

Popular: Senior Year
"The Ski Trip"
by
The Wild Pikachu

POPULAR: SENIOR YEAR

THE SKI TRIP

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. CHEMISTRY CLASS - MORNING

SUPER: Monday

The classroom is full, and the atmosphere is, to say the least, tense. Harrison and Natalie are sitting at the same table, but as far apart as they can get. Ditto Brooke and Sam. Sugar Daddy and Carmen are casting furtive glances at each other, Josh and Lily are cuddling together, and George and Mary Cherry look like innocent bystanders, waiting for a bomb to go off.

BROOKE
(hissing under her breath)
That...conniving...little...bitch.

Sam turns towards her slightly.

SAM
(low)
Excuse me?

BROOKE
Oh, not you.
(nodding)
Her.

Sam follows Brooke's gaze.

SAM
(surprised)
Nat?

BROOKE
(glowering)
She's worse than Nicole.

SAM
Not possible.

BROOKE
At least with Nic, you knew exactly where you stood. If she wanted some...thing, she wasn't shy about it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

I hate to break it to you, but Nicole was the queen of back-stabbing, double-dealing deception.

BROOKE

Not with me.

SAM

Except for that time she slept with Josh.

Brooke suddenly realizes what she's doing.

BROOKE

Are we talking?

SAM

No.

A long moment passes.

SAM (CONT'D)

What did Nat do to get you all worked up, anyway?

BROOKE

You don't know? She made a play for Harrison.

SAM

WHAT?!!

Harrison and Natalie turn to find both Brooke and Sam glaring at them. Natalie looks away guiltily, while Harrison groans and buries his head under a book.

Any further conversation is stopped by the entrance of Miss Glass, wearing her ubiquitous lab coat and looking chipper as ever. She takes her place at the head of the room and stares down the class.

GLASS

So, how was everyone's holiday?

Before anyone can answer, she smacks her palm down on the table with a guffaw.

GLASS (CONT'D)

As if I care whether any of you juvenile delinquents had a good holiday! My holidays were just peachy, thanks for asking!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GLASS (CONT'D)

(suddenly ferocious)

All right, kiddies, pop quiz time!

She pulls out a stack of "pop quizzes" that are about an inch thick each—but before she can do anything with them, the door opens and Principal Krupps comes strolling in.

GLASS (CONT'D)

(flustered)

Mr. Krupps!

KRUPPS

At ease, Miss Glass.

(to the class)

Happy New Year, everyone! As you know, the annual senior ski trip is this weekend, so be sure to get those permission slips signed and returned by Wednesday.

He starts to turn to leave, but is seemingly struck by an afterthought:

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Oh—Sam, can you stop by my office when you get a chance?

SAM

(a bit nonplussed)

Sure, Mr. Krupps.

Principal Krupps nods and continues out the door, leaving a minor mystery in his wake.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Josh and Lily are at his open locker. Lily hardly seems able to contain herself.

LILY

(clapping)

Josh, I am so excited! A whole weekend in the mountains!

JOSH

Yeah, I can't wait to get out on those slopes.

He pantomimes a skiing motion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

You don't think skiing is too jock-ish, do you?

LILY

I think skiing is perfect. As long as you don't tackle any trees.

(admonishing)

And you take all necessary precautions to protect the local wildlife. It is their mountain, you know.

JOSH

I know, babe. Hey—you know what's better than skiing?

(grins)

Soaking in the hot tub after.

He gives her a pinch, and she squeals. Just then the hallway becomes crowded: Harrison approaches from one direction, Carmen and Sugar Daddy from another.

LILY

Hey, Harrison, all ready to ski?

HARRISON

(shrugs despondently)

I dunno. I might not go.

LILY

What?!

JOSH

Hey, man, you gotta go.

SUGAR

Missing the ski trip is like, the kiss of death!

CARMEN

Yeah, remember Zach Bovine? The guy who tried running for mayor in '94?

FLASHBACK INSERT

An old edition of the Zapruder Reporter, featuring a photo of a forty-something fellow who is quite obviously the biggest loser ever. The headline screams, "WANNABE MAYOR SKIPPED SR. SKI TRIP; QUILTS RACE IN SHAME".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILY

As much as I detest this kind of
base, mud-slinging kind of
politics, Harrison—
(matter-of-factly)
—if you don't go on the ski trip,
you're screwed.

Harrison's face scrunches up.

HARRISON

(matching Lily's tone)
Tell me something I don't know.

Before anyone can respond, he stuffs his hands in his pockets
and walks off.

WHITE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

ENT. PRINCIPAL KRUPPS' OFFICE - DAY

Krupps is sitting at his desk, busy working on something or other, when there is a rap on the doorframe. He looks up to see Sam standing in the doorway.

KRUPPS
(beckoning)
Ah, Sam! Come in. Close the door.

Sam takes a cautious step into the office, obediently shutting the door behind her, and Krupps motions for her to sit down.

SAM
(sitting)
You wanted to see me, Principal Krupps?

KRUPPS
Yes, indeed. There's a matter of grave importance we need to discuss. Very serious business.

Sam practically sweats bullets at this point.

SAM
Mr. Krupps, I don't know what people are saying about me, but—

KRUPPS
(cutting her off)
Oh, they have been saying, Sam, they have been saying. Principals have ways of hearing things, you know.

Sam looks to be about one syllable from fleeing the school, and probably the country.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)
And I've been hearing very good things about you, Sam. I knew from the moment I laid eyes on you, I said, "Now there's the girl to put your money on, Calvin."

Sam doesn't quite seem to know how to respond to that; so the resulting response is silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

And that's why I knew you were exactly the right person to come to with this.

Finally Sam spots an exploitable opening.

SAM

Uh—Mr. Krupps? Come to with what?

Suddenly Krupps realizes he's gotten ahead of himself. He leans over the desk conspiratorially.

KRUPPS

You understand, Sam, this is extremely confidential.

Sam nods, wide-eyed.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Oh—and this is all completely off the record, of course.

SAM

(still nodding)
Absolutely.

KRUPPS

All right.

He reaches into a desk drawer and pulls out a file folder with "CONFIDENTIAL" stamped in red across the cover.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

I'm sure you heard that Lindsay Robey transferred before the break.

Sam's brow furls in thought.

SAM

Yeah—she went into an independent-study program, right?

KRUPPS

That's the official story. Almost nobody know the real reason Miss Robey left.

He pushes the file across the desk. With no small amount of trepidation, Sam picks it up and carefully opens it. She reads for only a few seconds before her eyes bug out, and she looks up at him in disbelief.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM
 (incredulous)
 You're serious?? The Treasurer of
 the Student Body Fund? Check
kiting?!

KRUPPS
 It's very serious, Sam. Needless
 to say, the Board was very...
 disturbed.

SAM
 (idly, reading)
 I can imagine.

She closes the folder.

SAM (CONT'D)
 But—with all due respect, Mr.
 Krupps—

KRUPPS
 (smiling benevolently)
 You don't understand what this has
 to do with you.

SAM
 Uh...no, Sir...

Then a thought strikes her, and her eyes go wide again. She
 doesn't even have to say anything; Krupps nods at her
 reaction.

KRUPPS
 Exactly, Sam.

SAM
 B-but—

KRUPPS
 No buts, Sam. The General Fund
 needs a new Treasurer. The Board
 is very leery right now. There's
 some sentiment for putting a
 faculty member in charge. But
 traditionally it's always been a
 student's job, and as you know, I
 am a man a tradition.

Whether she knows this or not, Sam is back to just nodding
 along.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

(earnestly)

There's no other choice, Sam. It has to be you. Frankly, you're the most trustworthy student in the whole school. And, with your track record, you're the only student I can sell to the Board.

It's clear that Krupps' stroking of Sam's ego is having an effect.

SAM

Mr. Krupps... I appreciate the offer, I really do—

He cuts her off before she can get to the "but."

KRUPPS

Please do this, Sam. I know that your job puts a great deal of strain on your schedule. I promise I'll do whatever I can to make things easier for you.

SAM

(wavering)

Well...I really don't have time after school...

KRUPPS

I completely understand. I'll clear school time for you, if necessary.

Sam's face wavers indecisively.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

You'd be doing a great service for Kennedy. And for me.

SAM

I guess I could take some time during lunch—

Krupps slides through that barest opening with lightning speed.

KRUPPS

It's settled, then! I'll make the announcement right away, and inform the Board.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Before Sam can react much at all, Krupps is around his desk and pumping her hand.

KRUPSS

Thank you, Sam. You have my personal gratitude, and I'm sure the entire school's, as well.

Sam seems to be just now catching up.

SAM

Uh...well, I'm happy to help the school...

Krupps half-pulls Sam out of her seat, ushering her to the door and out.

KRUPPS

(calling)

Shirley? Give Sam here a pass to her next class.

He stops Sam just long enough to shake her hand again.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Thank you again for agreeing to do this. I know you're the perfect person for the job.

And with that, they part ways.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS - MOMENTS LATER.

Class in progress. Osbourne has the floor.

OSBOURNE

...now, if you'll all find the section marked, "A Study in Cultural Friction"—I believe it's on page three twenty-seven—

The door opens and Sam not-quite-rushes in.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

Ah, Miss McPherson. Tardy?

She hands him her pass.

SAM

Sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSBOURNE
 (reading the pass)
 Well. I can't very well trump
 Principal Krupps for your
 attention, can I? Consider the
 tardy erased from your record.

Somewhat embarrassed, Sam takes her seat. But before
 Osbourne can resume the lesson, the P.A. speaker chimes.

KRUPPS (V.O.)
 (over the speaker)
 Attention, please. As you know,
 our Student Body General Fund
 Treasurer, Lindsay Robey,
 transferred away from Kennedy
 before Christmas. I am, at this
 time, pleased to announce that,
 effective immediately, Sam
 McPherson will be taking over as
 Student Body Fund Treasurer.

The muted reaction in the classroom only serves to further
 embarrass Sam.

KRUPPS (V.O.)
 I'm sure everyone knows Sam as one
 of our best and brightest here at
 Kennedy. And I'm sure she can
 count on everone's complete
 support. Congratulations, Sam!

The speaker clicks off. Brooke, Lily, Carmen and Natalie
 share a disturbed look—and then Brooke shares it with
 Osbourne, a fatalistic shake of the head that answers his
 unspoken question.

MARY CHERRY
 (indignant)
 Hell's bells! Treasurer? That job
 oughta be mine! Why, money's
 second nature to a Cherry!

LILY
 (skeptically)
 Yeah, spending it, Mary Cherry, not
managing it.

Mary Cherry subsides with a huff; Osbourne retakes control of
 the class.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OSBOURNE
 (neutrally)
 Yes, congratulations, Miss
 McPherson. Now, if could all
 continue with "A Study in Cultural
 Friction"...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS - LATER

The end of class: everyone is filing out the door; while
 Osbourne watches them pass from behind his desk.

OSBOURNE
 Miss McQueen—can I see you for a
 moment?

Unnoticed, Brooke touches Lily's arm, and when the crowd
 clears, Osbourne finds them both standing before him.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)
 (unperturbed)
 I assume by your presence here,
 Mrs. Ford, that you're aware of
 the subject of this conversation?

Lily nods grimly.

LILY
 I'm afraid so, Mr. Osbourne.

OSBOURNE
 Very well. Miss McQueen, some
 weeks ago you requested my silence
 regarding Miss McPherson's
 problem—which I agreed to in
 order that you and your friends
 might persuade her to change her
 behavior.

He leans forward, lacing his fingers together on the desk.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)
 I believe you're now going to tell
 me that your attempts at
 persuasion have been unsuccessful.

Brooke shuffles her feet, downcast.

BROOKE
 I've tried—
 (gesturing)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE (CONT'D)

—we've tried. She won't listen to us. Hardly anyone sees her outside school. Her whole life is work and raving—

LILY

(clarifying)

She goes to raves. Parties. She's not—you know, raving mad or anything.

OSBOURNE

(drolly)

Yes, Mrs. Ford. I wouldn't recommend use of the word "raving" in that context, but I understand the distinction.

(to Brooke)

Please continue, Miss McQueen.

BROOKE

I've been asking around—

LILY

(aside to Brooke)

You have?

Brooke throws a slight nod to Lily, and continues on.

BROOKE

She's definitely buying on campus. Pills, I heard. Uppers...

OSBOURNE

Amphetemines.

BROOKE

(nods)

Maybe designer drugs—I'm not sure.

(suddenly embarrassed)

I mean, it's, it's not like I—

Osbourne holds up a reassuring hand.

OSBOURNE

You are a popular and influential student, Miss McQueen. Trust me, your..."working knowledge" of this school casts no aspersions upon your own character.

Brooke seems greatly relieved at that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

I trust you also understand that I'll now have to bring Miss McPherson's activities to the attention of higher authorities.

Brooke gives him a sad, tiny nod of acquiescence, which in turn draws concern from Lily.

LILY

Brooke?

Brooke turns to her wearily.

BROOKE

I can't, Lily. I tried keeping it a secret—it just ate me up inside. I— There's nothing we can do for Sam. We just have to face it.

LILY

But... Brooke, it just seems so...

OSBOURNE

Miss McQueen is correct, Mrs. Ford. I applaud your efforts to aid her step-sister, but in certain circumstances the intervention must be staged by those with the power to enforce it.

(to Brooke)

I appreciate your candor, Miss McQueen. I give you my word, I'll do whatever is necessary to get Miss McPherson the help she needs.

(beat)

And...whatever Principal Krupps may think—I believe you have proven to be one of Kennedy's "best and brightest" yourself. I certainly wouldn't wish for more in a student.

Brooke flushes at this praise.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

(back to business)

Now—you should both hurry to your next class.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The girls look up at the clock and realize he's right. Lily is first out the door.

LILY
(calling back)
Thanks, Mr. Osbourne!

Brooke lingers a moment.

BROOKE
(echoing)
Thanks, Mr. Osbourne.

Then, significantly, catching his eye:

BROOKE (CONT'D)
Really. Thanks.

Osbourne tilts his head in acknowledgement, as Brooke hurries off after Lily.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - NOON

Krupps is walking in the general direction of the cafeteria when Osbourne falls into step beside him.

OSBOURNE
Have you a moment, Mr. Krupps?

KRUPPS
Only half a moment, Eric. Is there something on your mind?

OSBOURNE
I have some...concerns...about one of my students. I believe it warrants discussion at length, though.

KRUPPS
My lunch is spoken for, I'm afraid. Why don't you drop by this afternoon after class? I'll make sure I have some time free for you.

OSBOURNE
Certainly. Thank you, Mr. Krupps.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS

Of course, Eric, of course. I
always have time for members of my
team.

That signals the end of the conversation. Osbourne turns into the Teachers' Dining Room, while Krupps continues on towards the cafeteria.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

Lunch is in full swing. Sam enters the crowded space, but instead of heading directly for the lunch line, she scans the room warily. It's clear that Sam, who was never the center of a crowd to begin with, feels even more out of place now that she's alienating herself from most of her friends.

Brooke spots Sam, and unobtrusively nudges Lily, who in turn stands up and waves. But just then Mr. Krupps enters the cafeteria, and also waves across the room at Sam.

KRUPPS

Sam!

SAM

(acknowledging)
Mr. Krupps.

Krupps beckons her to come to him.

KRUPPS

Are you free to discuss those
details?

SAM

Ah...of course. Whenever you are.

KRUPPS

(smiling)
Terrific. Would you join me for
lunch in the Teachers' Dining Room?

The hubbub of the lunchroom, which had lulled a bit upon Krupps' entrance, shuts off completely. Everyone has stopped whatever they were doing and is staring at each other, at Sam, and Krupps in awe, or amazement, or disbelief—and everyone is thinking exactly the same thing.

Sam, however, seems to take only marginal notice of the attention.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

I...well...

Sam puts on an encouraging smile and nods, where upon Krupps puts a paternal arm around her shoulder and guides her from the room. Once they are gone, the crowd, the crowd slowly begins to thaw.

LILY

(sitting down blindly)

Did...did he just...?

Brooke just nods, stunned.

BROOKE

He did...

Mary Cherry comes rushing up, all a-tither.

MARY CHERRY

My Gawd, did y'all see that?!

LILY

(numb)

We saw.

MARY CHERRY

Status at this here school don't go that high! Why, that—that—that makes the Glamazons at their most dizzying heights look like—like the Tuna sisters!

Harrison walks up, carrying a sack lunch, oblivious. Just in case, he sits down as far away from Brooke as he can get. But she's too preoccupied to notice.

HARRISON

Hey, guys...what's going on? Why is everyone acting like an earthquake hit?

MARY CHERRY

Oh, there's been a earthquake, Joe! A social earthquake o' super magnitude!

HARRISON

Huh?

Before anyone can elaborate, Sugar Daddy and Carmen join the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARMEN

We heard! Is it true? It's not true, is it?

MARY CHERRY

Oh, it's as true as Mama's revolvin' lines o' credit!

HARRISON

(getting annoyed)
Would somebody mind telling me what everyone's talking about?!

SUGAR

Yo, man, you didn't hear?

Harrison groans.

LILY

(matter-of-factly)
Principal Krupps invited Sam to have lunch in the Teachers' Dining Room.

That makes him blink.

HARRISON

Impossible. No student's ever eaten in the Teachers' Dining Room.

(considers)

I don't think any student's ever even seen the inside of the Teachers' Dining Room.

CARMEN

(foreboding)
Until today.

BROOKE

It's unprecedented.
(looking up at them)
Mary Cherry's right. Sam's been awarded status that...that I couldn't imagine achieving.

HARRISON

(caustic)
I didn't know you were back to calculating your social status, Brooke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Brooke glares at him and starts to say something, but she catches sight of Mary Cherry hovering, and instead turns to Lily.

BROOKE

Gee, Lily, I guess we'll just have to miss that special one-hour, fifty-percent-off sale they're having at Sak's today. We'd have to leave—

(checks her watch)

—now to get there before it was over.

LILY

Huh?

Brooke kicks her under the table.

LILY (CONT'D)

Ow! Oh—yeah.

Meanwhile, Mary Cherry's ears have pricked up like a bunny's.

MARY CHERRY

(covering)

Well, y'all gots to excuse me now, I gots, um, errands to run! That's it! Buh-bye!

And she's off like a shot. Lily turns to Brooke.

LILY

The was cruel, Brooke. Necessary, but cruel.

Brooke shrugs gamely, then motions for everyone to sit down. Once they are huddled around the table, she sneaks a peak around, to make sure nobody around is paying attention to them.

BROOKE

(takes a breath)

Okay. The thing is, Mr. Osbourne—he knows about Sam.

There is the beginning of a general outcry, which Brooke quickly hushes.

CARMEN

How'd he find out?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BROOKE
(shrugs)
I told him.

Another outcry: harder to quell this time, but Brooke manages without drawing undue attention.

CARMEN
Are you nuts? What did you do
that for?

BROOKE
I had to talk to somebody. I just
had to.

She catches Harrison glaring at her.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
I mean, an adult. A non-parental-
unit adult. Someone who'd know
what to do. So before
Thanksgiving I went and told Mr.
Osbourne everything.

CARMEN
(hushed)
What happened?

BROOKE
He wanted to go to Principal
Krupps right away. I convinced
him to hold off for a while. I
thought we—thought you guys might
be able to get through to Sam.

Carmen whistles appreciatively.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
What?

CARMEN
(pointedly)
You convinced Mr. Osbourne?

LILY
She's right, Brooke. Sam's not
the only one with pull around
here.

Brooke seems flustered.

BROOKE
It's nothing, really. He's...easy
to talk to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

HARRISON

So, I guess he wants to spill the beans now?

BROOKE

That's the problem. Sam's become—

CARMEN

Principal's Pet?

BROOKE

More. So what happens when Mr. Osbourne tries to tell Principal Krupps that she's got a drug problem?

A handful of frowns appear around the table. Then Lily sighs.

LILY

Like you said, he's an adult. And a faculty member. He can probably hold his own.

Brooke doesn't look reassured.

BROOKE

I hope so.

CUT TO:

INT. TEACHERS' DINING ROOM

When Mr. Krupps ushers Sam into the Teachers' Dining Room, the reaction is not as pronounced, but just as palpable: every pair of eyes turn on them. Unlike the kids, however, most of the faculty quickly return to their business, at least overtly. Krupps escorts Sam to a generous table along the back wall.

KRUPPS

I hope you don't mind working though lunch, Sam.

SAM

Oh—no, Sir, Mr. Krupps. With journalists that's the norm, I've found out.

They sit down, with Krupps holding Sam's chair.

KRUPPS

Educators, too, unfortunately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As if on cue, a waitress-type person emerges from some inner sanctum, carrying two steaming plates. She sets the plates down in front of them; Sam can't help salivating at the sight.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)
(easily)
Privileges of rank. Dig in.

Sam obliges, while Krupps lays a number of files out on the table.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Brooke has finished her lunch and is headed for the Novak when Natalie steps into the hallway behind her.

NATALIE
Brooke?

Brooke stops, her face darkening. After counting three to herself, she turns; Natalie's face falls at seeing Brooke's fury unabated.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Brooke, can't we just—?

BROOKE
(icy)
What do you want?

NATALIE
Just to talk. Can't we talk? I thought we were friends.

BROOKE
Funny, so did I. Then I saw you climbing all over Harrison.

NATALIE
(growing indignant)
I wasn't—! It was one moment! I never would've let Harrison—

BROOKE
Looked to me like you were letting Harrison do whatever he damn well felt like.

NATALIE
Nothing would've happened!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE
(acidly)
Your lips would've missed each other?

NATALIE
Okay, maybe that would've happened. But nothing else.

BROOKE
And I'm supposed to believe you?

NATALIE
Yes!

There is a long pause, as the two girls regard each other.

BROOKE
Well, I don't. You want him, Natalie. I can see it. I can smell it.

NATALIE
(pleading)
Brooke!

Abruptly she changes tactics.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I heard Nicole did a lot worse, and you forgave her.

BROOKE
(blinks)
Yeah, sorry you missed my pathetic, co-dependent, image-is-everything phase. You could've been my friend then.
(considers)
No, you couldn't have. You're too mousy.

Tears start to well up in Natalie's eyes.

NATALIE
(spreading her hands)
Okay. If that's what makes you feel better.

BROOKE
You know what would make me feel better? Not talking to you. That would make me feel better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Brooke turns on her heel and makes a grand exit. Sniffing, Natalie's hands slowly clench into fists.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TEACHERS' DINING ROOM

The faculty who are eating in the Dining Room have settled into a routine of casting well-timed, unobtrusive glances at Krupps and Sam. For the most part they are too far away to eavesdrop; the occasional laugh or spike in volume draws a silent flurry of out-of-the-corner-of-the-eye looks.

The two of them seem not to notice, however, being completely engrossed in their working lunch. We catch a snippet of their conversation:

KRUPPS

So what do you think?

Sam closes the file she's been reading.

SAM

At first I thought the ski trip could be made more self-sufficient. I had no idea the insurance costs were so high.

KRUPPS

Yes, a large group of high-schoolers in a huge red flag.

SAM

Still, have you ever thought about an open-bid process?

Krupps nods approvingly, cupping his coffee with both hands and gazing at her over the edge as he sips.

KRUPPS

An excellent thought. In fact, I've had just such a proposal written up. But the Board moves at glacial speeds. That's why it's so important that the Fund is run smoothly. I have several ideas for improving things, but I need the Board's confidence first.

Sam nods in turn, picking up her soda and unconsciously mimicking his action.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
I completely understand. You can
count on me.

CUT TO:

INT. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Meanwhile, Ms. Ross is among those keeping an eye on things. She is still observant enough, though, to notice when Osbourne slides into the seat beside her.

ROSS
Well, hello, Mr. Osbourne.

OSBOURNE
I hope I'm not disturbing.

ROSS
You? Never. There isn't enough
culture in this school as it is.

Osbourne takes that in stride. After a moment he nods towards the center of attention.

OSBOURNE
Tell me, is this as significant as
I've heard?

She spares him a glance.

ROSS
Let's put it this way: I would've
bet on a sister getting in the
White House first.

Watching them, she shakes her head in something approaching respect.

ROSS (CONT'D)
I gotta say, though...

But she doesn't: she trails off instead. Osbourne allows a respectful pause to occur before prompting her:

OSBOURNE
Hmm?

ROSS
Look at her. Just look at her.
You'd think she was Vice-
Principal. Or even Secretary.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS (CONT'D)

I mean, I know she's smart as all out, but...

OSBOURNE

(nods)

One wouldn't expect someone of Miss McPherson's age to be...so...

ROSS

Comfortable?

OSBOURNE

Indeed. In her element, as it were. She seems to have taken to the situation remarkably well.

She turns to look at him again.

ROSS

Well, well. Is that disapproval I hear?

OSBOURNE

You don't disapprove? Frankly, the atmosphere in this room seems to be leaning in that direction.

She waves a scornful, dismissive hand.

ROSS

Aw, who cares what these fools think! I say, more power to the girl.

(raised eyebrow)

I'm surprised at you. I thought she was one of your favorites.

OSBOURNE

(sighs)

I'm afraid Miss McPherson has certain...issues. Issues I doubt our principal is aware of.

ROSS

(skeptical)

Really?

OSBOURNE

Miss McQueen came to me with some concerns, which I've discreetly verified. I'm really not at liberty to discuss the details.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROSS

Of course.

Neither of them notice Miss Glass, lounging behind the corner of a vending machine, schemes playing across her face.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. L.A. CHRONICLE NEWSROOM - AFTERNOON

Sam walks through the busy room slowly, clearly nervous. As she approaches Fleischer's office, his assistant, Vicki, looks up from her desk and smiles.

VICKI

Hi, Sam. I heard you got
snatched.

SAM

(groaning)
Does Art know?

VICKI

(nods)
He's waiting for you. Go on in.

Sam swallows hard, and steps into the office.

CUT TO:

INT. FLEISCHER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sam walks into the office looking very much like a condemned prisoner headed for the gallows. Fleischer, who is at his desk, gets up and comes out to meet her.

FLEISCHER

Sam! I heard about your little
holiday adventure.

Sam looks as though she might start to cry.

SAM

Mr. Fleischer, I swear, I never
said anything to Mr. Doyle, not
one word, I never wanted to work
for someone else, you have to
believe me...

Fleischer stops her by grabbing her shoulders.

FLEISCHER

Whoa, whoa, "Mr. Fleischer"? Sam,
do you think I'm mad at you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
(sniffing)
...aren't you?

In fact, Fleischer seems to be anything but.

FLEISCHER
I knew this would happen, Sam.

SAM
(completely lost)
You...what?

FLEISCHER
(patiently)
I knew that if I kept you around here long enough, you'd do something to impress one of the editors. I was sort of hoping it would be Allen in Politics, but...
(shakes his head)
Metro. I should've known you'd find the fast track and hop right on.

SAM
(slowly catching up)
I don't understand... You planned this?

FLEISCHER
All I did was put you where your talent could flourish and be noticed. You did the rest yourself.

SAM
And...you're not mad?

FLEISCHER
(laughs)
Have you not been listening, girl?

He wraps her in an unexpected bear hug.

FLEISCHER (CONT'D)
I'm thrilled for you! Now, you better get going.

He releases her and, looking much better, she turns to go. Fleischer walks her to the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FLEISCHER (CONT'D)

About Rick—don't let him scare you. I'm sure you've seen his gruff exterior.

SAM

You mean underneath he's sweet and cuddly?

FLEISCHER

(considers)

Not that I've noticed. But he's a good guy. And a great editor.

At the door, she turns and hugs him again.

SAM

(in his ear)

Thanks. For everything.

FLEISCHER

Knock 'em dead, Sam.

He watches her head off, with a considerably lighter gait.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL KRUPPS' OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Krupps is packing files into his briefcase when his intercom buzzes.

SHIRLEY (V.O.)

(over the intercom)

Mr. Krupps, Mr. Osbourne is here?

Krupps hits the intercom button.

KRUPPS

Yes, send him in, please.

He stands up and waits for Osbourne to come through the door.

OSBOURNE

Shirley told me you were leaving?

KRUPPS

(picking up his briefcase)

I'm sorry, Erick, I know I promised time for you. But I've been summoned to District Headquarters.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

The Board is still jittery over this Lindsey Robey situation.

OSBOURNE

I understand, of course. My concern did bear tangentially upon that matter...

But Krupps is already walking him to the door.

KRUPPS

(not really paying attention)

Yes, yes, I'll make sure to have Shirley set some time aside as soon as possible.

Without further ado, Krupps ushers Osbourne out, closing the door behind them.

CUT TO:

EST. KENNEDY HIGH - MORNING

SUPER: Wednesday

A stock shot of the quad.

CUT TO:

INT. CHEMISTRY CLASS

On Miss Glass' table is a cardboard tray with a sign marked "Permission Slips". Harrison runs into the room just as the bell rings, digs out his slip, unfolds it and lays it in the tray. As he takes his seat, Miss Glass steps up to the head of the class and takes the stack of slips out of the tray.

GLASS

All right! Last chance—no slip, no ski!

She sneers at Josh and Lily, sitting close together.

GLASS (CONT'D)

Except of course for the sickeningly married couple in aisle four.

She flips through the slips.

GLASS (CONT'D)

So, who's not going?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A moment of silence; then one voice cuts across the room.

SAM
(flatly)
I'm not.

Miss Glass looks up, surprised. So does the rest of the class. In contrast, Sam seems so utterly indifferent that she hasn't even lifted her eyes from the paper she's making notes on.

GLASS
(sincerely)
Really, McPherson? I'm surprised.

Finally Sam graces her with a glance. But emotions are still MIA.

SAM
I'm swamped.

For a moment teacher and student regard each other. Then Miss Glass smoothly slips back into her usual persona.

GLASS
(shrugs)
Your loss. Anyone else?

Apparently everyone else is going.

GLASS (CONT'D)
Well, now that that's done, let me tell you about the fun I had grading your quizzes.

With a nasty smile, she reaches under the table and brings up a stack of papers, liberally marked in red.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Lily and Natalie are by a water fountain.

LILY
So, you're going this weekend?

NATALIE
You think I'm going to miss my only chance to see snow in this God-forsaken place? Please. I'm having my skis Fedexed from home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY
You know, Natalie, sometimes I
forget.

NATALIE
Forget what?

LILY
How rich you are.

NATALIE
(blushing)
Oh, stop.

LILY
No, really. You don't flaunt it,
like Mary Cherry, or Nicole.

At that moment, Brooke comes down the hallway. She slows up just long enough to give Natalie a look that could freeze molten lava.

NATALIE
(downcast)
I'm glad someone still thinks I'm
not like Nicole.

LILY
Okay, Natalie, what was that
about? Why is Brooke mad at you?

NATALIE
It's...Harrison.

LILY
Huh? I don't get it.

NATALIE
It's...me and Harrison.

After a moment, Lily's eyes widen, and she begins to drag Natalie towards the door to the Novak.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRLS' RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Novak door opens, and Lily pushes Natalie through. Lily follows her inside and slams the door shut behind her, barricading it with her body.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY
Okay, Natalie—what "you and
Harrison"?!

Natalie is pacing around the tuffet, more or less.

NATALIE
Nothing! Nothing happened!
(waffling)
Really. Much.

LILY
Natalie!

Natalie collapses on the tuffet.

NATALIE
Brooke saw us...almost kissing.

LILY
(incredulous)
Almost?!

NATALIE
We were...in a pre-kiss position.

LILY
Excuse me?

NATALIE
Our mouths were...kind of aligned.
Okay?

LILY
No! Not okay! Natalie, how could
you?!

Natalie covers her face.

NATALIE
(anguished)
I can't help it! He's smart, he's
funny...he's so damn cute!

Lily hangs her head, laughing in spite of herself.

NATALIE **(CONT'D)**
(annoyed)
What?

LILY
I'm sorry. It's just..."Harrison
John, Chick Magnet".

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILY (CONT'D)

My brain is having trouble
processing this concept.

Lily starts laughing again.

NATALIE

(plaintively)

Stop it! It's not funny! I
didn't want to be attracted to
Harrison. I hate it that Brooke's
mad at me.

Lily immediately sobers, and sits on the tuffet.

LILY

Aw, I'm sorry, Natalie. You're
right. It's not funny. It seems
like nobody's talking to each
other anymore. All this negative
energy...

She shudders.

NATALIE

I'm sorry. I tried to talk to
Brooke, but...

Lily pats her hand reassuringly.

LILY

Don't worry. I'm sure Brooke'll
come around.

Natalie sits up, clutching at Lily's arm.

NATALIE

You'll help? With Brooke?

Lily pales as she realizes what she's gotten herself into.

LILY

I, uh, well...

Natalie hugs her like a life preserver.

NATALIE

Thank you! Thank you, thank you,
thank you!

Lily just looks skyward and rubs her forehead, in anticipation
of headaches to come.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Sam is walking down the corridor when a young girl—a freshman—runs up, hands her a note, and, without a word spoken, takes off. Puzzled, Sam unfolds the note and reads it. Her face shows no enlightenment, but she reverses course.

CUT TO:

INT. CHEMISTRY CLASS - MOMENTS LATER

Sam looks through the open doorway, then takes a couple of steps into the classroom.

SAM
(looking around)
Miss Glass?

Silence. The room is deserted. Sam ventures further inside.

SAM (CONT'D)
Miss Glass? Are you here?

The sound of the door closing makes her jump and spin around. Miss Glass is standing there.

GLASS
You got my note.

SAM
Um, yes, but...I don't understand.

Miss Glass walks over to her chair and lounges.

GLASS
It's pretty simple. We have some common enemies, and I think we can help each other.

SAM
I still don't get it. What "common enemies"?

GLASS
You don't really think everyone appreciates your sudden admission into Principal Krupps' Inner Circle, do you?

SAM
(sullenly)
It's not like that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM (CONT'D)

And I don't care what the rest of the class thinks.

GLASS

Oh, it's exactly like that, dearie. And I'm not talking about other students. I'm talking about staff.

Sam's eyes widen slightly: apparently she hadn't considered that before.

GLASS (CONT'D)

In particular, a certain Social Studies teacher who's gotten way too big for his britches.

SAM

(unbelieving)

Mr. Osbourne?!

GLASS

You sound surprised. You used to be one of his favorites, but lately he's been coming down on you hard, right?

SAM

(reluctantly)

Well...yeah...

GLASS

And now he's running to Mr. Krupps with tales of your... extracurricular activities.

SAM

(alarmed)

No! I mean, they're lies—

GLASS

Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn if they're true or not. I don't even know exactly what he's got on you. But I do know that a certain busy bee's been buzzing in his ear.

(significantly)

A busy blonde bee.

Storm clouds roll across Sam's face as she realizes what Miss Glass is saying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM
(growling)
Brooke.

GLASS
Like I said, it's pretty simple. I
want to bring down Osbourne. You
want to bring down McQueen. Since
they're already working together,
why shouldn't we?

In response, Sam pulls up a chair and sits down, an
unpleasantly cold grin spreading across her face.

SAM
Tell me more.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EST. KENNEDY HIGH PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

SUPER: Friday

Classic yellow school buses are lined up at the curb. Students are milling around, and luggage is being loaded.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Krupps and Osbourne, walking down the hall.

KRUPPS

I just feel terrible about giving you the short shrift this week, Eric. I've been completely swamped.

OSBOURNE

Of course I understand. I'm still hoping to talk to you about this student of mine—

KRUPPS

Well, the Board's reach doesn't extend to the ski resort, I'm happy to say. We'll have plenty of time to chat this weekend.

OSBOURNE

Err... I'm not going on the trip, Mr. Krupps.

Krupps stops walking and looks at him, surprised.

KRUPPS

You're not?

OSBOURNE

Skiing is not one of my... preferred activities. And I believe you already have the requisite number of teacher chaperones?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS

True, true. Well, I won't have my people taking a vacation they won't enjoy, so...have a pleasant weekend, Eric.

OSBOURNE

You, as well, Mr. Krupps.

As they walk on, Miss Glass appears from around a corner, looking satisfied.

CUT TO:

INT. CHEMISTRY CLASS - LATER

Miss Glass and Sam are having a powwow.

GLASS

The good news is, Osbourne still hasn't had a chance to blab to Mr. Krupps.

(beat)

What's he going to say, anyway?

SAM

(bluntly)

He's going to tell him that I'm a drug user.

Immediately Miss Glass convulses with laughter.

GLASS

You! A druggie...!

(sobering)

You know, that just crazy enough, he might believe it.

(beat)

So...it's just a lie Brooke McQueen came up with?

Sam eyes her coldly.

SAM

You said you didn't care.

GLASS

(frankly)

You're right, I don't.

(beat)

So, what do you think of my plan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
I think it stinks.

GLASS
(indignant)
What?! Listen, little missy,
that's a time-tested classic!

SAM
Yeah, a time-tested classic
failure!

GLASS
Hey, you almost sank your
journalism teacher without even
trying!

Sam's expression sours; obviously she doesn't like to be reminded of that.

SAM
And Nicole tried it on Mr. Krupps
and it totally backfired on her.

GLASS
(lazily)
Let me tell you something about
the late, great Nicole Julian,
McPherson. She liked to act big—
the chic clothes, the high-and-
mighty talk. Underneath it all,
she was strictly Amateur Hour.
You? You're Prime Time. Our
Fearless Leader has that pegged,
at least.

SAM
I'll still bomb faster than an ABC
reality series if I try this.

GLASS
Would you get with the program?
All you have to do is get close to
Osbourne—

SAM
—and get him into compromising
positions. Right.

GLASS
No, no, weren't you listening?
Just compromising-looking
positions.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GLASS (CONT'D)

You know—fall into his lap, trip and let him catch you...stuff like that. Meantime, yours truly will be there to snap the incriminating pictures—

(mimics using a camera)

—and voila!

SAM

(caustic)

Yeah, voila, you're fired and I'm expelled. That happens about five seconds after I accuse Mr. Osbourne of sexual harassment, with your convenient photos as, quote unquote, proof.

Miss Glass jumps up and leans over the back of her chair.

GLASS

That's the beauty of it! The photos surface anonymously, and you—deny—everything!

SAM

Huh?

GLASS

You say it's all innocent—you fell into his lap, you tripped and he caught you. Osbourne, he'll know you're telling the truth.

(grinning evilly)

But if you do it just right, everyone else will think you're lying to protect your favorite teacher. They might even think he's blackmailing you. Either way, you're the innocent victim, and he goes down like a block of cement in the harbor.

(beat)

Now what do you think?

By this time Sam is wearing her own predatory grin.

SAM

I think it could work.

GLASS

This weekend. He's not going, you're not going—it's perfect.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAM
(frowning)
Wait—you are going. Who's going
to take the pictures?

GLASS
No problemo. I'll fake sick.

Miss Glass clearly enjoys the expression that that produces on Sam's face.

GLASS (CONT'D)
You don't really think only kids
do that? You are such a babe in
the woods, McPherson.

She straightens up, goes to the door and opens it.

GLASS (CONT'D)
You'd better get cracking on a way
to get together with Osbourne.

Sam obligingly walks out of the classroom.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sam makes it about half a dozen steps down the corridor when Mr. Krupps comes up from behind her.

KRUPPS
Sam! I've been looking for you!

SAM
Uh...Mr. Krupps?

KRUPPS
(concerned)
I understand you don't intend to
go on the ski trip?

SAM
Well...uh, no, I'm not.

Krupps sounds positively crushed.

KRUPPS
Why not?

In the face of Krupps' questioning, Sam seems less indifferent than before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Not helping matters any is the sudden appearance, over his shoulder, of Miss Glass, motioning frantically yet completely incoherently.

SAM

Uh...well...I have a ton of work.
At the paper.

KRUPPS

They actually told you to work
this weekend?

Unfortunately for her, Sam is too frazzled to out-and-out lie.

SAM

Well...no...but—

KRUPPS

Great, then you can take a couple
of days off! You need to think of
yourself, Sam. Working all the
time isn't healthy.

SAM

(thinking)

But, um... Oh! I didn't get a
permission slip signed. Darn.

KRUPPS

(shaking his head paternally)

Sam, Sam... I know very well that
you're living on your own, as much
as Josh and Lily Ford are. You
don't need a permission slip.

Another objection shot down. Desperate, Sam tries once more:

SAM

I bet there isn't a seat left on
any of the buses anyway.

Krupps makes a "pshaw" motion with his hand.

KRUPPS

Why would you want to be on a
rickety, overcrowded old bus?
You'll ride up in my car. Now—
how long will it take you to pack?

Defeated, with a fatalistic glance at Miss Glass, Sam capitulates with a smile.

SAM

Half an hour?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KRUPPS

Excellent! I have to take care of a few more things here. Why don't you meet me in the parking lot in—

(checks his watch)

—twenty minutes? I'll drive you home, you can pack, and we'll be on our way.

SAM

Sure, Mr. Krupps.

Satisfied, Krupps walks away, rubbing his palms together. As soon as he is out of sight, Miss Glass comes rushing forward.

SAM (CONT'D)

What was I supposed to do? Flat out say no?

GLASS

Okay, okay, don't worry about it. We might just have to postpone our little operation.

(thinks)

Or... I've got an idea. Gotta run.

She takes off before Sam can protest.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EST. A MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

A convoy of school buses lumbers up the highway.

CUT TO:

INT. A SCHOOL BUS - MOVING

Josh and Lily are sitting together; directly opposite, Brooke is sitting by herself. Lily leans over and whispers something in Josh's ear, then hops across the aisle to sit next to Brooke.

LILY
Hey, Brooke.

BROOKE
(acknowledging)
Lily.
(sensing something)
What?

Lily takes a deep breath before plunging forward.

LILY
Brooke, do you remember when I said that I was friends with both you and Sam, and that I would stay out of any fights between you, and I would never take sides?

BROOKE
Yes...
(resigned)
You've changed your mind. You're choosing Sam's side.

LILY
(wide-eyed)
What?! Brooke, no! I promised, and I'm going to keep that promise.

BROOKE
(frowning)
Then...I'm confused.

LILY
(another deep breath)
Well...

(MORE)**(CONTINUED)**

CONTINUED:

LILY (CONT'D)

You'd think since I was smart enough to do that once, I'd be smart enough to do it again... wouldn't you?

BROOKE

What—?
(realizing)
Oh, no.

LILY

(cajoling)
Come on, Brooke, she's desperate.

BROOKE

(snorts)
Yeah, she desperately wants Harrison to be her boyfriend.

LILY

I really don't think so. She's really upset over this.

BROOKE

Is she suicidal? That might cheer me up.

LILY

(folding her arms)
That's not funny, Brooke.

Brooke's combativeness drops away; she stares out the window for a while.

BROOKE

I know. You're right. It's just, I get so mad thinking about Natalie going after Harrison—

LILY

Brooke, I swear, I think this is just one of those spontaneous things.

Lily chuckles, and Brooke looks at her strangely.

BROOKE

What?!

LILY

Don't you find this the slightest bit funny?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILY (CONT'D)

Harrison—our Harrison—Harrison
who couldn't get a date a year
ago—suddenly half the girls in
school are fighting over him?

Brooke thinks it over, finally rolling her eyes in silent
concession that it is at least a little bit funny.

BROOKE

I dunno, Lily.

LILY

You don't really want to fight
with Natalie, do you?

BROOKE

(sighing)

I guess not. But...

Several seconds of silence.

LILY

But?

BROOKE

Okay, maybe I believe that Natalie
didn't mean to become attracted to
Harrison. That doesn't mean that
she's not attracted to him, or
that she'll give him up.

LILY

Trust me, Brooke. She was so
upset about you being mad at her
that she was practically crying.

BROOKE

(uncomfortably)

I did say some pretty awful things
to her.

LILY

Like comparing her to Nicole?

BROOKE

Oh, I know that was totally
heinous. I was just so mad, I
couldn't think straight.

She lets out a little laugh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Great. She almost lip-locks with my boyfriend, and I feel bad for yelling at her. How do you do that?

LILY

I just want everyone to stop fighting.

BROOKE

Okay. I'll talk to her—for the sake of harmonious whatever. But I honestly don't know if we can ever be the same as we were before.

LILY

I think Natalie would be happy just to talk.

(fretting)

I wish I'd seen her today.

BROOKE

She wasn't in class?

(thinking)

She wasn't in class. I was so busy ignoring her, I didn't even notice she wasn't there to be ignored.

(sighs)

I used to be better at this.

LILY

Oh, I hope she didn't decide to stay home! She was so excited about coming.

Lily gets up and makes her way forward until she is crouched beside Ms. Ross, in the first row.

LILY (CONT'D)

Ms. Ross, we didn't see Natalie in class today. She's still coming with us, isn't she?

ROSS

(off-handedly)

Oh, don't you worry, child. She's coming. She had some kind of appointment, not from home, but she's coming. I think she's on the next bus.

(shooing)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ROSS (CONT'D)

Now, sit down before you go
through the windshield.

Lily makes her way back to Brooke's row, sitting in her own
seat.

LILY

(leaning over)

She's coming.

(thumbing back)

She's in the last bus.

But doesn't seem to know whether or not to be happy about
that.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY

Steadily making its way through the moderate traffic climbing
the mountain is Krupps' sporty car, two sets of skis strapped
to the roof.

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS' CAR - MOVING

Mr. Krupps is driving smoothly, while Sam semi-lounges in the
passenger seat.

KRUPPS

I was glad to find out that you
have your own skis. You were so
reluctant to go, I was afraid you
hated skiing. Or didn't know how.

SAM

(vaguely distracted)

No...I love skiing. Used to ski
all the time.

She trails off. He steals a glance over.

KRUPPS

I'm sorry if this is too personal,
but...you have my sympathies.

SAM

(confused)

I'm sorry?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS

Look, as principal, I know about a lot of things that go on at Kennedy. Now, I'm not saying I know every little thing, but I do know a lot of things.

(beat)

Like, the situation with you and Mr. John. And Miss McQueen.

SAM

(stunned)

Oh.

KRUPPS

Failed romances, love triangles... they're really pretty common in high school. It's never pretty.

(beat)

You seem to be handling it well. Not that I'm surprised—someone with your poise.

SAM

(muttering)

You should've seen me when I caught them coming out of the shower together. I didn't handle it too well then.

Krupps slaps the steering wheel with his palm.

KRUPPS

Well, who can blame you? That's very traumatic! You still have plenty of poise.

SAM

(wan)

Thanks.

They motor on in silence for a bit.

SAM (CONT'D)

Mr. Krupps? Can I ask you something?

KRUPPS

(reproachfully)

Sam, Sam...haven't I convinced you yet that you can talk to me about anything?

That coaxes a bit of a smile from Sam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM
Okay... It's about—all this.

KRUPPS
"All this"?

Sam makes a vague, all-encompassing gesture.

SAM
Everything this week. Becoming
Student Body General Fund
Treasurer...eating in the
Teachers' Dining Room...
(laughs)
Riding to the ski lodge in your
car.

KRUPPS
I want the best and brightest on
my team, Sam. That's you.
(concerned)
Sam, does this make you
uncomfortable?

SAM
Me? No! No. But...I think other
people might be.

KRUPPS
That's funny... You never struck
me as the type to be swayed by
peer pressure.

SAM
(quietly)
I didn't mean other kids.

Krupps snorts, understanding.

KRUPPS
Ah.
(long beat)
What are you getting in history?

SAM
(lost)
Huh?

KRUPPS
History. What are your grades
like?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAM

(shrugs)

B-ish. Maybe A-minus if I do a couple of extra credit papers.

KRUPPS

Mm-hmm. Study various forms of government?

SAM

(baffled)

Sure.

KRUPPS

What kind of government do you think a school is?

SAM

Uh...

KRUPPS

Is a school a democracy?

SAM

Ummm...no.

KRUPPS

(musing)

Nope... School's not a democracy. I'm not President, they're not my constituents. I'm the principal. They're the faculty. It's a little...principal-ocracy. So— does it matter if a few of them are uncomfortable?

SAM

(griping)

Well, not to you. You're the principal—they can't do anything to you.

Krupps looks over at her, vexed.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Krupps' car suddenly veers over into the right-hand lane, then onto a rest stop off-ramp. The car rolls into a parking space and stops.

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPSS' CAR - CONTINUOUS

Krupps turns the engine off, and twists in his seat to face Sam.

KRUPPS

Sam, do you not want to be on my team?

SAM

(flustered)

Mr. Krupps—

KRUPPS

Because it occurs to me that it may have seemed that I was ordering you to do these things. Which wasn't my intention. So if what you're trying to say is that you're uncomfortable, just say the word, and it stops, right here and now.

(beat)

Is that what you want?

Sam turns away for a moment, before looking him in the eye.

SAM

No. It's not.

KRUPPS

Good, because I still want the best and the brightest. And that's still you.

(intently)

Sam? Serious, now: If you think anyone is dinging you, or singling you out because of this, you tell me. Got it?

Sam relaxes a bit.

SAM

Got it, Mr. Krupps.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS

Since we're far from school grounds, and we really aren't going to be doing any official business, why don't you call me Calvin? Just for the weekend.

SAM

(concerned)

Are you sure that's approp—

Krupps cuts her off with a raised finger.

KRUPPS

Principal-ocracy.

SAM

(smiling)

Right. Calvin.

Krupps grins a broad grin, starts the car, and takes off.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKI VILLAGE PARKING LOT - EARLY EVENING

Many students are milling about as various equipment is off-loaded from the buses. Brooke and Lily are curbside; Brooke seems somewhat on edge.

BROOKE

I'm not all that sure that here is a good place to have a heart-to-heart with Natalie.

LILY

Don't worry, Brooke, I'm sure we can find a quiet little corner.

(calling)

Natalie!

Surprise #1 comes when Natalie, who is standing in front of the next bus, turns around. What makes Brooke and Lily gasp is her hair: while it is still French-braided down her back, Natalie has seen fit to streak it liberally with blonde highlights. It doesn't approach Nicole's platinum shade, but it's a far cry from Natalie's natural deep auburn. She waves, and jogs over.

NATALIE

Hey, Lily. I tried to get on your bus, but the seating arrangements were just bizarre.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She doesn't exactly ignore Brooke—there's no overt hostility in the air—but she does act as though Brooke were invisible. Or just a stranger who happens to be standing nearby. Despite this, Brooke ventures forward a fraction of a step.

BROOKE

Natalie.

For a long moment it doesn't look like Natalie's even going to acknowledge Brooke's existence; then she turns towards her. Her voice, though, is carefully devoid of any inflection at all.

NATALIE

Brooke.

Lily, sensing that this is not quite the reconciliation she had in mind, steps in.

LILY

Hey, Natalie, I thought we could,
um, talk...

Natalie turns back to Lily, and her voice comes back to life.

NATALIE

Sure! I'm going to find out where
I'm sleeping, but look me up
later!

Without another word, she trots off. Along with Lily, Brooke watches her go.

BROOKE

(deceptively casual)
Crying, huh?

Lily can only nod wordlessly.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

She seems to have recovered.

Lily nods again, clearly worried about just that.

Before anything else can happen, though, Surprise #2 pulls up to the curb, in the form of Krupps' car, with Sam clearly lounging in the passenger seat. They both get out, and—at some unseen, pre-arranged signal—two bellhops scurry out, open the trunk and begin to extricate their luggage. Sam starts to fiddle with the rooftop bindings, but Krupps waves her off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KRUPPS
Don't worry, they'll get that. Do
you know where you're staying?

Sam shrugs gamely.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)
We'll find out.

He peers around, seeks out another ski village employee, and beckons him with a snap of the fingers.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)
Excuse me? Can you find out the
location of Miss McPherson's
cabin—
(gesturing at Sam)
—and have her things taken there,
please?

Sam raises her eyebrows at no one in particular and soundlessly echoes the word "cabin". Meanwhile, this little mini-drama is being witnessed by a whole gaggle of students, and judging from then, she's not the only one to have had that reaction. The employee is perfectly obsequious, though.

EMPLOYEE #1
Of course, Mr. Krupps, right away,
Mr. Krupps.

KRUPPS
Sam, did you get all your stuff?

SAM
I think so.

Leaning in through the open passenger door, Sam scans the interior of the car. Then she spots Krupps' personal digital assistant lying on the back seat, thereby setting up Surprise #3:

SAM (CONT'D)
(without thinking)
Calvin, you left your PDA in the
car! Did you want it?

As on Monday, everyone freezes, teacher chaperones as well as students. They all look at each other in a perfect, Twilight Zone, she-didn't-really-just-say-that-did-she? moment. And this time, Sam notices; her lips pressed together as she senses herself become the focus of the local universe.

Krupps is utterly unaffected, though.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KRUPPS

Naw. It'll just have to commune
with the car until Monday.

Sam seems to take her cue from Krupps, shrugging off the
stares after a moment. Meanwhile, Krupps is huddling with
more flunkies. He waves her over.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Sam, these nice people have
uncovered where you're staying.

One of them drops a key into her palm as she approaches.

EMPLOYEE #2

Number nineteen, Ma'am. One of
our finest cabins.

SAM

Oh, but, uh...are you sure this is
okay? I'm not taking this away
from anyone?

KRUPPS

(low)

Always reserve a few extras—you
never know who might show up.
Words to live by.

Sam works up a suitably impressed expression.

EMPLOYEE #2

If you'll come with me, Ma'am?

As Sam is led away:

KRUPPS

(calling)

Are you up for a run before dinner?

SAM

Sure, just let me get changed.

KRUPPS

I'll meet you at the lift in half
an hour!

SAM

Okay, Calvin!

And she is gone, around the corner of a building.

Meanwhile, Mary Cherry has slipped up behind Brooke and Lily,
unnoticed. Not that she stays unnoticed for long:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARY CHERRY
Oh my Gawd!! Sam is Principal
Krupps' mistress!!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

EXT. SKI VILLAGE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Brooke and Lily turn as one to gape a Mary Cherry.

BROOKE

What?!

LILY

Mary Cherry, you're insane.

MARY CHERRY

What about all that?!

Brooke looks stymied, but Lily has things under control.

LILY

First of all, even Sam at her dumbest isn't that dumb. Second of all, if she and Mr. Krupps were...you know—
 (shudders)
 —doing it, wouldn't they be acting the exact opposite of that?

MARY CHERRY

Uh, well...
 (flash of insight)
 Unless it's one o' them double blinds! So we don't know they know we know. They know.

BROOKE

Which leads us directly back to...

LILY

(finishing)
 ...Mary Cherry, you're insane.

Mary Cherry harrumphs and walks off in a huff; but Brooke and Lily are preoccupied with this new problem.

LILY (CONT'D)

Brooke?

BROOKE

Hmm?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY
I know I said Sam couldn't
possibly be that dumb, but... You
don't think she could be...?

BROOKE
(flatly)
No.
(long beat)
Does it matter?

LILY
(outraged)
WHAT?!! Brooke, how could you ask
that—?! Of course it—!!

BROOKE
I didn't mean it quite like that.
I mean, in terms of power,
prestige... Fact it, Sam is the
most influential student in the
whole school right now. She's
probably higher up than some of
the teachers. She might as well
be sleeping with him.

LILY
Brooke, wouldja stop saying that?
The thought is making my skin
crawl.

BROOKE
(imploring)
Lily, I'm trying to be serious!
How are we going to tell anyone
Sam's in trouble? Who's even
gonna want to listen?

Lily mulls that over.

LILY
(uncertain)
I guess...we just have to hope
that Mr. Osbourne is convincing
enough.

BROOKE
I'd be more hopeful if Mr.
Osbourne had help.

LILY
(cautiously)
What do you mean by that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BROOKE
 (darkly)
 I don't know yet.
 (beat)
 But I'll think of something.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S CABIN - LATER

The word "cabin" doesn't quite cover Sam's weekend domicile; it's more like a scaled-down version of the (as-yet unseen) lodge: a great central room, huge fireplace, and loft space, all luxuriously furnished, of course. Sam is in her ski suit, wandering around and exploring things more-or-less at random, when the ponderous knocker on the oversized front door makes a ponderous sound. Sam cuts her tour short and goes to the door, knowing who is waiting. Krupps is standing on the stoop, and despite the nature of their relationship, she seems almost giddy to see him. After Sam opens the door, Krupps invites himself in, looking up and around.

KRUPPS
 Nice, very nice.

SAM
 Are you kidding? It's wonderful!

She spins once; then her mood falters precipitously.

SAM (CONT'D)
 I think maybe it's...TOO wonderful. I don't want it to be too wonderful.

KRUPPS
 Should I give you a tour of my cabin?

She practically clutches at him, acting just a bit...off.

SAM
 It is bigger, isn't it? Please tell me it's bigger. I couldn't stand having the biggest cabin of all.

Krupps, interestingly enough, seems to be treating her like a wayward child in need of reassurance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS
 (smiling benevolently)
 It's bigger. You don't have the
 biggest cabin here—far from it.

He touches a finger to her chin and raises her face.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)
 So don't worry, okay?

SAM
 (entirely too compliant)
 O-kay.

KRUPPS
 Good! So, are you ready to hit
 the slopes?

SAM
 Ready and willing, Calvin.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAM'S CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Krupps' skis are perched near the front door, next to Sam's. By the time they reach them, Sam seems to have gotten over whatever was affecting her mood. They start off towards the lift station.

KRUPPS
 (making conversation)
 Haven't you been here before?
 It's fairly close to home.

SAM
 (nodding)
 Once. I was about eight. My dad
 brought me.

KRUPPS
 (slightly discomfited)
 I'm sorry, I don't want to stir up
 painful memories.

SAM
 Oh, no! I never mind talking
 about my dad. He was a great man.

KRUPPS
 (appraising)
 Yes, I think I see that everyday.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sam blushes.

SAM
I want to ask you a question. Are you having dinner later?

KRUPPS
(dryly)
I try to at least once a day.
(beat)
Are you having dinner later?

SAM
(matching his tone)
It's a long-standing McPherson family tradition.

A long, long silence stretches between them. Finally:

SAM (CONT'D)
Are we having dinner later?

KRUPPS
That does see to be the question, doesn't it?

SAM
(conceding)
Not the one I'm going to ask at dinner, but for the moment...

And in her voice, in her eyes come the first hints that Sam may have some kind of handle on this complicated game of almost-flirtation that she and Krupps are playing.

KRUPPS
Well... I guess the question really is...can a principal—mind you, a visionary principal—

SAM
(interposing)
Who's still a man of tradition.

KRUPPS
—who is still a man of tradition—have a non-working, yet completely appropriate meal with his best and brightest student—who is pretty visionary herself?

Another blush from Sam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

Well... I happen to think that any principal who can construct a question like that ought to be able to, yes.

KRUPPS

And I happen to think that any student who can follow a question like that ought to be able to, as well.

SAM

There you go, then. Just remember—

KRUPPS

Yes, I know. The question. I'll consider myself forewarned.

They are close to the lift station, and Sam spies:

SAM

(peering ahead)

Is that...Mr. Osbourne? I thought he didn't ski.

Krupps follows her squint, and sure enough, it's Osbourne, seemingly playing traffic cop to a throng of students.

KRUPPS

Oh, yes. Miss Glass took ill at the last moment. Mr. Osbourne is her replacement.

SAM

Ah.

That non-committal sound is the only comment from Sam.

CUT TO:

EXT. - THE LIFT STATION - MOMENTS LATER

A slightly different scene, from a slightly different point of view: Osbourne looks up from his traffic-directing to critically study Krupps and Sam catching one of the lift bars, obviously quite comfortable with each other.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL - EVENING

Three conversations tackling more-or-less the same subject. First up: Brooke, Lily, Carmen, Josh, Sugar Daddy, and Harrison, sitting around an oaken version of their table in the cafeteria at school.

BROOKE

Frankly—I don't even know where to start. I have no frame of reference for this.

SUGAR

Yo, what about being a Glamazon? Didn't that—?

Brooke carefully separates each word, so it's impossible to be misheard.

BROOKE

Being a Glamazon...doesn't...
begin...to compare. Being star
quarterback...doesn't...begin...to
compare.

Just then George walks by, carrying his plate.

GEORGE

Compare to what?

BROOKE

Uhhh...

Without even looking up, Harrison spoils everyone's fun.

HARRISON

George knows about Sam.

BROOKE

Well, uh, I mean, everyone's seen—

GEORGE

I know about the pills, Brooke.

BROOKE/LILY/CARMEN

(simultaneously)

HUH?!

Harrison looks the girls over.

HARRISON

What, you were the only ones who could blab? Jeez...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gamely, Brooke motions for George to sit, which he does.

GEORGE

Let me guess. Sam has a problem.

BROOKE

Sam definitely has a problem.

CARMEN

(chiming in)

A b-i-i-i-g problem.

BROOKE

Pills.

Carmen nods.

LILY

We hope it's just pills.

George shakes his head discouragingly.

GEORGE

It won't stay that way.

Brooke nods in agreement with that, a gesture Lily catches with considerable surprise; apparently Brooke had never shared that opinion with her.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You have a problem, too. You want to tell people about Sam's problem. But...somehow, during the past week, she's managed to become Principal Krupps' invaluable right-hand girl. Which makes saying negative things about her...complicated.

CARMEN

That pretty much sums it up.

(aside to Lily)

We shoulda had him on the team a long time ago.

BROOKE

Okay, we've got the problem down pat. What's the solution?

GEORGE

(blankly)

Uhhh...huh.

George is clearly all played out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOSH
I hate to say it, but I have to
agree with that "huh".

BROOKE
(imploring)
Come on! Nobody has any ideas? We
have to do something!

Unfortunately, Brooke quickly rising temper happens to meet an
unintended target: Natalie, who walks over at this precise
moment.

NATALIE
Brooke, I—

BROOKE
(short)
We'll have to talk later.

Brooke seems to have forgotten that Natalie is actually a
member of this little group; as Lily and Carmen try to remind
her, Natalie, who was momentarily taken aback, presses
forward.

NATALIE
Okay, I just wanted to say I'm
sorry for—

BROOKE
(barking)
NOT NOW, DAMMIT!!

Natalie's mood plummets instantly into frustration, and she
turns away. Brooke continues her exhortations, unheeding.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
How do we fix this?!

GEORGE
(biting)
Ask Sam. She seems to be the
person to talk to about fixing
problems around here.

That bit of dark irony brings a fresh round of depression to
the table—but a few paces away, unnoticed, Natalie's head
tilts oddly. Meanwhile, Lily has actually grabbed Brooke by
the wrist—hard—to get her attention.

BROOKE
(irritated)
What?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

But it's Carmen—who has less of a clue, and therefore more of a reason—who jumps in first.

CARMEN

(hurt)

Why'd you yell at Natalie, Brooke?

Lily gives Brooke a highly significant look, as it begins to penetrate her brain that A) Carmen doesn't know about the discord between her and Natalie, and; B) she did, in fact, just finish yelling at Natalie, who; C) was, in fact, trying to help with Sam. Crestfallen, she rubs her eyes for a moment before twisting in her seat. She spots Natalie's now-highlighted French braid moving towards one of the doors.

BROOKE

Natalie! Natalie!

But there's no indication at all that Natalie heard THAT. Instead, she just keeps walking, out the door. Brooke twists back around.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Yep. I used to be lots better at this.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE DINING HALL

The huge dining facilities haven't deliberately been partitioned into separate areas; but most of the students have congregated in one place, leaving the faculty to gather in another. Sitting around a window-side table are Mr. Osbourne, Ms. Ross, and about half a dozen other assorted (anonymous) teachers. One of them, a bespectacled algebra instructor, stands awkwardly.

ALGEBRA TEACHER

Should I, um, ah, call the meeting to order?

Ms. Ross grabs his arm and yanks him down into his seat.

ROSS

This is not the Roman senate, Eugene. Keep your speeches to yourself.

OSBOURNE

Technically speaking, this is a meal.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

Definition: a shared dining experience involving familial or like individuals, at which various pleasantries may be discussed.

AMELIA

Or unpleasantries.

This contribution from a slight but formidable young Life Sciences teacher. Osbourne acknowledges her riposte with a nod. Another teacher, a middle-aged woman, snorts.

FEMALE TEACHER #1

I'd call it unpleasant all right, watching those two.

FEMALE TEACHER #2

Yeah, expecting us to put up with his little mini-harem?

ROSS

(rounding on her)

Hey! You just put a lid on that thought.

AMELIA

How can you sit there and defend his actions?!

OSBOURNE

His actions are questionable. His motives, however...

FEMALE TEACHER #2

What?! They were practically acting like newlyweds!

OSBOURNE

(smoothly)

Which, to the discerning eye, indicates that this potential part of their relationship is, thankfully, furthest from their minds. Certainly she may be infatuated with him, as an approving authority figure, possibly the first significant one since her father. And he might well... be...

He trails off while everyone listens intently, as though he were just working something out on the fly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROSS
(prompting)
"He might well be"?

But Osbourne has apparently also decided to keep this new-found insight to himself. He turns a consummately bland smile on the group.

OSBOURNE
Amateur pop psychology. Hardly useful here.
(moving on)
As for the rest— I said his actions were questionable, and they are. But there's little profit to the questions now. My humble suggestion is that everyone stay watchful—
(suddenly admonishing)
—keep quiet—and see if anything untoward happens.

FEMALE TEACHER #2
Isn't something "untoward" already happening?

OSBOURNE
Only if the National Enquirer has gained jurisdictional control of our district. But if you're speaking of appearances, I agree there is a danger. That's an appropriate subject on which to speak to the principal.

Ms. Ross' eyes flick off in the distance.

ROSS
Well, they're here. Who wants to do the honors?

CUT TO:

INT. YET ANOTHER PART OF THE DINING HALL - CONTINUOUS

The maître d', after a brief huddle with Krupps, escorts him and Sam up a narrow staircase and seats them at a table on the balcony rail—conveniently visible to most of the people below, a large percentage of whom are staring, either obviously (students) or not (faculty).

After they are seated—with Krupps holding Sam's chair, of course—a waiter magically appears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAITER
Drinks, Sir, Ma'am?

KRUPPS
Hmmm...scotch. And for the lady—

SAM
(interrupting)
Ginger ale.

The waiter bobs his head and moves off, while Krupps eyes Sam speculatively.

KRUPPS
(echoing)
Ginger ale.

A hint of a smile plays across her lips.

SAM
(slyly)
I think it would be inappropriate for one of Kennedy's best and brightest to use her fake I.D. to get alcohol while dining with her principal.

KRUPPS
(deadpan sigh)
Yes, you're probably right. Ah, well.

CUT TO:

INT. THE DINING HALL - FACULTY TABLE - LATER

The group of staff has thinned out and rearranged itself slightly; Osbourne and Ross are sitting side-by-side, keeping an eye on the proceedings above. Their conversational tone is very low.

ROSS
You wanna tell me again why I should be the one doing this?

OSBOURNE
There are several reasons. First, I have been attempting to have a private chat with our principal for several days, without success. Now, that may be due to Mr. Krupps' busy schedule—or he may be avoiding me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS
(shocked)
Why?

OSBOURNE
I don't know. I'm not even sure
my perceptions are correct there.
Second, my concerns regarding Miss
McPherson are quite...serious. I
can't risk them being lost amid
the hulabaloo of this.

ROSS
(grabbing his arm)
Now hold on right there, Mr.
Osbourne. You keep talking about
these "concerns" of yours. Now I
understand about being discreet,
but if you're sending me into that
lion's den, I think I need to know
what you know, right now.

Osbourne turns and appraises her for a moment.

OSBOURNE
Fair enough.

He puts his mouth to her ear and whispers a few words, which
make her eyes go wide. He immediately makes a shushing sound.
For several seconds she does nothing but shift her gaping
stare from Sam to Osbourne and back again.

ROSS
(boggled)
No...REALLY??? That's...no.

OSBOURNE
I assure you, it's quite true.
And it is imperative that this be
kept under wraps. A rumor at this
point would guarantee an
unmanageable situation.

ROSS
Oh, I hear you, Mr. Osbourne. I
hear you.

SWEEP TO:

INT. DINING HALL - KRUPPS' AND SAM'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Despite the seething chaos below, the principal and his
student seem engrossed in their own little world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A busboy clears the dessert plates, leaving them looking at each other over their after-dinner drinks.

KRUPPS

See? A non-working but totally appropriate meal. As promised.

Sam raises her glass in salute.

SAM

And it's been very nice...so far.

Krupps leans back, fingers steepled.

KRUPPS

Ah. So that trend could change?

Sam's smile fades; she suddenly finds the rim of her glass fascinating.

SAM

I'm not sure.

KRUPPS

Your question, I take it?

SAM

I've asked you this before, you know. I decided I didn't like the answer I got.

KRUPPS

Oh! Well, that is interesting. Please, ask away.

Sam drains her drink, sets the glass down, and fixes Krupps in an unwavering gaze across the empty table.

SAM

Why?

KRUPPS

(smiling pensively)
What what?

SAM

Why this?

She makes the same sweeping, all-encompassing gesture.

SAM (CONT'D)

Why all this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KRUPPS

(relaxed)

I'm afraid my answer is the same as last time, Sam. You're the best and brightest, and I want you on my team.

SAM

(simmering)

I'm the best and the brightest?

(hard)

Then please don't act like I'm the class idiot. Why—this—way???

Krupps gazes at Sam impassively as she ticks points off on her fingers.

SAM (CONT'D)

The Teachers' Dining Room...the ski trip...

(laughs shortly)

...this dinner! Up on the royal balcony, presiding over everyone. My God, Calvin—you haven't made me a member of your team; you've made me the object of an ascension.

She slaps her palms down on the table; her voice goes as high as it can without carrying across the room.

SAM (CONT'D)

For the last time—why???

For a long time Krupps just sits there, with Sam half out of her seat, hands on the table, staring him down. Finally—

KRUPPS

Because you deserved it.

That answer stops Sam in her tracks; she plops back down in her seat. It takes a moment or two of effort for her to find her voice.

SAM

I...huh?

KRUPPS

(patiently)

I saw you start to struggle. I knew you could do better. That you could blossom, become the woman I know you can be.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

With enough power, enough
status... And now you have them.

Sam looks as though she's lost the ability to breathe. She
gapes at him, dumbfounded, and several times her mouth opens
but nothing comes out.

SAM

You...you did...all this...for ME?

KRUPPS

Of course, Sam. All for you.

SAM

B-b-but...

KRUPPS

Oh, Sam. You can't look back on
three and a half years of work
you've done at Kennedy, and
possibly have to ask why.

Overcome, Sam leaps out of her chair, rounds the table, and
catches Krupps in a full-on, leaning-over neck clinch. After
a moment, the startled principal gets an arm free, and pats
her back awkwardly.

SAM

(in his ear)

Thank you thank you thank you...

KRUPPS

(with a beatific smile)

The girl to put your money on.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

FADE IN:

EST. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

The next day. All the lifts are running, and multitudes of skiers dot the snowy slopes.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

A series of short sequences of the kids skiing: Lily and Josh, side by side and weaving down the mountain; Mary Cherry preening and then wiping out; Carmen encouraging Sugar Daddy on as he makes his way down the bunny slope.

CUT TO:

EXT. A PATHWAY - DAY

Krupps and Sam, carrying their skis, are walking amongst the cabins.

KRUPPS

You seem...pensive.

SAM

I think I'm irritated with you. I haven't decided yet.

KRUPPS

Moi? Whatever for?

SAM

Well, for one thing, I happen to know that you fibbed to me about the cabins.

KRUPPS

Me? Fib? Never. What about the cabins?

SAM

You told me that my cabin wasn't bigger than everyone else's.

KRUPPS

And it's not! Scout's honor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

You forgot to mention that the teachers are sharing cabins! So technically my cabin is a little smaller, sure, but I have it all to myself! The teachers only have half a cabin, which works out to be a lot smaller than my whole cabin.

KRUPPS

Well, technically, that's not what you asked.

SAM

The other kids are doubled up in hotel rooms; the teachers are doubled up in cabins—I'm still the only person not sharing sleeping space.

KRUPPS

Except for me.

SAM

Except for you.

Spontaneously, they both stop to look at each other, and for a moment—less than a moment—the next, obvious, charged question hovers between them. For less than a moment.

KRUPPS

We're here.

Sam turns to see that they have, indeed, reached her stoop.

SAM

Number nineteen. My stop.

KRUPPS

How about a soak? Then a late lunch.

SAM

Sounds good. Meet you there?

KRUPPS

I'll be looking for you.

Krupps tracks off down the pathway, while Sam climbs up the step, setting her skis down to open the door. As she is maneuvering her skis through, a figure steps from the shadows of the trees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NATALIE
(calling)
Sam.

Sam turns around, taking in the sight; but instead of acknowledging Natalie, she returns to the task of getting her skis inside. Natalie takes the opportunity to approach the front door. Their conversational tone is frosty, but fairly civil.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Taking your skis in?

SAM
(dark)
I don't trust them out here. Lots of people'd like to see me take a header off a five-hundred-foot cliff.

NATALIE
I didn't say it was a bad idea.

Sam takes a long, appraising look at Natalie, and finally steps aside, silently inviting her through the open door. Natalie enters.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Sam and Natalie confront each other at five paces, arms crossed.

NATALIE
I'm sorry.

SAM
(guard dropping a bit)
What about?

NATALIE
Harrison.

At that, Sam relaxes, dropping her arms and laughing.

SAM
I'm sorry about that. It was an instinctive reaction. Harrison and I are History, comma, Ancient. I don't care what he does.
(considers)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM (CONT'D)

In fact, if you can take him away from Brooke, more power to you.

Sam waits for Natalie to hotly deny that that's her intention; instead, she just shrugs.

NATALIE

But you're still mad at me. For before.

Sam throws up her hands, mad again.

SAM

What do you expect?! You and Carmen barge into my apartment, spouting all this intervention crap, like I'm some drugged-out freak—

Natalie covers the distance between them in three determined steps, grabbing Sam by the shoulders and shaking her.

NATALIE

(intently focused)

I...have seen you! The others, they don't know, not really. But I know what it looks like!

Suddenly on the defensive, Sam tears herself out of Natalie's grasp, twisting away.

SAM

(weakly)

Leave me alone.

Natalie stands close behind her, unrelenting.

NATALIE

No! Because I know! They think, but I know! And I will not let you lie to me when I know!

She spins Sam around again, keeping a tight grip on her arms; there is such intensity in her voice that it threatens to crack. She brings them practically nose to nose.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Right here, right now, Sam! No Carmen. No Lily. No Brooke. Just you and me. Now by God you are going to tell me the truth! You're popping pills, aren't you?! aren't you?!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Under Natalie's ferocious barrage, Sam's face collapses into a mask of despair, her mouth working soundlessly. Finally she rips her gaze away, hair falling across her twisted features.

SAM
(a whimper)
...yes...

Natalie releases Sam; she stumbles back into a plush recliner, where she curls up, shaking. For the moment, Natalie just stands there, arms folded, eyes focused on the floor somewhere.

NATALIE
(not looking up)
You're right, you know...there are
people out to destroy you.

Sam uncurls a bit, her voice shaky but just coherent.

SAM
No...Calvin...Principal Krupps
said...if I thought...any teacher
was—

NATALIE
I'm not talking about teachers.

Sam shifts slightly, and her posture somehow goes from anguished to sulking.

SAM
Brooke. She told Mr. Osbourne
about me.

NATALIE
You know?
(chuckles)
Of course you know. Supergirl,
three steps ahead of everyone. He
wants to tell Mr. Krupps, you
know.

Sam has rearranged herself again, huddling with her arms wrapped around her knees.

SAM
I know.

NATALIE
(laughs)
No doubt you have some nefarious
scheme to neutralize him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAM
(neutrally)
Maybe.

Natalie doesn't seem to have anything to follow that; the silence stretches.

SAM (CONT'D)
What do you want, Nat?

For the first time, Natalie looks up.

NATALIE
What do I want?
(thinks)
I wanted the truth. After that...
(turns away)
I don't know.

SAM
You're going to run back to Brooke and the gang and tell them I've supplied the confirmation they've been looking for. The admission of guilt.

NATALIE
(sharp)
No.

SAM
(piqued)
No? Is there a problem? With Brooke?

NATALIE
(reluctantly)
She's not as...forgiving...as you are.

Sam stretches, laughing.

SAM
Brooke's got her panties in a bunch over Harrison.
(dryly)
What a surprise.

NATALIE
She refuses to understand, I wouldn't have let anything happen between me and Harrison.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SAM

She'll never understand. So I guess you have a dilemma now.

NATALIE

What?

Sam shifts to the edge of the chair, elbows on knees.

SAM

You have to decide whose side you're on.

NATALIE

I'm here, aren't I?

SAM

(standing up)

You sure? Being on my side could get dangerous.

NATALIE

(bitterly)

So could being anywhere else. Hell, I don't even know if you want me around.

SAM

I'd better. I've given you my biggest secret. But that's okay... because now I know yours, too.

NATALIE

(startled)

What are you talking about?

SAM

I figured it out, just now. Just a few minutes ago. I'm glad you came here and talked to me like that, because I figured it out. Why you were so quick to peg me... why you knew. You know what it looks like, all right—from looking in the mirror. You know because you've done it yourself.

NATALIE

I—

Instead of finishing the denial, Natalie makes her way shakily to a sofa and sits down hard. Finally she looks up at Sam, pleading in her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Please don't tell anyone.

SAM

(snorts)

Who'd believe me?

NATALIE

(stonily)

I have a record. They wouldn't have to believe you.

SAM

Juvie records are sealed. Take a lot of clout to pry in there.

NATALIE

Maybe that's why I'm here. Don't want someone with lots of clout prying.

SAM

(laughs)

Thanks, but I'm not that good.

NATALIE

Then you're better than you think.

SAM

Maybe you're here to spite someone.

That opens the floodgates.

NATALIE

I tried with Brooke, I really did— I know it was wrong, with Harrison, but I didn't want to, I've been fighting it, and it was just one moment, and we didn't even do anything! And all Brooke does is scream and say the most horrible things...

Trailing off, Natalie buries her face into the sofa's overstuffed armrest. Sam comes over and carefully sits next to her.

SAM

Everyone tries with Brooke. Nobody realizes at first that she's off in her own little world. "The World Revolves Around Brooke McQueen," by Brooke McQueen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

A moment of silence.

NATALIE
 Didn't I hear you say you were
 meeting Principal Krupps
 somewhere?

SAM
 (starts)
 Oh! Yes!
 (leaps up)
 I have a spa date.

NATALIE
 You look wiped.

Sam takes a look at herself in the room's full-length mirror
 and grimaces.

SAM
 Ugh. I got a quick fix for this.

She goes to one of the endtables, opens a drawer and takes out
 a plastic baggie with pills inside. She fishes out a couple.

SAM (CONT'D)
 You look like you could use a pick-
 me-up yourself. You want one of
 these...whatever they are?
 (studying the bag)
 They're blue.

NATALIE
 (shocked)
No! I'm clean! I'm never going
 back to that place!

SAM
 (holding up her hands)
 Suit yourself.

She puts the baggie back in the drawer, and swallows the
 pills.

NATALIE
 (rising)
 What do you mean, "whatever they
 are"? Don't you know?

SAM
 (shrugs)
 Jaycee gives them to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

NATALIE

You're popping pills and you don't even know what they are?! God, Sam!

SAM

(offended)

Jaycee would never give me anything dangerous!

NATALIE

All drugs are dangerous.

SAM

You know what I mean.

NATALIE

(subsiding)

Okay.

SAM

(a bit put off)

That's it? "Okay"? No speeches? No pamphlets?

NATALIE

Something else I know: no one can force you to quit. If you don't want to get clean, it's not going to happen.

SAM

(adamantly)

I don't have a problem.

NATALIE

Okay, then.

SAM

So...how do I look?

Sure enough, the "whatever it is" has given Sam a fresh burst of energy, making her perkier than before. Saggy makeup aside.

NATALIE

(dryly)

Fix your face.

Sam goes over to a small table with a mirror and spends a few moments retouching the sparse makeup she wears. Then she grabs a small clear vinyl bag containing her bathing suit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

SAM

Wanna come with? Calvin won't mind. Promise.

NATALIE

No, I'm going back to my hotel room. Hopefully my roommate will be out, so I can...brood.

SAM

If you want to be alone, stay here. I won't be back for a while.

NATALIE

(skeptical)

You're trusting me alone in your cabin. With your skis.

SAM

There's nothing worth stealing. I don't think you want to see me go off a cliff. Unless you're having thoughts of flushing my stash—

Natalie shakes her head vehemently.

SAM (CONT'D)

—then it's fine. You know, I never wanted to stop being your friend, Nat. I always liked you. Thought you were the mirror image of Nicole.

NATALIE

(eyebrows rising)

Really.

SAM

Why are you surprised?

NATALIE

You never mentioned my hair.

SAM

Oh...this?

Sam comes over and runs a finger along one of Natalie's highlights.

SAM (CONT'D)

I know what this is. It's a statement to Brooke. It says, "Be careful—I'm more than a mousy little thing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

SAM (CONT'D)

But you won't know how much more until it's too late."

(silky)

And you'll make her pay, won't you, Nat?

NATALIE

Why do you say that?

SAM

Because you always say what you mean. And because, when you were talking before about letting things happen between you and Harrison, you said "wouldn't have".

She steps past Natalie, in the direction of the door.

SAM (CONT'D)

(in Natalie's ear)

Past tense.

Sam continues to the door and opens it.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm glad we're on the same side.

She steps out, closing the door behind her. Natalie stares after, an inscrutable expression on her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PATHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sam is walking towards the main complex when her cell phone rings. She unclips it and flips it open.

SAM

(into the phone)

Hello?

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTDOORS

A close-up of Miss Glass, in a parka, framed by fir trees and holding her own cell phone.

GLASS

Jeez, McPherson, I've been trying to get you alone all morning!

INTERCUT BETWEEN SAM AND MISS GLASS

Sam is so startled she stops walking.

SAM

Miss Glass??? B-but—

GLASS

What? I told you I was faking sick. It was the perfect way to get Osbourne up here with you.

SAM

But now you're not here!

GLASS

Of course I'm here! How hard do you think it is to drive up that stinkin' mountain?

SAM

(looking around)

Wait—are you watching me??

GLASS

Of course I'm watching you! How am I supposed to get pictures if I'm not close enough to see you? So what's going on, huh, McPherson? You're supposed to be working on Osbourne, but all I see is you getting chummy with Principal Krupps.

(considering)

Not that kissing up to the Big Kahuna is a bad idea.

SAM

It's not—never mind. Now that I know you're here, I'll work on Mr. Osbourne. Tonight. You just be ready.

GLASS

Don't worry, McPherson. I'll be around.

The line goes dead. Sam puts the phone away and continues on towards the spa.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SPA - LATER

The main area of the spa building is laid out in a set of hot tubs, of varying sizes and elevations, separated by potted ferns and connected by wooden walkways. A regulation pool with diving board lurks nearby.

Sam draws a considerable amount of attention when she emerges from the women's locker room, with reason: she is wearing a tiny, high-cup solid black bikini. As she walks among the hot tubs, turning heads, Krupps spots her from across the room.

KRUPPS
(waving her over)

Sam!

A grin lighting her face, Sam waves back and makes a beeline for his hot tub, which turns out to be just big enough for two or three people. She stops across from him, unconsciously posing.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)
That looks new, somehow.

SAM
It is. I forgot about the spa, so I went over to the boutique and picked up a couple of things.

KRUPPS
You look—

He breaks off. After patiently waiting a couple of seconds...

SAM
Hmm?

KRUPPS
I can't think of a word I can say that's appropriate.

A smile plays across Sam's lips.

SAM
I guess that's a compliment.

KRUPPS
(grinning)
Oh, yes... I don't think I would be stepping out of line by confirming that.
(holding out a hand)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

You might want to think about coming in. Some of your male classmates are in serious danger of eye damage.

Blushing, Sam takes Krupps' outstretched hand and steps down into the hot tub, winding up opposite him.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Don't blush, Sam. You're a truly beautiful young woman; you should never be embarrassed by the attention you receive.

Sam offers an encouraging smile.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

I wouldn't have pictured you in black, though.

SAM

I tried the white one, but it seemed too...

KRUPPS

Translucent?

SAM

Yeah. Exactly. Too much stuff showing through.

Krupps nods approvingly.

KRUPPS

A woman like you should be alluring, not lewd.
(off Sam's expression)
What? Did I say something wrong?

SAM

Actually, I kinda...bought the white one. I just don't plan on wearing it in front of so many people.

KRUPPS

I wasn't passing judgment, Sam. In the right circumstances, there's nothing wrong with advertising.

SAM

A friend of mine once told me the same thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KRUPPS

I'm glad you didn't wear the white. I might've said something... inappropriate.

SAM

Well, we wouldn't want that, would we?

She scoots around the circular edge of the hot tub until she is seated next to him.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE SPA - CONTINUOUS

Brooke and Lily have discovered the ultimate high ground: a narrow walkway that runs along two whole sides of the giant room. Standing and leaning against the walkway's railing, they are twenty feet above everything else, giving them a bird's-eye view of everyone—including Krupps and Sam, where their attention is focused.

LILY

Okay, I know I was defending Sam, but—look at them! They're practically making out! In front of everyone!

BROOKE

(flatly)
There's nothing going on between them.

LILY

(curious)
How can you be so sure?

BROOKE

I asked Mr. Osbourne. He doesn't think they're doing it, either.

LILY

And you believe him?

BROOKE

No.

Lily does a doubletake.

LILY

Uhh, Brooke, you're losing me with the logic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE

When I asked Mr. Osbourne, he said the fact that they were so comfortable with each other meant that sex hadn't occurred to them. Or something like that.

LILY

So what do you think?

BROOKE

I think he's wrong.

Brooke turns a brooding pair of eyes back down to where Krupps and Sam are.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

I think they're doing it deliberately.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SPA - KRUPPS AND SAM'S HOT TUB - CONTINUOUS

Sam is leaning back, using Krupps' outstretched arm as a pillow.

KRUPPS

Sam?

SAM

(distant)

Hmm?

KRUPPS

Where are you?

SAM

Oh...sorry. I had a...stressful conversation earlier.

KRUPPS

Anything I can help with?

SAM

No, I took care of it.

He runs a finger along her neckline experimentally.

KRUPPS

You are tense. What you need is a good rub, get those knots out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sam obligingly leans forward, and Krupps begins to knead her neck.

SAM
Calvin?

KRUPPS
Yes, Sam?

SAM
Is this appropriate?

KRUPPS
(lightly)
For a hot tub? I think so...

She scoots away from him, moving to the center of the hot tub and turning to face him.

SAM
I'm serious. How far are we going to push this?

Krupps considers that for a few moments.

KRUPPS
Sam, I'm going to ask you something, and I want a completely honest answer. Okay?

SAM
(solemn)
Always.

KRUPPS
Are you—in any way—even remotely attracted to me?

Sam seems a bit thrown by that: she opens her mouth for an immediate response, then reconsiders and snaps it shut again. She ponders for a bit.

SAM
Honestly...? No.
(holding up a hand)
I mean, don't get me wrong—you're a wonderful guy, smart, funny, great-looking—I can appreciate eye candy as much as the next girl. But...

KRUPPS
There's no spark?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

There is! But not like that.
When I'm around you, I feel...I
don't know how to explain it. But
I know it doesn't have anything to
do with sex.

KRUPPS

(nodding sagely)
And you are a desperately
gorgeous, nubile young woman, who
could have any boy in school at a
snap of her fingers. Frankly, I
wouldn't let you near half my
friends. And I admit, I have
feelings for you, but...

SAM

Just not that kind?

KRUPPS

No. So you see—there's no
attraction of that sort between us
at all. Thus no danger.

SAM

(coy)
But it's fun to play?

KRUPPS

(grinning)
Exactly.

With that, Sam returns to her place beneath his fingers, and
he resumes massaging her neck and shoulders. She relaxes,
closes her eyes, and melts into him.

SAM

Calvin, I hope you don't mind, but
I'd like to spend some time with
Mr. Osbourne tonight.

Krupps suddenly stops the massage.

KRUPPS

My God, Sam, I've been completely
monopolizing your time! Why
didn't you say something before?

SAM

Oh, don't stop.

She reaches up and coaxes his fingers back into action.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAM (CONT'D)

I have fun with you, Calvin. I just think I need to do some fence-mending.

KRUPPS

Is he giving you problems?

SAM

Not because of us, I don't think. It started a couple of months ago. I just need to talk to him, find out what I'm doing wrong.

KRUPPS

You're sure you can handle it?

SAM

(lazily)

Don't worry...Mr. Osbourne is no match for me.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SKI LODGE BAR - EVENING

In this, the one area of the resort guaranteed free from high school seniors, Krupps is sitting on a stool at the bar having a beer. Mr. Osbourne slides onto the neighboring stool.

OSBOURNE

Do you mind if I join you for a bit?

KRUPPS

Of course not, Eric. Please.

OSBOURNE

(to the bartender)

Schnapps.

KRUPPS

If you're here to follow up on Ms. Ross' concerns, I'll have to disappoint you.

OSBOURNE

I haven't spoken to Ms. Ross, but I'm aware that she wanted to speak with you.

KRUPPS

About Sam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSBOURNE

Sir, with all due respect, there are appearances to be maintained—

The bartender sets a glass down in front of Osbourne.

KRUPPS

Like I told Ms. Ross: Sam and I haven't done anything inappropriate, and I don't give a damn about appearances.

(beat)

Sam told me she wanted to see you tonight.

OSBOURNE

(checking his watch)

Yes, I'm meeting with her shortly.

KRUPPS

I was surprised to hear that she was having problems in your class.

(beat)

I've told Sam to report any incidents of punitive action—but I'm sure your grading is based solely on her classroom performance.

OSBOURNE

We've had some...philosophical differences. Nothing intractable, I'm sure.

KRUPPS

I have the highest regard for you as an instructor, Eric. I'm extremely reluctant to stick my nose into your classroom.

Osbourne takes that for the veiled threat that it is.

OSBOURNE

I'm sure Miss McPherson and I can come to an understanding.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S CABIN - LATER

Sam is pacing, cell phone in hand. Various pill-laden baggies are scattered on a small table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

(into the phone)

...I don't care about that! I'm just asking... What happens if you take the blue ones and the little red ones together?

JAYCEE (V.O.)

(over the phone)

And I'm telling you: You don't want to do that. It's mucho dangerous, man. I'm not kidding, Sam—you could wind up in the ground.

SAM

(sighs)

Okay, okay...forget that, then.

JAYCEE (V.O.)

This would be easier if you told me what kind of high you were looking for.

Sam is rearranging the baggies, seemingly at random.

SAM

I'm not sure... What if I take two blues and one yellow?

JAYCEE (V.O.)

You'd upchuck your dinner... probably nothing else.

SAM

Huh... Okay, how about two blues, then one of those square green ones?

JAYCEE (V.O.)

I wouldn't do that, Sam.

SAM

Will it kill me?

JAYCEE (V.O.)

No, but...Sam, you'd be seriously out of control. And it'd be obvious to anyone that you're flying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM
 (nodding)
 That kind of sounds right. Okay.
 Thanks, Jaycee.

She disconnects the call and immediately dials another number. Two rings, and the line is picked up.

SAM (CONT'D)
 (into the phone)
 Are you ready?

GLASS (V.O.)
 (over the phone)
 Ready and waiting for you.

There is a knock at the door, making Sam turn and look.

SAM
 Good—here we go.

Sam snaps the phone shut and puts it away. Hurriedly grabbing the baggies, she pulls out three (not two) of the large blue pills, and one square green pill, and then sweeps the baggies into a drawer. Without looking, she downs the pills.

SAM (CONT'D)
 Coming!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A PATHWAY - LATER

Mr. Osbourne and Sam are walking—Sam none too steadily—along a snowy path. Nobody else is in sight.

SAM
 Mr. Osbourne, I'm sooo glad you
 let me talk to you, because...
 because...because of a very good
 reason. I think. Right?

OSBOURNE
 (concerned)
 Miss McPherson, you seem to be...
 unwell.

SAM
 Who, me? I'm well. I'm very
 well. I'm fine, wonderful...what's
 the word I'm looking for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly she stumbles sideways, clutching at Osbourne's coat as he instinctively reaches to grab her.

SAM (CONT'D)

Whoops!

Osbourne sets her upright, but keeps a hold on her, just in case.

OSBOURNE

Perhaps we should sit down.

Sam nods, her eyes wide and just a little crazy. Osbourne guides her to a nearby picnic table and makes sure she is firmly seated on the bench before sitting beside her.

SAM

I'm sorry...I...

OSBOURNE

Miss McPherson, I think you're seriously ill.

SAM

No, no...I just...feel...very strange.

OSBOURNE

An adverse reaction, perhaps? A bad mixture of drugs?

SAM

(swaying)

No fair...you're...you're trying to...get me to say...

She tries to get up, but manages the task badly, instead landing squarely in Osbourne's lap. For a moment her arms are wrapped around his neck; then he deftly lifts her to her feet.

OSBOURNE

I think I should get you to the infirmary.

SAM

No...no doctor...please...just...I think I...should lie down...

Osbourne considers this for a very long moment.

OSBOURNE

(sighing)

Very well. But this is against my better judgment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM
(fading)
Thank...you...

Supporting most of her weight, Osbourne guides Sam down the pathway.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S CABIN - LATER

The front door opens, and Osbourne shoulders a nearly-unconscious Sam inside. After inelegantly kicking the door shut behind him, he looks around. One glance up at the loft space convinces him not to try to put Sam to bed. Instead, he half-carries her back to the sofa, coaxing her down and lifting her legs up.

SAM
(eyes fluttering)
Mr....Osbourne...?

Osbourne shushes her, feeling her forehead and cheeks for signs of fever.

OSBOURNE
You need to rest, Miss McPherson.

He reaches for an afghan and spreads it over her.

SAM
I...I just...

She manages to reach up and lay a hand on his face.

SAM (CONT'D)
You...you're a very good...
teacher.

OSBOURNE
Shhh. Sleep now.

SAM
I...I'm...sorry...

Her hand falls away as she fades into unconsciousness. Osbourne feels his way to a nearby chair, settles down, and watches her in the dim light.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

102.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT SIX

ACT SEVEN

FADE IN:

EST. SAM'S CABIN - MORNING

Early morning at the ski village.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S CABIN

Krupps is visiting Sam. He has pulled the chair up next to the sofa, where Sam is still lying, covered by the afghan.

KRUPPS

I don't like this, Sam. Are you sure I can't convince you to go see the doctor?

She holds out a hand, and he takes it in both of his.

SAM

I'm sure. I just had a bad reaction to...something. I'll be fine, I promise.

KRUPPS

It's a good thing Eric got you back here and tucked in.

SAM

(grimacing)

I guess I didn't get much fence-mending done. If you see him, would you ask him to stop by?

KRUPPS

If you think you're up to it.

SAM

(scoffs weakly)

Stop worrying about me. I plan to be up and back on the slopes by noon.

By the way Krupps pats her head, it's clear he doesn't quite believe her.

KRUPPS

I hope so. But I can't help worrying about you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

You really should have seen a doctor last night.

She manages a thin but encouraging smile.

SAM

I'm sorry. I'll be all right, I swear.

Krupps gets up and places the phone on the endtable next to Sam's head.

KRUPPS

Just call when you're ready for breakfast. Light, heavy, whatever you want. Or if you need anything at all.

He starts to rise, but Sam holds out a hand to stop him.

SAM

There is something I want to talk to you about...Mr. Krupps.

KRUPPS

(sitting back down)
"Mr. Krupps"? Uh-oh. What happened to Calvin?

SAM

It's only Calvin if we're not talking school business.

KRUPPS

(chuckling)
Here you are, sick in bed, and you're thinking about the school.

He adopts an attentive posture.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

What's on your mind?

SAM

The Student Body Fund.

KRUPPS

Sam, I know you can handle it—

SAM

No, I can't. I figured that out just by looking at the reports. It's too big a job for one person.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM (CONT'D)

I don't know if you know how much the fund has grown since it was started. There's something like ten times the amount of money flowing through, five times the number of fundraisers, four times the number of outings—

Krupps holds up a hand.

KRUPPS

(smiling)

Okay, okay, I see your point.

SAM

I need an Assistant Treasurer.

KRUPPS

I can do that. And, knowing you, you already have someone in mind.

She cocks an eyebrow at him.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Well? Don't keep me in suspense.

And as Sam is telling him—

CUT TO:

INT. RESORT HOTEL LOBBY - LATER

Brooke comes out of one of the elevators, and spots Harrison walking across the lobby.

BROOKE

Harrison!

As she rushes over to him, he looks around as though he were considering making a run for it; instead he lets her grab his arm and pull him into a side corridor.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Okay, Harrison, what's going on?

HARRISON

(neutrally)

Nothing, Brooke. Why do you ask?

She throws her hands up in frustration.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE

Why—? Because this is supposed to be a major opportunity to, you know, have fun, and you've been avoiding me ever since we got here!

HARRISON

(still toneless)

We've eaten at the same table. We've skied down the same slopes. I know—I saw you.

BROOKE

We haven't talked, we haven't done anything together!

HARRISON

What is it you'd like to do?

BROOKE

(stomping her foot)

Why are you being like this?

HARRISON

(turning angry)

Brooke, you lied to me! Sam— Sam's in trouble, and you're busy protecting your turf!

BROOKE

No! It wasn't like that!

HARRISON

It's exactly like that! I can't believe you kept this from me! What did you think was going to happen?!

BROOKE

The same thing that happens every time Sam needs you—you'd run off and play hero. And she'd use that to manipulate you right back into her bed.

HARRISON

(laughs shortly)

You know what hurts, Brooke? That you think that little of me.

BROOKE

(taken aback)

No, I—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HARRISON

Like I'm some lapdog that's just supposed to come slobbering over whenever you or Sam call.

BROOKE

You have a history with Sam, a long history! I was just trying to protect our relationship.

HARRISON

How?! With lies?! With deception?! What kind of relationship is that?

(beat)

Maybe it's all a lie. Maybe you don't want to help Sam at all. Maybe you're just waiting for her to fall, so you can gloat.

BROOKE

No! I want to help Sam! I just don't think I should have to sacrifice my boyfriend, my life—

HARRISON

My, my, my. I see clearer all the time.

He pokes a finger in her chest.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

There she is—the old Brooke. Vain, shallow, selfish, win-at-all-costs...

Brooke can only shake her head in mute denial, her face twisted up.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

You lie to me—you get everyone else to lie to me—and then you stand there and tell me Sam's manipulative?

He storms past her, out towards the lobby and beyond.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

(passing)

Grow up, Brooke.

After he is gone, Brooke sags against the wall, hugging herself, silent sobs shaking her. After some moments, Lily comes up to her, concerned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LILY
Brooke! Are you okay?

Brooke looks at her through strands of hair, and shakes her head mutely.

LILY (CONT'D)
Oh, Brooke, what happened?

BROOKE
Harrison.

LILY
(suddenly still)
Oh.

Brooke pushes some of the hair out of her eyes.

BROOKE
Go ahead, kick me while I'm down.
God knows it's the thing to do.

LILY
(reproachfully)
Brooke...

BROOKE
You know you want to tell me how
badly I've screwed up with
Harrison.

LILY
Sorry, Dear Abby is not in today.

Brooke looks at her.

BROOKE
There's a "but" stamped across
your forehead the size of New
Jersey.

LILY
(smiling briefly)
But, Josh and I learned the hard
way what secrets can do to a
relationship.

BROOKE
I was in the hospital then. Too
bad. If I'd paid closer
attention, maybe I would've
learned something.
(sighs)
Probably not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

She turns so she is leaning back against the wall, staring up at the ceiling.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Sam McPherson, my eternal blind spot.

At a loss, Lily tries being cheerful.

LILY

Speaking of Josh, wanna come see him?

BROOKE

Are they letting him out? Sure, why not?

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY - LATER

Lily and Brooke are sitting in the waiting room when Josh comes out, assisted by a nurse. He is on crutches and his right ankle is in a cast. Lily leaps up and rushes over to him.

JOSH

(grinning)

Hey, Lil. Good thing I'm not still playing, huh? Coach'd have my hide.

Brooke gets up and joins them.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Oh, hey, Brooke. You shoulda seen me. There I was, slaloming down the diamond slope at like top speed. I was slaloming left, I was slaloming right, and then all of a sudden I see this huge mountain lion, right in front of me, and—

He catches Brooke trying to stifle a giggle.

JOSH (CONT'D)

(deflated)

—and Lily's already told you what happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY
 (patting his hand)
 Don't worry, honey, it's not like
 I'm telling the whole school that
 you...tripped over a fern.

JOSH
 Thanks, Lil.

Brooke bursts out laughing; but after only a moment the
 laughter turns to tears.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 Brooke? What is it?

BROOKE
 (wiping her eyes)
 I'm sorry. You two are very
 happy.

LILY
 (to Josh)
 She and Harrison had a fight.

JOSH
 Oh... Look, Brooke, you and
 Harrison, you'll work it out. I
 mean, I admit at first I didn't
 get it—I sorta always saw
 Harrison ending up with Sam,
 y'know?

As Brooke's face falls even farther, Lily nudges Josh—none
 too gently—in the ribs.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 Ow! What I mean is, I get it now.
 The two of you, you just click.
 Like me and Lily, we're like,
 different sides of the universe.
 But together, we're...everything,
 you know? You and Harrison,
 you're like that, too.

BROOKE
 You think so?

LILY
 (soothing)
 Sure you are, Brooke. Anyone can
 see it. Just give it a chance—
 it'll all work out. You'll see.
 (to Josh)
 C'mon, honey.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILY (CONT'D)

We'll get you back to the room.
Then I have to go look for
Natalie.

At the sound of Natalie's name, Brooke groans again.

LILY (CONT'D)

(to Lily)
You haven't seen her either?

BROOKE

Not since last night. Somebody
else I just can't get things right
with.

LILY

We'll find her. We'll talk it
out. I'm sure she's just as
anxious to put this in the past as
you are.

BROOKE

I wish I was sure.

LILY

(to Josh)
Let's go, big guy.

Josh, flanked by Lily and Brooke, limps out of the infirmary.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S CABIN - LATER

Sam is padding around in an unusual getup—terrycloth robe and
slippers—when there is a subdued knock at the door.

SAM

(calling)
Come in!

The door opens; Mr. Osbourne is standing there.

SAM (CONT'D)

Mr. Osbourne—please, come in.

Osbourne steps inside, closing the door. Sam gestures to an
overstuffed chair; he seats himself.

SAM (CONT'D)

Can I get you something?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSBOURNE

No, please don't trouble yourself.
How are you feeling this morning?

Sam takes a seat on the sofa.

SAM

Much better, thanks.

OSBOURNE

I'm gratified to hear that. I was
afraid I'd erred in not taking you
to the infirmary.

SAM

Thanks for not doing that. I just
needed sleep.

(beat)

I'm sorry. That wasn't supposed
to happen.

OSBOURNE

I hadn't thought that it was. An
unfamiliar drug, or combination of
drugs?

Sam looks at him suspiciously.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

(theatrical sigh)

Must we continue to play games? I
am not "wired", if that is what's
worrying you.

SAM

(slightly abashed)

No...

(long beat)

It was...something I hadn't tried
before.

OSBOURNE

(nods)

You understand I'll have to tell
Principal Krupps.

SAM

(mildly)

You don't have any evidence.

OSBOURNE

I have the evidence of my own eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

Calvin won't take your word over mine.

OSBOURNE

A drug test—

SAM

You can't make me take one. And he won't.

There is a lull in the conversation as Osbourne considers all this.

OSBOURNE

Well. You seem to have your bases covered, as it were.

SAM

I'm sorry. I wish Brooke hadn't come to you. I wish she hadn't put you in this position.

OSBOURNE

Interestingly, at times I find myself in agreement with that sentiment. As that may be, however, I am in this position, and I am duty-bound to report what I know.

SAM

(intent)

Please drop it, Mr. Osbourne. Please. You'll only end up hurting yourself, and...I don't want to see you get hurt.

OSBOURNE

That sounds very much like a threat.

SAM

(sincerely)

It's not.

Osbourne nods, and rises.

OSBOURNE

I take you at your word. But it doesn't alter the course of action I must take.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAM

I hope you don't. I really do.
Please think about it.

She gets up and moves with him to the door.

OSBOURNE

I must say, this conversation was
not quite what I expected.

SAM

You got me back here safe last
night. I'm grateful. I wish
there was something I could say to
make you stay out of this.

OSBOURNE

I'm afraid there isn't.

Sam opens the door.

SAM

I'm sorry it has to be this way.

OSBOURNE

(stepping outside)

As am I, Miss McPherson, as am I.

After she closes the door, Sam just leans against it tiredly,
a genuinely sorrowful expression clouding her features.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE SAM'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

As Osbourne steps off the porch and onto the snowy pathway,
his cell phone rings. Without breaking stride, he fishes it
out of his pocket and puts it to his ear.

OSBOURNE

(into the phone)

Hello?... No, not a bad time at
all... I just finished an
interesting conversation with
her... I'm not sure... She
seemed genuinely concerned... You
should continue as planned...
You'll just have to improvise.
You appear to have a talent for
it...

Then, for just two sentences, he switches to German:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:OSBOURNE (SUBTITLE) **(CONT'D)**

I have absolute faith in you...
 Goodbye.

He tucks the phone back into his coat, and continues on his way.

CUT TO:

INT. RESORT HOTEL HALLWAY - LATER

The hallway outside Josh and Lily's room: the door to the room opens, and Brooke backs out, talking to Lily inside.

BROOKE

...I'm just going to stop by my room and change.

LILY (O.S.)

Okay, Brooke, I'll meet you down in the lobby.

Brooke closes the door and walks down a stretch of hallway to her room. She swipes her keycard in the door and steps inside.

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brooke walks into her room—and finds Harrison sitting on her bed. She quickly looks around.

HARRISON

I bought off your roommate.

Anxiety shows on her face. She goes to him and kneels, looking up at his face.

BROOKE

(tearing up)

Harrison, I—I know you're mad, and, God, you have every right to be and to think the worst of me, and— I know I deserve it, but... I just don't know how much more I can take.

He puts a finger to her lips to quiet her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRISON

I think I went overboard this morning.

BROOKE

No, you nailed it. Vintage Queen B.

HARRISON

I shouldn't have said you didn't want to help Sam. I know you do.

BROOKE

Not enough to get her best bud involved.

HARRISON

Ex-best bud.

BROOKE

Still.

(beat)

God, I must be the most pathetic creature on Earth.

HARRISON

Hey, don't beat yourself up too much. Save some for the rest of us.

She reaches up and bats him on the arm, roused, at least marginally, from her self-pity. She gets to her feet and sits on the bed beside him.

BROOKE

I can't believe how stupid I was. How insecure I was. I was so sure all Sam had to do was whistle, and you'd go running off.

HARRISON

I guess I can't blame you for worrying about Sam, after everything we've been through... What I don't understand is how you can have so little faith in me. Not to just go running off.

BROOKE

I trust you, Harrison. I just... don't trust us, I guess.

She pats him on the knee, trying to be reassuring.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BROOKE (CONT'D)

It's not you, it's me. I guess I have some work left to do on myself.

HARRISON

Oh, great, the "it's not you, it's me" speech.

BROOKE

Harrison!

HARRISON

Sorry, sorry.

BROOKE

So...where does that leave us?

HARRISON

(grimacing)

I don't know.

Brooke leans in to kiss him, but he turns away, and she ends up pecking his cheek.

BROOKE

(murmuring)

Déjà vu.

HARRISON

But no Sam here between us, this time.

BROOKE

No.

(beat)

What about Natalie?

HARRISON

(embarrassed)

I don't know— We were— I mean, we were just talking, and— It was very strange. Believe me, I have no romantic feelings towards Natalie.

BROOKE

You're sure? Because it looked like there was a little feeling there.

HARRISON

There's only one woman I want, and she's sitting right here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Brooke flushes.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Just—let's not push, okay? I don't want to just jump into bed, like sex is the answer for everything.

BROOKE

(nodding emphatically)

Right. Absolutely. No pressure.

HARRISON

Right.

Brooke leans against him.

BROOKE

As long as you're here. God, I don't think I even realized how alone I've felt since New Year's.

She turns and, before Harrison can react, she kisses him long and soft.

HARRISON

(into Brooke's lips)

Brooke?

BROOKE

Mmm?

HARRISON

You're pushing.

BROOKE

(breaking away)

Oh. Sorry.

However, she then begins to plant quick kisses on his lips. Finally he holds her at arm's length.

HARRISON

I think I'd better go.

BROOKE

(pouting)

Sure?

HARRISON

(laughing nervously)

Brooke, if you keep this up, your roommate's going to be in for quite a surprise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BROOKE

Harrison...

He takes her face in his hands and plants a smooch on her lips.

HARRISON

No. Pushing.

BROOKE

Grrr. All right.

HARRISON

(patiently)

I'm not running off to Sam.

Brooke shakes her head obediently.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

You and me, we're going to work on making this thing between us right.

Brooke nods. Harrison plants one more kiss on her forehead.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Okay. I'll see you later.

He releases her face, stands up and retreats. After the sound of the door marks his departure, a dreamy grin covers Brooke's face. She falls back onto the bed, throwing her fists into the air.

BROOKE

Yes!

CUT TO:

EXT. SKI LODGE PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

The yellow school buses are back, being loaded for the trip home. Ms. Ross is standing near one of the buses, clipboard in hand, when Mr. Osbourne saunters up, hands in pockets.

OSBOURNE

Good afternoon, Ms. Ross. Ready to return to the humdrum of city life?

ROSS

I'm just a city girl at heart, Mr. Osbourne. What about you?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS (CONT'D)

You must be anxious to get back to civilization.

OSBOURNE

Actually, I've found the entire experience refreshing.

ROSS

Really? I don't think I saw you on the slopes.

OSBOURNE

Of course not. I don't ski.

Ms. Ross thinks that over for a moment, and decides not to try to figure it out.

ROSS

Should we compare notes?

OSBOURNE

Principal Krupps mentioned his meeting with you.

ROSS

Well, I didn't get anywhere. Told me he was treating Miss McPherson like any trusted advisor, and anyone who didn't like how it looked could just go shove it.

OSBOURNE

Indeed.

ROSS

He may not have used those exact words, but that's what he was saying. And he did say "trusted advisor".

OSBOURNE

He said much the same thing to me. I confess to being puzzled in the extreme.

Ms. Ross waits for him to expound on that thought.

ROSS

Okay, why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OSBOURNE

These days, the appearance of impropriety—even a hint of such an appearance—is fearsome enough to cause educators to take sometimes ludicrous actions. Yet far from shying away, Mr. Krupps seems to be inviting such appearances. I would be very much interested in discovering why our principal is so doggedly unconcerned.

ROSS

Well, what did he say when you told him about...you know.

OSBOURNE

I didn't tell him.

ROSS

What?! But—

OSBOURNE

It's been pointed out to me that I have no concrete evidence of Miss McPherson's wrong-doing. And in current circumstances, my word alone is unlikely to carry the day. Therefore I thought it wiser not to make the accusation.

ROSS

I guess that makes sense. But then what do we do?

OSBOURNE

We require proof; we shall simply have to obtain it.

ROSS

Yeah, right, "simply". Simply how?

OSBOURNE

By having patience, Ms. Ross. I am already employing certain... measures...towards this end.

ROSS

I'm not asking. I know you love discretion, and I'm sure whatever your devious little mind has cooked up, it'll do the job.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

OSBOURNE
Safe trip, then.

And as he walks away:

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)
"Devious little mind"... Really,
Ms. Ross...

Behind him, Ms. Ross' laughter floats on the thin air.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE PARKING LOT

Lily climbs off one of the buses and joins Brooke at curbside.

BROOKE
Did you get Josh squared away?

LILY
Oh, he's fine.

BROOKE
Still spreading the mountain lion
story?

LILY
(rolling her eyes)
Of course. Now—finish telling me
about you and Harrison. You
didn't—did you?

BROOKE
(grins)
No. If it'd been up to me...but
Harrison doesn't want to push.
I'm gonna work on him, though.

LILY
I have to say, Brooke, you sound
so much better.

BROOKE
I feel so much better. I realized
I was obsessing over Sam so much,
I wasn't giving any credit to
Harrison. Or myself. We could
have this really wonderful
relationship, something we never
had before. And it just has to be
about us. Not anybody else.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY

Wow, Brooke.

BROOKE

I just realized that Sam isn't a threat, unless I let her be one.

(excited)

I'm telling you, Lily, the way Harrison and I started to connect... It's like I've been in this long, dark tunnel for weeks now—but I think I finally see a light.

LILY

I'm so happy for you, Brooke.

BROOKE

Now all I have to do is fix things with—

LILY

(looking over Brooke's shoulder)

Natalie.

Brooke turns, and sure enough, Natalie is standing a few yards away.

BROOKE

(holing out her hands)

Natalie, I know you're probably pissed as hell, but just hear me out, okay? I've been really frazzled for a while now, and I took it out on you, and it was wrong. I should've listened to you, and not said all those things. And I'm really sorry for yelling at you last night. That was totally wrong of me. I know you're as worried about Sam as the rest of us, and it was stupid of me to shut you out. And I hope we can just put this behind us.

A long silence.

LILY

(uncertainly)

Natalie?

NATALIE

(flat)

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BROOKE

Okay?

NATALIE

You're right, anyway.

Brooke shakes her head, uncomprehending.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

About being honest.

Brooke and Lily's growing discomfort is clear.

LILY

Natalie, what's going on?

Natalie doesn't seem to hear her, being focused on Brooke.

NATALIE

You know what a friend of mine
said? A friend of mine said, if I
could take Harrison away from you,
more power to me.

(cold)

I think my friend is right.

Horrified expressions spread across the girls' faces.

LILY

Natalie...you can't mean that...

For the first time, Natalie turns her attention to Lily.

NATALIE

I may not be Nicole, but that
doesn't mean I don't know what I
want. Or how to get it.

Her eyes, hard and icy, flick back to Brooke.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

So let's see how long you can hang
onto Harrison. 'Cause I'm
betting, it won't be as long as
you think.

Brooke looks as though she's been hit with a stun gun.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

(casually)

You know, I'm glad we got a chance
to talk this out now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I'm going to be too busy with my new job from now on to waste time with idle chit-chat in the halls.

BROOKE

(choking)

New...job...?

Natalie gives her a smug nod.

NATALIE

Assistant Treasurer of the Student Body General Fund.

As if on cue, even as Brooke and Lily's stunned minds are processing that last statement, Sam shows up behind Natalie, putting a hand on her shoulder as though they were life-long friends.

SAM

Hey, Nat! I asked Calvin, and he said you riding down with us was no problem.

(lower)

Told ya.

NATALIE

(chipper)

Okay, then. You ready to take off?

SAM

Yep. You?

Natalie throws Brooke a haughty, dismissive glance.

NATALIE

I'm done here.

SAM

Then let's go.

Sam gives Brooke and Lily her own self-satisfied smirk; then she and Natalie are off, playfully chattering like sisters. Brooke and Lily, shell-shocked, and only stand and watch.

LILY

Uh...Brooke? About that light in your tunnel...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BROOKE
(nodding absently)
It's a train.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT SEVEN

THE END