

Popular: Senior Year
"Uncivil War"
by
The Wild Pikachu

POPULAR: SENIOR YEAR

UNCIVIL WAR

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Fleischer is huddled with his cell phone; Harrison is fidgeting, looking lost; and Sam is taking in the scene with a faint air of disgust. Meanwhile, Jane takes Mike by the arm and pulls him aside.

JANE
(low)
Mike, how COULD you??

MIKE
It wasn't even in the house.

JANE
It was close enough! How did Brooke even know where it was?

MIKE
Brooke's always known.

JANE
If I'd known, I'd have insisted you throw it in the ocean.

MIKE
I know.

Fleischer snaps his cell phone shut, which gets everyone's attention. Mike and Jane step back into the group.

FLEISCHER
Okay, it's going to take them a few minutes to set this up.

He turns to Harrison.

FLEISCHER (CONT'D)
Are you ready?

HARRISON
Uh—y—yeah.

FLEISCHER
Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRISON

Uh...what if—what if it doesn't
work?

FLEISCHER

(grimacing)
Let's not think about that.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH ATHLETIC FIELD

On the grassy knoll overlooking the field, Brooke is sitting cross-legged, methodically loading bullets into the chambers of the revolver, when, from over her shoulder:

CLARENCE (O.S.)

You really don't want to do that,
Brooke.

Brooke whips her head around, to find Clarence sitting on his haunches next to her.

WHITE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH ATHLETIC FIELD - CONTINUOUS

BROOKE

Clarence! Are you...?

He points to himself quizzically, then shakes his head.

CLARENCE

Naw, this time you're just
imagining me.

Brooke's expression sours, and she refocuses her attention on the gun.

BROOKE

Go away, then.

CLARENCE

(insulted)

What, just because I'm a figment
of your imagination, we can't
talk? I can't give good advice?
I'm, like, your conscience.

BROOKE

(not looking up)

I've seen "Pinocchio". You don't
look like Jiminy Cricket.

CLARENCE

Very funny.

(beat)

You do know you don't want to do
that, right?

BROOKE

Don't tell me what I don't want to
do.

CLARENCE

Okay, I understand how you're
feeling right now—

BROOKE

How do you know what I'm feeling?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARENCE

I'm inside your head, remember?
Your relationship with Harrison is
in ruins, your relationship with
Sam is D.O.A., she's run off to
God-knows-where and everybody
thinks it's your fault...

Brooke turns and glares at him.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

What I'm saying is, this too shall
pass! You're talking about a
permanent solution to a temporary
problem.

She studies the revolver clinically.

BROOKE

I like this solution. It's quick,
it's painless...

CLARENCE

How do you know it's quick and
painless?

BROOKE

I saw it on TV. It's like
flipping off a switch—one second
you're here, and the next—

She snaps her fingers.

CLARENCE

You're gonna believe everything
you see on TV? You could miss,
you know. The bullet could wind
up lodged in your cranium, and you
could wind up a semi-vegetable in
excruciating agony for the rest of
your life.

BROOKE

(with finality)

I won't miss.

CLARENCE

I don't know... I think you're a
little jumpy—

Brooke's cell phone rings, jerking her back to reality—in
fact, startling her so badly that the gun jumps in her hands.
Grimacing, she digs the phone out of her bag and flips it
open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BROOKE
 (into the phone)
 Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM

Specifically, Harrison, who is on the other end of the line.

HARRISON
 Brooke?

BROOKE
 (tiredly)
 Harrison, this really isn't—

HARRISON
 Look, I'm—I'm sorry about running
 out on you before, okay? I was a
 little frazzled.

BROOKE
 I understand, Harrison. It's not
 your fault.

HARRISON
 Hey, I wanted you to know that
 they found Sam, and she's fine.
 She's back home, so, you know,
 everything's fine.

To the side of Harrison, Fleischer is making a "keep-it-going" motion with his hands, while Mike and Jane look on closely.

BROOKE
 (flatly)
 Good. I'm glad.

HARRISON
 (improvising)
 So, anyway, Sam's fine, so, you
 know, nobody—blames you for
 anything, or anything. You know?

BROOKE
 Sam's home?

HARRISON
 Um, yeah, safe and sound.

BROOKE
 Did you talk to her?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRISON
 (looking over at Sam)
 Sam and me? Ah, yeah, we, um, we
 talked. Sure.

Sam rolls her eyes and turns away with a low snarl.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
 So, um, look—where are you? I
 mean, I think we oughta meet, you
 know, and, um...talk.

BROOKE
 You should fix things with Sam.
 That's what I think.

HARRISON
 Uh, Brooke, I—

BROOKE
 I really...there's something I
 have to do. So...

HARRISON
 Hey, wait, um—

BROOKE
 Just...concentrate on Sam. You
 two should...be happy.

Sighing, she snaps the phone shut.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
 (whispering)
 I love you, Harrison.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

HARRISON
 Brooke??

He takes the dead phone away from his ear and shakes his head helplessly. A moment later Fleischer's phone rings; he has it open instantly.

FLEISCHER
 (into the phone)
 Yeah?...

Mike, Jane and Harrison form a semi-circle around him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLEISCHER (CONT'D)
 (to everyone)
 They got it.

Expressions of relief break out as Fleischer listens.

FLEISCHER (CONT'D)
 (into the phone)
 What—? A grid number doesn't do
 me any good—give me an
 address!... Okay, at least a
 street, then!
 (looking up)
 Somewhere northeast of here, off
 Highland.

They all look at each other.

HARRISON
 School.

Mike is already breaking for the door, with Harrison a step behind him, and Fleischer and Jane closely following. At the door Jane catches Mike.

MIKE
 Jane—

She casts a glance at Sam, who appears entirely disinterested.

JANE
 You go—I'll stay.

He nods once, and then is out the door along with Harrison and Fleischer. Jane closes the door, and turns to Sam.

JANE (CONT'D)
 (angrily)
 Well, you don't seem very
 concerned.

SAM
 (scornful)
 Wow, I wonder why.

JANE
 Sam!

SAM
 She's not going to do it, Mom.
 It's just a stunt, to get everyone
 running after her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jane shakes her head in frustration.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Mike looks over, disapproving, when Harrison jumps into the passenger seat.

HARRISON
(adamant)
Look, if you want me out of this car, you're going to have to take the time to throw me out.

Mike considers it—briefly—and then starts the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH ATHLETIC FIELD

The imaginary Clarence is again by Brooke's side.

CLARENCE
Can we continue our conversation now?

BROOKE
I don't remember having a conversation.

CLARENCE
Come on! Things are looking up, right? Sam is back where she's supposed to be. No damage done.

BROOKE
Are you serious?! No damage done??

CLARENCE
Okay, maybe I was being a little big-picture-y there. But, really, Brooke...

BROOKE
(sighing)
Jane was right. That's the bottom line.

CLARENCE
Jane was right about what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE

(musing)

It shouldn't have happened. None of it...none of it should have happened. I should've died, in the hospital...I never should've walked out of there. Then...Sam and Harrison would...have a life together...

CLARENCE

You don't know that.

BROOKE

I saw it.

CLARENCE

(annoyed)

You saw what you wanted to see. You saw one of a, a million possibilities. For all you know, Sam and Harrison could've screwed up their relationship all by themselves, without any help from you.

BROOKE

(peering at him)

Why are you here??

CLARENCE

Hey, you're imagining me, remember? I'm part of you. You're trying to talk yourself out of this.

BROOKE

(chuckling humorlessly)

Maybe I'm trying to talk myself into it.

CLARENCE

Come on, Brooke. If you really wanted to do this, you'd have already done it.

With one smooth motion, she snaps the cylinder shut and cocks the hammer.

BROOKE

Like this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLARENCE
 (throws up his hands)
 Whoa, WHOA! Okay, you made your
 point. Jeez...

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S CAR - MOVING

A tense silence fills the air between Mike and Harrison.
 Then, abruptly:

MIKE
 Would you mind telling me what the
 hell you thought you were doing??

Harrison shrugs helplessly.

HARRISON
 I was...I was going to break up
 with Sam. Really. But, she
 was... And then, nine-eleven
 happened, and she was hurting so
 bad... It just—it never seemed
 like a good time.

MIKE
 (shortly)
 Before she walked in on you and
 Brooke would've been a good time.

HARRISON
 (grimly)
 Yeah.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH ATHLETIC FIELD

Clarence is pacing.

CLARENCE
 Okay...what about Harrison? You
 gotta know how broken up he's
 going to be if you go through with
 this. You really want him to
 spend the rest of his life blaming
 himself for your death?

BROOKE
 But, it's not his fault.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARENCE
 (snorts)
 Yeah, and people never blame
 themselves for things that aren't
 their fault.

He gestures emphatically to underscore his point.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH

Mike's car pulls into the empty parking lot, and Mike and Harrison jump out. A couple of moments later Fleischer joins them.

MIKE
 (exasperated)
 This doesn't make any sense—the
 school's locked up.

HARRISON
 Maybe she's around back—the
 field's open. So's the quad.

Fleischer makes a command decision, pointing to Mike, Harrison and himself in turn.

FLEISCHER
 All right, we split up. Left—
 center—right.

The three of them take off in different directions.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH ATHLETIC FIELD

CLARENCE
 (cajoling)
 Ya gotta work with me, Brooke, I'm
 running out of arguments here.

BROOKE
 Good, does that mean you'll be
 finished soon?

He squats down directly in front of her.

CLARENCE
 I'm telling you, I don't need the
 company, really.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I'm going to be seeing you anyway in, what, seventy or eighty years? I can wait; I'm doing fine without you.

She doesn't even bother to respond to that.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Okay—no more jokes. Look at that thing in your hand, Brooke. Just look at it. It's not just the easy way out. It's the cowardly way out.

BROOKE

Yeah, it is.
(looking up)
What's your point?

CLARENCE

(earnestly)
You're better than this, Brooke. You know it. You have so much to live for—you have things to live for you don't even know about yet. Just one squeeze of the trigger, that'll all be gone. One more addition to the cosmic junk heap of what-might-have-beens.

Clarence straightens up and steps back.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Okay. I'm done.

BROOKE

(blinking)
You are?

CLARENCE

Yep. I've said my peace, or whatever. Now it's up to you.

BROOKE

Oh. Well...good.

CLARENCE

It's your choice, Brooke. It always has been. Just—don't screw this up, okay?

Brooke squeezes her eyes shut for a moment, and when she opens them again, Clarence is gone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She looks over the revolver, turning it this way and that...and then, slowly, raises it to her temple.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH ATHLETIC FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Below and behind Brooke, Mike jogs around the corner of one of the school buildings; spotting her, he pulls up short at the edge of the grass.

MIKE
BROOKE!!!

Brooke looks over her shoulder, then clambers to her feet, the gun in her hand. Slowly, carefully, Mike starts up the gentle rise towards her, holding out his hands in a pleading gesture.

BROOKE
Daddy?

MIKE
(tearing up)
Brooke...please...

From behind, Harrison and Fleischer come running, joining up at the bottom of the rise.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Honey...just...give me the gun...

Emotionally drained, Brooke just stands there, eyes downcast.

Finally she lifts the gun. Everyone tenses—but she uncocks the hammer and flips the cylinder open, letting the bullets spill onto the ground, followed by the revolver itself as it slips from her hand. Mike covers the distance between them at a dead run, and crushes her against him in a bear-hug.

Below, Fleischer slaps Harrison on the shoulder. Harrison nods and sticks his hands in his pockets; then turns and walks away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EST. MCQUEEN HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

A warm, golden shot.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Jane waits anxiously as Mike comes out of Brooke's room and closes the door behind him.

JANE
Is she going to be okay?

MIKE
I think so.

JANE
(grimacing)
Now for the hard part.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM - LATER

Mike and Jane are sitting on the sofa. Across from them is Sam, who is in the process of erupting.

SAM
Wait, hold on just a minute! How did I get to be the bad guy in this little psycho-drama?! Brooke's the one who slept with my boyfriend behind my back!!!

JANE
We're not condoning what Brooke did.

Jane looks to Mike for confirmation.

MIKE
Of course not. And believe me, we are going to have a long talk with her.

SAM
Sure, when she can "handle" it. Poor Brooke. Fragile little Brooke. That's all anyone cares about.

JANE
Look, we know this is difficult. But you two are just going to have to talk it through and get past it. In the meantime—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jane reaches into Sam's duffel bag, which is on the coffee table between them, and pulls out her wad of cash.

SAM

Hey!! That's mine!!!

Sam makes a futile grab for the money.

JANE

Mike and I have talked about this.
You can have it back, when we're
convinced that you're not just
going to run off again.

Sam runs her hands through her hair in total frustration. Then she jumps to her feet and snatches up the duffel bag.

SAM

(dripping venom)
You might be able to force me to
live in this house. But you can't
make me pretend not to hate her
guts.

She stomps off towards the stairs. Halfway there, she stops and turns back.

SAM **(CONT'D)**

And just F.Y.I.? We are never—
ever—going to get past this.

Sam runs up the stairs, while Jane sighs, and leans against Mike.

DISSOLVE TO:

EST. KENNEDY HIGH - MORNING

An overcast day.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRLS' RESTROOM

Sam and Lily are sitting on the tuffet.

SAM

...so, now I'm like a prisoner. I
can't believe this is happening to
me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY
(absently)
Uh-huh.

SAM
Lily, you're not even listening to me.

LILY
Oh...I'm sorry, Sam.
(beat)
Josh and I are thinking of seeing a marriage counselor.

Sam immediately refocuses.

SAM
What? This isn't about Josh playing football, is it?

LILY
(grimacing)
I wish. You remember about four years ago—Carmen and I were sleeping over, there was this awful movie on—

Sam's mouth drops.

SAM
Did you—?

LILY
Yeah. Screaming, hysterics, the whole nine yards.

SAM
Oh, my God...how did Josh react?

LILY
Well, he was scared to death, obviously. And then I kinda had to tell him everything.

SAM
Then—that's good, right? It's all out in the open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILY

No, it's not good, Sam. He's reacting exactly the way I was afraid he would—he thinks that if he's not saccharine-sweet twenty-four-seven, I'm going to go bonkers. Which I'm actually going to do if he doesn't quit it. Hence, the marriage counselor.

SAM

I'm sorry, Lily. I'm sure the two of you are going to be fine.

Sam puts an arm around her shoulder and hugs her.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS - LATER

Sam, Brooke and Harrison are all sitting as far away from each other as possible, forming a rough equilateral triangle. Osbourne is, as usual, leading a meandering, philosophical discussion.

OSBOURNE

...Ms. Cherry, I believe that we can discuss the moral failings of politicians without resorting to specific examples, which shall only invite lawsuits to be filed against the school.

MARY CHERRY

Just tryin' to help. Ya know, Mama knows where all the skeletons are.

OSBOURNE

I appreciate that, Ms. Cherry. Now—

All heads turn as the classroom door bangs open, and Carmen rushes in.

CARMEN

(sheepish)
Sorry I'm late. I got...held up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSBOURNE

(dryly)

Well, I'm sure whatever it was was far more important than my meager instruction.

Carmen takes a seat as unobtrusively as possible.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

Now, as I was saying... We've covered moral ambiguity as it concerns public figures. Now, let's talk about it in, say, the typical high school student.

LILY

Us?

OSBOURNE

There's no moral ambiguity in your life, Mrs. Ford?

LILY

Well...

OSBOURNE

I assure you, Mrs. Ford, I have no interest in tawdry details. This is merely a general discussion of morals and character.

BROOKE

(jumping in)

You know, everyone makes mistakes. I don't think that necessarily makes you a bad person.

Sam narrows her eyes at Brooke.

SAM

I think depends on how big the mistake is. There's a difference between skipping a class, and, and...stealing someone's boyfriend.

BROOKE

(pointedly)

Some situations are more complicated than that. It's not always black and white.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

Sometimes it is black and white.
You know, right and wrong?

BROOKE

Well, maybe sometimes there's a
gray area, and things just get out
of control!

SAM

Maybe some people like to tell
themselves there's a gray area, so
they don't have to feel guilty
about—!

The increasingly heated exchange is abruptly cut off by the
school bell.

OSBOURNE

Well...this certainly has been
interesting. Please remember that
essays on the mass media's
influence on political scandal are
due tomorrow. Dismissed.

As the kids file out:

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

Miss McPherson?

Sam lingers behind, fidgeting.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

That was quite a performance, Miss
McPherson.

SAM

I'm sorry, Mr. Osbourne.

OSBOURNE

I do believe I detected a certain
note of hostility?

SAM

I understand, you don't want me to
bring my personal problems to
class.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

OSBOURNE

On the contrary, Miss McPherson. Though at first blush this might appear to be more within Ms. Ross' purview, you are free to bring whatever perspective you wish to this class. I appreciate stimulating discussion.

(beat)

That does not mean, however, that I am willing to referee a catfight. Am I clear?

SAM

Yes, sir.

OSBOURNE

(waving her away)

Carry on, then.

As Sam leaves...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAFETERIA - NOON

Brooke is mulling over the menu choices when Lily comes up to her.

BROOKE

Oh, hey, how are you doing?

LILY

Good, better. We—Josh and I are thinking about getting some professional help.

BROOKE

You mean, like a therapist? Lily, I think that's a great idea.

LILY

Really?

BROOKE

Yes! They can really help you sort out your problems. All right, I admit in my case, I had to be dragged kicking and screaming to see one. But it was still a good thing. You know...

(beat)

...uh, never mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY

What?

BROOKE

I was thinking maybe my dad knew someone. But whoever he and Mom were seeing, obviously they weren't very good.

LILY

Oh.

BROOKE

Hey, you and Josh have something really special going. Okay, maybe our parents had screwed-up marriages, but we are clearly smarter than they are, right?

They both break out in laughter.

LILY

So, what about you? How are you holding up?

BROOKE

You mean, am I going to go jump off the roof?

LILY

What?

BROOKE

(shocked)

You mean...someone didn't tell you?

LILY

Tell me what? Brooke, what are you talking about?

BROOKE

I...I almost did something really stupid. Look, I don't want to get into it here. Can we talk later?

LILY

Sure, of course. Why don't you call me after school?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BROOKE
 (beaming)
 Thanks.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

Lily sets her tray down at one of the tables and takes a seat. Sam, sitting across from her, drums her fingers on the table until Lily looks up.

LILY
 What?

SAM
 (annoyed)
 You tell me, Miss Judas. I saw you talking to her.

Lily glances across the room to where Brooke is sitting.

LILY
 Sam...

SAM
 You're my best friend!

LILY
 I thought Harrison was your best friend.

SAM
 Harrison is a dead man walking—I just haven't figured out how yet. I don't wanna talk about him. I wanna talk about you, and the Slut Queen of Kennedy over there.

LILY
 (sighs)
 Sam, please don't talk like that.

SAM
 You know what she did! How can you be on her side?!

LILY
 I'm not on her side. Sam, please. Don't drag me into this. I told Brooke, and I'm telling you—I'm not choosing sides.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

Lily, come on! You barely know her! I mean, what do you owe her, anyway?!

LILY

(heated)

Sam, she was there for me—!

Lily breaks off and looks away, immediately regretting her outburst.

SAM

...and I wasn't.

(burying her face)

God, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. If I'd known...

LILY

I know. I didn't mean anything by it. But, please, Sam, I'm asking you to respect my feelings in this.

SAM

(grousing)

You've been my friend a lot longer than you've been hers...

Lily looks at her reproachfully. Sam holds up her hands in surrender.

SAM (CONT'D)

Okay, okay—this is me respecting your feelings.

LILY

Thank you.

SAM

I don't have to like it, though.

Lily just rolls her eyes at her.

CUT TO:

INT. JOSH AND LILY'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Lily emerges from the kitchen with the phone cradled under her chin, while trying to pop the lid off of a jar with both hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY
Yes, I'm listening, Brooke... Uh-huh...

Suddenly her eyes go wide.

LILY (CONT'D)
You did WHAT???

Thus distracted, she goes walking right into—and over—the back of the sofa, tumbling out of sight.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BROOKE'S ROOM

Brooke, sitting on her bed, listens with a quizzical expression on her face.

BROOKE
Lily? Lily, are you all right?

Meanwhile, Lily picks herself up off the floor, settling onto the sofa.

LILY
I'm fine. Are you all right??

BROOKE
I...guess so.

LILY
What happened??

BROOKE
Dad showed up, somehow, but...I think I kinda talked myself out of it before that. Anyway, don't worry, I'm not going to go jogging on the freeway or anything.

LILY
Well, I hope not, Brooke! Listen, if you're ever feeling like that again, and I mean even for a split second, you call me, okay?

BROOKE
Yeah, okay.

LILY
I mean it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE
(grinning)
Okay, okay, I promise.

LILY
Good. Hey, how's your essay
coming?

BROOKE
The media and politics thing?
It's done—I turned it in to Mr.
Osbourne before class this
morning.

LILY
Show-off.

BROOKE
Well, it was either do the essay
last night, or sit in my room and
slowly go insane.

LILY
Hey, remember—

BROOKE
I know, okay.

Mike raps on the doorframe, and pokes his head through the
slightly ajar door.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
Oop—parental sighting. Gotta go.

Brooke hangs up the phone, and looks at Mike expectantly. He
swings the door open to reveal Jane standing next to him.

MIKE
Can we come in? We really need to
talk.

Brooke groans, and falls over onto the bed.

CUT TO:

EXT. MCQUEEN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sam is trudging up the walk, when Harrison steps out from
behind some foliage and catches her by the elbow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sam... HARRISON

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. BROOKE'S ROOM

Brooke is sitting on her bed, hands folded, with Mike sitting across from her, and Jane standing next to him.

MIKE

Now, I know things are going to be difficult for a while. But sooner or later, Sam is going to calm down.

BROOKE

Dad, I really don't think so.

JANE

Honey, we know it's hard, but...we think you take the first step.

BROOKE

What?

JANE

Apologize to Sam.

Brooke starts to say something, but Jane overrides her.

JANE (CONT'D)

We're not saying to make any elaborate...act of contrition, just...explain to her that it didn't mean anything, that it was just one mistake...

Brooke goes ashen at that, and Jane peers at her closely.

JANE (CONT'D)

It...was just one mistake...wasn't it?

Brooke hides her eyes behind her hand.

JANE (CONT'D)

Oh...

MIKE

Brooke, how...long have you been...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE
(sighs)
Since before school started.

MIKE
You and Harrison have been...for—
(counting)
—two months.

BROOKE
Yeah.

JANE
Well, obviously you can't continue
this relationship.

Mike stands up and takes Jane by the arm.

MIKE
Can I talk to you for a second?

He leads her out of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. MCQUEEN HOUSE

Meanwhile, Sam is standing on the walk, glaring at Harrison.

SAM
Oh, you really like living
dangerously, don't you?

HARRISON
Sam, I just want to explain—

SAM
Explain?! No, thank you—I saw
all the explanation I needed.

HARRISON
Please, I...I never wanted to hurt
you, Sam.

She stares at him, incredulous, shaking with rage.

SAM
(voice breaking)
You...you never wanted to hurt
me?! God damn you, Harrison!! I
was happy!! And then you...you
come along with your declarations
of love, and, and...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM (CONT'D)

How dare you say you never wanted
to hurt me!! Why did you ever
have to tell me you loved me?!
You bastard!!

She pulls the backpack off her shoulder and swings it at him,
knocking him to the ground.

SAM (CONT'D)

Don't...ever...come near me again.

She storms off, leaving him sitting on the ground, miserable.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Mike and Jane are conferencing in hushed tones just outside
Brooke's door.

MIKE

I thought we decided a few months
ago that we weren't going to tell
our daughters who they could and
couldn't see.

JANE

This is different. This isn't
just some guy—this is Harrison.
How is this relationship supposed
to heal if Brooke is constantly
throwing Harrison in Sam's face?

Behind them, the door opens, and Brooke moves past them and
towards the stairs.

MIKE

(calling)
Honey, we're not finished.

BROOKE

(not looking back)
Yes we are.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brooke jogs down the stairs, as Mike and Jane appear on the
landing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Brooke—

Near the foot of the stairs, she stops and looks back up at them.

BROOKE

Look, I love Harrison. And he loves me. And if we keep seeing each other, that's going to be our decision.

Brooke turns ahead again—and comes nearly face-to-face with Sam, who has come through the front door in time to hear her. Sam, a jumble of rage and grief, just shakes her head and runs up the stairs, brushing past Brooke.

CUT TO:

INT. JOSH AND LILY'S APARTMENT

Lily is curled up on the sofa, watching the television.

INSERT: THE TV SCREEN

The television is showing a commercial for—what else?—a marriage counselor.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Six months ago, Jack and Jill were fighting like cats and dogs! But now, they're happy as clams, thanks to Dr. Donahue's patented techniques. Let us put the bliss back in your wedded bliss—call today!

Lily considers it for a moment, and then reaches for a pad and pen, and jots the number down.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN DINING ROOM - EVENING

A grim scene: Mike, Jane, Brooke and Sam sitting around the table, eating in complete silence.

MIKE

So, does anyone want to talk about their day?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE/SAM
(simultaneously)
No.

The sound of each other's voices send the two girls glaring at each other.

MIKE
Come on...nothing happened today?

SAM
We had an interesting discussion
in social studies today...

JANE
(hopeful)
Really? What was it about?

Sam turns a cold eye on Brooke.

SAM
(grating)
People's lack of morals.

JANE
(annoyed)
Sam, if that's the way you're
going to be, maybe you shouldn't
be sitting at the table.

SAM
Fine.

Sam throws her napkin down, scoots her chair back with a sharp screech, and walks away.

The phone rings, and Mike gets up.

MIKE
I'll get it.

He steps over to the phone and picks it up.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Hello?... What—wait, hang on...
Kelly? Slow down!

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. KELLY FOSTER'S CONDO

where Brooke's mother is pacing, incensed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KELLY

No, I will not slow down! How dare you keep me in the dark about our daughter?!

MIKE

(flustered)
Wait, I wasn't trying to hide anything! I swear, it's just been really hectic around here.

BROOKE

(getting up)
Is that mom?

Brooke walks over and takes the phone from her father.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

(into the phone)
Mom?

KELLY

Brooke! What happened to you?!

BROOKE

I'm fine, Mom, really.

KELLY

It doesn't sound that way to me!
I think I should come down there.

BROOKE

Please don't. I'm really all right.

KELLY

If you're playing around with guns, you're not all right!

BROOKE

I wasn't—how did you even find out about that?

KELLY

That's the other thing—I have to get an e-mail from Sam to find out that you're in trouble?!

BROOKE

You...what?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Steaming, Brooke thrusts the phone at Mike and storms off.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sam is typing away when Brooke throws the door open.

BROOKE
How dare you e-mail my mother!!

SAM
(mock innocently)
What, was it a secret? Sorry.

Brooke seems ready to explode.

BROOKE
OOOOH!!!

She tromps off, slamming the door shut behind her. Sam has a good laugh before going back to her work.

DISSOLVE TO:

EST. MCQUEEN HOUSE - MORNING

Warm, glowing sunlight bathes the house.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S ROOM

Sam yawns, stretches, throws back the covers and rolls out of bed. Bleary-eyed, she stumbles across the room to her desk, where her laptop is set up. She looks down at a blank screen—which wakes her up instantly.

SAM
(gasping)
What? Oh, no, no, no...

In an increasing panic, she taps at the keys, to no avail. The only thing alive on the machine is a solid red light in one corner, which she peers at wonderingly.

SAM (CONT'D)
Battery? How can the battery
be...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She bends down and looks under the desk, to find the AC cord lying loose on the floor. With a snarl, she straightens up, clenching her fists.

SAM (CONT'D)
BROOKE!!!

She goes storming out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sam emerges from her room just in time to see Brooke disappear into the bathroom, and runs after her.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brooke is standing at the mirror when Sam bursts in, ready to kill.

SAM
YOU!!!

Brooke turns around, an innocent expression plastered on her face.

BROOKE
(looking around)
Me?

SAM
You unplugged my computer!!!

BROOKE
My, Sam, I don't know what you're talking about.

Sam takes a menacing step forward.

SAM
Why, you little...! I worked half the night on that essay!

BROOKE
(mocking)
Aww, the one for Mr. Osbourne?
Did you lose it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With a scream, Sam rushes her.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Responding to the commotion, Mike and Jane come running up the stairs, getting to the top just in time to see a plastic bottle of something-or-other come flying through the bathroom door and bounce off the wall beyond. Exchanging a glance, they high-tail it for the bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

When Mike and Jane get to the bathroom door, they see the girls squared off against each other, viciously throwing things at each other's heads.

JANE

Sam! Stop it!

MIKE

Brooke!!

Not listening, Sam hurls the last bottle in her hand, and then runs straight for Brooke, slamming her up against the wall and getting her hands up around her throat. Mike and Jane are both there in a second; it takes both of them to pry Sam off, Jane holding her back in a bear hug while Mike supports Brooke, who is bent over, gasping and rubbing her throat. Jane holds Sam by the arms and shakes her furiously.

JANE

(outraged)

SAM!

SAM

(shaking)

She ruined my homework assignment!!

BROOKE

You had no right going to my mom and telling her everything!!

SAM

You had no right sleeping with Harrison!!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE
(defiant)
Yeah, well, Harrison loves me, not
you, and I'll sleep with him
anytime I feel like!!!

Sam lunges at Brooke again, and Jane can barely hold her back.

MIKE
THAT'S ENOUGH, BOTH OF YOU!!!

The girls subside, just a bit. Mike nods his head at Jane, who turns Sam around and forcibly pushes her out of the bathroom. Then he turns to Brooke.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(forced calm)
Brooke, tell me, please, that I
didn't just hear you say that you
would sleep with Harrison anytime
you felt like it?

She thinks that over.

BROOKE
(gamely)
Okay. You didn't just hear me say
that I'd sleep with Harrison
anytime I felt like it.

MIKE
Brooke!

BROOKE
I'm sorry, Dad! I didn't mean it
that way. I meant...I'm tired of
feeling guilty about this.
Harrison does love me, and Sam is
not going to get in the way of
that anymore.

She stands there, hands on hips, defiant. Mike, knowing intransigence when he sees it, just rubs his eyes tiredly.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EST. KENNEDY HIGH - MORNING

A bright, shiny day.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Harrison is walking down the corridor when he is grabbed and spun into a quiet nook by—as it turns out—Brooke.

HARRISON

Brooke, w-what are you doing?

BROOKE

Don't you think we need to talk?

HARRISON

(looking downcast)

I'm not...sure what there is to say.

She holds out her hands helplessly.

BROOKE

You mean—your feelings for me have changed now?

HARRISON

No! Of course not. But, after everything—

BROOKE

I love you, Harrison. And I'm not going to let Sam control my life anymore.

She presses up against him, but he pulls away and holds her at a safe distance.

HARRISON

Brooke, please...

BROOKE

What?! Are you afraid Sam's going to see us? It's not a secret anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRISON

I just—I don't want to keep hurting her.

Brooke moves in again, wrapping her arms around him.

BROOKE

She's just going to have to—

Something makes Harrison look away sharply; and, sure enough, when Brooke turns her head to follow his gaze, Sam is standing in the corridor beyond, staring at them with an anguished look on her face. Then she tears herself away, walking off quickly. Instinctively, Harrison disengages himself from Brooke and takes a few steps after Sam before stopping himself. He turns back, too late: bleakly, Brooke waves at him dismissively, and runs off in the other direction.

CUT TO:

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - LATER

Josh and Lily are sitting on a comfortable couch in a luxurious office.

JOSH

I can't believe we skipped school for this.

LILY

(hushed)

It's the only time I could get an appointment, Josh. And shhh—she might hear you.

JOSH

Lil, we've been talking for forty-five minutes; she hasn't said three words. And now she's got some miracle solution? I think this is a scam.

LILY

I admit it seems a little strange, but let's at least hear her out. Okay?

JOSH

If she ever says anything.

Lily gives him a dirty look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSH (CONT'D)

Okay, okay...

The therapist walks in.

LILY

Dr. Donahue, are you sure you can help us?

DR. DONAHUE

Of course, Lily. It won't be easy, but I'm confident that, in time, you and Josh here will be able to move past all your problems. Now, if you'll follow me, I think I've found the ideal therapeutic method for you two.

Josh and Lily get up and obediently follow Dr. Donahue out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. THERAPY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The doctor leads Josh and Lily down a corridor and past a series of glass-enclosed cubicles. In each cubicle is a couple, all of whom are fighting in various ways: boxing, wrestling, judo.

LILY

Dr. Donahue, why are all these people fighting?

DR. DONAHUE

They're working through their anger issues.

JOSH

I hope we don't have to do that. I'm not going to start throwing punches at Lily.

DR. DONAHUE

Oh, don't worry. You won't be doing anything like that.

JOSH

Whew.

EFFECT CUT TO:

INT. A THERAPY CUBICLE

where Josh and Lily are standing—decked out in full fencing gear, and holding foils.

JOSH

Okay, I feel stupid.

DR. DONAHUE

It'll pass, trust me. This is the perfect environment for you and Lily to work through your problems.

JOSH

Lily, are you sure about this?

LILY

Let's at least try it, Josh.

(to Dr. Donahue)

I'm sorry.

DR. DONAHUE

No, no, this is exactly what you need to be doing. Lily, how do you feel about Josh's reluctance?

LILY

Well...I mean, I understand. Sometimes Josh doesn't like to try new things.

JOSH

(interposing)

What? I try new things lots of times. Even when they're stupid.

DR. DONAHUE

So, Josh, how do you feel about Lily's opinion.

JOSH

Look, every week with her, it's something—some new...fad, or cause, or—

LILY

Wait a minute, what do you mean, "stupid"?? My ideas aren't stupid!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSH

Yeah, like the time you wanted to replace all the water fountains in the school with organic bird-feeders?

LILY

That was not stupid! It would've been beneficial to migratory patterns!

She takes a swipe at him with her foil.

JOSH

Hey! Don't take it out on me, just because your ideas are whacko!

He knocks her foil aside with his.

LILY

My ideas are not whacko! You're just looking for an excuse to settle back into your non-threatening, non-stimulating, non-intellectual existence!

JOSH

Oh, yeah?!

LILY

Yeah!!!

And, just like that, they are off into a full-fledged fencing match, while Dr. Donahue looks on, nodding her approval.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Josh and Lily are walking back to their car, rather subdued.

LILY

Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

He sneaks a peek at her.

JOSH

I dunno. What are you thinking?

Lily goes a couple more steps, and finally spits it out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY
Man, was that a waste of time.

JOSH
(relieved)
Completely. Totally.

LILY
(rolling her eyes)
All right, maybe that idea was a
little whacko.

JOSH
Lil...do you really think I don't
want to try new things?

LILY
Sometimes I think so, yeah.

JOSH
I just need time to adjust, that's
all.

They go on for a few moments in silence.

LILY
You know, I still have a problem.

JOSH
Lily...

LILY
I'm serious. Normal people don't
have panic attacks. I think...I'm
going to have to find a real
doctor.

JOSH
Hey, I'll always be there with
you, wherever you need to go.

LILY
(hugging his arm)
I know.

JOSH
Man, school would've been better
than this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILY
(laughing)
Really. I bet everyone else is
having more fun than we are.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS

For once, the students are sitting in neat rows, silent, bent over quiz papers, while Osbourne works at his own desk.

A timer on Osbourne's desk dings, and he looks up.

OSBOURNE
Pencils down, please, and pass
your papers forward.

As the kids are doing that:

CARMEN
Mr. Osbourne? I thought you said
that tests like this were a waste
of time.

Osbourne rises from his seat, and circles around his desk to his customary place in front of the students.

OSBOURNE
"A colossal waste of time" was my
exact phrasing, Miss Ferrera.
Unfortunately, the administration
of the district does not share
that sentiment, and thus I am
occasionally forced to produce
stacks of quiz papers.

BROOKE
But—

Osbourne turns his head in Brooke's direction.

OSBOURNE
Yes, Miss McQueen?

BROOKE
I—I'm just not sure the quiz was
fair.

OSBOURNE
(neutrally)
Oh? How so?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE
(struggling)
Well...it just...there didn't seem
to be any clear-cut answers to any
of the questions.

OSBOURNE
Quite correct, Miss McQueen. All
of the questions required the use
of your own judgment.
(to the entire class)
Therefore, I shall review your
papers, and should your answers
make a modicum of sense, you shall
receive full credit.
(beat)
Just because the administration
requires these little tests, does
not mean you should miss an
opportunity to expand your ability
to reason.

He reaches behind him, and gathers up another stack of papers.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)
And, fortunately, I was able to
use the time to finish grading
your essays.

Osbourne walks up and down the aisles between desks, handing
out papers to the kids.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)
I fear some of you may be
disappointed with your marks.
However, I am quite strict in the
criteria which I use; and Miss
McQueen set the grade curve early.

He stops by Brooke's desk and hands her paper down.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)
Well done, Miss McQueen.

Brooke takes her paper, beams at the "100" on it and tucks it
away. Meanwhile, Sam looks at her "54" and hangs her head.

There is a polite rap on the classroom door; it opens and
George walks in. Osbourne walks up to the teacher's desk to
meet him. George hands Osbourne a small slip of paper, which
Osbourne unfolds and reads.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)
(looking up)
Transferring from Ms. Nishino's
class?

GEORGE
Yeah, my guidance counselor, he
thought I'd do better here.

OSBOURNE
Well. Always room for one more.
I shall expect you tomorrow
morning, Mr. Austin.

GEORGE
Great.

OSBOURNE
There is one thing. Many people
subscribe to the notion that
athletes are somehow inherently
less intellectually capable than
others. I am not one of those
people. I shall expect you to
perform at a high level of
competence while in this class.
Am I clear?

GEORGE
(nodding)
Yes, sir.

OSBOURNE
Good. Tomorrow, then.

Sam just shakes her head in resignation at this exchange. The
bell rings.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)
Class dismissed.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Osbourne emerges from his classroom, with Sam on his heels.

SAM
...please, Mr. Osbourne, please,
it really was a great paper.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM (CONT'D)

But my computer was sabotaged, and I lost it, and I had to recreate the whole thing in, like, half an hour, and I swear if you give me another chance I'll make it even better than it was the first time. Come on, Mr. Osbourne, please give me just this one chance?

OSBOURNE

I'm sincerely sorry, Miss McPherson. But I simply cannot begin making exceptions concerning deadlines. It is a slippery slope which can lead only to class anarchy, and thus I do not intend to step foot on that slope.

SAM

But—

Sam starts to plead her case again, but Osbourne holds up a hand to silence her.

OSBOURNE

There will be many opportunities over the coming months for you to improve your grade, Miss McPherson. The tragedy, as it were, is minor.

Osbourne walks off, leaving Sam standing there with a miserable expression on her face. After a moment, she shakes her head in despair and runs off in the opposite direction.

And a moment after that, Miss Glass appears from around a corner, wearing a satisfied smirk.

GLASS

(sing-song)

I smell trouble...

She sticks her hands in her lab coat pockets and saunters off, humming to herself.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Role reversal: This time, it's Brooke who's pulled aside by Harrison.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE
(tiredly)
Harrison...

HARRISON
I thought you wanted to talk.

BROOKE
You know what I don't want? I
don't want to watch you running
after Sam, time after time.

HARRISON
I'm sorry, okay? I mean, I was in
love with Sam for, I don't even
know how long. I just need a
little time. Okay?

BROOKE
(cautiously)
No more avoiding me? No more
pushing me away?

HARRISON
No... I mean...I just don't know
how comfortable I am with this
right now.

BROOKE
(considers)
I could help with that.

She presses up against him.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
Besides...don't you miss me?

HARRISON
(complaining)
That's not fair.

She wags her eyebrows at him.

BROOKE
(grinning)
I know.

She finds his hand, and leads him off down the corridor.

FADE OUT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END