

VYING FOR AFFECTIONS

Written By

Michaela Wadzinski

INT. HOPE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Iowa. 2014.

Low quality video footage. The voice of WILL ROADS rings out as he conducts interviews of his fellow CLASSMATES. The classroom is buzzing with the endless possibilities of the weekend.

WILL

Otto! How do you feel about the game tonight?

OTTO, a jock and a thespian, stands over the desk of HAILEY, a popular girl. He's wearing his football gear, not the regular uniform.

OTTO

They don't stand a chance.

WILL

Famous last words.

OTTO

Hey, no. Let this be a record. The Cardinals will be the 2014 state champions.

WILL

(laughs)

Okay, sure man. Where you gonna be in 10 years?

OTTO

Ten years?

WILL

That's what they told me to ask.

OTTO

Hm. Playing for the NFL.

HAILEY

Yeah right.

OTTO

What? What?

WILL

Hailey, where are you going to be in 10 years?

HAILEY

Anywhere but here.

JON, Hailey's boyfriend and a jock, appears behind her.

JON

She's going to be on the sidelines cheering me on.

He kisses her on the cheek. She pushes him off.

HAILEY

Please. I'm going to have my own fashion line.

WILL

Yeah? What's your-

A loud bang on the door pulls Will's attention. We see TRENT WOODS(17M), senior, loud, attention seeking and rebellious, pounding on the door.

KEVIN

Will! Will!

Will turns to reveal KEVIN, junior, sitting on the writing part of his desk.

WILL

Kevin, where are you gonna be in 10 years?

Behind Kevin is IRENE KIJEK (16F), junior, meek, with a posture that shrinks into itself. She sits, avoiding eye contact with the camera.

The camera focuses in on her more and more while Kevin speaks.

KEVIN

Jesus. Where won't I be?

WILL

Whatta you mean?

KEVIN

I'm gonna be famous. I'm gonna be everywhere. You're gonna get sick of seeing this face.

WILL

I already am.

They laugh.

INT. KIJEK RESIDENCE KITCHEN - DAY

A nice upper class suburban home decorated with entirely too many knick-knacks. Irene enters. It's quiet.

IRENE

I'm home.

No response. She looks at the whiteboard on the wall. "Dinner meeting 5PM -Mom". Irene writes back "Football game, won't be home till late. - Irene".

With a sigh, she heads upstairs.

INT. IRENE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Irene enters. It's a cornucopia of romantic movie posters.

She turns on a small TV, an old black and white film plays. MARGARET, the female lead of said film, walks confidently toward a train station.

HARRY, the male lead, runs after her.

HARRY

Margaret! Wait! Please!

Irene energetically acts along with the scene. She knows every word. As she does, she tries to pick out an outfit.

MARGARET

I have to go Harry. I'm sorry.

HARRY

I don't understand, please!

Margaret stops, and turns to him.

MARGARET

I know if leave I can make it.
Crowds of people cheering my name,
the whole world is gonna know me.

HARRY

What if you're wrong?

MARGARET

And what if I'm right? I'm tired of
being invisible, I'm going to be
somebody.

HARRY

I'll come with you.

MARGARET

You'd do that for me? Oh Harry!

Irene plops in front of the TV as the two movie stars kiss. She smiles to herself.

INT. IRENE'S CAR - EVENING

Irene enters the drive thru of Frosteez's, a local fast food chain, and pulls up to the ordering machine.

IRENE

Hi, uh, can I get a number-

FROSTEEZ'S WORKER

Irene?

IRENE

Elise? I didn't think you were working tonight.

ELISE

Of course I am! Get up here, I already know your order.

Irene pulls up to the first window. ELISE JOHNSON (16F), a junior, Irene's best friend, and a bit of an outsider, opens the window.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Do you have time before the game? If I take my break now we can eat together.

IRENE

That sounds so much better than eating in my car.

ELISE

Yeah it does. That'll be \$5.50.

Irene hands Elise some cash.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Be warned. Its a madhouse in here.

Elise hands Irene her change. Irene pulls forward, nearly hitting Trent Woods who jumps in front of her car.

TRENT

Oh shit!

He laughs as a GROUP OF BOYS appear from behind the building. Trent runs to catch up to them, barely paying Irene mind.

She's annoyed. Finally, she parks her car.

EXT. FROSTEEZ'S PARKING LOT - EVENING

Irene exits. Another car passes. She realizes Will Roads (16M), junior, a bit nerdy but incredibly charismatic, is behind the wheel.

He doesn't seem to notice Irene. Her body melts, nearly dropping her car keys. For years she's been hopelessly in love with him, and yet she still had no poker face.

He drives off. Irene composes herself and heads inside.

INT. FROSTEEZ - EVENING

Irene enters to pure chaos. Half of the high school seems to have flooded the restaurant. It's completely overwhelming.

Irene sees a table full of students she knows. She waves, but they don't see her.

Irene struggles through the crowd of people, constantly making room for them, without anyone making room for her.

Irene looks for Elise who is now at the front counter, confronting Kevin.

ELISE

There's no milkshake on your receipt!

KEVIN

Because I have a coupon!

Elise snatches the paper out of his hand.

ELISE

This isn't even for this restaurant.

KEVIN

Come on Elise!

ELISE

No, you have to buy one, just like everyone else! It's only 2 dollars Kevin.

KEVIN

I wish Morgan was working, she would've helped me out.

ELISE

I am helping you out. I don't think you should have a milkshake before your big game. Might get the runs.

KEVIN

(muttering)

Think you're so fuc-

ELISE

I have ears Kevin.

Kevin storms away as 3 MORE STUDENTS replace him. Elise locks eyes with Irene and looks at her as if to say "Kill me."

Irene tries to push through the crowd when FRANKIE, another student, bumps into her, getting ketchup all over her pants.

FRANKIE

Oh shit, I didn't even see you-

He notices it looks like period blood, and tries to hide his laughter. Irene looks down at the mess and by the time she looks back up Frankie is gone. Irene runs to the bathroom.

INT. FROSTEEZ BATHROOM - EVENING

Irene enters to find ALEXIS, senior, popular despite a negative reputation, fixing her makeup. Irene tries to hide her stains.

Alexis politely smiles but otherwise doesn't pay Irene mind.

Irene goes into the stall, and rubs out the ketchup. She is quickly distracted by a voice. A man's voice.

MAN

Come on Alexis can't-

ALEXIS

Shh! God. Follow me.

Footsteps leave the stall as Alexis guides the man, as quickly as possible, to the exit.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

(to the man)

This didn't happen.

They leave. Irene sits in a shocked silence. She stops working on her pants. She's only making them worse.

INT. FROSTEEZ - EVENING

Irene exits. She pushes through the students passing Kevin who is still upset.

KEVIN

She doesn't own this place! I don't know where she gets off thinking she can talk to *me* like that!

She sees Elise cleaning a table.

IRENE

Elise-

ELISE

Save this table-Wait, what happened? Jesus. Does everyone here suck? Take my apron.

Elise quickly hands her apron to Irene, stacks up the trash and walks away. Irene happily covers up her stains.

She sits and notices Trent out the window, still in the parking lot with his friends. He has a trumpet in hand and is playing it loudly.

Elise finally returns with the food.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Your order. No pickles.

Elise sits down.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Please don't ever let me work on *Football Fridays* again. This place is hell. A living hell.

IRENE

I saw Alexis in the bathroom.

ELISE

Cool? Did she do that?

Elise points to Irene's pants.

IRENE

No. She was with some guy, she was like sneaking him out of the girl's restroom.

ELISE

Did you see who it was?

IRENE

No but-

ELISE

You had one job!

IRENE

I know but I saw the shoes!

ELISE

Ugh. It's not enough. Whatever. It's not like I'm surprised Alexis would do that anyway.

IRENE

You don't think they were?

ELISE

Could be? I don't know.

A loud trumpet sound stops them, courtesy of Trent from the parking lot.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Even outside of school he's still like this? Do you think I can call the police on them for loitering?

IRENE

You could certainly try.

(then)

I wish you could save me from marching band tonight.

ELISE

No thank you. The only place worse than here would be a high school football game.

IRENE

No one even watches us play. It might as well be a recording!

ELISE

At least you get to leave at halftime right?

A CRASH, one of the other tables has spilled pop everywhere. They quickly attempt to fix the situation.

UNDERCLASSMEN 1
They're out of napkins. Elise!

ELISE
I'm on my break.

UNDERCLASSMEN 1
Come on!

ELISE
Use your shirt or something, I'm on my break!
(to Irene)
They don't pay me enough for this.

They scoff back in annoyance at her, and move to another table leaving the spill.

IRENE
Did you see Will?

ELISE
Nope, no. That man ordered three cheeseburgers and a chicken sandwich, you do not want to date a boy who ordered three cheeseburgers and a chicken sandwich. Where are the fries?

IRENE
Okay, okay. Can I keep the apron?

ELISE
Yeah we have more in the back. What happened?

IRENE
Frankie ran into me. It's like I'm invisible or something.

ELISE
You know, I have always wondered if you were maybe a figment of my imagination. It would explain a lot actually.

IRENE
Like what?

ELISE

Like you don't like pickles. That's just some made up shit, everyone like pickles. They're delicious.

IRENE

You're ridiculous.

EXT. FROSTEEZ - EVENING

Irene gives Elise one last wave before heading to her car.

She's stopped by a voice.

TRENT

Hey, Irene?

She turns to Trent, now alone holding his trumpet case. He seems different from the boy we saw before, almost nervous.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Thanks for expertly avoiding my body earlier.

IRENE

No worries.

TRENT

Do you think you could drive me to band warmups? The guys kind of ditched me.

Irene looks at him, considering.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I'll owe you one.

INT. IRENE'S CAR - EVENING

Irene and Trent sit in silence except for the radio.

TRENT

I didn't know you worked at Frosteez?

IRENE

What?

She looks down at the apron.

IRENE (CONT'D)
Oh, no. I don't. This is just the height of fashion.

Trent laughs. Irene is surprised.

TRENT
This is a nice car. I'm, uh, saving up money for my own ride. I'm super close.

IRENE
You don't have a car?

TRENT
No, I mean, my mom and I share one.
(then)
It's actually really annoying. I wait after school every day for her to pick me up. I'm 17, I should be able to go wherever I want.

Irene nods. Trent notes the time.

TRENT (CONT'D)
Oh shit.

IRENE
What?

TRENT
Shit, I'm gonna be late.

IRENE
We don't have to be there for another 15 minutes.

TRENT
No, no trumpets start at 6:30. If I'm late again Jennings is going to kill me.

Irene looks at the time: 6:26.

IRENE
I'm sorry.

TRENT
Do you think you could speed up?

IRENE
What?

TRENT

Please? You-you'd be saving me.
We're so close, if we just went a
little faster we could make it.

Irene is already going the speed limit. She looks at the time. Then at Trent. He pleads with her.

The light in front of them flashes yellow, and instead of stopping Irene goes faster. Running the light.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Yes! Oh my god, thank you so much!

This encourages her. Trent has the biggest stupidest smile on his face. She speeds up moderately, taking a quick turn.

Trent hoops and hollers. Irene looks over at him, she's kind of delighted?

They make it to the stadium. 6:29. She comes to a quick and clumsy stop.

TRENT (CONT'D)

That was awesome. I need you to
drive me to everywhere. I'll never
be late again!

Irene smiles politely. The sound of trumpets in the distance.

IRENE

I think you need to-

TRENT

Oh yeah, yeah. Shit. Thanks again!

He runs away with a wave. Giving her one last look, as if really seeing her for the first time.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD BATHROOMS - NIGHT

Irene exits the bathroom, now in her marching uniform. She runs into MS. KIMBLE, the theatre teacher, holding a stack of posters.

MS. KIMBLE

Irene! Looking very sharp.

IRENE

Oh. Hi Ms. Kimble.

MS. KIMBLE

Have you seen these yet?

She holds up a poster for the school play. It reads "NO MORE BOATS! A mystery for the ages! Play auditions."

IRENE

Wow, that look amazing.

MS. KIMBLE

I know! Once the football players see this they're going to drop the knee pads for some stage presence.

Ms. Kimble leaves. Irene rounds the corner to play poster. She stares at it with quiet determination.

Her thoughts are interrupted when-

DARREN

Irene! Good, you're dressed.

IRENE

(Unenthusiastic)

Hi Darren.

They walk up together.

EXT. PRACTICE SHED - CONTINUOUS

DARREN

I have to tell you, and this cannot leave this circle, but the freshmen do not know how to play.

IRENE

They're trying their best.

DARREN

If that's their best then we're hopeless. Also, don't look now, but Trent Woods is staring at us.

Over her shoulder she spots Trent. He is indeed staring.

DARREN (CONT'D)

Gross. Anyway we need to have a group meeting ASAP. I've gathered everyone else.

Irene tries to ignore her growing curiosity towards Trent. Darren and Irene join THREE OTHER CLARINET PLAYERS.

DARREN (CONT'D)

Clarinets? Alright. Everyone feeling okay about our new song?

(MORE)

DARREN (CONT'D)

I know the sixteenth notes can be a little challenging for some.

The group nods affirmatively.

DARREN (CONT'D)

Okay, good. But just in case, I think we should run them a few times. Just to check.

Irene locks eyes with Trent once again. He gestures, making fun of Darren. Irene smiles.

DARREN (CONT'D)

We all need to remember our breath support. We support the notes. No note left behind!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD STANDS - NIGHT

The small but energetic pep band finishes a song and sits.

The game continues but Irene only has a passive interest. She looks over to the student section. It's neon night.

She spots Will, video camera in hand, leading a chant. He commands the attention of his peers in a way Irene could only dream of.

Suddenly, her view is covered by a face. Trent's face.

TRENT

Hey Irene?

IRENE

How did you-

Irene turns around realizing he's crawled over his fellow bandmates. They stare at her in annoyance.

TRENT

I was wondering if maybe you'd want to hang out after halftime?

IRENE

I don't usually stay.

DARREN

You need to get back to your section.

TRENT

In a second. We wouldn't have to actually watch the game. I know a spot with a great view.

Irene opens her mouth to respond-

DARREN
Trent. Seriously.

TRENT
Darren. We're a shitty high school
marching band, no one cares.

Irene suppresses a laugh, admiring Trent's audacity. Darren turns around, pissed. Trent comes in closer.

TRENT (CONT'D)
What do you say?

Irene thinks long and hard. She's never hung out with a boy before.

There's lots of eyes on them, and Irene feels exposed like everyone is listening. She kind of likes it.

IRENE
Okay. Sure.

Trent's face lights up.

TRENT
Yes!

The student next to Trent elbows him.

BAND MEMBER 1
Trent. Move. I can't see the game.

TRENT
Shit, okay, okay. I'll see you
later.

Irene nods as she watches Trent climb back through the unamused crowd to his spot. Irene notes his lack of humility.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Trent and Irene sit on some jackets. A plate of concession nachos sit between them, but neither are eating.

The view is beautiful, miles of plains in the distance, with the bright stadium just below them. It's quiet, in a pleasant way.

IRENE
This is a great view.

TRENT

Yeah, I, uhm, found this spot
freshmen year. I've never shown it
to anyone else.

IRENE

All the lights almost make it look
like a big city.

They definitely do not.

TRENT

You don't ever stay and watch the
game?

IRENE

No, I'm not really a football
person.

TRENT

Neither am I. But everyone is here.

IRENE

I think that makes it worse.

Trent laughs.

TRENT

Are you going to audition for the
play? I saw you looking at the
poster.

Irene is surprised he saw that.

IRENE

Well, I have to. For class. But I
won't get a part, I'm not very
good. I usually just do tech.

TRENT

You'll get a part. I got a good
feeling.

IRENE

Yeah, okay. Sure.

The crowd below goes wild.

TRENT

Shit they might really be state
champs this year, huh?

IRENE

I don't know. Seems like it.

TRENT

That's just what they need. A shiny trophy that'll go straight to their egos.

IRENE

What do you mean?

TRENT

Have you ever talked to the guys on the team? They're all idiots who are just gonna be washed up losers in a few years.

IRENE

Isn't that just a stereotype?

TRENT

It is, but only because its true. Okay. Think of it like this. You and I? Don't give a shit about football. Well neither do like 99 percent of the students down there.

IRENE

And?

TRENT

So. They're just here because its something to do. They don't care if we win or lose or whatever.

IRENE

But we're doing really good right now?

TRENT

Right but, all of these people would be here even if they didn't. Like, oh, like theater, okay?

IRENE

Okay?

TRENT

Most shows do shit unless there's good word of mouth. But sports fans will always return even if their last good season was decades ago.

IRENE

I guess that's true.

TRENT

Right? So, really the only people who care are on the field, vying for the affections of the crowd.

IRENE

I've never thought of it like that.

Trent looks at her.

TRENT

Sorry for just, talking your ear off.

Irene smiles back at him. A moment of anticipation.

IRENE

It's fine.

TRENT

I can't believe we've never done this before. How did I not notice you sooner?

IRENE

There's not much to notice.

TRENT

That's not true.

(then)

Can I kiss you?

IRENE

What?

TRENT

(stumbling)

I'd like to kiss you.

They look at each other.

IRENE

Yeah, okay.

Trent leans in slowly, they both reek of never been kissed. Trent gets close and misses, kissing her lower cheek/chin. She giggles nervously.

He goes in again and sticks the landing. The crowd begins to cheer, the Cardinals have won the game.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Irene and Elise walk down the hall carrying boxes full of costumes. Elise talks on not realizing Irene is in a daze. She's barely listening.

ELISE

LD debate is really more challenging because it's debating moral or societal questions.

Elise realizes Irene isn't present.

ELISE (CONT'D)

And the topic this month is: Flat Earth? Who says it has to be round?

IRENE

What?

ELISE

You okay? I'm usually a very engaging speaker.

IRENE

(scoffs)

Is that why you failed AP English?

ELISE

No I failed because I didn't study. Don't avoid the question.

IRENE

I'm fine.

Elise looks her over, she knows Irene is hiding something. A group of students rush past them. STUDENT 1 yells back.

STUDENT 1

There's a fight in the junior lot!

Irene and Elise share a glance, then follow suit.

EXT. JUNIOR LOT - DAY

A huge GROUP OF STUDENTS have formed a circle, making it almost impossible to see what's in the middle. They scream.

GROUP

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

Elise and Irene push their way to the middle.

ELISE

Excuse us! Move it!

Suddenly they see it: Trent. He stands in the center of the chaos but with no opponent in sight. Irene flushes at the sight of him.

GROUP

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

Trent hypes up the crowd, running around the circle giving high fives and playing into the energy. He loves it.

ELISE

This is so embarrassing.

IRENE

(unconvincingly)

Yeah, totally.

The crowd continues to chant, but other voices break in.

SENIOR BOY 1

Get on with it!

JUNIOR BOY 1

Where's the other guy?

The crowd gets rowdier every second. It doesn't look like the opponent will show. Trent attempts to continue the hype.

TRENT

Looks like Rudy Claymore is a
COWARD!

This doesn't please the crowd, they wanna see blood. Trent starts to sweat. Irene overhears some girls next to her.

SENIOR GIRL 1

SENIOR GIRL 2

He probably made this all up. It's kind of pathetic.

The crowd grumbles, slowly turning on Trent.

TRENT

I didn't make this up! Rudy just-

Trent panics.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Okay! You wanna see a fight? Then
who wants to fight me?

No takers. Trent looks around desperately for anything he can do to appease this crowd.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Okay. Uhm.

He makes eye contact with Irene. His expression changes.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Wait wait wait! It's not a fight
but-

The crowd stops.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Irene Kijek?

Irene's heart stops. All eyes move to her, Elise the most surprised of them all.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I think you're really amazing. Will
you be my girlfriend?

A few gasps from the crowd.

IRENE

Yeah.

A couple of people clap, but most disperse, gossiping. Elise, Irene, and Trent stand there frozen in a stare down.

Elise eyes Trent up and down before turning to Irene. She grabs her hand and drags her away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

ELISE

I don't think you've ever even
talked to Trent!

IRENE

Well we-

ELISE

And now he's your-ugh.

IRENE

I guess we sort of went on a date.
After the football game.

ELISE

You went on a date with Trent?
Trent Woods?

IRENE

And we kissed.

ELISE

You had your first kiss with Trent?
Trent Woods? Are we thinking of the
same guy?

Irene nods.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Jesus. Irene.

IRENE

I know he's kind of-

ELISE

Kind of an idiot? Continue.

IRENE

Maybe we were wrong. He's actually
really nice. He was really
attentive.

ELISE

He was probably-also-very attentive
when he was trying to date Kasey
Richards last week. Or Hannah the
week before. He's been prowling
around the underclassmen hunting
for a girlfriend.

IRENE

I feel like we really connected.

Elise takes a step back.

ELISE

Still. He didn't need to embarrass
you like that in front of everyone.
Dragging you into his idiotic
schemes.

IRENE

It was kind of sweet.

Irene shrugs.

ELISE

Sweet? Your first kiss. Your first
boyfriend. Trent fucking Woods.

Elise walks into the theatre. Irene stands alone and looks at a nearby crucifix. It seems like even Jesus is looking down and judging her.

INT. THEATER - DAY

A little later. Irene paints a section of the set. She looks over to Elise, who is furiously painting a bench. Will Roads passes behind Irene and stops.

WILL

That looks great. Jesus, like half the set is almost done.

IRENE

Oh. Thanks Will.

WILL

So Trent? Huh. I wouldn't have painted him as your type.

Will laughs and walks off. Irene flushes beet red.

ELISE

Why are you even here?

WILL

I'm just getting an idea of the ambiance of the set, you know, for my audition.

ELISE

You gonna help out?

WILL

Absolutely not. Not getting paid, not working.

Elise rolls her eyes. Will exits.

Irene looks back at Elise it seems her anger is subsiding. Ms. Kimble enters.

MS. KIMBLE

Elise! Our fearless student director, and Irene, thank you both so much for your help. *No More Boats* is a notoriously ambitious show.

IRENE

I love a good murder mystery.

MS. KIMBLE

Me too! And casting this will be
it's own murder mystery. Who will
be who? Are you girls excited?

IRENE

Mmhmm.

ELISE

Of course!

ELISE (CONT'D)

Is there anything else I can be
doing to help? I just want this
show to be killer.

MS. KIMBLE

And it will be! I know it's not as
flashy as other shows. Sadly,
there's not much to pick from.
You'll never see us doing Grease.
Too much teen pregnancy.

Ms. Kimble leaves. Irene looks over to Elise.

IRENE

Are you still mad at me?

ELISE

In theory.

IRENE

But in reality?

ELISE

No. Thanks for helping with all
this.

IRENE

I'd be at tech regardless if you
were our *fearless* leader.

ELISE

(scoffs)

I know most student directors don't
do much of anything, but I'm gonna
be different.

IRENE

It's gonna be great.

INT. KIJEK RESIDENCE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Irene sits with her parents at the dinner table. JOHN,
Irene's father and a man who reads as all business even with
his family, finishes is up his last bites.

Irene's mother, PENNY, a seemingly put together but undeniably sad woman, sits staring blankly at the her plate.

Irene sits across from them. She makes eye contact with her father and smiles, but the silence isn't broken.

INT. IRENE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Irene sits on her bed doing homework. The TV plays a different old romantic comedy. LOTTIE, the female lead, stands outside of a bar with FORD. Irene mouths along.

FORD

He's running from the law, we don't know what he's capable of!

Penny and John can be heard fighting in the background. We can't make out the words, only the sound of raised voices. Irene ignores it, pulling a play poster out of her notebook and staring at it.

LOTTIE

What they say about him isn't true. He's being framed!

FORD

You have to listen to me. He's dangerous Lottie.

LOTTIE

I'm going to help him.

Irene's phone buzzes. It's a number she doesn't recognize, but she picks up anyway.

IRENE

Hello?

TRENT

Hey, it's me, uh Trent. Your-your boyfriend?

INT. KIJEK RESIDENCE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Irene is shocked. She quickly moves into her bathroom and sits in the tub, thinking it'll give her more privacy.

TRENT (CON'T)

Wow that feels weird to say doesn't it? I realized I never asked for your number, but I got it from a friend. How are you?

IRENE

I'm good. It's nice to hear your voice.

TRENT

It's nice to hear yours too. I wanted to say I'm sorry about earlier I didn't mean to-

IRENE

It's fine. I didn't mind. I'm glad you asked.

TRENT

Okay. I-Uh-I'm not really sure what to say. I've never actually dated someone before.

IRENE

I don't know what I'm doing either. Unless you count the fake boyfriend I made up in middle school.

TRENT

(laughing)

I guess we can figure it out together.

IRENE

Okay. Yeah.

TRENT

I was actually wondering if maybe I could walk you to some of your classes tomorrow?

Irene tries to hide it, but she's delighted by this.

IRENE

Tomorrow? Cool, yeah, I'd like that.

TRENT

Awesome. I do have to warn you. I've been told I have sweaty hands.

Irene laughs, covering her mouth to mute the sound.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I'm serious! This is what you signed up for!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Irene walks to her locker, instead of pushing through the crowd, people make room for her, they even look her way. Waiting at her locker is Trent.

TRENT
Good morning!

IRENE
Hey.

They smile at one another, unsure what to do with themselves. Irene opens her locker and quickly grabs her things. A few people behind them take notice.

Irene closes her locker. Her and Trent lock eyes.

TRENT
You ready?

Irene nods. A moment of awkward anticipation. It's like all of her movies. Their fingers brush then, suddenly, he grabs her hand.

They walk down the hall together, catching glances from everyone else who passes. They both seem overjoyed.

INT. THEATRE CLASSROOM - DAY

Elise and Irene sit in the back the classroom. They fold and steam mid-century placemats and napkins.

ELISE
They need to be folded like this,
that would be period accurate-

IRENE
This is just for rehearsal no one
will see these.
(then)
You wanna hang out tonight?

ELISE
I can't, I have to pick up a shift
at Frosteez. After Jared got
stabbed last week I've really been
avoiding the night shifts.

Will, Otto, and a few theatre boys sit down. Irene looks at Will with the same affection despite her new boyfriend.

Ms. Kimble enters.

MS KIMBLE

Today I want to go through proper audition etiquette. After you're going to practice your monologues with a partner of your choice.

Irene and Elise give each other a knowing look.

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Groups are spread around the theatre. Irene and Elise are in the back corner of the stage, Ms. Kimble passes by.

IRENE

...what the significance of the stars were, like I would somehow know the answer-

Elise signals that the coast is clear.

IRENE (CONT'D)

He called me last night.

ELISE

Who?

IRENE

Trent.

ELISE

Oh yeah, Trent.

IRENE

I don't see why you dislike him so much.

ELISE

The only thing we've ever done is make fun of the guy.

IRENE

He's been nice to me. I like being around him.

ELISE

Okay, I get that but I-

Ms. Kimble passes them again.

ELISE (CONT'D)

-I'm not convinced by that ending. It seemed a little forced, you just need to let it flow more naturally-

The coast clears.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Ugh, Look. I'm not trying to be an asshole. I know this is a big deal for you.

IRENE

Maybe you could try to get to know him better?

ELISE

I sure can try.

IRENE

That's all I ask!

ELISE

But I will beat him up. Like if he does anything stupid I will kill him.

IRENE

Elise!

ELISE

I'm not joking. I will find him and make a very specific, Jigsaw approved trap just to teach him how he messed up.

IRENE

We just started dating, it's not that deep.

ELISE

Good. Now, I actually do think the second half of your monologue could use some work and we should run it a few more times.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

School is over. Students crowd the small entrance. Irene digs through her purse for car keys, Elise stands with her. Irene spots Trent hanging out with four popular senior boys.

IVAN, a shit-stirrer. EMMETT, a complete goofball. JUSTIN, too handsome to ignore. KIM, their drug dealer.

Trent spots her and waves them over.

ELISE
You're being summoned.

IRENE
Actually we're being summoned

Irene links arms with Elise.

ELISE
I didn't mean today.

Elise gives in and they walk over.

TRENT
Irene! Elise. You know the guys
right?

IVAN
Of course, we've all known each
other since 1st grade.

EMMETT
Yeah, we're not South Middle kids
like you. Saint Mary's all the way.

IVAN
How are you two doing?

Fine. ELISE IRENE
Good. You know, same old same
old.

EMMETT
Can't be too similar, now that
you're chained to this guy!

ELISE
(scoffs)
Chained. That's a good one.

Irene gives her a look.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Trent. How are you?

TRENT
Good. I probably failed my algebra
test, but it could be worse.

He looks at Irene. They share a moment. Elise warms up.

ELISE

Mr. Kessler's practically asleep while he's teaching, so I don't blame you.

Trent laughs, Irene is delighted.

EMMETT

Lets cut to the juicy stuff. Is Trent a good kisser?

IRENE

Yeah, I guess so.

TRENT

You guess? She's just playing it cool.

IVAN

I wouldn't be so sure.

IRENE

I don't have much frame of reference.

JUSTIN

Kissing's easy. The wetter the better.

This confuses everyone. Trent spots Alexis in the distance and tries to change the topic.

TRENT

Guys-guys, Alexis.

IVAN

God, anyone but her.

IRENE

What's wrong with Alexis?

IVAN (CONT'D)

She's just the worst.

EMMETT

She sucks the fun out of everything. She threatened to report Kim selling pot.

KIM

She had no proof.

IVAN

Who's the boy of the week this week?

Running to catch up with Alexis is Darren

IRENE

Darren?

EMMETT
(laughing)
Yeah I don't think Darren exactly
swings that way.

All the boys laugh. Irene cracks a smile.

ELISE
Does that matter?

The laughing putters out.

EMMETT
It's just a joke.

ELISE
Sure it is.

IRENE
They're probably only friends so
they can swap boy stories.

Elise looks at her in disbelief. The boys laugh, pleasing Irene.

IVAN
Brutal. God. I would just love
karma to slap her in the face.

Trent springs up.

TRENT
Watch this.

He walks over to Alexis, who is less than pleased to see him. The group can't hear what they're saying, but Trent's posture is aggressive, leaning forward with a smirk.

Irene watches as the whole courtyard turns to look at Trent. She admires it, impressed by him. Behind her Elise is less than pleased.

The boys watch Trent like it's their favorite TV show.

EMMETT
God damn.

IVAN
I can't believe he just does
shit like this unprovoked.
It's incredible.

Whatever Trent says pisses Alexis off. She slaps him and walks away.

ALEXIS
 (yelled)
 Don't talk to me!

Trent turns to the boys with a smile and a red cheek.

ELISE
 (whispered)
 You can't seriously think that was okay.

IRENE
 (whispered)
 Alexis kind of sucks, we've never liked her.

ELISE
 (whispered)
 Yeah and?

Trent returns to the group, to applause. Elise quiets down.

IVAN
 Good work fine sir.

TRENT
 Why thank you.

EMMETT
 What did you say?

TRENT
 Well, I told her if she thinks she can rat out Kim then I'll tell everyone just how dirty she is.

EMMETT/IVAN/KIM/JUSTIN
 Ooooh.

TRENT
 And I called her a bitch.

EMMETT/IVAN/KIM/JUSTIN
 Yeah!/Hell Yeah!/Cool./Nice!

Irene is swept up in the hype and admiration. Elise pulls her aside.

ELISE
 I'm heading out, and you know what, this has changed my mind. He's worse than I thought.

IRENE

Oh, come on, they're just messing around.

ELISE

Irene. Take a second and think about it. You're in too deep.

Elise pats her on the back, and leaves.

IVAN

You wanna come smoke with us?

TRENT

I think I'll stay here with Irene. Maybe next time.

EMMETT

IVAN

For sure, catch you tomorrow. Bye Irene.

She waves as they leave. Trent can't stop smiling.

IRENE

Did you really say that to her?

TRENT

God no. Between you and me, I just asked her to slap me. It worked didn't it?

IRENE

How do you do it?

TRENT

Do what?

IRENE

All those people looking at you. Doesn't it make you nervous?

TRENT

Just means they'll remember me, right?

Trent smiles at her. She nods and smiles back.

IRENE

What if they make fun of you?

TRENT

Can't make fun of me if I'm already making fun of myself. You wanna hang out till my mom gets here?

IRENE

Sure.

Trent gestures and the two start walking around the school.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - CONTINUOUS

IRENE

Do you get along?

TRENT

With my mom?

IRENE

Yeah?

TRENT

I guess so. She can be really overbearing. She monitors like every part of my life. I can't slip anything past her.

IRENE

That's kind of sweet.

TRENT

Trust me, once she starts interrogating you, it isn't so sweet anymore. Don't tell the guys, but I've never actually smoked pot. She'd kill me.

(then)

What-uh-what about your parents?

IRENE

They're fine. We don't really talk. About much.

TRENT

Yeah?

IRENE

Yeah. It's always been that way. I remember in grade school I used to go over to Jess Albright's house a lot. Her mom was so nice, she always took a lot of stock in what Jess had to say. I remember thinking "I can't wait till my parents and I are that close."

Trent gives her a sympathetic smile. Irene flushes realizing she may have overshared.

IRENE (CONT'D)
Its really fine. It means I
basically can do whatever.

TRENT
Oh man, I wish. I'd be tearing up
this town.

IRENE
I suppose I should abuse the power
more.
(then)
There was this one night when I was
like 12, I snuck out of my window
and walked to a nearby park.

TRENT
And what'd you do?

IRENE
I just sat on the swings and looked
up at the stars. I got kind of
scared and started crying, so I
went back home.

They turn a corner and the two are nearly alone.

IRENE (CONT'D)
Why were you and Rudy gonna fight
the other day?

TRENT
Rudy's always thought he was better
than me. He used to bully me in
middle school.

IRENE
I'm sorry.

TRENT
It's whatever. Lots of people used
to bully me, it's why I moved
schools. Anyway, I heard he had
made some comments about me, so I
told him to prove himself. To fight
me. Guess he's all talk.

IRENE
What'd he say about you?

TRENT
It's nothing.

IRENE

You don't have to tell me.

TRENT

No it's-He was calling me an attention seeker. Telling people old stories. High school was almost a clean slate except for that idiot. I didn't want him to ruin the way people see me.

IRENE

Does it really matter?

TRENT

What?

IRENE

What people think about you?

TRENT

Of course it does. I won't go back to being the kid people think they can pick on.

IRENE

I think you're cool.

A car pulls up next to them. Alexis is in the passenger seat. She flips Trent off.

ALEXIS

GET A LIFE LOSER!

They speed off. Irene is shocked but Trent just laughs, pulling out his phone.

TRENT

Oh my god, the guys are going to love this.

IRENE

She seemed really upset.

TRENT

I'd hope so, she sucks.

Trent giggles at his own text. Irene wrinkles up her face in thought.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Uh, right! Since we're talking about the fight I wanted, or I've been meaning to tell you that I really meant what I said there. You know. I wasn't just-I like you. I like you a lot.

The hopeless romantic in her can't help but swoon.

IRENE

I like you too.

They kiss, it's less awkward this time.

TRENT

I didn't miss.

Trent spots his mom's car in the distance.

TRENT (CONT'D)

My mom's here. I should go before she spots you. See ya tomorrow!

Trent walks away. Irene smiles ear to ear. She's all in.

INT. IRENE'S CAR - MORNING

Some time has passed, fall colors filling the trees. The parking lot is buzzing. Irene is running late, but doesn't seem concerned. She pulls into the parking lot.

She unfolds a paper sitting on her lap. It has her audition monologue sprawled on it. She pauses, trying to remember, then writes the last words. She's nervous.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD PARKING LOT - MORNING

Irene hops out of her car and walks over to Trent, who is talking to Kim and Emmett.

KIM

Seriously?-

EMMETT

Dude holy shit-

Kim and Emmett spot Irene and stop talking, suppressing laughter.

IRENE

Good morning!

The boys leave. Trent faces Irene, but keeps looking back at his friends.

TRENT
Hey. What's up?

IRENE
I have my audition today. I'm
pretty nervous.

TRENT
You're gonna do great. Don't even
worry about it.

Irene relaxes slightly. Trent seems only half into the conversation.

IRENE
Did something happen-

Darren yells from across the lot.

DARREN
Irene! We need you stat! It's an
emergency!

He fans himself with his sheet music.

IRENE
I gotta go.

Trent waves weakly and walks back to his friends. Irene shakes off the feeling as she joins Darren.

DARREN
Irene, good. Walk and talk.

The pair walk from the parking lot to the football field.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Look, I know this may be shocking,
but I just learned that Clarissa
doesn't clean her clarinet after
every practice.

IRENE
What?

DARREN
What about that-wait-where's your
instrument?

Irene holds up the case in her hand.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Oh my god, you haven't even put it
together yet.

IRENE
I just got here.

DARREN
One thing at a time, can you imagine the amount of gunk in her instrument? It has to be affecting our sound.

IRENE
What do you want me to do about it?

DARREN
I don't know where you are this morning, I know it's Monday, but talk to me when your brain fog has passed and you're ready for this team.

Darren walks off. SEVERAL BAND MEMBERS on the field turn to look at Irene. She looks away. Her gaze fades back to Trent who is laughing loudly in the parking lot.

A whistle blows. Irene snaps back and looks down at her case.

IRENE
Shit.

She kneels on the ground and puts her instrument together as quickly as possible, students watch her as they pass.

INT. HISTORY CLASSROOM - DAY

Irene tunes out the teacher, instead practicing her monologue over and over. Next to her, Hailey and MORGAN gossip. One of them lets out a laugh that's a little too loud. Are they laughing at her?

No. They can't be. Stupid. Irene's audition anxiety must be getting to her. She looks around the classroom.

Are people looking at her? Is that in her head?

Oh right. The monologue. She has to practice the monologue.

INT. THEATRE HOLDING ENTRANCE - DAY

Irene, Will, and a few THEATRE STUDENTS wait outside the theatre to audition during class.

Irene sits against a wall nervously playing with her sweater. She is completely in her own world.

Ms. Kimble opens the door. Panic.

MS. KIMBLE

Jeanne?

Relief. JEANNE gets up and follows Ms. Kimble.

The door closes. It's eerily quiet.

WILL

You, uh, have a good weekend?

Irene is almost too nervous to even pay him mind.

IRENE

It was fine.

WILL

Yeah I bet it was.

Will smiles to himself, Irene isn't sure what he's getting at.

They sit in silence. Will giving her the occasional look.

Ms. Kimble opens the door again. Panic.

MS. KIMBLE

Irene?

Irene gets up and slowly moves towards the door.

WILL

Break a leg.

Irene smiles weakly back.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Irene walks down an empty hallway, beating herself up. Her audition didn't go as well as she'd like.

IRENE

(muttering)

Stupid, stupid.

The bell rings and students flood out of the classrooms around her. As people pass they stare at her. She hears fractions of gossip.

STUDENT 2

Did you hear that she-

STUDENT 3

Well I heard-

STUDENT 4
Oh god, she would-

STUDENT 5
That's so dirty-

Irene pushes past them all, her eyes on her shoes. Surely it was all in her head? They weren't talking about her?

She looks up and spots Trent. A sight for sore eyes. She practically runs to him.

IRENE
Trent!

TRENT
(Surprised)
Oh hey.

They walk together to Trent's locker.

IRENE
Is something going on today?

TRENT
What do you mean?

IRENE
I don't know it just seems like-
have you heard anything?

TRENT
About what?

IRENE
Me? I guess?

TRENT
No.

He barely makes eye contact as they talk.

IRENE
Okay. You would tell me if-

TRENT
Yes, I would tell you I'd heard
anything.

They reach his locker. Irene notices every glare from people walking pass. Trent talks to MICHELLE, a popular senior, who's locker is next to his.

TRENT (CONT'D)
Hey how'd you do on Holdstein's
test?

MICHELLE

Great thanks to that Adderall you gave me.

TRENT

Anytime.

Michelle smirks and walks away. Trent stares at her in a way he's never quite looked at Irene. She notices.

The bell rings.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Shit. See ya.

Irene stands alone, more confused than ever.

INT. LUNCH ROOM - DAY

Irene holds a tray of food, waiting in line to pay for her lunch. She anxiously bites the insides of her cheeks.

Behind her, TWO UNDERCLASSMEN whisper and laugh. Irene can't help but feel that they are talking about her.

Psst, Psst, Psst. The sound feels like hot lava on her neck. She bares it for as long as she can until-

IRENE

Can you please stop.

STUDENT 6

What?

IRENE

Stop talking about me.

STUDENT 6

We aren't talking about you.

STUDENT 7

I don't even know who you are.

They both look at her with an intense glare. She meekly turns back around.

IRENE

Sorry.

Psst. Psst. Psst. If they weren't talking about her before they definitely are now.

A few moments later Irene sits down at a lunch table, on the other side are a few THEATRE KIDS.

Irene stares pensively at her food, before looking around the cafeteria. She catches several eyes on her. Elise sits down.

IRENE (CONT'D)
Oh thank god.

ELISE
Are you okay?

IRENE
I don't know. It feels like everyone is looking at me.

ELISE
Small school, word gets around fast.

IRENE
Word of what?

ELISE
No one's told you?

IRENE
No, Elise, out with it!

ELISE
Oh god-okay there's this rumor going around that you gave Trent head.

IRENE
What?

ELISE
That you gave him a blowjob. And in fancier accounts that you swallowed.

IRENE
I don't even know what that means.

ELISE
Seriously? Okay-that's probably a problem for another day.

Irene looks over at Trent's table.

IRENE
I didn't do that.

ELISE
I know you didn't.

IRENE
Why would someone say that?

ELISE
Someone?

IRENE
I don't know. Who would make something like that up?

ELISE
Think about it.

Irene looks at Trent's table again. He seems to be the center of attention. A MALE STUDENT passes giving him a high five.

IRENE
He wouldn't.

ELISE
I don't know who you're talking about, but him? Yeah he definitely would.

Irene scans the lunch room for any other possible offenders. She spots RUDY CLAYMORE.

IRENE
Maybe it was Rudy?

ELISE
Rudy Claymore? Uh, no. It doesn't really seem up his alley.

IRENE
But he has that beef with Trent.

ELISE
And? If we were detectives I would've solved the case by now.

Irene looks back at Trent.

IRENE
That's not funny. I'm sure this is just some misunderstanding. I just need to talk to him.

ELISE
You should go over there and tell him off.

Irene surveys the busy lunchroom. Several eyes still on her.

IRENE

I-I can't do that.

ELISE

You can't just let people treat you like this.

IRENE

I really don't need the extra attention right now. I'd just say something stupid.

ELISE

Fine. God the people here are so lame. BJ's shouldn't even be news.

IRENE

I feel like I'm going to be sick. I'm gonna be known as the blowjob girl.

(then)

Oh god.

ELISE

What?

IRENE

Will heard it. He said something earlier that didn't make sense but now...he's gonna think I'm a slut.

ELISE

Will is probably going to die alone, we have bigger fish to fry right now.

Irene stares at Trent. Michelle sits down next to him. They smile and chat. Irene feels like she's going to explode.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Okay, I wasn't joking earlier. I will remove Trent's lower ribs and make him suck his own dick.

IRENE

I don't believe he would do this.

Elise looks over her shoulder and sees what Irene is looking at. Trent finally takes notice. When he sees Elise's grimace he quickly looks away.

ELISE

You have to ask him.

IRENE

Yeah. There has to be some other explanation.

Michaela Wadzinski 2024