middle school graduates dance and mingle. Cara awkwardly walks in looking for a friendly face. She spies Becky and after a friendly wave joins her on the edge of the dance floor.

BECKY
Have you seen him?

CARA
Who?

BECKY
Who she asks, him, Ian.

CARA
Oh no, not yet. I mean I just got here. Why?

BECKY
I think he's looking for you, and he's got James with him.

Becky freezes seeing JAMES across the room. He makes eye contact.

BECKY (CONT'D)
Oh my god! Oh my god! He's coming this way! Do I look alright?

CARA
You look great.

James comes up to Becky.

JAMES
(nervously)
Becky, I know we only had one class together but would you do me the honor of dancing with me?

BECKY
Yes! Yes!
(turns to Cara)
But I can't leave you here alone.

CARA
Go on. I'll be fine.

BECKY
Okay but I'll be back after one dance. I promise.

James awkwardly takes Becky's hand and they disappear onto the dance floor. Cara stands alone trying not to look awkward and out of place. After several painful moments she catches the eye of IAN the heart throb of the eighth grade. She smiles and is excited that he walks her direction. As he gets closer she waves shyly.

CARA

Hi Ian.

IAN

Uh hi, Carol isn't it?

CARA

Cara.

IAN

Yeah. Do you know Sandra?

Cara follows Ian's gaze to where Sandra the beauty of the eighth grade is standing.

CARA

Sorta. I mean we had some classes together.

IAN

Yeah, but you girls talk, right?

CARA

I suppose.

IAN

I mean did she ever say anything about me?

CARA

I dunno know.

IAN

Of course you wouldn't. Well here goes nothing.

Ian walks over the where Sandra is standing. He says a few words and they walk arm and arm past Cara and disappear onto the dance floor.

Cara stands awkwardly alone.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Cara is sitting on a folding chair against the wall. She is surrounded by couples and watching couples on the dance floor and looking as miserable as she feels.

Becky leads James over to where Cara is sitting.

BECKY

What's the matter?

CARA

Nothing. Everything.

BECKY

Oh stop being such a downer.

JAMES

(uncomfortably)

I'm going to get-

BECKY

Just a moment. This is everything.
You should be happy.

CARA

But I'm not.

JAMES

Come on.

CARA

Go on I'll be fine.

BECKY

Are you sure?

CARA

Sure, sure.

BECKY

Okay. See you tomorrow.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cara closes the front door behind her turning to face her darkened house.

CARA

Mom I'm home.

Only silence greets her as she walks into the kitchen and begins making herself a snack.

INT. CARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cara's bedroom is decorated like a typical middle school girl's room. Against one wall is her bed with a window that faces out toward the window of Becky's house.

Cara has been packing and repacking for summer camp. She packs a bit more until she finally falls asleep on her bed with everything half packed. A brochure for The Challenge Camp worn from rereading dangles from her hand.

After a soft knock Sarah enters the open door casting light into the darkened room.

SARAH

Cara?

Sarah goes to Cara's bedside and looks lovingly upon the sleeping Cara. She carefully pulls a blanket over Cara and The Challenge Camp brochure falls from Cara's hand to the floor. Sarah picks up the brochure and looks at it. She sighs sadly and carries it with her as she leaves Cara's bedroom and closes the door behind her.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sarah stands at the kitchen sink staring out the window. She looks tired and cradles a mug of coffee in her hands. Behind her she hears Cara thundering down the staircase in a panic.

CARA

Mom! Mom! Are you ready?

Sarah takes a seat.

SARAH

Why don't you take a seat. We have to talk.

CARA

Now? But we'll be late. Camp check-in is in three hours. Even if we drive fast-

SARAH

There won't be Challenge Camp this year, I'm sorry.

Cara stops shocked.

CARA

No camp? But you and dad-

SARAH
There is no-

CARA
But you promised!

SARAH
We- I just can't. It's too much.
Look there are all sorts of camps
here in the city.

CARA
But I don't want to go to them, I
want to go to Challenge Camp!

SARAH
Look I have a bunch of brochures of
other camps just like Challenge
Camp. Take a look and you can pick
one out.

Sarah puts a large stack of colorful brochures for local
summer camps on the kitchen table. Angry Cara shoves the
brochures off the table. Sarah stands up and stalks out of
the kitchen past the brochures fluttering to the floor.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Pick one or I will!

INT. CARA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Cara is sitting on her bed when Sarah knocks on the door. As
Sarah opens the door Cara turns her back to her and faces out
the window.

SARAH
Look I'm sorry about the camp, but
there's always next year.

CARA
No there's not.

SARAH
All I can say is I'm sorry.

CARA
No you're not. You guys could have
at least tried, but you just gave
up on it.

SARAH
We tried, believe me we did.

CARA

Yeah right.

SARAH

Look I have to go to work, but I'll be back early. We have an appointment, but we can go out to dinner afterward, you're choice.

CARA

Oh joy.

SARAH

Meanwhile take a look and pick one, okay?

CARA

(sarcastically)

Sure.

Cara shoves her headphones on and turns the music up signaling the end of the conversation. Sarah stares at Cara's back before leaving.

Cara glances over her shoulder at the empty doorway.