

Popular: Senior Year
"What I Want to Be When I Grow
Up"
by
The Wild Pikachu

POPULAR: SENIOR YEAR

WHAT I WANT TO BE WHEN I GROW UP

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. MCQUEEN FRONT DOOR - EVENING

Sam and Harrison are holding hands as they walk up to the front door.

HARRISON

You know, I'm really kinda glad school's going to start again.

SAM

Really?

HARRISON

Yeah. Is it just me, or did this summer take forever?

SAM

A lot happened. But, hey—look at us! We made it! We're seniors!

HARRISON

I dunno. That's kinda like making it to the last mile. We're not exactly done.

SAM

Hey, this is the year we finally get to have fun.

HARRISON

I'm starting to think that that's a myth... It's like a cruel hoax that gets perpetrated on each class to keep them from finding out there's actually nothing to look forward to.

SAM

Well, I was promised fun, and if I don't get it, there's gonna be an exposé in the paper.

There is a lull in the conversation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRISON

Well...

SAM

Sure you won't stay?

HARRISON

(shaking his head)

I told my mom I'd have dinner with her tonight. I think she's actually starting to miss me.

SAM

(grins)

I would, too.

She leans in to kiss him, but he smoothly dodges her, pecking her on the cheek.

HARRISON

Gotta go.

Sam opens her mouth to say something, but he is already heading off down the walk. She watches him go, disappointed, hugging herself. Finally she turns and goes inside. And, unseen, Brooke, who has been watching from a nearby window, lets the curtain fall back into place.

FADE TO:

INT. MCQUEEN DEN - LATER

The den has become Brooke's room, featuring a hideaway bed and numerous things dragged down from her bedroom. Brooke is sitting on the edge of the bed, reading, when Sam pokes her head in the open doorway and knocks on the frame.

SAM

Busy?

BROOKE

(looking up)

No. Just getting ready for bed.

Brooke closes the book and sets it aside as Sam comes over and sits next to her.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Nervous about tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
(shakes her head)
Not really. You?

BROOKE
No.

SAM
Whoo. Seems like yesterday we
were headed for the prom.

BROOKE
(faraway)
Seems like a million years ago to
me.
(beat)
So, what's the matter?

SAM
It's, um...well, it's Harrison.

BROOKE
(uncomfortable)
Oh... What—what is it?

SAM
I don't really know how to explain
it... It's like, he seems
more...distant lately. Have you
noticed that?

BROOKE
Oh—no...no. I hadn't noticed.

SAM
(sighs)
I don't know what to do. I mean,
I can't talk to him about it. What
am I gonna say? "You're not
kissing me enough?" I'm gonna end
up sounding like one of those
psycho women in the late-night
cable movies.

BROOKE
I, uh... I don't know what to
tell you, Sam. Maybe it just
seems like he's less affectionate.
(reaching)
Or...maybe he's just busy getting
ready for school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM
Yeah...maybe.

BROOKE
I'm sorry.

SAM
Don't worry about it. It's my
relationship, it's my problem.

The phone next to the bed rings, and Brooke leans over to pick it up, while Sam gets up.

SAM (CONT'D)
Well...good night.

BROOKE
Night, Sam.

Sam walks out, closing the door behind her. Brooke puts the phone to her ear.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Hello?

SPLIT SCREEN WITH:

CLOSE-UP - MARY CHERRY

MARY CHERRY
Brooke? Mary Cherry here.

BROOKE
(surprised)
Oh...hi, Mary Cherry.

MARY CHERRY
Hang on, I got Carmen waiting on a
conference call.

VERTICAL SPLIT WITH:

CLOSE-UP - CARMEN

CARMEN
Hello, Brooke?

BROOKE
Carmen? Okay, guys, what's going
on??

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMEN

We need your help.

BROOKE

My help? For—for what?

MARY CHERRY

I'll make it short and sweet,
Brooke—we want to consign that
demonic creation of Nicole's,
Bring It, back to the stygian
abyss from which it arose, and
restore our beloved Glamazons to
their rightful place at the
pinnacle of Kennedy's social
pecking order.

CARMEN

Yeah—and we need YOU to help us
do it.

SLIDE CUT TO:

BROOKE

BROOKE

WHAT?!!

WHITE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. MCQUEEN UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MORNING

Jane comes down the hall and stops in front of the door to Brooke and Sam's bedroom. She knocks, and after a moment passes without any response, she opens the door and pokes her head through.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Outside, birds are chirping, and sunlight is streaming through the window—but inside the room the only (barely) identifiable sign of life is a lump under the covers of Sam's bed.

JANE

Sam! Up and at 'em!

From the bed comes an unintelligible groan and the slightest of movements. Jane walks over, sits on the edge of the bed, and pulls the covers back, to find Sam with her head buried in the pillows.

JANE (CONT'D)

Come on, Sam. Time to get up.

SAM

(mumbling)

Go 'way.

Sam blindly reaches for the covers and pulls them back over her head. Jane resolutely yanks them down again.

JANE

Come downstairs and have breakfast. You don't want to be late.

SAM

I'm skipping.

JANE

You can't skip the first day of school, Sam.

(shaking her shoulder)

I'll see you downstairs.

Jane gets up and walks out, while Sam picks her head up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
(calling)
I meant, this year!

With that brief burst of energy spent, Sam collapses back into the pillows, pulling the covers back over her head again.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY

Mike walks up to the door of the den and knocks on it.

MIKE
Brooke?

BROOKE (O.S.)
(from the other side)
Come in!

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN DEN - CONTINUOUS

The door opens and Mike steps through. Brooke is sitting at a makeshift vanity table, putting on makeup. He comes over, hugging her around the shoulders.

MIKE
Ready for the first day of school?

BROOKE
(rueful)
No.

MIKE
C'mon—you'll be a champ.
(looking down)
Is this the outfit I keep hearing about? Let's see it.

Sighing, Brooke stands up, reaching for the cane that is propped against the table, and carefully steps away, showing off a very fashionable ensemble.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(grinning)
You look like a million bucks.

BROOKE
Sorry I can't spin around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE
You'll be spinning before you know
it.

BROOKE
(neutrally)
Yeah.

Mike steps over and holds her.

MIKE
Honey, you've come so far since
you've been home. I know it's
hard...but you have to be patient.
It's only a matter of time.

BROOKE
I just wish I didn't have to go to
school like this. I feel like a
total invalid.

MIKE
Didn't the doctor say, a few more
weeks and you'll practically be
good as new?

BROOKE
A few more weeks... It feels like
this summer's taken forever.

MIKE
Well, honey, most people's summers
aren't as eventful as yours.

BROOKE
I didn't have an eventful summer.
I had an eventful five seconds,
and then spent the summer in a
hospital bed.

MIKE
(sighs)
You're past all that now. Come
on—Jane's making some kind of
scrambled waffle thing?

BROOKE
(perking up)
Oh! I love those.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN DINING ROOM - LATER

Brooke is busily eating those scrambled waffle things.

MIKE
(watching)
Wow, you've got quite an appetite
this morning.

Brooke stops with her fork halfway to her mouth and broods at her father.

BROOKE
You think I eat too much now?

MIKE
(holding up his hands)
No, no. I never said that.

BROOKE
(to Jane)
These are really good. Mom never
cooked like this.

MIKE
Your mother couldn't boil water.
(to Jane)
We ate out a lot.

JANE
Mike, don't compare me to Kelly.
Mike pauses and regroupes.

MIKE
So, Brooke... Given any thought
to your college applications?

BROOKE
(sighs)
Dad, can I get through one day of
my senior year before having to
think about college?

MIKE
Is it me, or am I just digging
myself a hole this morning?

JANE
(nodding)
It's a pretty deep hole.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE
 (looking around)
 Where's Sam?

Jane looks around as well, and then casts an eye towards the stairs.

JANE
 (calling)
 SAM!!!

BROOKE
 (fretting)
 I really did want to get to school early today...

MIKE
 (leading)
 Jane?

JANE
 You go take Brooke. I'll wake up Sleeping Beauty.

BROOKE
 (getting up)
 Thanks.

CUT TO:

EST. CITY STREET

Mike's car moving through traffic.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S CAR - MOVING

MIKE
 Brooke?

BROOKE
 Hmm?

MIKE
 Is everything okay with you and Sam?

BROOKE
 Sure...why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

I don't know... Look, I know I'm just the parent, I'm not supposed to be tuned into these things, but...it seemed like you two got really close there for a while, and then...

BROOKE

(shrugs)

She lives upstairs, I live downstairs. That's it.

(beat)

You know, I think not having to share a floor is doing both of us a world of good. You should look into expanding the house. One wing for her, one for me?

MIKE

A year from now, you're going to be crammed into an eight-by-ten dorm room with a roommate.

BROOKE

Dad...

MIKE

Okay, no more college talk. At least not today.

BROOKE

Thank you.

MIKE

So, you're sure there's nothing between you and Sam?

BROOKE

(neutrally)

I'm sure.

Mike sneaks a peek at his daughter's expression, but lets the matter drop.

CUT TO:

EST. KENNEDY HIGH PARKING LOT - LATER

As Mike's car pulls up to the entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S CAR

MIKE

Now, I'll pick you up right after school to take you to your physical therapy session.

BROOKE

Thanks, Dad.

Brooke opens her door and carefully climbs out.

MIKE

And remember—think positive!

BROOKE

(playing along)

Right, Dad.

Brooke shuts the door, and Mike watches her turn and slowly climb up the front steps and into the quad.

CUT TO:

EST. KENNEDY HIGH PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

As Mike's car motors away, Lily's car pulls into a nearby parking space.

CUT TO:

INT. LILY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

After Lily shuts the motor off, she and Josh take a moment to just look at each other.

LILY

Well... It's the first day of school. Our first first day of school as husband and wife.

(grinning)

We're seniors. And we're married. We're married seniors.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

After she thinks about that for a moment, the grin disappears.

LILY (CONT'D)

Wait—that makes us sound like
we're old or something. Right,
Josh?

She looks over to see him staring down glumly.

JOSH

(listlessly)

Yeah.

LILY

Josh? Baby, what's wrong?

JOSH

I don't know, Lily, it's just...
Do you know that this is the first
time since eighth grade that I
haven't been on the football team?

LILY

So? Do you want to be on the
football team?

JOSH

No! I mean, don't get me wrong—I
don't want things to be like they
were before. But...I always used
to know what was ahead. My whole
life was planned out—an athletic
scholarship to a big-name college,
maybe even the pros after that.
Now... I'm supposed to know what
I want to be when I grow up, and I
don't know anymore.

Lily sighs, and pats his shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Brooke is limping along when she sees Mary Cherry and Carmen
heading towards her. She stops and holds up a warning finger.

BROOKE

Oh, no—stay away from me. You
two are demented.

The two girls quickly surround her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY CHERRY

No, wait, Brooke, listen, we have a plan, really!

CARMEN

Yeah, a really good plan!

BROOKE

You want me to help you bring back the Glamazons. Guys, reality check, okay?

(spreading her arms)

Not exactly Glamazon material.

MARY CHERRY

(poo-pooing)

Oh, Brooke, that's just temporary.

CARMEN

Yeah, and, and, you put me on the squad when I sprained my ankle, remember?

BROOKE

This isn't a sprained ankle! I had big metal pins in my leg! It'll be weeks before I can get around without this stupid cane!

She bangs the cane against the lockers angrily, making Mary Cherry and Carmen jump.

MARY CHERRY

O-okay, but, you don't have to do any of the routines yourself.

CARMEN

Right, you could be like, Honorary President.

MARY CHERRY

(hands on hips)

Brooke McQueen, you are still one of the most popular people at this school. You could be a rallying point, around which all the popular people could...well, rally!

She looks at them as if she were lecturing six-year-olds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BROOKE

I'm a senior. I'm supposed to be thinking about college. I'm supposed to be thinking about my future. I don't want to be a cheerleader when I grow up.

Stolidly Brooke shoulders her way past Mary Cherry and limps off down the hall, leaving her and Carmen staring after her.

MARY CHERRY

(confidently)
She'll come around.

CUT TO:

INT. CHEMISTRY CLASS - LATER

Brooke walks in and makes her way to her seat next to Sam, who appears to be conked out over the table; for some reason, Harrison is sitting on the other side of the room. As she sits down, Brooke and Harrison exchange a glance. She taps Sam on the shoulder; and Sam jerks upright.

SAM

Huh? Wha'd I miss?

BROOKE

Nothing, Miss Glass isn't here yet. Are you okay?

SAM

(yawning)
Yeah...

Sam looks over at Harrison, and manages to hold his gaze for a moment before he looks away.

SAM (CONT'D)

See?

BROOKE

What?

SAM

(shaking her head)
Never mind.

Miss Glass strides in full force, plopping a stack of materials down on the front table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GLASS

All right, listen up! Since this is our last year together—for those of you who manage to graduate, that is—I want to take this opportunity to say that, in my long years of teaching here at Kennedy High, you are the laziest, most obnoxious, self-centered bunch of no-good ingrate slackers to ever disgrace my classroom!

She picks up a stack of flyers and starts to hand them out.

GLASS (CONT'D)

Now that the pleasantries are out of the way, I need to remind you that Career Day is Friday. For most of you, that means illustrious names like "MacDonald's" and "Burger King". However, there will be a few people here representing more demanding careers, should you want to attempt to match your laughable abilities to them. Those of you who have parents with careers—and no, collecting unemployment checks does not count—will be able to bring them.

MARY CHERRY

Damn! Mama's on a business trip to Taiwan this week.

(to Miss Glass)

Miss Glass, could we put off this Career Day thingee until next week?

GLASS

No, Miss Cherry. Despite what your mother thinks, the world does not revolve around her.

She stops in front of Josh and Lily.

GLASS (CONT'D)

Mr. Ford, I don't suppose your father, successful and wealthy businessman that he is, will be available?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOSH
Probably not, no.

GLASS
(mocking)
Well, don't worry. Maybe you can
bring the manager of the local
Taco Bell.

LILY
Miss Glass—!

But Josh puts a restraining hand on her arm.

JOSH
No, it's all right.
(to Miss Glass)
I'll find someone.

Miss Glass laughs and rolls her eyes theatrically.

GLASS
I'm sure you will.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Carmen is at her locker when Sugar Daddy comes strolling up.

SUGAR
Yo, Carm!

She turns around, grinning, and hugs him.

SUGAR (CONT'D)
So are you coming to practice this
afternoon?

CARMEN
I might not be able to make it.

SUGAR
(frowning)
What's up?

She looks around suspiciously, then pulls him aside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMEN

Don't tell anyone, but Mary Cherry and I are working on a plan to depose Bring It and bring back the Glamazons as the cheerleading squad for the football team.

SUGAR

(brightening)

Now, that's what I like to hear!

CARMEN

Shhh! We don't want anything to jinx it.

SUGAR

Got it. Top secret. My lips are sealed.

CARMEN

So I might not be able to make it this afternoon.

SUGAR

Hey, no problem. You gotta do what you gotta do. I want my cheerleaders back!

(grins)

As long as you're one of them.

CARMEN

You better believe it.

She holds out her hand.

CARMEN **(CONT'D)**

Walk me to my next class?

Sugar Daddy takes her hand; as they walk off, two jocks in the background point at them and snicker.

CUT TO:

INT. JOSH AND LILY'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Josh is on the phone; Lily is nowhere to be seen.

JOSH

(into the phone)

...listen, thanks a lot for doing this.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSH (CONT'D)

It really means a lot to me...
Right... I'll call you with the
details... Okay...bye.

Josh hangs up the phone just as Lily emerges from the kitchen.

LILY

Josh? Who was that?

JOSH

Oh—nobody.

LILY

(concerned)

Josh, you didn't change your mind
and decide to ask your father to
go to Career Day, did you?

JOSH

Naw. He'd just use it to bust my
chops.

(imitating his father's voice)

"Why, of course, son, I'd be happy
to dispense all the advice that
you've rejected."

LILY

Look, don't let Miss Glass bother
you. She's just being Miss Glass.

JOSH

I know. It's okay.

Lily takes a step towards him, concerned.

LILY

Are you sure? If you want to talk
about it—

JOSH

(annoyed)

I said it was okay, okay?

She stops in her tracks, nonplussed.

LILY

O-okay. Whatever you say.

Lily turns and walks away. Josh looks dismayed for a moment,
then shakes his head and turns in the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN DINING ROOM

Mike, Jane, Brooke and Sam are all sitting at dinner.

JANE

So, Sam... How was the first day
of school?

SAM

(noncommittal)
Fine.

MIKE

It's funny—that's the exact same
thing Brooke said when I asked
her.

BROOKE

Dad...

MIKE

Sorry, sorry...
(to Jane)
Are you doing Career Day Friday?

JANE

What Day?

MIKE

(faltering)
Ah...Career Day...? You know...go
talk about your career...?

As he trails off, he and Jane both turn their attention to
Sam, who is picking at her food listlessly.

JANE

Were you going to tell me about
this?

SAM

(shrugs)
I guess.

JANE

Sam, do you not want me there?

SAM

Yes! I mean, no. I mean—I don't
not want you there. I just...
wasn't thinking about it, that's
all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

Seems like you aren't thinking of
a lot of things lately.

The phone rings, and Sam bolts from her chair.

SAM

I'll get it!!

She runs to the phone and picks it up.

SAM (CONT'D)

(into the phone breathlessly)
Hello?

A moment later her face falls.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh...yeah. Hang on.

She holds the phone out in Mike's direction.

SAM (CONT'D)

It's for you. It's your office.

As Mike comes over and takes the phone from Sam, Jane also
gets up.

JANE

Sam...

But Sam tosses her napkin on the table and brushes by her,
running out of the room; leaving Brooke to stare down at her
food morosely.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. MCQUEENS' DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - MORNING

A replay of the other morning: Mike walks up to the door of the den and knocks on it.

MIKE

Brooke?

BROOKE (O.S.)

(from the other side)

I'm up! Don't come in—I'm not dressed!

MIKE

Okay, honey. Breakfast in fifteen minutes.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN DEN - CONTINUOUS

Where Brooke, sitting on the bed with the phone cradled on her shoulder, is quite dressed.

BROOKE

Okay! I'll be right there!

She waits for a few moments to make sure Mike is gone, then puts the phone back to her ear.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

I'm gonna have to go... No... I shouldn't even be having this conversation... Look, this is dumb... Okay...okay, today... Yes, I promise... Okay...bye.

She puts the phone down and falls back on the bed, grimacing.

CUT TO:

EST. KENNEDY HIGH - DAY

The busy quad.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Some students are putting up a banner across the busy hallway that reads "Kennedy High Career Day". Below and down the hall, Brooke is at her locker. She opens it up and pulls a book out, then spies a note sitting there. Curious, she picks it up and unfolds it. A moment later, she looks around furtively, hastily refolds the note and sticks it in her bag before closing her locker.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRLS' RESTROOM

The door opens and Lily walks in and heads for the mirror. She is teasing her hair when she spies Sam, sitting on the tuffet behind her, her knees pulled up to her chin. Lily spins around, surprised.

LILY

Hey!

Sam just gives her a half-hearted nod in response. Frowning, Lily comes over and sits down beside her.

LILY (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

SAM

(shrugging listlessly)
Harrison.

LILY

(rolls her eyes)
Of course. Men—the source of all problems.

SAM

(concerned)
What—you and Josh?

LILY

Oh, no. I mean, I don't have a problem with Josh.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY (CONT'D)

I'm just—I'm worried about him.
Miss Glass is so mean.

SAM

This is something new?

LILY

It's not funny. She's really on
him about this Career Day thing.
It's so unfair. He won't even ask
his father—which I totally
support, by the way—but he's been
really quiet, like he's keeping it
all pent up inside.

(beat)

My dad used to do that...keep
everything bottled up.

After a moment of silence, Lily perks up and turns to Sam.

LILY (CONT'D)

So, I told you mine, now you tell
me yours. What's up with
Harrison?

SAM

(sighing)

Oh... He's just—I don't know.
He's not as affectionate as he
used to be.

LILY

Maybe you should go on Jerry
Springer.

SAM

Lily...I'm serious. I mean, we
started off really great. For
like two weeks we just clicked all
the time. We were practically
living together. Then Brooke came
home from the hospital...

LILY

You think this is because of
Brooke?

SAM

No! It's got nothing to do with
her. That's...just when it
happened.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM (CONT'D)

I mean, okay, so after she got home, we didn't have the place to ourselves, we couldn't just go running around naked anymore...

Sam trails off, and looks over at Lily.

SAM (CONT'D)

Ah...just pretend you didn't hear that last part, okay?

LILY

(trying not to grin)

Who, me? So, Brooke comes home, and no more honeymoon haven.

SAM

But, it's more than that. He's— it's like he's drifting away, and I don't wanna say anything, 'cause what if I'm just being completely paranoid and clingy?

LILY

Sam, you're not being clingy. Besides, wasn't it you who convinced me and Josh to talk out our problems?

SAM

Yeah, but that's different. You're—

LILY

Married?

SAM

Please, don't use the "M" word talking about Harrison. I did that a while ago...it was really bad.

LILY

Did what?

SAM

Oh, I...I said something about us being married, and—he totally freaked.

LILY

(looking over curiously)

Sam?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LILY (CONT'D)

Is there something about this relationship you're not telling me?

SAM

No! I don't want to be married to Harrison! I mean, maybe, someday, but... It was just a stupid, offhand remark. I don't even know why I said it.

(beat)

See? I'm being clingy.

LILY

(sighs)

Sam, you're not being clingy.

The bell rings.

LILY (CONT'D)

Come on.

They get up and walk out.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

LILY

You and Harrison know each other better than anyone I know—even better than me and Josh. Everything'll work out.

Just then, the girls run into Calvin Krupps.

KRUPPS

Good morning, ladies.

SAM

Good morning, no-longer-Acting Principal Krupps—and congratulations on the promotion.

KRUPPS

(smiling)

Well, thank you. It's always been my ambition to be able to take a school and mold it to my vision.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As he is speaking, Krupps holds out his hand and mimes a molding action, in a vaguely disconcerting way that makes Lily's eyebrows go up.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Oh, Ms. McPherson—would you mind stopping by my office at lunch? I'd like to talk to you about something.

SAM

(shrugs)

Sure.

KRUPPS

(rubbing his hands together)

Good. I'll see you then.

Krupps moves on, and Lily looks over at Sam.

LILY

What was that about?

Sam just shrugs. A moment later she spots Harrison by her locker.

SAM

I'll catch up with you.

She changes direction and walks up to Harrison.

SAM (CONT'D)

Harrison, can we talk?

HARRISON

(looking around)

Uh...right now?

SAM

Look, I don't want to sound...I don't know...paranoid—

HARRISON

(interrupting)

Sam... I know I haven't...been there...really as much as I should. I don't know...I guess I got a lot on my mind.

SAM

(regrouping)

Ah—I just...didn't know if it was me, or—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HARRISON
No. It's not you. You're...
wonderful.

He kisses her lightly.

SAM
(relieved)
You know, Lily was right. She
said, just come out and say what
you feel, and it'll be all right.

If Harrison's smile is a bit forced, Sam doesn't notice.

HARRISON
Yeah.

SAM
Oh, ah... Lunch?

HARRISON
Sure.

SAM
Great. See ya.

She kisses him goodbye and heads off, as he watches her go,
grimacing.

CUT TO:

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - LATER

Ms. Ross is holding court.

ROSS
...and so what Shakespeare is
saying here is that it's affairs
of the heart that are at the root
of—Miss McQueen, are you all
right?

All eyes turn to Brooke, who is partially slumped over her
desk with her head in her hands. She uncovers her eyes and
looks up at Ms. Ross, blinking.

BROOKE
(weakly)
Uh...affairs of the heart...I
heard you, Ms. Ross...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS

I think maybe you should go lie
down at the Nurse's Station.

BROOKE

All right...

Brooke stands up shakily and limps towards the door. As she passes by Ms. Ross' desk, the teacher scribbles out a hall pass and hands it to her.

ROSS

Here. Now don't you worry about
class—you need to take care of
yourself.

BROOKE

Oh...thanks...

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Brooke steps outside and closes the classroom door behind her. She closes her eyes for a moment, gathering herself, and then starts off down the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The room is closed and dark, the window shades pulled shut. The door opens and Brooke steps through uncertainly.

BROOKE

Hello? Is anyone here?

She takes a few unsteady steps into the room, then jumps at the sound of the door closing behind her. She spins around—ungracefully—and is caught up in the arms of Harrison, who stifles her surprised yelp with a kiss.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Brooke breaks away from Harrison's kiss, holding onto his arms.

BROOKE

Harrison! Oh my God, you scared me!

HARRISON

You weren't expecting me? You did get my note, right?

BROOKE

(turning away)

I wasn't expecting you to go sneaking up behind me! God!

HARRISON

(taking her arm)

Oh—here.

Harrison leads Brooke over to the side of the bed and sits her down, sitting beside her. She looks down forlornly at her hands, intertwined in her lap.

BROOKE

Harrison...this is wrong. We—we can't do this anymore.

HARRISON

Brooke—

BROOKE

No... It was bad enough before, but...we're in school now! I'm sneaking around, cutting class... we're in the nurse's office, for God's sake! We just—I just can't do it.

HARRISON

(stroking her hair)

Brooke...

BROOKE

(turning)

Harrison, what are we doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRISON

I don't know.

He takes her face in her hands and starts to kiss her; she makes a feeble attempt to turn away.

BROOKE

Please...

Harrison continues to plaster her face with kisses.

HARRISON

Do you want me to stop?

BROOKE

(weakly)

Yes...

HARRISON

(still kissing her)

Yes?

BROOKE

...no...

As he gathers her into a more serious lip-lock, they fall back onto the bed together.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Sugar Daddy and Carmen are holding hands just outside the boys' locker room.

SUGAR

So, how's the...you know...coming?

CARMEN

Well, if we can get Brooke on board, then...

SUGAR

Brooke? I mean, she doesn't seem...

CARMEN

Oh, not to do any of the...you know...just as kind of a symbol. You know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUGAR

Oh, I get it.

CARMEN

Anyway, she's not real thrilled, but Mary Cherry says she'll come around.

SUGAR

I dunno...I mean, I like Mary Cherry and all, but...she's a little...you know.

CARMEN

Yeah, but...and, you know, she's our best shot, so...

SUGAR

Right...okay.

CARMEN

So, I guess I'll see you at practice?

SUGAR

Oh—I got my wrestling tryout this afternoon.

CARMEN

Great! Can I come? Or, would that be like, breaking your concentration or something?

SUGAR

Hey, you can come. It's not gonna be much, though—just me and some other guys on a mat.

CARMEN

I—I don't mind.

SUGAR

Sounds like a plan, then.

CARMEN

Okay, then...I guess I'll...see you then...

Carmen awkwardly backs away with a silly grin and a little wave.

CUT TO:

INT. BOYS' LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Sugar Daddy steps into the locker room, the two jocks from before start snickering in his direction.

 JOCK #1
 Hey, look, here comes half of the
 BIGGEST couple on campus.

Sugar Daddy pulls up short and turns to narrow his eyes at them.

 SUGAR
 Say what?

 JOCK #1
 We were just sayin' how sometimes
 opposites don't attract.

 JOCK #2
 Yeah, sometimes size matters.

As the two jocks start laughing again, Sugar Daddy takes a threatening step towards them.

 SUGAR
 You got a problem?

 JOCK #1
 Us? Naw, we ain't got a
 problem...unless you and your
 girlfriend decide to jump up and
 down at the same time and cause an
 earthquake.

Josh, who has walked in in time to hear the last of the exchange, rushes forward.

 JOSH
 Hey, knock it off, man!

 JOCK #1
 (mocking)
 Oooh, listen to him. In case
 you've forgotten, Ford, you aren't
 the big-shot quarterback anymore.

At that, George steps into the fray.

 GEORGE
 No, I'm the big-shot quarterback.
 So I'll ask: you got a problem?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The two jocks lose some of their steam.

JOCK #1

No, we were just—

GEORGE

You were just disrespecting the guy who's gonna keep defensive linemen off my ass. Now how do you suppose I'm gonna feel about that?

JOCK #2

Hey, we didn't mean—

GEORGE

Especially coming from someone who drops half the balls I send his way.

JOCK #1

That was one—

GEORGE

Yeah, I'm sure Coach'll keep that in mind, when he asks me what deadwood needs to be cut.

JOCK #2

Now, hold on—

GEORGE

Look, this is real simple. You got a problem with my guy, you got a problem with me. You got a problem with me, you got no place on my team. Now—you got a problem?

JOCK #1

(sullenly)

No. No problem.

GEORGE

Good. Keep it that way.

After the two jocks slink off, Sugar Daddy turns to Josh and George.

SUGAR

Hey, man, I don't wanna sound ungrateful or anything, but I can handle a couple of busters myself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGE

Hey, I like Carmen. She's good people. There isn't gonna be any crap about her, not in my locker room.

(beat)

So, I hear you're double-dipping again this year.

SUGAR

Yeah, if I can get on the team. Tryout's today.

GEORGE

Well, just don't go getting yourself hurt or anything. I hear there's a couple of guys over at Eleanor Roosevelt High that want a piece of me, and I need everyone I can get on my line.

SUGAR

Well, don't you worry—you can sit back there all day. Nobody's coming though me.

George claps Sugar Daddy on the shoulder.

GEORGE

That's my man. See you at practice?

SUGAR

Got it.

JOSH

Hey, good luck, Shug.

SUGAR

Thanks.

Josh and Sugar Daddy shake hands, and Sugar Daddy heads off.

GEORGE

Hey, Josh...this swearing off football thing—is it a total, cold-turkey prohibition thing? Like A.A. or something?

JOSH

(frowning)

I dunno...why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GEORGE
You remember red-twenty-two?

JOSH
(nods)
Double cross-over rollout.

GEORGE
I can not get it to work, man. I got guys trippin' over their own feet out there. If I try it tomorrow night against Roosevelt, my ass is gonna be grass. As in, pounded straight into the turf.

JOSH
It's the timing. You gotta get your wide-out to break in front of the short coverage.

GEORGE
Look, would you mind stopping by the practice field this afternoon and, you know, taking a look? Maybe you can see where we're screwing up at.

JOSH
(shrugging)
Sure. No problem.

GEORGE
Thanks. You're really saving our butts.

He looks up as the bell rings.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'm gonna go grab lunch. See you after school.

JOSH
Right. See you.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE

Harrison and Brooke are lying side-by-side under the sheet on the bed, staring up at the ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRISON

It's lunchtime. We should get out of here. People will miss us.

BROOKE

Yeah.

However, neither of them move.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Sam suspects something.

HARRISON

No, she doesn't.

BROOKE

She knows something's wrong. She knows you're pulling away from her.

HARRISON

I can't help that.

BROOKE

(rubbing her eyes)

This is such a mess. God, I can't believe we're doing this to her. I mean, the first time—

HARRISON

No. This isn't like the first time. She can't know. She can't find out.

BROOKE

We can't keep it from her forever.

HARRISON

Why not?

BROOKE

Harrison...

She pulls back the sheet and swings her legs over to sit up on the side of the bed. Harrison reaches out to touch her back, but she flinches away, taking her blouse and pulling it on.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

We have to end this. You have to end this, Harrison, because...I don't know how to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HARRISON
I...can't. Brooke, I love you.

BROOKE
You love Sam.

HARRISON
(frustrated)
I... I need...time. Time to end
things with Sam, somehow.

She turns to look back at him for the first time.

BROOKE
Really?

HARRISON
I'll...find some way to let her
down easy. Then...then there'll
be time for us. I'm not losing
you, Brooke. Not again.

She twists around and snuggles up against his chest.

BROOKE
Don't hurt her. Promise me you
won't hurt her.

HARRISON
I promise.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL KRUPPS' OFFICE

There is a knock on the open door, and Sam pokes her head in
to find Principal Krupps sitting at his desk.

KRUPPS
Ah! Come in, Miss McPherson.
Close the door.

As instructed, Sam closes the office door behind her.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)
(gesturing to a chair)
Please.

Sam sits down and folds her hands in her lap, waiting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Miss McPherson—Sam—you've been the editor of the Zapruder Reporter for, what...over two and a half years, right?

She immediately becomes distressed and holds up her hands to stop him from going any further.

SAM

Mr. Krupps, I realize that last year I might have been a little distracted, but I swear—

KRUPPS

(waving her off)

Please, there's no need to explain yourself. Mr. John's illness was a strain on the entire school. It's perfectly understandable that your mind wasn't always on the newspaper. In fact, I think you did an admirable job under the circumstances.

SAM

You do?

KRUPPS

Indeed I do. Sam, the reason I wanted to talk to you is...since you have been the editor for such a long time, I'm sure that you've developed a close working relationship with the rest of the students who work on the paper.

SAM

Well, of course. I couldn't do it without them.

KRUPPS

As you know, the Principal names the editor of the Reporter. Now, I confess that I don't know the first thing about running a newspaper, even a high school one. So I'd appreciate your input.

SAM

Input on what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KRUPPS

On who should be editor after you.
Your successor, that is. Don't
misunderstand me—you don't have
to make the decision—some
suggestions are all I'm looking
for.

SAM

(shaking her head)

Mr. Krupps, I—I don't understand.
Are you taking the editorship away
from me?

KRUPPS

Oh, I imagine you'll be too busy
to continue on at the Reporter.

Sam looks thoroughly confused. But before she can ask anything else, there is another knock on the door, and before Principal Krupps can answer, it swings open and a tall, somewhat rakish man in his late thirties strolls in.

FLEISCHER

Cal! Sorry I'm late—there must
be a freeway closed somewhere:
traffic is just murderous.

A bit late, he notices Sam sitting there.

FLEISCHER (CONT'D)

Whoop—I do have the right day,
don't I?

KRUPPS

Come on in, Art.

As Sam automatically rises, a gleam of recognition appears in her eyes.

SAM

(growing excited)

Wait—you're Art Fleischer, aren't
you? With the Chronicle? I never
miss your column! Mondays,
Wednesdays and Saturdays, page
five.

Fleischer wags an eyebrow in Principal Krupps' direction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FLEISCHER

High-schoolers who read the newspaper? Now I know I'm in the wrong place.

KRUPPS

This is Sam McPherson. The person I told you about?

FLEISCHER

(a bit taken aback)

Oh! Uh, I'm sorry, it's just... When Cal said "Sam", I was expecting, well...

SAM

Don't worry. It's not the first time.

FLEISCHER

(recovering)

Well, I'm extremely pleased to be mistaken.

He extends his hand, and after a nervous moment, Sam shakes it.

SAM

But— Wait, I'm confused.

KRUPPS

I'm afraid that's my fault. I should have waited for Art to get here before saying anything.

SAM

W-what did he mean, he told you about me?

FLEISCHER

Well, you see, Sam—can I call you Sam?—every year at the Chronicle, a couple of slots open up for promising young writers, kind of like an apprentice program. Now, usually they're college kids, but when Cal here told me that he had someone I should look at, I had him clip a bunch of your articles and send them over to my office. Frankly, I was impressed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FLEISCHER (CONT'D)

And, frankly, so was my associate editor. So...I'm here to see if you're interested in a job.

SAM

(dumbfounded)

Ah—j—just like that?

FLEISCHER

Well, technically, there's a review process, but—

(waving dismissively)

—that's all politics, anyway. As far as you're concerned, just say the word, and you're in.

SAM

I, uh—I mean, I—I don't know what to say...

KRUPPS

(leaning across)

I might suggest, "yes".

SAM

Ah—yes. Yes! I mean—of course!

FLEISCHER

(grins)

Good. Give me your number, and I'll call sometime next week to set things up.

SAM

Oh—right—here...

Sam digs a piece of paper and a pen out of her bag, scribbles down her phone number and hands it to him.

FLEISCHER

(holding out his hand)

Good. I think you'll make a fine addition to the Chronicle.

Sam takes his outstretched hand and shakes it profusely.

SAM

Mr. Fleischer, you have no idea what this means to me. Really.

FLEISCHER

It's Art, please—Mr. Fleischer's my father.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

FLEISCHER (CONT'D)

And I know how you feel. I reacted about the same way when I got my first newspaper job.

(looking over at Mr. Krupps)
Right, Cal?

KRUPPS

Seems to me, you haven't changed much since then, either.

Sam spins around to Principal Krupps.

SAM

(gushing)

Mr. Krupps—I can't even begin to thank you. Nobody's ever done anything like this for me before...

KRUPPS

I'm sure you'll do the school proud.

FLEISCHER

(breaking in)

Look, Cal, I know I said we'd have lunch, but—I'm sitting on a source, and...

KRUPPS

(laughs)

Like I said, you haven't changed. We'll do it next week.

FLEISCHER

Sure.

(finger-waves)

Catch you later.

Fleischer turns and walks out.

SAM

(calling)

Good-bye, Mr. Fleischer! And thank you!

FLEISCHER

(over his shoulder)

Art!

After he is gone, Sam turns back to Principal Krupps, still a bit dazed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

SAM

Mr. Krupps, I...

KRUPPS

(waving her off)

No need, Sam. I was happy to help. It's always good to see a student excel, and I'm sure you'll make the most of this opportunity. But I would like your thoughts on your replacement as editor.

SAM

Oh, ah, yes, I mean, I'll think about it.

KRUPPS

Good. Well, enjoy the rest of your day.

SAM

Oh, I will, Mr. Krupps! I will!

With that, Sam fairly flies out of the office, leaving the principal to return to his paperwork, chuckling to himself.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA

Brooke is sitting alone at one of the tables, eating lunch and idly working a crossword puzzle, when Carmen and Mary Cherry sit down across from her.

BROOKE

(without looking up)

No.

CARMEN

Come on, Brooke! Please? We really, really, really need you. I mean, really.

BROOKE

(annoyed)

Guys, you can argue until you're both old and gray—

That mere thought brings a horrified expression to Mary Cherry's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE (CONT'D)

—but you're not going to get me
to go along with this insane
scheme of yours.

Across the room, Harrison has (luckily) just set his tray down when he gets blindsided by Sam, who flings herself into his arms, spins him around and smothers him with a long kiss.

HARRISON

Whoa, Sam...are you okay?

SAM

I am so much better than okay! You
won't believe what just happened
to me—I got a job!!

HARRISON

A what?

SAM

A job! With the Chronicle! I'm
gonna be a reporter!! Come over
tonight—we'll celebrate.

With that, she wraps him up again. Neither of them notice Brooke watching them, while Carmen and Mary Cherry are doggedly continuing their sales pitch.

CARMEN

...It'll barely take any of your
time, I swear. And nobody'll
expect you to do any cheering,
even when your leg gets better.
Not even a little bit. Just, you
know, show up at rallies, and make
a couple of speeches about how
great the Glamazons are, and—

BROOKE

(interrupting)

Okay. I'll do it.

CARMEN

(taken aback)

You will? I mean, we won't take
you away from anything else that
you're doing—

Mary Cherry nudges her under the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARY CHERRY

(hissing)

Shhh! She said she would. Don't
try and change her mind!

BROOKE

No. You won't be taking me away
from anything.

She sneaks another peek at Harrison and Sam.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Nothing at all.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. THE FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER

Josh is watching George and the team run through practice drills.

JOSH
(calling)
No, Kelly! Two steps! Two steps,
and break!

One of the players comes jogging over to the sideline.

KELLY
I can't do that, Josh. I'm gonna
run right into the coverage.

JOSH
No, no. The corner's thinking
deep, the safety comes up—by the
time you hit your spot, they'll
both be five yards off of you. You
just have to do it, and the
lane'll be there when you are.

Coach Krupps comes up from behind.

COACH KRUPPS
Hey, going after my job now, Ford?

JOSH
(turning)
No, Sir, I—

George comes jogging up to join them.

GEORGE
I asked Josh to come watch red-
twenty-two, see if we can get it
down before tomorrow.

JOSH
The timing's off. Kelly's
breaking too late.

COACH KRUPPS
(laughing)
All right. I have to go do
wrestling tryouts anyway. Carry
on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Coach Krupps walks away, while Josh and George watch him go.

JOSH

I sure hope Shug gets on that team. He's really been working hard.

GEORGE

Yeah.

(beat)

Hey, why don't you go out and run a couple?

JOSH

Me? No, I—well, okay.

Josh and George head back to the huddle.

GEORGE

Listen up, guys! Josh is gonna run red-twenty-two a few times! Try to pay attention, wouldja?

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE FIELD

Behind the chain-link fence, Lily is watching Josh direct the play when Carmen comes ambling up to her.

CARMEN

Hi, Lily.

LILY

(not turning)

Hey, Carm.

Carmen joins Lily at the fence.

CARMEN

Hey, I didn't know Josh was playing football again.

LILY

He isn't.

Carmen's eyebrows go up.

CARMEN

Coulda fooled me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY
 (subdued)
 Really, he's just doing George a
 favor.

But as she watches Josh laughing it up with the team, it's clear that she's not so sure. After a moment, she tears her eyes away and turns to face Carmen.

LILY (CONT'D)
 Hey, if anyone hassles you about
 Sugar Daddy, you'll tell me,
 right?

CARMEN
 (shaking her head)
 What? Why would anyone be
 hassling me?

LILY
 Oh...I thought you heard.

CARMEN
 Heard what?

LILY
 Just—a couple of jocks were
 giving Sugar Daddy a hard time
 about, you know, the two of you.
 Josh said he and George stepped up
 and made them back off.

CARMEN
 No, I hadn't heard... Hey, I
 gotta go. I'll talk to you later,
 okay?

Without waiting for an answer, Carmen turns and runs off.

LILY
 (to Carmen's back)
 Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN DINING ROOM - EVENING

Sam, Brooke, Jane and Mike are finishing up dinner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

...and so I'm just standing there,
and Art Fleischer offers me a job!
It was just unreal!

JANE

Honey, I'm so proud of you.

MIKE

Yeah, Sam, I know you're going to
be one helluva reporter.

There's a moment of expectant silence.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(prodding)

Brooke?

Brooke, who doesn't seem to have been paying attention to the
conversation, looks up suddenly.

BROOKE

Yeah, Sam. I'm...I'm glad you got
what you wanted.

Before Sam can react, the doorbell rings, and she leaps out of
her chair.

SAM

Oh! That's Harrison. We're going
out to celebrate. She rushes off
to answer the door.

MIKE

Brooke? What's the matter?

BROOKE

(picking at her food)

I don't know... It's—I mean,
look at Sam. She's getting on
with her career already, and...
Did you know Mary Cherry and
Carmen want me to help bring back
the Glamazons? It's like I'm
mired in all this high school
stuff.

(beat)

Like I'm...just spinning my
wheels.

Mike leans over and lays his hand on hers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE

Honey, you are smart, and beautiful, and you can do anything you put your mind to. You just have to believe in yourself.

Brooke looks extremely unconvinced.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN DEN - LATER

Brooke is sitting at the desk/vanity table when there is a knock on the open door, and Harrison steps inside.

BROOKE

Harrison! I thought you were going out!

HARRISON

We are. Sam—had to do something.

BROOKE

Harrison, you shouldn't be in here.

Harrison takes a couple of steps inside.

HARRISON

Sam's upstairs.

BROOKE

Please, just... I can't handle this.

HARRISON

Brooke—

BROOKE

I don't know what's going on.

HARRISON

I...I don't know what to say to her. I don't know what to say to you.

BROOKE

The truth?

HARRISON

I love you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE
(looking away)
And Sam?

Harrison shrugs helplessly. He takes another step towards Brooke, when Sam appears in the doorway.

SAM
There you are!

HARRISON
(turning)
Sam! We were just, uh—

BROOKE
Talking.

HARRISON
Yeah. Talking.

Sam seems oblivious to the tension between Brooke and Harrison.

SAM
Ready to go?

HARRISON
Ah, yeah.

As Harrison walks towards Sam, she takes his arm and practically drags him out of the room.

SAM (O.S.)
(calling to Jane and Mike)
Don't wait up!

Brooke looks at the doorway bleakly, then slowly lays her head down on the desk.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHEMISTRY CLASS - THE NEXT DAY

Miss Glass is being her usual acerbic self.

GLASS
All right, listen up! We're ready to start Career Day presentations, after which you'll be free to explore potential career paths on your own.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GLASS (CONT'D)

Now, contrary to what some of you may think, I wholeheartedly support Career Day. Any excuse not to be cooped up in this classroom with all of you is very good thing. To those of you who brought their parents, I say, thank you for conning them into this thankless job.

(beat)

I understand Mr. Ford even found someone to come today.

(to Josh)

So, what have to got for us? The local car wash? Or perhaps you decided to follow in your wife's footsteps and sell herbal soap.

Lily gives Miss Glass a dirty look.

JOSH

Actually, Miss Glass, I—

Everyone turns at the sound of a polite rap on the doorframe.

LILY

(grinning)

Dr. Bennett!

As Dr. Bennett steps inside, Josh slides off his stool and walks over to her.

JOSH

Everyone, this is Dr. Tina Bennett. She's a research scientist at the Pacific National Institute for Oceanographic Studies up in Monterey, where I worked this summer.

Miss Glass steps over, trying to maintain the upper hand.

GLASS

So, I guess "Doctor" is an honorary title?

Dr. Bennett smiles sweetly at her.

BENNETT

Yes, it honors the fact that I received a doctorate in marine biology from Columbia University.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOSH

Dr. Bennett also has a master's in zoology.

BENNETT

But aquatic studies are my specialty. Actually, in college, I was a double major—biology and physics.

(shrugs)

I was vacillating between the two.

JOSH

Oh, and she was in the French lit honors program at Yale.

BENNETT

Three semesters. But I only read French literature on my own time, so I don't usually count it.

As the class titters at Miss Glass' discomfiture, she makes one more attempt.

GLASS

My, you've accomplished quite a lot. And you've taken care of yourself—you certainly don't look like you're—

BENNETT

Thirty-two.

GLASS

(gaping)

Thirty...two?

BENNETT

Thirty-two.

Effectively dismissing Miss Glass, she turns to the class, draping her arm over Josh's shoulder.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Since you're his classmates, you probably already know that Josh didn't have much interest in aquatic biology when he came to the Institute.

More laughter rises from the class.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BENNETT (CONT'D)

But he found a job he could do,
and he did it well. I'm proud to
say that Josh was one of our best
interns—and my bosses wouldn't
mind having him back next year.

As Josh returns to his seat, there is a patter of applause.

LILY

(whispering to Josh)
Why didn't you tell me??

JOSH

She wasn't sure she could make it.
I didn't want to tell you, in case
it didn't work out.

Meanwhile, Dr. Bennett has stepped to the center of the room.

BENNETT

Now, I realize that most of you
probably have never given a
thought to the study of sea life.
And I doubt many of you will be
thinking about it after today—
it's a highly specialized
interest. But a few of you might.
And if not this, then something
else might catch your eye today.
It might be something you've
wanted to do all your life, or
something completely unexpected.
(chuckling)

Josh keeps saying he's the dumb
jock in your group. If that's
true, you're all going to have
very bright futures.

Lily puts her arm around Josh, looking like she's going to
burst.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE

Mike, Jane, and a few other parents talking to the class.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Tables have been set up along the hallway, like booths at a bazaar. Brooke is walking down the hall when she comes up short at the sight before her.

BROOKE

Oh—no.

Placed at a strategic corner, Mary Cherry has set up a gaudy, glittery display devoted to the Glamazons. Mary Cherry has changed into something that looks more like a parody of a cheerleading outfit. Brooke starts to turn away, but Mary Cherry rushes out from behind the table and stops her.

MARY CHERRY

Brooke! You promised!

BROOKE

I said I'd help—but there are limits!

Mary Cherry leads Brooke over to the table.

MARY CHERRY

Come on, Brooke! This is perfect!

BROOKE

This is ridiculous! Cheerleading is not a career choice!

MARY CHERRY

It can be a very rewarding career, leading to endorsements, Playboy layouts...

BROOKE

Mary Cherry!

Suddenly Carmen comes rushing up, dressed in a similarly gaudy outfit and carrying a bolt of fabric.

CARMEN

Mary Cherry! Look at this!

Mary Cherry examines the material.

MARY CHERRY

What's this?

CARMEN

It's the material for the costumes!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY CHERRY

(throwing up her hands)

No! It's supposed to be fuchsia,
not lavender! Can't they get
anything right?!

CARMEN

Well, they're unloading a whole
crate of it.

MARY CHERRY

No, no, it's all going back!

(to Brooke)

Just watch the table for a few
minutes, okay? Thanks!

Brooke starts to protest, but Mary Cherry and Carmen are already gone. Shaking her head in disgust, she pulls up a chair and sits down, pulling a crossword puzzle book out of her bag. She is completely absorbed in her puzzle when someone clears their throat. She looks up to see a blonde girl, dressed in a vaguely Britney Spears-wannabe ensemble, standing nervously before her.

MANDY

Uh...excuse me? I'm...Mandy...
Mandy Thompson... I'm a
freshman...is this where I go to
be a cheerleader?

(her eyes go wide)

Wow! You're Brooke McQueen,
aren't you? I can't believe it!

BROOKE

You know me?

MANDY

(gushing)

Are you kidding? Everybody knows
you! You're like, the Queen of
Kennedy! Wow, I can't believe I'm
talking to a senior! And not just
any senior—Brooke McQueen!

BROOKE

(shrugs)

It's a special occasion. We won't
acknowledge your existence the
rest of the year.

MANDY

Oh...right... So...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BROOKE
(breaking in)
Why do you want to be a
cheerleader?

MANDY
Are you kidding? It's, it's
glamorous, and everybody loves
you, and, and...

Suddenly she just seems to run out of steam.

MANDY (CONT'D)
(shrugs fatalistically)
I've always been a cheerleader.
Ever since eighth grade. It's
expected.

BROOKE
(murmuring)
That sounds familiar.

MANDY
So, this is where I go, right?

Brooke nods at the notebook the girl is cradling in her arms.

BROOKE
What's that?

The girl looks down as if she's forgotten the book was there.

MANDY
This? Oh...nothing. It's—just
kind of a...it's like a journal?
Sometimes...I just...write down
stuff... You know, just, ideas,
and some poems, and stuff...

Brooke uses a bit of her senior-class authority to hold out
her hand expectantly, and the girl hands the notebook over
without question. Brooke flips through it idly.

MANDY (CONT'D)
It's not really very good... I
mean, I know, you probably think
it's really dorky...

Brooke snaps the notebook shut and hands it back, then leans
forward and cranes her neck, spotting Sam at the end of the
hall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BROOKE

(pointing)

You see that girl? The brunette,
in the brown sweater? She's the
editor of the school paper.
Forget the Glamazons. Go talk to
her.

MANDY

But—

BROOKE

The sooner you stop doing what's
expected of you, and start doing
what you want to do, the better
off you'll be.

MANDY

Are you sure?

BROOKE

(chuckling)

Yeah. I'm sure. Go on.

The girl looks nervously in Sam's direction.

MANDY

What if she hates me?

BROOKE

She's my sister. Tell her I sent
you. Show her your journal, and
tell her you don't want to be a
cheerleader when you grow up.

After considering it for another moment, the girl turns and
starts to tentatively walk down the hall; and Brooke relaxes
in her chair, for the first time in a long while a satisfied
smile spreading across her face.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END