

Popular: Senior Year  
"Bad Girls"

by

The Wild Pikachu

POPULAR: SENIOR YEAR

BAD GIRLS

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. JOSH AND LILY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Josh and Lily are sitting on the sofa, scrutinizing something with great interest and huddled in serious consultation. Josh strokes his chin in a scholarly manner. Lily cups her hand to his ear, whispering. He nods once, solemnly, and looks over at her.

JOSH  
Are we agreed?

LILY  
I think so, yeah.

They turn eyes forward.

JOSH  
You are definitely...a dead man.

Harrison, sitting across from them, slaps his knees scornfully.

HARRISON  
Well, gee, thanks, guys. I knew I could count on you two.

LILY  
Harrison, you've dome some dumb things in your time, but you have to admit—

JOSH  
—this is epic-ly stupid. Even for you.

HARRISON  
(annoyed)  
And it just keeps getting better.

LILY  
What do you want, Harrison?

HARRISON  
(duh)  
Help?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY  
You've got dates—

HARRISON  
They aren't dates!

LILY  
—with three different girls on  
the same day.

HARRISON  
(adamant)  
They aren't dates!

LILY  
Fine, whatever. You've got a not-  
date with Sam in the morning, a  
not-date with Brooke in the  
afternoon, and you're going to a  
movie with Natalie at midnight—  
how is that not a date, by the  
way?

HARRISON  
Okay, maybe that's kind of a date,  
but—

LILY  
And brunch with Sam?

HARRISON  
Well...but Brooke, that's not a  
date! We're just... just...I'm  
not sure what we're doing.

LILY  
So it could be a date.

HARRISON  
You're really not helping.

LILY  
I'm not sure what we're supposed  
to do, Harrison.

Harrison turns to Josh.

HARRISON  
Come on, Josh. You were starting  
quarterback.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOSH

Yeah, and if I'd been dating two other girls, Brooke woulda killed me.

HARRISON

(teeth gritted)

I'm—not—dating—them!

JOSH

Seriously, I can't figure how someone like you managed to get three girls interested. No offense.

Harrison makes a "none taken" gesture.

LILY

You know, it could be worse. You could have dates with all of them at the same time.

JOSH

Hey, I think I saw that movie!

She pats his hand.

LILY

Not now, honey.

HARRISON

You know, I think coming here was a big—

The ringing of his cell phone cuts him off. Grimacing, he digs it out and holds it up to his ear.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Hello?

He shoots Josh and Lily a look, then plasters an artificial grin on his face.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Brooke! Hey!

WHITE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The hall outside Osbourne's social studies class. Students are leaving, in clumps of two or three. When the last one has trickled out, Osbourne closes the door.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS - CONTINUOUS

Osbourne walks to his desk. Brooke is standing there, arms folded.

BROOKE  
(impatient)  
Did you find out anything?

He reaches into one of his desk drawers, pulls out a paper, and holds it out across the desk to her.

OSBOURNE  
This is your computerized transcript. It was sent automatically to the institutions to which you applied.

She takes the paper and scans it; it takes only a moment for her eyes to widen in disbelief.

BROOKE  
What—?! This—no way. I mean, no way! I never—D's?! I never got a D in my—all right, one time, seventh grade, I loathed Home Ec, but—this—these are—are—

OSBOURNE  
(calm)  
The word you are searching for, Miss McQueen, is "impossible."

BROOKE  
You know these aren't my grades.

OSBOURNE  
Of course. The school's computer system contains incorrect information.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE

Then why isn't there an uproar all over?

(eyes narrowing)

It's because it's just me, isn't it?

Osbourne tilts his head in agreement.

OSBOURNE

As soon as it became clear that this was not merely a clerical error, Principal Krupps had a number of other students' records checked, at random. It seems as though someone...hacked, I believe is the term...into the system, in order to alter your marks.

BROOKE

(glaring)

Sam.

OSBOURNE

A logical prime suspect. Unfortunately, it may be impossible to prove. We can surmise what was done—but the school cannot afford to hire a computer security expert to ferret out how it was done.

BROOKE

(unhappy)

Let alone who did it. I don't think Sam knows that much about computers, anyway.

She paces half the length of the classroom and back.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Okay, never mind—I can kill Sam later. But this can be fixed, right? You can send the right grades to everyone? You said there were procedures.

OSBOURNE

There are, indeed.

(beat)

However, your case entails certain...complications.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Brooke, who has been fidgeting, stops and leans over Osbourne's desk, spreading her hands on the desktop.

BROOKE  
Complications?

OSBOURNE  
Your marks must be reconstructed by hand, from the school's paper records and, if necessary, the District's archives.

BROOKE  
I thought everyone had this permanent file that has every detail since kindergarten in it. Or is that just a suburban school myth?

OSBOURNE  
(chuckling)  
No, it's not a myth. You do, indeed, have a permanent file.

BROOKE  
(sardonic)  
I can hear the "but" coming.

OSBOURNE  
However... It is my understanding that during the technology push of ninety-nine, the school's paper recordkeeping became somewhat... confused.

Brooke throws up her hands in disgust.

BROOKE  
Great. Just great! I'm going to be going to community college. Or maybe I should skip that and just go straight to a job at Mr. Cluck's.

She has started to pace back and forth in front of Osbourne's desk; finally he rises and holds out his hands in a placating gesture.

OSBOURNE  
Calm yourself, Miss McQueen. You will certainly not be employed at a fast food restaurant.

Brooke snatches up her transcript and waves it at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BROOKE

No, not with these grades! I'll have to become a bag lady and sleep in alleyways. Or just sponge off Dad the rest of my life.

OSBOURNE

Miss McQueen, please. I said that your records would be reconstructed, and they shall be.

BROOKE

There it is again—"but?"

OSBOURNE

These things do take time.

BROOKE

More time than I've got?

OSBOURNE

(carefully)

I don't wish to appear pessimistic, nor to raise false hopes.

Brooke chews that over for a moment.

BROOKE

So it's possible.

OSBOURNE

It is possible.

(disgruntled)

I am finding that American colleges can be... intransigent... with regard to their timetables.

Brooke sits down at a desk in the front row and props her chin on her hands gloomily.

BROOKE

She's going to get away with it.

After a moment of silence, she looks at Osbourne.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Isn't this where you're supposed to be all reassuring?

OSBOURNE

Miss McQueen, I would like nothing more than to give reassurance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BROOKE

Do you know you have this bad habit of stopping right before the "but?"

OSBOURNE

It's entirely possible that, should you wish to attend an institution of your choosing, you shall have to wait until the spring term to begin.

BROOKE

This can not be happening to me.  
(looking up)  
If I hear one word about denial, I'm coming across this desk, so help me.

OSBOURNE

You are distraught, Miss McQueen. I do assure you that I shall continue to press your case with these various colleges, however unreasonable, however...

BROOKE

Pig-headed?

OSBOURNE

...stubborn they may be.

BROOKE

Thank you.

Osbourne looks up at the clock.

OSBOURNE

Your next class...

BROOKE

I know. I'm going.

She stops at his desk.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Really. Thanks. I seem to keep saying that, but... I hope you know how much everything you've done means to me.

OSBOURNE

I consider it—consider you—a very worthy cause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Flushing, Brooke turns to go. In the doorway, though, she runs smack into Mary Cherry.

MARY CHERRY  
 Oops! Sorry, Brooke.  
 (calling)  
 Urgent message for Mr. Osbourne!

In a moment, Osbourne has joined them, taking a slip of paper from Mary Cherry's outstretched hand and scanning it briefly.

OSBOURNE  
 It seems I've been summoned into  
 the lion's den. Excuse me,  
 ladies.

He slides past them and walks off.

MARY CHERRY  
 (confused)  
 I thought that was from the  
 principal's office.

Brooke gives her a look.

BROOKE  
 Mary Cherry, why are you  
 delivering messages?

MARY CHERRY  
 Oh! You know how "community  
 service" is supposed to look good  
 on your college applications?  
 Well, I figure a school is kinda  
 like a community, right? So here  
 I am, servin'!

Brooke thinks that over, while Mary Cherry watches her anxiously.

MARY CHERRY (CONT'D)  
 D'ya think it'll work?

BROOKE  
 (hastily)  
 What? Oh—sure! Uh, I mean,  
 volunteering is good! But, uh...  
 wasn't your mother just going to  
 buy your way in to wherever you  
 wanted to go?

An over-dramatic, Southern belle sigh from Mary Cherry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

MARY CHERRY

Sadly, in spite of truly heroic efforts by our great President Dubya, economic difficulties are ravaging even the great state of Texas.

BROOKE

Your mother's company is in trouble?

MARY CHERRY

Like a ripe cornfield facin' a plagueful o' locusts. Mama said the only way I was gettin' into college was to...to...

Here she falters, her lower lip trembling. Brooke looks at her quizzically.

MARY CHERRY (CONT'D)

...to earn my way in!

Mary Cherry seems positively horrified by the thought. Brooke tries to look sympathetic, but can't quite manage it.

BROOKE

You know...a lot of people do that. Earn their way in.

MARY CHERRY

But not rich people! It'd be shameful if I didn't get in the traditional way—by Mama donatin' a building to the institution of my choice! Just shameful!

Suddenly Mary Cherry is bawling at Brooke, who, after a moment, awkwardly pats her on the shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS' OFFICE - LATER

Krupps is sitting at his desk working on something or other when his intercom buzzes. He reaches out and picks up the handset.

KRUPPS

(into the intercom)  
Yes, Shirley?... Oh, yes, send him in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hangs up the intercom and stands as the door opens and Osbourne walks in.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)

Eric. Please, have a seat.

Osbourne obligingly sits down.

OSBOURNE

I just left Miss McQueen. She is quite distraught at the difficulty regarding her transcript.

KRUPPS

You told her we'd do everything in our power to fix things?

OSBOURNE

Of course.

KRUPPS

Good, good... I sent for you, though, to discuss another matter.

Osbourne's eyebrow goes up.

OSBOURNE

Oh?

Krupps opens his desk drawer and pulls out a thick manila envelope. He sets the envelope down on his desk, removes a bunch of photos from it, and hands them to Osbourne.

KRUPPS

These arrived via messenger this morning.

Unperturbed, Osbourne flips through the photos.

INSERT: THE PHOTOGRAPHS

These are the pictures taken of Sam and Osbourne during the ski trip: Sam stumbling into Osbourne's arms, Osbourne helping Sam up the steps of her cabin, Sam lying on the sofa while Osbourne checks her forehead. They are meant to be suggestive, but in reality it's not hard to tell that nothing lewd is going on.

OSBOURNE

What did Miss McPherson have to say about these?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KRUPPS

I haven't shown them to her yet.  
I wanted to hear what you had to  
say first.

Osbourne's eyebrow goes up again, as though he finds that mildly surprising. He flips through the photos again before laying them on the desk.

OSBOURNE

Regarding the subject matter?  
There's not a great deal to be  
said, I believe. These photographs  
were taken during the class field  
trip in January, of course. You'll  
recall that Miss McPherson wished  
to see me on Saturday evening, and  
that shortly thereafter she fell  
ill.

KRUPPS

(neutrally)

I remember.

OSBOURNE

These appear to have been taken  
during the period of time in which  
I escorted Miss McPherson back to  
her cabin.

KRUPPS

Any idea who took them?

OSBOURNE

(shaking his head)

I'm afraid I had no idea that we  
were being surveilled.

KRUPPS

Do you think this is some kind of  
blackmail attempt?

OSBOURNE

If so, it's a poor one. The  
photographs are not particularly  
compromising. And, to be perfectly  
frank—your activities with Miss  
McPherson that weekend would have  
provided more ideal material.

KRUPPS

(to himself)

True... If I'd had any idea there  
was...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Krupps puts the photographs back into the envelope absently.

OSBOURNE

May I ask what you intend to do?

KRUPPS

I'm going to find out who's behind this, of course. It doesn't matter who the target of this little scheme is. Somebody violated the privacy of the school's students and faculty, and that's just not acceptable. I was hoping you could give a lead.

OSBOURNE

(sighs)

Well, it was worth a try.

Krupps stands; on cue, Osbourne rises as well.

KRUPPS

I hope I haven't disturbed you unduly.

OSBOURNE

It is disturbing in principle to be spied upon, but... I really can't see what damage has been done.

Osbourne starts towards the door, then turns back uncertainly.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

(hesitantly)

I'm not certain whether or not I should bring this up...

KRUPPS

Please, feel free.

OSBOURNE

It's just that I've heard this rumor...

Krupps chuckles, rather humorlessly.

KRUPPS

High schools are great breeding grounds for rumors, aren't they. If this particular one is what I think it is, then—it's true.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Another raised eyebrow.

OSBOURNE

Excuse me?

KRUPPS

Sam's apartment was broken into recently. She didn't feel safe there, so I offered her the use of a spare bedroom at my house.

Osbourne seems to be literally struck speechless—he opens and closes his mouth a couple of times before managing to put a few words together.

OSBOURNE

Mr. Krupps...sir...I can appreciate your intentions, but...you must be aware of how this looks...!

KRUPPS

I'm not jeopardizing Sam's safety for the sake of appearances. Besides, I'm immune to scandal. I thought you'd figured that out by this time.

OSBOURNE

A sufficiently public scandal would force the Board to take action, I'd think.

Krupps eyes Osbourne warily.

KRUPPS

Is that a threat?

OSBOURNE

Of course not. If I'd had any interest in creating an embarrassing situation, I'd have done so in January.

Osbourne makes a meaningful gesture towards the envelope.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

There may be someone with that intention, however.

KRUPPS

It doesn't matter. Sam's well-being comes first.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

OSBOURNE

(grating)

Miss McPherson's well-being would be best served by a reconciliation with her family.

KRUPPS

Sam would never agree to that now. And given what her family has done, I can't say that I blame her much.

Osbourne rubs the bridge of his nose, clearly frustrated.

OSBOURNE

I can assure you that Mr. And Mrs. McQueen are well aware of their role in the matter, and are ready to take responsibility for their actions.

Krupps leans against his desk easily.

KRUPPS

Yes, I guess you would know—since you've taken Brooke McQueen under your wing.

OSBOURNE

I have advised Miss McQueen on occasion. My utmost concern has always been her best interest, and the strengthening of ties between her and her family. Reconciliation has always been my goal.

KRUPPS

I happen to think that reconciliation is not in Sam's best interest.

OSBOURNE

With all due respect, Sir, you're wrong. Miss McPherson needs her family—

KRUPPS

What Sam needs is support. Support her so-called family is either unable or unwilling to provide.

OSBOURNE

Mr. Krupps, you can't seriously expect—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Krupps holds up a hand to cut him off.

KRUPPS

Eric, we obviously aren't going to change each other's mind. I think we ought to just leave it.

Osbourne looks reluctant, but Krupps' tone leaves no room for argument. Krupps shows Osbourne to the door.

OSBOURNE

I urge you to examine your actions carefully.

KRUPPS

(easily)

I always do, Eric. Believe me, I am absolutely convinced that Sam is better off away from that home situation right now.

After Krupps closes the door behind Osbourne, he picks the envelope up off his desk, walks to the door to the back office, and opens it.

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS' BACK OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sam is sitting behind the desk; she looks up when the door opens.

SAM

Oh, I was just going to go looking for you.

She beckons, and he walks around the desk to look over her shoulder at a computer screen—a new addition.

INSERT: THE COMPUTER SCREEN

Various spreadsheets are arranged around the screen, but on top of everything is a password box.

KRUPPS

Oh, right. After Brooke McQueen's records got tampered with, the District's IT office had new security software installed.

SAM

(casually)

Did they figure out who did that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRUPPS  
 (shakes his head)  
 Whoever it was, they were good.  
 If this weren't a cash-strapped  
 high school, we might get 'em.

SAM  
 (sourly)  
 I'm sure Brooke thinks it was me.

Krupps looks at Sam intently.

KRUPPS  
 Don't worry about that. I know  
 about Brooke McQueen's bias  
 against you. If she starts  
 throwing accusations around, they  
 won't go anywhere.

SAM  
 Thanks.

KRUPPS  
 Now, then, the password is...  
 uh...

He scratches his head for a moment.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)  
 Hang on a second.

He rushes back into his office, re-emerging a moment later  
 holding a slip of paper.

KRUPPS (CONT'D)  
 The password is—  
 (reading)  
 —bike-three-seven-snow.

Sam frowns, but taps the keys obediently.

INSERT: THE COMPUTER SCREEN

A row of asterisks appears in the password box; then the box  
 disappears.

SAM  
 What's "bike-thirty-seven- snow"  
 mean?

KRUPPS  
 (shrugs)  
 I dunno. The IT guy assigned it  
 to me. I'm afraid to change it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He looks at Sam significantly.

SAM

Oh, no—don't look at me! I'd  
crash the whole thing.

KRUPPS

It's all right—I keep this in my  
desk in case I forget.

SAM

I thought you weren't supposed to  
do that.

KRUPPS

(shrugs)

I don't think anyone's going to be  
rifling through my desk.

Sam touches the manila envelope, which Krupps has laid on her  
desk.

SAM

Is this for me?

KRUPPS

(uncomfortable)

Oh—not exactly. But it's  
something I think you need to see.

Tentatively, Sam picks up the envelope, opens it and looks  
inside. She pulls out the photos and flips through them  
quickly. Then she looks up at Krupps with a carefully-crafted  
wide-eyed expression.

SAM

Mr. Krupps, I... Believe me, this  
isn't what it looks like!

Krupps puts his hand on hers gently.

KRUPPS

I know.

SAM

(caught off-guard)

You do?

KRUPPS

I've already talked to Eric about  
it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAM  
(echoing)  
You have.

KRUPPS  
He thinks this might be a warning  
to me.

SAM  
I don't get it. How?

KRUPPS  
Well, if someone was sneaking  
around the ski resort snapping  
photos... They might have gotten  
some of us. These—  
(gesturing at the photos)  
—aren't really what you'd call  
incriminating. But if, say,  
someone got a shot of the two of us  
in the hot tub...

SAM  
(catching up)  
Oh...oh! Well...I, uh...maybe  
it's not. I mean, maybe it's just  
somebody trying to get Mr.  
Osbourne.

Krupps thinks about that a bit.

KRUPPS  
I guess that could be...with the  
zero-tolerance policy most schools  
have, these pictures could be  
misinterpreted.  
(beat)  
And it wouldn't be the first time  
someone tried to set up a staff  
member for sexual harassment.

SAM  
I remember.

KRUPPS  
But this is different—you aren't  
behind this, like Miss Julian was  
behind the attempt to blackmail  
me.

SAM  
(going along)  
Uh...right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

KRUPPS

They must have thought the axe  
would fall on Eric even with you  
telling the real story.

SAM

Yeah, must be.

(beat)

It's not, right? Mr. Osbourne's  
not going to get in any trouble.

KRUPPS

Absolutely not.

Sam does her best to put on a relieved face.

SAM

Well...good, then. That's good.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRLS' RESTROOM - LATER

Brooke is consulting with Lily, while they are both checking  
themselves out in the mirror.

LILY

I'm sorry, Brooke. Just because I  
know which way to plug in a RAM  
module, doesn't make me some kind  
of super-hacker.

BROOKE

Come on, Lily, you hack into stuff  
all the time!

LILY

Yeah, but that's easy. You're  
talking about tracking down  
somebody else's hacking. I don't  
know how to do that.

(beat)

Hey, why don't you ask Emory?

BROOKE

Emory? Does he know about  
hacking?

LILY

No, but he knows every...um...

BROOKE

Geek?

(CONTINUED)

**CONTINUED:**

Lily makes a vague gesture of agreement.

LILY  
...in school. He might know  
someone who can help.

BROOKE  
(nodding smartly)  
Emory. Right.

Brooke spins around and marches off. A second later she  
marches back.

BROOKE **(CONT'D)**  
Will you come with me?

Lily looks at her strangely.

BROOKE **(CONT'D)**  
(fretting)  
I'm not very good with Emory, I,  
I, I, there's this whole him-being-  
a-dork thing, and I think he still  
looks at me like I'm some kind of  
princess or something...

LILY  
Brooke, that's silly.

BROOKE  
You don't think Emory's a dork?

LILY  
He's...eccentric.

Brooke raises a skeptical eyebrow.

LILY **(CONT'D)**  
And I'm sure he doesn't see you as  
a princess.

FLIP CUT TO:

INT. - SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Emory presses his hands together and makes a little bow.

EMORY  
Ah, Your Highness. How might this  
humble lackey serve you?

Brooke shoots Lily a dirty look; Lily pushes her forward

**(CONTINUED)**

CONTINUED:

unceremoniously.

BROOKE

Look, you know that somebody broke into the school's computers and tampered with my grades, right?

EMORY

"Hacked" is the correct word.

BROOKE

I know, I know... Do you think you can maybe help me find out who did it?

EMORY

(trying for suave)

Fear not, fair maiden. I do like to keep my ear to the ground, so to speak...

BROOKE

Does that mean you can help?

Faced with a direct question, Emory starts to hem and haw.

LILY

(prompting)

Come on, Emory! Yes or no?

Finally, Emory pulls a scrap of paper out from somewhere, scribbles on it, and hands it to Brooke.

EMORY

Meet me at my cousin's place after school. He can find out who did the deed. He's the genius in the family.

(confidently)

I got the looks.

Lily and Brooke glance at each other, but wisely refrain from saying anything.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH PARKING LOT - LATER

In the distance, students are milling about, with some getting into cars and driving off; but this is a secluded corner of the parking lot.

(CONTINUED)

**CONTINUED:**

Sam walks up to her car, keys in hand, and is about to unlock her door when someone clamps a hand on her shoulder. She yelps and spins around.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Sam is face-to-face with a twenty-something in an expensive suit, who looks vaguely like a refugee from "The Sopranos."

MAN  
Sam McPherson?

Instinctively Sam backs up against the car.

SAM  
Who are you? What do you want?

The man holds out a paper bag.

MAN  
These are yours. I'm returning  
them.

Sam takes the bag hesitantly, and looks inside.

INSERT: THE BAG

Looking down into the paper bag, we can see various baggies with pills in them.

Sam closes the bag in a rush, looking around furtively.

MAN (CONT'D)  
My colleagues mistakenly took them  
from your apartment.

SAM  
They—you—you work for that  
Manzetti guy!

He just smiles patiently.

MAN  
My employer gave very specific  
orders. They were only to look  
for unpaid-for merchandise in your  
friend's apartment. They  
overstepped their bounds by going  
into your apartment at all, let  
alone taking anything—even if  
they did think it might belong to  
my employer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

I—I didn't get those from Jaycee.

The "Sopranos" guy seems to be all genial smiles.

MAN

My employer realized that they weren't from his inventory. Since they aren't his, he asked me to return them to you.

SAM

(flustered)

Oh.

MAN

Also to extend his apologies for the inconvenience. My colleagues have been... chastised...for their overzealousness.

(beat)

A young woman should feel secure in her home. My employer wants you to know that it's perfectly safe for you to return.

SAM

What—how did you—?

But Sam decides she'd rather not know.

MAN

Well, I have other business... Again, our apologies for the intrusion.

The man starts to turn away. Sam reaches out as if to grab his arm—but thinks better of it.

SAM

Wait—what about Jaycee?

He turns back, his smile becoming just a bit cold.

MAN

A piece of advice, Sam—you don't mind if I call you Sam? Don't get involved with your friend's problems. You'll only wind up getting hurt.

SAM

But—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The man leans in close.

MAN

It would be a shame if you got hurt.

Sam remembers to be scared again, nodding with wide eyes as the man grins. When he turns and walks off, she slumps against the car, spent.

CUT TO:

EXT. A HOUSE - LATER

Brooke, Lily and Emory are walking up the front walk to a cozy little house somewhere in the suburbs.

BROOKE

You're sure your cousin can help?

EMORY

Absolutely. Believe me, he's... Spock-smart.

They step onto the front porch, and Emory rings the doorbell. After a few seconds of waiting, they all look at each other.

LILY

Are you sure he's home, Emory?

EMORY

That's what his mom said.

BROOKE

What school does your cousin go to?

EMORY

Oh, no, no. He works at this big international bank downtown. But he's off today.

The front door opens, and standing there is Emory's cousin—who just happens to be Marshall Flickman (from "Alias").

MARSHALL

Oh—Emory!

(remembering)

That's right, you said you were coming over.

He steps aside, gesturing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHALL (CONT'D)  
Come on in.

The three of them file into the house.

CUT TO:

INT. MARSHALL'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Marshall ushers them inside:

MARSHALL  
(to Brooke and Lily)  
You must be Emory's friends, uh—

BROOKE  
(extending her hand)  
Brooke McQueen.

LILY  
Lily Ford.

MARSHALL  
I'm Marshall. Marshall Flickman.

As he shakes their hands, he leads them through the living room.

CUT TO:

INT. MARSHALL'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

MARSHALL  
Now, if you'll accompany me down  
to the dungeon—

He opens a small door off the kitchen, beyond which is a narrow flight of stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. MARSHALL'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

As the little band is tromping down the stairs:

MARSHALL  
—of course, it's not really a  
dungeon.  
(nervous laugh)  
Well, in the RPG sense...  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

but, I like to think of it as more  
of a lair.

The "lair" is packed, ceiling to floor, with electronic gizmos and gadgets of all kinds. A couple of worktables, piled high with equipment, take up much of the floor space. It looks like a combination home workshop and NASA command center. Marshall leads them through the maze.

LILY

(whispering to Emory)  
"RPG sense"?

He looks at her as if she were missing something completely obvious.

EMORY

RPG? You know, role-playing games?

Lily and Brooke exchange another glance; meanwhile, Marshall is hunched over one of the many monitor screens.

MARSHALL

(pumping a fist)  
Yes!

The others look over in his direction.

BROOKE

What?

Marshall turns to them, gesturing excitedly.

MARSHALL

My elven princes have routed the  
goblin army.

He turns to a keyboard, tapping furiously.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

You see, nobody attacks goblin armies because, well, even if you win, you have to spend a couple of days doing clean-up—goblins are really messy. But—I wrote a program that automatically takes care of all that. So, this guy uses a goblin army to guard his cache of enchanted weapons, and—well, I made short work of that. Or rather, my princes did. With their magical arrows...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Marshall has finished keying in his instructions and is now just gesturing and rambling on; eventually he peters out.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Well—Emory told me a little about your problem, and I, ah, did a little sleuthing. Investigative work. Come see.

He leads them to yet another workstation.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

First of all, I found out the system was not compromised remotely.

BROOKE

Remotely?

MARSHALL

Right. That is, the work was done on-site. Frankly, the system is a dinosaur. It would take me, like, two seconds. Less.

BROOKE

But can you find out who did it?

MARSHALL

Well, if it had been done remotely, then I could have traced the link, and that would give you your man. Or woman, as the case may be.

LILY

So you can't tell?

MARSHALL

(wagging a finger)

I didn't say that. We know that it was someone who probably wasn't supposed to be there, because the system was compromised at precisely—

(checking the screen)

—two-eighteen in the morning.

BROOKE

(prompting)

And?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARSHALL

And, based on my analysis of the methods and techniques the intruder used, combined with, ah, various surveillance cameras in the area...

He taps the keyboard, and points to the screen.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

This is your guy.

Brooke, Lily, and Emory all lean in to peer at the screen.

INSERT: THE SCREEN

On the screen is a fuzzy nighttime picture of...fuzziness.

BROOKE

(squinting)

Where?

MARSHALL

Ah—allow me to enhance.

He taps a few keys.

INSERT: THE SCREEN

A small section of the picture enlarges, then resolves from random pixels into a shot of hacker Delbert.

EMORY

(doubtful)

Him? Not to doubt your intellectual abilities, cousin, but he looks twelve.

MARSHALL

Astute observation, my youthful kinsman. He is twelve. His name is—

Marshall taps a few more keys.

INSERT: THE SCREEN

A portrait shot of Delbert appears.

MARSHALL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

—Delbert Simpson, and he attends—

Another click, and:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

INSERT: THE SCREEN

A photo of a school appears, as though part of a slide show.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

—Martha Washington Junior High.

LILY

So, a seventh-grader broke in and changed Brooke's transcripts? Is that even possible?

MARSHALL

Oh, Delbert has quite a track record.

(beat)

And, if you don't mind my saying so, your system's—

LILY

A dinosaur. Right.

BROOKE

(distracted)

But...why?

MARSHALL

Excuse me?

BROOKE

Why would this kid do something like this?

MARSHALL

Oh—it's the hacker mentality. There's this whole little culture—not that I, you understand...

BROOKE

No, no, I mean...why me?

MARSHALL

(understanding)

Ah! Well, just off the top of my head, I'd say probably because the person who was with him told him to.

BROOKE/LILY/EMORY

(simultaneously)

Who?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MARSHALL  
(sheepish)  
I guess I didn't mention that,  
huh? Yes, um...

He clicks more keys, and points.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)  
...right there.

They all lean in to peer at the screen.

INSERT: THE SCREEN

An indefinable fuzzy patch of pixels; with a lot of  
imagination, it might be a silhouette.

LILY  
Who is it?

MARSHALL  
(shrugs)  
Can't tell. There isn't enough raw  
data to extrapolate.

EMORY  
I see...so, Delbert is only the  
front man. Our true villain  
remains in the shadows.

MARSHALL  
Very apropos, cousin!

Brooke throws up her hands.

BROOKE  
What do we do now?

MARSHALL  
If it were me—not that I've ever  
been in on the planning of covert  
ops or anything, you understand—  
but if it were me, I'd be looking  
to turn Delbert. Make him squeal  
like a pig.

He holds out a slip of paper.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)  
I have his address right here.

After a moment, Brooke takes the slip, and she and Lily nod  
to each other, apparently satisfied.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

LILY  
Thanks, Mr., uh—

MARSHALL  
Oh, just Marshall. Everyone calls me Marshall. Well, not everyone, because, you know, it would be pretty rude if, say, your concierge were to...

BROOKE  
(cutting him off gently)  
Thank you, Marshall.

EMORY  
Well, it looks like we have a suspect to grill.

With that, Emory starts to lead the girls out of the basement.

MARSHALL  
(waving after them)  
I'll put a watchdog program in place. If Delbert tries anything else, I'll know about it.

BROOKE (O.S.)  
Thanks!

CUT TO:

EXT. MARSHALL'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Emory, Brooke and Lily, walking back down the walk:

EMORY  
(claps his hands together)  
A successful intelligence gathering mission.  
(beat)  
Sorry about...you know.

LILY  
(confused)  
What?

EMORY  
I did tell you guys my cousin was a little eccentric.

Brooke starts to say something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMORY (CONT'D)  
 (snorting)  
 I mean, elven princes against a  
 goblin army?

Brooks snaps her mouth shut and rolls her eyes at Lily behind Emory's back. Emory stops and turns to face them, too late to catch it.

EMORY (CONT'D)  
 So, when do we flip the kid?

Lily bats Emory on the arm.

BROOKE  
 Thanks, guys, but I think I'd  
 rather do this mission solo.

LILY  
 You sure, Brooke?

BROOKE  
 Yeah. I'll drop by Delbert's  
 tomorrow.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - LATER

INSERT: A COMPUTER SCREEN

More spreadsheets and graphs.

As the shot widens, we see Sam sitting in a chair in the waiting room, working on her laptop. She looks up as a nurse pushes Jaycee down the hall in a wheelchair. Sam folds up the laptop, stands up and walks over to them.

NURSE  
 Everything's been taken care of.  
 Is your car out front?

Sam nods, and falls into step beside them as the nurse resumes pushing.

JAYCEE  
 I hate these things.

Sam lays a hand on Jaycee's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM  
You'll get plenty of practice  
walking at home—the elevator's  
broken again.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Sam's car sits at the curb. She rushes ahead of the nurse and opens the passenger door, then helps Jaycee move awkwardly from the wheelchair to the car seat.

SAM  
(to the nurse)  
Thanks.

JAYCEE  
(off-handedly)  
Yeah, thanks.

As the nurse withdraws, Sam runs around to the driver's side of the car, gets in and drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S CAR - MOVING

Jaycee runs her fingers along the dashboard.

JAYCEE  
Nice ride. Where'd you get it?

SAM  
Oh, well—it's not really mine. I  
mean, it's just on loan.

JAYCEE  
A loaner...when do you have to have  
it back?

SAM  
No, it's not like that. I mean—  
Calvin got it for me.

It takes a moment for Jaycee to register the name.

JAYCEE  
Oh!  
(teasing)  
Principal's sweet on you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

Stop it! It's not like that.  
We're...we understand each other.

JAYCEE

Really, fess up, Sam. You and him,  
you've never done it?

SAM

Eww! No!

JAYCEE

What ew? He's kinda hot. In an  
authority-figure sort of way.

SAM

I didn't say he wasn't hot. But  
still—eww.

JAYCEE

(shrugs)

Whatever. I'd do him. Probably.

Sam just shudders as they drive on.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAM'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Sam's car pulls up to the curb.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

SAM

By the way... I was looking for  
your car before I came. Not to  
drive or anything. Just checking.  
I didn't see it, though.

JAYCEE

Um, well, I kind of...sold it.

SAM

You what?!

JAYCEE

(grumbling)

Got ripped off, too, with what I  
got for it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

Was it enough to pay off Manzetti?

Jaycee grabs Sam's wrist.

JAYCEE

Where did you hear that name?!

SAM

Reyanna told me. She told me everything—

Jaycee slaps the dashboard.

JAYCEE

Dammit!

SAM

Jaycee, these guys trashed my place! And they took my whole stash.

JAYCEE

I can't believe they did that. They're not supposed to...

SAM

Well, I got it all back. This creepy guy came by earlier—said his "employer" didn't keep stuff that wasn't his.

JAYCEE

Good, then. You're not involved anymore.

Jaycee opens the car door; this time it's Sam's turn to grab her arm.

SAM

Jaycee! We have to do something!

JAYCEE

(shrugging matter-of-factly)  
What can you do? Nothing. Unless you can come up with the money...  
Never mind. Don't worry about it.

Jaycee shrugs off Sam's hand and clambers out of the car. Sam gets out and rushes around the car to help her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGLE: FROM ACROSS THE STREET

The scene, from a distance, freezes several times, accompanied by a distinctive clicking sound: someone is snapping pictures of Sam and Jaycee.

CUT TO:

INT. JAYCEE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens, and Sam helps Jaycee, who is clearly spent, get over to the sofa.

JAYCEE  
(panting)  
Okay, I take it back... I hate walking. How long has the elevator been out?

SAM  
Uh...I don't know.

Jaycee looks at Sam quizzically.

JAYCEE  
You don't know?

SAM  
I, um... I haven't exactly been staying here.

JAYCEE  
You went back to casa McQueen? I don't believe it.

SAM  
(snorts)  
No way!

Jaycee continues to look at Sam questioningly.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Since those guys broke into my place I've...kind of been... staying at Calvin's. Mr. Krupps'.

Jaycee gives Sam an entirely different look.

SAM (CONT'D)  
It's not like that! Separate bedrooms. Totally separate!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAYCEE

Mm-hmm.

SAM

Would you stop that?! We don't play around like that anymore.

JAYCEE

Could've fooled me.

SAM

You're impossible, you know that?

JAYCEE

(relaxing)

I'm not the one living with my principal.

Sam just growls, and heads for the door.

SAM

I'll call later.

JAYCEE

Hey—aren't you going to, you know, fix me food and stuff?

SAM

(deadpan)

Do I look like a nurse? You'll be fine. No raving.

Jaycee clucks at Sam in mock disappointment.

JAYCEE

Hey, Sam?

Sam, at the door, turns back.

JAYCEE (CONT'D)

I hate to ask, but...

Understanding, Sam fishes through her bag, pulls out a bottle of pills, and tosses it to Jaycee.

JAYCEE (CONT'D)

Thanks.

SAM

Sure. And don't worry—we'll figure out what to do about Manzetti.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAYCEE  
(sighing)  
Sam—

SAM  
(firm)  
Hush. Get some rest. I'll call.

Sam opens the door.

JAYCEE  
(calling)  
Give Principal-Man my love.

Sam rolls her eyes at Jaycee as she steps out.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE JAYCEE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Sam closes the door, and her expression hardens in resolve.

SAM  
(to herself)  
I will figure out how to help.  
You'll see.

With that, Sam walks off.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EST. THE DINER - MORNING

SUPER: "SATURDAY"

CUT TO:

INT. THE DINER

Harrison is sitting in a window booth, nursing a soft drink. He checks his wristwatch.

INSERT: HARRISON'S WATCH

which reads 10:02.

When he looks back up, Sam is standing there.

SAM  
(subdued)  
Hey.

HARRISON  
Uh...hey.

Sam takes a seat across from Harrison. For a long few moments, there is nothing but silence between them.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
I'm um... I'm not sure... I don't know if this is a good idea.

SAM  
Probably not.

Sam refuses to make eye contact with him, instead focusing on the tabletop.

HARRISON  
I mean, I don't even really know what I'm doing here.

SAM  
Makes two of us.

HARRISON  
(pointedly)  
This was your idea.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM  
(still looking down)  
True.

Sam looks up as a waitress approaches the table.

SAM (CONT'D)  
(to the waitress)  
Coffee.

When the waitress withdraws, Sam turns to staring out the window. Harrison looks at her helplessly.

HARRISON  
Sam...you gotta give me a little  
help here. What do you want?

SAM  
(scornful)  
What do I want?

She tears herself away from the window and focuses on him.

SAM (CONT'D)  
What do I want?! I want to turn  
the clock back to last summer and  
get my life back. That's what I  
want.

HARRISON  
Sam—

SAM  
I was happy, you know. I didn't  
need a job, or... other stuff. I  
had you.

HARRISON  
I know. But—

Sam laughs—an extremely unpleasant sound.

SAM  
But.  
(beat)  
There's Brooke. You love Brooke.  
Brooke, Brooke, Brooke.

She slams her palm down on the table, making him jump.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM (CONT'D)

All that time... There I was,  
being the supportive sister, and  
all that time the two of you were  
getting it on behind my back—!

She breaks off as the waitress approaches and sets a coffee  
cup down in front of her. After she is gone, Sam takes a  
sip, then stares at Harrison again.

SAM (CONT'D)

How long did it take after she  
came home from the hospital for  
her to jump you?

HARRISON

(sighs)

It didn't happen that way.

SAM

(cold)

Let me rephrase: how long did it  
take for you to jump her?

HARRISON

Sam, I wish you wouldn't talk like  
that...

SAM

Why not?!

HARRISON

You make it sound...

SAM

What?! Dirty? It is dirty! I  
feel dirty thinking about it! My  
boyfriend and my step-sister  
sleeping together under my nose!  
How's it supposed to sound?!

She pulls a bottle out of her bag, uncaps it, and shakes out  
a couple of pills. Harrison reaches out to stop her, but she  
shrugs him off.

HARRISON

Don't.

SAM

Like you care.

Sam pops the pills into her mouth, and washes them down with  
her coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HARRISON

I don't understand, Sam... How can you do this to yourself?

SAM

It doesn't hurt anything.

HARRISON

The hell it doesn't! And don't you dare say I don't care! I wouldn't be here if I didn't!

SAM

Stop it! Just stop lying to me!

HARRISON

Sam, I swear to God... I have never stopped caring about you.

Sam now seems slightly unfocused, partially retreated into a private space.

SAM

(distant)

...why...?

HARRISON

(puzzled)

Why do I care about you? I just...do.

SAM

...why did...was I...?

She looks up at him, teary-eyed.

SAM (CONT'D)

What did I do wrong?

Harrison slumps as he figures out what she's talking about.

HARRISON

Nothing, Sam! You didn't do anything wrong.

SAM

I must have done something!

Harrison gets up and moves around the table to sit next to Sam.

HARRISON

Sam, it just... It's got nothing to do with you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SAM

It's okay. I just want to know,  
you know? Why you... why you  
stopped loving me.

Harrison looks positively crushed as he realizes that there's nothing he can say to make Sam feel better. He settles for just wrapping an arm around her and letting her lean against him.

CUT TO:

INT. A LINGERIE SHOP - LATER

Natalie is lingerie shopping, pulling various outfits off the racks and holding them up critically. Suddenly she comes face-to-face with Lily, and they both jump.

NATALIE

Lily! What are you doing here?

She recognizes how that sounds even before Lily turns an insulted expression on her.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I mean... I just meant, you don't seem—

LILY

Look, Natalie, I know that my body type isn't the stereotypical six-foot supermodel—

NATALIE

No, no, I mean...you're married, right? You don't need sexy lingerie and all that stuff.

LILY

(sagely)

Maintaining a romantic atmosphere is essential to a healthy marriage.

NATALIE

Oh. Okay.

Natalie takes a sheer camisole and models it for herself in front of a mirror.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

(off-handedly)

You think Harrison would like this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY  
Any man with a pulse would like  
that. But, Natalie...

Natalie turns to face Lily.

LILY (CONT'D)  
I know you have a date with  
Harrison tonight.

NATALIE  
(coy)  
Mm-hmm.

LILY  
He said you were going to the  
movies.

NATALIE  
Kinda.

LILY  
Are you looking for something to  
wear?

NATALIE  
(still coy)  
Maybe.

LILY  
(doubtful)  
To the movies?

Natalie waggles her eyebrows at her; Lily stops and considers  
for a moment.

LILY (CONT'D)  
(to herself)  
I'm gonna regret getting  
involved...  
(to Natalie)  
Natalie, do you really hate Brooke  
that much?

Natalie's kittenish veneer vanishes instantly; she turns to  
Lily, completely sober-faced.

NATALIE  
This isn't about Brooke.

That takes Lily aback.

LILY  
But...before, you said...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NATALIE

I know, when I first got acquainted with the bitchy side of Brooke McQueen, I was a little pissed—okay, I was a LOT pissed—and I said some things, and Sam said some things... But, Lily, I'm not dating Harrison to get back at Brooke, or because Sam wants me to. I'm dating Harrison because I want to. Because he's funny, and smart, and he gets the cutest lost-dog look on his face when he's embarrassed, and—

LILY

—and you really like him.

NATALIE

Yeah.

Lily looks away, resigned.

LILY

This is an apocalypse waiting to happen.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DINER - LATER

Harrison and Sam are leaving the diner; Sam is leaning on Harrison just a bit.

SAM

It's okay. You don't have to tell me.

HARRISON

Sam, I'm serious. It has nothing to do with you. It's...I can't explain it, but it's not you.

SAM

(playing along)

Okay.

Harrison sighs, knowing he hasn't convinced her. They stop, face to face, on the sidewalk.

At that moment, Brooke comes walking down the other side of the street. She stops cold and her jaw drops when she spots them.

(CONTINUED)

**CONTINUED:**

Harrison and Sam, occupied with each other, don't notice her. Before Brooke can either advance or retreat, she is grabbed by the arm and pulled into the shelter of a doorway by—Carmen.

CARMEN  
Brooke, what are you doing here?  
Are you checking up on me?

BROOKE  
(rattled)  
What?

CARMEN  
I have to tell you, I'm really  
uncomfortable doing this.

Brooke is looking over Carmen's shoulder at Harrison and Sam.

CARMEN **(CONT'D)**  
Brooke? Brooke, are you listening  
to me?

BROOKE  
(distracted)  
Yeah...

Carmen twists around to see what Brooke is looking at.

CARMEN  
Oh...yeah.

Meanwhile, in front of the diner:

SAM  
I gotta go.

She starts to move past Harrison, but he puts his hands on her shoulders to stop her.

HARRISON  
Whoa, Sam. I don't think you  
should be driving.

SAM  
Why not?

Harrison gives her a "you know" look.

SAM **(CONT'D)**  
Oh, come on! It was a couple of  
pills! I do it all the time.

**(CONTINUED)**

CONTINUED: (2)

HARRISON

Sam, are you even listening to yourself?!

SAM

I'm not high—it's just a little buzz.

Harrison holds out his hand stubbornly.

HARRISON

Give me the keys. I'll drive you home.

SAM

I told you—you don't have to act like you care.

HARRISON

(intently)

Sam—I do care. I will always care.

She looks at him curiously.

SAM

You really mean that, don't you?

HARRISON

Yes, Sam, I really mean it. I swear.

Suddenly she leans in and gives him a kiss on the lips—a chaste kiss, but one which, just for an instant, threatens to become something more. But before Harrison can react, she pulls away. Then she drops her keys into his hand.

From across the street, Brooke watches them. Carmen waves a hand in front of her face worriedly.

CARMEN

Brooke? Are you okay?

Brooke shifts her gaze to Carmen long enough to take her hands and smile reassuringly.

BROOKE

Carmen, I'm fine. I can handle it.

But then she looks back across the street, and sees Harrison and Sam walking to her car, with Harrison getting behind the wheel. She grits her teeth and clenches her hands—which, unfortunately, are still holding Carmen's.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARMEN

Uh, Brooke...my hands, you're—ow!  
Brooke! Let go of my—ow, ow!

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE SAM'S APARTMENT - LATER

Sam walks down the hallway. She stops at her door, but notices that Jaycee's door is slightly ajar. She steps over quietly and peeks inside.

CUT TO:

INT. JAYCEE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jaycee is on the phone, fidgeting and pacing.

JAYCEE

(into the phone)

...yes, Mr. Manzetti, I... No, I understand, but...if you could just give me... but, I can't... Please, Mr. Manzetti, I just need...no...yes, I know that, but...

The conversation abruptly ends; Jaycee, shaking, hangs up the phone and collapses on the couch. Sam comes in and rushes over to her.

SAM

(hugging Jaycee)

Don't worry. We'll figure out how to deal with this.

JAYCEE

(sobbing)

How?! I don't have any money!

Sam hesitates.

SAM

I hate to ask, but... Is there any way your family could...?

Jaycee shakes her head miserably.

JAYCEE

They're...we don't... My family's worse than yours. Believe it or not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

I'm sorry for asking. If we're on our own, so be it. We're not giving up.

Jaycee manages a tiny smile through her sniffles as she curls up against Sam. Sam, looking over Jaycee's head, spies a scrap of paper on the arm of the couch.

INSERT: THE PAPER

on which is written "M" and a phone number.

Sam reaches out and deftly snatches up the paper without Jaycee noticing.

CUT TO:

EXT. KRUPPS' HOUSE - LATER

Sam walks up to the front doors, laptop under her arm, and lets herself in.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S ROOM - LATER

The room Sam is staying in is obviously a guest room, although a few personal touches have been added. Sam is sitting at a small, functional desk, tapping away at her laptop intently.

INSERT: THE LAPTOP SCREEN

A bank's website, showing the school's accounts.

While studying the screen, Sam picks up her cell phone and makes a call.

SAM

(into the phone)

Hey, it's Sam. Are you busy?...

Great. Want to get together?...

No, I was thinking more about work... Come over to Mr. Krupps' place, and I'll show you some things.

CUT TO:

EXT. A STREET - LATER

Harrison is strolling down the street when his cell phone rings. He digs it out and puts it to his ear.

HARRISON  
(into the phone)  
Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKE'S ROOM

Brooke is sitting cross-legged on her bed, holding her phone.

BROOKE  
(into the phone)  
Harrison! It's Brooke.

INTERCUT BETWEEN HARRISON AND BROOKE

HARRISON  
(a bit flustered)  
Oh, hey, Brooke.

BROOKE  
So—how was your morning?

HARRISON  
Uh...uneventful.

Wrong answer; Brooke's face darkens. But her voice remains casual.

BROOKE  
Nothing interesting happened?

HARRISON  
Nope, um, nothing worth talking  
about.

Brooke lowers the phone for a moment and takes a deep breath, trying to control her anger.

BROOKE  
Look, Harrison... I really don't  
feel like doing anything today.  
Maybe I'll just see you at school  
Monday, okay?

HARRISON  
Oh, well, uh, okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Brooke hangs up without saying goodbye. Harrison stares at his phone for a moment, then places a call of his own.

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS' DINING ROOM

Sam is sitting at the table in this bright, airy room. Next to her is Natalie. The laptop is open between them.

SAM

...and after you make the vendor payment, you have to remember to update this spreadsheet. Otherwise everything gets out of whack.

Krupps walks in.

KRUPPS

How are you girls doing?

SAM

I'm showing her all the boring stuff.

Krupps fingers Natalie's brightly multi-colored scarf, which is draped over a nearby chair.

KRUPPS

That's a nice scarf. Cashmere?

NATALIE

(nods)

Found it in a little shop in Bern.

KRUPPS

I didn't know you'd been to Switzerland.

NATALIE

(embarrassed)

Just once.

Natalie points at the laptop screen.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

What's that?

INSERT: THE LAPTOP SCREEN

The password box has popped up again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM  
New security system.

She reaches out and types in the password.

SAM (CONT'D)  
If you ever need the password, Mr.  
Krupps keeps it in his desk.  
(glancing at Krupps)  
Don't tell anyone.

KRUPPS  
Well, I'm going to fix iced tea.  
Would you like some?

NATALIE  
Sure. Thanks.

SAM  
Thanks.

After Krupps goes into the kitchen, Sam turns to Natalie.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Nat, there's something else I  
wanted to talk to you about.

NATALIE  
What?

SAM  
Harrison.

Natalie's face scrunches up.

NATALIE  
What about Harrison?

SAM  
You know what I said about going  
after Harrison to spite Brooke?

NATALIE  
Yeah?

SAM  
Well... I've been thinking about  
it—and I don't really think it's  
a good idea anymore.

NATALIE  
(neutrally)  
You don't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

(casual)

It's just, Brooke isn't worth the trouble, you know? You shouldn't be dating Harrison just for spite.

NATALIE

So...you think I shouldn't try to get Harrison to go out with me.

SAM

Right. Don't even worry about it.

NATALIE

(shrugging)

Okay.

SAM

(relieved)

Great.

There is a loud crash from the kitchen, making both girls turn in their chairs.

KRUPPS (O.S.)

Sam?! Could you give me a hand for a minute?!

SAM

Coming!

Sam gets up and trots into the kitchen. Natalie turns back to the laptop—but then her cell phone rings. She pulls it out and flips it open.

NATALIE

(into the phone)

Hello?

HARRISON (V.O.)

(on the phone)

Hi, Natalie.

Natalie jumps up, grinning.

NATALIE

Harrison!

HARRISON (V.O.)

Hey. Can we, uh, get together and talk?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NATALIE

Ah, sure.

(frowning)

Harrison, you're not trying to get out of our date tonight, are you?

HARRISON (V.O.)

Well—

NATALIE

Oh, please don't. I've been really looking forward to it.

HARRISON (V.O.)

I just think we should talk.

NATALIE

I don't know if this is a good idea...but okay.

HARRISON (V.O.)

Meet me in front of the food court at the mall.

NATALIE

I'll be there. Just—promise me that you're not going to back out of our date, okay, Harrison?

There's a measurable pause on the other end.

HARRISON (V.O.)

Yeah. I promise.

NATALIE

All right, good. I'm on my way.

Natalie closes her phone, happy again. She doesn't see Sam standing in the doorway behind her, looking seriously pissed off. After waiting a couple of moments, Sam puts a pleasant expression on her face and noisily walks in, carrying two glasses of iced tea. Natalie turns when she hears her.

SAM

(innocent)

Did I hear your phone?

Natalie looks a bit guilty, but covers it quickly.

NATALIE

Oh, yeah, uh, that was my mom. She wants me to meet her. I hope you don't mind me skipping out on you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SAM

No, no, it's fine, go.

(beat)

Hey, you understand, right? About Harrison.

NATALIE

Oh—yeah. I understand perfectly.

Natalie beats a hasty retreat from the room. Sam smiles after her as she leaves—her expression turning cold after Natalie is gone. Turning back to the table, she sees that Natalie has forgotten her scarf, which is still draped over the chair. Sam picks it up and winds it around her hands tightly, steaming.

Krupps walks up behind her.

KRUPPS

Did Natalie leave?

Sam glances back at him for a moment, betraying no sign of her rage.

SAM

(casual)

Yeah. She had places to go.

She turns away, and her face clouds over again.

SAM (CONT'D)

(to herself)

...people to stab in the back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EST. THE MALL - AFTERNOON

A stock exterior shot of the local Galleria.

CUT TO:

INT. THE FOOD COURT

Natalie and Harrison are sitting at a table by the entrance, with a couple of soft drinks and a basket of fries between them. Very 50's.

NATALIE

I was surprised you called.

Usually I have to chase you down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRISON

I don't want you to get the wrong idea.

NATALIE

What idea would that be?

HARRISON

Well...that...you know, that we're, that I'm—

NATALIE

Interested?

HARRISON

Yes! I mean, no! I mean— look, I like you, okay? And, I don't know, if there wasn't anyone else, then, maybe...

NATALIE

(prompting)

Maybe?

HARRISON

(shaking his head)

It doesn't matter. It's just not— there are so many reasons why this thing with us won't work.

NATALIE

Okay, stop. It's not a "thing," okay? It's just a movie.

HARRISON

It's more than just a movie.

NATALIE

(sighs)

Okay, but for today it's just a movie. So, it can work today, right?

Harrison looks indecisive.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Please?

Finally, Harrison sighs a surrender.

HARRISON

Fine. It's just a movie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NATALIE

Great! Remember, my place, eleven-  
forty-five.

HARRISON

Isn't that cutting it a little  
close?

NATALIE

It'll be fine.

CUT TO:

EST. SAM'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Sam's car is parked out front.

CUT TO:

INT. JAYCEE'S APARTMENT

Reyanna opens the door and lets Sam in.

SAM

Where's Jaycee?

Reyanna nods towards the bathroom door. She looks haggard  
and drawn.

REYANNA

I'm scared, Sam. She's really...

She pulls Sam's pill bottle out of her pocket, and presses it  
into Sam's hand.

REYANNA (CONT'D)

Here, take these.

SAM

Why?

REYANNA

She's...one minute she's talking  
about leaving town, and... I  
don't know what she's gonna do.

SAM

It's that bad?

Reyanna nods solemnly. Sam walks over to the bathroom door  
and knocks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAYCEE (O.S.)  
 (from behind the door)  
 Go away!

SAM  
 Jaycee, it's Sam!

JAYCEE (O.S.)  
 Go away!!

SAM  
 Come on, Jaycee! Just open the  
 door and let me in, okay?

JAYCEE (O.S.)  
 No! I don't want you here!

SAM  
 (reasonably)  
 You don't mean that.

The door flies open and Jaycee comes storming out, making Sam  
 back up. Jaycee looks like a complete wreck.

JAYCEE  
 Yes I do! I want you to get out  
 and never come back!

SAM  
 Jaycee—

Without warning, Jaycee goes completely psycho, wailing on  
 Sam with her fists.

JAYCEE  
 No! Get out! OUT!! OUT, OUT,  
 OUT!!!

Stunned by Jaycee's hysterics, Sam allows herself to be  
 pushed out of the apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sam is pressed up against the hallway wall, collecting  
 herself, when the door to Jaycee's apartment opens and Reyanna  
 peeks out. She spots Sam and slips through the doorway,  
 closing the door quietly behind her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REYANNA

She doesn't mean it. She's just  
scared. And she doesn't want  
anything to happen to you.

Sam doesn't answer, but she does touch Reyanna's arm before  
walking away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAM'S CAR - LATER

Sam is sitting in the driver's seat of her car, which isn't  
moving. Lying on the passenger seat are her laptop and  
Natalie's scarf. She gives them both a long, hard look.

Then she reaches over and flips open the laptop, punching a  
few keys.

INSERT: THE LAPTOP SCREEN

Again showing account lists and balance sheets, but focusing  
in on a bold total figure, which is something over \$20,000.

Sam pulls out her cell phone and the slip of paper from  
Jaycee's, and dials.

SAM

(into the phone)

This is Sam McPherson... Yes,  
Jaycee's friend... Never mind with  
the friendly warnings. Just tell  
your employer that I can get him  
his money.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. A ROOM

An anonymous room (in Delbert's house). The focus, though, is on Delbert and Sam, who are sitting in a face-to-face huddle.

SAM

You can do this, right?

DELBERT

Sure. No problem. Easy.

SAM

Today?

DELBERT

Yeah, sure.

SAM

What about the documents?

DELBERT

If you've got the thing, I can do that right now.

He bounces up; Sam follows suit.

FLIP CUT TO:

EXT. A STREET - LATER

A suburban residential street. Brooke is walking down the sidewalk, looking at house numbers and consulting a piece of paper. She spots the house she wants—Delbert's house—and walks towards it. She is one yard away when the door opens. She ducks behind a shrub, watching (but too far away to listen).

Delbert and Sam come out of the house and stand on the stoop. Sam is holding a paper bag and a large manila envelope.

SAM

Get it set up. I'll call you tonight and tell you when.

DELBERT

I'll be ready whenever you are.

Meanwhile, Brooke watches Sam walk down the sidewalk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE  
 (muttering darkly)  
 Well, Sam, you're just showing up  
 everywhere today.

She waits until Sam gets in her car and drives off; then she resolutely marches towards the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. DELBERT'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Brooke steps up to the front door and stops. She reaches into her jacket pocket, pulls out a mini-tape recorder, thumbs it on and sticks it back into her pocket. Then she rings the doorbell.

A few moments later, the front door opens, with Delbert standing there. Before he can say anything, she shoulders her way in.

DELBERT  
 Hey! Who are you?

She muscles him against the wall, glaring down at him.

BROOKE  
 (tough-girl)  
 I'm gonna be your worst nightmare,  
 twerp, unless you tell me  
 everything you and Sam McPherson  
 have been doing.

DELBERT  
 When my brother Eldon comes home,  
 you'll be in big trouble!

Brooke seems unimpressed.

BROOKE  
 What's he gonna do? Use his slide  
 rule on me? Now tell me about Sam  
 McPherson!

DELBERT  
 Who?

BROOKE  
 Don't give me "who?", buster! She  
 was just here!

Brooke slams Delbert back into the wall for emphasis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DELBERT

So she was here. So what?

BROOKE

(still tough)

Don't play games with me! I know  
the two of you broke into the  
Kennedy High computer!

DELBERT

(peevishly)

You can't prove anything. And what  
do you care, anyway?

BROOKE

I'm the person whose grades you  
changed, you idiot!

Delbert pales a bit, but quickly recovers his bravado.

DELBERT

Yeah, well, like I said, you can't  
prove it.

Brooke pushes him again.

BROOKE

You start talking, or so help me,  
I'll make your life a living hell.

DELBERT

(squeaking)

I'm not sacred of you.

BROOKE

Do you know who I am? I'm Brooke  
McQueen! "Queen of the  
Cougarettes"?

This time Delbert goes pale and stays that way.

DELBERT

Th-th-that Brooke McQueen?

BROOKE

That's right. And I still know  
people at Washington. I make one  
phone call, and you will be  
running laps in Mr. Denton's  
detention every afternoon for the  
next year and a half!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DELBERT

Hey, I'm sorry, okay? She didn't tell me what she wanted to do. I thought she just wanted to raise her own grades!

BROOKE

What was she doing here today?

DELBERT

Nothing! I swear!

Before Brooke can respond, the sound of a door opening comes from behind her.

DELBERT (CONT'D)

Eldon!

Brooke turns around—and the tough expression on her face vanishes as she finds herself looking up at a beefy linebacker-type.

CUT TO:

EXT. DELBERT'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Brooke gets literally thrown out of the house, stumbling down the steps and landing on her butt on the walk.

BROOKE

Ow!

ELDON

—and stay out!

The front door slams shut. Brooke picks herself up and reaches into her pocket for the tape recorder. She switches it off, satisfied (if a little bruised), and walks off.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM - LATER

The tape recorder is sitting on the coffee table, playing. At the part where Eldon comes in, Brooke reaches out and shuts the machine off.

BROOKE

(triumphant)

See? She did it! She broke into the computer and changed my grades!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike and Jane, sitting together on the sofa, look at each other.

MIKE

I don't know...Jane?

JANE

He didn't exactly say that Sam did anything.

Brooke's expression turns incredulous.

BROOKE

Yes he did!

MIKE

Honey, I think you might have been putting words in this kid's mouth. It sounds like you were really bullying him.

BROOKE

I was not! And this "kid" is a hacker! Emory's cousin got him on a security camera right by the school the night my grades got changed! And I saw Sam at his house today!

JANE

Brooke, it's not that we don't believe you...

BROOKE

Of course you don't believe me!

MIKE

Don't say that. We want to believe you. It's just...this thing you're accusing Sam of, it's—

BROOKE

That's what I'm saying! This isn't some high school prank! She is tampering with my life!!

JANE

We know you're upset, Brooke. Obviously we need to sit down with Sam and talk this through—

Infuriated, Brooke leaps up and snatches the tape recorder off the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BROOKE

I don't believe this! What good is talking going to do?! I can't believe I ever thought you would listen to me!

Brooke storms out of the room. Mike and Jane look at each other again, clearly troubled.

MIKE

Jane... I know we're trying to be fair to Sam, but—

JANE

Do you really think she would go that far?

Mike thinks that one over for a moment.

MIKE

I don't know. Look, we have to face the fact that we don't really know her anymore.

JANE

Yes, but... Mike, I just can't believe Sam would do something criminal.

CUT TO:

INT. A BANK

A man is sitting behind a desk labeled "New Accounts," looking over a bunch of papers.

BANK OFFICER

These all seem to be in order. If you could give me your driver's license, I'll be happy to set you up, Ms.—  
(checking)  
—McQueen.

On the other side of the desk, "Ms. McQueen"—Sam in a long blonde wig—smiles sweetly and hands over a card.

INSERT: THE DRIVER'S LICENSE

A perfectly authentic-looking license, with Brooke's name and Blonde Sam's photo.

(CONTINUED)

**CONTINUED:**

The man glances at the license, gathers up the papers, and rises.

BANK OFFICER (CONT'D)  
It'll only take a minute to scan these.

He walks towards the back.

SAM  
(calling)  
Take your time!

She settles back in her chair, a very satisfied look on her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATALIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Harrison steps up to the front door and, after taking a deep breath, rings the doorbell. A few moments pass, and then the door opens. Natalie is standing there—dressed in a silk robe.

HARRISON  
(confused)  
Natalie! I, um, ah—did you cancel? 'Cause I—

She reaches out for him.

NATALIE  
No, no—come on in!

With a little prodding, he follows her into the house.

CUT TO:

INT. NATALIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Natalie is still leading Harrison through the house.

HARRISON  
...didn't you say the show started at midnight? We're going to miss it.

NATALIE  
(grinning)  
No, we're not...

**(CONTINUED)**

CONTINUED:

She pulls him into a darkened room and, with the flip of a switch, reveals a richly-furnished, state-of-the-art theater room. Natalie waves her arm.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Ta-da!

Harrison is immediately wary.

HARRISON

Uh, I, I, I don't think this is a good idea.

He backs away, but she grabs onto him.

NATALIE

Come on, Harrison, please?

HARRISON

No, Natalie! This—all this—I thought we talked about this! Why are you doing this?

NATALIE

This isn't anything, it's just a movie—

HARRISON

It's just a midnight movie at your house, on your couch, with you dressed like that!

He shakes her off.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

This is like a bad late-night cable show! You're trying to seduce me!

NATALIE

(hopeful)

Is it working?

Harrison glares at her.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

(downcast)

I didn't think so.

HARRISON

Why did you think I'd go for this?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NATALIE  
Harrison, I was kidding. My  
parents are home. There is zero  
chance of something happening.

HARRISON  
(skeptical)  
Your parents. Are here.

He steps back from the room, looking around the open  
vestibule area.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
Mr. James? Mrs. James?!

Natalie rushes out to quiet him.

NATALIE  
Shhhh! You're gonna wake them up!

Harrison crosses his arms at her.

HARRISON  
Your parents are upstairs sleeping?

Natalie nods.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
And there's zero chance of  
something happening?

Natalie fidgets and withers under Harrison's glare.

NATALIE  
Okay, maybe a little something.  
But not a big something.

Harrison shakes his head and turns away. Natalie clutches at  
him once more.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
Please, Harrison, just come in and  
watch the movie? Hands off, I  
promise.

HARRISON  
Sorry, Natalie. It's gonna have to  
be a matinee.

He pulls free and walks away, leaving Natalie looking both  
sad and frustrated.

CUT TO:

INT. KRUPPS' OFFICE - LATER

The office is dark—except for someone prowling around with a flashlight. They use a letter opener to jimmy open Krupps' desk drawer, taking a slip of paper from it. Then Natalie's scarf drops softly to the floor beside the desk.

Finally, the intruder—Sam—takes her cell phone and makes a call.

SAM  
(into the phone)  
Now.

She opens a door to the outside, passes through it, and then, from the outside, breaks the window before slipping away. A few moments later the alarm goes off.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE

A series of shots, set to music:

Harrison walking along a street in a funk, hands stuffed in his pockets;

Brooke nursing a cup of coffee at the diner;

Delbert working at his computer;

The computer screen as he replaces the Blonde Sam ID with Brooke's, and transfers all the money out of the student fund account;

Natalie, curled up on the couch in the flickering light of the television, eating popcorn alone;

Brooke getting up and walking out of the diner;

Harrison walking in by a different door a moment later;

Sam's laptop, displaying an instant message reading "DONE";

Sam closing the laptop, her face starting cold and hard, but dissolving into weariness.

FADE OUT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END