

**The Lives Between
the Lines**

A Play Written by Charis Ellett

List of characters

Colleen Myers

The play's protagonist. A female in her early 20's. Preferably blonde, in trendy, but also slightly edgy, 90's clothing. Colleen is awkward and a pushover at the start, but throughout the progression of the show she starts to grow more confident in herself and demanding of what she wants. She went by Evie in high school, and when Evie reappears they are played by the same actress.

Evangeline "Evie" Caswell

A kind, sweet and gentle old soul. Evie is brunette and wears calm, simple clothing. She is Colleen as a teenager and the two should be as opposite as the singular actress can get. They need to not only look different, but also act different in their voice, mannerisms and whatever else possible.

Jack Davis

Colleen's abusive boyfriend, Jack is the classic wears a wife beater, has tattoo sleeves and looks like he hasn't shaved or combed his hair in weeks cliché of a

douchebag... and it fits him. He's rude, crass and should be played by someone of a substantial size. Not necessarily fat nor muscular, but not scrawny.

Eric Stone

The dream man. Eric was Evie's crush in high school and even as an adult, she can't let him go. He should be fit and wear trendy 90's clothing with hair that makes the audience's eyes sparkle. He's sweet and considerate, however his abilities are sometimes questionable.

Ivy Thomas

Colleen's sweet best friend, Ivy should be beautiful and ooze bubbly. She is a very funny part so the actress should be able to pull off her sense of comedy. She should wear cute 90's dresses and have her hair in curls that bounce around as she moves. She is described as being "extra in all senses of the word" and the actress should portray that obviously.

Jackie White

The office rival, Jackie is revealing and flashy. She knows what she wants and will do anything to get it. She views Colleen only

as an obstacle that needs to be destroyed on her path to success.

Ms. Adam

The pushy, but successful British publisher for the newspaper. She's intimidating to the characters, but comical to the audience.

While the character is a women, it can be played by either a man or a woman.

Mr. Weppler

The hopeful bookstore owner from Italy. He's lovable, hilarious and quite round. An old friend of Eric's who has been lonely for a long time but would do anything for his store.

Waiter

A waiter in the Golden Gate Grill who waits on the cast. Can be played by either male or female

The Sign

A silent character who is in all the restaurant, bookstore and office scenes holding a sign stating where they are.

Gender-neutral, interacts with the cast and should be dressed according to each occasion.

Ensemble

4-6 silent members who fill the scenes.

A Letter From the Playwright

Hello to all the beautiful people who have decided to do this play, I feel extremely honored that you feel that my show is a good fit for your theatre company. A few things about the production, Yes I know I give pretty specific directions within the play (trust me they used to be a lot worse) I really do hope that you will honor these directions in your performance. This is my first full length play as a writer, it took me over two years to complete. I even had the amazing opportunity to put this show on at my school and direct it as well. Then even after the first performance I still continued to work on it for months afterwards. It was a thrilling experience that I will never forget. I truly hope I will be fortunate enough to come see your interpretation of it. If you're just now reading this script, I really hope you enjoy it! It took a lot out of me to get it this far and I would love for you to take it even further.

-Charis Ellett

Act I

Scene 1

*The reds are closed, house lights go down and only a single colored spotlight on center stage. This color of spotlight will only appear when **Colleen** is monologuing. Rain sound effects start loudly. **Colleen** shuffles her way through the reds and into the spotlight with a voice recorder and a notepad with her. The rain starts to settle as she speaks.*

Colleen

(She speaks into voice recorder.) We open up on a cold rainy night in San Francisco. The time is (She checks her watch.) 12:31 am on June 1st, 1994. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Colleen Myers. I am 23 years old and I'm a writer. Well, at least I'm trying to be. I've kinda been going crazy trying to find something... anything to write about! I've spent the last year traveling all over the U.S. with my boyfriend trying to find my story. The one that will launch my career. But so far... I have nothing. I mean I do work for a

newspaper company and I write articles for that, but what I really want is to write something for myself, like a novel. The only catch is I have no idea what I am doing in my life. I used to know what to write about. In high school, I had loads of ideas. But once I graduated I decided to change a lot of things about me and who I am as a person. I didn't realize that changing who I am would also change how my mind works and what I think of. I sometimes think about what things might have been like if I had never changed. Would I even be here? Certainly we (She references between her and the audience.) would not be here now, together, because I would have no story to tell. Or maybe a very different one... anyway! I have been going through an entire year of writer's block. (Beat.) Wait, hold on... (She scribbles on notepad, mumbling.) a year of writer's block, that was my diagnosis... my diagnosis? (She laughs at how pathetic that sounds and starts talking back to the audience.) As you can see I'm no good at making stuff up. I've tried writing the truth. I've tried writing a lie. So all that's left is something in between. I've decided to turn my life into something worth writing. I can find something and change it

into what actual people want to read, not just me. I can start with the truth and then go from there or- just see where it leads me. Oh boy...

The reds open and the spotlight turns off. The set is an apartment setting. The apartment has one side door that acts as the main entrance and there's another door towards the back that leads to the rest of the apartment. It's pretty basic looking with two chairs in the center. No one is seen inside it yet. Colleen runs over, up the stairs and knocks on the door.

Jack

(He enters from the inside door.) You seriously forget your key again?

Colleen

No, I lost it. Come on baby, let me in, it is cold.

Jack

Lost it? You know I hate liars.

Colleen

I'm not lying I promise. (**Jack** begrudgingly opens the door and she walks in.) Thanks.

And by the way it's "did you seriously forget your key?"

Jack

Yeah whatever.

*The setting freezes and the colored spotlight comes back on. **Colleen** pulls out her voice recorder. In a very sarcastic tone she says:*

Colleen

Ladies and gentlemen, the love of my life. Quite the charmer, isn't he? A Mr. Jack Davis, he has no job, no money, no family, only me. A high school dropout at his junior year. Not because he got a girl pregnant or because he flunked out but simply because it was "too hard." Being in a relationship with him is hard. The only reason I stay with him is because I know that he really does care about me. He just shows his love in different ways than others. (She puts away her voice recorder and the plot resumes. The lights change back. She sits.) How was your day?

Jack

Fine. Whatever.

Colleen

So nothing happened? Nothing at all? (She is constantly reaching over to touch **Jack**, trying to get him to pay attention to her.)

Jack

What's up with all these freaking questions?
I said it was fine.

Colleen

Okay.. (A long beat.) Are you going to ask me how my day was?

Jack

Holy crap! Fine! How was your day? You make me so angry sometimes.

Colleen

Babe, if I had a nickel for every time something made you angry, I would have enough money to put you through anger management classes.

Jack

Funny.

Colleen

I don't know why you're so grumpy all of a sudden.

Jack

I'm not.

Colleen

Or really why you're angry all the time lately.

Jack

I said I'm not. Now stop bothering me and go do something else. I don't care.

Colleen

Why are you acting like this? Did I do something?

Jack

No. I just don't really feel like talking.

Colleen

(She looks back at audience, talking into her voice recorder. The spotlight appears.)
So this is it. Welcome to the glorious life of Colleen Myers. As you can see it's just a treasure trove full of blessings and I can't freaking wait to see what happens next!

Lights fade. End of scene 1.

Scene 2

*Open up on an office set. There are many desks piled with papers and at least 1-2 **ensemble** members at each desk. The people are very loud, chattering on phone calls with each other and messing around with their papers. Everyone seems to be busy and noisy. A person dressed in business attire stands along the back and holds a sign that reads: "The San Francisco Examiner."*

Colleen

(She walks in and pulls out her voice recorder. Everyone pauses, the spotlight appears.) 9:12 am on June 1st, 1994. I enter into my office. Well, technically... it is my office. But it is also his office, her office, his office, his office, her office, his office, her office, her office and her office. (She points to each person as she calls them out. This will adjust to who is in this scene.) There used to be a day where I would have killed to be where I am now. But now that I'm older I want bigger and better things. I want my own office where I can write full-length novels that actually mean something. I want to create art. Not just silly articles that everyone skips over

in their weekly newspaper. But I shouldn't be complaining. It... it is a good job. A lot of people would still love to have it. And it will get me places... eventually. My co-workers are nice enough. And my boss is...

Ms Adam

(She is offstage and yells in a British accent.) Colleen!!!

Colleen

(She jumps, while still talking into a voice recorder.) Quite frankly my boss is annoying. She is loud, inconsiderate and a nuisance. She is also famous. She is the official publisher for the San Francisco Examiner. She can get me where I need to be. So, for now, I am stuck kissing her- (The lights change back, end of entry.)

Ms Adam

Colleen!!!!!!

Colleen

Um, I'm coming! (She grabs a handful of papers and starts to run off stage but is quickly stopped by **Ms. Adam.**)

Ms Adam

(She walks on, scowling.) Well don't worry now, you're already late.

Colleen

I'm sorry, I-

Ms Adam

I don't care. I have an assignment for you.

Colleen

Okay. Oh and this time could I-

Ms Adam

Jackie! Come here!

Jackie

Coming! (She is dressed professionally but also promiscuous. She adjusts her top and walks over to **Colleen** and **Ms Adam**. On her way over she sassily bumps into **Colleen** as she passes her by, pushing **Colleen** out of the conversation.)

Colleen

(She talks into her voice recorder as the lights change.) Ladies and gentlemen, the office slut! (Everything changes back.)

Ms Adam

Ah there you are! Now I want you and Colleen to have a little competition.

Jackie

A competition?

Ms Adam

Precisely! You two will both write a story on the same thing and I will choose the better one to actually be published. The other will go in the rubbish.

Jackie and Colleen

What?!

Colleen

Mrs Adam please... I-I have not even finished the story I've been working on. Or started actually... Besides, I don't think I can write thoughtfully knowing that I'm competing with someone else. Mrs Adam please!

Ms Adam

Hush! First of all, it's *Ms* Adam. Second, you have no choice. Your topic is... (She goes, between the two girls, puts one arm around each and stares towards the back of the audience as she dramatically says:) Bookstores!

Jackie and Colleen

(They engage in her fantasy at first, then **Jackie** seems disappointed while **Colleen** is more confused.) Bookstores?

Ms Adam

What? I never said it was thrilling. Lately chain bookstores have been outselling local bookstores. Write about that.

Jackie

(off to the side) Ew.

Ms Adam

What was that?

Jackie

Nothing!

Ms Adam

Good! You have a week to put it on my desk.
Toodaloo. (She walks off stage.)

Colleen

(She puts out her hand for shaking and smiles.) May the best woman win.

Jackie

(She scoffs and rudely walks past Colleen, bumping into her again.)

Colleen

(She tries to cover up her friendliness by taking her hand and fixing her hair after Jackie rejects it. She sighs in defeat and walks back to her desk.)

Lights fade. End of scene 2.

Scene 3

The scene changes to a restaurant. There are tables full of people enjoying each other's company. Ivy sits at a table alone, looking at a menu. Colleen comes running in and sits across from Ivy.

Colleen

Hi Ivy. I'm sorry I'm so late.

Ivy

It's fine, I promise.

Colleen

Well you look nice.

Ivy

Thank you! (She flips her hair.)

Colleen

(Mid hair flip, **Colleen** pulls out her voice recorder, lights change, she talks to the audience.) Ivy Thomas. My best friend since high school. She was the only thing I kept from that awful time. She knows everything about me. And I know everything about her. She's overly-happy. Overly-smiley. Over-dramatic. Over-everything really. She is extra in all senses of the word. But I love her. Opposites attract, I guess. (The lights change back and the play resumes.) You won't believe what happened to me today.

Ivy

What?

Colleen

I got assigned to a writing competition... against Jackie.

Ivy

(She very overdramatically gasps.) No!

Colleen

I know, right.

Waiter

(He walks on stage to their table, he obviously could not care less about this job.) What can I get you guys? (He sees **Colleen**.) Hey, do I know you from somewhere?

Colleen

No! I mean... I don't think you do.

Waiter

Hm. Oh well. (He shrugs and walks off.)

Ivy

(As he's walking off, she says:) Um, could I get..? (She shrugs.) I guess not. (She starts laughing hysterically.) He totally DID NOT take our order.

Colleen

No he didn't.

Ivy

Why are you acting so weird?

Colleen

I'm not.

Ivy

Oh... oh well! Back to your writing competition thingy...

Colleen

Yeah. And there is no guarantee that it will even be published. So my writing might all go to nothing. And get this, Ms Adam did not even give us a decent topic.

Ivy

What is it?

Colleen

Bookstores.

Ivy

Ewww.

Colleen

Exactly.

Ivy

Remember when we were in high school and they had these kind of writing competitions all the time? You won them almost every time!

Colleen

Yes I remember, unfortunately. And you know I don't like to talk about high school.

Ivy

Yeah, yeah, I remember. (*Beat.*) But everything was so much easier then.

Colleen

I'm not sure I would go as far as to say that.

Waiter

(He walks back on and realizes that they're talking about high school.) Heeeyyyyyy that's where I've seen you! We went to high school together!

Colleen

(She sighs and to herself says:) Seriously? (She looks back at the waiter.) You must be mistaken. I have never seen you in my life.

Waiter

No, I remember now! You were the one with purple braces and curly hair! Although I could have sworn it was darker... (He starts to reach out to touch **Colleen's** hair.)

Colleen

(She leans back.) Excuse me?

Waiter

(He pulls back his hand immediately.) Sorry!
I just, um... ugh. (He runs off again.)

Colleen

(She looks at **Ivy** for a moment. **Ivy** has a
dropped jaw.) He still didn't take your
order.

Ivy

(She closes her mouth, thinks for moment and
then she realizes that **Colleen** is right. She
starts to giggle as she stands up and starts
marching off in the **waiter's** direction.)
HEY.

Waiter

(He screams as **Ivy** chases him offstage.)

Lights fade. End of scene 3.

Scene 4

*The focus changes to where **Colleen** and
Jack's apartment is. **Jack** is in his chair
with a remote in his hand. He keeps clicking
it while looking at the back of the audience
as if he was looking at a TV. **Colleen** walks
on and appears to be happy at first, since
she is just walking home from her lunch with
Ivy.*

Colleen

(She shuffles through her purse, her happiness begins to fade as she mumbles under her breath.) Crap. (She reluctantly knocks on the door.) Babe? It's me.

Jack

(He groans loudly.) I thought we talked about this!

Colleen

I know, baby... I just forgot again. Please let me in.

Jack

Not this time!

Colleen

(She is taken aback.) Excuse me?

Jack

You heard me! I'm tired of always having to lift you up and help you. Do I have to do everything?

Colleen

Jack, please let me in so we can talk about this.

Jack

(He gets up off the couch and lets out a big, over dramatic sigh, then reluctantly opens the door.) There. (He holds his hand out to the room.) You happy?

Colleen

(She angrily stomps into the apartment and throws her purse on the couch.) No! I am not happy! Perhaps I will be happy once you stop acting like such a jerk!

Jack

(He shuts the door and starts laughing.)

Colleen

What is so funny?!

Jack

Nothing. You.

Colleen

Me?

Jack

Yeah, you... You thinking that you can stand up to me. YOU. Out of all people! When I

think about it I just... (He starts laughing again.)

Colleen

It's not funny!

Jack

Oh, yes it is.

Colleen

Ugh, why are you so infuriating? Can you please just be supportive of me for once? I bet you didn't even care about what happened to me at work today. Actually, I know you don't care because you *never* care to ask!

Jack

I don't need to ask because it's always the same thing! "Oh I'm so untalented. No one appreciates my work. I'll never find something to write about."

Colleen

Yeah, well at least I have a job to complain about! All you ever do is sit around on your sorry butt and complain about how you're not "living in the lap of luxury" off your girlfriend's salary!

Jack

Well then maybe you shouldn't be my girlfriend.

Colleen

Well then maybe you should learn to provide for yourself! Because if I leave then you have nothing.

Jack

I already am nothing. Remember?

Colleen

Oh I remember perfectly. (Beat. They scowl at each other in disgust.) I'm going to stay at my friend's for a few days.

Jack

What friend?

Colleen

Ivy.

Jack

Ugh, man, that pr-

Colleen

Don't say anything bad about her!

Jack sarcastically holds his hands up in surrender as he exits. **Colleen** takes her key off its hook and grabs the doorknob as if she's about to leave, but then she just sighs, throws the keys in **Jack's** direction, grabs a jacket and runs out the front door and down the stairs.

Rain sound effects are playing in the background as **Colleen** crosses the set. The **ensemble** enter from all different sides and walk across the stage to create the street setting. **Eric** enters opposite of where **Colleen** is coming from. He is a normal looking yet attractive man holding an umbrella and looking at the ground. **Colleen** is also not looking where she is going and the two bump into each other.

Colleen

Sorry!

Eric

My bad, darling.

Colleen continues to run off stage. **Eric** turns around and pauses. A smile crooks to the side of his mouth as she exits and then he too exits.

Lights fade. End of scene 4.

Scene 5

*Open up with a messy bookstore. There is dust and miscellaneous books scattered everywhere with no organization whatsoever. There are no customers. The only people seen inside it are **Eric** and **Mr Weppler**, a round, middle aged Italian man. The **sign** is also present, this time holding a sign that reads "Mr Weppler's Bookstore." **Eric** is relaxing, with an almost completed book in hand and **Mr Weppler** is running around with a duster, not really cleaning but rather jollily galavanting around his store.*

Eric

(looking up from his book with content and closing it) Wow, you were so right! This is definitely the best book released so far this year.

Weppler

I told you-a, boy. It's so influential and deep and meaningful...

Eric

And tight!

Weppler

Tight?

Eric

Yeah. You know, like cool.

Weppler

Oh, yes-a. Of course...

Eric

And I just love how the author uses her strange language to better get her point across. Like here, on page 76, when Chelsea exclaims "My love shall not be taken by your want to separate the moon from the stars." I mean, it sounds so beautiful and almost Shakespearean, but yet so modern.

Weppler

You are very-a insightful to these things, son. How's that writing career-a of yours going? You know I still carry your book here! "The Money Case"!

Eric

"The Money Jar." But thank you, Mr Weppler. I appreciate that someone has it, even though it's awful. But I'll get better, I promise.

Weppler

You don't have to tell-a me that. I've known-a you for a long time, but I've never known you-a as a bad writer.

Eric

And I've never known you as a bad librarian.

Weppler

Awh, thanks. (Feeling nostalgic.) This used to be a beautiful store! Remember?

Eric

Yes, I remember. I used to come here as a kid and you would always have that little bowl of suckers by the checkout.

Weppler

Yes, that was a good time.

Eric

I'll get you back there someday, pal.

Weppler

Awh. You don-

Eric

No, I mean it. I love this place just as much as you do. It means a lot to me too and I want to get it back to what it used to be. I'll get your name back out there, ol' man.

Weppler

Thank-a you. (They embrace.)

Eric

Well I gotta go. It was nice seeing you. (He starts to leave.)

Weppler

Come back-a soon! (Beat.) Wait, who-a are you calling old?

Lights fade. End of scene 5.

Scene 6

*The set changes to **Ivy's** apartment. It is very pink and with frills and lace everywhere. It is the next morning. **Colleen** enters from the back, looking like she never*

*went to bed, and at some point during the monologue, **Ivy** enters as well. **Ivy** lounges on her daybed peacefully like she's been awake for hours.*

Colleen

(She out her voice recorder and the lights change.) 10:52 pm on June 1st, 1994. Though I'm not exactly sure what I just experienced, what I do know is that it was bad. Bad enough to make things interesting. Bad enough to strike an interest in a reader. And because of that, I'm not sorry it happened. I have just started my story. This is where it will all begin. God help us. (Lights change back and the plot resumes. She looks to **Ivy**.) What are you doing up?

Ivy

Oh I've been up for hours.

Colleen

Oh. Right. I forgot that you were an early riser. (She yawns largely.)

Ivy

Honey it's two in the afternoon.

Colleen

Oh. I guess I never actually fell asleep..
But thank you for letting me stay here. It
helped a lot.

Ivy

Of course. So you're still hung up on what
happened with Jack, huh?

Colleen

Yeah... (She speaks reluctantly.) I forgot my
key again...

Ivy

(She knows how bad that is.) Oh, crap.

Colleen

Yeah. Jack got really mad this time and, at
first, wouldn't even let me in. But then he
did. And we fought. It was just a whole big
mess.

Ivy

I'm sorry, honey... Remind me again why you
stay with him?

Colleen

Because... Because I don't know what I would
do without him. Yes, he's lazy and he's

rude. But he's been mine for so long. And we didn't used to be like this. We were in love once. You remember. All those years ago. So what if we fight sometimes? All couples do.

Ivy

Yes, but not-

Colleen

Ivy, please. Not now.

Ivy

Right. Sorry.

Colleen

It's okay. (She sighs and puts her hands in the pocket of her coat.) I must've grabbed **Jack's** jacket instead of mine. (She rolls her eyes and pulls his set of keys out of the pocket.) How ironic.

Ivy

(She gasps, leaps up, and runs over to **Colleen**) Let's break in and wrap everything in saran wrap!

Colleen

Um... no?

Ivy

(pleading) But why not?

Colleen

Because it's my apartment too.

Ivy

Oh... Right. (She giggles nervously.) Forgot about that. Sorry.

Colleen

It's fine. Honestly I'm more upset about how you didn't use correct grammar.

Ivy

(She groans.) Fine. *I* forgot about that. *I'm* sorry. Better?

Colleen

(She laughs slightly.) That's much better. Thank you.

Ivy

It's no problem! (Beat.) Come on, get up!
(She walks off stage to the bedroom.)

Colleen

Where are we going?

Ivy

(She is talking in her regular voice, but still offstage) I'm taking you out to breakfast.

Colleen

(a little louder) What?

Ivy

(a little louder) I'm taking you to breakfast!

Colleen

(louder) What?!

Ivy

(screaming) I'M TAKING YOU TO BREAKFAST.

Colleen

(She plugs her ears but still talks as loud as before.) But Ivy, you have done so much already. I can't ask you to do that.

Ivy

(still screaming) NONSENSE! I WOULD LOVE TO! AFTER EVERYTHING YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH?

Colleen

Ivy?

Ivy

HOW COULD I NOT?!

Colleen

Ivy!

Ivy

I INSIST!

Colleen

IVY!

Ivy

(She pokes her head through the door.) YEAH?

(She quickly realizes how loud she is talking and begins talking regularly again.)

Oh. Am I screaming?

Colleen

(She is nodding slowly in astonishment at her not realizing but also laughing.) Yes Ivy.

Ivy

Oh... my bad! (She comes running back to **Colleen**, dressed in her regular clothes. She grabs **Colleen's** hand and pulls her up and

back towards the bedroom.) Come on, get dressed!

Colleen

(mocking her) "But honey it's two in the afternoon!"

Ivy

Not for you it isn't! Come on! We're leaving in 20! (She throws **Colleen** offstage into the bedroom then wipes her hands off for a job well done.) Hmph.

Lights fade. End of scene 6.

Scene 7

*Lights rise and the restaurant scene appears. **Colleen**, now fully dressed, and **Ivy** walk into the restaurant and sit at a table. The ensemble and the sign are also present, except this time the sign reads "The Golden Gate Grill" and the **ensemble** members are dressed more casually.*

Colleen

So... do you think they'll actually take your order this time?

Ivy

(She snaps back.) Hey! (It's a sensitive topic.)

Eric sits in the back of the scene, continuously looking over at Colleen and Ivy's table.

Ivy

Don't look now but there's totally a cute stranger looking your way.

Colleen

Ivy, don't be ridiculous.

Ivy

Okay. I'm just saying he's really cute.

Colleen

No he isn't.

Ivy

You haven't even looked at him.

Colleen

...so?

Ivy

Just look.

Colleen

No.

Ivy

Please?

Colleen

No.

Ivy

Why not?

Colleen

No.

Ivy

There's no shame in looking.

Colleen

No.

Ivy

It won't hurt anyone if you do.

Colleen

(She looks up from her menu for the first time.) I'll hurt you.

Ivy

Colleen pleeeaaaasssseeeeeeee???

Colleen

Fine. (She looks back at Eric for a brief moment and then quickly back to her menu.)

Ivy

Isn't he cute?

Colleen

No.

Ivy

Ugh! Still, he is totally checking you out.

Colleen

Yeah, it's because I know him and you do too.

Ivy

No honey I'd remember him.

Colleen

It's Eric Stone from high school.

Ivy

(She gasps.) No!

Colleen

Yeah...

Ivy

THE Eric Stone that you were obsessed with for years? Your best friend from high school?

Colleen

Yes. He was the one I changed everything for. The reason why I am who I am now.

Ivy

Why didn't you tell me?

Colleen

Because I was hoping to just forget about it! I ran into him the other day in the street... and by ran into I mean totally body slammed into him.

Ivy

(She giggles.) Kinky.

Colleen

Ivy!

Ivy

Sorry! Sorry! Did you say anything to him?

Colleen

Why would I?

Ivy

Because you love him.

Colleen

I don't. Not anymore.

Ivy

Whatever. I'm going to go to the bathroom.

Colleen

Have fun!

Ivy

Oh I will (She exits.)

Colleen sits at the table, looking over her menu. Eric waits a moment before getting up and heading over to Colleen and Ivy's table.

Eric

Hey. Um... aren't you the girl I-

Colleen

Body slammed? Yes. That would be me.

Eric

Oh. Well you looked pretty upset last night,
I just wanted to make sure you're okay.

Colleen

I'm fine. Thank you.

Eric

No problem...

*There is a long moment of awkward silence
where **Eric** starts to say something
repeatedly just as **Colleen** turns the page of
her menu.*

Eric

My name is Eric. (He puts out his hand.)

Colleen

(She finally looks up at him and shakes his
hand.) Colleen. (They stay there awkwardly
holding each other's hand for a moment as
the shaking slowly stops. **Colleen** pulls her
hand away and looks back down at her menu.)
My friend will be back any minute.

Eric

Okay. (He starts to walk back to his table before pausing.) It was nice to actually meet you. (He sits down at his table.)

Colleen

Oh you have no idea.

Ivy

(She enters back in and sits down) Were you just talking to him?

Colleen

Maybe.

Ivy

You were.

Colleen

So what? It didn't mean anything. He didn't even recognize me.

Ivy

Oh. I'm sorry honey.

Colleen

Please don't be. That was the goal right? To not be recognized? That's why I completely changed who I am?

Ivy

Well yes but-

Colleen

But nothing. (She checks her watch.) I have to get to work. (She walks out.)

Lights fade. End of scene 7.

Scene 8

*Open back up at **Colleen's** office. She, as always, is scrambling through her desk. She looks very stressed while sitting at her messy desk. The **ensemble** and the **sign** are also present, as they were in the last office scene.*

Jackie

(She walks to Colleen's desk, wearing a low cut top. She struts around the stage like she knows she is better than everyone.) Hey Colleen. Been working on that piece yet?

Colleen

(bluffing) Yes. I have, actually.

Jackie

Hm. (She leans over onto Colleen's desk, making her boobs eye level with **Colleen**, who

is sitting down.) I've already finished mine.

Colleen

(She is too distracted and disturbed to form a coherent sentence.) Nice.

Jackie

Yeah. Five days early too. I was up all last night just trying to get it perfect.

Colleen

Congratulations.

Jackie

I just wish our topic wasn't such a bore.

Colleen

I know right! Why did Ms Adam have to give us such a boring topic? Like who actually cares about failing bookstores?

Jackie

Not me! (She gets into **Colleen's** face.) Listen here, I've been waiting for years for an opportunity like this. And I'm not going to let anything get in my way of winning. Not a lame assignment. And certainly not you. Clear?

Colleen

Crystal.

Jackie

Good. (She walks off.)

Colleen stands up and starts to walk in her direction as if she's about to go after Jackie but then backs out. She walks back to her desk, sighs to herself then looks down at her chest in disappointment. She then tries to fiddle around trying to look like Jackie. Eventually she gives up and sighs, slumping back into her chair. Eric enters.

Eric

You know you don't have to look like that to be a good writer.

Colleen

Oh my lanta it is my stalker.

Eric

Don't flatter yourself.

Colleen

Can I help you?

Eric

I was just listening in and I heard about your assignment from Ms Adam.

Colleen

Yeah. What about it?

Eric

And about how far you've gotten in it...

Colleen

Y-yeah...

Eric

You got nothing, do you?

Colleen

...leave me alone. (She returns to her work.)

Eric

On the contrary. I want to help you.

Colleen

You want to help me? Why?

Eric

I don't know. I just feel drawn to you.

Colleen

Excuse me?

Eric

L-like I know you from somewhere.

Colleen

Well you did run into me.

Eric

No I mean other than that.

Colleen

You said hi to me at the restaurant.

Eric

Other than that! (He laughs.) Jeez can't you just take my help?

Colleen

Okay..?

Eric

(He walks over to her desk and stares for a moment.) Well for starters, your workspace is a mess.

Colleen

Excuse me?

Eric

I mean look at all of this... There are just papers and other miscellaneous crap scattered everywhere.

Colleen

I'm sorry but who are you?

Eric

I already told you, I'm Eric.

Colleen

No, I mean who are you to tell me how my desk should look? Or how I am supposed to work?

Eric

Sorry. My bad. My name is Eric Stone. Personal assistant to Ms Adam and an aspiring novelist. I already have one book published titled "The Money Jar." Perhaps you've heard of it.

Colleen

No.

Eric

Ah, well, that would be because it isn't any good. That's why I had to take the job of Ms Adam's assistant. My book only sold 197 copies worldwide.

Colleen

Wow...

Eric

Yeah. Pretty pathetic, huh?

Colleen

I would say so. So why should I trust you with my writing then?

Eric

Because I know everything Ms Adam likes and doesn't like in articles such as the one she gave you. And judging by the string of events I just witnessed between you and Jackie, I can assume you really want to beat her out for this.

Colleen

Well yeah.

Eric

And that is why you should let me help you! Now let's get started. (He pulls up a chair

next to **Colleen**, shuffles around the papers for several long moments, trying to look at each piece but just finding himself lost.) Like seriously how can you work like this?

Colleen

Well, I don't, really...

Eric

(He gets up and starts walking to his coat, which is on a rack.) Come on!

Colleen

Um, where are we going?

Eric

My apartment.

Colleen

Excuse me?

Eric

It's much quieter there. And organized. And just an overall better place for writing. I can't think in here. Are you coming?

Colleen

Uh people who get lured into stranger's apartments don't get help, they just get murdered.

Eric

(laughing) Come on! I promise I won't bite or kill or anything. (He exits, followed by **Colleen**.)

Lights fade. End of scene 8.

Scene 9

*Open up at **Eric's** apartment. It's slightly decorated, he is a guy after all, but definitely not a mess. He unlocks the door and opens it for **Colleen**.*

Eric

Here we are. Welcome! Ma maison est ta maison! (He is speaking French.)

Colleen

Ma maison est ta maison?

Eric

Exactly. See everyone expects "Mi casa es tu casa" which means "my house is your house"

in Spanish, but no one expects you to say the same exact thing in French.

Colleen

I guess not.

Eric

Have a seat. (He motions to his couch that has a coffee table placed in front of it.) I'll get us something to drink. Tea?

Colleen

No, actually, I am more of a coffee drinker.

Eric

Gotcha. Coming right up!

Colleen

You do not have to-okay...

Eric

(As **Colleen** is getting everything ready, he exits and returns with two mugs and sets them on opposite corners off the coffee table as he takes a seat. He starts to think aloud.) So. Bookstores. (He goes through several intervals of staring into space, as if in deep thought, and then changing his demeanor as if trying to come up with a new

thought. Eventually he sighs and gives up.)
I got nothin'.

Colleen

Yeah, I know, it's awful. I wish I was given a better topic. A better way to make a name for myself and prove to Ms. Adam that I can do it.

Eric

Oh, that's easy. All you have to do is write a terrible novel. (He starts to laugh at himself.)

Colleen

(She's not finding it as funny.) Trust me, I have been trying.

Eric

What do you mean?

Colleen

I spent the past year traveling all around the country trying to find something to write about. Anything! But every place I went I struck out. Ms Adam held my job for me back home.

Eric

Why do you think that is?

Colleen

Why do I think Ms Adam held my job for me?

Eric

No, why do you think you couldn't find anything?

Colleen

Oh, I don't know. It could have been where I went, what I did, who I did it with...

Eric

Who'd you do it with?

Colleen

My boyfriend Jack tagged along for the whole thing.

Eric

And do you love Jack?

Colleen

...you ask a lot of questions.

Eric

I'm just curious.

Colleen

I'm not sure that is any of your business.

Eric

Well?

Colleen

(Beat.) It's not that simple.

Eric

What isn't?

Colleen

Could you please stop with the questions?

Eric

Sorry. My bad.

Colleen

It's okay. Can we just get back to writing please?

Eric

Sure thing. (He looks back down at all the papers scattered along the coffee table.) We should start at the beginning. Why are local bookstores failing?

Colleen

Because people are heading to the larger chain bookstores as opposed to local ones.

Eric

I see... well what if you wrote it from the perspective of one of the local owners?

Colleen

Okay... how do you suggest I do that?

Eric

You could interview one of them. Open up the article as if you're writing as them.

Colleen

That's not a bad idea! (She writes it down on a piece of paper.)

Eric

There's one about 4 miles from here. The owner's a buddy of mine. We can go tomorrow!

Colleen

Okay! We should probably call to let them know we are coming.

Eric

Good idea. The phone is over there and I'll get the phone book. (He heads out the door.)

Colleen walks over to where the phone is lying and picks it up. There is a picture frame next to it with a photo of **Eric** and a brunette, gentle looking girl in high school. She stops, picks up the frame and looks at it. He re enters with the phone book. He sees **Colleen** looking at the photo.

Eric

That's my best friend from high school, Evie. Well, her real name was Evangeline, but I called her Evie.

Colleen

Oh. (Beat.) Nice shirt.

Eric

Oh yeah. (He laughs.) She wasn't really one for tee shirts, but she loved Neon Life. So she made an exception.

Colleen

Neon Life?

Eric

They were this really obscure band she found one day. They actually aren't that bad.

Colleen

That's cool.

Eric

Yeah, she was pretty chill. I haven't talked to her in forever, though.

Colleen

Why not?

Eric

I don't know. I tried to find her about four years ago but she seemed to have disappeared.

Colleen

(aside) Yeah I know.

Eric

What?

Colleen

What? Oh, nothing. (She leaves the photo frame and brings the phone over by **Eric** and sits down.) Honestly, I am surprised you remember her at all. I can barely remember anything from last week let alone high school.

Eric

Well, what do you remember? (He takes the phone and starts dialing.)

Colleen

Why are you so persistent to know me?

Eric

I don't know, probably because I feel like I already do. (He looks at her and smiles, then continues dialing.)

Colleen

(She looks away when he smiles at her. She pulls out a voice recorder and stands up. The lights change.) 10:58am on June 2nd, 1994. This was when I found the second part of my story. And as always, it was him. He is the second part. Me reunifying with an old friend while confronting the past that I had thought was gone. Me fighting with Jack started the story, me running into Eric continued it. (She puts away the voice recorder and the lights change back.)

Lights fade. End of scene 9.

Scene 10

Open back up with Colleen unlocking the door and walking into hers and Jack's apartment.

Jack

(He walks in and speaks angrily.) Where have you been?

Colleen

Out.

Jack

For so long?

Colleen

I guess so..

Jack

Where were you?

Colleen

I don't think that's any of your business.

Jack

Yeah right it's none of my business. I'm in charge of you!

Colleen

In charge of me?

Jack

Yeah!

Colleen

You do not own me! I am not your slave! I am not your property!

Jack

Fine. Then you can leave.

Colleen

What?

Jack

Get your stuff. You're moving out.

Colleen

You cannot make me!

Jack

Oh yes I can! This is my apartment!

Colleen

You haven't paid the rent in three years!

Jack

Well then I guess that's your fault. Besides, the apartments in my name.

Colleen

Jack, please. All of this because I left for a little while?

Jack

What does it matter? You're never here anyway!

Colleen

I was only gone for like 24 hours and that is because you made me feel like you didn't want me!

Jack

Yeah, well, maybe I don't.

Colleen

(She is stunned and stands there in silence for a moment before **Jack** chimes back in.)

Jack

You didn't even tell me you were leaving!

Colleen

You threw me out!

Jack

You ran away!

Colleen

You've been treating me like crap for almost as long as we've been together! You act like you don't love me! You make me feel like nothing...

Jack

(Beat. Jack takes a deep breath.) Get your things. You're leaving... now. (He takes her by her arm and drags her off through the door)

Lights fade. End of scene 10.

Scene 11

While the set is being transformed back into Ivy's apartment, Colleen reenters with two suitcases trailing behind her. She knocks on Ivy's door. Ivy is laying in a daybed, eating popcorn while reading a magazine.

Ivy

(She is humming to herself and bouncing her toes, being a little extra, as always.)
Whoooooooooooo is it?

Colleen

Ivy, please open up. It's me.

Ivy

Who?!

Colleen

Colleen! Please open the door.

Ivy

Oh! Sure thing, sweetheart! I'm coming! (She goes over and opens the door for **Colleen**.)

Colleen

(She is standing in the door looking pitiful and defeated.) Thank you.

Ivy

Honey, you look awful.

Colleen

(She shoots **Ivy** a glare.)

Ivy

Love you!

Colleen

Yeah, sure.

Ivy

What happened? Why do you have suitcases?

Colleen

Jack.

Ivy

(She pauses for a moment.) ...can you be a little more specific? (She knows that **Jack** is trash.)

Colleen

He kicked me out. (Beat.) I don't particularly want to talk about it.

Ivy

Oh, okay... (She offers **Colleen** the bowl of popcorn)

Colleen

(She gets up abruptly and knocks over the entire bowl of popcorn. She doesn't realize and walks over to face the other way.) I mean, I just don't understand how someone thinks it is okay to treat someone else like that! Like what in the... Ivy, do you (She turns around and sees the popcorn spilled everywhere.) Oh.

Ivy

(She sits in all the spilled popcorn, glaring at **Colleen**.)

Colleen

(Quickly and unmeaningly she says:) Sorry!
(She turns back around and continues her rant.) Like, does this mean we broke up? Should I try to go back there and fix it? Am I supposed to go back there at all? What about all my stuff? I would have to go back to get it eventually. Ugh! Now I'm just so torn! Ivy... what do you think? (She turns back around at **Ivy**. A confused and appalled look grows on **Colleen's** face.)

Ivy

(Although she still listening, she, at some point during **Colleen's** rant, has shrugged and started eating her popcorn off of the floor, comically blowing off each piece before consuming it. She sees that **Colleen** is looking over at her and **Ivy** pauses.)
...want some?

Colleen

No. I prefer to eat my food in a dish, not the floor. (Beat.) Do you mind if I stay here for a little while?

Ivy

Of course you can. (She leads **Colleen** to the daybed and motions for her to have a seat. **Colleen** sits.) Let me go get you some bedding. (She leaves and re enters with a folded blanket with a pillow lying on top and sets it next to Colleen.) Do you want to talk?

Colleen

Not particularly.

Ivy

Okay.. I'll be in my room if you need me.
(She exits through the door.)

Colleen

(She stands, pulls out her voice recorder, lights change.) 7:32 pm on June 2nd, 1994. Now that Jack and I are probably over, which was not my original intent, I'm realizing that in order to make my life the story worth writing it's going to have to affect real things. It's going to affect my life and other people's lives and what other people feel. And I don't know how to feel about it. On one hand I feel awful for putting people through this. On the other hand I have this weird kind of excitement that tells me that big things are about to

happen. If this is what it takes to get a good story then I'm willing to do it. It's just a matter of time at this point.

*Colleen puts away the voice recorder and the lights change back. After a bit, she unzips one of her suitcases. Everything looks like it has been thrown in quickly. She picks something up but then quickly throws it back into her suitcase, this repeats. Eventually she sees **Jack's** jacket across the room from the last time she stayed at **Ivy's**. She walks over, picks it up, holds it for a moment, then viciously throws it out the window. She goes back to her day bed and lays down, not setting up either of her blanket or pillow. The lights dim and then come back on, symbolizing the sun rising and setting. **Colleen** stays wide awake throughout the entire thing. The next morning **Ivy** walks in.*

Ivy

Do you want to go to breakfast?

Colleen

No, I'm okay. Thanks.

Ivy

Well, then I'm going to work. (She stands for a moment, waiting for **Colleen** to respond. When she doesn't, **Ivy** leaves.)

Colleen

(She sits back up, she heads back to the kitchen. She shuffles around for a bit and then the phone rings. She answers.) Hello this is Ivy's.

Eric

(He is standing off to the side.) Colleen?

Colleen

(She perks up.) Eric? Yes, hi.

Eric

So are we still on for today?

Colleen

For what?

Eric

The bookstore, they're expecting us today in a few hours.

Colleen

Oh yeah! Okay I promise I'll be there!

Eric

Okay!

Colleen

I'll see you in a bit!

Eric

See ya.

Colleen hangs up the phone and **Eric** walks off stage. **Colleen** scrambles and goes back to her suitcase and shuffles through it looking for clothes. She pauses and then picks up the Neon Life tee shirt. She holds up the shirt for the audience to see. She has a moment of realization and grabs some other clothes and heads out the door.

Lights fade. End of scene 11.

The reds close. The house lights rise. End of act 1.

Act II

Scene 12

*The house lights dim and the reds open. The set is **Eric's** apartment with **Eric**, frozen and sitting on his couch looking over some*

papers. Colleen enters and heads to her monologuing spot. She is dressed in the tee shirt from the photograph and a wig.

Colleen/ Evie

(The lights change, the scene freezes as she pulls out her voice recorder.) 9:46am on June 3rd, 1994. This is nothing like how I expected things to happen. 5 years ago, when I graduated high school, I swore I would put Evie away for good. I didn't like her. I didn't like who she was. I didn't like who I was... But I liked him. I loved him. (Beat.) I can't believe he didn't see right through me the moment he ran into me in the street. Just two short days ago. Two days! I also can't believe he was able to pull me back in so quickly... Evie is nothing like me. She knows nothing that I know. All I wanted was a fresh start. I wanted to be someone that I had always longed to be but was too afraid. I kept nothing, well, except Ivy. I couldn't leave her behind. But other than that, I'm nothing that I was in high school. I was born as Evie, but I will die as Colleen. (Beat.) At least that was the plan... (She goes to the front door of **Eric's** apartment and knocks. Lights change back.)

Eric

(He unfreezes from his position and heads to the door to open it. He pauses in astoundment.) Evie!

Colleen/ Evie

(There is an obvious change in her actions and mannerisms from before, when she was Colleen.) Eric.

Eric

(He lunges over and hugs her.) What are you doing here?

Colleen/ Evie

I... I don't know. I was in town and I remember that you tried to get a hold of me...

Eric

Yeah, like four years ago!

Colleen/ Evie

Yeah. Uhh...

Eric

I only stopped trying because I thought it was mission impossible.

Colleen/ Evie

Yeah, I'm sorry about that I-

Eric

Don't even worry about it! Why are you in town?

Colleen/ Evie

Oh, I was visiting a friend.

Eric

Which one? Is it someone I know?

Colleen/ Evie

Which friend? No. You don't know them.. It's, um...

Eric

Oh never mind! I'm just really glad you're here. Come on in, sit down. Ma maison est ta maison!

Colleen/ Evie

You still held onto that French, huh?

Eric

Of course! How could I not? Madame's class was the best!

Colleen/ Evie

Yeah, it was.

Eric

Can I get you something to drink? Perhaps a green tea with basil?

Colleen/ Evie

You remembered.

Eric

Of course I did. How could I ever forget? (He walks back to the mini kitchen, grabs two cups and pours tea from a teapot into both of them.) You only drank it at any given moment on any given day.

Colleen/ Evie

Hey, it helps with my nerves!

Eric

Ha! What nerves? (He comes back and hands one cup to Evie.)

Colleen/ Evie

Exactly! That's how you know it's working. (She takes a sip.) Ugh, I haven't had this in forever.

Eric

Really?

Colleen/ Evie

Hm? (She freezes, realizing that she just spoke out of character) Oh. Um. What I meant was... I haven't had this in forever... meaning yesterday! (She laughs nervously and takes a big gulp.)

Eric

Okay... So, how have you been?

Colleen/ Evie

Pretty good, actually. I have a writing job.

Eric

Yeah I remember how much you loved to write. You always had so much potential.

Colleen/ Evie

Yeah I guess...

Eric

(He puts a hand on her leg.) I always knew you could do it.

Colleen/ Evie

(She moves her leg away from him.) Thank you. But what about you? What have you been up to? Still dating Sarah?

Eric

Oh no. We broke up right after graduation. And oh, nothing much. I'm also a writer.

Colleen/ Evie

Oh really?

Eric

Oh yes. I actually have a novel out. It's called "The Mone-"

Colleen/ Evie

(stepping on his words) "The Money Jar"

Eric

You've heard of it?

Colleen/ Evie

Oh I've done more than that, deary. I've read it.

Eric

(Beat.) Oh no.

Colleen/ Evie

Oh yes.

Eric

Well now I'm just embarrassed. Wasn't it just awful?

Colleen/ Evie

Well I don't want to be mean..

Eric

Of course you don't! Just say it.

Colleen/ Evie

Fine. But you're asking for it. (She leans up closer to him, suddenly talking very seriously.) Not only was it awful, but it was truly the most heinous thing I've ever read.

Eric

(beat) Wow.

Colleen/Evie

Chill out! I'm just joshin' you.

Eric

Well, I am too. Is that all you've got? It's heinous? Evie, it's atrocious! It's absurd!

Colleen/ Evie

That's exactly what heinous means! But it also means wickedly evil.

Eric

So I'm evil, huh?

Colleen/ Evie

No, not you personally. Just the way you move a pen.

Eric

Well I will have you know that I just so happen to be an assistant to a very famous publisher. And, this one I'm particularly proud of, I'm assisting another great writer with her piece for the aforementioned famous publisher!

Colleen/ Evie

Oh really? Well do I know said writer?

Eric

No, you wouldn't. She's not famous yet.

Colleen/ Evie

Yet?

Eric

Afraid not. She will be, though. I can tell.
She just has to get herself together first.

Colleen/ Evie

Well if you're the one helping her, then God
help her. She's got her work cut out for
her.

Eric

Hey!

Colleen/ Evie

Well!

Eric

(After a moment of just them laughing, they
start to calm down.) I really did miss you,
Evie.

Colleen/ Evie

(She is hesitant.) I missed you too.

Eric

Why are you here anyway? Don't lie to me, I
know there's no "friend."

Colleen/ Evie

I was just having a rough night a little
while ago. Then suddenly I caught myself

smiling for no reason. Then I realized I was thinking of you.

Eric

(He grabs her hand and gently says:) Oh please. Nothing bad could ever happen to you. Nothing bad could ever happen to my sweet ol' Evie.

Colleen/ Evie

(She looks at him regretfully, but still smiles. She pulls out her voice recorder. The lights change and the scene freezes. This time she speaks in Eric's direction.) I wanted to tell him... everything. But I couldn't. I couldn't risk that. Not again. (She puts away the voice recorder, the lights change and the scene resumes.)

Eric

(They stare at each other for a moment. Suddenly the alarm on his watch goes off, he checks it.) Oh shoot!

Colleen/ Evie

What is it?

Eric

I'm so sorry but I have to go. I am meeting with my writer friend to interview this librarian.

Colleen/ Evie

(laughing) A librarian? What kind of boring old story requires interviewing a librarian- (She freezes, realizing that she also needs to be ready to meet with said librarian as Colleen. She whispers:) Crap.

Eric

What?

Colleen/ Evie

Oh. Nothing. I just realized that I also have some place I need to be. (She gets off the couch.)

Eric

Oh. Well, will I see you again?

Colleen/ Evie

I would really like that.

Eric

So would I.

Colleen/ Evie

(They hug.) Goodbye, Eric.

Eric

Goodbye, Evie.

Colleen/ Evie

(She exits out the door.)

Lights fade. End of scene 12.

Scene 13

The set is changed to a little local bookstore. It seems to be very disorganized, with randomly scattered piles of books and unkempt bookshelves everywhere. The sign is back, but this time reads "Mr Weppler's Bookstore" and is at a slant. **Eric** walks down from his apartment and looks around. After a moment he leans up against the side of the door.

Colleen

(She rushes on stage.) Sorry! Sorry I'm late!

Eric

(laughing) You don't say. Where were you?

Colleen

(panting) I had to change.

Eric

Change?

Colleen

Yeah?

Eric

I'm sure whatever you had on was fine.

Colleen

Trust me, it wasn't.

Eric

(He gives her a weird look.) Whatever you say.

Colleen

(She takes a deep breath from running.) I'm sorry.

Eric

I assure you it's quite alright. Come on, (joking) we're late enough! (They walk inside the door. Sound effect: bell ringing.) Hello?

Wepler

(A funny looking, round man with an italian accent comes walking in, carrying a stack of books.) Ooo! 'Scusa mi! (He sets the books down and wipes off his hands.)

Colleen

Um, Mr Wepler, is it?

Wepler

Si. I am-a Mr Wepler. (He takes a bow.)

Colleen

Yes, we are the writers who called you about an interview yesterday?

Wepler

Ooohhhh yes yes yes. I-a remember now. Ahh Eric!

Eric

Hello, sir. Good to see you again.

Wepler

Mr Eric is an old friend of mine. Been-a friends for many years!

Colleen

Yes, he told me. So do you mind if we, uhh, get started?

Weppler

But of course! Although the call you gave me was kind of odd, walk-ins are always welcome! (**Colleen** and **Eric** look at each other confused. **Weppler** mutters to himself.) Hmm. Let me see if- aha! (He pulls one off of the shelf.) Here you are! (He holds it out in front of **Eric** and **Colleen**. **Weppler** pauses, looks at the top of the book, then blows a pile of dust off and continues.) "How to Hold a Proper Interview" now be careful with this one. She's a bellezza.

Eric

(He starts coughing because of the dust, along with **Colleen**.) Um. No. Mr Weppler, we came to interview you.

Weppler

Me?

Colleen

Yes, sir.

Weppler

Well, why would you want to interview me? I'm afraid I'm not a very interesting fellow.

Colleen

It's for an article, sir.

Weppler

What kind of article?

Colleen

One about local versus chain bookstores.

Weppler

Hm. Well that sounds a little boring, dear. Are you sure you wouldn't rather write about-a something else?

Colleen

(Bitterly, to herself, she scoffs.) Yeah, "boring" says the man who owns a book about giving proper interviews.

Eric

(He nudges her violently.)

Colleen

(She holds where Eric had just hit her and whispers:) Ow.

Eric

Anyway! Would you mind answering a few questions for us?

Weppler

Sure. It's-a no problem! It'd be tight, (He winks at Eric.) or is that what the kids say?

Colleen

(She pulls out her notebook.) Now, Mr Weppler, why did--

Weppler

(Dramatically interrupting her, he looks out to the back of the audience and up, as if looking into a dream.) It was a cool day in my good old country of Italia in March of 1947.

Colleen

(She sighs and rolls her eyes.)

Weppler

I was-a just a small little fellow about yay high. (He holds his hand out about three feet above the ground.) And me pa says to me, "Son, it is-a time for us to go away. And travel to America." And I said " Aw but pa, why? Why must we go?" (Beat.) "Opportunity!" My pa shouted at me. "But all my friends are-a here-a!" "Nonsense!" My pa

did-a not care! He moved me and my ma and my... (He pulls out his hand and starts to count.) four sisters and my... (He pulls out his hand again and starts to count again.) seven brothers all the way across the ocean!

Colleen

(butting in) That is very nice but uh-

Mr Wepler

And off we went to a new land. But, we had no jobs, no house and no family to help us find these things. So we opened this store! At first it was very hard to adjust to speaking english and selling english books. But we overcame that and all of our problems went away for a while. I cannot say that I don't miss it. Believe it or not, this used to be a beautiful store! People loved to come here and buy books and leave books and... But then my pa died, and my ma died, and my siblings moved away. I never found love. (He shrugs.) I was-a too busy with the store!

Eric

Awh.

Mr Wepler

Si! It's a very big awh indeed! I miss when people used to come here every daybefore all those big and fancy bookstores started opening. I loved getting people excited to read! I miss my family. I miss Italia. (Beat.) But life-a goes on! Do you have anymore-a questions?

Colleen

(stunned) No, actually.

Mr Weppler

Oh. Well it was-a nice to-a meet you! (He goes back to his cleaning.)

Colleen

It was nice to meet you too.

Eric starts to head out the door. Colleen follows Eric, but then stops. She turns around and starts to straighten the sign. Eric marches back into the bookstore and sighs in disappointment at Colleen's need for everything to be perfect. He takes her arm and pulls her out the door. The sign reacts by sticking out his/her tongue at Colleen once she has left.

Lights fade. End of scene 13.

Scene 14

Colleen and Eric head back to Eric's apartment. The lights dim as they walk back and set up their papers on the coffee table. After they get all set up and appear to be talking for a moment when the lights rise.

Colleen

(laughing) Okay, you cannot put that in the article!

Eric

(laughing also) Why not?

Colleen

Because it's awful!

Eric

Hey! That's insulting.

Colleen

That's offensive!

Eric

(obviously kidding) How is calling chain bookstores a "massive life sucking hole filled with the most mediocre top 20 selling

pieces of crap that only uneducated middle school preps read as they sip their lattes and pretend to be 'chill'" offensive? (He puts air quotes around the word "chill".)

Colleen

(Beat.) How is it not offensive?

Eric

Oh, don't have a cow. (**Colleen** hits him.)
Alright, alright I'll take it out! (He scribbles on the paper, still laughing.)

Colleen

(laughing) Good.

Eric

Okay. Now let's move on. Read me what we have so far.

Colleen

(She clears her throat.) "And as Mr Wepler continued on to tell me his tragic yet hopeful story, I started to wonder to myself: 'What is so appealing about mass production?' With unoriginality and the basics already all over the world, why are we as a society choosing to eliminate what is left of our strange and constantly

evolving world? If we continue on this track then what will become of us and the place we inhabit? Everything becomes boring and lackluster." What do you think?

Eric

I think it's great. Totally the bomb.

Colleen

Really?

Eric

Absolutely! It's compelling. It's passionate. It's argumentative. It makes the reader think.

Colleen

But do you think Ms Adam will think it is great?

Eric

Of course she will. How could she not? I promise, it's really good, Colls.

Colleen

Why do you keep calling me that?

Eric

I don't know. I always give people nicknames. Like Evie.

Colleen

Oh. (She resumes her work.)

Lights fade. End of scene 14.

Scene 15

*As **Eric** and **Colleen** exit **Eric's** apartment, the set becomes half the office and half the street outside of the office. Since it is late at night, the **sign** is still present but now wearing pajamas and sleeping. The **sign** jumps up when **Colleen** enters and assumes his/her position, though still lagging.*

Colleen

(She pauses and recollects herself before entering through the door.) Ms Adam? I finished my story. (Beat.) Ms Adam? Ms Adam? I will just leave it here for you then. (She sets the stack of papers on a desk neatly. She smiles and nods for a job well done. She pulls the Neon Life shirt out of her bag and admires it. She exits out the door. **Colleen** is shuffling through her purse and doesn't see **Jack** enter.)

Jack

Hey.

Colleen

(Startled, she starts frantically shoving the shirt back in her bag.) What do you want?

Jack

I want you to come home.

Colleen

What?

Jack

I was wrong to treat you like that. Just... please come back home.

Colleen

Jack

Jack

Listen. Please. Please just hear me out.

Colleen

Why should I?

Jack

Because we were together for four years? You owe it to me to listen to me.

Colleen

(sarcastically) I owe it to you.

Jack

Yeah.

Colleen

I guess you really haven't changed. (She shuffles back into her purse and pulls out her key.) I have to get home.

Jack

My home is your home.

Colleen

No, it isn't. I've moved in with someone else. And I don't think you should come around anymore.

Jack

And why not?

Colleen

Because I have no way of knowing what you'll do.

Jack

(Beat. He grabs the wrist that's not holding the key.) You're coming with me.

Colleen

No I'm not!

Jack

Oh yes. You are. (He starts to attack her like before. She tries to fight back.)

Colleen

Jack let me go!

*Colleen continues to struggle for a bit. Then in a fit of adrenaline, she takes her key and scratches **Jack** across the face with it. A scratching sound effect is heard. **Jack** screams, both in pain and in anger, he lets go of **Colleen**, who falls to the floor and braces for what will happen next, but nothing does. Both are left breathing heavily on the ground. Eventually, **Colleen** scurries off. Jack pauses for a moment, regains himself and marches after her.*

Lights fade. End of scene 15.

Scene 16

Lights raise back up on the office.

Ms Adam

(She walks on stage and over to the office.)
I cannot believe I left my face powder here again! (At first she strolls by **Colleen's** article, then she stops, turns around and picks it up.) "The Colors of the Covers By: Colleen Myers" (She sits on the desk where she found the report and begins reading aloud.) "Fade in on an empty mind, one that has been cleared out by mediocrity and the persistence of dull movements. The mind hungers for something new to chomp on and swallow into it's deep abdomen. When creativity is wiped out by mass production of the same things and ideas, that is where this hunger begins." Hm. (She looks up, appearing to be deep in thought. After a short moment, she gets off the desk and heads off stage, still reading the article in her hands.)

The set changes to **Eric's** apartment. **Eric** is sitting down on the couch, reading a newspaper. **Colleen/ Evie** enters and heads to her monologuing spot. She pulls out her voice recorder and the lights change.

Colleen/ Evie

11:02 pm on June 3rd, 1994. I deserve happiness. Doesn't everyone deserve happiness at some point? If being Evie, even if just just a few times a week makes him happy, and it makes me happy, then how can it be wrong? Everything else in my life is wrong. Things with Jack have never been this bad before. What just happened with us, never has never happened before. But hey, that's just more writing material, right? But I can't think about that right now. All I can think about... all I want to think about... is him. (SHe glances in **Eric's** direction. Lights return to normal and she heads over to knock on **Eric's** door.)

Eric

Evie! Back so soon?

Colleen/ Evie

What can I say, I couldn't stay away.

Eric

Come on in.

Colleen/ Evie

I just wanted to see you again.

Eric

You know I always want to see you.

Colleen/ Evie

I do. And besides, I had such a good time the this morning, I just didn't want to say goodbye yet.

Eric

No one's forcing you to. Tea? (He heads back to the kitchen and pours two cups of tea.)

Colleen/ Evie

Yes. Thank you. That sounds amazing.

Eric

(He smiles and hands her the cup of tea.)
Anytime.

Colleen/ Evie

So how have you been?

Eric

Pretty good actually. My coworker and I finished that story I was telling you about.

Colleen/ Evie

Oh yeah? How'd it go?

Eric

Amazing, actually, I really think she has a shot.

Colleen/ Evie

Really?

Eric

Oh yes. I mean, why would she not? Colls is very talented.

Colleen/ Evie

(sarcastically) I bet she is.

Eric

(baby-ish) Aww is someone a little jealous?

Colleen/ Evie

No.

Eric

Aww don't be jealous Evie. I love you just the same. (off to the side) Even though you can't write.

Colleen/ Evie

Excuse me?

Eric

What?

Colleen/ Evie

What did you just say?

Eric

(laughing it off) I'm just kidding Evie!
Wow, you're always so serious!

Colleen/ Evie

(Beat.) I wasn't talking about the writing.

Eric

Oh. Well...

Colleen/ Evie

You love me?

Eric

Um. Uhh...

Colleen/ Evie

The same as her?

Eric

Evie, please let me explain.

Colleen/ Evie

I'm listening.

Eric

(He takes a minute to prepare himself to say:) I love you.

Colleen/ Evie

(She sighs.) Eric.

Eric

Please Evie! Stop talking! (Beat.) I've loved you for a while now, only I didn't know it. I was only able to figure it out when I didn't see you for years. I missed you like hell. I was going insane! There was this empty void in my life that never seemed to be filled no matter how much I tried. I tried writing a book. I tried traveling the world. Hell, I even tried a career in performing, just to try something crazy and new. But nothing seemed right without you. I missed the way you'd run your fingers through your long dark hair in class. I missed the cute little giggle you did when there was an awkward silence. I missed your strange, yet calming, tea order. I missed you. And then Colls came along and it all seemed to make sense. She fit that piece I was looking for in you. But now you're back! And back for a while this time. And I... I

couldn't be happier. So please... (He leans in to kiss her.)

Colleen/ Evie

(She went along with it for a while then backed out at the last moment. She runs off the couch and down to in front of the coffee table.) Eric please! (Beat.) You don't want to love me, nothing good can ever come of loving me! Why can't we just be friends like we always were?

Eric

You know that we were never "just friends." And that's not true. Good things can come from loving you.

Colleen/ Evie

But it is true! Trust me.

Eric

Trust me.

Colleen/ Evie

(whispering) But I can't.

Eric

(whispering) You can. (They kiss.)

Lights fade. End of scene 16.

Scene 17

*Lights come back up on the restaurant scene. **Jack** sits alone surrounded by many beer bottles, accompanied only by the new scar on his face from **Colleen's** key. He sips on one, looking distraught.*

Waiter

(He enters from the employee door with another beer.) You sure you want another one?

Jack

Positive. And keep 'em coming.

Waiter

Look man, I don't think-

Jack

I don't care what you think! Get me another one.

Waiter

(He sighs in defeat.) Alright. Aren't you a waste. (He walks off.)

Jack

(He reacts by getting tense for a moment then, after realizing he doesn't care, he calms down and takes another sip.)

Jackie

(She enters the restaurant and upon seeing Jack says:) Well well well. What do we have here?

Jack

Nothing. Leave me alone.

Jackie

Oh please. I don't leave that easily. (She sits in the chair opposite of him and playing with one of the empty bottles.) What brings you to this point? Tough break up?

Jack

I guess you could say that.

Jackie

Maybe I could help. (She touches his hand.)

Jack

(He scoffs and takes another sip of beer but doesn't pull his hand away.) Yeah, right.

Jackie

Well geez aren't you in a mood.

Jack

Well, lady, I don't know what you want from me. I don't even know you.

Jackie

You don't have to. (Beat.) Wait a second, don't I know you?

Jack

No.

Jackie

Yeah. I vaguely remember seeing you somewhere. Maybe in a picture... Oh. (She scoffs.) Now I remember. Colleen.

Jack

What?

Jackie

Your girlfriend, Colleen? I work with her. She has a picture of you on her desk. (Beat.) Ohhhhh is that why you're here? Because she's screwing her little helper man?

Jack

What?

Jackie

Yeah. Eric, I think his name is. He's helping her write this paper in attempt to beat me. (She flips her hair. She then takes a notice that the idea of being cheated on is really bothering **Jack**. She takes the opportunity to worsen the situation.) But yeah, they've been together for months now. I'm surprised you didn't notice. (Beat.) Wait is that why you're here?

Jack

(You can see the anger growing on his face.)
I knew she was a liar.

Jackie

(She is totally playing him.) Oh my! You didn't know?

Jack

I have to go. (He stands up.)

Jackie

Honey wait. (She goes up next to him and takes a pen out of her pocket and scribbles her number on his arm.) And when you're done with her, give me a call.

Jack glances back at her before storming out. **Jackie**, pleased with herself, giggles, sits back down in his chair and takes a swig of his beer. The lights fade on the restaurant and a spotlight appears on Jack. He's intimidating and obviously scary as he glances out at the audience. Slowly, he starts to back up, before exiting.

Lights fade. End of scene 17.

Scene 18

The set has been cleared. It is the street. **Colleen** stands alone in her usual monolging spot with the usual lighting. As she speaks, **Jack** appears in the background and slowly looms up on her.

Colleen

11:58 pm on June 3rd, 1994. Oh. My. (She tries to move her mouth to say something but nothing comes out.) Did that really just happen? I- I don't know what to think, or say or do. It has been so long since... Am I actually happy? I never thought I could be happy this way. (She messes with her hair. Beat. She smiles.) But I don't think I have a problem with it.

*All of a sudden, **Jack** grabs her by the mouth from behind. The colored spotlight quickly changes to red as he grabs her. He starts screaming into her ear. Upon being grabbed, her voice recorder goes flying. **Colleen** is kicking and screaming this whole time.*

Jack

Why didn't you tell me? Who do you think you are that you can cheat on me and get away with it? I loved you! I let you move into my house! How many times did I have to let you in because the stupid, pathetic little you forgot her key? And you go and cheat on me? I followed you everywhere! Everywhere!

Colleen

I know! I know! I didn't cheat on you!

Jack

And now you're a liar too. You know how I feel about liars. (He pulls out his pocket knife, and holds it in front of Colleen.)

Colleen

(She is really panicking.) Jack please!

Jack

I didn't want to do this. I tried so hard,
Colleen.

Colleen

Jack...

Jack

No! You pushed me to do this! I loved you
and you left me! You betrayed me while I
loved you! You lied to me! You made me do
this!! Eric, was it? (He turns her around so
she is facing him. He holds up the knife
between their faces.)

Colleen

H-how do you know that name? (She starts to
cry.) Jack I promise I did not cheat on you.
I would never do that. Jack, please.

Jack

(You can see his conflicting thoughts on his
face as she talks, but eventually the bad
takes over him.) I don't believe you. (He
kisses her aggressively.)

Colleen

(She struggles to pull away but she is not
strong enough to beat him. In her fit, his
knife slashes across her arm. She screams

even louder and noticeably than before. She falls to the ground with Jack still looming over her.)

A police siren is heard.

Jack

(Beat.) You got lucky this time.

Jack dashes off stage. While on the ground, Colleen places her hand over her scar. She is sobbing as she aggressively screams in his direction. She reaches for her voice recorder, and then collapses in defeat.

Lights fade. End of scene 18.

Scene 19

Lights come back up as **Colleen** struggles to stand up. She hobbles her way over to **Ivy's** apartment and weakly yells from the door.

Colleen

Ivy! Ivy! Ivy!

Ivy

(She rushes on from the door and flings open the door.) Oh my goodness! (She grabs onto

Colleen, who somewhat falls onto her, and helps her to the daybed.) What happened?

Colleen

Jack accused me of cheating on him. With Eric.

Ivy

What? How would he even know that?

Colleen

I have no idea. But he found me and he beat me and for a moment I thought he was going to kill me. But then he heard police sirens and dashed off.

Ivy

Oh honey. (She hugs her tightly. **Colleen** flinches in pain, but lets **Ivy** hug her anyway. Beat.) Let me help you wrap that up. (She gets some bandages and then leads Colleen to the daybed and begins wrapping her arm.)

Colleen

Ivy. I did something.

Ivy

What?

Colleen

(Regretfully, she pulls out the Neon Life tee shirt out of her bag and holds it out for **Ivy** to see.)

Ivy

(Her face drops.) Oh honey...

Colleen

I know I know! It's bad! But it was all within reason, I swear! You see, I did it all for this book that I've been trying to write for years. And well you know all about that. So I thought I could just make my life into my own book and make it interesting and make it worth writing about. Since I couldn't make something up on my own, I thought life could write the story for me. I just went over once and everything is already changing so fast! And I just never thought that-

Ivy

Never thought what?

Colleen

I never thought that I'd actually feel something. I never thought it might actually hurt people.

Ivy

What are you saying?

Colleen

I think I'm falling in love with him again.

Ivy

Oh honey...

Colleen

I know.

Ivy

Why did you have to go back? Why did you have to do this? After how hard you tried to never end up back here.

Colleen

For the book. I did it for the other thing I'm working so hard for. And it... it just... It made him so happy.

Ivy

What?

Colleen

Seeing her again. It made him so happy.

Ivy

So that's your explanation. Deceiving him made him happy.

Colleen

I am not deceiving him!

Ivy

Pretending to be someone else, someone he loved, isn't deceiving?

Colleen

Loves.

Ivy

What?

Colleen

Someone he loves. He told me, or rather her, tonight.

Ivy

Wow.

Colleen

I know.

Ivy

So it's like a love triangle, but yet, the triangle only has two sides.

Colleen

Sick, isn't it?

Ivy

But what I don't get is that is this really what you wanted? For Colleen, I mean. An abusive boyfriend? And, I'm sorry but, lacking career? Is this really what you wanted for yourself? What you had imagined?

Colleen

Not at all. I had no idea it would be like this.

Ivy

Why did you leave her?

Colleen

What?

Ivy

Evie. Why did you leave her behind? You never really told me.

Colleen

(Beat.) Because I couldn't stand who I was. I couldn't stand the way people viewed me, as this scared little girl. I wanted to be able to fight for myself.

Ivy

There are other ways to do that besides erasing your-

Colleen

The night before graduation my parents sat me down and told me that if I ever wanted to be someone in life I was going to need to learn how to find exactly what I wanted and take it for myself. They failed to teach me that. I had to teach myself. I knew no one would look at this scared little girl and think "She can do wonders." I wanted to be someone that people could relate to and know. No one could know Evie. Evie failed. And I just can't... I can't admit to myself that Colleen failed too. And if I became Evie again, for good, it would mean that I've given up. That I'm proof that I failed, again.

Ivy

Life isn't about people fearing you!

Colleen

No it's about people loving you!

Ivy

What?

Colleen

He didn't love her! No one loved her! Not even herself...

Ivy

I loved her.

Colleen

Sometimes that's not enough!

Ivy

(Beat.) Is this all for you... or for him?

(Beat.) Hon, you have to put yourself first sometimes. This is one of those times. People will enter and exit your life all the time. Just be able to let them go before things get bad. Before all the good times you had are replaced by all the bad ones. Don't cringe at the mention of their name because you can only think of all the bad memories instead of smiling at all the good.

Colleen

You're right. Just, can you give me a minute?

Ivy

Of course. If that's what you want.

Colleen

It is.

Ivy

Okay. (She stands up.) Call for me if you need anything. (She exits through the door.)

Colleen

(Lights change as she speaks into her voice recorder.) 3:04 am on June 4th, 1994. There was a girl I used to know. There was a girl I used to be. However that girl is dead. I now see that Evie can do nothing but harm. After today, I can only see her as a symbol of all of my mistakes. I cannot be her anymore... Dear listener, I don't know what you've heard. I don't know where you've been. I can only hope you have been in my place once. I will miss her, and I will miss the way he acts around her. (Beat.) Because where I was once found, now I am lost again. I hope you can understand, but I refuse to

let this be my story. The only thing I do know is that Eric must never know what I did to him.

Lights fade. End of scene 19.

Scene 20

*It's the street setting again. **Jack** enters and begins to wander around the stage. **Ivy** enters a moment later from the opposite direction. She angrily looks around and spots him.*

Ivy

Hey.

Jack

(He looks around.) Me?

Ivy

Yeah, you.

Jack

Okay? (They meet in the middle of the stage.)

Ivy

(She is sassy as all get out.) Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Ivy. (She puts out her hand.)

Jack

Jack? (He takes her hand and shakes it.)

Ivy

(She doesn't let go of his hand.) If I gave you a straw, would you mind sucking the fun out of someone else's life?

Jack

...what?

Ivy

(She stops shaking and pulls him close to her face.) Now would you mind telling me why you tried to kill my best friend?

Jack

(He sighs.) Oh. Yeah. That makes more sense.

Ivy

Excuse me?

Jack

Nothing.

Ivy

Do you think this is some kind of joke?

Jack

Well, yes, actually.

Ivy

Murder is no joke.

Jack

Would you calm down?! I wasn't actually going to kill her.

Ivy

Well you sure made it seem that way!

Jack

Shut up! You don't know the first thing about our relationship!

Ivy

I'm her best friend. If you really think that I don't know more about your relationship than you do, then that's your own fault.

Jack

I barely even know you! So get out!

Ivy

Excuse me?

Jack

That's right. Get out of my life. Get out of my relationship. You don't belong here you stupid, naive litt-

Ivy

(She slaps him hard across the face.)

Jack

(He is taken aback.)

Ivy

Still funny?

Jack

(Beat. He starts roaring with laughter.)

Ivy

Ugh! No wonder you're so irritating!

Jack

Excuse me?

Ivy

Oh don't get your tinsel in a tangle.

Jack

...what?

Ivy

Stay away from my best friend.

Jack

Well she should've stayed away from Eric, or whatever his name is.

Ivy

Okay if you're going to kill someone on that account of someone else, you should at least know that person's name.

Jack

I don't care to know it. It doesn't matter.

Ivy

It doesn't matter? You were going to kill someone over a reason that "doesn't matter?"

Jack

I already said I didn't want to kill her.

Ivy

I don't care about what you want. What you want doesn't mean anything if you go against

it. Like I didn't want to eat that donut earlier, but I still did it!

Jack

I really don't care. Just keep out of my way. (He shoves his way through her and exits.)

Ivy

(Defeated, she sighs and exits in the other direction.)

Lights fade. End of scene 20.

Scene 21

*Lights rise to show that the set has changed to **Eric's** apartment. **Eric** is inside of it on the couch.*

Colleen/ Evie

(She slowly but surely making her way to her usual monologuing spot. She pulls out her voice recorder and looks as if she's about to speak into it. The lights start to change when she hold out her hand.) Stop. (The lights go back to their original setting. Colleen/ Evie just stands shaking her head as she puts her voice recorder back into her purse. After a moment she starts to head

back to the US platform. It is obvious that she is struggling to knock on the door but eventually she does.) Eric? It's me.

Eric

(He gets up and opens the door for her.)
Come on in m'lady...

Colleen/ Evie

(She enters.) Eric we need to talk.

Eric

Okay. (He sees the scar on her arm.) Oh my-
what happened?

Colleen/ Evie

What? Oh. Nothing. It doesn't matter.

Eric

Yes it does.

Colleen/ Evie

I just tripped getting home last night. It
was just me being clumsy again.

Eric

Oh okay. Is there anything I can do to help?

Colleen/ Evie

No, no, I promise I'm fine. But we seriously need to talk.

Eric

Okay, what about? (He sits down.)

Colleen/ Evie

(She sits down next to him and takes a deep breath.) Look, I know I said I wasn't going to do this to you again...

Eric

What?

Colleen/ Evie

But I need to go away again.

Eric

(Beat. He sighs.) Evie...

Colleen/ Evie

Please understand that this is something that I have to do.

Eric

You can't.

Colleen/ Evie

I have to.

Eric

I won't let you. (Beat. He moves closer to her and grabs her hand.) Please, please just stay... for me.

Colleen/Evie

Everything's just so complicated.

Eric

We can fix it.

Colleen/ Evie

No we can't. This is how the story has to end.

Eric

What?

Colleen/ Evie

(She stands up and heads towards the door.)
I really have to go.

Eric

(He stands up and grabs her wrist.) Please just wait! Did I do something?

Colleen/ Evie

Of course not.

Eric

Then why--

Colleen/ Evie

Eric we're not good for each other!

Eric

How do you know that?

Colleen/ Evie

Because we never have been! Even in high school... you were Eric Stone, the star baseball player. I was just a member of the crowd of everyone who loved you.

Eric

You were never part of that crowd to me!

Colleen/ Evie

(Beat. She takes a deep breath in preparation for what she's about to say.)
Look you didn't know it but I used to be really in love with you. And I just can't go through all of that again.

Eric

I knew.

Colleen/ Evie

And everything just keeps getting worse and worse. Maybe if I ha- (She pauses, then corrects herself) maybe if things hadn't have changed... we wouldn't be here. And I can't help but think, if you'd never have come into my life... what would I be thinking about all this time, instead of thinking about you? You're slowly killing me and you don't even know it! I opened up to you! (Beat.) And you closed it up on us.

Colleen/ Evie storms out the door, closing it behind her. Eric then gets up and heads to that door as well, without opening it. There is a moment of nothing, then Colleen/ Evie and Eric, in synchronicity, lay against the opposite sides of the door. They stay like this for a long moment. Until eventually, the lights focus only on Eric as Colleen runs off stage.

Eric

I closed it up. I closed it up?! You're the one who left! You- you hurt me! I would have never just drop you like you've done twice now. I would never abuse your emotions like you abused mine. But maybe I love you for that... No. No, this is all my fault. It's all

my fault again. It must be. You wouldn't leave by your own guilts. I just wish I knew what I did. Why couldn't you just tell me? We were so good together, why couldn't you just see that?! I need you. You make me happy. I can't believe I messed this up again. Please. Please come back to me again someday. You did it once, I know you can do it again...

Lights fade. End of scene 21.

Scene 22

Lights rise and the office set is on stage. Jackie and the other ensemble members are at their desks. The sign is also present, back in their business attire. Colleen enters as herself, wearing long sleeves to cover her scar, and shuffles through her desk for a moment.

Ms Adam

(She enters through her door with a folder.)

Colleen! Jackie! Come here.

Jackie and Colleen

(Looking up from their desks, they run to the center of the platform where Ms Adam is.)

Ms Adam

I have officially decided on a winner.

Jackie

(She is obviously confident.)

Colleen

(She is obviously nervous.)

Ms Adam

Now not to say this was an easy decision... Except it was. The published article goes to... (She pulls a stack of papers out of her folder. It appears as if it's going to be **Jackie** because that is where **Ms Adam** goes, but then she steps in front of **Jackie** and hands the stack of papers to **Colleen**.)
Colleen.

Colleen

(Stunned, she takes the papers.) Thank you!
Oh my gosh (She hugs her hard.) I could kiss you!

Ms Adam and Jackie

Don't.

Ms Adam

(She pushes **Colleen** off of her.) I look forward to working with you. (She exits the way she came on.)

Colleen

(She joyfully shuffles through the papers she was just given.)

Jackie

Eh, it's not like I really wanted it anyway. I mean, who wants to spend their whole life writing about bookstores? (She laughs.)

Colleen

(She looks up from her papers and gives the audience an "are you kidding me" look. She turns to **Jackie** and puts out her hand.) It was my honor to compete against you. Believe me, I have no idea how I won.

Jackie

(She actually takes her hand this time.)
Thanks?

Colleen

I know you will go far in the future, but maybe not in this field. Goodbye Jackie. And may your life be as pleasant as you are.

Grinning widely, **Colleen** exits the office. The office set is taken off and we're back on the street. Colleen lets out a ridiculous laugh and starts walking when suddenly she sees Ivy in the street.

Colleen

Ivy! Ivy I won! I won the writing contest! Ms Adam is going to publish my article!

Ivy

Oh my gosh that's amazing!

Colleen

I know! Hey, are you alright?

Ivy

Oh I'm fine.

Colleen

Are you sure? You seem a little frazzled.

Ivy

I'm fine... So you won?!

Colleen

I did!

Ivy

That's so exciting! (She hugs her.) I'm so happy for you!

Colleen

Thank you! I guess Eric's help really worked! Oh my, Eric! I need to go tell him! And Mr Weppler!

Ivy

Go! Have fun!

Colleen

Okay! Are you sure you're alright?

Ivy

I'm sure. I just went to go visit Jack today.

Colleen

(She becomes very serious.) Why would you do that?

Ivy

I was only trying to help.

Colleen

I appreciate that, but I can handle it myself.

Ivy

I know. I just hate the way he treated you and the things he does to you. I felt like I had to say something.

Colleen

Did he hurt you?

Ivy

No. Just my dignity. (She is way to cocky for what she actually accomplished.) But I mighta messed him up a little.

Colleen

Ivy, promise me you'll never speak to him again.

Ivy

I promise. It's just that... well it's your life! And he shouldn't still be ruining it! You should.

Colleen

(She laughs.) Thanks for the advice. And thank you for trying to help. (They hug again.)

Ivy

Well I mean, I am kinda a blessing.

Colleen

You really are. But I'm not letting Jack ruin this day for me. (Beat.) Come with me. (She takes Ivy's hand and leads her further away. This could be used for a better transition into the next scene.) About our conversation earlier, I just wanted to say thank you. You've always been the one who helped me through things. You really opened my eyes up to that truth and, well, I've made my decision. No story is worth hurting the ones you love. I egged Jack on so that makes his part of the story my fault too. I screwed up two relationships and all for what? If this is what it takes to get a good story then I'm not willing to do it.

Ivy

Good. Now go get 'em tiger.

Lights fade. End of scene 22.

Scene 23

*The set is now Mr **Weppler's** bookstore. The sign is present but Mr Weppler is not. **Colleen** enters.*

Colleen

Mr Weppler?

Weppler

(He enters from his door.) Yes? Ah, Signoria Colleen! How are you today?

Colleen

Actually I am quite well. I just stopped by to tell you that the article that we wrote about your store is going to be published!

Weppler

(He gasps in excitement.) Really?

Colleen

Yes!

Weppler

Oh well business will start booming again!

Colleen

It will!

Weppler

And I will be able to keep the store!

Colleen

Yes!

Weppler

And make my father proud!

Colleen

Yes!

Weppler

Oh well this is just wonderful!

Colleen

It really is.

Weppler

(He walks over and takes her hands.) And I have you to thank for it.

Colleen

Well I couldn't have done it alone.

Weppler

Please promise to stop by sometimes, va bene?

Colleen

I promise. (They hug.) Now if you don't mind, I have to go tell Eric, okay?

Mr Wepler

Si. But I would like to give you something first. (He goes and grabs a book from the shelf.) This was-a my favorite back in my home of Italia. It is-a called "La Nuova Ragazza Nel Vecchio Mondo" which-a means "The New Girl in the Old World" It is-a about a young girl and-a her search for her purpose in-a life-a. For some-a reason it reminded me of-a you. I had one translated in english for you. (He hands the book to her.) Anyway I think you might find it helpful.

Colleen

(Taking the book, she is amazed.) Thank you.

Wepler

There is this-a one quote in it: "Even if someone is-a lost in you finding yourself, congratulations, because you have-a won." (Beat.) But-a anyway I just-a always loved that line. (Beat.) Go ahead. Go tell-a Eric the good news.

Smiling, Colleen starts to exit the platform. Weppler joyfully starts humming a song and starts to clean up his store when, just as Colleen is just about to leave, a singular ensemble member enters the store. Weppler's face brightens up.

Lights fade. End of scene 23.

Scene 24

The bookstore scene is taken off. Colleen stands on stage alone starting to walk off when Jack approaches her from the other side. At first she flinches, then he regains herself.

Jack

Hey.

Colleen

Are we seriously still doing this?

Jack

Please just hear me out.

Colleen

I think I've spent too much time doing that.

Jack

Ple-

Colleen

No!

Jack

(He starts to inch his way towards her.) We were so good together, you and I. We'd been through so much. I'm sorry that I hurt you but you hurt me too. (He starts to grab her hands and she is obviously uncomfortable.) Let me love you again. I never stopped loving you even in my worst times. (He takes her hand and presses it up to his face.) We can be in love again if you just-

Colleen

If I just what? Forget what happened? Forget that it got so bad that my friend had to go behind my back to step in for me? (She pulls her hand away.) I'm sorry, but I can't do that for you

Jack

You can! I know you can! I realize that what I did was wrong. It was so wrong, and I'm sorry. You know how I get sometimes. (He takes both her hands.) I would give anything just to hold you again. Not even to kiss

you, but to just hold you next to me. Please, Colleen. (He presses his forehead against hers. They both close their eyes. Beat. He whispers.) Love me.

Colleen

(Beat. She pulls back.) I can't. (Jack looks helplessly defeated as she stares at him sorrowfully.) I don't want to see you again. I don't want to hear anything from or about you. Stay away from me, stay away from my friends. I want you out my life for good this time.

Jack

But I love you.

Colleen

No one who makes me feel as bad as you do could possibly love anyone. Goodbye Jack.

*She runs to the other side of the stage. **Jack**, silently and sulkily walks off the other direction. At some point, they both look back at each other but at different times. As soon as he's gone **Colleen** starts bawling hysterically.*

Lights fade. End of scene 24.

Scene 25

Whilst the set is being transformed into **Eric's** apartment, **Colleen** regains herself and repeats "Even if someone is lost in you finding yourself, congratulations, because you have won." **Eric** is obviously distraught, with dark circles under his eyes and a drink on the table from which he drinks of often in the scene. He sits on the couch with his head in his hands. **Colleen**, once she is done recollecting herself, she walks up and knocks on the door.

Eric

Go away.

Colleen

Eric? It's me, Colleen.

Eric

Okay then come in...

Colleen

(She walks in.) I have really exciting new-
(She pauses, seeing him distraught. She is instantly depressed knowing that she did this to him. However she has to act like she

has no idea what's going on.) What's wrong?
Are you okay?

Eric

Evie left again.

Colleen

Oh. Did she?

Eric

Yeah.

Colleen

I'm sorry.

Eric

Yeah.

Colleen

Is there anything I can do to help?

Eric

No. Not that I know of.

Colleen

(She starts to tear up again.)

Eric

(Beat. He starts to get frustrated.) I just wish I knew what I did to her.

Colleen

(Aside, she speaks quietly.) You didn't do anything.

Eric

Why does she hate me?

Colleen

I don't.

Eric

I just wish I knew!

Colleen

(She dries up her tears then heads over and sits next to him.) Maybe she thought you two just weren't good for each other. That she wasn't good for you.

Eric

Maybe.

Colleen

I mean, obviously all she does is cause you pain.

Eric

(He starts to get angry.) That's not true!
That's not true and she knew that!

Colleen

(In an effort to console him, she wraps her arms around him.) Shhhh. It's okay. I know it hurts for now, but it will get better. I promise. I'm here with you now.

Eric

You don't have to say all this to me. You don't have to make promises we both know won't be kept.

Colleen

This one will be. As long as you promise me you'll move past this.

Eric

I can promise to try...

Colleen

Thank you. You're better than this.

Eric

I'm glad one of us thinks so. I just wish she would've given me more of a reason.

Colleen

Sometimes simplicity is best when it comes to stuff like this.

Eric

(He looks at her longingly.) Oh Colls, I'm afraid I'm going to have to disagree with you on that one.

Colleen

(Beat.) I know you don't deserve this.

Eric

Obviously some part of me does! Look Colls I really do appreciate you coming here and trying to help... but I really just need to be alone for a bit. Okay?

Colleen nods then lets go of him. She then stands up and heads to the photo frame of Eric and Evie in high school. She picks it up and stares at it for a moment then sets it back in its place. Without removing her hand from it, she turns the frame down, symbolizing the permanent death of Evangeline Caswell. She then walks out the door and off stage. **Eric** physically falls back into his self pity as she leaves the stage. However once she is gone he realizes

she left her bag on his couch. He sees the voice recorder and takes it out of the bag. Colleen enters and heads to her usual monologuing spot, wearing the same outfit she wore in the first scene. Eric presses the play button on the voice recorder. As Colleen talks, he gets up and heads to see the turned down picture of them in high school. He picks it up and looks at the voice recorder.)

Colleen

We open up on a cold rainy night in San Francisco. The time is (She checks her watch.) 12:31 am on June 1st, 1994. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Colleen Myers, I'm 23 years old, and I'm a writer. Well, at least I'm trying to be. I've kinda been going crazy trying to find something... anything to write about!

Lights fade. End of scene 23.

The reds close. End of act 2. End of show.

The reds reopen and curtain call begins.