

Popular: Senior Year  
"Quadrangle"

by

The Wild Pikachu

POPULAR: SENIOR YEAR

QUADRANGLE

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. KENNEDY HIGH OFFICE - NIGHT

Actually, early morning. Even the janitorial staff has gone. But someone has bypassed the alarm system and gained access to the office. This room, like the others, is dark—except for the glow from a single computer monitor. Bathed in the glow of the monitor are two figures: one sitting at the computer, the other standing behind, watching.

One of these intruders, the one working the computer, happens to be a stereotypical 12-year-old geek named Delbert, who comes complete with wire-rimmed glasses, awful plaid shirt and pocket protector.

DELBERT

(hushed)

Wow—this is so cool. Getting to  
hack into a high school system...  
You don't see dinosaurs like this  
everyday.

As he's talking, he's tapping the keys furiously. Now he finishes with a flourish. With a grin, he twists his head around and up to look at his companion.

DELBERT (CONT'D)

There you go—the master grade  
file.

The other intruder—Sam—leans down and nods.

DELBERT (CONT'D)

We just type in your name, and—

But Sam shakes her head, holding out her hand to stop him.

DELBERT (CONT'D)

(confused)

Isn't that what you want? Jack up  
your GPA with some easy A's?

Instead of answering, Sam reaches for the keyboard herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSERT: THE COMPUTER SCREEN

As it echoes her input: MCQUEEN, BROOKE. An instant later Brooke's grades appear. As Sam continues to work the keyboard, the highlighted cursor moves across the screen, and the letter grades change one by one, A's and B's becoming C's, D's and F's. With each change, the cumulative GPA displayed on the right side of the screen drops, from 3.78 all the way down to 1.44.

Sam straightens up, a malevolent grin on her face.

SAM

There. That's what I want.

WHITE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

Jaycee is lying in a bed, heavily bandaged and hooked up to an IV line and lots of monitors. Meanwhile, Sam is sitting in a nearby chair, laptop perched on her lap, tapping away quietly.

A faint noise from the bed makes Sam look up. She closes the laptop, gets up, sets the computer on the seat and steps over to the side of the bed, leaning over to study Jaycee's face.

Jaycee moans again, and her eyes flutter open.

JAYCEE  
(very weak)  
Sam?

Sam reaches out and gently strokes Jaycee's cheek.

SAM  
Hey, you. Welcome back.

Jaycee, with difficulty, focuses her eyes on Sam.

JAYCEE  
Back?

SAM  
It's not like you were in a coma  
or anything. But this is the  
first time you've known who I was.

JAYCEE  
I don't remember.

SAM  
Shhh...it's okay. You got messed  
up pretty bad.

Apparently remember something of the attack, Jaycee squeezes her eyes shut, groaning.

SAM (CONT'D)  
When you're up to it, the police  
want to talk to you.

This time Jaycee's eyes snap wide open.

JAYCEE  
Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

Jaycee...you were attacked in your own apartment. Why do you think?

JAYCEE

Did they search the place?

SAM

What?

JAYCEE

(insistent)

Did they??

SAM

No, Jaycee. They do that to criminals' places, not victims'.

JAYCEE

You called them, didn't you?

Despite the situation, Sam is starting to get indignant.

SAM

I called 9-1-1. What did you want me to do, let you die on the floor?

Jaycee closes her eyes again, strength going.

JAYCEE

No...sorry...

SAM

You just worry about getting better.

JAYCEE

No...Sam...I have to...

But then a nurse appears in the open doorway.

NURSE

I'm sorry, Miss. Visiting hours are over.

SAM

Sleep. I'll be back tomorrow.

Sam gather her laptop and walks out of the room, looking back at Jaycee all the while.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN DINING ROOM - EVENING

Mike, Jane and Brooke are having what might look like a normal family dinner—except for the palpable tension filling the room. And the silence. Mike and Jane keep looking at each other, and at Brooke, who steadfastly concentrates on her plate, not acknowledging their presence at all.

JANE

So, Brooke, how was school today?

BROOKE

(not looking up)

Fine.

Mike shakes his head discouragingly; apparently they've been through this before. But Jane soldiers on.

JANE

Anything interesting happen?

BROOKE

No.

JANE

(laughing awkwardly)

Nothing at all?

BROOKE

No.

JANE

(persisting)

Brooke, look at me.

Brooke turns her eyes to Jane—but there's nothing there. No warmth, no anger, no resentment—nothing at all. That alone makes Jane swallow hard.

JANE (CONT'D)

Did you see Sam today?

BROOKE

In class.

JANE

Did she say anything?

BROOKE

Not to me.

Frustrated, Jane relents, averting her eyes. Brooke picks up her plate and starts to stand up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

But Mike reaches out and grabs her arm roughly. She drops back down into her chair.

MIKE

No, you're not excused.

JANE

Mike...

MIKE

No! I've had it with this. Now, you can sit there all night, but you're not leaving this table until you tell us something that happened at school today.

Brooke turns that emotionless expression on her father. Long seconds of silence stretch out between them.

BROOKE

We're reading "The Stepford Wives" in English class.

Mike seems surprised at getting an actual response.

MIKE

Oh! Well...that's nice, honey.

BROOKE

It was my idea.

Something flickers in Mike's eyes, as though he knows that Brooke suddenly volunteering information is a danger sign. But he presses forward anyway.

MIKE

It's good that you're that involved in your classes.

BROOKE

I said my parents would be happier with a couple of Stepford daughters.

Mike's expression turns hard.

MIKE

You really think that, Brooke?

BROOKE

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Throughout her entire time at the dinner table, she might as well have been a computer, dispensing toneless responses. It's clear that Mike is trying to work up a good argument, but Brooke's total detachment is blunting the effect.

MIKE

Well, you're wrong, Brooke. We don't want that at all! We just want—I just want to be able to talk to you. Like before. Is that really too much to ask?

Another long, uncomfortable silence.

BROOKE

(dead flat)

Yes.

Again she starts to get up.

MIKE

Brooke—

She freezes halfway out of her seat, gazing at him implacably.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(sighing)

Never mind. Go on.

Without a word, Brooke picks up her plate and walks into the kitchen. Mike takes his napkin and uses it to mop his face.

JANE

You see what I mean. Talking to her is more exhausting than not talking to her.

MIKE

She won't even fight back. Since when does Brooke not fight back?!

JANE

I think she's being passive-aggressive.

MIKE

Whatever she's being, she's too good at it. How'd she get to be so good at it?

JANE

I'd settle for figuring out how to get her to stop it.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

Mike nods glumly, as they sit there and commiserate.

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKE'S BEDROOM

Brooke steps into the room, her face as expressionless as ever, and closes the door behind her. Once the door is securely locked, she lets out a puff of air, as if she'd actually been holding her breath. She falls on her bed with abandon; then she reaches underneath the bed, and hauls up a large, thick book.

INSERT: THE BOOK

A scholarly tome entitled "Dysfunctional Families: Signs, Strategies and Interpretations".

Brooke opens the book to a bookmarked place in the middle, and begins to read lightly, grinning.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

Lily walks through the halls, waving and saying hello to various people she passes. She and Carmen spot each other at the same time—but Carmen ducks her head, trying to avoid notice. Frowning, Lily marches right over to her.

LILY

Okay, Carm, what's going on?

CARMEN

Uhhh...huh?

LILY

Don't "huh" me! You're avoiding me! You're avoiding everyone!

CARMEN

Am not. I'm, uh...shy! I'm Shy Girl!

LILY

You are not! And you're not talking to anyone, even in class. That's not shy, that's inanimate!

CARMEN

Okay, look, we don't know what to do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY

"We"?

CARMEN

Me and Sugar Daddy. I mean, we don't know who's safe to talk to.

LILY

Safe? What's that supposed to mean?

CARMEN

It used to be really simple—it was Us versus Them. Popular versus Not Popular. Dweebs versus Glamazons. Now...everybody talks to everybody else, except that lots of people are mad at other people, and so they aren't talking to each other, and then they get mad if you talk to them, and— It's like, there used to be two sides, and now there's, like, six, and everybody switches every day. And I don't want anybody to be mad at me for talking to someone else, and for all I know there are people getting mad at me right now for talking to you, and...

Carmen more-or-less runs out of breath.

LILY

(laughing)

Carmen, calm down. Nobody's going to get mad at you for talking to me—

She pauses, glancing upward while performing a quick mental check to make sure that's actually true.

LILY (CONT'D)

No, nobody's going to get mad at you for talking to me, or anyone else.

CARMEN

Oh, really? What about Brooke and Natalie going after each other?

LILY

Well..I'm sure they don't really expect everyone to choose sides.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Unbeknownst to Lily, however, Brooke has come upon them, and is standing right behind her, arms crossed.

BROOKE  
Yeah? Says who?

Lily spins around, startled.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS - LATER

The gang is settling into Mr. Osbourne's classroom; Lily and Brooke happen to be sitting side-by-side. There are a half-dozen hushed conversations going on; Brooke starts another one.

BROOKE  
(leaning over)  
I'm sorry.

Lily shoots her a look.

BROOKE (CONT'D)  
It was a joke!

LILY  
You scared poor Carmen half to death.

BROOKE  
No, I didn't. And I apologized, didn't I?

LILY  
I'm not sure she believed you.

Osbourne walks in exactly as the bell is ringing; all the half-whispered exchanges die away. He closes the door behind him, steps to his usual position at the head of his desk and faces the class.

OSBOURNE  
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Today we'll continue our discussion on the relevance of—

He is cut off by the door opening. A student carrying a thick, rubber-banded bundle comes in, hands the package to Osbourne, and walks back out without a word.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Osbourne puzzles over the bundle for a moment, then removes a Post-It note stuck to the top of the papers and scans it. A vaguely distasteful expression passes across his face; then he walks the bundle over to the desk where Sam is sitting, and perfunctorily sets it down in front of her, and hands her the note. Sam reads it, and flushes slightly.

SAM

Sorry.

She gathers her things, along with the bundle of papers, and makes a hasty exit from the room.

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS' BACK OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Sam drops everything on the desk before sitting behind it. She pulls the bundle to her, but before she can do anything with it, the telephone on her desk—a new addition—buzzes. She picks up the handset.

SAM

(into the phone)

Hello?

KRUPPS (V.O.)

(over the phone)

Sam? Is this thing working? Can you hear me?

SAM

I can hear you. Can you hear me?

KRUPPS (V.O.)

Loud and clear.

SAM

I guess it works, then.

KRUPPS (V.O.)

Good. You have no idea how much trouble I had to give Maintenance over it. Took them forever to get it wired right.

SAM

You didn't have to go to all that trouble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS (V.O.)  
Nonsense. It'll come in handy—  
I'll prove it. Would you come in  
here a second?

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The door to the back office opens, and Sam pokes her head in. Krupps, still holding the phone in his hand, motions her in. As Sam walks in, he pushes a button on the phone, switching to another line.

KRUPPS  
(into the phone)  
Shirley, make sure I'm not  
disturbed.

Sam takes a seat in front of Krupps' desk. He gets up, comes around the desk, and perches himself on its corner.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)  
Sam...we have to have a talk.

Sam sighs and her head drops to her chest.

SAM  
Mr. Krupps, I am...so sorry. I  
know I embarrassed you, I  
embarrassed myself, I embarrassed  
the school—

KRUPPS  
(holding up a hand)  
Wait, wait. Are you talking about  
the meeting with your mother and  
stepfather last week?

SAM  
Aren't you?

He reaches out and touches her gently.

KRUPPS  
No. Sam, you certainly didn't  
embarrass me. Or the school. And  
I hope you don't feel embarrassed,  
either.

Sam looks up at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

But, the way I acted...

KRUPPS

You were coming to my defense, I think.

SAM

I was rude beyond belief.

KRUPPS

Only to your mother and stepfather. Mostly your stepfather. And it would be highly inappropriate of me to comment on whether or not he deserved it.

Sam's mood lightens a bit at that.

SAM

So, you're not...firing me? I figured it took you a week to figure out how to chew me out right.

Krupps laughs out loud.

KRUPPS

No, Sam. I'm not firing you. Or chewing you out.

He sits in the chair next to Sam, positioning himself so they can be face-to-face.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

There is something we have to talk about... But it has nothing to do with what happened last week.

SAM

(hollow)

Oh.

Sam abruptly gets up and starts to pace.

KRUPPS

Sam, this is very difficult for me... It's something I'm not very proud of keeping from you...

She stops at his side, kneels down and looks up at him earnestly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

Mr. Krupps... I know.

KRUPPS

No, Sam, I don't think—

SAM

Yes. I do.

KRUPPS

Sam, this is something very personal—

SAM

Amanda.

Krupps bolts from the chair.

KRUPPS

How—?!

SAM

Mr. Krupps, please—

KRUPPS

Osbourne told you, didn't he?! He promised me—!

Sam grabs his hands.

SAM

No, it was me! I...heard you and Mr. Osbourne talking. About...her.

Krupps focuses on her face.

KRUPPS

Then...you knew...

Sam turns away again.

SAM

At first, I...I was just kind of numb. I thought...I thought maybe you didn't like me after all... Like I was just a...a substitute.

KRUPPS

Sam, believe me, that was never my intention—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAM

But I thought of all the things  
you've done—I mean, all the way  
back to getting me my job at the  
paper—

Krupps actually gets an "aw, shucks" look on his face.

SAM (CONT'D)

—and I thought, is it really that  
important? Being a substitute?

He grabs her by the arms and looks hard into her eyes.

KRUPPS

Sam! Listen to me. You are not a  
substitute. I swear to God, you're  
not.

SAM

Really, it's okay—

KRUPPS

No! It's not! Please, believe  
me—Amanda has nothing to do with  
you!

A sad little smile crosses Sam's face.

SAM

Nothing?

KRUPPS

Absolutely not!

SAM

I can't believe that. You know I  
can't.

KRUPPS

Sam—

SAM

Look, I hate this so much I feel  
like I'm going to throw up. But a  
lot of what he said kind of made  
sense.

Krupps lets go of her, running a hand through his hair. But  
Sam is holding his eyes with hers, and she refuses to look  
away.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (4)

SAM (CONT'D)

Please, you have to be honest with me.

(long beat)

Please?

He takes her arm and guides her back into her chair. In a moment they are sitting face-to-face again.

KRUPPS

I'm not sure what to say.

SAM

Tell me everything. Tell me about Amanda.

KRUPPS

All right. Yes, I had a daughter. Her name was Amanda. She died—she and her mother died—almost ten years ago.

Sam's face tightens and she reaches out for his hand.

SAM

I'm... Was it...?

KRUPPS

There was an accident. It was late, it was on a mountain road... A tanker truck jackknifed in front of them. They were...the car was incinerated.

He reaches up to wipe away his tears; Sam blinks away hers.

SAM

Oh, my...

KRUPPS

It was... They said it was... It happened instantly. They didn't feel anything... Probably... They probably didn't even know it was happening.

He takes a tissue from his desktop, and wipes Sam's eyes.

SAM

I'm sorry... You don't have to...

KRUPPS

Sam—this is very important. Yes, I miss Amanda. And her mother.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Very much. And yes, sometimes I wonder what she would be like. What she would be doing. But you are not her. I swear it, Sam, I absolutely promise you. I don't see Amanda. I see you. I don't want you to be Amanda.

Sam considers him gravely; her eyes flick momentarily to his hand, which, despite his protestations, is holding hers in a distinctly fatherly way.

SAM

You mean you don't wish you could do all those father-daughter things?

KRUPPS

Of course I—!

He catches himself, realizing the point she's trying to make.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Of course I do.

Krupps gets up, and distances himself from Sam by a few steps, turning his back to her.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

I apologize, Sam. It seems I've drawn you into my personal problems. It won't happen again.

But Sam is shaking her head, growing more alarmed by the moment, and finally she jumps up and runs to him.

SAM

(urgently)

No. No! That's not what I— Don't say that!

KRUPPS

Sam, it's clear that we can't continue like this. Eric is right—I can't have you acting as my surrogate daughter.

SAM

Why not?!

Krupps steps back, seemingly surprised by the question. Sam presses close to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

SAM (CONT'D)

We haven't done anything wrong! It doesn't matter why you did anything—it's still not wrong!

KRUPPS

It's a little more complicated than that.

SAM

No! Just, forget Mr. Osbourne said anything, okay? Forget I said anything!

The resigned look on Krupps' face tells her that's not going to happen.

SAM (CONT'D)

(desperately)

Please! Mr. Krupps—Calvin—you can't just...abandon me, not now. I don't know what I'd do...

Sobbing, she sags into him, clutching at his jacket.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'll do anything you want, just don't do this!

He pulls her up and holds her tight, allowing her to bury her face in his shoulder.

KRUPPS

Shhh... I'm not abandoning you... I'm very sorry, Sam. I never meant to hurt you.

SAM

(muffled)

If you don't want to hurt me, then don't...don't leave me all alone.

KRUPPS

I'm not, Sam. You're not alone.

SAM

I will be!

Krupps pulls her away enough to be able to look her in the eye.

KRUPPS

Your mother will always be there for you no matter what.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

SAM  
(scornfully)  
She doesn't care. She's got Brooke  
now. And Mike.

KRUPPS  
You're mad at her, but you know  
that's not true.

SAM  
I'll never go back and live with  
Mike. Never.

A concerned expression grows on his face.

KRUPPS  
Sam, has Mike ever...hurt you?

Her eyes widen as she comprehends his meaning.

SAM  
Oh! No! He never laid a hand on  
me. He's not like that. Just all  
tight-lipped and bubbling-under-  
the-surface-y. Except when he's  
yelling.

KRUPPS  
You're sure? You could tell me  
if—

SAM  
(dismissive)  
No, no. He's not abusive. Just  
totally clueless. And completely  
unfair. And impossible to live  
with.

KRUPPS  
Sounds like a lot of fathers, or  
at least their teenage children's  
opinions of them.

SAM  
(defiant)  
Not like my dad.

KRUPPS  
I'm sure your stepfather has no  
illusions of replacing your  
father. Especially after last  
week.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

SAM

Mr. Krupps...when I came in here last week and, uh...made a total fool of myself—

KRUPPS

There's no need to explain. I realize now—you'd just found out about Amanda, so naturally you'd say what you did, to hurt your stepfather. I know you didn't really mean it.

SAM

(heartfelt)

I meant it. I meant every word.

KRUPPS

You don't have to—

SAM

No! Stop. You've never dismissed me. Please don't start now.

He shakes his head as if trying to clear his mind, dropping into one of the chairs.

KRUPPS

No. I can see you mean it. I just don't know how to react to how you feel. I guess... subconsciously, I must have known there was a some kind of connection. I MUST have... On some level, I must have known what I was doing.

Sam drops to one knee, putting herself at his eye level again.

SAM

(encouraging)

On some level, so did I. Just not the same level.

Krupps makes a visible effort to marshal his thoughts.

KRUPPS

Be that as it may, the fact remains that I can't possibly ask you to—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

SAM

No—I'm asking you. Please.  
Don't...change, don't let this...  
let us...

She breaks off, regroupes.

SAM (CONT'D)

You don't understand—I want to do  
all those father-daughter things,  
too. When we went up to the  
mountains, I felt...I felt... I  
haven't felt like that in almost  
five years.

She takes his hands in her again, squeezing them tight, her  
eyes boring into his, seemingly trying to project her soul  
with every word.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm asking you. I'm begging you.  
Please. Don't take that away from  
me. You'll kill me if you do.

KRUPPS

Sam, I—

SAM

I promise I'll make you proud. As  
proud as she would have.

For a moment Krupps' eyes cloud over, and Sam, reading it as  
a painful memory, really loses it.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh God, I shouldn't have said  
that, I didn't mean— I'll never  
mention her again, I swear! I'd  
never compare myself... I'm  
sorry, I'm really sorry!

He brings their hands up to face level, giving Sam something  
immediate to focus on.

KRUPPS

Sam. Sam! Listen to me. Are you  
listening?

Gradually Sam's panicky eyes settle on him, and she nods  
compliantly.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Good. Now. Breathe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

Krupps begins an exaggerated breathing exercise, in and out. With an effort, she matches his rhythm. When he's convinced that she's calmed down, he breaks off the breathing and leans in.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Okay. Now, I want you to listen to me. Okay?

Sam looks a bit unhinged still, but she nods.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

And you'll hear me out? You won't say anything until I'm done?

Tentative, but a definite nod.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Promise?

Nod.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Okay.

He pauses for a deep breath himself.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

First of all... There is nothing, not anything, that you can't talk to me about. Not ever. Not Amanda. Not anything. Got it?

Sam appears to think it over before relaxing just a bit, and nodding her assent.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Good. Next—you have no idea how proud you do make me, Sam. You're already doing things that other girls won't do until they're out of college, and some won't do at all. When I see the life you're starting to make for yourself... Sam, making me proud is something else you don't ever have to worry about. Okay?

Sam is blushing now, but she nods shyly.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Okay.  
(deep breath)  
Now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

No matter how much we want to, we can't just make Mr. Osbourne or your mother and stepfather or the rest of the world go away.

And just like that his tentative hold on her shatters; she starts to make little noises in the back of her throat, and looks like she's about to bolt the office. Krupps responds by holding her hands tightly, almost as if he's trying to rein in a skittish mare rather than a teenage girl.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Whoa, whoa! You said you'd hear me out, remember? You promised. Right?

It seems touch-and-go for a moment, but Sam finally settles down a little. Krupps keeps hold of her, though, just in case.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Some of those people are genuinely concerned for you, and we have to respect that. But—that doesn't mean we have to let them dictate what goes on. I'm sorry I said what I did before. I was obviously overreacting to a very sudden shock.

For the first time in over a minute, something that's not abject fear shows in Sam's eyes.

SAM

(barely a whisper)  
Really?

KRUPPS

Obviously, you are still Treasurer of the Student Body General Fund. And that's still your own office back there. And you can still talk to me about absolutely anything.

He loosens his grip enough to hold up one finger.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

But—as for us, there are going to have to be new rules.

SAM

(warily)  
What?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (12)

KRUPPS

For one thing, absolutely no more playing around. We're going to have to be strictly on-the-level and above-board from now on.

Sam's mouth twitches upwards fractionally.

SAM

No more hot tub?

Krupps drops his head and laughs, relieved that the worst appears to be past.

KRUPPS

No, Sam, no more hot tub. That's not the image we need to put out there now. Satisfying as it was to imagine the looks on certain people's faces.

SAM

(unwinding)

I always thought you wanted to goose someone, but you never told me who it was. Not that you have to now or anything.

KRUPPS

Let's just say there's a certain Board member who's been gnashing her teeth into powder over not being able to fire my butt all the way to Timbuktu. I'll tell you all about it sometime.

He stands up and, still holding Sam's hands, helps her to her feet.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

That brings me to the other very important thing. You said I had to be honest with you. About Amanda. And you were right. That works both ways. We have to be able to be totally, completely honest with each other. About everything.

Sam looks vaguely anxious for a moment: she realizes that not telling him about her drug use is a pretty big lie, at least one of omission. But then she puts a calm face on her semi-guilty conscience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (13)

SAM  
(nodding)  
Absolutely.

KRUPPS  
I'm not just saying that, Sam. I  
mean it—can tell me absolutely  
anything. Okay?

SAM  
Okay. I totally understand.

KRUPPS  
Good. Feel better?

Sam thinks that one over.

SAM  
I'm...not sure.

KRUPPS  
Mmm-hmm. I think I know what you  
mean. But you're okay, right?

SAM  
Uhh...yeah.

KRUPPS  
Good.

SAM  
Right. Good.

And with that, neither one of them seems to have much idea  
what to say next.

KRUPPS  
So...did you see the budget  
projections?

SAM  
Just got them. Haven't had a  
chance to look at them yet.

KRUPPS  
Okay.

SAM  
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

Another awkward silence ensues as the conversation sputters to a halt again.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS

The bell has rung, the students have filed out, and—as is becoming habit—Brooke has lingered behind, waiting until she and Osbourne are alone before approaching his desk.

OSBOURNE  
Yes, Miss McQueen?

BROOKE  
I asked around. Phil the Pharmacist has definitely lost Sam's business. Looks like she's taken her buying off-campus.

OSBOURNE  
I'd hoped we were making progress. But the fact that she's taking proactive steps to conceal her activities is certainly disheartening.

BROOKE  
Guess she doesn't want to be caught.  
(beat)  
Oh, hey, did I thank you for the book?

OSBOURNE  
You've found it helpful, I trust?

BROOKE  
(gleeful)  
Very. There's this whole section on things kids do that annoy their parents—I found stuff I'm using to drive Dad and Jane absolutely bonkers. They don't know what to do with me—  
(giggling)  
I swear they're ready to sell the house and move to Tibet.

Osbourne makes a dramatic show of rolling his eyes, then fixing a reproachful gaze upon her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSBOURNE

Miss McQueen, the point of the book is to help restore normal communications with your family, NOT to allow you to further exacerbate the situation.

BROOKE

(contrite)

Sorry.

(beat)

But if they weren't the most unreasonable people in the world, there wouldn't be a problem!

OSBOURNE

I assure you, the vast majority of teenagers feel this way towards their parents at some point.

BROOKE

Maybe, but mine are.

(glum)

If I were successful, like Sam, I could just ope out, instead of sitting around waiting for letters from colleges.

(sigh)

I suppose it's too late to apply to Oxford.

OSBOURNE

You are quite wrong, Miss McQueen. To measure success solely by employment—

BROOKE

She's not serving up chicken dinners at Mr. Cluck's! She's a journalist, and she's writing for a big newspaper, and she hasn't even graduated yet! She's got her own place, her own car—however that happened—

OSBOURNE

Courtesy of Principal Krupps, I understand. Completely legal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BROOKE

See?! She's already doing all the things she wants to with her life—and she's got the goodies to show for it! And what am I doing?! Nothing!

OSBOURNE

Nonsense. You are continuing to prepare yourself. As I said, to measure success solely by employment or material goods at this stage is foolhardy. You should view life much as a thoroughbred race.

Brooke narrows her eyes at him.

BROOKE

You're comparing me to a horse?

OSBOURNE

(unperturbed)

The horse which breaks fastest out of the gate, who leads at the quarter pole, or the midway mark, almost never wins the race. The one who wins is the one who steadily paces himself, overtaking in the final turn and pulling away down the stretch.

BROOKE

Yeah, that's nice. What about all the horses that start last and finish last?

OSBOURNE

You are not going to finish last, Miss McQueen. I reiterate that you should not count Miss McPherson's blessings too early. Meteoric rises are often followed by meteoric falls, and I suspect your career will long outlast hers.

BROOKE

Great. Career in what?

Osbourne opens his mouth to answer, but finds himself stymied.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Ha! Gotcha. You don't know what I'm going to do with my life. I don't even know what I'm going to do with my life.

OSBOURNE

That is one of the functions of college, Miss McQueen. It's not necessary for you to have made up your mind at this point.

BROOKE

Do you have any idea how envious I've always been of Sam, that she always knew what she wanted to be?

OSBOURNE

Envy does not become you. You will find something which fulfills you, and you will excel at it. It will happen.

(beat)

Incidentally, you are also wrong about Oxford.

BROOKE

Huh?

OSBOURNE

It is most certainly not too late to apply to Oxford. I know a man in the Admissions office, and for the right student, anything is possible.

BROOKE

Ohh...

OSBOURNE

Of course, it's not something to be undertaken on a whim.

BROOKE

(distant)

Right... I guess I'll have to think about it, then.

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS OFFICE

Picking up immediately where we left off before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS

Well. This isn't starting off too well, is it?

SAM

I'm sorry. It's my fault. I shouldn't have kept pushing.

KRUPPS

No, Sam. You did exactly the right thing by pushing. The only thing that upsets me is that I didn't see it before.

(reflective)

Eric came out and accused me point-blank, and I still refused to see it.

(chuckling)

That's quite a feat of denial. You were probably the only person who could have come along and made me see what I was doing.

SAM

(sad)

I'm sorry I did.

KRUPPS

I know. But you have to get past that. It's going to be better this way, I promise. And I always keep my promises, don't I, Sam?

After a moment of consideration, Sam nods, and a lot of the remaining tension flows away.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Damn right I do. Especially to you, no matter what.

(beat)

So, what are you doing for lunch?

SAM

(hesitant)

Oh, ah...actually I was going to go by the hospital and see Jaycee.

KRUPPS

How is your friend?

SAM

I haven't seen her since last night.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

He leans over his desk and picks up the phone, pushing the intercom button.

KRUPPS  
 (into the phone)  
 Shirley, Miss McPherson and I are taking an off-campus meeting. Transfer emergencies to my cell; otherwise, I'm unavailable. Thank you.

He hangs up the phone, while Sam looks at him curiously.

SAM  
 We are?

KRUPPS  
 You betcha we are. Besides, nobody ever checks these things.

He motions towards the back office.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)  
 Go, grab those projections.

Sam starts towards the door, pulls up after one step.

SAM  
 Wait, hang on, the student parking lot is locked up till lunch.

KRUPPS  
 It's okay—we'll take my car.

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS' CAR - LATER

As Krupps and Sam settle in their seats, shut their doors and fasten their seatbelts.

SAM  
 (light)  
 I was just getting used to driving myself, too. I guess I'm at your mercy.

KRUPPS  
 Careful who you say that to. There are some boys around here...

Sam laughs loudly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

As if!

Chuckling, Krupps starts the engine and they drive off.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Natalie is standing in a relatively quiet spot when Harrison comes up and taps her on the shoulder. Without looking, she stiff-arms him, sending him crashing into a row of lockers.

For a moment—a moment Harrison doesn't see—she looks shocked and concerned. But by the time he recovers enough to pull himself partially upright and glare at her, she has put an aloof expression on her face.

HARRISON

(aggravated)

Would you—please—stop doing that?!

NATALIE

Well, stop sneaking up on me, then.

Grimacing, he pushes himself away from the lockers, rubbing his shoulder.

HARRISON

I wasn't sneaking! What is wrong with you?

She glares right back at him, arms crossed.

NATALIE

I'll make this real simple, Harrison. You want me to stop hitting you? Leave me alone.

And she pushes him, no-so-gently, out of the way, walking off. He glares after her.

HARRISON

Fine, then!

After a few moments, though, his angry façade crumbles, and he throws up his hands in surrender.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

No, wait, Natalie!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And he runs after her.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Harrison catches up to Natalie, holding up his hands in the universal "don't hurt me" gesture when she spins around angrily.

NATALIE

What do you want?!

HARRISON

Just, help me understand, okay?

NATALIE

(furious)

What's to understand?! You said for me to stop bugging you! You told me to go away! I did! Isn't that what you wanted?!

HARRISON

(flustered)

No! I mean, yes, but— No! Not like—

NATALIE

Like what?! Aw, to hell with this!

She starts walking away again. He chases after, getting in front of her, unmindful of the danger he might be in.

HARRISON

Natalie, come on. What are you doing?

NATALIE

(heated)

What am I doing? I'm forgetting you. I am not looking at you, I am not talking to you. I swear to God, I am going to forget everything I ever felt for you if I have to move back to Minnesota to do it!

HARRISON

I just wanted us to be friends!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATALIE  
 You don't get that choice,  
 Harrison. It's not on the menu.

After a moment he nods, calm settling over his features.

HARRISON  
 Okay. I understand.

An equal but opposite reaction: Harrison's sudden calm makes Natalie even more agitated.

NATALIE  
 Okay?! Okay?!! You understand?! I  
 don't understand! How can you  
 understand?!

The only response he can come up with is to shrug lamely. Doggedly she advances on him.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
 I swear, Harrison John, you are the  
 most aggravating...annoying...  
infuriating—!

Her forward momentum has put them almost nose-to-nose, and without any warning at all she leans up and kisses him, full-on. He is so startled that she kisses him for several seconds and breaks away on her own, without him lifting a finger to stop her. He stares at her, stunned—and then the sound of a throat being noisily cleared makes both their heads turn.

Brooke is standing there, of course, a murderous glint in her eye. Natalie sizes her up, then, very deliberately, she puts her hands on each side of Harrison's face, turns it back to her, and kisses him again, long and hard. Then she smirks at Brooke, turns, and heads back up the hallway. Harrison just stares at Brooke, his mouth hanging open.

HARRISON  
 I don't suppose you'd believe that  
 I had nothing to do with...

Brooke harrumphs and storms off.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
 (to himself)  
 ...no, I didn't think so.

CUT TO:

EST. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - LATER

As Krupps' car pulls up.

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS' CAR - CONTINUOUS

Sam looks over at Krupps as he stops the car.

SAM

I thought we were having a meeting?

KRUPPS

You visit your friend, then we'll have our meeting.

SAM

Oh, I can't ask you to just wait around...

KRUPPS

(patiently)

You're not asking. Sam, are you ever going to start accepting things gracefully?

SAM

Uh, no.

KRUPPS

That's what I thought. Well, I'm still waiting.

SAM

(venturing)

Or, you could...come up.

(hastily)

I mean, you don't have to or—

Krupps lays a hand over hers.

KRUPPS

Are you being polite, or is there a reason you want me with you?

SAM

It's...I don't know, it's stupid. It's just a feeling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS  
Never ignore that. It's your gut  
trying to tell you something's  
wrong.

He flips off his seatbelt and cracks his door open.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)  
Well? Coming?

CUT TO:

INT. JAYCEE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A nurse is tending to Jaycee when Sam and Krupps come in.

NURSE  
Oh, she's about to be taken down  
for a CAT scan. You can have a  
few minutes, though.

The nurse leaves as Sam approaches Jaycee's bedside, with  
Krupps a couple of steps behind.

SAM  
Hey. You look better.

Jaycee makes a minimal effort to raise her head.

JAYCEE  
You know me. Up and partying in  
no time.

She peers past Sam, to Krupps.

JAYCEE (CONT'D)  
(suspiciously)  
You a cop?

SAM  
Jaycee!

She reaches back and brings Krupps forward.

SAM (CONT'D)  
This is Principal Krupps.

KRUPPS  
Calvin.

Jaycee nods, something she can do without too much difficulty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAYCEE

I know about you. You're Sam's guardian angel.

KRUPPS

(bemused)

Well... I guess that's one way of looking at it.

JAYCEE

She needs looking after. I'm a bad influence.

KRUPPS

Really...

JAYCEE

Better believe it.

He puts his hands on Sam's shoulders.

KRUPPS

I do my best to take care of her.

SAM

What, the two of you are ganging up on me now? I don't need taking care of.

(to Jaycee)

Did the police come by?

JAYCEE

(grimacing)

No, this afternoon. I won't be able to tell 'em much, though.

SAM

You don't remember anything about what they looked like?

JAYCEE

Man, I came home and I got jumped. All I remember is things hitting me.

The nurse comes back in.

NURSE

I'm sorry, but it's time.

JAYCEE

They're going to see if my brain got any more scrambled than it already was.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM  
Okay, well, I'll be back later.

JAYCEE  
Hey, Sam... You don't have to be here twenty-four-seven, you know.

SAM  
It's okay, really.

JAYCEE  
No, I'm serious, Sam. You shouldn't come around so much.

SAM  
(uncomfortable)  
Um...we'll talk about it later, okay?

Sam casts worried glances back at Jaycee as she and Krupps leave the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

The double doors swing open, and Sam and Krupps walk out of the building.

SAM  
See what I mean?

KRUPPS  
If this were a cop show, one of us would be saying "she knows more than she's telling" right about now.

SAM  
Knows what?

KRUPPS  
Obviously, who attacked her. Maybe even why.

SAM  
(puzzled)  
But...that doesn't make any sense. Why wouldn't she say something?

Krupps offers her a slight shrug as they reach his car.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

KRUPPS  
Come on. I've got something to  
show you.

Sam eyes him warily as he goes around to the driver's side of  
the car.

SAM  
Something else?

CUT TO:

EXT. KRUPPS' HOUSE - LATER

A very large, two-story white Spanish-style place, with a  
spacious tree-filled front lawn and a circular driveway, which  
Krupps' car pulls into. The passenger door opens and Sam  
steps out, surveying the property.

SAM  
(whistling)  
Nice. I didn't know principals  
made that much.

Krupps has gotten out of his side of the car.

KRUPPS  
I had some investments do well.  
(gesturing)  
Let's go inside, shall we?

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS' VESTIBULE - MOMENTS LATER

Two stories high, with a sweeping staircase running up one  
wall, and opening into a huge living room. One of the front  
double doors opens, and Krupps guides Sam inside.

KRUPPS  
Would you like a tour?

Sam grins wickedly at him.

SAM  
If this were one of those cheesy  
older-man-seduces-young-girl  
movies, you'd offer to show me  
your etchings.

He snaps his fingers in mock disappointment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS

Damn, and I forgot to stop at the etching store.

She giggles convulsively.

SAM

You're awful!

KRUPPS

(considering)

I thought it was fairly clever, myself.

(beat)

There is something serious I'd like to talk to you about.

The carefree expression vanishes from Sam's face.

SAM

(tiredly)

Something else? Haven't we been through the wringer enough for one morning?

KRUPPS

It's not like that...exactly. But it is important.

SAM

(grimacing)

What?

KRUPPS

You remember I said we had to stop playing around? Be completely straight?

SAM

I remember it. You only said it an hour ago.

He nods, obviously preparing himself for something big.

KRUPPS

Well... In light of that, this may sound a bit...odd.

SAM

(echoing)

Odd?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KRUPPS

In fact, I'm about to fulfill your  
stepfather's worst nightmare.

SAM

(totally lost)

What?

He spreads his hands in the most casual, non-threatening  
gesture possible.

KRUPPS

Sam...I want you to move in with  
me.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. KRUPPS' VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS

Sam just stands there, gaping.

SAM

Excuse me??

KRUPPS

I'd like it very much if you came to live here. There's a spare bedroom, with its own bathroom, at the other end of the hall from my room. You'd have all the privacy you wanted, come and go as you please—I definitely would not "cramp your style"...

SAM

But, I have a place!

KRUPPS

Sam...you live in a run-down studio in a run-down building in a run-down part of town. Your neighbor got beaten in her own apartment. That could've been you.

Sam lays a comforting hand on his arm.

SAM

I appreciate the offer, really. But I'll be all right. Promise. Now, if we're going to talk about budget projections—

She looks around.

SAM (CONT'D)

Shoot. I left them in the car.

She turns around and starts back towards the door.

KRUPPS

Sam...

Sam turns back expectantly.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Just think about it, okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM  
(sigh)  
Okay. But I'm not changing my  
mind.

She heads for the door again.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH - AFTERNOON

Harrison is sitting quietly on a low landscaping wall, staring out at some point in the distance. Natalie comes up and sits a few feet away. She doesn't look over at him; instead she also gazes off at something far away. (In fact, they have most of this conversation without ever looking at each other.)

NATALIE  
(dully)  
How could you possibly understand?

HARRISON  
I just do.

NATALIE  
You don't know how it feels.

HARRISON  
You can't just be friends. You can't be around them, day after day, acting like nothing's changed...watching them be with someone else.

NATALIE  
(faintly surprised)  
Yeah.

HARRISON  
I said something like that to Sam.  
When she picked George.

NATALIE  
Oh.

A long silence.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
You were a wuss.

HARRISON  
What??

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATALIE  
Letting Sam pick George.

HARRISON  
I didn't let Sam pick. I made Sam pick.

NATALIE  
That wasn't very smart.

HARRISON  
Well, I didn't think she'd pick him.

NATALIE  
You were still a wuss. You should've fought for her.

HARRISON  
You mean, fight-fight? George woulda kicked my ass.

NATALIE  
So? At least you would've done something.  
(beat)  
Besides, if you really love somebody, aren't they worth getting your ass kicked for?

Harrison's expression makes it clear he hadn't considered that before.

HARRISON  
Maybe.

After another silence, a disturbing thought occurs to him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Natalie...you're not going to...?

NATALIE  
Fight?

HARRISON  
Yeah.

NATALIE  
Maybe.

Harrison closes his eyes tiredly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HARRISON

Please, please don't fight Brooke.  
I don't want to see either one of  
you hurt.

NATALIE

(plainly)

Too late. But don't feel bad—  
it's not your fault.

(beat)

Unless you consider being cute  
your fault.

HARRISON

Hey, I didn't ask you to be  
attracted to me.

NATALIE

Yeah. Me either.

Lingering silence.

HARRISON

So now what?

NATALIE

I guess I'd better go throw down  
with Brooke.

They look at each other.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Kidding.

HARRISON

Promise me that you will not fight  
with Brooke.

NATALIE

Don't you think that's a bit  
presumptuous, demanding promises  
from someone who you want to go  
away?

HARRISON

(serious)

Please.

NATALIE

(sigh)

Tell you what—I promise I won't  
fight with Brooke, if she doesn't  
fight with me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HARRISON

Okay.

NATALIE

Okay. But I swear, Harrison—she raises a hand to me, I'll kick her ass all the way to Tijuana.

HARRISON

Great. I'm being wooed by a street fighter.

NATALIE

"Wooed"?  
(thinking)  
Wooed...that's what I'll do! I'll woo you!

HARRISON

(rubbing his eyes)  
Oh, God, please don't.

Natalie hops off the wall.

NATALIE

I'll be fun! I gotta go read up on this wooing thing. Seeya, Harrison!

And just like that, she's gone.

HARRISON

(groaning)  
Aw, man...

CUT TO:

EXT. MCQUEEN FRONT PORCH - LATER

Brooke steps up to her front door, but doesn't open it. Instead she turns away, struggling with herself. Then she takes a couple of deep, tantric breaths, and puts that expressionless mask on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brooke walks into her home, the perfectly unapproachable Stepford child. However, the effect is wasted: the room is deserted. A slight pffft of disappointment is the only reaction Brooke allows herself.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

She wanders over to the endtable where the day's mail is piled. Idly she picks the pile up.

INSERT: THE MAIL

The top envelope in Brooke's hand is addressed to her, with the UCLA seal in the corner. She shuffles the envelopes, and we see the top five are from various colleges.

Brooke separates the college letters and sets the rest of the mail back down. She picks up a handy letter opener and slices open the first envelope, pulling out the letter inside.

INSERT: THE LETTER

The most obvious part of the letter is the large "DECLINED" stamped in red at the top. A few phrases come into sharp focus, such as "not granted admission" and "insufficient grade point average".

Brooke shakes her head in confusion, or shock, or both. Hurriedly she opens the other envelopes, ripping out the letters. As it becomes obvious that they are all rejections, Brooke comes closer to crying, tears welling up in her eyes. She's on the verge of losing it when, from behind her:

MIKE

Brooke?

Brooke freezes. Unseen by Mike—and Jane, who is with him—her fists clench, and she squeezes her eyes shut tightly, blinking away her tears. She makes a concerted effort to control her breathing. It takes a few seconds, but finally the mask drops back into place.

BROOKE

(emotionless)

Yes?

MIKE

Did you see the mail?

BROOKE

Yes.

MIKE

(helpful)

You got letters from colleges.

BROOKE

I saw them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE  
(prompting)  
And?

No answer; just the barest shrug.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
(exasperated)  
Did you open them yet?

BROOKE  
Yes.

MIKE  
And??

Jane takes a step forward.

JANE  
(calm)  
Brooke, can we see the letters,  
please?

Unfortunately for Brooke, the compliant but indifferent attitude she's adopted makes it impossible to just ignore a polite request. So she silently holds the batch of envelopes and letters up, offering them over her shoulder without turning around. Jane comes forwards and takes them out of Brooke's hand, then returns to Mike's side. Together they examine the letters, and—still unseen—Brooke grits her teeth as she hears the hasps and expressions of shock from behind her.

MIKE  
What is—?! This is impossible—!  
Brooke!

Brooke gives herself another moment to compose herself. Then she slowly turns to face Mike and Jane, utterly impassive.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
This is outrageous! Did you see  
these?!

BROOKE  
Yes.

MIKE  
Your grades are more than good  
enough to get into any of these  
schools! We need to march right  
down to the high school and  
demand—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He breaks off, peering at Brooke unreadable face.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(shouting)

What's wrong with you?! Don't you care?!

Brooke just shrugs, but she's having to work to keep her face still and her breathing steady; it's clear that her control is skating on a razor-thin edge. Jane puts a calming hand on Mike's arm and steps between them.

JANE

Brooke, I know you're hurt. And confused. I can see it. We can help you. Please, won't you talk to us? Won't you let us help you?

Brooke swallows, her jaw clenched.

BROOKE

No.

She turns away and, very deliberately, walks towards the stairs. Mike makes a move as though he's going to call her back, but Jane's grip on his arm tightens, and he holds his peace.

From behind and below it looks as though Brooke is the model of poise. But in fact—though she keeps her body from trembling—the tears are running down her face before she reaches the top of the stairs.

Meanwhile, Mike looks at Jane bleakly.

MIKE

Go ahead.

JANE

Mike...

MIKE

We have to. There's nothing else we can do now.

Jane nods soberly. She fishes a business card out from somewhere, walks over to the other endtable and picks up the living room phone. Reading the card, she punches out a number, and waits for an answer.

JANE

(into the phone)

Hello? This is, uh, Jane McQueen...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JANE (CONT'D)

Please, it's important... No, it's Brooke... Look, we need help. You might be the only person she'll listen to... If you would. We'd be very grateful... All right.

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

By the time Brooke gets to her room, she is weeping freely, but silently. She flings the door behind her, catching it just in time to keep it from slamming shut. Running to her bedside table, she picks up her phone, speed-dials a number—only to get a busy signal. She throws the phone across the room, falling on the bed and curling up in a fetal position, burying her head under her pillow.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAM'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Sam's little green car pulls around to the side of the building, maneuvering into an empty space. Sam gets out and starts to walk towards the main street; but before she can get there, Reyanna steps out from a niche in the wall.

SAM  
Reyanna? Hey.

Reyanna looks nervous. Actually, she looks scared to death.

REYANNA  
I really need to talk. Can we talk? Inside?

SAM  
Uhhh...yeah, sure.

Sam leads Reyanna towards the front of the building.

CUT TO:

INT SAM'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens and Sam shows Reyanna in. Reyanna still looks like a gazelle surrounded by lions, and Sam—a little unnerved herself by this time—leads her to the bed and sits her down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sam sits beside her.

SAM

This is about Jaycee, isn't it?

REYANNA

She made me swear not to say anything, but...

SAM

It's okay, Reyanna...

REYANNA

Oh, no. It's not okay. They could get me. They could get you.

SAM

Wait, who's "they"? You mean Jaycee really does know who beat her up?

REYANNA

Well, no, but she knows Ricky sent them.

SAM

Who's Ricky?

Reyanna looks at Sam as though she'd just asked who the President was.

REYANNA

Ricky Manzetti.

SAM

(laughing awkwardly)  
Jeez, what is this, "The Sopranos"?

Reyanna hushes her, as if he could hear.

REYANNA

It's not a joke! What he did to Jaycee, that was just a warning.

SAM

Okay, this Ricky guy, he's Jaycee's...supplier?

Reyanna nods.

SAM (CONT'D)

(guessing)  
And she owes him money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

REYANNA  
(emphatically)  
Oh, she's into him big time.

SAM  
A lot?

Another nod.

SAM (CONT'D)  
How much?

Reyanna actually scoots away from Sam a bit, as though the subject were contagious.

REYANNA  
You don't wanna know, really—

Sam catches her hand.

SAM  
(insistent)  
How much?

Reyanna turns away, her face hidden in her long blonde hair; but Sam can still hear her answer:

REYANNA  
Twelve thousand.

Sam's eyes go wide and her mouth drops. In a sudden reversal, Reyanna crowds against her, clutching at her like a lifeline.

REYANNA (CONT'D)  
I'm scared, Sam. If Jaycee can't come up with the money...

Sam puts an arm around Reyanna's shoulder.

SAM  
I don't think that this guy will go around beating up everyone Jaycee knows.

Reyanna looks up at her with big, frightened eyes.

REYANNA  
He might.

Sam takes a moment to think.

SAM  
Okay...this Ricky, he wants his money, right?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAM (CONT'D)

And he knows Jaycee can't do anything while she's in the hospital, right? So he's going to wait until she's out before he does anything else. So—I'm going to drive you home, okay? You'll be all right, trust me.

Reyanna doesn't look nearly as convinced, but she allows Sam to pull her up and take her to the door. Sam reaches to open the door and—

CUT TO:

EXT. MCQUEEN FRONT PORCH

Another door—the McQueens'—opens. Jane is standing in the doorway.

JANE

Thank you so much for coming.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Jane steps aside and Osbourne walks in.

OSBOURNE

(greeting)

Mrs. McQueen, Mr. McQueen.

Mike comes forward.

MIKE

Brooke's in her room.

He holds out the letters.

MIKE (CONT'D)

These came today.

Osbourne takes the letters and scans them.

OSBOURNE

I find this rather difficult to believe.

MIKE

Brooke's been on the honor roll six straight semesters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSBOURNE

Possibly an error occurred, the wrong transcripts sent. It happens, rarely. And it should be correctible; there are procedures for dealing with such things.

MIKE

Okay, fine, good. But Brooke—she acted like she didn't even care.

JANE

No, that wasn't it. She was broken up inside, I could tell. But she wouldn't let it show.

MIKE

You have to understand, she's my little girl. I just wanted to take her up in my arms and make everything better, and she wouldn't even let me...

He sits on the sofa's armrest unsteadily, the picture of misery.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Does she really hate us...hate me...that much?

Osbourne shakes his head, not unkindly.

OSBOURNE

No, Mr. McQueen. Though given the circumstances, Miss McQueen's behavior is unsurprising.

JANE

Why?

OSBOURNE

I'm afraid I must begin with yet another apology. In order to help Miss McQueen understand her difficulties with you, I recommended a book on family relationships. Unfortunately, she decided to use the book's analysis of teenage behavior as source material...a strategy guide, so to speak.

Despite the situation, a hint of a smile plays on Jane's lips.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

JANE

Sounds like Brooke.

(beat)

But what did you mean by "given the circumstances"?

OSBOURNE

Appearances to the contrary, I believe Miss McQueen would very much like a healthy relationship with you.

(to Mike)

I'm sure she wanted nothing more than to be comforted by you, Mr. McQueen. She simply couldn't allow herself to be.

MIKE

Why the hell not?!

OSBOURNE

It would seem that she were backing down because she couldn't deal with the rejection letters. She can't accept that. Her innate stubbornness drives her to continue playing the antagonist, regardless of the emotional cost.

MIKE

(ruefully)

I guess we know where she gets that from.

Jane goes to Mike and leans on him, arm around his shoulder.

JANE

Can you help?

OSBOURNE

Truthfully—I don't know. I can attempt to talk to Miss McQueen, of course.

Mike and Jane look at each other; then Jane nods for both of them.

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brooke is still curled up on the bed; the only difference is that she's buried herself under the covers. There is a knock at the door. Brooke doesn't so much as move.

After a few seconds, there is a another knock.

OSBOURNE (O.S.)  
(from behind the door)  
Miss McQueen?

Brooke pokes her head out, glances at the door.

OSBOURNE (O.S.)  
It's Eric Osbourne.  
(beat)  
I'm alone. Please open the door.

Finally Brooke crawls out of bed, trudges to the door and pulls it open. Osbourne is standing there, alone as promised.

BROOKE  
What are you doing here?

Her eyes flick towards the stairs.

BROOKE (CONT'D)  
(sullen)  
They called you.

Osbourne flashes her a deadpan look.

OSBOURNE  
Of course. Did you expect them to do otherwise?

BROOKE  
Yeah. I expected them to padlock the door from the outside and call the mental ward.

OSBOURNE  
(chuckling)  
I doubt they would resort to something so...outlandish.

Brooke stares at him.

BROOKE  
Have you not been paying attention to the way they've been acting?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSBOURNE

(shrugs)

Perhaps your father and stepmother have learned that the brute force approach can be counter-productive.

BROOKE

They didn't learn the first ten times it didn't work.

Brooke steps to one side, silently inviting Osbourne in. After he's inside, she closes the door behind him, then pulls out the chair at her computer desk for him. She sits on the edge of the bed.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

(trying for lightness)

Bet when you took this job, you never thought you'd be sitting in one of your female students' bedrooms.

Osbourne takes a quick glance around.

OSBOURNE

I believe that would be a safe bet. One must admit to the unlikely nature of this scene.

BROOKE

(spreading her hands)

Welcome to my world.

A moment of awkward silence.

OSBOURNE

Well. You know why I'm here.

BROOKE

Because the parental units called you?

OSBOURNE

I've seen the letters, Miss McQueen.

The life goes out of Brooke.

BROOKE

Oh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OSBOURNE

Needless to say, I am quite concerned.

Brooke doesn't seem to know what to say; her arms flail helplessly.

BROOKE

I...don't understand what happened. I tried really hard... I only got one C my whole life... I just... don't...

Brooke finally breaks down, sobbing uncontrollably. Osbourne feels moved to go and sit on the bed next to her, putting an arm around her shoulder awkwardly, patting her as she cries into his jacket.

OSBOURNE

There, there, Miss McQueen. I'm certain that this is the result of a simple mistake. It will be remedied, I assure you.

BROOKE

(sniffling)

How come you never call me Brooke?

OSBOURNE

Pardon?

BROOKE

I'm always "Miss McQueen". Like I'm just another student.

Osbourne looks down at Brooke, still resting her head on his chest.

OSBOURNE

You're correct, I suppose. It's merely a device, designed to maintain a degree of separation.

(beat)

It does seem rather...absurd, just now.

BROOKE

I'm sorry. I'm getting you all wet.

OSBOURNE

Nonsense. It's a perfectly normal reaction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BROOKE

Bawling my eyes out all over is normal?

OSBOURNE

Of course.

(beat)

But you are aware that I'm not the person to whom you should be "bawling your eyes out".

Brooke pulls away, closing in on herself.

BROOKE

(a whisper)

I can't.

OSBOURNE

You must. You cannot continue on this path. Your father and stepmother are acutely aware of the damage they have caused. Their relationship with Miss McPherson may well be irreparable. They are desperate not to lose you as well.

Brooke is shaking her head.

BROOKE

I don't know...

OSBOURNE

Please, Miss...Brooke. You must try.

BROOKE

What if it doesn't work? What if they're just as controlling with me as they tried to be with Sam?

OSBOURNE

However it turns out, you will never forgive yourself if you do not make the attempt now.

Brooke mulls that over.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mike and Jane are still waiting in the living room. They watch with great trepidation as Osbourne guides Brooke down the stairs, waiting a discreet distance away, afraid to come too close. Osbourne brings Brooke to within a few feet—there she stops, glancing back and forth between him and Mike.

Osbourne nods encouragingly and gently prods her forward, while Mike holds his arms open, inviting her in. Brooke takes one hesitant step—then breaks and runs into her father's arms. He hugs her tightly; with his arms wrapped securely around her, she starts to cry again.

MIKE  
 (patting her hair)  
 Shhh...Daddy's going to make it  
 all right...

Osbourne takes a step back, towards the front door.

OSBOURNE  
 I believe I should leave you alone  
 now—

Brooke turns in Mike's arms.

BROOKE  
 No! I don't want you to go.

JANE  
 It's all right. Please stay.

MIKE  
 (to Brooke)  
 Come on. Let's sit down and talk.

Mike walks Brooke over to the sofa and sits her down. He and Jane sit on either side of her, while Osbourne remains on his feet, a few feet away. Mike gives Brooke a handkerchief; she dries her eyes.

JANE  
 Honey, your father and I have  
 talked about this at length, and  
 we think we've come up with  
 something that will make everybody  
 happy.

MIKE  
 The deal is this: we stop  
 treating you like a child, and you  
 stop treating us like parents.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE  
I'm sorry, what?

MIKE  
I said, we stop treating you—

BROOKE  
(interrupting)  
Yeah, what do you mean, treating  
you like parents?

MIKE  
For instance, this "Stepford girl"  
routine you've been pulling around  
here. You know you wouldn't act  
that way towards anyone else. You  
only do it around us because we're  
your parents.

JANE  
We're just saying we want you to  
treat us the same way you would  
any other adult. And we'll do the  
same for you.

MIKE  
What we want is to be three adult  
individuals sharing a household.  
It's that simple.

BROOKE  
It can't possibly be that simple.

JANE  
(sigh)  
At least it's a place to start.  
Please, Brooke, can't we just try?

Brooke looks back and forth between them, clearly wanting to  
be convinced, but still holding back.

MIKE  
I'll learn to let go. I promise.

Brooke curls her hand around his.

BROOKE  
You don't have to...you know...  
let go all the way.

There are expressions of relief all around as the tension  
breaks, and Mike and Jane hug Brooke around her shoulders.  
Brooke turns her eyes to Osbourne.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BROOKE (CONT'D)

(to Osbourne)

Thank you.

JANE

That goes for us too.

OSBOURNE

This bodes well, I think. Of course I'll look into the matter of Miss McQueen's records immediately.

He starts to turn, but Mike stops him.

MIKE

Mr. Osbourne—wait. Before you go, there's something else we need your help with.

He looks at Brooke.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(to Brooke)

Your help, too.

JANE

Sam.

BROOKE

(snorts)

You want my help with Sam?

MIKE

(to Brooke and Osbourne)

I know our last try at this didn't go very well, but we're ready to listen now.

BROOKE

I don't know why you'd want to listen to me. I was the one with the bright idea that Lily and Carmen could talk Sam out of popping pills.

JANE

We know your intentions were good, honey.

(to Osbourne)

Please, won't you sit down and bring us up to date?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

OSBOURNE

I'll assist in any way I can, of  
course, Mrs. McQueen.

So Osbourne sits down across from Jane, Brooke and Mike, who  
are—at least for the moment—a functional family again.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EST. KENNEDY HIGH - AFTERNOON

The afternoon of the following day.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Osbourne is walking down an empty corridor when he crosses paths with Principal Krupps.

KRUPPS

Eric, can I have a word with you?

OSBOURNE

Certainly, Mr. Krupps.

The two men step to one side of the hall.

KRUPPS

It seems I owe you an apology,  
Eric.

OSBOURNE

(raising an eyebrow)  
Indeed? How so?

KRUPPS

A week ago, you said that I was  
using Sam McPherson as a  
substitute for my daughter Amanda.

OSBOURNE

I don't believe it's that cut and  
dried—

KRUPPS

No, you were right. I apologize  
for my behavior that day. I was  
in denial...but Sam made me face  
up to the truth.

OSBOURNE

(surprised)  
Miss McPherson did?

KRUPPS

Couldn't deny my feelings to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSBOURNE

I see. Then...you've discontinued the relationship?

KRUPPS

Of course not. Now that we both understand the context, it makes things much simpler.

OSBOURNE

Mr. Krupps, you simply cannot be Miss McPherson's surrogate father.

KRUPPS

Why not? Her question, not mine.

OSBOURNE

(flabbergasted)

It's obviously improper—!

KRUPPS

We don't think so.

OSBOURNE

"We"? Miss McPherson is incapable of making this decision.

KRUPPS

Why not? My question, not hers. I'm not horning in on anyone's territory—except maybe for Mike McQueen's, and just between you, me and the wall, I don't think he's up to it.

OSBOURNE

That's not—

KRUPPS

Frankly, it's this attitude that Sam isn't able to think for herself that alienates her the most. I expected better than that from you, Eric.

With that, Krupps turns and walks away, leaving Osbourne to scratch his head.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY

Harrison is packing up at his locker. He closes the door—and jumps when he sees Natalie standing behind it.

HARRISON  
(irate)  
Now who's sneaking?

NATALIE  
Sorry.  
(beat)  
You wanna hit me?

HARRISON  
(heavy sigh)  
No, I don't want to hit you.

NATALIE  
Good. Here.

She holds out a small white box.

HARRISON  
What's that?

NATALIE  
(laughing)  
Well, take it and find out.

Reluctantly, Harrison takes the box and opens it. Inside is a slip of paper.

HARRISON  
(reading)  
"Good for two tickets to a special showing of 'The Breakfast Club', Saturday at midnight".

He looks at her skeptically.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Why are you doing this?

NATALIE  
Well, candy and flowers seemed stupid, and I know you wouldn't go out to dinner with me or anything, so...  
(cajoling)  
Come on, Harrison, say yes, please? I'll take care of everything.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATALIE (CONT'D)

All you have to do is meet me at my place at eleven-thirty on Saturday. Come on, I know how much you love John Hughes movies.

HARRISON

How do you know that?

NATALIE

(shrugs)

Sam talks about you sometimes.

(beat)

You're Brian, right? The Brain. The geeky one? Sam says she's Alison, which—though I like Ally Sheedy—I cannot see at all.

HARRISON

I think she means in the "being a misfit" sense.

NATALIE

But they're all misfits! Even the ones who aren't. Isn't that the point? That we're all the same underneath? We're all in the same boat together, whether we know it or not?

Harrison is fascinated despite himself.

HARRISON

Yeah...I guess it is.

NATALIE

Besides, the music is the bomb.

She hums a few bars of "We Are Not Alone" while Harrison looks on, impressed, again in spite of himself.

HARRISON

Not many people pay attention to the music. Except the main theme.

NATALIE

Are you kidding? I've had that soundtrack for years. Simple Minds, though? Way oversold. "Don't You Forget About Me" was not their best work.

(beat)

So, what do you say? Say yes. Please? Pretty please?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Harrison's face scrunches up.

HARRISON  
Natalie, I can't.

NATALIE  
What are you going to do Saturday  
night instead? Stay home and  
fight with Brooke?

HARRISON  
Hey, you're the reason I'm  
fighting with Brooke in the first  
place.

NATALIE  
(snorting)  
Oh, that's bull and you know it,  
Harrison. You and Brooke were  
fighting long before me.  
(beat)  
Don't you want to have fun for a  
change? Just once?

HARRISON  
(rubbing his eyes)  
Okay, okay. But just the movie.  
Nothing else.

She holds up her hands.

NATALIE  
Absolutely. I swear. See you  
Saturday night.

She moves off down the hall, lightly, almost skipping.

HARRISON  
(calling)  
Hey!

Natalie stops, turns.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Which one are you?

A sly smile appears on Natalie's lips.

NATALIE  
I'm the girl who doesn't get  
detention.

And she disappears around a corner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Harrison stares after Natalie for a moment, bemused. With a sigh, he turns to pick up his backpack—and Brooke comes rushing up.

BROOKE

Harrison! I'm glad I caught you.

He looks at her, and she grimaces.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

I know that look. It's the "is she mad at me today?" look.

Harrison starts to protest, but Brooke holds up a hand to stop him.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

No, you're completely justified. I have been totally schizoid. But that's all going to change.

HARRISON

(cautiously)

Brooke, what are you talking about?

BROOKE

Look, I've been so wrapped up in Sam, and Dad and Jane... I haven't been taking responsibility for our relationship.

HARRISON

I'm not sure what that means exactly, but—

BROOKE

I've just been blindly reacting to things instead of keeping my cool. Take Natalie, for instance.

Harrison is suddenly very uncomfortable.

HARRISON

N-Natalie? Wh-Wh-What about Natalie?

BROOKE

You were right—it's absolutely stupid to let what she does get to me. And blaming you when she comes on to you? You were so right not to let me get away with that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Obviously it's not your fault. I mean, it's not like you're encouraging her.

Harrison does a very good imitation of a fish out of water.

HARRISON

Uhhh...right.

BROOKE

So from now on, I'm going to remember that her advances are totally unwelcome and that you want nothing to do with her.

HARRISON

Uhhh...

BROOKE

And as for you—

She leans in and kisses him, quick, on the lips.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

—you don't have to worry. From now on, I am going to be fully committed to making our relationship work. Starting with Saturday.

Once again, Harrison practically goes into convulsions.

HARRISON

S-S-Saturday?

BROOKE

Sure! We'll hang out all afternoon. No shopping, I promise. There will only be guy- and girl- friendly activities.

For the first time, she seems to sense something wrong.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Harrison? Are you okay?

HARRISON

Huh? Oh, um, ah, yeah. Fine.

That's good enough for Brooke.

BROOKE

Great!

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (5)

She backs away.

BROOKE (CONT'D)  
I'll call you! We'll make plans!

She turns and heads off, stepping as sprightly as Natalie did.

HARRISON  
(after her)  
Right! Plans! Saturday!  
(to himself)  
Great. Just great. You're  
spending time with Brooke AND  
Natalie on the same day.

He picks up his backpack, slings it over his shoulder, and starts off down the hall. He's only gone a short distance, though, when Sam joins up with him. He gives her a sour look but doesn't say anything.

SAM  
(tight-lipped)  
I see. You're so repulsed by me  
that you can't stand to be seen in  
the same hallway?

HARRISON  
Sam, don't be silly. Of course  
I'm not repulsed by you.

Sam turns her face away.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Maybe I was a little harsh the  
other day.

SAM  
But you still meant it.

HARRISON  
(slightly defensive)  
Sam, you've changed.

SAM  
No I haven't! It's still me!

HARRISON  
But...  
(waving his arms)  
...you know.

SAM  
(insistent)  
It's not hurting anyone!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

HARRISON  
It's hurting you.

SAM  
Harrison, I'm fine. I swear to  
God.

HARRISON  
And by the way, what's this thing  
with you and Principal Krupps?

Sam glares at him.

SAM  
Don't you start, too.

HARRISON  
What do you expect? You're  
fooling around with this guy—

SAM  
We were just playing...

HARRISON  
Yeah, I heard. You and Mr. Krupps  
in a hot tub, all touchy-feely.

SAM  
It wasn't—! It was just a game.  
We were just kidding.

HARRISON  
For God's sake, Sam, why?! The  
guy is old enough to be your  
father.

SAM  
It was just fun, okay? Making  
everyone wonder.  
(beat)  
Anyway, we're not doing that  
anymore.

HARRISON  
You thought it would be fun to  
make me—make everyone think you  
were sleeping around with the  
principal.

SAM  
(gesturing)  
Hence the repulsion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

HARRISON

For the last time, I am not  
repulsed by you! Besides, you  
pushed me away first.

(beat)

You always pushed me away first.

SAM

(hurt)

Oh, that's not fair!

HARRISON

Why not? It's true. What, was it  
just a mistake?

SAM

(looking at the floor)

Pushing you away is always a  
mistake.

HARRISON

Huh?

SAM

(louder)

Nothing.

HARRISON

You just...sometimes you make it  
really hard to be your friend.

Sam stops walking; Harrison overruns her by a couple of  
steps.

SAM

Do not! Besides, I didn't think  
you were. Anymore.

HARRISON

(angry)

Come on, Sam, just cut the self-  
pity act already. If I wasn't  
your friend I wouldn't be standing  
here arguing with you.

SAM

If you were my friend, you  
wouldn't have slept with Brooke.

Now it's Harrison's turn to be injured.

HARRISON

That's low, Sam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

SAM  
Why? It's true.

Harrison is left avoiding her eyes.

HARRISON  
Yeah.

SAM  
I guess maybe there really is too  
much water under the bridge.  
(shrugs)  
Sorry for bothering you.

She turns away, but Harrison catches her arm.

HARRISON  
Wait. Look, I know there's been  
some bad stuff—really bad stuff—  
between us. But there's been lots  
of good stuff, too! Years and  
years of good stuff.

SAM  
So what are you saying exactly,  
Harrison?

HARRISON  
I don't know! I thought we  
weren't going to fight each other  
anymore.

SAM  
Never seeing each other again  
would accomplish that.

HARRISON  
Is that what you want, Sam? Is  
that what you really want?

Sam turns her back to Harrison again, mumbling something  
unintelligible.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
What? Tell me, Sam.

He spins her around, and is shocked to find her crying. She  
shakes his arm off.

SAM  
How...how could you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

Harrison makes a move towards her, but she steps back, fists clenched at her sides, glaring at him furiously through her tears.

SAM (CONT'D)

You were everything to me!! Last summer, I thought...I thought...

HARRISON

Sam, please stop crying—

SAM

(unhearing)

...and then you...you...you just...

She turns and runs off down the hallway. Harrison takes a step to follow, then stops himself.

HARRISON

(to himself)

Don't run after her, Harrison.  
It's a seriously bad idea. Don't  
run after her, don't run after  
her, don't... Aw, hell—SAM!!

He takes off after Sam.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Sam is sitting at the bottom of the steps, huddled against the wall, staring at nothing. Harrison comes up and gingerly sits down beside her.

HARRISON

You're right. You're absolutely right. I ruined everything between us. And you probably shouldn't ever see me again, not after what I did. B-But...I don't want to never see you again. Okay, and I know I have absolutely no right to ask you to have anything to do with me...

SAM

(dead)

What do you want, Harrison?

Harrison gropes for words for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRISON

I want...another chance. A—a chance for us to be—I don't even know what, but— Oh, God, this sounds so lame... I just can't stand the thought of you walking out of my life forever, okay?

Several heartbeats' worth of silence. Then Sam stands up, looking straight ahead, not at Harrison.

SAM

Okay.

HARRISON

Huh?

SAM

The coffee shop. Ten A.M., Saturday. If we're both there... then we'll try. To be... something. Otherwise...we'll know it's over forever.

Without another word or a backward glance, she walks off. Harrison is totally relieved for a couple of moments before it dawns on him.

HARRISON

Wait a—Saturday?

He smacks his forehead in frustration.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is dark. The front door opens—a rectangle of light, silhouetting Sam's figure. She steps inside, flips the light switch—and freezes.

The apartment has been ransacked.

The mattress has been upended, the dresser drawers opened and dumped on the floor. Sam blindly closes the door behind her, stepping dazedly over the piles of her things, looking around in shock. She stoops down and picks up the photograph of her father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSERT: THE PHOTOGRAPH

The glass inside the frame is shattered.

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS' VESTIBULE - LATER

The doorbell rings, a fairly normal chime for such a large house. After a few moments Krupps approaches the double doors and opens them.

Standing on the portico is Sam, a suitcase in each hand.

SAM

Hi.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END