

THE LYING GAME
(working title)

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THE LYING GAME

TEASER

EXT. VEGAS DESERT TRAIL - DAY

Worn-out running shoes pad over a dusty trail on the outskirts of Las Vegas. The shoes belong to EMMA BECKER, 17, a natural beauty whose auburn ponytail bounces with each confident stride.

Emma veers into a neighborhood of depressingly small houses, turns down a driveway to her sagging home.

INT. EMMA'S FOSTER HOME - DAY

Emma crosses down a hallway off the faded living room.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NEARLY CONTINUOUS

... Emma kicks off her shoes, starts to slip out of her top... when she notices TRAVIS BOYLE, 19, her pea-eyed foster brother, leering at her through an open window.

TRAVIS

Hey, 'sis. Good run?

EMMA

I'm not your sister.

TRAVIS

Okay, *foster* sister... Like that better, anyway. So many more *possibilities*.

EMMA

You are such a perv.

TRAVIS

And you *so* read things into what I say.

Emma reaches to close the blinds.

EMMA

I don't think so. Now if you don't mind...

TRAVIS

Only if you close those blinds.

Emma BANGS the window shut, yanks the blinds, blotting out Travis's toothy grin. Emma falls back on her bed, gazing

up at the ceiling. She's painted the ceiling in dayglow stars, the only decoration in an otherwise drab bedroom.

A sudden PINGING causes Emma to bolt up. She opens her laptop, immediately linked to Skype. A face APPEARS on her SCREEN -- a face *identical* to Emma's. This is SUTTON MERCER, 17, Emma's newly-discovered twin sister. Sutton is sitting in her upscale Phoenix bedroom.

SUTTON

There you are. We just got back...

EMMA

Wait. Let me look at you.

Emma drinks in Sutton. Sutton does the same. Like looking in a mirror.

EMMA (CONT'D)

It still... amazes me...

SUTTON

Even after two months?

EMMA

You know I can't wait for it to be face-to-face.

SUTTON

Me, too...

EMMA

So now that you're back home...

SUTTON

Emma, you know I want us to be together. But you get why we have to wait...

EMMA

You're searching for our real parents.

SUTTON

Which means being careful with my adopted ones...

Emma looks off, hesitating. Sutton *twin-senses* there's something on her mind.

SUTTON (CONT'D)

What?

EMMA

It's just -- the people who adopted you
-- they sound pretty cool. I mean,
they must love you...

SUTTON

Then why did they lie to me?

Sutton, noticeably disturbed, has leaned back.

EMMA

Maybe they want to protect you.

SUTTON

(flaring)

They're protecting themselves, okay?

Sutton suddenly gets up, paces away. Emma can't see her.

SUTTON (CONT'D)

Sure, on the surface, they gave me this
perfect life, and it's been great...
But now I find out most of it was just
a cover-up...

Sutton returns to the WEBCAM, switches on a warm smile.

SUTTON (CONT'D)

But, hey, I'm back on it now. Won't be
long, I promise.

Sutton smiles. Emma returns an identical one.

EMMA

Well, like I always say, 'hope is
grief's best music.'

SUTTON

Wow, Emma, that's brilliant. You
really got the smart half of the
embryo, didn't you?

EMMA

Actually, it's stolen from a book.

SUTTON

Yeah, well, so when we *do* get together -
- guess who's going to do my homework
for me?

Both laugh an *identical* laugh, interrupted when Emma's door
FLIES OPEN!

Travis is standing there, hoping he's walked in on
"something."

TRAVIS
Who you talking to?

EMMA
None of your business.

Emma SLAMS her laptop shut... as we...

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. EMMA'S FOSTER HOME - GARAGE AND ALLEY - EVENING

... Emma smashes a tennis ball against a blistered garage door. She's so focused on her shots, she doesn't see Travis sitting down on a stoop to watch her.

TRAVIS

Kind of a waste of time, isn't it?

Emma doesn't look back.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Your school doesn't even have a tennis team. And even if it did...

Emma misses a shot, the ball bouncing to Travis. He catches it in his fist, proffers it to Emma.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

What's the idea -- bash it hard enough, you escape your messed up life?

Emma grabs for the ball, but Travis seizes her wrist with his free hand. He yanks her closer, hoping to kiss her... Emma pushes him back with such ferocity even Travis is surprised.

EMMA

Don't touch me.

TRAVIS

Why not? Emma, you need to, like, accept your situation here. In my mind...

Travis starts to advance. Emma explodes --

EMMA

You don't have a mind, okay? There's five-and-a-half inches between your ears and it's basically empty... So just stay the hell away from me, okay?

From inside the house --

CLARICE (O.S.)

Emma! Travis! Get in here!

SLAM TO --

INT. MERCER HOME - FOYER - EVENING

DOORBELL RINGS... and we find LAUREL MERCER, 16, racing for the front door across this marble-decked foyer. Laurel, Sutton's sister, is all sassy spunk and sarcasm. She opens the door to handsome-sexy-confident LUKE COBURN, 17. Luke has always been the boy all the girls crush on.

LUKE

Hey, Laurel, welcome home. Sutton here?

Laurel puts on a faux serious face --

LAUREL

Luke, I'm afraid I have bad news. Sutton was killed in a tragic boating accident off Bora Bora, making me the last available Mercer female.

KRISTIN MERCER, 40s, races into the foyer, having heard --

KRISTIN

Laurel, stop! Luke, don't listen to her...

LUKE

Wouldn't think of it, Mrs. Mercer. Welcome home. How was the South Pacific?

KRISTIN

Wonderful time, but glad to be back.
(then)
Do you believe Sutton turned me down for our girls night out...?

LUKE

Thought you guys had a tradition.

KRISTIN

So did I.

Sutton is hurrying in on this --

SUTTON

Don't start, Mom. Hey, Luke...

Sutton gives Luke a quick kiss.

SUTTON (CONT'D)

(to Kristin)

People grow out of things, Mom. Why
(MORE)

SUTTON (CONT'D)
 don't you take Laurel -- she's been
 screaming to go for years.

LAUREL
 This is true. Besides, I'm sure Sutton
 and Luke have a lot of, you know...
 (airs 'quote marks')
 ... 'catching up' to do...

Laurel quickly spins from Sutton's look-that-could-kill,
 passing entering TED MERCER, 40s, on her way out. Ted's a
 plastic surgeon. Handsome, athletic, very confident.

TED
 Hey, Luke. Good summer?

LUKE
 Pretty boring without Sutton around.

SUTTON
 (quickly)
 I'm out of here. Char's got a 'welcome
 home' thing going for me.

KRISTIN
 Everything unpacked?

... BANG, the door closes behind Sutton and Luke. Ted
 turns to Kristin.

KRISTIN (CONT'D)
 My mistake. Discussing things in front
 of the boyfriend.
 (then)
 I was just so hoping the trip, getting
 away...

TED
 Daughters pull away from their mothers.
 It's a natural part of growing up.

KRISTIN
 No. It started when we lied to her.
 That's when she pulled away...

Real *fear* in Kristin's voice. Ted eases Kristin into a
 warm embrace.

TED
 We did the right thing. Never doubt
 that.
 (then, strongly)
 We did all we could.

Kristin leans her head against his chest, so wanting to believe him.

EXT. MERCER HOME - EVENING

Sutton and Luke cross to Luke's Mustang, parked just inside the ornate gates. Luke suddenly sweeps her into a steamy kiss. When they come up for air --

LUKE

I missed you.

SUTTON

Me, too.

LUKE

Really? I barely heard from you.

SUTTON

Sorry. We were crazy busy, and I got distracted.

LUKE

But even before you left... you were acting weird.

Sutton stares at Luke a moment, then looks away --

SUTTON

Look, it's something I've got to work out on my own. You get that, right?

LUKE

Guess I have to.

SUTTON

Thanks.

Sutton leans in, tenderly kisses him.

SUTTON (CONT'D)

So if it's okay -- right now, I need a girlfriend fix. See you tomorrow?

Sutton is already hurrying off toward her BMW, leaving Luke a bit unsettled.

INT. EMMA'S FOSTER HOME - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Blackjack-dealer foster mother, CLARICE BOYLE, 52, is shaking a hollowed-out book at Emma and Travis.

CLARICE

... Five hundred dollars, *including* a hundred dollar tip signed by none other than Mister Bruce Willis himself...
Now who got into my kitty?

TRAVIS

Ma, I didn't even know you had a kitty.

CLARICE

Emma?

Emma hesitates. It's as though she knows what's coming.

EMMA

Travis took it. He stole your money.
I saw him do it.

TRAVIS

I got my own job, what would I need with Mom's tip money?

EMMA

I dunno. Buy more pot. He's been coming on to me every chance he gets...

Clarice hasn't even looked at Travis.

CLARICE

Emma... I took you in... when no one else would have you...

EMMA

You took me in because the state of Nevada pays you...

TRAVIS

Check her backpack. Go on, *look*...

CLARICE

Think I will...

Clarice grabs the backpack, rummages, comes out with a wad of bills. She unfurls a particular c-note.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

'To my lucky penny, Clarice. Love,
Bruce Willis.'

Emma thrusts a finger toward Travis.

EMMA

He did this. He set me up.

CLARICE

Social Services said if anything like this happened, I'm supposed to call the cops... and that's just what I'm going to do. Watch her, Travis.

Clarice heads for the kitchen phone. Emma, worried, spins away from Travis's smug smile...

EXT. CHAMBERLIN ESTATE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

... Sutton is hugging CHARLOTTE "CHAR" CHAMBERLIN, 17. No one is as cheery and perky as Char unless they're hiding deep pain somewhere. It's certainly not in this palatial back yard. Sweeping lawn. Pool. Glowing fire pit.

CHAR

... Love it! The dress, the hair... Good old Sutton. We barely survived without you, right, Mads?

MADLINE "MADS" VEGA, 17, is approaching. Mads carries a definite "anti" air about her. Nearly-retro. Too cool to *gush* about anything.

MADS

Somehow we managed...

CHAR

We just missed having our -- what did you call it, Mads?

MADS

Our 'oracle.'

SUTTON

I'm sure you guys did great without me. How's your mom, Char?

CHAR

Oh, great. Out of rehab. Getting lots of sleep.

Sutton sees right through Char's perky, upbeat smile --

SUTTON

No change, in other words.

CHAR

See for yourself.

Char indicates a window high up in the mansion -- where PHYLLIS CHAMBERLIN, 50, stands, looking down on them. A wisp of a silhouette and not much more.

CHAR (CONT'D)

She's not really looking at us. She just stares. I have no idea at what...

(quickly)

But hey, I am *not* going to let it get me down. School's about to start, Sutton's back, all's right with the world.

SUTTON

(to Mads)

How's Thayer doing? You talk to him, right?

MADS

Occasionally. What about you?

SUTTON

Same. He seems to like L.A.

MADS

Yeah. Time with our mom... Weird being the only kid now... I mean, with my dad...

CHAR

Well, freaks me out Thayer would just leave like that. I mean, I get that he wants to be with your mom. But you and your brother were so close, Mads. And Sutton... you three were like the Mouseketeers.

SUTTON

I think you mean 'Musketees.'

MADS

No. She means 'Mouseketeers.'

A VOICE calls to Char from inside. It could be her mother or someone else...

CHAR

Great. Be right back.

Char hurries off toward the house. Mads has pulled a PHOTO STRIP out of her jeans pocket.

MADS

Thayer left this in a drawer.

It's a succession of FRAMES taken several months ago -- THAYER VEGA, 18, with Mads and Sutton *mugging* in one of

those photo booths. The girls are laughing it up, but there's a sadness in Thayer's eyes.

MADS (CONT'D)

So I gotta ask... you and Thayer were never more than just friends, right?

SUTTON

Please. He's your brother. He's like *my* brother.

MADS

Sorry. Just curious. Hey... I'm really glad you're back, Sutton. Char's right -- summer sucked without you.

Sutton returns her warm smile. WIPE TO --

EXT. EMMA'S FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

... HEADLIGHTS sweep into the front driveway. A Vegas Police Cruiser is arriving. A "Juvenile Division" decal is just below the county seal. Clarice trundles out to the OFFICERS.

CLARICE

Thank you for coming, officers...
Whatever I gotta sign, I'll sign...
I'm pressing charges.

INT. EMMA'S FOSTER HOME - CONTINUOUS

Travis has the drapes pushed back, looking out the front window.

TRAVIS

That didn't take long.

Travis turns. Emma is standing there, hands behind her.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

You know, I still might be able to help you here... Promise me a little action, I can make those cops go away...

He slides a hand down her arm... moves closer...

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

I mean, aren't you getting kind of close to three strikes?

Emma swings the tennis racket out from behind her back!
She hits him hard in the face, sending him reeling...

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Bitch...

He lunges for her, but she swings the racket baseball-style, smashing him in the mouth. He SCREAMS in pain, falling into an end table, knocking over a lamp... plunging the room in darkness. Travis, bleeding badly, groans in pain... as the door flies open and the officers burst in...

COP

Police! Stop!

JUMP TO --

EXT. EMMA'S FOSTER HOME - BACK PATIO - CONTINUOUS

... Emma, backpack in hand, flies out through the back slider, vaulting the gate, racing down a back alley. She can see FLASHLIGHTS and HEAR the cops trying to chase...

STAY WITH Emma as she jumps a wall, landing in a vacant lot. She weaves through tumbleweeds, finds a dumpster to hide behind -- just as red-and-blue POLICE FLASHERS light up the alley.

A SPOTLIGHT narrowly misses Emma. She waits until its clear, then runs off... enveloped in inky darkness.

MADS (O.S.)

(PRE-LAP)

... You just ditched him?

EXT. CHAMBERLIN ESTATE - NIGHT

Mads, Char and Sutton are kicked back around a fire pit.

SUTTON

Luke can wait. I wanted to see my best friends.

CHAR

But God, Luke's your boyfriend...

SUTTON

I think I know that.

MADS

So do you want to break up with him, are you cheating, or both?

SUTTON
None of the above.

CHAR
So what *is* it? Come on, *share*.

SUTTON
It's complicated... and... maybe the first thing I *can't* share with you guys.

Meanwhile, Sutton's PHONE has TONED. She checks it.

SUTTON (CONT'D)
Better take this.

Sutton slips off across the back lawn. Char looks at Mads.

CHAR
Sounds like family stuff.

Mads is thinking of her own life --

MADS
It's *always* family stuff.

ACROSS LAWN, NEAR POOLHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sutton's just answered the phone. She keeps her voice low.

SUTTON
(into phone)
Emma? What's up?

INTERCUT TWO-WAY with Emma outside a Vegas bus station.

EMMA
I'm coming to Phoenix. Tonight.
There's an all-night bus.

SUTTON
Whoa. Back up.

EMMA
My pervy foster brother set me up. He said I was stealing and... look, I'm in a really bad situation here...

Sutton glances around, then slips into --

INT. POOL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

EMMA
Sutton? Sutton, you still there?

Sutton paces in the dark pool house.

SUTTON
Yeah. Just thinking.

EMMA
I know you don't want to spring this on
your adopted family...

SUTTON
No, it's okay. We'll work it out.
(beat)
What time does your bus get in?

EMMA
Eight-fifty AM.

SUTTON
Okay. I'll meet you at the station.

Relief washes over Emma. A bus COUGHS EXHAUST across the lot. Her bus. A nearby TRANSIT OFFICER makes her nervous.

EMMA
Gotta go.

And Emma mad-dashes for the bus.

BACK TO -- Sutton hears the LINE GO DEAD. Door to the pool house suddenly BURSTS OPEN! Sutton spins and squints into a BLINDING FLASHLIGHT. MATCH CUT TO --

INT. GREYHOUSE BUS - SCOTTSDALE - NEXT MORNING

... BRIGHT SUNLIGHT in Emma's eyes, waking her. She squints at a passing highway sign: NOW ENTERING PHOENIX, ARIZONA.

EXT. PHOENIX BUS STATION - DAY

The Greyhound pulls into a slot. Emma is one of the first off the bus. No sign of Sutton. Emma crosses toward the depot. She'd go inside, but SEES a TRANSIT COP inside the door. She subtly eases off in the other direction (just in case the guy is looking for her -- which he isn't). Suddenly, a mysterious hand grabs her and pulls her into --

PUBLIC RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Emma realizes it was Sutton who grabbed her. They stand for a moment, looking at each other in amazement.

EMMA
It's you.

SUTTON

It's me. In the flesh.

EMMA

On the computer, it never felt... real, you know?

SUTTON

Yeah. If I hadn't always had that feeling... someone else was out there.

EMMA

God, everything about us... it's the same. Hair, eyes...

SUTTON

And sizes, looks like.

Sutton suddenly wedges a mop under the restroom's door handle, jamming it closed.

SUTTON (CONT'D)

We don't have a lot of time.

EMMA

What do you mean -- for what?

SUTTON

I can't go into detail. But last night, after you called, I got a lead -- on our real parents.

EMMA

You found them?

SUTTON

I don't know. There've been a lot of dead-ends till now. But here's the problem -- this lead, it leads to Los Angeles.

EMMA

I don't get it. You want me to go to L.A.?

SUTTON

No. *I'm* going to L.A. You're going to stay here.

Sutton strips off her jacket, slips off her t-shirt.

SUTTON (CONT'D)

We'll change clothes. And I'm prepared for the hair. Yours is longer, it looks like.

EMMA

You want me to take your place?

Sutton now helps Emma off with *her* jacket, t-shirt.

SUTTON

Two days. Just hang out, kick back and enjoy. You said you envy everything I've got...

EMMA

I never really said 'envy...'

SUTTON

You didn't have to.

Sutton slips her t-shirt over Emma's head.

SUTTON (CONT'D)

It's going to be easy. Like I told you this summer -- my sister's totally annoying and my parents lied to me. Anything else you need to know about me is on Facebook. Oh, and take this...

(hands over her
iphone)

The key to 'me' -- my phone.

EMMA

I have *so* wanted one of these. Okay -- *that* was envy.

Sutton, meanwhile, has pulled out some scissors.

SUTTON

I'm thinking about three inches off the ponytail. Oh, and I do this flip thing...

Sutton demonstrates, flipping her hair back. Then she begins to shore away at Emma's locks...

EMMA

I don't even know your address...

SUTTON

My BMW's in the parking lot. Nav system has my address. Push pre-set 'one,' she'll take you right home.

Emma and Sutton's eyes meet in the mirror.

EMMA

So I just... be you.

SUTTON

And don't say anything to anyone.

Sudden BANGING on the door -- someone wants to get in!

SUTTON (CONT'D)

(toward door)

One second!

(then, to Emma)

What better place to hide out? You're a smart girl, you'll do great.

Sutton tosses her the BMW key.

EMMA

If I had even a day with you... to study up... practice...

SUTTON

This L.A. thing can't wait. Oh! The boyfriend sitch. It's a little complicated...

BANG, BANG, BANG!

TRANSIT COP (O.C.)

Transit Authority! Open this door!

The mop against the handle begins to give way...

EMMA

Oh crap. Cops.

Sutton has interlocked her fingers, creating a step... so Emma can reach a window. As Emma starts to climb up...

SUTTON

I'll be back in two days with *amazing* news. We'll meet at the lake house.

(to her confusion)

Pre-set 'four' on the nav system. Ten PM. Two days only. I promise.

Door CRASHES open! But Emma is already out the window. The transit cop fills the doorway. Sutton puts her hands on her hips.

SUTTON (CONT'D)

Dude... a little privacy?

EXT. PHOENIX BUS STATION PARKING LOT - NEARLY CONTINUOUS

Emma gulps at the full lot of cars. She hits the remote. A silver convertible BMW's alarm SQUEAKS, headlights FLASH, signaling its location. Emma looks back at the bus station, mulls for only a moment, then jumps over the door and into the driver's seat.

Wheels SQUEAL and the BMW rockets off toward Emma's new life... *as Sutton.*

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. SCOTTSDALE - CAMELBACK ROAD - DAY

Emma is loving Sutton's wheels *and* the sights, as Scottsdale, in all its opulence, whizzes past. Truly a place untouched by the recession.

NAV SYSTEM VOICE

In six hundred feet, turn right...

Emma, hair blowing, cranks the wheel...

EXT. MERCER HOME - FRONT CIRCLE - DAY

Emma eases the convertible to a stop in the circular drive.

NAV SYSTEM VOICE

... You have arrived.

Emma, gulping, takes in the sprawling house and grounds.

EMMA

Oh my God.

EXT. MERCER FRONT DOOR - NEARLY CONTINUOUS

Emma's finger pauses over the doorbell. She quickly withdraws it. Instead, she gingerly reaches for the brass door handle.

INT. MERCER HOME - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Emma steps inside the marble foyer. A far cry from Vegas. A far cry from *anywhere* she's lived. Kristin Mercer -- Sutton's mom -- is passing through with an enormous potted plant. She can barely see through the thick fronds.

KRISTIN

There you are. Sure got home late last night. Then out again first thing this morning...

(teetering suddenly)

Whoa...

EMMA

Here, I've got it...

Emma rescues the pot from Kristin. Kristin looks at Emma, a little surprised.. Emma looks away nervously.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Where should I put it?

KRISTIN

Living room, where it always goes.
Thank you, Sutton.

Emma descends a pair of steps into the living room. A matching pot is her best clue as to where to put this pot.

Laurel is lying on a couch in a window nook, skimming a teen rag on her ipad.

EMMA

(to Kristin)

Sorry about this morning. I had some stuff to do.

LAUREL

What -- pawning Grandma's necklace?

This is the first time Emma sees her "sister," Laurel.

KRISTIN

Sutton? Oh my God, where is it? I don't think I've ever seen you without it.

Emma's hand instinctively goes to her throat.

LAUREL

Luke probably took it off last night, so he could give you a proper 'welcome home hickey.' By the way, Mads asked me to swim with you guys. She can't wait to see our new bikinis. Don't suppose I can have a ride.

Laurel is expecting a summary "no," shocked when --

EMMA

Sure, I guess.

LAUREL

Cool.

EMMA

(to Kristin)

Look, I'm sure I'll find the necklace.

KRISTIN

I hope so. Something ever happens to it, your grandmother will be devastated.

TED

And we'd never hear the end of it.

Ted Mercer, Sutton's dad, is coming through, on his way to the golf course. Emma takes a long look at Ted as he collects his keys.

TED (CONT'D)

Anyone going by the dry cleaner's?
I've got a bag of shirts from the trip.

KRISTIN

Might have to wait till Monday. Unless
Sutton... on your way...

Kristin is anticipating rejection, but instead gets --

EMMA

Sure. No problem.

LAUREL

Oh my God. That's *twice*. 'Sutton
pitching in.'

KRISTIN

Laurel... leave her alone...

Emma meets Kristin's warm smile with a smile of her own. She instantly likes this woman -- the mother she *might* have had.

EMMA

Is there... anything else I can do?

Ted puts down the mail he's been going through.

TED

Okay, that's it. Who are you and *what*
have you done with my daughter?

Emma's jaw goes slack, but everyone's CHUCKLE overtakes her panic, and she opts just to smile along.

INT. SUTTON'S BEDROOM - A MINUTE LATER

... Emma closes the door behind her, leans her head back against the Lady Gaga poster hanging there. When she opens her eyes, she takes in Sutton's room, remembering it from the webcam tour. Sutton's MacBook is on the desk. Emma touches it as if it's the Holy Grail. She opens it, Sutton's Facebook POPPING UP on the SCREEN. She SCROLLS recent comments... *Swimming at my house. Don't be late. Wear that bikini.* Emma turns, sees a string bikini on a hangar by the closet. She holds it up to herself in the mirror. *Gulps.* Timid KNOCK at the door, then Kristin, watering can in hand, nervously enters.

KRISTIN

They barely watered while we were away.
Okay if I get yours?

EMMA

Sure.

Kristin suddenly turns to Emma.

KRISTIN

Last night with Luke, I shouldn't have pulled him in that way... I was really looking forward to us having our girls-night-out... This summer, I was so hoping you and I could get back what we'd lost... Maybe now that we're home...

EMMA

I'll go...

Emma realizes she's straying from Sutton's playbook --

EMMA (CONT'D)

I mean, if it means that much to you...

KRISTIN

Everything. It means everything.

Emma nods, smiles. Kristin's eyes grow misty. Laurel, in a cover-up, bursts in.

LAUREL

We better get going. If you're still taking me...

Emma turns back to Kristin. Kristin smiles, waves her off.

KRISTIN

Go. Have a good time.

JUMP TO --

EXT. MERCER HOME - FRONT CIRCLE - DAY

Laurel and Emma are heading to the car.

LAUREL

... So I just heard I made cheer team. Char and I are 'flyers.' I know she's like one of your best friends, so you're going to be pissed... Get it out, go ahead, chew me a new one...

Emma suddenly tosses Laurel the keys.

EMMA

You drive.

LAUREL

I'm sorry -- what did you say?

EMMA

You've got your permit, right? And you know the way to Char's house...

Because obviously Emma doesn't.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I know I probably said I'd never let you drive my car...

Laurel holds up a hand before Emma can say anything.

LAUREL

Actually, you said 'never *sit* in it.'
But not arguing. Not saying a word.

EXT. VEGA BACKYARD - DAY

SPLASH! Luke, Sutton's boyfriend, dives into the pool, swims underwater, breaking the surface with great finesse. He sees Laurel's just arrived.

LUKE

Laurel... Where's Sutton?

Mads is in a lounge chair next to Char.

MADS

Right over there.

Emma is coming outside, a cover-up over her bikini. She can't hide a tad of embarrassment.

CHAR

Come on, let's see it. Show us the money.

MADS

No time for 'modesty.'

Emma lets the cover-up drop as Luke hops out of the pool.

CHAR

Whoa, girl. I was expecting a Bora Bora tan?

LUKE
 Leave her alone...
 (to Sutton)
 You look great.

Luke takes hold of Emma, dragging her, SCREAMING, into the pool!

When they come up for air, Emma gets her first real look at Luke. It's nearly love at first sight. Her knees go weak, but at least they're underwater. Until this moment, Emma has only dreamed about guys like this.

LUKE (CONT'D)
 Seriously. You look amazing.

EMMA
 I really missed you while I was away...
 You had a good summer?

LUKE
 We kind of went over this last night...

EMMA
 Right. Last night.

LUKE
 I've been a little worried, actually.
 You kind of left me standing there.

EMMA
 Well... I've been a little distracted.

LUKE
 I know. That's what you said last night.

EMMA
 See that? I'm so distracted -- I forgot I said that.

Luke smiles, kisses her, then whispers in her ear --

LUKE
 You need sunscreen.

Luke dips below the surface, swims away. Meanwhile, from the lounge chairs --

MADS	CHAR
What was that?	What did he say?

EMMA
 He said I need sunscreen.

CHAR

Please. That is so not true.

MADS

C'mon, Sutton, we need to know the
'state of the union.'

EMMA

Well..

(echoing Sutton)

'Boyfriend sitches... always a little
complicated.'

Emma drops below the surface.

UNDERWATER

Emma SCREAMS a frustrated SCREAM she knows no one can hear.
JUMP TO --

VEGA BACK PATIO - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

... as -- from Emma's POV -- NISHA RANDALL, 18, makes an
entrance. She's in tennis togs, has a hard body and icy
personality to match.

NISHA

Huge party at my place -- two nights
from now. It's mostly seniors, but you
guys can come.

She seems to be zeroing in on Emma, who is aside with Luke.

NISHA (CONT'D)

Look who's finally home.

MADS

Nisha. Don't exactly remember inviting
you.

NISHA

I saw the cars. And I do live across
the street.

MADS

Always trying to forget. And not sure
you've answered my question.

NISHA

How's the knee, Sutton?

MADS

Actually, that doesn't, either...

Nisha, ignoring Mads, stands right over Emma.

LUKE
Good as new, looks like.

MADS
Ready to take you down, Nisha.

NISHA
Wow. Shaking in my Nikes. Is that a challenge, Sutton?

EMMA
Guess it is.

NISHA
Well you sure went down easily last year. You know, people're still saying you faked the knee to avoid the humiliation.

EMMA
We'll see what happens...

NISHA
How about tomorrow -- first day of practice? You against me.

EMMA
You're on.

Nisha heads off. Luke turns to Sutton.

LUKE
Nice. About time someone stood up to her.

Emma, reeling, turns to Mads with a what-have-I-gotten-myself-into look.

MADS
What?

EMMA
... Really need to use the bathroom.

MADS
Right where it's always been.

INT. VEGA HOME - DAY

Emma, alone, steps into the coldly modern house from the patio. Very masculine environs. She heads for where she *thinks* the bathroom might be.

HALLWAY/THAYER'S ROOM

Emma, on her way to the bathroom, pauses at an open door. A bedroom. A boy's bedroom. Thayer's bedroom. PHOTOS cover his ego wall. Champion Little League player, high school track team. Trophies and certificates and a bulletin board of SNAPSHOTS. His hair is longer, wavy... very different from Luke's... A SHOT of Sutton and Thayer seems to capture Emma's attention. From the doorway, the smooth VOICE of ALEC VEGA, 44, Mads and Thayer's divorced dad --

ALEC (O.S.)
Been over two months...

Emma turns to this brooding, but handsome divorced man. There's a sheen to his ivory locks.

ALEC (CONT'D)
... Feels like he was just here.

Emma nods, silent as Alec moves around the room.

ALEC (CONT'D)
You were like a second sister to him,
Sutton.

EMMA
I don't know about that.

ALEC
I do.
(then)
When he left, he said he'd call. He
calls Madeline, but not me. Does he
call *you*, Sutton?

EMMA
A few times. When I was away. He
seemed okay.

Alec stares at her.

ALEC
Sutton, why do I feel like you're not
telling the truth?

EMMA
I don't know... I...

Mads is suddenly bolting into the room.

MADS
Hey -- what's going on?

ALEC

Just what *I* was wondering.

As a volley of looks pass between Mads, Alec, and Emma...

INT. VEGA BATHROOM/VIEW OUTSIDE - DAY

... Emma locks the bathroom door once she's inside.
There's a small window LOOKING OUT on the backyard.

Emma can SEE into the patio area where Mads, Char, Laurel, Luke, Nisha, and now GARRETT MATHEWS, 17, are gathered. Garrett has that edgy "bad boy" vibe, a healthy dose of "urban" in the "suburban."

OUTSIDE - CONTINUOUS

... Luke and Garrett are faced off.

LUKE

Just go. No one wants you here.

GARRETT

Is this your house... your party?

MADS

Guys, come on... Garrett, you really need to go... Sutton doesn't want to see you. I doubt she even wants to talk to you...

GARRETT

You know this for a fact?

LUKE

Yeah, we do.

Garrett gives them a look, nods darkly, then starts off...

INSIDE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

... Emma watches as Garrett stops at the gate. He looks back toward the house and Emma could swear he's looking right at her.

LAUREL (V.O.)

(PRE-LAP)

That Garrett dude gives me the creeps.

INT. SUTTON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Laurel is painting her nails on the bed, while Emma stares at Sutton's computer SCREEN... one fuzzy PHOTO of Garrett taken the year before...

LAUREL

... The way he always just shows up out of nowhere. And that stare... He's like those homeless dudes in the park.

Emma shuts off the computer, gazes at the wall.

EMMA

Have Mom and Dad ever talked about my adoption?

Laurel looks up from her toes.

LAUREL

You're kidding, right?

EMMA

... I mean, anything more than what they always say.

LAUREL

Right... that they 'chose' you and that makes you special. Me -- the big surprise -- comes along like seven months later to nibble on the scraps.

Emma stares at her a moment, ingesting this information.

EMMA

I just think... our parents aren't telling us everything.

LAUREL

Of course they're not. They're *parents*.

Laurel swings her finished toes and feet off the bed.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

I'm getting a distinct sense of *deja vu*.

(off Emma's look)

That conversation on the plane home... You asked, 'Who has a child and just gives it away?'

(beat)

Obviously you were talking about who gave you up.

EMMA

I'm sure I was.

Laurel frog-walks toward the door...

LAUREL

Well I'd imagine it was someone who could see into the future, and knew what a nightmare you'd turn into...

EMMA

Snap.

Meanwhile, a phone is TONING.

LAUREL

Changed your ringtone. I like it.

Laurel goes into her room, closes the door. Emma spins to Sutton's iphone -- it's *silent*. Emma realizes it's *her* phone. She retrieves it from a drawer.

EMMA

(into phone)

Sutton?

TRAVIS (O.C.)

No. It's your 'brother,' Travis.

INTERCUT TWO-WAY -- Travis is on the back patio of Emma's old foster home. His face is a puffy, purple mess.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

You're really in some trouble around here... Ma's pushing the assault charge. Not smart running the way you did. Cops took like a million pictures of my face... And who the hell is *Sutton*?

EMMA

None of your business.

TRAVIS

Maybe not, but I heard they're talking real jail time, Emma...

Emma quickly hangs up, stares at the blank computer screen. Suddenly -- in the computer screen's REFLECTION -- she SEES someone in the window behind her! Emma SCREAMS!

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. MERCER HOME - BACK YARD - SAME NIGHT

Ted Mercer is SHINING his FLASHLIGHT around the Mercer backyard. Emma watches nervously from just behind him.

EMMA

Anyone there?

TED

Doesn't look like it. You're *sure* you saw someone?

EMMA

A... a guy, I think...

TED

But you didn't get a look at his face.

EMMA

No... It was so fast.

OTHER SIDE OF MERCER WALL

Garrett Mathews, the obvious intruder, has dropped into some bushes on the street-side of the wall. He leans his head back against the stucco.

INT. SUTTON'S BEDROOM - A BEAT LATER

... Ted closes the slider behind Emma as they come back inside. He snaps the lock into place.

TED

You okay?

EMMA

Yeah. I'm fine. Maybe I imagined it.

TED

I was kind of talking in general. You've been different since we got home.

EMMA

So everyone keeps telling me.

TED

Well, if it matters or not -- I like it.

EMMA

You do?

TED

And your mom is actually kind of hopeful.

Emma studies this stranger who thinks he's her father.

TED (CONT'D)

It's nice to know we have each other... to rely on. God, how 'Brady Bunch' was that?

EMMA

I loved that show.

TED

You hated it.

EMMA

Hey. I'm allowed to change my mind -- I'm a teenager.

Ted smiles. Emma smiles back.

TED

But you know what I mean, right? A family's a great thing.

EMMA

... What I've wanted my whole life.

The irony lingers -- as well as the moment -- as Ted starts to the door, turns back --

TED

When you were a kid... right about now you'd ask for a hug.

EMMA

So am I too old... now?

Ted smiles and crosses back to embrace her warmly. Emma closes her eyes against his broad shoulder, makes sure he doesn't see the tear in her eye when they part.

TED

Good night, honey. Sleep tight.

Ted goes out into --

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A little stunned, Ted looks back at the closed door...

INT. SUTTON'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

THUNK! A pillow hits Emma. She rolls over, the FACE in front of her COMING INTO FOCUS -- it's Laurel in her cheerleader outfit.

LAUREL

First day of school -- I've got to wear this, but the whole school's going to be dying to see what Sutton Mercer is wearing. 'Little curious, myself. Better hurry.

Laurel bolts out of the room. Emma jumps up, throws open the closet, gazes on rack upon rack of trendy threads.

EMMA

You said this would be fun, Sutton...
(slowly smiles)
And it finally is.

She dives into the closet...

INT. MERCER KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Emma makes her grand entrance, and everyone -- Laurel, Ted and Kristin -- turn. Emma looks very, very Sutton.

TED

Can a kid get suspended for looking too good?

Emma is already diving into a platter of eggs.

EMMA

These are amazing...

She looks over to her "family." All are staring at her.

KRISTIN

Last time I made you eggs, you refused to touch them. You said, 'What, you want me to get fat?'

LAUREL

Eggs. Strictly *verbotten* on the Sutton 'starve yourself to death diet.'

EMMA

I guess eggs are my new tofu. Okay if I take some bacon, too?

Laurel gasps --

LAUREL

Don't worry -- I won't tell anyone.
Obviously you need the protein for your
big match with Nisha.

(starts out)

Me? I've got to go purge and brush my
teeth.

Laurel ducks out. Emma, meanwhile, pauses by a small gallery of family photos on a shelf in the breakfast nook. *Exotic vacations. Elaborate birthday celebrations.* All the fun Sutton experienced -- and Emma didn't. Emma lifts a photo of Kristin holding Sutton as a baby. Kristen appears at her side, looks over her shoulder.

KRISTIN

The miracle was getting you to sit
still long enough to take a picture.

EMMA

(assuming)

I was a fussy baby...

KRISTIN

Very defiant. I used to hold you and
stare into those big eyes and wonder...

Kristin trails off. Emma can tell she wants to say more.

EMMA

So I don't know if I've ever asked you
this, but did you guys want just one
kid, or two?

Kristin, taken aback, looks at who she thinks is Sutton.

KRISTIN

I don't...

EMMA

I mean... was I supposed to be an only
child?

KRISTIN

Yes, actually... Your dad was an
intern at UCLA... We're in this little
apartment in West L.A., no money. One
baby seemed like all we could handle.

Ted glances up from his paper during the ensuing silence. Kristin is suddenly misty-eyed.

EMMA

I'm sorry... I just...

KRISTIN

It's okay. I'll see you after practice
for our night out.

Kristin waves a hand and hurries out of the room. Ted
gives Emma an uneasy smile.

TED

She's fine.

Ted quickly goes after Kristin. Emma can SEE them through
the door into the dining room...

EMMA'S P.O.V. -- Ted holds an emotional Kristin, silently
caressing her back. He *whispers* something in her ear, but
we can't hear what.

LAUREL (O.S.)

(PRE-LAP)

Have you ever wondered -- what if you
were adopted into some other family?

EXT. SCOTTSDALE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

... Emma and Laurel have parked the BMW, heading toward the
modern, desert-themed high school.

EMMA

... All the time.

LAUREL

Think about it, you could be living...
wow, just about anywhere.

EMMA

I think I did okay... considering the
alternative.

(off Laurel's look)

I mean, if no one adopted me.

Laurel nods, pensive a moment.

LAUREL

Really? Are there still orphanages?

EMMA

No... I mean, probably not... They've
been replaced by foster families. I'm
guessing most are pretty awful...

(then)

'Least that's what I've heard.

Emma is looking off. A police car is pulling up. Garrett
Mathews is getting out, leaning back in to say goodbye to

the cop driving the car, his father, DAN MATHEWS, 47, a sergeant with the Scottsdale P.D. Garrett steps away from the car and his eyes catch Sutton's. He looks away and walks off toward campus. Laurel has seen the look.

LAUREL

Garrett Mathews. Most likely guy in high school to get in serious trouble... and most unlikely guy to have a father who's a cop.

(looks off)

Later, sis. If I don't see you -- good luck against Nisha.

Laurel veers off. Emma, alone, continues on, past the patrol car. She *feels* Garrett's father, Dan, watching her. Dan slowly drives the car along next to her, unnerving her.

Emma quickly turns a corner. Out of sight of the patrol car, she leans against a wall to catch her breath. She's definitely creeped by the encounter with the cop.

Meanwhile, "a parade" of KIDS is passing Emma. *Hi, Sutton. Hey, Sutton. Looking good, Sutton!* The AD-LIBBED greetings RING in Emma's head, though she still manages to meet each salutation with a beatific smile. JUMP TO --

NEAR THE SCHOOL ENTRANCE - MINUTES LATER

Mads and Char have sidled in on either side of Emma as she heads into the picturesque quad area of the high school.

CHAR

... So out of the blue, my mom has like a 'lurid' moment and starts going on and on about you...

MADS

I think you mean 'lucid...'

EMMA

Your mom was talking about me?

CHAR

Bunch of questions. It was weird. I still can't get over that they all went to high school together... our parents...

MADS

Too bad they don't still get along.

CHAR

Not like us. Friends for life, right,
Sutton?

EMMA

For life.

SCHOOL LOCKER AREA (OUTSIDE) - NEARLY CONTINUOUS

... Emma is absorbing everything Char and Mads are saying.

MADS

The key is not to get stuck... stuck
here, stuck in a rut... like our
parents... Like Thayer, when I go, I
go...

Mads and Char stop, but Emma keeps going. When Emma
realizes they've stopped, she turns back.

EMMA

What's wrong?

CHAR

Like, you just walked past your locker.

Emma shrugs it off, returns to the locker between them.

EMMA

Oh. Wasn't thinking.

MADS

And in case you forgot your combination
again... it's on the inside back flap
of your backpack.

CHAR

I've got to pick up my class schedule.
See you guys later.

Char continues off. Mads and Emma spin the tumblers on
their locks. Emma has to check her backpack flap.

MADS

Do you believe it? They've got Char in
Special Ed English. That's got to be
so embarrassing.

Emma opens Sutton's locker. The inside is plastered with
PHOTOS OF LUKE. One is crooked, pulling on the yellowing
tape holding it in place. Emma starts to refasten it. It
falls off, REVEALING a PHOTO OF THAYER underneath. He's
sitting in an Adirondack chair in front of a glistening
lake, a shack-like house behind him.

MADS (CONT'D)

Thayer...

Mads has looked over and seen the photo.

EMMA

Where was this taken?

MADS

I don't know. Some house by the lake.
Since you have the picture, I figured
you'd know.

EMMA

(quickly)

Guess someone stuffed it in my locker.

Mads regards Emma for a moment, then moves off.

ON A NEARBY WALL

Garrett is sitting on a wall. Emma looks over and finds him staring at her. Even though the BELL RINGS, neither looks away. Emma finds herself very unsettled. JUMP TO --

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - NOON

Emma's about to sit down at a lunch table. Luke swoops in, takes her arm.

LUKE

What -- we're going to give up our
table?

EMMA

No... I...

He takes her by the hand, leads her to a small, shady, *special* table. He rips into a sandwich. Emma is intently staring at him. He's easily the handsomest guy she's ever seen. She looks away.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Am I nuts -- or are people actually
staring at us?

Luke looks over, kind of shrugs...

LUKE

I guess...

Luke is quiet a moment.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Everyone's wondering if we're still a couple.

Emma looks around.

EMMA

How do you know that?

LUKE

Just... stuff I've heard. So... are we, still a couple? Because sometimes I think I kind of take it for granted...

Emma stares at him. Then --

EMMA

Luke... I really appreciate you... and this. I'd be crazy to take it for granted.

She drifts off before she reveals too much of Emma... Luke rescues her with a smile.

LUKE

Come on!

Luke suddenly grabs her and pulls her away. JUMP TO --

INT. DARK SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Deserted. No one in the seats. The stage is empty. Luke pulls Emma inside. Emma is tingling with anticipation.

LUKE

This, I didn't want anyone to see.

And Luke kisses Emma passionately on the lips. When they part --

LUKE (CONT'D)

With all that's been going on, I haven't been able to say what I've wanted to say for two days...

(then)

Welcome home, Sutton.

EMMA

Thanks.

And they kiss again.

LUKE

It's really weird, but I keep thinking there's something you're not telling me.

Emma looks away for a second. When she looks back, she's fully Sutton again --

EMMA

Actually, there's something you can tell *me*... How the hell I'm going to survive against Nisha today?

LUKE

Stay clear of her drop shot... and don't forget -- you're better than you think you are.

Off Emma's growing feelings for this prince she knows she'll soon have to give up...

EXT. TENNIS COURTS - DAY

... as a tennis ball spins in SLOW MOTION against a dark blue sky, DESCENDING to the taut strings of a racket -- THUNK -- a puff of dust and the ball rockets away...

REAL MOTION -- as we realize the ball was off Nisha's racket. It blasts past Emma, who is dressed the part, but very nervous. Can she really play at this level?

A female COACH is off to the side. All the courts are filled with practice rounds.

COACH LEE

Nisha! I said, easy. We're working our way back, ladies. I want nice long rallies... Sutton! Ready position...

Nisha punches a slow serve to Emma, who hits it back. Nisha plays with an ease and confidence that Emma meets with streetwise hustle. The rally goes on and on, Nisha running Emma around the court with perfectly placed shots.

IN THE BLEACHERS -- Luke, just coming off his own court (boy's tennis practice), is impressed with Sutton's determination.

ON A DISTANT WALL -- Mysterious Garrett Mathews watches.

ON THE TENNIS COURT -- Nisha and Emma's marathon rally is drawing some attention. A few of the players have come to the fence to watch. Nisha's barely broken a sweat, but Emma is near-collapse, though far from giving up.

Nisha draws Emma to the net with a pair of wicked drop shots, then attempts to finish her off with a cross-court. Emma dives for the volley, edge of the racket just tipping the ball.

THE BALL -- in SLOW MOTION again -- dances along the edge of the tape, finally falling onto Nisha's side. Not playable for Nisha, and the victory goes to Emma.

Emma watches from the ground, exhausted, knee scraped, but mustering a victorious smile as a CHEER rises from the gallery.

COACH

Well. Looks like Sutton's back.

Luke is clapping and WHISTLING wildly. And Nisha, with a scathing look to Luke, storms off the court.

EXT. GYMNASIUM PARKING LOT - LATER

As Emma heads to her car, she spots Garrett perched on a wall a short distance away. Emma suddenly stops, spins, and marches right over to Garrett.

EMMA

Who're you -- Humpty-Dumpty or something? Every time I see you, you're sitting on a wall.

Garrett regards her curiously.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You know, if I tell Luke you're stalking me, he's going to be really pissed.

GARRETT

Stalking you...

EMMA

What else would you call it?

GARRETT

I guess just about *anything else*.

Garrett starts to stroll off. Emma calls to his back --

EMMA

That was you outside my window last night, wasn't it?

GARRETT

Of course it was.

This sends a shiver down Emma's back. Garrett's subsequent smile is even more unnerving. He continues off, as Emma, flustered, stomps back toward her car, rummaging in her purse for her keys. She doesn't see Laurel approaching --

LAUREL

Probably left them in your gym locker.
(when Emma looks up)
That was like every day last year...

EXT. GYMNASIUM LOBBY - A MINUTE LATER

Alone, Emma is walking back toward the gym to fetch her keys. She rounds a corner, passing bleachers. Suddenly, she stops dead.

HER P.O.V. -- Luke is back in the shadows of the bleachers in a wildly passionate kiss with Nisha!

Emma turns away... *blown away*...

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. BOUTIQUE SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY

A chic sidewalk establishment. The sun is low in the sky. Three chairs at Kristin and Emma's table; one has all the shopping bags on it.

KRISTIN

That's horrible. Actually kissing...?

Kristin is just as surprised that "Sutton" is sharing this with her.

EMMA

I know you really like Luke... and so did I... I'm just not sure... I mean, do I confront him?

KRISTIN

Do you want to?

EMMA

Well... I... I think I like being his girlfriend.

KRISTIN

That's interesting, because last year I wasn't always sure...

EMMA

But you think I should...

KRISTIN

Confront him? Heck, yes. You can't let a guy do that to you... The alternative would be to pretend you didn't see anything...

EMMA

And... leaving something out... isn't a lie.

Kristin seems a little uncomfortable with this.

KRISTIN

People say that.

EMMA

I think a lie's a lie. But if the reasons are... reasonable... then maybe you can forgive the lie.

Kristin blinks, looks off. Emma waits -- hoping she'll get some answers from Kristin.

KRISTIN

Sometimes things have nothing to do with reason.

A silence.

KRISTIN (CONT'D)

Your father and I love you very much. We *chose* you, Sutton. We picked you. And we'd do anything for you. Those are the only 'circumstances' that should matter.

Another silence.

EMMA

I... I'm sorry.

Kristin nods, then looks away. Emma realizes she pushed too fast, too hard -- and she's angry at herself.

INT. SUTTON'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

... START CLOSE on the PHOTO of Thayer, on the deck of the lake house. Emma puts the photo aside.

EMMA

What's the point -- ten PM, it's all over.

Laurel, dressed up, is at the desk, putting on make-up.

LAUREL

What happens at ten PM? Is this a Cinderella thing?

Emma stares at Laurel for a long moment, then --

EMMA

I should just tell you...

LAUREL

Tell me what?

Char and Mads suddenly scramble in through the slider, interrupting --

CHAR

You're not dressed! Don't say you're not going. All of Scottsdale High
(MORE)

CHAR (CONT'D)
 knows you kicked Nisha's ass. They
 want to see the fireworks.

LAUREL
 Wait. Sounds like she's got some place
 else to be...

Char has thrown open the closet, rummaging for something
 "Sutton" can wear.

CHAR
 What is wrong with you guys? So what
 if it's Nisha-Lucretia, it's still a
 party.

Emma studies Char and Mads. *Soon the real Sutton will be
 back and everything will change.*

EMMA
 You guys are amazing, you know that?

In Emma's whole life, she's never had friends like these.

CHAR
 You're really scaring me, Sutton. Now
 get changed, so we can go.

EMMA
 You guys pick something for me. You
 know more about what's in that closet
 than I do.

Char has spotted a garment bag to the side.

CHAR
 New stuff! Perfect!

EXT. NISHA'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Our four girls -- Char, Mads, Emma and Laurel -- make a
 "Charlie's Angels" entrance into this raging party. Emma
 is in the middle, and -- in the amazing dress -- has come
 full circle, looking remarkably like Sutton... and *feeling*
 like her, too. She flips her hair back -- pure Sutton.

Nisha's backyard is all lit up like daytime. Shakira's
 "Give It Up To Me" THUMPS over rock speakers.

Emma takes a long drink from a plastic cup of punch, reacts
 to the obvious-alcohol in it. She's checking the time when
 Luke slides in next to her.

LUKE

Thought we were coming together to
this.

EMMA

I came with my friends.

Emma's cool to him because of the kiss with Nisha.

LUKE

Okay... you want to explain this?

EMMA

What?

LUKE

... The cold shoulder?

EMMA

Sorry, Luke. Guess I'm just having a
little trouble trusting you right now.

ASIDE -- Nisha watches Luke and Emma closely.

MINUTES LATER - OFF TO THE SIDE

Mads, alone, is off to the side. Emma moves up to her.

EMMA

You okay?

MADS

No... I miss Thayer... I'm jealous...
that he got to go and I didn't... And
a little pissed, too.

Mads runs a hand through her hair. Emma notices bruise
marks on her arm. Emma catches her wrist.

EMMA

What happened?

MADS

I dunno. Banged it in field hockey.

Emma, unlike Sutton, is well-versed in signs of abuse.

EMMA

Okay...

MADS

I'm telling the truth.

EMMA

Right. Like everyone is. Luke. My mother.

MADS

I just don't want to talk about it -- is that okay?

Emma calms down, looks at her.

EMMA

I get it. Even best friends don't tell each other everything.

MADS

Close, but never too close.

EMMA

Guess that's why you haven't noticed.

MADS

Noticed what?

Emma would love to say, "That I'm not Sutton." Instead --

EMMA

How much I really care about you.

LATER - BY THE POOL

Emma's iphone displays "9:30 PM." Emma starts to secretly look for a graceful exit. *Sutton's going to be waiting.*

LUKE

You keep disappearing...

He's obviously tipsy as he moves in for a kiss. Emma shoves him back. *She's all Emma now, no Sutton.*

EMMA

You know what -- you can forget this. I saw you with Nisha, okay? The bleachers? So how long's it been going on?

LUKE

Sutton...

EMMA

(overlapping)
... All summer? Or just since I got back? I vote 'all summer.'

LUKE

You were avoiding me -- you were *distracted*.

EMMA

So what was that today -- your lips just *accidentally* ran into Nisha's?

LUKE

She kissed me!

EMMA

Oh, please...

LUKE

... I told her it's over, and it was a summer thing, and that you and I had talked... *Remember?* The auditorium?

Nisha is suddenly there, in Emma's face.

NISHA

He doesn't give a crap about you.

LUKE

That's not true...

NISHA

(to Emma)

You won nothing today. You got lucky. You've never been in my league and you never will be...

EMMA

You know what, Nisha? I've known people like you my whole life. Even wanted to be like you at one point... But all you do is put people down... like somehow that makes you better...

NISHA

At least it doesn't make me a poser.

EMMA

What?

NISHA

Truth is, you were abandoned, Sutton... Even your real mother didn't want you.

Emma snaps, hauling off and slapping Nisha as hard as she possibly can! The blow rocks Nisha off her feet. Mads grabs Emma's arm before she can pounce.

NISHA (CONT'D)

Get her out of here! Now... or, swear to God, I call the cops...

EXT. NISHA'S HOUSE - FRONT DRIVE - MINUTES LATER

Mads is coming out with Emma. Mads is laughing...

MADS

That was beautiful... Stomped Nisha twice in one day. Hey, where're you going? I'll come with.

EMMA

No. I'm good. Just... going home.

Emma heads up the street. Mads goes the other way.

FEET begin to shadow Emma from an adjacent lawn. Closing.

AT EMMA'S CAR

... Emma sits into the driver's seat. She hits "four" on the navigation preset. DIRECTIONS to the Lake House APPEAR. Suddenly, Garrett jumps into the passenger seat.

GARRETT

I'm really tired of this game.

EMMA

Get out... get out of this car. I... I didn't even know you were here...

GARRETT

You didn't look up. 'Humpty' was on the wall.

When Emma doesn't say anything, Garrett suddenly leans in and kisses her. Serious liplock. When they finally part --

GARRETT (CONT'D)

I knew it. You're not Sutton.

Off a flummoxed Emma... *caught*...

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE NISHA'S - *MOMENTS LATER* - NIGHT

Emma has gotten out of the car, pacing in a circle as Garrett jumps out as well.

GARRETT

I'm right, aren't I? You're not Sutton. You're someone else.

EMMA

And you're a pain in my ass...

GARRETT

See, Sutton wouldn't say that...

EMMA

Shut up! Go away!

GARRETT

Or that. Or that.

EMMA

I'm Sutton, okay? See?

(flips hair)

Sutton. S-u-t-t... Oh, forget it.

Garrett gets in Emma's way.

GARRETT

Prove it. Prove you're Sutton. Answer one question -- who's your boyfriend?

EMMA

Luke. Luke Coburn is my boyfriend. Or was.

GARRETT

Or *never* was. *I'm* your boyfriend, Sutton.

Emma stops, agape, turns to him.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

Luke was for appearances. Your parents don't like my parents... and never would have approved of me. Luke was easy. He liked you, your parents love him... on the surface, it was perfect. But you and I have been seeing each other for nearly a year. We texted the entire time you were in the South Pacific. And skyped. And talked.

Emma just stands there.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

I got suspicious when I saw you on the court with Nisha. More suspicious when you accused me of being a stalker. And that kiss just now -- final confirmation...

EMMA

You done?

GARRETT

When you tell me where the real Sutton is.

EMMA

Okay. I will. She's right behind you.

When Garrett instinctively turns, Emma suddenly bolts for the BMW, jumping in and locking the door before Garrett -- who's chasing her -- can jump in. Emma nearly runs him over as she peels away!

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - NIGHT

Emma pulls up in the BMW, stops in a cloud of dust. The deserted lake house is just ahead. The placid reservoir reflects a full moon.

NAV SYSTEM VOICE

You have arrived...

Emma checks the dashboard clock. 10:00 PM.

INT. LAKE HOUSE - A MINUTE LATER

The front door CREAKS open. Emma steps into this deserted rental, tries a light switch. Nothing.

EMMA

Sutton? Are you here?

No answer. She walks further into the house, her only light source the MOONLIGHT in a window. There's a living room... dining area. The back of the house beckons next.

INTERCUT -- a SEDAN, headlights off, rolls in next to Emma's BMW.

IN A BACK BEDROOM -- Emma stops when she notices a little SPARKLE on the floor. She bends down, finds a necklace -- apparently the one Sutton lost.

INTERCUT -- mysterious, dark FEET start up the porch steps.

IN THE BACK BEDROOM -- Emma hears a faint CREAK.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Sutton?!

She pockets the necklace, runs back to --

LIVING ROOM - Emma stops in her tracks. A FLASHLIGHT'S in her eyes. A second later, it snaps off. It's Garrett again.

GARRETT

So you ready to tell me who you are,
where you've come from, and what the
hell you've done with Sutton?

Emma, nervous, stays silent...

GARRETT (CONT'D)

... Fine. If you want, I can go to
Sutton's parents. Or my father... the
cop?

EMMA

Okay! All right...
(deep breath)

I'm not Sutton. I'm her twin sister.
My name is Emma. Emma Becker.

(exhales)

God, you have no idea how many times in
the last two days I've wanted to say
that. We switched places... when I got
here...

(then)

Look, Sutton will be here any second.
This was where we agreed to meet. Ten
o'clock. I'll let *her* explain.

Garrett still regards her with a healthy dose of suspicion.

GARRETT

Man. Two whole days. You fooled
everyone.

EMMA

Except you.

GARRETT

Sometimes all it takes is a kiss.
(studies her)

So you haven't answered my questions.

(MORE)

GARRETT (CONT'D)

Starting with -- where did you come from?

EMMA

Unfortunately a place I can't go back to.

TIME CUT --

EXT. LAKE HOUSE DOCK - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Emma and Garrett walking out onto the back dock. Emma is staring at Sutton's necklace while Garrett holds the "Thayer on the dock" photo.

GARRETT

... So you're running from the law... in Nevada. That explains why you're here.

EMMA

I told Sutton I wouldn't say anything to anybody...

GARRETT

This has to do with her search for her real parents, doesn't it?

EMMA

She told you?

GARRETT

I know Sutton's been looking into it. And I'm guessing, except for you, I'm the only other person who knows.

EMMA

Do you know what's in L.A.?

GARRETT

Besides Disneyland, no idea.

EMMA

It's where she went. And she was supposed to get back tonight... and meet me here.

Garrett looks off, thinking. Finally --

GARRETT

It's weird. The night before you got here, Sutton and I had this strange conversation in Mads's poolhouse. She
(MORE)

GARRETT (CONT'D)
 said she had to go -- something
 important -- and just ran out.

EMMA
 Maybe she came here...

Emma dangles the necklace on a finger... He studies it in
 the moonlight for a moment.

GARRETT
 So, what's it like -- being Sutton?

EMMA
 Garrett -- I'm serious -- it's only
 been two days and I think I've screwed
 up her whole life.

INT. MADS' HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mads' father, Alec Vega, is washing his hands in the sink.
 Mads comes in through the back door, home from the party.
 Alec -- perspiring -- is dressed in dark clothes.

MADS
 Hi, Dad. I know it's late... I was at
 a party.

ALEC
 Have any fun?

MADS
 Not really. Way too much drama.

ALEC
 Thought you liked that stuff. Good
 fodder for that big novel you're going
 to write some day.

There's just a little bit of ridicule in Alec's voice.

MADS
 I guess...
 (then)
 It's weird -- I keep expecting Thayer
 to show up. Today at school. Tonight
 at the party. Remember how he'd shoot
 baskets out there... sometimes till two
 in the morning.

Alec looks out through the kitchen window. The garage
 backboard and basket stand idle in a flood light.

ALEC

I don't really want to talk about that
right now.

(then)

Go to bed, Madeline. You have school
tomorrow.

HALLWAY AND THAYER'S ROOM

Mads pauses by the open door to Thayer's room, looks in on
his things. A haunting, moonlit glow to the place. Her
cell TONES. Mads quickly answers --

MADS

Sutton?

KRISTIN (O.C.)

(filtered, on phone)

Madeline? Thank God you picked up...
It's Kristin... I need to know the
last time you saw Sutton...

EXT. LAKE HOUSE DOCK - NIGHT

Emma is a wreck, unloading to Garrett in a cathartic *aria* --

EMMA

... I broke up with her fake boyfriend.
Accused her *real* boyfriend, *you*, of
being a stalker. And with her
parents... I tried to help, but only
made it worse... At least with her
sister Laurel, I might actually have
fixed something.

(then)

Maybe I should just tell them. Go back
to that house and confess the whole
thing.

Garrett is gazing off, turns back to her.

GARRETT

You can't tell them. You promised
Sutton you wouldn't say anything.

(then)

It's weird. I don't like any of this.
She didn't tell me. She could have
picked up the phone...

EMMA

Yeah, and she could have told me that
we... I mean, the two of *you* were
involved...

Garrett looks at her.

GARRETT
Sutton is everything to me.

EMMA
To me, too. It's why I've done
everything I can to make this work.

GARRETT
Then you have to keep doing it... keep
up the... deception. We both do.

Emma nods, looks at Garrett -- in this moment, she sees what Sutton sees in him. Someone who feels intensely -- someone of extreme loyalty. She looks away from his intense stare.

EMMA
She promised she'd be here right at
ten. Why wouldn't she call if she got
delayed? I have her phone, but...

Emma realizes she can't find the iphone. Garrett flashes a warm smile --

GARRETT
Sutton was always losing it, too.

JUMP TO --

EXT./INT. SUTTON'S CAR - NIGHT

Emma lifts the phone off the car seat, checks the screen.

EMMA
Seven missed calls.

As Emma scrolls them --

GARRETT
Sutton in there?

EMMA
Everyone but.

STRANGER'S P.O.V. -- FROM A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY

... SOMEONE is hiding in some brush, watching as Emma says something to Garrett, jumps into the BMW, and drives off. As the P.O.V. focuses on Garrett watching after her...

INT. MERCER FOYER - NIGHT

Sgt. Dan Mathews, Garrett's father, is talking to Kristin and Ted in hushed tones. Mads and Laurel look on. Another pair of cops are moving through with evidence kits.

TED

... Alarm company said it went off at exactly ten-fifteen.

A familiar voice from the open front door causes them all to turn --

EMMA

What's going on?

KRISTIN

Oh thank God...

Kristin runs to Emma, pulling her into an embrace.

KRISTIN (CONT'D)

We'd worried they'd taken you...

EMMA

Taken...?

TED

Someone broke into the house... into your room...

DAN MATHEWS

Would you know if anything's missing?

JUMP TO --

INT. SUTTON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

START on the ransacked bedroom. WHIP BACK to Emma as she walks in, her parents, Mathews and Mads and Laurel right behind. Laurel and Mads linger in the doorway.

LAUREL

I got home first. The alarm was going off.

There's glass from the broken slider on the floor...

TED

We think maybe Laurel scared them away.

Emma stops over the desk, turns to them.

EMMA

My laptop's gone.

DAN MATHEWS

You didn't have it with you?

She looks at them. She's close to telling them who she really is...

EMMA

No... I didn't...

DAN MATHEWS

According to Madeline Vega and Laurel, you left the party early. Where were you, Sutton?

Emma still hesitates... Kristin crosses to her, takes her in her arms, and holds her closely.

KRISTIN

... I don't care where you were. It doesn't matter. So long as you're safe.

(holds her at arm's length)

Sutton, I... I'm sorry about before... From now on, nothing but the truth. I promise.

(embraces her again)

God, what would I ever do without my Sutton?

As Emma is enveloped in a mother's arms, a mother's warmth...

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

P.O.V. SHOT -- arms rowing out into the middle of the lake... a gloved hand reaching down... taking Sutton's laptop out from under oily rags... tossing it into the water with a SPLASH.

UNDERWATER

... as the laptop sinks into the murky blackness... the reflection of the full moon rippling on the surface...

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE