

NEVER BEEN KISSED

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CLOSE UP ON A GIRL'S FACE

It's Josie Geller, 25, cute, blonde and scared out of her wits. We hear the chanting of a crowd.

CROWD

Josie! Josie! Josie!

JOSIE (V.O.)

You know in some movies how they have a dream sequence only they don't tell you it's a dream?

Pull out to reveal Josie on pitcher's mound of a--

EXTERIOR. A BASEBALL STADIUM -- NIGHT

It's packed. Reporters line the field. All eyes are on Josie.

JOSIE

(V.O.)

This is so not a dream.

The stadium clock sets at 5:00. The crowd goes crazy. Josie takes a deep, nervous breath and smiles, "Oh God."

INTERIOR. ELECTRONICS STORE -- CONTINUOUS

Multiple images of Josie play across rows of TV sets. A crowd has gathered.

JOSIE

(V.O.)

It wasn't supposed to be like this. I was just trying to do my job. And then things happened. Well, life happened. And now I'm here.

EXTERIOR. BASEBALL STADIUM -- CONTINUOUS

The clock starts to tick down. The crowd yells again.

JOSIE

(V.O.)

Trust me. I am not the kind of girl who does things like this. I mean, two months ago you couldn't have picked me out of a crowd...

INTERIOR. CHICAGO SUN TIMES BULLPEN -- DAY

Packed with office workers. Bustling with activity. The camera searches the crowd.

JOSIE (V.O.)

Told you. I'm over there.

The camera swings to Josie entering. Rhoda, a young copy assistant, tails her, pen and paper in hand.

RHODA

Theater--

JOSIE

Standard American calls for "er". Standard British is "re". So go for "er", unless you're a pompous American, then go for British.

Josie keeps negotiating the maze, leaving Rhoda in her wake.

RHODA

No. Theater. Last night. We were supposed to go, remember?

Josie stops at a desk where Merkin Burns, officious office assistant, is talking on the phone. He picks his nose with abandon as he talks, ignoring Josie.

MERKIN

(into phone)

No way. No way. No way. Ech, hold on.

(to Josie)

What.

JOSIE

Messages?

Merkin removes his finger from his nose and uses it to pick up a pink message. He holds it out to Josie. Disgusted, she takes it by one corner.

MERKIN

(into phone)

Seriously? No way. No way--

Josie's still standing there.

MERKIN

What

JOSIE

Merkin, do you think we could get some more yellow highlighters? I checked the box and we're--

Merkin swivels his chair 180 degrees so his back is to Josie and continues with his phone call.

MERKIN

(back into phone)

Okay, I'm back, so--

Josie sighs, walks to her door. It's marked with a lopsided nameplate: Josie Geller, Copy Editor. She adjusts the plate so it's perfectly straight.

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Josie enters, reads the message still gingerly held in two fingers, and drops it into the trash can. She hangs her coat squarely on the back of her door, takes five pencils from her pencil pot, one by one

sharpens them in her pencil sharpener, and then lays them out neatly in a row. She smiles, satisfied, ready for another day.

Anita Brandt, late 20's, pretty in a semi-unprofessional way, bursts in, smiling.

ANITA

Guess who I did it with last night...

JOSIE

(duh)

Roger in Op/Ed.

ANITA

Who told!

JOSIE

You did. Yesterday you said, and I quote, "I have a date with Roger from Op/Ed tonight and I'm going to do it with him."

ANITA

Well, that doesn't mean it was going to happen for sure.

Josie just stares at her.

ANITA

Once it didn't happen for sure.

Gus Strauss, late 30's, would probably clean up well, enters. He tosses some copy onto Josie's desk.

GUS

Computer's down. Septuplets story. I need it back by five. Hopefully the copy's not a mess.

JOSIE

(emphasizing)

It is hoped that it's not a mess. "Hopefully" is an adverb. It means "with hope". You have it defining the copy, and I'm pretty sure the copy doesn't have feelings.

Gus and Anita just stare at Josie.

JOSIE

Well, excuse me for caring about words.

GUS

(to Anita)

So. You and Roger in Op/Ed.

ANITA

Oh, man! Who told?

GUS

Roger in Op/Ed. Don't make me send you another memo about my policy on inter-office dating.

JOSIE

Intra office. And they're not dating. They're having sex.

ANITA

And what is your policy? That if you're not getting any, no one can?

Anita flounces off.

GUS

How many times have I fired her?

JOSIE

Five-- Six--

GUS

(shrugging, giving up)

Eh.

Gus turns to exit.

JOSIE

Hey Gus--did you see the story idea I left on your desk?

GUS

Yeah--the blind foster home mother. It was good. I got Cahoon on it.

JOSIE

(disappointed)

Oh. Cahoon. Yeah, he's--good.

GUS

Geller, we've been over this. You're a great copy editor. Maybe my best copy editor. You're not a reporter.

JOSIE

You've done five of my ideas.

GUS

You know what separates us office flunkies from the reporters?

JOSIE

They don't have to be in the office Christmas show?

GUS

A flack jacket.

JOSIE

(not getting it)

A--flack jacket.

GUS

Every Tom, Dick, and Harry thinks he can write. But a journalist gets in there, right where the bombs are. He's aggressive. Grabs the bull by the balls.

JOSIE

You don't think I can grab bulls' balls?

GUS

Geller, you don't want a reporter's life. They're very--messy. You're all about order. Control. And getting me my copy by five.

JOSIE

Hey--I can be out of control.

Gus smiles. On his way out he re-adjusts Josie's nameplate so it hangs at an angle. Tormented, Josie waits a beat. She can't take it, and runs to the door and straightens it.

GUS

(over his shoulder)

Copy by five.

INTERIOR. SUN TIMES LUNCHROOM -- DAY

Actually, a pretty depressing kitchenette area. Anita and Josie eat lunch--Anita eats Chinese out of a container, Josie has three baggies of perfectly cut food in front of her.

JOSIE

Be honest. Do you think I'm aggressive?

Anita ponders a moment.

ANITA

Okay. Remember when they took your office chair in for repairs and forgot to return it?

JOSIE

Yeah.

ANITA

You stood for like a month.

Cynthia, an affable African-American woman in her 40's, enters and puts three microwave meals in the microwave.

JOSIE

Just because I'm not out of control doesn't mean I can't write.

CYNTHIA

Josie, you listen to me. If you feel you're a writer--(touching her chest)

Here, deep inside, don't let anyone tell you you're not. Look at me. Every day I come to this paper and I pour my heart and soul into what I do. I feel it, passionately, to the core of my being.

JOSIE

You write obituaries.

CYNTHIA

Hey, if you can make a busted aorta sound good--honey, that's art.

The microwave dings off. Cynthia fishes the three Lean Cuisines out. Anita and Josie share a look.

ANITA

Cynthia, aren't they only diatetic if you eat them one at a time?

CYNTHIA

I eat 'em one at a time.

ANITA

(to Josie)

Y'know, maybe Gus has a point. It wouldn't kill you to relax and have some fun. Roger's got a friend, Marshall in editing? The one with the lazy eye? Maybe we could double date.

JOSIE

Forget it.

ANITA

I swear to God, Jos. When is the last time you went on a real live date?

JOSIE

I'm concentrating on my career right now.

ANITA

Do you own any colored underwear? Stripes? Anything?!

JOSIE

(embarrassed)

Anita!

ANITA

Look. You're way under 30, you're cute, some guys find white Carter's underwear sexy-

(beat)

If you talk to his nose, you don't even notice the eye.

Josie laughs in spite of herself.

JOSIE

The right guy is out there. I'm just not going to kiss a whole bunch of losers to get to him.

ANITA

Yeah, but sometimes kissing the losers can be a fun diversion.

JOSIE

When I finally get kissed, I'll know.

Anita and Cynthia trade looks.

ANITA

Okay. If you've never kissed a guy, we got bigger problems than the underwear.

JOSIE

I've kissed guys. I've just never kissed a guy. Felt that thing--

CYNTHIA

"That thing"? Is that what you kids are calling it these days?

JOSIE

That thing. That moment. You kiss someone and it's like the world around you gets all hazy and the only thing in focus is you and this other person and you know that one person is the person you're meant to be kissing for the rest of your life. And for that one moment you've been given this amazing gift and you want to laugh and cry at the same time because you're so lucky you found it, and so scared that it will all go away.

Anita and Cynthia take this in.

CYNTHIA

Damn, girl. You are a writer.

INTERIOR. TIKI POST -- DAY

Basically a Mailbox Etc. store, but dressed in a Tahitian theme. Cardboard hula dancers hold Fedex envelopes.

Rob Geller, 23, good-looking, wears a smock with "Tiki Post" emblazoned across it over a Hawaiian shirt. He stands watch at the cash register.

Monty Maylik, 50, proud owner, rearranges a display. The place is empty.

ROB

Hey Monty--you think we'll get any business today?

MONTY

(of course)

I'm handing out a free lei to every customer! What do you think?

ROB

I think maybe people are scared off by the tiki torches.

MONTY

Change is scary. Robbie, let me tell you a little something about the mail business. I've been in it over thirty years. And in those thirty years, the only thing that's changed is the Elvis stamp and some gun laws. People are bored! They wanna shake things up!

ROB

I thought people just wanted their mail delivered on time.

Josie walks into the store, triggering Hawaiian music. Monty puts a lei over her head.

MONTY

Aloha! Welcome!

ROB

Relax, Monty. It's just my sister.

Monty takes the lei off her neck. Josie hands Rob an envelope. Rob rifles through the cash inside.

ROB

Thanks, Jos. I'll pay you back. Bambi thanks you, too.

Rob indicates a beat-up wreck of a yellow car parked outside.

JOSIE

That is so--weird that you name your car.

ROB

No it's not. Guys name their penises.

JOSIE

Okaaaay....(then)

That car's going to bankrupt you.

ROB

She just needs a new windshield wiper.

JOSIE

Because I bought the windshield last week. I'm a hubcap away from owning more of Bambi than you do.

Rob hands the money back.

ROB

Y'know what? Take it. I don't want it.

Josie hands it back.

JOSIE

Rob, take the money, okay? It's no big deal.

ROB

No, it is. It's just one more thing to add to your "things that make you a better person than me" list.

JOSIE

Better person than I.

ROB

See!

JOSIE

I know this woman. She works in admissions at Lakeshore Community? She might be able to get you in for the Fall semester. Maybe she could get you the baseball scholarship, and I could help and--

ROB

I'm not going to college, Jos. And I'm not playing anymore baseball. This is my life.

JOSIE

(whispering)

This--this is a luau that sells packing material!

ROB

Someday this luau is going to be all mine!

JOSIE

How can you just give up like that? You had a real shot at playing college ball and you let one case of mono stop everything. Don't you want more? To move out of Mom and Dad's? Pay your own bills?

ROB

Oh yay! And then I could be as happy as you!

JOSIE

For your information, I am very happy. Deliriously happy. I lead a very happy life!

She exits. The music starts up again.

MONTY

Come again!

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

We pan around the neatest and quietest walk-up you've ever seen. Lots of books on shelves.

We find Josie sitting at her small table putting the finishing touches on a needlepoint pillow. She turns it over and we see it says: "LOVE". She holds up the final product to a terrarium, look up at her two turtles.

JOSIE

There. What d'you think, guys? Where should it go?

Josie looks around the living room.

JOSIE

Hmm.

(She pretends to listen to the turtles.)

What's that? Bedroom? Great idea!

She walks into the bedroom with the pillow.

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

A perfectly arranged Laura Ashley bedroom. We pan over to the bed. It is completely covered in needlepoint pillows. Josie places the latest one on top of the others and smiles.

JOSIE

Perfect.

INTERIOR. A CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME

It's packed with the NEWSPAPER STAFF. Hiram Rigfort, 65, white-haired, dignified owner of the paper presides. Anita and Josie sit next to each other. Next to Anita sits Roger from Op/Ed, a good-looking guy in his 30's.

RIGFORT

Let me start out by saying that I was very impressed by the investigative piece Dutton did on pesticides in our supermarkets.

An older man, Dutton, smiles proudly.

RIGFORT

But since the Trib did a better piece on the same subject, you're fired.

Dutton's face falls. Everyone looks horrified.

RIGFORT

You heard me. Out. Out.

Dutton shuffles out. Josie takes a big bite of donut.

RIGFORT

So. Happy March everybody!

ALL

(by rote)

Happy March Mr. Rigfort.

RIGFORT

To celebrate, I've decided it's time for another undercover feature!

Everyone looks underwhelmed.

RIGFORT

You all know that some of my best inspiration comes from personal experience. Who knew that my botched foray into hair plugs would lead to last month's award-winning expose -- "hair today, gone tomorrow"? Hat's off to you, Bruns.

We pan over to Bruns, a reporter whose hair is missing in odd-looking clumps. He nods sadly.

RIGFORT

Or should I say "hat's on"! And what about when my wife had that affair with Gil, her ski instructor and Howard went undercover as an expert slalom skier.

Howard smiled wanly. Both his arms are in casts. Camera pans the room as Rigfort continues, picking out different reporters.

RIGFORT

So last night I'm sitting around the dinner table with my family. The wife, the two nannies, the boys, and we're eating chicken with this peanut sauce.

Camera stops at a Chef Boyardee look-alike.

GUS

Undercover chef. I like it.

RIGFORT

Hang on, Gus. So, we're eating this peanut sauce and suddenly the younger kid starts choking.

Camera stops at a Nurse Ratchet look-alike.

ANITA

(sotto to Josie)

I'm smelling undercover ER nurse.

RIGFORT

Turns out he's allergic to peanuts. And I think -- holy shit. I don't even know my own kids. I mean, who knows if they're even mine? And it got me thinking. How much do we know about kids today? What are they thinking? How many of them are allergic to peanuts? Boom. It hit me -- "My Semester In High School."

Camera stops at a bald guy, the jerks over one seat to Josie.

RIGFORT

(to Josie)

You. What's your name.

JOSIE

Josie. Josie Geller.

RIGFORT

You enroll on Friday.

General crowd hubub. Josie's in shock.

JOSIE

Oh. But--I'm not a reporter yet...

RIGFORT

And none of these geezers could pass for a day under 40. Have fun.

And Rigfort exits.

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Josie is so excited she can hardly speak to Anita.

JOSIE

It's finally happening, Anita! I'm going to write!

Anita looks concerned.

JOSIE

My own undercover feature - "Written by Josie Geller".

ANITA

Jos - Maybe you should turn it down.

A beat. Josie's face falls.

JOSIE

You don't think I can do it.

ANITA

No - It's just a lot of pressure for your first piece, that's all. I mean, it's not a half-page article, it's a major undercover piece, Jos. Look what Rigfort did to Dutton - and that guy's his cousin!

Gus enters.

GUS

Don't worry, I'll straighten all this out.

JOSIE

But I don't want it straightened out.

GUS

Geller, this is way out of your league.

Josie takes in Anita and Gus.

JOSIE

Okay, just so I'm clear here -- neither of you think I can do this.

ANITA

Jos, that's not what we're --

JOSIE

Anita, when you wanted to seduce the guy in the mailroom and you didn't think you could learn Spanish fast enough, who quizzed you on your verbs?

Anita looks down, chastened.

ANITA

Senorita Josie.

JOSIE

And Gus - when you picked up knitting, who showed you how to hold the needles?

GUS

(sotto)

You did.

ANITA

(to Gus)

You knit?

JOSIE

So, this is my chance.

A beat.

GUS

I'm not holding your job for you, Geller.

Josie jumps up and down and hugs Gus, who is clearly uncomfortable.

GUS

Don't make me send you the memo on hugging in the workplace.

Josie smiles. Gus exits.

ANITA

I do believe in you, Jos. Anything you need, I'll help you out.

Josie sits, motions to the brown paper bag.

JOSIE

You can start by handing me that bag.

Anita does. Josie sticks it over her face, flips her head between her knees and starts hyperventilating again.

Close up on Rob, wearing his Tiki Post outfit. He shakes his head.

ROB

No. Uh, uh.

Pull out to reveal him standing with Josie on the sidewalk in front of
-

EXTERIOR. TIKI POST - DAY

Josie's shiny Buick is parked right behind Bambi at the curb.

JOSIE

It's just for a couple of months.

ROB

You can't just "borrow" my car for a couple of months! That's like ten years in Bambi life!

JOSIE

I'll give you my Buick Le Sabre.

Rob rolls his eyes and enters the store.

JOSIE

You can name it whatever you want.

INTERIOR. TIKI POST - CONTINUOUS

Josie follows Rob into the store. He turns.

ROB

Wow. This must be big.

JOSIE

I got an assignment from the paper. I'm going undercover. Back to high school.

Rob starts laughing uncontrollably.

JOSIE

What!?

ROB

Do you remember high school?

JOSIE

It was a long time ago -

ROB

Don't you remember what they called you?

Slowly Josie's face falls. She looks very far away.

ROB

Josie -

INTERIOR. A HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY (FLASHBACK)

It's packed with kids. Everyone stares off-screen at chants -

ALL

Josie Grossie. Josie Grossie. Josie Grossie.

INTERIOR. TIKI POST - SAME

Josie looks stricken.

JOSIE

Josie Grossie.

ROB

I know. I came up with it.

(beat)

You look nauseous.

JOSIE

Nauseated. I look nauseated. Oh God.

She puts her hand over her mouth, races for the bathroom.

INTERIOR. TIKI POST BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Josie has just gotten violently ill. She rises off her knees, grabs some toilet paper to wipe her mouth. She looks down at her feet.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

We close up on brown leather oxfords and widen to reveal teenage JOSIE braces, heavy glasses, in all her nerdness, slowly walking down the corridor with a huge backpack on her back.

A boy sneaks up behind her, holds open the top of her backpack while another boy pours a half drunk Sprite into her backpack.

Kids smile and snicker as Josie continues down the hallway. She spots, Billy Prince, ultimate high school heartthrob, and approaches him nervously.

JOSIE

Hey, Billy Prince, I noticed you weren't in math today, and I have the notes in case you want -

Midway through Josie's speech, we hear the odd sound of liquid hitting linoleum. Josie follows Billy's gaze down to between her feet where a pool of Sprite has gathered. Billy starts to laugh. Kids around him join in. As the laughter echoes around her we DISSOLVE BACK TO:

INTERIOR. TIKI POST BATHROOM - SAME (PRESENT DAY)

Josie stares into the mirror. Staring back is teenage Josie.

JOSIE

This is a very bad idea.

INTERIOR. THE MALL - TEEN CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Anita and Josie cruise through a teen clothing store, carrying large bags from a stationery store. Josie picks up a platform sneaker and just stares at it.

ANITA

So, you were a geek. Big deal.

JOSIE

Anita, remember espadrilles?

ANITA

Please. That doesn't make you a nerd. Everyone wore those shoes.

JOSIE

The girls threw them at me in the locker room.

ANITA

Okay. That's bad.

JOSIE

At the end of the year the person who got the most direct hit to my head got to toss me into the pool.

ANITA

Mama mia.

(then)

Just because you were a nerd once doesn't mean it's going to happen again. That's why you have me for fashion consultation.

Anita pulls a slip skirt off a rack and holds it up.

ANITA

Now this is cute.

JOSIE

That is lingerie.

ANITA

So I was thinking about what you were saying - y'know, about really being kissed? I think Roger could be the one.

JOSIE

What'd you feel when you kissed him?

ANITA

Bridgework?

JOSIE

Very romantic.

Josie pulls out a plain button-down cardigan.

JOSIE

How about this?

ANITA

I am not letting you out of the house in that, young lady.

Anita grabs an awful white maribou jacket and matching earrings and holds them up.

ANITA

Cuuuute!

JOSIE

'Nita, this is about reporting, not accessorizing.

ANITA

And we're going to have to do something about your hair.

JOSIE

Anita!

ANITA

Jos, please try and have some fun here, okay? How many of us get to go back to high school? You're gonna have a blast!

SMASH CUT TO: CLOSE UP - AN ALARM CLOCK

on a bedside table. Surrounded by make-up, boxes of hair color, a stack of index cards, ripped magazine pages of teen looks, issues of Teen Beat and YM. The clock slips to 7:00. NPR starts playing. A hand reaches over, hits the radio off. SOUND EFFECTS: A school bell. As the bell continues to ring, we widen to:

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Josie sits up in bed, covers pulled up to her chin in terror.

EXTERIOR. A CHICAGO STREET - MORNING

MUSIC UP: "Morning Train". Crowds of commuters stream down the sidewalk and onto the stairs leading up to the El.

A big yellow car jerks into frame, backfires noisily. It's Josie at the wheel of Bambi. She jerks out of frame.

EXTERIOR. SOUTH GLEN SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

A suburban campus anchored by a main building. Cars pull into the parking lot for the beginning of the day. Kids greet each other, converge on the front doors of the school. General mayhem.

Bambi pulls in. She jerks into a spot, backfiring once more for effect. The entire scene stops. Kids freeze, look at Josie. A beat, and they they continue on their way.

INTERIOR. BAMBI - CONTINUOUS

Josie takes a few deep breaths.

JOSIE

Okay, I can do this. Piece of cake. I can do this.

EXTERIOR. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Josie steps out of the car wearing the maribou jacket, earrings, and white jeans. She shuts the door behind her, starts walking. She has unknowingly shut her jacket in the door and as she walks, a piece of maribou rips, trailing behind her like a tail.

JOSIE

Yeah, okay. Feeling good...

INTERIOR. SCHOOL LOBBY - SAME

Josie merges with the throngs of kids and is literally pushed into the lobby. She stares around, overwhelmed. "Go Rams!" banners share space with signs that read: "63 DAYS TIL PROM!" She inches her way along the wall until she is stopped by a guard who grabs her arm.

GUARD

Hey--where are you going?

JOSIE

Oh, I'm a student. Most definitely a student. In high school. Here. I am going to class. With my fellow students.

(greeting random kids)

Hi. Hi there.

The guard stares at her a beat and then motions behind them, to three huge metal detectors that the kids are filtering through. Josie smiles, "whoops," walks back.

GUARD

(under his breath)

Freak.

INTERIOR. SCHOOL LOBBY - MINUTES LATER

Josie's stuff lays out on the post-detector table - cell phone, laptop, mini tape recorder, electronic organizer, pager, being scrutinized by the guard. Josie's sure she's been found out. Camera widens. Down from Josie, we see other kids' belongings spread out. They have the identical high-tech equipment. The guard picks up Josie's nail file, examines it -

GUARD

Weapon.

And throws it in the trash.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

Josie stares at her class card and eyes the classrooms, totally lost. She approaches a boy in a flannel shirt and loose jeans.

JOSIE

Hi--um, I'm looking for Room 204, Ms. Knox?

As soon as the boy starts to talk, we notice something in his mouth - a tongue pierce. Josie does too. We zoom in on that shiny little metal ball. Josie is fixated. So fixated that we stop hearing the boy's voice. All we see is the mouth - and that ball - moving. The mouth closes. He's done. Josie's face is contorted in imagined pain.

JOSIE

Ow.

(catching herself)

I mean, wow. Wow. Great directions. Clear. Concise.

And Josie takes off, totally embarrassed.

BOY

(under his breath)

Freak.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

Josie walks up to Room 204. Opening the door, she's met by a sea of faces.

Ms. Knox, mid-forties, distracted but bubbly, sits in the front of the class.

MS. KNOX

Hi - hello. Willkommen. Entre.

Josie walks in. Kids whisper and snicker.

JOSIE

Sorry I'm late.

MS. KNOX

Yes, well, I'm sorry I forgot to take my hot flash medication this morning. Josie, right? Please sit. Mi casa es su casa.

Josie makes her way to the desk, trailing maribou. The class titters. She sits in front of two girls, Kirsten and Kristen, beautiful and intimidating.

KIRSTEN

That is so sad --

KRISTEN

I know, like five chickens had to die just so she could look that stupid.

MS. KNOX

Josie, in my classroom, tardiness is unacceptable --

JOSIE

I'm really sorry --

Ms. Knox pulls a ridiculously huge sombrero out from under her desk. The class laughs in recognition.

MS. KNOX

Not as sorry as I am.

Ms. Knox puts the sombrero on a less-than-thrilled Josie.

MS. KNOX

Ole! Ten minutes in this hat, you'll never be late again. So, let's hear something about you. Stand up. Stand up.

Josie does. The sombrero drops over her eyes. She adjusts it so she can read her notecards. CLOSE UP on the notecard --it's filled with precise script under a heading: MY PAST. She scans it, then flips the cards face-down on the desk. Confidently she begins --

JOSIE

My name is Josie. I'm a high school student. I came from --

Just then the classroom door opens. We see from Josie's perspective a blinding light, Josie squints. From the light emerges a shadowy vision of Billy Prince.

JOSIE

Billy?

Josie blinks, REVEAL not Billy, but a beautiful guy, Guy. He stands very close to her.

JOSIE

(catching herself)

Bali.

(another beat)

I'm from Billy-Bali. It's a suburb of Bali proper.

Guy pushes past her, tosses a wooden hall pass to Ms. Knox, and moves to his seat.

MS. KNOX

Bali. Fascinating! What did your family do there?

Josie looks around in panic, sees a student in a South Glen South windbreaker with huge ram on the back.

JOSIE

We were--sheep--farmers. We raised sheep. In Billy-Bali.

Josie realizes the trouble she's gotten herself into.

JOSIE

Oh my God.

(caught)

Oh my God--do I miss Billy-Bali.

(beat)

It had--a really great...aquarium.

She sits. Defeated.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Josie rushes down the hall, still toting her enormous bag. A huge banner - SOUTH GLEN, OUR NATION'S BEST PROM - hangs prominently. She talks covertly into a hand-held tape recorder.

JOSIE

Note to self--Research Bali. Kill Anita for picking out this outfit. Find and destroy sombrero.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM - SAME

Josie and her enormous bookbag enter. She takes a seat toward the back of the room.

Kristen, Kirsten and GIBBY, another beauty, enter and head to the back of the room.

Kirsten and Gibby stand over Josie, staring at her.

KIRSTEN

We sit here.

JOSIE

Oh. Sorry--I didn't know these were assigned.

GIBBY:

They're not.

Josie quickly gathers her things and moves one row forward, next to two empty seats. TWO STONERS shuffle over to Josie.

STONER 1

Sorry. We sit here.

JOSIE

(indicating two empty seats)

Couldn't you two--sit there?

STONER 2

Right. Except there are three of us--

The Stoners eye each other, then the two seats. A look of horror comes over Stoner 1.

STONER 1 (cont'd)

Dude--we left Jed at the 7-11!

(beat)

Again!

Josie picks up her stuff, moves to the last empty seat in the room-in the front row, surrounded by "Denominators" who all wear orange Denominator sweatshirts.

Sitting next to Josie is ALDYS, a Denominator--intense, wise, with a whole bunch of math medals on her sweatshirt. She smiles at Josie.

Josie smiles back and looks up as MR. COULSON enters the room. He's a ruggedly handsome twenty-something Yale grad.

He grabs a notebook out of his bag, goes around to sit on the front of his desk, sipping coffee from a Styrofoam cup.

SAM

Hi, everyone.

(Spots Josie)

I don't think we've met. I'm Sam Coulson- although for some reason the school has this thing about not letting you guys call me Sam.

JOSIE

(shyly)

I'm Josie. Geller. I think the school would probably be pretty comfortable with you calling, me that. Josie.

Sam smiles.

SAM

Josie since you're new--I love to drink my coffee during class, and since I allow myself to do this, I allow everyone to bring beverages to class as well.

(a beat)

welcome to Shakespeare's "As You Like It."

(beat)

Okay. How many of you actually read the assignment last night?

About five hands go up.

SAM (cont'd)

Not bad. Now how many of you spent more than thirty minutes eating salty snack foods?

Twenty hands. Sam laughs.

SAM (cont'd)

Man. If I could just get you guys to read while you eat.

Sam opens his book. Aldys notices Josie has no book. She moves next to her.

ALDYS

Here. We can share.

They share a smile.

SAM

'As You Like It" is an example of a Shakespearean--

Sam turns to the blackboard and starts writing. We CU on his butt, hardly discernable in his loose 501 jeans, all the girls swoon.

SAM (cont'd)

Pastoral Comedy. Anyone know what that means?

An enthusiastic, if slightly dim girl, SERA, waves her hand.

SERA

Oh oh oh! That's what they do to milk!

SAM

That's pasteurize, Sera. But close. Same letter--

(tapping three fingers on his arm a la charades)

--three syllables--

SERA

Parakeet?!

ALDYS:

(sotto to Josie)

There's a minute of my life I'll never get back.

Josie smiles at this.

SAM

Okay, anyone else---

Josie can't contain herself.

JOSIE

Pastoral means set in the country. Originally seen in the Eclogues of Virgil. It's from the Latin pascere. To graze.

Student bleats like a sheep O.S. Sam just stares at her, smiling. Finally, he walks over and shakes her hand.

SAM

Did I mention to the class that I love our new student?

Josie beams.

GIBBY

Did I mention that the class also loves our new kiss ass?

Josie's smile quickly fades.

SAM

Gibby, that's not exactly the kind of participation I'm looking for.

Gibby looks right at Josie.

GIBBY

(totally insincere)

Ooops. Sorry.

Josie just sits there, face burning.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Josie approaches her locker. She can't get to it because a COUPLE is busy making out against it.

A GIRL'S VOICE comes over the loudspeaker. She's completely ignored.

GIRL'S VOICE

Hi. This is Sydney, Student Body President! Okay, first. Bad news-The district didn't allocate enough funds, so as of this afternoon, there will be no music department. Now, about Prom--

The entire hallway FREEZES. The couple breaks their clinch and looks up. SILENCE. Josie is amazed.

SYDNEY'S VOICE

Voting on Prom theme has been completed. And the theme is--

CU on expectant FACES.

SYDNEY'S VOICE

(cont'd)

The Millennium!

PANDEMONIUM. Kids cheer, gasp. One GIRL faints.

The crowd surges again. Josie, caught in the flow, doesn't notice a locker door flinging open. She smashes her face right into it. Everyone, including Guy, turns and laughs. Even some Denominators.

CUT TO

CU: A CAFETERIA TRAY

Moves down the food line. It's piled with unidentifiable foods and three glasses of fluorescent red punch. Hands pull the tray out of the frame. INTO FRAME comes another tray, this one bearing a perfectly arranged place setting with three celery sticks on a plate. WIDEN TO REVEAL:

INTERIOR. CAFETERIA - DAY

Josie, pulling the perfect tray down the cafeteria line. She reaches some awful-looking Cole slaw in a big vat. A CAFETERIA GUY in a plastic cap hovers above it.

JOSIE

(to cafeteria guy)

Excuse me. What's in the Cole slaw?

The cafeteria guy hauls an industrial-size plastic tub onto the counter and turns it-so Josie can read the label: "KOLE SLAW FOOD." Josie wrinkles her nose. She moves on to the cash register.

CASHIER

That'll be twelve ninety-five.

JOSIE

(stunned)

Oh my gosh. Wow. That's... pricey.

CASHIER

That's real meat in the ham sandwich.

Josie turns to a GIRL in line behind her.

JOSIE

Boy--that's a lot of bread for that bread!

The Girl rolls her eyes, reaches past Josie to grab a mustard bottle. Josie turns with her tray toward the room.

CUT TO

INTERIOR. CAFETERIA - DAY (FLASHBACK) 4 KIDS stare at CAMERA and chant:

ALL

Josie Grossie--Josie Grossie--Josie Grossie.

ANGLE BACK ON JOSIE. She's seventeen. Standing with her tray, paralyzed. The CAMERA SPINS, showing us her back. There, tattooed in squeeze-bottle mustard, is "GROSSIE." A boy stands behind her victoriously holding the mustard bottle.

CUT BACK TO

INTERIOR. CAFETERIA - SAME (PRESENT DAY)

Josie shakes off the vision and stares out at the crowded cafeteria. She sees Kirsten, Kristen and Gibby, steels herself, and decides to approach.

Kirsten is eating a bran muffin.

KRISTEN

Kirsten, that bran muffin has like 75 fat grams.

KIRSTEN

Nah uh.

GIBBY

Yeah, I read this thing that one bran muffin can be like two bran muffins sometimes.

Kirsten pushes the muffin away.

KIRSTEN

God. Food is so confusing.

JOSIE

(to Kirsten)

Hi Kristen.

KIRSTEN

It's Kirsten.

Josie plops herself down with these girls, and takes a spiral pad out of her big knapsack. In the process, she manages to spill her chocolate milk all over her white jeans.

JOSIE

That'll teach me to wear white after Labor Day.

GIBBY

Umm- I don't think you're supposed to wear white jeans after 1983.

They all laugh. Josie fakes a laugh, too.

JOSIE

Right, right.

Josie picks up her notepad and her pen.

JOSIE

So - tell me about yourselves.

They all just stare at Josie in disgust. Guy approaches their table.

GUY

I'm Guy.

Guy looks at Josie. He's beautiful. She's flustered.

JOSIE

Yes you are. A guy. Guy. Quite a guy. Oh my. Look at that--I rhymed.

(beat)

Yikes.

(beat)

Bikes!

GUY

(very serious)

Are you in special ed?

Josie stands up, grabs her bag and her chocolate milk-

JOSIE

Bye. Guy. Others.

She leaves the Cafeteria, passing a-couple of Denominators.

JOSIE

(to herself)

Aaaah! How old am I?

DENOMINATOR #1

Approximately six thousand three hundred and fifty days old- subject to adjustment for month of birth.

This is very funny Denominator humor- to the Denominators. Josie leaves the Cafeteria.

EXTERIOR. SCHOOL GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Josie runs out an exit door and right into a SECURITY GUARD

GUARD

You got a pass?

INTERIOR. GYM - LATER

A banner above reads "PRESIDENTIAL FITNESS TESTING THIS WEEK." FIFTEEN SENIOR GIRLS, including Josie, in matching green and yellow polyester gym clothes do sprints up and-down the basketball court. Josie looks like she's about to die. Ms. Brown yells as she passes.

MS. BROWN

move it Geller! Move it! Move it!

Josie stops, grabs the woman by the shoulders.

JOSIE

Must--have--water--

MS. BROWN

What do I look like, your waitress? Now you're gonna complete these sprints, cause if you don't you fail. And if you fail gym, you're NEVER GETTING INTO COLLEGE!

JOSIE

Oh--my--God--you guys are--still telling that lie--?

MS. BROWN

That's it Geller--drop and give me twenty!

Josie drops to the gym floor.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

It's - finally- the end of the day. Josie makes her way down the hall, clutching her pad of paper, getting pushed and shoved by kids as they storm outside. A huge banner hangs overhead reading: "SIGN UP FOR SENIOR NIGHT!"

She tries to smile at some kids, but they all ignore her.

She makes it to the main entrance to the school, where we see, as she shoves her pad of paper into her bag, it is completely blank.

EXTERIOR. PARKING LOT - SAME

Kids fill the parking lot. Josie walks, talking on her cell phone.

JOSIE

(into phone)

Rhoda, make sure Gus gets-the whole message, okay? Yeah--bye--

Josie arrives where she parked Bambi. The space is empty. She still holds the phone to her ear--

JOSIE

Wait a second--

(into phone)

No, not you--bye--

Josie shuts the phone, looks around...retraces her steps ... Bambi is gone.

Josie walks around the lot, getting visibly upset.

In the corner of the lot, we see a group of Denominators removing a BIG METAL CHAIN from around a group of tightly packed cars.

ALDYS

(O.S.)

They do it to all the new kids.

Josie finds Aldys standing next to her.

JOSIE

Who's of they?

Aldys motions up to a second floor window. Guy and his Group look down on them, laughing.

ALDYS

Guy Perkins and his amazing Lemmings. They push your car out of its space, hide it, then watch while you look for it. We've taken to chaining ours together for safety. I'm Aldys.

JOSIE

I'm Josie. Aldys is an interesting name.

ALDYS

When it's not yours. My mom was going through her Harlequin Romance phase.

JOSIE

Try being named after a guitar-playing pussycat.

Aldys doesn't get it.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

Never mind.

(beat)

That is so awful that they hide your cars.

ALDYS

I guess. Although, what is truly awful is that with the combined intellectual effort of every kid in that room right now-

She points up to the biology room-

ALDYS

They still would not know the difference between a synecdoche and a hyperbole.

Josie laughs.

JOSIE

I know. It's pathetic.

Aldys stares Josie down.

JOSIE

What?

ALDYS

Well, do you?

JOSIE

Synecdoche uses a part to represent a whole- as in " head of cattle", whereas a hyperbole is simple exaggeration like "I could eat a horse."

ALDYS

Nice.

They stop and look around.

JOSIE

How long will they watch us for?

ALDYS

Until Guy tells them to go. Once they watched me for like two hours. I found my car the next day in the T.J. Maxx parking lot.

JOSIE

Why do they listen to Guy?

ALDYS:

(duh)

Because he's Guy Perkins.

(then)

Listen, you want to walk to Na-Na's and get something to eat?

JOSIE

Yeah. Let's do that.

They start to walk out of the parking lot. Josie is visibly thrilled - having finally found a friend.

INTERIOR. NA-NA'S - LATER

Josie and Aldys share a huge plate of chili fries.

ALDYS

Yeah - isn't it amazing that those guys are our same age? I mean, they just seem so much younger, you know.

JOSIE

Oh I know.

A WAITER delivers two huge chocolate shakes.

ALDYS

I'm going to be so happy to get to college. I hear at Northwestern they don't make fun of you for knowing the element table.

JOSIE

Hey--I went to Northwestern!

(a beat)

Once. To use the bathroom.

OUT THE WINDOW, Josie sees her Buick with Rob at the wheel stopped at a red light. Detailed on to the side in big white script is:

"THE TIKI POST". Josie's eyes widen. The light changes. Rob pulls away.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

(So angry)

Oh. My. God.

(a beat)

You'll really like Northwestern.

They both slurp down their shakes.

JOSIE

So what are your hopes, your dreams, what do you want to be?

ALDYS

Professor of medieval literature. Novelist. Weekend flautist.

Aldys takes another slurp of her shake. WE HEAR a muffled cell phone RINGING.

ALDYS

(cont'd)

I think your knapsack is ringing.

Josie takes the cell phone out of her knapsack and answers it.

JOSIE

Hello?

WE INTERCUT WITH:

INTERIOR. GUS'S OFFICE - SAME

Gus speaks into his phone, knitting frantically.

GUS

Geller, I got your message. What the hell kind of story are you pitching?!

Josie smiles awkwardly at Aldys, covering the phone.

JOSIE

It's my dad. He worries.

(into phone)

Hi, Dad. I miss you too.

GUS

You're a sick puppy, Geller.

Josie indicates to Aldys she'll be right back and walks to the back of the restaurant by the pay phones.

JOSIE

(into the phone)

It's an expose on cafeteria food.

GUS

And you're leading with the terrible truth about cole slaw?!

JOSIE

Well, the bulk of it will be about the pimento loaf--

GUS

Geller...you wanna be a reporter? Take a look at what sells! Sex scandals. Bribery. People jumping off buildings. So unless a kid just killed himself because he was being paid to have sex with the school mascot in a big vat of this cole slaw, you got nothing!

Gus slams down his phone.

JOSIE

(into a dead phone)

You didn't taste the pimento loaf.

She looks back to the table where Aldys is dividing the check.

EXTERIOR. TRACK - HIGH SCHOOL - DUSK

In the middle of the track is Josie's car. The MARCHING BAND clumsily practices their formations around it. Josie and Aldys arrive at the car and Aldys pops the hood.

ALDYS

They love to disconnect the battery, too.

She looks under the hood, reconnects the battery. Slams the hood down.

ALDYS

(cont'd)

Just so you know, I think they recalled these cars in 1974.

JOSIE

Thanks.

ALDYS

Sure. No problem.

Aldys heads to the lot for her car, and then turns around.

ALDYS

Hey, Josie, how are you at Calculus?

JOSIE

Petty good.

ALDYS

How would you like to join The Denominators? The Math Team could really use a new brain. We lost our best logarithm guy last year.

JOSIE

College?

ALDYS

NASA.

(beat)

Plus we have these really fun pizza study groups, and we go to-these all county meets. And, I mean, not that you need it, and without sounding too much like the Godfather, I think we could offer you a certain amount of protection", if you know what I mean. We all kind of stick together and watch out for each other.

Josie smiles. MUSIC UP: SCHOOL HOUSE ROCK'S "Magic Three"

AS WE BEGIN MONTAGE:

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Josie and Denominators walk down the hallway in unison, past Guy's Group, open their lockers in order a la "RESERVOIR DOGS", take out paper, pencils, calculators.

INTERIOR. - HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Josie and Aldys, both wearing big orange Denominator sweatshirts, are behind a table manning a bake sale.

A banner behind them says: $n = 3.14578697786978$ Pie = \$.75

No one is stopping to buy anything. Josie points to the left, Aldys looks, and Josie stuffs a whole brownie in her mouth. They laugh uncontrollably as Josie starts to choke and cough up most of the brownie.

We pan down a row of nervous looking Denominator faces as they watch Josie, sitting head to head against a DIGIT, an opposing Math-a-lon competitor. They both work furiously on a problem. A judge sits between them. A makeshift scoreboard hanging off the desk shows the score is tied.

Josie bangs the bell on the desk and hands the judge her card. He looks it over, and gives her team five points. They win.

The Denominators erupt into cheers. They're jumping all over Josie, going crazy. As we go wider we see the gym is entirely empty, except for a handful of Denominators going crazy on one side, and a janitor sweeping up on the other.

INTERIOR. MALL BOOK STORE - DAY

Smiling at each other, Josie and Aldys clutch books excitedly and stand in line. WE WIDEN to reveal they're in line with NERDY ADULTS also clutching their books. At the head of the line is a blow-up poster for The New Elements Of Grammar. An OLD MAN signs books for his fans.

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's late. Josie is typing on her laptop, referencing notes from her notebook. Schoolbooks and homework are spread around her.

END MONTAGE.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM - DAY

Sam is perched on the desk. The usual players in their usual seats. Aldys is standing and reading from her book.

ALDYS:

(reading)

"All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players."

SAM

Anyone have any idea what Shakespeare meant by that?

No one answers.

SAM (cont'd)

Anyone? Sera ... Megan ... exchange student who doesn't speak English?

We CU on the students, ending on an Asian boy who smiles wildly at Sam and waves. Sam smiles, and waves back.

SAM (cont'd)

It's about disguise, playing a part. It's the theme of "As You Like It." Can anyone tell me where we see that?

ALDYS

Well, Rosalind disguises herself as a man and escapes into the forest.

SAM

Right. And it's when she's in costume that she can finally express her love for Orlando. See, Shakespeare's making the point here that when we're disguised, we feel freer. We can do things we wouldn't do in ordinary life.

CU on Josie's face. She's clearly uncomfortable. Sam walks up to a huge football player, BRETT.

SAM (cont'd)

Brett when you go out on the football field in your uniform, what happens?

BRETT

We win?

SAM

You hit people. You yell. You touch other guys' butts.

The class giggles. Brett looks horrified.

SAM

But it's okay, because you're in uniform. Disguise changes the rules

(beat)

I had these Spiderman pyjamas. I thought when I wore them, that I had super powers. One night I tried to walk up the side of the garage.

SERA

Did you make it?

SAM

To the Emergency Room. Yeah.

Josie smiles at this, a little smitten.

SAM (cont'd)

Josie, why don't you read from Act 5, Scene 2, Rosalind's speech--

Josie stands up, starts reading--

JOSIE

"No sooner had they met but they looked; no sooner looked but they loved; no sooner loved but they sighed..."

Josie's voice begins to fade away-

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

ANGLE BACK to Josie, now seventeen and mortified, nervously standing in class and reading a poem. Billy Prince sits to the side--she glances at him throughout the poem, it's clearly about him.

JOSIE

Does he notice me? Does he hear my heart screaming his name-- sometimes it's so loud I think the Gods can hear my pain. His voice is so mellifluous, oh to get just one small kiss.

The CLASS laughs at her except for Billy, who smiles at her, looking slightly touched.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Seventeen-year-old Josie is surrounded by an elaborate, color-coded index card system for her research paper.

Her friend, SHEILA, over-weight and pimply, comes running across the library at breakneck speed. She sits down next to Josie, visibly excited and pushes her index cards aside.

SHEILA

O.K., what have you wanted for like ever but you didn't think it would -ever happen?

Josie looks at her for a moment, mulling it over.

JOSIE

That they'd start an Olympic team for grammar - like diagramming sentences and verb declensions and stuff. And I'm scouted for the team- just as an alternate, of course- because I'm so young. But then there's talk of me in the '96 games-

SHEILA.

No-, better. Something better

Josie smiles.

JOSIE

I'm the most popular girl in school, and Billy Prince is taking me to prom.

Josie laughs at the absurdity. She looks at Sheila. Sheila is dead serious.

SHEILA

Yes.

JOSIE

What?

SHEILA

Billy Prince is asking you to prom.

JOSIE

Why?

SHEILA

I don't know.

JOSIE

(beat)

The poem! I knew he liked the poem!

(all sinking in)

Billy Prince is asking me to the prom.

SHEILA

That's what I'm saying.

The two girls look at each other. Big smiles erupt into screams, as they jump up and down, hugging each other.

SFX - The BELL RINGS.

INTERIOR. SAM'S CLASSROOM (PRESENT)

- SAME

It's the end of class. Students pack their bags.

SAM:

(calling out)

O.K. - just a reminder. Your paper is due in one week.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - SAME

Aldys and Josie head out of class and down the hallway towards their lockers. Josie stops in front of hers where the Makeout Couple continues their clinch, blocking her locker. Josie pauses frustrated as Sydney's Voice comes over the loudspeaker.

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Hey guys! Bad news--Chem wing is closed. The Hazardous Materials Crew is on the way. Now, about prom.

The entire hallway STOPS to listen. The makeout Couple stop making out.

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Please join a committee--because we are going to KICK NORTHGLEN'S BUTT and make millennium the best prom EVER!

The hallway erupts in CHEERS. Josie makes a move to go for her locker. The Makeout Couple are faster. They're back in their clinch, blocking Josie again.

CU ON GUY

walking with his group.

GUY

Rufus! Prom is gonna be Rufus.

KRISTEN

Rufus?

GUY

Yeah. I made it up. Start using it.

ANGLE BACK ON JOSIE AND ALDYS.

JOSIE

What is with this school and prom?

ALDYS

Southglen South competes every year for best prom, and usually they win. We Denominators don't even go to prom. -But to everyone else it's huge.

JOSIE

Aldys, don't miss your prom--it only happens once.

ALDYS

This one has been so hyped. We're tied for most wins with Northglen North. This year's winner will determine the winner of the century. The theme is everything. So whatever Southglen picks has to be totally unique--

INTERIOR. NORTHGLEN NORTH HIGH SCHOOL - DAY KIDS all stare at a loudspeaker.

KID'S VOICE: (O.S.)

And this year's prom theme is--the millennium!

The Northglen kids go crazy.

INTERIOR. SOUTHGLEN HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - SAME

Josie reaches for her knapsack, and realizes she left it in English.

JOSIE

I left my bag in English. I'll see you later.

Josie dashes down the hallway.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM - SAME

Sam still sits at his desk. He reads a book. Josie enters.

SAM

Whoa. Deja Vu.

JOSIE

Sorry. Forgetful.

Josie picks up her bookbag. She notices the book Sam's reading--

JOSIE

(cont'd)

(excited)

Dorothy Parker--

SAM

You like her?

JOSIE

I love the way she writes.

SAM

Not the happiest of souls.

(reading out of book)

"Art is a form of catharsis, and love is a permanent flop."

JOSIE

But I think she wanted to be happy, that's why she wrote. I mean, she was still writing about love, right?

SAM

True. I guess she hadn't completely given up hope.

(then)

Are you sure you're seventeen?

JOSIE

Sure, why?

SAM

Because seventeen-year-olds do not like writers from the '30's. They don't even like people in their 30's.

JOSIE

Well, I'm definitely seventeen and

(off clock)

now definitely late--

And she smiles and runs out.

INTERIOR. ALDYS' CAR - NIGHT

Aldys drives, Josie has shotgun and TYKE, Aldys' nine-year-old sister, is in back. They all hold double-scooped cones and they all sing FREE TO BE YOU AND ME at full voice.

TYKE

See, aren't you guys glad you took a break from that Denominator stuff. I mean, you shouldn't be spending your Saturday night studying the whole time.

ALDYS

we should be spending it thinking of how we can better serve your baby-sitting needs?

TYKE

They pull up at a red light, next to an abandoned drive-in. Josie peers in, and sees a BIG GROUP OF KIDS, standing around a bonfire drinking beers, talking, a few making out. She opens her window, sticks her head out, and tries to get a better look.

JOSIE

What's that?

ALDYS

That's the old drive-in. They call it "The Court". Now it's just a continuous party for Guy's group.

ANGLE ON: Gibby and Kristen talking by a car.

ALDYS:

(cont'd)

Sometimes I wonder what they talk about.

JOSIE

Yeah, I know.

ALDYS

I mean, what if they just stupid to hide the fact that they're actually brainiacs with super powers and they're plotting to take over the world and make my life hell until I die?

ANGLE ON: THE COOL GIRLS.

GIBBY

No. It's lather, rinse, repeat.

ANGLE BACK ON: ALDYS AND JOSIE

Suddenly, Guy pokes his head in, startling everyone.

GUY

Wow, if it isn't Alpo. Coming out to sniff some hydrants?

Josie is frozen, but not Aldys.

ALDYS

Oh, Guy, you on a little break from having an original thought? Oops, I forgot, that's all the time.

Tyke gets it, and laughs. Guy doesn't get it at all.

GUY

You guys aren't seriously trying to hang out at The Court?

ALDYS

ooh, cheap wine coolers and a fire in a trashcan. Where do I sign up?

GUY

And stay away from prom.

ALDYS

Last I checked--this was still a free country.

TYKE

(singing)

There's a land that I see, where the children are free-

Guy's right in Aldys' face, leaning over Josie. Aldys starts to drive away. Guy keeps his head in the window while he runs alongside the car.

GUY

Look, geek, why don't you just go home and play with your calculator. Figure out how many lifetimes it will take you to get cool.

Guy stops running, and the car continues down the street.

INTERIOR. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Aldys seems a little shaken, Tyke continues singing.

JOSIE

Have you ever wanted to go to The Court?

ALDYS

Are you kidding, Josie? It's lame. All they do is stand around and get drunk. It's lame.

JOSIE

It is?

ALDYS

Yes, it's lame.

JOSIE

Yeah, it sounds lame. Why would we want to go there, and stand around?

ALDYS

Exactly.

INTERIOR. GUS'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON a newspaper headline: "THE COURT - SITE FOR PARTIES, DRUGS AND WEEKEND ARRESTS" - as Gus throws the newspaper down on his desk.

Josie sits across the desk from him. She reads the headline, looking very surprised.

GUS

Josie, I am appalled.

Josie picks up the paper, and starts reading intently.

JOSIE

Jeez, so am I. I had no idea that these kids- let's see- turn to A14-

She tries to turn to A14, but Gus grabs the paper out of her hands in a rage.

GUS

(trying to keep his cool)

No, I am appalled that I have a reporter in there, undercover, for almost three weeks now- I had to read about this in the Tribune.

JOSIE

Oh. Right.

Gus angrily tries to fold the paper back 'up. He's having a hard time. Josie tries to help, but he yanks it away. Gus reads aloud from the newspaper.

GUS

Responding officers found minors, marijuana, and cheap wine coolers when they responded to a call to break up a party at what Southglen High Schoolers have come to call "The Court." Seventeen-year-old Kristen Rey says, "Yeah, everyone who's anyone is at The Court on Saturday night."

JOSIE

(disbelieving)

Kristen got a quote?

Gus looks up at Josie.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

Yes, urm, she's right. I have learned it is a very popular place for the young people to go.

GUS

Have you been there?

JOSIE

Uhh, no.

GUS

Have you been to any parties?

JOSIE

Well, how would you define to parties"? Because we ordered a deli platter at this one Denominator drill session--

Gus looks like he may combust. He opens the newspaper, finds what he's looking for, and shoves it in Josie's face. It is a picture of all of the popular kids at Southglen- Kristen, Kirsten, Gibby, Guy- they are all posing for the picture at The Court, smiling and holding beers.

GUS

This is where the stories are. You are going to become friends with these people. You are going to party with them. You are going to hang out with them on weekends. When they go to prom, you are going to be in their same damn limo!

JOSIE

Gus I, the popular kids and I, we just don't- I mean, I don't think I can do this.

He points to the picture in the paper of the Popular Kids.

GUS

Do you even know these kids?

JOSIE

(trying)

They hid my car--

Gus leans in very close.

GUS

Get to know them. Very well. Your job and my job depends on it.

JOSIE

(very small)

Depend on it. No s. Your subject is plural.

GUS

OUT!

Josie grabs her knapsack and does.

INTERIOR. ANITA'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Josie runs through the bullpen, past Anita's cubicle. ROGER from op/ed enters. He and Anita smile flirtatiously.

ANITA

Hi Roger from op/ed--

ROGER

Hi Anita from classifieds. We still on for tonight?

ANITA

of course--

And he leans in and kisses her. She pulls away, confused. A beat. Anita kisses him again. Nothing.

ANITA (cont'd)

(can't believe she's saying it--)

Y'know what? No, I don't think we are on. I think I have to stay home.

(liking how it sounds)

Yeah. I'm staying home! I don't know what I'll do there, but I'm gonna do it. Alone!

Roger walks off.

ROGER

(under)

Freak.

EXTERIOR. JOSIE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Rob opens the door still dressed in his Tiki Post outfit. He takes one look at Josie and knows that things are not good.

JOSIE

Are mom and dad here?

ROB

No. They're at the Franklin Hint Expo at the Skokie Holiday Inn.

JOSIE

Good.

She shoves her way into the house. Rob follows.

INTERIOR. DEN - CONTINUOUS

Josie storms into the den, and plants herself on the sofa. She sees that Rob has been watching baseball on T.V., and she turns it off.

JOSIE

I can't do it. I thought I could. I can't. I give up--I'm never going to be a reporter.

Rob sits next to her on the couch. He looks up at the T.V.-, which is now off.

ROB

Did you catch the score?

Josie gives him a look of death.

ROB

No, I mean, no big whoop.

JOSIE

I can't do this.

She pulls the article out of her purse, and shoves it at Rob. He sees the picture of all the popular kids at The Court.

ROB

These girls are high schoolers? Damn, we've got some underage hotties on our hands, here!

JOSIE

Gus insists that I become friends with these kids. The popular kids. It's impossible.

ROB

Why is that impossible?

Josie's eyes get teary.

JOSIE

Rob, you don't know how it was for me back in high school. No one ever threw juice boxes at you in the hallway. You never dreamed about being popular- you already were. All I wanted was to be accepted, and they just fucking tortured me. I can't do all that again. I can't go back to Southglen South.

ROB

Oh my God! You're at Southglen South? They have a killer baseball team.

JOSIE

Rob. Please focus.

He puts his arm around her.

ROB

Jos, you've been to college, you're successful, you wash your hair now-- you're not Josie Grossie anymore.

JOSIE

Don't you realize how much I wanted to be you in high school? Just for one minute to feel what it was like to be popular?

ROB

Come on! It's not that hard. All you need is one person. Once the right person thinks you're cool, you're in. Everyone else will be too scared to question it.

JOSIE

Is that true?

ROB

Little known fact.

Josie takes this in.

ROB

(cont'd)

Look, don't you wanna show them - Gus, Billy Prince, yourself--that you're not freaked out by the cool kids anymore? That you can go in there, be friends with them, and get your story?

JOSIE

Yes, desperately.

ROB

Plus, if you quit you're no better than me.

JOSIE

Better than I...

ROB

That's the spirit!

EXTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NEXT MORNING

Josie approaches the school. She's clearly made a new attempt at style- she's teetering on too-high platform shoes and showing a blending white midriff. No one pays much attention to her.

GEORGE, thirty-something African-American, the epitome of cool, waves Josie over to an open van side door. Josie looks confused and scurries to the van.

JOSIE

(sotto)

George! What are you doing here?

GEORGE

Just get in the van, Josie.

INTERIOR. GEORGE'S VAN - MOMENTS LATER

High-tech surveillance wonderland meets seventies living room. Tape players and monitors share space with shag carpeting and a mini-fridge. Barry White PLAYS on a TAPE. George starts to wrap wire around Josie's waist. He pins a kid's plastic "captain's wings" onto her collar.

JOSIE

What is this?

GEORGE

Hidden camera.

JOSIE

Wings?

GEORGE

We used it for our expose on overweight flight attendants--"Is That Why They Never Give You a Second Bag of Nuts?"

JOSIE

I'm not doing this until I speak with Gus.

GUS (O.S)

(through speaker)

Geller, stop being a pain in the ass.

Josie looks all around.

JOSIE

Gus?

GUS (O.S.)

No, it's the Great and Powerful Oz. Now listen--you're in over your head. This is how it's gonna work. I review the tapes, I find your story.

JOSIE

What if I say no?

GUS (O.S.)

I bet Good Housekeeping would go gaga over the cole slaw piece.

Off Josie's look of concern...

EXTERIOR. SCHOOL - MINUTES LATER

A crush of kids flood up the stairs to the front door of the school. We see Kirsten, Kristen and Gibby walking three abreast ahead of Josie up the stairs. The Crowd parts around them. Josie heads towards them.

JOSIE

Hey! Kirsten, Kristen, Gibby-- What's up girlfriends?

The three girls pause and turn just as Josie, caught up in the moment, doesn't see a stray backpack on the stairs in front of her. Josie trips and--

JOSIE-CAM POV:

The CAMERA FACE-PLANTS into the pavement.

INTERIOR. GEORGE'S VAN - SAME

George watches the monitor, winces.

JOSIE-CAM POV:

The CAMERA still faces the pavement.

JOSIE

(O.S.)

(small)

I'm okay.

INTERIOR. COULSOM'S CLASSROOM - LATER

Josie is standing, reading from her paper. Sam is rapt.

JOSIE

And so it is Rosalind, in disguise, who is best able to see through the disguises of others. To say to Phebe, "Mistress, know thy self," to look at love from every angle, and to realize, finally, that she is in love with Orlando--

The BELL RINGS. Class is over. Josie puts her stuff away and starts to follow the Cool Girls out.

JOSIE

Hey guys, wait up--

The Girls keep moving. Sam stops Josie.

SAM

Hey, Josie, hold on.

(then)

You've been hiding something from me.

JOSIE

Oh I don't think so.

SAM

Your writing. It's amazing, Josie. You're really talented. And far less depressing than Dorothy Parker.

JOSIE

Thank you.

SAM

So what are you thinking for college?

JOSIE

College. Haven't really thought about it.

SAM

That's crazy. I'll get you some applications.

JOSIE

Oh no no no no no. See, my family, we don't go to college.

(beat)

We just go right into sheep herding.

SAM

Josie you owe it to yourself to go. For your writing. You're a natural.

JOSIE

Thanks. Wow. That's--really nice to hear.

SAM

Josie, you're different. When you speak in class, I can tell--You actually feel the words--

(touching heart)

in here. They're alive. Like-Eurdora Welty talked about the word it moon"? How for her it was like a Concord grape. "That Grandpa took off his vine and gave to me to suck out of its skin--"

SAM/JOSIE

It --and swallow whole."

They both take a breath in. Look away from each other.

INTERIOR. GEORGE'S VAN - SAME

George watches the monitor.

GEORGE

Uh oh.

INTERIOR. GUS'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Anita sits on Gus's desk, watches the last scene on Gus's TV, engrossed. Gus walks in and stops the tape.

GUS

Showtime's over! Move-it! Back to work!

Anita climbs off his desk.

ANITA

Gus, have you ever been in love?

GUS

Leave.

ANITA

Oh give it up, Gus. I'm just making conversation.

GUS

Love. Who knows what that is? Now circulation, deadlines, those I understand.

ANITA

You should go out every now and then, Gus; with some new ties the girls would be all over you.

Gus stares down at his tie. But he's smiling--a little.

GUS

Go away. I have enough work here to last me all night.

ANITA

Listen, I don't have any plans--you want some help?

GUS

No Roger from op/ed?

ANITA

Nope.

They share a smile.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Josie walks toward her locker, the Make out Couple is at it again. Josie's fed up. She taps the Boy on his shoulder.

JOSIE

Excuse me. Hi. Do you guys have some kind of schedule I could work around?

He ignores Josie and goes back to his Girlfriend.

Aldys, in her Denominator sweatshirt decorated with pins, approaches Josie.

ALDYS

Hey, where's your sweatshirt?

JOSIE

I - uhh, must have forgotten-

ALDYS

No biggie. I have an extra in my locker. I'll get it for you.

She starts to leave.

ALDYS

Oh - I almost forgot - I'll see you tonight at Big Cup. 7:30, right?

Josie looks confused.

ALDYS

Remember, that poet that we liked - the reading he's doing at Big Cup? I got us tickets.

JOSIE

Right. 7:30.

ALDYS

I'm late for lab.

Aldys takes off. Josie looks down the hall, where Guy, Kristen and the others are all looking at a flyer pasted to the wall.

GUY

That is gonna be such a sweet show. I am so there.

Guy looks at Tommy and Jason, who f follow his lead.

TOMMY

Oh, yeah, man, I'll drive.

JASON

It's gonna be Rufalicious.

GUY

(beat)

You're using it wrong.

They head off, en masse. Josie goes and looks at the flyer: "JIMMY CLIFF TONIGHT AT DELLOSER HALL". Josie smiles.

EXTERIOR. CLUB/DELLOSER HALL - NIGHT

Marquee reads "Jimmy Cliff." A crowd has gathered by the door. Josie gets out of cab, and walks towards the club.

INTERIOR. CLUB/DELLOSER HALL - NIGHT

Josie enters the small, smoky club. She wears what she considers to be her "hip concert outfit," an outfit that completely clashes with the Rasta wear of the other concert goers. -She reaches the BOUNCER.

BOUNCER

You Drinking?

Josie notices the two Stoners from school standing behind her in line.

JOSIE

I am not 21. I am only seventeen and I still attend high school.

The bouncer stamps her hand. She looks down at her hand.

WE CU ON her hand, reading DELLOSER.

She enters as the two Stoners approach the Bouncer.

BOUNCER

Two of you?

A beat as the Stoners look at each other, realizing...

STONER 1

(to Stoner 2)

Oh, Dude--

And they run out of the club.

INTERIOR. CLUB/DELLOSER HALL - SAME

JIIAMY CLIFF is playing. The crowd sits at tables, grooving. Josie approaches the bar. A guy turns around--it's Sam.

SAM

Josie--out on a school night.

A woman, LARA, emerges from the crowd. And puts her arm around SAM. An awkward beat.

LARA

Hi.

JOSIE

Hi.

SAM

Oh, right, sorry. Lara--Josie. Josie--Lara.

(to Lara)

Josie's a student of mine.

(to Josie)

Lara's my-date.

LARA

Nice to meet you.

Another awkward pause.

LARA

C'mon, c'mon, let's go dance.

The crowd roars over Cliff's next song as Lara drags Sam off into the crowd. Sam looks back briefly at Josie as we lose him into the crowd.

ANGLE ON JOSIE

She sees Guy's group sitting at a table and approaches an empty seat. They immediately scoot around so that the seat is taken. Undeterred, Josie sees a seat at the next table and sits down in it. She looks up to see that she is at a table of huge RASTAFARIANS. They all wear big Rasta hats and even bigger hair and are smoking a joint the size of Cuba. She smiles awkwardly.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

Hi. Is it okay if I sit here?

RASTA #1

Oh, ya mon. We accept all peoples. We are all about da' love.

Josie and the Rasta's start to groove to the music. Josie looks over at Guy's table, sees they are toking off a small joint and passing it around.

INTERIOR. GEORGE'S VAN - CONTINUOUS

George and his DATE, a Pam Grier look-alike, sit close on the couch, grooving to the CONCERT PLAYING on the monitor and through the various speakers. CU on the monitor.

JOSIE-CAM POV:

The joint the size of Cuba is passed into frame. Josie's hand takes it. Catching sight of this, George and his Date exchange concerned looks.

SMASH CUT TO:

INTERIOR. CLUB/DELLOSER HALL - LATER

Josie is high beyond belief, wearing a big Rasta hat and loudly laughing her ass off as the Rastas just stare. She can hardly keep herself in her chair.

JOSIE

Get it?! Get it?! He was a firecracker!

She lifts up Rasta 1's dreadlocks to get his ear.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

(yelling)

A firecracker!

And she cracks up again.

RASTA #1

(to Rasta #2)

I don't love her.

Rastas share looks ill around. Then Josie hears the first strains of "The Harder They Come"--

JOSIE

(cont'd)

Oh my God! This music rules!

And Josie proceeds to get up and take over the place--she's dancing on the table, getting up with the band and playing the bongos, all with absolutely no rhythm or style. But with a lot of whooping. The club is agog.

ANGLE ON: Lara and Sam. They both look aghast.

LARA

She's a student of yours?

SAM

(in explanation)

She's from Bali.

And as Josie continues to dance on stage, making a total fool of herself, Jimmy Cliff turns to CAMERA.

JIMMY:

Freak.

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Josie is on the phone, and is in the process of finishing an entire pie.

JOSIE

I'm telling you, Rob! I think I did it! I'm totally in! I was soo cool tonight! You'd be so--

(staring at fork)

You know what's a weird word? Fork.

(then)

Wait! Wait! Did I tell you about my new friends? I made friends with a whole table of Rastafarians! Not one, a whole table!

(noting empty pie plate, suddenly serious)

Oh. My. God. Someone ate my entire pie.

DISSOLVE TO:

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

Josie is asleep where we left her, her head on her hand, empty pie plate nearby.

She wakes, picks her head up. Looks down at her hand, the DELLOSER stamp is faint. CLOSE UP ON her forehead. There in block letters backwards is "LOSER".

She looks up at the clock, which reads: 8:30. She's late. Very late. She grabs her book bag and her keys, and races out.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

Josie strides confidently down the hallway, LOSER prominently on her forehead. She sees Guy and his Group.

JOSIE

Hi Guy. Guys. Guy's Guys.

They stare, then snicker.

GUY

Hi loser.

The group laughs and joins in, saying "Hey Loser." Josie's face registers confusion.

JOSIE-CAM POV:

We move slowly down the packed hallway, the camera shifting nervously amidst a sea of laughing kids. The LAUGHTER starts to ECHO.

Josie starts to walk quickly, then run, through the gauntlet of' laughing and pointing kids.

INTERIOR. GEORGE'S VAN - CONTINUOUS

WE HEAR THE LAUGHING, the JOSIE CAM JERKS frantically from KID to KID.

GEORGE

This can not be good--

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

JOSIE CAM P.O.V. WE HEAR Josie BREATHING HEAVILY as she runs past KIDS who all stare or LAUGH. She makes it to the Girls Room, pushes open the door.

INTERIOR. GIRLS' BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josie goes to the sink, splashes water on her face.

INTERIOR. GEORGE'S VAN CONTINUOUS

George watches the monitor, HANDS splash water. A HAND grabs a paper towel. George can now see Josie reflected in the bathroom mirror. He sees the "LOSER" stamp on her forehead.

GEORGE

Oh man. Look up, girl. C'mon, Look up--

INTERIOR. GIRLS' BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josie wipes her mouth. Throws the towel away. Goes to exit--

INTERIOR. GEORGE'S VAN - CONTINUOUS

George is now apoplectic.

GEORGE

LOOK IN THE MIRROR!

INTERIOR. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josie pauses, goes back to the mirror. She looks up. Sees the stamp. Her hand goes to her mouth in horror. She runs into a stall.

JOSIE CAM P.O.V.: WE FACE the toilet.

INTERIOR. GEORGE'S VAN - CONTINUOUS

George looks at the monitor in amazement.

INTERIOR. GUS'S OFFICE - DAY

A Group is watching Gus's TV, including Bruns

(the hair plug man)

and Howard

(arm casts). They are slack-jawed in shock. WE HEAR O.S. the SOUNDS of Josie VOMITING. Gus shakes his head sadly.

GUS

It's like the All-Humiliation Network.

They all nod in agreement.

INTERIOR. GIRLS' BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Josie is in the fetal position on the floor of a stall.

INTERIOR. DEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The den of Josie's parents' home. Josie is decked out. She's wearing a pretty hideous metallic pink dress, matching gloves, bag, shoes. She's shining her braces, using the T.V. screen as a mirror. The PHONE RINGS. Josie grabs it.

JOSIE

(into phone)

Hey, Billy. I'm ready. Sure, I can just wait for you on the front porch. See you in a -uhh- jiffer.

She hangs up. Sixteen year old Rob, very cute and buff, enters. His pretty GIRLFRIEND is on his arm.

GIRLFRIEND

(mouthing to Rob)

Jiffer?

Rob just shrugs.

EXTERIOR. JOSIE'S FRONT PORCH NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Josie, in all her prom splendor, waits out on the front porch for her date.

She sees a LONG, BLACK LIMO turn the corner, headed for the house. She's hopping up and down with excitement. She checks her reflection in her compact, and then watches the limo approach.

The sunroof of the limo opens and Billy Prince, the Adonis of the suburbs, stands up, sticking out of the sunroof. He waves. Josie smiles and waves back.

Then, another figure joins Billy's. It's a GORGEOUS BLONDE in a slinky dress. She's standing up, sticking out of the sunroof as well. Josie looks a bit confused, but still tries to smile. Then, she sees them holding things. LITTLE THINGS. LITTLE WHITE THINGS.

Before Josie realizes what's going on, her metallic ensemble is covered in dripping, oozing eggs. One whacks her right in her trifocals.

BILLY

(shouting)

Hey, write a poem about this!

Billy and his date lob a few more eggs, and their limo roars off. Josie stands on the porch, alone. She's got egg in her hair, on her face, all over her dress- everywhere. She starts to cry. Softly at first, moving into big, loud, wet sobs. She sits down on the porch, her head in her hands, and just keeps crying.

DISSOLVE BACK TO

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - (PRESENT) - DAY

Homeroom has just gotten out, and the halls are packed with kids. Josie is running full speed, trying to negotiate around lots of kids, in her frantic-race for the door. Kids still point and stare.

She bangs into some freshmen, gets whacked by a book bag, slides some banners that kids are painting - but she won't slow down.

Just as she's almost at the doors to the school, the BIG WOODEN DOOR to the front office opens. Josie can't stop. A figure emerges, but before Josie can even see who it is, she slams into it and goes down. She bangs her head on the hard linoleum floor.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - (PRESENT)

- DAY

Homeroom has just gotten out, and the halls are packed with kids. Josie is running full speed, trying to negotiate around lots of kids, in her frantic-race for the door. Kids still point and stare.

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DISSOLVE

JOSIE-CAM POV:

We see two KIDS looking down into the camera.

JASON

Hey--you okay?

Camera nods "yes" slowly. Tommy and Jason come into frame.

TOMMY

Wow. You took a pretty big fall.

JASON

Yeah. Like every loser should. And they move out of frame, laughing.

JOSIE

As every loser should.

VOICE

Are you O.K.? Josie, are you O.K.?

Rob comes into frame.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rob is bent over Josie. She rubs her eyes.

JOSIE

I've been in a horrible accident. This is a coma-induced nightmare.

ROB

No. Josie, this is real.

She looks up.

JOSIE

Oh my God! That's worse!

(beat)

What are you doing here?!

Rob leans in and whispers to Josie.

ROB

I just registered.

Rob whips out his fake ID and shows it to her.

ROB

(cont'd)

(proudly)

Manufactured at the Tiki Post.

Rob helps Josie up.

JOSIE

Are you crazy?! You can't do this.

ROB

This is it Jos! This is my ninth inning! The game isn't over--I just thought it was! I get on the Southglen baseball team, the right scout sees me-- I'm into the minors-it's game time!

JOSIE

You're twenty-three years old!

ROB

With the reading comprehension of a fifteen year old! Plus, I'm popular... You want to be popular... I can recognize a cry for help when I see one.

JOSIE

Hear one.

(then)

Rob, this is so like you. You know, you can't just come in here and be popular in just one day.

SMASH CUT TO:

INTERIOR. CAFETERIA - LATER

Josie emerges from the cafeteria line with her tray. A LOUD CHANT comes from one of the tables.

CROWD

ROB, ROB, ROB

She turns to see Rob in the middle of a hot dog eating contest with a HUGE WRESTLER. Rob downs his last one, raises his hands in victory. The CROWD goes WILD. Rob sits down at Guy's table.

JOSIE

Oh my god.

ANGLE ON GUY'S TABLE

GUY

Dude, you rock!

He high-fives Rob. A pretty girl, TRACY approached Rob.

TRACY

Hi. I'm Tracy and I'm sixteen and I'm a gymnast and I don't have a boyfriend...

ROB

(looks skyward, mouths)

Thank you.

(Then , to Tracy)

I'm Rob.

TRACY

Duh.

ANGLE BACK ON JOSIE

Aldys approaches.

ALDYS

Hey - where were you last night? I was worried.

Josie can't take her eyes off Rob sitting at Guy's table. Aldys notices Josie's distraction.

JOSIE

What?

ALDYS

Last night. 7:30. Big Cup. I kept calling you, but I only got your machine. I don't even know your parents line and I was really worried.

JOSIE

Oh. I forgot.

Aldys is really hurt.

ALDYS

Well, maybe you should forget about sitting with us too.

Josie just stands there all alone.

EXTERIOR. TRACK - LATER

Girls P.E. is over. The girls head back to the locker room. Josie lags behind the group, and then wanders over to the baseball diamond, where she hears a bunch of hoots and hollers.

EXTERIOR. BASEBALL DIAMOND - SAME

The team is practicing. Rob has just hit a home run with three men on. EVERYONE CHEERS him on as he runs the bases.

As he comes into home, he is met with congrats, high fives. Everyone loves him.

Josie watches the whole scene, seething with jealousy.

INTERIOR. GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Josie, post-shower, is wrapped in a towel and carrying her sweaty gym clothes. A group of GIRLS walk by her, giggling as they exit. She approaches her locker and finds it ajar and completely empty. She looks from the empty locker down to the sweaty clothes in her hand. A realization sweeps over her face.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Josie shuffles down the hall, still wearing her cheesy green and yellow gym clothes. She is clearly beaten. She looks down the hall, stunned.

It is ridiculous Rob is being followed by a posse, everyone knows his name. Girls tug on his shirt, guys slap him on the back or high-five him.

JASON

Hey, Rob.

TOMMY

Robster, what's up?

BRETT

The Rob man. My man Rob.

GIBBY

Hey, Robbie.

KRISTEN

Hi there Robbie Rob.

Josie sees Guy approach Rob, and shake his hand.

GUY

Hey Robo- how's it going?

ROB

Nice pants, man. They are rufus.

Guy smiles. Josie looks like she's going to hurl. She looks down the hall the other way- where a huge banner hangs that reads:

"IMPEACH SYDNEY ANAKOWSKI. ELECT ROB STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT.

TRACY

Hey Rob, see you at the carnival later?

STONER 1

It's Robilicious!

Josie looks on the wall next to her- and sees a list:

"FINAL CAST LIST FOR HAMLET. HAMLET . . . ROB."

JOSIE

Oh, please.

Josie has seen enough, and walks on.

EXTERIOR. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Establishing shot of a smallish carnival, Ferris wheel, midway, tea cups ride. Near the entrance reads a banner: "SOUTHGLEN HIGH SENIOR NIGHT".

EXTERIOR. CARNIVAL MIDWAY - SAME

Aldys and the Denominators stand in front of a booth that displays a large glass jar of jellybeans. Calculators and paper out, they're engrossed in find the answer.

Josie walks by alone. The Denominators don't notice her.

EXTERIOR. THE FERRIS WHEEL - SAME

WE PAN DOWN the line of KIDS waiting to ride the Ferris wheel. In front are Tommy, Jason, Gibby and Kirsten.

KIRSTEN

This has been so much fun! We've been first in line for every ride!

TOMMY

That's cuz we cut every line.

WE PAN DOWN to the end of the line, where we find Josie, standing alone. She's trying her best to keep her game face on. The CARNY opens the gate, the Kids pile onto the ride, two by two. Josie reaches an empty car--the last one--and gets in. The Carny holds the safety bar open.

CARNY

Where's your partner?

JOSIE

I don't--I don't have one--

CARNY

(yelling loudly)

I GOT A LONELY RIDE IN BUCKET SEVEN!

(to Crowd)

SINGLE!

JOSIE

Do you have to yell like that?

Sam, standing by a vendor, looks over and notices Josie's predicament.

TOMMY (O.S.)

Of course it's Loser that's holding up the ride!

Sam walks up to the Josie's bucket.

SAM

This seat taken?

JOSIE

(relieved)

Thank you.

He gets in. The ride JERKS into motion.

SAM

(nervous)

Whoa.

They start a slow ascent. Sam seems ill at ease.

JOSIE

Are you--scared?

SAM

I'm gonna tell you something here, and I hope it doesn't undermine my position as an authority figure. I'm a little afraid of heights.

JOSIE

You're afraid of the Ferris wheel.

SAM

Actually, it's more the plunging head first into the crowd part that gets me.

JOSIE

Oh right. The Spiderman incident.

SAM

(touched)

You remember that story?

JOSIE

Of course. I remember everything from your class.

They smile at each other. The smile is interrupted by a HEAVY SWAYING of their bucket, caused by Tommy ROCKING in the bucket ahead. Sam looks a little green.

SAM

Yoooooow.

JOSIE

Don't look down!

They're facing the ground at this point.

SAM

Out of my control.

(yelling to Tommy)

TOMMY! CUT IT OUT! ENOUGH!

Tommy stops. Sam turns to Josie.

SAM

(cont'd)

(defensive)

I said that as a chaperone.

They start to ascend again. Sam relaxes.

SAM (cont'd)

Okay This is okay. Smooth.

(then)

Can I ask you something? Do you think I tell too many stories in class?

JOSIE

That's what makes you interesting.

(beat, recovering)

As a teacher.

SAM

God, I would love to think I'm an interesting teacher. I mean, I had maybe one or two teachers in high school who had any passion at all.

JOSIE

You do. Seem to. Have passion. In the classroom.

SAM

You have to say that. You're my student.

JOSIE

I don't have to say that.

They look into each other's eyes just as Tommy RATTLES his bucket ruthlessly.

TOMMY

(O.S.)

IF THE BUCKET'S A-ROCKIN', DON'T COME-A KNOCKIN'.

Josie and Sam laugh uncomfortably.

SAM

Boys.

JOSIE

I know.

SAM

I'd like to tell you that we all grow out of it, but that's a lie. Some of us will always be rattling cages.

JOSIE

Why do you do that?

SAM

I don't know. And you know what's scary--when you get older it just gets more confusing. I've spent the last ten years with women who are basically all wrong for me.

(beat)

You know what, I shouldn't be talking about this stuff with you.

JOSIE

That's okay. It's nice to have someone to talk to--

The bucket is rocked again by Tommy--Sam grips the safety bar.

SAM

(as he rocks)

Same here.

They stop rocking but they're still stuck at the top.

SAM (cont'd)

All I can tell you is that when you're my age, the guys will be lined up around the block for you.

They share a smile.

JOSIE

(suddenly shy)

You have to say that. You're my teacher.

SAM

I shouldn't say that, because I'm your teacher.

They look at each other, their smiles fading into realization. Suddenly, the car jerks, and they start to move down. Josie and Sam are pulled out of their reverie. They smile awkwardly at each other and laugh a small laugh.

WIDE SHOT of the Ferris wheel as Josie and Sam descend.

SAM (V.O.)

Thanks, Josie. This wasn't as bad as I thought.

JOSIE (V.O.)

When are you going to open your eyes?

SAM (V.O.)

I'm thinking when I'm home.

EXTERIOR. BASEBALL DUGOUT - DAY

Rob sits with a bunch of BASEBALL PLAYERS. MATZ and PACKER, the studs of the team, come into the dugout and join them.

PACKER: Hey Rob, thanks for showing me that new grip. It totally changed my swing.

ROB

No problem, man.

They do one of those elaborate, fraternity-like handshakes. Out of the corner of his eye, Rob sees Josie walking alone across the field. He gets an idea.

ROB

Hey, you guys know that girl, Josie Geller?

MATZ

You mean "Loser"?

ROB

No, dude, Josie. We used to go out and she dumped me. But we're still good friends. And she is... amazing, if you know what I mean.

The guys are all stunned.

INTERIOR. BIOLOGY CLASSROOM - DAY

Gibby stands staring at a skeleton with Rob and the Cool Girls.

GIBBY

All right--that's it. Just water and Ex-Lax till prom.

ROB

Hey--Josie's Dad invented that stuff. Josie's like the heiress to the Ex- Lax fortune.

KIRSTEN

(impressed)

Shut up.

ROB

Yeah. She's loaded. She spends all her vacations on the family yacht in the south of France.

They react.

EXTERIOR. TRACK - DAY

Rob stands behind the bleachers with Tommy, Jason, and Guy.

TOMMY

No way.

JASON

She used to date the drummer for The Big Bad Voodoo Daddys?

GUY

No way. I always wanted to be a drummer.

ROB

Yeah well, she left him for the drummer from "Sister Hazel." Y'know the song "All for You?"

GUY

That was about Josie?

(impressed)

Rufus...

INTERIOR. CAFETERIA - DAY

Josie turns with her tray after paying. Aldys sees her.

ALDYS

Hey, Josie--I'm really sorry I snapped at you. Do you wanna--

Josie sees Rob waving her over to "the table" where Kristen, Gibby and the gang sit.

JOSIE

Oh, Aldys, y'know, I have to--

And Josie walks over to Guy's table, leaving Aldys staring after her. Josie sits down at the table. Everyone stares at her.

GIBBY

Hey Josie. It's Josie, right?

KRISTEN

Can I just say--I totally love Ex-Lax.

JOSIE

(confused)

Okay, that's good to know--

TOMMY

I can't believe you dated Big Bad Voodoo Daddy.

Josie shoots a look at Rob.

ROB

Hey, I told you--Josie doesn't like to talk about that.

KIRSTEN

Yeah, Tommy, that's totally gochay.

GIBBY

I think it's pronounced gauche.

JOSIE

Yeah it's French. There's no accent aigue, so the e is soft.

A silent beat. Josie thinks she may have blown it.

GIBBY

Duh, of course you would know that. From being on your yacht in the south of France.

They all smile at her. Josie soaks in her newfound popularity.

INTERIOR. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - DAY

On the walls are SAFE SEX posters. On the front desk, pamphlets on sexually transmitted diseases share space with plastic biology cross-section models of male and female reproductive organs.

Sam stands in front of his English class, impatiently looking at his watch. Josie looks up from her desk, sees Anita waving wildly from the other side of the glass door. Josie's eyes widen, she starts to make "get out of here" movements. Sam notices Josie and follows her gaze to Anita. He opens the door, speaks sotto to Anita.

SAM

Hi. You're here for the sex talk?

ANITA

(happily taken aback)

Well. I like a man who gets to the point.

SAM

You're Pam?

ANITA

(frisky)

If you say so.

Sam turns to the class.

SAM

Welcome juniors and seniors, this is Pam Kitterman. She's our district health counselor. She's here to lead our sex discussion.

He ushers a surprised Anita to the front of the room. Josie reacts.

ANITA

I am? Oh, I am. Hi. Okay. Sex. Yes, well, sex. What's to say really, y'know? You like a guy, you do it. Sometimes he calls. Sometimes he doesn't.

Anita leans into Josie, talks sotto.

ANITA (cont'd)

(whispering)

Hi!

JOSIE

(also whispering)

What are you doing here?!

ANITA

I had a lunch break so I thought I'd come by and see you. Your teacher is a fox!

(then normal voice to Josie). Why don't we discuss that after class. But the burning is totally normal.

(looking at watch)

Oh look. Class is over already.

SAM

I thought this was a 45-minute seminar.

ANITA

Right. Right.

Anita walks back to the front of the classroom.

ANITA (cont'd)

Okay, sex. Let's see. Sex is really fun.

(off Josie's look)

When you're old enough. Which none of you are, trust me I should know cuz when you lose it to some guy named Junior with really bad breath in the back of a van at a Guns and Roses concert you're gonna wish you listened to your Mom when she said, y'know, no one's gonna want to buy the whole friggin ice cream truck when you're handing out the popsicles for free.

There's a deafening silence. The kids are amazed.

ANITA (cont'd)

Okay. Any questions?

INTERIOR. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - LATER

The Kids all have bananas and condoms. They are in various stages of putting the condom over the banana. Anita walks among them, clearly more comfortable with her role now.

ANITA

Okay. I know it's hard.

Titters from the group.

ANITA (cont'd)

Difficult. But safe sex is really important. I try to practice it every day.

Josie reacts.

ANGLE ON KIRSTEN & KRISTEN. Their condoms are snugly on their bananas. They stare at Josie.

KRISTEN

wait, rewind. Do you really think she hooked-up with our Rob? They're so--different.

GIBBY

Sometimes opposites attract.

KIRSTEN

Yeah. Look at Bert and Ernie.

WE ANGLE ON ANITA. She's walking authoritatively up the aisle towards the front.

ANITA

So just..imagine the bananas are the real thing.

She takes a rather large banana off a desk and looks at it. She snorts.

ANITA (cont'd)

In a land called "every man's fantasy".

She looks up, sees the real MISS KITTERMAN

(we can tell from the model of a uterus she carries), standing outside the door and waving. Without missing a beat, Anita pulls down a shade on the door and locks it.

ANGLE ON: JOSIE AND TRACY still struggling with condoms.

TRACY

God, I can't do this.

JOSIE

Maybe because we're not supposed to be having sex with bananas.

TRACY

You know what, though? I feel like I'm really ready to do it. To have sex for the first time.

JOSIE

Wow. That's big. I mean sex is a really big deal. You shouldn't do it until you know you've found the right person.

ANGLE ON SAM, listening. Josie is oblivious.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

You know, Adele penguins pick one mate. They spend their whole life looking for that one other penguin and when they find it, they know. That's the penguin they stay with for the rest of their lives.

TRACY

But I'm not a penguin.

SAM

It's an analogy.

A surprised Josie looks up to see Sam next to her. She lets her condom go. And it flies off her banana into his face. Josie turns to Tracy.

JOSIE

Excuse me. I have to go die now.

The class is interrupted by Sydney over the loudspeaker:

SYDNEY (O.S.)

(over speaker)

Hey guys--Sydney again! Don't forget--No going into the library cuz of that little asbestos problem. And about prom--

Everyone freezes. Dead silence.

SYDNEY (cont'd)

Really bad news. We just got the word from intelligence-- Northglen High is doing the Millennium too!

Complete chaos. SCREAMING terror. A GIRL faints. Sera squeezes her banana so hard it oozes out of its skin. Other KIDS are beating their bananas against desktops. Brett, the football player, absentmindedly peels his banana and begins eating it.

SAM

All right guys, let's calm down. Calm down.

(no response)

Sit!

They all do, including Anita.

SAM (cont'd)

Now look. Let's focus. Prom theme. We need a new idea.

ANITA

OH! How about "Under the Sea?"

She's met with a round of "boos". Anita reacts.

ANITA (cont'd)

Well excuse me.

SAM

What about the "Roaring Twenties"... or "The 80's"?

The Class lets out a GIANT GROAN on that one.

GIBBY

What do you think we are? Amateurs?

GUY

Josie.

SERA

That's not a theme.

GUY

No, Josie will have the answer.

A long beat. Expectant faces all turn to Josie. She looks at Tracy.

JOSIE

How about--'

(coming to her)

meant for each other--Famous couples throughout history?

Another beat as the Class considers.

GUY

(smiles and nods)

Yeah. That's it.

The Class suddenly CONCURS.

CLASS

Yeah. /That's it. /Rufus.

Josie soaks in all the approval like a sponge.

JOSIE

Thanks. Thank you.

Josie looks from Sam and Anita's smiling faces to find Guy smiling at her.

CLOSE UP ON A BANNER reading: "MILLENNIUM". It comes down, replaced by one that reads: "MEANT FOR EACH OTHER... WIDEN TO REVEAL:

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Josie and the Cool Girls walk under the banner, laughing. We PAN UP to their lapels and see that they are all wearing replicas of Josie-'s geeky airplane pin. They pass Aldys, Josie is oblivious.

INTERIOR. MALL - DAY

Josie and the Girls walk four abreast, like a pack of proud lions. Kids part to let them through.

INTERIOR. SUN TIMES BULLPEN - DAY

WORKERS look at their watches, run into Gus's office.

INTERIOR. GYM PROM PREP AREA - LATER

Sam and Josie have fun painting a backdrop of the sunset.

INTERIOR. GUS'S OFFICE - SAME

Workers stand around Gus's TV, riveted by Josie and Sam.

INTERIOR. DEPARTMENT STORE - COSMETIC COUNTER - SAME

Josie and the Girls try on lipstick, laughing and fooling around.

INTERIOR. MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Josie and Sam pick out CDs from a DJ's case. Josie picks one out and puts it in the "yes" pile. Sam picks it up, wrinkles his nose, puts it back. When he looks away, Josie sneaks it back.

INTERIOR. TEEN CLOTHING STORE - SAME

Josie's hiding behind a rack of clothes, talking on her cell phone.

JOSIE

(into phone)

I'm telling you Gus. It's a great story. They keep the tags on, then return the clothes after they've worn them.

(beat)

Gus?--Gus?

Kirsten discovers Josie behind the rack. Josie quickly pulls a cardigan off a rack, feigning interest in it. The Girls all do the same.

INTERIOR. HALL CONCOURSE - SAME

Josie and the Girls, wearing matching cardigans, walk past Aldys and another Denominator on their way to the escalator. Josie and Aldys lock eyes and Josie smiles but Aldys turns her back to her.

ALDYS

(to Denominator)

Look, there goes another Lemming.

WE ANGLE ON the escalator as Josie and the Girls rise single file out of- FRAME.

EXTERIOR. BASEBALL STANDS - DAY

Josie sits with her new friends, emulating them by sunning in a bikini top and shorts while they watch the game.

GIBBY

Josie, you have totally transitioned.

JOSIE

Transitioned?

GIBBY

You crossed over.

KRISTEN

Into our group.

KIRSTEN

It's really hard to do. Some kids try for all of high school and never make it.

GIBBY

Wannabes. Kirsten transitioned last year.

KRISTEN

Her dad sold a car to Leonardo Di Caprio's uncle and before he picked it up, her dad let us all sit in it and take pictures.

GIBBY:

(to Josie)

Wait. Do you know any gay guys?

JOSIE

Why?

KIRSTEN

We'd love to transition a gay guy into the group.

KRISTEN

We're very evolved.

ON THE FIELD

A BALL sails fast and hard. It looks like it's going to be a base hit, into left field, but the shortstop leaps up and grabs it. That shortstop is Rob. The Team cheers. Coach Romano heads out of the dugout towards Rob.

IN THE STANDS

Josie and the Gang leap up and cheer. Josie almost loses her top, but catches it, just as Guy comes around the side of the stands and notices Josie.

EXTERIOR. BASEBALL DIAMOND - CONTINUOUS

Coach Romano approaches Rob. Slaps him on the back.

COACH ROMANO

Great playing, Rob. You might be just what Southglenn South needs to get to Nationals.

ROB

I'm playing in the championship game?

COACH ROMANO

Playing? You're starting shortstop. And I don't mean to put more pressure on you but there are going to be some pro scouts there.

ROB

Oh man!

Rob grabs Coach Romano in a bear hug. The Coach is uncomfortable. Rob moves towards the dugout and the Coach happily slaps him on the ass.

EXTERIOR. BASEBALL STANDS - SAME

Josie and the Girls are leaving. Guy catches up to them and taps Josie on the shoulder.

GUY

So--you going to the party at Rob's?

Josie's taken aback. The Girls notice Guy's interest.

JOSIE

Rob's?

GUY

Yeah, you gonna be there?

Josie stumbles on a step Guy immediately reaches out to steady her. She melts. She can't even speak, so she just nods.

GUY

Good. I'll see you tonight.

Guy walks off.

GIBBY

He is totally crunching on you.

JOSIE

(confused)

Do I want to be crunched?

GIBBY

By Guy?

GIBBY/KRISTEN/KIRSTEN

Oh yeah.

INTERIOR. SUN TIMES ELEVATOR - DAY

CAMERA PANS the faces of some dull-looking workers. It stops on Josie, who stands out in her teen garb and huge knapsack. A star struck female WORKER turns to her.

WORKER

I really loved you in the sex-ed scene.

Josie reacts.

INTERIOR. BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Josie spills out the elevator and races through the bullpen with Rhoda in pursuit.

RHODA

Splendiferous--

Josie stops, turns back to her.

JOSIE

Totally.

Josie keeps going. A confused Rhoda stares after her. She passes Merkin's desk. He is still on the phone.

MERKIN

(into phone)

No way ... Yeah? ... No way.

Josie reaches over, grabs the phone out of his hand and hangs up without missing a beat. She continues on as Merkin stares after her. Josie reaches the conference room door. An older WOMAN runs out crying.

INTERIOR. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rigfort presides over a staff meeting. CLOSE UP on stunned office WORKERS' faces.

RIGFORT

Alrighty then--next on the agenda-sack races at the company picnic-yes or no?

Josie sneaks in. She pushes past workers to get to a chair, big backpack whacking them as she goes.

JOSIE

Hi. Sorry I'm late.

(pushing past chairs)

Sorry. Excuse me--

Josie takes the chair next to Anita's. Anita looks her up and down.

ANITA

(sotto)

I love that jacket.

RIGFORT

Miss Geller, what's the status on your story?

JOSIE

Oh it's great. Totally Rufus.

Gus and Anita look at each other, both mouthing "Rufus?"

JOSIE

(cont'd)

I have, um--

Josie dumps out her backpack on the table. Teen items spill out-- notebooks, CDs, barrettes, a hacky sac, a Frisbee, glitter nail polish. She rifles through it all--

JOSIE

(cont'd)

--notes here somewhere-(picking up paper)

There's my math homework!

RIGFORT

Geller, I don't need your notes. I need your story. Though I speak for everyone when I say I've seen the tapes. Compelling stuff.

All the workers nod in agreement.

RIGFORT

(cont'd)

But I want a story in two weeks. I'm saving the "Life and Style" cover for you. You're gonna make one hell of a reporter. Oh, and if you don't, you and Gus are fired.

Josie and Gus react.

RIGFORT

(cont'd)

Now, onto the next order of business. Marketing department-yes or no?

EXTERIOR. JOSIE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Beer cans and kids litter the lawn. Josie pulls into the driveway.

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S PARENTS HOUSE - SAME

Josie makes her way through the THRONGS OF KIDS. It's a big high school "rager" lots of big blue keg cups, drunk girls, etc. The cool Girls are present and socializing. Josie finally makes her way to the kitchen.

INTERIOR. KITCHEN - SAME

Rob is mixing margaritas, wearing a big sombrero. Tracy sits on the counter, gazing lovingly at Rob's every move.

JOSIE

Hey Rob, what's going on?

TRACY

I'm Rob's prom date.

Josie glares at Rob.

JOSIE

Really?

(pulling Rob aside)

Rob-, that girl is sixteen.

ROB

And a gymnast!

JOSIE

She's sixteen years old, Rob. That's totally and completely illegal.

Josie feels an arm around her shoulder. It's Guy.

GUY

Hey there.

JOSIE

Hey. There.

Guy takes Josie's hand.

GUY

Come here. I want to ask you something.

Rob watches them leaving the kitchen.

ROB

(to Josie, calling after)

See you around the cellblock, Mrs. Robinson.

Josie turns around and gives him a death look. Tracy turns to Rob.

TRACY

Rob, what do you want to be when you grow up?

ROB

Well, a ball player.

TRACY

No, I know. But, what if you don't make it? 'I mean, you don't want to be working at a mail place the rest of your life. It's okay for an after school job, but, come on, "hi, I'm Rob and I run the Tiki Post"?! Totally lame.

Tracy starts to giggle. Rob does not.

INTERIOR. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Guy and Josie stand in front of Josie's old room. A bicycle license plate that says-"JOSIE" is nailed to the door. She stands in front of it.

JOSIE

Maybe we should go in a different room?

GUY

I already checked. There are some pretty serious couples in there.

Guy reaches for the doorknob.

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S OLD BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

They go in. Josie sees her spelling bee trophies- with her name. She turns them around, trying to appear nonchalant. As Guy enters, he eyes the trophies, the stuffed animals, the many sets of encyclopedias.

GUY

Wow, Rob's sister must be such a loser.

Josie manages a weak smile. Guy sits on the bed.

GUY

Come here, sit down.

She sits on the bed, and then sees a picture of her and her family on the bedside table. She dives across the bed to overturn it.

GUY

I'm sure you've probably heard that I want to ask you, but I'd like to know if you'd go to prom with me. I know we didn't hit it off right at the beginning but-

JOSIE

Yes. I'll go. Yes.

Guy leans in as if to kiss her and whispers...

GUY

Rufus.

(then pulling away)

But I don't even know where you live.

JOSIE

You know what? Why don't you just pick me up here? We could all share a limo.

GUY

Cool. I'll catch you later.

Guy leaves. Josie is ecstatic and flops back on her bed. Stuffed animals fall all around her.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Josie and Rob walk confidently through the hallway. Kids greet and high five them both.

JASON

Hey Jos. Hey Robster.

BRETT

Looking good guys.

TOMMY

Hey Jos. Rob, rufus kegger.

Rob and Josie turn the corner.

JOSIE

Rob, this is unbelievable. I mean--

Josie shoves through the double doors leading into the gym.

INTERIOR. GYM - CONTINUOUS

The place is a flurry of activity, a staging area for prom. Various committees are set up at tables throughout the room.

Josie and Rob enter.

JOSIE

--I spent my whole life wanting to fit in, and now--

Gibby and Kirsten run up to Josie.

GIBBY

Hey Josie- who did Archie date Betty or Veronica?

JOSIE

Betty.

Gibby turns to Kirsten.

GIBBY

Told you.

And they move off. Rob spots Tracy and moves off to her.

SAM

(O.S.)

I always liked Betty better.

Josie turns, sees Sam.

JOSIE

You did?

And they begin to walk through the prom prop area, and it begins to appear like a romantic date--they pass flowers, he picks one out, they pass a bistro table, a backdrop of a sunset follows them for awhile, etc.

SAM

Oh yeah. Betty was so spunky and fun. Veronica may have had great legs, but she was too moody. Very high maintenance.

Josie laughs.

ANGLE ON: A TABLE where Kristen and Tommy are selling prom tickets. Aldys is standing in front of them.

ALDYS

You can't not sell me a ticket to prom.

TOMMY

Listen, Alpo--we can do whatever we want.

ALDYS

Oh, I get it. It's that pesky making change part that's confusing you guys. Here. I'll make it easy.

(holding up money)

Money-

(drops money, takes ticket)

Ticket.

Aldys takes her ticket, walks off. Tommy and Kristen turn to each other and start whispering conspiratorially.

ANGLE BACK ON: JOSIE AND SAM

Sera runs up to Josie.

SERA

Josie, were Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum a couple?

Josie and Sam share a look.

JOSIE

Well, in a strict sense, probably not. But for prom--sure.

SERA

Thanks!

Sera turns off.

SAM

You're really doing a great job here, Josie. I like your "can do" attitude.

JOSIE

(shyly)

Thanks.

(beat)

They weren't related to Humpty Dumpty, were they? Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee?

SAM

Maybe distant cousins. They did have that egg shape in common.

JOSIE

But Humpty Dumpty was alone.

SAM

That's sad, isn't it? He had to sit on that wall all by himself. He deserved to have somebody.

JOSIE

That's really what we all need, right? Someone to sit up on the wall with us--

SAM

Yeah. To watch the world go by.--

JOSIE

To put us back together again when we fall.

They share a meaningful glance and a smile.

SAM

Our penguin, right?

JOSIE

Do you think you'll find her?

SAM

Yeah, actually I do.

They are lost in each other. They lean closer, as if they may kiss, then Sam breaks the moment.

SAM

Oh my God! I almost forgot--I got you a meeting with the admissions guy from Dartmouth!

JOSIE

What! But--I wasn't even going to go to college--

SAM

No, I know, but I pulled some strings, got him to look at your writing, and he agreed to meet you.

JOSIE

Oh--yikes!

SAM

I told him

(teasing)

--if I'm wrong about this girl, you can take away my teaching certificate!

JOSIE

Wow. You believe in me that much--

SAM

Of course I do. Josie, you owe it to yourself--to your writing, to go to college. You're a great writer. You just have to find your story.

As they share a meaningful look, WE FREEZE FRAME.

INTERIOR. GUS'S OFFICE - LATER

Gus and Josie sit in front of his TV. The image of Sam and Josie is frozen on the screen.

GUS

That's your story!

JOSIE

You're crazy. I can't--I can't-no. No.

GUS

It's got it all--sex, intrigue, immorality in the education system--

JOSIE

He's my teacher!

GUS

And that's the best part.

(bannering with his hands)

"Teacher-Student Relations: How close is too close?" We're gonna blow the lid off it!

JOSIE

There is no lid! Nothing's going on between Sam and me. Coulson. Mr. Sam Coulson and me.

GUS

Not yet. Every person in this office comes in here and watches you guys! It's like the goddamn Young and the Restless! Rigfort's salivating over it.

JOSIE

You already pitched this to Rigfort?!

Gus leans in, now all business.

GUS

Josie, this isn't a joke. You heard Rigfort. It's both of our asses on the line. This is your story.

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josie is getting ready for prom. She wears her bathrobe and is doing her make-up. She looks over at her dresser where she eyes the camera/flight wings pin tentatively.

INTERIOR. DEN - NIGHT

Rob, in boxers, a dress shirt, and socks is filling flasks with vodka. Josie comes in the door wearing a lovely Elizabethan gown. She looks absolutely beautiful.

ROB

Wow, Josie- you look really-

JOSIE

(hopeful)

Rufus?

ROB

Yes. Exactly. Major Rufus.

JOSIE

Thanks. And what are -

ROB

Duh. Tom Cruise. "Risky Business".

He puts on his black wayfarer sunglasses, and does the famous slide into the living room. Josie laughs.

JOSIE

Rob--thanks. For everything. This is really happening. I never thought--

ROB

I know.

Rob smiles and exits.

Josie nervously checks her reflection in the T.V. - just like she did eight years ago. She takes a deep breath, and goes out.

EXTERIOR. FRONT PORCH - SAME

Josie comes out on the porch, and sees the limo rounding the corner, just like eight years before. The sunroof opens. And Guy stands up - holding something.

Josie panics - and starts to take cover - but then sees he's holding a dozen white roses. And holding them out to her.

GUY

Come on beautiful - what are you waiting for?

Josie, smiling, runs down the driveway to the limo.

EXTERIOR. COUNTRY CLUB - NIGHT

Prom night. And it really is magical. Twinkling lights dot the trees, MUSIC wafts out from the club. A neon sign that says "Meant For Each Other" blinks above the building.- COUPLES make their way inside. We see MORK a MINDY, ANTONY a CLEOPATRA and Sera dressed as a RABBIT. Annoyed, she turns back to her lagging date, Brett, dressed as a TORTOISE.

SERA

Hello! If you don't hurry up we're gonna miss the whole thing!

Gibby, Kirsten, and Kristen exit limos with their DATES. They all wear the same straight blonde wig, and look at each other in horror.

GIBBY

Oh-my-God. You totally ripped off my Malibu Barbie idea.

KRISTEN

Uh uh. I'm Disco Barbie.

Kirsten's wearing a short, tight miniskirt.

KIRSTEN

And I'm Evening Gown Barbie.

GIBBY

Right. That's not an evening gown.

KIRSTEN

It is on Barbie.

Josie and Guy approach, dressed in Elizabethan costume. They look great.

KRISTEN

Josie, you look Rufus.

KIRSTEN

Who are you guys?

GIBBY

Don't tell me...you're Medieval Barbie.

JOSIE

Rosalind and Orlando.

(nothing)

From "As You Like It"?

(more blank stares)

Shakespeare?

It's like talking to a sack of hammers. Guy interjects.

GUY

Look! I get to have a sword!

And they all ooh and ahh.

INTERIOR. COUNTRY CLUB - CONTINUOUS

WE FOLLOW Josie and the group into the prom. The place looks amazing. Lights, ice sculptures, champagne fountains. WE PAN DOWN the buffet.

A BOY dressed as a jar of PEANUT BUTTER and his date, JELLY, are getting food. Peanut Butter turns away from the buffet and bumps into a GIRL dressed as a CHOCOLATE BAR.

PEANUT BUTTER

oh, sorry.

There's a magical beat as they smile at each other.

CHOCOLATE BAR

That's okay--

Jelly looks on, chagrined.

We reach two OLDER GENTLEMEN in tuxes who carry clipboards and wear big buttons that read: NATIONAL PROM JUDGE. They contemplate the ice sculpture.

JUDGE #1

It's deft and unique without being derivative.

JUDGE #2

(looking off)

Hey! Pigs in blankets!

And he runs off.

INTERIOR. COUNTRY CLUB - LATER THAT NIGHT

Josie sits with the COOL GROUP at a table. Kristen is making odd faces.

JOSIE

Kristen, what are you doing?

KRISTEN

I'm practicing my surprised face for when we get named to prom court.

JOSEPH and a very pregnant MARY approach their table and try to sit down.

KIRSTEN

Sorry. There's no room at this table.

Joseph and Mary amble off. Guy turns to Josie.

GUY

You having fun?

JOSIE

(meaning it)

Oh yeah. The best. Josie takes in the spectacle around her.

INTERIOR. GEORGE'S VAN - CONTINUOUS

Candles are lit. George's Date sits on the couch. The monitor is on showing the JOSIE CAM POV.

He flips the switch, the lights dim and a small disco ball starts moving slowly. George settles in next to his Date.

INTERIOR. GUS'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The entire office is crammed into Gus's office. Anita sits up front, spellbound, watching the JOSIE CAM. Gus stands in back. Okay, he's a little interested too.

ANITA

This is the most beautiful prom I have ever been to.

Cynthia runs in with a bowl of popcorn.

CYNTHIA

Did I miss the crowning?

MERKIN

No, but I'm closing the pool in five minutes.

Merkin holds out a bowl of cash.

MERKIN

(cont'd)

Josie's odds are 3 to 1. 2 to 1 for Prom court. And even odds the kid sticks himself with the sword by the end of the night.

INTERIOR. COUNTRY CLUB - CONTINUOUS

WE PAN ACROSS the dance floor where we see POPEYE & OLIVE OYL, SONNY & CHER, the BLUES BROTHERS.

WE HOLD on ROBIN dancing with BATGIRL. BATMAN approached and taps Robin's shoulder--

BATMAN

May I have this dance-

And Batgirl steps aside--Robin and Batman dance happily away.

ANGLE ON ROB trying to slow dance with Tracy

(dressed like REBECCA De MORNAY), but she is so-drunk she's having trouble balancing.

TRACY

Are you having fun?

ROB

Yeah. Definitely.

He tries to stand her up on her own.

TRACY

Good. Gibby gave me champagne.

ROB

Maybe we should sit.

He helps her to a chair next to the dance floor. They both sit. Next to them, a ravenous MISS PIGGY eats with her date KERMIT looking on. She picks up an hors d'oeuvre and stares at it horrified.

MISS PIGGY

Oh my God! Is this a pig in a blanket?!

Tracy looks at Rob, and gets serious.

TRACY

Rob, I've - I've thought about it a lot. And I think- I mean, I know. You're the one. My penguin.

Rob looks at her. She's young. She's beautiful. She's tipsy. She's trying to put her legs behind her head.

ROB

Wow - I-

TRACY

Rob, I mean it. I want you to be my first. Me and you. Once the floor stops spinning, let's have sex.

He looks around. It's high school prom. A skinny kid is getting beat up in a corner. Other kids are sneaking smokes. He can't do this.

ROB

I'm gonna get you some water. And then, I think we should get back out on that dance floor and boogie.

Rob gets up, kisses Tracy on the top of her head, and heads for the refreshment table. Tracy, her leg still around her head falls backwards into Kermit's lap. Kermit looks down, surprised and interested. Miss Piggy notices, gives him a big "Harumph", tosses her hair, and leaves.

ANGLE BACK ON: THE COOL TABLE.

Gibby is staring O.S. in horror.

GIBBY

You guys--what is the one thing that could ruin my senior prom?

KRISTEN

That you would trip on your Barbie heels and I'd get named prom queen?

(beat)

Did I say that out loud?

WE FOLLOW Kristen's stare to the prom entrance where Aldys and the Denominators enter in pairs, one behind the other, attached together with rope, to form a human ladder. They cross the dance floor, interrupting everything with their unwieldy, tied-together conga line. They approach the Cool Table.

GIBBY

So what are you supposed to be? Other than freaks?

ALDYS

We're DNA. A double helix. But I guess you'd know that if you'd actually passed bio.

Kristen reaches out and touches the rope binding Denominator #1 to Aldys. Denominator #1 slaps her hand away.

DENOMINATOR #1

Please don't touch the hydrogen. It's rented.

Kristen reacts.

INTERIOR. COUNTRY CLUB - ON THE STAGE - LATER

Sam takes the stage, with a card in his hand.

SAM

Well, the moment has arrived.

He looks at the card.

SAM

Our 1999 prom court - the princesses are - Miss Kristen Rey, Miss Kirsten Leosis and Miss Gibby Zarefsky. And the princes are Mr. Thomas Salamey, Mr. Jason Way, and Mr. Rob -

Sam looks at the card, and then looks around. Nobody can help him.

SAM

Mr. Rob ... Mr. Rob!

The crowd cheers. Gibby, Kirsten, and Kristen all jump in preplanned delight. Rob seems genuinely surprised. Jason carries Tommy up to the stage piggyback. The girls make their way to the stage, and put on their "PROM COURT" sashes. Sam looks to the card again.

SAM

Next up - Southglen's Prom King..

Guy is already halfway to the stage-

SAM

Guy Perkins!

The crowd goes wild. Guy reaches the stage and takes his crown and scepter.

SAM

And - this year's prom queen -

Sam looks at the card, then at Josie. Josie is standing; eyes open, staring at the podium...

INTERIOR. GUS'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Crowd is rapt, waiting for the announcement. Anita has her eyes squeezed shut, praying for the win...

INTERIOR. COUNTRY CLUB - ANGLE ON SAM.

SAM

Ladies and gentlemen - Josie Geller!

The Crowd CHEERS like crazy, Josie smiles.

INTERIOR. GUS'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Crowd goes crazy, hugging each other and jumping up and down.

ANITA

Yes! You go girl! Yes! Yes!

Anita gives Gus a big hug. Gus is completely taken aback. Merkin dolefully hands out money.

INTERIOR. COUNTRY CLUB - CONTINUOUS-

Josie is hugged and congratulated as she makes her way, elated, to the stage. Sam places the Queen's tiara on her head and hands her a bouquet of flowers. They lock eyes for a moment.

SAM

And now - as it is custom - the king and queen will have their first dance.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR:

Guy and Josie begin to dance. From Josie's P.O.V., it's in SLOW MOTION, the world glittering and wonderful around her.

GUY

Hey--what are you thinking about?

JOSIE

Shakespeare. How he described a night like this--"Look how the floor of heaven is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold".

(beat)

What about you? What are you thinking about?

GUY

(taking a beat, happily)

My sword.

It's like a switch has been flicked on in Josie's brain.

JOSIE

Oh.

GUY

Josie, you rock my world. You're like the most amazing girl I've ever dated. You're so smart and fun and crazy! You rock my world.

JOSIE

You said that already.

INTERIOR. COUNTRY CLUB - BUFFET - MINUTES LATER

Josie stands by the buffet in her tiara, turns and comes face to face with Sam. They're both taken aback by the other's beauty.

SAM

Josie--you make a really beautiful prom queen.

JOSIE

Thanks. So do you.

They both laugh, embarrassed, at Josie's flub.

SAM

I always feel like such a goofball in these penguin suits. Like I'm at my own wedding or something.

An awkward beat.

SAM

(cont'd)

You wanna--

He gestures towards the dance floor. Josie smiles.

JOSIE

Yeah, okay--

And they walk off onto the dance floor.

ANGLE ON: THE SIDE OF THE DANCE FLOOR.

Guy approaches Aldys.

GUY

Hey, listen--it's prom. How about we let all the old shit go. Would you like to dance?

Aldys can't help it. She smiles, a little flattered.

GUY

(cont'd)

If it's okay with the rest of the double helix.

Aldys smiles and unhooks herself from the group. And starts to dance with Guy.

ANGLE ON: JOSIE AND SAM as they continue to dance.

SAM

Proms always make me sad. They're so final. Graduation. Everyone's scattering, moving on.

JOSIE

Well, are you here with anybody?

SAM

No, I'm alone.

JOSIE

It's weird because "prom" is actually from the word "promenade". And you can't really promenade alone, can you?

Sam smiles at this.

SAM

You're amazing, Josie Geller.

ANGLE ON: GUY AND ALDYS as they dance, WE SEE the Cool Girls and Jason standing to the side of the dance floor laughing Gibby reaches into her purse and pulls out a CAN OF ALPO. She hands it to Jason who pulls a CAN OPENER out of his pocket, opens the lid. He hands it to Kirsten who take the lid off. She hands the can to Kristen, who hands the can to Tommy.

SAM

So--have you thought anymore about Dartmouth?

JOSIE

Yeah, I have.

CLOSE UP on Josie's HAND as she subtly removes her hidden camera pin and drops it to the ground.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

There's something I have to tell you--

Her foot comes down on top of it.

INTERIOR. GEORGE'S VAN - CONTINUOUS

George is making out with his Date when the monitor suddenly FRITZES OFF. George looks up.

GEORGE

What the--?!

George stands and hits the side of the monitor.

INTERIOR. GUS'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gus's monitor flicks to static. The Crowd lets out a horrified GASP.

CYNTHIA

Tell him what?! Tell him what?!

INTERIOR. COUNTRY CLUB - DANCE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Sam looks deep into Josie's eyes.

SAM

There's something I have to tell you, too--

Josie's eyes shift from Sam to over his shoulder. She spots Aldys, who smiles at her. Josie's eyes travel up to the can of DOG FOOD.

FLASH: TEENAGE JOSIE

on the porch, facing Billy and his Date.

FLASH: TEENAGE JOSIE

with egg dripping all over her.

BACK TO PRESENT.

JOSIE

NOOOOOOO!

SLOW MOTION as Josie lunges for Aldys and pulls her to floor as Tommy, off-balance, dumps the dog food all down Guy's front. The Crowd stops dead, staring. The can, now empty, rolls slowly off the dance floor, the metal rolling noise ECHOING in the silence.

GUY

(to Josie)

What is your problem?!

GIBBY

I knew it. You are a loser.

KRISTEN

You ruined the whole thing!

KIRSTEN

You so do not deserve to be prom queen.

Everyone is still staring. It's dead quiet.

JOSIE

Let me tell you something.

It is still silent. Josie takes a deep breath, and looks around the room.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

I don't care about being the prom queen. I am twenty five years old.

Looks of confusion and teenage disgust. Rob is pissed. Sam looks shocked.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

I'm here as an undercover reporter for the Sun Times for God's sake and I've been beating my brains out trying to impress you.

She tears off her crown, and chucks it. She's on a roll.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

I want to tell you something. You people- Guy, Gibby, the rest of you who have been keeping the geeks down through the ages. You will spend your lives trying to figure out ways to keep others down, because it makes you feel more important. And you will miss out on so much.

(indicating Aldys)

Why her, huh? What did she ever do to you? Let me tell you something about this girl. She is unbelievable. I was new here, and she befriended me- no questions asked. But you people, you were my friends only after my brother, Rob...

She points out Rob in the crowd. He's mortified.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

posed as a student and told you to like me. But y'know--I have to thank you. I got to go to an amazing prom. I got to be prom queen. I got to be cool. It felt good.

(beat)

But not as good as being myself.

(turns to crowd)

And to all of you-- there's a big world out there. Bigger than prom. Bigger than high school. When you get there, it won't matter if you were prom queen or the quarterback or the biggest nerd in school. What matters is that you don't regret who you were, who you are--What if Steven Spielberg had quit the audio/visual club because it wasn't "cool"? What if Rosie O'Donnell had stopped cracking jokes because someone told her they were stupid? What if Michael Jordan never went back to basketball after he got cut from his high school team?.

(a beat)

In this room right now, there could be a future Nobel Prize winner, a Supreme Court Justice, an amazing Mom. Find out who you are and don't be afraid of it.

(a beat)

And if you'll all excuse me, I have some business to take care of.

Reaction shots' all around. Kids start clapping, hollering, whooping. The MUSIC STARTS UP again. They all go back to dancing The Denominators lead their own conga line.

ANGLE ON: JOSIE

She looks around for Sam but he is gone. She runs out, brushing past the Judges.

ANGLE ON: JUDGES

Judge #2 dabs his eyes.

JUDGE #1

This prom had it all. Laughter, tears, an amazing climax.

Judge #2, still overcome, just raises his "two thumbs up."

EXTERIOR. COUNTRY CLUB PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Josie exits the club, looking for Sam. George runs up to her.

GEORGE

Hey--I lost the feed! What happened with Coulson? Gus is going crazy!

Out of the shadows emerges Sam. The look on his face says he just heard everything.

JOSIE

So--surprise!

He shakes his head in disbelief and walks off. Josie chases after him. He turns back to her.

SAM

"Surprise!" you were doing a story on me?!

JOSIE

No, surprise, I thought you'd be--

SAM

What? Happy? Why? Because it turns out all along that I was allowed to be attracted to you?

JOSIE

(touched)

You were attracted to me?

SAM

Goddamnit, Josie! Drop the act. Do you have any idea what I went through every night because of you?! I was attracted to a 17 year old!

When I wasn't taking cold showers, I was trying to figure out what the hell I was going to do when I couldn't teach anymore! I thought I was the one being unethical.

JOSIE

Wait, I was going to tell you--

SAM

You set me up. For a story.

(beat)

You know what's crazy? I was actually considering waiting for you.

JOSIE

But now you don't have to--

SAM

Now I don't want to! I bought all of your penguin crap. I thought I found her--the right one! And the problem was she was too young! No - the problem was--she didn't even exist!

JOSIE

I did exist. I do exist. I'm the same person!

SAM

The person I cared about wouldn't have done this. Everything out of your mouth has been a complete lie. I don't know you at all. For all I know you could hate Dorothy Parker.

JOSIE

I don't! Look, you could get to know me, again.

Sam turns and starts to walk away.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

Please. Please don't walk away.

SAM

I just can't look at you the same way.

Sam gets into his car and drives off. Josie is devastated.

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - LATER

Josie, still in the prom dress, rounds the corner of her apartment hallway and sees Rob, still in his Risky Business get-up, slumped in front of the door.

ROB

Josie, finally. I just wanted to come over and make sure you're okay.

JOSIE

Really?

He gets up. He's not happy.

ROB

No- not really, Josie. NOT REALLY. How could you do that to me? I helped you. I got you everything you wanted. And how do you repay me- you blow everything TWO DAYS before pro scouts come to see me play. Once they had seen me really play- they wouldn't have given a shit about my age.

JOSIE

I wasn't even thinking about-

ROB

No, you weren't. Don't you realize the only time I was really happy in the last five years was when I was playing ball with those guys?

JOSIE

I-

ROB

No, shut up, Josie. Just shut up.

He storms off.

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Josie lies amidst the needlepoint pillows, still in her prom costume. She stares blankly at the ceiling.

INTERIOR. GUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Gus slaps a newspaper down on his desk.

CLOSE ON - the front page of the paper, and not just any newspaper - THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE - the Sun Times' rival.

There is a PHOTO of Josie from Prom with the headline that reads: "REPORTER REVEALED AT LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL".

Josie picks it up, and starts reading.

GUS

Your story was Rigfort's baby. We were scooped! We've got nothing. Zippo. You totally and completely screwed both of us.

JOSIE

Maybe I could talk to Rigfort, you know, tell him the whole story.

GUS

I'll tell you a story. It's about this shy copy editor who makes a mockery of herself and her boss when she completely botches her first assignment as a reporter.

Josie stands. Slams down the paper.

JOSIE

We are not screwed. Yes, I made a mistake. But we will have a story.

(beat)

You will have an amazing story.

Josie exits.

INTERIOR. SUN TIMES BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Josie walks out of Gus's office, continues, determined, towards the elevators. Anita falls into step with her.

ANITA

Josie! Josie, how'd it go? Did he ream you?

JOSIE

Yeah, but I'm okay. I've got some work to do.

ANITA

You need my help?

JOSIE

No, thanks--I'm doing this on my own.

Josie walks past Merkin's desk. She holds out her hand to Merkin.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

Merkin. Highlighter.

Merkin slaps a highlighter into her hand, she continues on. Anita watches her go.

EXTERIOR. SOUTHGLEN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Josie, looking quite the professional in stylish pantsuit and briefcase, bounds up the steps, two at a time.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - SAME

Josie walks down the hall, purposefully - she is on a mission. Groups of kids stop and stare at her, but this time, Josie doesn't even notice.

As Josie rounds a corner, she comes face to face with Guy, who is at his locker. He looks at her. She smiles. And now it is Guy that is nervous. He drops a pile of papers, tries awkwardly to gather them. Josie looks at him - and for the first time we see it register on her face - this guy is just a seventeen- year-old kid.

GUY

Uh, hey, umm--Ms. Geller. This is totally embarrassing but my mom, she's all worried about me getting a job after graduation. She wanted me to ask you about like, an internship for me, at the Sun Times?

Josie smiles big.

JOSIE

I'll do what I can. And tell your mom not to worry - you'll do O.K.

Josie continues down the hall.

INTERIOR. LOCKER ROOM - SAME

The guys' locker room. A bunch of GUYS are getting dressed after P. E.

JOSIE

(O.S.)

WOMAN COMING THROUGH! COVER UP WHAT YOU DON'T WANT SEEN!

And with that Josie comes walking into the locker room, completely unruffled, and storms over to Coach Romano's office, just as he is leaving it.

JOSIE

Hi, Coach Romano, my name is Josie Geller, from the Chicago Sun Times Listen, you know the local sports guy for the Sun Times, Jim Lakin?

COACH

Sure, every coach in the area tries to get Jim to cover his team.

Josie puts her arm around the coach, and leads him back into his own office.

JOSIE

Well, what would you say if I told you that I could guarantee that Jim and every other reporter in the area would be at the game?

COACH

I'd say you can have whatever the hell you want.

Josie smiles, together they enter his office and close the door.

INTERIOR. JOSIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Josie sits at her desk, typing on her laptop, engrossed.

JOSIE (V.O.)

Someone once told me that to write well you have to write what you know. This is what I know. I am twenty five years old. I have never really kissed a guy. A geek to the core, most of my childhood years were spent doing extra homework I requested from the teacher.

INTERIOR. GUS' OFFICE - DAY

Gus comes in, snaps on the light, sits at his desk, and opens his newspaper. He pulls out, the "Life and Style" section.

And there it is. Front page - "NEVER BEEN KISSED BY JOSIE GELLER." There are three pictures next to the article. One is Josie at age 17, one is her recent prom picture, and one is her as a normal, 25 yr. old adult.

JOSIE (V.O.)

High school was more of the same. Then, at seventeen, it seemed as if my luck was about to change. The cutest guy in school asked me to senior prom - but it turned out he invited me as a cruel joke. I have never fully recovered.

INTERIOR. SUN TIMES LUNCHROOM - DAY

Anita and Cynthia read the article, in the staff lunch room, over a shared bag of microwave popcorn. They are astounded-

JOSIE (V.O.)

Yes, it is embarrassing to share this with the world. But it would be hard to explain what I learned, and how I learned it, without sharing this humiliating history.

EXTERIOR. A HOUSE - MORNING

The Sun Times lies on the front mat. The door opens; we see a pair of bare feet. A hand reaches down to grab the paper. WE PAN UP to reveal Sam in all his depressed glory--sweats, unshaven, bleary eyed.

JOSIE (V.O.)

I received an assignment, my first as a reporter, to enroll in high school as a student, to gain some insight into kids today. Understandably, returning to high school was my worst nightmare.

Sam shuts the door.

EXTERIOR. SOUTHGLEN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Kids stream into school.

JOSIE (V.O.)

What I found?

INTERIOR. MRS. KNOX'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Mrs. Knox, wearing the sombrero, teaches her class.

JOSIE (V.O.)

There's still that one teacher, who marches to her own drummer-

And in the back row, Kirsten, Kristen and Gibby are laughing and talking--

JOSIE (V.O.)

Those girls are still there. The ones that, even as you grow up, will still be the most beautiful girls that you've ever seen close up.

EXTERIOR. BASEBALL DIAMOND - DAY

The BASEBALL TEAM as they practice-

JOSIE (V.O.)

The athletes - and the immense sense of fraternity and loyalty that they share-

INTERIOR. SCIENCE LAB - DAY

Aldys and the Denominators- making smores over a bunson burner getting into a melted chocolate and marshmallow fight- and laughing hysterically-

JOSIE (V.O.)

The smart kids. Who everyone else always knew as the brains. But who I just knew as my soulmates, my teachers, my friends.

EXTERIOR. PARKING LOT - DAY

Guy, Tommy and Jason, as they get out Guy's car, in the parking lot-

JOSIE (V.O.)

And there's still that one guy, the one who is so perfect in every way, from the muscles in his shoulders-

EXTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

We focus in on Guy, as he takes the front steps two at a time-

JOSIE (V.O.)

- to the way he, in his own way, struggles to uphold tradition. Southglen would not have been the same without him. High school would not be the same without him. I would not have been the same without him.

INTERIOR. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Guy, his buddies, Kirsten, Kristen and Gibby, sign yearbooks, hang out by the lockers-

JOSIE (V.O.)

All of these things made me miserable at seventeen. But at twenty five I finally see that this - all of this- is just the way it should be. It is all part of this thing- high school. A time in our lives that we can never truly repeat. A time that shapes us. A time that makes us who we are, for years to come.

EXTERIOR. NEWSSTAND - DAY

HANDS grab Chicago Sun Times at the newsstand-

JOSIE (V.O.)

High school- going through it the first time- helped make me who I am. But going there a second time made me see that who I am is O.K. I always wanted to be "in", but seven years later, when they finally opened the door, I somehow gained the confidence to stay outside, firmly, happily.

EXTERIOR. "EL" TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

About 75% of the people have their Life and Style sections opened, reading Josie's piece.

JOSIE (V.O.)

This is not the article I was sent in to write. This is the article I needed to write. I lived a lifetime of regret after my first high school experience, and now, after my second, my regrets are down to one.

INTERIOR. SAM'S KITCHEN - MORNING

The kitchen of a depressed guy--empty pizza boxes next to a dying plant. Sam pours milk into a bowl of Lucky Charms while he reads the Sports Section of the paper.

JOSIE (V.O.)

A certain teacher was trampled in my path to self-discovery, and though this article may serve as a step, it in no way makes up for what I did to him.

He's not paying attention and the milk overflows the bowl, soaking the table.

JOSIE (V.O.)

(cont'd)

To this man, you know who you are, I am so sorry.

He takes the wet paper, using it like a sponge, he sops up the remaining milk, and throws the paper into an open trash can. He leaves the kitchen. WE HOLD ON the empty room.

JOSIE (V.O.)

(cont'd)

And, I would like to add one more thing - I think I am in love with you.

EXTERIOR. BASEBALL, STADIUM PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Cars begin to fill the parking lot in a steady stream.

JOSIE (V.O.)

And so I propose this - as an ending to this article, and, perhaps, as an ending to this portion of my life. I, Josie Geller, will be at the State Championship baseball game - where my friends the Southglen Rams are playing for the title.

EXTERIOR. BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

The Southglen Rams baseball team minus Rob, are on the field, warming up.

JOSIE (V.O.)

I will stand on the pitcher's mound for the five minutes prior to the first pitch. If this man accepts my apology, I ask him to come to kiss me, in front of everyone, for my first real kiss.

We find a nervous looking Josie standing in the dugout.

JOSIE

(cont'd)

Five minutes may seem like a short time, but trust me, when you've been waiting twenty-five years, it's usually the last five minutes that kill you.

CU: THE PICTURE TAKEN OF JOSIE AND SAM AT THE PROM.

JOSIE (V.O.)

I went back to high school and discovered I was a loser, again.

WIDEN TO REVEAL the picture on the fridge in--

INTERIOR. SAM'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Sam enters, still in sweats, carrying a book. He opens the fridge, grabs a beer, shuts it, is confronted by Josie's picture. He takes it down, looks at it.

JOSIE (V.O.)

(cont'd)

And then I discovered it wasn't so bad. I wasn't so bad. So, now that I'm ready to start living the rest of my life, it would be magical if I could live the rest of it with him.

Sam lets the photo slowly drop from his hand into the trash.

JOSIE (V.O.)

(cont'd)

Because inside everyone is a loser afraid to be loved, and out there is the one person who can kiss us and make it all better.

WE FOLLOW Sam's stare down into the trash and see the photo lying on top and to the side of Josie's article--the photos from the article are clearly visible.

ANGLE ON HOT DOGS, POPCORN CHANGING HANDS being sold by the truckload at the stadium. The crowds are over capacity. Way over. People fill the parking lot, they cover every other inch of school grounds, as well. They stand on the roofs of nearby buildings, they sit on top of their cars. It looks like most of Chicago is either already there, or on their way.

Some WOMEN hold signs for Josie, others hold and wave her article.

Josie sticks her head out of the dugout, and looks out at the fans. TV REPORTERS are everywhere, including several on the field. She looks like she may faint. She ducks back in.

INTERIOR. DUGOUT - SAME

The team is dressed, ready, excited. Anita and Aldys stand next to Josie. Josie looks up at the crowd, amazed.

JOSIE

Wow. It's packed.

ANITA

It's great! They're behind you. They feel like they know you.

ALDYS

It's romantic, what you're doing, and they want to be a part of it.

JOSIE

Well I'm so glad that you guys are.

Josie then starts to hyperventilate. She puts her head between her ankles. Anita and Aldys both grab the brown paper bag and hand it to Josie. She hyperventilates into it. Coach Romano approaches. Josie puts the bag down.

COACH

Sweet Jesus, Geller - I had no idea there'd be all these TV crews here. This thing's gonna be on every station in the country.

Josie immediately begins hyperventilating into the bag again.

COACH

You more than kept your end of the bargain. Now go out there and get 'em.

Josie gets up and he slaps her on the ass. She hugs Aldys. Then Anita gives Josie a big hug, and won't let go. Josie has to pull Anita pulls back. Josie struggles to get out of the hug- Anita won't let her. Finally, they are both laughing.

Josie walks out of the dugout, and onto the field.

EXTERIOR. PITCHER'S MOUND - SAME

She walks, alone, out to the pitcher's mound, clutching a microphone. The crowd goes berserk. She stands until they quiet.

JOSIE

Could I have five minutes on the clock, please?

The scoreboard clock reads 5:00. Josie stands, alone.

EXTERIOR. BOX SEATS - SAME

The staff from the Sun Times sits in box seats up front. Rigfort joins them, carrying a huge load of hot dogs.

RIGFORT

I got weiners. Hot weiners.

Rigfort sits next to Gus. Behind them sit Bruns, his hair finally growing in and Howard, now down to just a sling.

RIGFORT

I love this. Sun Times readers, out here, making a personal connection to one of our reporters. This is amazing, isn't it? Weiner?

Gus takes a weiner.

GUS

Yeah, it is.

RIGFORT

(studying his weiner)

Wait a minute...

Rigfort pulls something small and shiny out of the bun.

RIGFORT

(cont'd)

There's a bolt in my weiner.

Then he turns back to Howard and smiles.

RIGFORT

(cont'd)

Hey Howard, what are you doing for the next month?

Howard's face falls.

EXTERIOR. PITCHER'S MOUND - SAME

Josie still stands there. The clock is down to 2:30. She looks over to the dugout.

EXTERIOR. BLEACHERS - SAME

The Denominators talking and laughing. Behind them, sit the Marching Band

EXTERIOR. PITCHER'S MOUND - SAME

Josie forces-a stoic smile. 1:00 is on the clock.

EXTERIOR. BLEACHERS - SAME

The cool crowd. Guy, Kirsten and the gang. They are trying start the wave, but its not working.

EXTERIOR. PITCHER'S MOUND - SAME

The clock reads: 20.

EXTERIOR. BOX SEATS - SAME

The Sun Times box. Anita clutches Gus's hand for dear life has her eyes squeezed tight. The crowd keeps chanting.

EXTERIOR. BLEACHERS - SAME

Everyone - including all the Denominators are on their feet, chanting. Aldys cheers the loudest.

EXTERIOR. STANDS - SAME

The women are on their feet, chanting.

EXTERIOR. BLEACHERS - SAME

Guy and the Gang are on their feet.

EXTERIOR. PITCHER'S MOUND - SAME

Josie stands, clutching the mic. The clock reads: 10.

CROWD

TEN - NINE - EIGHT - SEVEN - SIX -

Josie stands there, head still held high.

CROWD

FIVE - FOUR - THREE - TWO -

Josie steals a look to the dugout. No one is coming out the door.

CROWD

ONE!!

Josie makes one more desperate look around. No one is running toward her.

CLOSE UP on Josie, completely crestfallen. She drops the microphone. It reverbs in the silent stadium.

WE PAN ACROSS the Crowd, all defeated. And then...

A commotion in the stands. Sam bursts through the crowd. He runs toward the mound. The Crowd is on their feet.

It feels like a lifetime before he reaches Josie, grabs her, pulls her close to him.

SAM

I told you you could write, Josie Geller.

JOSIE

I finally found my story.

And they kiss passionately. The most amazing, most waited-for kiss in the history of man. A kiss that will last forever.

INTERIOR. DUGOUT - SAME

Rob is in his baseball uniform, cheering up a storm. Across his chest is emblazoned: "ASSISTANT COACH".

EXTERIOR. BOX SEATS - SAME

Anita is so thrilled, she reaches over and plants a big one on Gus. She is surprised. So is he. They like it.

EXTERIOR. BLEACHERS - SAME

The Denominators and Aldys cheer their brains out.

EXTERIOR. BLEACHERS - SAME

Guy, Kirsten, etc. have finally succeeded in starting the wave.

EXTERIOR. PITCHER'S MOUND - SAME

MUSIC UP: The Beach Boys "And Then I Kissed Her" as Josie and Sam continue to kiss as the CAMERA PULLS UP, taking in the kiss, the Crowd, the stadium... CAMERA SPINS UP as FIREWORKS go off above the stadium... And we watch as the stadium becomes a speck against the glittering backdrop of Chicago.

FADE OUT.

The End