

The Perks of Being
a Wallflower

by

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Based on his novel

the
Perks of being a
Wallflower

Final Draft

FADE IN:

1 EXT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

1

The titles begin over black. We hear the sound of an old typewriter. Someone reaching out to us. The bell dings, announcing the end of a line, and we see our title...

THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER

Music begins, picture fades up, and we are in the city. Downtown Pittsburgh. Looking out of the back window like a child in the back of a station wagon.

We see lights on buildings and everything that makes us wonder. We see the bridge. And the river below. And then we enter...

The Tunnel.

We keep moving backwards, watching the lights. Golden, alive, and hypnotic. The music carries us as we float out of the tunnel. Onto another bridge. And over the highway.

We move into the night sky, back through the trees, through a window, and into...

2 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

2

It is a neat and tidy little room. Few posters or books. **CHARLIE** is 15. He is innocent, hopeful, awkward, and likable to everyone but his classmates. He sits at his desk, writing a letter in pencil as he tapes the title song through the radio on his cassette boom box.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Dear Friend, I am writing to you because she said you listen and understand and didn't try to sleep with that person at that party even though you could have. Please don't try to figure out who she is because then you might figure out who I am, and I don't want you to do that. I just need to know that people like you exist. Like if you met me, you wouldn't think I was the weird kid who spent time in the hospital. And I wouldn't make you nervous.

3 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

3

Charlie anxiously walks through the hallway of his suburban split level house.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

I hope it's okay for me to think that.
You see, I haven't really talked to
anyone outside of my family all summer.

Charlie moves to the living room where dad watches a football game. Mom reads a page turner and sips her white wine. Charlie waits for them to notice him. And waits. And waits.

4 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

4

Charlie sits at his desk, continuing his letter in pencil.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

But tomorrow is my first day of high
school ever, and I really need to turn
things around this year.

(hopeful)

So, I have a plan.

5 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - LAST DAY

5

We see it in Charlie's mind. Slow motion and wondrous. The kids clear out their lockers by throwing their old papers in the air like a New York confetti parade.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

As I enter the school for the first time,
I will visualize what it will be like on
the last day of my senior year.

Charlie walks down the hall. Triumphant. Confident. Happy.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, I counted, and that's...

SMASH CUT TO:

6 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - FIRST DAY

6

Reality. The bell rings, and we see the chaotic maze from Charlie's POV. A SENIOR BULLY leads the ritual, making dozens of freshmen hop down the hall.

SENIOR BULLY

Hop, freshman toads. Hop! Move it, boys!

As seniors grab more victims, Charlie moves to the wall.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

... 1,385 days from now.

VARSITY FOOTBALL PLAYERS pass, wearing their letter jackets.

LINEBACKER
Man, you got big.

NOSE TACKLE
Worked out all summer. Rock hard, dude.

At the front of the pack is **BRAD HAYS** (17), the quarterback. He's good looking, charismatic, and friendly. The big man on campus. Nice guy, too.

BRAD HAYS
Would you guys get a room?

They laugh. Charlie turns to the trophy case to avoid them. Trying to make himself as small as possible.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
(trying to be optimistic)
Just 1,385 days.

7 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - LUNCH

7

Charlie moves down the lunch line with his sister. **CANDACE KELMECKIS** is 17 and a beautiful type A, straight A priss.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
In the meantime, I'd hoped that my sister Candace and her boyfriend Derek would have let me eat lunch with their earth club.

CANDACE
Seniors only.
(barks to Derek)
What are you doing with a plastic spork?

Candace turns to her boyfriend, **DEREK**, 17. Derek is such a pussy, the most masculine thing about him is his pony-tail.

DEREK
I don't want to bring back silverware--

CANDACE
Derek, you're Earth Club Treasurer.

Derek takes the silverware like a beaten dog. Charlie watches them move into the intimidating cafeteria.

8 INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

8

Charlie sits in the corner alone, observing everyone having a great time with their friends. He sees a pretty girl with blonde hair having the best first day. This is **SUSAN**, 14.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

When my sister said no, I thought maybe my old friend Susan would want to have lunch with me.

Charlie catches her eye and waves, but she looks away.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In middle school, Susan was very fun to be around, but now she doesn't like to say hi to me anymore.

Charlie turns his attention to the quarterback, Brad Hays.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And then there's Brad Hays, who's the quarterback of our team. Before my brother went to play football for Penn State, he and Brad played together. So, I thought maybe he'd say hi to me. But Brad's a senior, and I'm me, so... who am I kidding?

Brad catches Charlie staring at him. Awkward.

9 INT. SHOP CLASS - DAY

9

Charlie sits by himself, watching the freshmen boys laugh as a senior paints a goatee on his face with a grease pencil.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

On the bright side, one senior decided to make fun of the teacher instead of the freshmen. He even drew on Mr. Callahan's legendary goatee with a grease pencil.

Meet **PATRICK** (18), full of confidence, mischief, and so over high school. He is the class clown, performing a perfect imitation of the teacher, Mr. Callahan.

PATRICK

Boys, the prick punch is not a toy. I learned that in 'Nam back in '68. "Callahan," the sergeant said, "put down that prick punch and go kill some gooks."

The laughter suddenly dies as the real **MR. CALLAHAN** (57) walks up behind the oblivious Patrick.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

But you know what happened? That prick punch killed my best friend in a Saigon whorehouse.

Patrick suddenly feels Mr. Callahan behind him. Oops.

MR. CALLAHAN

I heard you were going to be in my class.
Are you proud being a senior taking
freshman shop, Patty-Cakes?

PATRICK

My name is Patrick. You call me Patrick
or you call me nothing.

MR. CALLAHAN

Okay... Nothing.

The class laughs. Except Charlie. He watches Patrick take
the long walk back to his seat.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

I felt really bad for Patrick. He wasn't
saying the impersonation to be mean or
anything. He was just trying to make us
freshmen feel better.

MR. CALLAHAN

Everyone open your safety guides.
Nothing... why don't you read first?

Patrick opens the book.

PATRICK

Chapter 1. Surviving your fascist shop
teacher, who needs to put kids down to
feel big.

(to the class)

Oh, wow. This is useful guys. We should
read on.

Charlie smiles. He loves him already.

10 INT. ENGLISH CLASS - MORNING

10

The kids pass back paperback copies of To Kill A Mockingbird.
Charlie opens his Trapper Keeper, takes a pencil out of the
plastic pouch, and writes... "ENGLISH CLASS... DAY ONE."

CHARLIE (V.O.)

My last class of the day is advanced
English, and I'm excited to finally start
learning with the smartest kids in the
school...

A **SMART ASS FRESHMAN** girl with braces smiles at him.

SMART ASS FRESHMAN

(whispers)

Nice Trapper Keeper, faggot.

The kids around him laugh. Charlie's ears turn red. At the blackboard, the teacher writes his name... Mr. Anderson. But you can call him **BILL** (27). Bill is an idealist.

BILL

Shhh. I'm Mr. Anderson. And thanks to Teach for America, I'm going to be your teacher for freshman English. This semester, we're going to be learning Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Genius book. Now, who wants to get out of the first pop quiz?

All hands go up. Except Charlie's. Bill paces the rows.

BILL (CONT'D)

I'm shocked. Alright. You can skip the quiz if you tell me which author invented the paperback book. Anyone?

As kids think, Bill confiscates contraband, removes hats.

BILL (CONT'D)

He's British. He also invented the serial. In fact, at the end of chapter 3 of his first novel, he had a man hanging off a cliff by his fingernails. Hence, the term cliffhanger. Anybody?

FRESHMAN GIRL

Shakespeare.

BILL

That's a great guess, but no, Shakespeare didn't write novels. Anybody else?
(off their silence)
The author was...

Bill is about to give the answer when he notices Charlie has already written... **Charles Dickens**.

BILL (CONT'D)

... Charles Dickens. However, if you and I had gone to a play in Shakespeare's time, it would have cost 4 pennies. Can you imagine that? We would have put those pennies in a metal box, which the ushers would lock in the office. And that's where we get the term... anyone?

KIDS (O.S.)
 "Office Depot!" "Office Supplies!"

Charlie writes down **Box Office**, then looks up to find that Bill is staring at him. Waiting for him to raise his hand.

BILL
 I'll give you a free "A" on anything but
 the final term paper if you get it right.

Charlie looks down. He's not going to answer.

BILL (CONT'D)
Box office.

The kids groan. They should have known. Charlie smiles to himself. He's going to like this class.

11 INT. ENGLISH CLASS - LATER

11

The bell rings. The students chatter their way out of class. The last to leave is Charlie.

BILL
 You should learn to participate.

Charlie stops and turns to find Bill erasing the board.

BILL (CONT'D)
 Why didn't you raise your hand?
 (off Charlie's shrug)
 They call you teacher's pet? Freak?
 (off Charlie's nod)
 I used to get spaz. I mean, come on,
spaz?

Charlie smiles. Bill takes a moment. Then...

BILL (CONT'D)
 So, I heard you had a tough time last
 year. But they say if you make one friend
 on your first day, you're doing okay.

CHARLIE
 Thank you, sir, but if my English teacher
 is the only friend I make today, that
 would be sort of depressing.

BILL
 Yeah. I could see that.

CHARLIE
 Don't worry, Mr. Anderson. I'm okay.

Bill nods and watches Charlie exit. He gets swallowed up by the hallway as the bell rings.

12 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY 12

Charlie looks through the thick office glass. He sees Patrick use his charms on MRS. SMALL, (58) the Principal.

PATRICK
(to Mrs. Small)
I would happily not take shop...

Out of nowhere, the SENIOR BULLY grabs Charlie's book.

SENIOR BULLY
Hey, Freshman Toad.

The bully rips the cover. He throws it on the ground as his friends laugh and disappear down the hall. Charlie walks up and picks up his book.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Well, I have 1,384 days to go. And just so I say it to someone, high school is even worse than middle school.

13 EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY 13

Charlie walks up the path to his house.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
If my parents ask me about it, I probably won't tell them the truth because I don't want them to worry that I might get bad again.

14 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON 14

Charlie tapes his book cover back together. He looks up as his dad comes home from a long day. Charlie's mom hugs him.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
If my Aunt Helen were still here, I could talk to her. And I know she would understand how I am both happy and sad, and I'm still trying to figure out how that could be. I just hope I make a friend soon. Love always, Charlie.

15 INT. CHARLIE'S DINING ROOM - EARLY EVENING 15

Charlie stands in the kitchen, pouring his milk.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Charlie, come on.

His family is seated around the table. Candace's boyfriend, Derek, is their special guest.

DEREK
Mmmm. This chicken paprikash is
delicious, Mrs. Kelmeckis.

Charlie's father rolls his eyes, then reads his sports page.

MOTHER
Thank you, Derek. It's Charlie's
favorite. He was a little nervous about
starting high school, so I made it.

FATHER
You feel a little silly being nervous
now, huh, champ?

CHARLIE
Yes, sir. I sure do.

Charlie carries his milk back to the table. He quickly sits, hoping someone will change the subject.

FATHER
I told you. Just give 'em a smile and be
yourself. That's how you--

CANDACE
"--make friends in the real world."

FATHER
You're cruisin' for a bruisin'.

DEREK
Freshman year is tough, but you really
find yourself.

FATHER
(deep eye roll)
Thanks, Derek.

16 INT. LIVING ROOM / ENTRY HALL - EVENING

16

Charlie's father and mother watch a local sports show.
Charlie passes by them with ice cream on his way downstairs.

MOTHER
I think you could be a little nicer to
Derek.

FATHER

I'm sorry. The kid's a pussy. I can't stand him.

Charlie moves to the entry hall. He looks through the screen door to the porch where Candace kisses Derek's cheek goodbye. As Derek walks to his mom's Mercedes, Candace joins Charlie.

DEREK

(waving from car)
I hope you love the mix I made. The cover is hand-painted.

When he gets into his car, she hands Charlie the mix tape.

CANDACE

Charlie, do you want this?

CHARLIE

Are you sure?

CANDACE

He gives me one every week.

17 INT. CHARLIE'S BED ROOM - DUSK

17

Charlie sits on his bed, reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the cover taped back together. We see Derek's mix... Autumn Leaves... rotate in his old tape recorder.

DEREK (V.O.)

Hey, Babe. This next one might be a little sad, but it reminded me of your eyes.

The first notes of The Smiths' "Asleep" begins. As Morrissey sings, Charlie keeps reading. And reading.

CUT TO:

18 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

18

The reading is done. Charlie proudly puts *To Kill a Mockingbird* on his newly dubbed "Shelf of Fame."

19 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

19

The songs continues as we see glimpses of Charlie's day to day life over the next few weeks. Charlie exits his English class. FRESHMEN BULLIES wait for him, led by...

SMART ASS FRESHMAN

Did you already do the term paper on To

Silence. They grab and drag him into the boy's room. We hear the toilet flush for the swirly.

20 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - DUSK 20

Charlie looks at the new bottle of prescription Wellbutrin. He puts a pill in his mouth and washes it down with RC cola.

21 INT. CHARLIE'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON 21

Charlie watches his brother and the Penn State Nittany Lions on TV. He looks over at his father, but his dad is too busy building Charlie's clock for shop class to notice him.

22 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - LUNCH 22

Charlie carries his tray through the intimidating cafeteria. Not giving up. Looking for somewhere to sit.

CUT TO:

23 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - LUNCH 23

Charlie sits by himself in the corner. He looks around the cafeteria, wanting to break in. Not knowing how. After a moment, he returns to his book. The song ends.

24 EXT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT 24

Friday Night Football in Western, PA. Charlie buys his Coke and nachos and wanders to the bleachers. He sits alone, trying to blend in by cheering with the rest of students. When the Mill Grove Devils recover a fumble, he hears...

PATRICK

Come on Devils! Woooooo!

Charlie looks up at Patrick, cheering his head off. **TWIN SENIOR GIRLS** pass him, taunting.

TWIN SENIOR GIRLS

Hey, Nothing. Hey, Nothing.

PATRICK

Suck it, virginity pledges!

Charlie wants to go up to Patrick so badly. After driving himself crazy, sitting up and down twice, he approaches.

CHARLIE

Hey... Patrick.

PATRICK

Hey! You're in my shop class, right?
How's your clock coming?

CHARLIE

My dad's building it.

PATRICK

Yeah. Mine looks like a boat.
(off Charlie's awkward silence)
You want to sit over here, or are you
waiting for your friends?

CHARLIE

No. I'll sit if that's okay.

Patrick motions for Charlie to sit. Charlie sits. Elated.

PATRICK

Thanks for not calling me "Nothing" by
the way. It's an endless nightmare. And
these assholes actually think they're
being original.

Brad Hays puts on his helmet and rushes onto the field.
Charlie dries his hands on his pants. So nervous. A 5
second silence that feels like a year. Think of something to
say. Anything.

CHARLIE

So, uh... you like football?

PATRICK

Love it.

CHARLIE

Then, maybe you know my broth--

PATRICK

Hey, Sam.

Charlie looks up. Standing there is the prettiest girl he's
ever seen. **SAM** (17) would make every mother proud and every
father nervous. She is alive, adventurous, and a world class
flirt. Great attitude. Great taste. Great banter.

SAM

Question. Could the bathrooms here be
more disgusting?

PATRICK

Yes, they call it the men's room.

Sam sits down, sandwiching Charlie between her and Patrick. Charlie tries to remain casual. Hang in there, buddy.

SAM
Well, I finally got hold of Bob.

PATRICK
Party tonight?

SAM
No. He's still trying to shag that waitress from the Olive Garden.

PATRICK
He's never tossing that salad.

Brad Hays marches the Devils offense down the field. The kids clap. Sam looks at Charlie, then turns back to Patrick.

SAM
(about Charlie)
Patrick... who's this?

PATRICK
This is...

CHARLIE
Uh... Charlie... Kelmeckis.

PATRICK
Kelmeckis! No shit! Your sister dates Pony Tail Derek, doesn't she?

CHARLIE
Is that what they call him?

SAM
Awww. Leave Pony Tail Derek alone. You put the "ass" in "class," Patrick.

PATRICK
I try, Sam. I try.

SAM
It's nice to meet you, Charlie. I'm Sam.

Sam extends her hand to Charlie. Every nail a different color. They shake. Then, Sam grabs a nacho. Zoinks!

PATRICK
So, what's the plan, Sam? You want to go to Mary Elizabeth's house?

SAM

Can't. She got caught watering down her parent's brandy with iced tea. Let's just go to Kings.

PATRICK

(turns to Charlie)

Hey... we're going to Kings after the game if you want to come.

Charlie nods just as Brad Hays tosses a touchdown pass. The fans go crazy. Especially Patrick. Charlie smiles.

25 INT. KINGS FAMILY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

25

The Devils' faithful cheer as Brad Hays and his guys enter! The place is packed. Patrick and Sam drink coffee while Charlie eats his brownie. They're all excited.

SAM

Do you have a favorite band?

CHARLIE

I think The Smiths are my favorite.

SAM

Are you kidding!? I love The Smiths! The best breakup band ever. What's your favorite song?

CHARLIE

Asleep. It's from Louder Than Bombs. I heard it on Pony Tail Derek's mix tape.

PATRICK

That works on so many levels.

CHARLIE

I could make a copy for you.

SAM

Thanks. What about Eide's? You love Eide's, right?

CHARLIE

(never heard of it)

Yeah. They're great.

PATRICK

Not a band, Charlie.

SAM

It's an old record store downtown.

PATRICK

I used to be popular before Sam got me some good music. So, watch out, Charlie. She'll ruin your life forever.

CHARLIE

That's okay.

Brad Hays, the quarterback, passes with his posse. Taunting.

NOSE TACKLE & LINEBACKER

Hey, Nothing. Hey, Nothing.

PATRICK

Let it go! Jesus! It's an old joke!
It's over!

Sam laughs. She loves watching Patrick get riled up.

SAM

So, Charlie... what are you going to do when you get out of here?

CHARLIE

My Aunt Helen said I should be a writer, but I don't know what I'd write about.

SAM

You could write about us.

PATRICK

Yeah. Call it Slut and The Falcon. Make us solve crimes.

Sam laughs. Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE

You guys look happy together. How long have you been boyfriend and girlfriend?
(off their laughs)
What?

SAM

He's my step-brother. My mom finally left my worthless dad and married his nice dad 3 years ago.

PATRICK

But Sam's not bitter. Make no mistake.

SAM

Absolutely. I'm not a bulimic. I'm a bulim-ist.

They laugh at their inside joke. Charlie has no idea what's so funny.

CHARLIE
I'm sorry. I don't know what that means.

PATRICK
She just really believes in bulimia.

SAM
(cracking up)
I love bulimia.

26 EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

26

Charlie hops out of Sam's old truck. The music blares.

PATRICK
Thanks for paying, Charlie.

CHARLIE
(so eager)
No problem. Thanks for the ride. Hey... maybe I'll see you around in school?

SAM
(distracted - to Patrick)
God, would you turn that down? You're going to make us deaf. Bye, Charlie.

PATRICK
Bye, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Okay. Bye.

Charlie waves as the truck leaves. The look on his face. The happiness from one night of company.

27 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

27

Charlie enters the house, excited to tell someone his news. He runs up the stairs to find the living room empty. He hears the TV playing downstairs in the basement.

28 INT. DOORWAY TO BASEMENT - NIGHT

28

As Charlie approaches, he hears muffled sounds of fighting.

DEREK (O.S.)
I'm sorry. I can't do anything about it.
Please talk to me.

CANDACE (O.S.)

Maybe your mom and I should have a "drive us to our hair appointment" contest. Then, I could spend a Saturday with you.

Charlie looks through a slit in the open door to find...

DEREK

There's nothing I can do--

CANDACE

Do you always want to be a mama's boy?

DEREK

I am not a mama's boy--

CANDACE

Yes! You are! Every time I go to your house--

DEREK

Shhh. Shut u--

CANDACE

-- your mom says, "Don't go to Columbia with Candace. Go to Pitt, Derek. Mommy needs you to stay at home because she can't drive herself." She's only 51.

DEREK

SHUT UP, CANDACE!

29 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

29

Charlie enters, wanting to stop the fight. Derek's neck is red. Dangerous angry. Candace keeps digging.

CANDACE

And you just stand there like a little bitch dog.

SNAP! Out of nowhere, Derek slaps her across the face. It's not a movie slap. It's a real slap. Dead sound. And after it, silence. Candace turns and sees Charlie. It sobers her up. Charlie moves at Derek. Candace stops him.

CANDACE (CONT'D)

Charlie, just go. I can handle it. Just don't wake up mom and dad.

She pushes him out of the room and closes the door.

30 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 30

Charlie sits at his desk. So disturbed. He hears a car start outside. He moves to his window and looks down at Derek and Candace near Derek's mother's Mercedes. Derek is crying. Candace comforts. After a beat... they kiss.

Charlie stands frozen, a look creeping across his face.

MOTHER (V.O.)
Hey, look who's here...

FLASHBACK TO:

31 INT. ENTRY HALL - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 31

The door opens to reveal Charlie's mom and **AUNT HELEN** entering the house. Aunt Helen carries a suitcase. The children don't know where she's been or why she looks sad. They just know they love her. Little Charlie stands at the top of the stairs with his brother and sister in their Sunday clothes. There are balloons. And streamers.

LITTLE CANDACE
Welcome home, Aunt Helen!

AUNT HELEN
Oh. Look at you all, dressed so nice.

Aunt Helen smiles at Little Charlie on top of the stairs.

MATCH CUT TO:

32 INT. ENTRY HALL - NIGHT (PRESENT) 32

Charlie stands at the top of the stairs as Candace enters the house. She is startled when she sees Charlie. They whisper.

CHARLIE
What are you doing?

CANDACE
Look, I egged him on. You saw it. He's never hit me before. I promise he'll never hit me again.

She's about to go back downstairs when...

CHARLIE
Like Aunt Helen's boyfriends?

A silence passes between them. Then...

CANDACE

Charlie... this is Pony Tail Derek. I
can handle him. Will you trust me?
Please, don't tell mom and dad.

With a desperately confident nod, Candace goes downstairs.
Charlie stands in the entry hall, troubled.

33 INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

33

The Homecoming Dance is in full swing. God bless everyone.
Especially Charlie. He's alone at the wall, dressed in his
Sunday suit. To us, adorable. To himself, in living hell.

Charlie watches his sister, slow dancing with Derek. As
happy as she looks, Charlie still isn't sure if he did the
right thing by keeping quiet. The song ends to applause.

After a beat, Charlie turns away. That's when he sees Sam
and Patrick at the punch bowl. We hear the first notes of
"Come On, Eileen" by Dexy's Midnight Runners.

SAM

Oh, my God. They're playing good music.

PATRICK

Holy shit. They are! They're playing
good music!

SAM

(total mischief)
Living room routine?

PATRICK

Living room routine!

Charlie watches Sam and Patrick run to the center of the
floor and show this stiff crowd what dancing is. It starts
slow. "So over it" hand moves. A little shoulder. And
then, the best of swing. 30 seconds of genius.

Charlie takes a breath. Then, he tries desperately not to
look like he's dancing toward them as he dances toward them.
He bobs his head like a dork. And once he gets close,
Patrick and Sam turn and find him.

SAM & PATRICK

Hey!

Without a pause, they grab his hands, and move together in a
circle. Their own island. After a moment, Sam moves around
Charlie like a maypole as the whole gym explodes into dance.

34 EXT. BOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

34

The party rages inside this mansion in the rich part of town. Patrick and Sam walk up the steps with Charlie tailing.

SAM
God, it's freezing.

PATRICK
But you wore that toasty costume. It's not like you're trying too hard to be original.

SAM
Piss off, Tennessee Tuxedo.

CHARLIE
Are you sure it's okay that I come?

SAM
Of course. Just remember, Charlie... Bob's not paranoid.

PATRICK
"He's sensitive."

Sam knocks. The door opens, revealing **BOB** (20). Bob was the cool high school kid, who never quite left. He's stoned so often that people can't tell the difference anymore.

BOB
Sam... that waitress from the Olive Garden is a tease. Will you marry me?

SAM
Only if I have Patrick's blessing.

BOB
Patrick?

PATRICK
You're a hopeless stoner who attends the culinary institute. So, I'm going to have to say "no" on that one, but nice try. Charlie?

Patrick leads Charlie inside, leaving Bob staring at Sam.

BOB
Touché.

35 INT. BOB'S BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

35

PATRICK

Charlie... this is a party.

The music blasts. Charlie's eyes are our guide. As they walk through the crowd, you can smell it. Stale beer and cigarette smoke. High school parties. The room is packed with kids playing quarters. Others pouring vodka into a watermelon. *

PATRICK (CONT'D)

This is what fun looks like.

Patrick smiles when he spots two friends.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

You ready to meet some desperate women?

MARY ELIZABETH and ALICE (both 17) sit on the sofa together. Mary Elizabeth is smart, a little overweight, and extremely bossy. Alice will figure out that she's a lesbian in college. Right now, she just likes movies and is Mary Elizabeth's "beta female."

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Here, have a seat. Hey, ladies, meet Charlie. Charlie, meet ladies.

They shake hands and say their hellos.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

This is Charlie's first party ever. So, I expect nice, meaningful, heartfelt blow jobs from both of you.

MARY ELIZABETH

Patrick, you're such a dick.

PATRICK

Where the hell did you go?

MARY ELIZABETH

The dance was a little boring, don't you think?

PATRICK

You're so selfish. We looked everywhere for you. You could have told someone.

MARY ELIZABETH

Cry me a river.

PATRICK

How is it that you got meaner since

MARY ELIZABETH
Just lucky I guess.

PATRICK
I think you're doing something wrong.

MARY ELIZABETH
Or something very right.

Patrick and Mary Elizabeth laugh at their banter, just as Sam calls out from the other side of the room.

SAM (O.S.)
Hey! Look who's here!

The party turns, and Charlie sees Brad Hays, the quarterback, enter with Sam and Bob. Patrick approaches them. Charlie sits on the beat up couch next to the girls. He's shocked.

CHARLIE
Is that Brad Hays?

ALICE
Yeah. He comes here sometimes.

CHARLIE
But he's a popular kid.

MARY ELIZABETH
(offended)
Then, what are we?

Charlie tries to think of something, but he can't. The girls turn, ignoring him. Bob approaches with a tray.

BOB
Charlie, you look like you could use a brownie.

CHARLIE
Thank you. I was so hungry at the dance. I was going to go to King's, but I didn't really have any time. Thanks.

Bob smiles. Mary Elizabeth gives Alice a knowing glance. Charlie bites into the brownie. The icing gushing between his teeth. The image goes up into the smoke like an inhale as he chews and chews and chews.

After a beat, the music changes, and the image exhales back down to Charlie, who is now... baked out of his mind. The

whole party surrounds him now, pissing themselves with laughter as this shy kid talks and talks and talks.

CHARLIE

Have you guys felt this carpet? This carpet feels so darn good.

MARY ELIZABETH

(laughing)

Charlie, what do you think about high school?

CHARLIE

High school? Bullshit. The cafeteria is called the Nutrition Center. And people wear their letter jackets even when it's 98 degrees out. And why do they give out letters for marching band? That's not a sport, and we all know it.

MARY ELIZABETH

This kid is crazy.

Charlie looks at Mary Elizabeth with her new wave haircut.

CHARLIE

And Mary Elizabeth, I think you're really going to regret that haircut when you look back at old photographs.

(off their laughter)

I'm really sorry. That sounded like a compliment in my head.

MARY ELIZABETH

Oh, my God!

ALICE

Well, it's kind of true.

MARY ELIZABETH

Shut up!

Sam enters the room. Takes quick stock. Then...

SAM

Bob, did you get him stoned?

BOB

Come on, Sam. He likes it. Just look at him.

SAM

How do you feel, Charlie?

CHARLIE

I just really want a milkshake.

The entire room explodes with laughter. Charlie loves that people find him so funny.

37 INT. BOB'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

37

Sam takes the ice cream from the freezer to the blender. Charlie watches her make the perfect vanilla milkshake.

CHARLIE

Sam, you have such pretty brown eyes, the kind of pretty that deserves to make a big deal about itself. You know what I mean?

SAM

Okay, Charlie. Let me make the milkshake.

CHARLIE

What a great word. Milkshake. It's like when you say your name over and over again in the mirror, and after awhile, it sounds crazy.

SAM

I'm guessing you've never been high before?

CHARLIE

Me? No. My best friend Michael. His dad was a big drinker. So, he hated all that stuff. Parties, too.

SAM

Well, where is Michael tonight?

CHARLIE

Oh, he shot himself last May.

Sam looks up. Shocked silent. Charlie is just stoned.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I kind of wish he'd left a note. You know what I mean?

(off her sad nod)

Where's the bathroom?

SAM

It's up the stairs.

CHARLIE

Charlie wanders off. Sam watches him go.

38 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

38

Charlie leaves the bathroom and stops when he sees himself in a large ornate mirror in the hallway.

CHARLIE
Charlie. Charlie. Weird.

Charlie wanders down the hallway, a little lost. He finds the door to the master bedroom and opens it. He sees Patrick and Brad Hays... kissing.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Woah.

PATRICK
Charlie?

BRAD HAYS
(nervous)
Who is that kid?

PATRICK
Relax. Relax. He's a friend of mine.
Stay here.

Patrick closes the bedroom door and follows Charlie.

CHARLIE
I didn't see anything.

PATRICK
I know you saw something, but it's okay.

Patrick takes a quick peek to make sure no one is watching.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Listen, Brad doesn't want anyone to know... wait, are you baked?

CHARLIE
"Like a cake." That's what Bob said.
And how you can't have 3 on a match because they would find us. And everyone laughed, but I don't know what's funny.

PATRICK
Okay, Charlie, listen. I need you to promise that you're not going to say anything to anyone about me and Brad. This has to be our little secret.

CHARLIE
Our little secret. Agreed.

PATRICK
Thank you. We'll talk later.

CHARLIE
I look forward to that big talk.

Patrick laughs, goes back to the room, and closes the door.

39 INT. BOB'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

39

The party has thinned. Sam watches Charlie drink his milkshake obsessively with Alice and Mary Elizabeth.

CHARLIE
Isn't this the best milkshake, Alice?
It's even better than the first one.

Patrick walks downstairs. Sam motions him over.

SAM
(barely audible whisper)
I need to talk to you. Charlie just told me that his best friend shot himself. I don't think he has any friends.

Patrick turns to look at Charlie. He feels so bad for the kid. Patrick raises his plastic cup to the remaining crowd.

PATRICK
Everyone. Raise your glasses to Charlie.

Charlie looks up. A little paranoid. Everyone is staring.

CHARLIE
What did I do?

PATRICK
You didn't do anything. We just want to toast our new friend.
(off his look)
You see things. And you understand.
You're a wallflower.

Charlie dries his sweaty hands on his pants. He looks around the room at the nods and friendly faces.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
What is it? What's wrong?

CHARLIE

PATRICK
Well, we didn't think there were any cool
people left to meet. So, everyone...

SAM & EVERYONE
To Charlie.

They all drink. Sam approaches him. A knowing smile.

SAM
Welcome to the island of misfit toys.

Charlie smiles, and the soundtrack comes rushing up loud.

SMASH CUT TO:

40 EXT./INT. SAM'S TRUCK - NIGHT

40

The truck speeds on Highway 376 toward the Fort Pitt Tunnel.
Patrick drives. Sam cranks the radio, blaring "The Tunnel
Song." The Star's anthem, "Your Ex-Lover is Dead" is our
prototype for tone.

SAM
My God. What is this song!?

PATRICK
Right? I have no idea.

SAM
(to Charlie)
Have you heard it before?

CHARLIE
Never.

SAM
(light bulb)
Wait! Let's go through the tunnel!

PATRICK
Sam, it's freezing.

SAM
Patrick, it's the perfect song!

PATRICK
No. Mama Patrick says no.

SAM
Patrick, it's Sam. It's Sam talking to
you, I'm begging you to drive me--

PATRICK
 (laughing)
 Alright! I concede!

Sam climbs through the window to the flat bed. She grips the flood lights to steady herself as she stands.

CHARLIE
 What is she doing?

PATRICK
 Don't worry. She does it all the time.

SAM
 Turn it up!

PATRICK
 You got it, your highness.

Patrick turns up the volume and drums on the steering wheel, just as the truck flies into...

THE TUNNEL

We go behind the truck. Rising as Sam puts her arms in the air. The image moves to Charlie's point of view, rising from Sam's feet up her shivering legs. Past the band-aid on her right knee. To Sam's face as she looks down. Into the camera. Right at us. For we are now...

Charlie, looking up at Sam, so in love with this free-spirit. So happy to have friends. Happy to be alive. Charlie gets this look on his face. Patrick notices and smiles.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
 What?

CHARLIE
 I feel infinite.

The truck flies out of the Fort Pitt Tunnel onto the bridge. Patrick and Charlie laugh as Sam raises her arms. Free and young and alive on the greatest night of Charlie's life.

CUT TO:

41 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

41

We see Charlie proudly put a Smiths poster on his wall next to photos of his new friends. He dances to his desk, listening to Air Supply's "All Out of Love" on his Walkman.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 Dear Friend, I'm sorry I haven't written
 for awhile, but I've been trying hard not
 to be a loser.

As the lyrics begin, Charlie unabashedly lip-synchs...

AIR SUPPLY
*I'm lying alone with my head on the
 phone, thinking of you 'til it hurts.*

Charlie sits at his desk, writing and lip-synching.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 For example, I am trying to participate
 by listening to Sam's collection of big
 rock ballads and thinking about love.
 Sam says they are kitschy and brilliant.
 I completely agree.

42 INT. BILL'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

42

As the students file out, Charlie hands his paper to Bill in
 exchange for a beat up copy of The Great Gatsby.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 I am also studying extra books outside of
 class. As it turns out, Mr. Anderson is
 a writer. He even had a play put up in
 New York once, which I think is very
 impressive. He and his wife might go
 back there after this year. I know this
 is selfish, but I really hope he doesn't.

Charlie pauses in the doorway and turns back to look at Bill.

43 INT. CAFETERIA - LUNCH

43

Charlie turns from the lunch line with The Great Gatsby on
 his tray. He looks at the gang at their table. He sits with
 them as they debate the design of this month's fanzine.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 My favorite time, though, is lunch because
 I get to see Sam and Patrick. We spend
 the time working on Mary Elizabeth's
 fanzine about music and The Rocky Horror
 Picture Show. It's called Punk Rocky.
 Mary Elizabeth is really interesting
 because she is a Buddhist and a punk, but
 somehow she always acts like my father at
 the end of a "long day."

44 INT. LIBRARY - AFTERNOON

44

The xerox spits out copies of PUNK ROCKY! Halloween Issue!
Alice staples while Mary Elizabeth works her like a sled dog.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Her best friend Alice loves vampires and wants to go to film school. She also steals jeans from the mall. I don't know why because her family is rich, but I'm trying not to be judgemental. Especially since I know how they were all there for Patrick last year. Patrick never likes to be serious, so it took me awhile to get what happened.

Sam and Alice laugh when Patrick begins stapling Mary Elizabeth's fanzines to within an inch of their life.

[Note: The following sequence will come from Charlie's POV of Patrick and Brad's activities over a weekend.]

45 EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

45

Brad Hays leads the football team through the banner onto the field as Charlie, Patrick, and Sam cheer. Moments later, Brad pulls his helmet on and rushes onto the field.

CHARLIE

When he was a junior, Patrick started seeing Brad on the weekends in secret. I guess it was hard, too, because Brad had to get drunk every time they fooled around.

46 INT. CAFETERIA - LUNCH

46

Patrick whispers while the gang studies their SAT books.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Then, Monday in school, Brad would say, "Man, I was so wasted. I don't remember a thing." This went on for 7 months.

47 INT. ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH - MORNING

47

Charlie sits with his family in itchy church clothes. He turns to see Brad with his father and mother. Proper family. Brad's dad gives him a pat on the back.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

When they finally did it, Brad said he loved Patrick. Then, he started to cry.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
saying his dad would kill him. And
saying he was going to hell.

48 INT. LIBRARY - DAY

48

We see Patrick and Brad walking in the library. They reach the stacks, and just when it looks like they'll speak, they simply... PASS EACH OTHER WITHOUT A WORD.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Patrick was eventually able to help Brad get sober. I asked Patrick if he felt sad that he had to keep it a secret, and he said no because at least now, Brad doesn't have to get drunk to love him.

Brad sits down with his football pals. Patrick joins Charlie and Sam at their table. Charlie looks over at Sam, studying hard for her SAT's.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I think that I understand because I really like Sam. I asked my sister about her, and she said that when Sam was a freshman, the upper classmen used to get her drunk at parties. I guess she had a reputation. But I don't care. I'd hate for her to judge me based on what I used to be like.

49 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - DUSK

49

We see Charlie making a mix tape on his boom box.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
So, I've been making her a mix tape so she will know how I feel.

The two cassettes run. The song is just about to finish when... the side runs out of tape and snaps off.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Ah, shit!

50 EXT. DORMONT HOLLYWOOD MOVIE THEATER - MIDNIGHT

50

The marquee announces it's time for the...

51 INT. DORMONT HOLLYWOOD MOVIE THEATER - MIDNIGHT

51

... Rocky Horror Picture Show! The **ROCKY EMCEE**, dressed as Riff Raff, whips the crowd into a frenzy.

ROCKY EMCEE
 Gimme an R! Gimme an O! R-O-C-K-Y! Rocky! Rocky!
 Gimme a C! Gimme a K! Gimme Rocky!
 a Y! What's that spell!?

The crowd cheers! Charlie claps from the front row.

52 INT. DORMONT HOLLYWOOD MOVIE THEATER - LATER

52

The movie is in full swing. Charlie watches Sam as Janet in the Floor Show. Sam mimics Susan Sarandon perfectly. Especially the body. She winks at Charlie as "Fanfare/Don't Dream It" begins and arriving regally as Frank 'n Furter in full drag is... Patrick.

PATRICK
Whatever happened to Fae Wray? That delicate, satin draped frame? As it clung to her thigh, how I started to cry 'cause I wanted to be dressed just the same.

Patrick is a rock star. He approaches Charlie. Putting his ass in his face. Charlie is freaked out and laughing! Especially when he sees Brad, alone in the back, smiling.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Give yourself over to absolute pleasure. Swim the warm waters of sins of the flesh. Erotic nightmares beyond any measure. And sensual daydreams to treasure forever. Can't you just see it? Woah oh oh!

Charlie stops laughing when the orgy begins between Patrick, Mary Elizabeth (as Columbia), **CRAIG** (21), an art student with a model's body (as Rocky)... and of course... Sam. Charlie watches Sam until he can't take his lust (or guilt).

53 INT. CRAIG'S LOFT APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

53

We hear the chorus of "Don't Dream It, Be It" as Charlie watches all of the exciting cast members at the after-show party. Charlie sees a photo of Sam's naked back on the wall of Craig's loft. Very arty. Very black & white. Charlie's lust (and guilt) are now at 11. Alice looks at the photo.

ALICE
 It's gorgeous, Craig. What did you use?

Craig is impressive to high school kids. He's a little pretentious. But his art school life. His red wine. His loft. Wow. Right now, he holds court in the wine line.

CRAIG

Color film, but black and white paper for the printing. My professor gave me an "A," but for the wrong reasons. Most of them are idiots. You'll see what I mean when you get to college. How were your SAT's by the way?

ALICE

(worried)

1150. I think I'll get into NYU.

CRAIG

Yeah, I hope so.

MARY ELIZABETH

(cruel to Alice)

1490. Harvard. Face!

54 INT. CRAIG'S LOFT APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

54

Charlie sees Sam alone on the loft steps. She looks a little down. He hands Sam a plastic cup and sits next to her.

CHARLIE

Hey. Are you okay?

SAM

Yeah. Yeah. But I got my SAT results back. Oops.

CHARLIE

You can take them again.

SAM

Yeah, it's just if I'm going to Penn State main campus, I have to do much better. I wish I would have studied freshman year. I was a bit of a mess.

CHARLIE

I'll help you study for the next one.

SAM

Will you?

CHARLIE

Yeah, of course.

SAM

Thanks, Charlie.

Charlie summons his courage. He hands her the mix tape.

SAM (CONT'D)

What's this?

CHARLIE

Just a mix tape. No big deal. My parents have a pretty good stereo. It's all about that night in the tunnel. I couldn't find that song we were listening to, but I'm still searching for it, so--

SAM

It's okay. These are great. You have really good taste, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Really?

SAM

Yeah. Way better than me as a freshman. I used to listen to the worst top 40.

CHARLIE

No.

SAM

Yeah, I did. But then I heard this old song. Pearly Dew Drops Drop. And I thought someday I would be at a party in college or something. And I'd look up and see this person across the room. And from that moment, I'd know everything was going to be okay. You know what I mean?

CHARLIE

(devastated in love)

Yeah.

55 INT. CRAIG'S LOFT APARTMENT - LATER

55

The tape revolves in the stereo, playing a beautiful ballad. Charlie watches Sam sway to his music like a serenade. Like she is dancing with him. But she isn't. A wider angle reveals that she is slow dancing with... Craig.

Charlie is 15 year old CRUSHED. No filter. Just feeling. Patrick, Alice, and Mary Elizabeth watch Sam across the room.

ALICE

So, what do you think?

PATRICK

I don't know.

ALICE

I hope it works out. Craig would be a big step up from her last boyfriend.

MARY ELIZABETH

No, shit. Who could forget Mr. Car Wash Loser?

PATRICK

I just hope she stops playing dumb with these guys. I keep telling her... don't make yourself small. You can't save anybody.

Craig dips a smiling Sam as the song ends. Sam goes into the kitchen. Craig approaches Charlie. Turns off his mix tape.

CRAIG

Man, your mix is morbidly sad, kid. How about something a little more upbeat?

Craig grabs a record from the pile and slaps it down.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Sam tells me you want to be a writer.

CHARLIE

Yeah.

ALICE

Don't you write poetry, Craig?

CRAIG

No. Poetry writes me. You know?

Charlie sighs. Craig's upbeat song begins to play. He dances over to Sam. Charlie's heart breaks as he watches Sam hug on Craig.

56 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY 56

In a mirror image, Candace hugs on Derek near the lockers. Charlie closes his own locker and moves down the hall.

57 INT. ENGLISH CLASS - MORNING 57

The bell rings. Charlie sets down his On the Road paper.

BILL

Wow. That was fast. You want another one?

Charlie nods. Bill smiles and reaches into his desk. He hands Charlie a copy of A Separate Piece. Charlie takes the book and starts to walk out, but he turns back.

CHARLIE

Mr. Anderson... can I ask you something?

BILL

Yeah.

CHARLIE

Why do nice people choose the wrong people to date?

BILL

Are we talking about anyone specific?

Charlie nods. Bill looks straight at him. Not preaching. Coming from a history of personal experience and pain.

BILL (CONT'D)

We accept the love we think we deserve.

CHARLIE

Can we make them know they deserve more?

BILL

We can try.

Charlie smiles.

58 INT. KINGS FAMILY RESTAURANT - MORNING

58

Charlie waits nervously at a booth. He sees Sam enter. He fixes his hair, then pretends to read his SAT PREP BOOK.

SAM

Hey, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Hey, Sam. I didn't see you come in. You want to work on probabilities and statistics?

Sam nods. They open their books, and a Christmas song begins. In a quick passage of time, we see them study next to Halloween decorations. Then, Thanksgiving. And finally, Christmas decorations.

59 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

59

The song continues. Charlie's mom and sister hang the Christmas ornaments as Charlie helps his dad find that "one

CHARLIE
Hey, dad. Can I have 30 dollars?

FATHER
(old joke)
20 dollars? What do you want 10 dollars
for?

CHARLIE
Sam is doing secret santa. It's her
favorite thing in the world. Please.

Charlie's father reaches into his pocket and hands Charlie a bill. It's a fifty. Dad winks, in a great mood.

FATHER
Have fun.

CHARLIE
Thanks.

60 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY 60

Lockers are opened by Charlie. Sam. Patrick. Wrapped gifts are deposited. Mischief smiles. Lockers closed. Everyone loves getting their presents except Charlie - who got socks.

61 INT. BILL'S CLASSROOM - MORNING 61

Bill hands Charlie a well worn copy of The Catcher in the Rye. He smiles.

BILL
Charlie... this was my favorite book
growing up. This is my copy, but I want
you to have it.

CHARLIE
Thanks.

BILL
Have a great Christmas break.

CHARLIE
You too, Mr. Anderson.

62 INT. SHOP CLASS - DAY 62

Mr. Callahan, the shop teacher, looks at a Sad Sack Girl's clock. He takes a moment, and then...

MR. CALLAHAN
Terrible stain.

He moves to Charlie's dad's amazing clock. He hands Charlie an A on a piece of paper.

MR. CALLAHAN (CONT'D)
That's pretty good, Charlie.

Mr. Callahan moves to Patrick's SHITTY WOODEN CLOCK. No stain. No finish. Lop-sided. The ugliest clock you've ever seen in your life.

MR. CALLAHAN (CONT'D)
You've got to be kidding me.

PATRICK
If you fail me, you get me next semester.

Mr. Callahan writes a grade and slaps it down.

63 EXT. WEST END OVERLOOK - NIGHT 63

The song continues as Patrick holds up the grade. C minus! Charlie and Sam cheer as Patrick screams at the top of his lungs...

PATRICK
Woo! C Minus! It's over! It's over!
Ladies and gentlemen, I am below average!

SAM
Below average!

Patrick screams at the city in the distance. Below average!

64 INT. DORMONT HOLLYWOOD MOVIE THEATER - GREEN ROOM - NIGHT 64

We move to find Sam, holding her SAT score up to the group.

SAM
Hey, guys. 1210.

Everyone cheers. Sam hugs Charlie.

65 INT. SAM AND PATRICK'S HOUSE - GAMES ROOM - NIGHT 65

Charlie carries Sam on his shoulders past the Christmas Tree. Sam wears a Santa Hat like a hot elf.

SAM
No more applications! No more SAT's!
Thank you, Charlie!

They pass Mary Elizabeth as she opens her final present.

MARY ELIZABETH

Multiple pairs of blue jeans. Wow. This is a really tough one, but I'm going to have to guess... Alice.

Alice smiles. Bob nudges her. Guilty as charged. Mary Elizabeth pulls one last item out of the gift bag.

MARY ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Wait, guys... a receipt! She actually paid!

PATRICK

Impossible!

MARY ELIZABETH

I'm so touched.

Alice laughs. Patrick pours everyone brandy. The kids look ridiculous, but they don't feel ridiculous.

CHARLIE

Where's Craig?

SAM

He went home to Connecticut. He'll be back for New Year's Eve.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry we won't be seeing him tonight.

Sam nods, then turns. Charlie is delighted. No Craig. The kids settle in the living room in front of the fire.

SAM

Alright, big brother by 3 weeks. Who's your secret santa?

PATRICK

I'll tell you, Sam. This one's tough. I have received a harmonica, a magnetic poetry set, a book about Harvey Milk, and a mix with the song "Asleep" on it... twice.

Charlie starts snickering. He can't help himself.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I mean, I have no idea. This collection of presents is so gay that I think I must have given them to myself. But despite that distinct possibility, I'm going to have to go with... drum roll... Charlie.

Charlie holds up his hands. Yay! They all cheer.

SAM

Alright, Charlie... it's your turn.

Charlie and Patrick switch places. Charlie stands.

CHARLIE

Okay. Uh, I have received socks, pants, a shirt, and a belt. I was ordered to wear them all tonight. So, I'm guessing my secret santa is Mary Elizabeth.

PATRICK

Huh. Now, why do you say that?

CHARLIE

I don't know. She bosses people around sometimes.

The gang cracks up. Mary Elizabeth is pissed.

MARY ELIZABETH

What the hell is wrong with you?

CHARLIE

Sorry.

PATRICK

Well, you'll be surprised to know that your secret santa is actually... me.

CHARLIE

You got me clothes? Why?

PATRICK

Because all the great writers used to wear great suits. Your last present is on a towel rack in the bathroom. Delve into our facilities. Emerge a star.

Charlie gives Sam a sack of presents.

CHARLIE

Can you hand these out while I'm gone?

MARY ELIZABETH

Wait a second. There's only secret santa presents. There are rules, Charlie.

PATRICK

Mary Elizabeth, why are you trying to eat Christmas? Hand them out, Sam.

Sam gives out the presents. The group rips them open. Alice looks at a book about Martin Scorsese with the inscription...

ALICE

"Alice, I know you'll get into NYU."

Alice turns to Mary Elizabeth who holds up a card with...

MARY ELIZABETH

40 dollars.

(reads card)

"To print Punk Rocky in color next time."

Bob blows soap bubbles into the air. Stoned. Mesmerized.

BOB

He knows me. He really knows me.

Sam looks at her present. An old 45 record of The Beatles classic "Something" with a card. She reads the card. Holds it to her chest. Very moved.

SAM

Come on out, Charlie.

They all chime in. "Let's go, young man!" "Charlie! Charlie!" Charlie opens the door off camera, and we see his entrance play off their faces. The reverse angle reveals...

Charlie dressed in his suit. Like the best of English mods in the 60's. For those of you who know the book, this is the cover. They all clap. It's magic.

PATRICK

Yeah! What a display of man I have ever seen!

Sam and Charlie look at each and smile.

66 INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - LATER

66

The door opens. Sam and Charlie walk into the dark room.

CHARLIE

Where are we going?

SAM

It's a surprise.

Sam flips the switch, bathing the room in light. Sam's room is so cool. A shrine to music. A xerox that says "The Beatings Will Continue Until Morale Improves." Virgin Mary icons. Snow globes. Kitsch.

CHARLIE
Is this your room? It's so cool.

SAM
Thanks.

Sam points to a green box with a red ribbon on her desk.

CHARLIE
You got me a present?

SAM
With all that help on my Penn State
application? Of course I did. Open it.

Charlie lifts up the box to reveal an OLD MANUAL TYPEWRITER.

CHARLIE
I don't know what to say.

SAM
You don't have to say anything.

Sam goes over and types. "Write about us sometime." He
smiles and types back. "I will." They look at each other.
We can hear a lovely ballad playing downstairs.

SAM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry we can't be here for your
birthday.

CHARLIE
That's okay. I'm just sorry you have to
go back and visit your dad.

SAM
I'm in such a great mood, I don't think
even he could ruin it. I feel like I'm
finally doing good.

CHARLIE
You are.

SAM
Me? What about you? When I met you, you
were this scared freshman. And look at
you in that suit. You're like a sexy
English school boy. I saw Mary Elizabeth
checking you out.

CHARLIE
(innocent laugh)
No.

SAM
 Innocent. Worst kind of guys. Never see
 you coming. And parents love you. That's
 like... extra danger.

CHARLIE
 Well, it hasn't worked so far.

SAM
 Come on. You've never had a girlfriend?
 Not even a 2nd grade valentine?

He shakes his head.

SAM (CONT'D)
 Have you ever kissed a girl?

CHARLIE
 No. What about you?

SAM
 Have I ever kissed a girl?

CHARLIE
 (laughs)
 No! Your first kiss...

Sam gets this strange look in her eyes. A little haunted.

SAM
 My first kiss? I was 11. His name was
 Robert. He would come over to the house
 all the time.

CHARLIE
 Was he your first boyfriend?

SAM
 He was my dad's boss.

Charlie goes silent.

SAM (CONT'D)
 You know Charlie, I used to sleep with
 guys who treated me like shit. And get
 wasted all the time. But now... I feel
 like I have a chance. I could even get
 into a real college.

CHARLIE
 It's true. You can do it.

SAM

CHARLIE

My Aunt... she had that same thing done to her, too. And she turned her life around.

SAM

She must have been great.

CHARLIE

She was my favorite person in the world... until now.

Sam smiles. She's very moved.

SAM

Charlie, I know that you know I like Craig. But I want to forget that for a minute. Okay? I just want to make sure that the first person who kisses you loves you. Okay?

Charlie nods. And with that, Sam leans over and kisses him. It starts softly, then Sam wraps her thin arms around him. Holding on for lonely life. When the song crescendos, and they part, Charlie and Sam look at each other. Finally...

SAM (CONT'D)

I love you, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I love you, too.

67 EXT. SAM AND PATRICK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

67

The porch lights are as golden as Charlie feels right now. We see the girls wave to each other and hug Sam.

GANG

"Merry Christmas!" "Good luck at your dad's!" "See you at New Year's!"

Patrick approaches Charlie in the doorway.

CHARLIE

Have a good time at your mom's.

PATRICK

Thanks. And Charlie... since you were born on Christmas Eve, I figure you don't get a lot of birthday presents. So, I thought you should have my clock. From the heart.

CHARLIE
Thank you, Patrick.

Sam gives Charlie one last hug. Patrick and Sam watch their friends leave.

PATRICK
I love you guys!

68 EXT. DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH - NIGHT 68

We fly as high as Charlie feels. Above the city on Christmas Eve.

69 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 69

The front door opens, revealing Charlie's dad.

FATHER
Hey! Look who's here!

He moves out of the way, and standing there is Charlie's older brother, **CHRIS KELMECKIS** (19). Chris is handsome, charismatic, and an all around winner.

CHRIS
Come here, little sister.

CANDACE
Hey, Chris.

Big hug. Chris smiles big and "son flirts" with his mom.

CHRIS
Ma, you look so thin!

MOTHER
10 pounds... Weight Watchers.

Big kiss. When he lets go, he sees Charlie and smiles.

CHRIS
Charlie...

Chris and Charlie look at each other in silence. Then, hug. As the family moves into the dining room to celebrate, Chris gives him a quiet...

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Happy birthday.

70 INT. CHARLIE'S DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 70

MOTHER
Make a wish, honey.

We move closer to Charlie as he makes his wish and blows out his 16 candles.

MATCH CUT TO:

71 EXT. CHARLIE'S STREET - NIGHT (PRESENT) 71

The wind blows out a candle in one of the luminaria bags. The suburb is quiet. Not a creature is stirring. Except...

Charlie. He fills a brown paper bag with sand and a candle. He lights the candle, making the bag glow like a beautiful lantern. He looks down his street, where families are out with their kids, doing the same luminaria ritual.

MATCH CUT TO:

72 EXT. CHARLIE'S STREET - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 72

The same street. Christmas Eve. Many years ago. Aunt Helen and the kids finish their luminaria bags. Aunt Helen lights up the candles. They glow.

AUNT HELEN
Can you see it, Charlie? The luminaria
is a landing strip for Santa Claus.

The image goes wide. All of these bags glowing. Beautiful. Aunt Helen rattles her keys. Whispers.

AUNT HELEN (CONT'D)
Keep an eye out for him with your brother
and sister. I'll be right back.

She bends down and whispers into his ear.

AUNT HELEN (CONT'D)
I'm going to get your birthday present.

She musses his hair and gets in the car.

END FLASHBACK

73 EXT. CHARLIE'S STREET - NIGHT (PRESENT) 73

Charlie hovers over the glowing luminaria. Something is bothering him. He shakes it off.

74 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

74

Charlie wanders through the quiet house. He turns the corner where he finds Chris sitting at the table. He's lit by a couple of candles and the blinking lights of the Christmas Tree. He's surrounded by leftovers. Charlie sits.

CHARLIE

Hey.

Chris chews and swallows. Famished. They both whisper.

CHRIS

Hey. God, I missed mom's cooking. You have no idea how good you have it. I'm actually beginning to hate pizza.

Charlie smiles. Grabs a Hershey Kiss cookie.

CHARLIE

How are you liking school?

CHRIS

Not bad. I'm no brainiac like you or Candace. But I'm doing okay.

CHARLIE

Okay? You're playing in a Bowl Game.

Chris laughs. Charlie smiles. A moment passes. Chris changes his tone. Cautious.

CHRIS

How are you feeling, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Good.

CHRIS

You know what I mean. Is it bad tonight?

CHARLIE

No.

CHRIS

No?

CHARLIE

I'm not picturing things anymore. And when I do, I can just shut it off.

CHRIS

(relieved)

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 now. And maybe if it does get bad again,
 you can just talk to them, yeah?

CHARLIE
 Yeah. Especially Sam. I'm going to ask
 her out at New Years. I think the time
 is right now.

Chris smiles at his kid brother. We hear the church organ.

75 INT. ST. THOMAS MORE CHURCH - MORNING

75

The family moves down the line to receive Holy Communion at Christmas Mass. Charlie's father, then mother, then sister, take the sacrament. Charlie is next. The PRIEST makes the motion of the cross with the communion wafer. He places it in Charlie's hand. Charlie brings the sacrament to his mouth with his fingers...

MATCH CUT TO:

76 INT. BOB'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

76

We move in closer to Charlie's fingers in his mouth. When he takes his hand out, we see... a tab of LSD. The church organ is now a rock organ. And it's now... New Year's Eve.

Charlie closes his mouth. He looks down the hall of the smoky room where Craig has his arm around Sam. Charlie turns to Mary Elizabeth, who's also dosed.

CHARLIE
 How long does this take to work?

77 EXT. BOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

77

About 45 minutes. The sound is muted thick. Slight echoes. Charlie shovels the snow. Crunch. Fascinated by his breath making fog. Sam comes outside. She's worried about him.

SAM
 Shoveling snow, huh?

CHARLIE
 I have to get this driveway clean. Then,
 I have to congratulate you for being
 happy because you deserve it.

SAM
 You said that an hour ago.

CHARLIE
 Was that tonight? God. I was looking at
 this tree, but it was a dragon, and then

SAM

Okay, Charlie. Don't freak out. Just give me the shovel. Calm down. Look up.

She points. Charlie looks up. Sees the stars.

SAM (CONT'D)

Isn't it quiet?

CHARLIE

Sam, you ever think that if people knew how crazy you really were, no one would ever talk to you?

SAM

All the time. So, you want to put on these glasses? They'll protect you.

Sam puts her arm around his shoulder. Protecting him. Charlie looks through the glasses. The sky bends like a globe. When he breathes, the sky ripples.

78 INT. BOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

78

Charlie wanders through the party, tripping out of his mind. He sits down on the sofa. The world unbends as Charlie takes off the glasses. Kids walk around the party, leaving ghosts of themselves behind.

Charlie looks upstairs to find... Sam and Craig kissing. Craig leads her to the bedroom.

Charlie looks back at the party as kids gather for the New Years countdown. Patrick leads the charge.

PATRICK

10-9-8...

79 EXT. CHARLIE'S STREET - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

79

In a QUICK FLASH, we see 7 year old Charlie with Aunt Helen on Christmas Eve. She bends to whisper in his ear.

AUNT HELEN

It'll be our little secret, all right?

80 INT. BOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

80

We are BACK TO PRESENT as Charlie takes a deep breath and tries to remember that he's at a New Year's party.

PATRICK

7-6-5-4-3-2-1. Happy New Year!

The crowd cheers, leaving ghosts of themselves. Charlie gets up from the sofa and walks out of Bob's house.

- 81 EXT. CHARLIE'S STREET - NIGHT 81
- Charlie walks down the road under a streetlight. Silhouette. The road is icy. Charlie lays down and starts moving his arms in the snow. The memories begin to haunt him.
- 82 EXT. CHARLIE'S STREET - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 82
- 7 year old Charlie waves goodbye to Aunt Helen as she drives away through the landing strip for Santa Claus.
- 83 EXT. CHARLIE'S STREET - NIGHT (PRESENT) 83
- 16 year old Charlie blinks. The memories come faster.
- 84 INT. AUNT HELEN'S CAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 84
- Aunt Helen drives past a tall snow drift. She looks down at the 45 of The Beatles in the seat next to her. She smiles at Charlie's birthday present. Then, she looks up as the headlights of the semi truck smash the windows with a CRASH!
- 85 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 85
- Charlie's mother opens the door, revealing a POLICEMAN. He turns to Charlie in his party hat. 7 years old and confused.
- 86 EXT. CHARLIE'S STREET - NIGHT (PRESENT) 86
- 16 year old Charlie lays on the snow, shivering, as the image goes high above to reveal he's made a snow angel.
- 87 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON 87
- The Emergency room is bustling on New Year's Day. Charlie looks up as the POLICE, DOCTORS, and his PARENTS tower over him. He is terrified and does what any kid would do. He lies his ass off.

POLICEMAN

Did your older friends pressure you?

CHARLIE

No one pressured me into anything. I would never do drugs, officer. Never.

POLICEMAN

Then, how did you happen to be passed out on the ground at 6 in the morning?

CHARLIE

Well, um... I was really tired, and uh...
I was feeling feverish. So, I went
outside for a walk, just to get some cold
air. And I started seeing things. So, I
passed out.

He waits to see if this worked. And then, unexpectedly...

MOTHER

(worried)

You're seeing things again, Charlie?

CHARLIE

(oops)

Not, uh... Not really.

88 EXT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - MORNING 88

The tires squish the grey slush puddle as the busses pull
into the dreary parking lot. School is back in session.

89 INT. HALLWAY - MORNING 89

Charlie shakes off the cold, then takes off his overcoat to
reveal... he's wearing his suit from Secret Santa. All the
kids stare. Charlie realizes he made a terrible mistake.

CHARLIE

It was a Christmas present.

90 INT. BILL'S CLASSROOM - MORNING 90

Charlie sits as Bill hands out the book for the semester...
The Great Gatsby. As the kids chatter, Bill gives Charlie
his own book to start the year... The Stranger.

CHARLIE

Did you have fun on your break?

BILL

More fun than you're going to have today,
Sinatra.

Bill pats his shoulder and moves on. The Smart Ass Freshman
looks at Charlie and whispers.

SMART ASS FRESHMAN

Nice look, jag off.

91 EXT. DORMONT HOLLYWOOD MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 91

The Rocky Horror faithful enter the theater.

SAM (O.S.)
I called him 30 times.

92 INT. DORMONT HOLLYWOOD MOVIE THEATER - GREEN ROOM - NIGHT 92

Mary Elizabeth and the kids get ready for the floor show.

MARY ELIZABETH
Well what are we supposed to do? We're
going on in 10 minutes!

The phone rings. Mary Elizabeth picks up. Charlie turns to Brad, sitting next to him. Charlie is freaking out.

CHARLIE
But they said in health class--

BRAD HAYS
They say that about LSD to scare you.

CHARLIE
Are you sure?

BRAD HAYS
Charlie, you're fine, man.

Mary Elizabeth hangs up the phone, frustrated.

MARY ELIZABETH
Guys, we have an emergency. Craig flaked
out on us again. I need a Rocky. Brad?

BRAD HAYS
(scared)
No way. There are people out here.

The group is deflated. They all start thinking. After a beat, Mary Elizabeth looks at Charlie.

MARY ELIZABETH
Charlie... take off your clothes.

93 INT. DORMONT HOLLYWOOD MOVIE THEATER - LATER 93

You know those dreams you have when you are standing in front of 200 people in your underwear? Well, this is no dream.

We hear a heart beat as Charlie dances out of the Rocky gauze and finds himself standing in tight gold underwear, looking out at 200 people, cheering him on.

His friends can't stop smiling. Especially Mary Elizabeth, who watches Charlie's little butt in the gold undies. She

94 INT. DORMONT HOLLYWOOD MOVIE THEATER - LATER

94

"Touch-A, Touch-A, Touch Me" is in full swing. Sam slinks over to Charlie dressed in her white bra and slip.

SAM
(as Janet)
*So if anything grows while you pose.
I'll oil you up and drop you down. And
that's just one small fraction of the
main attraction. You need a friendly
hand. And I need action!*

Sam grabs Charlie's hands and rubs them all over her chest.

SAM (CONT'D)
*Ah! Touch a touch a touch me! I wanna
be dirty! Thrill me. Chill me. Fulfill
me! Creature of the night!*

The song continues. We see flashes of the night's performance as Charlie goes from train wreck to triumph. Charlie joins Sam in the kick line, and it feels like it's just the two of them. On the final beat, Sam gasps...

SAM (CONT'D)
Creature of the night!

The song ends. The cast bows. Sam and Patrick push Charlie in front for his own curtain call. Everyone cheers. It's the night he'll never forget.

95 EXT. DORMONT HOLLYWOOD MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

95

The wind whips. That bracing February cold. Charlie helps Mary Elizabeth carry the costumes outside to her car.

CHARLIE
Maybe I could join the cast as an
alternate or something?

MARY ELIZABETH
We're filled up now, but they'll need
people after we leave for college. I
could put in a good word for you.

CHARLIE
That'd be great. Thanks.

They put the box in her trunk. Snap it closed. We can't help but notice the "Keep Your Laws Off My Body" bumper sticker as Mary Elizabeth tries her best to flirt.

MARY ELIZABETH

Charlie... have you heard of the Sadie Hawkins dance?

CHARLIE

The one where the girl asks the guy.

MARY ELIZABETH

Yeah. Well, obviously, it's completely stupid and sexist. It's like, "Hey, thanks for the crumb." And normally, I'd just blow it off because school dances suck torture. But, you know, it's my last year, and... would you maybe want to go with me?

CHARLIE

You want to go with me?

MARY ELIZABETH

I'm sick of macho guys. And you looked really cute in your costume. So, what do you say?

Charlie thinks and thinks and...

96 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

96

Ding dong. Charlie's mom opens the door for MARY ELIZABETH. Charlie straightens out his church suit. So nervous.

MOTHER

You must be Mary Elizabeth. It's so good to meet you.

MARY ELIZABETH

You, too, Mrs. Kelmeckis.

FATHER

(shit eating grin)

Charlie tells me you're a Buddhist.

97 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - FIREPLACE - DUSK

97

Charlie and Mary Elizabeth stand next to Candace and Derek.

FATHER

OK, a little closer together. That looks nice. Buddhist, I need you to smile a little bit more. There you go. Nice.

Cheese! White flash. The picture of 4 kids. Smiling big.

98 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT 98

Charlie and Mary Elizabeth slow dance to an 80's love song. Sweaty palms. Awkward. Hands on hips. Horror.

Charlie looks around the gym. He sees Alice dancing with her date, an EFFEMINATE GOTH KID (17). We'll never meet him, but he'll make us laugh once.

Charlie then watches Patrick dance with Sam. He follows Patrick's gaze across the floor to Brad, who dances with a SENIOR GIRL (18). Charlie sees the boys look at each other. For one moment, it's like they're dancing together.

99 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - LATER 99

Mary Elizabeth is at the punch bowl with the gang. Charlie sees Sam, standing by the wall, looking sad. He approaches.

CHARLIE

Are you having a good time?

SAM

Not really. How about you?

CHARLIE

I don't know. This is my first date, so I don't know what to compare it to.

SAM

Don't worry. You're doing fine.

Charlie joins her at the wall. Mary Elizabeth gives them a quick, jealous look.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry Craig didn't come.

SAM

Yeah. He said he didn't want to go to some stupid high school dance. Can't say I blame him.

CHARLIE

I don't know. If you like it, he should come.

SAM

Thanks, Charlie. Have a beautiful first date. You deserve it.

CHARLIE

I'll try not to make you too jealous.

He said it to cheer her up. Sam forces a smile and leaves.

100 INT. MARY ELIZABETH'S DEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

100

Mary Elizabeth approaches Charlie on the antique sofa. She uncorks a bottle of wine. POP! She hands him the bottle.

MARY ELIZABETH

Mmmm. Now, let it breathe.

Mary Elizabeth walks over to the vintage turntable. She turns on the gas fireplace with a remote control. Roar!

CHARLIE

This is sure a nice house.

MARY ELIZABETH

Thanks.

Mary Elizabeth drops the needle on a vinyl LP. A Doo Wop make-out classic begins to play. She dances over to Charlie.

MARY ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Mmmm. Don't you just love old music?

(off his nod)

Good. Because I made you a mix of it.
I'd love to expose you to great things.
Like Billie Holiday and foreign films.

She pours the wine. Charlie looks at the bottle.

CHARLIE

This merlot is really fancy.

MARY ELIZABETH

Yeah. My dad collects wine, but he doesn't drink. That's weird, isn't it?

CHARLIE

I guess. Where are your parents?

MARY ELIZABETH

Their club is hosting a cotillion or something racist. They'll be gone all night.

Mary Elizabeth drops her necklace with a thud. Charlie looks around. Heart beating.

CHARLIE

That's sure a nice fire.

MARY ELIZABETH

Yeah. After I'm done being a lobbyist, I want to move to a house like this in Cape Cod. That sounds nice, doesn't it?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

She reaches out and touches his chest.

MARY ELIZABETH

Your heart is beating really fast.

CHARLIE

Is it?

MARY ELIZABETH

Here, feel.

She puts her hand on his. Moves it to his chest.

MARY ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Charlie?

CHARLIE

Uh-huh?

MARY ELIZABETH

Do you like me?

CHARLIE

Uh-huh.

MARY ELIZABETH

You know what I mean.

CHARLIE

I think so.

MARY ELIZABETH

Don't be nervous.

She slowly moves his hand to her dress strap. It falls off her shoulder. She leans in for a red wine kiss. She guides his hand over her bra. He feels her breast. Wow.

MATCH CUT TO:

101 INT. MARY ELIZABETH'S BASEMENT - FANTASY

101

For a quick moment, Charlie imagines he is kissing Sam.
Broken by...

102 INT. MARY ELIZABETH'S BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

102

Mary Elizabeth moves his hand away. Charlie blinks, taking a moment to realize Sam's not the one in the room. The song is over. The needle turns at the end of the record.

MARY ELIZABETH

Charlie...

She gives him one last kiss. Content, she lays down on his lap. Peaceful.

MARY ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I didn't know how it was going to go tonight, but it was really nice, huh?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

MARY ELIZABETH

I can't believe it. You of all people. I just can't believe you're my boyfriend.

We land on Charlie's face. "What?" And then, we hear the GARAGE DOOR OPEN.

MARY ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Oh, shit! My parents!

The mad scramble for clothes begins.

CUT TO:

103 EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

103

Mary Elizabeth's car pulls in front of Charlie's house. Charlie gets out. Wanting to say he's not her boyfriend. Not knowing how. Mary Elizabeth smiles. Smitten.

MARY ELIZABETH

See you Monday.

With that, she backs out of the driveway. We see him from the back of her car, getting smaller and smaller. His stomach already filling with acid.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Dear Friend... I'm sorry I haven't written for awhile, but things are a total disaster.

104 INT. CAFETERIA - LUNCH

104

Sam, Patrick, and Alice are seated around the table. Mary Elizabeth has her arms around Charlie. Smothering him.

MARY ELIZABETH

We're literally making out, and I'm in my bra. Hello! And the front door opens. It's my parents! I'm scrambling to get my dress on. It was crazy. Right, babe?

Charlie nods, tortured.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

I probably should have been honest about how I didn't want to go out with Mary Elizabeth after Sadie's, but I really didn't want to hurt her feelings.

105 EXT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MORNING

105

Ash Wednesday. Charlie gets out of the school bus to immediately find Mary Elizabeth waiting for him. She sees the cross of ashes on his forehead. She thinks his ashes are a smudge. She cleans it.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

You see, Mary Elizabeth is a really nice person underneath the part of her that hates everyone. And since I heard that having a girlfriend makes you happy, I tried hard to love her like I love Sam.

MARY ELIZABETH

Can you believe it's almost our two week anniversary?

CHARLIE

I know.

106 EXT. DORMONT HOLLYWOOD MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

106

A double date. Craig and Sam buy the tickets to see the silent classic, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

So, I took her on double dates.

MARY ELIZABETH

(proud)

Your first foreign film.

CHARLIE

MARY ELIZABETH
Vegans don't eat butter.

Charlie tries not to feel Mary Elizabeth's sweaty hand.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
And I tried not to mind that she loves to
hold hands even when her hands are
sweaty.

107 INT. MARY ELIZABETH'S DEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 107

Just like Sadie's except... the fire in the fireplace is out.
We move from the fireplace to Charlie, touching Mary
Elizabeth's breasts over her sweater.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
And I had to admit something really
upsetting. But I am tired of touching
her boobs. I thought maybe if she would
just let me pick the make-out music once
in awhile, we might have a chance.

Charlie looks at the Ani DiFranco Mix on the stereo. Sighs.

108 INT. CAFETERIA - LUNCH 108

The gang is there. Walden rests on Charlie's lunch tray.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
And maybe if she didn't put down the
books that Mr. Anderson gives me.

MARY ELIZABETH
Walden? I read it in 7th grade. I would
have called it "On Boring Pond."

109 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON 109

Ring! Charlie grabs the cordless. He looks at Patrick's
clock. 3:13pm. His voice can no longer hide his quiet rage.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Or if she would stop calling me the
minute I get home from school when I have
absolutely nothing to talk about other
than the bus ride home...

MARY ELIZABETH (V.O.)
That dairy just sits with you. It walks
with you.

Charlie calmly puts down the phone and leaves the room. We

110 INT. CHARLIE'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER 110

Charlie is so miserable. His mom is sympathetic.

MOTHER

She's on the phone right now? Charlie,
you have to break up with her.

CHARLIE

I can do that?

Charlie's father leans back from the sofa and his newspaper.

FATHER

For Christ's sake... I need to use the
phone!

111 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER 111

He returns. Mary Elizabeth is still talking on the cordless.

MARY ELIZABETH (V.O.)

I'll give you this book. It's really how
I became a vegan--

CHARLIE (V.O.)

I know I should have been honest, but I
was getting so mad, it was starting to
scare me.

He looks back at the clock. 3:23pm.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Um... Mary Elizabeth. Can I talk to you--

MARY ELIZABETH (V.O.)

Charlie. Please, don't interrupt. You
know I hate that.

Charlie goes to his quiet place. Tick. Tick. Tick.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

I just wish I could have found another
way to break up. In hindsight, I
probably could not have picked a worse
way to be honest with Mary Elizabeth.

112 INT. CRAIG'S LOFT APARTMENT - NIGHT 112

Truth or dare. The gang is seated in a circle, drinking from
plastic cups. Charlie sits between Mary Elizabeth and Sam.

BOB

PATRICK
Who are you talking to?

BOB
I dare you to kiss Alice.

PATRICK
(licks his lips)
Get ready, breeder.

As Patrick approaches an apprehensive Alice...

CRAIG
Mary Elizabeth? Samantha told me that
you got into Harvard. Congratulations.

MARY ELIZABETH
Thank you.
(re: Charlie)
This one still hasn't gotten me flowers.
(to Charlie)
But I forgive you.

She kisses him. Charlie bites his cheeks. Sam looks a
little depressed.

CRAIG
(to Sam)
Don't worry about Penn State. You're
just wait-listed.

PATRICK
Excuse me, everyone, but you're missing
some hot "fag on goth" action.

Anticipation. Patrick is getting ready to plant the biggest
kiss on Alice when she jumps him. Everyone groans. Ew!
Laughter. Patrick looks for the next person. Charlie's
heart pounds. Don't pick me! Please!

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Okay. My turn. Um... let's think...
Charlie... truth or dare?

Silence. Thinking. Finally...

CHARLIE
Truth.

PATRICK
How is your first relationship going?

CHARLIE

It's so bad that I keep fantasizing that one of us is dying of cancer, so I don't have to break up with her.

PATRICK

Charlie? Truth or dare?

Charlie blinks. It was all fantasy.

CHARLIE

Dare.

PATRICK

I dare you to kiss the prettiest girl in the room on the lips. Notice I charitably said girl and not person because let's face it... I'd smoke all you bitches.

Alice hits him. Laughter. Charlie thinks. He looks at Mary Elizabeth, then turns to Sam. Before Sam can even react... Charlie plants a kiss right on her lips. When he opens his eyes, he looks around, and realizes the magnitude of his mistake. Everyone stares. After a horrible silence...

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Now that's fucked up.

Without a word, Mary Elizabeth just stands, dignified, and goes into the kitchen.

CHARLIE

Mary Elizabeth, I'm sorry. I'm--

Alice follows Mary Elizabeth. Sam is close behind.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Sam?! Sam! I'm sorry. I didn't mean anything by it. I'm sorry.

Sam turns and looks at him. She doesn't even recognize him.

SAM

What the hell is wrong with you?

Charlie is devastated.

113 EXT. BOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

113

They move to the driveway. Charlie feels awful. Panicky.

CHARLIE

PATRICK

Trust me. You don't want to go back there.

CHARLIE

But, I... I'm sorry... I didn't mean to do anything.

PATRICK

I know you didn't, but look... I hate to be the one to break this, but there's history with Mary Elizabeth and Sam. Other guys. Things that have nothing to do with you. But... it's best if you stay away for awhile.

CHARLIE

(crushed)

Oh. Okay. How long do you think?

Silence. Charlie looks over at Patrick, who wears a grave expression. It's going to be a long time. We hear the sound of the typewriter.

114 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

114

Charlie sits at his desk. It looks like he's barely slept. He begins typing. The keys up close and loud. Clak.

CLOSE UP TYPING: "Dear friend, I have not seen my friends for 2 weeks now. I am starting to get bad again."

Charlie stares at the typewriter. And remembers.

SMASH CUT TO:

115 INT. CHARLIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

115

Little Charlie pops his head around the corner from the hallway. He looks at something we can't see yet.

BACK TO:

116 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING (PRESENT)

116

Present. Knock. Knock. Charlie's mom opens the door.

MOTHER

We're going to be late for Easter Mass.

CHARLIE

I'll... I'll be there in a minute.

Charlie forces a smile, then looks back at the typewriter.
And tries to shake off the memory.

SMASH CUT TO:

117 INT. CHARLIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 117

Little Charlie looks at Aunt Helen as she smokes her
cigarette and sobs.

BACK TO:

118 INT. ST. THOMAS MORE CHURCH - MORNING 118

Charlie is lost. His family sits in the pews for Easter
Mass. Charlie watches the PRIEST recite the Lord's prayer.

PRIEST

Our Father who art in Heaven. Hallowed
be Thy name. Thy kingdom come--

MATCH CUT TO:

119 INT. ST. THOMAS MORE CHURCH - MORNING (FLASHBACK) 119

7 year old Charlie watches the PRIEST recite the Lord's
prayer. He looks at Aunt Helen's picture on the coffin.

PRIEST

Thy will be done on earth as it is in
Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

MATCH CUT TO:

120 INT. ST. THOMAS MORE CHURCH - MORNING (PRESENT) 120

16 year old Charlie looks haunted by the memory.

PRIEST

And forgive us our trespasses as we
forgive those who trespass against us--

The voices drift away and all Charlie can see is...

CUT TO:

121 INT. CHARLIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 121

7 year old Charlie takes Aunt Helen's hand to make her stop
crying.

CUT TO:

122 INT. ST. THOMAS MORE CHURCH - MORNING (PRESENT) 122

16 year old Charlie blinks as the voices come back.

PRIEST

And lead us not into temptation. But
deliver us from--

SMASH CUT TO:

123 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 123

Charlie on the phone. His voice wavers a bit. Desperate.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Mary Elizabeth... I... uh... I've been
listening to the Billie Holiday CD every
night and--

MARY ELIZABETH (V.O.)

It's too late, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I know. I just feel really bad about
what I did. I just get so messed up
inside like I'm - not there or something.

MARY ELIZABETH (V.O.)

Tell it to someone who cares.

CHARLIE

I know. I'm sorry. I just. We've all
become such good friends--

MARY ELIZABETH (V.O.)

Good friends? You mean the people I've
known since kindergarten that you've
known for 6 months? Those good friends?

CHARLIE

Oh. Yeah. I mean I don't want to do
anything to ruin our--

MARY ELIZABETH (V.O.)

It's ruined. Okay? So, stop calling
everyone. Stop embarrassing yourself.

CHARLIE

Okay. I will. Goodbye, Mar--

Dial tone. Charlie hangs up the phone.

124 INT. BOB'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

124

Charlie is terribly anxious. He watches Bob groom some pot.

CHARLIE
Something's wrong with me--

BOB
Don't worry about it. Hey... you hear
from Patrick?

CHARLIE
No. He told me to stay away.

BOB
Oh... you don't know?

CHARLIE
(concerned)
Why? Why? What happened?

BOB
Brad's father caught them together.

125 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - MORNING

125

As kids open lockers and move to morning period, Charlie stares at Brad. He has a black eye and cuts on his face. He look like he was beaten up badly. Students whisper gossip.

GOSSIP WHISPERS (O.S.)
"Some Lebo kids jumped him outside the
O." "It was some kids from North Hills."
"That's not what I heard."

Brad moves into the arms of CHARLOTTE (18), cheerleader cute. As Brad kisses her, Charlie sees Patrick down the hall, watching them. Patrick closes his locker. Hurting.

CHARLIE
Are you okay?

PATRICK
Not now, Charlie. I'm sorry.

Patrick storms off.

126 INT. CAFETERIA - LUNCH

126

Charlie sits at his table, alone. He watches Patrick leave the lunch line, passing a chorus of...

TWIN SENIOR GIRLS

Patrick says nothing. He's too sad to fight the mob today. He just moves to his table when the Nose Tackle sticks out his leg. Patrick falls on his tray. The kids laugh.

NOSE TACKLE

Oops. Sorry, Nothing.

Patrick smiles to himself, dusts off, and turns to Brad.

PATRICK

You going to do something?

BRAD HAYS

What are you talking about?

PATRICK

Your pet ape just tripped me. Are you going to say something?

BRAD HAYS

Why would I?

PATRICK

You know why.

It's too far. Brad can feel people staring.

BRAD HAYS

This is pathetic, man. Your fixation on me.

Brad's friends laugh. Patrick's eyes narrow.

PATRICK

Do you want your friends to know how you got those bruises? Really?

BRAD HAYS

I got jumped in a parking lot.

PATRICK

Where? In Schenley Park? Do they know about Schenley Park?

(to Brad's friends)

Do you guys know about Schenley Park?

Brad stands and gets right in Patrick's face.

BRAD HAYS

I don't know what kind of sick shit you're trying to pull.

(real warning)

But you better walk away now... Nothing.

PATRICK

Fine. Say hi to your dad for me.

Patrick turns and leaves. And then, as an afterthought...

BRAD HAYS

Whatever... faggot.

Brad's friends laugh. Patrick stops and turns. Last chance.

PATRICK

What did you call me?

BRAD HAYS

I called you a faggo--

Smack.

Before Brad can even finish, Patrick throws a vicious right to the cheek. Brad tackles him. And the two start fighting. The cafeteria erupts in NOISE.

PATRICK

Say that shit again! Say that shit again!

Brad's football buddies rise and peel Patrick off Brad. Mary Elizabeth and Sam jump up from their corner table.

MARY ELIZABETH

It's Patrick!

The cafeteria gets louder. The Nose Tackle holds Patrick up. More Noise. The Linebacker hits Patrick in the face.

SAM

No! No!

Sam rushes up and the Nose Tackle pushes her down. She lands on her tail bone. Thud. Patrick gets hit a couple of times in the face. The kids cheer the fight. It's getting louder and louder with more and more noise. And then...

SMASH CUT TO:

Silence.

Charlie comes out from a blink. He calmly looks around. For a moment, he doesn't understand where he is. He looks up. All the kids are staring at him. Mary Elizabeth. Alice. Brad. They are all quiet. Afraid of him. Charlie looks at his hand, clenched in a fist. It is already covered with...

Charlie's confused until he sees the Linebacker holding his broken, bloody nose. He's looking at Charlie...

Terrified.

The image pans over. The Nose Tackle is on the ground. Charlie stands over them. He is disconnected. It's an out of body experience. He reaches out and helps Patrick to his feet. Then, he calmly turns and stares right through Brad.

CHARLIE

(icy calm)

If you touch my friends again, I'll blind you.

Brad is stunned. So is everyone... except Sam.

127 INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

127

Charlie sits in the waiting room of the principal's office. He looks through the glass where Principal Small talks to Brad. After a beat, she pats Brad's shoulder and opens the door. Leaving Charlie and Brad alone in the waiting room. Just as Brad is about to leave...

BRAD HAYS

Charlie?

CHARLIE

Yeah?

BRAD HAYS

Thanks for stopping them.

CHARLIE

Sure, Brad.

Brad doesn't look at him. He just moves on.

128 EXT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

128

Charlie exits the building. Kids stare at him. Then, look away. Charlie feels very lost until he sees... Sam. She smiles. It brings him back instantly. And then, gently...

SAM

How you doing, Charlie?

CHARLIE

I don't know. I keep trying, but... I can't really remember what I did.

Sam can see he's afraid of himself. She nods, sympathetic.

SAM
Do you want me to tell you?

CHARLIE
(scared)
Yeah.

SAM
You saved my brother. That's what you did.

CHARLIE
So, you're not scared of me?

SAM
No.

CHARLIE
And can we be friends again?

SAM
Of course.

The minute she hugs him, the numb goes away. She kisses the top of his head and puts her arm around his shoulder. They begin walking away.

SAM (CONT'D)
Come on. Let's go be psychos together.

129 INT. PATRICK AND SAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

129

Mary Elizabeth looks at us because she wants us to know...

MARY ELIZABETH
I'm dating Peter now.

She motions to **PETER**. College. Glasses. Good looking-ish.

MARY ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
He's in college with Craig. He's opinionated, and we have intellectual debates. You were very sweet, but our relationship was too one-sided. I know this is hard for you.

CHARLIE
I'm just glad you're happy.

MARY ELIZABETH
Okay.

Mary Elizabeth joins Peter. Charlie looks at his friends.

that says, "They forget. I don't." After a beat, Patrick comes downstairs. He looks sad with his bruises.

PATRICK
Hey Craig, Sam will be down soon.

MARY ELIZABETH
We're going to miss the movie.

CRAIG
Yeah, I'll go put some pep in her step.

As Craig moves upstairs, Patrick approaches Charlie.

PATRICK
Hey... you wanna get out of here?

CHARLIE
Sure, Patrick.

130 EXT. WEST END OVERLOOK - NIGHT

130

Patrick drives Sam's truck up the hill to the overlook.

PATRICK (V.O.)
I'll tell you something, Charlie. I feel good. You know what I mean? Maybe tomorrow I'll take you to this karaoke place downtown. And this club off the strip. They don't card. And the Schenley Park scene. You gotta see the "fruit loop" at least one time.

131 EXT. WEST END OVERLOOK - NIGHT

131

Charlie and Patrick walk the lighted path, howling at the moon. Patrick holds a thermos, filled with who knows what.

PATRICK
Oh, my God. My life is officially an after school special. Son of a bitch!

CHARLIE
(laughing)
It kind of is. It so is.

More laughter. They arrive at the lookout. They drink.

PATRICK
So, you ever hear the one about Lily Miller?

CHARLIE
I don't know.

PATRICK
Really? I thought your brother would
have told you. It's a classic.

CHARLIE
Maybe.

PATRICK
So, Lily comes here with this guy Parker.
And this was going to be the night they
were going to lose their virginity. So,
she did it really proper. She packed a
picnic. Stole a bottle of wine.
Everything was perfect, and they're just
about to 'do it' when they realize they
forgot the condoms. So, what do you
think happened?

CHARLIE
I don't know.

PATRICK
They did it with one of the sandwich
bags.

They start laughing and screaming.

CHARLIE
Ew! That's disgusting!

PATRICK
Yes! It is! Let's keep the train
rolling. Suburban legends. Charlie!

Patrick points to Charlie, who thinks...

CHARLIE
Uh. Well... there was this girl named
Second Base Stace. She had boobs in the
4th grade--

PATRICK
Mosquito bites. Promising. Go.

CHARLIE
And she let some of the boys feel them.

PATRICK
That's your suburban legend? Did you at
least cop a feel?

CHARLIE
No.

PATRICK

Of course not. You went home, listened to "Asleep," wrote a poem about her self-esteem--

CHARLIE

Fine! Okay. Your turn.

Patrick walks over and sits down next to Charlie.

PATRICK

Yeah, I've got one. Well, there was this one guy. Queer as a 3 dollar bill. Guy's father didn't know about his son. So, he comes down into the basement one night when he's supposed to be out of town. Catches his son with another boy. So, he starts beating him. But not like the slap kind. Like the real kind. And the boyfriend says, "Stop. You're killing him." And the son just yells "Get out." And eventually the boyfriend just did.

Patrick stops. Gripped by sad. He can't shake.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Why can't you save anybody?

CHARLIE

I don't know.

PATRICK

Forget it. I'm free now, right? I could meet the love of my life any second now. Things will be different now, and that's good. I just need to meet a good guy.

CHARLIE

Yeah.

Patrick looks at him. Charlie has never seen him so vulnerable. After a beat... Patrick kisses Charlie on the mouth. Unsure of what to do, Charlie lets it happen. His eyes open the whole time. A moment, then Patrick looks at Charlie. He collapses into his chest.

PATRICK

I'm sorry.

CHARLIE

It's alright.

Charlie holds his friend as Patrick begins to cry. And we leave them, the city lights small in the distance.

132 EXT. CITY HIGHWAY - NIGHT 132

We see the truck glide down the highway.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
I've been spending a lot of time with Patrick. He begins every night really excited.

133 EXT. SCHENLEY PARK - NIGHT 133

Patrick and Charlie are parked at the entrance of Schenley Park. Patrick speaks, very animated, until...

CHARLIE (V.O.)
He always says he feels free, and tonight is his destiny. But after awhile, he runs out of things to keep himself numb.

... the words leave him, and we can see how sad he really is.

134 INT. SAM AND PATRICK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 134

Patrick hands Sam an envelope. Sam holds it. Pins and needles.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Then, Sam got her letter from Penn State.

Sam opens the letter. She reads. Tears instantly well up in her eyes. She leaves the room and walks down the hall. Patrick picks up the letter.

PATRICK
(reading)
"We will require you to take our summer session at the main campus immediately following your high school graduation."
(off Charlie's look)
She got in, Charlie.

Charlie turns back to Sam. She holds him with sweet relief and redemption.

135 INT. CAFETERIA - DAY 135

Charlie laughs with his friends in the cafeteria.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
After that all Patrick could talk about

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 did get into NYU Film School. Patrick is going to the University of Washington because he wants to be near the music in Seattle.

136 INT. SHOP CLASS - DAY

136

Charlie and a group of students stand, looking up at the wall, which is covered with...

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 But he wasn't going to leave without organizing the best senior prank ever.

... All The Shop Tools Painted Pink

The shop teacher, Mr. Callahan stares at the wall, furious. As the students gawk, Charlie smiles to himself.

137 INT. CAFETERIA - LUNCH

137

Sam and the girls chat excitedly. Summer is almost here.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 Sam is going to leave right after graduation. It all feels very exciting; I just wish it were happening to me.

138 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

138

Charlie sits on his bed, finishing the letter.

CHARLIE
 Especially because ever since I blacked out in the cafeteria, it's been getting worse. And I can't turn it off this time.

Charlie puts down the letter.

139 INT. BILL'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

139

The kids pass their copies of The Great Gatsby up to the front, where Bill collects them for next year's freshmen. The class is buzzing loud.

BILL
 Guys, you want to pass your copies of Gatsby up to the front please? And I know it's the last day, but if we could just keep it to a dull roar, I'd appreciate it.

The class quiets down.

BILL (CONT'D)

Thank you for such a great year. I had a blast. I hope you did, too. And I hope you have a great time this summer on your vacations. Now, who here is going to be reading for pleasure this summer?

Charlie looks to see if anyone is watching... then, decides to raise his hand anyway. Bill is proud.

BILL (CONT'D)

Very good, Charlie. Who else?

Charlie looks at the Smart Ass Freshman who tormented him all year. She sighs. Nothing left to say to him.

140 INT. BILL'S CLASSROOM - LATER

140

The last kids exit the classroom. Charlie walks down the aisle and stands in front of Bill.

BILL

Last day.

CHARLIE

Yeah. So, uh, I know it's none of my business, but have you decided... are you going to New York?

BILL

Well, my wife and I like it here, and I think I might be better at teaching than writing.

Charlie is relieved. Bill is staying.

BILL (CONT'D)

So, uh Charlie... I was thinking maybe I could still give you books next year.

CHARLIE

Yeah. Yeah.

BILL

I think you could write one of them one day.

CHARLIE

(fragile belief)
Really?

BILL

I do.

Charlie is quiet. Then...

CHARLIE
You're the best teacher I ever had.

BILL
Thank you.

He gives Bill a shy sideways hug. The two men say nothing else. Charlie waves and leaves. Bill smiles to himself.

141 INT. MILL GROVE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON 141

Times Square has nothing on these seniors. Charlie watches the gang on their last day of high school. When the clock hits 10 seconds to 3pm, all the students chant...

SAM & COMPANY
10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2...

STUDENT (O.S.)
Oh, my God, get me the hell out of here!

ALL
1!

They all cheer and hug each other. Patrick loses his mind with joy and charges down the hallway.

SMASH CUT TO:

142 EXT. MILL GROVE FOOTBALL STADIUM - SUNSET 142

A brilliant sunset. We see the gang. In silhouette. Running up the bleachers after the sun.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Dear Friend... I wanted to tell you about us running. There was this beautiful sunset. And just a few hours before, everyone I love had their last day of high school ever. And I was happy because they were happy, even though I counted, and I have 1,095 days to go.

143 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - FIREPLACE - LATE AFTERNOON 143

Prom night. Charlie sees Candace posing for Dad's camera. For a moment, we think Candace went to prom with Derek.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
I kept thinking about what school was going to be like without them as they

As mom and dad move out of the way, we realize Candace is standing with her 3 best girlfriends. They look beautiful.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
My sister finally decided to break up with Derek and go stag with her girlfriends instead.

144 EXT. SAM AND PATRICK'S HOUSE - SUNSET

144

Prom night continues. The antique limo is so garish, it's great. Charlie snaps pictures with Sam's mom and Patrick's dad. Mary Elizabeth is with her boyfriend, Peter. Alice stands with Patrick, dashing in his Mod Suit Tux.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
And then there was Sam...

The image moves to the front of the house, where Sam emerges. She wears a vintage flapper dress from the 20's. Radiant.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I've looked at her pictures since that night. I like to see how happy she was before she knew.

Sam joins Craig. They kiss for the cameras, then run with the rest of the gang to the limosine.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They were in a hotel suite after prom when the truth came out...

The gang poses for more pictures in front of the limo.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Basically, Craig has been cheating on Sam the whole time. When I heard that, I kept thinking about the happy girl in these pictures. Because she doesn't have 1,095 days to go.

145 EXT. PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

145

Graduation Day. The place is packed with graduating seniors and families. Charlie's mom and dad fawn over Candace with the video camera. Charlie finally finds... Sam.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
She made it. This is her time. And no one should be able to take that away.

They approach each other and hug.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 Congratulations.

PATRICK
 Oh, Charlie's here! Guys, group photo!
 We should all take a group photo. Get
 against the railing and try to look
 suave!

The kids line up for the picture they will always remember.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
 Yeah, this is the one. That's going to
 be a great angle.

Patrick bows to reveal the top of his cap reads, "Nothing
 Hates You." The parents line up cameras. "Cheese!" Snap.

SMASH CUT TO:

146 INT. SAM AND PATRICK'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 146

The grandfather clock reads 9:30pm. The room is festive
 under streamers wishing Sam luck at Penn State. The kids
 sign each other's yearbooks. Charlie sees Sam smile at old
 photos. He misses her already.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 At her going away party, I wanted her to
 know about that night we went through the
 tunnel. And how for the first time, I
 felt like I belonged somewhere.

CUT TO:

147 INT. SAM AND PATRICK'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - LATER 147

10:28pm. Charlie doesn't know where the time keeps going.
 Sam opens goodbye presents from her friends.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
 And tomorrow, she's leaving. So, I
 wanted to give her a part of me.

Charlie watches Sam pick up his present. She carefully peels
 the tape to reveal that Charlie gave her all of his books.

SAM
 Are these all your books, Charlie?

He nods. They lock eyes and do not speak.

148 INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

148

The pictures are down. The dressers empty. The suitcase is open on the bed. Charlie watches Sam fold clothes and put them in her suitcase. He has promised himself he will not cry. Even when she packs away his Beatles 45 of "Something."

Instead, he looks at her and tries to remember every detail. Her hair and brown eyes and sound of her voice.

SAM

Thanks for staying up with me.

CHARLIE

Sure. My brother said Penn State has a restaurant called Ye Olde College Diner. You have to get a grilled stickie on your first night. It's a tradition.

SAM

That sounds like fun.

CHARLIE

Yeah. Pretty soon, you'll have a whole new group of friends, and you won't even think about this place anymore.

SAM

Yes, I will.

Sam moves some suitcases over to the pile in the room. They stand next to each other. Close.

SAM (CONT'D)

I had lunch with Craig today.

CHARLIE

Yeah?

SAM

He said he was sorry, and that I was right to break up with him. But I'm driving away, and I just felt so small. Just asking myself why do I and everyone I love pick people who treat us like we're nothing?

CHARLIE

We accept the love we think we deserve.

He says it sober. Without judgement. Sam lets it sink in. Charlie walks over to the bed to do more packing. Then, she turns to him.

SAM

Then, why didn't you ever ask me out?

Charlie didn't expect that. He is silent. Heart pounding.

CHARLIE

I, uh, I just didn't think you wanted that.

SAM

Well, what did you want?

CHARLIE

I just want you to be happy.

SAM

Don't you get it, Charlie? I can't feel that. It's really sweet and everything, but you can't just sit there and put everybody's lives ahead of yours and think that counts as love. I don't want to be somebody's crush. I want people to like the real me.

CHARLIE

I know who you are, Sam.

Sam waits. And Charlie finally speaks from the heart.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I know I'm quiet, and I know I should speak more, but if you knew the things that were in my head most of the time, you'd know what it really meant. How much we are alike. And how we've been through the same things. And you're not small. You're beautiful.

He can't contain himself anymore. He moves to her and kisses her. They stand. Move to the bed. Kissing. Charlie's heart pounds. They sit on the bed. Still kissing.

We see her fingertips. Her hand on Charlie's knee. When she touches him, Charlie pulls away from her. Shocked. Like he's seen a ghost. It hits Charlie like freezing water.

SAM

What's wrong, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Oh, ah... nothing.

Charlie shakes off whatever was bothering him and continues

149 EXT. SAM AND PATRICK'S HOUSE - MORNING

149

It's like a dream for Charlie. He watches Sam hug Alice and Mary Elizabeth goodbye. But Charlie is somewhere else.

SAM
I'll call all the time.

MARY ELIZABETH
Promise.

SAM
And we'll all see each other in New York.

SAM'S MOM
Come on, Sam.

Charlie can't take it. He moves to the side of the truck and puts in the last suitcase. He looks over at Sam.

SMASH CUT TO:

150 INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

150

QUICK FLASH... Charlie remembers kissing Sam the night before. Her hand touches Charlie's knee.

BACK TO PRESENT:

151 EXT. SAM AND PATRICK'S HOUSE - MORNING

151

Charlie snaps himself out of it. He turns back as Mary Elizabeth and Alice part ways. Charlie locks eyes with Sam. They take a moment. And then they come together to hug. She kisses him goodbye, trying not to cry.

After a moment, Sam climbs into the driver's seat of her truck with Patrick riding shotgun. Charlie looks dazed.

SMASH CUT TO:

152 INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

152

QUICK FLASH... Charlie remembers pulling away from Sam. Shocked. Like he's seen a ghost.

SAM
What's wrong, Charlie?

BACK TO PRESENT:

153 EXT. SAM AND PATRICK'S HOUSE - MORNING 153

Sam starts the truck. Charlie wants to scream for her to stop. But he's frozen. She drives away. He watches her go. The truck gets smaller in the distance until it turns at the stop sign. And disappears. Charlie stands there, alone.

SMASH CUT TO:

154 INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 154

QUICK FLASH... Charlie remembers the night with Sam. We see her put her hand on his knee. The image moves up the arm. To the shoulder. To the face. And we reveal, we are not in Sam's bedroom. And it is not Sam touching Charlie. But...

Aunt Helen

AUNT HELEN
Don't wake your sister.

BACK TO REALITY:

155 EXT. SAM AND PATRICK'S HOUSE - MORNING 155

The memory only registers as a small blink of his eye. Charlie sees his friends are crying. He's not. He's numb.

156 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MORNING 156

Charlie walks down the street. His eyes far away. The images and memories are short, violent bursts. If you've never had an anxiety attack, this is how it feels.

157 EXT. CHARLIE'S STREET - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 157

QUICK FLASH. It's Christmas Eve. Aunt Helen smiles to Little Charlie.

AUNT HELEN
It'll be our little secret, okay?

Little Charlie nods.

158 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MORNING (PRESENT) 158

BACK TO PRESENT. Charlie walks toward us on the sidewalk. We see him through a long lens. His image fractures. We see him in different planes of the image. He's beginning to break apart. One image. Two images.

159 INT. CHARLIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 159

QUICK FLASH. Little Candace is asleep on the floor. Aunt Helen sits next to Little Charlie on the sofa.

AUNT HELEN
Look, Charlie. She's fast asleep.

160 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MORNING (PRESENT) 160

BACK TO PRESENT. We see Charlie fracturing. The pieces scattered. Out of focus. Lost. He's all over the frame.

161 INT. CHARLIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 161

QUICK FLASH. Aunt Helen points to Little Candace.

AUNT HELEN
Don't wake your sister.

162 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY (PRESENT) 162

BACK TO PRESENT. Charlie enters his house.

SMASH CUT TO:

163 INT. AUNT HELEN'S CAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 163

QUICK FLASH. Aunt Helen gets hit by the semi-truck.

164 INT. ENTRY HALL - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 164

QUICK FLASH. Little Charlie's mom opens the door to reveal a policeman.

165 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY (PRESENT) 165

BACK TO PRESENT. Charlie is in the same entry hall in the same house 8 years later. Banging his head against the wall. "It's my fault. It's all my fault."

He passes the photo wall on the stairs. We see the images of the family. Church. Communion. Baby pictures. Years of history staring at us. Ghosts on the wall.

166 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY (PRESENT) 166

BACK TO PRESENT. Charlie sits at his desk. We see him from behind. Perfectly still. Trying to keep himself calm.

CHARLIE
Stop crying.

167 INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY (FLASHBACK) 167

QUICK FLASH. Charlie thinks everyone is staring at him. His sister and her friends. His brother and mother. Mary Elizabeth and Alice. And worst of all... Sam and Patrick the night they toasted him. A paranoid nightmare.

168 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY (PRESENT) 168

BACK TO PRESENT. Charlie's falling to pieces. The tears run down his face.

CHARLIE
Stop crying.

169 INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - VARIOUS TIMES (FANTASY) 169

QUICK FLASH. Derek hits Candace. Patrick hits Brad. The cafeteria erupts into violence.

And Charlie remembers what he's blacked out.

We see him in the cafeteria. Terrifying. He thinks he sees Aunt Helen as he breaks the Linebacker's nose. Hits another in the throat. And pushes another. Charlie looks at his hand, covered in blood. The whole school staring at him.

170 INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY (PRESENT) 170

BACK TO PRESENT. Charlie holds his head. Trying to stuff the pictures back in his brain. But he can't. They keep coming and coming, faster and faster. Sam's hand, Little Charlie on top of the stairs, the police telling him Aunt Helen is dead.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
It'll be our little secret.

We go behind his head. The image moves closer and closer. Until it feels like we are inside Charlie's mind.

SMASH CUT TO:

171 EXT. HOUSE SWIMMING POOL - DAY 171

We see Candace hanging out with her girlfriends at a friend's backyard pool. Her **FRIEND** (18, pretty) holds the cordless.

CANDACE'S FRIEND
Candace... your brother's on the phone.

Candace casually picks up the phone.

CANDACE
Hello.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Hey, Candace.

CANDACE
Charlie?

CHARLIE
Sam and Patrick left, and um, I just
can't stop thinking something.

CANDACE
What?

CHARLIE
Candace, I killed Aunt Helen, didn't I?
She died getting my birthday present, so
I guess I killed her, right? I've tried
to stop thinking that, but I can't. She
keeps driving away and dying over and
over.

Candace looks like she got hit with ice water. She knows her
brother. She knows this voice. Candace covers the phone.

CANDACE
Call the police and send them to my
house.

CHARLIE
And I can't stop her. I'm crazy again.

CANDACE
No, Charlie, listen to me. Mom and dad
are going to be home with Chris any
second.

CHARLIE
I was just thinking... what if I wanted
her to die, Candace?

CANDACE
What? Charlie... Charlie!

Dial tone.

172 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

172

We begin in the house. It's silent. The hallway. The entry
hall. The empty bedroom. Charlie's typewriter on his desk.

It's all so quiet. And then, we see Charlie walking down the hallway. He turns the corner and enters the...

MATCH CUT TO:

173 INT. CHARLIE'S KITCHEN - DAY (PAST AND PRESENT)

173

Kitchen. One room. Charlie doesn't know where he is anymore. The past and present have bled together.

QUICK FLASH. We see Little Charlie turn the corner into the kitchen. BACK TO PRESENT as 16 year old Charlie stands in the same kitchen, breathing shallow.

QUICK FLASH. 7 year old Charlie walks up to Aunt Helen sitting at the kitchen table. BACK TO PRESENT as 16 year old Charlie begins to have a full blown anxiety attack.

QUICK FLASH. 7 year old Charlie takes Aunt Helen's hand and turns it over... to reveal her wrist scars.

BACK TO PRESENT as Charlie looks from the table to the counter with the bread and the KNIVES. He stares at the knives for a moment. Just as...

The Policemen break down the door.

SMASH CUT TO:

174 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

174

We see Charlie's reflection in the window. The door opens slowly, and his psychiatrist, Dr. Burton, enters. She finds him sitting in the corner. He has been crying.

DR. BURTON
Charlie? I'm Dr. Burton.

CHARLIE
Where am I?

DR. BURTON
Mayview hospital.

This news hits Charlie hard. He begins to panic.

CHARLIE
You have to let me go. My dad can't afford it.

DR. BURTON
Don't worry about that.

CHARLIE

No. I saw them when I was little. And I don't want to be a Mayview kid. Just tell me how to stop it.

DR. BURTON

Stop what?

CHARLIE

Seeing it. All their lives. All the time. Just... how do you stop seeing it?

DR. BURTON

Seeing what, Charlie?

Charlie breaks.

CHARLIE

There is so much pain. And I don't know how to not notice it.

DR. BURTON

What's hurting you?

CHARLIE

No! Not me. It's them. It's everyone. It never stops. Do you understand?

Dr. Burton smiles, sympathetic. Charlie nods, relieved that someone finally understands. Until...

DR. BURTON

What about your Aunt Helen?

Like cold water. What was tears is now confusion and soon to be shame. Dr. Burton is gentle to him.

CHARLIE

What about her?

DR. BURTON

Can you see her?

CHARLIE

Yes, she had a terrible life. But... I mean, what am I...

DR. BURTON

You said some things about her in your sleep.

CHARLIE

I don't care.

DR. BURTON

If you want to get better, you have to--

Charlie looks at her, nodding her encouragement.

CHARLIE

She was... insane.

The minute he says one word of truth, he feels ashamed. He stops talking. Dr. Burton does not press him. Not today.

DR. BURTON

Charlie, are you going to let me help you here?

Charlie cries and nods.

CHARLIE

Okay.

DR. BURTON

Do you remember anything before you blacked out?

CHARLIE

I, uh... I remember leaving Sam's house, and walking home...

We move away from them as Charlie's voice trails off.

175 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

175

The sun creeps through the windows. We can hear birds outside. The intercom is quiet. Charlie is alone. He looks at Sam's typewriter. "Dear Friend" is already typed.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

I was in the hospital for awhile. I won't go into detail about all of it. But I will say there were some very bad days. And some unexpected beautiful days.

Charlie picks up a get well card from Sam.

176 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

176

Dr. Burton walks Charlie's parents down the hallway.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

The worst day was the time my doctor told my mom and dad what Aunt Helen did to me.

In the distance, we see Charlie's mom and dad stop. Shocked.

177 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 177

Charlie looks up and sees his mom and dad in the doorway.

MOTHER

Honey?

His mother comes to hold him.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

For a second, we see the emotion his father hides behind the sports page, before he chokes it down. He walks over to his son and kisses his forehead.

178 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING 178

Charlie, Chris, and Candace sit on the bed, playing cards.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

The best days were those when I could have visitors. My brother and sister always came for those until Chris had to go to training camp. He's going to be first string this year. And my sister told me she met a nice guy at her summer job.

179 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON 179

Charlie leaves his room with his suitcase in hand. His mother waits in the hallway with Dr. Burton.

DR. BURTON

There he is. So, I'll see you Thursday at 6, right?

Charlie nods and leaves the hospital with his mother.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

My doctor said we can't choose where we can come from, but we can choose where we go from there. I know it's not all the answers, but it was enough to start putting these pieces together.

Dr. Burton smiles, then turns back into the hospital.

180 INT. CHARLIE'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT 180

The family sits at the dinner table.

FATHER

God bless this food that we are about to receive. We thank You for this bounty in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

After they say "Amen," the room falls silent. The family is on pins and needles. No one touches their food. Until...

CHARLIE

How do you think the Penguins are going to do this year, dad?

FATHER

God damn Penguins. I think they're allergic to God damn defense.

CHARLIE

What do the players call a puck again?

FATHER

A biscuit.

CANDACE

Are you sure it's not a "God damn biscuit?"

FATHER

You're cruisin' for a bruisin'.

As things return to normal, dad picks up his paper. Candace talks about the books she'll need for college. Everyone starts eating. And Charlie smiles, happy to just be home.

181 INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

181

Ding dong. The door opens to reveal Patrick, smiling.

PATRICK

Can Charlie come out and play?

Charlie's mother smiles. Charlie smiles, too. Especially when he sees... Sam. Standing next to Patrick. Her hair a little different. Her eyes alive and happy.

182 INT. KINGS FAMILY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

182

The gang of three sit at their booth. Sam and Patrick have their coffee. Charlie has his brownie. Like always.

SAM

That first night, I had grilled stickies. It was so good. You have to visit in the Fall. We'll have some. Okay?

CHARLIE
Definitely.

PATRICK
Sorry, Sam. Charlie has a breakdown
scheduled for October.

Charlie laughs. Sam smiles. After a beat...

SAM
Well, can I tell you something? I've
been away for two months. It's another
world. And it gets better.
(off Charlie's smile)
And my roommate Katie has the best taste
in music.

Sam puts a cassette tape down on the table.

SAM (CONT'D)
I found the tunnel song.

Charlie looks at Sam and Patrick, who smile.

SAM (CONT'D)
Let's drive.

183 EXT. KINGS FAMILY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

183

The three leave the restaurant and jump into Sam's truck.
Patrick drives. Charlie in the middle. Sam the passenger.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
I don't know if I will have the time to
write any more letters because I might be
too busy trying to participate. So, if
this does end up being the last letter, I
just want you to know that I was in a bad
place before I started high school. And
you helped me.

184 INT. SAM'S TRUCK - NIGHT

184

The three friends are flying down the highway in Sam's truck.
The music blaring. The wind making their hair dance.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Even if you didn't know what I was
talking about. Or know someone who's
gone through it. It made me not feel
alone.

With Sam's help, Charlie climbs through the little window

185 EXT. HIGHWAY 376 NORTH - NIGHT

185

Charlie gets into the back of the truck. He sits down, looking back at the highway. Watching everywhere he's been.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Because I know there are people who say all of these things don't happen. And there are people who forget what it's like to be 16 when they turn 17.

We see Charlie in profile. The night sky behind him until...

186 INT. FORT PITT TUNNEL - NIGHT

186

... they enter the tunnel, and we realize just how fast they're driving. The white tiles of the tunnel whiz by at blinding speed. A perfect night. A perfect drive. Flying.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

I know these will all be stories someday. And our pictures will become old photographs. And we'll all become somebody's mom or dad. But right now, these moments are not stories.

Charlie turns to face forward. To the moment. To Sam, smiling at him from the front seat.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This is happening. I am here. And I am looking at her. And she is so beautiful.

Sam kisses Charlie. Then, she turns, and all three kids look ahead to everything in front of them. Charlie begins to stand in the back of the truck. Ready to leave the tunnel.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I can see it. This one moment when you know you're not a sad story. You are alive. And as you stand up and see the lights on buildings and everything that makes you wonder. And you are listening to that song on that drive with the people you love most in this world.

Charlie stands in the back of the truck. The wind on his face. He is free.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And in this moment, I swear...

We see the moment as Charlie sees it. The tunnel's exit getting bigger and brighter with the lights of the city behind it.

CHARLIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... we are infinite.

The tunnel song blasts over the speakers as the truck flies out of the tunnel. Sam and Patrick scream with excitement. Charlie holds his arms in the air. The weight of the world gone. If only for a moment. This one moment. We see the city. A million lights like white stars in a glass dome. We crane to the sky. We are in Heaven.

FADE OUT.