

Popular: Senior Year
"The More Things Change..."

by

The Wild Pikachu

POPULAR: SENIOR YEAR

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. A ROOM

Featureless and unidentifiable.

ANGLE: BROOKE AND NATALIE

Very tight, the two of them side by side. Brooke mutters something inaudible under her breath.

NATALIE

What?

BROOKE

(growling)

I said, Sam.

NATALIE

(sour)

Oh. Yeah. Sam.

A long silence.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I can't believe she did this.

Brooke makes another inaudible noise.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

What?

BROOKE

(growling again)

I said, nobody does.

NATALIE

I mean, I can't believe she did this to me.

BROOKE

In case you hadn't noticed, Sam turns on her "friends" quick.

NATALIE

I hadn't. Until now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Another long silence.

BROOKE
I'm gonna kill her.

NATALIE
Yeah.

The shot pulls back, revealing a set of bars: the girls are sitting in a jail cell.

BROOKE
As soon as I get out of here.

WHITE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BROOKE AND NATALIE'S CELL - LATER

Some indeterminable time later. A guard walks up to the cell door, unlocks it, and slides it open.

GUARD
Time to go.

BROOKE
We're free?

GUARD
(dryly)
You made bail.

Brooke and Natalie exchange a glance.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION BOOKING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brooke and Natalie are performing the time-honored ritual of retrieving their personal effects from the booking officer.

BROOKE
I don't get how we could be bailed out. We haven't even gotten arraigned yet.

NATALIE
(scornfully)
Hello? Gift horse, mouth.

Brooke concedes the point with a sniff. Meanwhile, someone taps Natalie on the shoulder. When she spins around, she sees a familiar face:

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Uncle Arthur!

"Uncle Arthur" is a stocky, kindly-looking man in his late fifties, with sparse gray hair.

ARTHUR
Well, Natalie, I didn't think I'd be flying out here on business.

Natalie looks abashed, then turns to Brooke to make introductions.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATALIE

Uncle Arthur, this is Brooke McQueen. She's in the same class as me. Brooke, this is Uncle Arthur.

Arthur extends his hand and shakes Brooke's.

ARTHUR

Honorary uncle. Official family attorney.

BROOKE

Oh, uh, nice to meet you—

She looks around uncertainly.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

But—?

ARTHUR

(smoothly)

Everything's been taken care of. I've already spoken to your parents. They're waiting for you at home.

BROOKE

(confused)

They aren't here?

ARTHUR

I advised them not to come. Your father especially might have made a scene.

BROOKE

(voice rising)

All this—this is—

Natalie hushes her with a hand on her arm.

NATALIE

(low)

Not here.

ARTHUR

Right. Let's go, ladies.

Arthur gently propels Brooke and Natalie towards the exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Brooke, Natalie and Arthur are standing on the sidewalk outside the suburban police station.

BROOKE

All right, what was that all about?

ARTHUR

Natalie knows not to speak carelessly inside a police station. You never know who might be listening.

Natalie nods in agreement, and Brooke shoots a speculative glance at her.

NATALIE

(unnoticing)

Now where to?

ARTHUR

The McQueens'.

NATALIE

To drop Brooke off?

Arthur opens his mouth to answer, but Brooke cuts him off:

BROOKE

No. We need strategy.

ARTHUR

(recovering)

Right you are. I'll be handling the defense for the both of you, and your parents will want to be involved.

BROOKE

Parents. Right.

This time Natalie catches the glance Brooke throws at her, quickly realizing that the strategy Brooke is planning has nothing to do with parents.

NATALIE

Okay, then. Let's go.

Oblivious, Arthur ushers them on.

FLIP CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Typical Kennedy High day. Josh and Lily are walking hand-in-hand down the corridor, with Sugar Daddy and Carmen (not hand-in-hand, but close) following behind.

JOSH

I'm just saying, Lil, I don't see how you can help Brooke and Natalie.

SUGAR

Word, man. Messin' with the cops is serious.

LILY

(indignant)

Authority should always be questioned!

JOSH

Questioned, maybe, not charged at. Babe, you could end up in jail, too.

Lily is about to continue her protest, but Carmen cuts her off:

CARMEN

(looking off)

What the hell?!

The others follow Carmen's gaze—to see Harrison standing before them, wearing a monk's brown robe and a beatific smile, hands clasped together prayerfully.

CURTAIN CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM - LATER

The doorbell has just rung; Mike, with Jane by his side, opens the door. Brooke is standing there, with Arthur and Natalie just behind. After a moment of awkwardness, Brooke takes two quick steps into the arms of her father, who gathers her up.

MIKE

I'm so sorry, honey. I wanted to be there—

BROOKE

I know. It's okay.

Meanwhile, Jane steps aside, inviting the others to enter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE

Thank you so much for bringing
Brooke home to us, Mr. Cavendish.

ARTHUR

Arthur, please. And it was no
trouble at all.

JANE

Won't you come in?

ARTHUR

Right. We should discuss the case.

As Arthur steps inside, Jane comes face-to-face with Natalie,
producing a moment of mild awkwardness.

NATALIE

(pleasantly)

Hi, I'm Natalie. We've never
actually met before.

JANE

Please, come in.

MIKE

I have to say, you really are a
dead ringer for Nicole.

Natalie makes a face.

NATALIE

So people keep telling me.

Brooke swats her father on the arm and shoots him a dirty
look.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Um, is there someplace I could
freshen up?

JANE

(pointing)

Through the kitchen, second door on
your left.

NATALIE

Thanks.

Natalie heads off towards the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN KITCHEN - FOLLOWING

Natalie walks into the kitchen. But instead of continuing on to the bathroom, she stops, cocks her head back for a moment toward the muffled voices coming from the other room, then reaches into her pocket and pulls out her cell phone.

FLIP CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Picking up with Harrison and the gang:

SUGAR

Yo, man, is it Halloween already?

HARRISON

(pleasantly)

Harmonious greetings to you all.

LILY

Harrison, what the hell is going on?

EFFECT CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

EST. A BUILDING - DAY

CUT TO:

INT. A CONFERENCE ROOM

Harrison is among a group of people sitting in rows of chairs facing a podium. Standing at the podium is what looks like a typical middle management executive—except that he's dressed in monk's robes.

PRESENTER

Ladies and gentlemen, you're all here because you want to leave behind the shallow, superficial lives you've been leading. Because you're looking for a higher purpose. A better life. Isn't that right?

There is a murmur of assent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRESENTER (CONT'D)
 (cheerleading)
 I can't hear you!

The murmur turns into a disorganized rumble.

PRESENTER (CONT'D)
WHAT?!!

GROUP
 (in unison)
YES!!!

Suddenly the ceiling over the audience opens up and water comes cascading down, leaving everyone drenched.

PRESENTER
 (serenely)
 Lesson number one: we never shout.

SWIRL CUT TO:

MONTAGE

A silly, over-the-top take-off on "Kill Bill" showing Harrison going through a series of training exercises.

EFFECT CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Harrison looks down at Lily briefly.

HARRISON
 Why, nothing, Sister Lily—

LILY
 (interrupting)
 "Sister" Lily??

HARRISON
 —I have accepted a higher truth.
 I walk a path free from the turgid temptations of the flesh.

CARMEN
 (lost)
 Huh?

Harrison holds up a pamphlet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRISON

Pamphlet?

INSERT - THE PAMPHLET

...which features an illustration of monks in front of an abbey. It is titled "The Really Simple Life."

CARMEN

(shying away)

Uh, no.

Harrison seems unperturbed.

JOSH

Dude, you're seriously creeping Lily out here.

HARRISON

I sense the tension within you, Brother Josh. You must learn to let go.

JOSH

Hey, I ain't your brother.

Harrison spreads his hands serenely.

HARRISON

All men are brothers.

JOSH

Yeah, whatever.

The bell rings.

LILY

Come on, we're gonna be late.

As the group moves on, Harrison palms a pamphlet off on a random passer-by, a rapturous smile on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS - MOMENTS LATER

As the students file in, they are surprised to see Ms. Ross sitting behind Mr. Osbourne's desk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS

Attention class! Mr. Osbourne has been called away on an emergency, so I will be supervising independent study this period. Mr. Osbourne suggests—

(consulting a sheet of paper)
—that you use this time to consider the topic of your final essays.

(to herself)
Having kids write essays—what a concept.

After a few moments of confusion, the kids get their notebooks out.

CUT TO:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM - LATER

Brooke and Natalie are making their case.

BROOKE

Look, it's real simple, okay? Sam's little hacker friend—the same one who changed my grades—somehow forged documents saying I opened a bank account—which I know I didn't do—

NATALIE

(picking up)
—and then hacked into the school's mainframe, drained all the money out of the Student Fund account, and transferred it into the account that Brooke didn't open.

Mike, Jane and Arthur share a dubious look.

MIKE

Honey, no offense, but that sounds a little...

JANE

Far-fetched.

MIKE

Right. Far-fetched.
(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE (CONT'D)

Besides, Sam was—is—the Treasurer. Why would she need to break into Principal Krupps' office?

NATALIE

(exasperated)

To make it look like I was the one who did it! She must've planted my scarf there—the last time I had that scarf, I was visiting Sam.

BROOKE

And we already know that Sam knows someone who can hack into the school computer.

MIKE

I don't know...

JANE

(to Natalie)

Why would Sam set you up, anyway? I know you need a scorecard to keep track, but the last I heard, you and Sam were best friends.

Natalie looks a bit discomfited at that, but before she can answer, the doorbell rings. Everyone rises, and Mike goes to the front door.

ANGLE: THE FRONT DOOR

Mike opens the door, to find Mr. Osbourne standing there.

MIKE

Ahhh...Mr. Osbourne?

OSBOURNE

May I come in?

Without any real reason to refuse, Mike stands aside, and Osbourne steps inside. Jane shoots a questioning glance at Brooke, who holds up her hands in denial. But before she can say anything—

NATALIE

Brooke didn't call Mr. Osbourne.

They all turn to face Natalie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

I did.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. MCQUEEN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everyone stares at Natalie.

BROOKE

You called Mr. Osbourne??

OSBOURNE

Perhaps we should all have a
seat...

Mike, Jane and Arthur obligingly sit on the sofa, with Osbourne in an easy chair opposite them. Brooke and Natalie, meanwhile, stay standing on opposite ends of the furniture set. Natalie shoots a questioning glance at Osbourne, who gives her a slight nod in return.

NATALIE

(hesitantly)

A while ago...a few months ago...
Mr. Osbourne asked me to get close
to Sam.

BROOKE

(blankly)

What? When?

NATALIE

Just...like, at the beginning of
the year.

No one else seems to have anything else to say while Brooke turns this information over in his head.

BROOKE

Then...all that...on the ski trip,
that was all...?

NATALIE

(bleakly)

You didn't make it hard to hate
you.

Brooke concedes that point with a grimace. Meanwhile, Jane turns a hard look on Osbourne.

JANE

(on edge)

Would you mind telling us what
exactly you were thinking?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSBOURNE

After Miss McQueen approached me concerning Miss McPherson's problem, I agreed—against my better judgment, yes—to allow her and Miss McPherson's other friends to attempt to...intervene. I was, however, skeptical of their chances of success.

Brooke pouts at him.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

I thought it quite likely that Miss McPherson would alienate all of her friends. She would, therefore, be in need of a new friend—one who was perhaps alienated from Miss McQueen herself.

MIKE

(nodding)

The enemy of my enemy is my friend.

OSBOURNE

Precisely. Thus I asked Miss James to try to gain a rapprochement with Miss McPherson. An agent provocateur, so to speak.

BROOKE

(curious)

Why Natalie?

Surprisingly, Osbourne appears taken aback by the question.

OSBOURNE

I, ah...made a personal judgment that Miss James was suited for this assignment.

BROOKE

I don't get—

NATALIE

(interrupting)

No.

Brooke turns to retort before realizing that Natalie is talking to Osbourne.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OSBOURNE

Miss James—

NATALIE

No. This has to...I can't keep
doing this. This has to come out.

Osbourne looks as though he wants to protest further, but then settles back in his chair, acquiescing. Everyone else looks thoroughly confused. Natalie takes a moment to compose herself before facing the group.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Brooke doesn't know about Sam.
Not really.

Brooke looks offended, but holds her fire.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Lily, and Carmen, and Josh and
Harrison...they don't know.
(long pause)
I know.

BROOKE

(lost)
You know what?

NATALIE

I know...about Sam. I know what's
going on in her head.
(beat)
I know where Sam is...because I've
been there.

The atmosphere in the room changes slightly as realization of what Natalie's talking about sinks in.

MIKE

Uh...you mean, you were—?

NATALIE

Am. Not was. You never stop
being an addict.

She reaches into a pocket and pulls out a chip, which she twiddles between her fingers.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I've been clean for two years,
seven months, eighteen days. But
I'll be an addict for the rest of
my life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

There is a sobering lull in the conversation.

JANE
Can you help Sam?

Natalie shakes her head discouragingly.

NATALIE
The only person who can help Sam
is Sam. If she doesn't want to
quit, nobody can force her to.
(beat)
I'm sorry to have to tell you
this, but she's going to have to
hit rock bottom before she'll
accept help.

Jane huddles against Mike, who holds her protectively.

JANE
Isn't there anything we can do?

NATALIE
(shrugging faintly)
Be there for her when she needs
you. That's what I was supposed to
do.

OSBOURNE
Obviously something went wrong.

NATALIE
(shrugs again)
The only thing I can think of is
that she somehow found out that
you told me to cozy up to her. I
can't think of any other reason
she would turn on me.

Again, Brooke looks aggrieved, but keeps her peace.

OSBOURNE
Unless you were merely a
convenient accomplice. Miss
McPherson may have passed the
point beyond which she no longer
takes into consideration such
things as friendships.

NATALIE
Maybe. I did.

At this point, Brooke decides she's had enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BROOKE

Hi, I just want to break into this sympathy party for Sam to remind everyone that she set us up!!

MIKE

Now, honey, we don't really know—

Brooke cuts him off with an annoyed sound.

BROOKE

Ooooh! I cannot believe you people!

Theatrically stamping her foot down, she spins and runs up the stairs. Mike and Osbourne both make as to get up, creating a moment of awkwardness, but then Natalie holds up her hand.

NATALIE

Um, maybe it would be better if I tried to talk to her? Girl-to-girl.

After a beat, both men settle back in their seats. Natalie turns and trots up the stairs after Brooke.

ARTHUR

(trying for reassurance)

I'm sure everything will work out fine.

Mike and Jane don't look so sure; Osbourne just strokes his chin thoughtfully.

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Natalie walks in, closing and locking the door behind her. On the far side of the room, Brooke stares her down, arms crossed.

BROOKE

(expectantly)

Well??

Natalie mulls that over for a moment.

NATALIE

It was a bit much.

Brooke huffs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Stamping the foot? That is so
cliché.

BROOKE

Hey, that's classic.

(smirking)

Besides, they have no idea what to
expect from me now. I could be
doing iambic pentameter and they'd
buy it.

NATALIE

Don't get cocky. Parental units
can get perceptive at the wrongest
times.

BROOKE

Don't worry. I can handle them.

Natalie nods, and they sit on the edge of the bed.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

So, I suppose you "understand"
this about Sam, too?

NATALIE

If you mean Sam turning to crime,
then yeah, I understand.
Especially if it involves money.

Brooke snorts.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

(hardening)

Just because I understand it,
doesn't mean I'm gonna let her get
away with it.

On that, the two girls share a determined nod.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

So—strategy. What exactly do we
do about Hacker Boy?

FLIP CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Lily, Josh, Carmen, Sugar Daddy and Mary Cherry are moving as
a group down the hall when they come across Harrison, still in
his monk's robes—handing out dollar bills to passing
students. Lily, followed by the others, marches up to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY
 (hands on hips)
 Harrison, just what do you think
 you're doing now?!

Harrison just smiles pensively, handing Lily a dollar bill and a pamphlet.

INSERT - THE PAMPHLET

...much like the first one, except that this one is titled "The Vow of Poverty."

Lily shoves the pamphlet and dollar bill back into Harrison's chest scornfully.

LILY (CONT'D)
 You're already poor, Harrison.

Before anyone can do anything else, Mary Cherry snatches the money, clutching it triumphantly.

LILY (CONT'D)
 (shocked)
 Mary Cherry!

MARY CHERRY
 (defensive)
 What?! Mama says, never turn down
 money. It's sacrilegious.

The others share an incredulous look. Lily grabs Josh's arm.

LILY
 Come on, we're going to be late.

As the group moves on, a cell phone rings. Without breaking stride, Sugar Daddy pulls his phone out, flips it open and puts it to his ear.

SUGAR
 Yo!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DELBERT'S HOUSE - LATER

ANGLE: BROOKE

A close-up of Brooke (from the POV of the front door, which she's standing in front of). Taking a deep breath, she reaches up and pounds on the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE
(shouting)
DELBERT!!!

CUT TO:

INT. DELBERT'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Delbert, who had been playing a videogame, jumps up at the noise and rushes to the living room window, peeking through the blinds.

ANGLE: BROOKE

...as seen through the window, pounding on the door.

BROOKE
(muffled)
Delbert! Open this door right
now, you little hacker punk!

Delbert turns, panicked.

DELBERT
Eldon!

Delbert's big brother emerges from another room.

DELBERT (CONT'D)
That blonde girl's back!

Eldon grins and cracks his knuckles.

ELDON
Guess it's time to teach her
another lesson.

He confidently goes to the front door and throws it open—but instead of Brooke, it's Sugar Daddy standing there, wearing a grin of his own.

SUGAR
Yo, scrub.

The next thing we see, Eldon is flailing backwards through the living room, arms pinwheeling comically. Sugar advances on him, while Brooke and Natalie enter on his heels, turning on Delbert. Delbert cowers on the sofa as Brooke and Natalie stalk towards him menacingly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE

Now then...you and I are going to
have another little chat.

FLIP CUT TO:

EXT. DELBERT'S HOUSE - LATER

Brooke, Natalie and Sugar Daddy are walking down the walk,
looking very satisfied with themselves.

BROOKE

Thanks, Sugar.

Sugar Daddy high-fives Brooke.

SUGAR

Anytime, Brooke. I been wanting to
kick that scrub's ass for a while.

NATALIE

(curious)

Really?

SUGAR

He's on the wrestling team at
Eastside. Pulled a dirty move on
one of our guys last year.

(beat)

Anyways, you need muscle, I'm your
guy.

BROOKE

(beaming)

You got it.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS - AFTERNOON

INSERT - A TAPE RECORDER

An old-fashioned school-type tape recorder is sitting on a desk, playing.

DELBERT (V.O.)

(on the tape)

...okay, okay! This girl, Sam, it was all her idea! I did up the driver's license with her—except, you know, blonde—and then I got in the bank records and switched it with the real thing.

BROOKE (V.O.)

Mine.

The shot widens to show Brooke, Natalie and Osbourne seated around the tape recorder.

NATALIE (V.O.)

And the money?

DELBERT (V.O.)

Hey, all I did was transfer it from one account to another. I didn't skim off even a little!

BROOKE (V.O.)

Just like Sam said, right?

DELBERT (V.O.)

Right! Just like Sam said.

Brooke reaches out and snaps the tape recorder off, a triumphant gleam in her eye.

BROOKE

See? It's all on tape.

Osbourne rubs the bridge of his nose for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSBOURNE

Indeed. A confession which was obtained under duress, is completely inadmissible as evidence, and would certainly result in the both of you being re-arrested on any number of charges.

Natalie's face falls, and she slams her hand down on the desk in frustration.

NATALIE

Dammit! We're screwed no matter what!

Brooke, in contrast, just looks calmly at Osbourne.

BROOKE

(matter-of-fact)

What do we do?

OSBOURNE

Leave the tape with me. I'll make certain that it reaches the proper hands—or ears, as it were.

Brooke nods soberly, ejects the tape and puts it in Osbourne's waiting hand. Osbourne responds with a grave nod of his own.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)

Both of you should go home. It would be best if there were as much distance as possible between you and this tape.

(beat)

Does anyone else know?

BROOKE

Sugar Daddy.

(confidently)

He won't say anything.

Osbourne accepts Brooke's assessment with a brief nod.

OSBOURNE

Go.

Brooke rises at once; after a moment of hesitation, Natalie follows suit.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Brooke and Natalie walk down the deserted corridor. Brooke sneaks a peek at Natalie's sour expression.

BROOKE
What?

NATALIE
You think this will work out?

BROOKE
(definite)
Mr. Osbourne will handle
everything.

Natalie doesn't look convinced.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
You trust him, don't you? You
were his "agent provocateur" or
whatever.

NATALIE
I trust him.
(under her breath)
Just not as much as you do.

DISSOLVE TO:

EST. L.A. SKYLINE - MORNING

Signifying the dawn of a new day.

CUT TO:

EST. KENNEDY HIGH - MORNING

Stock shot of the quad.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Harrison, still fully decked out, is walking down the hall in a perfect imitation of an abbot in prayer. He suddenly pulls up short, though, upon coming to an obstacle in his path—Sam, hands on hips, glaring at him ominously.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
Harrison? What the hell do you
think you're doing?

Harrison just gives one of his serene smiles, and holds out a pamphlet.

INSERT - THE PAMPHLET

This one is titled "The Vow of Silence."

Sam glances down at the pamphlet, then grabs a very startled Harrison and hauls him away.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Sam unceremoniously pushes Harrison inside, then stands to confront him, hands on hips again. There is a brief moment of silence.

SAM
(impatient)
Well?!!

Harrison just smiles, shrugs, and offers up the pamphlet again.

SAM (CONT'D)
(deadly)
Harrison John, so help me, if you
don't start explaining yourself
right now, vow or no vow, I will
make you eat that pamphlet.

Harrison shrugs again, the picture of serenity.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The door to Sam's office flies open, and Harrison comes stumbling out, having obviously been pushed. After regaining his balance, he looks up and down the empty hall, then reaches into his mouth and pulls out a wadded-up pamphlet. Satisfied that one has seen him, he pockets the pamphlet, smooths out his robes, and—perfect smile again on his face—walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Detective Candido is filling out a report on her desk computer—Detective Harris is nowhere in sight—when her phone rings.

She reaches over and picks up the handset.

DET. CANDIDO
(into the phone)
Candido.

Her brow furls as she listens.

DET. CANDIDO (CONT'D)
Hmmm?... Well—yes, I understand.

Candido hangs up the phone, just as Detective Harris arrives, sitting at his desk across from her.

DET. HARRIS
(nodding towards Candido's
computer)
How's it going?

DET. CANDIDO
(sour)
You know what you get when you
take the paper out of paperwork?
(beat)
Just plain work.

Harris barks a laugh. Just then a uniformed officer comes trotting up.

OFFICER
Hey guys, got a message.

He unfurls a piece of paper and refers to it.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
One of you needs to go over to
Judge Groves' chambers and sign
off on the Dickenson paperwork.

DET. HARRIS
(grinning at Candido)
More paperwork. You wanna?

DET. CANDIDO
(waving him off)
Naw, you go ahead. I'm on a roll
here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DET. HARRIS
Don't have to tell me twice.

Harris is up and moving in a flash.

DET. CANDIDO
(calling after him)
Hey, pick me up a burger while
you're out!

Harris acknowledges that with a wave as he disappears.
Candido waits for a moment, then gets up and casually strolls
to Lt. Schuberg's office.

CUT TO:

INT. LT. SCHUBERG'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Lt. Schuberg glances up as Candido steps inside.

LT. SCHUBERG
Close the door, Cheryl.

Candido complies, then stands by one of the chairs
expectantly. Schuberg opens a desk drawer and pulls out a
tiny tape recorder with a pair of earphones attached. He sets
them on the desk in front of Candido.

LT. SCHUBERG (CONT'D)
Don't ask where this came from.

Candido scoops up the tape recorder casually.

DET. CANDIDO
(straight-faced)
Where what came from?

Schuberg nods approvingly as Candido turns to go.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Standing against the blank rear wall of the building, Det.
Candido casts a casual glance around before putting the
earphones in her ears and clicking the tape recorder on. A
variety of expressions flicker across her face as she listens
to the tape.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

After a few moments, she clicks the recorder off, pulls the earphones out of her ears, pockets everything and moves away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GIRLS' RESTROOM - LATER

The door to the Novak opens and Lily, Carmen and Mary Cherry walk in.

CARMEN

...said it before, and I'll say it again: Mary Cherry, you are insane.

MARY CHERRY

Well, hell's bells, you're the one that said it!

Carmen just groans.

LILY

Mary Cherry, when Carmen said Harrison was giving up girls, that's not what she meant.

Mary Cherry looks confused.

MARY CHERRY

Well, what in tarnation—
(gasps)
Y'all mean—Joe's givin' up everythin'?

Lily and Carmen exchange a glance and a nod.

MARY CHERRY (CONT'D)

Well, hell, that's just...dumb!

CARMEN

(wry, to Lily)
I actually agree with her.

It's only then that the three girls notice that Brooke is also there, sitting on one of the tuffets. Part of the reason it's taken them so long to notice her is that she hasn't greeted them, or reacted in any other way to their presence. She's just sitting there, totally preoccupied by something.

LILY

(surprised)
Brooke!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Brooke looks up absently.

LILY (CONT'D)
 (challenging)
 What do you think about all this?!

BROOKE
 (blankly)
 About what?

LILY
 Harrison! Haven't you seen him?!

Brooke considers that question for a little longer than she should need to.

BROOKE
 No...I haven't seen him.

MARY CHERRY
 (helpful)
 Golly, Brooke, Joe has plumb
 turned into a walkin' nutcase!

Lily and Carmen exchange another look.

LILY
 What she means is that Harrison's
 taken to walking around acting
 like a monk—literally. He's been
 handing out pamphlets on this vow
 or that vow. It's very strange.

Mary Cherry looks annoyed.

MARY CHERRY
 Lil Lily, that's what I said!

Brooke absorbs this exchange with seemingly no interest at all.

BROOKE
 (absently)
 I haven't seen him.

Further discussion is cut off by the ringing of the bell. Without a word, Brooke stands up and walks past the girls and out the door.

CARMEN
 (to Lily)
 What's with her?

Lily can only shrug helplessly as the three girls hurry out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

And after the door swings shut, Natalie emerges from an alcove, her eyes imponderable.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. JAYCEE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Sam screeches up to the stoop in her little green ride. As if on cue, the front door opens and Jaycee comes bounding down the stairs, wearing one of her barely-there outfits. She pulls the passenger side door open and slides in next to Sam, who has a similar outfit on.

JAYCEE

Rave on, Dude!

The two girls high-five, and the car zooms off.

PAN CUT TO:

INT. BROOKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brooke is pacing back and forth erratically, distracted and lost in what seems to be troubled thoughts. After a few moments, she stops and moves purposefully to her computer desk. She sits down there and begins to shuffle papers.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE

A short montage (no more than half a minute) alternating between Sam and Jaycee raving wildly, and Brook sitting at her computer working away diligently.

DISSOLVE TO:

EST. L.A. SKYLINE - MORNING

Another brand-new day.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH - MORNING

Early morning, a nearly empty quad.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS

The door to the classroom opens and Mr. Osbourne trundles in, carrying a heavy briefcase. He pulls up short when he sees Brooke standing there waiting for him.

OSBOURNE
Miss McQueen...this is an
unexpected development.

Under Brooke's watchful eye, Osbourne resumes his course towards his desk. He sets the briefcase down and sits before giving Brooke an appraising look.

OSBOURNE (CONT'D)
And to what do I owe this early
morning visit?

Brooke approaches the desk gravely.

BROOKE
I need your help, if you're still
willing.

Osbourne raises a quizzical eyebrow.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
I've come to a decision.

She hands a thick folder to Osbourne. He opens it and flips through a couple of pages, then nods knowingly.

OSBOURNE
I see.
(rising)
I'll send these to my friend. He
can begin the process today.

Brooke seems a bit taken aback.

BROOKE
That fast?

OSBOURNE
(droll)
Facsimile machines and e-mail,
Miss McQueen. The wonders of the
twenty-first century. Rest
assured, you are in capable hands.

Brooke looks relieved as Osbourne leads her out.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK LOBBY - DAY

Det. Candido is standing in the middle of the lobby with the bank's branch manager.

MANAGER

I'm afraid I don't understand why you need to look at our records again, Detective.

DET. CANDIDO

(smoothly)

I'm just following up on a few things.

(beat)

I had assumed that a warrant wouldn't be necessary...

MANAGER

Oh, no, Detective, of course not! We're happy to cooperate.

And he leads her away.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK RECORDS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Det. Candido and a records clerk are gathered at a table, where the clerk is opening a standard file box.

RECORDS CLERK

You're lucky you came by when you did, Detective. Another couple weeks and these would have been gone.

DET. CANDIDO

(sharply)

Why?

RECORDS CLERK

We only keep the paper originals for thirty days. Then they get incinerated.

DET. CANDIDO

Really?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RECORDS CLERK
 (shrugs gamely)
 What's the point of scanning
 everything if you're going to keep
 the paper, too?

DET. CANDIDO
 Right...
 (dismissing)
 Thank you.

RECORDS CLERK
 If you need anything, I'll be
 right out there.

The clerk withdraws, and Candido rifles through the box. She pulls out one thick file, lays it open on the table and starts flipping papers over rapidly. It takes only a few moments for her to pull one page from the file and hold it aloft, a grin breaking out across her face.

DET. CANDIDO
 Gotcha.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Harrison is still in full monk-mode, walking pensively down the hall, when, from out of nowhere, a hand reaches out and yanks him sideways through a doorway.

CUT TO:

INT. EMPTY CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

The yanker turns out to be Natalie, who is standing before Harrison, hands on hips. For a moment he seems startled; then he smiles and puts his fingers to his lips.

NATALIE
 You don't have to talk, Harrison.
 You just have to listen. You can
 do that, right?

Without waiting for a response, she leans in close.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 I know what you're doing. You're
 giving up. All this is just...
 giving up. You're giving up on
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 Brooke, you're giving up on Sam,
 giving up on girls and love and...
 and everything. You've decided
 everyone's given up on you, so
 you're going to give up on them
 right back.

She darts in and pecks him on the mouth.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
 (whispering)
 I haven't given up on you.

And with that she is out the door, leaving a stunned Harrison
 in her wake.

CUT TO:

JAYCEE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

In the golden afternoon light streaming through the window, we
 see Sam lying in a stupor on Jaycee's bed, half-covered by a
 sheet. Finally she groans and stirs slightly. A moment
 later, she tries for a bigger movement—enough to send her
 cascading off the bed and onto the floor.

SAM
 (woozy)
 Ow...

Sam props herself up by clutching the bed, rubbing her head.

With great difficulty, she focuses on the Jaycee, who is lying
 on the other side of the bed. Slowly, Sam manages to crawl
 back onto the bed and over to Jaycee's side.

SAM (CONT'D)
 Hey, Jaycee...we gotta...take a
 break...these raves are killing
 me...

She reaches out and shakes Jaycee's shoulder weakly, but
 Jaycee doesn't respond. Sam tries a little harder, and
 suddenly Jaycee flops over onto her back, utterly lifeless.

SAM (CONT'D)
 Jaycee?

As Sam realizes what has happened, she panics, shrieking and
 shaking Jaycee's body wildly.

SAM (CONT'D)
 Jaycee?! JAYCEE!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And at that moment, the apartment door crashes open, and two uniformed police officers burst in, guns drawn.

OFFICER #2
POLICE!! FREEZE!!

Sam's head snaps up to stare at them in shock, and—

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END