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Showstoppers: An Original Screenplay

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Honors Project

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Title: Show Stoppers: An Original Screenplay

Author: Cassedy Mahrer

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Show Stoppers

By
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Screenplay
Honors Project
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5-4-09

INT. AUDITORIUM AT UNIVERSITY OF IOWA-EVENING

The lights are dim. The huge auditorium is packed full of stony-faced high-school students dressed in business casual-wear. Their proud-looking parents sit beside them, dressed as if they were attending a wedding.

Banners denoting "2006 SOUTH EASTERN IOWA REGIONAL SCIENCE FAIR" hang above the stage. Jeanie Rudnik, age 47, a stern looking woman clad in bright red with matching glasses stands at the podium in the center of the stage.

As we hear Jeanie speaking about the honor of going to state, we see Katie Meyer, a 17 year old girl, watching with suppressed excitement. The corners of her mouth continually twitch into a big smile, but then they are forced back down to neutrality.

Katie wears a black suit and has straight golden-brown hair tied back into a long ponytail held with a stylish but modest barrette, not an elastic. She has a trim figure and wears flawless but simple make-up. She sits next to Kyle, age 17, a red-haired boy with glasses. Kyle eagerly watches Katie.

JEANIE

...and this year, for her achievement in furthering stem cell research by regrowing tissue from chicken embryos and discovering a way to graft it to wounded birds wings...EMILY PETERSON will be representing SE Iowa at the State Science FAIR!

The crowd erupts into applause. Emily, a 17 year old girl with straight blond hair and light freckles excitedly jumps from her seat and walks quickly toward the stage. Beaming, she takes the medal from Jeanie.

Katie Meyer claps and smiles, not taking her eyes off of Emily.

Katie finally takes her eyes off of Emily. She edges out of the row she's sitting in, smiling and nodding at people as she passes. No one looks as she goes straight down the red carpeted aisle, toward the exit.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF AUDITORIUM-EVENING

EMILY (o.s.)

...and thank you to Mr. Rost for two wonderful years of close supervision over my-

Emily's acceptance speech is muffled as Katie carefully closes the door. The smile falls off of Katie's face and she storms down the hall.

(Music cue for "Search and Destroy" by Iggy and the Stooges).

CUT TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY OF IOWA'S GYMNASIUM

(Music continues to play throughout this scene). Katie runs through rows upon rows of tables lined with huge Science Fair Display Boards. Her face is cold and determined.

She stops at the champion, Emily Peterson's Board, right across from hers. Without thinking, she tears off a page.

Her face lights up, and she vigorously starts tearing everything off the board, with both hands, and then flings the Petri dishes and plastic cubes with tissue in them across the gymnasium. She knocks over some one else's board. She then takes Emily's board down and attempts to rip it, letting out a ferocious roar.

KATIE

ARGHHHHH!!!!

Unsuccessful, she seems to snap back to her senses. Her face looks fearful, she has just realized what she's done. She throws the board down on the ground, and begins running toward the exit, only to see MR. BEELZ, one of the head Judges, watching her with a stunned expression.

She stares in disbelief and looks down at her feet, where there is a petri dish. She kicks it really hard, and then tries to run the opposite way. Startled, Mr. Beelz starts running after her.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE AT UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
CUE CREDITS AND OPENING MUSIC

Music plays over the action (the music is slow and indie style). Katie sits in a chair outside of the main offices, waiting to be picked up by her parents, looking quite bedraggled. Her shirt's untucked, her mascara runs a

little bit, and random administrative people continually pass by her.

At the end, a sense of calm comes over her face. Her parents walk in, frantic and distraught, and they sweep into the picture, taking Katie into their arms. Katie remains almost limp in their embrace, and hardly responds as they drag her out of the shot.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. MEYER'S FOUR-DOOR CAR-NIGHT
Mr. Meyer is driving, Mrs. Meyer is in the passenger seat, and Katie Meyer is in the back seat. All members just look ahead.

CUT TO:

INT. MEYER HOUSEHOLD BATHROOM-NIGHT
Katie--still wearing her suit, brushes her teeth carefully, as if her hands know the proper brushing techniques by memory. Dried mascara lines streak her face.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM (cont.)
Katie flosses

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM (cont)
Katie washes her face.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM (cont)
Katie stares into the mirror without any make-up.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM (cont.)
The view is on the toilet seat. Katie's pinky tests the toilet seat. Her hand retracts quickly. It is obviously cold. A hairdryer quickly appears in the scene, and warms the toilet seat. The hair dryer turns off and gets put away. You can see bare legs approaching the seat.

CUT TO:

INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM-NIGHT
(music continues) Katie walks into her room and hangs her suit jacket on the desk chair. She then checks off several boxes on a to-do list on her desk, then rips it up and throws it in the trash.

She turns out the lights and lays down on her bed. Her eyes stay open. She wrenches them shut and puts her face into her pillow and screams. Her scream is the first real sound we hear during the credits.

CUT TO:

INT. BILL LEMAUT'S OFFICE at JOHN ADAMS HIGH-DAY

Bill Lemaut, a tall, balding, 48 year old man with an ill-fitting white button up shirt and obnoxious cartoon character tie, sits behind a small desk. He is too large for his small office and looks as if he was once a tremendous athlete, despite the patches of fat and wrinkles that have accumulated on his body.

Katie Meyer sits in a large chair in front of his desk. Her mother, Mrs. Meyer, a put-together, quiet looking lady, age 43, is sitting across from Katie. Mr. Meyer, a slightly stocky 50 year old salt-and-pepper haired man, stands next to his wife.

There are with posters with catchy slogans like "A SMILE CAN GO MILES" and "PLEASE, NO WHINING" taped to the walls.

Katie shifts in her seat uncomfortably, eyes glued to the ground.

BILL

So, Katie, what were you feeling that night?
Anger? Pain? Bloodlust?

He pauses, glances at her parents and raises his eyebrows.

BILL (CONT'D)

Any of these ringin' any bells?

Katie continues to stare at the floor. Mr. Meyer's eyebrows are knitted and he looks troubled and confused.

Bill addresses Mr. and Mrs. Meyer.

BILL

Well, have you noticed this sort of behavior before? I mean, she's only been with us here at John Adams for one year, I'd hate to think that there was a history of something...ADHD...aggression...something that you forgot to mention to us when you enrolled her?

MR. MEYER

Now, now! Let's not jump to any hasty conclusions. Katie's one of those golden children. She never parties, never fraternizes

with the wrong type of people. She's going to be a doctor. Needless to say, this behavior is very out of character.

MRS. MEYER

She's a very hard worker, Mr. Lemaut. I assure you. She is right there at the top of her class.

MR. MEYER

She won the state science fair two years ago in Florida. No one can really do that without some competitive nature.

MRS. MEYER

Maybe Katie feels more pressure here in Iowa, for some reason. The two months before this science fair, she was always up at two or three AM. I was doing some research on the internet, and it says that not sleeping for long periods of time can affect mood, reaction, and judgment. It can even make you black out at random according to one study.

KATIE

Mom!

Katie's face turns red and for the first time, she looks at Bill. Bill looks hard at Katie and each of her parents. He finally sighs and looks down at his desk, then back up to them.

BILL

Well, how bout this. Since the actual chicken embryos were safely tucked away at a lab and only model organs were on display, you folks will be able to cover the damages with a payment directly to the Peterson family. If you do that, I can turn a blind eye to this incident and not include it on her permanent record as long as she does some community service for the rest of the year...just a few hours a week.

MR. MEYER

Well that sounds very reasonable. That'll even look good on her college application. Thank you kindly.

MRS. MEYER

Yes, we wouldn't want this going on Katie's permanent record. She's starting to look at colleges now.

BILL

No, no. We certainly wouldn't. Now Katie, the Prairie Homes Senior Center was recently forced to let go of a great deal of their kitchen staff due to insufficient funding. They need volunteers very badly. How does that sound?

MR. MEYER

Sounds great, Bill. What do you think, Katie Bug?

KATIE

(reluctantly)

I could do that. I like old people anyway.

BILL

(beat)

All right then. Bye bye folks, and I'll make a call to Prairie Homes today. Glenda will call you to schedule orientation sometime later this week. Then you two can work out a schedule... maybe two afternoons a week. Alright?

Bill looks at Katie intently, obviously trying to make a connection. Katie looks at him and shrugs.

KATIE

Sure.

A bell rings, and Katie leaps up towards the door without saying goodbye. Mr. and Mrs. Meyer awkwardly gather themselves and smile as they decide to follow suit.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN ADAM'S CAFETERIA-NOON

Katie walks into the cafeteria, looking down at the floor as she goes. She is obviously shy in this large social setting.

With salad and tomato soup on her tray, she walks over to a table of dorkily dressed people...some with glasses and some very well put-together.

Katie attempts to sit down by Kyle, the boy who sat next to her at the science fair, who is wearing khakis and a t-shirt with the periodic table. He puts his hand on the seat and looks up at her aggressively.

KYLE

Sorry, this seat is saved for my new lab partner, Amy.

As if on cue, a small Asian girl wearing a red-polo and jeans walks in front of Katie and takes the seat, giggling a little. Katie looks from Amy to Kyle.

KATIE

What? Since when are we not lab partners?

KYLE

Since you tarnished the John Adams name at Regionals.

The entire table is now looking at Katie, shaking their heads disapprovingly. A boy from India named Anil looks particularly perturbed.

ANIL

We took a chance on you, Meyer. You let us down. They're screening for mental health now, and I take medicine for bipolar...this could affect my chances in Science Olympiads!

People at the table nod sympathetically.

KATIE

You can't just kick me out; I've put in so many hours.

KYLE

Sorry, you're just not worth the liability.

Katie looks confused and hurt. She gives Kyle a sad and confused stare and then shuffles away, trying not to speed walk toward the exit. She dumps her tray of food into the trash and quietly exits the lunchroom.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN ADAMS PARKING-LOT/OUTSIDE THE CAFETERIA-DAY
Katie sits on the grass outside of the cafeteria near the edge of the parking lot. A few people pass by her every so

often. She has a notebook in her lap and writes "To Do" at the top. Then she begins to daydream.

CUT TO: (FLASHBACK)

INT. LAB AT JOHN ADAM'S HIGH-AFTERNOON

The sun shines through the window and the entire laboratory is abandoned, save Katie, who is working with multiple microscopes, micro-pipetters, beakers and test tubes.

Kyle rushes into the lab, holding a beaker of magenta liquid. He also wears protective goggles and a white lab coat. He speed walks over to Katie.

KYLE

Katie! It tested positive for Potassium! Do you know what this means?

KATIE

We've successfully tricked the fat soluble vitamin to solvate in our new formula, without fat?

KYLE

YES!

TOGETHER

(make celebrating noises)

Kyle's eyes light up and he grabs Katie, clumsily knocking over her stool in the process, and simultaneously crushes her in a bear hug. There's a beat, then they pull apart.

Kyle looks at Katie with shining eyes.

KYLE

You know, you're not like any other science-girl I've ever met. I'm really happy you moved here...

KATIE

(blushing)

Well, thanks for taking a chance on the new girl.

Beat.

KYLE

(smiling at Katie)

Come here, I want to show you a slide.

KATIE

What is it? Increased c-count in the plasma?

KYLE

You'll see, just take a look.

Kyle takes a slide from the box, which is obviously pre-prepared, and puts it under the microscope.

VIEW THROUGH THE MICROSCOPE:

"HOMECOMING?" is spelled out squamos epitheleal cells.

ON KATIE:

She blinks, and looks back in the microscope. Kyle watches her eagerly, not blinking or swallowing. Katie slowly turns to him and attempts to smile in a friendly way, not a romantic way.

KATIE

Kyle...This is really nice, but-

KYLE

They're made from cheek cells...our cheek cells, actually.

Kyle laughs nervously.

KYLE (cont)

Remember the time I asked you for a sample?

KATIE

Oh, yes. I do. But it's just that, I'm not really a dancer...and that's the week before the science fair. We have to prepare.

KYLE

I know I know, but wouldn't it be fun? To see you dressed up and I'd buy you a flower and we could go to Denny's afterward and-

KATIE

(friendly, but firmly)

Listen. Kyle, that sounds really fun, but I have to be honest. I want to win state. I will be finalizing my board, practicing my pitch...it's just bad timing.

Kyle gives Katie a pained/betrayed look, then his face turns decidedly cold and hard.

KYLE

Bye Katie, see you on Monday, I guess. Have fun cleaning up.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN ADAM'S OUTSIDE CAFETERIA-DAY

Katie is still sits on the grass with a notebook in her lap. She frowns at the blank page with "Haiku" written on top. She then draws a doodle of her smashing Kyle on the head with a hammer and makes a check box by it.

She then glances at her watch and jumps up, shoving the notebook in her back pack. A bell rings and she runs even faster for the doors back into school.

CUT TO:

INT.WRITING CLASS AT JOHN ADAMS-DAY

This room is full of windows and more brightly lit. The desks are pushed a circle, most of which are full. Chatter starts to die down in the hallway. No one in the room is really talking except for the two emo-looking kids at the furthest corner of the circle. The bell rings.

MRS. WILLIAMS

Alright everybody. Don't get too comfortable...it's Haiku Day! So we're going to kick off the unit by having you all read the Haiku's you were assigned to write last Friday. Any volunteers?

The majority of the class stare at their desks. Then the goth-looking girl, Maria, rolls her eyes and half raises her hand.

MRS. WILLIAMS

Maria! Great! Thanks for volunteering.

Maria scans the classroom. She focuses in on one boy, who upon meeting her eyes looks temporarily frightened. Maria proceeds to pick up a scrap of notebook paper from her desk.

MARIA

Pain fills my organs.
I broke my last black crayon.
Expression is dead.

Students' eyebrows raise. The teacher's mouth hangs open a little, then snaps back into a smile.

MRS. WILLIAMS

Thank you Maria. That was very interesting.
Next? Anyone? Okay, ETHAN, how about you?

ETHAN, a slim boy with blonde curls and an Abercrombie polo nod, and chuckles to himself.

ETHAN

Okay, sure. Here it goes...(ahem)

When eating big pickles,
Do you like to bite them first?
Or lick them slowly?

He winks at one of the girls staring at him. She looks disgusted.

MRS. WILLIAMS

(To ETHAN)

See me after class.

(To the class)

Okay, two down, twenty-four to go.

The door creaks open and Katie sneaks into the room. Everyone turns to her. A few people laugh. Katie makes a B-line for an empty seat, pulling out her notebook and immediately jotting something down on the page.

MRS. WILLIAMS

Great, thanks for volunteering, Katie.

KATIE

What?

MRS. WILLIAMS

We're taking turns reading our Haikus out loud.

KATIE

I thought we were just handing them in to you.

MRS. WILLIAMS

(Impatiently)

Katie, please just read your Haiku, its only three lines.

KATIE

Okay, well, it's not very good. Ummm, ok.

The ribosome dot,
Adorns the endoplasmic
Reticulum sheet.

MRS. WILLIAMS
(putting her hand to her mouth)

Hm...

Silence. Katie looks mortified.

MRS. WILLIAMS

Next!

INT. HALLWAY RIGHT OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF WRITING CLASS-DAY
Students spill out the doorway.

CUT TO:

INT. WRITING CLASS-DAY

Katie and one other boy, Nick, pack up. Nick, age 18, has a pointed, but kind face. Although he is 6-feet tall, the way he holds himself makes him appear shorter. He wears jeans and a t-shirt of some unknown band, which hide and accentuate his slightly skinny figure at the same time.

The teacher is at the front, shuffling through her papers and simultaneously chastising ETHAN for bringing his dirty mind into his writing again.

Katie looks sad and walks toward the door. Nick rushes behind her.

NICK

Hey, you forgot your notebook.

KATIE

Oh, thanks. Now I can burn it, so no one will ever read my dumb haiku again.

NICK

Really? I liked yours. It was pretty funny...you're taking cell-bio this year, I take it?

KATIE

Nah, I took it when I was a freshman.

*Nick raises his eyebrows, showing that he is impressed.
Katie smiles. They exit the classroom together.*

INT. JOHN ADAMS HIGH HALLWAY-DAY

NICK

Oh, I'm Nick, by the way.

They start walking down the hall together.

KATIE

Katie.

NICK

Yeah, I know, you're always late for class.

KATIE

I know. I mean I've dissected brains. I've studied how they work, but I still don't understand why mine can never seem to get me to be on time.

NICK

Ha! You're really into it, aren't you?

KATIE

What?

NICK

Science.

KATIE

I guess so. It's kind of interesting to know how things work. But I've been excommunicated from the science society here now, so I guess I'll have to find something else.

NICK

Why?

KATIE

It's a long story.

NICK

(slowing down)

Well, you'll have to tell me sometime. I've gotta get going to practice now, but I'll see you around.

KATIE

In class, if no where else.

For some reason, Katie finds her remark witty and laughs a little too loudly. Nick stares at her not knowing what to make of it.

KATIE (cont.)

(casually)

Umm, what kind of practice do you have?
Football?

Nick smiles and looks sheepish.

NICK

Uh, no, not exactly.

Nick looks down at his shoes

NICK (cont.)

Actually, it's Show Choir practice.

Katie looks at him, puzzled.

NICK (cont.)

Oh, it's a choir where you sing and dance to pop songs and other "classics".
It's probably my mom's fault for putting me through all the musicals in her community theater group. But actually, it's pretty cool. And John Adams High is the current holder of the 'Golden Note' Trophy.

KATIE

(laughing)

Wow, the "Golden Note"...sounds real neat.

NICK

I know I know. Well, don't judge until you see us. Actually, we're holding auditions on Friday and Saturday. Do you sing?

KATIE

Umm, I like making up songs about things I like. Plus, I've been taking choir for all of school until last year, so that I appear "well rounded" for colleges.

NICK

(walking away from Katie)

That's so cool. (Chuckling) I'm writing music too. You should think about auditioning. See ya around.

Katie watches him walk down toward the music wing and sighs, smiling. She suddenly looks at her watch and starts running out for the main doors, where the buses are starting to leave.

CUT TO:

INT. MEYER HOUSEHOLD-EVENING
Katie walks in the front door.

KATIE

I'm home!

No one answers, but the evening news report can be heard, as can the sounds of dinner preparation coming from the kitchen.

Katie walks down the hall to her room. An article ripped out from a teen magazine titled "Books or Looks? Can you Do Both and Still Snag a HOTTIE!" is taped to the door.

KATIE
(to herself)

Damn it, Lily.

Katie rips it off and pushes the door open.

CUT TO:

INT. KATIE'S ROOM-EVENING
She enters a medium-sized bedroom. It has a desk with cups of pens (organized by color), a lap top, and multi-colored picture frames of Katie with friends.

There is also a long closet with huge mirrored folding doors.

The wall by her desk is covered in patterns (ie: flower made of sticky notes) of multi-colored sticky notes with details about schedule, to-do lists, etc. written on them.

Katie sets her backpack down on a shelf labeled "School Storage" and goes over to her desk, laying the article on it. Then, there is a knock at the door.

LILY

Katie?

Lily Meyer, 14, Katie's sassy, brunette sister, enters. She wears a John Adams High football sweatshirt.

KATIE

What do you want? Is that my sweatshirt?

Lily ignores her and crosses the room to sit on Katie's bed.

LILY

Why are you back so late?

KATIE

(scanning the article)

I missed the bus again, so I had to walk.

LILY

(laughing)

That's funny.

KATIE

Yeah, I guess. By the way, this article is really dumb.

Katie crumples up the article and throws it at Lily.

KATIE

Seriously, *Hip-Teen Magazine*?

LILY

I was just trying to help. Oh, speaking of which, they're asking for "Psychotic Freak-outs" from their readers for the next issue. You should definitely write in.

KATIE

Why don't you just leave me alone!?

Katie reaches over and pulls Lily's ponytail to yank her off the bed. Lily screams and runs towards the wall and starts peeling off Katie's elaborate sticky notes.

KATIE

QUIT! I'M SERIOUS!

Katie runs towards Lily with murderous eyes, and is about to strangle her when there's a knock on the door.

MRS. MEYER (O.S.)

Girls! Dinner!

LILY and KATIE

'K, Mom!

They look at each other in a hostile truce. Katie slaps the back of Lily's head and then runs out of the room, Lily close on her heels.

CUT TO:

INT. MEYER'S DINING ROOM-EVENING

The whole family is seated around the table, having some sort of hotdish, salad, and rolls. Everyone seems focused on eating, and not on talking just yet.

MR. MEYER

So Katie, how was the rest of your day at school?

KATIE

Ok. I had to read my pathetic excuse for a poem out loud, so that was embarrassing. But I got a B+ on my math quiz.

MR. MEYER

Well that's good news. Why was the poem bad? What did you write about?

KATIE

Ribosomes.

MR. MEYER

Ah. What are those again?

KATIE

Without them, we would not exist.

MR. MEYER

Well, that seems practical. Sounds like a fine topic to me.

KATIE

I don't know, everyone else seemed to have a more emotional topic than me.

MR. MEYER

Well, they're probably just trying to draw attention to themselves.

There is a pause in conversation while everyone continues to chew their food quietly. Mrs. Meyer keeps glancing nervously over at Katie. Finally, she breaks the silence.

MRS. MEYER

You're not going to let that math grade get you down, now, right Katie? I mean, a B+ is a fine grade. No need to vandalize anything, right sweetie?

Katie stares at her mother.

MR. MEYER

Of course not! She's not crazy, Ellen! She's back on track now, right pumpkin?

KATIE

Yes Dad.

CUT TO:

INT. KATIE'S ROOM-NIGHT

The Phantom of the Opera soundtrack plays in the background. There is a small light on in the room, reflected in the mirrored closet doors. All of the sudden, Katie's face comes into view in one of the mirrors, with a scarf tied around her neck. She sings along with the music into a hairbrush, watching herself act the scene out in one of the mirrors.

KATIE

"In sleep he sang to me. In dreams he came"

She dramatically thrusts her arms with the music.

KATIE (cont.)

"That voice which calls to me, and speaks my name..."

Then she breaks and looks up to the left corner of her eyes and whispers "Nick!"

Back into character, now dancing in front of the mirror

KATIE (cont.)

"And do I dream again, for now I find, the PMAAAAAAAAAA-

The door suddenly opens.

MRS. MEYER

(voice raised to be heard over the music)

Katie?

KATIE

AHH! MOM!

She rushes to turn the music down.

MRS. MEYER

(eyebrows knitted in confusion)

I just wanted to say goodnight, but you weren't responding because the music was so loud so I opened the door...well, goodnight.

KATIE

Sorry, Mom. I was listening to that, for, ummm, class. *(another pause)* Goodnight.

Mrs. Meyer plasters on a smile and walks out the door, a little shaken. She looks around the room once and blinks. Her face becomes warm again.

Katie notices the brush is still in her hand and starts brushing her hair casually.

KATIE

Sorry, Mom. Just please knock louder next time.. I'll try to keep the music down.
(pause)
Goodnight.

Mrs. Meyer plasters on a smile and walks out the door.

KATIE

(muttering to herself and shaking her head)
Awwwkward.

Katie walks over to the door and locks it. She crosses the room to the desk and picks a pen. She grabs a yellow sticky note and writes something down on it.

Then, she peels it off and sticks it in the middle of a big flower design (composed of many-colored sticky notes) above her desk and smoothing the top it so it stays on the wall.

ANGLE ON: STICKY NOTE

"Friday Audition?" Lights turn off.

CUT TO:

INT. PRAIRIE HOMES SENIOR CENTER DINING HALL-EVENING

The dining hall is full of slow-moving, wrinkled seniors, situated 3-5 persons at a table. Mauve and teal colors fleck the off-white linoleum floor and the bare walls.

Nurses assistants administer medicine in small plastic cups. There is a din of metal tines scraping against plastic plates and raspy voices filling the air.

Glenda, a squat old lady with white hair and red cheeks shows Katie around while pushing a desert cart. Katie wears a white shirt with black pants and a hairnet and apron.

Glenda stops her at a table with three tiny, flannel dressed ladies, a shrunken balding man, and an indistinguishable gendered person in a dressing gown, laying back in a wheel chair.

GLEENDA

Now this is Table 9. Millie, Regina, Betty, Robert, and Jo eat here for dinner. They're all on special diets, and need monitoring throughout their meals. Make sure they're eating too. And watch out for Millie, she likes to steal sugar packets and other people's desserts, but she shouldn't do that because it makes her feet swell up. Got it?

KATIE

Yes ma'am.

GLEENDA

Good, here is a chart of all the restrictions. Feel free to take it home and look it over. Tonight, I just figured you could all get acquainted.

Glenda serves the various desserts to everyone and then leaves Katie alone with the table.

KATIE

(nervously)

Hi everyone. I'm Katie.

REGINA

I like snow flakes.

The others just look at Katie, happily, then go back to their dessert. Millie, however, who has a cup of fruit, glares belligerently at her spoon. Katie attempts to connect with her.

KATIE

Hey Millie, make sure that you eat your fruit.

MILLIE

(in a meek and crackling voice)

I don't understand why I can't have a bread pudding like everybody else.

KATIE

Well, you have diabetes, Millie. What about your feet?

MILLIE

(reminiscently)

Winston used to massage my feet every day after he got home from work. I was the luckiest woman around. It was heels or nothing when I was your age.

Millie looks out the window momentarily.

MILLIE (cont)

It made it easier to be swept off your feet...

KATIE

Was Winston your husband?

Millie gives a flighty bat of her eyes and then smiles and nods.

KATIE

How did you meet him?

Millie lights up and puts her frail hands to her cheeks.

MILLIE

Oohh, now there's a story!

Two of the old ladies and one of the old gentlemen sigh and invest all their attention in their food. Millie picks a piece of spaghetti off of her chin and sets it down, then returns her bright eyes to Katie.

MILLIE (cont)

I met him in Glee Club. His voice was so smooth, it knocked me off my block each time I heard him. Each note was like a cupid's arrow, straight through my heart.

Millie clutches her chest and closes her eyes and starts humming something (presumably from the 40's era). A smile spreads across her face.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN ADAMS HIGH HALLWAY BY THE REHEARSAL HALL-AFTERNOON

The choir room's door has a big yellow sign that says AUDITIONS FOR THE SHOW STOPPERS SHOWCHOIR TODAY! A sheet with times and names is attached below. Katie runs down the hallway toward this door.

She waits for a moment, looks around, then practices a little tune under her breath.

KATIE
(to herself)

I can't do this.

She turns to leave, but then walks back to the door. She looks at her name (in the next time slot) and grabs her pen, as if about to cross it out), then the door suddenly opens and Nick walks out just in time to see her step/fall backwards.

NICK
Oh sorry! Are you okay?

KATIE
(flustered)
Oh yeah, fine. I was just...

NICK
You're signed up for 3:15?

KATIE
Umm, yes. Yes I am.

NICK
Cool, well, you're up.

Katie smiles nervously.

KATIE

Okay.

They walk through the door together and it closes behind them.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE MUSIC ROOM

There is a group of 15 students scattered throughout the large, terraced room with great arching ceilings and large windows with risers and various wooden props pushed against them.

Some students are clumped in groups of 3-4, talking animatedly to one another. A few others are running scales quietly in the corners of the room, and a few others are in leotards and stretching.

Katie's eyes widen.

KATIE

It's a group audition?

NICK

Yeah. Didn't you know?

Katie looks like she wants to say something, but then covers her mouth and looks terrified. She runs past Nick over to a trash can and vomits into it.

Everyone looks up at her and the room turns silent.

Nick breaks the silence by purposefully dropping a box full of sheet music on the floor, and everyone resumes their conversations.

Nick goes over to Katie and kneels.

NICK

(quietly)

Ummm, are you okay?

KATIE

(looking down and in a quiet voice)

Oh my gosh, I can't do this. Everybody just saw me...I actually...I have to go.

Katie gets up and starts walking towards the door.

NICK

Hey wait! C'mon, look, they've already gone back to talking about themselves again. You're in the clear.

Katie gives Nick a disbelieving look.

NICK (cont.)

No seriously, this isn't so bad. Want to hear something? Okay, my first time playing the lead in a musical, in middle school, I got so nervous before my first scene. But the director pushed me out onto stage against my will. I took one look at the crowd, and I could feel my face turn green. I knew I was supposed to be speaking my first lines, but I just stood there, and proceeded to spew my guts out all over the stage. They had to close the curtains, clean up the vomit, and simultaneously come up with a way to work it into the rest of the play.

KATIE

(unwillingly smiling)

Did that really happen?

NICK

Yeah, it kind of sucked. At least you made it to the trash can.

KATIE

Yeah, I guess so. But now my breath smells like acidic meatloaf.

NICK

Well, today is your lucky day, because I just happen to have mouthwash with me.

KATIE

Whao! Seriously?

NICK

(solemnly)

Yep, I've carried it with me to every audition and performance since that play. No, just kidding, I just gargle before singing. Here.

Nick hands Katie a mouthwash bottle from his backpack.

KATIE

Thanks. I'll be back in one minute.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BATHROOM

Katie spits out some mouthwash into the sink, then looks up at herself in the mirror.

KATIE

[to her reflection]

You are such a loser.

Katie continues to stare at herself. She looks up close at her teeth, picks at one, then gargles one more time. She checks her breath by covering her mouth with her hand and breathing hard onto it. Looking satisfied, she walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN ADAMS SHOW CHOIR ROOM

Katie enters the big doors again. Nick sees her and walks up to her.

NICK

Hey. How're you feeling now?

KATIE

Better.

NICK

Good, because it's just about to get sort of intense. Okay, I just gave the speech to everyone else, so I'll just brief you quickly.

Nick looks down at a clipboard and starts reporting to her in a very official tone.

NICK (cont)

You're in group B. Your group is with Lin first, to learn some choreography. Then you're going to learn a small song with four part harmony with Richard. Then, you get to perform the dance and the harmony in front of the three directors, after which each person in this time slot will perform the piece they prepared for the audition.

Nick looks up from clipboard.

NICK (cont)

Ummm, are you going to throw up again?

KATIE

Nope, I think the last batch took care of everything.

NICK

Good. Okay, time to go.

He blows a whistle, then speaks loudly to the whole room.

NICK (cont.)

Group A, make a circle around me. Group B, go with Lin to the stage. And Group C, gather around the piano. You'll have 20 minutes at each station. GO!

CUT TO:

INT.AUDITORIUM-STAGE-EVENING

A group of 7 students (Katie included) are doing uniform jazz squares to the song "Give My Regards to Broadway," which is blasting from a boom box at the front of the stage.

Their eyes dart from their feet to LIN MATIN, the young, blonde and slim choreographer who is standing at the front of the stage in a black leotard with a pale pink skirt. Katie is obviously the worst of the bunch.

LIN

And 5-6-7-8 and shuffle step and swing...kick-ball-change, pivot, and FINISH!

Lin lands on one knee with her arms outstretched enthusiastically and one leg outstretched behind her. The students are in various stages of kneeling/falling. Lin rolls her eyes and then turns her attention to the auditoinees.

LIN

All right, I'm gonna be honest: not promising, but we might have something to work with here. You two, (pointing to Katie and a rotund girl), come up closer to me, you seem to be struggling a bit. Lenny, cue music. And 5-6-7-8...

CUT TO:

INT.CHOIR ROOM

The same seven students are circled around the piano staring hard at sheet music. Dr. Richard Franklin, a 50 year old man with suspiciously dark, un-peppered hair

conducts a barber-shop quartet like tune called "Hail to ye John Adams."

Dotty, a 63 year old apple-shaped woman with a floral print dress and penny loafers, skillfully accompanies the students.

Katie looks more confident, but she keeps unsuccessfully trying to catch people's eyes and smirk whenever Dr. Franklin's hair piece moves.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM-STAGE-EVENING

Dotty is at the piano accompanying BETHANY ROSE, a slender girl of 17 dressed conservatively but classily. She stands perfectly poised on the stage and singing an aria from Mozart's "The Magic Flute."

The auditorium is full of people, the three judges—Lin, Dr. Franklin, and Jean Heggins (the main director for the show choir—sitting in the front with note pads and pens.

The aria ends, and everyone claps. The judges look impressed. Jean leans forward into her microphone.

JEAN

Thank you Bethany. That was lovely. Next, we have Katie Meyer.

Katie is in the wings, muttering "Oh God, Oh God" to herself. She shakes her head, and walks out, shivering a little bit, and hands her music to Dotty.

As she walks back to center stage, Nick catches her eye and gives her a thumbs up from the audience. She smiles weakly.

JEAN

Okay, you said that you're between an Alto and a Soprano?

KATIE

Yes.

JEAN

Alright. Dotty, start her off on B flat major, and then go up from there.

(To Katie)

Could you just sing the scales through on "la" for as high as you can go?

KATIE

Umm, okay.

Dotty starts playing, and Katie starts in late, singing squeaky and quietly at first. Then, before the next chord is hit, she swallows and comes back a little stronger. She makes it all the way to the second B above middle C, but barely.

JEAN

(scribbling down some notes)

Great. Okay, now let's hear your piece. What is the title?

KATIE

Well, the tune is Rockin' Robin, but the lyrics are about one of my recent projects in lab.

JEAN

Okay, whenever you're ready

Katie takes a few deep breaths and then tries to signal Dotty by jerkily pointing to her. Dotty raises her arms to fall in sync with Katie's abrupt hand gestures, but the two don't match up. Eventually, they fall in sync, and Dotty starts up the music.

Katie sings. The judges look skeptical at first, but then their faces soften as the solo goes on. They also start laughing merrily at the clever lyrics. The vocal quality improves exponentially throughout the song.

LYRICS for Use Those Pi Bonds:

(to the tune of "Rockin' Robin")

Electrons are spinnin'

All day long

They're spinnin' right around while we're singing this song

All we needed was some row one elements

To add to sucrose

So people could get their vitamins

Use the pi-bonds

Pi pi pi pi

Use the pi-bonds

Pi pipi pi

Cuz if you use the sigma, you won't get no potassium in there

CUT TO:

INT. CHOIR ROOM-NIGHT

People are packing up their stuff and slowly filtering out of the room, chatting lightly. Nick walks over to Katie, who is half-heartedly stuffing the music back into her folder.

NICK

Hey! So, how are you doing?

KATIE

Umm, I don't know. This is a scary world.

NICK

I bet you did fine. The solo was really cool.

KATIE

Oh, thanks. I made it up after I made a breakthrough in one of my long-term lab experiments...

NICK

It was just, I could picture a whole musical number to it, ya' know? There's this new musical, actually, called *Tweet Tweet, You're So Sweet*, and I could definitely see that song in it. I could even see the choreography.

Nick suddenly stops speaking and blushes a little. They momentarily stare at each other. Nick looks away first.

KATIE

Well, I guess I should get going. It takes me a while to walk home.

NICK

You have to walk? It's kind of late. Hey, I'm driving Justin home already. Wanta ride?

KATIE

Sure, that'd be great!

Katie looks nervously at Nick. Nick smiles and laughs, nods to Justin towards the door, and the three leave.

CUT TO:

INT. MEYER HOME-NIGHT

Katie walks in through the front door and into the kitchen. All the lights are off. A plate with dinner sits on the table for her, covered in saran-wrap. A note card taped to it reads "Katie, reheat this in the microwave for 1 min 23 sec for warm or 2 min 15 sec for steaming hot...but the green beans will get over done. Love, Mom"

Katie just walks past the plate and down the hall toward her room. She passes by her parents room.

MR. MEYER (O.S.)

Katie? Is that you?

Katie stops outside the door.

KATIE

Hi Dad.

Mr. Meyer emerges from the door and walks with Katie to the living room around the corner as he walks.

MR. MEYER

Get held up at work?

KATIE

No Dad, I had an audition today, remember?

MR. MEYER

Oh, that's right. Well, hope it was okay for you. Just make sure you have time for the important stuff. Speaking of which, how's your science Olympiad team this year?

KATIE

(casually)

Oh, I decided not to rejoin. A lot of people in the S.O's were in the science fair..

MR. MEYER

What about all your good friends in it? Like Kyle and Chad?

Katie looks oddly hurt at this statement. She looks at Mr. Meyer a bit dramatically.

KATIE

Dad, I don't have any friends here. Those were just my two main team-mates. We only met up to study. We never really went to movies or anything.

MR. MEYER (O.S.)

Really, I always thought that you and Kyle..

KATIE

No, Dad.

Beat. Katie looks at Mr. Meyer with intense, teenage-seriousness. Mr. Meyer's expression softens.

MR. MEYER

Everything going ok at school since the, you know, incident?

KATIE

Fine.

MR. MEYER

You know, you don't have to go join a show choir to run away from the science people. I mean, you belong with the scholars, not the attention needy, tap-dancing-

KATIE

DAD! That's not why I auditioned!

MR. MEYER

All right. I'm sorry, I didn't mean anything by it.

Mr. Meyer looks at his watch.

MR. MEYER (cont.)

Well, it's getting late. Time to hit the hay.

KATIE

Yeah, it feels late.

Mr. Meyer reaches over and gives Katie a hug. She accepts.

MR. MEYER

Goodnight, Katie.

KATIE

Night, Dad.

MR. MEYER

I love you.

Mr. Meyer slowly makes his way to his bedroom. Katie walks to the end of the hall to her bedroom. She closes the door quietly. Without turning on the lights, she puts her

backpack in its spot and walks over to her bed and lies down (with all her school clothes on).

She closes her eyes and a tear rolls down her cheek, but she starts humming the pi-bonds song softly and her face relaxes.

We see a full moon out of her window.

FADE INTO: (moon to clock close up)

INT. WRITING CLASS IN JOHN ADAMS HIGH-DAY

The clock on the wall shows that it is 3:13pm. The students (whose chairs are pushed into a circle once again) stare forward blankly, supporting their chins with their hands. Their eyes are unfocused...one boy is actually drooling.

The words "UNIT 3: NONFICTION" are written on the board. The teacher massages her right temple with index and middle fingers. All the while, the monotonous, stumbling voice of Charlie Hanzer, a lineman on the football team, fills the room.

CHARLIE

*(looking down at a paper in his hands)
...and at that point, I broke through the line. I heard the crowd outside of my hard helmet. I tackled the quarter back at the 40 yard line. He fumbled the ball. I picked up the ball. I ran the field. I almost got tackled at the 20 yard line, but I kept running. Then I made it to the end zone. The game was won. The end.*

The bell rings.

MRS. WILLIAMS

*(standing up and looking relieved)
Well, that is all the time we have left for today. Thank you class. And remember, although the action plot is important, there has to be a strong emotional plot to make any story compelling. Have a nice day.*

She walks over to her desk and throws down two aspirin followed by a slug from her diet coke bottle.

KATIE

*(to Nick, whom she was sitting by)
I'm happy I came in late today, that was awful!*

NICK

(packing up)

Yeah, I don't know if I'm going to be able to get this drool stain out of my shirt sleeve.

They start walking out of the classroom door.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY JOHN ADAMS HIGH-DAY

KATIE

They're posting the show choir listings today! I'm actually excited. My Dad would be so ashamed.

NICK

Really, why?

KATIE

He thinks show choirs are for people who need lots of attention.

NICK

That's so harsh.

KATIE

It's okay. He's from North Dakota. Things are kind of different there... But I'm from Florida and I like music, and I hope I get in.

NICK

(smiling mischievously)

Hmm, I think you'd better go check the list then.

KATIE

Okay. Are you coming with me?

They reach the end of the hallway.

NICK

Nah. I have to pick up my Mom, her car broke down. But, if you want to call me when you get the news...here's my number.

Nick hands Katie a slip of paper with his number on it.

KATIE

(beaming and blushing)

Oh. Okay. Thanks, I will!

Nick turns right at the adjoining hall and walks toward the exit. Katie glances over her shoulder to make sure he's not watching, and then speeds toward the music wing.

Once she gets there, she sees that the sign on the door that says "Friday Auditions..." has not been taken down, but no new one had been added. She slumps against the wall.

Bernice, one of the school secretaries from the activities office, comes waddling down the hallway, her heels clacking, with a piece of pink paper with some tape on the top in hand. She flashes a sickly sweet smile at Katie and daintily smooths the piece of paper on the door, then turns away and starts clacking back toward the middle of the building.

Katie watches her for a moment then runs to the door, running her finger down the list of names. Her finger finally goes over *FIRST ALTO-Melissa Hart, Katie Meyer-*

Katie looks at Bernice and shouts

KATIE
(fist pumping)
Woohooo! I got in!

Bernice turns around and looks startled.

Katie, in a jubilant motion, sprints down the hallway, toward the buses.

CUT TO:

INT. MEYER HOUSEHOLD, FRONT DOOR-DAY

The door knob turns and Katie walks in excitedly. She drops her backpack and walks down the hallway to her room. There is Bubble Rap, a 15 year old popular rapper, playing through the door. Katie's brow furrows and she shoves the door open.

Lily is singing along with the music.

LILY
B to the U to the BB 'ulllllllllll'
Rap Rap...rap rap
Don't pop me
Too early
My shoulders are burly
And I will surely
Wrap you up all night

We'll <pop pop>, get freaky

KATIE

(sternly)

LILY! What are you doing in my room?

Lily is stretched out on the bed, reading something.

LILY

I just found a little poem in your desk. It's nice, Katie. You should publish..

Katie focuses angrily on the piece of paper, which says "I Don't Need Your Love Potion" on the top of it. Then Katie relaxes her face and says

KATIE

Lily, leave me alone.

LILY

(reciting)

"At first you gave me mixed emotions
But now I see it was all love potions
You're no more than a shallow electron
You can't even see your way out of a pi-bond.."

Katie snatches the paper out of Lily's hands. Katie looks at the paper, then tauntingly back at Lily, with a smile.

KATIE

(casually)

Well, actually, it's a song, so you're butchering it. I'm glad you liked it though.

Lily looks at Katie suspiciously.

LILY

What's gotten into you? Aren't you angry? I went thought your stuff and read a personal anti-love poem!

Katie looks at the lyrics again and then puts them down on her desk.

KATIE

No, why would I be angry?

LILY

What's wrong with you? Why are you so happy?
Did you make student of the month or something?

KATIE

No, Lily. You've just made me happy, because this is obviously your way of reaching out to me and being supportive of my song-writing.

LILY

No it's not! I think it's the stupidest thing I've ever read! You're so weird.

Lily runs out of the room, looking disgusted and disappointed.

Katie hums the tune of the song she sang for auditions as she picks up the piece of paper and tears into quarters and throws it away. She walks toward her bed, and looks at the trash. After a few seconds, she retrieves the scraps and puts them back together.

Under her breath, she sings the same words Lily recited with a eighties-pop beat. Her face shows that she now realizes that this song is not a keeper, and she throws them back away.

CUT TO:

INT. SHOWCHOIR ROOM-DAY

Forty students are scattered across the room in groups of 5-8, chatting, running scales, singing impromptu duets, etc. Half of them are wearing black t-shirts with the white letters spelling "Coachella" across the chest.

Freshly polished trophies bedeck curving shelves around the room, many of them with a large number one on them, some with the words NATIONAL CHAMPIONS written.

Katie enters the room talking with Nick, who is also wearing one of the black shirts.

KATIE

...yeah, I couldn't believe it when Ethan's short story turned into a porno...oh my god.

A large group of girls stands in a circle in front of Katie. Bethany Rose stands in the center. She just began leading "siren" warm ups, where one makes the sound of a siren to warm up the entire vocal range.

KATIE

Oh, I thought that was a real siren for a second. Almost made me want to merge the right side of the room...hehe, get it, like when an ambulance comes and you go on the right side of the-

Everyone stares at her, not amused, with the exception of Nick.

BETHANY ROSE

Excuse me, um...

KATIE

Katie.

BETHANY ROSE

Yes, Katie. I'm sorry, but we're trying to warm up. You can join us if you like, but please try to limit the anecdotes, ok?

Katie walks to the other side of the room. Nick follows.

KATIE

What's her problem?

NICK

She's just trying to warm up. She's pretty serious about singing. Don't take it personally.

Nick flashes a smile at Katie. She smiles 'back.

KATIE

Ok.

Jean, age 47, dressed in a grey, chic turtle neck and grey slacks with a burgundy scarf walks into the room, commanding a certain presence as she passes people.

JEAN

Excuse me everyone, it's five minutes past the hour. Let's get started. Grab your folders please from this table, they're in alphabetical order.

The students get up and grab red and black sparkly plastic folders from a long table.

JEAN

Attention! We don't have all day, let's circle up in sections please.

Katie rushes over to the corner of the room that has a sign "Altos" written on the wall. After milling around for 30 seconds, everyone stands poised and silent, eyes on Jean.

JEAN

All right. Welcome to our Prep-choir: The Show Stoppers. I recognize some of you from the women's choir. Congratulations. You will notice that there are twenty people wearing black shirts...these are the seniors from our Premier Choir: The Show Stealers. They have won two international Golden Note awards and will be attending your practice this semester to help everyone along. You would be wise to pay extra special attention to them...they know what they're doing. But you all joined show choir to make some music, so let's start off with that. I'm Jean Heggins and I'll be conducting group rehearsals. Lin will be doing choreography on Saturday Retreats twice a month. Any questions?

BETHANY

Yes. What is the theme this year?

JEAN

(beaming)

I almost forgot! Open your folders...the theme is FEEL THE BEAT!

The students in black shirts high five each other and celebrate with whoops. A few of the new students clap their hands.

Katie opens her folder and sees a mini-poster with black and red and silver stars glittering around the words "FEEL THE BEAT." She looks down at her two left feet and cringes.

JEAN (cont.)

Well let's get started. Please take "You Can't Stop The Beat." Next week, we'll be auditioning for the solo on page 7.

Katie glances over at Nick while others shuffle and get their music out. He suavely spins his folder and flips out the music, then tosses the folder casually to the floor.

Katie takes out her music without looking and accidentally gives herself a huge paper cut. Olive, a blonde wavy haired and round faced girl looks over at her.

OLIVE

(Whispering)

Oh my gosh, you're bleeding.

Katie sucks on her finger abruptly and then takes it out to inspect it.

KATIE

(nonchalantly)

It's nothing.

Now Marna, a girl with mousy brown hair and a whimsical air about her looks over.

MARNA

(in a forced British accent)

Red, the color of passion has stained thine sheet and thy cheek.

Katie looks at the tiny red dot on her sheet music and tries to wipe it off.

KATIE

It's not really a big deal.

JEAN

Please turn to page 3, measure 64. Dotty, if you will please.

Dotty plays a chord, the two girls heads snap forward, and Katie looks down at her music, trying to find the right measure.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN ADAMS STAGE-AFTERNOON

The same music is playing from a boom box and the students are learning a dance. Katie is all over the place, and looks lost.

Katie is paired up with Nick, and just as she seems like she starts to be in sync with him, she turns the wrong way and collides heads with him hard, and falls to the ground.

Katie looks horrified.

Lin stops the dancing and turns around. Seeing Katie, she looks displeased. Lin marches over to the boom box and turns it off.

LIN

Okay, let's call it a night. Katie, over here please.

Students start to mill around and pack up their belongings.

LIN (cont.)

[Taking Katie aside]

Katie, I think you should know a few things. I did not initially approve of you getting into this choir. At this level of competition, the girls have to be able to dance. But Nick, our strongest male dancer in all the show choirs, argued on your behalf, and said that he would partner with you for the first semester, even though he is already in the Show Stealers, to help you improve. Unfortunately, that means that if you do not improve and start being able to hold your own come January, I'm afraid we're going to have to let you go. So please be very careful, because you have one of the largest vocal ranges in the choir, and it would be a pity to lose you. Are we clear?

KATIE

Yes ma'am.

LIN

Good. Okay, well, start practicing.

KATIE

I will.

Katie exits the stage stiffly with a look of determination.

CUT TO:

INT. PRAIRIE HOMES SENIOR CENTER: MILLIE'S BEDROOM-EVENING

Millie is sitting on her bed, Swing Time, a Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movie from 1936. At this moment, a smooth, deep voice is singing "The Way You Look Tonight" Millie hums along and swinging her shoulders in the rhythm of the dancers.

Katie enters, pushing a cart full of metal boxes.

KATIE

Millie? Hi, it's Katie. I'm just bringing you your dinner tonight since your blood pressure's been acting up again.

Millie glances over at Katie, smiles, and then keeps dancing, her eyes closing again.

Katie takes a plate full of soggy, squashed food out from one of the metal boxes and places it on a tray on Millie's bed. Then she fills a glass of water and takes a spoon, fork, and knife from her apron and sets them next to the plate.

Then, Katie wanders over to Millie and stands next to her, staring at the screen.

KATIE

I wish I could dance like that. They make it look so easy.

MILLIE

That's because they practice every day and night.

Millie has opened her eyes again and has apparently snapped out of her daze.

MILLIE (cont)

My mother was a dancer. She was gone every night, always off practicing at the dance hall in Washburne, the town next to mine. She'd come home smelling like dust and potpourri. I remember that. I'd know she was home and in my room to kiss me goodnight when I smelled that dust and potpourri. It made me sneeze!

KATIE

Well she must have been talented. I'm learning I'm not at all. I think I'm going to quit.

MILLIE

You're learning how to dance?

KATIE

I'm in a show choir. You have to sing and do stage dances at the same time.

MILLIE

(indignantly)
Well if my mother learned how to raise a family
and dance ballroom, I think you can balance
stage dancing and singing.

KATIE
But my Dad says it's just a way for people to
draw attention to themselves.

MILLIE
(winking)
What's wrong with that? Every now and then, the
gents need a little preview before they decide
to 'invest.'

KATIE
Millie!

MILLIE
(slyly)
My mother wasn't the only dancer in the family.
Besides, how do you think I met my husband.

Millie gives Katie another big wink.

KATIE
All right Millie, you'd better eat your food
before it gets even colder.

MILLIE
Just passing on some advice. I pretended to not
know any of the steps that we learned at the
monthly Barn Dance so that Winston would help
me. He worked with me extra hours, and pretty
soon, I was his favorite partner and he asked me
to marry him!

KATIE
You were so tricky! Now you'd better eat your
food this time, or Glenda will be hurt. I'll be
back for the plate later.

*Katie leaves the room, and seeing Millie return to watching
the old movie, and still not moving toward her food. Katie
walks down the hallway smiling.*

CUT TO: INT. SHOW CHOIR ROOM-EVENING
*Nick talks Justin in the corner of the room. Katie is
helping rearrange the chairs in the choir room and keeps an
eye on Nick.*

Then, she checks around the room and notices no one is looking in her direction. She tries doing one of the sexy drop moves while holding the chair, but ends up dropping it loudly. She quickly goes back to her work.

As she's putting back the last chair, she gets tapped on the back.

NICK

Hey, that's really nice of you to help the managers out with all the chairs.

KATIE

Oh, well, it's nothing. I have pretty good chair-stacking skills.

Katie looks down at her shoes.

KATIE

Can I ask you something.

NICK

Sure.

KATIE

Will you help me not to be the worst dancer that show stoppers has ever seen?

NICK

You're not the worst...

KATIE

Lin kind of hates me, though. I'll make everyone look bad. I don't know why it's so hard for me. I just, I wanted to quit at first, but I think I actually want to stay.

Katie hears nothing but her heart beating for a moment while Nick pauses before he looks up to speak to her again.

NICK

You know what, yeah, I could do that. Show choir is all I do anyway. Besides, my mom is actually a dance instructor and we have a small exercise room in our house...

KATIE

Really!?

NICK

(smiling)

Yeah, but then I get to ask you for something too. And don't laugh!

KATIE

I won't.

NICK

Well, I'm writing a musical, and I want to be one of the first people to write a musical about chemistry. I think it's so rich with material. And think about the double implications, like romantic and chemical... And well, you know a lot about science, and about rhyming, so I thought maybe you could help me out.

KATIE

Seriously?

NICK

I'll teach you to dance and you'll help write?

KATIE

Yeah, we have a deal!

Katie and Nick stand looking at each other nodding, not saying anything. Katie resorts to trying to high five Nick to express her gratitude, but partially misses. Then she turns on her heel.

KATIE

Bye.

NICK

(Laughing)

Bye.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEYER HOUSE-MIDNIGHT

All the windows in the house are dark except for one, which has a tiny light coming from it.

CUT TO:

INT. KATIE'S ROOM-MIDNIGHT

Katie is in front of her mirrored closet doors, stiffly (on tip toes) trying to mimic the movements from the dance portion. She tries the turn and falls over with a thump.

The faint voice of Mr. and Mrs. Meyer are heard mumbling suddenly.

Katie's eyes widen, then she scrambles off the floor quietly, turns off her light and jumps into her bed, pulling the covers up to her neck and tries to look relaxed.

An instant later, there is a gentle knocking at the door.

MRS. MEYER (o.s.)
(groggily)

Katie? Are you okay?

Mrs. Meyer pushes the door open and shines flashlight around the room till she finds Katie's head and focuses the light there.

KATIE
(feigned sleepy confusion)
Ah, Mom! The light is hurting my eyes!

Mrs. Meyer quickly whisks the light beam away from Katie's face to her feet.

MRS. MEYER
I heard a thump.

KATIE
Oh, I just fell out of bed. I was having a nightmare.

MRS. MEYER
Ok.

Mrs. Meyer stares at Katie with a motherly smile.

MRS. MEYER (cont.)
You aren't having any more of those...episodes are you? Are you having any feelings like you might have another one? You've been staying up pretty late and...

KATIE
MOM! I'm fine. I just fell out of bed. Now can you please turn off the light?

MRS. MEYER

Of course. I'm sorry. Good night, Katie. Try and get some sleep.

Katie watches the door close and as soon as the closing of the second door is heard, Katie pushes back the covers once again and tiptoes over to the desk lamp, turns it on, and resumes her start position in front of the mirrored closet doors.

KATIE

(whispered)

And 5-6-7-8 and shuffle step...ow!

She's messed up already.

CUT TO:

INT. WRITING CLASS

The board has "Journal Day ☺" written on it. Mrs. Williams is at her desk, reading a romance novel which is hidden by a bigger book around it. Most students doodle or write in their notebooks. Katie and Nick have their desks pushed close together.

*Nick writes a note on his journal paper:
"You look tired"*

*Katie writes back on it:
"Yeah, I was up late last night trying to practice the stupid dance."*

And then she doodles a picture of herself dancing badly and making a child cry.

Nick laughs and the bell rings. Mrs. Williams puts down her novel reluctantly then addresses the class energetically.

MRS. WILLIAMS

Don't forget everyone, as this is our ninth journal entry, next time you will have to turn them in. So, for any of those of you that have forgotten to write more than two pages for each day we did them, you might want to go back and revise revise revise!

Mrs. Williams sits back down, returning her full attention to the novel.

Katie and Nick walk out of the class together.

CUT TO:

EXT. NICK'S HOUSE-EVENING

Katie rings the doorbell, double checking the number that is scribbled on the sheet of paper matches the golden letters on the house. They do.

A slim, petite woman in bright colors (Mrs. Logan, Nick's Mom) opens the door.

MRS. LOGAN

Hi! You must be Katie!

KATIE

Oh, hello.

MRS. LOGAN

Well come on in. Nicky has told me all about you.

KATIE

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S HOUSE-EVENING

MRS. LOGAN

So, did you find the house okay?

KATIE

Oh yes, they were good directions.

MRS. LOGAN

Great. Let me call Nick for you. NICK! YOUR FRIEND IS HERE!

KATIE

This is a really nice house.

MRS. LOGAN

It keeps us dry when it rains.

Nick comes down the stairs toward Katie and Mrs. Logan.

NICK

Hey Katie. Sorry, I was watching the news. Oh, I see you've met my mom.

MRS. LOGAN

She certainly has. Say, do you two want a little hump day treat?

NICK

No, Mom. I told you, you can't keep quoting teen movies. It's not really that funny anymore.

Katie laughs.

MRS. LOGAN

Ha! Mean Girls? See? She gets it.

NICK

Okay, but thanks Mom. I think we're good.

MRS. LOGAN

Okay, let me know if you need anything.

NICK

Okay, bye bye.

Mrs. Logan exits into the kitchen, doing a little salsa step as she goes.

NICK

Sorry! My mom is a little crazy sometimes. But I still love her. Anyway, shall I show you to the legendary exercise room?

KATIE

Sure.

NICK

Okay, right down the basement stairs. Here we go.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S BASEMENT TURNED INTO AN EXERCISE ROOM

There are two yoga balls, one mirrored wall, and a hand bar in the basement. In front of the mirror is hardwood floor. A few large blue mats cover the unfinished portion of the basement near the mirrored area. A little set of hand weights and exercise bands lie in a basket by a water cooler.

Katie looks around approvingly.

KATIE

Wow, this is impressive.

NICK

Okay. Where do you want to start?

KATIE

Can we do the first song? That's the hardest one with all those swing moves.

NICK

Okay, I've taken the liberty of learning your part, so I'm going to do it along side you first, then we'll mix in the lifts, okay?

KATIE

(looks at him for a moment)

Thank you.

NICK

Don't mention it. And five-six-seven-eight and...

Nick has hit the play button on a boom box and "You can't stop the beat" starts up. Katie puts her arms in starting position, but Nick comes from behind her and adjusts them and whispers, "Now go!" and he helps spin her...

INT. MEYER HOME-EVENING

Katie and Lily sit on the couch, watching tv. Katie has a text book on her lap and seems to be taking notes during commercials. The phone rings.

KATIE and LILY

Got it!

The sisters spring up from the couch and race into the kitchen to get the phone. Mr. Meyer, who is reading the paper at the kitchen counter, picks it up.

MR. MEYER

Katie, some young man is calling for you.

Katie beams, and takes the phone, smirking at Lily.

KATIE

(flirtatiously)

Nick?

KYLE(O.S.)

No, this is Kyle Wexler, the president of the Student Science Association and receiver of three gold medals in-

Katie's face falls.

KATIE

Why are you calling me, Kyle?

KYLE (O.S.)

Oh, straight down to business? I always did like that about you, Meyer.

Katie grimaces.

KYLE (O.S.)

All right, well, I'm calling to formally invite you back to the Science Olympiads. Perhaps we were a bit too harsh after the, er, incident. And you know as well as I, we all make mistakes sometimes, and we just really, um, miss you.

KATIE

No one knows Organic chem, do they?

KYLE (O.S.)

(sounding relieved and frustrated)

No! They don't. Can you believe it? What with Jeanie gone from last year, you were our strong candidate. I mean, Anil and I are mediocre at best. We've been getting crushed at the scrimmages... Anyway, that is neither here nor there. I'm just happy we got everything sorted out. We started practicing on Wednesday nights instead of Tues-

KATIE

I'm not coming back.

KYLE (O.S.)

What? Why not?

KATIE

I have something else I'm doing.

KYLE (O.S.)

Now Katie, I hope you don't expect me to beg. I mean, what else could you be doing that is as rewarding as-

Katie hangs up the phone and throws it on the couch. She looks at her hand that threw the phone, surprised. Then she smiles and walks back into her room. The music starts again, and through her doorway, we can see she is practicing a spin, and she nails it.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN ADAMS AUDITORIUM-DAY

The highly acclaimed choreographer, Jacques Cartier, is pacing around the stage, walking between couples, who are fervently dancing. He wears a beret and he continually issues a soft stream of suggestions to everyone around him. The booming music finally stops, and the couples hit the last position, panting.

Katie starts wiping beads of sweat off of her forehead discreetly, so that Nick won't see.

Bethany looks like she just emerged from a beauty salon. Katie gives her an angry glance.

JACQUES

That's a wrap everyone! Nice work on the steps. But ladies, you might want to start dieting before nationals ... cows don't fly! And men, please, for the love of God, start doing push ups every day. I know you're not football players for a reason, but that doesn't mean you can't have some upper-body strength.

Jean Heggins walks in.

JEAN

(quietly, to Jacques)

Alright, I think that's enough, Jacques.

(louder, to everyone)

Great! That was our third retreat! And look how much we've improved. Let's give a round of applause for Jacques Cartier, who came all the way from New York City to help you out this weekend.

Applause breaks out amongst the students.

JEAN (cont.)

Okay, now get plenty of rest, because we have a show to do next week, and I want you all well rested and ready to go for it! Everyone, dismissed.

Katie is in the corner of the room, still practicing the routine. Nick walks up to her.

NICK

Hey! You've had enough practice for today. Wanna go over to "Koko Beans" for some coffee or something? I think after surviving *Jacque Cartier* you deserve a reward.

Katie looks finally stops trying to do a kick jump and bends over, out of breath. She looks up at Nick, smiling.

KATIE

Yeah. That sounds really good.

Katie and Nick leave through the doors smiling.

CUT TO:

INT. KOKO BEANS COFFEE SHOP-DAY

The hip, coffee joint is filled with teenagers, soccer moms, and bored-looking business men. The walls are all made of glass, giving a beautiful view of the snow-covered parking lot.

Nick brings over two overly-large mugs brimming with whip cream and sprinkled with cocoa powder.

NICK

One hot chocolate and one fudge mocha grande. Here ya go.

KATIE

(giggling)

Thanks.

NICK

Don't mention it. Oh, but I did have to ask you something.

Katie lights up and looks at him intently. Nick grabs his guitar case from behind his seat, and pulls out a notebook with scrawled hand-writing on it from the front pocket. "Lyrics" is written at the top. Her face falls a little bit.

NICK (cont.)

I was wondering if you can help me with this song a little bit. It's called "Rainbows" It's basically saying why they're not so great. But

I kind of want to add a science twist to it.
It's for the musical...for the female lead.

KATIE

Yeah, sure! Actually, let's start doing this
more often.

Nick and Katie stare at each other expectantly.

KATIE

Well, are you going to play it for me?

NICK

Oh, umm...

*Nick scans the coffee shop, which is sparsely populated at
this time. He gingerly takes his guitar from the case.*

NICK (cont.)

Ok. I'll play it very quietly, so come close.
And think about the lyrics, ok?

*Katie nods earnestly. Nick puts his head toward hers, and
starts playing and singing very softly. After the first
verse, Katie starts making up a background part by humming.*

NICK

(singing)

Why are there so many songs, about rainbows
Cuz most of them really kind of, blöw
And my voice is too small and not quite low
Enough to sing this one

And I know that rainbows aren't real
And I kinda hate how that feels
They're just water reflecting light
And every day is a bit of a fight

And the fact that they aren't magic is tragic
There are no pots of gold or leprechauns
Our childhood, was just a con

I still remember the day
That someone took everything away
They handed me a science book
And they said, "Take a look"

And as they pissed on
My imagination
I learned about the fragmentation

Of light
Through the frickin' water droplet
And I didn't wanna drop it

Nymphs didn't paint the sky
Now I know why people get high
Just to experience a bit of reality
That they knew from their childhood
perspectivity

And songs about rainbows, always make me sad
And some people, always get mad
Even though there's nothing to be mad about
They feel the need to shout
And when they shout
They silence the people
Who are already silent
And just need a peep-hole
Into their personality...

One disgruntled man in a gray suit catches Nick's eye and gives him a stern look. He abruptly stops. Katie lights up and applauds.

KATIE

These are great! What do you want help with?

NICK

I feel like the 2nd part is really weak. From, "And songs about rainbows...always make me sad." That's basically the end so far, but I wanted to maintain this sciency-whimsical feel that I start in the beginning of the song. Something just feels off.

KATIE

How about here, use something like (sung) "And songs about rainbows, always make me sad. But molecule movements, always make me glad. Bobbling, Colliding, moving in and out, I feel the need to shout."

About what though...hmmm...maybe
"About the triumphant cascades,
Of phosphorylation
Causing reactions
What glorification
Of the cells in my body...
Oh Physiology"

That way, it could be about losing one magic and then gaining another, in science.

Nick beams at Katie, as if he's just struck gold.

NICK

That's amazing! Where do you get this stuff?

KATIE

When I was little, if I didn't understand something, I'd just make up a song about it. I guess it's just the way I think...in rhymes.

NICK

Want to come over and record a demo-tape now? I really want to record. It sounds so cool!

KATIE

(smiling)

Sure.

NICK

Alright, let's go.

Nick and Katie hurriedly rush out of the restaurant.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN ADAMS AUDITORIUM-STAGE-NIGHT

Parents, students, and teachers file into the spacious auditorium. The Meyer family shuffles into seats in the back. Mrs. Meyer glances nervously at the people around her. Just as people start settling and chatting, the lights begin to dim.

The music from the pit orchestra begins and a velvet curtain rises dramatically. The Show Stoppers launch right into their program, dancing and swinging all over the stage.

The girls wear classic, ruby colored dresses with flowy skirts and form fitted empire waists. The boys wear white tuxes with red bow ties and cummerbunds.

**Camera fades through the highlights of each piece and then comes in for the grand finale, "You Can't Stop the Beat." This number is filled with dips, twirls, and swing moves in addition to some marching band-like choreography. Everyone has a ridiculous smile slapped on their face.*

At the finish, Katie is pointing in the correct direction. The audience bursts into applause. Katie is in the back,

and can't even see the crowd. There are video cameras everywhere.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL ATRIUM-NIGHT

Katie emerges from the auditorium with her hair pulled back into a fashionable bun. She has stage make-up on her face and some glitter on her arms.

She stands on her tip toes to look for her Mom and Dad, and spots them close to the stair well. A large Orange and Red sign reading "JOHN ADAMS HAPPY HARVEST CONCERT" hangs above their heads.

Katie walks over to them. Mr. Meyer sees her coming and looks down at his shoes.

KATIE

Hi Mom and Dad!
Lily.

LILY

OH MY GOSH! Was that guy next to you Nick. I'm sorry, he just seems to good for you. No offense, but he's definitely a better dancer, a better looker, a better-

KATIE

Mom!

MRS. MEYER

Now Lily, don't you want to tell your sister how good you think she did?

LILY

No.

Lily loses interest and walks away toward the snack counter.

MRS. MEYER

Well Katie, that was really fun. Your outfits are certainly very interesting.

KATIE

Yeah, I know, I'd never really wear this on my own...the other mom's did it. There's a whole entourage of them backstage! They even come to dress rehearsals.

MRS. MEYER

Well, that's nice. Jim, didn't you think Katie did well?

MR. MEYER

Um. Yes. Nice work. There was some positive energy there.

KATIE

Dad?

MR. MEYER

It's just very interesting how people have to dedicate so much time just to do a little two step and song. Very interesting. It nearly consumes everything else, doesn't it?

MRS. MEYER

JIM

MR. MEYER

(back to Katie)

But if it makes you happy, Katie Bug, then that's all that matters.

Mr. Meyer smiles and gives a wink to a crestfallen Katie, and she warms up a little bit.

KATIE

Well, we're all going out for ice-cream tonight to celebrate...so don't wait up for me, I'll be home late.

MR. MEYER

Don't you have a Physics test next week?

KATIE

Yes, but I'll probably be home before midnight, so it'll be okay. I don't need much sleep.

MRS. MEYER

Well Katie, you should get a good amount, after all, it could have been a factor in the, um, rage-

KATIE

Mom. I'm fine. I'm going for ice-cream.

MR. MEYER

Well okay. Take care, Miss.

KATIE

Thanks Dad. Bye Mom!

Katie leaves her parents and disappears through the auditorium doors.

CUT TO:

EXT-FROSTY FLAKE ICE-CREAM PARLOR-NIGHT

A group of about 27 choir members shuffle in from the bitter, November cold, singing some acapella songs loud and proud.

Katie walks by Olive and Marna, who are dramatically deciding whether or not to break the Healthy Choices=Healthy Voices list and actually have ice-cream instead of a juice-cooler.

CUT TO:

INT-FROSTY FLAKE ICE-CREAM PARLOR-NIGHT.

Thanksgiving decorations overwhelm all the counters, walls, and display cases. Pumpkin Pie Ice-cream is advertised at least seven times throughout the store.

Everyone gets in line to order. Nick is at the front, talking with some fellow basses about the show. Katie watches him and sighs.

MARNA

Well, shall you or shall you not disobey the "list of food that good singers must never eat"?

KATIE

(looks at her skeptically)

I think I'm going to take my chances.

OLIVE

So Katie, are there any other indulgences you want to give in to?

KATIE

(blushing)

I don't know what you're talking about.

OLIVE

Oh come on, I'm not stupid...neither is the rest of the choir. Listen, I couldn't help but notice that you're kind of awkward with people...

Katie stares at her.

OLIVE

Not in a bad way! Just...(lowers her voice)
Guys usually like a chase...do you know what I
mean? If you're always around and available,
you're boring.

(raising her voice to normal level again)
Just thought I'd give you that advice.

Katie purses her lips and continues staring.

FROSTY FLAKE SERVER

Next!

KATIE

(to Olive)

I gotta order.

(to server)

Umm, I'd like pumpkin pie ice-cream please.
Thanks.

CUT TO:

EXT. FROSTY FLAKE

*Katie exits the store, which is now bursting with Frosty
Flake tip-song jingles (and the choir has joined in with
them in multiple harmonies). She leans against the window
ledge, shivers and bites into her ice-cream cone.*

*The door opens (jingling bells) again and Nick steps out
too.*

NICK

Hey, good concert.

KATIE

Yeah, you too. Thanks for all your help. Lin
told me that I can stay in for spring semester!

NICK

That's great! And hey, it was you doing all the
spins and steps out there, not me.

*Nick leans on the ledge next to Katie, looking out into the
street, and his elbow touches Katie's. Katie's face lights
up, but when Nick looks back at her, she forces a calm look
back onto her face.*

NICK (cont.)

Wow, it's kind of weird eating ice-cream outside while it's snowing. I remember when I was a kid..

Nick starts looking off into the street while he tells his story. Katie doesn't hear Nick's voice really, and just focuses on trying to casually keep her arm touching his in the same spot. At one point, she ends up leaning on him a little too obviously.

NICK

And then I got the bucket from my dad and...Hey. Are you okay? You seem kind of unstable.

Katie straightens up immediately and folds her arms across her chest.

KATIE

I'm fine. Just tired, I guess.

They look at each other for a long moment.

Then, the doors burst open again, and the show choir people are spilling out, singing "In the Jungle" Katie looks back and rolls her eyes.

NICK

Ok, well, I should go with them. The basses need their final performance notes.

KATIE

Ok. Yea. Well, have a good night.

NICK

(smiling)

Thanks, you too.

They stand there awkwardly for a moment. Katie goes forward for a hug, then retreats, then, picking up on her intent, Nick goes forward for a hug, but also retreats, then they finally manage to briefly embrace.

Katie's lips brush Nick's cheek in an ambiguous way and then the two quickly pull apart. Nick starts walking with the group and Katie starts walking to her bus stop. She turns around.

KATIE

Bye!

Nick turns back to her.

NICK

Bye!

Katie beams as she walks away toward the bus stop.

CUT TO:

INT. SHOWCHOIR ROOM-AFTERNOON

The Show Stoppers and the Show Stealers are rehearsing together, sight reading the music of a South African song "Shosholozza" A boy from the band, Richard, stands to the side of the group. He confidently follows the sheet music for the "African" drum part, but works in his own "improvisations" occasionally, looking very cocky.

They finally finish the song.

JEAN

Great work everybody! Let's give a hand to Richard and his marvelous drumming skills.

The choir applauds Richard.

JEAN (cont.)

And remember, no extra practice on Friday. But do look over this music again, especially the pronunciations in the front cover. I'll see you on Saturday for vocal/dance combo. Sound good? Great. Well, have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Several of the girls crowd around Jean, asking her questions about details on pronunciation for one of the songs they're doing.

Katie goes over toward her back pack and takes out a "SHOW STOPPERS" water-bottle and takes a swig.

Nick walks over to her and grabs her hand.

NICK

Hey, can I talk to you? I need to tell you something.

KATIE

Sure.

NICK

Here, let's go over here.

Nick leads her towards through the door to the auditorium. He proceeds to lead Katie backstage, and then takes her behind a black, back curtain. The din of people tapping, packing up, and singing by themselves can be heard dimly in the background. Nick moves close to her and whispers

NICK

Katie...

Katie is smiling and biting her bottom lip.

KATIE
(softly)

Yeah.

NICK

There's been something on my mind for a long time, and I've been really unsure about it...but you're so close to me now, I just feel like I can tell you anything.

Katie starts leaning her face towards his.

KATIE

Yes?

NICK

I think I'm gay.

Katie has closed her eyes and is going for his lips, then suddenly wrenches them open and looks at Nick, terrified.

KATIE

What?

NICK
(more slowly)

I think I'm gay.

There is a long pause. Katie looks away, biting her lower lip much harder. She finally looks back to Nick, who is still holding her hand.

KATIE

Well, are you okay?

NICK
(startled)

Um, yeah. I think so.

KATIE

Well, that's good. Oh. I'm so touched that you are able to tell me.

She hugs him gently.

KATIE

Is there anything I can do. Do your parents know? Are you sure you're okay?

NICK

Um, ha. I don't know. But I feel fine. My parents don't know. No one does. I'm just kind of, you know, figuring things out.

KATIE

Wow, that's so hard.. Well, you should call me. I have to go though. Gotta go do my volunteer hours..call me though.

NICK

Ok...bye.

Katie emerges from the wings of the stage, picks up her bag, and mechanically walks for the door. Olive and Marna try to approach her, but she breezes past them. Marna watches her whimsically and Olive scowls.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN ADAMS HIGH, PARKING LOT

Katie emerges from the big double doors and starts running down the street. She doesn't stop.

CUT TO:

INT. PRAIRIE HOMES NURSING HOME DINING HALL-DAY

"HAPPY THANKSGIVING" banners decorate the dining hall and big, animated paper turkeys hang from the ceilings and plaster the walls. Katie sits at her usual table of three old men, the androgynous looking person in the wheel chair, and three meek, frail looking ladies with white hair.

Katie sits between Millie and Enid, a lady with large clip-on-turkey earrings. Millie shifts her eyes to Enid's plate, which has a large helping of pureed yams with marshmallows, to Katie. Katie is looking down at her lap.

Millie quickly reaches across Katie and grabs a marshmallow off of Enid's yams.

ENID

Katherine! Katherine! She's taking them again. Shoo!

Enid swats at Millie with a spoon. Katie turns on Millie and grabs the marshmallow with her napkin, perhaps more angrily than she normally would. Millie looks outraged.

KATIE

Millie. Come on, you know that refined sugar is bad. I'll try to get you some extra cranberry sauce, ok?

MILLIE

(indignantly)

I've had it with fruit! What joy is life if it doesn't taste good? I just want something fun.

KATIE

(exasperated)

Have you ever had a dog, Millie?

MILLIE

Why yes, his name was Marshall. He was always partial to Winston, though.

KATIE

Do you remember what happened if you ever fed him chocolate?

MILLIE

Well, I always know that you're not supposed to, but I never knew why...

KATIE

It would poison him. It's the same for you, sugar is like poison due to your lack of insulin, ok?

Katie appears irritated and unnecessarily, and looks back at her lap, with her arms crossed across her chest. Millie stares at her.

MILLIE

What's the matter with you? Your temper is as short as I've seen it.

Katie's face softens. She looks at Millie, as if about to open up to her.

KATIE

It's just...I'm kind of, let down and confused about something...

MILLIE

What is it?

Katie looks at Millie, and then back to the table.

KATIE

It's just that...ummmm...my dog gets along really well with my neighbor's girl dog, but they won't mate, so we can't get any puppies. I just don't understand why...I just, really want to date, I mean to have puppies.

MILLIE

Oh, that happened to Marshall too. Don't worry. At the vet, you can get this special spray that you put on the female dog that makes all the difference. It's testosterone or something like that.

Katie's face lights up. The gears in her mind start turning.

MILLIE (cont.)

There. See, just tell Millie your troubles. She'll make them better. Now, will you get me that cranberry sauce?

KATIE

(smiles)

Sure Millie, be right back.

Katie leaves, and Millie scoots closer to Enid's plate and scoops up the rest of the marshmallows on the candied yams. Quickly, she puts them in her mouth and smiles, despite Enid's complaints.

CUT TO:

INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM-NIGHT

Katie enters her bedroom. She closes the door, then locks it. She crosses the room to her desk, and pulls an advanced biology book from the corner of it and flips through the book to the index. Her finger trails down the page until it hits "pheromones." She flips to the correct page.

KATIE

(reading to herself)

"In animals, sex pheromones indicate the availability of the female for breeding. Male animals may also emit pheromones that convey information about their species and genotype. Many insect species release sex pheromones to attract a mate..."

Katie puts the book down.

KATIE (cont.)

(muttering to herself)

I already knew that. HMMMM.

Katie opens her lap top, which is sitting on the desk. She opens a browser window, which is open to google. She types "pheromones" and then guiltily looks over her shoulder, then back to the computer and types "+ homosexual." Then she hits enter, and the sites that come up are as follows.

"Same Sex Gay Attractants with Pheromones"

"Male Aroma-Attract Men"

"Pheromones and gay men"

"'Sexy' Smells Different for Gay Men"

Katie's face lights up, she clicks the top link, and types "ingredients" into the search browser on the website.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN ADAM'S SHOW CHOIR ROOM-AFTERNOON

All of the group stands in a cluster, singing "Carol of the Bells" conducted by Jean. They all appear very serious.

SHOWCHOIR

Ding, dong, ding-----DONG!

Jean conducts the group to cut off.

JEAN

Very well done. I can tell you've been practicing. I think that the senior citizens will love this! Thanks for the connection, Katie.

Katie beams.

KATIE

Don't mention it.

JEAN

All right, that's enough for now. Have a nice evening.

Students mill about, packing up. A group of two girls and two boys leave the room singing the bell carol in four part harmony, looking as though this makes them feel superior.

Katie gathers her things and makes a beeline for the door. Nick cuts her off.

NICK

Hey. Don't you want to practice today? It's Wednesday.

KATIE

Oh, um, Can't. I have work to do. Thanks, though.

NICK

Ok. See you aroun-

KATIE

(interrupting)

Bye!

Nick looks confused and slightly hurt as Katie walks out past him.

INT. WRITING CLASS-DAY

The room is decorated with holly and red bows and cardboard cutouts of snow men and snow flakes. Mrs. Williams is standing in front of the class holding some mistletoe and reading off a piece of paper, and everyone's watching her with amusement.

Katie and Nick are sitting next to each other.

MRS. WILLIAMS

...for who was I to ever know
The dangers of the mistletoe.
I stood beneath it everywhere,
Hoping for some love and care.
But drunken lust was what I got,
The scars I received were ne'r forgot.

Mrs. Williams continues reading.

Katie has her eyes glued on Mrs. Williams, and Nick stares at Katie. Finally, he moves his desk closer to hers and writes to Katie on her notebook page: "Hey, where have you been lately? You're always leaving as soon as class gets over. Don't you still want to practice?"

Katie leans over, reads it, frowns sadly and writes back "Sorry, I've been really busy. Let's practice tonight though. I miss seeing you outside of school."

Nick draws a smiley faced stick man giving a thumbs up. He also adds: "Ok. Let's go after class, to my place."

Katie smiles and looks forward.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S BASEMENT-AFTERNOON

Katie and Nick are in the dance studio area of his basement. Katie starts taking off her coat.

NICK

Hey, I'll be right back. I just have to get my dance shoes.

KATIE

Ok, see you in a minute.

Nick leaves up the stairs. Katie grabs her backpack and quickly takes out a little bottle of "STRONG MEN'S COLOGNE." She holds it an arms length away and sprays herself down with it. She pauses to look at the bottle, then back up the stairs, then back at the bottle.

KATIE

(whispered to herself)

This is so wrong. What was I thinking?

She continues to stare at the bottle, then jumps as she hears the basement stairs creak as Nick comes down them. She hurriedly gives herself two more guilty sprays and then puts it away.

Nick walks in smiling, then his nose wrinkles and he sniffs the air. His eyes start watering and he sneezes.

NICK

What is that? It smells like really intense cologne. I'm so allergic to that stuff. Do you have some or something?

Katie turns beet red, and then starts putting on her coat again.

KATIE

Oh, uh, my dad must have sprayed it near my backpack or something. I'm sorry. Actually, I feel a bit ill. I think I should go.

Nick looks at Katie, sneezing, confused, and breaking out in hives.

NICK
Want me to take you home?

KATIE
Oh, it's ok. There's a bus stop a few blocks from here. Thanks though.

NICK
(still sneezing with watering eyes)
Want to practice tomorrow instead?

KATIE
Maybe. See you later.

Nick appears confused and saddened again.

NICK
Bye.

Katie exits the basement.

CUT TO:

INT. MEYER HOUSEHOLD BATHROOM-EVENING

The bathroom is perfectly white, with blue curtains, sail boat-themed soap dispenser, towels, and rugs decorating it. Katie sits on the rim of the bathtub, and takes the bottle out of her bag.

She unscrew the top, smells it one more time, then pulls her head back, revolted. She dumps it out in the toilet, then flushes.

KATIE
Some love potion.

Katie leaves the bathroom, dragging her feet as she walks.

CUT TO:

INT. PRARIE HOMES NURSING HOME DINING ROOM-EVENING

It is evident by the holly and red and green decorations hung everywhere that it is almost Christmas. All of the tables have been pushed into a semi-circle.

Elderly people sit at the tables, eating their food. In the center of the circle are a piano on wheels and the Show Choir, dressed in black and sparkly blue outfits (the girls with skirts and the boys with vests). They stand, smiling out at the older people.

Katie scans the crowds, but notices that Millie is missing. Nick tries to catch Katie's eye, but she pretends she doesn't see him.

Beth, a plump, cheery looking woman with short brown hair and an enormous snow-man-sweater steps up to the microphone.

BETH

Excuse me everyone! Excuse me!

Half of the people eating stop talking and look up at Beth. The other half go about their business.

BETH

Yes, thank you. Beth here! Well it's Wednesday, as you know, which means it's entertainment night! Tonight is very special, because the John Adams Show Stoppers are here to sing for you. So I'll hand you over to Jean Heggins, the director of the choir. Let's hear a round of applause!

A few people clap very enthusiastically, but many clap a little or not at all. Jean gracefully takes the microphone from Beth.

JEAN

Thank you all for having us here. I know there are a few of you who have grandchildren at John Adams. I would like to say that we are here representing all of them. Tonight's repertoire will consist mostly of Christmas carols, including different arrangements of "The First Noel" "What Child is This," "Go Tell it on the Mountain," "Silent Night," "Holy Night," and "Riu Riu Chiu."

SENIOR MALE #1

Boo.

Jean looks surprised at the boo. She glances around the audience and notices one angry looking man in a wheelchair in the front. Jean shrugs and puts down the microphone. She turns to the choir and lifts her hands and starts Dotty on the piano and then brings in the choir for "Go Tell it on the Mountain"

SUNG

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN
GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN
GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN..

SENIOR MALE #1

Booo! Who cares if Jesus was born!? Booooo!
What's so special about him? Why don't you sing
about Harry Levy Pollans bein' born, eh? Why
not?

The showstoppers, who all still have smiles on their faces, start looking sideways at one another, but continue singing. Jean goes on conducting as if nothing is happening. Beth glances agitatedly from the two senior men to the show choir.

SENIOR MALE #2

Yeah! What'd Jesus ever do for me, heh? He gave
me ungrateful children who put me in this dump.
Booo!

Jean persistently keeps conducting, the showstoppers start looking visibly agitated. Beth rushes over to Jean and whispers something in her ear. Jean abruptly signals Dotty to stop and they end the piece prematurely. Beth quickly ushers them out of the cafeteria.

INT. FRONT HALLWAY OF PRARIE HOMES SENIOR CENTER-NIGHT
Everyone starts putting on their coats, looking crestfallen. Beth apologizes profusely to Jean. Katie hovers near Jean and Beth.

BETH

I am so sorry. This hasn't happened before.
Harold and Abraham are in a lot of pain these
days, and sometimes their anger just comes out
in different forms.

KATIE

(interrupting)

Um, sorry, Beth, but I might have an idea!

Katie whispers something to Beth and Jean and they both smile.

BETH

That's a great idea. Excuse me, everyone!
Change of venue. Please follow me.

INT. MILLIE'S BEDROOM AT PRARIE HOMES-NIGHT

There is a knock at the door, and Katie and Beth walk into the room. Millie is attached to an IV (intravenous therapy)

and a machine at her bed. She looks feebler and paler than the last time Katie had seen her. But when she sees Katie and Beth, her eyes light up with a fiery spark.

KATIE

Millie?

MILLIE

Why hello! I do love visitors. What is your name, young lady?

Millie's voice is shaky and she speaks slowly.

KATIE

Oh, it's Katie.

BETH

Millie, Katie has brought some of her friends to sing to you. Would that be all right if they came in here right now to sing a few carols?

MILLIE

Oh that would be lovely! But, Katie, dear, would you please get me another blanket. It's awfully cold.

BETH

I'll get it. I'll be right back.

Beth leaves, and the door opens again, as the showstoppers pour in the door, led by Nick who is noticeably trying to channel all of his showmanship into Millie and avoiding Katie. They're all holding candles.

MILLIE

Why, look at how that light sparkles on your dresses, oh they're beautiful.

Beth comes back in with the blanket.

BETH

Here you are.

MILLIE

Oh thank you. Now what is happening again.

KATIE

We're going to sing to you, Millie.

Jean comes to the front of the group, and raises her hands. The group starts singing "Silent Night" acapella. Millie clutches her chest, and a tear rolls down her wrinkly cheek. She grabs Katie's hand (who is standing next to her bed) and holds it for the whole song. The last shot is of Millie closing her eyes with a big smile on her face when they sing "Sle-eep in heavenly peace."

CUT TO:

INT. MEYER'S LIVINGROOM-DAY

Wrapping paper, gadgets, clothes, and candy cover the living room floor, especially next to the Christmas tree in the corner of the room. Lily lays on the couch, playing a videogame, Mr. Meyer reads the newspaper in a large, comfy chair, and Mrs. Meyer is on the floor, trying to put together her new closet organizer. Katie runs into the room, wearing a white shirt and black pants.

KATIE

Mom, can I have the car keys?

MRS. MEYER

They're in the scissor drawer. Are you really going to volunteer on Christmas day?

KATIE

They needed someone because Tracy is sick. I know the shift, I can do the job. Besides, they're thinking of hiring me.

MRS. MEYER

Okay, well have a good time.

KATIE

I will. Bye!

Katie grabs her coat, the keys, and a small wrapped gift that says "To Millie" on it and rushes out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. PRARIE HOMES SENIOR CENTER HALLWAY-DAY

Katie bursts in the front doors, and without stopping to take off her coat, walks down the hallway towards the residential rooms.

She finds room 259, Millie's room, and knocks gently on the door. There is no response from inside, so Katie opens the door softly.

INT. MILLIE'S ROOM-DAY

Katie walks in. The curtain around Millie's half of the room is drawn. Katie tiptoes up to it.

KATIE

Millie? Are you awake?

Again, there is no response. Katie peeks through the curtain, and notices there is no one in the bed. She opens the curtain all the way and sees the bed completely stripped down. The pictures of Millie's children are missing from the shelves and the Poinsetta plant is gone from the corner of her bed. Katie screws up her face and then runs out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. PRARIE HOMES KITCHEN-DAY

Katie walks agitatedly through the big steel doors. Glenda is at the stove, mixing a 3 foot vat of stuffing.

GLEENDA

It's about time you got here. I was beginning to worry-

KATIE

Glenda! What happened to Millie? Did she go to the hospital? Is she okay?

Glenda stops stirring the pot and looks at Katie.

GLEENDA

(softly)

She passed last night, Katie. Went out with a smile on her face. I heard you all sang to her. That must've been nice

Katie crumples to the floor against the huge dishwasher. A tear streams down her cheek. Glenda goes over and hugs her.

KATIE

How could this happen? Why Millie?

GLEENDA

Everybody dies here. You get used to it.

Glenda gets back up, dusts herself off, and goes back to her vat of stuffing.

GLEENDA

(cont...)

You'd better get started on the salads, ok?

KATIE
(sniffs)

Okay.

Katie gets up. She takes off her coat, and pulls out a present wrapped in white paper with red ribbon around it. She throws it in the garbage. Then puts on her hairnet and heads for the refrigerator.

Once she's gone, Glenda picks the parcel out of the trash and reads the tag "For Millie" then rips it open. It's a Christmas tree ornament of a golden pair of dancing shoes. On the back, there's a post it that says "I hope you get to dance one more time. Love, Katie"

Glenda puts the gift back in the wrapping.

GLEND
(to herself)
You can't get so attached.

Glenda throws the gift back in the trash.

CUT TO:

INT. MEYER FAMILY ROOM-NIGHT

Lily and Katie slump over opposite ends of a long, black leather couch. Katie is wrapped in a red blanket. Lily eats large handfuls of popcorn from a big silver mixing bowl in her lap.

The Phantom of the Opera is playing on the television. They watch transfixed. The scene is "Past the Point of No Return." Lily looks sideways at Katie.

LILY
What's wrong with you? You always sing at this part, no matter what. And then I get really annoyed and throw pillows at you. What's your problem?

KATIE
(not looking away from the screen)
Nothing.

LILY
Yeah right. You've been home an awful lot lately. Did you stop your dancing lessons with Mr. Twinkle Toes?

KATIE

Just shut it, Lily.

Lily looks at her sister with empathetic eyes. She scoots closer.

LILY
Here, have some popcorn.

KATIE
Thanks.

LILY
No problem. And, we can watch the scene again
if you want. I know it's your favorite..

Katie glances over at her sister and laughs.

KATIE
Really?

LILY
Just don't sing.

KATIE
(laughing)
I'll try.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN ADAMS CHOIR ROOM-AFTERNOON
The room is much less crowded now. About half the people that were there in the fall are there now. A big calendar on the blackboard reads "SHOWSTOPPERS JANUARY COMPETITION DATES: 1-21 Marshfield, 1-28 Kensington" The boys and girls stand in their sections around Jean. She spiritedly conducts a gospel medley.

SHOWSTOPPERS (singing)
If yo' wanna go to heaven let me show you how
Just keep yo' hand on dat gospel plow
Keep a yo' hand, on a da plow
Hold on Hold on
HOLD OOOOOONNNN

Jean throws back her hands dramatically and cuts the choir off. She opens her eyes and looks very pleased.

JEAN
Great job everyone! You sure are 'Feeling the
beat'!

Jean chuckles to herself, as do some of the girls.

JEAN

All right, we're done. Go home, have fun.

Katie walks over to her bag by herself, while all of the girls huddle together in the middle of the room, whispering. Bethany Rose, the blonde, well-put together girl emerges from the huddle and walks towards Katie and extends her hand out forcefully.

BETHANY

Hi, I'm Bethany Rose.

Katie takes her hand reluctantly.

KATIE

Hi.

BETHANY

Well, me and the girls have noticed that you've been looking a little lonely lately, so I was wondering if you'd like to come over for our January sleepover. We take turns hosting them each month.

KATIE

Oh I don't know.

BETHANY

Oh, you must come. It's really fun. Plus, my family has an indoor pool!

KATIE

I guess I could.

BETHANY

Great, I'll e-mail you the directions to my house.

KATIE

Great.

BETHANY

All right. Don't forget your swimsuit. Bye.

INT. THE MEYER VAN-EVENING

Mrs. Meyer is driving the van and Katie is in the passenger seat. Katie is looking out the window. You can see big, suburban houses out the windows. Mrs. Meyer looks over at Katie and smiles warmly at her.

MRS. MEYER

Katie, you must be so excited. A sleepover. Just you and the girls. Oh Katie, they say female bonding helps you recover from the bad times! I read this study in *Woman's Life* magazine and..

KATIE

Mom! It's not that big of a deal.

MRS. MEYER

Ok, sweetie. Whatever you say.

The van pulls into the driveway and Katie slowly opens the door and slumps out. She grabs her backpack, pushes the door shut and waves goodbye to her mom.

As Mrs. Meyer drives away, Katie starts walking up the long driveway towards Bethany Rose's huge house.

EXT. BETHANY ROSE'S HOUSE

Corinthian pillars support the small bit of roof above the front door. The house looks much larger and taller than Katie's. It is made of almond-colored bricks and is adorned with large windows.

Katie gulps and rings the doorbell. Instead of making a bell sound, she hears voices singing "Hello, hello, hello, hello...hellllooo!" (one voice adding each "hello" in the intervals do mi so do, respectively).

Mrs. Payton, a slim, put together blonde woman with a chic hair cut and pearls opens the door. She's holding a candle.

MRS. PAYTON

Hi. You must be Katie. We're just about to start dinner, so just drop your things at the door.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PAYTON HOME-EVENING

Katie walks into the house. All of the lights are out, so Katie stays close to Mrs. Payton as she leads her to the dining room.

The two walk into a large, wood-floored room. There is a long table with a white table cloth that is pushed almost all the way against the wall.

Almost all of the girls from Showstoppers are sitting around it. In the middle of the room, Bethany and seven younger girls, all very blond and very proper looking stand holding candles which are not lit. The littlest girl, Claire, sits on a barstool in the middle of all the girls. She has a white dress on and flowers in her hair.

KATIE

(to Mrs. Payton)

What's the occasion for all the candles?

MRS. PAYTON

It's Claire's birthday. We do things a special way here on birthdays. Here, sit down and you'll see.

Katie edges across the room and sits next to Olive and Marna. Then, without a word, Mrs. Payton sets her candle on a table next to Claire's stool, and then joins the girls in the circle and picks up her violin.

The girls all breathe together and then start singing in four part harmony as they weave around Claire with simple dance steps.

LYRICS:

Today it is your birthday and we sing to let you know
That you are the queen for a day
Whatever you say goes.

We sing because we love you and we want to make it seem
As if this is your day of royalty
Hail to the queen

Today it is your birthday and we sing to let you know
That you are the queen for a day
Whatever you say goes.

During the last verse, Bethany lights her candle from her mother's candle, then passes the flame to the next eldest girl in a choreographed step. This process happens until it is the last word, and the second youngest girl lights Claire's candle.

All of the girls then bow towards Claire as she stands on her stool with her lit candle. She blows it out. All the showstoppers girls applaud and holler except for Katie. She is frozen, staring at the spectacle with disbelief.

The lights turn on and Mrs. Payton steps to the center and takes a bow. More cheering. Then she picks up Claire.

MRS. PAYTON

Claire, everyone! (more applause) Happy birthday, sweetie.

CLAIRE

Can I have some cake, mommy?

MRS. PAYTON

Of course. JOHN!

Katie's eyes widen once more when she sees John (presumably Mr. Payton) rolling out a pink-sparkly four tiered cake on a trolley. Everyone starts singing happy birthday to you, and Katie joins in.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PAYTON'S BASEMENT-NIGHT

There is a huge room with soft, white carpeting. Family pictures, deer-heads, and portraits of Jesus and Mary hang on the walls. Bethany Rose and the showstopper girls are all in their pajamas, laying on their respective sleeping bags and chattering.

There is a wide screen tv at the center of all the girls. Bethany Rose is looking through a large shelf unit of DVDs.

BETHANY

So, Katie. What's going on with you and Nick?

KATIE

What do you mean?

All the choir girls gather around closer.

BETHANY

Oh come on, everyone's noticed the way you too were all over each other last semester...now you won't even look at each other. What's the deal? Is he available again?

Katie looks nervously at the girls around her. Bethany still looks for DVD's, pretending not to watch Katie.

KATIE

We never dated or anything. We were just close friends.

CHOIR GIRL 1

Well why haven't you looked at him once since we've gotten back?

KATIE

(turning red)

I'm busy with my new job, I guess.

MARNA

Oh Katie! Has he wronged you? Shall we perform a curse on him?

Bethany Rose looks at Marna with disgust.

BETHANY

No, Marna. Nick Logan obviously is incapable of doing anything evil. He's so perfect.

All of the girls sigh.

EVERYONE

Yeah, he's so cute.\He's the best dancer.\He's the sweetest guy in show choir!

The girls all look dreamy. Katie smirks to herself.

KATIE

Well, aren't we going to watch a movie?

EVERYONE

Yes!

CHOIR GIRL 1

Bethany, let's watch a horror movie!

CHOIR GIRL 2

No! Let's watch a romance!

MARNA

How bout a musical?

EVERYONE

*laughs *

BETHANY

No, I'm looking for a classic. I've seen all of these recently anyway. Oooo, I'm going to look in the VHS collection. I haven't seen those in ages.

Bethany Rose hops across the room to an old dresser. She pulls out a drawer and fishes out a few VHS's without covers.

BETHANY

Whoa, these look like they were taped off tv in the 80's! I bet there's really weird commercials and stuff on them.

OLIVE

Let me see! Okay, we got "Mary's Mine" "La Boca Cocoa " and "The Harpoon"

BETHANY

Let's watch "La Boca Cocoa" It sounds Italian!

CHOIR GIRL 2

Ooo, I bet it's super vintage?

BETHANY

Yeah, probably. Let's put it in.

Bethany sets up the TV and pops "La Boca Cocoa" into the VCR. All the girls sit around and wait for the movie to start. At first all they can see is chocolate fudge smeared all over something soft, that's moving. They look quizzically at the screen.

It is soon evident that the chocolate is on human skin. The camera zooms out to reveal the breasts and stomach of a woman are drizzled with chocolate. The girls gasp.

The camera stays in this shot, and then the head of a man appears, licking and suckling the chocolate off. The girls stare, aghast and transfixed, but unable to look away.

A woman's moans can be heard in the background and finally it screams out "John! Take me home! Take me home!" The head disappears momentarily, and the camera is zooms out, to reveal the woman is not only covered in chocolate below her waist, but it also reveals her head and blond hair.

The girls all scream. Bethany leaps up to the TV to turn it off. Katie starts laughing.

BETHANY

Oh my gosh! Gross!

EVERYONE

Ooooooo! \That's so filthy! \Oh no! \Your parents!

BETHANY

There must be some mistake!

All the girls start nervously giggling and wailing. Katie goes over to Bethany trying not to laugh.

BETHANY

Ok. I'll go die now.

KATIE

No, Bethany. It's your party. Maybe we could all tell embarrassing stories about our parents.

Everyone stops giggling and looks at Katie.

CHOIR GIRL 1

Yeah! That sounds like fun! I've got a good one!

BETHANY

Ok.

EVERYONE

Hurray!

They all snuggle up close and start telling embarrassing situations they've caught their parents in. Bethany looks at Katie and smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. DECISION MEADOWS BIBLE CAMPGROUNDS-DAY

Jacques Cartier is at the center of the circle of all the Show Stoppers in a field covered in at least 3 feet of snow. The land is very flat, save a hill in the distance, adorned by three crosses and a few pine trees.

Near the hill are four cabins and a big building with smoke coming out the chimney. It is clear that during the winter, this facility is rented out to groups going on retreats. There is also a chapel, which has a big sign saying "REHEARSAL SPACE" tacked to it.

Jacques is clad in black cashmere winter wear and has real fur ear-muffs. The Show Stoppers are partnered up, and although everyone is wearing snow pants and parkas, they seem to be practicing lifts.

Jacques stares with utter dismay as he sees the boys continuously toppling over backwards upon contact from their partners, sending the girls face first into the snow.

JACQUES

STOP! STOP STOP STOP! What is wrong with you? Gentlemen! I told you to work out, it looks as though you've only gotten softer. And ladies, did you keep those diets over Christmas? Hmmm? I think not. Everyone, run 20 laps around the field.

EVERYONE

(groans)

JACQUES

For every complaint, there shall be an additional lap. Now run my little fairies, run!

Jean comes out from one of the cabins and wades through the snow to Jacques, watching the students clumsily attempting to run through the snow banks.

JEAN

I think the cold makes someone a little grouchy.

Jacques slits his eyes at her and looks back to the kids.

JACQUES

You know as well as I that this is a weak bunch. Competitions are starting next month, for goodness sakes. They need to do these dance moves. Otherwise, I don't know what you're even hiring me for. Why hire a five star choreographer if you have two star dancers?

JEAN

It's true. All of the real dancers are going out for theater or ballet. They've got good pipes though.

JACQUES

Yes, but all left feet.

Jacques' lips curl in amusement at his joke. Jean looks at him seriously.

JEAN

Jacques, I know they need to be in better shape, but try being a little nicer, eh? Let them come inside after this.

JACQUES

Oh Jean, always such a softie. Very well.

(to the students)

Run faster, little heifers! Otherwise you'll get the hose again!

JEAN

Jacques!

JACQUES

Just kidding. Just run! Run!

(camera cut to Katie panting next to Steven)

KATIE

This sucks.

STEVEN

Yeah, he makes me want to stop taking French and pick up German instead.

Katie giggles and then falls in the snow. She gets back up and keeps running. In the background, Jacques has begun chanting "Art is pain! Art is pain! Art is pain!" Katie rolls her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. DECISION MEADOWS CENTRAL COTTAGE KITCHEN AND DINING-AFTERNOON

The Showstoppers shuffle in slowly, dripping wet and pink-cheeked. Many of them sniffle as they remove their caps and coats.

The coat hangers are located right next to a big serving window connected to the huge, dirty kitchen. Two tall, silver hot water heaters with spouts at the bottom rest on the counter. One is labeled "COFFEE" and the other "HOT COCOA" Then there is a small banner above the window which reads "SHOWSTOPPERS! ENJOY A WARM TREAT ON US! -The Decision Meadow Staff"

Everyone smiles, and people move towards the kitchen. Bethany Rose walks through the doors on the side of the window, into the kitchen.

BETHANY

I found mugs! C'mon! There's enough for everyone.

The students start pouring into the kitchen to grab mugs.

JEAN (O.S.)

Halt!

Everyone turns around to see Jean, who has appeared around the corner of the small hallway.

JEAN

Milk chocolate and caffeine? I don't think so guys. We've gotta keep those vocal cords at top quality.

Everyone begins to groan and attempt to complain.

JEAN

Nope. It doesn't matter. I know you're cold, but I think water will be good for now. You'll warm up soon. Sorry. Bethany and Katie, please go dump those out in the lavatory. Everyone else, we'll have a thirty minute break and then we'll meet in the Rehearsal space to start warming up for a fun singing session! See you all there.

Jean disappears. Katie and Bethany slowly put their cups back and load the two silver hot water heaters onto a trolley and start pushing it through a crowd of pleading faces. Students stare at the two of them, still clutching their identical white mugs. The two girls finally turn the corridor towards the bathrooms.

KATIE

(whispered)

This is wrong.

BETHANY

Yeah. But Jean said no go.

KATIE

Hey! I know. Let's take these into the boy's bathroom. Then we can dish from there. And Jean won't be able to find us because she can't go into the boy's bathroom.

Bethany jerks her head left and right, checking to see if anyone is following them. She looks back at Katie.

BETHANY

I've never been very rebellious, but this is bull shit. Let's do it! I'll get Tyler and tell him to spread the word, and Marna to distract Jean. You go set up the cart, and I'll bring you a mug.

KATIE

Cool. I'll see you in the boys bathroom.

The two girls giggle too excitedly together, and then realize they look foolish and attempt to regain their cool.

BETHANY

Ok. One moment.

Bethany runs down the hallway and turns the corner. Katie proceeds pushing the cart down the dark, narrow, wood-paneled corridor. She finally reaches the boys bathroom. She takes a breath, and then enters cautiously.

INT. DECISION MEADOWS BOY'S BATHROOM

The lights are off. Katie flips a switch and a bare fluorescent tube above the sink flickers dimly. Slowly, the low light grows steadier.

The once white and black checkered floor is covered in dried mud and seems a little moist. A single urinal with a big, blue urinal cake and a sad little stall stand against one wall and the sink against the other.

After looking around, Katie pushes the cart toward the stall, and opens the door, pushing the cart in. She takes a heavy amount of toilet paper and places it on the seat, then sits down on it. There is a tap at the door.

BETHANY (O.S.)

Katie? Are you in there?

KATIE

Yeah! Come on in.

The door opens and Bethany walks in with three other girls. Two others follow close behind.

BETHANY

Eeeew. This place reeks! Hey!

Bethany turns around at the two girls who followed after her and her group.

BETHANY

I told you we are going to go in shifts of four, remember? Otherwise it will seem too obvious-

The door opens again and five boys and one girl enter. The girls that Bethany was talking to hurry over to Katie, who fills their mugs. They smile.

BETHANY

(exasperated)

What about the plan we just went over?!

BOY #1

(getting his mug filled)

Aw cool it Beth. We're all cold, we want our hot drinks now.

GIRL #1

Yeah, c'mon. Don't be such a priss about it.

BETHANY

Well if we don't get caught...I guess ten people isn't soo bad.

The door swings open again, and everyone starts pouring in.

BETHANY

You guys! We can't just-

KATIE

Bethany! Do you want hot chocolate or coffee?

BETHANY

Ohh-ok whatever. I'll have the chocolate.

Katie fills her mug.

TEN MINUTES LATER:

The bathroom is filled with people, talking, drinking from their mugs, and starting to strip down. Sweat is visible on many people's foreheads, and girls are down to undershirts/tank tops and some boys are shirtless. Obvious flirtation is going on.

BETHANY

(to Katie/herself)

Oh crap, we should really get going. We have to be at rehearsal hall in 5 minutes.

Everyone! Everyone! Maybe we should-

The door slams open. Jean appears in the door.

JEAN

Bethany! Katie! What do you think you're doing!?

Everyone stops talking and looks up at Jean, the boys scramble for their shirts.

JEAN (cont.)

I thought I told you to flush it down! Not distribute it! And I thought Jacques was being to hard on you... Everyone out. OUT!

Everyone scrambles out the door, picking up their mugs and discarded clothing as they go. Katie is trying to push the cart out of the stall. Jean walks over to her.

JEAN

This is not impressive, Katie. Not impressive at all. I helped fight for you.

Jean shakes her head at Katie and walks out of the bathroom. Then she pops her head back in.

JEAN

Throw the rest of that out and then join us in the chapel.

KATIE

(resigned)

Yes ma'am.

Katie is left alone in the muggy bathroom. She hits the toilet paper dispenser. Then hits it again and again.

KATIE

Damn it! Damn it damn it damn it!

CUT TO:

EXT. DECISION MEADOWS-NIGHT

Katie walks alone towards the chapel. Her head is down, and wind is blowing snow across the path she follows. She makes her way to the Chapel/Rehearsal Space building and opens the door.

CUT TO:

INT. DECISION MEADOWS CHAPEL-NIGHT

Everyone is sitting in the front four pews, looking at Jean, who stands at the front of them, talking harshly.

JEAN

...Apparently we haven't been hard enough on you. Your voices are the strongest part of our show choir, and now you're deliberately ruining those too. I don't know what to say.

She looks up and sees Katie.

JEAN (cont.)

Ah, Katie. So nice of you to join us. Since you're back there, would you bring me that podium to the left of the door.

KATIE

Sure.

Katie walks over and picks up the old wooden podium, covered in spider webs. Something thumps when she picks it up and she instantly drops it.

JEAN

What's wrong? No need to be afraid of the dirt.

KATIE

Something thumped, it's really heavy. I think there's something in there.

JEAN

They're probably just bibles or something. Just take them out.

KATIE

No, I can't. It didn't feel like bibles.

Jean looks sternly at Katie and marches down the aisle toward the back.

JEAN

You can't even move some dusty Bibles, yet you can sit on a dirty toilet seat in the men's bathroom? Oh Katie, we will be needing to talk after this meeting.

Everyone's eyes are on Katie. Katie begins to blush. Jean approaches her and the podium. Katie starts heading towards the rest of the choir.

JEAN

Wait.

Jean lifts the podium once and sets it down.

JEAN (cont.)

Help me move it after I get those books out of there. It is kind of heavy.

Jean opens the little door on the back of the podium and reaches her hand in, then pulls it back, shrieking. A raccoon proceeds to jump out and land on her chest, knocking her to the floor. It sinks its teeth into her neck.

JEAN

AAAAAHHHHHHHHH! Get it off of me! Someone get it off!

Everyone is frozen, staring at the spectacle. Katie snaps out of it and takes a snow shovel from beside the entrance and attempts to shove it off of Jean. The beast eventually is pushed onto the ground. Jean is bleeding from the neck and crying.

The raccoon runs towards Katie. It is foaming at the mouth. Katie screams and brings the shovel down with a thunderous blow which miraculously lands on the raccoons head. Its body doesn't move.

Everything is silent except for the sound of Jean writhing and whimpering on the floor. Then a huge applause breaks out.

EVERYONE

Hurray! \Katie! \Go Katie! \You Rock!

Jean lets out another shriek of pain.

EVERYONE

Oh no! \Call 911! \What should we do? \Help!

One of the boys runs out of the chapel. He returns a few minutes later with the owner of the camp, Jerry.

JERRY

Don't worry, children. An ambulance is on the way.

JEAN

(coughing and slightly delusional)

You're the owner. You're the owner! I want my money back! This place is filthy and riddled with vermin! Money back!

Jerry looks uncomfortably around the room and then looks down at the raccoon. With his working gloves on his hands, he grabs it by the tail and throws it out the door. The students mouths drop open and their eyes bug out of their heads, watching him.

JERRY

There there. Everything will be okay. Why don't we all say a prayer for-

JEAN

Money! Money! I don't believe in God!

Jacques walks in to the spectacle.

JACQUES

(to Jerry)

Stand back, heathen.

He pushes Jerry aside and kneels next to Jean. He takes off his cashmere scarf and puts it under her head.

JACQUES (cont.)

(whispered)

It's okay Jeanie. It's okay. I heard the ambulances coming. They'll get you just fine.

(to everyone)

All right, nothing more to see. Go to your cabins or run twenty more laps.

Everyone evacuates quickly.

JACQUES

(to Jerry)

As for you! We demand all our money back, we expect you to cover this hospital fee, we expect...

EXT. DECISION MEADOWS-NIGHT

People are walking in groups back to the cabins, grumbling about being hungry and worriedly talking about Jean.

Katie and Bethany Rose and Marna walk together.

MARNA

You wielded that shovel with the grace of Leowin of Bardsvard.

KATIE

Errr, thanks Marna.

MARNA

Don't mention it.

Marna skips off through the snow to catch up with some other girls.

KATIE

So, is this what retreat is always like?

BETHANY

Um, let's just say this has been a very weird year.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN ADAMS PARKING LOT-NIGHT

SUVs, minivans, and four-door cars fill a small section of the parking lot, which is covered in gravelly snow/ice. The yellow light from the street lamps serve as the only light source besides the faint glow of green digital clocks that can be seen through the car windows. The read 4:02 AM.

Among these cars is the Meyer van, in which Mrs. Meyer is huddled up behind the wheel. Her hair is messy and she dons a large winter parka over her flannel nightgown and slippers. Bleary eyed, she nervously glances from window to window.

A large school bus pulls into the parking lot. Once stationary, the doors open up, and all of the showstoppers pile out, carrying their sleeping bags, back packs, and pillows. Parents roll down their car windows to beckon their children to them.

Katie exits the bus with Bethany Rose, waves goodbye, then trots toward her Mom's minivan. Mrs. Meyer looks anxiously out the windshield at Katie.

CUT TO:

INT. MEYER VAN-NIGHT

Katie opens the back door and throws all of her stuff on the seat, then climbs into the front seat, putting her hands on the heaters and slouching grumpily in her seat. Mrs. Meyer starts pulling out of her parking space.

Katie looks out the window. Mrs. Meyer glances at Katie as if she is a ticking time bomb.

MRS. MEYER

So, did you have a nice time?

KATIE

Sure.

MRS. MEYER

Any, um, accidents or anything?

KATIE

I don't really want to talk about it.

MRS. MEYER

So, you didn't have an, er, attack. That's not why you're all coming home, right?

KATIE

Mom.

MRS. MEYER

Just joking! Oh, it's late. Why don't you rest on the way home.

Katie turns to her Mom. Her face softens.

KATIE

Thanks for coming to get me this late and everything.

MRS. MEYER

You're welcome, honey.

Mrs. Meyer smiles to herself and continues driving. Katie turns back to the window, and watches the black, flat sky against the white, flat road through her window. Her eyelids start to droop.

CUT TO:

INT. SHOWCHOIR ROOM-AFTERNOON

The boom-box plays "Footloose" as Lin runs through a dance routine with the showstoppers, most of whom are following it well. Katie moves stiffly with the group, but seems to be following the steps.

Jean appears in the doorway with fresh stitches across her neck and jawbone. She watches the students dance, her gaze focusing on Katie. After a few moments, the song stops,

and the next track starts playing. Lin breaks her pose and runs to the boom-box to turn it off.

LIN

(catching her breath)

All right everyone. That's a wrap. Good work.

The students disperse to various corners of the room where their backpacks and street shoes lay. Jean walks into the room towards Lin and begins speaking with her in a hushed voice. As students notice her, they turn to each other and start whispering. Katie and Bethany Rose give each other a look and then start to hurriedly walk out. Jean turns toward Katie.

JEAN

Just a moment, Katie. Would you mind staying behind for a few minutes?

Katie looks at Bethany with wide eyes and mouths 'oh no, she's still mad.' Bethany grimaces sympathetically then heads for the door. Katie turns back to Jean and bites her lip.

CUT TO:

INT. JEAN'S OFFICE-EVENING

The small office has a window with the blinds drawn, a large steel desk whose teal paint is chipping, and a large filing cabinet. The walls are covered with programs, awards, certificates, and photos of Jean from her glory days, the show choir she's conducted over the years, and a few photos of cats and her children. Jean takes a seat in the office chair, and pulls two folding chairs out from behind her desk for Katie and Lin.

JEAN

Katie, I'm sorry, but things aren't going as well as we'd hoped.

KATIE

(surprisingly loud and frantic)

I'm sorry about the hot chocolate! I just wanted to have some fun. Please don't be angry!

JEAN

Oh, that...that's not why you're here.

KATIE

I'm not in trouble?

LIN

Well...

Lin looks meaningfully at Jean.

JEAN

Katie, your voice is fine. And you're starting to bring a lot of energy to this group...but the dancing just isn't there. When you were partnered with Nick, it wasn't as noticeable since he is a *sensational* dancer. But we have to get real here. We take competitions very seriously. And I'm sorry to say, but you are the one member of this group that will hold us back from getting the gold.

Katie's mouth is open. Tears start forming in her eyes, but they don't run down her cheeks. She just stares at Jean.

KATIE

(quietly)

So you're kicking me out?

JEAN

I'm afraid so.

Katie shakes her head in disbelief.

JEAN (cont.)

On top of everything else, the damned Hairspray musical is going back on tour, and they aren't allowing us to perform our closing number by them at NMDTF (National Music, Dance, and Theater Festival) since it's a ticketed, open to the public event.

KATIE

So we aren't doing the finale?

JEAN

No, we're learning a new one. And I quite frankly don't think you will learn it quickly enough.

Katie's eyes well up a little more and she sniffs.

JEAN

It isn't personal Katie. It's just that, John Adams has a reputation to uphold, and I have to uphold it. Next year, I'd love it if you tried out for choir though. Too late this year,

unfortunately. And your science teachers have been complaining to me that you've quit their chemical-biological organism clubs...now you can go back to those I'm sure...so much more time on your hands.

Katie rubs one of her eyes, and then stands up abruptly.

KATIE

Well, thank you for giving me a chance. I guess it just didn't work out. Good luck at competition.

Jean and Lin nod at her appreciatively. Katie turns on her heel and exits the office.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN ADAMS HALLWAY-EVENING

Katie rushes out of the doors and storms down the hallway. Her face is flushed. Some of the Show Stealers, presumably coming for their practice, walk towards her slowly. Katie speeds up and almost runs past them. When she turns the corner, she crumples down against the wall and puts her head in her knees. Then a hand touches her shoulder.

KATIE

(muffled through her arms)

Just leave me alone.

NICK

Katie, it's me.

KATIE

(looking up)

Nick?

NICK

What happened? Are you okay?

Katie looks at him and then lets out a soft sob.

KATIE

Nick! I'm sorry! I've been avoiding you. I should've been supportive. I just had a crush on you so I felt weird and I was being selfish...but now I miss you. And I'll never see you again, because Jean just kicked me out of the Showstoppers forever.

Nick sinks down on the wall next to Katie.

NICK

Ok, first of all, I had a crush on you too..but then I realized I couldn't ask you out because I just couldn't be attracted to you in that way. That's what confirmed for me that I'm, well, you know.

KATIE

sniff Really?

NICK

Yeah. If it would've been anyone, it would've been you.

Katie and Nick gaze at each other for a moment, then Katie turns away blushing. She smiles to herself.

KATIE

So you forgive me?

NICK

Forgive what?

She smiles puts her head on his shoulder. Nick tilts his head on hers. Then he turns to her.

NICK

Hey, why are they kicking you out though? You know those dances.

KATIE

They hate me...and we have to learn a new finale. I guess they don't even have one yet. Hairspray is-

NICK

...going on tour, I know. I guess I can see why she's worried. That's our hugest gig, where we compete for the national title of "Best Showchoir" And now, we have to learn an all new song and dance routine in less than two months, and most choirs will have been working on theirs since October.

Katie's eyes well up with tears again.

KATIE

I, I guess it's better that they kicked me out then.

NICK

No, that's not what I meant.

Nick puts his arm around her.

NICK (cont.)

I just meant that I can see why Jean is freaking out. Plus she's probably still grumpy about her recent raccoon attack.

Katie sniffs and smiles at Nick.

KATIE

You heard about that?

NICK

Yeah, it sounds like you're a hero. Haha, some reward.

KATIE

Yeah...but what am I going to do? I actually looked forward to showchoir.

Nick all of the sudden jumps up.

NICK

Katie! I have an idea. Can you wait here, till after my practice?

KATIE

Yeah.

NICK

Great, we'll go over the details then.

Katie's brow furrows and then she leans her head back on the wall. Nick jogs down the hall towards the show choir room.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF FROSTY FLAKE-AFTERNOON

Katie and Nick are eating an ice-cream cones, walking toward Nick's car.

KATIE

...so if I wrote the lyrics, you could write the music. Do you think Jean would buy it?

NICK

Yeah, well, I hope so. It's worth a try. We'd have to keep your part a secret at first.

They get into Nick's car.

KATIE

I think we can do it!

NICK

Cheers to that.

They click ice-cream cones.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE: NICK AND KATIE MAKING TOP SECRET PLAN

Details of Montage:

- 1. Katie and Nick at Nick's house with Nick's guitar, and lots of empty and scribbled on sheet music lying everywhere.*
- 2. Katie and Nick working with Nick's Mom in the "dance studio"; Katie is strumming the guitar in-expertly and singing while Nick and Mom are coming up with some dance steps*
- 3. Katie at home, singing into a hairbrush, then writing down words in a notebook...Lily looks disgusted but intrigued, parents are curious.*
- 4. Nick and Katie talking to Bethany Rose, who also seems excited in a proper way.*
- 5. Nick and Katie trying out some dance moves*
- 6. Nick sitting with guitar, then drumset, writing things down on staff paper.*
- 7. Nick and Katie at Nick's house, with headphones on, singing together. By viewing the screen of the computer, one can see that the drums, guitar, keyboard, midi-strings, midi-xylophone, and midi-horns have already been added.*

(TIME FRAME → THE MONTAGE TAKES 1-2 weeks)

CUT TO:

INT. JEAN'S OFFICE-DAY

Jean sits at her desk, listening to a yellow and green mp3 player which is clearly not hers. She bobs her head a little. Nick watches her with anticipation. Jean takes off the headphones.

JEAN

Why Nicholas! I always knew you were a great dancer, but I had no idea about your composition abilities. Amazing.

NICK

So you liked it?

JEAN

Well, yes, quite frankly, I did.

NICK

I think that this could be the solution to our, eh, problem with Hairspray.

JEAN

I'm reluctant to agree, but I can see it. I'd have to send it to Jacques, of course, and make sure it could work. Oh god, this is going to cost me so much money...

NICK

There's one catch, though.

JEAN

What is that?

NICK

Well, the lyrics are mostly Katie's. And she helped write the melodies too. She's talented...and you can't have the song without having her.

Jean's face sours. She leans forward and speaks in a whisper.

JEAN

You of all people should know how hopeless she'd be at learning and refining choreography for a new number.

NICK

Well, I thought maybe we could make up some back up parts. And not just for Katie. The ShowStoppers aren't strong dancers anyway. I thought we could split the choreography, so that we showcase the best dancers and have the rest as back-up dancers.

Jean and Nick stare at each other.

JEAN

Do you have anything in mind?

NICK

Yes, actually I do.

Jean looks at Nick for a long moment, her brow furrowed.

JEAN

Alright, well you can talk to Jacques about that. And as for Katie...I suppose she could be reconsidered, if she promises to work very hard at the dances we already have, and play back-up in this one or not be in it at all.

NICK

Everyone deserves a second chance, Jean.

And that's her voice singing with me on the song. She's great.

JEAN

Well, I can't deny she has some talent. But that is neither here nor there. Send me a copy of that song immediately, so I can pass it along to Richard, Lin, and Jacques.

NICK

I will.

Nick begins to exit the office.

JEAN

Wait! Can you leave that thing here with me until the end of the day. I'd like to go over it myself, to think about how to teach it.

NICK

Uh, sure. Here you go.

He hands over her mp3 player, which has stickers spelling "K-A-T-I-E" on the back, then leaves the room. Jean watches him leave, and then shuts her door. She stares at the mp3 player, then looks right and left.

Jean then puts the headphones in her ears, and clicks to the song again. She cranks up the volume. A tinny buzz can be heard from outside the head phones. She closes her eyes and smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. SHOW CHOIR ROOM-DAY

The entire show choir (both the stealers and the stoppers) fill the room. All of the chairs are pushed to the edges of the room, and many of the show choir members have sweat soaking through their shirts.

Jacques Cartier and Lin are at the front. There is no music. The students are all doubled over, watching Jacques and Lin.

Jacques grimaces and shudders.

JACQUES

All right! STOP! It's done. I can't do anything more with you little puppies today. We're adding the music next Saturday, so come prepared. I will cut anyone who can't keep up with what we've learned.

He turns to Lin.

JACQUES (cont)
(to Lin, quietly)

I would forgo vocal practice this week and dedicate it all to dancing if you want even the slightest chance of placing at nationals. Mmmkay?

Lin sighs, looking a bit defeated.

LIN

All right, Jacques.

Jacques swaggers away, toward his briefcase to get a water bottle. Katie sits on a chair right next to his briefcase, where she had been watching the dance rehearsal. To avoid looking at Jacques, she takes a large swig from her water bottle. Jacques turns to her.

JACQUES

I don't usually say this to students, but I think you're fabulous.

Katie's eyes widen and her water bottle slips down, dribbling water down her face and neck. She starts wiping it, embarrassed.

KATIE

Sorry, I, uh-

JACQUES

Oh, it happens to everyone. I just, I like that song. I feel like I learned something from it too. Good stuff. Anyway, I need to get out of this hell hole before I turn into a hill-billy. My plane leaves in two hours. Good-byeeee.

Jacques exits, and Katie just stares after him. Her mouth almost twitches to a smile.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK LOGAN'S BASEMENT/DANCE STUDIO-EVENING

Katie and Nick are doing the cha-cha-cha's side by side. Nick's shoulders move smoothly, and his lips pout in a suave way. Katie has the step down, but no hips or face to match.

NICK

Katie, are you sure you want to try to learn this? They said you don't have to? Besides, you look like you're taking a test or something, not dancing. You need to learn how to relax.

KATIE

(still dancing)

I know, I just, I study it. This is how I learn things.

Nick suddenly grabs her hand and pulls her in very close to him, so that there is no room between her back and his chest. He then pulls her arm up, as Jacques did with Lin, and starts running his hand down her side.

NICK

(quietly, smoothly)

To learn how to dance, you don't just need steps. You need your senses to be alive..

Nick's hand almost grazes the side of her breast, she inhales gently and pushes her head back into his chest a little, perhaps involuntarily.

NICK (cont.)

You have to trust your partner completely and let him move you as much as possible.

Nick's hand rests on her hip, and pulls her hips closer to his. Katie turns her face towards his, and Nick bends his closer to hers, they both close their eyes and move closer to each other. But at the last minute, Nick's eyes open, and he grabs Katie's hand, by her hip, and twirls her out of the embrace with a triple spin. He looks at her with a boyish grin.

NICK

Probably shouldn't.

Katie's cheeks turn red, but she laughs.

KATIE

You're probably right.

They smile at each other.

NICK

Okay, next move.

CUT TO:

INT. SHOWCHOIR ROOM-AFTERNOON

Lin and Jean sit in two chairs by the door as the show choir performs the dance in full costume in front of them. The calendar on the wall says MAY.

Everyone in the show choir is singing the last word of the song (a five-part chord), and doing a final jazz-step and the girls jump into their partners arms and they're dipped down on the last instrumental downbeat. They look sharp, even Katie.

Jean and Lin stand up from her seat and clap.

JEAN

You know what, you did it. I think we have a winning piece. Great work. Now get a lot of rest, we'll be on a bus all day tomorrow. Now go home! See you in the morning, 7am sharp.

Everyone relaxes. They look exhausted, but happy. Katie leans against Nick.

KATIE

Oh my god, did I actually do that dance?

NICK

Yep! You sure did.

KATIE

Huh. I guess it's easier when it's my own song...and when it's the back-up part, not the main part.

NICK

Hey, you worked hard. It paid off. But, don't forget, it is *our* song, not just *your* song.

Nick gives Katie a mock-menacing look. Katie giggles

KATIE

Oops, sorry.

NICK

What did your parents think?

KATIE

Oh, I never showed it to them. They probably wouldn't get it. It's okay, though. I don't really care—uh oh! Here comes Olive.

Nick's expression changes from mild concern to amusement.

NICK

Ha! Okay, let's hold hands again.

Katie grins.

KATIE

Okay.

They hold hands and look dramatically at each other with affection.

OLIVE

You two are dating. I know it!

Katie and Nick yank their hands apart, as if they didn't realize Olive had been approaching.

KATIE

No, we're just really good friends.

Olive looks angrily at Nick.

OLIVE

Why her, Nick? What about the administrators of your official facebook fan club? Think of what we have to offer you!

Nick looks at his watch.

NICK

(to Katie)

Oh, look at the time, babe, I mean Kate. We don't want to miss our—

Nick looks overly awkwardly at Olive (on purpose).

NICK

Curfews.

KATIE

Yeah, I hate being late.

Katie gives him a knowing look and smiles flirtatiously.

KATIE

Let's go.

Olive stares at them angrily.

OLIVE

You are *not* just good friends. I know you're really going on a date right now. I know it!

Katie and Nick are already walking out, laughing.

INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM-EVENING

Katie folds shirts and shorts into a suitcase laying open on the bed. The song she and Nick wrote is playing in the background. There is a knock at the door.

MRS. MEYER (O.S.)

Katie? Can I come in? I have your clean socks.

KATIE

Yeah, sure.

Mrs. Meyer walks in the room carrying a laundry basket full of socks and underwear. Katie jumps up and turns off her sound-system.

MRS. MEYER

What was that? A new musical?

KATIE

Oh, it's just something Nick and I worked on.

MRS. MEYER

You know I love musicals. Is it a group project, honey? For drama? Are you learning a new part?

KATIE

Oh, not really. It's just—it doesn't matter. I just have to focus on packing right now. Is that alright, Mom?

MRS. MEYER

Oh, sure. Well, here are your socks. And, I folded your underwear for the trip, so it won't get wrinkly.

KATIE

(blushing)

Thanks, Mom. I'll see you tomorrow morning.

MRS. MEYER

Well, goodnight.

KATIE

Goodnight.

Mrs. Meyer exits, looking puzzled and a bit sad.

CUT TO:

INT. MEYER LIVINGROOM-NIGHT

Mrs. Meyer walks out of the kitchen with her robe and flannel pajamas on, holding a cup of tea. She looks into, and sees Katie's suitcase and backpack laying next to the door. An mp3 player is laying on top.

She walks over and picks it up and puts the headphones in her ears and plays the song that was on (Katie and Nick's song). A smile spreads across her face and a tear rolls down her cheek.

She sits down on the sofa, without bothering to turn on the lights, and listens to the song again.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN ADAMS PARKING LOT-EARLY MORNING

The lot is now muddy and wet. Patches of grass sprout up around the curbs and brown, soggy leaves from last fall clutter the edges of the lot.

Parents and showstoppers fill the lot. A stocky old man helps people store their luggage under the bus (which is a coach bus). And mothers and daughters pile on in pairs. A few boys have mothers there too.

The Meyer minivan pulls into the parking lot.

INT. MRS. MEYER'S MINIVAN-EARLY MORNING

Katie looks over to her mother.

KATIE

Well, bye, Mom.

MRS. MEYER

Katie, why are all those ladies getting onto the bus?

KATIE

They're moms. They're coming with to help out with costumes and make-up and stuff. Plus, they want to watch their kids.

MRS. MEYER

How come you didn't tell me that other people were bringing their mothers?

KATIE

I didn't think you'd be interested. Bye.

Mrs. Meyer looks sad, but then pulls herself together quickly.

MRS. MEYER

Bye! I'll miss you. Have a safe trip!

Katie exits the van. Mrs. Meyer watches Katie smile and run towards her friends, and then gets on the bus. Furrowing her brow, she drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. PLAZA HOTEL, SAN DIEGO, CA-NIGHT

Bethany Rose, her mother, Mrs. Payton, Marna, and Katie enter a hotel room, holding all their luggage.

Showstopper songs can be heard from the hallway, sung by giddy groups of students as they make their way to their rooms.

Katie and Marna take one of the queen beds while Bethany Rose and her mother take the other.

MRS. PAYTON

Well, girls. I am the official mother of room 205, so if you need any "Mom" type things, just let me know.

KATIE

(smiling)

Thanks Mrs. Payton.

MRS. PAYTON

Don't mention it. Now Bethany honey, why don't we get the curlers set up for tomorrow, ok?

Bethany and her mom start unpacking a huge duffle bag full of cosmetics, hair dryers, and curlers. Marna turns on the tv and changes the channel to animal planet. Two turtles are having sex.

Katie starts laughing, giving a knowing look to Marna and a sideways glance to Mrs. Payton (who can't see them). Marna giggles and covers her mouth. They change the channel.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PLAZA HOTEL-NIGHT

Mrs. Meyer is dressed conservatively, wearing a travel suit and a semi-turtleneck business shirt. She has a single modest carry-on suitcase with her. She checks in at the counter and gets her keys.

Mrs. Meyer makes her way towards the elevator. It is late, and the hotel is mostly abandoned, save two slightly greasy looking men, dressed in suits and talking by the fire. The two men get up from their chairs and make their way towards the elevators also. Mrs. Meyer notices this out of the corner of her eye and starts walking faster.

Mrs. Meyer gets to the elevator and presses the button somewhat frantically, looking over her shoulder and noticing that the clerk at the desk has gone to the back room, and is nowhere in sight.

The two men arrive at the elevators, and stand next to her, calmly chatting with each other. She goes rigid, and peers out of the corner of her eye at the taller man's jacket, and his hand is in his suit pocket. It looks as though there might be a gun in there. Her eyes widen, and then she stares straight ahead, as the elevator slowly makes its way to the lobby.

All three walk in. As the doors begin to close, one of the men says "Hit the floor" and Mrs. Meyer drops to the floor, her nose and belly flat against it, arms covering her head. The two men look down at her quizzically and realize that she thought they were talking to her. They laugh and the tall man extends a hand to help her up. The man had been holding a cell phone in his pocket.

TALL MAN

I'm sorry! I was talking to my partner, Mike. I was asking him to hit the floor button for the elevator, because I couldn't remember the floor we're on. That's all.

Mrs. Meyer blushes and looks at the ground, dusting herself off.

MRS. MEYER

Oh yes, yes. So sorry.

MIKE

So what floor are you on?

MRS. MEYER

(barely audible)

Twenty seven.

MIKE

Don't worry about it. Everything's all taken care of.

Mike punches the 27 button and the 33 button, and the elevator starts moving upward. The men resume talking, and Mrs. Meyer glues her eyes to the panel above the doors, which displays the floors they're passing as they rise up. At 27, the elevator dings and opens up. Mrs. Meyer rushes out the doors, clutching her suitcase.

MIKE

Will you be all right, ma'am?

MRS. MEYER

Oh yes, fine, thanks.

TALL MAN

Take it easy.

The elevator doors close and Mrs. Meyer rolls her eyes and looks at herself in the hallway mirror and says

MRS. MEYER

You are such a loser.

Then she walks down to her room.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKSTAGE AT MAIN STAGE AT NMDTF-DAY

The entire show choir (showstoppers and show stealers) are in full make-up and costume. The moms rush around with powder brushes and mascara, touching up people's make-up, straightening bow-ties, etc.

Katie peaks out at the stage, which is set outdoors, although the backstage area is in a building behind the

stage. There is a crowd filled with thousands of people, wearing everything from shorts and t-shirts to fancy evening wear.

A group from Minnesota is onstage, and their routine looks very difficult and well performed. Jean walks over to Katie and stands next to her.

JEAN

We've beaten them before. We can do it again.

Enter technician.

TECHNICIAN^{*}

John Adams! You're on next.

Jean looks at everyone as they gather around.

JEAN

I know you can all do this. Let's get out there and do what we do best.

EVERYONE

Hurrah!

ANNOUNCER (o.s.)

...thank you very much to Rochester Minnesota's "Northern Lites" What a show, what a show. Next on the program, we have the "Showstoppers" from Blaine, Iowa.

JEAN

This is it, go, go.

Everyone excitedly speed walks on stage. Then, the ground starts shaking. At first it seems to be caused by the applause from the audience, but then a huge speaker falls and crushes one of the \$2000 microphones. An earthquake is happening, and a bad one at that.

People start screaming, and Jean frantically herds her kids away from the stage (which has many blunt, heavy objects suspended above it).

JEAN

Everyone! Get into that huge doorway. Now! Get in. Boys in that one. Girls in that one. Move!

The crowd can be seen running away from the stadium, as a huge light post falls down, dangerously close to the crowd. The choir girls cry, and the boys try to stay calm.

Jean and Jacques stand next to each other in a smaller doorway to a dressing room.

JEAN

This is why I chose to live in the mid-west.

Jacques raises an eyebrow at her.

JACQUES

Touché.

CUT TO:

ONE HOUR LATER

The earthquake is over, but the stage is completely destroyed. Most of the audience has left, as have some of the choirs, who are loading onto their busses.

The Showstoppers/Stealers wait in the middle of the building still crying and muttering to each other about whether they think they will perform or not.

A frazzled looking woman with a white Polo that says "STAFF" on the right-hand breast of it steps into the middle of the "stage" and speaks through a mega-phone.

STAFF WOMAN

Okay, everyone. Listen up, please. Our sound equipment has been damaged, one of our chief technicians is on his way to the ER, and half of the judges have left. NMDTF is officially cancelled. I'm sorry for your losses. We can offer reimbursement for the cost of busses and registration. That is all, please contact the main office with questions.

The Showstoppers/Stealers stare at the women angrily. Bethany Rose walks over to Katie and Nick.

BETHANY

Now what are we supposed to do? I can't believe this! This is so unfair. I just need that trophy, I j

Katie stops listening to Bethany. The pitches of her voice are isolated, and Katie starts muttering "the trophy was

all I thought I'd need...thought it was only way to succeed...greed." Music starts accompanying her muttering.

Katie then lights up. She turns to Nick. Bethany is at the point where she is talking to herself and continues, since she doesn't realize Katie has left.

NICK

Katie. I'm so sorry we didn't get to perform our song. After all that work. I mean, who would chose California for an event like this—

KATIE

Nick! I've gotten an even better idea. It won't be wasted.

Nick looks curiously at Katie.

KATIE

Listen to this:

(sung)

"The trophy was all I thought I'd need
I thought I only wanted to succeed
But it turns out it was just greed
And now I can seeeeeeee
That if I just dance through life
It will be suffice..."

Well, it goes on, but think about it. An arc for your story. It could be about a girl that wanted to win the science fair, and at the end, she doesn't, but then she realizes it doesn't matter. That'll be the interlude to the last song.

NICK

Katie! That's brilliant! So you, do you mean what I think you mean?

Katie nods her head and smiles.

NICK (cont)

Come on, we've got work to do.

CUT TO: (One Year From This)

INT. IOWA STATE THEATER/AUDITORIUM-EVENING

The stage is lit up and obviously set for a musical/play. Bethany Rose is at the center, sitting next to a torn up science fair board, singing the lines of the song that Katie had just written in the previous scene.

Instead of wearing the sparkly show-choir dress, she wears a suit, in addition to stage make-up and her hair pulled back into a neat pony tail. This time, a live orchestra plays along. The song continues.

BETHANY

"And now I can seeeeeeeeee
That if I just dance through life
It will be suffice
Awards can be nice
But they can't help me get..."

Nick enters the stage, dressed like a nerdy boy with high-water pants, glasses, and a vest. He crosses over to her and interlocks his fingers with hers, and joins her in singing.

NICK and BETHANY

"Complete Octet
No I never thought I'd see the day
When my efforts would pave the way..."

Now the entire show-choir (and cast) enters and Katie and Nick's song (titled: Complete Octet), and join in the singing. Katie is dressed in a long dress with a gray wig and glasses. She is playing the teacher. The Orchestra picks up the tempo.

The audience lights up. Mr. Meyer smiles larger than anyone in his family. Lily watches excitedly, then realizes that she's excited, and pretends not to be.

Now everyone is singing and dancing in pairs.

EVERYONE:

To form our complete Octet
We will never forget
The first time we met
And our bond was set
(repeat)

I never liked those acidic guys
With their high PKA
All I wanted was someone
To hold me tight all day
Never spin away

I want my
COMPLETE OCTET
We will never forget
The first time we met

And our bond was set

To form our (repeat chorus)

We've spent so much time being phenyl groups
Outside the benzene ring
It's time for us to just break out
Maybe try to dance and sing

And as for those noble gasses
What a bunch of asses
We don't need them anyway
They'll be lonely at the end of the day

Because they can't form their COMPLETE OCTET
(repeat chorus twice)

Nothings as sad as Potassium
Except for perhaps, Calcium
They're so good for our bones
But they can feel so alone

I thought row one girls like me
Had a different destiny
To be forced to give up pieces of ourselves
To be able to survive and live well
But we can all transition
Without suspicion

To form our COMPLETE OCTET
We never will forget
The first time we met
And our bond was set

(2X)

That's the way it's gonna be for meeeeeee
I'm FREE!

(boom, the end of the song)

The audience erupts into applause. The curtain closes. Mr. Meyer stands up, clapping, and Mrs. Meyer joins. As do a handful of other people in the audience. The curtain opens again and the whole cast steps forward and takes a bow. Then Bethany comes forward and takes a bow. Then Nick and Katie come forward, and take a bow. The entire audience stands.

INT. LOBBY OUTSIDE OF THE THEATER IN IOWA STATE-NIGHT

The lobby is abuzz with animated chatter and conversations. At least five-hundred people are there. Punch, crackers, and cheese are available on tables!

A large poster hanging above the doors reads "CONGRATULATIONS Iowa Original Drama Award (IODA) WINNERS: 'MY COMPLETE OCTET'"

Mr. Meyer speaks enthusiastically to some men who share his eyes and build.

MR. MEYER

-and did you know that the IODA isn't just for students? It's for anyone in Iowa! Even professionals. And my Katie-bug won it. You know big colleges have been calling, asking her to visit their campuses. Apparently, this is a very prized skill...

The performers come out from around the corner. The lobby bursts into cheers again. Katie runs toward her family, and hugs her Dad.

KATIE

Dad! Did you like it?

MR. MEYER

Great stuff. Great stuff.

Katie turns to Lily.

KATIE

How bout you. Bored this time?

LILY

Yeah, it was really stupid.

Katie raises her eyebrows skeptically at Lily.

LILY

Well, it's not Phantom of the Opera, but I guess it's okay, for a high schooler.

Katie squints her eyes at Lily's face. A faint line of mascara runs down her cheek.

KATIE

Did you cry at the ending!? Are you serious?

Lily quickly rubs her cheek and looks angrily at Katie.

LILY

None of your business.

Lily storms off towards the cheese plates. Katie turns to Mrs. Meyer.

MRS. MEYER

Oh Katie, you've found an outlet for your steam.
I'm so proud honey.

KATIE

Mom, it's not an outlet for steam, it's more of
an-

Harold, a portly man in a three piece suit taps Katie's shoulder. Katie turns around swiftly, still wearing her wig and glasses.

HAROLD

So, are you the lyricist, ehm, Katie Meyer?

KATIE

Um, yes. That's me.

HAROLD

My name is Harold Koggt. I work for an
educational company, you know, the one that
produced all of the school House Rock movies.

KATIE

Oh yeah. I loved those.

Harold chuckles to himself and smiles at Katie.

HAROLD

Well, I can see why. You certainly have talent.
It shows. Well, I know you're still quite
young, but I was wondering if you'd consider
working for us on a special project. We're
producing a new series for high-school students
struggling with history, the sciences, and
mathematics, and it would be nice to have
someone fresh on the team.

KATIE

Are you serious? Me? Really?

HAROLD

Why, yes. Very serious, in fact.

KATIE

Well that sounds great. I mean, yes. Thank you so much!

MR. MEYER

Now, this won't interfere with her college work.

HAROLD

Oh, well, it shouldn't. After all she has the whole summer ahead of her. And she can easily work away from the company and communicate by e-mail.

MR. MEYER

Well, as long as it's only part time during the school year, that sounds awfully generous of you. Thank you kindly, sir, for taking an interest in my little girl.

HAROLD

Pleasure. Here's my card. We'll be in touch.

Harold hands Katie his business card, and makes his way across the crowd to the cheese plate as well. Katie gives the card to Mr. Meyer.

KATIE

I'm going to go to Gandery Goose with the gang. I'll be home before one.

MRS. MEYER

Well, have a nice time honey. You did wonderfully.

MR. MEYER

(to Katie)

I'm glad you weren't my teacher!

They all laugh. Katie leaves her parents, and walks towards Nick. He's talking with some other portly men in three-piece-suits. He looks at Katie and she looks at him. They smile, then look away. Katie takes in the entire room for another moment, then goes back into the theater.

THE END