

VYING FOR AFFECTIONS

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 as he conducts interviews of his fellow classmates. The classroom is buzzing with end of the week energy and 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.

OTTO

Are you kidding? It's going to be a piece of cake. Blue Jays don't stand a chance.

WILL

(Laughs) Okay man. Where you gonna be in 10 years?

OTTO

Ten years?

WILL

Yeah.

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.

HAILEY

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

WILL

Okay, 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, 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 there avoiding eye contact with the camera, just staring at the clock.

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

KEVIN

Jesus. Where won't I be?

WILL

Whatta mean?

KEVIN

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

WILL

I already am.

They laugh.

INT. KIJEK RESIDENCE MUD ROOM - DAY

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

IRENE

Mom?

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 her room. It's a cornucopia of old romantic movie posters.

She turns on a small TV, and a black and white film plays. MARGARET, the female lead of the film, stands at a train station.

MARGARET

I should've thought he'd be here by now.

Irene energetically acts along with the scene. She knows every word. As she does she looks through her closet trying to pick out an outfit for tonight.

Margaret walks slowly away from the station but HARRY, the male lead, runs after her.

HARRY

Margaret! Wait! Please!

They run into each other's arms.

MARGARET

I thought you'd left for good.

HARRY

I would never leave without you.

MARGARET

Oh, but can't you see this won't work?

HARRY

Don't say that.

MARGARET

It's true. We're from two different worlds.

HARRY

None of that matters. Nothing can change the way I feel about you.

MARGARET

Oh, Harry.

HARRY
Come with me.

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 Froztee's, a local fast food chain. She taps along to the music playing in her car.

She pulls up to the ordering machine.

IRENE
Hi, uh, can I get a number-

FROSTY'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 a loudmouth, opens the window.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Do you have time before the game?
If I take my break now we can eat together.

IRENE
Absolutely.

ELISE
Yes! (Changing tone) Okay, miss.
That'll be \$5.50. I gave you a little discount.

Irene hands Elise some cash.

IRENE
Why thank you kind sir.

They giggle.

ELISE

See you up front in a sec. I'll
bring the goods.

Irene pulls around the building. As she does, Trent Woods jumps in front of her car. She nearly hits him.

TRENT

Oh shit.

He starts to laugh and the sound gets amplified as a GROUP OF BOYS appear from behind the building. Trent runs to catch up to them, barely paying Irene mind.

She seems annoyed.

Finally, she parks her car.

EXT. FROSTEEZ'S PARKING LOT - EVENING

Irene exits. Another car passes by her slowly, blasting a fun tune. Much to her surprise she realizes Will Roads (16M), junior, not conventionally attractive but incredibly charismatic, is in the car.

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'S - EVENING

Irene sits down at a table. Elise quickly follows suit carrying both of their meals.

ELISE

Did you just almost hit Trent Woods
with your car?

IRENE

More like he almost hit my car...with
his body.

Elise turns her attention to Trent and the group of boys who are still messing around in the parking lot.

ELISE

Oh god, even outside of school he's
still like this. I wonder if I can
call the police on them for
loitering?

IRENE

Who cares. I wish you could save me from marching band tonight. I don't know why we have to play every game, its not like anyone watches us.

ELISE

Aw, but I've heard the band is pretty good this year.

IRENE

Mr. Jennings seems to think so. But a band of 40 or so people doesn't quite have the wow factor. (Beat) Did you see Will?

ELISE

We are not talking about Will. That boy ordered three cheeseburgers and a chicken sandwich. You do not want to date a boy who orders three cheeseburgers and a chicken sandwich. Where are the fries?

IRENE

Jesus.

A GROUP OF TEENAGERS they know enter.

ELISE

Hey!

GROUP

Hey!/What's up/How's it going?

Irene shrivels into herself but manages a wave.

ELISE

Frosteez's Friday nights are the worst. I leave school just to see every single person we know. It's hell. It's a never ending hell.

IRENE

Where else is there to go?

ELISE

Touché.

Irene's focus shifts back to Trent and the group of boys.

IRENE

Did you hear Hailey and Jon got in trouble for doing some serious PDA during mass this morning?

ELISE

In Mass? Seriously? We get it, you've been dating since middle school.

IRENE

Come on, it's cute.

ELISE

I don't know. I hope in ten years when they're married they still find one another attractive despite the fact that they've literally never kissed anyone else.

IRENE

Pssh. Just let them be happy. It's not hurting you.

ELISE

I'm not so sure about that.

Otto, dressed for the football game, enters.

OTTO

Johnson, nice uniform.

ELISE

Looks better than yours.

OTTO

(Annoyed)

You really think you're so funny.

ELISE

I do, yes. Thank you.

He goes to order.

ELISE (CONT'D)

You wanna hang out after the game?

IRENE

No, I think I'll be pretty wiped. I'll probably just watch a movie or two. You know me.

ELISE

Okay. But don't watch anything too good without me.

IRENE

Oh I wont watch anything good. Like, maybe, I don't know, maybe I'll check out all 6 hours of The BBC's Pride and Prejudice?

ELISE

Don't you dare! You cannot watch it without me.

IRENE

I don't know, it sounds pretty good.

ELISE

I will end you. I need to see your face when they reveal Mr. Darcy. (British Accent) "And you sir? Are you fond of dancing?"

She turns to Irene dramatically, mimicking the show. They laugh.

EXT. FROSTY'S PARKING LOT - EVENING

Irene exits, giving Elise a last wave. As she walks to her car a voice stops her.

TRENT

Hey, Irene?

Everything about Trent seems different than the boy we saw before. He seems almost nervous.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Thanks for expertly avoiding my body earlier.

IRENE

No problem.

She tries to continue on her way.

TRENT

Hey, are you heading to band warm up right now?

IRENE

Yeah.

TRENT

Do you think you could give me a ride? Guys kind of ditched me.

She looks at him. Considering.

IRENE

Sure.

INT. IRENE'S CAR - EVENING

Irene and Trent sit in awkward silence. Trent thinks of whatever he can to break it.

TRENT

This is a nice car.

IRENE

Thanks.

TRENT

I wish I had a car like this. I share the family one with my mom.

IRENE

Oh. How do you get home from school?

TRENT

She picks me up. Eventually. I've been saving up to buy a used car though. I'm so sick of catching rides.

IRENE

I can imagine.

Beat.

TRENT

Are you, uh, going on the band trip?

IRENE

No, I don't think so.

TRENT

What? You have to go! We miss two days of school and we're going to six flags!

Irene shakes her head negatively.

IRENE

I-

TRENT

We need you, were going to be all brass without you!

IRENE

(Laughs) I'm sure Darren is going.

TRENT

Oh we couldn't convince him not to go. Literally the most eager first chair clarinet there is. You're gonna leave us with him?

IRENE

I don't want to deal with him! You know last year, when we played swan lake, he kept making us rehearse just the ending bit. I think he felt really cool playing those high notes or something.

TRENT

Oh my god. He would!

IRENE

It's my nightmare to be stuck in a line with him at six flags. So no thank you.

Trent laughs. Surprised. Irene seems pleased.

TRENT

Fair enough. Oh shit.

He looks at the clock.

TRENT (CONT'D)

We're gonna be late.

IRENE

What? We don't have to be there till 6:45.

TRENT

Trumpets start at 6:30. If I'm late again Jennings is going to kill me.

Irene looks at the open road, the clock, and then at Trent.

She speeds up.

IRENE
We can make it.

TRENT
Holy shit.

Irene speeds around a corner, just barely running a red light. Trent laughs, completely giddy.

In a flash they make it to the football field. 6:29.

The car comes to a fast stop. Trent sits there for a moment. He looks at Irene as if seeing her for the first time.

TRENT (CONT'D)
That was awesome.

IRENE
What are you doing? Go. Go!

TRENT
Oh god, yeah, right. Shit, thank you!

He runs out of the car. She watches after him.

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
Did you enjoy our reading of Blithe Spirit in class today? I thought it was delightful.

IRENE
Yeah, it's a good show.

MS. KIMBLE
Indeed. Speaking of, I think you should consider switching your monologue for the play audition.

IRENE
Oh-

MS. KIMBLE

I've heard so many people deliver that piece you picked out. I think you should try to pick something a little more personal. You know?

IRENE

Yeah, I just found it online.

MS. KIMBLE

Did you happen to search for "Best Monologues for girls?"

Irene nods.

MS. KIMBLE (CONT'D)

(Laughing) Maybe you should pick one from a movie you like instead. I don't know. I know you have to audition for class, but shake it up. Keep me on the edge of my seat.

IRENE

I'll do my best.

MS. KIMBLE

That's what I like to hear! Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go drum up enthusiasm. Once the football players see this they're going to drop the knee pads for some stage presence.

Ms. Kimble walks away with a wave. Irene rounds the corner and sees a poster for the play. It reads "NO MORE BOATS! A mystery for the ages! Play auditions 10/5 during theatre class or after school 4-5 pm."

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 to the practice shed where the rest of the marching band is.

EXT. PRACTICE SHED - NIGHT

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 times. Just to check.

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

DARREN (CONT'D)

We all just 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 their song and sits.

The game continues but Irene only has a passive interest. She looks over to the student section.

It's neon night so everyone is dressed in the brightest colors imaginable. They chant and stomp in time.

Irene feels eyes on her. She looks back and sees Trent giving her a look.

She turns back around with a feeling of delight and confusion.

Darren waves wildly to his parents.

DARREN

I tell them they don't have to but they come to every performance. Ugh. Where are your parents?

She doesn't even bother looking around.

IRENE

Not here.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Halftime is about to start. The marching band lines up on the side of the field, preparing to perform.

As the football players leave the field, so does the crowd. They flock to concessions, the bathroom, anywhere but the stands.

The band marches onto the field. Irene takes note of how little people seem to care.

EXT. PRACTICE SHED - NIGHT

The band tears down for the night. The third quarter of the game starts in the background.

Irene takes off the last bit of her uniform and carefully puts it back in the case.

She looks over her shoulder and sees Trent, now wearing neon, jumping on the back of another BAND MEMBER.

Irene zips the case.

TRENT

Hey!

Irene looks up to see him standing behind her.

TRENT (CONT'D)
How's it going?

IRENE
Fine, yeah.

Irene notices several bandmates staring. Darren included. She feels self conscious.

TRENT
Nice. Um-I was wondering if, maybe, you'd want to stay and watch the rest of the game with me?

If Trent was nervous before he's even more so now.

IRENE
I don't usually stay.

TRENT
Oh. Yeah, of course.

Beat. The eyes on them feel like daggers.

TRENT (CONT'D)
We wouldn't have to actually watch the game.

IRENE
What?

TRENT
We could just hang out? I know a spot, it has a pretty good view.

IRENE
Yeah?

Irene feels a twinge of excitement, but is torn.

TRENT
Yeah.

Irene takes a moment to think, trying to ignore the glances. She's never "hung out" with a boy before.

IRENE
I guess I could stay for a little while.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Trent and Irene sit on a hillside. The view is beautiful, miles of plains in the distance, with the bright stadium just below them.

It's quiet, in a pleasant way.

Trent has laid out some jackets for them to sit on. A plate of concession nachos sit between them, but neither one is eating.

IRENE

This is a nice view.

TRENT

Yeah, it's a little less congested.

IRENE

Totally.

TRENT

You can really see everything from up here too.

IRENE

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

They definitely do not. The tension is palpable. Irene tries to distract from the feeling with conversation.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I take it you're into football?

TRENT

Not really, no. Most of the players suck. They think they're so cool playing high school football, but they're just gonna be washed out jerks in a couple of years.

IRENE

They are on their way to being state champions.

TRENT

Oh? Did you say a prayer so the boys could continue their godly winning streak?

IRENE

Not exactly. But why stay and watch if you don't even like the game?

TRENT

Mostly to hang out with friends,
but I'm ditching them tonight.

This makes Irene smile.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I saw you looking at the play
posters.

Irene is surprised he saw that moment.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Are you gonna audition?

IRENE

Well, I have to, but I won't get a
part. I'm not very good.

TRENT

I'm sure that's not true.

IRENE

I-uh-I've done tech the last few
years, and chorus for the musicals.
It's really fun.

TRENT

You'll get a part. I just know it.

IRENE

Uh-huh.

Beat.

TRENT

So what are some of your-

IRENE (CONT'D)

Why did you decide to-

They stop and laugh.

TRENT (CONT'D)

No, you go.

IRENE

The trumpet. Why did you decide to
play the trumpet?

TRENT

Yeah, it's funny actually-I wanted
to play the saxophone-there's
nothing quite like a good saxophone
solo. But my mom insisted that I
play the trumpet because we had my
grandpa's old horn in the basement.

(MORE)

TRENT (CONT'D)

Turns out its a lot cheaper to play an instrument you already own so, yeah.

IRENE

I think the trumpet can sound really pretty too.

TRENT

It's grown on me, and the clarinet?

IRENE

I don't know. I guess I thought it seemed easier than a brass instrument, you know, the mouth shape, and I liked how small and light the case was.

TRENT

Absolutely, yeah, I also picked based on case size.

IRENE

Shut up!

The crowd below them goes wild. The Cardinals have scored another touchdown.

TRENT

Wow, they really might be state champions. A big shiny trophy is just what they need. They already think they're hot shit.

Irene looks intensely at the crowd of cheering fans.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I mean, no one in the crowd really cares how good they do. It's just some parents, a teacher or two, and a few alumni who are a little too attached to their high school glory days. But like the students, they're just here because its something to do.

IRENE

I've never really thought about it like that.

TRENT

The only people who care are on the field, vying for the affections of the crowd.

Irene looks at Trent. After a beat he turns to her, a moment of anticipation lingers between them. They awkwardly stumble through their conversation, nervous.

TRENT (CONT'D)
You look really great tonight.

IRENE
Thanks.

Beat. His hand touches hers, she doesn't pull away.

TRENT
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.

TRENT
Why don't we try that again?

They kiss. 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 more moral or societal questions. So being able to understand and argue both sides is extremely challenging, and in public forum you have your partner to back you up. I'm up there debating all by myself.

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) Yeah, I'm sorry. I guess I just have a lot on my mind. Nothing major.

Elise looks her over, she knows Irene is hiding something.

ELISE

Okay.

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. It's hard to see what's happening in the center, but the crowd is worked up.

GROUP

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

Elise and Irene push their way to the middle.

ELISE

Excuse us!

Suddenly they see it: It's 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 generally 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 and rowdier. 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 a fight. Trent starts to sweat. Irene hears some girls next to her.

SENIOR GIRL 1

He probably made this all up.

SENIOR GIRL 2

Ugh, its pathetic.

The crowd grumbles, slowly turning on Trent.

SENIOR BOY 1

This guy's a loser anyway.

SENIOR GIRL 1

Get over yourself.

TRENT

I didn't make this up! Rudy just-

He surveys the crowd and makes eye contact with Irene. His expression changes.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Wait wait wait!

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 just amazing. Will you be my girlfriend?

A few gasps from the crowd. Beat.

IRENE

Yeah.

A couple of people in the crowd 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
Why didn't you tell me?

IRENE
I just-I knew you wouldn't like it.

ELISE
Do you really want to date him?

Irene shrugs and nods.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Your first kiss. Your first boyfriend. Trent fucking Woods.

Irene nods. Elise walks into the theatre without her. Irene stands alone for a moment. She turns to look at a crucifix on a nearby wall. 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

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

Will laughs and walks off. Irene flushes beet red.

ELISE

Will, why are you even here?

WILL

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

Elise rolls her eyes. Will exits.

Irene looks over to Elise, Irene smiles as if to thank her. Elise halfheartedly pretends to still be furiously painting, but her anger is subsiding.

Irene tries to continue painting, but her heart feels like it's going to fall out of her chest.

Ms. Kimble enters.

MS. KIMBLE

Irene, Elise! Thank you both so much for your help. I'm so excited we are getting a jump on tech now. *No More Boats* is a notoriously ambitious show.

IRENE

I love a good murder mystery.

MS. KIMBLE

Me too! And casting this show is going to be it's own murder mystery. Who will be who? Only two weeks till we find out! Are you girls excited?

IRENE

Mmhmm.

ELISE

Of course!

MS. KIMBLE

Hm. Well, I can't wait to see whodunnit. Also, Irene, if you ever can't make it to tech just tell me. I know you have to wake up awfully early for marching band.

IRENE

Don't worry. I'll be here. It beats sitting at home doing nothing.

MS. KIMBLE

Okay. Gosh I'm so excited! I know it's not as flashy as other shows, but I think it'll be great. I mean, you'll never see us doing Grease! Too much teen pregnancy.

Ms. Kimble leaves. Irene looks over to Elise, who's still painting.

IRENE

Are you still mad at me?

ELISE

In theory.

IRENE

But in reality?

ELISE

No. Just be careful okay? And keep me in the loop!

Irene nods, feeling a little better.

INT. KIJEK RESIDENCE DINING ROOM- NIGHT

Irene washes dishes after dinner. JOHN, Irene's father and a man who reads as all business even with his family, hands his dish to Irene.

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

JOHN

Anything interesting happen at school today?

IRENE

Not really, but we started tech for the play, so I'll probably be home later most days.

JOHN

That's great sweetie.

John leaves. Irene looks over at Penny then approaches her.

IRENE

Are you done with that mom?

PENNY

Yes, yes. Thanks Renie.

IRENE

I don't know if you heard, I'll probably be home later the next few weeks, fall play started.

PENNY

I can't wait to see it. I love a good murder mystery.

IRENE

Me too.

PENNY

I have a work meeting tomorrow so don't expect to see me in the evening.

IRENE

I know. I saw it on the whiteboard.

Irene heads back to the sink.

PENNY

I've also got a lot of work to do tonight. I probably won't see you before you go to bed. Sleep well.

IRENE

Goodnight.

Penny leaves. Irene finishes the dishes.

INT. IRENE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Irene sits on her bed doing homework. The TV plays a different old romantic comedy.

LOTTIE, the female protagonist, 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!

After a moment, 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

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 doing?

IRENE

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

Trent laughs.

TRENT

It's nice to hear yours too. I wanted to say I'm sorry about earlier I really-

IRENE
It's fine. Seriously.

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

IRENE
I don't know what I'm doing either.

TRENT
I guess we can figure it out together.

IRENE
Sounds good to me.

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! I'm just preparing you now. This is what you signed up for!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Irene pulls books out of her locker. Trent approaches her.

TRENT
Good morning!

IRENE
Morning.

They smile at one another, unsure what to do with themselves. A few people behind them take notice.

TRENT
Sorry, I'm running a bit late.

IRENE
It's fine. Uh, what class do you have?

TRENT
Theology with Breiner. You?

IRENE
American History.

TRENT
First floor it is! You ready?

IRENE
Yeah.

Irene closes her locker, and Trent grabs her hand. They walk down the hall together. Most people in the hallway take notice. This makes both Irene and Trent glow.

INT. THEATRE CLASSROOM - DAY

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

IRENE
Do you wanna hang out tonight?

ELISE
No. I have to pick up another shift tonight at Frosteez. After Jared got stabbed last week I've really been avoiding the night shifts.

IRENE
You do know what you just said is insane right?

ELISE
Someone has to get the people their sweet treats.

IRENE
But at what cost.

ELISE
It's 4.50 for a regular.

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

Otto, however, turns around and pretends to make out with the air.

OTTO

Oh Trent!

Irene ignores him. Elise gives a look that could kill.

Ms. Kimble enters.

MS KIMBLE

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

Irene gives Elise a knowing look.

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Groups are spread around the theatre practicing their monologues. 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 enjoy being
around him.

ELISE

I'm happy to hear 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.
It's a dramatic monologue so you
should really-

The coast clears.

ELISE (CONT'D)

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

IRENE

I know. 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, I'm not in
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 waiting for their rides or hanging out. 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 and a very good chorus singer.

Trent spots her and waves them over.

ELISE

You're being summoned.

IRENE

Come with me.

ELISE

What?

IRENE

You said you would get to know him better.

ELISE

I didn't mean today.

IRENE

Please?

Elise realizes she should support Irene and follows suit.

TRENT

Irene! Elise. You know the guys right?

IVAN

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

EMMETT

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

IVAN
How are you two doing?

IRENE
Good.

ELISE
Fine.

IRENE (CONT'D)
You know, same old same old.

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

ELISE
(under breath) That's an opportune
word. Trent. How are you?

TRENT
I'm 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?

This catches Irene off guard, the other boys laugh.

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. It's all about the
lips.

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
(to Trent) What's wrong with Alexis?

IVAN
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.

ELISE
Alexis is a little high-strung, sure, but she's all talk.

IVAN
I would just love karma to slap her across 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.

ELISE
Oh no.

Irene and Elise look at each other. Irene flushes with embarrassment. Everyone in the courtyard has taken notice.

EMMETT
God damn.

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

The boys watch Trent like it's their favorite TV show, laughing and make snide remarks. It seems like they are laughing at Trent, not with him.

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.

IVAN
Jesus.

Irene looks at Elise, she's horrified. Trent returns to the group, the boys applaud.

IVAN (CONT'D)
Good work fine sir.

TRENT
Why thank you.

EMMETT
What did you say to her?

TRENT
Well, I told her she should get the stick out of her ass.

EMMETT/IVAN/KIM/JUSTIN
Ooooh.

TRENT
And I called her a bitch.

EMMETT/IVAN/KIM/JUSTIN
Yeah!/Hell Yeah!/Way to go./Nice!

Irene looks less than happy, and Elise even less than her.

ELISE
(To Irene) I think I'm going to head out. I'll see you tomorrow.

IRENE
Okay, see ya.

Elise pats her on the back, and leaves.

TRENT
Yeah, she wasn't a fan.

IVAN

I bet not, you wanna come smoke
with us?

TRENT

Uh, no I think I'll stay here with
Irene. Maybe next time.

EMMETT

For sure, catch you tomorrow.

IVAN

Bye Irene.

She waves weakly 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.

Irene isn't sure she believes him, but wants to.

TRENT (CONT'D)

You wanna hang out till my mom gets
here?

IRENE

Sure.

Trent gestures and the two start walking around the school.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Do you get along?

TRENT

With my mom?

IRENE

Yeah.

TRENT

I guess so. She can be really
overbearing. She comes to every
marching band performance and
cheers as loud as she can. She
might actually be the only one who
watches us. God. She would come to
every practice too, if she could.
It's annoying.

IRENE

That's sweet.

TRENT

Trust me, as soon as she starts interrogating you about every aspect of your life it isn't so sweet anymore. Don't tell the guys, but I've never actually smoked pot before. My mom would kill me.

IRENE

Your secret is safe with me.

TRENT

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 elementary 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 or what she was feeling. 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)

Sorry. Its really fine. It means I basically can do whatever, cause no one is really watching.

TRENT

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

IRENE

I suppose I should abuse the power more.

TRENT

Uh, yeah!

IRENE

There was this one night when I was like 12, I snuck out of my window and walked to a nearby park. It was like two in the morning.

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 just went back home.

They turn a corner and the two are nearly alone.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I am curious. Why were you and Rudy gonna fight the other day?

TRENT

Oh, that. Rudy sucks. He's always thought he was better than me. He used to bully me in middle school.

IRENE

I'm sorry.

TRENT

It's whatever. I heard he had made some comments about me, so I found him and told him to prove himself. To fight me. Coward didn't show up.

IRENE

What'd he say about you?

TRENT

It's nothing.

IRENE

I'm sorry, you don't have to tell me.

TRENT

No it's-He was calling me an attention seeker. Telling people old stories from middle school. Most people didn't know me back then. Coming to high school was like 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.

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
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. He can tell something is off.

TRENT (CONT'D)
And where were we? Uh, right! I've been wanted to tell you that I really meant what I said before. You know, I wasn't just-I like you. I like you a lot.

Beat. Irene is taken aback. 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)

Ah. My mom's here. I should go before she spots you and you get stuck talking to her.

IRENE

That sounds like a good plan.

TRENT

I'll see you tomorrow.

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

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD PARKING LOT - MORNING

Some time has passed and the fall weather is in full bloom. Irene pulls into the parking lot, a scrap of paper in her lap. She spots Trent messing around with Kim and Emmett.

The parking lot is buzzing. Irene is running a little late, but doesn't seem very concerned about it.

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

Irene quickly hops out of her car and walks over to Trent.

KIM

Seriously?-

EMMETT

Dude holy shit-

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

IRENE

Good morning! How was your weekend?

The boys leave, Emmett elbows Trent on his way out. Trent faces Irene, but keeps looking back at his friends throughout the conversation.

TRENT

Good, good.

IRENE

I'm glad. How was the, uh, family reunion?

TRENT
About as awful as you'd imagine.

IRENE
Yeah I didn't hear from you much,
you must've been busy.

TRENT
No phones allowed around grandma.

IRENE
That makes sense.

Irene can't place it but something is off. Trent seems
distracted-maybe distant?

IRENE (CONT'D)
I have my play audition today.

TRENT
Oh yeah?

Irene looks past Trent at Kim and Emmett who quickly
straighten up and wave at her.

IRENE
Uh, yeah. I'm a little nervous-
Darren yells from across the lot.

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

Darren fans himself with his sheet music.

IRENE
I gotta go.

Trent barely even looks her away.

TRENT
Sounds good.

Irene shakes off the feeling as she walks over to 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 GROUP OF STUDENTS giggle as they walk past her.

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 JAIME gossip. After a moment 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, focusing on the monologue in her head.

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

Did you 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.

MS. KIMBLE

Irene?

Irene gets up and slowly moves towards the door.

WILL

Break a leg.

Irene smiles weakly back.

INT. THEATRE - DAY

The auditorium is empty except for Ms. Kimble and Irene.

Ms. Kimble sits down, grabbing a notebook and pen. Meanwhile, Irene takes center stage.

MS. KIMBLE

Okay. Whenever you're ready.

IRENE

I'll be doing a monologue from the film "The Diviner".

Ms. Kimble nods. Irene takes another moment and then-

IRENE (CONT'D)

He once asked me what the significance of the stars were, like I-

Irene pauses, momentarily forgetting her line.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Sorry. Sorry. Can I start again?

MS KIMBLE

Of course. Just take a deep breath.

Beat.

IRENE

He once asked me what the significance of the stars were, like I would somehow know the answer! How can anyone dare to understand the words written in the sky?

Irene's delivery isn't great. She holds herself back. We've seen her deliver lines with more gusto in her bedroom.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Nevertheless, I tried. I told him the stars only shine when we allow them too. When the sun sets, and we turn all the lights off, they appear like magic. We can't see them during the day but we know they're there, waiting for their chance to shine.

MS. KIMBLE

Thank you. The cast list will be posted later today.

IRENE

Thanks.

Irene leaves.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Irene walks down an empty hallway, already beating herself up.

The bell rings and students flood out of the classrooms around her. As people pass they stare at her. She can hear 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 was all in her head? They weren't talking about her?

She looks up for a moment 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, who's locker is right 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 7
What?

IRENE
Stop talking about me.

STUDENT 8
We aren't talking about you.

STUDENT 7
Seriously.

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.

Beat. 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. We spent the
whole weekend doing theatre tech
and playing Harvest Moon.

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
No 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
Well you can't just let people treat you like this.

Elise looks her over, desperate to help her friend.

ELISE (CONT'D)
If you won't do it then I will.

She stands up.

IRENE
No, no, please. Stop.

Elise reluctantly sits down.

ELISE
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. Oh god.

ELISE
What?

IRENE
Will heard it. He said something
earlier that I didn't understand
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 takes note.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Okay, I wasn't joking earlier. I
will remove Trent's lower ribs and
make him suck his own dick. And I
will craft a Billy puppet for the
full effect!

IRENE
I just don't believe he would do
that.

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 gotta at least talk to him.