

Annalise & Song

Written by

SJ Inwards

*For my love, Kenny -
Thank you for making me feel understood*

SCREENWRITER'S NOTE:

As you're reading, you'll be introduced to 2 different fonts:

1) All action lines written in this font indicate that we are seeing the world as "normal" people see it.

2) *All action lines written in this font indicate that we are seeing the world as Annalise sees it: "Annalise's POV - Special Vision"*

Don't you worry too much about this now.

I'll walk you through it.

OVER BLACK:

A clock's steady tick... tick... tick...

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON - 1967

Tick... tick... tick... continues from a GRANDFATHER CLOCK...

...which is being intently watched by a GIRL: **ANNALISE** (17).

Hm. Annalise looks to be an exceedingly *ordinary* girl.

An embodiment of unremarkable. The epitome of plain.

She perches-- expressionless-- on a stiff-backed chair in her family's pristine (yet bland) **1960s** living room.

Tick... Tick... Tick... Her EYES set on that clock... Until--

Annalise abruptly latches her sharp GAZE onto us instead.

And here, a sage **STORYTELLER** draws us into our FAIRY TALE:

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Annalise had always seen things
differently from her peers...

Suddenly we move around the side of Annalise-- Curving behind her until the back of her head BLOCKS our view of the world--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Be not mistaken: This was not a
metaphorical difference...

--and as we emerge from the other side of Annalise, our view of the world is now TRANSFORMED into Annalise's Vision.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

This was quite a literal one.

Through Annalise's eyes, the world indeed looks entirely, radically different.

For one, the colors in the room have changed; the previously restrained scene is now composed of VIBRANT HUES. Some colors are merely more saturated versions of normal vision, and other colors have changed completely.

For another, half of all the objects in the room look like completely different objects in Annalise's eyes. The COUCH now looks to be a slumbering TIGER; the CARPET now a blanket of LILY PADS; the CURTAINS a cascade of LIGHTBULBS; the RADIO a ROAST TURKEY; the LAMP a BIRTHDAY BALLOON.

And that GRANDFATHER CLOCK is now a TRAFFIC LIGHT. Tick--tick--ticking from red... to yellow... to green... and back...

We continue to rotate around Annalise-- And as we face her once more, we find that Annalise herself actually looks quite the same as she did to the "normal" eye: same plain hair, plain face, plain disposition.

But her clothes have drastically changed. Her once prim dress is now a garment made of COOKIES, and the lop-sided HAIR RIBBON that had been tied in her hair is now a large, writhing WORM.

The worm's tail FLOPS onto Annalise's forehead. She reaches to move it just as--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Indeed, it may seem an absurd and peculiar vision--

We rotate behind Annalise's head-- her hair BLOCKING our view once more--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

--but to Annalise this was the natural state of the world.

--and when we emerge back out the other side, we again see the world normally.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

It always had been.
And it always would be.

Annalise finishes adjusting the PINK RIBBON in her hair, which is no longer a worm to our eyes.

Throughout it all, Annalise's gaze remains on the grandfather CLOCK. Throughout it all, the clock soldiers on...

Tick... tick... tick...

MOTHER (O.S.)

It's almost time!

Annalise's eyes flit from the CLOCK to the WOMAN whisking into the room. This is Annalise's **MOTHER** (40s).

Mother is preened with such a precision it verges on unsettling. She keeps her home in a similar condition.

Mother swoops to the coffee table, placing a serving TRAY onto it. She jabbars at an alarming pace:

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Never have I had such a bother in the kitchen! I tell you, Annalise, it was simply *impossible* to decide what to serve today!

On the tray: Mother rotates a plate *ever-so-slightly*--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Brisket! ...Is what I thought at first. Who doesn't love a brisket?

On the tray: Mother adjusts a napkin's fold *ever-so-slightly*--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

But then I wondered: What kind of meats do Chinese people like anyhow? Some of those meats I see hanging around Chinatown-- those *duck heads* and whatnot-- I don't know about those. Turns my stomach, to be perfectly honest. Who knows? Maybe brisket is to them like duck heads are to me!

On the tray: Mother aligns each fork *ever-so-slightly*--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

So I thought: How about a nice Jell-O? Colorful, fun, low in calories-- But then I remembered I heard from Mrs. Schwartz that she read in Time Magazine that many Asian cultures don't eat much sugar, they have things like *nuts* for *dessert*. So of course I canned the Jell-O idea--

On the tray: Mother plucks the last stray crumb away--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

And then I *really* went down the rabbit hole. Chopped liver? Too fatty. Pickles? Too salty. Deviled eggs? Too boring. Martinis? Not boring enough!

Mother SMILES down at the tray on the coffee table. Everything in its place.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Finally I thought to myself: TOAST!

Mother moves aside to reveal that on the tray is, indeed, a stack of DRY TOAST.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Plain old toast: no fuss, no
 frills. Surely that'd be
 unobjectionable!

Mother's smile falters *ever-so-slightly*...

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 ... Right?

Annalise has not said a single word. Has not even opened her
 lips. Instead, she's STARING at that Grandfather CLOCK...

Tick... tick... tick...

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Annalise? Don't you think...?

Mother turns to Annalise and FROWNS.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Oh, now Annalise-- You've gone and
 mussed up your hair again! What did
 I say about touching your ribbon?

Annalise doesn't respond. Blank face. Eyes on the clock.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 (as if Annalise had
 answered)
 That's right! *We don't touch it.* We
 don't touch it, or move it, or-- or
 anything, we just sit still.
 Perfectly still, alright?

Mother scurries up to Annalise and begins primping her--

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Not to worry-- We'll get you fixed
 up, quick as a bunny.

Mother finishes fiddling with Annalise's hair. She brushes
 aside a final strand and admires her daughter.

Mother KISSES Annalise on the forehead affectionately.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 There we are. Now sit up straight,
 darling.

Mother goes to the couch and seats herself *just so*.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 They'll be here any minute...

Mother turns her attention to the grandfather clock as well.

The two sit, stock-still, silent... Watching... Waiting...

And it's then that Annalise's EYES (still steadfast in their stare) gloss *ever-so-slightly*--

--with **TEARS**.

Tick... tick... tick--!

CUT TO BLACK.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

It wouldn't be until 1969 that
Kübler-Ross would publish her model
on the Five Stages of Grief--

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

SUPER: 1950

Mother (now 20s) is in the midst of giving birth. **FATHER**
(20s) frets by her side.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

--but Annalise had experienced each
Stage with utmost agony throughout
the 1950s and 60s in her youth.

Finally-- *WAHHHH!* A baby's cry! Annalise is born! A NURSE
lowers baby Annalise into Mother's arms. Mother BEAMS
tearfully down at her newborn daughter:

MOTHER

Oh. She's just *perfect*.

Clock sound: Tick--!

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

SUPER: 1953-1955: *Denial*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

At first, little Annalise was lost
in the confusing fog of *Denial*.

Mother (20s) and Annalise (3) huddle with other MOMS and
TODDLERS in a cozy Public Library story circle.

Mother points to a picture of a GIRAFFE in the children's
book she's showing to Annalise--

MOTHER

Giraffe. See? Can you say giraffe?

Little Annalise squints at the picture, then points excitedly out the window at a MAPLE TREE.

ANNALISE

Giraffe!

MOTHER

No, Annalise, that's a tree...

Annalise furrows her brow in confusion at the book-- while we rotate behind little Annalise's head--

--to find that in Annalise's Special Vision, the maple tree outside the window is indeed a GIRAFFE. Annalise peeks over to find that Giraffe is peeking right back at her! Annalise shyly waves "hi" to the Giraffe. The Giraffe almost seems to GRIN...

ANNALISE

(soft smile)

Giraffe...

--We rotate behind Annalise, back to normal vision. With a HUFF, Mother pulls the Picture Book closer to Annalise's face. Annalise's smile VANISHES.

MOTHER

No-- No! Annalise, focus! Giraffe!

Mother offers a strained SMILE to the disapproving MOM sitting next to her. Annalise POUTS.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Little Annalise had come to the conclusion that surely there must be some *miscommunication* afoot...

Clock sound: Tick--!

INT. MOTHER'S CAR - DAY

Father (20s) drives the family CAR wearing his yarmulke. Mother (20s) perches in the passenger seat with Annalise (4) on her lap. All dressed in their Bar-Mitzvah-Attending-Best.

It's POURING RAIN outside, splattering the windshield. Little Annalise is dazzled by how it looks.

ANNALISE

Look, Mommy! *Money!*

MOTHER
Where, darling?

We move around behind Annalise-- *to find that in Annalise's Vision the RAINDROPS outside instead look like glittering COINS. Each one explodes into silvery DUST when they hit the windshield.*

ANNALISE
Money! Money! All over the place!

--as we return to Normal, Mother looks pointedly over at Father. Father avoids Mother's eyes.

<p>MOTHER (hiss) Honestly, Harold! Listen--</p>	<p>FATHER (hushed) I know! I know, dear...</p>
---	--

Little Annalise's enthusiasm wilts. She can tell she's upset her parents somehow... *What did she do!?*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Surely it couldn't be that something was wrong with her...

Unsure Annalise burrows further into Mother's sure arms...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
...could it?

Clock sound: Tick--!

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - DAY

Annalise (5) squirms as a DOCTOR shines a LIGHT directly into her eye. Mother (20s) watches the examination worriedly.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Alas, no doctor had ever encountered anything like Annalise's unique sight.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

MOTHER and FATHER sit opposite the Doctor at his desk. They clasp each others hands as they wait for the doctor to speak.

Doctor SIGHS, takes off his glasses before explaining to them. But we can't hear what the Doctor is saying. All we can see is Mother and Father absorbing his words, filling with a sickening DREAD...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 And so Annalise's doting parents
 were left only with the grim
 diagnosis that Annalise was what
 they classified then as...

Doctor's lips move in sync with Storyteller's voice:

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 ...mentally disturbed.

Mother and Father are utterly DEVASTATED. Broken.

Clock sound: Tick--!

INT. ANNALISE'S BEDROOM - DAY

SUPER: 1956-1959: Anger

Annalise (6) throws an all-out TANTRUM on her bedroom floor.

STORYTELLER (V.O.) (shouting over Annalise's screaming)	ANNALISE NO!!! MOMMY NO!!!! PLEASE DON'T!!!!
---	--

By Annalise's 6th birthday,
 her patience with the
 misunderstandings had run its
 course, and she instead
 simmered constantly in the
Anger phase.

Mother in curlers, a housecoat, and no make-up (not her usual presentable self) approaches Annalise with a PINK HAIR RIBBON. As she does, Mother CRIES passively. TEARS drip from her eyes, but her hollow expression is heartbreakingly BLANK.

ANNALISE (CONT'D) THE WORM'S ICKY!!! I WON'T WEAR IT, I WON'T!!!	MOTHER (whisper) Please...
--	----------------------------------

Clock sound: Tick--!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Annalise wears a birthday HAT, sits in front of a birthday CUPCAKE, and SCREAMS! Mother and Father watch her, deadpan.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 She screamed--

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

TEACHER lugs KICKING Annalise (6) down the school hallway.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
--she kicked--

INT. FAMILY CAR - DAY

Father wrestles with Annalise (7) to buckle her car lap belt. Annalise sinks her TEETH into Father's hand--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
--she bit--

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Annalise (8) STRUGGLES in Mother's grip, dragged along for grocery shopping.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
--she fought.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Annalise (8) scribbles on the classroom's blackboard. Teacher scrutinizes her writing.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Every correction served her--

TEACHER
(pointing to a world map)
No, this is *blue!*

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Annalise (7) curiously lifts a ROTTEN APPLE out of the kitchen garbage. Mother notices--

MOTHER
No, that is *old!*

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

In swimsuits, Neighbor KID and Annalise (6) argue by a SPRINKLER they're playing in.

KID
Yes, you are *wrong!*

INT./EXT. CLASSROOM / KITCHEN / NEIGHBORHOOD - VARIOUS

Split Screen: In all 3 scenarios (Teacher/Classroom, Mother/Kitchen, Kid/Neighborhood) Annalise opens her mouth--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
--was met with battle cries.

--and *SCREECHES!!!!*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
This happened at home to the result
of punishment--

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Father SPANKS Annalise (7) on the behind.

FATHER
Don't treat your mother like that!

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
This happened in the school yard to
the result of ostracism--

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

A gang of KIDS surround Annalise (8) on the playground.

KID
You can't play with us, moron!

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
It even happened in her mind--

INT. ANNALISE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Annalise (9) stews in bed, unable to sleep. FURY in her eyes.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
--in the dark of her room, far past
when the house had grown still,
when she internally berated herself
for being so *alien*.

Annalise suddenly PUNCHES her pillow with RAGE!

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Why couldn't she be a normal girl!?

Clock sound: Tick--!

CUT TO BLACK.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
And then came the *Bargaining*.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: 1959: *Bargaining*

Annalise (9) and ALL her extended family-- Aunts, Uncles, Grandparents, Cousins-- cram around the dining room table for Passover Seder. The room BUZZES with energy.

But Annalise is not buzzing with energy. She slumps at the table, lost *in her own world... gazing at her Grandpa's TOUPEE, which is a plump TARANTULA in her eyes. Each of its 8 legs takes turns itching his scalp, until Grandpa reaches up and SCRATCHES it roughly. The tarantula winces in pain...*

...Annalise tunes back into reality just as Father proclaims:

FATHER
Time to find the afikoman!

All the other little kids in the room SQUEAL and go racing out of the room. Father CHUCKLES at their excitement.

But Annalise stays put at the table. She zones out once more.

Father notices; his smile slips right off his face. He places a ginger hand on Annalise's shoulder.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Why don't you join the others?

Annalise doesn't respond. She simply holds her father's gaze without a trace of emotion.

Then Annalise slides out of her seat without a word.

Annalise trudges slowly through the house. Family members flit and flounce around her. Children go peeping under furniture and behind curtains for the afikoman.

But Annalise makes a beeline for the front door--

EXT. ANNALISE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Annalise shuts the house's front door behind her. She *plops* down onto the porch's steps, wraps her arms around her knees.

She SIGHS. Alone.

Suddenly-- She perks up! *What's that?* She hears something... someone MUTTERING?

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
No! I-- I-- get off me! Get off me!

Annalise hesitantly rises to her feet, inches toward the sound of the voice... It seems to be coming from the well-manicured BUSHES lining the house...

But it's DARK... Annalise must *squint* to make anything out...

And then the muttering CEASES. *Huh?* Annalise cocks her head. Listens with all her might. UNTIL--

UNCLE GERRY
 STOP IT! DON'T-- TOUCH-- ME!

UNCLE GERRY (30s) *LEAPS* out of the bushes toward Annalise!

Annalise stumbles backwards, falls on her butt! She **SCREAMS!**

But Uncle Gerry barely notices Annalise as he rolls on the front lawn. He writhes, *YANKING* his SHIRT off over his head--

UNCLE GERRY (CONT'D)
AH! Strangle, strangle me to death!

Annalise scrambles to her feet, backs HORRIFIED toward the front door-- just as MOTHER opens it!

MOTHER
 (panicked)
Annalise!?

Mother takes in the scene: Uncle Gerry's now frantically removing his PANTS as well, underwear on display to Suburbia. Mother's face goes from PANIC to-- utmost PITY.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Oh-- *Gerry...*

Mother covers Annalise's eyes with her hand just as Uncle Gerry JUMPS to his feet.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 HAROLD! DAVID! NOAM! Get out here!

UNCLE GERRY
 (to Mother, tearful)
 Clementine-- Clemmie-- don't come any closer-- I can't protect you!

Uncle Gerry spins around-- *WIELDING* something SHINY in his hand. A POCKET KNIFE.

ANNALISE
 (scared)
 Mother!?

MOTHER
 Oy-- HAROLD!

EXT. ANNALISE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

RED and BLUE lights flash across Annalise's face. She-- along with the rest of her ENTIRE FAMILY-- gawk from the front porch as EMTs and COPS wrangle frightened (and nearly-naked) Uncle Gerry onto a GURNEY.

Uncle Gerry WAILS as EMTs tighten RESTRAINTS around him.

Mother's mortified as NEIGHBORS emerge from their homes to take a peek at the hubbub. Mother ushers the rest of the family back inside the house to save face.

But Annalise remains.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

This is when Annalise made the deal
with herself:

Annalise's gaze is UNWAVERING as Uncle Gerry's loaded into the back of the ambulance. LOCKED AWAY.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

*Never tell anyone your secret, and
you'll maintain your freedom at
least.*

Annalise presses her lips TIGHTLY together as the ambulance's SIRENS rev up--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Thus her silence was solidified.

Clock sound: Tick--!

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

SUPER: 1960-1966: *Depression*

Throughout this MONTAGE, the WORLD around Annalise moves in FAST MOTION, while Annalise herself moves in SLOW MOTION.

A) INT. ANNALISE'S ROOM - DAY/NIGHT

Annalise (13) lies listlessly in bed. The sun rises and sets. Concerned Mother and Father enter and exit.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Once Annalise stopped speaking
altogether, her real loneliness
calcified. And with that loneliness
came Depression, the heaviest and
most crushing kind.

B) INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Mother (30s) flutters around Annalise (14) in the bathroom. Mother brushes Annalise's teeth for her, combs Annalise's hair for her, dresses Annalise in clothes for her. Annalise stares vacantly at herself in the mirror throughout.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Annalise struggled to grasp at any motivation to keep going. There was no point to her life at home, the burden of her existence beleaguering her parents.

C) INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Annalise (15) plods through the sea of STUDENTS-- in a classroom, in the hallway, in the cafeteria. Ignored by all.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

There was no point to her life at school-- a queen pariah, an outcast to the outcasts.

D) INT. DINER - NIGHT

Sitting at a booth in a DINER, Annalise (16) scribbles in a JOURNAL. She's incredibly focused on her scrawling. Diner PATRONS and WAITRESSES dart around her: coming and going, eating and cleaning, talking and laughing.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

And finally, there was no point to her future. Who would hire a dumb mute? Who would marry a social dud? Who would eventually replace her parent's unyielding affection? What was the point of it all!?

Suddenly-- the FAST MOTION of the world around Annalise SLOWS. Annalise's SLOW MOTION catches up. The world and Annalise both move at the same NORMAL PACE once more.

Annalise stares down at something she's written in the journal. She's circled it:

THERE IS NO POINT.

Annalise reads it once more... then sits back in her seat.

Satisfied.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Annalise (17) strolls down the sunny sidewalk, looking quite lovely in a delicate dress and curled hair. The trace of a SMILE lingers on her lips...

Annalise pauses-- takes off one **SHOE**-- and places it deliberately on the ground. She then turns off the sidewalk's path and heads into the FOREST lining it...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

...It felt almost peaceful when the thought struck Annalise that she could end her life.

INT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Annalise breathes in the fresh air as she meanders through this lush forest. Taking her time. *Savoring...*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

She plotted it quite carefully, leaving a shoe of hers behind so they could find her remains and grant her family some closure. She even selected her second-best dress to wear for the occasion.

Finally, Annalise stops.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Second best, of course, so her mother could put her in the best one for the burial.

Annalise neatly seats herself in the dirt, taking care to fan her beautiful skirts out around her. As she does so-- We circle behind Annalise, her head BLOCKING our view--

--and when we pass to the other side of her, we see everything in Annalise's Vision.

The forest is truly an extraordinary sight to behold, in Annalise's eyes:

It's a kaleidoscope of vibrant COLORS. Half of all the FOLIAGE has transformed into strange and wondrous objects: a regal OSTRICH, a handsome GREEK STATUE, a towering stack of MUSIC BOXES, a cluster of DRAGON FRUIT. Annalise's dress is now made of opaque STAINED GLASS.

But we can barely focus on these charming details-- because Annalise has reached into her skirt pocket and pulled out a GUN.

Annalise's hand trembles, but she presses the gun FIRMLY to her temple. Resolute.

Annalise sharply INHALES-- COCKS THE GUN--!

And hesitates...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

(whisper)

There was one last voice inside her
that *begged* Annalise not to shoot--

RAPID FLASHES OF MEMORIES:

- Mother tucking Annalise snugly into bed
- Annalise bopping to an UPBEAT SONG on the RADIO
- Annalise relishing the taste of fresh-baked cookies

Back to Annalise in this very moment, the gorgeous SUNSHINE warming her face...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

...But she soothed it away by
acknowledging that, while it was
difficult... it was ultimately the
only choice she had.

Annalise CLOSES her teary eyes with finality. She SWALLOWS.

Her whole body TENSES as she PULLS THE GUN'S TRIGGER!

JUST as she does this, we SPIN behind her head-- passing
RIGHT THROUGH the spot where the bullet soon will EXPLODE out
of Annalise's SKULL--!

But--!!

There's no CRACK of the GUNSHOT...

...in fact, there's barely any sound at all...

...and as we circle around to face Annalise, back to normal
vision again, we find out why:

THE GUN in Annalise's hand is NOT A GUN at all. In normal
vision, it is instead a tube of TOOTHPASTE.

Annalise's fingers GRIP it tightly. A dollop of toothpaste
slimes itself down Annalise's temple...

And as Annalise realizes that she is not dead... she slowly
opens her eyes once more...

BEWILDERMENT-- then **HORROR**-- fills her face... as she lowers the TUBE of toothpaste into her lap... as she brushes her fingers over the TOOTHPASTE dripping down her cheek...

...and slowly, the awful REALIZATION that her cruel vision has once again TRICKED HER sinks in...

Until finally, Annalise crumples in her spot and *WEEPS*.

We are forced to bear witness to her *UNRELENTING WEEPING* as the afternoon gradually wanes into dusk...

...

..

.

Eventually, Annalise has no more tears to weep.

It's nearly dark now. Annalise's eyes are devoid of emotion. Her body completely INERT.

Finally, Annalise drags her palms to the ground, and PUSHES herself to STAND.

Clock sound: Tick--!

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD / ANNALISE'S HOUSE - DUSK

SUPER: 1967: *Acceptance*

Annalise trudges home in the last rays of the sun. She's so lacking in luster, she appears zombie-like. Her one SHOE-LESS foot is caked in DIRT.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

By the time 1967 rolled around, Annalise found herself at her final destination, the last stage of grief: Acceptance.

When Annalise reaches her house, Mother is outside, impatiently waiting for her.

MOTHER

Annalise, where have you been!?
Your father's already back in from
the city! Dinner's getting cold!

Annalise-- as always-- doesn't respond, doesn't react in any way. She simply continues her trudge up the porch steps.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Oh-- Annalise! What happened to your shoe, darling? Your foot is positively filthy!

Mother shepherds Annalise inside the house--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

No bother, we'll get you fixed up, quick as a bunny.

Mother SHUTS the front door. And we are left in the twilight... In the QUIET of the neighborhood...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

...*Acceptance* is such a funny descriptor for where Annalise found herself.

Clock sound: Tick--!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Annalise-- freshly washed with wet hair-- sits at the dinner table. Her parents chatter to each other, but Annalise gazes blankly at her untouched FOOD, *which looks like a pile of BROKEN CHILDREN'S TOYS in her eyes*. A severed DOLL HEAD gazes blankly back at her...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Acceptance conjures the sentiment of embrace, or peacefulness. That there's been some triumph. That the worst is over.

Clock sound: Tick--!

CUT TO BLACK.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

But no.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON - 1967

Back to where we first met Annalise: In the LIVING ROOM watching the GRANDFATHER CLOCK with MOTHER. *Waiting...*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

For Annalise, *Acceptance* was a begrudging resignation
 an abandonment of hope
 a giving up
 as she patiently waited for her life to tick... away...

Annalise BLINKS-- and the TEARS we momentarily saw in her eyes before CLEAR. She STARES into the face of the clock.

The CLOCK'S minute hand inches CLOSER and CLOSER to the top of the hour: *Tick... tick... tick...*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

By now, Annalise had not spoken a single word in over 7 years.

We slowly inch toward Annalise, getting closer and *closer* and CLOSER to her... *Tick... tick... tick...*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

In all that time, she had never wavered in her muteness.

Tick--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Had never strayed from her facade of simpleness.

Tick--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Had never escaped her tomb of loneliness.

Tick--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Not once.

Tick--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Not ever.

TICK!

...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

That is, until she met Peter Song.

DONG! DONG! DONG! The grandfather clock CHIMES on the hour!

And just after it--

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK coming from the front door--

Mother leaps to her feet with a brilliant SMILE!

MOTHER
Ah! Right on time!

Mother plucks up a full TEACUP from the tray on the coffee table and hands it to Annalise--

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Here-- Offer this to Mrs. Song when she comes in!

Annalise takes the teacup, still deeply unenthused.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Alright, now let me see that dazzling smile!

Annalise forces an especially underwhelming SMILE. Mother practically BOUNCES with glee.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Perfect!

Mother hastens to answer the door-- And that smile plops right off of Annalise's face--

INT./EXT. FRONT DOOR/PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Mother flings the front door open with a flourish! Revealing that behind it stands: **MRS. SONG** (40s) and her son, **PETER SONG** (17).

Mrs. Song rivals Mother's fastidious appearance. She wears a rather fashionable *qipao* (Chinese dress) and holds a small porcelain dish in her manicured hands. A GOLD RING gleams from one of her fingers.

Peter Song, well. He looks to be an exceedingly *ordinary* boy--

--save for the swath of BURN SCARS marring one side of his face. Peter slumps next to Mrs. Song, attempting to hide his scars from view.

Actually, it looks as though Peter's attempting to hide his entire *self* from view-- hunching, leaning, shrinking. Peter is the type that prefers to go altogether *unnoticed*.

MOTHER
Mrs. Song! How lovely of you to visit.

Mrs. Song has a Chinese accent. She enunciates each English word carefully to mitigate it:

MRS. SONG
Thank you for having us.

MOTHER
Oh, nonsense, it's my pleasure. And
you must be *Peter*!

Peter peeks bashfully up through his eyelashes, head bowed.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
So nice to finally meet you!

Mother and Mrs. Song exchange knowing grins before Mother
steps aside to welcome them in:

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Come in, come in! Make yourselves
comfortable, don't be shy--!

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Mother steers Mrs. Song toward the Living Room couch. Mrs.
Song hands Mother the porcelain bowl:

MRS. SONG
I have boiled peanuts to share.

MOTHER
Aw, how very thoughtful!
(I-told-you-so)
See? Annalise? *Nuts*.

Annalise ignores her mother, instead rising languidly from
her seat and offering the TEACUP to Mrs. Song--

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Ah, yes! Mrs. Song, this is
Annalise! She's made you some tea--

MRS. SONG
Thank you very much, Annalise.
(in MANDARIN, to Peter)
Bide (Peter)! Hurry up!

Mrs. Song *GLARES* over at Peter who's shuffling into the room--

That's when Annalise *URNS*--

--and Annalise sees PETER SONG for the very first time.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Of course, Annalise did not see him
the way the rest of the world did--

Annalise GASPS involuntarily!

Her hands loosen, DROPPING the teacup to the floor where it CRACKS into two pieces! TEA splashes on the pristine carpet!

MOTHER

Oh! *Annalise!*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

But even Annalise had *never* seen anyone like Peter Song before.

MOTHER

Silly girl-- she, um. She's a *dainty* thing--

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE)

(in MANDARIN, to Peter)
Look what you've done, you've startled the girl!

Peter's bewildered by Annalise's SHOCKED gawking at him. *What did he do!?* Mrs. Song hastily grabs Peter by the arm and seats him on the couch next to her.

MOTHER

Oh, not to worry! Annalise will get that fixed up, quick as a bunny!

Mother tosses a wad of napkins at Annalise, serving Annalise a *death glare* (which Annalise doesn't notice).

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Now who wants some *toast*?

MRS. SONG

Oh, yes please!

As Mother plies Mrs. Song and Peter with toast, the sound of their eager CHIT-CHAT *fades to the background*...

All the while, Annalise gets LOST in *GAZING* at Peter...

Even as she kneels to pick up the pieces of the broken teacup, Annalise's jaw remains dropped in AWE, her eyes remain LOCKED on Peter.

However Annalise is seeing him has rendered her completely **THUNDERSTRUCK**.

Peter, meanwhile, remains befuddled and increasingly uncomfortable by all of Annalise's direct eye contact.

Peter averts his eyes. Slumps his shoulders. Bows his head. Slowly raises his piece of TOAST... so as to pitifully HIDE behind it (as if that might temper Annalise's ogling).

But Annalise still doesn't look away from him. Breathless, she rises into her chair again, broken teacup in her lap.

Once more, we move behind Annalise's head-- transferring from normal vision into Annalise's--

And when we FINALLY see what Annalise does, we find that Peter Song is NOT a scar-faced boy in her eyes.

Instead, to Annalise, PETER SONG is a scar-free, GORGEOUS GIRL.

In a DAZE, Annalise touches her fingertips to her thrumming HEART-- Ba-dum, BA-DUM, BA-DUM!

The wriggling WORM (hair ribbon) in her hair flops back onto her forehead, but she barely notices. A BLUSH creeps up her cheeks to kiss the worm's tail.

Suffice it to say, someone's got a CRUSH.

We rotate back around Annalise into normal vision again-- and once we face Annalise, for the first time since we've met her, we finally see Annalise

genuinely SMILE!

Peter balks at Annalise's goofy GRIN. He's at a complete loss for what to do or say to such a bizarre girl...

Finally, we can HEAR Mother and Mrs. Song's CHATTERING again--

MOTHER

HA! Oh you are a hoot, Mrs. Song! I must say, it is so nice to finally meet you!

MRS. SONG

I agree! I have been looking forward to it all week!

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

In fact, Annalise's Mother and Mrs. Song had already met-- Not once, but thrice before--

EXT. ANNALISE'S HOUSE - PORCH - AFTERNOON

Mother and Father sit in rocking chairs on their front porch. Father's buried in a NEWSPAPER.

Mother's eagle-eyed on the HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET. There, a MOVING VAN is parked out front, MOVERS shuttling belongings into the house.

A FAMILY CAR pulls up behind the moving van. Mother eagerly nudges Father with her elbow:

MOTHER
Harold! They're here!

Father just *barely* peeps over the top of his newspaper to spy alongside her.

From out of the car climbs: MR. SONG and MRS. SONG, both **Chinese-American**. Father's eyes sink back below his newspaper so he can mutter to Mother from behind it:

FATHER
Oh! My-- they're, um...

MOTHER
(scolding)
Oh-- *really* Harold!

FATHER (CONT'D)
(sheepish)
... What?

MOTHER
Remember when we were the first
Jewish family to move into the
neighborhood?

PETER SONG finally emerges from the family car. Mother *narrows her eyes at him...* *SCHEME a-brewin'...*

MOTHER (CONT'D)
The times they are a-changin'...

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Mother stands in the back of the line at the Post Office. She PERKS when she notices Mrs. Song standing near the front. Mother nudges not-so-tactfully ahead of the OTHERS in line--

Mother finally reaches Mrs. Song. TAPS her on the shoulder.

MOTHER
NEE HOW!

Mrs. Song is startled by this outburst of poorly articulated Chinese. She blinks a few times to compose herself.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
*NEE-- nee ha! Am-- am I saying that
right? Nee... ha-ow...*

MRS. SONG

Yes, hello.

MOTHER

Oh, you speak English! Thank *goodness*, I only learned one more Chinese phrase, and I was told if I pronounced it wrong I'd be at risk of calling you a *horse*.

Mrs. Song GRINS despite herself.

MRS. SONG

Your pronunciation is quite good for Americans.

MOTHER

Why, thank you. It's probably because I'm bilingual myself-- *Yiddish*.

MRS. SONG

Ah! *Schmendrick! Meshuggeneh! Oy vey!*

MOTHER

(impressed)

Where'd you learn that!?

MRS. SONG

When I first move to America, I played mahjong with a Jewish lady. She's always yelling these things at me when I beat her, but I don't know what they mean...

MOTHER

HA! She was cursing you up and down! You must be one heck of a mahjong player.

MRS. SONG

(smirking)

No. She was a terrible one.

Mrs. Song sticks her hand out for a shake--

MRS. SONG (CONT'D)

I'm Mrs. Song.

MOTHER

(taking her hand)

Oh, trust me, I know. I've been dying to meet you--

INT. SONG FAMILY HOME - DAY

Mother perches on a couch in the Song living room. Half-unpacked MOVING BOXES are scattered about. Mrs. Song pours them both cups of TEA from an intricate Chinese Tea Set.

MRS. SONG
(RE: Tea)
Honey? Sugar?

MOTHER
Don't tempt me, I've been trying to resist my *devious* sweet tooth.

MRS. SONG
...What is "devious"?

MOTHER
It means *sneaky*. It gets me into trouble.

MRS. SONG
Ah...

...Mrs. Song coyly presents a bottle of WHISKEY instead.

MRS. SONG (CONT'D)
Then how about this?

Mother's eyebrows raise... Mrs. Song GRINS playfully.

MRS. SONG (CONT'D)
It may still get you into trouble, but it's not sweet...

Mother chuckles, shrugs.

MOTHER
Sure, why not!

Mrs. Song dumps a healthy dose of liquor into each of their teacups and--

MOTHER (CONT'D)
So I noticed you have a son--

A FEW HOURS LATER -

Mother and Mrs. Song are now TIPSY, SILLY, guards down. They nurse their teacups. Lean close together. Kindred Spirits.

MRS. SONG
Really!? I was starting to think I am the only one--

MOTHER

I promise you, I'm in the very same boat!

MRS. SONG

I have tried *everything* to help him! I don't know what else to do!

MOTHER

(nodding)

There's not much you *can* do when your child turns out so *strange*...

MRS. SONG

So *strange* and so *sad*...
My *Bide* (Peter) has not truly smiled since he was a baby. Always with a pout, like *this*--

Mrs. Song dons an exaggerated FROWN.

Mother plays along, FROWNS exaggeratedly too.

MOTHER

Same with my Annalise. Always sulking around... *Alone*...

MRS. SONG

Always alone...

MOTHER

And Harold's no help. He's off working all day. By the time he comes home he's *exhausted*--

MRS. SONG

Mm, yes, my husband is the same. He just wants to pretend *Bide* is a normal boy! I tell him, what kind of normal boy has *no friend*!?

Both of the mothers SIGH, exchanging their exaggerated frowns for real ones. They take SWIGS of Whiskey Tea...

Slowly... simultaneously... the very same thought dawns on them both... They side-eye each other.

MOTHER

You don't suppose they could...

MRS. SONG

...frown together?

Their frowns slink into conspiratorial GRINS...

MOTHER

It won't work if they know we planned it. We have to be *sneaky*.

MRS. SONG

Sneaky... so this is "devious"?

MOTHER

Oh, yes, Mrs. Song. It sure is.

Rosy-cheeked, they CLINK their teacups together as a *toast*--

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

BACK TO ANNALISE GAWKING AT PETER IN THE LIVING ROOM. Mother and Mrs. Song exchange sly, sidelong glances--

MOTHER

Oh, I've got a marvelous idea! Why don't you two walk to school together tomorrow?

MRS. SONG

(too quickly)
I agree!

MOTHER

(too quickly)
It's settled then!

Annalise SMILES at her Mother-- NODS! *Yes, yes!* Mother BEAMS at seeing Annalise so happy!

BUT-- when Annalise returns her infatuated gaze to Peter Song, her smile falters *ever-so-slightly*--

Because Peter is NOT smiling. He turns to SCOWL openly at Mrs. Song, suddenly privy to her SCHEMING.

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE)

(in MANDARIN, *hissed*)
What? You needed a friend!

Peter rolls his eyes--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Indeed, Peter Song had never *had* any friends--

EXT. CALIFORNIAN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

We hover above a CROWD of High Schoolers eating lunch in a sunny CALIFORNIAN SCHOOLYARD. But Peter Song is nowhere to be seen amongst them...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 --but Peter had never had any
bullies either.

Even as we move closer and closer to the scene, we still can't find Peter. It's like a WHERE'S WALDO we can't solve...

...finally we've narrowed in on a small CLUSTER of TEENS. But Peter isn't one of them. Huh... Wait, we're moving even *past* the teens... Now it seems like there's *no one* in the frame...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 For years he had managed to make
 himself nearly **invisible**.

Oh-- *There!* Half of Peter's FACE emerges from behind the PALM TREE he's leaning against, eating his lunch with CHOPSTICKS.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

We're looking at a CLASSROOM filled with seated STUDENTS. But again, Peter doesn't seem to be one of them. We slowly push in on one STUDENT in particular, whose hand is raised...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 Laying low had worked well for
 Peter *before* his family had moved
 across the country...

Teacher CALLS on this STUDENT. As he begins to speak we notice-- there seems to be something *behind* him--

PETER is lined up behind this student *so exactly* that he's perfectly hidden. Only when the student shifts in his seat while gesticulating do we catch GLIMPSES of Peter.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 So he had planned to do the very
 same here: Lay low.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

Now, Peter is in PLAIN SIGHT of everyone as he treks through the neighborhood to his new school. He's wearing a rather DISTURBED expression as he peeks over at:

Annalise, trailing beside him. GAWKING OPENLY at him.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 Unfortunately for Peter, it looked
 as though Annalise was *not* adept at
 laying low...

*As we rotate around behind Annalise into Annalise's Vision, of course Peter Song is once again a **GIRL** of unmatched **BEAUTY**. Annalise's girl Peter looks just as **PERTURBED** as-- the Peter in normal vision does. In fact, his concern is morphing into **DISDAIN**.*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Yes, Annalise was going to be a problem. Peter was sure of it.

PETER

Can't you talk?

Annalise just **OGLES** him wordlessly... Peter's **FROWN** deepens.

PETER (CONT'D)

Can you even hear me?

At this, Annalise *slowly* grows... a **SMILE**. Peter almost **RECOILS** from such a peculiar response. Annalise finally **NODS** at Peter in a daze-- *yes, I can hear*.

They've reached the looming **HIGH SCHOOL**, swarming with **PEERS**. Peter glances between the school and **GRINNING** Annalise...

PETER (CONT'D)

(mutter, sarcasm)

Terrific...

INT. SCHOOL ATRIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Peter's **FINGERNAILS** bite into his **PALMS**-- a nervous tick as he clenches his fist with rising **ANXIETY**...

He's doing his best to become **invisible** behind Annalise as they enter the school. But Peter's quickly learning that these students have made a pastime of **SPECTATING** Annalise.

PETER

Do they always stare at you like this!?

Annalise **SHRUGS**, **NODS**, without even taking her eyes off of Peter, without even taking her lovesick **GRIN** off her lips.

Peter notices a few peers **POINTING** at them and **SNICKERING**. He skulks even lower... nails **CUT** even deeper into his palm...

School Bell RINGS--!

INT. HOMEROOM CLASSROOM - DAY

Peter and Annalise are the last two **STUDENTS** to enter their homeroom. Annalise **PLOPS** into an empty desk.

Annalise PATS the empty desk in front of hers, inviting Peter to sit. Peter desperately SCANS the rest of the room, finding NO other empty seat, and instead finding that his PEERS have already begun STARING at him and WHISPERING.

Just then, their bird-like teacher, MRS. RADCLIFF (50s), scurries to the front of the class.

MRS. RADCLIFF

Take a seat! Quickly, quickly!
Homeroom is still a *class*-- We've
got a lot to get through today--

Peter GULPS before resigning himself to the desk in front of Annalise's. Peter *sinks* down into it, almost as if he wishes he could hide beneath it...

MRS. RADCLIFF (CONT'D)

First and foremost is a reminder of
our *dress code*. Ladies, I don't
care how fashionable these
"miniskirts" are. These are not the
streets of Paris, this is a *school*--

As Mrs. Radcliff LECTURES the class, Peter SETTLES in behind the STUDENT sitting in front of him... until he is indeed perfectly *invisible*, just as he had been in California...

Finally, Peter unwinds, SIGHS with relief. *Phew*. Maybe his signature *Laying Low* can be salvaged after all...

But then-- *NUDGE, NUDGE!* Annalise JABS Peter's elbow with a FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER.

Peter does his best to IGNORE Annalise. TENSING his whole body with irritation...

But Annalise does not let up-- *steadily* and *unrelentingly* shoving the piece of paper into Peter's elbow:

NUDGE... NUDGE... NUDGE... NUDGE...

Peter's face screws up in MOUNTING frustration until-- He SNAPS! SPINS to Annalise, SNATCHES the note! He CRUMPLES it up in front of her face!

MRS. RADCLIFF (CONT'D)

Mr. Song!

Mrs. Radcliff swoops by, PLUCKS the note from Peter's hand!

MRS. RADCLIFF (CONT'D)

Passing notes your first day, I
mean *really!*

Peter FILLS with abject HORROR as ALL EYES narrow in on him.

Students SMIRK and TITTER as Mrs. Radcliff unfurls the note. She takes a momentous BREATH before reading it aloud:

MRS. RADCLIFF (CONT'D)
 "I can write notes."

Mrs. Radcliff furrows her brow... For a moment, no one knows how to react...

And then-- everyone BURSTS out LAUGHING. Even Mrs. Radcliff struggles to stifle a CHUCKLE as she hands Peter the note--

MRS. RADCLIFF (CONT'D)
 Mr. Song, just because we *can*
 doesn't mean we *should*. Let's keep
 our thoughts to ourselves, shall
 we?

Peter BURNS with shame. He does his best to MURDER Annalise with a GLARE as Mrs. Radcliff returns to the front--

But Peter finds that Annalise is *not* burning with shame in the least. Instead, there she is, still dreamily gazing at Peter and **SMILING**.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 There it was again! Annalise was
 smiling-- *smiling!* A madwoman!

Peter SPINS to face the front of the room, CLENCHING his fist around the crumpled NOTE-- His fingernails DIG into his PALM--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 Well at this point, Peter knew that
 Annalise wasn't going to be shaken
 off easily--

PRE-LAP: SCHOOL BELL RING!

INT. HOMEROOM CLASSROOM - LATER

Peter *SHOVES* off his desk and BOLTS out of Homeroom! Annalise watches Peter go... her smile *WILTING*...

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peter PANTS as he SPRINTS through the hallways! He DODGES fellow STUDENTS as they pour out of classrooms.

Peter's eyes dart from looking over his shoulder, to glancing at his class schedule, to reading the classroom numbers beside the doors.

Finally, Peter SKIDS to a stop in front of one classroom, SLIPS into it--

INT. CALCULUS CLASS - CONTINUOUS

Peter quickly surveys the scene: There's ONE open desk near the front, and TWO open desks near the back. Peter hustles to the SOLE open desk, but just as he's about to drop into it--

LUCY
You can't sit there!

Peter hesitates. LUCY (17), a snide-faced Queen Bee, is seated in the desk behind the open one. Her sour face turns even sourer as she gets a good look at Peter's SCARRED face.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Um, you're *new* here right? That's
Randall's seat.

Peter PANICS as he looks at the PAIR of open desks in the back. He glances at the open DOORWAY, where Annalise could come barreling through at any second!

So Peter GULPS and then-- PLOPS into the solo seat!

LUCY (CONT'D)
Uh! Hello? Didn't you hear me?

Peter keeps his nervous eyes on the door. Lucy TAPS him--

LUCY (CONT'D) PETER
I said you can't sit there! Um-- uh--

Peter SPINS to Lucy and loudly proclaims with a WAVE:

PETER (CONT'D)
(Mandarin Chinese)
Ni hao!

SCHOOL BELL RINGS! Lucy can only give Peter a befuddled look as poor RANDALL enters the room and is relegated to the BACK.

TEACHER (O.S.)
Okay, class! Who's ready for some
integrals?

Peter's eyes are fixed anxiously on the open classroom door... but as the TEACHER drones on, and it becomes clear Annalise isn't coming... Peter SIGHS. Can finally *relax*...

RHONDA (O.S.)
Lucy!

Lucy and another girl, RHONDA, whisper to each other behind Peter's back-- just loudly enough for Peter to hear--

RHONDA (CONT'D)
(pointing to Peter)
What...?

LUCY
I don't *know*, it's like he doesn't even understand *English!*

RHONDA
What happened to his *face?*

LUCY
Beats me... whatever it was musta messed with his brain....

Peter BLUSHES. He lifts his thin PENCIL to his cheek as if he could hide his large SCAR behind it...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Now, Annalise--

INT. HOMEROOM CLASSROOM - EARLIER

Back to Annalise in HOMEROOM, her smile WILTING as Peter makes his swift escape--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
--She felt utterly *sorry*.

MONTAGE - SCHOOL - VARIOUS

A) *Annalise floats contemplatively in her own world through the school hallways... passing students wearing PUMPKINS for shoes, and doors made of static TELEVISIONS, and lockers composed of hundreds of BUTTERFLIES...*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
No, not sorry for herself-- quite sorry for *Peter*.

B) We *barely* catch a glimpse of PETER as he escapes into the hallway, hiding behind the rest of his Calculus class. His eyes are PEELED for Annalise...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
It didn't occur to Annalise that Peter might want to get rid of her. Instead, Annalise assumed Peter was ashamed for getting them in trouble.

C) *Annalise* watches her Art Classroom's door expectantly for Peter until-- the school bell that she sees as a big ol' BULLFROG, opens his mouth to emit a RING! *Annalise slumps with disappointment; Peter's not coming.*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Annalise wanted *desperately* to find Peter, to make it clear that she didn't blame him one bit!

D) Peter hides in the BOYS BATHROOM as he peeks out into the SWARM of STUDENTS passing-- is Annalise among them?

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
To insist that she still very much wanted to be friends!

E) *Annalise* JOGS with the rest of her gym class around an outdoor track made of MOLTEN LAVA. She gets sidetracked as she passes one of the school's WINDOWS... is that Peter in there? *Annalise* peers inside-- but she can't find Peter. Gym teacher BLOWS A WHISLE and *Annalise* begrudgingly JOGS away--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
But alas, *Annalise* could not find Peter all morning...

...(Girl) Peter shifts slightly in her seat... emerging from behind the STUDENT she's perfectly hidden herself behind. *Phew, close call!*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Until lunch time dawned.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Peter moves through the lunch line, GRIPPING his lunch tray anxiously and surveying the CROWD. Peter FILLS with immeasurable DREAD. The world *s l o w s* as Peter SPOTS:

ANNALISE.

On her tip-toes. Scanning the CAFETERIA for Peter. And then-- LOCKING her EYES on him. *Annalise* waves at Peter excitedly!

The world returns to NORMAL SPEED as *Annalise* fast approaches! Peter reflexively *cringes* away from her-- causing Peter to accidentally STEP on the foot of the girl standing beside him in line: LUCY.

Peter BALKS as Lucy YELPS and spins around!

LUCY

OW!

Lucy GRIMACES, *shrinks* away from Peter with disgust upon getting a good, close look at his SCARRED face.

LUCY (CONT'D)

(rubbing her foot
dramatically)

Ugh! What is wrong with you!?

Lucy's SHRILLNESS summons a group of ONLOOKERS to gather just as Annalise arrives like an eager puppy at Peter's side. Lucy soaks up the power of her growing AUDIENCE, staring Peter directly in the eye as she SHOUTS:

LUCY (CONT'D)

Stay away from me, you FREAK!

Instantly Annalise transforms from GIDDY-- to **INCENSED**.

Annalise pivots slowly toward Lucy, MALICE in her eyes...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

That word... Annalise had heard that word whispered behind her back... Had heard it bandied about casually... Had felt it about her own self, deep down in her marrow.

Onlookers are starting to notice and point toward Annalise's palpable RAGE--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Annalise did not like that word.

--*we move behind Annalise's head into Annalise's Vision, just in time to catch (girl) Peter's deeply ASHAMED reaction to being called a FREAK so publicly.*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

But whereas she normally absorbed it silently and unmoving, today was different.

Annalise raises a single, shaking FIST up in front of her, as if she's about to PUNCH Lucy in the face--!

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Today the sound of that word, well. It cracked her.

--as we return to normal vision, Annalise screws up her face in pure contempt, GRABS a handful of MASHED POTATOES from Lucy's lunch tray, and--

CHUCKS them directly into Lucy's smug face! SPLAT!!!

For a moment, there's nothing but STUNNED SILENCE:

- Splatted Lucy is FROZEN in SHOCK!
- The ONLOOKERS are SPEECHLESS, unbelieving!
- And Peter- Peter can't help but look at Annalise in... **AWE**.

Annalise is quite *pleased* with herself. This time, the SMILE she grows across Annalise's lips is quite... **MANIACAL**.

ONLOOKER (O.S.)

FOOD FIGHT!

With that declaration, a full-fledged FOOD FIGHT erupts in the cafeteria! Students take COVER, and food goes FLYING!

But Peter barely notices, still transfixed by Annalise and her devious SMIRK.

A HOT DOG just barely misses smacking Peter in the head! Seeing this, Annalise grabs Peter by the hand-- leads him to take cover under a LUNCH TABLE--

Annalise and Peter huddle together under the lunch table, watching scoops of mushy PEAS and hunks of MEAT and dollops of JELL-O SOAR through the air and SMACK victims with satisfying SPLATS!

But of course, when we shift into Annalise's Vision, the FOOD FIGHT looks quite different. It's a storm of mishmashed items: squawking CHICKENS and revving CHAINSAWS and potted PLANTS and puffy TEDDY BEARS whizzing every-which-way through the air!

CHAOTIC and ABSURD and GLORIOUS.

Annalise turns to GRIN devilishly at Peter. (Girl) Peter looks at Annalise in turn, slack-jaw at the massive food fight she's witnessing--

--and finally, for the very first time, (girl) Peter BEAMS at Annalise.

*Annalise is downright **breathless** at the sight.*

Despite the wild scene surrounding them, Annalise & (girl) Peter's eyes connect like magnets, unable to look away from each other.

Their matching SMILES are positively LUMINOUS.

PRE-LAP: SCHOOL BELL RINGS!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL / NEIGHBORHOOD - AFTERNOON

All the food-stained TEENAGERS spout of the High School's entrance, CHATTERING excitedly about the fallout from the food fight. Annalise and Peter are two of the last to leave.

They amble down the sidewalk home together. The SKYLINE of the **BIG CITY** looms on the horizon beyond SUBURBIA.

Annalise is still GLOWING from this afternoon. She can't suppress her GRIN as she sneaks peeks over at Peter.

But Peter's smile has VANISHED, signature BROODING returned. His sight is on his shoes as he ruminates. His hands CLENCH into FISTS, his nervous tick.

Peter is TORN from his thoughts as Annalise *TAPS on his HAND*.

Peter glances at Annalise to find that her SMILE is GONE now too. Instead, she's is giving Peter's hand a CONCERNED look.

Peter lifts his HAND to inspect it.

PETER

What?

We finally see: There are dark SCARS all along Peter's PALM where his fingernails have repeatedly SLICED into them.

Annalise gently brushes her pointer finger over the scars...

Peter SNATCHES his hand away from her, embarrassed.

PETER (CONT'D)

Oh. *That*. Just a bad habit.

Even now, Peter's already back to CLENCHING his fists. Fingernails finding their old WOUNDS.

Annalise's concern deepens. She reaches into her SACHEL and pulls out a PEN and PAPER. She SCRIBBLES a note and passes it to Peter. Peter SIGHS before opening it:

What's wrong?

Peter STARES at the note, EMOTION rising against his will...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Perhaps it was the fact that Annalise was a mute and could never betray his secrets.

Annalise HANDS Peter the pen, her eyes encouraging him--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Perhaps it was the earnestness that shone from every pore of Annalise's face.

--Peter hesitantly takes the pen from her.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Perhaps it was simply because Peter had been ambushed by the glow of friendship for the very first time in his life. Whatever the reason, Peter decided to do something very uncharacteristic that day: Be seen.

Peter SCRATCHES out the question mark on the note and ADDS:

What's wrong with me?

Peter hands the note back to Annalise.

Annalise reads Peter's message several times over, truly PUZZLED. She looks from the note, up to Peter, and back down to the note. She SHRUGS, shakes her head NO-- No, *nothing*.

PETER

Pft. You can't know that. You don't even know me.

Peter returns his sulking eyes to the ground.

Annalise screws up her face in determination. She pries her pen out of Peter's hand and writes a new note on the back:

Then tell me about yourself

PETER (CONT'D)

What kind of question is that?

Annalise *rolls her eyes*-- gestures at him: *Come on!*

PETER (CONT'D)

Well, I don't know what to say!

Annalise STOPS walking. Crosses her arms.

PETER (CONT'D)

Fine! What do you wanna know?

Annalise thinks... then writes another note:

Tell me about your last home

Peter considers this... and then:

PETER (CONT'D)

Well... I guess that's actually *kind of* an interesting story... My family used to live in California-- in Hollywood.

(off Annalise's excitement)

Yeah, *Hollywood*. I could even see the Hollywood sign from my window. But it wasn't all that glamorous like the movies make you think. My parents were nuts about saving money for a better home, so we lived in a real dump--

As Annalise listens to Peter... her SMILE slowly RETURNS...

EXT. ANNALISE'S HOUSE - LATER

Peter is ANIMATED as he finishes another anecdote on their walk home. Annalise listens, completely rapt.

PETER

--but on the hundredth-try, I stood up, and I *stayed up!* No one saw me, but I *swear*, I taught myself to surf, I really did! I just never really told anyone about it because-- well. I don't know. I didn't know *who* to tell, I guess. My mother would've been furious if she found out I was in the dirty ocean--

Suddenly, Annalise STOPS walking. Peter is almost surprised by her halt... until he takes a look around him.

PETER (CONT'D)

Oh... we're home already?

Annalise SHRUGS. *Yeah*. Peter seems almost *disappointed*...

PETER (CONT'D)

Huh. Well... See you tomorrow?

Annalise smiles, savoring this question. She NODS.

PETER (CONT'D)

Alright then. Well. Bye.

Peter turns to cross the street to his house, but Annalise hooks a hand around his elbow-- *wait!*

Peter faces her, expectant. Annalise TEARS another slip of paper from her notebook, SCRAWLS a note inside. She has to shield her writing with her other hand to keep Peter from reading it too soon.

When she's done, Annalise FOLDS the note, presses it into Peter's hand. Peter barely catches Annalise's SMILE before she spins and skips into her family's home--

INT. ANNALISE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Breathless, Annalise presses her back into her front door as she shuts it. She's BEAMING with joy.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Annalise could not remember a better day in her life than this one.

EXT. ANNALISE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Peter stares at Annalise's front door, behind which Annalise has just disappeared...

Alone on the sidewalk, Peter turns his attention to the note. He opens it and reads:

There's nothing wrong with you. I promise.

Despite himself, Peter GRINS.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Peter's happiness, however, was short-lived--

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Late at night, Peter stands in front of a full-length MIRROR in his bedroom. He GLOWERS at his reflection...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Inside, he felt as rotten as he always did, as rotten as rotten can be.

TEARS WELL in Peter's eyes, SCORN brimming behind them...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Because Peter, like Annalise, was also grappling with a painful secret.

(MORE)

STORYTELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 One he had never told a soul. One
 he had never even uttered aloud to
himself.

Peter's FISTS TIGHTEN... FINGERNAILS pressing harder and
harder into the flesh of his palm...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 You see, there was indeed something
wrong with Peter...

His fingernails BREAK SKIN, **BLOOD** drips down his knuckles!

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 ...and Peter knew exactly what it
 was.

With an angry GRUNT-- Peter SWIPES his hand across his
 reflection in the mirror! A smear of BLOOD obscures him
 ominously...

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Annalise-- wearing her PINK HAIR RIBBON-- munches on her
 breakfast cheerily. She's bopping in her seat to the SONG
 playing on the RADIO. She's all SMILES.

Across the table, Father's staring at her suspiciously. *Who
 is this girl, and what has she done with his mopey daughter!?*

Mother swoops in with some more eggs for the table. Father
 gives her a pointed look, nodding toward Annalise. *What's
 with her!?* Mother SHRUGS with a coy smile.

MOTHER
 Annalise, you're wearing your hair
 ribbon? I thought you hated that
 thing.

Annalise picks up a piece of CHALK and a well-worn SLATE that
 she uses to communicate with her parents at the table. On it
 she writes: ***You always say it makes me look pretty...?***

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Oh... yes, well it does! Doesn't it
 Harold?

Father's still in disbelief. Annalise GRINS at him as she
 takes another BITE of her breakfast--

EXT. ANNALISE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Annalise BRIGHTENS as she exits her house and bounds down the porch stairs. Peter is waiting for her on the sidewalk, ready for their walk to school. Once Annalise reaches him:

PETER

Okay, I told you about my surfing,
now I wanna hear something that
you've never told anyone.

Annalise thinks... *Pulls* out her notebook, begins writing...

INT. SCHOOL ATRIUM - CONTINUOUS

This time, when Peter and Annalise enter the school atrium, they don't even *notice* the multitudes of students GAWKING at and GOSSIPING about them.

Peter is too busy reading the long note that Annalise has written to him to pay them any mind. Annalise watches Peter read with anticipation...

PETER

(finished reading)
Wow... is-- is this true?

Annalise NODS. Peter absorbs this... and then *SNORTS* with laughter. Annalise GRINS too.

PETER (CONT'D)

Jeez, Annalise! You're kind of a
rebel, huh?
(lowers voice)
Did the school ever figure out who
did it?

Annalise shakes her head NO with a smirk.

PETER (CONT'D)

So *all these people* have no idea
that *you're* the secret graffiti
artist...

Peter consults the note again-- then:

PETER (CONT'D)

Can I ask you a question--?

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - A NEW DAY

Annalise and Peter eat LUNCH together at their own table:

PETER
You really *never* talk? ...*Ever*?

Annalise NODS, writes on the notebook between them: ***I can't.***

Peter mulls this over...

PETER (CONT'D)
Did you just forget how?

Annalise rolls her eyes and shakes her head NO--

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - A NEW AFTERNOON

It's late Autumn now, the leaves changed into vibrant hues. Peter and Annalise KICK at fallen leaves as they walk home from school. BIG CITY looms on the horizon.

PETER
You don't even talk to your parents?

Annalise shakes her head NO--

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - A NEW DAY

Annalise has just BOWLED a gutter ball. Peter approaches her holding his own BOWLING BALL.

PETER
You don't even talk to *yourself* when you're alone?

Annalise shakes her head NO--

INT. ANNALISE'S LIVING ROOM - A NEW DAY

Mother brings a tray of fresh-baked COOKIES into the living room for Peter and Annalise as they STUDY.

PETER
(taking bite of cookie)
What if you talk in your sleep?

Annalise shakes her head NO--

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - A NEW NIGHT

Annalise and Peter SHIVER in the snowy bleachers as they CHEER on their school's FOOTBALL TEAM.

PETER
What if I paid you ten bucks to say something?

Annalise shakes her head NO--

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Peter and Annalise munch on POPCORN as they watch the JAMES BOND film *YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE*. Peter leans over to Annalise:

PETER

(hiss)

What if someone held a gun to my head and they demanded you say something or they'll shoot!

Annalise SMACKS his shoulder, holds a finger up to her smiling lips: *Shhh!* Peter returns his attention to James Bond on screen for only a second before:

PETER (CONT'D)

(whisper)

...You'd be a good spy--

INT. HOMEROOM CLASSROOM - A NEW DAY

Peter keeps one eye on Mrs. Radcliff as he furtively passes a NOTE back to Annalise. Annalise opens it and reads:

So what do you do with all that time you spend not talking?

Annalise picks up her pen to respond, but thinks better of it and instead--

INT. ANNALISE'S ROOM - A NEW AFTERNOON

Annalise DUMPS a pile of BOOKS onto Peter's lap.

PETER

Annalise, you're gonna crush me!

Annalise responds by DUMPING *another* hefty pile of BOOKS onto Peter's lap. She goes to her overflowing BOOKCASE for more--

PETER (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Annalise! Alright, I get it! You like to read!

Peter's sitting on Annalise's bed in her room. He spreads the books across the quilt, looks them over one-by-one:

PETER (CONT'D)

Hmmm... *Pride & Prejudice*, never read it. *The Lord of the Rings*, never read that one either.

Annalise seats herself next to Peter to watch his assessment.

PETER (CONT'D)

Oh! *Catcher in the Rye*. This one I have read. Didn't like it though-- the main character was so *annoying*.

Annalise snatches the book away from Peter with a pout!

PETER (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry, you like it? Well I suppose you'll think I'm a 'phony' then, huh?

Annalise shoves Peter's shoulder playfully while Peter sifts through the massive pile of books on the bed: *Anne of Green Gables; Alice's Adventure in Wonderland; And Then There Were None; Jane Eyre; To Kill A Mockingbird...*

PETER (CONT'D)

I can't believe you've read *all* of these... Which one's your favorite?

Annalise considers all the options... finally selects one and hands it to Peter. *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

PETER (CONT'D)

Mm. Sorry, I haven't read this one either.

Peter offers the book back to Annalise. She takes a pen and writes on the inside cover: ***To the phony.***

Peter SNORTS with a grin. Annalise hands it back.

PETER (CONT'D)

For me?

Annalise NODS. Peter is genuinely touched.

PETER (CONT'D)

Well thanks... Tell me what you like so much about it.

Annalise starts writing a response in her NOTEBOOK--

INT. HOMEROOM CLASSROOM - A NEW DAY

--Annalise FINISHES writing and furtively RIPS a page out of her notebook. Careful not to catch Mrs. Radcliff's eye, she passes it up to Peter:

So what do you do with all the time you spend not talking?

Peter GRINS and--

PETER (PRE-LAP)
Okay, don't tell anyone...

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - A NEW AFTERNOON

In Peter's bedroom now, Annalise gives Peter a sarcastic look: *Of course I won't tell anyone...*

PETER
 (chuckle)
 Well-- don't write anyone then.

Annalise NODS, sits on the bed, watches him expectantly.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Alright... it's not really a *hobby*--
 well I suppose you *could* call it a
 hobby. I just do it sometimes when
 I'm... when I can't fall asleep
 or... when I feel...

Peter SIGHS, pulls out a RECORD from its sheath and places it onto a RECORD PLAYER.

PETER (CONT'D)
 I'll just show you...

When the needle hits the vinyl, it begins to play "MOON RIVER" sung by Audrey Hepburn. As the first verse flows, Peter's nerves are palpable. He TIGHTENS his fist, fingernails *digging* into his palm...

PETER (CONT'D)
 Can you... can you turn around?

Annalise gives Peter a quizzical look--

PETER (CONT'D)
 Please?

Annalise does so, facing the foot of the bed. But unbeknownst to Peter, Annalise can still spot him through the full-length MIRROR. She watches as Peter takes in a shaking breath... and ever-so-quietly begins to sing in **falsetto**:

PETER (CONT'D)
 (singing softly)
*Two drifters, off to see the world
 There's such a lot of world to see*

As Peter sings, we move into *Annalise's Vision: (Girl) Peter practically trembles as she sings. Peter's falsetto matches her angelic face perfectly. Annalise is incredibly moved by the song. Her jaw slacks. Her eyes well.*

PETER (CONT'D)
 (singing softly)
*We're after the same rainbow's end
 / waitin' 'round the bend / My
 huckleberry friend / Moon river,
 and me...*

The record ends... STATIC crackling as it loops...

Annalise-- back still turned to Peter-- struggles to wrangle in her emotion. She covertly dabs the moisture from her eyes.

PETER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (whisper)
 Sorry... sorry I--

Annalise spins around, shaking her head no, no, no!

Annalise searches around for a pen-- Can't find one in her pocket-- Can't find one in her satchel-- finally gives up.

She stands and places one hand on either of Peter's shoulders. She looks Peter in the eyes. She nods softly...

PETER (CONT'D)
 ...You liked it?

Annalise answers by turning around and starting the RECORD playing over again. Annalise seats herself on the bed once more, her back facing Peter as the song starts up.

She gives Peter a THUMBS UP over her shoulder: *Again!*

Despite himself, Peter grins. OPENS his mouth to sing again--

PRE-LAP: TELEPHONE RIIIIING!

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Annalise ANSWERS the phone ringing in her living room. Behind her, Mother and Father watch THE 1968 NEW YEARS BALL DROP on TV. There's a pause as Annalise waits for someone to speak...

PETER (ON PHONE)
 ...Annalise?

Annalise doesn't answer.

PETER (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
*Hi, it's Peter. But you probably
 could tell that-- um. How's your
 Christmas break going?*

Annalise SMILES, but of course doesn't answer.

PETER (CONT'D)
*Oh right... You're Jewish. Well,
 it's still nice not having school,
 huh? Listen, I called 'cause-- Do
 me a favor and go look out your
 bedroom window. Okay?*

Peter HANGS UP the phone. Annalise is intrigued...

INT. ANNALISE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Annalise peers out her bedroom window: Outside it's dark, the neighborhood blanketed with SNOW, neighbors' CHRISTMAS LIGHTS twinkle along the block.

Across the street: There's PETER standing in his bedroom window. He holds up a big SIGN, lights it with a FLASHLIGHT:

I CAN WRITE NOTES TOO

Annalise stifles a giggle! Peter's grinning goofily across the street. Annalise holds up a finger-- *One second!*

She quickly pulls a MARKER and CONSTRUCTION PAPER out of her ART SUPPLIES BIN. SCRIBBLES on it--

Annalise holds a SIGN to her window; it's got elegant handwriting and artful DESIGNS along the edges:

NOT AS WELL AS I CAN

Peter is visibly CHUCKLING across the street in his window. Annalise relishes the sight...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
*As the school year wore on,
 something quite extraordinary was
 happening to Annalise...*

EXT. FOREST - DAY

It's SPRINGTIME now. The snow has melted, and this FOREST has begun to flourish with green regrowth. Annalise and Peter stroll through it idly.

PETER

...the thing is, I don't want to learn to write it! I *speak* Chinese just fine, so I don't see why I have to go to school on Saturdays just to learn *more* Chinese.

(sigh)

Ma wants me to be able to write to my Grandparents without her translating... but I've never even *met* my Grandparents in person! Why should I have to learn thousands of characters just for them?

Annalise is barely listening to what Peter's saying... She's looking around herself at the forest, growing *uneasy*...

...When we finally look at the forest as Annalise sees it, her unique vision makes this place unmistakable for us: This is exactly where Annalise attempted suicide.

Annalise's chin quivers. She slows to a stop as she desperately tries to rein in her spiraling despair.

PETER (CONT'D)

Oh, no... Annalise? What's wrong?

Peter rubs her arms awkwardly, as if he's trying to warm her up. Concern all over his face.

PETER (CONT'D)

Hey-- hey! What's the matter?

Annalise opens her mouth, but of course can't say anything. Instead, tears leak onto her cheeks. She *SNIFFS* them back.

PETER (CONT'D)

Here, here-- let me--

Peter pulls a pencil and a scrap of paper out of his pocket. Hands it urgently to Annalise-- desperate to understand!

Annalise takes the pencil and paper uncertainly. She stares down at them, unsure what to say... Finally writes:

A bad memory here

PETER (CONT'D)

(whisper)

... What happened?

Annalise CAN'T LOOK AT HIM... She finally answers:

I tried to give up

Peter stares at the note... Soaking in what it means...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

(whisper)

The closer Annalise got to Peter...

...Peter gently takes the pencil from Annalise. Writes:

I'm glad you didn't

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

...the *lighter* she felt her secret become.

After reading this, Annalise finally summons the courage to LOOK UP at Peter--

INT. ANNALISE'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

--*(Girl) Peter looks FLAWLESS in Annalise's Eyes as they sit next to each other on Annalise's bed. A strand of (girl) Peter's LONG HAIR falls into Peter's face.*

Annalise hesitantly... reaches up, brushes Peter's hair aside. Annalise's fingers graze Peter's CHEEK...

(Girl) Peter's eyes fall to her feet, embarrassed. Annalise quickly drops her hand-- Oh no... did she go too far?

PETER

I appreciate-- you know... that you've never asked...

Annalise furrows her brow, confused. Peter points to his SCARRED CHEEK, where Annalise had just touched him.

PETER (CONT'D)

About my scar.

(sigh)

It's not even an interesting story. I pulled a pan of hot oil off the stove when I was really little. I don't even have any memory of it...

(beat)

But that's the thing about having a scar everyone can stare at... They'll never let me forget what I can't even remember in the first place...

...Annalise pulls out her NOTEBOOK... She's DEBATING writing this... but finally decides to do it:

When I look at you, I don't see your scar

Annalise hands it to him, NERVOUS. It's a sliver of the TRUTH... Peter reads the note... and then *FROWNS* even *DEEPER*--

PETER (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
Annalise--

Suddenly, Peter stands up from the bed, moving toward the door, not even looking at Annalise--

PETER (CONT'D)
That's nice and all, but I'd rather you not pretend I'm-- I'm perfect or something...

Peter pauses at the door, flustered:

PETER (CONT'D)
I'm not. I'm not perf-- I'm--

Annalise is TAKEN ABACK by Peter's irritation--

PETER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
(hasty)
Nevermind-- I better get home, I'll see you tomorrow.

Peter leaves Annalise confused...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
...But as Peter got closer to Annalise, his secret was becoming unbearably *heavy*--

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Annalise sits on Peter's bed, her back to Peter as he again SINGS in **FALSETTO** to a RECORD playing.

Annalise studies Peter surreptitiously through the MIRROR. This time, Peter is less shy performing, EMOTING as he sings.

Because (girl) Peter doesn't know Annalise is watching through the mirror, Peter doesn't hide her sorrow. And that sorrow DEEPENS as (girl) Peter reaches the climax of the SONG; TEARS well and threaten to FALL down her cheeks...

Seeing Peter's tears, Annalise tears up herself... She reaches a comforting hand out to him, but just as Annalise's fingertips are about to brush his shoulder--

Peter moves away from her. Rips the needle from the record. Annalise is consumed with worry for him...

PETER (PRE-LAP)
Here, I've got something for you--

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - AFTERNOON

While walking home from school, Annalise accepts yet another NOTE from Peter. She opens it and reads:

PROM?

Annalise stops walking.

It's like she can't believe what she's reading. She glances up at Peter-- *Really!?*

Peter's anxious...

PETER
 ... Well!?

Annalise can't help it-- she tears up, happy tears. She SNIFFS them back hastily, pulls out her PEN, flips the paper over to reply--

PETER (CONT'D)
 You know, this is one of those times we talked about where I'd rather you just nod or something, 'cause the suspense is--

--Annalise notices that Peter is NERVOUSLY clenching his fingernails into his palm again. So Annalise ditches the paper and instead reaches out for Peter's hand--

Peter shuts up. Annalise flips Peter's hand over, revealing his FINGERNAIL SCARS. Annalise writes in pen directly onto his skin, arcing along the edge of the scars:

I would be honored

The two friends GAZE into each other's eyes...

MOTHER (PRE-LAP)
 Ooooooh, we are good...

INT. SONG FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON

Mother and Mrs. Song GIGGLE in the Song living room, sipping from TEACUPS and well on their way to DRUNK.

MRS. SONG
We are *very* good.

MOTHER
You know, Mei... Annalise's father
and I went to Prom together back in
our day...

MRS. SONG
Oh, *really*?

MOTHER
Yes, and you know what else? I do
believe I managed to hook him that
very night. It's a magical thing,
Prom... it could lead to... *you*
know...

Mother TAPS the WEDDING RING on her finger... Mrs. Song
finally understands her meaning-- *GASPS!*

MRS. SONG
You think!?

MOTHER
It's possible!

MRS. SONG
We should *be* so lucky! I'd lost
hope that *my* Peter would ever--

MOTHER
I know. Me too...

Mother grows very serious:

MOTHER (CONT'D)
If it has any chance of happening,
we'll have to do everything in our
power to make sure Prom is simply
perfect for them.

Mrs. Song and Mother SMIRK at each other, partners in crime.
Mrs. Song CLINKS her teacup to Mother's--

MRS. SONG
Deal.

The two women DOWN the rest of their drinks. Mrs. Song
reaches toward the tea tray in front of them-- Picks up a
plate of DRY TOAST and offers it to Mother.

MOTHER

Oh-- No, thanks. If I'm honest, I don't really care for toast.

Mrs. Song's jaw DROPS.

MRS. SONG

You don't!? Why do you cook it all the time!?

MOTHER

I make it for you!

MRS. SONG

I don't like toast!

MOTHER

But *you* make it all the time!

MRS. SONG

I make it for *you*!

They both BUST into drunken GIGGLES-- Mrs. Song TOSSES the plate of toast over her shoulder where it all goes TUMBLING to the ground. This CRACKS them up even more!

Mrs. Song lifts up the big bottle of WHISKEY:

MRS. SONG (CONT'D)

How about this one?

MOTHER

Now *that* I like!

Mrs. Song lifts the lid of the TEAPOT and pours the liquor directly inside-- causing Mother to GIGGLE even more--

Just then-- Peter comes in the front door! Mrs. Song GASPS and hastily chucks the bottle of WHISKEY under the couch.

Mrs. Song and Mother sit up straight, feigning sobriety.

PETER

Hi Ma. Hi Mrs. Gold.

Peter trudges over to them. He reaches for the TEAPOT to pour himself a cup-- But Mrs. Song SMACKS his hands away!

MRS. SONG

Aiya!

Peter is startled backwards. Mother SNORTS back her laughter--

MRS. SONG (CONT'D)
 No, um. This is-- this is our
 special... *Friday tea*...

At this, Mother LOSES it. Mrs. Song can't keep it together
 any more either.

O-kay... PETER MOTHER (O.S.)
 (laughing)
Friday tea!

Peter just shakes his head, retreats to his room upstairs--

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Peter picks up the PHONE in his room and dials a number he
 knows by heart. He WRITES on a piece of paper as he does so--

PETER
 (into phone)
 ... Annalise? It's Peter.

Peter HANGS up the phone. He goes to his window and holds up
 the SIGN he's just made:

OUR MOTHERS ARE STRANGE

Across the street, Annalise peers out her bedroom window,
 reads his sign. She GRINS. Writes a sign in response:

MUST BE WHERE WE GOT IT FROM

Peter smiles softly. He WAVES goodbye at Annalise before
 dropping his curtain and withdrawing back into his room.

But as he does so, there are TEARS forming in his eyes...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 Indeed, by the end of his senior
 year, Peter could barely endure his
 secret any longer--

INT. TAILOR'S SHOP - DAY

Mrs. Song and a TAILOR flutter around Peter. They MEASURE and
 PIN the PROM SUIT he's wearing, fitting it to his body.

But Peter barely notices them, transfixed by his own
 reflection in the mirror... *Disgusted* by it...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Every time he looked in the mirror,
he saw a monster. Every time he
tried to smile, he felt a fraud.

Finally, Peter looks away from himself.

INT. DRESS SHOP - DAY

Annalise is GIDDY as she *bursts* from behind a DRESSING ROOM DOOR! Mother is waiting eagerly on the other side of it.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

And Annalise, well. Peter felt even
more miserable when he looked at
her.

Annalise is wearing a GORGEOUS GOWN: a dreamy blue, with a fitted bodice and layered tiers of romantic tulle. Annalise surveys herself in the MIRROR and positively *GLOWS*.

In Annalise's Eyes, the GOWN is truly DAZZLING: The fitted bodice has the appearance of rippling WATER; the tiered tulle skirt is instead a mesmerizing array of lit SPARKLERS. Sprays of flame GLITTER at the tips.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

The way Annalise's eyes shone when
they landed on him. The way she
grinned, no matter what Peter wrote
in his notes. The way she
complimented him and *praised* him
and *cherished* him.

Mother is overcome with bittersweet emotion at seeing her little girl now a young woman.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Where those things should have made
Peter feel loved, they only made
him feel a colossal **phony**.

MOTHER

Oh Annalise... You're simply
perfect.

Annalise uncharacteristically TACKLES her Mother in a HUG. Mother is surprised by it, then *MELTS* around Annalise.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

By Prom night, Peter had never felt
more out of place--

INT. PETER'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Peter-- in his PROM SUIT-- does his best to BANDAGE his palm's bleeding fingernail WOUNDS while fighting back TEARS.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
He'd never felt *uglier*...

INT. ANNALISE'S LIVING ROOM

Annalise's Grandfather CLOCK *tick.. tick... ticks...* Peter watches it morosely as he waits on the couch...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
...He'd never felt more like *giving up*.

Peter glances up to see ANNALISE coming down the stairs in her spectacular PROM DRESS.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Annalise, on the other hand--

Annalise is clearly on CLOUD NINE. (Girl) Peter FORCES a smile for her.

INT. ANNALISE'S HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT

Annalise is BLISSFUL in Peter's arms as their PARENTS fawn over them, snapping PHOTOS on the front porch.

INT. MR. SONG'S CAR - NIGHT

Annalise GLOWS in the passenger seat as Peter drives his father's CAR to Prom. Annalise glances at him, BEAMING!

But Annalise finds that Peter doesn't smile back at her... In fact, he won't even *look* at her, his STOIC eyes on the road.

Annalise DEFLATES... her expression CLOUDS with WORRY...

PETER
(half-hearted)
...You look nice.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Peter and Annalise trudge toward the school. Peter's eyes are downcast; Annalise's are intent on Peter.

Annalise *sets her jaw*. She reaches out-- and HOLDS HIS HAND.

Determined, Annalise SMILES at him again, PULLS him along--

MONTAGE - HIGH SCHOOL GYM - PROM

The school gymnasium is charmingly decorated. All the kids are gussied up and jubilant. A LIVE BAND plays Sinatra's *The Way You Look Tonight*.

Annalise PLASTERS on an encouraging SMILE throughout; Peter AVOIDS her gaze, grows increasingly blue:

- Annalise scoops cups of colorful PUNCH for them to sip.
- Annalise passes Peter a note: ***You look nice too!***
- Annalise playfully drapes STREAMERS on Peter's shoulders.
- Annalise pulls Peter onto the DANCE FLOOR. She latches both of their hands together and TWIRLS Peter in circles until the whole world is spinning around them... But it's no use...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - PROM - LATER

Annalise and Peter are smack-dab in the middle of the DANCE FLOOR, engulfed by wildly dancing Prom-goers. By now, Peter's disengaged fully, in his own world as Annalise tries to get him to dance. Annalise is growing discouraged... *desperate...*

BAND MEMBER

(as current song ends)

Alright, guys and gals, this is the last dance of the night! Be sure to share it with someone *special--*

The Band strikes up the song: *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*.

All the couples in the room embrace for a SLOW DANCE. Annalise takes the lead, wrapping her arms around Peter's shoulders. Peter hesitantly raises his hands to her hips.

BAND SINGER

Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high / There's a land that I've heard of once in a lullaby.

Annalise steps CLOSER to Peter. TOUCHES her forehead to his--

And finally, for the first time that night, their eyes CONNECT. Annalise's fake smile is gone now, earnestness in its place.

Annalise peers so deeply into Peter's eyes he's left feeling naked. And yet, he cannot bring himself to pull his eyes away, *seized* by her gaze.

BAND SINGER (CONT'D)
*Somewhere over the rainbow, skies
 are blue / And the dreams that you
 dare to dream, really do come true.*

Peter's eyes brim with TEARS, but this time, he doesn't blink, doesn't hide. This time, he shows them to Annalise. It breaks Annalise's heart, but she doesn't look away.

She sees him.

Sees her.

BAND SINGER (CONT'D)
*Somewhere over the rainbow, blue
 birds fly / Birds fly over the
 rainbow, Why then, oh why can't I?*

(Girl) Peter opens her mouth-- as if she's finally about to say something! Annalise listens with all her might, on pins and needles!

But-- It's too much for Peter. He rips his eyes away, casts them to the floor. Turns his head to hide his burning tears.

BAND SINGER (CONT'D)
*If happy little bluebirds fly
 beyond the rainbow / Why, oh why
 can't I?*

As the song ENDS, Peter hurriedly pulls himself out of Annalise's arms. He retreats from the dance floor, leaving Annalise behind. Alone. *Heartbroken.*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 Annalise knew what she saw behind
 Peter's eyes--

INT. MR. SONG'S CAR - NIGHT

Now Annalise is upset too, trying to hide her melancholy from Peter as he drives them home in SILENCE. Annalise's breath HITCHES with rising, untamable DESPERATION.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 --she had felt it once before too.
 Whatever Peter was hiding... it was
killing him.

Suddenly-- Annalise GRABS a scrap of paper and pen from her purse! She FURIOUSLY scribbles as she succumbs to her tears--

Annalise SHAKES Peter's shoulder urgently. She points to the side of the road emphatically--

PETER

Annalise--! Don't push me!

Annalise is ANGRY as she shoves his shoulder again-- pointing at the side of the road--

PETER (CONT'D)

Okay, okay! Fine!

Peter pulls the car over as Annalise SNIFFLES. Even after the car is in park and idling, Peter doesn't face her.

Annalise SHOVES the NOTE she wrote into his lap:

What's wrong?

Peter doesn't even pick the note up. Doesn't answer.

Annalise SCRAWLS another note-- SHOVES it into his lap:

WHAT'S WRONG?

Again, no response. So another:

WHAT'S WRONG!?

Suddenly-- Peter GASPS in DESPAIR!

PETER (CONT'D)

ME!

It's like this has uncorked all of Peter's emotion. He BURSTS into SOBS-- body-wracking, breathless, SOBS. He hunches over, buries his face in his hands.

Annalise softens... She can't bear to witness (girl) Peter so upset! Annalise scoots across the seat-- closing the wide gap between them. She EMBRACES Peter.

(Girl) Peter deteriorates at her touch, folding into Annalise's chest and allowing all of the much-needed weeping to be wept.

Annalise tries to catch Peter's gaze again, the way they had during the dance. When their pupils do connect, Annalise implores (girl) Peter with her eyes, with everything she has: Please... tell me...

Peter is slowly swayed...

PETER (CONT'D)

(through tears)

Annalise... I...

Peter's voice catches in her throat. Her chin trembles as she tries again:

PETER (CONT'D)
(barely audible)
...I have a secret.

Annalise doesn't break her gaze with Peter, doesn't even blink. She waits patiently.

PETER (CONT'D)
(whisper)
You'll think I'm insane... but... I
feel inside... that...

(Girl) Peter takes in a shaky breath-- she's terrified:

PETER (CONT'D)
(whispered)
I'm a woman.

Annalise GASPS! SHOCKED!

ANNALISE
Peter-- you are!

Peter is STUNNED right back!

For a moment, neither Annalise nor Peter can talk, can move, can breathe! Finally:

PETER
Y-- Y-- You can talk!?

They GAPE at each other some more! This is unbelievable! Peter SMILES!

PETER (CONT'D)
Annalise-- you have a lovely voice!

And now Annalise is SMILING right back! She takes a DEEP, MOMENTOUS BREATH-- and she TALKS.

We don't hear what she says, we only watch as Annalise talks a-mile-a-minute. The longer Annalise talks, the lighter and freer Peter becomes. Tears DRYING. Spirits LIFTING. The two of them GLOWING in the WONDER they have for each other.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Just as Peter had told Annalise,
Annalise told Peter. She told Peter
of her special vision. She told
Peter of her poor Uncle's
imprisonment and of her resulting
promise to herself.
(MORE)

STORYTELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But most importantly, Annalise told
 Peter, in no uncertain terms:

ANNALISE
 I see you-- I've always seen you--
 as a woman.

Annalise's words HANG in the air as Peter silently SOAKS this in, unreadable... For a brief moment, Annalise grows CONCERNED: Oh no, does Peter think she's insane?

But then-- Peter HUGS Annalise. CLINGS to her. Pure RELIEF. Annalise wraps herself protectively around Peter, relieved as well. This moment lasts a lifetime.

Until finally-- Annalise pulls away from Peter ever-so-slightly. Annalise carefully places her fingertips beneath Peter's chin, brushes her thumb against Peter's lips--

Peter's breath catches in her chest at Annalise's touch. The two are closer than they've ever been-- and then finally--

Their lips CONNECT.

It's a KISS so magnetic, so urgent, so intimate-- that the both of them GASP.

Peter pulls Annalise closer by her waist. As they KISS DEEPER, Annalise opens her eyes just slightly-- and she's delighted to find that in her Special Vision, millions of little SPARKLES float through the air around them, as if they were in a luminous SNOW GLOBE.

Annalise GRINS as she closes her eyes again, giving herself fully to their KISS--

PETER (PRE-LAP)
 (whisper)
 What do I look like?

INT. MR. SONG'S CAR - LATER

After their kissing, (girl) Peter's arms are wrapped tightly around Annalise's shoulders. Annalise leans into Peter's chest, so Peter is whispering into her hair.

PETER
 Describe me. Please.

Annalise has a dreamy look on her face as she speaks. Annalise doesn't even have to look at Peter to recall what she looks like; Annalise knows it by heart. And of course, everything Annalise says is true about the Peter we can see in her eyes.

ANNALISE
 You have long black hair, curled in
 at the ends.

PETER
 (wistful)
 I have long hair?

Peter touches her own hair gingerly... longingly...

ANNALISE
 Mm-hm. And you have such long
 eyelashes too... And full lips...
 and the cutest nose...

Peter rests her chin comfortably on the crown of Annalise's head, daydreaming off of Annalise's words...

PETER
 What about my skin? Is it scarred?
 Is it burned?

Annalise reaches up and traces a finger down Peter's flawless cheek, the side that we usually see scarred. Annalise SIGHS warmly.

ANNALISE
 No. But it wouldn't matter anyway
 if it were. You are radiant.

This-- this look on Peter's face-- this is true happiness.

Annalise glances up at Peter, HOPE shining on her face.

ANNALISE (CONT'D)
 You believe me, then? What I see?

Peter looks down at Annalise, HOPE shining on her face too.

PETER
 How could I not?
 (beat)
 It's what I've always felt.

INT. ANNALISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Annalise practically FLOATS through the front door in her PROM DRESS. She FLIPS off the light before she glides up the stairs to her room... Leaving the living room in DARKNESS...

...Mother inches into view, holding the phone to her CHEST. She's been watching Annalise from the kitchen where the phone's cord has kept her tethered.

Mother's giddy as she lifts the phone receiver to her ear:

MOTHER
(whisper into phone)
Looks promising over here! You?

MRS. SONG (ON PHONE)
One moment--

INT. SONG FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

Mrs. Song wears curlers and a bathrobe as she IRONS Mr. Song's shirt in the living room. She feigns nonchalance, sneaks peeks over her shoulder where--

Peter HUMS happily to himself, taking shoes off by the door--

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE)
(in Mandarin Chinese)
Did you have a nice night, Baobao?

PETER (SUBTITLE)
(in Mandarin Chinese)
Mm... The best.

As Peter disappears up the stairs, thrilled Mrs. Song pulls the phone up from where it's been HIDDEN behind the iron--

MRS. SONG
(whisper into phone)
I think it is a success!

INT. ANNALISE'S ROOM / PETER'S ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Split Screen: Dreamy Annalise and Dreamy Peter both lay on their beds, still in their Prom gown and tux respectively, still basking in the magic of the evening...

At the very same time, as if they were being pulled, they rise from their beds-- go to their bedroom windows. They look out to see each other appear in their windows across the street. Both GIGGLE a bit to find the other one there too.

Peter scribbles on paper, lifts it up to show her:

Sweet dreams, Annalise

Annalise blushes. She presses her palm to the glass of her window. Peter does the same, a smile lingering on his lips...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Annalise and Peter decided not to
tell anyone else their secrets--

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Annalise blows out the candles of her BIRTHDAY CAKE at the kitchen table. Her parents and the Songs surround her and CHEER! Annalise scribbles with chalk on her kitchen SLATE--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
To the rest of the world, Annalise
was still every bit the **mute** she
had always been--

Annalise lifts the slate: **Thank you all!**

INT. BOYS' LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Peter changes out of his GYM CLOTHES into his BOY CLOTHES with the other boys in the locker room--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
To the rest of the world, Peter was
still every bit the **boy** he had
always been--

Peter studies himself in the mirror as he fixes his hair.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
But alone, together...

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Annalise and (girl) Peter lounge on a blanket in the midst of the neighborhood FOREST, their surroundings festooned with WHIMSY thanks to Annalise's Vision.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
...they were free.

*Annalise's head rests on Peter's stomach. She READS ALOUD from the copy of **The Diary of Anne Frank** she had lent to Peter. Peter savors every word Annalise says...*

PETER (PRE-LAP)
Try it again--!

EXT. FOREST - LATER

*Annalise **SCREAMS** at the top of her lungs! When she's done, she's **BEAMING**. (Girl) Peter laughs at Annalise's adorable expression--*

PETER
See? Doesn't it feel... so...

ANNALISE
Electrifying!

PETER
Exactly!

ANNALISE
It hurts my throat a little.

PETER
Oh no, in a bad way?

ANNALISE
(shaking head no)
In the *best* way--

Annalise takes in another breath and-- SHRIEKS again! With all of her might!

ANNALISE (CONT'D)
I forgot how good it feels!

Peter is overwhelmed with adoration for her-- EMBRACES Annalise. Annalise buries herself in Peter's chest, practically bouncing with excitement.

PETER
Ready to try some more?

MONTAGE - FOREST - DAY

- Annalise WHISPERS as softly as she can, to Peter's amusement.

ANNALISE
(whispering)
Can you still hear me?

PETER
Sort of...

ANNALISE
(even softer)
...How about now?

PETER
Just barely...

- Annalise GIGGLES. Then CHUCKLES. Then full-on LAUGHS! She can't control it anymore, she's overcome with laughter--DOUBLING OVER! Peter CRACKS UP--

ANNALISE
 (laughing, tearing up)
 Oh, no! It's-- I can't stop
 now! It's addicting!

PETER (CONT'D)
 Your laugh is so cute!

- *Annalise tests out different PITCHES for her voice:*

ANNALISE
 (low pitch)
 Maybe I should talk like this?

PETER
 I don't think so...

ANNALISE
 (high pitch)
 How about I talk like this?

PETER
 (chuckling)
 That's even worse.

ANNALISE
 Now you try!

PETER
 ...Me?

- *Nervous, (girl) Peter speaks in a higher-than-normal voice-- in the range of the falsetto Peter uses when singing:*

PETER (CONT'D)
 Um... how-- how is this? Is-- does
 this seem right?

ANNALISE
 (grinning)
 Mm. It suits you.

PETER (PRE-LAP)
 You know what we should do--?

EXT. FOREST - LATER

Annalise and (girl) Peter laze on the blanket in the sun dappled forest, snacking on foods from their lunch pail-- a PICNIC.

PETER
 We should *investigate*.

Annalise's Vision makes some of the snacks look like inedible things: Grapes look like DICE, a sandwich looks like a PENNY LOAFER, a banana looks like a GERBER DAISY. Annalise happily munches on these.

ANNALISE
(mouth full)
Investigate what?

PETER
Investigate you! You say there's no rhyme or reason to your sight, right?

ANNALISE
Yes...?

PETER
Well, how do you *know* that?

ANNALISE
I guess... I simply *realized* it. After failing to make sense of it for so long.

PETER
Yes-- *but*-- you never had a translator before, did you?

ANNALISE
Translator?

PETER
Yeah! Translator! Interpreter! I can be that for you-- You tell me what you see, I'll tell you what I see, and we'll go over all the evidence to find the pattern. Break the code!

ANNALISE
(sigh)
...what if there is no *code*?

PETER
How could there not be?

ANNALISE
Trust me... I've *tried*. You're setting yourself up for disappointment, Peter.
(beat)
I don't make sense...

Annalise dims. But Peter's determination doesn't. Peter leans CLOSE to Annalise:

PETER
It can't be a coincidence,
Annalise. That we feel the same
thing. Don't you believe that?

Annalise SHRUGS...

PETER (CONT'D)
I believe it.

Peter is so close, Annalise goes almost cross-eyed to look at her. Peter SHINES with so much conviction that Annalise can't help but GRIN. She gives Peter a soft KISS...

ANNALISE (PRE-LAP)
*I didn't realize how good it would
feel--*

EXT. FOREST - LATER

The sun is SETTING as Annalise and (girl) Peter finish packing up their PICNIC.

ANNALISE
--to see you *listening* to me...

PETER
What do you mean?

Annalise and Peter set off, strolling through the woods back home. All the while, Peter studies Annalise's face, Peter's whole attention is placed on her:

ANNALISE
Before, when I wrote something to
you, you'd be looking down at the
words when you understood me. But
now, you look *right at me* when
you... when you understand me... I
didn't even realize how much I
wanted that...

PETER
...I didn't realize before just how
much I longed to hear your voice...

Annalise slows to a stop... We return to normal vision.

*They've reached the edge of the forest. Their neighborhood
and everyone else in the world LOOMS on the other side...*

PETER (CONT'D)
 (whisper)
 ...Say something again. Before we
 have to go back.

Annalise KISSES Peter tenderly.

ANNALISE
 Peter...

With her pointer finger, Annalise traces Peter's scarred
 cheek... lips... chin...

ANNALISE (CONT'D)
 (quietly)
 I was thinking... I don't think the
 name *Peter* quite fits you...

PETER
 No...?

ANNALISE
 Mm-mm. It's much too...

Peter grows a little sad...

PETER
 I know...

ANNALISE
 (quickly)
 So I was thinking-- how about we
 call you-- Song?

Peter considers this...

PETER
 (testing out)
 Song...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 It felt right.

Peter GRINS at Annalise. NODS.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 It felt like **herself**.

SONG
Song.

*[From here on out, Peter Song will be referred to only as
Song, and her pronoun will be **she**, even when we see her
 appearing as a "boy" in normal vision.]*

With that, Annalise & Song walk back out into the world--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

When Annalise & Song crossed their high school graduation stage, they felt as if it was also a graduation from the worst phase of their lives--

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - GRADUATION - DAY

Song SMILES in a GRADUATION CAP and GOWN as she strides toward the school PRINCIPAL to accept her DIPLOMA. Song and Annalise's PARENTS CHEER in the crowd!

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Never before did the future look as **bright** as it did now.

Song reaches the other side of the stage, where she joins BEAMING Annalise, DIPLOMA already in hand--

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Annalise and Song POSE in front of the school in their GRADUATION GARB. Their PARENTS snap photos-- FLASH!

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

But at the same time, the brightness of possibility was almost blinding...

Annalise and Song BLINK the flash spots out of their eyes, photos finished. Their PARENTS move to get into their CARS--

SONG

We'll meet you at home.

MRS. SONG

You don't want to ride?

SONG

Nah, we'll take one last walk home from school. For old times' sake.

Song GRINS at Annalise. Their mothers swap knowing looks.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Annalise and Song meander their well-worn path home from school. But their GRINS are GONE. Now they're RUMINATING...

NUDGE at Song's elbow. A NOTE. Song accepts it from Annalise:

What now...?

Song SIGHS weightily... She speaks in her higher-pitched voice when it's just her and Annalise:

SONG

I don't know. Before Prom, I didn't even think I'd make it *this* far...

Annalise sobers at this thought, that Song might not have been here... But Song is beginning to perk up:

SONG (CONT'D)

Well, I suppose we could start our investigation? Maybe that can be our summer mission: solve the mystery of your sight! Besides, we should probably know the answer to that before we decide what to do with the *rest* of our lives...

Annalise seems hesitant. She starts SCRIBBLING her reply, a LONGER message in her notebook, which FRUSTRATES Song--

SONG (CONT'D)

Writing takes so *long*-- Can't you just tell me? Whisper it!

With a HUFF, Annalise jots a smaller response:

Too dangerous!! Someone might see!!

SONG (CONT'D)

I *know*, but it's like we're still...!

Song SIGHS again, frustrated... Annalise wilts.

Song gazes out at the horizon pensively. The SKYLINE of the BIG CITY looms beyond the suburbs...

Gradually... Song BRIGHTENS:

SONG (CONT'D)

Annalise... What if we go where no one knows us?

EXT. ANNALISE'S BACKYARD - DAY

Wearing sunglasses and bathing suits, Mother and Mrs. Song stretch out on lawn chairs in the backyard. They alternate sunbathing, smoking, sipping iced tea.

Annalise and Song approach them nervously...

SONG

Hey-- Ma?

MRS. SONG

Mm?

SONG

Um. Annalise and I are going to take the train into the city. To search for jobs.

Mother and Mrs. Song simultaneously pull down their shades to squint at their kids.

MOTHER

But you just graduated! Don't you want a little summer vacation before getting into all that nitty-gritty of employment?

MRS. SONG

Yes, why not have some fun first? The rest can be dealt with come the *Fall*.

Annalise and Song glance to each other, then return DETERMINED looks to their mothers.

SONG

We'd rather get a head start. I mean, who *knows* how long it might take to find a good job?

Mother and Mrs. Song stare incredulously at them.

MOTHER

You too, Annalise?

Annalise NODS. Mother and Mrs. Song exchange looks... SHRUG.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Well... alright then.

Annalise and Song BEAM. *Yes!* They spin eagerly to go--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Wait! When will you be back?

SONG

(as they're leaving)

Oh-- Late. Probably late--r. After dinner-- We'll just eat something in the city. Okay? Thanks-- thank you Ma! Bye!

Annalise and Song disappear into the house. Mother and Mrs. Song stare after them, deadpan...

MOTHER

...There's no way in hell those two are really job searching.

MRS. SONG

Hell no.

Mother and Mrs. Song simultaneously push their shades back up their noses. Cool as cucumbers.

MRS. SONG (CONT'D)

Let them have their summer fun.

MONTAGE - CITY - VARIOUS

Each moment is a DIFFERENT DAY; throughout all of this, Annalise and Song GAB NONSTOP:

A) Annalise and Song scoot close together, excitedly peer out of the TRAIN WINDOW as they ENTER the BIG, BUSTLING CITY. The deeper their train snakes into the metropolis, the brighter their eyes GLEAM with CURIOSITY and AWE!

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Once they were in the privacy of the urban jungle, Annalise & Song were finally free to talk to their hearts' content.

B) Annalise and Song emerge from the underground train station into the heart of the CITY. They are overwhelmed by the vastness, tilting their heads up to take in the TOWERING SKYSCRAPERS surrounding them. *In Annalise's Vision: several of the SKYSCRAPERS are made of billowing SILKS and twinkling STARS.*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Though they chattered constantly, there was one conversation to which they always returned--

C) Annalise and Song venture through an ART MUSEUM. Song is enraptured by a piece of MODERN ART. *Annalise, however, is enraptured by a fellow PATRON who appears to have POLKA-DOTTED SKIN in her vision.*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

They wondered together what they had wondered privately for so long: Why were they the way they were?

D) Annalise and Song saunter along the city's WATERFRONT lined with SHOPS and RESTAURANTS. *In Annalise's Vision: One of the FOUNTAINS they pass SPEWS DIAMONDS into the air. The flock of PIGEONS taking flight around them are instead soaring CUPCAKES.*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

They suspected that maybe the answers to their life-long questions-- **Why** did Annalise see the way she did? **Why** did Song feel the way she did?-- had been found within each other...

E) Annalise and Song board a CITY BUS where--*Annalise is bewildered to see that the bus DRIVER'S hands are SNAKES in her eyes. In fact, many of the bus PASSENGERS look very DIFFERENT to Annalise...*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

...Could it be that Annalise saw the truth? And could it be that Song felt it?

SONG (PRE-LAP)

We're gonna need a new notebook--

INT. QUAIN T BOOKSTORE - DAY

In a cozy bookshop in the city, Song peeks at Annalise over the top of a PULP DETECTIVE NOVEL:

SONG

--for our investigation.

Annalise is a kid in a candy shop in here, bright-eyed at the multitude of things to read. She adds the detective novel to the tall stack of books Song carries for her--

ANNALISE

Better get the biggest notebook you can find. It's going to take a lot of investigating to solve me...

SONG

(teasing)

You don't think I have what it takes to crack the curious case of Annalise?

ANNALISE

Of course not, I think you're a regular Nancy Drew.

Annalise gives Song a SMOOCH whilst adding a GIANT TOME to the pile, weighing Song down--

ANNALISE (CONT'D)

But I also still think I'm a wild goose chase.

SONG

(chuckling)

Jeez, Annalise! How many books are we buying you?

ANNALISE

Depends... How many can we carry?

SONG

You ever thought about writing a book of your own?

ANNALISE

(scoff)

What? No.

SONG

Why not!? You love books!

ANNALISE

I wouldn't know how.

SONG

Oh come on, yes you would. You've read a million of them-- And you've written *more* than a million notes. Perhaps enough for a book already! Why not write one yourself?

Annalise averts her eyes from Song. Feigns focus on the bookshelf nearest her...

ANNALISE

Because...

Song can see she's struck a nerve with Annalise... Song reaches out and tenderly touches Annalise's arm...

ANNALISE (CONT'D)

(soft)

Song... If I wrote a book, no one would understand it. How can I write books about the world when I don't even know what the world sees?

SONG

Don't write about their world.
Write about yours.

Annalise finally glances at Song. Song offers her an encouraging smile. Suddenly, Song points over Annalise's shoulder, to a NOTEBOOK on display behind her:

SONG (CONT'D)

Hey! Is that notebook big enough?

Annalise inspects, then picks up the notebook. She plops it on top of the pile of books in Song's arms:

ANNALISE

(shrug)

It's a start--

EXT. PARK - DAY

A new day: Song wraps her arms around Annalise as they sprawl in the grass of the CITY PARK. Song POINTS to a HOT AIR BALLOON, hovering in the distance.

SONG

What about that?

We see it along with her as Annalise describes what she's observing:

ANNALISE

That thing in the air? It's a big blue whale. Swimming in the sky...

SONG

Hm. Interesting...

Song records this in a long LIST they've compiled in their INVESTIGATION NOTEBOOK, comparing Song's sight to Annalise's.

SONG (CONT'D)

(pointing)

Alright, what about that-- there?

Song's watching a DOG playing FETCH with a TENNIS BALL. *But Annalise, she's watching something entirely different:*

ANNALISE

(squinting)

Hm, well it's a *lawn mower*. Chasing a-- a--- oh, what's it called. A penguin! A tiny, running *penguin*--

Song BURSTS out laughing!

SONG

You see a *lawn mower* chasing a
penguin!? How are you not laughing
all the time!?

But Annalise isn't laughing, not at all. Annalise is HURT by Song's amusement. Song sobers quickly--

SONG (CONT'D)

Oh-- *Annalise*. I'm sorry. I'm
sorry, I shouldn't have--

Annalise *SHOVES* the NOTEBOOK out of Song's hands. Dejected.

ANNALISE

None of this makes any sense...

SONG

Aw, come on. We can't give up that
easy...

Annalise SIGHS. Song KISSES Annalise's temple encouragingly, then picks up the NOTEBOOK to resume their investigation.

SONG (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)

I have an idea--

EXT./INT. - PARK / TUNNEL - EVENING

Annalise and Song meander through the city park at DUSK, making their way to the park's exit. Annalise is still glum from their "investigation." Song's got her eye on something in the distance--

SONG

It won't take long, come on!

Song LEADS Annalise into a nearby TUNNEL in the walking path. Inside the tunnel it's DARK. Song pulls Annalise close...

SONG (CONT'D)

(whisper)
Okay, now yell.

ANNALISE

(whisper)
Yell what?

SONG

I don't know, anything-- Yell
anything you'd like. Trust me.

Annalise playfully POUTS, but gives in to Song's eager smile.

ANNALISE

Fine...

Annalise scrunches up her eyes, takes a deep breath, and--

ANNALISE (CONT'D)

HELLO!!!!

HELLO! Hello! Hello... hello... her voice ECHOES back to her, bouncing off the tunnel's walls and returning to them. Annalise brightens, turns to Song, who's already beaming.

SONG

Try it again!

Annalise thinks for a brief second-- then INHALES and:

ANNALISE

MY NAME IS ANNALISE!

Annalise can't help but GIGGLE as her voice returns in a **CHORUS** at them, circling around them from every angle. Annalise BASKS in it. Song HUGS her, squeezing her TIGHT.

SONG

Listen to you! See? Don't you sound lovely?

Annalise opens her mouth to respond, but she CHOKES UP...

SONG (CONT'D)

(murmur in Annalise's ear)

We'll figure you out. I promise.

(beat)

Now try it once more, really loud so it rings in my ears.

Annalise SNIFFS back her bittersweet TEARS, summoning the words for this moment:

ANNALISE

HERE I AM!

Her voice RICOCHETS around them, *ENVELOPING* them fully.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

And oh, how lovely it sounded indeed.

EXT. ANNALISE'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

BOOM! Fireworks EXPLODE in the sky! ILLUMINATING Annalise's backyard in technicolor flashes.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 By the 4th of July that summer,
 never had either felt so *alive*.

Mother, Father, Mrs. Song, and Mr. Song laugh DRUNKENLY,
 sipping on Chinese LIQUOR and chomping on American BBQ.
 Annalise and Song lurk behind them, watching the fireworks.

Mrs. Song RISES from her seat, empty LIQUOR BOTTLE in hand--

MRS. SONG
 We need more *baijiu!*

As Mrs. Song passes them, Annalise hands Song a tiny NOTE:

Now?

Reading this note *SUCKS* the air out of Song. Breathless, Song
 looks from the note back up to Annalise. Song just barely
 NODS. Annalise grabs Song's hand--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 That night, they felt a crackling
 anticipation--

INT. ANNALISE'S ROOM - NIGHT

BOOOOM! Another firework's EXPLOSION resonates in Annalise's
 room as Annalise and Song slip inside. Annalise takes care to
 LOCK the door behind her...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 --a lightning nervousness--

Annalise pulls Song further into the room...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 --their hearts pounding with with
 each *bang!* of a firecracker.

BANG! Another FLASH of colorful illumination spills inside
 the window, highlighting both of their NERVOUS expressions...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 They had been talking about doing
 this for a few weeks now...

...Song UNDRESSES slowly in front of Annalise... unbuttoning
 her men's shirt and unbuckling her men's belt...

As the clothes fall away, leaving Song only in loose-fitting
 underwear, Annalise moves toward her CLOSET.

Annalise rummages inside only a moment before re-emerging with one of her DRESSES. It's pretty, delicate, UNDERSTATED. A rather *ordinary* dress for a rather *ordinary* girl.

Song bites her lip anxiously as she steps into the dress, sliding it up her thighs and over her hips easily.

Annalise stands behind Song; both of them watch themselves in the full-length mirror as Annalise zips Song into it. The dress fits as if it had been specially tailored for Song.

SONG
(breathless)
How do I look?

Annalise scrutinizes Song's reflection... Strangely, in Annalise's Vision, this dress still looks quite normal. Powder BLUE, airy fabric, freshly ironed. Song GLOWS in it.

ANNALISE
Happy.
(grinning)
You look happy.

Song smiles softly, turning toward Annalise--

ANNALISE (CONT'D)
I want you to have it. It's yours.

Song's moved by her gift. They share a tender KISS-- the two of them beautifully SILHOUETTED in Annalise's bedroom WINDOW--

EXT. SONG FAMILY HOME - SIMULTANEOUS

--which is easily SEEN from down below in the Song's front yard, where MRS. SONG stands, a new bottle of *baijiu* in hand.

Mrs. Song STARES up at Annalise & Song. DUMBSTRUCK.

FEAR-- *tears*-- fill Mrs. Song's eyes as she watches Annalise and Song's kiss break apart. As she watches her child twirl in Annalise's DRESS up in the window...

It looks as though Mrs. Song is going to fully break down CRYING-- but just as her trembling chin and glossing eyes are about to give way--

Mrs. Song SWALLOWS back her emotion forcefully. SETS her jaw. AVERTS her eyes from what she's seen in the window--

--in time with another firework's **BOOM!**

INT. SONG FAMILY HOME - MORNING

BRIGHT morning light. Mrs. Song slumps at her kitchen table, HUNGOVER. Smoking. She finishes POURING WHISKEY into her cup of tea... HIDES the bottle of liquor again.

Mrs. Song perks as she hears Song trying to slip out of the front door unnoticed-- Mrs. Song calls out to her--

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE)
(in Mandarin Chinese)
Bide (Peter)! Come here...

Song begrudgingly appears in the kitchen. Antsy. Mrs. Song doesn't even look at her. EXHALES a drag of her cigarette...

SONG
... What?

Mrs. Song simply PATS the place next to her at the table.

SONG (CONT'D)
I gotta go meet Annalise, our train
leaves at--

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE)
(in Mandarin Chinese)
*Surely you can give your mother one
minute...*

Song SCOFFS. Drops into the seat by her Mother.

Mrs. Song SIGHS, struggles to find the words to say. She fiddles with the GOLD RING on her finger. There are two CHINESE CHARACTERS engraved on it.

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE) (CONT'D)
(in Mandarin Chinese)
*You see this? ...My grandmother
gave me this ring when I left
China... You see those characters?
Can you read them?*

Song looks closer... but shakes her head NO. She can't recognize them. Mrs. Song grows emotional, voice cracking--

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE) (CONT'D)
(in Mandarin Chinese)
*Mm, you cannot-- cannot read
them... This is "Ruyi." It means:*
(in English)
"Live as you desire."
(in Mandarin Chinese)
Bide...

(MORE)

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE) (CONT'D)

For so long, I believed that I desired to live in this country. To be American. Even after I arrived and it was far more difficult than I had dreamed, I still believed that this was what I wanted. But Bide, I did not know the nature of what I desired. I believed that I desired a chance at prosperity, that I desired that prosperity for you, my son--

(fighting back emotion)

Baobao, the longer I am here, the more I see what I desired for what it really is. That to be American means I am a thousand miles away from my parents' deathbed. That to be American means I am not fully Chinese, not fully American, but nationless in the eyes of both my countrymen. That to be American is to have a son that cannot even recognize "desire" in my language... Now I--

Mrs. Song takes a long, shaky DRAG of her cigarette.

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE) (CONT'D)

(in Mandarin Chinese)

I got what I desired.

Mrs. Song EXHALES her smoke, TEARS in her eyes. Song is DISTURBED by the amount of emotion she's seeing from her mother... Mrs. Song grows very serious:

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE) (CONT'D)

(in Mandarin Chinese)

*Bide, you must see your desires for what they really are... You must look past them... you must look through them... you must look beneath them... and you must find what **trap** is hiding there for you.*

Mrs. Song STANDS abruptly-- dabbing at her eyes. She exits the room without looking back at Song:

MRS. SONG (CONT'D)

Go. Catch your train.

Song is left behind in the kitchen. Alone. Unsure...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Her mother's words haunted Song...

EXT. CITY STREETS - DUSK

Annalise and Song hike through the city at NIGHT. Annalise POINTS out things and records what she sees in the COMPARISON NOTEBOOK. But Song's distracted, barely listens to her...

Instead, Song's ANALYZING every little thing they pass, as if she's SEARCHING for something in particular...

Song looks BEHIND herself...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
**How is one supposed to look
 past a desire...?**

ANNALISE
 (quiet in background)
 What about that? It looks
 like an igloo to me...

Song looks to her LEFT...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
**How is one supposed to look
 through a desire...?**

ANNALISE (CONT'D)
 (quiet in background)
 Oh-- no wait, what about *that*
 one! I see a *carrot*--

Song looks to her RIGHT...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
**How is one supposed to look
 beneath a desi--!?**

ANNALISE (CONT'D)
 (quiet in background)
 Song...? Are you listening to
 me...?

Suddenly-- Song abruptly STOPS, her eyes WIDE. Annalise STOPS too, seeing that something has **MESMERIZED** Song...

Song's transfixed by a delicate PAINTING of a **ROSE** adorning a nondescript DOOR... It's as if Song's HYPNOTIZED by it...

SONG
 Annalise, do you see this painting?

Annalise SQUINTS at the door... then NODS:

ANNALISE
 Mm-hm... To me, it's a Rose.

SONG
 ...it's a Rose to me too...

ANNALISE
 (surprised)
 You too!? *Oh!*

Annalise turns to scrutinize it alongside Song... Now they're BOTH spellbound by it...

Weak-kneed, Song takes a seat at a nearby little table for two. Annalise joins her--

ANNALISE

Song, what are you seeing!? Where are we!?

SONG

Annalise... the men here-- they're-- they're wearing dresses and-- and make up-- and-- and high heels!

Annalise takes another look around, *CONFUSION* setting in...

SONG (CONT'D)

Do you think... Do you think they're like me!?

ANNALISE

Perhaps... You should ask!

SONG

Oh, no, no, no, I couldn't--

SONG (CONT'D)

What if they think I--?

ANNALISE

Here, I'll ask for you--

SONG

Annalise--!

Annalise scoots toward the nearest PATRON-- An elegant man dressed akin to JACKIE KENNEDY.

ANNALISE

Pardon me-- Is this a club for men who are women?

The patron SMILES, LIPSTICK smudging on her crooked teeth--

PATRON

Why-- yes, darlin'. I suppose it is.

The patron returns her attention to the SINGER who brings the house down with the rousing climax of the MUSICAL NUMBER. Song is utterly enraptured by the SINGER!

But Annalise-- Annalise is *distracted*... She's studying her surroundings closer... and growing more and more *UNEASY*...

SONG (PRE-LAP)

Annalise, can you believe it--!?

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Song BEAMS on the train ride home, can't sit still she's so jazzed!

SONG

There are others like me!

Annalise is barely paying attention to Song; instead she hunches over their INVESTIGATION NOTEBOOK, pouring over the list of what Song sees VS what Annalise sees...

SONG (CONT'D)

How many of them do you think were in there?

ANNALISE

(writing in notebook)

Song-- Did that singer's dress look floor-length to you?

SONG

What? I don't remember-- But did you see that some of them had-- um--

Song gestures to her chest, pantomiming BREASTS.

SONG (CONT'D)

(hushed)

How do you think they made them look so *real*!?

ANNALISE

(writing in notebook)

What about the band-- what did they look like to you?

Song puts her hand over the comparison notebook--

SONG

Annalise-- could you-- just forget the list for a moment? I'm-- this-- this changes *everything*! I mean, I--

But Annalise can't hide her look of DISAPPOINTMENT from Song... Song thinks she understands:

SONG (CONT'D)

(comforting)

Oh, Annalise... Don't worry! Maybe this means there's a club out there somewhere with people just like you too!

But this doesn't cheer Annalise up, not a bit...

ANNALISE
 (hesitant)
 Song, no. I...
 (sigh)
 Those other people in there...?

Annalise finally looks to Song. Song NODS: *Go on...*

ANNALISE (CONT'D)
 I didn't see them all as women...

Song's face falls as this sinks in...

SONG
 Then what did you...?

Annalise looks back down to the list of sight comparisons...

ANNALISE
 (whisper)
 ...They just looked like men in
 dresses.

For a long moment, Song just stares at Annalise... and then Song turns her back to Annalise.

SONG
 Well... well, that doesn't... that
 doesn't really *mean* anything...

Annalise shoots Song a reproachful look, HURT. But Song is focused on her own REFLECTION in the train's window...

SONG (CONT'D)
 I know what I saw...

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

THE ROSE PAINTING.

Conspicuously placed on its inconspicuous DOOR.

Song faces it with trepidation. She and Annalise loiter on the bustling sidewalk outside The Rose in broad daylight. But this time, the Gruff Man doesn't greet them...

So Song raises an apprehensive fist... KNOCKS on the door...

...no response. No one's here.

Song's palpably crestfallen. Annalise brims with IMPATIENCE.

ANNALISE

I told you, they probably aren't
open during the day.

Song glances around herself, as if the patrons from last
night are hiding just out of sight.

SONG

But then... where do they all go?

ANNALISE

Probably back to pretending to be
normal, like we do!

Song droops, eyes falling to the ground. Annalise SIGHS...
places a tender hand on Song's shoulder...

ANNALISE (CONT'D)

Oh, Song... Come on, let's just--

BABS (O.S.)

Weren't you two here last night?

Song and Annalise spin to find BABS (30s) emerging from the
alley, smoking a cigarette. This is the Jackie Kennedy
impersonator they had met the night before.

But now, Babs isn't dressed as Jackie, she's instead wearing
androgynous shorts and shirt. She no longer wears a wig, her
hair instead cropped in a men's style.

Song is STAR-STRUCK.

SONG

Y-- Yes. We were.

Babs gives Song a skeptical once-over while taking the last
drag on her cigarette. Babs flicks the cig butt away,
EXHALING the smoke with a GRIN. She offers Song her hand:

BABS

Welcome back. The name's Babs.

INT. THE ROSE CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

The Rose Club appears more run-down in the daytime with all
the lights on. The singer from last night, POPPY (30s), flits
about behind the BAR, restocking liquor. CARMEN (20s) is back
there with Poppy, wiping down the CUPS with a RAG.

Babs, Poppy, and Carmen are all THREE (as Annalise put it):
MEN WHO ARE WOMEN. In here, they can be THEMSELVES.

Babs leads eager Song into the room. Annalise cautiously trails a few steps behind them.

BABS
Ladies! We've got company.

Everyone sidles up to their respective sides of the bar.

POPPY
More of your strays?

BABS
(to Song)
This is Poppy.

SONG
I saw you sing last night-- you were-- *incredible*.

POPPY
(nodding to Babs)
Did she tell you to say that?

BABS
(to Song)
And this is Carmelita.

CARMEN
Call me Carmen.

SONG
Nice to meet you. I'm Pe-- *Song*.
I'm Song.

POPPY
(to Annalise)
And you, dear?

Song looks to Annalise, who subtly shakes her head NO. Not talking.

SONG
...this is Annalise.

BABS
Mm. So. Annalise and Song. What brings you two back to the Rose?

SONG
(embarrassed)
Oh-- Um... I...

Song peeks at Annalise for help. Annalise doesn't offer any.

SONG (CONT'D)
 (softly)
 I... don't...

Carmen, Poppy, and Babs look KNOWINGLY to each other; it's a BITTERSWEET look. They close in around Song.

BABS
 Tell you what I think. I think you
 look like you...

Song grows nervous, flinching at the impending answer...

BABS (CONT'D)
 ...can *sing*.

POPPY
 Ooo- yes!

SONG
 Sing...?

Poppy, Babs, and Carmen shepherd Song up to the stage--
 LEAVING Annalise awkward by the bar--

CARMEN
 Trust me, *querida*, Babs's got an
 eye for these things.

POPPY
 Step up to the microphone--
 like-- yes like that--

BABS
 Mm-hm... mm-hm... I see it--

SONG
 Well... I do sing *sometimes*... by
 myself--

CARMEN
 How does she always *know*!?

POPPY
 Every. Time.

BABS
 (shrug)
 I have the gift.

The three step back and APPRAISE Song... Song's nervous
 behind the microphone on stage, still wearing BOYS CLOTHES...

BABS (CONT'D)
 ...we're gonna need a better
 costume.

POPPY
 Absolutely.

CARMEN
 I'll get my case--

SONG
 ...costume?

INT. THE ROSE CLUB - BACKSTAGE - DAY

Annalise SCOWLS on the sidelines as Babs, Carmen, and Poppy flutter around Song. They're BACKSTAGE in a dressing room. Carmen brushes dramatic MAKE-UP across Song's complexion--

CARMEN

Hand me the rouge, *bomboncita*--

Poppy hands a COMPACT to Carmen while affixing a BLACK WIG atop Song's head--

POPPY

What do we think? More curls?

BABS

And *higher*, please-- Higher the hair, closer to God--

Babs holds up two DRESS options: *In Annalise's eyes, one dress looks like it's made entirely of PEARLS, the other looks to be made of USED CHEWING GUM.*

BABS (CONT'D)

Which dress do we think?

Annalise points to the one she sees as PEARLS, but everyone else in the room points to the OTHER DRESS.

BABS (CONT'D)

Perfect!

Babs ZIPS the not-Annalise-approved DRESS up Song's back. The chest of the dress SAGS, nothing to fill it.

Babs pulls out a set of FAKE BREASTS. Displays them to Song--

BABS (CONT'D)

May I?

Song can only NOD... Babs carefully maneuvers the breasts into the dress, filling it out. Song scrutinizes herself in the mirror, SPEECHLESS...

When it all comes together, it's a flashier take on the iconic **Audrey Hepburn Breakfast at Tiffany's** look.

Frankly, it's quite fabulous.

But behind them, Annalise GLOWERS.

In her eyes, it's not a sparkly black dress on Song, it's a garment made of USED CHEWING GUM. It's not fake breasts stuffed inside, it's a pair of BAGUETTES.

It's not a wig atop her head, it's a very confused POMERANIAN. It's not make-up smeared along her cheeks, it's grotesque POND SCUM.

Frankly, it's quite ridiculous.

But even Annalise can plainly see: Song is taken with her reflection...

BABS (CONT'D)

So... What d'ya think, Miss Song?

SONG

I... I love it!

INT. THE ROSE CLUB - STAGE - DAY

Song takes her place behind the mic on stage. She stands TALL, emboldened by her new outfit. Babs, Poppy, Carmen survey her proudly. Annalise grows grumpier by the second.

POPPY

There we are, that's better.

SONG

Can I... can I really sing up here?

CARMEN

Of course you can!

BABS

Even better, you can come back tomorrow night-- should have a full house on a Friday.

ANNALISE

She doesn't sing in front of people.

Poppy, Babs, Carmen turn to give Annalise stink eyes...

POPPY

(mutter, RE: Annalise)

Oh... she *talks*--

SONG

Well, I haven't sung in front of people *before*... but... I think I'd like to try...

CARMEN

You sing your heart out, *querida*. With a name like yours, how could you not?

Song BEAMS from their encouragement.

ANNALISE (PRE-LAP)
Let's go home...

INT. METAL STAIRCASE - EVENING

Annalise POUTS on the metal staircase outside The Rose. Song-- still in the wig, make-up, sparkly dress, fake breasts-- slouches next to her. They speak in HUSHED tones:

SONG
 Now? Can't we stay a little longer?

ANNALISE
 (whine)
 I'm tired.

SONG
 What's the matter with you? You've been sour all day!

Annalise SCOFFS.

SONG (CONT'D)
 Oh, don't pretend you haven't been--
 Why are you acting so *glum!*?

ANNALISE
 (gesturing to Song's accessories)
 Well--! If I'm honest, I don't think you need any of this stuff!

SONG
 Why!? What do you mean!?

ANNALISE
 Well-- 'Cause--!

SONG	ANNALISE (CONT'D)
Why not!?	'Cause it makes you look like a fr--!

Annalise cuts herself off. Song's expression DARKENS.

SONG	ANNALISE (CONT'D)
What?	I-- don't--

SONG
 Like a *freak!*?

ANNALISE
No! I-- just think--

SONG (CONT'D)
Is that what you were going
to say?

ANNALISE
You looked fine how you were!

SONG
Well, I like how I look in this
stuff!

Annalise HUFFS--

SONG (CONT'D)
What? You think I look ugly?

ANNALISE
Song-- I don't think you're *ugly*, I
just *think*...
(sigh)
Before you looked more yourself--

SONG
--to you!
(beat)
To you, Annalise... Only to you.

Annalise's face falls... Song's eyes plead for understanding:

SONG (CONT'D)
If I wear this stuff... then
everyone else can see me too.

Song steps closer to her, reaches to hold Annalise's hands--

SONG (CONT'D)
Don't you want others to see me
too?

ANNALISE
(pulling her hands away)
No!

Song is taken aback, STUNG. It's painful enough to strike
TEARS into Song's eyes:

SONG
I don't want to be just your
fantasy, Annalise!

Now it's Annalise's turn to be STUNG. A small SOB escapes her
as she turns away from Song, flees up the stairs--

SONG (CONT'D)
Wait-- *Annalise!*

Song moves to follow after Annalise-- But-- Song YELPS as she TRIPS on the hem of her dress-- FALLS HARD to the metal stairs with a *CLANGGGGG!*

The NOISE summons concerned Babs from within The Rose--

BABS
Song!?

TEARS spring to Song's eyes as she checks her now bleeding KNEE. But Song SMUDGES her tears roughly away, PULLS herself back to her feet to go after Annalise--

BABS hooks Song's elbow-- holds her back--

SONG
ANNALISE!

BABS (CONT'D)
No! Don't!

Song turns back to Babs-- impatient to yank her arm free--

BABS (CONT'D)
You shouldn't go out there! Like
that... It's... It's not safe.

Song looks down at the fabulous dress she's wearing... sees the heavy make-up SMUDGED atop her palm scars from where she wiped her tears...

And suddenly, it's like an enormous weight has settled on Song's shoulders. She lowers to sit on the stairs... Babs squats next to her, gently circles an arm around her...

BABS (CONT'D)
You know, dear... a lot of people,
they... they just don't understand
people like us...

SONG
But Annalise *does...*

Babs gives her a skeptical look... *The same Annalise that just ran away from you?*

SONG (CONT'D)
She does! She just-- she just
needed some space-- just needed
some *air*. She'll come back...

Song looks up to the top of the metal stairs, at The Rose's front door behind which Annalise has disappeared...

A LONG, PAINFUL PAUSE... as Song waits expectantly for her...

SONG (CONT'D)

(soft)

Annalise wouldn't leave me...

...But she has.

Babs studies Song's face with PITY. Watches Song's expression FALL into DESPONDENCY... Finally:

SONG (CONT'D)

Do you... ever go out in the world
like this? Let others see you?

Song lifts her tearful eyes to Babs. Pleading.

BABS

Some do... I don't.

Song looks almost HURT by this reply...

SONG

(whisper)

Don't you want to?

Babs SIGHS. CUPS Song's cheek. Like a mother and child.

BABS

More than anything.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Annalise WEEPS while trudging home in the POURING RAIN.

She RIPS pages out of her NOTEBOOK-- *the lists comparing what Song sees vs Annalise sees*-- and CRUMPLES them into balls. The notebook's soggy remains litter the sidewalk behind her.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

That night, Annalise saw something
she thought she'd never have to see
again, something she thought she'd
left far in her past:

Annalise finally arrives outside her home. DRIPPING with rainwater. Illuminated by a SINGULAR porch light...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Herself. Alone.

MOTHER (PRE-LAP)

Oh! Annalise--!

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Worried Mother ushers SOPPING WET Annalise into the kitchen--

MOTHER

You're positively soaking! Here--
here-- onto the linoleum--

Annalise SLUMPS at the kitchen table, SILENTLY sobbing. Mother fishes a FRESH TOWEL out of a basket of laundry, wraps Annalise SNUGLY in it--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

What's happened!? What's wrong!?

Annalise doesn't provide any clue. Mother sinks to her knees, to Annalise's level. Looks in her daughter's eyes:

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Did something happen with Peter?

Annalise looks away. And Mother understands.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(softly)

Oh dear... Is he upset with you?

Annalise SHRUGS.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Oh darling... Look at you... Just
look at you...

Mother reaches up... tenderly brushes messy hair from Annalise's eyes... wipes bleeding MASCARA from her cheeks...

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Not to worry... We'll get you fixed
up, quick as a bunny.

At this, Annalise SNAPS. She SWATS her Mother's hands away.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Annalise!

Annalise snatches her SLATE and CHALK up from the table-- SCRAWLS furiously on it! Her eyes shine with CONVICTION as she raises the message she's written for her Mother:

I DON'T WANT TO BE FIXED

EXT. SONG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Song-- back in her BOY CLOTHES-- loiters on her front lawn in the DOWNPOUR. She GLARES over at Annalise's house, up at Annalise's bedroom window.

But the window is DARK. Dejected, Song turns away from it--

INT. SONG FAMILY HOME - CONTINUOUS

Song enters her dark home, soaked to the bone from the rain. She creeps through the living room without turning on any lights, but--

MRS. SONG (O.S.)

Baobao?

Mrs. Song emerges from the shadows, flicking on a LAMP.

Song FREEZES as Mrs. Song slowly approaches... HALTS only a foot away. Neither speaks. It's a stand off... Finally:

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE) (CONT'D)

(in Mandarin Chinese)

Do you know tomorrow's date?

Song slowly... nods her head yes... *Suspicious...*

SONG

September first...?

Mrs. Song nods knowingly. She pries the GOLDEN RUYI RING off of her finger... places it gently into Song's scarred PALM...

MRS. SONG (SUBTITLE)

(in Mandarin Chinese)

...Summer is over.

Mrs. Song SMILES sadly at Song before leaving room...

Song stares down at the RING...

INT. SONG'S ROOM - NIGHT

Song's still studying the GOLD RUYI RING while laying in her bed, in the darkness of midnight...

Finally, Song places the ring on her bedside table. As she does so, her fingers BRUSH against a scrap of PAPER laying there. Song picks it up. It's a NOTE. One of the first Annalise ever gave Song:

There's nothing wrong with you. I promise.

This is it-- this note BREAKS her. Song's eyes BRIM with tears as she stares at it, and *suddenly*--

Song sits up in bed! Stares at her bedroom window. It's as if she's being DRAWN to it... Just like after PROM...

Song gets up, goes to her window. With an *INTAKE OF BREATH*-- Song pulls her curtain aside-- Looks out across the street, at Annalise's bedroom window, to find that--!

Annalise isn't there.

The neighborhood is empty. Quiet. The calm after the rainstorm. Song looks so small in her darkened window...

Song completely deflates... and now the TEARS fall. She tries to SNIFF them back, but she can't stop them. She presses her palm to the glass wistfully...

SONG
(whisper)
Annalise...

Song bows her head... takes a step back, about to drop the curtain again-- but *just then*--

Movement in the window across the street!

Annalise APPEARS in her window. Song GASPS at the sight! Steps as close to the glass as she can!

SONG (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Annalise!

Annalise has tears in her eyes too.

Annalise & Song simply stare at each other across the street... Unmoving... *Dream-like* in the darkness and SILENCE.

Finally Annalise holds up one finger-- *one moment*...

Annalise disappears behind her curtain again. Song HOLDS HER BREATH anxiously... doesn't want to see Annalise go.

But thankfully-- Annalise REAPPEARS in her window. This time, holding up a SIGN:

I WANT THE WHOLE WORLD TO SEE YOU

Upon reading it-- a soft SOB escapes Song's lips. And at the very same time-- Annalise & Song vanish from their windows--

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

--go RACING out their front doors-- down their front porches--
across their front lawns--

And *collide* in an EMBRACE in the middle of the street!

They CLING to each other desperately. SOBBING with relief.

When they finally pull apart, Song takes Annalise's face in her hands. She searches Annalise's face.

SONG

Only you do, Annalise. *Only you.*

Annalise NODS her head. Understanding.

ANNALISE

(whisper)

Then I won't look away.

INT. THE ROSE CLUB - NIGHT

Annalise sits expectantly in the midst of the packed AUDIENCE at The Rose. She LIGHTS UP as Song takes the stage to uproarious APPLAUSE.

Song's wearing the DRESS that Annalise had gifted her on the 4th of July. No wig. No make-up. Song grips the microphone nervously as the PIANO PLAYER begins the song MOON RIVER.

Song's eyes lock on Annalise as she SINGS. And this time, instead of turning her back like she normally would, Annalise keeps her promise: She doesn't look away the entire time.

SONG

(singing)

*Moon river, wider than a mile
I'm crossing you in style some day
Oh, dream maker, you heart breaker
Wherever you're goin', I'm goin'
your way*

In Annalise's eyes... in the very best way... Song looks to be a rather ordinary GIRL. Annalise is CAPTIVATED by Song. Bittersweet TEARS linger in Annalise's eyes.

SONG (CONT'D)

(singing)

*Two drifters, off to see the world
(MORE)*

SONG (CONT'D)

*There's such a lot of world to see
We're after the same rainbow's end,
Waitin' 'round the bend, My
huckleberry friend, moon river and
me*

Babs, Poppy, and Carmen are amongst the spectators, their reactions an amalgamation of pride, hope, and melancholy.

As the song ends, the room FILLS with cheers and applause! But it's like Annalise & Song can't even hear them.

Without breaking eye contact, Song descends the stage. She seats herself in Annalise's lap; she wraps her arms around Annalise's shoulders; she takes a DEEP BREATH--

And at the very same time:

SONG (CONT'D)

I love you.

ANNALISE

I love you.

Their LIPS CONNECT in a KISS-- like FATE, like HOME.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

This is the part of the story where
I should tell you that Annalise &
Song lived *happily ever after*...

When they pull apart, Song strokes Annalise's cheek with her thumb. Song implores her with her eyes.

SONG

Will you marry me?

Song REVEALS the golden RUYI RING. Annalise can only manage a NOD, emotions filling her the to the brim. Song's hands SHAKE as she pushes the ring onto Annalise's FINGER.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

This is the part of the story where
I want to say "The End"...

In Annalise's eyes the entire room FILLS with millions of BUBBLES-- iridescent and weightless. ENVELOPING THEM COMPLETELY. In their own world. It's almost as if Annalise & Song themselves are turning iridescent and weightless... Floating, cocooned in each other's arms...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

(whisper)

...This is the part of the story
that hurts the most.

GRUFF MAN (O.S.)
THERE'S BEEN A RAT!

SUDDENLY-- All of the BUBBLES begin to POP around them-- Annalise & Song are torn out of their own world as--

The CROWD around them begins to ERUPT with PANIC-- STAMPEDING-- CONFUSION-- *SHRIEKING!* The GRUFF MAN guarding the Club's door has BURST into The Rose--

GRUFF MAN (CONT'D)
 RUN!

Moments later, a DOZEN POLICEMEN pour inside behind him!

Annalise & Song CLING to each other-- utterly TERRIFIED-- as they witness THE RAID descending around them!

The POLICE WIELD their batons. They *CURSE* in people's faces. They SMASH alcohol bottles and FLIP over chairs and BLOCK off the door. They set to work ARRESTING every person dressed in-- to their eyes-- the *wrong* clothes.

But the patrons fight back-- Babs, Poppy, and Carmen among them. They KICK and they HIT and they FLEE.

BANG! The CLOUD of A SMOKE BOMB spreads across the room, obscuring their vision! Annalise & Song look to each other desperately--Annalise CLINGS to Song-- just as a BURLY POLICEMAN grabs Song by the bicep!

SONG
Annalise!

Annalise opens her mouth to scream back--! BUT--! Nothing comes out! She CHOKES violently on her own WORDS!

Annalise CLUTCHES at her own throat, as if trying to push her voice out manually-- but it's no use! All Annalise can do is HANG ON to Song-- Even as Song is DRAGGED out of The Rose--

EXT. THE ROSE CLUB - CONTINUOUS

--all the way to the POLICE WAGON'S OPEN DOORS, waiting outside on the street. The Policeman finally SHOVES Annalise roughly off Song. Annalise reaches out frantically, GRABBING for Song once more-- but the Policeman SPITS in her face!

All Annalise can do is watch HELPLESSLY as Song-- SOBBING-- is corralled into the Police Wagon with the rest.

Through her tears, Annalise OPENS HER MOUTH AGAIN-- but this time, she PUSHES with all of her MIGHT to get her voice out:

ANNALISE
 (louder than we've ever
 heard her)
SONG!!!

In Annalise's Vision: Along with her VOICE, her actual HEART escapes out through her lips! It floats macabrely toward Song through the smoke-suffused air, still dripping with BLOOD and spasming with PULSE. It DISAPPEARS into Song's chest!

Annalise watches it go with a mixture of HORROR and AWE. And then-- the police SHUT SONG AWAY. The WAGON DEPARTS.

Annalise CHASES after the police wagon for as long as she can... until she's ROBBED of breath... Until her LEGS can't hold her up any more... Until she CRUMPLES in the STREET--

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

--Mother CATCHES WEEPING Annalise in her arms as she collapses across the threshold into the house.

MOTHER
 Oh! Annalise!

Mother CRADLES Annalise in her lap on the floor. Stroking Annalise's hair SOOTHINGLY. Steady. Sure.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
*Shhh... Shhh... I'm so sorry,
 darling... I'm so sorry... I'm
 here... I understand... I'm here...*

Annalise CLINGS to her Mother. Annalise SHAKES with SOBS. Mother smears Annalise's tears from her cheeks.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 What a terrible thing... Mrs. Song told me what happened. Peter called her from the police station--

At Song's name, Annalise bursts into a fresh set of tears--

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Oh, darling, you couldn't have known! Mrs. Song is quite upset too, of course. Who knew that Peter was capable of being so-- so-- *unnatural*.

At that, Annalise furrows her brow... Grows UNEASY...

It's as if the world tilts sickening to one side. Annalise's tears HALT and instead a stiff dread pools over her... she WRIGGLES out of her Mother's grasping arms--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

The poor boy is utterly disturbed!
I would have never guessed Peter
had such a *perversion*--

Annalise backs away from her mother with HORROR. Mother misreads Annalise's REVULSION--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Oh, no, it's not your fault,
Annalise! I promise, you never have
to see him again--

Annalise shakes her head NO. No. No. No. No, no, no, no, no--

An expression of RAGE comes over Annalise. She blasts a glare of FURY at her mother. Annalise stumbles backward, reaching for the handle of the front door--

Mother is overcome by a SUDDEN PANIC--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

No! Annalise--!

Mother LUNGES toward Annalise! TACKLING her! Annalise STRUGGLES to break free!

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I know this must be heartbreaking
for you-- You have fallen for that
boy, that much is clear. But he's
been deceiving you, Annalise. He's
been deceiving all of us!

Annalise KICKS and GROANS and HOLLERS as she pries herself away from her mother! It looks as though Mother's strength is going to win out, her arms sinewy and vice-like, but--

One of Annalise's flailing elbows CONNECTS with Mother's eye. Mother YELPS in pain! Releases Annalise and clutches at her already-bruising SOCKET.

Annalise stands up, TOWERING over Mother, who KNEELS on the floor. Annalise reaches for the front door's knob, TWISTS it.

Mother looks up at her daughter. Mother looks BETRAYED.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 You'll follow this *boy* instead of
 me!?

And now Mother is CRYING, nearly two decades full of tears:

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 I have loved you your whole life,
 Annalise! I have loved you through
everything!

Annalise softens a bit at the sight. But her resolve is strong as she opens her mouth to respond:

ANNALISE
 You have loved me despite who I am.
 Song loves me because of it.

And with that, Annalise spins out the door, leaving her bruised and SHOCKED MOTHER behind...

Mother FOLDS into herself, CURLING up in a BALL and WAILING.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

Annalise runs WILDLY across the street-- BAREFOOT and SHIVERING. When she reaches the Song's front door, she POUNDS on it with her fists RELENTLESSLY--

--until MRS. SONG answers. She's disheveled, swaying, eyes bloodshot. DRUNK from *Biajiu*.

The two STARE at each other. Each with their own pain.

ANNALISE
 Which police station?

Mrs. Song doesn't even look stunned to hear Annalise's voice. She instead trains her eyes on the GOLD RUYI RING on Annalise's finger. She's SICKENED to see it.

Mrs. Song begins closing the door in Annalise's face. But not before saying--

MRS. SONG
 Forty Avenue.

INT./EXT. TRAIN STATION / TRAIN - LATER

Annalise DASHES through the station, SOBBING with abandon. She barely catches a train before the doors SEAL SHUT--

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Annalise RUSHES through the city streets-- squinting to read street signs, to remember her way. She WINCES as her BARE FEET are sliced by GRAVEL and stray street DEBRIS.

Finally, she turns a corner and REACHES A POLICE STATION. Annalise BARRELS INSIDE--

INT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Among the swarm of other people waiting to be booked is SONG. Handcuffed. Slumped in a chair. Still in the gifted dress.

Annalise collapses at Song's feet. She grips Song's shins. She BAWLS. But Song doesn't even raise her head. Song REFUSES to look at her. To even acknowledge her.

Finally, Annalise SHAKES Song's leg for her attention:

ANNALISE

Song!

SONG

Don't call me that!!

It's as if Song slapped Annalise in the face! She's STUNNED.

Song GESTURES out at the police station-- at the situation at large. Her voice RAGGED with unfettered sorrow--

SONG (CONT'D)

This is how the rest of the world
sees us, Annalise!

ANNALISE

But... But they're-- they're *wrong*--

SONG

They'll *never* see what you see!
They'll *never* see Song, they only
see *Peter*. And they barely even
want to see *him*--

ANNALISE

I want to see Song, I want to see
Peter, I want to see *you*--

SONG

Why am I like this!?

ANNALISE

Because-- because it's who you *are*--

SONG

No, *why!*? ... *Why* was I born in the wrong body? ... *Why* do you see the way you do?

ANNALISE

I... I don't know... But-- you said it yourself-- it can't be a coincidence! What we-- what the two of us *together*-- Don't you still *believe* that!?

Song still has not looked at Annalise. It's like she didn't even hear what Annalise just said... Lost in her own thoughts...

SONG

(whisper)

Maybe we are freaks...

ANNALISE

No-- *Don't*. Song-- I once thought that was true, that I was a freak and nothing more. But-- but then-- then I met *you*--

SONG

Stop--

ANNALISE (CONT'D)

You are the *only* thing that makes sense to me-- you are the *only* one who sees what I see. So what if I can't explain *why!*?

SONG

Annalise, you need to leave.

ANNALISE

No! *Never*--

SONG (CONT'D)

I can't see you anymore!

ANNALISE

I can't *stop* seeing you! I-- I see your face in my dreams!

SONG

Stop!

ANNALISE

I feel your hair between my fingers!

SONG

Annalise-- stop it!

ANNALISE

I smell your scent, even when
you're far away!

Now Song can only CRY--

ANNALISE (CONT'D)

Can't you smell me too?

Song's breath HITCHES--

ANNALISE (CONT'D)

Can't you feel me too?

Song's chest SHUDDERS--

ANNALISE (CONT'D)

Can't you see me too!?

SONG

Please.

This one word HALTS Annalise. And now, Song finally looks up to Annalise. Her eyes BEGGING Annalise... *Stop...*

ANNALISE

(whisper)

...You truly want me to leave you?

SONG

(barely audible)

Yes.

ANNALISE

Why?

Song's handcuffs JINGLE as she reaches up-- takes Annalise's hands into hers...

SONG

Because it's too painful to hear
you describe that version of me...
a me that I want so desperately...
a me that I can't have.

They both fall quiet.

Though she doesn't want to... Annalise NODS.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Annalise understood.

Song leans forward, touching her forehead to Annalise's.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Better than anyone.

CUT TO BLACK.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
I wish I could tell you it ended
like this:

MONTAGE - VARIOUS - All of this RAPID:

A) Annalise & Song in the police station, foreheads still touching. Annalise SHAKES HER HEAD NO. *No, she won't leave!* Unable to resist, they passionately give in to a KISS--

B) The Next Day: Annalise & Song stoically ride the TRAIN into the CITY, in each other's arms. SUITCASES at their feet.

C) Annalise & Song cuddle together in bed in their humble APARTMENT. They pull each other CLOSER, holding on TIGHT.

D) Annalise & Song SMILE at each other in an intimate COURTHOUSE wedding ceremony-- BOTH wearing DRESSES--

E) OLDER Annalise & Song lay on their floor side-by-side SINGING along to a RECORD PLAYING...

F) EVEN OLDER Annalise & Song walk hand-in-hand through the CITY PARK... Pointing out to each other what they SEE...

CUT TO BLACK.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
...I really wish I could.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Back in the police station, Annalise and Song's foreheads touching... Annalise leans forward and KISSES Song softly...

When they part, Annalise pulls the GOLD RUYI RING off of her finger and places it delicately in Song's hand. Annalise rises to her feet and trudges out of the station...

EXT. CITY STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Annalise WEEPS passively as she drags herself home through the city. Through her eyes, the whole world looks like the color has been drained of it, like the focus has been pulled blurry, like the liveliness, the vividness has been stolen away.

Annalise SUCKS in a BREATH for yet another SOB but--

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 When Song left, so too did
 Annalise's voice.

--*when she continues SOBBING NO SOUND COMES OUT OF HER MOUTH.*

*In fact, it is ENTIRELY QUIET. So SILENT it deeply disturbs us. So utterly
 DEVOID of SOUND we can feel it in our bones, we can hear our own blood flowing...*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 (all whispered:)
 It dried up and evaporated from her
 throat without a trace. She lost
 all of it.
 (long beat)
 No more feeling of laughter
 bubbling in her chest.
 (long beat)
 No more vibration in her teeth as
 she chit-chatted.
 (long beat)
 No more rawness in her windpipe as
 she screamed.
 (long beat)
 Nothing.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Still in that TOTAL SILENCE, Annalise bursts in her family's
 front door. She's met by Mother, still bruised, wary of
 Annalise. They face each other... FRACTURED...

But when Annalise's quivering chin gives way into a SOB--
 Mother is there by her side in a *heartbeat*. EMBRACING her
 again. A buoy in this sea of sorrow.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Song, Mr. Song, and Mrs. Song finish PACKING their family car
 in the driveway of their HOME. A *FOR SALE* sign stands in the
 lawn, a sticker slapped over top proudly proclaiming: *SOLD!*

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 Afterwards, the Song family moved
 far away, so that Song could have
 what they saw as a fresh start.

INT. SONG FAMILY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Each member of the Song family ruminates in their own world as their car speeds down a highway... but Mrs. Song sneaks peeks at Song in the backseat through the rearview MIRROR:

Song (in boy clothes again) looks forlorn out her window. She fiddles with the GOLD RUYI RING on her finger...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

It wasn't that Mrs. Song didn't want Song to be happy, it was just that Mrs. Song had her own unique way of looking at the world, and sadly that sight couldn't see the real Song.

INT. NEW SONG HOUSE - DAY

Song unpacks BOXES in her new room. From within one box, she unearths the copy of *The Diary of Anne Frank* from Annalise.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

And Song? Well... For now she would lie low once more...

Song HIDES the BOOK from Annalise in the very back of her closet. So far back, it's clear she won't be seeing it again for a long, long time...

INT. ANNALISE'S ROOM - DAY

Annalise stares despondently out her bedroom window... at Song's EMPTY bedroom window across the street...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Annalise, of course-- she was heartbroken.

Annalise looks down at her desk, where a FRESH NOTEBOOK waits... And in her eyes, we can see... an IDEA is brewing...

STORYTELLER

But at the same time, Annalise saw things *differently* than she had before.

Annalise picks up a pen and begins SCRIBBLING--

INT. ANNALISE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Annalise keeps WRITING and WRITING, late into the night. She's filled up almost her ENTIRE NOTEBOOK with a STORY.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 Yes, it still wasn't what others
 saw, but for the first time
 Annalise could see: A future.

As she writes the final words-- *THE END*-- Annalise **SMILES**.

INT. COZY BOOKSHOP - DAY

Annalise WORKS behind the CASH REGISTER in that cozy bookshop in the city, the one she and Song visited during the summer.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 And though it looked like that
 future wasn't with Song, knowing
 that someone had understood her--
 that Song had understood her once--
 was a seed of hope stronger than
 she'd ever possessed before.

Annalise keeps peeping over at one of her CUSTOMERS: a bright-eyed GIRL around Annalise's age. From the looks of things, this GIRL has her eye on Annalise as well...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 Annalise's voice was lost, yes, but
 not forever.

The GIRL takes the plunge, approaches Annalise with a coy GRIN. And Annalise, well. She **SMILES** at her **NEW LOVE**.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
 Somewhere deep inside her, Annalise
 knew that she'd find her voice
 again:

ANNALISE
 (to New Love)
Hello.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

SPLIT SCREEN: Annalise and Song grow up in different places, with different people:

- Annalise goes on her very first date with the **NEW LOVE** we met, the two of them sharing a delicate **KISS**. Meanwhile Song works up her nerve to buy her very own **LIPSTICK** at a department store.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

In the end, they never got the answers they were looking for: ***Why*** was Song born in the body she was? ***Why*** did Annalise see things differently from anyone else?

- OLDER Annalise buzzes with nerves as she hands a MANUSCRIPT to a PUBLISHER in an office. He looks down at it skeptically. Meanwhile OLDER Song (now dressed as a WOMAN in public) sings KARAOKE at a bar. She locks eyes with a DAPPER MAN in the audience, who raises his DRINK to her: *Cheers*.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

But Annalise & Song had come to find that perhaps the answers to those questions didn't matter. Perhaps the only thing that matters is finding the ones who see the way you do.

- OLDER Annalise and her NEW LOVE are welcomed home to celebrate Mother's birthday. Meanwhile OLDER Song and DAPPER MAN dance cheek-to-cheek in Song's apartment. This man is **SONG'S NEW LOVE**. They KISS tenderly.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)

Later in life, when they had both grown into themselves fully, when they had both managed to wrangle the word *freak* into a badge of honor, when they had both found lasting love again with someone else--

INT. SONG'S NEW PLACE - NIGHT

OLDER SONG (45) GASPS awake in bed, awoken from a DREAM! It takes Song a second to catch her breath... She closes her eyes, attempting to recall what she just DREAMT:

INT. MR. SONG'S CAR - NIGHT / DREAM

IN THE DREAM, SONG'S BACK IN HER FATHER'S CAR ON PROM NIGHT: Annalise HOLDS Song tightly to her chest as SONG *WEEPS...* and *WEEPS...* and weeps...

Finally, Song wipes the last of her tears. Song straightens up in her seat. She wraps one arm around Annalise, puts her other hand on the wheel, steps on the GAS--

But the car doesn't just DRIVE DOWN THE ROAD. It tilts up-- impossibly driving upwards into the air-- up, up, up, into the atmosphere and out of this world...

...Until Annalise & Song are just two DOTS in outer space.
The whole world nowhere to be found.

Just them.

INT. SONG'S NEW PLACE - NIGHT

OLDER Song's still catching her breath in bed after waking from this dream... PASSIVE TEARS leak down her cheeks. She peeks over at her NEW LOVE, still fast asleep beside her.

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Song found that she didn't feel
sad, exactly. She couldn't tell you
what the feeling was if she tried.

INT. SONG'S NEW KITCHEN - DAY

OLDER SONG DIALS a phone number she knows by heart, waits for the other end to pick up. Phone RINGS... RINGS... RINGS...

STORYTELLER (V.O.)
Nevertheless, she knew what the
dream was urging her to do...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Now older, MOTHER (60s) answers the phone in her KITCHEN:

MOTHER
Hello?

Mother listens to the caller on the other end... her expression UNREADABLE... until she SOFTENS:

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Of course I remember.

INT. ANNALISE'S NEW APARTMENT - DAY

OLDER Annalise (45) gives her NEW LOVE a SMOOCH as she enters their apartment. She carries whole STACK of **BOOKS**, the covers of which tell us they were AUTHORED by ANNALISE HERSELF.

NEW LOVE
Your mother called...

New Love hands Annalise a NOTE. When she reads it, Annalise's JAW SLACKS, heart STOPS, breath is SUCKED OUT OF HER...

And when Annalise finally LOOKS UP--

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY - 1995

--She's standing in the middle of the CITY PARK where she and Song had shared what they saw with each other so many years ago. It's 1995 now, but the park looks much the same.

Annalise is waiting for someone, scanning the swarms of park-goers anxiously for a familiar face. And then-- her eyes LIGHT UP with recognition.

Of course, the person whom Annalise recognizes is **SONG**.

We rotate around Annalise-- spinning *around* and *around* her as the scene unfolds-- Alternating between ANNALISE'S VISION and NORMAL VISION every time we pass back behind her head--

So that as Song approaches Annalise, we'll come to find--

that the way Annalise sees Song--

and the way the rest of the world sees Song--

is now finally--

one--

and--

the--

same.

IN BOTH VISIONS: The girl that Annalise saw in their youth has grown up to be the woman that Song has become in everyone's eyes. Song is a 45-year-old trans woman. Song has a facial scar. Song is beautiful.

Ultimately Annalise and Song stand mere inches apart.

Eyes connect. An unspoken bond tethering them to one another.

Finally, with a sharp intake of breath for courage--

Song reaches out-- Clasps Annalise's hands in hers--

And smiles.

SONG

Thank you.

Somewhere Over the Rainbow plays over the credits:

Somewhere over the rainbow, way up
high
There's a land that I've heard of
once in a lullaby.
Somewhere over the rainbow, skies
are blue
And the dreams that you dare to
dream, Really do come true.
Someday I'll wish upon a star
And wake up where the clouds are
far behind me.
Where troubles melt like lemon
drops,
High above the chimney tops,
That's where you'll find me.
Somewhere over the rainbow, blue
birds fly
Birds fly over the rainbow
Why then, oh why can't I?
If happy little bluebirds fly
beyond the rainbow
Why, oh why can't I?