

# VYING FOR AFFECTIONS



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Written By

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INT. HOPE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Iowa. 2014.

Low quality video footage. The voice of WILL ROADS rings out from behind the camera as he conducts interviews of his fellow CLASSMATES, almost all in catholic school uniform.

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.

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 fellow 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 and kind of a jerk, 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.*

She hobbles 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 digs through her closet.

MARGARET

I have to go Harry. I'm sorry.

HARRY

I don't understand, please!

Margaret stops, and turns to Harry.

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 nothing, I'm going to be  
somebody.

HARRY

Let me 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 (O.S.)

Irene?

IRENE

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

ELISE (O.S.)

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 cash.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Be warned. Its a madhouse in here.

Elise hands Irene her change. Without looking, Irene pulls forward, nearly hitting Trent Woods who jumps in front of her car.

TRENT

Oh shit!

He laughs, a GROUP OF BOYS further in the parking lot cheering him on. Trent runs to catch up to them, barely even looking at Irene.

She's annoyed, but pulls forward and parks her car.

EXT. FROSTEEZ - EVENING

Irene exits. Another car passes. She realizes Will Roads (the voice from earlier) (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 still 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 waves at a table of students, but they don't seem to see her.

She 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 and 3 MORE STUDENTS replace him. Elise  
locks eyes with Irene and makes a look as if to say "Kill  
me."

Irene pushes 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-

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

INT. FROSTEEZ - GIRL'S RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

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

She 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 by Kevin-

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.

Elise notices her stained pants.

ELISE (CONT'D)

What happened? Jesus. Does everyone here suck? Take my apron.

Elise 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. It's obnoxious.

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 after 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. You care to explain?

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

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

IRENE  
Like what?

ELISE

Like the fact that 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  
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 have 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)

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, these 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 and sees another play poster. She stares at it with quiet determination.

Her thoughts are interrupted when-

DARREN

Irene! Good, you're dressed.

DARREN(17M), the most enthusiastic first chair clarinet to ever exist, stands behind her.

IRENE

(Unenthusiastic)

Hi Darren.

Together they walk to join the rest of the band.

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? 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 more  
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.

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

Wow.

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

(surprised)

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 idiots and they're all 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 weren't. Like, oh, like theater, okay?

IRENE

Okay?

TRENT

Most shows do shit unless there's good word of mouth.

(MORE)

TRENT (CONT'D)

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-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 into the crowd.

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 uh, well-

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 shrugs. She kind of liked it.

ELISE (CONT'D)

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 sanding 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 or not.

ELISE

(scoffs)

I know most student directors don't  
do much of anything, but this is  
gonna be a good show.

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, stares 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 gonna 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 and instead of pushing through the crowd, people make room for her, they even look her way. Trent waits for her.

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. People continue to take notice of the odd couple.

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. Both are beaming.

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

Okay class, today we're going to go through proper audition etiquette. After which, 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  
When I said I'd try, I didn't mean today.

Irene pouts. Elise gives in and they walk over.

TRENT  
Irene! Elise. You know the guys right?

IVAN  
Obviously, we've all known each other since we were practically in diapers.

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

IVAN  
How 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)  
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.  
(in a silly voice)  
Huh, gay!

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  
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'd be happy  
to air out all of her dirty  
laundry.

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

Well, 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. Irene is running late, but doesn't seem concerned. She pulls into the football field parking lot and parks.

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

The parking lot is buzzing. 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  
(disinterested)  
You're gonna do great. Don't even worry about it.

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 quietly 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 gross-

Irene pushes past them all, her eyes on her shoes. Surely it's all in her head? They aren'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

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'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

I will, I will. There has to be some other explanation.

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - DAY

Irene, Kevin, Otto, and Jeanne sit in a group working on their chemistry homework.

Irene stares intensely at a question, confused and completely in her head.

KEVIN

(reading)

*What is the balanced equation for this transformation?*

JEANNE

I think it should be this?

Jeanne puts her piece of paper in the center of the table.

OTTO

Looks close enough to me.

KEVIN

Yeah sure, whatever.

They copy the answer onto their worksheets.

OTTO (CONT'D)

Irene?

IRENE

Yeah?

OTTO

You gonna write down the answer?

She nods.

OTTO (CONT'D)

How'd your audition go? I think I nailed it.

IRENE

Uhm, okay, it could've been better.

JEANNE

Mine went great, thanks for asking.

KEVIN

Irene was probably a little distracted.

He lets out a giggle. Irene tries to ignore it. Kevin jabs Jeanne in the shoulder.

JEANNE

Is it true?

IRENE

What? I don't know you solved the equation.

OTTO

Seriously? Guys-

KEVIN

Is it true? Did you...you know?

Irene stares at them in disbelief.

IRENE

No I did not.

KEVIN

I mean you wouldn't tell us even if you did though, would you?

IRENE

What? I-

JEANNE

You two like just started dating right?

IRENE

It's been a couple weeks.

JEANNE

Like two.

IRENE

That's a couple.

OTTO

Guys, it's probably none of our business.

He smiles, pitying her. Somehow that's even worse.

IRENE  
Who told you?

They all shrug.

JEANNE  
Everyone's talking about it.

IRENE  
Well it's not true.  
(then)  
And I'm sure if you asked Trent  
he'd say the same thing!

Irene raises her hand.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Can I use the restroom?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Irene walks through the dead halls, appreciating the quiet.  
She takes a moment to just breathe.

She looks up at a cross. Even when she's alone, Jesus is  
still staring down, judging her.

Will appears around the corner, taking her off guard.

WILL  
Oh. Hey. Were you also sneaking  
away to catch a look at the cast  
list?

IRENE  
You caught me.

WILL  
You okay?

IRENE  
(sarcastic)  
Yeah. I'm great.  
(then)  
How did your audition go?

They start walking together.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
You're a shoo-in for General  
Penderson.

WILL  
You think?

IRENE  
Ms. Kimble loves you, and it's  
right up your alley. Plus you get  
the lead like, every year.

WILL  
I hope so.  
(then)  
How was yours?

Irene shrugs. Will wants to say something, but avoids it.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Do you remember that assignment we  
had to do in middle school?

IRENE  
Which one?

WILL  
The video one. It was me, you and

Kevin. WILL (CONT'D) IRENE  
Kevin.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Yeah. *Mini Reporters on the Scene*.  
Possibly the worst thing I've ever  
had to do. Thanks for reminding me.

WILL  
Your acting was pretty good in  
that.

IRENE  
Yeah okay, acting is a strong word.

WILL  
Well to be fair, you did have a  
great director.

IRENE  
Great? Wow, didn't know we won an  
Oscar for it.

WILL  
(laughing)  
We got an A, so from Henderson that  
might as well be an Oscar.

IRENE

Is that where you're gonna be in 10 years? The Oscars?

WILL

God. I just want to finish that video in peace. No one's taking the interviews seriously.

IRENE

Maybe it's because you're giving them?

WILL

What? Am I not a serious person?

Irene just laughs.

WILL (CONT'D)

Well you better show up for your interview, don't make me hunt you down Kijek.

They arrive at the cast list.

IRENE

Good luck.

WILL

You too.

They look it over. Will is cast as *General Penderson*, of course.

IRENE

Congrats!

Down the list Elise is cast as *Ms. Kingston*. Irene is pleased for her.

WILL

Oh shit, you're on here too.

Irene does a second take and sees her name for *Darlene*.

IRENE

Darlene?

(muttering)

The quiet one?

WILL

Congrats!

IRENE

Thanks.

In the excitement of the moment, Will brings her in for a side hug. She turns to jelly, her stomach filling with butterflies.

He realizes what he's doing, pats her on the shoulder, and awkwardly disengaging from the hug.

WILL

See you at rehearsal.

He walks away, Irene watches him, her face completely flushed.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LOBBY - DAY

The last bell rings. School is over.

Irene holds her play script. She hugs the book to her chest, beaming. The bad of the day having almost faded away until-

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

She sees Trent across the way chatting to Ivan and Emmett.

Irene considers going home, but she gets up the courage and walks over.

TRENT

If you just slip the notes into the pen, Ms. Nelson will never notice-

IVAN

Sup Irene.

Trent turns around to face her.

TRENT

Oh hey.

IRENE

Can I talk to you?

TRENT

Sure.

He stands still.

IRENE

Just the two of us?

TRENT  
Right, right.

They walk to a slightly more secluded area.

TRENT (CONT'D)  
What's up?

IRENE  
Have you heard what people are  
saying?

Irene is timid in her approach. Trent tries to play it cool.

TRENT  
I mean, yeah, I might've heard  
something.

IRENE  
Okay. Well earlier you said you had  
no idea what was going on, but it  
seems like maybe you might've, I  
dunno, started it?

SEVERAL STUDENTS stare at them. Irene tries to ignore it.

TRENT  
No. God. Why would you think that?

IRENE  
I-It just seems like one of us is  
getting the worst of it.

TRENT  
Irene, I promise I didn't start  
this shit. People are just being  
nosy, they gossip, it's doesn't  
mean anything.

IRENE  
But did you tell people it wasn't  
true?

TRENT  
What?

IRENE  
Have you been telling people it's  
fake?

TRENT  
Yes, yeah, of course I have!  
(then)  
Why is this bothering you so much?  
(MORE)

TRENT (CONT'D)

It's not a big deal. Does it really matter what other people think?

IRENE

Yes. Everyone is saying terrible things about me.

TRENT

Like what?

Irene gives him a look as if to say "seriously?"

IRENE

They've all been looking at me, talking behind my back, and I almost flunked my audition because Will thought it would be funny to rub it in.

TRENT

Will's a dipshit.

IRENE

No, he's not.

Trent gives her a knowing look.

TRENT

Look I'm sorry this all happened but it wasn't me. I wouldn't do something like that to you.

(then)

You're really special to me. I don't wanna mess this up.

IRENE

Yeah?

TRENT

Of course! I'm honestly surprised you think I could do something like that.

IRENE

Well Elise said-

TRENT

Elise is wrong. I hate that you spent all day thinking I did this.

IRENE

I'm sorry.

TRENT

I don't know what I'm doing. I really don't want to be a bad boyfriend.

IRENE

You aren't.

TRENT

Yeah?

IRENE

Yeah, I promise.

A beat. Trent tries to change the topic.

TRENT

So, you *almost* flunked your audition?

Irene smiles, pulling the script from behind her back.

IRENE

I got a part!

TRENT

Holy shit. That's amazing.

IRENE

I honestly don't think I could've done it without you.

Trent looks her deeply in the eyes.

TRENT

I love you.

Irene's eyes shoot wide at these words.

IRENE

I-I love you too.

He brings her in close, her grip tightens. Onlookers stare.

INT. KIJEK RESIDENCE - OFFICE - DAY

Irene enters.

IRENE

Mom?

She sees some money and a post it note reading *For dinner. Love, Mom.* A corner of a shiny photo buried underneath a stack of papers catches her eyes.

She grabs it. It's an old high school photo of her parents. They look so young. They look so happy.

Under the photo is a letter. It reads *I'm so lucky to have found someone as special as you.*

The sound of footsteps. John Kijek appears in the doorway.

JOHN

Oh hey sweetheart, I'm just about to head out. You know your mom would kill you if she saw you snooping around in here.

IRENE

She left me some money for dinner and I-I've never seen this one before.

John grabs the photo from her.

JOHN

Oh gosh, that hair. I barely remember this myself.

Irene opens her mouth to speak but isn't sure exactly what to say. John hands the photo back to her.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I won't see you till late. Don't get into any trouble.

He leaves.

Irene's shoulders swoop. She grabs her phone, snaps photos of both items, puts them back, and leaves.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Irene opens her locker to a strange book titled "Romance, Sex, and Jesus: Living the pure way."

She opens it cautiously. On the first page someone has written: "I thought you could use this. Amen. :)"

Mortified. She hides the book against her chest, and rushes down the hall.

INT. GIRLS RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Irene throws the book in the trash. She splashes her face with water. Someone enters.

ALEXIS  
Oh. It's you.

Alexis plops a makeup bag down. Her eyes look red.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)  
We keep meeting like this.

Irene smiles politely back. Alexis throws away some eyeliner and spots the book. She picks it up.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)  
Yours?

IRENE  
No. I've never seen that before.

ALEXIS  
I know what they've been saying about you.

IRENE  
I don't know-

ALEXIS  
I've gotten one of these before.  
Ms. Lawrence likes to give them to the *troubled* girls.

She throws it back in the trash.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)  
Trust me it only gets worse from here.

IRENE  
What do you mean?

Alexis looks at her with pity, she considers.

ALEXIS  
Come here.

Irene moves closer. Alexis grabs her concealer and uses it under Irene's eyes. She blends it out with her finger.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)  
Don't let them see that they've upset you.

(MORE)

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Only makes them want to do it more.

(then)

I'm not always good at taking my own advice.

Alexis turns her towards the mirror.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Makes you look fresh and new. Even if you don't feel like it.

Alexis starts to do the same under her own eyes.

IRENE

Thanks. I don't know how you deal with it.

ALEXIS

I'm gonna graduate this year, and then I'm going as far away as possible. I'm not gonna let these people define who I am.

IRENE

What if they do?

ALEXIS

They can't. Not if you don't let them.

A beat.

IRENE

I really need to get to rehearsal.

ALEXIS

Watch your back. You're probably the only one who will.

Irene leaves.