

THE FAULT IN OUR STARS

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Based on the novel by John Green

May 1, 2012  
First Draft  
Temple Hill/ Fox 2000

HAZEL GRACE LANCASTER (16) lies in the grass, staring up at the stars. We're CLOSE ON her FACE and we hear:

HAZEL (V.O.)  
You have a choice in this world, I believe, about how to tell sad stories.

CUT TO a SERIES OF QUICK IMAGES:

- Hazel and the BOY we will come to know as AUGUSTUS "GUS" WATERS (17) at an outdoor restaurant in some magical place. [*They look very much like the perfect Hollywood couple.*]

HAZEL (V.O.)  
On the one hand, you can sugar coat - the way they do in movies and romance novels.

- "Perfect" Hazel and "Perfect" Gus sit on a BENCH overlooking an incredible seascape in some foreign country. She rests her head on his shoulder.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
Where villains are vanquished and... heroes are born and...

- "Perfect" Hazel and "Perfect" Gus kiss in a dark room.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
... beautiful people learn beautiful lessons...

- "Perfect" Hazel and "Perfect" Gus fall onto a bed together. They look deep into one another's eyes.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
... and nothing is too messed up that can't be fixed with an apology and a Peter Gabriel song.

BACK TO Hazel on the grass, still watching the stars. Were those dreams or were they memories? Still unclear.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
I like that way as much as the next girl, believe me. It's just not the truth.

Hazel closes her eyes.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
This is the truth.

And EVERYTHING GOES BLACK. We HEAR:

HAZEL (V.O.)  
Sorry.

FADE IN ON:

INT DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The real Hazel is no less beautiful than the one we just saw.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
Late in the Winter of my 17th  
year...

There are, however, some key and obvious differences.

First, you'll notice the OXYGEN TUBE in her nostrils which help her to breathe.

Second, you'll notice her hair - which we couldn't see in the grass. It's much shorter than the "Perfect" version, the result of someone whose head was completely shaved a few years before.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
... my mother decided I was  
depressed.

HAZEL  
I'm not depressed.

Hazel's legs dangle over the side of an exam table. Her mother FRANNIE (early 40s, younger than she feels) explains to the DOCTOR:

FRANNIE  
... she eats like a bird. She  
barely leaves the house,

HAZEL  
I'm not depressed.

FRANNIE  
... she reads the same book over  
and over...

DOCTOR  
She's depressed.

HAZEL  
I'm not depressed!

Off her look, CUT TO:

QUICK SEQUENCE, which play over:

HAZEL (V.O.)  
The booklets and web sites always  
list depression as a side effect of  
cancer...

- A SHOPPING MALL. Filled with TEENAGE GIRLS - gossiping, laughing - being teenage girls, basically. And here's Hazel. With her Mom. And her oxygen tank. Just another day.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 Depression's not a side effect of  
 cancer...

- HAZEL'S LIVING ROOM. She sits watching game shows in the middle of the afternoon. Her Mom brings her a sandwich. A glass of water. And then a whole host of prescription meds. Hazel eyes them with indifference.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 ... it's a side effect of dying.

- A STARBUCKS. Hazel sits alone reading a dog-eared, heavily underlined copy of a novel ("An Imperial Affliction" by Peter Van Houten). She only looks up when distracted by a squeal of delight. A YOUNG GUY has lifted a YOUNG GIRL over his shoulder playfully. He spins her around. Hazel watches a beat - goes back to the book.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 Which is what was happening to me.

And we CUT BACK TO:

INT DOCTOR'S OFFICE - SAME

Frannie continues to talk to the doctor. Hazel continues to dangle her feet.

FRANNIE  
 ... some days she won't even get  
 out of bed.

The Doctor scratches his beard, thinking.

DOCTOR  
 I may switch you to Zoloft. Or  
 Lexapro. And twice a day instead of  
 once.

HAZEL  
 Why stop there?

DOCTOR  
 Hmm?

HAZEL  
 Keep 'em coming. I can take it. I'm  
 like the Keith Richards of cancer  
 kids.

The Doctor looks at Frannie who just shakes her head.

DOCTOR  
 Have you been going to that Support  
 Group I suggested?

Instead of answering, Hazel looks at her Mom.

FRANNIE  
She's gone a few times.

HAZEL  
I'm not sure it's for me.

DOCTOR  
If you're depressed --

HAZEL  
(exasperated)  
I'm not de--

DOCTOR  
(ignoring her)  
-- support Groups are a great way  
to connect with people who are...

HAZEL  
What?

DOCTOR  
(beat)  
On the same journey.

HAZEL  
"Journey?" Really?

FRANNIE  
Hazel.

DOCTOR  
Just give it a chance, ok? For me.

Hazel rolls her eyes, knows she's lost this battle.

DOCTOR  
Who knows? You might even find  
it... enlightening.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

CLOSE UP on PATRICK (30s, pony-tail). He has a guitar.

PATRICK  
... we are gathered here today -  
literally - in the heart of Jesus.

ANGLE on Hazel who just shakes her head. This is the lamest  
thing she could be doing right now.

PATRICK  
Who would like to share their story  
with the group?

The basement is filled with SICK PEOPLE. Hazel among them.  
Most are under the age of 18. QUICK CUTS:

SPEAKER #1  
Jillian. 15. Lymphoma.

SPEAKER #2  
Angel. 17. Ewing sarcoma.

PATRICK  
Patrick. 34. Testicular. It started  
a few years ago, when I was...

As Hazel watches, bored, and Patrick continues, we hear:

HAZEL (V.O.)  
I'll spare you the gory details of  
Patrick's ball cancer. Basically,  
they found it in his nuts, cut most  
of it out, he almost died, but he  
didn't die, and now here he is -  
divorced, friendless, addicted to  
video games, exploiting his  
concertastic past in the heart of  
Jesus - "literally" - to show us  
that one day - if we're lucky - we  
could be just like him.

They all say:

ALL IN UNISON  
"We're here for you Patrick."

Hazel says it the least enthusiastically. She locks eyes with  
her only friend in Support Group, a blonde kid with an eye  
patch, ISAAC. He's also shaking his head.

PATRICK  
Who else would like to share?  
(no response)  
Hazel?

Oh no. Patrick gestures for her to speak. Reluctantly she  
stands, sighs...

HAZEL  
I'm, uh, Hazel. 16.  
(beat)  
Thyroid originally but with quite  
the impressive satellite colony in  
my lungs.

Not much more to say, Hazel is about to sit down.

PATRICK  
And how are you doing Hazel?

Hazel has no idea how to answer that.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
You mean besides the terminal  
cancer?

But that's not what she says. She says:

HAZEL  
 Alright? I guess...?

Isaac tries not to laugh at this. Hazel sits back down.

ALL IN UNISON  
 "We're here for you Hazel."

Hazel exhales. This is not at all helpful. A few more beats.

PATRICK  
 Maybe now I'll play a song...

EXT CHURCH - LATER

Frannie sits in the car in the parking lot, reading from a book, waiting for Group to be over. She sees the church door open and puts the book away. Hazel comes out. Frannie looks at her like "well, was it great?" Hazel just exhales and gets in the car. CUT TO:

INT HAZEL'S LIVING ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

"America's Next Top Model" is on the TV. Hazel sits on one side of the L-shaped couch, flipping through her novel.

Frannie and Hazel's dad MICHAEL (40s, kind, doing his best to stay positive) sit on the other side, watching her - but trying not to make it seem that way. After a few beats:

FRANNIE  
 It's Friday night.

HAZEL  
 Hmm?

FRANNIE  
 I was just thinking... you should call your friends, see what they're up to.

HAZEL  
 (disinterested)  
 That's ok.

Frannie and Michael look at one another, don't say anything.

MICHAEL  
 Wanna see a movie?

Hazel looks up from the book. Sees her parents. Gets an idea.

HAZEL  
 Why don't you guys go to a movie?  
 (off their look)  
 (MORE)

HAZEL (CONT'D)  
 You haven't been out in a while.  
 Go. Have fun. Take the night off.

Frannie and Michael look at one another again.

MICHAEL  
 This is a really good show.

Hazel sighs. And just like that, everyone goes back to what they were doing. CUT TO:

QUICK SEQUENCE, which plays over:

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 And that was my life.

- Hazel watching TV, book in hand.
- Hazel in another doctor's office.
- Hazel popping pills.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 Reality shows. Doctor's  
 appointments. Eight prescription  
 drugs, three times a day.

INT HAZEL'S KITCHEN - ANOTHER DAY

Hazel and her parents in the kitchen.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 And worse worse worst of all...  
 support group.

HAZEL  
 Ugh. You can't make me.

MICHAEL  
 Of course we can, we're your  
 parents.

Hazel frowns.

MICHAEL  
 Hazel, you need to get out of the  
 house. Make friends. Be a teenager.

HAZEL  
 If you want me to be a teenager,  
 don't send me to Support Group. Buy  
 me a fake ID so I can go to clubs  
 and drink gimlets and take pot.

MICHAEL  
 You don't take pot.

HAZEL  
See, that's the kind of thing I  
would know with a fake ID.

FRANNIE  
(beat)  
Get in the car.

Hazel mock stabs herself in the stomach with an invisible  
sword. CUT TO:

EXT CHURCH - ESTABLISHING

A small Episcopalian sanctuary in suburban Indianapolis.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
And so I went...

Frannie's car pulls up close to the back entrance.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
Not because I wanted to or because  
I thought it would help. But for  
the same reason I did anything  
these days...

Hazel, oxygen tank in toe, gets out of the car with Frannie's  
assistance.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
... to make my parents happy.

HAZEL  
Are you gonna sit here and wait the  
whole time?

FRANNIE  
Of course not, no. I...  
(she totally is)  
I have errands to run.

Hazel knows she's not planning to run any errands. She  
doesn't press the issue.

HAZEL  
Ok.

FRANNIE  
Love you.

HAZEL  
Love you too Mom.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
The only thing worse than biting it  
from cancer - is having a kid bite  
it from cancer.

As Frannie gets back in the car, she shouts to her daughter:



PATRICK

Isaac, I know you're facing a challenging time. Perhaps you would like to say something...

Isaac nods, rises.

ISAAC

Yeah, um... I'm Isaac. 17. Eye cancer.

(beat)

It's looking like another surgery in a couple weeks. After which, well, I'll be blind...

Hazel tries to focus on what Isaac's saying but it's difficult. She still feels the Beautiful Boy's gaze on her.

ISAAC

Not that I'm complaining or anything. I know a lot of you have it way worse but, still, I mean, you know, being blind's gonna suck...

As Isaac shares, the Beautiful Boy doesn't look away from Hazel. Hazel finds this intimidating. And intimidation irritates her. So she decides to play the game with him, meeting his gaze and holding it just as firmly.

A staring contest.

ISAAC

...My girlfriend helps. And friends like Augustus here...

Isaac nods towards the Beautiful Boy who now has a name - AUGUSTUS. He still doesn't look away from Hazel.

ISAAC

So... yeah. That's what's up.

ALL IN UNISON

"We're here for you Isaac."

The staring contest continues another few beats until:

PATRICK

And does your friend want to speak?

This causes the Beautiful Boy to momentarily look away. Aha, he's lost the contest! Hazel smiles, flicks her eyebrows up as if to say "Victory is mine!" He smiles back at her, the most radiant smile on the planet. He turns back to the Group.

GUS

Hi. I'm Augustus Waters. 17. Had a touch of osteosarcoma bout a year and a half ago - lost this baby as a result...

Gus holds up his right leg - a prosthetic.

GUS  
But really I'm just here at Isaac's request.

PATRICK  
And how are you feeling Augustus?

GUS  
Me? Oh I'm grand. I'm on a roller coaster that only goes up, my friend.

Hazel smiles. Gus catches this. Embarrassed, she stops smiling and looks away.

PATRICK  
Perhaps you'd like to share your fears with the group, Augustus.

GUS  
My fears?

Gus thinks about this.

GUS  
Oblivion.

PATRICK  
Oblivion?

ANGLE ON Hazel, intrigued.

GUS  
Yeah, see... I intend to live an extraordinary life. To be remembered. If I'm scared of anything it's... not doing that.

Patrick doesn't quite have the tools to deal with that.

PATRICK  
Would, uh, anyone like to speak to that?

And Hazel's hand goes up. Even Patrick is surprised by that.

PATRICK  
Hazel! That's unexpected.

Hazel stands, takes a second to gather her thoughts. Augustus watches her, waits for it.

HAZEL  
I just wanna say... there will come a time when, you know, all of us are dead.

Gus is now even more fixed on her than before.

HAZEL

It might be tomorrow. Might be a million years from now but... it's gonna happen. And when it does, enough generations will come and go, there'll be no one left to remember Cleopatra. Or Mozart. Or Muhammad Ali, let alone any of us, right?

The look on Gus's face is unreadable.

HAZEL

Oblivion's inevitable. And if that scares you, well, I suggest you ignore it. God knows it's what everyone else does.

A beat. And then an enormous smile spreads across Gus's face, not a flirty smile but a surprised one, a real one. CUT TO:

EXT OUTSIDE THE CHURCH - LATER

Hazel waits for her Mom's car to appear.

Across the parking lot, she sees Isaac going at it with a redhead, MONICA (17), sucking face like there's no tomorrow against the door of her green Pontiac Firebird. Between kisses, we can hear:

ISAAC  
Always.

MONICA  
Always.

And Hazel hears:

GUS  
Literally.

Hazel turns to find the Beautiful Boy, Augustus, standing right next to her.

GUS  
I thought we were in a church basement but apparently we were literally in the heart of Jesus.

Hazel smiles.

HAZEL  
Someone should probably tell him, don't you think? Jesus? Seems kinda dangerous keeping all these kids with cancer in your heart.

Gus laughs.

GUS  
What's your name?

HAZEL  
Hazel.

GUS  
No your full name?

HAZEL  
(confused)  
Hazel Grace Lancaster.

Gus nods to himself, smiles. Still fixated on her.

HAZEL  
What?

GUS  
I didn't say anything.

HAZEL  
Why are you looking at me like that?

GUS  
Because you're beautiful.

Hazel is taken aback. No one's ever said that to her before.

GUS  
I enjoy looking at beautiful people and I decided a while back not to deny myself the simpler pleasures of existence. Particularly given that, as you so astutely pointed out, we're all gonna die pretty soon.

HAZEL  
(beat)  
I'm not beaut --

A CUTE YOUNG GIRL walks past them.

YOUNG GIRL  
Hey Gus.

GUS  
Hey Alisa.

Hazel isn't surprised that other girls know Gus. Of course they do. She turns back towards Isaac and Monica pawing at each other. She hears:

Always.

ISAAC

Always.

MONICA

HAZEL  
What's with the "always?"

GUS  
 "Always" is their thing. They'll  
 "always" love each other and  
 whatnot. Must have texted "always"  
 to each other at least four million  
 times this year.

They continue to watch the show. It's pretty gross. Isaac  
 squeezes Monica's breast like a clown horn.

HAZEL  
 He's gotta be hurting her boob.

GUS  
 Let's watch a movie.

Hazel is again surprised.

HAZEL  
 Oh. Um. Uh...  
 (yes!)  
 Sure. Yeah. I'm... pretty free this  
 week--

GUS  
 No I mean now.

HAZEL  
 What?

GUS  
 Hmm?

HAZEL  
 What do you mean "now?"

GUS  
 I've got a car.

He shrugs. Hazel has never seen someone so confident.

HAZEL  
 You could be an axe murderer.

GUS  
 There is that possibility.  
 (beat)  
 Come on Hazel Grace... take a risk.

As Hazel mulls this over, Gus reaches into his pocket and  
 pulls out, of all things, a pack of cigarettes! Hazel is in  
 disbelief. He flips the box open, puts a cigarette between  
 his lips.

HAZEL  
 Oh my god. Oh. My. God. You're  
 kidding right?  
 (off his look)  
 You just ruined the whole thing!

GUS  
Whole thing?

HAZEL  
What, you think that's cool? Oh you idiot! There's always a hamartia, isn't there? And yours is - even though you had FREAKING CANCER you give money to a corporation for the chance to acquire EVEN MORE CANCER!? Ugh. And you were doing so well.

As she rants, Gus continues to look at her with that smile on his face. Hazel does not find it so amusing.

HAZEL  
Let me tell you... not being able to breathe? Sucks. Totally sucks.

GUS  
Hamartia?

Hazel folds her arms and turns away from him.

HAZEL  
A fatal flaw.

Gus takes a beat and then moves to face her, the smile still etched on his face.

GUS  
They don't hurt you unless you light them.

HAZEL  
Sorry?

GUS  
I've never lit one.

Hazel turns back to him.

GUS  
It's a metaphor. See? You put the thing that kills you between your teeth. But you don't give it the power to do the killing.

Hazel is floored. And impressed.

HAZEL  
Metaphor.

Gus holds her gaze. And it's at this point Frannie pulls up.

FRANNIE  
Hi sweetheart. Ready for some "Model?"

Hazel looks at Gus, cigarette dangling from his lips. Cool as anything. Handsome as hell. She looks back at her mom.

HAZEL  
 Can't tonight.  
 (off her confused look)  
 I've made plans with Augustus  
 Waters.

And with that, she walks off. Frannie looks at the boy with the cigarette in his mouth. This could be trouble. Or awesome. Or both. And we CUT TO:

INT GUS'S CAR - LATER

Hazel is terrified. Turns out, Gus is the world's worst driver. When he brakes, her body flies forward against the seatbelt. And when he hits the gas, seconds later, her neck snaps back in the seat. Gus sees the look on her face.

GUS  
 I failed the test a couple times.

HAZEL  
 You don't say.

GUS  
 Most amputees can drive with no  
 problem but... yeah. Not me.

HAZEL  
 I'm surprised you have a license.

GUS  
 Tell me about it!

Another brake forces Hazel against the seat belt.

GUS  
 The fourth time I took the test...  
 it was going about how this is  
 going... and when it was over, the  
 instructor looks at me and goes,  
 "your driving, while unpleasant...  
 is not technically unsafe."

HAZEL  
 Aha. Cancer perk.

GUS  
 Total cancer perk.

A few beats of silence.

GUS  
 So what happened to you?

Hazel takes a deep breath. She's told this story before but somehow this seems different.

HAZEL  
I was 13 when they found it.

And as she speaks, we see it unfold. SMASH CUT TO:

INT HOSPITAL BED - FLASHBACK

13-YEAR OLD HAZEL has a biopsy.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
Stage IV thyroid cancer.

INT OPERATING ROOM - FLASHBACK

13-YEAR OLD HAZEL on the operating table. It's a nightmare.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
I had surgery first.

INT SEVERAL MORE HOSPITAL ROOMS - FLASHBACK

This poor little girl is taking a beating. And it's just getting started.

- Radiation treatment.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
Then Radiation...

- Having her head shaved by Frannie.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
Then Chemo...

- With a PICC line in a chemo chair.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
All of which worked for a while.

- A RADIOLOGIST looks at an X-ray. He's not pleased.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
And then stopped working.

- 14-Year Old Hazel lies in bed, struggling to breathe. Frannie runs her fingers through her hair. Dad calls 9-1-1.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
And then my lungs started filling up with water.

- In the ICU, her parents standing over her.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
That should have been the end.

FRANNIE  
 (through the tears)  
 Are you ready, sweetie?

14-Year Old Hazel nods. Michael can't keep it together any longer. He completely breaks down.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 But it wasn't.

INT ICU - THE NEXT MORNING

The sun shines in the room. 14-year old Hazel eats ice chips, the color has returned to her cheeks.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 The antibiotics kicked in. They  
 drained the fluid from my lungs.  
 And in time I got better. Stronger.

INT YET ANOTHER HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Slightly older Hazel is getting more intravenous medication. It's never ending.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 I even found myself in an  
 experimental trial. You know the  
 ones that are famous in the  
 Republic of Cancervania for not  
 working.

- A SECOND RADIOLOGIST examines a second X-ray.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 It's called Phalanxifor. Didn't  
 work in over 70 percent of patients  
 but, for some reason...

The Radiologist looks surprised.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 ...it worked in me. They called it  
 "The Miracle."

And finally, BACK TO:

INT GUS'S CAR - SAME

Gus has one eye on the road, the other on Hazel. He was impressed with her before. He's totally dazzled now.

HAZEL  
 Tumors shrank, my mets have hardly  
 grown since...  
 (MORE)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Of course my lungs still suck but, theoretically, they could continue to suck in just this way for, I dunno, a while maybe.

GUS

Wow.

HAZEL

Yeah.

GUS

So are you back in school or...?

HAZEL

Can't.

GUS

Why not?

HAZEL

Got my GED.

GUS

A college girl! Well that explains the aura of sophistication...

He smiles at her. She smiles back. Shoves his upper arm playfully. They're easing into each other.

Eventually Gus's car pulls into his driveway.

GUS

We're here.

He's as good at parking as he is at driving. CUT TO:

EXT/INT GUS'S HOUSE - SAME

Hazel follows Gus inside. She quickly notices all sorts of engraved plaques and framed signs with phrases like "Home is Where the Heart Is" and "True Love is Born from Hard Times." Hazel looks at Gus quizzically.

GUS

My parents call them  
"encouragements."  
(rolling his eyes)  
Don't ask.

Gus's MOM and DAD (40s) are in the kitchen making dinner.

GUS

Hey guys.

GUS'S MOM

Augustus, hi. New friend?

Gus's parents don't seem surprised to see Gus with some random girl in their house. Hazel takes note of that.

GUS  
This is Hazel Grace.

HAZEL  
It's just... Hazel.

GUS'S DAD  
How's it going, Just Hazel?

GUS  
(abruptly)  
Downstairs if you need us!

Gus drags Hazel to the next room. As she's pulled:

HAZEL  
Nice to meet you!

They walk down the carpeted stairs - Gus having an easier time with his one leg than Hazel is with her oxygen tank and weak lungs.

Eventually they arrive at Gus's basement bedroom. There's a TV with a video game console, a few band posters, and a whole host of basketball memorabilia (autographed sneakers, school trophies, framed images etc.) Gus sees her looking at them.

GUS  
I used to play.

HAZEL  
Must have been pretty good.

GUS  
These are mine. And these. The rest of it's just cancer perks.

Gus grabs a DVD from his stack of DVDs. Hazel sits down on the bed, her breathing noticeably heavier.

HAZEL  
Need to sit.

Gus sits down next to her on the bed.

HAZEL  
Don't get any ideas.  
(catching her breath)  
All that standing... and stairs...  
and then more standing... lotta  
standing for me.

GUS  
I understand.

HAZEL

I'll be fine in a minute. Unless I faint. I'm a bit of a Victorian lady, fainting-wise.

Gus smiles. He waits for her breathing to slow down. In time:

GUS

You ok?

Hazel nods, smiles.

GUS

So what's your story?

HAZEL

I already told you my story. I was diagnosed --

GUS

Not your cancer story. Your story. Interests, hobbies, passions, weird fetishes...

HAZEL

Um...

GUS

Don't tell me you're one of those people who becomes their disease.

HAZEL

No. I'm just... I don't know... un-extraordinary.

GUS

I reject that out of hand.  
(beat, Hazel shrugs)  
Think of something you love. First thing that comes to mind.

HAZEL

"An Imperial Affliction."

GUS

Ok. What's that?

HAZEL

It's a novel. My favorite novel.

GUS

Does it have zombies?

HAZEL

(laughing)  
What? No.

GUS

Stormtroopers.

HAZEL  
 Seriously?  
 (he shrugs)  
 It's not that kind of book.

GUS  
 Sounds horrible.

HAZEL  
 It's not, it's... kind of my bible  
 actually.

GUS  
 Interesting. What's it about?

HAZEL  
 Cancer.  
 (off his look)  
 But not in that way, trust me. The  
 guy who wrote it, Peter Van Houten,  
 he's... well, the only person I've  
 ever come across who seems to a)  
 understand what it's like to be  
 dying and b) not have died.

GUS  
 (intrigued)  
 In that case... I am going to read  
 this horrible book with the boring  
 title that does not contain zombies  
 or stormtroopers. And in  
 exchange...

Gus pulls a book from his bookshelf.

GUS  
 ... all I ask is that you read this  
 brilliant and haunting novelization  
 of my favorite video game.

Hazel looks at the slim, ridiculous novella. She laughs.  
 She's adorable when she laughs. She takes the book from him  
 and as she does, their hands get tangled together for a  
 brief, charged moment.

GUS  
 Your hands are cold.

HAZEL  
 Not so much cold as under-  
 oxygenated.

GUS  
 Ooh Hazel Grace...  
 (beat)  
 I love it when you talk medical to  
 me.

Hazel blushes. And off her completely smitten smile, CUT TO:

INT HAZEL'S BEDROOM - ANOTHER NIGHT

Hazel sits in bed reading Gus's novella. Frannie stands in the doorway, notices the new book.

FRANNIE  
That's different.

Hazel shrugs. Frannie looks intrigued.

FRANNIE  
Did he give it to you?

HAZEL  
By "it" do you mean herpes?

Frannie rolls her eyes. Hazel's phone buzzes. She excitedly checks it - only to be disappointed. Frannie notices.

FRANNIE  
I'm sure he'll call, don't worry.

HAZEL  
I'm not worried. Please. It's not like I'm waiting for him to call or anything. I just... we hung out. No big deal.

Frannie says nothing to that. Her silence says it all. Hazel rolls her eyes. CUT TO:

QUICK SERIES OF SCENES:

Hazel continues "not to wait" for Gus's call. We see her:

- Brushing her teeth. And checking her phone.
- Watching TV. And checking her phone.
- Eating breakfast. And checking her phone.
- Looking out the window on a rainy day. Trying not to check her phone. Willing herself to not check the goddamn phone.

And checking the phone.

Where is he?! Did he forget about her?

INT HAZEL'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Hazel at the dinner table with her parents. She's a little sullen, barely touching her food.

Hazel's phone buzzes. She tries not to seem too eager to check it, what with her parents watching and all. She subtly looks down at her lap. And sure enough: a text from Gus! Her eyes bug out. We see:

"Tell me my copy is missing the last ten pages or something."

Hazel smiles. Goes back to eating. Frannie and Michael share a quick glance. A second later, there's a follow-up text.

"Tell me I have NOT reached the end of this book!"

Hazel smiles again.

And then a third text:

"A BOOK CAN'T END IN THE MIDDLE OF A SENTENCE?! WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS THIS MADNESS! AAAAHHHH!"

Hazel now laughs out loud. Michael clears his throat. Hazel looks up.

MICHAEL  
Would you like to be excused?

EXT HAZEL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Hazel sits down on a patio chair and dials the phone. Gus answers on the first ring.

GUS (O.S.)  
Hazel Grace.

HAZEL  
Welcome to the sweet torture of  
reading "An Imperial --"

At which point she hears a loud WAIL coming from the other end of the phone.

HAZEL  
What the -- are you ok?

GUS (O.S.)  
Me? Yeah. I'm excellent.

INTERCUT between Hazel on the patio and:

INT GUS'S BASEMENT BEDROOM - SAME

Isaac's head is buried in Gus's couch. He's wailing like a banshee, having some kind of nervous breakdown.

GUS  
(into phone)  
I am, however, with Isaac.

Hazel hears more wailing. Has no idea what to make of it.

GUS (O.S.)  
 (to Isaac)  
 Dude! Hey! Does Support Group Hazel  
 make this better or worse?

Hazel genuinely has no idea what the hell is going on.

GUS  
 Isaac! Focus. On. Me.

Hazel waits a few beats for Gus to come back on. Finally:

GUS (O.S.)  
 (to Hazel)  
 How fast can you get here?

Hazel thinks about this. And on her face, CUT TO:

INT GUS'S BASEMENT - LATER

Hazel descends the steps. She hears an ungodly moan before she sees anyone. What has she gotten herself into? Gus appears at the base.

GUS  
 (calling to Isaac)  
 Isaac, Hazel from Support Group is  
 coming downstairs.

Gus waits for a response. None comes. He gestures for her to follow him into the room. Before he does:

GUS  
 A gentle reminder: Isaac is in the  
 midst of a psychotic episode.  
 (Hazel nods)  
 You look nice, by the way.

Hazel blushes, follows Gus into the room to find Isaac sitting upside down in a gaming chair. Tears are flowing down his reddened cheeks. Empty soda cans and bags of junk food lie around him.

HAZEL  
 How ya doing Isaac?

Again, no response. Hazel looks to Gus for an explanation.

GUS  
 Seems Isaac and Monica are no  
 longer a going concern.

HAZEL  
 Oh I'm sorry.  
 (beat)  
 Do you want to talk about it?

Isaac starts to sob again.

GUS

He just wants to cry and play video games.

HAZEL

Fair enough.

GUS

It doesn't hurt to talk to him, however. If you have any sage words of feminine advice...

HAZEL

I actually think his response is appropriate.

GUS

"Pain demands to be felt."

HAZEL

(lights up at that)  
You're quoting my book!

Gus winks at her. At which point, Isaac lets out another howl. Gus gestures for Hazel to sit. The two of them flank Isaac. He finally speaks.

ISAAC

She didn't want to do it after the surgery. Said she couldn't handle it. I'm about to lose my eyesight and she can't handle it.

Hazel rubs his shoulder in sympathy.

ISAAC

I kept saying "always" to her. Always, always, always. And she just kept talking over me and not saying it back. It was like I was already gone, you know? "Always" was a promise! You can't break promises.

HAZEL

Sometimes people don't understand the promises they're making when they make them.

ISAAC

Right, sure, but you keep the promise anyway. That's what love is. Love is keeping the promise anyway.

GUS

That could be an "encouragement."

It's silent for a beat. And then Isaac stands up, a funny look on his face.

GUS  
Isaac...?

Suddenly Isaac starts kicking his chair across the room.

GUS  
Here we go...

The chair lands against the bed. Gus hands Isaac something else to throw, a pillow. Isaac grabs the pillow and slams it against the wall. He dives on it and begins pummeling the pillow like a maniac.

GUS  
That's it! Punch that thing.

And so he does. As he continues to, Gus looks at Hazel, cigarette dangling from his mouth.

GUS  
I've been wanting to call you on a nearly minutely basis but I have been waiting until I could form a coherent thought in re: "An Imperial Affliction."  
(she smiles)  
I can't stop thinking about it.

HAZEL  
I know, right?

GUS  
The only problem is the ending.

HAZEL  
It is rather abrupt.

GUS  
It's torture! I mean, I totally get that she died or whatever - Anna. But there is an unwritten contract between author and reader and I think ending your book in the middle of a sentence kind of violates that contract.

HAZEL  
But that's part of what I like about it. It portrays death truthfully. You die in the middle of your life, in the middle of a sentence. But I do - God, I do want to know what happens to everyone else.

GUS  
Yeah like her Mom.

HAZEL  
The Dutch Tulip Man...

GUS  
Sysiphus the Hamster...

Hazel beams. Gus totally gets the book. A bond between them.

GUS  
Have you tried contacting this...  
Peter Van Houten?

HAZEL  
I've written letters. He's never  
responded. Apparently he moved to  
Amsterdam, became a recluse. Hasn't  
published anything. Doesn't do  
interviews.

GUS  
Sad.  
(beat)  
Hang on.  
(turns to Isaac)  
Isaac!

Gus stands and takes the pillow out of Isaac's hand.

GUS  
Pillows don't break.

Gus hands Isaac one of his basketball TROPHIES.

GUS  
You need to break something.

Isaac looks at it, then back to Gus as if asking permission. Gus nods. Isaac holds it over his head and SMASH! The trophy breaks into a million pieces. Isaac almost smiles. Gus hands him another.

GUS  
Go to town, my friend.

And Isaac does. Smashing them one by one. Hazel looks at Gus.

GUS  
I've been looking for a way to tell  
my Dad that I kinda hate  
basketball. Think maybe we've found  
it.

Isaac grabs more of the TROPHIES, smashing them to pieces. Gus and Hazel enjoy the spectacle. When there are none left Isaac is panting, standing over the bronze carnage.

GUS  
Feel better?

Isaac thinks about it. Shakes his head no. Gus puts his arm around him but looks at Hazel.

GUS  
That's the thing about pain... it  
demands to be felt.

Hazel smiles. And on her face, we CUT TO:

INT LANCASTER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - ANOTHER NIGHT

Where Hazel is having dinner with her parents.

FRANNIE  
Dr. Maria called today. The PET  
Scan is set for the eighth.

Hazel nods. This could be a source of worry but she's not going to think about that right now. She's upbeat. And she's actually eating, which her parents can't help but notice. Frannie and Michael look at one another, pleased.

FRANNIE  
I told you Support Group was a good  
idea.

Hazel's phone buzzes. "Augustus." She looks to her parents.

MICHAEL  
By all means.

EXT HAZEL'S BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Hazel lays on the grass in her backyard staring up at the stars. She rings him back and as she does SPLITSCREEN w/ Hazel in the grass and:

INT GUS'S BASEMENT BEDROOM - SAME

Gus (upside down) in bed, a laptop on his chest.

GUS  
Hazel Grace.

HAZEL  
Hello Augustus.

GUS  
So I read it again. And I just kept  
feeling like... like it was a gift.  
Like you'd given me something  
important.

HAZEL  
(touched)  
You're welcome.

GUS  
On the other hand... we need  
closure, don't we?

HAZEL

What we need is a sequel.

GUS

Yes. We need to know what happens to Anna's family after she dies.

HAZEL

That's what I kept asking Van Houten for in my letters.

GUS

But he never wrote back.

HAZEL

That's correct.

GUS

Because he's a recluse.

HAZEL

Yeee-up.

GUS

Utterly unreachable.

HAZEL

Unfortunately so.

Gus clears his throat, smiles. Hazel waits.

GUS

"Dear Mr. Waters... I am writing to thank you for your electronic correspondence received this 6th of April.

Hazel sits up. Could it be...?

GUS

"I am grateful to anyone who sets aside the time to read my book..."

HAZEL

Augustus!?

GUS

I found his assistant. I emailed her. She must have forwarded it to him.

(Hazel is stunned)

Shall I continue?

HAZEL

Keep reading, keep reading!

GUS

"I am particularly indebted to you, sir, both for your kind words about 'An Imperial Affliction' and for taking the time to tell me that the book, and here I quote you directly, 'meant a great deal' to you."

Hazel pays attention to every word.

GUS

"To answer your question: No, I have not written anything else, nor will I. I do not feel that continuing to share my thoughts with readers would benefit either them or me. However thank you again for your generous email. Yours most sincerely, Peter Van Houten.

HAZEL

You're making this up?

GUS

Hazel Grace, could I, with my meager intellectual capabilities, make up a letter from the great Peter Van Houten?

HAZEL

Holy hell.

GUS

Indeed.

HAZEL

Can I... would you mind...

GUS

(smiling)  
Go check your in-box.

Hazel jumps up as fast as her lungs will allow. CUT TO:

INT HAZEL'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Hazel sits at her computer, Van Houten's assistant's email address staring her in the face. The cursor blinks on a blank page. And then Hazel starts writing...

HAZEL (V.O.)

"Dear Mr. Peter Van Houten, my name is Hazel Grace Lancaster. My friend Augustus Waters, who read your book - at my recommendation - just received an email from you at this address. I hope you will not mind that he shared that email with me."

While Hazel reads the letter, we see a SERIES OF SCENES showing the next several days. They include:

- Hazel and Gus drinking coffees at a cafe. He's enthusiastically telling a story and she's enjoying every moment of it.

- Hazel helping Gus become a better driver. It's no use.

HAZEL (V.O.)

"I was wondering if you wouldn't mind answering a few questions I have about what happens after the end of the book. Specifically, the following:"

- In his kitchen, laughing, trying to make omelettes.

HAZEL (V.O.)

"Does Anna's Mom marry the Dutch Tulip Man; is the Dutch Tulip Man up to something - or is he just misunderstood? What happens to Anna's friends?"

- Watching TV. Their bodies almost touching. But not quite.

HAZEL (V.O.)

Lastly, I was hoping you could shed some light on Sisyphus the Hamster. These questions have haunted me for years. And I don't know how long I have left to get answers to them."

And finally, back in Hazel's bedroom. She finishes reading this letter into the phone.

HAZEL

"I know these are not important literary questions and that your book is full of important literary questions, but I would just really like to know."

INTERCUT w/ Gus bouncing a ball against the wall, listening.

HAZEL

(reading it aloud to him)  
 "And of course, if ever you do decide to write anything else, even if you don't want to publish it, I'd love to read it. Frankly, I'd read your grocery lists. Yours with great admiration, Hazel Grace Lancaster. Age 16."

GUS

Not bad.

HAZEL  
You think?

GUS  
Bit pretentious. But then again,  
Van Houten uses words like  
"tendentious" and... "bacchanalia"  
so I think he'll like it.

Hazel smiles, looks at a clock.

HAZEL  
Is it really almost 1?

GUS  
Guess so.

HAZEL  
I gotta get to sleep.

GUS  
Ok...

HAZEL  
Ok...

Neither one of them want to hang up the phone.

GUS  
Ok...

HAZEL  
Ok...

They both laugh at this.

GUS  
Perhaps "ok" will be our "always."

Hazel smiles.

HAZEL  
Ok.

GUS  
Ok.

HAZEL  
Ok.

Gus hangs up. We stay with Hazel. Is it really possible this Beautiful Boy likes her? She thinks about it. She's not convinced. CUT TO:

INT HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Isaac lies in bed, bandages covering his eyes, now officially blind. A NURSE attends to him while Hazel sits by his side.

ISAAC

She hasn't even visited. Fourteen months we were together. What kind of person...

ISAAC'S NURSE

You'll get over her Isaac. Just takes a little time. You'll see.

The Nurse exits the room.

ISAAC

Is she gone?

HAZEL

Yeah.

ISAAC

Did she really just say "you'll see?"

HAZEL

(shakes her head)  
Qualities of a Good Nurse. Go.

ISAAC

Doesn't pun your disability.

HAZEL

Gets blood on the first try.

ISAAC

That is huge. I mean, seriously, is this my freakin' arm or a dartboard? Three - no condescending voice.

HAZEL

(lays it on thick)  
"I'm gonna stab you with this needle now, so there might be a little ouchie."

They laugh and then lapse into silence for a moment.

HAZEL

You doing alright, Isaac?

ISAAC

I don't know. To be honest, I think a hell of a lot more about Monica than my eye. Is that crazy? That's crazy.

HAZEL

It's a little crazy.

ISAAC

But I believe in love, you know? I don't believe that everybody gets to keep their eyes or not get sick or whatever, but everybody should have true love. Don't you think?

Hazel thinks about it as Isaac presses the button on his pain pump, self-administering morphine.

ISAAC

Gus was here earlier.

HAZEL

(trying to be nonchalant)  
Was he?

Isaac exhales as the pain pump starts to kick in.

ISAAC

Mmm... that's better.

HAZEL

The pain?  
(off his slow nod)  
Good. Good, Isaac.  
(Isaac closes his eyes)  
What about Gus?

But Isaac is already asleep. Whatever he was going to say about Gus is gone. Hazel nods, pats his hand. CUT TO:

INT HAZEL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Hazel rolls out of bed, stumbles to her computer. She casually checks her in-box and is shocked to discover - he's written her back!

HAZEL

Holy shit!  
(reading aloud)  
"Dear Ms. Lancaster... I cannot answer your questions, at least not in writing, because to do so would constitute a sequel, which you might publish or otherwise share on the internet. Not that I don't trust you, but how could I trust you, I barely know you."

Hazel's jaw hangs open as she reads the next part:

HAZEL

"Should ever you find yourself in Amsterdam, do pay a visit at your leisure. Yours most sincerely,  
Peter Van Houten" Son of a - WHAT IS THIS LIFE!!!

Frannie races in, clearly expecting a health problem.

FRANNIE  
What's wrong?!

HAZEL  
(realizing she scared her)  
Nothing. Sorry.

FRANNIE  
(confused)  
Nothing?

HAZEL  
Everything! Look!

Hazel shows Frannie the note. Frannie reads it.

HAZEL  
Can we go to Amsterdam? Please?

Frannie thinks about how to respond for a beat.

FRANNIE  
Hazel, I... I love you and... you  
know I'd do anything for you, but  
we don't...  
(pained)  
We don't have the money. The  
expense of getting equipment over  
there - love, it's just not  
possible...

HAZEL  
(deflates)  
No, yeah, of course.

Clearly Frannie feels awful. Which makes Hazel feel awful.

FRANNIE  
I mean, I could talk to your father  
or --

HAZEL  
Mom, no. Please. Don't do anything.  
Forget I mentioned it.

A beat between them. Frannie walks out, sadly. Hazel sits on  
the bed, totally bummed now for two reasons.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
Guilt is definitely a side effect  
of cancer.

EXT SUBURBAN STREET - LATER

Hazel and Gus walk together on the sidewalk.

GUS  
Just use your wish.

HAZEL  
I've used it already. Pre-  
"Miracle."

GUS  
What'd you do?

Hazel doesn't want to say. Gus realizes.

GUS  
Not Disney.

HAZEL  
I was 13...

GUS  
Tell me you did not go to Disney  
World.  
(Hazel looks away)  
Hazel Grace! You did not use your  
one dying Wish to go to Disney  
World!

HAZEL  
(feeble)  
And Epcot Center.

GUS  
(hands in the air)  
Oh my God!

HAZEL  
(defending herself)  
We had fun on that trip.

GUS  
That is the saddest thing I've ever  
heard!

HAZEL  
I met Goofy...

GUS  
Now I'm embarrassed.

HAZEL  
Why are you embarrassed?

GUS  
How can I have a crush on a girl  
with such cliché wishes?

HAZEL  
Wait, what?

The word "crush" has taken Hazel totally by surprise.

GUS

What?

She looks at him. A beat. She quickly looks away, blushing. Gus continues on about Disney but all Hazel can think about is "CRUSH". She tries not to seem too excited. CUT TO:

INT PET SCAN ROOM - DAY

Hazel, in a hospital gown, is slowly fed through the machine. A TECH explains that she should hold still, try and relax, etc. But Hazel knows. She knows all about these procedures. She's a pro. CUT TO:

EXT HAZEL'S HOUSE - FRONT

Gus is waiting on the front stoop when Frannie's car pulls up. They're home from the hospital.

He wears an Indiana Pacers JERSEY and carries a bouquet of bright orange TULIPS.

Michael gets out of the passenger's seat to help Hazel out of the car. Gus rises to assist them.

MICHAEL

Is that a Rik Smits jersey?

GUS

It is indeed.

MICHAEL

(beat)

Man, I loved that guy.

Hazel sees Gus, wasn't expecting him.

HAZEL

Gus?

GUS

Hi Hazel.

(beat)

How would you like to go on a picnic?

INT HAZEL'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Gus is with Frannie and Michael downstairs.

FRANNIE

Something to drink?

GUS

I'm great Mrs. Lancaster.

Meanwhile, upstairs, Hazel gets ready for the date. She's put the orange flowers in a toothbrush holder and is putting on LIP GLOSS. She can faintly hear the conversation downstairs.

ANGLE ON Gus sitting on the stairs. Michael next to him.

MICHAEL

You're a survivor yourself?

GUS

(taps his leg)

Didn't cut this fella off for the hell of it. Though it is an excellent weight-loss strategy. Legs are heavy!

MICHAEL

How's your health now?

GUS

N-E-C for fourteen months.

MICHAEL

That's fantastic.

GUS

I'm very lucky.

ANGLE ON Hazel, checking herself out in the mirror. Seems to like what she sees a lot more than before.

BACK ON Gus and Michael, downstairs:

MICHAEL

Son, you have to understand... Hazel's still pretty sick. She will be the rest of her life.

ANGLE on Hazel, who can hear all of this. She stops what she's doing and listens.

MICHAEL

She'll want to keep up with you - she's that kind of girl - but the truth is, her lungs --

HAZEL

You ready Gus?

Hazel appears, silencing her Father mid-sentence. CUT TO:

EXT PARK - LATER

Behind the Indianapolis Museum of Art is 152 Acres of Gardens and Grounds. Hazel and Gus walk together.

HAZEL

Is this where you bring all your romantic conquests?

GUS  
 Every last one.  
 (beat)  
 Probably why I'm still a virgin.

Hazel laughs, elbows him.

HAZEL  
 You're not a virgin.  
 (off his look)  
 Are you really?

Gus picks a STICK up from the dirt. Draws a BIG CIRCLE in it.

GUS  
 See this? This circle is virgins...

Now Gus draws a much smaller circle inside that circle.

GUS  
 And this... is 17 year old dudes  
 with one leg.

Hazel laughs. Point made. He grabs her hand, helps her walk up a tiny hill. Once up there, Gus lays a blanket on the ground. They sit, looking out over a rather odd SCULPTURE - a set of GIANT WHITE BONES where children can jump and play.

GUS  
 (explaining)  
 "Funky Bones" by Joep Van Lieshout.

HAZEL  
 He sounds Dutch.

GUS  
 And he is. Much like Rik Smits. And  
 tulips.

Hazel raises an eyebrow at Gus. He's sure taking this Amsterdam/Dutch thing pretty far. He removes some sandwiches and orange juice out of a basket.

GUS  
 Sandwich?

HAZEL  
 Let me guess --

GUS  
 (nods)  
 Dutch cheese. And tomato.  
 (she takes one)  
 The tomatoes are Mexican. Sorry.

They eat for a second, their eyes watching the children play on the bones.

GUS  
How cool is that? A skeleton being  
used as a playground.

HAZEL  
You do love your symbols.

GUS  
Speaking of which...

Gus stands up, takes a cigarette, puts it in his mouth. He  
clears his throat.

GUS  
You're probably wondering why  
you're sitting here eating a bad  
cheese sandwich and drinking orange  
juice with a guy in a Rik Smits  
jersey.

HAZEL  
It has crossed my mind.

GUS  
Hazel Grace, like so many before  
you - and I say this with great  
affection - you spent your Wish...  
moronically.

HAZEL  
I was thir--

GUS  
Hush! I'm in the midst of a grand  
soliloquy here.

HAZEL  
Sorry. Please, continue...

GUS  
You were young. Impressionable. The  
Grim Reaper staring you in the  
face. And the fear of dying with  
your one true Wish left ungranted  
led you to rush into making one you  
didn't really want, for how could  
little Hazel Grace, having never  
read "An Imperial Affliction" ever  
know that her one TRUE wish was to  
visit Mr. Peter Van Houten in his  
Amsterdamian exile.

Hazel nods in agreement.

GUS  
If you were smart, you would have  
saved your wish til the time in  
your life when you really knew your  
true self.

Gus stops talking. Hazel is confused.

HAZEL  
But I... didn't save it.

Gus smiles.

GUS  
Good thing I saved mine.

Hazel cocks her head to one side. What is he talking about?

GUS  
Got it in exchange for the leg.  
(beat)  
And I still have it.

She starts to realize.

HAZEL  
Are you saying --

GUS  
I'm not gonna give you my Wish or anything. But I too have an interest in meeting Peter Van Houten and it wouldn't make much sense to meet him without the girl who introduced me to his book, now would it?  
(Hazel's eyes widen)  
I talked to the Genies and they're in total agreement.  
(beat)  
We leave on May third.

Hazel is so excited that she grabs Gus and pulls him into a hug. Their faces close, lips inches apart, and just when it looks like something might happen --

HAZEL  
Wait a minute.  
(beat)  
Are you only doing this so I'll kiss you?

A beat. Gus blinks a few times.

HAZEL  
Cause I'd totally kiss you either way.

And kiss him she does. He's surprised. And when it's over, they sit back, look at one another. A magic moment.

HAZEL  
Seriously... why are you doing this?

GUS  
Because Hazel Grace... I found my  
Wish.

And Hazel is beyond touched. We hear:

FRANNIE (OVERLAP)  
Are you out of your mind?

INT HAZEL'S UTILITY ROOM - DAY

Frannie folds laundry while Hazel pleads her case.

FRANNIE  
It's too much, Haze. We can't  
accept something like that from a  
virtual stranger.

HAZEL  
He's not a stranger.

FRANNIE  
Really?

HAZEL  
Don't be gross.

FRANNIE  
It's still "no," I'm afraid.

HAZEL  
Can we at least ask Dr. Maria?

INT DOCTOR'S OFFICE - ANOTHER DAY

Where Hazel's oncologist DR. MARIA shakes her head.

DR. MARIA  
That's out of the question.

HAZEL  
You said the PET scan was  
encouraging!

DR. MARIA  
The PET scan is encouraging. We  
just don't know how long it'll stay  
that way. What if you get sick in a  
foreign country?

HAZEL  
They have doctors in Amsterdam. And  
cancer. Someone will know what to  
do.

DR. MARIA

Be that as it may, without someone familiar with your particular case, I can't --

HAZEL

(turns to her Mom)  
So you'll come too.

FRANNIE

What?

HAZEL

The Genies can hook it up. They're loaded.

FRANNIE

I --

HAZEL

You've never been to Amsterdam, have you Mom?

And judging from her face, seems she'd kinda like to. Dr. Maria looks at Frannie, shrugs - kid's got a point.

Hazel smiles. And on that smile, we SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK.

Over which, we HEAR:

HAZEL (V.O.)

And then this happened.

INT HAZEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

[Note: There's no sound in this sequence. Just images.]

Hazel wakes up screaming in the middle of the night, shaking and holding her head.

Frannie and Michael burst in. Mom grabs her crying daughter, frightened beyond belief, waves to Michael to call for help.

HAZEL (V.O.)

People talk about the courage of cancer patients. And I do not deny that courage...

He leaves the room to do so and Fran stays behind, rocking with her daughter, promising her it'll all be ok. Whatever nightmare this is, it's going to end. CUT TO:

INT FRANNIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Still silent. Michael drives, trying to keep it together. Frannie's in the back with Hazel's head in her lap.

Hazel continues to scream in silence, whether from pain or terror, we do not know.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
I'd been poked and stabbed and  
poisoned for years and still I trod  
on.

INT EMERGENCY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Michael carries Hazel into the chaotic emergency room. They're practically running. There's still no sound.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
But make no mistake...

The doctors rally to assist the screaming, crying child. She's wheeled away from her family who can only watch. We stay with her and WE HEAR:

HAZEL (V.O.)  
In that moment I would have been  
very, very happy to die.

END SEQUENCE.

INT HOSPITAL ROOM - ICU - MORNING

The sound returns. And it's the sound of a heart monitor. BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. It's also the sound of a working heart. Hazel has made it through. Her eyes open. A NURSE is there.

HAZEL'S NURSE  
Hello.

HAZEL  
Hi.

HAZEL'S NURSE  
You're ok, Hazel.

Even Hazel seems surprised by that.

HAZEL'S NURSE  
Would you like to see your parents?

Hazel nods. The Nurse goes to get them. Soon they come bounding in, crying and kissing her repeatedly. So much relief. CUT TO:

LATER. Hazel's bed has been raised up so she can talk to her parents "comfortably."

FRANNIE  
They thought it was a brain tumor.

MICHAEL  
It wasn't - thank god --

HAZEL  
So what happened?

FRANNIE  
The usual. Fluid in the lungs,  
preventing oxygenation. They put  
that in...

There's a TUBE in Hazel's side draining fluid into a plastic bladder that hangs off her bed.

FRANNIE  
Drained a liter and a half last  
night.

(That's a lot of fluid.)

MICHAEL  
The good news is... no tumor  
growth. No new tumors in your body.

Hazel nods. That is a relief.

MICHAEL  
We're all so relieved.

Frannie embraces her daughter.

FRANNIE  
This is just a thing Hazel. It's a  
thing we can live with.

Hazel nods again. Only in the universe of Hazel Grace Lancaster is something like this just a thing. Meanwhile:

INT HOSPITAL ICU - WAITING AREA - LATER

Here's Gus, his foot tapping nervously on the floor. It's unclear how long he's been waiting there. He sees Michael walk down the hall. Races after him.

GUS  
Mr. Lancaster! How's she doing?

MICHAEL  
Better, thank you. Much better.

Gus nods, as relieved as the rest of them.

GUS  
They won't let me in. Family only.

MICHAEL  
I'm sorry --

GUS  
No I get it. Will you just... will  
you tell her I was here?

MICHAEL  
Of course I will.

Gus smiles. And sits back down. Though he won't get to see her, he still wants to stay.

MICHAEL  
Gus.

Michael really likes this kid.

MICHAEL  
Why don't you go home, get some rest?

Gus looks up. That might be for the best. CUT TO:

INT HOSPITAL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAYS LATER

Hazel and her Parents sit at a very large conference table along with Dr. Maria and THREE OTHER ONCOLOGISTS - her whole "Cancer Team."

ONCOLOGIST #1  
The great news is... Phalanxifor continues to control your tumor growth.  
(beat)  
The not so great news is we're still seeing serious problems with fluid accumulation.  
(beat)  
So how should we proceed?

Silence. Hazel looks around the room, waits for someone to answer. No one does.

HAZEL  
Um, I feel like I'm not the most qualified person to answer that.

ONCOLOGIST #1  
I was talking to Dr. Simmons.

DR. SIMMONS (late 60s, white beard, old school) speaks next.

DR. SIMMONS  
It's a strange case. Normally the tumors start resisting the treatment. But that hasn't happened here - yet.

Hazel hears the "yet" the loudest.

DR. SIMMONS  
Unfortunately, the drug may be worsening the edema.

DR. MARIA

But if we stopped it entirely,  
we're likely to face even graver  
dangers.

MICHAEL

So we're gonna do nothing?

DR. MARIA

That's what we have to decide. The  
truth is... very few people have  
been on Phalanxifor as long as  
Hazel has. We don't really know the  
long term effects.

That comforts no one.

HAZEL

Can't I just get like a lung  
transplant or something?

The Doctors look at one another like "who wants to take that  
one?" Eventually:

DR. MARIA

You would not be considered a...  
strong candidate for a transplant.

Hazel takes that in, nods, tries to pretend it didn't bother  
her. Sensitive Michael on the other hand starts to cry a  
little bit. He grabs Frannie's hand.

DR. SIMMONS

We're trying to prevent endothelial  
growth while at the same time  
preventing immunosorbent...

As Dr. Simmons drones on with some cancer gobbledegook,  
Hazel's eyes remain firmly fixed on her parents. She hates  
what she's doing to them. And seeing them holding hands,  
crying but trying not to cry - it jogs a memory. CUT TO:

INT HOSPITAL ICU - FLASHBACK

We saw this once before. It looks like the end for 13-year  
old Hazel. Her father is weeping off to the side while her  
mom stands over her, holding her hand, and asking:

FRANNIE

(through the tears)  
Are you ready, sweetie?

13-year old Hazel nods. The doctors get to work. The  
anaesthetic takes hold and Hazel goes under. But not enough.  
Cause she totally hears her mother say:

FRANNIE

I won't be a mom anymore.

She falls into her husband's chest. And we're BACK TO:

INT HOSPITAL - CONFERENCE ROOM

Hazel comes out of the memory when her parents see her staring at them. She tries to shake it off. Dr. Simmons is still talking nonsense when:

HAZEL  
I have a question.

DR. MARIA  
Yes Hazel.

HAZEL  
Can I still go to Amsterdam?

Dr. Simmons can't help himself. He laughs. Everyone looks at him. He clears his throat.

DR. SIMMONS  
That would not be wise at this juncture.

HAZEL  
Why not?

DR. SIMMONS  
Excuse me?

HAZEL  
Why not, Dr. Simmons?

DR. SIMMONS  
I --

The doctors are trying to be delicate here.

DR. MARIA  
It would... increase some risks --

HAZEL  
So does going to the mall --

DR. MARIA  
Yes but an airplane?

HAZEL  
They have oxygen on airplanes.

FRANNIE  
Hazel --

HAZEL  
It's my life, right?

DR. SIMMONS  
You're Stage IV --

HAZEL

I have this opportunity I may never have again. If the medicine's working, I don't see why --

DR. SIMMONS

Because, Hazel.

(beat)

Look, I don't know any other way to say this... You're just too sick.

And this is like a punch in the gut.

DR. SIMMONS

I'm sorry.

Everyone feels horrible now. Dr. Maria, Frannie and Michael, and even Hazel. This meeting couldn't have gone worse. And we CUT TO:

EXT HAZEL'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY

Hazel parent's bring her home from the hospital. She looks miserable. It's clear the last few days have been a big emotional set back. CUT TO:

INT HAZEL'S BEDROOM - LATER

Her parents tuck her in.

FRANNIE

We'll be right outside.

Hazel nods. Her phone buzzes. She looks at it. A text from Gus that reads: "ok?" Hazel looks at it.

And she doesn't write back. CUT TO:

INT HAZEL'S KITCHEN - ANOTHER NIGHT

Hazel sits staring at nothing. The house phone rings. Michael comes in from another room with the phone in hand. Whispers:

MICHAEL

Gus again.

Hazel thinks about it - silently shakes her head, no. Michael says into the phone.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry Gus, she's asleep.

Hazel stands and goes into her bedroom, clearly depressed.

INT HAZEL'S BEDROOM - LATER

Hazel reads from "An Imperial Affliction." Her phone buzzes again. "Augustus." It just says "hello?" Again she ignores it.

And then a second text. She looks at it. "The silence is deafening." She puts the phone back down.

Hazel's heart breaks. She can't take it anymore. She picks the phone back up. She texts the following:

"I don't know if you'll understand this but I can't see you anymore. I mean I want to. I just..."

She thinks about the rest. She writes:

"I'm a grenade."

She sends the text. Waits.

And then there's more to say. She sends a second text.

"When I look at you, all I can see is what I'm going to put you through. I can't have that. I'm sorry."

She sends that text. Waits.

He writes back.

"Ok."

Hazel reads it. Writes back: "Ok."

A beat. Gus responds: "oh my god, stop flirting with me!"

Hazel smiles - she can't help herself! - but she must. She gets her emotions in check. Puts the phone away. CUT TO:

EXT HAZEL'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING

An ugly day in Indianapolis.

INT HAZEL'S HOUSE - SAME

Inside, Hazel is about as miserable as the weather. The sky - and the circumstances - have cast a grey pall over the day.

EXT HAZEL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

Hazel walks out back. Looks up at the clouds, threatening rain but not yet delivering it. She sits down in the grass, on the verge of tears. She looks at the old rusty SWING SET that's been in her backyard for years.

And starts to cry. Just for a few brief moments, she lets herself cry.

Then she wipes the tears. Becomes strong again. And makes a decision.

Hazel dials her phone. We hear:

GUS (O.S.)  
Hazel Grace!

HAZEL  
Hi Augustus.

GUS (O.S.)  
Are you crying, Hazel Grace?

HAZEL  
Kind of.

GUS (O.S.)  
What's the matter?

HAZEL  
I don't know. I want to go to Amsterdam. And I want him to tell us what happens after the book and I don't want my particular life and also the sky is making me sad and there's this old swing set that my Dad made for me when I was a kid. It's just... everything.

Hazel is on the verge of losing it again. A few beats of silence pass by.

GUS (O.S.)  
I demand to see this swing set of tears.

Hazel can't help but smile and we CUT TO:

LATER. Same backyard - only now Hazel is with Gus. Which makes everything better.

They both look at the swing set.

GUS  
I see your point.  
(beat)  
That is one sad swing set.

Hazel nudges her head onto his shoulder.

HAZEL  
Thanks for coming over.

GUS  
 You do realize... trying to keep  
 your distance from me will in no  
 way lessen my affection for you.

Hazel says nothing.

GUS  
 All efforts to save me from you  
 will fail.

Hazel looks at him. He's sure not making this easy.

GUS  
 Is this about Amsterdam? Cause we  
 don't --

HAZEL  
 It's not about Amsterdam. It's  
 about me. It's about...

GUS  
 Grenades.

Hazel nods.

GUS  
 I get it. One day you're going to  
 explode in a huge ball of fire and  
 everyone close to you will die in  
 your wake.

HAZEL  
 Exactly.

GUS  
 There's already two people in your  
 life you're going to destroy. Why  
 add a third to that list. Am I  
 right?

HAZEL  
 (nods)  
 That's why I don't have a hamster.

Gus is silent. He can't argue. They stand there quietly a few  
 more beats, looking out at the swing set. Until:

GUS  
 We have got to do something about  
 this frigging swing set.

INT HAZEL'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hazel sits at the computer screen writing a Craigslist post.  
 Gus stands next to her.

HAZEL  
(typing)  
"Swing Set Needs Home."

GUS  
"Desperately Lonely Swing Set Needs  
Loving Home."

HAZEL  
"Lonely, Vaguely Pedophilic Swing  
Set Seeks Butts of Children."

Gus laughs.

HAZEL  
No?

Gus laughs harder. Hazel laughs with him.

GUS  
That's why.

Hazel looks at him, not understanding.

GUS  
In case you were wondering...  
that's why I like you.  
(beat, off her look)  
You're so busy being you that you  
have no idea how utterly  
unprecedented you are.

Hazel absorbs that. Her feelings for this boy in a tangle.  
CUT TO:

EXT HAZEL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

Gus and Hazel watch as a TOWNIE finishes loading the swing set into the back of his PICK-UP. Gus salutes the swing set as the truck drives off.

Then he sneaks a quick kiss on Hazel's cheek. She shoots him a look. Gus throws up his hands.

GUS  
Friendly.

She playfully elbows him away.

EXT CHURCH - ANOTHER DAY

Hazel walks with Isaac out of Support Group.

ISAAC  
Do you like him?

HAZEL  
Of course I like him.

ISAAC

But you don't want to hook up with him?

Hazel doesn't know what she wants.

HAZEL

It's complicated.

INT HAZEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hazel is at her computer reading a new email from Lidewij Vliegenthart. Clearly Hazel was not expecting this.

HAZEL (V.O.)

"Dear Hazel, I have received word via the Genies that you will be visiting us with Augustus Waters and your mother beginning on the 4th. A week away! Peter and I are delighted and cannot wait to --

Hazel is confused. She stands and walks into the hallway.

HAZEL

Mom?

No response.

HAZEL

Mom!

(still nothing)

MOM!!!

Frannie races out of her room in a towel, dripping wet.

FRANNIE

What is it, what's wrong?!

HAZEL

Sorry, I... I didn't know you were in the shower.

FRANNIE

(exhausted)

Bath. I was just... just trying to take a bath for five seconds. What's the matter?

HAZEL

Did you ever call the Genies to tell them the trip is off? I just got an email from Peter Van Houton's assistant. She still thinks we're coming.

Frannie purses her lips and squints past Hazel. Clearly unsure what to say.

HAZEL

What?

Frannie can't keep a straight face.

FRANNIE

I'm not supposed to tell you until  
your father gets home.

(beat)

We're going to Amsterdam.

HAZEL

(still not believing)

Really...

FRANNIE

Dr. Maria called last night and  
made a convincing case that you  
need to live --

HAZEL

(yelling)

I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!!

Hazel can't move all that fast to hug her Mom so Frannie  
comes to her and they embrace. After:

FRANNIE

I'm getting back in the tub now.

When she leaves Hazel grabs her cell phone. ANGLE ON IT.

Hazel sends Gus the following text: "STILL FREE MAY 3? :-)"

A moment later Gus responds: "EVERYTHING'S COMING UP WATERS!"

Hazel is over the moon with excitement. She smiles, then  
tries to calm herself, knowing it's the best thing.

HAZEL

(whispering to her lungs)

One week, lungs. Keep your shit  
together one more week...

INT KITCHEN - ONE WEEK LATER

Luggage waits by the door, including oxygen tanks and medical  
equipment. Frannie makes breakfast as Hazel enters, now  
dressed and excited for the trip.

HAZEL

Amsterdam!

FRANNIE

Amsterdam!

And a moment later Michael joins them.

MICHAEL  
Amsterdam!

They're all going crazy with excitement! CUT TO:

EXT HOUSE - LATER

Michael finishes loading up the car. Kisses his wife goodbye. He embraces Hazel. She hugs him back and of course he starts to cry.

MICHAEL  
(whispering)  
I love you. I'm so proud of you.

HAZEL  
For what?

Michael lets go of her and wipes away his tears. They look at each other. Unable to help himself, he grabs her for another hug. Hazel lets him, laughing.

INT / EXT CAR - LATER

The car is packed with oxygen tanks, a suitcase for clothes, another for medicines and back-up medicines just in case etc.

Frannie pulls up to Gus's house. They get out of the car and head to the front door, buzzing with excitement.

As they get close, they can hear a commotion inside. A WOMAN'S VOICE yelling something unclear, followed by:

GUS (O.S.)  
BECAUSE IT'S MY LIFE, MOM. IT  
BELONGS TO ME!

Frannie immediately puts her arm around Hazel and quickly spins her back to the car.

HAZEL  
Mom?

FRANNIE  
We can't eavesdrop, Hazel.

Back at the car, far out of earshot, they wait. Hazel unsure what that was about. Frannie politely honks the horn.

A moment later Gus emerges from the house, smiling. A travel bag over his shoulder and a cigarette dangling from his lips.

GUS  
(to Frannie)  
Always a pleasure to see you ma'am.  
(beat)  
Hello, Hazel Grace.

HAZEL  
Ok...?

GUS  
Ok.

HAZEL  
Ok.

Frannie doesn't know what to make of any of that. She just says, when they stop and look at her:

FRANNIE  
Amsterdam!

EXT AIRPORT - ESTABLISHING

A SKYCAP helps Hazel, Gus and Frannie with all their bags and equipment.

INT AIRPORT - MOMENTS LATER

They wait in line for the security checkpoint. When it's Hazel's turn she unhooks the plastic nubbins from her nose. Gus places the oxygen tank on the conveyer belt.

Hazel takes slow, careful steps through the metal detector. She seems determined to get through this without any help. But upon reaching the other side it's clear that even these few steps without oxygen were a struggle.

Hazel holds on to the side of the conveyer belt to steady herself. As soon as her tank reappears she puts the cannula back in place. Still light-headed, Hazel closes her eyes and focuses on her breathing. She catches her mom looking at her, nervously.

HAZEL  
(with some difficulty)  
Amsterdam!

INT AIRPORT GATE - LATER

Arriving at the Gate area they draw curious looks from the OTHER PASSENGERS: Hazel with her oxygen tank, Gus with his noticeable limp and Frannie helping with the equipment.

A YOUNG COUPLE gets up so that Hazel and Gus can sit.

HAZEL  
Oh that's not necessary.

But they give up their seats anyway. Hazel and Gus take them. We see various Passengers watching. Hazel ignores the attention until a LITTLE GIRL (6, cute braids) appears.

LITTLE GIRL  
What's in your nose?

HAZEL  
It's called a Cannula. These tubes  
give me oxygen and help me breathe.

The GIRL'S MOTHER swoops in, a little frantic.

GIRL'S MOTHER  
Jackie... Oh, I'm sorry.

HAZEL  
(sincere)  
No, no. It's alright.

LITTLE GIRL  
Would they help me breathe too?

HAZEL  
I dunno. Wanna try?

Hazel removes her cannula and let's the Little Girl try it.

LITTLE GIRL  
Tickles.

HAZEL  
Right?

LITTLE GIRL  
I think I'm breathing better.

HAZEL  
Well... I'd love to give you my  
cannula but... I kinda really need  
the help.

The Little Girl nods, hands it back to Hazel, who quickly  
reattaches it.

LITTLE GIRL  
Thanks for letting me try it.

They smile at each other before the Little Girl walks back to  
her family. She waves. Hazel waves back.

AIRPORT ANNOUNCEMENT (O.S.)  
We will now begin pre-boarding  
Flight 144 to Amsterdam. For those  
passengers in need of extra  
assistance...

HAZEL  
I think that's us.

INT AIRPLANE - MOMENTS LATER

Hazel sits in the middle with Frannie on the aisle and Gus at the window. He looks around, antsy.

HAZEL

Have you never been on a plane before?

Gus shakes his head, he has not. And he's nervous. He pulls a cigarette out of his pocket and puts it in his mouth. Within seconds a FLIGHT ATTENDANT rushes over.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Sir, you can't smoke on this plane. Or... any plane.

GUS

(cigarette in his mouth)  
I don't smoke.

The Flight Attendant shoots him a look.

HAZEL

It's a metaphor. He puts the killing thing in his mouth but doesn't give it the power to kill him.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

(no nonsense)  
That metaphor is prohibited on today's flight.

Gus nods and puts the cigarette away.

PA SYSTEM

"Flight attendants, prepare for departure."

The engines roar to life and the plane accelerates towards take off. Gus is getting more worried by the second. He grabs the arm rest, his eyes wide.

HAZEL

Ok?

Gus doesn't say it back. Hazel laughs.

HAZEL

This is what it feels like to ride in a car with you.

Gus grabs Hazel's hand as the plane lifts off. He looks out the window - they're flying! - and then back to Hazel.

GUS

We're flying! Look!

Hazel smiles at his enthusiasm.

GUS  
 Holy -- look at that?! NOTHING HAS  
 EVER LOOKED LIKE THAT EVER IN ALL  
 OF HUMAN HISTORY!

He's adorable at this moment. Hazel can't resist leaning over to give him a kiss on the cheek.

FRANNIE  
 (not looking up from her  
 magazine)  
 Just so you know, I'm right here.  
 Sitting next to you. Your mother.

HAZEL  
 We're just friends, Mom.

GUS  
 She is. I'm not.

Hazel shoots him a look. Gus shrugs - "what, it's the truth."  
 Hazel just shakes her head. CUT TO:

LATER. Mid-flight, the plane is dark, Frannie's asleep. Hazel and Gus watch the same gory action movie. Actually, he watches the movie. She just watches him watch it. He watches it with gusto.

Hazel continues to watch him. Try as she might, she's falling in love. CUT TO:

SFX: the PLANE touching down. CUT TO:

EXT/ INT AMSTERDAM HIGHWAY - TAXI CAB - MORNING

Hazel, Gus, and Frannie ride in the back of a YELLOW CAB.

CAB DRIVER  
 Americans?

FRANNIE  
 We're from Indiana.

CAB DRIVER  
 Indiana. They steal from the  
 Indians but they keep the name, yes?

Hazel and Gus share a look.

HAZEL  
 Something like that.

Meanwhile, the landscape outside is flat and dusty, with dirt tracks and the occasional concrete building. In other words, it looks more like Indianapolis than Holland.

HAZEL  
 (to the Driver)  
 This is Amsterdam?

CAB DRIVER

Yes and no. Amsterdam is like the rings of a tree. It gets older as you get closer to the center.

Soon enough, the cab takes an off-ramp and turns a corner and suddenly, it's as if they're transported - not only to another universe but to another time as well.

We see MULTI-COLORED ROW HOUSES lined on both sides of a windy CANAL. HOUSEBOATS float against the edges and everyone rides BICYCLES down cobblestone streets. They're astounded.

INT HOTEL - LATER

Gus helps Hazel and Frannie bring their stuff into the room. We see a WICKER BASKET of gifts - presents from the Genies - welcoming their arrival. Hazel, exhausted, sits on the bed.

GUS

I'll be right down the hall.

Hazel nods, already drifting off to sleep. CUT TO:

INT HOTEL ROOM - HOURS LATER

Some time later. Hazel stirs. Her Mom is seated in a sagging, paisley CHAIR across from the bed reading a TRAVEL GUIDE.

HAZEL

Good morning.

FRANNIE

Actually, it's five o'clock.

HAZEL

How was the park?

FRANNIE

Never made it.

HAZEL

Mom!

FRANNIE

What? I like watching you sleep.

Hazel shoots Frannie a look. Even in an exotic city, her Mom still can't enjoy herself.

FRANNIE

I promise I'll do crazy Mom stuff tonight while you and Gus are at dinner.

HAZEL

What do you mean?

FRANNIE

You have reservations at a place called Oranje. Mr. Van Houten set it up. Very fancy according to the Book. And romantic.

HAZEL

Mom...

FRANNIE

I'm just saying...

HAZEL

A 16 year old girl running free with an older boy on the streets of a foreign city famous for its vice and debauchery... is totally cool with you. Is that what you're saying?

FRANNIE

(beat, excited)

Let's get you dressed!

Hazel just shakes her head. CUT TO:

INT HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Frannie opens the door to find Gus in a perfectly tailored BLACK SUIT, cigarette dangling from his mouth.

FRANNIE

(calling to the bathroom)

Hazel! Gus is here.

(to Gus)

Looking sharp.

GUS

Thank you ma'am.

A few beats later Hazel emerges from the bathroom. She wears a knee-length, pale blue SUNDRESS. And she looks...

GUS

Wow.

HAZEL

I...

(beat)

Am I under-dressed?

GUS

You look gorgeous.

Gus offers Hazel his arm. She takes it. They're ready to go.



GUS  
 The chef's choice sounds lovely.  
 (the Waiter nods)  
 And can we get more of this?

WAITER  
 We have bottled all the stars for  
 you this evening, my young friends.

The Waiter leaves. Hazel and Gus look at each other.

GUS  
 Thank you for coming to Amsterdam.

HAZEL  
 Thank you for letting me hijack  
 your wish.

GUS  
 Thank you for wearing that dress  
 which is like whoa.

Hazel shakes her head, trying not to smile but unable not to.

The Waiter brings two more glasses of champagne and a plate:

WAITER  
 Belgian white asparagus with a  
 lavender infusion.

Hazel takes a bite.

HAZEL  
 Oh my god.

GUS  
 Yeah?

Gus takes a bite.

HAZEL  
 I mean...

GUS  
 That is just...

HAZEL  
 There are no words.

Meanwhile, down on the water a BOAT passes, filled with  
 merry, drinking LOCALS. One of them raises a glass to them  
 and says something in Dutch.

GUS  
 (shouting back)  
 We don't speak Dutch!

ANOTHER LOCAL  
 She says, "the beautiful couple is  
 beautiful!"

Hazel and Gus smile. This night could not be going any better so far. CUT TO:

LATER. Hazel and Gus enjoying their second courses.

GUS

I want this dragon carrot risotto to become a person so I can take it to Vegas and marry it.

Hazel leans back in her chair, in need of a breather.

HAZEL

I like your suit.

GUS

Thanks. First time wearing it.

HAZEL

That isn't the suit you wear to funerals?

GUS

Oh no. That one's not nearly this nice.

(off her look)

When I first found out I was sick - I mean, they told me I had like an 85% chance to be cancer-free. Great odds, sure. But that meant a year of torture, the loss of my leg, and still a 15% chance it might fail.

(beat)

So right before the surgery I asked my parents if I could buy a suit, like a really nice suit, just in case I didn't make it.

HAZEL

It's your death suit.

GUS

That's what it is.

HAZEL

I have one of those. Bought it for my 15th birthday. Don't think I'd wear it on a date, though.

GUS

Are we on a date?

HAZEL

(cocks her head)

Watch it.

Gus winks. CUT TO:

LATER. Dessert on the table. As they euphorically eat:

GUS  
God?

HAZEL  
Maybe.

GUS  
Angels?

HAZEL  
Undecided.

GUS  
Afterlife?

HAZEL  
No. Well...  
(beat)  
Maybe I wouldn't go so far as to  
say no. I just... I'd like some  
evidence.  
(Gus nods)  
What do you think?

GUS  
Absolutely.

HAZEL  
Really?

GUS  
Oh for sure. I mean, not like a  
heaven where you ride unicorns,  
play harps, and live in a mansion  
made of clouds but, yeah, I believe  
in something.

Hazel is surprised.

GUS  
Something becomes of us. It has to.  
Otherwise what's the point?

HAZEL  
Maybe there is no point.

GUS  
I refuse to accept that.  
(beat)  
I won't accept it.

Hazel thinks about it. She appreciates his conviction but is still not sure she agrees. The hand they've been dealt too unfair. Hazel looks out at the water as she says:

HAZEL  
I hope you're right.

GUS  
I'm in love with you.

That gets her attention.

GUS  
You heard me.

HAZEL  
Augustus --

GUS  
I'm in love with you. And I know that love is just a shout into the void, and that oblivion is inevitable, and that we're all doomed and that there will come a day when all our labor has been returned to dust, and I know the sun will swallow the only earth we'll ever have, and I am in love with you.  
(shrugs, matter-of-fact)  
Sorry.

At which point, the Waiter reappears.

WAITER  
More stars?

Hazel is still too speechless to respond, her eyes fixed on Gus. Eventually Gus answers for them.

GUS  
Just the check, please.

WAITER  
No, sir.  
(beat)  
Your meal has been paid for by Mr. Van Houten.

Gus raises his eyebrows at Hazel. This Van Houten guy is something else.

EXT AMSTERDAM CANALS - LATER

Hazel and Gus on a park bench, his arm around her, looking out over the water. Seeds blow from the elm trees and the reflections of the city ripple in the water below them.

Hazel leans into his body, just a little. They stay like that, savoring the best night of both of their lives. CUT TO:

EXT AMSTERDAM - HOTEL - ESTABLISHING

A crisp Spring morning in Amsterdam. The buzz in the air outside is equalled by the buzz in:

INT HOTEL ROOM - SAME

Where Hazel excitedly paces through the room.

FRANNIE

I really don't get that shirt.

Hazel wears a screen print t-shirt of Magritte's "Ceci N'est Pas Une Pipe." (A painting of a pipe with words below that mean "This is not a pipe.")

HAZEL

Van Houten will get it. Trust me. There are like fifty Magritte references in "Imperial Affliction."

FRANNIE

(reading)

"This is not a pipe."

HAZEL

Exactly.

FRANNIE

But it is a pipe.

HAZEL

No it's not. It's a drawing of a pipe. See?

(she doesn't)

All representations of a thing are inherently abstract. A drawing of a thing is not the thing itself. Nor is a t-shirt of a drawing of a thing the thing itself.

Frannie is still at a loss but she's impressed.

FRANNIE

When did you get so grown up? I feel like it was yesterday I was telling 8-year old Hazel why the sky was blue. You thought I was a genius back then.

HAZEL

Why is the sky blue?

FRANNIE

(beat)

Because I say so.

A knock on the door. Gus pokes his head in.

GUS

Who's ready for some answers!

EXT. VONDELSTRAAT ROW HOUSES - LATER

Gus and Hazel stand outside Van Houten's white house.

HAZEL

I'm so excited I can barely breathe.

GUS

As opposed to other days...?

She playfully hits him. He takes her arm, picks up the oxygen tank, and up they go towards his front door.

As they approach, there's a noticeable NOISE coming from inside the house. It's the deep thump of a BASS BEAT. Loud. Like, obnoxiously loud.

Hazel grabs the brass ornament and knocks. They wait. There's no response.

GUS

Maybe he can't hear over the music?

Gus tries again, this time with more force. Still nothing. He tries a third time. Finally, the music stops. They wait. Still excited.

A moment later the door swings open.

It's a MAN IN PAJAMAS (60s), with a huge potbelly, thinning hair, and a week-old beard. All he says is:

MAN IN PAJAMAS

What?!

Gus and Hazel look to one another. Could it be?

GUS

Mr. Van Houten?

At which point, the Pajama Man slams the door in their faces. Hazel and Gus are too stunned to react. Through the closed door, they hear this:

MAN IN PAJAMAS (O.S.)

(shouting)

LEEE-DUH-VIGH!

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Are they here, Peter?

So it is PETER VAN HOUTEN. Gus and Hazel can't believe it.

MAN IN PAJAMAS (O.S.)

There are two --

(beat)

Who the hell's "they?"

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
They are Augustus and Hazel, the  
young fans with whom you've been  
corresponding.

Gus and Hazel smile at hearing their names. Perhaps this will  
help things take a turn for the better.

MAN IN PAJAMAS (O.S.)  
The Americans?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
You invited them, remember?

MAN IN PAJAMAS (O.S.)  
You know why I left America,  
Lidewij? To never have to encounter  
Americans. Get rid of them.

Hazel and Gus can't believe it. This is terrible!

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
I will not do this Peter. Be nice.

At which point, the door opens - opened by the Woman whose  
voice they'd been hearing - Van Houten's assistant LIDEWIJ  
(30s, Dutch, pretty in a bookish way). She virtually shoves  
Van Houten towards a stunned Gus and Hazel.

And they are again face-to-face with Van Houten. One beat,  
two beats. No one knows what to say. Finally:

VAN HOUTEN  
Which of you is Augustus Waters?

Gus raises his hand tentatively.

Van Houten sizes them up. Without another word, he turns and  
walks inside - at least this time, leaving the door ajar.

LIDEWIJ  
Please. I am sorry. Come in.

Hazel and Gus share one more awkward glance before Gus takes  
a step. Hazel follows. They walk:

INT VAN HOUTEN'S HOME - SAME

Lidewij leads Gus and Hazel into a living room so sterile  
it's creepy. The walls are empty and white, there's a single  
couch, a small ottoman, and a single lounge chair. That's it.  
Van Houten sits in the chair.

Off to the side are two large black garbage bags, full and  
twist-tied.

HAZEL  
Trash?

LIDEWIJ

Fan mail. 18 years worth. He never opens it.

Van Houten kicks his feet up on the ottoman and crosses his slippers. He motions for them to sit on the couch.

VAN HOUTEN

Yours are the first missives to which I've replied and look where that got me.

Hazel and Gus take their seats.

VAN HOUTEN

Scotch?

HAZEL

Um, no thanks.

VAN HOUTEN

Augustus Waters?

GUS

It's 11am.

VAN HOUTEN

Just me then, Lidewij. Scotch and soda.

LIDEWIJ

Perhaps some breakfast first Peter?

VAN HOUTEN

She thinks I have a drinking problem.

LIDEWIJ

I also think the Earth is round.

Nevertheless, Lidewij pours Peter half a glass and hands it to him. He takes a sip, then sits up straight.

VAN HOUTEN

So you like my book.

HAZEL

Yes. We - well, Augustus, he made meeting you his Wish so that we could come here and talk to you.

Van Houten says nothing. Takes a long pull on his drink.

VAN HOUTEN

Did you dress like her on purpose?

HAZEL

(looks at her shirt)  
Kinda.

Van Houten says nothing to that.

VAN HOUTEN  
I do not have a drinking problem. I have a Churchillian relationship with alcohol: I can crack jokes and govern England and do anything I want to do. Except not drink.

He glances over at Lidewij, who dutifully refills his glass.

GUS  
Incidentally, thank you for dinner last night.

VAN HOUTEN  
(to Lidewij)  
We bought them dinner last night?

LIDEWIJ  
It was our pleasure.

VAN HOUTEN  
(sighs)  
You've come a long way so... what is it I can do for you?

HAZEL  
We have some questions --

VAN HOUTEN  
Uh-huh...

HAZEL  
About what happens, you know... after... the end of your book. Specifically to those who Anna leaves behind. Like her Mom, the Dutch Tulip Man, Sisy --

VAN HOUTEN  
(interrupting)  
How familiar are you with Swedish hip-hop?

Hazel looks at Gus. Is he kidding?

HAZEL  
I would say... limited?

VAN HOUTEN  
But presumably you know Afasi Och Filthy's seminal album "Flacken."

GUS  
Um...

VAN HOUTEN  
Lidewij! Play 'Bomfalleralla' immediately.

Lidewij sighs but she does as she's told. A few seconds later, some loud Swedish rap song blasts from the speakers. Hazel and Gus sit through this, totally baffled.

HAZEL  
 (yelling over the music)  
 I'm sorry, sir. We don't speak Swedish.

VAN HOUTEN  
 (yelling)  
 Who the hell speaks Swedish? The important thing is not what nonsense the voices are saying, but what the voices are feeling.

The song continues another awkward ten seconds or so before Gus has enough. He gets up and turns off the music.

GUS  
 Are you messing with us?

VAN HOUTEN  
 Pardon?

GUS  
 Is this some kind of performance?

VAN HOUTEN  
 Rudolf Otto said that if you had not encountered the *numinous* then his work was not for you. And I say to you, my friends, if you cannot hear Afasi Och Filthy's bravadic response to fearfulness, then my work is not for you.

Hazel is really getting worried at this point. They came all this way for this?

HAZEL  
 So anyway... when the book ends, Anna's mom --

VAN HOUTEN  
 (raising a hand to silence her)  
 Let us imagine that you are racing a tortoise.

Hazel and Gus fidget in their seats. Lidewij frowns, clearly feeling bad for them. Van Houten continues.

VAN HOUTEN  
 The tortoise has a ten yard head start. In the time it takes you to run ten yards, the tortoise has moved maybe one yard. And so on, forever.

(MORE)

VAN HOUTEN (CONT'D)

You are faster than the tortoise but you can never catch him, you see, you can only decrease his lead. Now certainly you can run past the tortoise as long as you don't contemplate the mechanics involved but the question of how turns out to be so complicated that no one really solved it until Cantor's proof that some infinities are bigger than other infinities.

Hazel and Gus have no idea how to respond.

VAN HOUTEN

I assume that answers your questions.

GUS

(to Hazel)

I don't know what's going on.

VAN HOUTEN

And yet you seemed so intelligent in print, Mr. Waters.

(under his breath)

Must be all that cancer in your brain.

LIDEWIJ

Peter!

Gus could throw a punch right now. Hazel tries to calm the situation.

HAZEL

Can we please, maybe, talk about Anna for a sec? I mean, I understand that the story ends mid-sentence because she dies or she becomes too sick to continue --

VAN HOUTEN

I'm not interested in talking about that book.

HAZEL

- but that doesn't mean her family and everyone she loves doesn't have a future, right?

VAN HOUTEN

I said I'm not interested --

HAZEL

(getting upset)

But you promised!

(calms herself)

(MORE)

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Mr. Van Houten, you said you would tell us what happens and that's why we're here. We... I need you tell me. Surely you've thought about it. I mean, as characters --

VAN HOUTEN

Nothing happens to them! They're fictions. They cease to exist the moment the novel is over.

This is not what Hazel came all this way to hear. She won't accept it.

HAZEL

They can't!  
(again, has to calm herself)  
I mean, I understand. In a literary sense. But it's impossible NOT to imagine some future --

VAN HOUTEN

I can't do this. Lidewij, get rid of them, please.  
(Lidewij doesn't move, he turns back to Hazel)  
I won't indulge your childish whims. I refuse to pity you in the manner in which you're accustomed.

HAZEL

I don't want your pity --

VAN HOUTEN

Of course you do. Like all sick kids, your existence depends on it.

LIDEWIJ

Peter!

VAN HOUTEN

(on a roll)  
You are fated to live out your days as the child you were when diagnosed, the child who believes there is life after a novel ends. And we, as adults, we pity this, so we pay for your treatments, for your oxygen machines. We give you food and water though you are unlikely to live long enough --

LIDEWIJ

PETER!

VAN HOUTEN

You are a side effect of an evolutionary process that cares little for individual lives.

(MORE)

VAN HOUTEN (CONT'D)  
 You are a failed experiment in  
 mutation.

LIDEWIJ  
 I RESIGN!

Lidewij has tears in her eyes. Gus has balled his fists. But not Hazel. Van Houten's words have not phased her one bit. She rises from the couch.

HAZEL  
 Hey listen douchepants. You're not gonna tell me anything I don't already know about illness. I need one thing and one thing only from you before I walk out of your life and that's for you to tell me what happens to your goddman characters!

VAN HOUTEN  
 (beat)  
 I cannot tell you.

HAZEL  
 Bullshit!

VAN HOUTEN  
 I cannot --

Van Houten goes to take a drink but...

HAZEL  
 Make something up.

... Hazel smacks it right the fuck out of his hands, surprising everyone.

After a beat:

VAN HOUTEN  
 Lidewij. I'll have a martini please.

LIDEWIJ  
 I have resigned.

VAN HOUTEN  
 Oh don't be ridiculous.

No one moves. Van Houten realizes he's alone in this.

VAN HOUTEN  
 I'd like you to leave now.

HAZEL  
 You're really not gonna tell us?

VAN HOUTEN  
 I would like you... to leave.

Hazel is furious. Gus stands next to her, touches her arm as if to say "come on, enough of this guy." CUT TO:

EXT VAN HOUTEN'S HOUSE - SAME

Gus and Hazel come out of the house, practically shaking. As they get to the street, Van Houten has one more thing to say.

VAN HOUTEN  
Have you ever stopped to ask why you care so much about your silly questions?

A beat.

HAZEL  
Go fuck yourself.

Van Houten doesn't have a response to that. He just shuts the door. And when he does, that's when Hazel gets emotional.

GUS  
Hey. It's ok. It's ok...  
(beat, an idea)  
I'll write you a sequel.  
(she cries harder)  
I will. Better than any shit that drunk could write. With blood and guts and sacrifice. You'll love it.

Hazel nods, then wipes away tears. She fakes a smile and Gus gives her a hug. Afterwards:

HAZEL  
I spent your Wish on that asshole.

GUS  
You did not spend it on him. You spent it on us.

They embrace once more.

HAZEL  
I wanted...

GUS  
I know... I know. Apparently the world is not a wish-granting factory.

This gets a real smile from Hazel. That's when Lidewij comes outside. Clearly she's been crying too.

LIDEWIJ  
I'm so sorry. Circumstance has made him cruel. I thought meeting you would help him, if he would see that his work has shaped real lives, but... I'm very sorry.

Hazel says nothing. Gus holds her in a very protective way.

LIDEWIJ  
Perhaps we can do some sightseeing.  
Have you seen the Anne Frank House?

GUS  
I'm not going anywhere with that  
monster.

LIDEWIJ  
He is not invited.

EXT ANNE FRANK HOUSE - LATER

Lidewij walks back from the ticket kiosk with more bad news.

LIDEWIJ  
I'm afraid there's no elevator.

HAZEL  
Oh, um, that's alright.

LIDEWIJ  
No, there are many stairs. Steep  
stairs.

HAZEL  
I can do it.

GUS  
Hazel --

HAZEL  
I can do it!

Hazel is not going to stand for any more disappointments today. They are going inside. CUT TO:

INT ANNE FRANK HOUSE - GROUND FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

A VIDEO plays on a MONITOR showing the Nazi invasion of Holland. Hazel and Gus stand with Lidewij in a pack of BACKPACKERS and TRAVELERS about to take the tour. Many of them begin to walk up the first flight of stairs.

LIDEWIJ  
Shall we?

Hazel nods. Both Hazel and Gus walk slowly up the stairs. So far so good. They find themselves in an office space.

LIDEWIJ  
This is the bookcase that hid the  
Frank family and four others.

The BOOKCASE is half open. Behind it is an even steeper set of stairs, only wide enough for one person at a time.

Some of the Travelers begin to walk up the stairs. Gus looks at Hazel - are you sure we should continue? She begins the climb, determined. Lidewij trails behind, carrying her oxygen tank.

Hazel moves very slowly. We are aware of her labored breathing the entire time.

ANGLE ON OTHER TOURISTS, watching and quietly commenting. Just like at the airport, except now in foreign languages.

Hazel arrives on the NEXT FLOOR - an empty room. She's definitely starting to struggle. She leans against the wall to catch her breath. Gus comes to her side, wipes her brow.

GUS  
You're a champion.

Hazel smiles. When she's feeling up to it they walk into the next room, also empty. And another staircase, even more narrow and steep - practically a ladder. When Gus sees this he looks at Hazel:

GUS  
That's enough --

HAZEL  
(resolute)  
I'm ok.

Hazel very slowly begins the climb. Again we're aware of her every breath. It's dark. And it's becoming very difficult. Near the top Hazel stumbles but is finally able to pull herself through.

Once there, she falls to the floor, slumping against the wall, trying to catch her breath. Gus crouches next to her.

GUS  
We're at the top. That's it.

Hazel becomes aware that TOURISTS look at her with concern. She smiles, stands up, nothing to see here.

And now they're in the final room - a long, narrow hallway. This is where Anne Frank and 7 other people lived in hiding for as long as they could. There's a TIME LINE detailing their story.

LIDEWIJ  
The only member of the whole family  
to survive was Otto, Anne's father.

Gus takes Hazel's hand.

LIDEWIJ  
I don't know how you go on, without  
your family.

Lidewij stays behind to study part of the exhibit. Gus leads Hazel into the room at the end of the hallway where a VIDEO details the last days of Anne Frank's life. Over it, we hear a YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE reading from the diary.

The Travelers stand to watch and listen. Gus and Hazel do the same. The room is dark.

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)  
 "At such moment's, I don't think  
 about the misery..."

Gus and Hazel stand very closely together. The video is the cherry on top of a very emotional day. Hazel watches it.

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)  
 "...but about the beauty that still  
 remains."

Gus, meanwhile, is just watching Hazel, the same way she watched him on the airplane. After a beat, she catches him. Their eyes meet. The emotions build...

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)  
 "Try to recapture the happiness  
 within yourself. Think of all the  
 beauty in everything around you...  
 and be happy."

And Hazel KISSES Gus. A most passionate, intense, you-and-me-against-the-world kind of kiss, better than any they've experienced or could even imagine. It seems to last for a small eternity.

Eventually, they break away and open their eyes. They quickly notice all the Travelers staring at them. For a brief second, they wonder if that was a very inappropriate thing to do...

When suddenly everyone starts clapping for them, moved by the whole thing. One EUROPEAN even shouts "bravo!" Hazel blushes, Gus smiles, bows, he grabs her hand. CUT TO:

INT GUS'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

They fall onto Gus's bed, kissing. Hazel is very in the moment and now it's Gus who seems nervous. As they kiss:

GUS  
 It's above my knee.

She ignores him, more kissing. She takes off his shirt.

GUS  
 It tapers a little and then it's  
 just skin --

HAZEL  
 What?

Hazel pulls away from him.

GUS  
 My leg.  
 (beat)  
 Just so you're prepared --

HAZEL  
 Oh get over yourself.

Hazel kisses him again. Now he tries to pull her shirt off but it gets tangled in with her oxygen tube. He can't figure it out. Eventually the whole thing is hilarious to them. They shake their heads - laughing - certainly not your typical Hollywood movie moment. And yet, for them:

HAZEL  
 I love you, Augustus Waters.

GUS  
 I love you too, Hazel Grace.

They resume kissing. And we CUT TO:

INT HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Gus wakes up in the bed. He looks around for Hazel but she isn't there. On the bed is a piece of paper. A note.

It reads: "Dearest Augustus..."

Beneath that is a BIG CIRCLE, labeled "Virgins." And in that circle is a SMALLER SECOND CIRCLE labeled "17 year old dudes with one leg." We'll notice part of that circle is now outside the bigger circle. Gus flashes that signature smile.

EXT CAFE - DAY

Hazel and Gus sit with Frannie drinking coffee in the sun at an outdoor cafe. They're re-enacting yesterday's events.

HAZEL  
 "Get up you fat bastard."

GUS  
 "I can't stand up, I'm too drunk."

HAZEL  
 I said "get up."

GUS  
 "Standing is for fools!"

HAZEL  
 God, what an asshole.

They both giggle at the whole thing.

HAZEL

It was awful, Mom. You can't imagine.

FRANNIE

And then what happened?

HAZEL

Then we went to the Anne Frank museum.

FRANNIE

And after that?

A quick glance between Hazel and Gus.

HAZEL

We just... walked around.

Hazel and Gus smile, thoroughly in love but trying to keep it in check in front of her Mother.

FRANNIE

Sounds lovely.

A few beats later.

FRANNIE

Listen... I'm gonna stretch my legs a little. Give the two of you some time to talk.

HAZEL

(that's weird)

Um... ok...

As she stands up to leave, Hazel thinks she catches Gus and Frannie making eye contact for a brief second. Once Frannie has left them:

HAZEL

That was weird.

Gus doesn't respond except to say:

GUS

Shall we?

EXT AMSTERDAM STREET - LATER

They start to walk. Gus takes a cigarette out of his pack, sticks it between his lips. Hazel notices he's struggling with something.

HAZEL

Augustus?

GUS  
 There's something I have to tell  
 you...

They walk in silence a few beats.

GUS  
 Just before you went into the  
 hospital... There was this... I  
 felt this... ache in my hip.

Hazel grabs onto his arm, a lump already forming.

HAZEL  
 Oh no...

Gus takes the cigarette out of his mouth, clenches his teeth  
 tightly, trying not to cry.

GUS  
 I had a PET scan.

Gus sits down on a BENCH. Looks up at her. Tries to smile.  
 Before he even says it, she knows.

GUS  
 It lit up like a Christmas tree,  
 Hazel...

HAZEL  
 Oh god.

GUS  
 The lining of my chest, my liver...  
everywhere.

HAZEL  
 Oh my god no!

Hazel loses it in that moment, falling on top of him, hugging  
 him for dear life, her head in his lap.

HAZEL  
 I'm so sorry, Augustus. I'm so so  
 sorry --

GUS  
 I'm sorry too --

HAZEL  
 It's so unfair --

GUS  
 I should have told you --

HAZEL  
 It's so fucking unfair!

A beat. Gus still trying not to cry.

GUS  
Apparently the world is... not a  
wish-granting factory.

And at that point, Gus lets it go, lets himself cry and be sad and feel awful.

But just for a second. Then he shakes it off, pulls Hazel's face up to his, tries again to smile through the tears.

GUS  
Don't you worry about me, Hazel  
Grace. I'll find a way to hang  
around and annoy you for a long  
time.

She hugs him, perhaps a little too tightly. He winces.

HAZEL  
Does it hurt?

GUS  
It's ok.  
(beat)  
I'm ok.

HAZEL  
Ok.

GUS  
Ok.

But of course it's not ok. Not by a mile.

Hazel takes a moment to look at him, touches his cheek.

GUS  
What?

HAZEL  
I'm just... I'm very fond of you.

He grabs her hand and holds it.

GUS  
I don't suppose you can forget  
about it, treat me like I'm not  
dying.

HAZEL  
I don't think you're dying,  
Augustus. You've just got a touch  
of cancer.

Gus nods. Squeezes her hand.

GUS  
Would it be absolutely ludicrous to  
make out right now?

Hazel doesn't answer. She just kisses him, hard. And on the two of them, so in love, we CUT TO:

INT AIRPLANE - LATER

Hazel lays on Gus's shoulder as he stares out the window, leaving Amsterdam behind.

INT INDIANAPOLIS AIRPORT - BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

As they ride down the escalator, Hazel sees Michael standing amongst the livery drivers. He holds a sign that says - instead of someone's last name - "My Beautiful Family (and Gus)."

Upon seeing them, he immediately starts to cry of course. He kisses his wife, gives Hazel a big hug. Gus goes to shake his hand but Michael hugs him as well. CUT TO:

INT HAZEL'S LIVING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Hazel sits with her father on the couch.

HAZEL  
Gus had a recurrence.

MICHAEL  
(nods)  
Mrs. Waters told us the night  
before you left.  
(beat)  
I'm sorry Hazel.

They sit for a beat. Tears form in Michael's eyes.

HAZEL  
You're not gonna say it?

MICHAEL  
What's that?

HAZEL  
The usual. "Everything happens for  
a reason..."

Michael shakes his head.

MICHAEL  
I don't know, Haze.  
(beat)  
I always thought being an adult  
meant knowing what you believe...  
(beat)  
... that has not been my  
experience.

Hazel understands exactly. CUT TO:

INT GUS'S BASEMENT BEDROOM - DAY

Gus lays in bed, eyes open, a PICC line now being fed through a port in his chest. Chemotherapy at work.

Hazel and Isaac are keeping him company.

HAZEL  
How are your eyes?

ISAAC  
Great. Wonderful. I mean, they're not in my head is the only problem.

GUS  
I hate to one-up you but... seems my entire body is made out of cancer now, so...

Isaac nods. Tries not to get emotional but it's happening. He goes to touch Gus's arm and accidentally touches his thigh.

GUS  
Whoa, I'm taken.

Isaac laughs.

ISAAC  
(to Hazel, re: Gus)  
Did you write his eulogy yet?

Hazel is confused.

GUS  
Dude.

ISAAC  
What?

GUS  
I haven't asked her.

ISAAC  
Oh.  
(beat)  
Oops.

HAZEL  
What are you talking about?

ISAAC  
My bad.

HAZEL  
(still confused)  
Augustus?

Gus looks at her, grows a little serious.

GUS  
I need speakers at my funeral. I thought maybe you and Isaac... but especially you --

ISAAC  
Hey!

GUS  
Would you be kind enough to whip something up?

HAZEL  
(touches his hand)  
It would be an honor.

They hold hands.

ISAAC  
You guys are adorable.

Hazel playfully slaps Isaac on the arm.

HAZEL  
How's your love life? Anything from Monica?

ISAAC  
Not a word.

HAZEL  
She hasn't even like, texted to ask how you're doing?

He shakes his head. Gus gets an angry look on his face.

HAZEL  
That is so messed up!

ISAAC  
I've stopped thinking about it. Moving on. There's a new girl in Support Group with these humongous -

Isaac gestures to his chest. Hazel is confused.

HAZEL  
How do you even know that?

ISAAC  
I'm blind but I'm not that blind.

GUS  
Hazel Grace!

They turn to him.

GUS  
Do you happen to have four dollars?

No one knows what that means. CUT TO:

INT HAZEL'S CAR - LATER

Gus is in the passenger's seat. Isaac sits in the back. Hazel returns to the car. With a CARTON OF EGGS.

HAZEL  
Ok now what?

Gus smiles. CUT TO:

EXT SUBURBAN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Hazel, Gus, and Isaac lean against Hazel's car staring something down.

ISAAC  
Is it there?

GUS  
Oh it's there.

REVEAL they're looking at Monica's green Firebird.

ISAAC  
She's in the house?

GUS  
Who cares where she is? This is not about her. This is about you.  
(sticks out his hand)  
Hazel...

Hazel nods, opens the egg carton, hands Gus an egg. Gus puts it in Isaac's hands. Positions Isaac - who, of course, can't see a thing - towards the Firebird.

Isaac winds up and tosses the EGG.

It misses the car by a mile. After a beat:

ISAAC  
I didn't hear anything.

GUS  
A little to the left.

ISAAC  
My throw was to the left or I should aim to the left?

GUS  
Aim left.

Isaac turns his shoulders.

GUS  
Lefter.

Isaac turns some more.

GUS  
Yes! Excellent! And throw hard.

Gus hands him a SECOND EGG. Isaac winds up and hurls it - missing the car again but hitting the HOUSE.

GUS  
Bullseye!

ISAAC  
Really?

GUS  
No you missed it by like 20 feet.  
(hands him a THIRD)  
Try one more time.

Isaac hurls it, this time smashing the car's taillight. Isaac's face lights up.

HAZEL  
Woo hoo!

Isaac grabs for ANOTHER EGG. Throws it. Then ANOTHER. He's a throwing machine. Most of them miss but at least he's enjoying himself. Finally there's a DIRECT HIT on the car door, triggering the alarm. Isaac pauses.

GUS  
Keep throwing, keep throwing!

Isaac does. Gus smiles, putting an unlit cigarette in his mouth. Hazel watches him, enjoying this moment.

Eventually, MONICA'S MOM opens the front door and comes out.

MONICA'S MOM  
What in God's name --

Seeing Hazel, Gus, and Isaac, she stops in her tracks.

GUS  
Are you Monica's mom?

MONICA'S MOM  
(confused)  
I am.

GUS  
Hello ma'am. Your daughter has done an injustice and we've come here seeking revenge. We may not look like much. Between the three of us, we have five legs, four eyes, and two and a half working lungs.  
(MORE)

GUS (CONT'D)  
 But we also have two dozen eggs. So  
 If I was you, I would go back  
 inside.

Monica's Mom is very confused. A beat. Without another word, she turns and goes back inside. The three of them celebrate. As Isaac picks up where he left off, Hazel gently kisses Gus on the cheek. And over we hear:

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 A few days later, Gus landed in the  
 hospital with chest pains.

INT HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Hazel bounds in to find Mrs. Waters in the waiting room. She stands to hug Hazel. They both sit down.

HAZEL  
 How's he doing?

MRS. WATERS  
 He's had a tough night, Hazel. His  
 blood pressure's low. His heart --

Mrs. Waters starts to cry.

HAZEL  
 What about the chemo?

MRS. WATERS  
 (shakes her head)  
 They're gonna stop the chemo.

They both know what that means. Mrs. Waters gathers herself.

HAZEL  
 Can I see him?

MRS. WATERS  
 (beat)  
 We have to be a family now.

Hazel nods. She understands.

MRS. WATERS  
 We'll tell him you were here.

HAZEL  
 If you don't mind, I'll just hang  
 for a while.

Mrs. Waters nods, hugs her again, walks out through the heavy doors towards Gus's room. Hazel sits in the chair. Same chair Gus sat in while waiting for her. They've switched places.

## EXT INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART - DAY

Hazel pushes Gus, now confined to a WHEELCHAIR, to their spot on the hill overlooking "Funky Bones." A second picnic, this time with champagne. Hazel pours some for them both into little Winnie the Pooh cups. She's trying to be upbeat - but it's difficult. Gus watches the kids play on the bones.

HAZEL

What are you thinking about?

GUS

Oblivion.

HAZEL

Augustus...

GUS

I know it's kid's stuff but... I always thought I'd have a grand story to tell, you know? Something that would run in all the papers. I always thought I was special.

HAZEL

You are.

GUS

Yeah but... you know what I mean.

Hazel, annoyed finishes her cup, tosses it to the side. Gus can tell he's said something wrong.

GUS

What?

HAZEL

I do know what you mean, I just...  
I don't agree.

Hazel stands up, anger building.

HAZEL

This obsession with being  
remembered --

GUS

Don't get mad --

HAZEL

But I am mad!

(beat)

I think you're special, is that not  
enough?

GUS

Hazel --

HAZEL

You think the only way to live a meaningful life is for everyone to love you, for everyone to remember you. Well guess what, Gus, this is your life. This is all you get. You get me, and your family, and this world. And if that's not enough, well I'm sorry, but it's not nothing. Cause I'll remember you, I'll love you --

GUS

You're right --

HAZEL

And I just wish... I just wish you'd be happy with that.

GUS

You're right. I'm sorry.  
(pulling her back down)  
I'm sorry.

Gus hands Hazel another Winnie the Pooh cup. Raises his to hers in a toast.

GUS

It's a good life, Hazel Grace.

She softens. They toast.

HAZEL

It's not over yet, you know.

Gus nods. Of course it isn't. And yet they both know there isn't much time. CUT TO:

INT HAZEL'S BEDROOM - ANOTHER NIGHT

Hazel is asleep. Suddenly, her phone buzzes. She looks at it - "Gus" - then she looks at the clock - 2:35am. A pit grows in her stomach. A quick panicked beat before she answers:

HAZEL

Hello?

GUS (O.S.)

(weakly)  
Hazel Grace.

HAZEL

(relieved)  
Oh, thank God. Hi. Hi, I love you!

GUS (O.S.)

I'm at the gas station --

HAZEL

What?

GUS (O.S.)

Something's wrong. You gotta...  
please come help me.

INT/ EXT HAZEL'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Hazel drives like a maniac down the street, eventually finding herself at the Speedway gas station.

Gus's car is alone in the parking lot and she pulls up next to it. She gets out of her car, opens his driver's side door, and finds him sitting there, his shirt stained with vomit and blood. She gags from the smell.

GUS

(mumbling)

Hi.

Hazel looks down at his hands which are pressed tightly to his belly. She sees something is leaking from the TUBE sticking out of it.

HAZEL

(panicked)

Oh, God, Augustus, I'm calling 911.

GUS

No! Please! Hazel, listen to me. Do not call 911 or my parents -- I'll never forgive you -- Don't, please.

Gus starts to cry.

GUS

Please just look at it.

Hazel lifts up his shirt. His ABDOMEN is bright red.

HAZEL

I think it's infected...

Hazel feels his forehead, he's burning up.

HAZEL

Gus, what the -- why are you here?  
Why aren't you home?

Gus throws up. He doesn't even have the energy to turn his mouth away from his lap.

HAZEL

Oh, sweetie...

GUS

I wanted to buy some cigarettes. I lost my pack. Or they took it.

(MORE)

GUS (CONT'D)

I don't know. They said they'd get me another one but I wanted... to do it myself. Do one little thing myself.

Hazel doesn't know what to do.

HAZEL

I can't fix this. I have to call someone. I'm sorry.

GUS

No, Hazel, please!

But she must. She gets out her cell phone and dials. At which point, Gus really loses it, weeping like the poisoned, dying teenage boy that he is. As Hazel dials, we hear:

HAZEL (V.O.)

I wish I could say Augustus Waters kept his sense of humor till the end, did not for a moment waiver in his courage and his spirit soared like an eagle to the sky...

GUS

(to himself, shaking)

I hate myself I hate myself I hate this I hate this...

HAZEL (V.O.)

...but that is not what happened.

LATER. An EMT loads Gus into the back of an AMBULANCE. Hazel is allowed to ride with him in the back. As the car starts moving, Gus grabs her hand.

GUS

Read me something.

HAZEL

Read you something?

GUS

Do you know any poems?

HAZEL

I know one.

GUS

Read it to me.

HAZEL

"The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams.

(beat, tries to remember)

"So much depends / upon / a red wheel / barrow / glazed with rain / water / beside the white / chickens."

GUS

(beat)  
Is that it?

That is it. But there's another ten minutes of driving to do. Hazel thinks fast.

HAZEL

No of course not. Um... what else...

(thinks)

so much depends/ upon a blue sky/  
cut open by the branches/ of the  
trees./ So much depends/ on the  
transparent G-tube/ erupting from  
the belly/ of the blue-lipped boy.

Gus smiles, weakly, barely conscious. Hazel cradles his head in her arms. And continues...

HAZEL

So much depends upon this observer/  
of the universe...

As Gus is drifting off to sleep, WE HEAR:

HAZEL (V.O.)

One of the less bull-shitty  
conventions of the cancer genre is  
the convention known as the "Last  
Good Day..."

EXT GUS'S HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Gus comes home from the hospital. He does not look good - but he lives. Hazel is there to help get him inside.

INT GUS'S HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Gus no longer sleeps in his basement. Nor does he sleep in his own bed. He sleeps in a HOSPITAL BED set up in a guest room. Hazel is with him. They're watching sports on TV.

HAZEL (V.O.)

This is where the victim of cancer  
finds himself unexpectedly with  
some hours...

EXT GUS'S BACKYARD PORCH - ANOTHER DAY

Hazel and Gus getting some fresh air. She sits there reading a book. Gus just sits there. His eyes staring off into nothing. Hazel waves to him. Gus looks over, as if waking from a dream. She manages a smile. He manages one back.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 ... when it seems like the  
 inexorable decline has suddenly  
 plateaued, when the pain is for a  
 minute bearable.

INT HAZEL'S DINING ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Hazel sits at dinner with her parents. She is barely touching her food.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
 The problem, of course, is that  
 there's no way of knowing that your  
 last good day is your "Last Good  
 Day." At the time, it's just  
 another decent day.

The phone buzzes and Hazel answers it.

HAZEL  
 Hi, Augustus.

GUS (O.S.)  
 Good evening, Hazel Grace.

His voice is strong today, and Hazel is happy to hear it.

GUS (O.S.)  
 Quick question for you. Did you  
 ever write that eulogy I asked you  
 to prepare?

HAZEL  
 I may have...

GUS  
 Excellent. Do you think you could  
 find yourself at the Literal Heart  
 of Jesus in 20 minutes.

HAZEL  
 Um... sure. Is everything --

GUS (O.S.)  
 I love you Hazel.

The call ends. Hazel, confused, stands to go.

HAZEL  
 I gotta go.

FRANNIE  
 Finish eating first.

HAZEL  
 I can't, I have to meet Gus.

FRANNIE  
You haven't eaten a thing.

HAZEL  
I'm not hungry.

FRANNIE  
You can't not eat, Hazel.

HAZEL  
I am aggressively unhungry, ok?

MICHAEL  
Hazel --

HAZEL  
I have to go.

FRANNIE  
Sit down.

HAZEL  
No!

MICHAEL  
Hazel, listen to your mother.

Hazel tries to push past her but Frannie grabs her shoulders.

FRANNIE  
You have to eat, Hazel. You're not gonna starve yourself to death just because Gus is sick. You have to stay healthy --

HAZEL  
I can't! I can't stay healthy because I'm not healthy, Mom. I am dying. I am going to die and leave you here alone and you won't have me to hover around and you won't be a mother anymore, and I'm sorry, but I can't do anything about it, ok?! Just leave me alone!

Upon seeing her mother's face change, Hazel immediately regrets this.

FRANNIE  
You heard me?

Frannie has tears in her eyes. Hazel looks away, feeling terrible.

FRANNIE  
You heard me say that to your father?

Frannie sits down on the couch with her daughter.

FRANNIE

Oh god, sweetie. I'm sorry. I was wrong, ok? It wasn't true. It's not something I believe.

Michael sits across from them.

FRANNIE

As long as either of us is alive, I will be your mother. Even if you die, I --

HAZEL

When.

FRANNIE

Even when you die, I will still be your mother. I will always be your Mother.

By now Michael is crying too. They all are.

HAZEL

I worry that you won't have a life. That you'll sit around all day with no me to look after and stare at the walls and be miserable or off yourselves or something.

FRANNIE

We're not gonna off ourselves. It's gonna hurt like hell to lose you but --

MICHAEL

Hazel. You of all people know it's possible to live with pain.

She takes that in. It rings true to her. Hazel nods.

FRANNIE

I don't just sit around, you know.

Hazel is confused. Frannie looks at Michael like, "should I say something?" She goes for it.

FRANNIE

I'm taking some classes. Online. To get my master's in social work.

HAZEL

You are?

Hazel is stunned.

HAZEL

So when you're waiting for me outside Support Group or whatever, you're always --

FRANNIE

Working or reading. If I get my MSW, I can council families in crisis or lead groups dealing with illness --

HAZEL

Why didn't you tell me?

Frannie and Michael don't quite know what to say.

MICHAEL

We didn't want you to feel abandoned --

HAZEL

Are you kidding? Mom, this is awesome! This is fantastic! Oh my god!

Hazel grabs her Mom for a hug.

HAZEL

I'm so excited! You're gonna be so great, Mom!

FRANNIE

Thank you. That means everything to me.

Mom and Daughter hug. And when it's over:

FRANNIE

I'd still really like you to eat.

HAZEL

I know Mom. And I will. I promise. But right now... I really gotta go.

INT CHURCH - LATER

Hazel enters the Literal Heart of Jesus room which is now empty except for Isaac, up on a dais, and Gus, in his wheelchair. Gus is thinner than we've ever seen him, thinner than any young man should be. But for now, he's happy.

GUS

Hazel Grace, you look ravishing.

HAZEL

I know, right?

(beat)

So, um, what's going on guys?

ISAAC

You're late.

HAZEL

Late for what exactly?

Gus gestures for her to sit next to him and she does.

GUS  
I wanted to attend my funeral. By the way, will you speak at my funeral?

Hazel looks at him like "of course, silly" and then kisses him on the mouth.

GUS  
Sweet. I'm hopeful I'll get to attend as a ghost, but just to make sure, I thought I'd - well, not to put you on the spot, but I thought I'd arrange a pre-funeral.

HAZEL  
Why now?

GUS  
No time like the present.

HAZEL  
(looks around the room)  
How did you even get in here?

GUS  
Would you believe they leave the door open at night?

HAZEL  
Um, no.

GUS  
As well you shouldn't.

He smiles and for a brief moment it's old Gus. Hazel laughs. Isaac clears his throat.

ISAAC  
"Augustus Waters was a self-aggrandizing bastard. But we forgive him. We forgive him... not because he had a heart as figuratively good as his actual one sucked, or because he got 18 years when he should have gotten more."

GUS  
17.

ISAAC  
I'm assuming you've got some time, you interrupting bastard! I mean seriously...  
(back to the speech)  
"Augustus Waters talked so much that he'd interrupt you at his own funeral. And he was pretentious."  
(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Sweet Jesus that kid never took a piss without pondering the resonances of human waste production. And he was vain. But that comes with superhuman handsomeness."

Gus nods - that part is true.

ISAAC

"But I will say this: when the scientists of the future show up at my house with robot eyes and they tell me to try them on, I will tell the scientists to piss off, because I don't even want to see a world without Augustus Waters."

Hazel smiles - but it's one that triggers an immediate emotional waterfall.

ISAAC

"And then, of course, having made my rhetorical point, I will put my robot eyes on because, I mean... robot eyes!"

Gus has a big smile on his face.

ISAAC

"So anyway, Augustus, my friend... Godspeed."

Gus nods a couple times.

GUS

Thank you Isaac.

This causes Isaac to lose it. He clings to the lectern.

ISAAC

Goddamn it, Gus.

GUS

Hey don't swear in the Literal Heart of Jesus.

ISAAC

Shit! Ass! Balls!

Isaac sighs. Wipes away the tears. And another beat passes.

ISAAC

Can I get a hand here, Hazel?

Hazel remembers Isaac can't see. She rises, goes up to get him, walks him back to her seat.

GUS

Hazel Grace, it's down to you.

Hazel takes out a piece of paper, walks up to the dais. Takes a beat to ready herself.

HAZEL

"Augustus Waters was the great star-crossed love of my life. Ours was an epic love story, and I won't be able to get more than a sentence into it without disappearing into a puddle of tears.

(beat)

Like all real love stories - ours will die with us, as it should. I'd hoped that he'd be eulogizing me, because there's no one I'd rather have..."

And that's all she can get out before falling apart. She lets it out for a couple beats and then pulls herself together.

HAZEL

(beat, composing herself)

"I can't talk about our love story so instead I will talk about math. I am not a mathematician, but I know this: there are infinite numbers between 0 and 1. There's .1 And .12 And .112 And an infinite collection of others. Of course, there is a bigger infinite set of numbers between 0 and 2, or between 0 and a million. Some infinities are bigger than other infinities. A writer we used to like taught us that. I want more numbers than I'm likely to get, and God, I want more numbers for Augustus Waters than he got. But, Gus, my love, I cannot tell you how thankful I am for our little infinity. You gave me a forever within the numbered days, and for that I am eternally grateful. I love you."

Gus smiles, nods, and closes his eyes. CUT TO:

BLACK.

Over which we hear a RINGING TELEPHONE.

INT HAZEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hazel turns on the LIGHT by her bed. Her HOUSE PHONE is ringing and it's 4am.

She knows instantly.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
Augustus Waters died eight days  
later in the ICU...

Hazel's head falls into her chest.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
... when the cancer, which was made  
of him, stopped his heart, which  
was also made of him.

Her bedroom door opens. It's Frannie and Michael. This only confirms her worst fears. She starts to cry. Her parents embrace her in the bed.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
It was unbearable. The whole thing.  
Every second worse than the last.

EXT HAZEL'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - SAME

Hazel sits in the car in the dark. She's blaring the loudest music she can possibly blare - a means of drowning out the horrors of the world. Over which we hear this:

HAZEL (V.O.)  
One of the first things they ask  
you in the ER is to rate your pain  
on a scale from 1 to 10. I'd been  
asked this question hundreds of  
times and I remember once, early  
on, when I couldn't catch my breath  
and it felt like my chest was on  
fire, and the nurse asked me to  
rate the pain and though I couldn't  
speak, I held up 9 fingers.

The loud music isn't protecting Hazel as well as she hoped. She falls apart nonetheless.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
Later on, when I'd been feeling  
better, the nurse came in and she  
called me a fighter. "You know how  
I know," she said. "Because you  
called a ten a nine."

INT HAZEL'S BEDROOM - ANOTHER MORNING

Hazel puts on her funeral dress. She looks in the mirror.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
But that wasn't the truth. The  
reason I called it a nine was... I  
was saving my ten.

INT CHURCH - DAY

The place is filled today with mourners for Augustus Waters. Hazel comes in with her parents and stands in the back, watching people she's never seen before approach the Waters family and extend their deepest condolences.

HAZEL (V.O.)  
And this was it. The great and  
terrible ten.

When Mr. and Mrs. Waters see Hazel, they open their arms.

MRS. WATERS  
He loved you so much.

Hazel nods. Hugs them back.

HAZEL  
He loved you so much too.

More MOURNERS approach the family, leaving Hazel stranded in the receiving line. Her eyes turn towards the COFFIN. She's not entirely sure she wants to go there but she takes a deep breath, wills herself to walk towards it.

Gus is there in the same suit he wore to Oranje. Immediately, Hazel breaks down. And immediately, she catches herself.

HAZEL  
It's ok, you hear me? It's ok.

She leans forward and kisses his cheek. She looks around. Once in the clear, she pulls out a hard pack of Camel Lights and sticks them in the space between Gus and the lining of the coffin. A MINISTER approaches at that moment.

MINISTER  
I think we're ready to begin.

Hazel nods and walks back to her parents, taking her seat in the middle of the room.

MINISTER  
Augustus Waters fought hard for  
many years. His battle was a  
courageous one and his strength was  
a source of inspiration for each  
and every one of us...

Hazel frowns. This is all such bullshit. And she hears:

MALE VOICE  
What a load of shit, eh kid?

Hazel recognizes that voice. But it doesn't make sense. She turns around and, sure enough, it's Peter Van Houten.

MINISTER

Let us pray.

Everyone clasps their hands, closes their eyes. Hazel keeps staring at Van Houten, too shocked to do a thing.

VAN HOUTEN

We need to fake pray now.

Van Houten bows his head. Hazel, still stunned, slowly turns back to the Minister, trying to make sense of this unexpected appearance.

MINISTER

Now I call on Augustus's close friend Isaac to say a few words.

Isaac stands, walks up to the podium with someone's help. Hazel sneaks one more look at Van Houten. Yup, it's really him. That makes no sense to her. Isaac starts to speak.

ISAAC

Of all the things I've lost in my life, this hurts the most.

And Isaac stops talking. It's unclear if that was the end or if he just can't go on. He returns to his seat. The Minister walks back up.

MINISTER

And now we'll hear from Gus's... special friend Hazel Lancaster.

Hazel stands, walks up to the podium. A few titters in the room at the words "special friend."

HAZEL

I was his girlfriend.

Some laughter from the crowd. She takes out her notes.

HAZEL

There's a beautiful quote in Gus's home that reads "if you want the rainbow, you gotta deal with the rain."

Hazel continues to speak but we over it, WE HEAR instead:

HAZEL (V.O.)

I didn't believe a word, of course. But that was ok. Funerals, I'd decided, aren't for the dead. They're for the living.

Gus's Parents, arm in arm, nod along with every word. CUT TO:

EXT CEMETARY - DAY

Everyone is watching Gus's body be lowered into the ground. Everyone but Hazel. She looks off into the distance.

Off to the side, we see Van Houten, also not watching the burial. He's watching Hazel. CUT TO:

LATER. Ceremony over, we see Hazel with her parents.

HAZEL  
I'll be fine.

FRANNIE  
Are you sure? We can drive you --

HAZEL  
No, I'd... I'd like to be alone for a while.

Hazel hugs Mom and Dad, walks alone towards the parking lot. As she gets to the car, Van Houten approaches.

VAN HOUTEN  
Could I hitch a ride?

Hazel doesn't want to help this man.

VAN HOUTEN  
Just to the bottom of the hill.

Hazel exhales. Fine. Once they're both in the car:

HAZEL  
How did you even --

VAN HOUTEN  
The internet.

HAZEL  
And you just... bought a ticket?

VAN HOUTEN  
The drinks are free drinks in First Class.

Van Houten removes a FLASK from his coat pocket. Takes a swig. Hazel shakes her head in disgust. Starts driving.

VAN HOUTEN  
Omnis Cellula e cellula.

Hazel ignores him.

VAN HOUTEN  
Your boy Waters and I corresponded quite a bit in his last --

HAZEL  
You read your fan mail now?

VAN HOUTEN

I would hardly call him a fan. He despised me. But he was quite insistent I attend his funeral and tell you what became of Anna and her mother. So here I am and that's your answer: omnis cellula e cellula.

HAZEL

I'm so not in the mood --

VAN HOUTEN

"Life comes from life."

HAZEL

Goodbye Mr. Van Houten.

VAN HOUTEN

You don't want an explanation?

HAZEL

Nope. Thanks though. Have a great life.

VAN HOUTEN

You remind me of her.

HAZEL

(beat)

I remind a lot of people of a lot of people.

VAN HOUTEN

She was eight, my daughter. She suffered... beautifully. For so long.

Hazel starts to understand Van Houten - and softens.

HAZEL

She had leukemia? Like Anna?

VAN HOUTEN

Just like her, yes.

HAZEL

Were you married then?

VAN HOUTEN

Not when she died, no. I was insufferable long before Anna, my dear. Grief doesn't change you, Hazel, it reveals you.

Hazel takes that in.

HAZEL

Well I'm sorry for your loss.

VAN HOUTEN

And I'm sorry for yours. I'm sorry for everything, for being so rude to you two, for ruining your trip --

HAZEL

You didn't ruin our trip, you asshole. We had an awesome trip.

VAN HOUTEN

Hazel, I'm trying. I'm trying! You asked me to tell you what happens and I wish I could do that. I wish that I could. But I can't. No one can. No one knows, Hazel. They don't talk to us. Unless...

Van Houten takes out a typed piece of paper. He hands it to Hazel who grabs it - and immediately crumples it into a ball.

HAZEL

You think I care about that? I don't give a shit, Van Houten.

Hazel throws the piece of paper at Van Houten.

HAZEL

You're a drunk and a jerk and a failure. And I'd like you to get out of my car right now so I can go home and grieve.

VAN HOUTEN

(stunned)  
But --

HAZEL

Get out of the car!

Van Houten knows he's too late. He does as he's told, stepping out of the car onto the side of the road. He stands there as Hazel peels out.

In the rearview mirror, she sees him raise the FLASK, as if toasting her. She blinks away some tears and drives. CUT TO:

INT HAZEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Hazel lies in front of the TV. "Top Model" is playing but she's lost in her own world. Tears fall from her eyes and she can't do anything to stop it. Hazel gets up.

INT BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hazel sits against the tub on the floor and weeps. Soon there's a knock.

HAZEL  
 (through tears)  
 Occupada.

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
 Can I come in?

Hazel leans over and unlocks the door. Michael kneels down next to her, putting her head on his shoulder.

Hazel presses her face into his shirt and cries some more. Michael squeezes her tightly. And this time, he doesn't cry.

MICHAEL  
 I'm so so sorry.  
 (beat)  
 It was a privilege to love him,  
 though, wasn't it?

Hazel nods into his shirt. Then looks up at her Dad.

MICHAEL  
 Gives you an idea how we feel about  
 you.

Michael smiles at Hazel. And he doesn't cry. Hazel draws strength from him.

EXT ISAAC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hazel and Isaac have climbed through his open bedroom window. They sit on the roof.

ISAAC  
 Do you know if it hurt or whatever?

HAZEL  
 He was really fighting for breath,  
 I guess. He eventually went  
 unconscious, but it seems like,  
 yeah, it wasn't great or anything.  
 Dying sucks.

ISAAC  
 (long beat)  
 It just seems so impossible.

HAZEL  
 Happens all the time.

ISAAC  
 Are you angry?

HAZEL  
 Very.

ISAAC

Me too.

(a few beats)

Gus really loved you, you know.

HAZEL

I know.

ISAAC

He wouldn't shut up about it.

HAZEL

I know.

ISAAC

It was annoying.

HAZEL

I didn't find it that annoying.

They sit there in silence a few beats.

ISAAC

Did you read the note or whatever from your author friend?

HAZEL

He is not my friend and -- how do you know about that?

ISAAC

We talked at the cemetery. Said he came all this way to give you that.

HAZEL

Yeah well I'm over it. I never want to read another word of that asshole's again.

ISAAC

Yeah but he didn't write it - Gus did.

HAZEL

(stunned)

What?

ISAAC

That's what he said. Gus had written something, sent it to Van Houten --

Hazel sits up. Her heart is racing.

ISAAC

What?

HAZEL

I... I have to go. I... Are you...?

ISAAC

I do it all the time. Go.

As quickly as possible Hazel leaves. Isaac stays behind, enjoying the cool night. A new day is coming.

INT/ EXT HAZEL'S CAR - DAY

Hazel is inside the car, rummaging crazily through the trash in an effort to find what Van Houten gave her. She's about to give up when she sees it - crumpled up into a ball beneath the passenger's seat. She reaches under, pulls it up, and unwraps it. As she reads, WE HEAR:

GUS'S VOICE

Mr. Van Houten, I'm a good person but a shitty writer. You're a shitty person but a good writer. We'd make a good team. I don't want to ask you any favors but if you have the time, and from what I saw you have plenty, please fix this for me. It's a eulogy for Hazel.

Hazel is overcome with emotion.

GUS'S VOICE

She asked me to write one and I'm trying, I just, I could use a little flair. See the thing is... we all want to be remembered.

She smiles to herself, remembering:

- That first time Gus and Hazel ran into each other.
- The staring contest in Support Group.

GUS'S VOICE

We all want to leave a mark.

- Driving (badly) in Gus's car.
- Their first kiss at the picnic by "Funky Bones."

GUS'S VOICE

But not Hazel. Hazel is different. Hazel knows the truth. She didn't want a million admirers, she just wanted one. And she got it. Maybe she wasn't loved widely but she was loved deeply. And isn't that more than most of us get?

- And BACK TO HAZEL reading the letter, tears in her eyes.

GUS'S VOICE

When Hazel was sick, I knew I was dying. But I didn't want to say so.

INT ICU - FLASHBACK

Gus stealthily sneaks into Hazel's single room in the ICU. She sleeps. He kneels by her side.

GUS'S VOICE

She was in ICU and I snuck in for ten minutes and sat with her before I got caught. Her eyes were closed, her lungs were intubated...

Gus takes her hand and holds it.

GUS'S VOICE

... but her hands were still her hands, still warm, and the nails painted this dark blue back color and I just held her hands and I willed myself to imagine a world without us and what a worthless world that would be.

- AND BACK TO HAZEL reading the letter. She never knew that story, never knew he was there. CUT TO:

EXT HAZEL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER

Hazel walks out to the grass behind her house, the oxygen tank dragging behind her. She lays down on the grass and looks up at the stars - the same IMAGE that opened the movie.

GUS'S VOICE

She's so beautiful. You don't get tired of looking at her. You never worry if she's smarter than you cause you know she is. She's funny without ever being mean.

She remembers:

- The magical dinner at Oranje.
- The bench in which they sat overlooking the water.
- The passionate kiss in Anne Frank's house.
- Falling onto the bed together.

*[All of these are images we saw at the beginning of the movie, only now, we SEE the oxygen tank, we SEE Gus's leg, we SEE the fumbling and the difficulties etc. They don't make these images less beautiful. They make them twice as beautiful - because they're real.]*

GUS'S VOICE

I love her, god I love her. I'm so lucky to love her, Van Houten.

(MORE)

GUS'S VOICE (CONT'D)

You don't get to choose if you get hurt in this world but you do have a say in who hurts you.

- AND BACK ON Hazel in the grass. She holds the letter to her chest. A single tear falls onto her cheeks.

GUS'S VOICE

I like my choices. I hope she likes hers.

Hazel CLOSES HER EYES.

GUS'S VOICE

Ok, Hazel Grace?

A beat. Another.

Hazel OPENS HER EYES. And she says to the universe:

HAZEL

Ok.

BLACK.