

MOUSE

Written by

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May 1, 2020

FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS - NIGHT - 2002

The moon illuminates three cars as they turn onto the street, headlights off.

CALLIE'S HOUSE

They park a few houses down and TEENAGERS exit, dressed in black.

As they approach a particularly large house, BRAD (18, football-handsome) looks up to an electric candle glowing in the second-story window.

Brad motions and the group begins to silently "roll" the house, tossing rolls of toilet paper over the branches of the trees.

CUT TO:

I/E. VARIOUS HOUSES

Houses all over town get rolled, the rollers expending more effort on some houses than others.

From inside, younger teenagers watch from their windows, proud and relieved.

Inside one, a DISGRUNTLED DAD walks into his DAUGHTER's room and flips on her light.

DISGRUNTLED DAD
What the hell are they doing??

DAUGHTER
(flipping off the light)
Dad, shhhh!

Dad sticks his head out the window as teens scatter.

DISGRUNTLED DAD
Quit that right now! I'm gonna call
the police!

DAUGHTER
Dad, stop! It means I'm cool!

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE

As they finish rolling, Brad blows a kiss to the window with the electric candle, which flashes three times in reply.

I/E. CALLIE'S BEDROOM

CALLIE (17, Greek-American, one of the sparkly people) crouches at her window, hand on the candle's switch.

As Brad turns and runs to the cars we pull out Callie's window, up, up, up to reveal **a massive curtain of toilet paper blowing in the wind**, a more impressive "rolling" than any we've seen.

I/E. MINNIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**MINNIE'S ROOM**

MINNIE (17, one of the mousy people) sits at her window, waiting. Her house is small, a beat-up Chevy Nova in the driveway.

The branches of a lone dying tree sit bare and toilet paper-free.

Minnie's clock reads 3:12am. She glances out the window with increasing despair.

CUT TO:

MINNIE'S ROOM - DAWN

Minnie lies next to the window, asleep.

With a GROAN she wakes to the sound of two dogs BARKING from down the hall. One yaps; the other's vocal chords have been cut- its barks sounds like a muted trumpet.

Minnie hears gentle THUDS outside. She peeks out the window. The first light of dawn illuminates the yard.

A FIGURE in a bulky coat and lion mask tries to roll the dying tree.

Minnie crawls quickly to her bedroom door and lets in the two dogs.

MINNIE
(whispering)
Shhhh, you guys are gonna fuck this
up for me!

She returns to the window, quieting them as a roll hits a branch and ricochets, hitting the figure in the face.

FIGURE
Ow!

They lift their mask and rub their nose. Minnie cranes to see, but the figure returns to rolling.

It's pathetic, but Minnie smiles nonetheless. The figure does one last throw and sprints out of sight, the sound of a CAR STARTING and DRIVING AWAY.

The dogs start up again. A BABY CRIES from the next room.

BARBARA (O.S.)
(from down the hall)
Minnie, why are the dogs barking?

INT. MINNIE'S HOUSE- MORNING

BARBARA (Minnie's mom, 40's, in a vet tech uniform) pops a Pop Tart into the toaster.

BARBARA
(yelling down the hall)
You're gonna be late!

BATHROOM - MORNING

Minnie brushes her teeth and looks at herself in the mirror.

MINNIE
(pausing the brushing)
Hey, would you sign this?

She resumes brushing, then pauses again.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
Sure, wanna sign mine?

She holds a smile for a few seconds, then lets it drop. She spits.

KITCHEN - LATER

Barbara hurriedly feeds DUSTIN (two years old).

Various adoption rejects are visible - a large rabbit with one eye, two hissing cats, the two dogs who woke Minnie, and a decrepit Great Dane who watches everything from a recliner in a corner.

Minnie sits amidst it all, staring at her pop tart.

BARBARA
What kind of low-life scum would do
that?
(looking out the window)
It's gonna be there for months,
little bits of paper stuck in the
branches for probably ever. Our
house is gonna look trashy.

The house is trashy in every way. On the mantel sits a "glamour shot" of a younger Minnie and Barbara with Texas-large hair, blue eye shadow and feather boas.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Clean it up before you go.

MINNIE
...I'm supposed to leave it up the whole day.
(off Barbara's look)
It's a tradition. On the last day of school, the seniors roll some of the juniors as like, a sign of respect.

BARBARA
Only an asshole would do something mean and call it "respect."

DUSTIN
"Ass-hole."

BARBARA
He gets it.

Barbara clocks Minnie's disappointment.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Just today. Tomorrow, it goes.

A car HONKS outside. The dogs go crazy (except the Dane).

I/E. FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Minnie opens the door to Donna Summer's "Last Dance" blaring from Callie's car speakers. Callie, in effortlessly chic, expensive clothes, does a celebratory dance in the yard.

The dogs jump all over her.

CALLIE
Last day, bay-bee!

MINNIE
Jasper, Roo, stop!

Callie dances with them.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
They're gonna get you all dirty.

Callie dances on, pulling Minnie in and spinning her.

Barbara steps out onto the porch, followed by Dustin in his diaper.

BARBARA
(to Callie)
Hey, it's the star!

CALLIE
Hey, Ms. Dunn! Hey, Dustin!

BARBARA
(re: the toilet paper)
Can you believe this shit? Did they
get your house, too?

CALLIE
Not as much, I'm not as cool as
Minnie.

MINNIE
That's not- BARBARA
That can't be true, Minnie's
cute, but she's not-

Minnie and Callie stare at Barbara, who catches herself.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Let me get a picture of you girls
before you go.

MINNIE
Mom, please. CALLIE
Ok!

Barbara runs back inside the house. Callie clocks Minnie's
silence.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
You're fucking gorgeous. Don't ever
forget it.

Barbara reenters with a disposable camera.

BARBARA
Big smiles!

Callie throws her arm around Minnie. The camera flashes.

I/E. CALLIE'S CAR - DAY

Callie's SUV windows are covered in white painted messages:
"NLRHS Rising Senior!" and "Caution: Rising Senior on Board!"

They pass house after house with toilet paper in its yard.

A church's billboard reads: "God Bless the class of 2002!
Jesus take their wheels!"

HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Callie turns into the parking lot of idling teens, music blaring from all of their cars.

They park and Minnie moves to get out.

CALLIE
Hold on.

She pulls out a sticky roller from the glove compartment. Minnie realizes she's covered in dog/cat/rabbit hair.

Minnie self consciously rolls herself clean. Callie nods in approval.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
Fuckin gorgeous.

Callie hops out. Minnie takes a deep breath and follows.

The crowd immediately envelopes Callie, Minnie just outside.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING**VARIOUS CLASSROOMS**

On the TV Callie and Brad deliver the morning announcements:

CALLIE
Good morning, Wildcats! I'm Callie King-

BRAD
--and I'm Brad Hugg.

CALLIE
Welcome to the final day of the school year!

Classrooms school-wide erupt in CHEERS.

BRAD
(becoming solemn)
First, we're sad to report the framed photo of Mr. McClendon's mother that was taken from his desk is still at large. This photo is very meaningful to him, and he didn't make any copies for some reason, so if you have any info please visit him in room 109.

MR. MCLENDON'S CLASSROOM

MR. MCLENDON (40s, kind eyes) looks despondent at his desk.

TV PRODUCTION CLASSROOM

Now we see that Minnie is operating the camera.

BRAD
Now, since I'm graduating-

CALLIE
(anchor banter)
Congrats, Brad.

BRAD
Thanks, Callie. I'm off to
Fayetteville next year.
(raising his hands in the
air, "calling the hogs")
Woooooo...

VARIOUS CLASSROOMS

Students and teachers all over the school join, raising their arms in the air.

STUDENTS
Pig! Sooie! Razorbacks!

TV PRODUCTION CLASSROOM

Brad and other students snort like pigs.

Minnie stands behind the camera, unmoved.

BRAD
(looking at Callie)
Let me give you rising seniors some
parting advice:
(serious, into the
camera:) Senior year is the best of your
lives.
(beat)
So fuckin' live it up!

Brad lunges and kisses Callie.

VARIOUS CLASSROOMS

Kids in every classroom hoot and holler.

TV PRODUCTION CLASSROOM

The TV PRODUCTION TEACHER (30s) cuts the broadcast. Brad CACKLES. Callie wipes saliva from her mouth.

Minnie rolls her eyes, disgusted. Callie catches it, and reddens.

DRAMA CLASSROOM - AN HOUR LATER

MRS. MURDAUGH (O.S.)
 "I work, I feel, I move all the time. You stay put. You don't really live. I make it a rule to never worry about the future. I don't think about aging or dying. What will be, will be."

Photos of the school plays and musicals show Callie front and center - Annie in Annie Get Your Gun, Mama Rose in Gypsy, and (somewhat offensively) Anne in Anne Frank.

Minnie can be seen in all of them, in the back - ensemble.

MRS. MURDAUGH (50s, wild hair, serious glasses, an Arkansas Tina Landau) stands at the front of the classroom next to a somewhat yellowed wedding dress.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
 (pivoting to another character)
 "And I, I drag my life along like a dress with an endless train. I feel a thousand years old--"
 (pausing for effect)
 "--and often, I wish I were dead."

She holds for a moment, then drops the character.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
 Who said that?

Minnie timidly half-raises her hand.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
 Who is Anton Chekhov.

Minnie lowers her hand.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
 I have lent this dress, which was my wedding dress, to eleven different students. I have walked six students down the aisle and given eulogies at two funerals. And if any of you ever need, I will do the same for you.

Except for Minnie and Callie, the girls in the class are rapt.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
 I didn't need to have children
 because I consider all of you my
 children. I love you as much as
 your own mothers-

Ms. Murdaugh notices Minnie pulling a loose thread in her shirt, which quickly turns into a hole.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
 Maybe even more in some cases...

SCHOOL COURTYARD - LATER

Callie and Minnie sit with CARA and BRANDI (17, the in-crowd).

CARA
 You know Mrs. Murdaugh was on
 Broadway?

BRANDI
 (floored)
 Stop.

CARA
 She was in Hello, Dolly! with Carol
 Channing, but she quit because it
 was too commercial. And I think she
 tore her meniscus.

BRANDI
 Who's Carol Channing?

Cara looks at Brandi like "you philistine."

CARA
 Comedian? She had her own show?

Cara pulls her ear like Carol Burnett. Brandi reddens, embarrassed at her own ignorance.

CARA (CONT'D)
 I think Ms. Murdaugh's an artist.

CALLIE
 (with a shrug)
 I think she tries too hard.

Cara and Brandi look at Callie, who takes a bite of her sandwich.

BRANDI
 (to Callie)
 Will you sign my yearbook?

CARA
 (to Callie)
 Sign mine when you're done.

The girls trade books. Cara opens Callie's yearbook, pages filled with long messages. Minnie almost asks Brandi to sign her book, then chickens out.

MATH CLASSROOM

Minnie looks at the pages of her yearbook, which have just a few short, generic messages: "Stay sweet!" MS. CLEMONS (40s, a decade past burnout) hands out tests. Her shirt sports a logo for "Siemens". A COOL KID (17) snickers.

COOL KID
(whispering to two buds)
Y'all see that Ms. C' loves semen?

The class chuckles. Ms. Clemons shakes her head.

MS. CLEMONS
Mr. Hollis, I think I'll miss you
most of all.
(to the class)
You have one hour.

Minnie looks down at the test of complex math equations, x's and y's.

MS. CLEMONS (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
Good luck, dip shits.

Pencils start to scratch.

At Ms. Clemons desk, a giant calendar shows the final day of school circled in red. She pulls out a sailing magazine and begins to read.

MATH CLASSROOM - LATER

Minnie finishes the last question and smiles to herself. She fucking killed it. She turns to look at the rest of the class, still working. She sees that Callie is flushed, frustrated and panicked.

Minnie glances at Ms. Clemons, busy tearing a picture of a particularly grand sailboat out of the magazine.

Minnie slides her finished test into Callie's line of sight.

Callie shakes her head. Minnie nods and pushes the test closer.

CALLIE
(whispering)
I want to do it myself.

MS. CLEMONS
Miss King?
(noticing Callie's tears)
(MORE)

MS. CLEMONS (CONT'D)
 I've seen you do enough fake crying
 onstage to last a lifetime. Try
 using your brain for once.

Callie turns even brighter red.

MATH CLASSROOM - END OF CLASS

Callie is the last to finish. The Cool Kid starts a countdown to the end of the school year.

COOL KID
 Ten! Nine!

ALL STUDENTS
 Eight! Seven!

MS. CLEMONS
 (bellowing)
 Quiet!

The class quiets. Minnie looks at Callie's test. She's on the last problem and Minnie sees it's the correct answer. Callie looks up and smiles at Minnie.

Suddenly it's 3pm. The BELL RINGS and students pour out of the classroom, dropping off their tests as they go.

Ms. Clemons looks at Callie and Minnie's tests side by side.

MS. CLEMONS (CONT'D)
 (to Callie)
 Hm. Unless you've had a recent
 brain transplant, there's no way
 you did this on your own.

CALLIE
 I didn't cheat...

MINNIE
 She didn't. She studied really
 hard.

MS. CLEMONS
 (to Minnie)
 Miss Dunn, at some point you're
 going to have to develop a
 personality of your own...and
 realize when you're being used.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

The parking lot is flooded with celebration. Minnie walks slightly behind Callie then stops, watching Callie walk on without her.

As Callie reaches her car she turns and notices Minnie's absence.

CALLIE
(calling to Minnie)
Come on!

Minnie rushes to the car, and as they drive away, cars file in behind them.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Cars full of TEENAGERS speed down the roads.

They pass each other, blaring music, some hanging out the car windows, some mooning each other. Reckless jubilation.

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They pull into the driveway amidst a sea of other cars and are greeted by HELEN (40s, Callie's mom, Greek American and the only person in this movie without an Arkansas accent).

MARK (40's, Callie's dad) stands on a ladder propped against the house, painting Allie's window frame.

He climbs down and receives bro hugs from Brad and other boys.

FRONT ROOM/KITCHEN

The house bustles with VOICES and energy. Teens eat snacks and gossip with Helen, who thrives.

Minnie, on the outskirts, tries to look occupied by scanning photos on the mantel: Callie on homecoming court, in dance recital outfits, and singing in a spotlight onstage.

There's a family photo in matching white linen on a sandy beach and a **giant abstract self-portrait of Callie**, and it's really fucking good.

Minnie turns and notices Helen and Callie mid argument. Callie holds a can of red bull. Helen speaks to Callie in Greek, Callie speaks back in English.

Mark carries a twenty four pack of beer through the back door. He puts an arm around Callie, taking her side.

Callie storms off. Minnie watches Helen and Mark have a moment of strained disagreement.

Brad breaks the spell by playfully punching Mark. Mark puts him in a headlock.

MARK
(holding up the beer)
All right everybody, these are just
for adults.
(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)
 So if any of them go missing, I'm
 gonna assume adults took them.

He winks (he's a winker) and the party LAUGHS and CHEERS.
 Minnie watches Helen's smile drop and turns to find Callie in
 a corner.

MINNIE
 (to Callie)
 You ok?

CALLIE
 My mom's just like, she sees the
 danger in everything. She hates
 when I have caffeine 'cause I had a
 heart murmur when I was a baby-

Callie chugs the rest of the can.

MINNIE
 I thought you hate Red Bull.

Callie cracks open another can and chugs, eyeing Helen
 defiantly. Helen looks away.

BACKYARD - HOURS LATER

The teenagers hit the slip and slide. It's a blast and
 totally unsafe. Wet bodies and lots of feelings about wet
 bodies.

The teens CHANT for Mark to go down the slide. He does,
 sweeping Brad's feet as he goes by.

Brad does a scary flip in the air and lands on his neck.
 Everyone GASPS and they wait for Brad to stand back up.

BRAD
 (hopping up)
 I'm good!

The crowd CHEERS as Mark and Brad high five. Helen picks up
 her glass and takes a long sip.

SIDEYARD - NIGHT

The guys play basketball with Mark.

BASEMENT/DANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Music plays and the girls practice a choreographed,
 occasionally sexual dance in front of a mirror wall. Minnie
 sits in a corner.

Mark and the boys enter the basement, shirtless and sweaty.
 Cara and Brandi eye Mark's toned body.

MARK
All right, ladies, time to say
goodnight to the fellas.

They say goodbye, some couples cuddling, others pointedly
ignoring each other.

MARK (CONT'D)
(approaching Minnie)
Don't you have a boyfriend yet?

MINNIE
Ha. No.

MARK
(all innocence)
I just can't understand that.

He winks and walks away. Minnie blushes, flattered and
unsettled.

BASEMENT/DANCE ROOM - LATER

The girls sit in a circle.

CARA
(mid-explanation)
Ok, so the way this works is we
pick one person, and we go around
taking turns giving them personal
feedback.

GIRL
What kind of feedback?

CARA
Like, things you like about them,
or things that aren't serving them
anymore.

GIRL
Like bad things?

CARA
I'll go first. What's some feedback
you can give me?

Silence.

CARA (CONT'D)
The most respectful thing you can
do is be honest.

CUT TO:

A FEW MINUTES LATER

The feedback circle has become a bloodbath. Should be improvised and messy, quick cuts of girls annihilating each other.

Cara sits in the middle.

CALLIE
You're pretentious.

CARA
Exound.

CALLIE
You gave Brandi crap for not
knowing Carol Channing, but *this*?
(she pulls her ear)
Is Carol Burnett.

BRANDI
(emboldened)
And you're a suck up.

GIRL
Totally. CARA
To *who*??

GIRL (CONT'D)
Ms. Murdaugh.

CARA
I *admire* her.

GIRL
No, you want to be the lead.

GIRL 2
But that ain't gonna happen.

CARA
(sincerely hurt)
Why not?

Everyone looks at Callie. Strained silence.

CUT TO:

Callie's sits in the hot seat:

BRANDI
Your hair is perfect, and you're
dating, like, *Brad*, and y'all are
probably gonna get married, and
you're the most talented person in
the school, but you're also really
nice and likable-

Cara glares at Brandi.

BRANDI (CONT'D)
 (self-correcting)
 --and that's really unlikable.

CARA
 (with the pointed
 resentment)
 You're not as perfect as you think
 you are.

CALLIE
 I don't think-

CARA
 Just absorbing.

Callie shuts up.

CARA (CONT'D)
 You signed the true love waits
 contract at church, but I know Brad
 fingered you after Sadie Hawkins,
 and any kind of penetration counts.

BRANDI
 Not any.
 (beat)
 Not the...butt...

All the girls stare at Brandi. She shrinks.

Callie looks around, relieved.

CARA
 And you're not very smart.

This hits Callie hard. She begins to well up and looks to
 Minnie for help. Minnie, too scared to speak, looks at the
 floor.

CARA (CONT'D)
 Ok, I'm bored with this.

CALLIE
 (deflecting)
 Minnie didn't go.

Everyone looks at Minnie, remembering her presence. Minnie
 looks at Callie, betrayed.

Cara focuses on Minnie, tilts her head, and takes a
 preparatory inhalation of breath.

CALLIE'S ROOM - LATER

Minnie sits alone in Callie's room, crying on her bed.

CALLIE (O.S.)
 Cara's an asshole.

Minnie stifles her tears. Callie sits on the bed. Everything in her room is varying shades of green, Callie's favorite color.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
I know it's not very Christian, but
I seriously wish she would burn to
death in a fiery explosion.

MINNIE
She's right. About me.

CALLIE
You're just shy.

MINNIE
I don't actually think I am. Just
in comparison...

Beat.

CALLIE
I don't feel like I'm the person
they described.

MINNIE
You did get fingered at Sadie
Hawkins.

CALLIE
(frustrated)
That's, like, the least interesting
thing about me. I have plans.
(off Minnie's look)
I do.

MINNIE
Like what?

CALLIE
Like- MINNIE (CONT'D)
Going to the same state
school as everybody else?

Hey, snob- CALLIE (CONT'D) MINNIE (CONT'D)
Coming back to high school
parties on weekends?

CALLIE (CONT'D)
That state school's where I can get
in.

Minnie quiets, shamed.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
(rallying)
But then. I go to New York. And I
struggle. And live on nothing but
ramen in a tiny studio apartment.

Minnie glances around at the huge room and scoffs.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
 And I'm like an understudy in a
 medium-big-deal show, and nobody
 knows who I am, nobody gives a crap
 about me. I'm the only one who
 knows I'm special. I'm mother-
 freakin' it.

Minnie understands this on a deep level.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
 Then one day, I get the call: the
 star's broken her hand.

MINNIE
 (like, "so?")
 Her hand?

CALLIE
 Her foot. She's lost a leg.

Minnie laughs in spite of herself.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
 So it's up to me. It's my time. And
 all the big wigs are like, "we
 can't put her on, who the hell is
 she?" I say, "I can do it." But
 inside, I'm terrified.

Callie stands on the bed, Minnie looking up at her.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
 And I step out onto the stage. I'm
 shaking. Everyone's holding their
 breath-

She pauses for dramatic effect.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
 -and I. Am. Mesmerizing. That was
 me all along, ya know? After that-
 (she snaps her fingers)
 -I do one Broadway show, then
 another, and the Tony nominations
 roll in.

Callie basks in the thought.

MINNIE
 What about me?

Beat.

CALLIE
 You're at every opening night and
 awards show as my forever date.

The bubble is burst for Minnie.

MINNIE

You ever worry you're just high
school good? And that's not gonna
be true anywhere else?

Callie looks at Minnie.

CALLIE

There's nothing wrong with wanting
a big life.

MINNIE

(to herself)

I think I'm gonna have a small one

Callie lies down in bed next to her, both of them looking at
a ceiling full of glow-in-the dark stars.

MINNIE (CONT'D)

My mom says I'm going to find
myself in college, that's what
people like me do.

CALLIE

Well, you don't have to wait 'til
then.

Callie shakes Minnie.

CALLIE (CONT'D)

Come on! We have one year left
together before you leave to go to
some smarty-pants school and forget
all about me. We gotta fuckin' live
it up.

MINNIE

I could never forget you.

Callie smiles. Minnie looks at Callie.

MINNIE (CONT'D)

You take up too much space.

Callie's smile fades, genuinely hurt. She waits for Minnie to
apologize. Minnie stares at the ceiling. Callie puts her
retainer in and rolls over. **Minnie almost says more, but
doesn't.**

CALLIE'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Minnie wakes, Callie still asleep, turned away from her.
Minnie quietly grabs her bag.

INT. HALLWAY

Minnie stands at the top of the stairs, a sea of sleeping girls in sleeping bags visible below: a minefield. She takes one careful step, and the stair CREAKS. Cara stirs, and Minnie retreats back into the room.

INT. CALLIE'S ROOM

Minnie stands in Callie's room feeling trapped. She spies Mark's ladder from yesterday still propped against the window.

INT. BASEMENT/DANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Over more girls in sleeping bags, Minnie's feet climbing down the ladder are visible out the window.

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Helen jogs up, returning from a run. She sees Minnie climbing down the ladder.

HELEN
(calling out)
Minnie? Be careful!

Minnie, startled, slips on the last few rungs and lands on her tailbone, hard.

MINNIE
Shit!

Helen runs up, worried.

HELEN You all right??	MINNIE (CONT'D) Sorry. I'm fine.
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HELEN (CONT'D)
I told Mark not to leave this here,
somebody's gonna break their neck.

Helen helps Minnie stand.

HELEN (CONT'D) Why didn't you use the front door?	MINNIE (CONT'D) Sorry. I'm fine.
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MINNIE
I just wanted to...slip away.

Helen looks at Minnie pityingly. Minnie sees it, and hates it.

MINNIE (CONT'D) I'm late to help my mom.	MINNIE (CONT'D) Sorry. I'm fine.
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HELEN
(good-naturedly)
A helpful daughter. I can only
imagine.

Minnie smiles politely then starts to limp away.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Want a ride?

MINNIE
I'm good!

Helen watches Minnie go, a large grass stain visible on her butt.

I/E. STRIP MALL - VETERINARY CLINIC - MORNING

Minnie enters the front door of a small veterinary clinic.

Inside, Barbara talks on the phone at the front desk. She waves to Minnie who doesn't wave back.

KENNELS

Minnie sprays out the kennels and picks up piles of dog poop.

ADOPTION CENTER

Minnie feeds a caged bird. It pecks her repeatedly.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DISCOVERY ZONE - DAY

She walks out of the clinic, passes a few storefronts and arrives outside an off-brand Discovery Zone.

INT. DISCOVERY ZONE - BALL PIT

In lumpy khakis and a polo Minnie stands in a colorful ball pit surrounded by SCREAMING KIDS. They throw balls at her head. She blows a WHISTLE to no effect.

LATER

After closing, Minnie loads colored balls into big mesh bags. She stops when she sees a child's turd amongst the balls. She finds a paper towel and disposes of the turd.

CLEANING ROOM

Minnie sprays down the bags with a big hose.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DUSK

Minnie walks home from work. The Cool Kid from Ms. Clemons class jogs by, shirtless. He stares at Minnie as he passes, then doubles back.

COOL KID
Hey!

Minnie looks to see who he's greeting. She is shocked to see it's her.

COOL KID (CONT'D)
You're Callie's friend, right?

She turns, frustrated, and walks away.

COOL KID (CONT'D)
(calling after)
...Just wanted to say sorry, or
whatever!

Off Minnie, turning back...

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Minnie runs, out of breath, and turns the corner to see Callie's front yard in the distance where twenty TEENS AND ADULTS, including Cara and Brandi, are assembled. She freezes when she sees that most of the people are crying.

We track her as she walks through the front yard past small groups of people. We/She hear whispered, "hospital," "accident," etc.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE

Minnie enters the kitchen past two neighborhood moms, BETH AND DIANE (40s), red-eyed. They stop talking when they see Minnie.

MINNIE
Did something happen to Mrs. King?

The women look at each other.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
..Or...is Mr. King...ok?

Beat.

BETH
Your Callie's best friend, aren't
you? Didn't anybody call?

Minnie stands in silence.

DIANE
I'm so sorry, hon. Callie...passed.
It happened a few hours ago.

Beat.

BETH
(quietly)
Always, always wear your seatbelt,
hon.

DIANE
Beth, can you not?

BETH
What, she should! DIANE (CONT'D)
It sounds like you're
blaming.

BETH (CONT'D)
I'm not blaming-

BETH (CONT'D)
-she just might have DIANE
survived. -let's just...

Diane resets, and turns back to Minnie.

DIANE (CONT'D)
The doctors said she passed
instantly, the moment she was
thrown from the car. So at least
that's...something.

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE

Minnie walks down the porch stairs and through the front yard. We hear snippets of whispered CONVERSATION as she passes:

SUBURBAN DAD
I'm just grateful she was alone.

SUBURBAN MOM
(re: her daughter beside
her)
Crystal said she was supposed to go
with her, but she changed her mind
at the last second. And that's God,
sweetie. God saved you.

And:

CARA
She was such a good friend.

BRANDI
The best.

CARA
 ...but she was *my actual best friend.*

The walk to the sidewalk seems endless.

YOUNG MOM 1
 Is there anyone else we need to call?

YOUNG MOM 2
 I think we got everyone.

Minnie reaches the edge of the grass just as Mark and Helen pull into the driveway and exit the car. They're escorted inside, and the yard is suddenly empty, the front door closed.

Minnie sees that Callie's bedroom window is dark - the electric candle unlit.

INT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - LATER

Barbara feeds Dustin at his high chair as Minnie enters. Barbara notices Minnie's blank demeanor.

BARBARA
 What crawled up your butt and died?

Minnie stares at Barbara and then goes to her bedroom, shutting the door. Barbara resumes feeding Dustin.

MINNIE'S ROOM

Minnie lays on her bed. The house phone RINGS.

LIVING ROOM

Barbara stands, phone to her ear, hand over her mouth.

BARBARA
 (whispering)
 Oh my God. Oh my God.

She looks toward Minnie's closed door.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 ...her poor mother.

MINNIE'S ROOM/HALLWAY INTERCUT

Minnie lies on her bed.

BARBARA (O.S.)
 Minnie?

Silence.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I just wanted to say...

She pauses. Wants to apologize. Instead:

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Don't worry about walking the dogs
tonight. I can do that. Or we could
walk 'em together.
(beat)
You just let me know.

Minnie stares at the ceiling.

EXT. CHURCH - PARKING LOT - DAY

The parking lot is full of cars. People of all ages file into the church as Barbara's Chevy Nova pulls up. Minnie, Barbara and Dustin join the throng of mourners.

Cara hands out purple angel-wings pins at the door.

BARBARA
(re: the pin)
What's this?

CARA
It's for Callie, 'cause she was an
angel on earth, and now she's one
in heaven. And purple was her
favorite color.

She hands a pin to Minnie. As they walk in, Minnie stares at it, despising it.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

A sea of purple angel pins amongst the dark clothing. A closed casket in front of the alter.

Helen, Mark, and MARK'S PARENT'S lead the receiving line.

A few pews seem reserved for Callie's schoolmates.

BARBARA
(whispering)
Sit with your friends. We'll be
back here.

Barbara watches as Minnie sits silently on the aisle.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Mark stands at the lectern behind a smiling photo of Callie.

MARK

For something we never thought we'd have to plan, I think this turned out pretty nice. I have some thoughts I'd like to read, but first, some of Callie's friends put together a slide show. We're going show that now.

A slideshow of Callie through the years, her friends and her achievements, begins. There's a photo of Callie as a baby being baptized in a Greek church, Helen smiling, and later, a photo of Callie being "saved" as a teenager in the hip Church we're in now, Mark smiling.

There are many photos of Cara and Brandi with Callie, with Minnie in the background of just a few.

Minnie turns to the MALE COUSIN (14) next to her with a whisper.

MINNIE

When did they collect pictures for this?

A GIRL (13) a few seats over SHUSHES Minnie.

The slideshow ends with swooping script: "Callie, an angel on earth and now in heaven." Minnie cringes and glances over at Helen, who hasn't been watching any of it.

CUT TO:

The Pastor (60s) stands at the pulpit.

PASTOR

We cry out for human understanding, we beg God to tell us *why*.

Mark nods his head throughout. Helen does not.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

And in response to our desperate human questioning, sorrow, and even anger, because I'm angry, too...boy, am I angry. God whispers, "Trust." God makes no mistakes.

CUT TO:

Various testimonials are given into a handheld mic:

CARA

Callie never said a negative word about anybody.

Minnie stares daggers at Cara.

CARA (CONT'D)
 She was an angel on earth, pure and perfect, and everyone's best friend. I know she was mine.

CUT TO:

MRS. MURDAUGH
 Annie Oakley. Mama Rose. Her indelible Anne Frank. The only student, in the history of the school, I have ever trusted to play the lead in the musical as a freshman.

Minnie watches Helen, impassive.

CUT TO:

MS. CLEMONS
 (reading from a notecard, nervous but sincere)
 She was the skipper of any ship she boarded. And though everyone who knew her is in troubled waters now, I know she's set sail for brighter harbors. Anchors away, Callie. Anchors away.

CUT TO:

MR MCCLENDON
 A student, we were never able to prove who...

Mr. McClendon glances at Brad who shifts uncomfortably.

MR MCCLENDON (CONT'D)
 ...stole a picture of my mother and me off my desk, I think as a prank. It was the last picture of my mom and me that was ever taken. And...anyway. Callie returned it to me. Even though I know she wasn't the one who took it. Even though we weren't particularly close. I think she knew it was meaningful to me. And I think small acts like that, when no one is looking, when you won't get any credit, show you who a person is. And of course, everyone could see how impressive Callie was in a lot of obvious ways. But my impression is that she was also just, quietly good.

Mr. McClendon hands the mic back.

PASTOR
 Would anyone else like to speak?
 Share a story or memory?

I/E. BARBARA'S CHEVY NOVA - BEGIN FLASHBACK

Barbara's Nova sits stopped at a green light on a very steep hill. Callie sits patiently beside Minnie.

Minnie tries to operate the stick shift, many cars lined up behind her, HONKING; an ANGRY BMW DRIVER yells openly.

Every time she tries to accelerate she slides backward a few more terrifying feet, precariously close to hitting a BMW behind her.

MINNIE
(panicked)
I can't do this.

CALLIE
Yes, you can.

MINNIE (waving out the window) Go around! Go around! CALLIE (CONT'D) Clutch down-

MINNIE (CONT'D)
Switch seats, drive for me.

CALLIE

MINNIE
(with tears in her eyes)
Please!

Callie stares at Minnie then jumps out of the car.

She unbuckles her seatbelt but stops when she sees in the rearview:

Callie has put her body between Minnie's car and the BMW.

CALLIE
Back up, everybody!

MINNIE CALLIE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?? We'll all be moving in a
second, if you just back up!

ANGRY BMW DRIVER

Learn how to drive!

CALLIE
Fucking working on it!

The honking drivers slowly back up. Callie remains between.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
Ok, Minnie. Go!

Minnie shuts her eyes and puts the car into gear.

The Nova sails back a few feet, **nearly hitting Callie**, then lunges forward, accelerating up the hill.

Minnie opens her eyes in disbelief/exaltation.

Callie runs to catch up to the still-moving Nova and jumps in. They cheer and Callie throws her arms around Minnie who hugs her back.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
(joyfully)
Hands on the wheel!

INT. CHURCH - END FLASHBACK/PRESENT DAY

Minnie sees Helen looking back at her. Minnie looks away.

PASTOR
Ok, then.

CUT TO:

Two TEEN GIRLS sing "For Good" from Wicked as Mrs. Murdaugh conducts, occasionally wiping away tears. At moments they get a little too fancy, riffing where they shouldn't.

The congregation stands as the PALL BEARERS, including Mark and Brad, carry the casket down the aisle and out of the church. Callie's grandparents trail behind.

Barbara watches Helen pass, tears in her eyes.

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATER

Barbara pulls up as mourners mill around and arrive. She turns back to look at Dustin.

BARBARA
Smells like he's got a dirty
diaper. Can you get a ride home?

MINNIE
Sure.

Minnie steps out of the car. Barbara makes eye contact with Helen, who absently nods along to a conversation.

I/E. CALLIE'S HOUSE

Minnie inside, uncertain who to talk to. She sees Mark telling a story, surrounded by rapt teenagers.

BACKYARD

More cliques have formed outside. Minnie walks by everyone.

SIDEYARD

Minnie paces, feeling trapped.

She sees the ladder still propped against Callie's window. She considers climbing up. Instead, she takes the purple pin and throws it in the trash. She looks up to see Helen watching her.

FRONT YARD

Helen watches Minnie walk through the front yard, onto the sidewalk and down the street, away from the house.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE BACK UP ON:

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE

Helen sits across from JENNIFER (30's, looks 18, eager). Helen stares into a small trashcan where an accumulation of a previous client's mascara stained tissues have been discarded.

JENNIFER

How long ago was the accident?

HELEN

It was May 24th. So six weeks.

JENNIFER

Recent. I'm sure time feels very strange.

(beat)

How have you been feeling? And FYI, in here you're not allowed to say "fine" or "ok."

HELEN

Ok.

Jennifer chuckles. Helen wasn't making a joke.

Helen spots an **exceptionally realistic looking baby doll** sticking out of a box under Jennifer's desk.

JENNIFER

Right about now is the time when all the attention disappears, and things can get very quiet. A new reality starts to set in.

Helen refocuses on Jennifer, not having heard her last statement.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
How's your support system?

HELEN
My parents died a few years ago-

JENNIFER
I'm sorry.

HELEN
-at the time I thought that was hard.

JENNIFER
Well. With losing a parent, at least that's in the right order.

Helen glances back at the doll.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Other family?

HELEN
Extended. All back in Greece.

Jennifer makes a note.

JENNIFER
Friends?

HELEN
We have friends at the church, or other moms who volunteer at the school. I moved here for Mark, so most of our friends are more-

JENNIFER
Mark's your husband?

HELEN
(deflecting)
I'm sorry, what is that?

Jennifer looks to the doll.

JENNIFER
Oopsie.

Jennifer takes the box and puts it in the closet, half closing the door.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
That's from my previous session.
Some grieving parents find it
helpful, to be able to hold it. Say
anything they didn't get to say.

Jennifer returns to her seat. Helen can't help but look at a sliver of the doll's face looking back at her through a crack in the door.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
It's mostly for parents of very
young children. We won't be using
that with you.

HELEN
Is there a restroom I could use?

EXT. THERAPIST PARKING LOT- DAY

Helen walks through the parking lot quickly, gets in her car and drives away.

INT. HELEN'S CAR/EXT. CEMETARY- DAY

Helen drives through cemetery gates. She slows when she sees, in the distance, Minnie sitting at Callie's gravesite.

Helen stops the car behind a tree and watches for a moment. She sees that Minnie is writing a letter several pages long.

After a beat, Minnie stands, folds the letter, and hides it under a rock near the headstone.

Minnie walks toward the cemetery exit, unaware of Helen.

Helen pulls close to the gravesite, where new grass has begun to grow, the headstone newly placed: "Caliope Stathos King. Beloved daughter, granddaughter, friend."

Helen removes yesterday's flowers, and places fresh ones in a stone vase. She spots Minnie's letter peeking out under a rock. She glances back to where Minnie exited. She picks up the letter. She reads.

INT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Minnie walks inside, dogs jumping all over her.

MINNIE
(calling)
Mom?

She fills the dog bowls with food and fresh water and lets the rabbit out of its pen. It leaps around the kitchen as the PHONE RINGS.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
(into the receiver)
Hello?

HELEN (O.S.)
Minnie? This is Helen.

Minnie freezes.

HELEN (O.S.) (CONT'D) MINNIE
...Callie's Mom. Hi.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
Yeah, I know...

HELEN (O.S.)
How've you been, how was your
fourth?

MINNIE
(looking at the high
strung dogs)
Oh, we don't really celebrate.

Beat.

HELEN (O.S.)
I was wondering if you might want
to come over for dinner tomorrow.
We're inviting a few of Callie's
friends. Mark and I thought it
might be nice! It's been a little
quiet...

Off Minnie, immediately nervous.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Minnie, Brad, Cara, Mark, and Helen sit, eating. There is way too much food on the table, both Papa John's pizza and a full home-cooked spread.

BRAD
(answering a question)
...Britney Spears, Christina
Aguilera, Jessica Alba.

MARK
Ok, I think I know who all
those people are...

CARA
Come on, we have to pick guys
at some point!

BRAD
(to Cara)
Pick guys on your turn.

HELEN
How old are those girls?
Aren't they like--

BRAD (CONT'D)
--they're over 18.

CARA
How do you know?

BRAD
There's a website.

HELEN
There is??

CARA
You're disgusting.

MARK
Okay, I got it. Kill Britney
Spears...

BRAD
Obviously.

CARA
No! Marry her! She's so
sweet, and she's waiting 'til
she's married to-

BRAD (CONT'D)
There's no way true.

HELEN
I think we should change games.

MARK
Marry Jessica Alba.

BRAD
Agreed.

MARK
(with relish)
And screw-

HELEN
Can we at least find a different
word?

BRAD
Um, the actual word is a lot worse,
so-

MARK
Come on, honey, everybody here's an
adult.

HELEN
No they're not.

CARA
I will be in two months!

Brad holds out a hand for Mark to high five.

MARK
I'd make love to--

HELEN
 "Kiss." Call it "Kiss, Marry, Shove," we shouldn't be talking about killing them, either--

MARK (CONT'D)
 --honey, it's a game. We're not going to do any of those things to those nice young ladies, it's an intellectual exercise.

(to Brad)
 Christina Aguilera!

BRAD
 (to Paul)
 Correct. Across the board, correct.

CARA
 I'd marry Britney for her values, and kill Christina 'cause she's a skank.

MARK
 What do you think, Minnie?

Everyone looks at Minnie.

MARK (CONT'D)
 You can't just watch, you gotta play.

BRAD
 Yeah, who would you screw?

Helen eyes Mark, all innocent playfulness. After a beat:

MINNIE
 Christina. For sure.

MARK
 ...and there it is.

BRAD
 Whoa! From the quiet one in the back!

CARA
 Ew, she has a song all about how dirty she is.

BRAD
 (to Cara)
 Ding ding, Cara, that's the point.

HELEN
 Okay, game officially over.

FOYER - LATER

The teens put on their shoes. Helen closes the lids to Tupperware.

MARK
 One game of horse before you go.

BRAD
 Naw, I'll kick your butt next time.

HELEN
Take some spanikopita and dolmadas
with you. Minnie, would your mom
like moussaka?

MARK
(with an amiable edge)
English, honey. No one can
understand you.

Mark smiles at the kids. Minnie clocks Helen's embarrassment. The kids start to walk out the door.

HELEN
Actually...before you all go, I
have something I'd like show you.
Or have you listen to.

Mark visibly tenses. Helen opens a drawer.

MARK
(quietly, to Helen)
I thought we weren't going to do
this now.

HELEN

HELEN (CONT'D) MARK
When's that going to happen It's been such a good night.
again? Let them go home.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Five minutes. Please.
(to the kids)
Five minutes.

Helen pulls out a blank CD. The teens freeze, unsure of what to do.

LIVING ROOM

Helen sits across from the teenagers, watching them closely. Mark stands in the doorway, half out of the room. A recorded scene plays over the sound system.

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
I see that you didn't get to say
goodbye.

Beat.

HELEN (V.O.)
That's right. It was a car accident.

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
There was someone else in the car
with her?

HELEN (V.O.)
No...

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
Or, another driver who caused-?

HELEN (V.O.)
We don't know exactly what
happened. She might have gotten
distracted, I know she plays her
music too loud. But she lost
control. She hit the median.

Beat.

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
I'm seeing her surrounded by many
friends.

Helen looks hopefully at Cara and Minnie.

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
She knew she was well loved.
(beat)
She's telling me...Was there a
person in her life who's name
started with the letter "B"?

Brad's eyes go wide.

HELEN (V.O.)
Her boyfriend. Brad.

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
She wants me to tell him she sees
him. She's still with him.

Brad drops his head.

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
Now I'm getting...is there a
"Sarah?"

HELEN (V.O.)
...There's a Sarah in her class,
but-

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
Or "Laura?" "Hannah?" Something
with an "A"?

CARA
(whispering)
Cara.

HELEN (V.O.)
Cara?

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
That's it.

Cara gasps.

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
Callie's waving to her.

Cara does a tiny near-unconscious wave back.

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
Did she have siblings?

HELEN (V.O.)
No. We wanted to, but-

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
-someone like a sibling?

Beat.

HELEN (V.O.)
Minnie?

Helen looks at Minnie intently. Minnie reddens under her gaze.

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
She's saying...Minnie....Minnie...
Minnie Mouse? Did Callie ever call
her that?

HELEN (V.O.)
I don't know.

HELEN
(to Minnie, intensely)
Did she?

A beat, then **Minnie nods** and Helen tears up happily,
relieved. Minnie shrinks further into the couch.

HELEN (V.O.)
Do you think I could talk to her?

Helen stands and heads toward the CD player.

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
Of course. What would you like to
say?

Helen presses STOP. She turns and looks at Minnie.

HELEN
You see?

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

The three teens wave goodbye as Helen and Mark close the front door. As Cara and Brad walk down the front path, Minnie looks back at the house.

CARA
K, well, I'm never doing that again.

BRAD
It was fine, Cara.

CARA
Mark was fine, but Mrs. King? It's like, when she looks at me she needs something. Like, what do you want, lady?

Cara and Brad get in their cars.

BRAD (O.S.)
Minnie, you want a ride?

CARA
Let her walk, it's like her thing.

Minnie lifts her chin.

MINNIE
Actually, a ride sounds great.

EXT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brad's car pulls up outside.

MINNIE (O.S.)
Thanks.

I/E. BRAD'S CAR

BRAD
No problem.

Minnie starts to open the door.

BRAD (CONT'D)
(suddenly)
I never heard Callie call you Minnie Mouse. Did she really?

Minnie looks at Brad, then shakes her head.

BRAD (CONT'D)
I haven't seen you much this summer.

BRAD (CONT'D) MINNIE
I thought you might be at I've been working a lot.
Cooper's birthday...

BRAD (CONT'D)
No, keepin' busy's good.
(beat)
(MORE)

BRAD (CONT'D)
 I've been going out a lot, which is weird. I've been doing a lotta things I don't really understand.

(beat)
 The night of the funeral I had sex with Mallory Dryden. In this car. I don't know why I did that. Callie and I never even had sex.

(beat)
 Do you think Callie saw me do that?

MINNIE
 Oh- BRAD (CONT'D)
 Do you think I'm going to hell?

MINNIE (CONT'D)
 I don't believe in hell.

BRAD
 ...there's definitely a hell.
 (beat)
 Sorry. I just feel really weird.
 (beat)
 I'm not hitting on you.

Brad starts to cry. Minnie watches him.

INT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Minnie enters, Barbara sits watching TV and eating a TV dinner.

BARBARA
 How'd it go?

MINNIE
 Fine.

BARBARA
 What'd you have for dinner?

MINNIE
 I don't know.

BARBARA
 You don't remember what you had for dinner?

MINNIE
 ...She made roast chicken, salad, like a greek spinach pie-

BARBARA
 She made all that?
 (She shakes her head)
 I guess if you've got the time...

Minnie looks at Barbara, then walks down the hall.

She reenters, picks up Barbara's TV dinner and throws it against the wall.

MINNIE

I don't want you to say a word
about Mrs. King ever again. Good,
bad, whatever, I don't care. Don't
talk about her.

Minnie leaves the room. Barbara sits, stunned as the dogs lick food off the wall.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

Minnie walks through her neighborhood. She makes a turn down the sidewalk, then doubles back, taking the different direction to...

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE

Minnie walks by Callie's house. She sees the candle unlit in the window.

INT. DISCOVERY ZONE

Minnie sings along mindlessly at a kid's birthday party.

INT. DISCOVERY ZONE- NIGHT

Minnie cleans the inside of the colorful tunnels, spraying industrial cleaner and wiping down tubes while inside them.

She feels woozy and passes out for a second.

HAROLD (50s, Minnie's boss) hits the underside of the tube with a broom handle.

HAROLD

No sleeping on the job!

Minnie startles awake. She crawls backward out of the tunnel.

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Minnie walks down the street and stops when she sees Callie's SUV, sparkling clean and completely undamaged, in the driveway. **The electric candle in Callie's bedroom window is lit.**

Minnie creeps to the side of house where the ladder still sits, untouched. She ascends the ladder up to Callie's room.

I/E. CALLIE'S ROOM

Minnie stands next to the window. The flickering candle reveals the room exactly as it was the morning of the accident. Clothes strewn on the floor. Bed rumpled.

Minnie walks to her side of the bed. In the corner, she sees the lion mask from the rolling night. She picks it up.

HELEN (O.C.)
Callie?

Minnie jumps. Helen SCREAMS.

MINNIE
Holy shit! I'm sorry! It's me, it's me.

LINDA
Oh my gosh! Minnie?

HELEN
Sorry, I didn't mean to yell.
What are you doing?

MINNIE
I just...
(beat)
...the light was on.

CUT TO:

DINING ROOM

Minnie eats a plate of delicious food. Helen hasn't touched hers. Silent awkwardness.

MINNIE
...where's Mr. King?

HELEN
He's at a "guy's weekend" in Hot Springs.

Minnie eyes packed boxes in the next room filled with sports memorabilia and men's shirts. Helen clocks Minnie's gaze.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Mark and I are separating. We were going to wait until Callie went to college...
(beat)
We're moving up the timeline.

MINNIE
I'm sorry.

HELEN
Don't be, he's a prick.

Minnie is shocked. Helen smiles at her own brazenness.

DINING ROOM - LATER

HELEN

They *pee* in there?

MINNIE

So much. It's almost entirely
liquid under the balls.

LINDA

Kids can be disgusting.

MINNIE

And actually, *pee* is the least
gross thing. Some kids'll just, go
to a corner, drop their pants, and-

HELEN

No! Where are their parents??

MINNIE

The parents expect me to clean it
up, because these moms are *rich* and
entitled and never worked a day in
their lives, and I'm like, "you are
a *shitty* person who's raising
shitty kids who take actual *shits*
in public."

Minnie catches herself. Helen lets it pass.

HELEN

I always thought maybe I should've
made Callie get a job, so she
doesn't grow up-

MINNIE

(earnestly)
-oh, no. Callie's the least stuck-
up person ever.

HELEN

Really?

Minnie nods.

HELEN (CONT'D)

That's nice to know.

A CLOCK CHIMES in the next room.

MINNIE

I should..

HELEN (CONT'D)

You should get home.

They stand and clear plates.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I'll give you a ride.

MINNIE

I like walking.

HELEN
It's too dark, your mom wouldn't
like it.

MINNIE
My mom doesn't care.

FOYER

Helen closes the door behind Minnie. The house feels huge, empty, and quiet.

FRONT YARD

Minnie walks down the walkway. She turns toward the lit candle and hesitates.

The front door opens and Helen sticks her head out.

HELEN
(brightly)
Hey! I have an idea...

STAIRCASE

They walk up the stairs, the walls lined with photos of Callie.

CALLIE'S ROOM - LATER

Helen walks in, Minnie trailing behind.

MINNIE
(following behind)
You sure?

HELEN
Absolutely! Here, let me put on
fresh sheets-

Helen reaches for the sheets, then stops herself. Minnie sees her hesitation.

MINNIE
That's okay. I never change my
sheets.

HELEN
I'll get you pajamas-

MINNIE
Callie just lets me wear these.

She reaches into a familiar drawer and pulls out a t-shirt and boxers.

Off Helen, already conflicted.

CUT TO:

Minnie sits on Callie's bed in her t-shirt and shorts.

There's a gentle KNOCK at the door and Helen pokes her head in.

Seeing her, Helen feels a million things.

HELEN
Goodnight.

She closes the door.

INT. HALLWAY

Helen hesitates outside the door, then walks down the hall.

INT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Barbara enters carrying a sleeping Dustin as the dogs BARK. A message is being left on the answering machine.

BARBARA
(whispering)
Shhh, outside!

They run outside as Barbara puts Dustin to bed. She reemerges, looks in Minnie's room, then knocks on the bathroom door.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Minnie?

She opens the door: empty. She's suddenly worried.

The clock reads 11:11pm. She's not even sure who to call. She sees the answering machine flashing and hits play.

HELEN (V.O.)
Hi, this is Helen King...Callie's mom.
(half beat)
Minnie stopped over here for dinner, so sweet of her, and then it was getting late, and we thought it might be easier if she stayed here tonight. So she's here. Of course, call if you'd rather-

Barbara picks up the phone to call. Then hangs the receiver back up.

HELEN (V.O.)
So she's here. Of course, just call
if you'd rather she came home. Ok.
Goodnight.

Barbara picks up the phone right as Helen hangs up.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - CALLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Minnie tries to sleep but the candle light keeps her awake.
She tosses and turns, then turns off the candle.

She gets up again and turns it on again, staring at the
ceiling.

CALLIE'S ROOM - MORNING

Minnie wakes up on "her" side. She looks at Callie's empty
place next to her. She hears the sounds of COOKING from
downstairs.

KITCHEN

Helen stands at the stove cooking pancakes as Minnie walks
downstairs. There's also eggs, fresh fruit, bacon, etc - way
too much food.

HELEN
Hey! How'd you sleep?

Helen looks even more tired than yesterday.

MINNIE
Good...do you know where my uniform
is?

HELEN
There was a bunch of pet hair on
it, so I put it in the wash.
(off Minnie's look)
Oh no, do you have to work this
morning?

MINNIE
It's fine, I have more,
just...walking home in this might
be weird.

CALLIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

They enter and Helen looks through clothes in a few shopping
bags.

HELEN
 Callie rejected these, I have no
 idea why. I never got around to
 returning them.

She pulls out a shirt and pants, both very expensive and very
 foreign to Minnie.

HALLWAY

Minnie opens the door and stands in her new outfit. Helen
 appraises her.

MINNIE
 I'm not sure they fit.

HELEN
 Well, let's give 'em a fighting
 chance.

CALLIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Minnie stands in front of Callie's full length mirror while
 Helen safety pins the hem of the pants and rolls the cuffs of
 the shirt.

EXT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Barbara sits on the front porch feeding Dustin in his high
 chair while the dogs lounge in the yard.

Helen's SUV pulls up. Barbara notices Minnie's clothes as the
 dogs jump all over her.

MINNIE
 (to the dogs)
 No, stop!

She holds the dirty dogs at arms length.

HELEN
 (from the car)
 Thanks for letting Minnie stay over
 last night!

BARBARA
 (yelling)
 What?

HELEN
 (unbuckling her seatbelt)
 Oh, sorry!

As Helen approaches the dogs run toward her but stop and yelp
 when they reach the limits of an invisible fence.

HELEN (CONT'D)
 I was going to say--
 (to the dogs)
 Hey there...

BARBARA
 Don't mind them. They're sweet, but
 they're idiots. Their old owner had
 one of those invisible fence things
 that shocked them when they went
 too far. We don't have one, but old
 habits...

Helen is unsettled by Roo's strange bark.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 And he cut her vocal chords. Some
 people are just fucked.

Helen has the tiniest reaction to hearing Barbara cuss so
 flippantly. The dogs WHINE at the periphery of the
 nonexistent invisible fence. Helen steps closer.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 I'd stay on that side-

HELEN
 I don't mind.

She steps into the yard and pets them lovingly.

HELEN (CONT'D)
 (to Barbara)
 I saw you at the service. It was so
 nice of you to come.

BARBARA
 I wish I coulda stayed longer. I'm
 so sorry for your loss.

Helen nods.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 I can't even imagine.

HELEN
 Well...

The moms look at each other.

MINNIE
 Ok, bye, Helen.

BARBARA
 Minnie, it's "Mrs. King." I've told
 her-

HELEN
 Helen's fine.

Barbara dislikes Helen's familiarity.

MINNIE
Thanks for everything, Helen.

HELEN
Come over anytime.

Helen smiles at Barbara and crosses back to her car. The dogs jump against the non-existent invisible fence.

Helen waves as she drives away. Minnie waves back.

BARBARA
(to Minnie)
Well don't you look like a million
bucks.

Minnie walks inside, ignoring her.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
(calling after her)
We should put you in a pageant!

I/E. LIBRARY - DAY

Minnie walks the dogs. She ties their leashes to a post outside the library. They BARK like crazy as she walks inside.

PUBLIC COMPUTERS

Minnie googles, "how to get over someone who died." Sites for psychics and therapists pop up.

She becomes distracted by movement to her left.

PHIL (60, homeless) stealthily jacks off while watching a Britney Spears music video. He looks at Minnie who turns back to her own computer.

KAT (O.C.)
Awwww, come on, Phil.

KAT (17, grunge vibe) approaches and turns off his monitor.

KAT (CONT'D)
You can't do that here, dude. No judgement on the act itself, and I'm sorry if your situation precludes you from having a computer on which to do this at home, but we got kids here. Steal a magazine from a gas station. Go old school.

She ushers him toward the door, then doubles back.

KAT (CONT'D)
(to Minnie)
Didn't you see what he was doing?

MINNIE

Yeah.

KAT

Why didn't you say something?

Minnie says nothing and walks away, embarrassed.

Kat reads what Minnie had searched on the computer. She looks after Minnie.

I/E. DISCOVERY ZONE - LOBBY - EVENING

Minnie vacuums. Out the big windows she sees a lone car parked in the lot - Callie's SUV.

PARKING LOT

Minnie steps outside, closer and closer to the familiar car.

HELEN (O.C.)

Hey, Minnie!

Minnie jumps. She turns to find Helen sitting near the Discovery Zone's door.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Sorry! I didn't want to knock,
thought it might scare you.

MINNIE

(shaken)

It's okay...

Minnie waits for Helen to say more. The moment is awkward.

HELEN

...I looked up how far your walk
home is from here. It's over two
miles.

MINNIE

Uh huh.

HELEN

It's not safe for you to be walking
that far alone at night, something
could happen.

MINNIE

It's okay.

HELEN

(nervously)

It's really not.

(beat)

I want you to use this car.

They look at Callie's SUV. It sits strangely in the lot.

MINNIE
What do you mean?

HELEN
To get around. I won't be able to
sleep otherwise-

MINNIE
You're giving me a car?

HELEN
(with a smile)
Not giving, loaning.
(beat)
It's perfectly safe, the repair
people said the damage wasn't
actually that bad, which...that's
the funniest joke I've ever heard.
(beat)
If you don't use it, it's going to
Goodwill.

Off Minnie, revisiting Callie's SUV.

I/E. CALLIE'S CAR - LATER

Minnie pulls into the driveway and Helen exits with a
tentative wave. The candle sits lit in Callie's window.

EXT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Minnie pulls up outside her house and watches Barbara through
the window rocking Dustin, in full breakdown.

Minnie drives by.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

She slowly drives through the empty school parking lot.

EXT. CHURCH - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Except for one car, the lot is empty. Driving closer she
realizes it's Brad's.

The windows are fogged and bodies move in the backseat.
Minnie quietly drives away.

I/E. CALLIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Driving through familiar streets, Minnie stops at a red
light. Callie's Mati (evil eye) pendant and cross necklace
hang from the mirror, side by side.

With a push of a button the song Minnie and Callie were listening to on the last day of school jumps from the speakers.

The light turns green but Minnie doesn't go.

CUT TO:

Minnie merges onto the highway.

She passes exit after exit and speeds up. The median sails past her - she's nearly reached 100 mph.

Closing her eyes, she imagines she is Callie. The car drifts.

It hits the median and flips into the air.

A PASSING HORN BLARES and Minnie opens her eyes just in time to swerve away from the median. Minnie steers into the right lane and slows.

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

Minnie walks past the library in her DZ uniform. She sees Kat smoking a cigarette and speeds up.

KAT
(after her)
Hey!

Kat runs up and touches Minnie's arm. Minnie turns.

KAT (CONT'D)
Sorry for what I said the other day, I'm totally not down with victim blaming. I don't think Phil understands what he's doing most of the time, I just try to get him out of there so he doesn't get arrested. I'm Kat.

MINNIE
Minnie.

Minnie walks off and Kat follows.

KAT
Who'd you lose?
(off Minnie's look)
I saw what you googled.

MINNIE
...you looked at what I-

KAT (CONT'D)
To be fair, you didn't close the window.

KAT (CONT'D)
Fuck, see that, I victim blamed again!
(MORE)

KAT (CONT'D)
Our culture gets it in on a
foundational level, it's hard to
unlearn.

JUDY (50s, a severe-looking librarian) sticks her head out
the automatic doors.

JUDY
Kat, that's more than five!

KAT
Sorry, Judy!

Kat takes out a pen.

KAT (CONT'D)
Gimme your hand.

Kat notices Minnie's hand is sweaty and wipes it on her own
shirt.

KAT (CONT'D)
(writing her number)
My mom died last year, and it
totally fucked me up. I can at
least tell you some things not to
do.

Kat stubs out her cigarette and runs inside. Off Minnie's
glance down at the number on her hand.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Helen sits in her sparkling clean kitchen. She opens the
fridge, stares, and closes it. She opens the freezer and sees
about a dozen untouched casseroles that people brought months
ago.

She starts throwing the casseroles in the garbage.

INT. WALMART

Helen walks blankly down the aisle, occasionally putting a
box of cereal in her cart.

She notices a FOUR YEAR OLD GIRL (who looks like a younger
version of Callie) wandering the aisles alone, lost and
scared. Helen glances around for the girl's parents. No one.

HELEN
(to the girl)
Hi. Are you ok?

The girl starts to cry then disappears down an aisle. Helen
follows, worried.

In the next aisle, Helen glimpses the back of the girl's head as she makes her way farther and farther into the store. The girl picks up her pace, and so does Helen.

HELEN (CONT'D)
(calling to the girl)
Hold on. Stay right there!

The girl, scared, keeps running. Helen catches up to her and grabs her by the arm. The girl WAILS.

HELEN (CONT'D)
It's all right, where's your mom?
Are you lost? Do you know where she
is? You're ok.

The girl's MOTHER suddenly appears.

MOTHER
Megan? Megan!

The girl reaches for her mom, and the Mother swoops her up.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Where'd you go? You can't run off
like that.

The girl buries her head in her mom's chest.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
(to Helen)
I'm so sorry, she was right next to
me.

HELEN
I think she was just scared.

MOTHER
Me too.
(to the girl)
You scared me.

HELEN
(kindly)
That's happened to me before.

MOTHER
Oh yeah? HELEN (CONT'D)
It's terrifying.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
How old is yours?

Half beat.

HELEN
She's seventeen.

MOTHER
(overwhelmed)
It get easier?

HELEN
(with a laugh)
Definitely not.

The mother wipes the girl's tears.

MOTHER
And now we've got boogies
everywhere, ok...
(moving away)
Say thank you to the lady?

The girl sniffs.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
(with a tired smile)
Thanks.

Helen waves to the girl as the mother walks back to her cart.

Helen turns and walks back down the aisle, her eyes filling with hot tears. As she turns the corner, she runs directly into:

Minnie, who stands in the "Back to School" supplies aisle.

MINNIE
Hey, Helen.
(seeing her tears)
You ok?

Helen focuses on a folder in Minnie's hands.

HELEN
That's the one you're getting?

Beat.

MINNIE
I don't know which one's me.

They stare at the numerous options of folders: brightly colored, boho, sparkly, plain.

CUT TO:

CHECK OUT

The CASHIER runs SO MANY folders, pens, and notebooks under the scanner. They have chosen every option of multiple supplies. Minnie looks on as Helen swipes her credit card.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE- AFTERNOON

Helen and Minnie sit chatting at the kitchen table, Helen helping to label Minnie's school supplies with her name.

INT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Minnie enters carrying her new supplies. Barbara is "dressed up" and Dustin wears a little tie.

MINNIE
(re: their outfits)
What's this?

BARBARA
Put your nice clothes on, kid,
we're going out. Made reservations
and everything.

(sensing Minnie's
apprehension)
I know you haven't been in a
celebratory mood, but I want us to
have a nice family night before you
get too busy with school and then
bam, the year's over and you're a
million miles away at college and
we never see you again.

(beat)
This is where you tell me you'll
visit all the time.

MINNIE
I'm staying at Helen's tonight.

BARBARA
...when did you decide that?
I was gonna take you to school
tomorrow.

MINNIE
Since when?

BARBARA
Since it's the first day of your
senior year-

MINNIE
You've never done that before...

BARBARA
Excuse me, I took you to school
everyday for over a decade.

Minnie sighs, exasperated.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Fine, you can go over after dinner.

MINNIE
She's making dinner--

BARBARA
So she's got an oven,
congratulations, this is our
tradition!

MINNIE
It's not a tradition. You
have to do something every
year for it to be a
tradition, that's like, the
definition-

BARBARA (CONT'D)
-and it's the last year we'll
get to do it...
We do it every year!

MINNIE (CONT'D)
We've done it five times out of
twelve years. That's less than
fifty percent, or is that math too
advanced for you?

CUT TO:

INT. MACARONI GRILL - NIGHT

Minnie, Barbara, and Dustin sit at a table in silence. Minnie pushes her food around her plate. She checks her watch; Barbara notices and it breaks her heart.

A SERVER (early 20's, over it) delivers a generic dessert with a candle while half-heartedly singing a birthday song. Minnie glares at Barbara.

BARBARA
(singing)
And many more!
(sincerely)
Make a-

Minnie blows out the candle quickly without making a wish.

MINNIE
(to the server)
It's not my birthday. She just does
this to get free cake.

The server rolls his eyes and walks off. Barbara's smile fades.

MINNIE (V.O., PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
I wish I had a different mom.

INT. CALLIE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Minnie sits on the bed as Helen sits on the foot of the bed, folding laundry.

MINNIE
I know that's not very Christian,
but like, there are billions of
moms in the world, why'd I have to
get her?

Helen kind of smiles.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
 And I know, I'm lucky, some kids
 are like sex slaves or chained up
 in basements-

HELEN
 You're allowed to be frustrated
 with your mom.

MINNIE
 I'm not frustrated. I'm horrified.

Beat.

HELEN
 I got this book...when Callie
 turned thirteen, and she started
 leaving the room whenever I walked
 in, or walking ahead of me in
 public so that people wouldn't
 think we were together. I read that
 teenagers are evolutionarily
 designed to reject their parents
 and go off on their own. To
 encourage genetic diversity, for
 the survival of the species. So
 right now, every part of your body
 and brain is making you think you
 hate your mom even if you don't.
 Maybe it's not her fault.

MINNIE
 Maybe. Or maybe she's just a bitch.

Beat.

HELEN
 Using language like that makes you
 sound cheap.
 (gently)
 You're better than that.

Minnie tries to hide her embarrassment.

HELEN (CONT'D)
 (standing)
 I got you something.

She leaves the room and reenters with a small brown bag.

HELEN (CONT'D)
 (re: Minnie's face)
 Relax, it was a dollar.

Minnie opens it. There's a house key inside.

HELEN (CONT'D)
 This way when I'm not home, you
 don't have to climb through the
 window.

CUT TO:

Later that night, Minnie sleeps in Callie's bed. She stirs and opens her eyes. **Callie lies next to her, staring at Minnie.** Minnie smiles, but Callie doesn't blink. Minnie realizes Callie is dead - a corpse.

CUT TO:

Minnie jolts awake. Callie's spot next to her is empty.

BATHROOM

Minnie splashes water on her face. A SOUND from outside grabs her attention - Helen stains some outdoor furniture, in the middle of the night. Minnie looks on, concerned.

CALLIE'S ROOM - MORNING

COOKING SOUNDS from downstairs. Minnie dresses in Callie's rejected clothes.

She looks in the mirror, unsatisfied. She picks up some clothes piled on a chair in the corner, where Callie must have left them. They're familiar.

KITCHEN

Helen cooks breakfast and MUSIC plays.

HELEN
Fifteen minutes!

She listens for a response.

HELEN (CONT'D)
You don't want to be late on the
first day!

BATHROOM

MINNIE
Ok!

Minnie wears the shirt Callie wore on the last day of school. It doesn't quite fit.

She surveys Callie's hair products and makeup on the counter.

She applies lip gloss, then mascara. She grabs Callie's hairbrush - hair still on the bristles. She uses it, then spritzes herself with Callie's perfume. She hides it all under her own frayed jacket.

KITCHEN

Helen wraps a breakfast sandwich in a paper towel. She hears footsteps from the staircase and turns.

HELEN
I made you this to-go...

When she sees Minnie coming down the stairs she freezes. Minnie doesn't exactly look like Callie, but there's something reminiscent. Callie's abstract self portrait hangs in the background.

Minnie takes the sandwich from her with a nervous smile.

MINNIE
(heading for the door.)
Thanks.
(noticing Helen's stare)
I look ok?

Helen nods, dazed. Minnie rushes out.

MINNIE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
See you later!

The door closes behind her. Helen is alone.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - MORNING

Minnie drives into the bustling parking lot. One TEENAGER notices Callie's car pulling in, and stares.

Minnie parks and heads inside.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - TV PRODUCTION CLASSROOM - MORNING

Minnie sits in the back of class.

TV TEACHER
Luke. You're sound, Mallory, camera
A, and Minnie, you want camera B?
(beat)
Minnie?

VARIOUS CLASSROOMS

Assembled classes look on as the teacher turns on the television for the morning announcements.

Minnie appears onscreen sitting at the anchor desk next to TYLER (17). She looks into the lens, unsure.

TYLER (V.O.)
Good morning, Wildcats! I'm Tyler
Sobel-

A disbelieving beat as Cara and Brandi exchange a look.

TV CLASSROOM

Minnie is a deer in headlights. Tyler looks at her, then to the teacher for help. Everyone stares at Minnie, waiting.

VARIOUS CLASSROOMS

Onscreen, Minnie smiles vacantly, frozen.

TV CLASSROOM

She looks at a monitor at her own face then back into the lens, where the teleprompter scrolls.

MINNIE
(with effort)
...and I'm Minnie Dunn...welcome to
the first day of the school year!

BATHROOM - STALL

Minnie throws up into a toilet, mid panic attack.

She emerges from the stall and tries to slow her heart rate. Washing her mouth out with water, she sees her mascara's run and there's a spot of puke on Callie's pristine shirt.

She tries to wash off the stain to no avail.

FRESHMEN GIRLS enter the bathroom talking, but stop when they see Minnie.

FRESHMAN GIRL
Was that you on tv just now?

Minnie nods.

FRESHMAN GIRL (CONT'D)
(admiringly)
Cool.

MATH CLASSROOM - LATER

Mr. McClendon writes "AP CALCULUS" on the board. Minnie takes a seat and notices the desk next to her is empty.

As Mr. McClendon introduces the lesson a LATE STUDENT rushes in and takes "Callie's" seat.

LATE STUDENT
(re: Minnie's stare)
What?

Minnie refocuses on Mr. McClendon.

DRAMA CLASSROOM

The class is full. Minnie sits near Cara and Brandi.

MRS. MURDAUGH
"Comparison is the thief of joy."
Who said that?

Minnie kind-of-raises her hand.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
Who is Theodore Roosevelt.

Minnie puts down her hand.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
The fall talent show is just around the corner, and as you develop your pieces, I want to remind you that each of you is *uniquely* gifted. Possessing your own passions. Identities. Souls. Which you will bare to the audience. And while there will technically be a winner decided by a panel of judges, the real prize is *finding your own-*

CARA
Mrs. Murdaugh? Sorry, I had an idea for the talent show this year?

MRS. MURDAUGH
(impatiently)
Okay.

CARA
(with effortful gravitas)
I know I for one feel really weird coming back to school without Callie...

The class becomes solemn.

CARA (CONT'D)
And I thought, what if we could dedicate the talent show to her? It might feel like she's still with us.

Minnie rolls her eyes.

MRS. MURDAUGH
You mean like a memorial?

Cara nods. Mrs. Murdaugh thinks.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
I think that's a lovely idea.

Cara beams.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
Although, the competition aspect
might be inappropriate-

CARA
(ready)
--unless we name the prize after
her.

Minnie looks away, disgusted.

DRAMA CLASSROOM - END OF CLASS

The room is empty as Minnie stares at the sign-up sheet: "Callie King Memorial Talent Show" written in bubble letters.

A few names are already listed, including: "Cara Boddington and Brandi Whitehead- Modern/Contemporary dance."

INT.DISCOVERY ZONE - DAY

Minnie wipes down a counter as kids play in the background. She bends down behind the counter and when she comes back up, Brad is standing right in front of her.

MINNIE
(started)
Jesus!

BRAD
Whoa, sorry! You ok?

MINNIE
Yeah, just, I haven't been sleeping
well.

A five year old boy, ANTHONY, holds Brad's hand.

ANTHONY
Can I have pizza?

BRAD
After you play, buddy, we don't
want you throwing up again.

Anthony runs off to play.

BRAD (CONT'D)
He gets excited, everything gets
shaken up.

MINNIE
That your brother?

BRAD

My little. It's this mentoring
thing with my youth group.

MINNIE

I thought you were at
Fayetteville...

BRAD

Back for the weekend.

Minnie kinda laughs, a private joke with Callie.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Watcht this: Anthony!

Anthony looks at Brad from the ball pit.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Pig Sooie!

ANTHONY

Razorbacks!

They both SNORT like pigs.

BRAD

(smiling)

See? I'm turning him into a little
me.

Minnie doesn't know how to respond.

BRAD (CONT'D)

So, you coming to Cara's party
tonight?

MINNIE

(oblivous to a party)

Um, I have to close.

BRAD
But after.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
It takes forever.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Can I help?

BRAD (CONT'D)
I can drop him off and come
back.

MINNIE
You don't want to do that,
it's a really gross job.

BRAD (CONT'D)
I caught Anthony's vomit last week.
I can take it.

BALL PIT- NIGHT

Brad cleans the inside of a tunnel while Minnie scoops balls into a bag.

BRAD

You know there's no ventilation in here?

MINNIE

Don't breathe!

They share a laugh.

BATHROOM

Brad scrubs a tiny toilet as Minnie vacuums.

BACKROOM

They wear kids-sized birthday hats. Minnie spritzes the floor as Brad steps on paper towels and moonwalks. They're having fun, a surprisingly good team.

EXT. DISCOVERY ZONE- NIGHT

Brad holds a full trash bag as Minnie tries to lock the finicky front door.

BRAD

You have your costume with you?

MINNIE

BRAD (CONT'D)

Um-

(re: trash bag)

Crap, we got a leak.

MINNIE (CONT'D)

The dumpster's just-

BRAD

Be right back.

Brad dashes around the corner as Minnie locks the door. After a moment she realizes he hasn't returned.

SIDE LOT/DUMPSTERS

She rounds the corner to find Brad, still holding the leaking trash bag, frozen staring at Callie's car.

BRAD
What the hell is this?

He looks at Minnie.

BRAD (CONT'D)
This is her car. Right?

He looks in the window.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Look, that's her necklace. Holy
shit. This is Callie's car, the car
that she-

MINNIE
-it's mine.

Brad stares at Minnie.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
Helen gave it to me. I've been
driving it.

BRAD
(weirded out)
Why?

MINNIE
Because I don't have one and it's
not safe for me to be walking home
alone at night.

Brad tries to process.

BRAD
I'm sorry, but that's...

MINNIE
What?

Brad realizes he's still holding the trash bag. He throws it
in the dumpster. His eyes return to the car.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
Actually, I'm tired.

Minnie hops in the drivers seat.

BRAD
No, wait, I'm sorry. MINNIE (CONT'D)
I'm just gonna-

Brad gets into the passenger seat.

BRAD (CONT'D)
 I'm not gonna be coming back much
 anymore, and it's your senior year.
 We gotta live it the fuck up.

I/E. CALLIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Minnie drives. Brad can't help but glance around the car -
 familiar bobby pins, an old tube of strawberry lip balm.
 Minnie notices and turns up the music.

EXT. CARA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

They pull up to a long line of cars down the block. Music
 BLARES from inside. Brad and Minnie hop out, him pulling a
 sheet from his back pack.

BRAD
 Come here.

He rips the sheet in half.

INT. CARA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Brad and Minnie enter the house packed with teens wearing
 makeshift togas and olive branch crowns.

Brad's toga is tiny, more like a speedo. Minnie wears her
 full work uniform under her toga.

Friends greet Brad but only the freshmen girls from the
 bathroom wave to Minnie. MALLORY (17) feeds a GUY (17)
 grapes.

Cara spots Brad and Minnie and immediately disapproves.

Brad places a hand on the small of Minnie's back and guides
 her into the:

KITCHEN

Brad ladles himself a cup of spiked punch from a large bowl,
 chugs it, then goes for another. He can't quite shake the
 car.

Minnie ladles a cup full of punch as a DRUNK BRO throws an
 arm around Brad.

DRUNK BRO
 Dude, I'm gonna miss you so much!

BRAD
 Thanks, bro.

DRUNK BRO (CONT'D)
 I love you like a brother.
 More than a brother.

DRUNK BRO (CONT'D)

(to Minnie)

This guy is who I want to be.
Loyal, God-fearing, with the
hottest girls...did you know
Callie?

BRAD

Okay, man.

DRUNK BRO

They were the ultimate power
couple. And he could have fucked
her and he *totally didn't*, that's
how much he respected her.

Brad, out of nowhere, pushes the Bro, hard.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - POOL

Cara sits with the drunk bro, holding a bag of ice to his head. Minnie and Brad sit across the way on the edge of the pool. A COUPLE makes out nearby.

MINNIE

(re: drunk bro)

That guy was a friend of yours?

BRAD

I'm like, *his* best friend. He's not
mine.

Minnie thinks about whether she was actually Callie's best friend. She takes a sip, then chugs her drink. Brad chugs in solidarity. They teeter on the edge of drunk sorrow.

Instead, Minnie stares at Brad, then leans over and kisses him. She aggressively makes out with him. She reaches for his crotch.

BRAD (CONT'D)

(pulling away)

Whoa, can we like...slower?

Minnie stares at Brad, then erupts in laughter, drunk. Brad tries to laugh along, confused.

Minnie slides into the pool. He slides after her.

CUT TO:

An hour later, Minnie and Brad are both completely wasted. They are playing the pool game "Categories." Brad stands at one end of the pool with his eyes closed.

Cara watches from the hot tub as Minnie, Brandi and the Freshmen Girls wait at the other end giddily. The Drunk Bro sits on a deck chair nearby, slipping in and out of consciousness.

All the girls but Minnie are in bathing suits or underwear. Minnie is in full uniform still, but having a blast.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Missionary!

He waits then turns back. No one's moved. He turns back and covers his eyes.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Girl on top!

No one moves.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Reverse cow girl!

One of the Freshmen jumps in and swims across.

CARA
That's disgusting! What even is that?

BRAD
How can you be disgusted if you don't know what it is?
(back to the game)
Blow job!

The other Freshman and Brandi jump in.

CARA
You're all going to hell!

MINNIE
(to Brad, re: the girls)
They're already swimming, you gotta go after them!

BRAD
(slurring)
Nuh-uh. I'm waiting for my Moby Dick.

DRUNK BRO
I am Ishmael!

FRESHMAN GIRL
(reaching the end)
What happened? Sorry, did I do it wrong?

MINNIE
I'm not gonna play if you don't uphold the integrity of the game!

BRAD
(rapid-fire)
Eating a girl out! Doggy-style!

CARA
Try "scissoring!"

Everyone looks at Cara, then Minnie.

CARA (CONT'D)
I bet that's what Minnie likes.

The Drunk Bro laughs. Minnie's vision starts to blur.

UNDERWATER - BEGIN FLASHBACK

Minnie opens her eyes. **She and Callie are nine-years old.**

They have an underwater tea party, play washer-dryer, alternating underwater flips while holding hands.

Callie kicks above the water to breathe then rejoins Minnie below. She puts her mouth on Minnie's and exhales into Minnie's lungs as Minnie inhales.

Minnie passes the breath back but Callie coughs. She tries to pull Callie to the surface, but Callie is stuck at the bottom, like a nightmare.

Suddenly she's yanked out and her vision of Callie rushes away.

BACKYARD/POOL - END FLASHBACK

Minnie, drenched, opens her eyes to Brad giving her mouth to mouth. She spits up water violently and sits up to the terrified group.

MINNIE
Get off! What are you doing??

BRAD
Ok, just, the sheet got wrapped around your head-

MINNIE
I'm not- I don't want to kiss You weren't breathing!
you-

MINNIE (CONT'D)
I'm not-

Minnie throws up into the grass. Everyone is embarrassed by/for her.

CARA
Pathetic. Get her out of here.

BRAD
I can't drive her home, I'm too messed up.

Minnie MUMBLES to herself.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Minnie, who do you want us to call?

EXT. CARA'S HOUSE - LATER

Minnie leans drunkenly on Brad as Helen pulls up and walks to the porch.

BRAD
I'm sorry, Mrs. King-

LINDA
-it's fine-

BRAD
-she insisted.

MINNIE
(slurred, unintelligible)
...I took her air...

HELEN
You did what?

MINNIE
I don't feel good.

HELEN
I bet not.

Helen unwraps Minnie from the wet toga.

HELEN (CONT'D)
(re: the sheet)
What's this?

BRAD
Greek night.

Helen gives Brad a look.

HELEN
Do you have a way to get home?

BRAD
I'm gonna crash here.

Helen looks up at the porch where Cara stands; suddenly, Helen feels betrayed for Callie.

She walks toward the car with Minnie.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Don't be mad, Helen, we were just
having fun.

Helen turns back.

HELEN
 I know your brain is biologically incapable of grasping consequences yet, and will be for a few more terrifying years, but this girl is half your size and trying to out-drink you. Do you think that's a good idea?

BRAD
 No.
 (With a shrug:)
 But I'm not in charge of her, am I?
 Not my job to keep her safe.

He turns and stumbles back to the house. Helen stares, then steers Minnie into the passenger seat.

I/E. HELEN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Minnie watches the streets and trees sail by out the window.

HELEN
 If you're going to be sick, tell me and I'll pull over.

Minnie's head nods against the window.

HELEN (CONT'D)
 Here...

She rolls Minnie's window down.

HELEN (CONT'D)
 Get some fresh air on your face.

Minnie leans her head out the window.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - CALLIE'S ROOM - LATER

Minnie lies in Callie's bed as Helen talks on the phone just outside the door.

HELEN (O.S.)
 She fell asleep doing homework, I didn't want to wake her.

INT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS/INTERCUT

Barbara leans against the sink.

BARBARA
 Oh. Ok...

Beat.

HELEN
I can bring her home early
tomorrow-

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Does she want....sorry, I
interrupted-

HELEN (CONT'D)
-no, what were you-

BARBARA
Just, she has to babysit her
brother in the morning, so I can go
to work.

HELEN
I can have her home by eight?

Barbara considers it, conflicted.

BARBARA
I don't know if she has a
toothbrush-

HELEN
She has everything she needs over
here.

Minnie lets out a quiet GROAN in the background.

HELEN (CONT'D)
We'll see you in the morning, then?

BARBARA
All right.
(beat)
Thanks.

Helen has hung up.

Now we see the table Barbara stands next to: a simple but carefully prepared home-cooked dinner with two place settings laid out. Barbara looks at the food; she starts to put it in tupperware.

INT. CALLIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Helen enters carrying a full glass of water.

HELEN
(sitting down)
That's the only time I'm ever going
to lie for you. Understood?

Minnie nods. Helen hands her the water.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Drink it all.

Minnie shakes her head.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Yes.

(moving Callie's trashcan
closer)

Use that if you need to.

She watches Minnie try to drink the water.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Have you ever gotten drunk like
this before?

Minnie shakes her head and hands the glass back to Helen.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I believe you.

Minnie closes her eyes. Helen shakes her head.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Once, in high school...I got so
drunk that I made out with a guy
I'd met that night outside of a gas
station. He had a feather earring.
He must've been close to 40.

(realizing)
...and then I think I got on his
motorcycle.

Helen shakes her head. She maternally strokes Minnie's hair.

CUT TO:

CALLIE'S ROOM - MORNING

The DOORBELL CHIMES.

Minnie and Helen are asleep next to each other, Helen in her clothes from the night before, in Callie's spot. The clock reads 9:47am. The DOORBELL CHIMES again. Minnie stirs first, then Helen.

I/E. CALLIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Helen opens the door to Barbara in uniform, Dustin on her hip.

BARBARA
Good morning.

HELEN
Oh my gosh, it's late-

BARBARA
It just became take your daughter
to work day. I'm gonna need my
daughter for that.

Minnie walks down the stairs and sees Barbara. Minnie immediately sprints for the bathroom. AUDIBLE VOMITTING.

INT. BARBARA'S CAR - MORNING

Barbara smells the stale booze on Minnie as she drives.

BARBARA
You want to skip over any lying
you're considering doing, tell me
how you actually got this fucked
up?

Minnie says nothing.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Did that woman give you alcohol?

MINNIE
Of course not, Helen's not like
that.

MINNIE (CONT'D) BARBARA
She took care of me. I have no idea what she's
like.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I know she's a liar.

Minnie rolls her eyes.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
She knew I needed you home to
babysit your brother, but she
doesn't have a job-

BARBARA (CONT'D) MINNIE
-so she probably doesn't get (under her breath)
that. He's not my brother.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
What was that?

Minnie looks straight at Barbara.

MINNIE
(pointed)
He's not my brother. He's just
another stray with a sob story, who
you decided to take in-

Barbara veers the car to the side of the road and hits the brakes.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
What the hell! I'm already
nauseous!

Barbara gets out and opens Minnie's door, unbuckling her seat belt and pulling her out of the car.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
Mom, what are you doing??

BARBARA
What'd you just call me?

MINNIE
Mom!

BARBARA
That's right. Seems like you've been forgetting that-

Barbara holds onto Minnie's arm.

MINNIE
Ow, stop!

BARBARA
I'm your family. He's your family. And while you were off pretending you're better than us, he's started understanding words, really understanding them, and I won't let him hear his sister talk about him like he's fucking less than.

MINNIE
You use language like that because you're cheap.

Barbara stands, dumbfounded.

BARBARA
My mom would have slapped the shit out of me for that.

A WEALTHY WOMAN pulls up and rolls down her window.

WOMAN
Honey, everything ok?

Minnie looks at Barbara who has no fight left.

MINNIE
(to the Woman)
I'm fine.

The driver waits a second then drives on. Barbara gets back in and comforts Dustin.

INT. VETERINARY CLINIC - DAY

Barbara counsels a WOMAN WITH A CAT on how to administer a vial of antibiotics.

Minnie sits on the floor as Dustin plays with her face. She looks at him with guilt and love.

CUT TO:

A CO-WORKER stands up behind the counter and grabs her purse.

CO-WORKER
(to Barbara)
I'm gonna take lunch. Want me to
take Dustin, Minnie?
(to Dustin)
How do chicken nuggets sound?

Dustin SQUEALS in delight. Barbara smiles in thanks.

CUT TO:

Minnie sweeps the lobby as a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN (50s) walks in with puffy red eyes, carefully carrying a crate and a dog bed.

She has a quiet conversation with Barbara at the counter.

Barbara pokes her head into the lobby area.

BARBARA
Minnie, would you help me with
something?

HALLWAY

Minnie, in scrubs, stands in the hallway outside the exam room. Barbara leans against a wall and Minnie looks into the exam room through the window in the door.

The woman's dog lies shaking on the exam table, in its bed from home. The owner gently pets it and cries, speaking to it softly.

After a last moment, she exits the room, nods at Barbara, and heads toward the lobby.

EXAM ROOM

Barbara walks inside and Minnie follows. Barbara goes to the dog and rubs behind its ears. Through this scene Barbara is as gentle and quietly capable as we've seen her.

BARBARA
You're all right, sweet pea. You're
ok.
(to Minnie)
Here. Hold her like this.

Barbara demonstrates how to hold the dog gently but firmly. Minnie tries but is too hesitant and the dog shakes harder.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
You can be firmer. Show her you've
got her.

Minnie does so and the dog calms slightly.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Good.

Barbara prepares two injections across the room.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
They like it when you talk to them.

MINNIE
I don't know what to say.

BARBARA
It's more about how you say it.

Minnie looks at the dog, who looks back at Minnie.

Barely audibly, Minnie hums a song. She's not a good singer, but it doesn't matter.

Barbara is incredibly moved to hear Minnie sing but doesn't show it. She brings the injections over and inserts one needle in the dog's leg, depressing the plunger. Minnie stops singing, scared.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
(to the dog, but also to
Minnie)
It's ok. It's ok.

The dog twitches harder. They hold it as it slowly relaxes, twitching less and less.

Barbara injects the dog with a second shot. They wait. Its eyes close halfway, and the dog grows still.

HALLWAY

Minnie watches as Barbara informs the woman. The woman cries.

LOBBY

Minnie helps settle the bill. She nods toward the pet supply and rescue adoption area.

MINNIE
We just got some new rescue puppies
in, if you want to take a look.

The woman glances at the puppies playing. She turns back.

WOMAN
No thanks.

EXAM ROOM

Barbara cleans the room. The bed is urine stained; she drops it in a trash bag. She wipes up a small puddle of urine that seeped through onto the table.

Minnie picks up a towel and helps clean.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DRAMA CLASSROOM - DAY

The talent show sign up sheet now has many entries.

Minnie enters and sits close to Cara and Brandi.

BRANDI

(mid-argument)

I thought you were gonna to play
yourself and I was gonna be Callie.

CARA

The piece is evolving, we have to
evolve with it.

BRANDI

Doesn't it make the most sense for
you to play yourself?

CARA

We have to subvert expectations.

CUT TO:

Mrs. Murdaugh leads the class in Viewpoints acting exercises.
The students walk around the space.

MRS. MURDAUGH

There is no such thing as
"character," there is simply you
under different circumstances. In
order to bring yourselves to your
roles, you must first know who you
are.

The face the walls at different spots.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)

In public, this is who I am.

They hit solo tableaus. Most hit outgoing, exaggerated poses.
Minnie makes her body very small.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)

This is who I am in private.

Most hit introspective, pensive poses. Minnie stays in a
similar posture to her first pose- very small.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)

This is who I actually am.

They hit some middle ground version of their public and private selves.

Minnie, however, stretches her arms wide and lifts her head to the sky. She takes up the most space of anyone.

CUT TO:

Cara and Minnie stand opposite each other at the front of the class. They're mid Meisher exercise.

CARA
You're blank.

MINNIE
I'm blank.

CARA
You're blank.

MINNIE
I'm blank.

CARA
You feel nothing. You're dead inside.

MRS. MURDAUGH
Hold. Stay with each other.

The girls maintain eye contact.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
Cara, your job is to see past the facade. Minnie, as much as she tries to hide it, has a complex, simmering internal life. Go deeper.

CARA
Ugggh.

Cara shakes it out and refocuses. She narrows her eyes at Minnie.

CARA (CONT'D)
You're...

Cara narrows her gaze. Then she lets out a little gasp.

CARA (CONT'D)
You're happy.

Minnie is taken aback.

MINNIE
I'm happy?

CARA
You're happy.

MINNIE
I'm happy??

MRS. MURDAUGH
(quietly)
Good, Cara.

CARA
(invigorated)
Ohhh, you're angry!

MINNIE
I'm angry?

Minnie begins to tear up.

CARA
You're angry!

MINNIE
I'm angry!

CARA
You're tearing up!

MINNIE
I'm-

CARA
You're sad! You're
embarrassed!

MINNIE (CONT'D)
(overwhelmed by her own
emotion)
I'm...

MRS. MURDAUGH
Yes, Minnie, use your voice! Follow
your instincts!

Minnie shoves Cara. The whole class gasps.

CUT TO:

At the back of the classroom, Mrs. Murdaugh talks to Cara in hushed tones. Minnie stands at the front of the classroom looking at the talent show sign up sheet.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
(whispered)
I know, but that reaction means you
were right.

Minnie writes her name on the sign up sheet, and next to it: "TBD."

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

Minnie parks in the library parking lot and walks inside.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

She looks to see if Kat is working - no Kat in sight.

In the "Holds" section, she finds the book waiting under her name: "Finding Your Voice."

On the shelf above, she sees holds for "Helen Stathos." There are over a dozen books on grief and mourning.

CUT TO:

Minnie stands in the check out line.

Just as Minnie steps to the front, Kat relieves Judy. Minnie panics and peels out of line.

KAT
(after her)
Hey Minnie!

Caught, Minnie turns back to the desk.

KAT (CONT'D)
(quietly)
I've been waiting by the phone, you
never called.

MINNIE
I washed my hands.

Kat reaches for Minnie's book. Minnie hands it over, reluctantly.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
(re: the book)
There's a talent show at my school.
I'm trying to figure out what to
do.

An man in his 80's, DAN, pokes his head out from the line.

DAN
(good-naturedly)
Sorry, Kat, I'm gonna miss my bus.

KAT
No prob, give 'em here.

She scans his books she talks to Minnie.

KAT (CONT'D)
You could dance.

MINNIE
Ha, no.

KAT
Play an instrument?

Minnie shakes her head.

KAT (CONT'D)
(turning to Dan)
Dan, you ever been in a talent show?

DAN
Oh yeah. When I was ten I did a vaudeville routine at the Izard county fair. Abbot and Costello. I played both parts.

KAT
Did you win?

DAN
Went to a farmer who trained his pig to blow bubbles with its own saliva. But I felt like the winner.

KAT
Minnie here's gonna be in a talent show, what do you think she should do?

DAN
(turning to go)
Whatever makes you feel alive, doll.

KAT
Hey Dan!

He turns back.

KAT (CONT'D)
Who's on first?

Dan winks at Kat and shuffles away. Minnie is charmed by Kat.

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Minnie does her calculus homework as Helen completes a thank you note for the funeral. She places it on a stack of fifty completed notes.

Overwhelmed, she shifts her focus to Minnie.

HELEN
Need help?

Minnie looks up, surprised.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I was a straight A student in high school.

MINNIE
Um, sure. My mom couldn't even help
me with trig.

Helen takes the book.

HELEN
Ok....so....

She stares at the page, smile fading.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Wow, this is...

Minnie becomes embarrassed for her.

MINNIE
Actually, there's something else I
could use your help with. I signed
up for the school talent show-

HELEN
(thrilled)
You did?

MINNIE
I'm already a lost cause.

HELEN
You have tons of talent.

MINNIE
Uh huh...Like, what, would you
think?

HELEN
I've heard you sing in the
musicals.

MINNIE
Always with a group. A big group.
For a reason.

HELEN
Come on, I'm sure you're great!

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Helen plays the beginning chords of "You'll Never Walk Alone" on piano while Minnie holds the sheet music.

When it gets to where when Minnie should sing, she freezes.

HELEN
So that's your cue.

Beat. Minnie holds the sheet music out for Helen to take back.

MINNIE

Maybe I shouldn't sing.

HELEN

You haven't even tried.

Helen takes the sheet music.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Well, what else are you good at?

MINNIE

Math.

HELEN

But what do you love?

MINNIE

Math.

Beat.

HELEN

I don't think you can do math for a
talent show.

Minnie glances to a framed photo on the piano - Helen and Callie smiling with a talent show trophy. Three physical trophies line a shelf behind.

When Minnie looks back at Helen, she sees Helen looking down at the sheet music.

HELEN (CONT'D)

(with a shrug)

I love this song.

I/E. CALLIE'S CAR - NIGHT

The sheet music sits on the passenger seat as Minnie drives. The evil eye necklace around the rearview mirror TAPS annoyingly against the windshield. On impulse, she stuffs it in the glove box.

EXT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Minnie parks at the end of the block where the SUV can't be seen and walks inside.

INT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Minnie walks in to an empty house.

MINNIE

Mom?

Through the sliding door she can see Barbara, Dustin and all the animals in the backyard.

Barbara throws a ball for Jasper while Dustin chases after him. The toddler and dog play tug of war while Barbara looks on.

It's a nice family scene. Minnie misses them suddenly, but turns toward her room.

CUT TO:

Later, the dogs pile inside, Barbara and Dustin following.

BARBARA
Dustin, you want pizza for dinner?

Barbara picks up the phone, and hears voices already talking.

MINNIE (V.O.)
It's gonna be a disaster. I feel sick just thinking about it.

KAT (V.O.)
Then don't do it.

MINNIE'S ROOM

Minnie lies in bed with the cordless.

MINNIE
I have to.

KAT (V.O.)
...as long as you're doing it for you.

INT. KAT'S HOUSE - KAT'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS/INTERCUT

Kat sits on the floor, shuffling a deck of cards.

MINNIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Barbara listens more closely. Dustin SQUEALS and Barbara covers the receiver, putting her finger to her lips.

MINNIE'S ROOM

MINNIE
You said...your mom died last year?

KAT
Yeah, she did.

MINNIE
What happened, if you don't mind me-

KAT

It's ok. She was on vacation with my dad in like, the English countryside, and she saw a turtle in the road, so she stopped to move it, and an old lady hit her with her car.

MINNIE

Oh my god.

KAT

I know, so random. She was in a coma for like, two days. My dad got me a plane ticket, to try to get me there before, but she died while I was in the air. I think I was watching Legally Blonde.

MINNIE

That's awful.

KAT

I know, it totally ruined that movie for me. (beat) My therapist says I use humor as a coping mechanism.

Beat.

MINNIE

Your mom sounded like an amazing person, to stop to save a turtle.

KAT

Yeah. (beat) I don't know if that story is totally representative. It's nice, but she was complicated. We fought a lot. My parents were on that trip as a kind of last effort, I guess my mom had cheated-

MINNIE

Wow.

KAT

Yeah. And she didn't even like animals...

(beat)

At the funeral, all anybody did was tell that turtle story, over and over.

Minnie nods.

KAT (CONT'D)

I know it's fucked up, but there's a girl in my class who's dad died of lung cancer, really drawn out... Sometimes I get jealous of her. 'Cause she got to say goodbye.

(beat)

(MORE)

KAT (CONT'D)
Annnnnd now you think I'm a
terrible person.

MINNIE
I don't think that. At all.

Beat.

KAT
Did you lose a parent?

MINNIE
No.
(beat)
A friend.
(beat)
Do you mind if we don't talk about
it now?

KAT
MINNIE (CONT'D)
Sure. I'm just thinking about this
performance-

KAT (CONT'D)
You gonna let me come to the show?

MINNIE
I'm gonna be terrible.

KAT
I don't care about that.

MINNIE
What if I puke?

KAT
I'll hold your hair back.
(beat)
Besides, you're cute when you're
embarrassed.

Barbara's eye grow wider. Minnie freezes.

KAT (CONT'D)
Sorry. I couldn't tell if...I'm
like, totally down for just being
friends. I don't want to weird you
out-

MINNIE
No, I...I think you're cute, too.

Minnie SCREAMS into a pillow.

KAT'S HOUSE - KAT'S ROOM

Kat throws the deck of cards in the air like confetti.

MINNIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Barbara covers her mouth and sits on the floor. The dogs GO WILD and jump all over. Barbara hangs up and hears Minnie's door open.

She stands and quickly busies herself with dishes.

Minnie enters, still holding the phone in her hand.

MINNIE
(terrified)
Mom, were you just-

BARBARA
Hm? Did you need something?

MINNIE
...never mind.

Minnie retreats. Barbara looks at Dustin who SQUEALS with delight.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Minnie carries herself with more confidence than we've seen before. A few YOUNGER GIRLS watch her with admiration.

TV PRODUCTION CLASSROOM

Minnie reads from the teleprompter competently, smiling into the camera.

MATH CLASSROOM

Minnie tries to pay attention but finds herself doodling the name "Kat" on her notebook over and over next to half-completed calculus equations.

I/E. CALLIE'S CAR - DAY

Minnie drives. At a red light, she replaces Callie's music with a CD from her own backpack and turns it up.

EXT. CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Kat sits on a bench in her uniform. Minnie pulls up and Kat gets in.

I/E. CALLIE'S CAR - DAY

They drive, putting their hands out of the window and feel the wind, listening to music. Kat pops an Atomic Fireball in her mouth.

EXT. KAT'S HOUSE- DAY

They walk to the front door of Kat's small house.

INT. KAT'S HOUSE

Kat opens the front door and walks inside.

KAT
My dad's working 'til seven, so we
got the place all to ourselves.

Minnie scans the house. There are pictures of Kat and her parents on the mantel. Minnie studies the pic of Kat's mom.

One picture is of Kat and her parents in very accurate Star Trek uniforms, Kat dressed as Spock with pointy ears.

KAT (CONT'D)
(off Minnie's look)
You ain't seen nothin' yet.

INT. STAR TREK ROOM

Kat opens the door to reveal a guest bedroom that has been converted into a **Star Trek memorabilia room**. Figurines in unopened boxes cover the walls, top to bottom. A life-sized cardboard cutout of Worf brandishing a phaser stands in the corner. A thousand piece model of the Starship Enterprise, assembly in process, sits on a table.

MINNIE
So your dad likes Star Trek.

KAT
My mom. When they started dating,
she got him this as a joke-
(she points to a Picard
figurine)
Then he got her Data, then she got
him Troy. On and on for years.
(beat)
He still gets her things.

We scan over all the little figurines.

Minnie studies the intricate model of the enterprise with a bottle of glue sitting next to it, hundreds of pieces yet to add.

INT. KAT'S ROOM

Kat opens the door to her room which is decked out with magic gear. A top hat, numerous decks of cards, ropes in knots, rings, etc.

Minnie picks up a rabbit puppet.

MINNIE
(delighted)
Stop.

KAT
(proud)
I will not.

CUT TO:

As Kat performs a mini close-up magic show:

MINNIE
How many hours of your life have
you spent doing this?

KAT
What's three hours a day for nine
years?

Minnie does some quick mental calculations.

MINNIE
9,855 hours.

KAT
(impressed)
Is that right?

Minnie nods, bashful, proud. Then:

MINNIE
Is all this another coping
mechanism?

KAT
Hell no, dude, this is a vocation.
I've been doing this since third
grade, since dumb ass Doug Thatcher
showed me some totally obvious
trick, and when I figured it out
right away and thought up six
different ways to *improve* it, he
said I could be his *assistant*. Like
wearing a skimpy outfit to be sawed
in half is an honor.

Minnie looks at a framed photo of a 5th grade Kat dressed in tails and white gloves, looking intently mysterious.

Kat notices Minnie staring at the pic.

KAT (CONT'D)
 I understand if you don't want to
 date me now, I guess it's not the
 sexiest--

Minnie kisses Kat. Kat kisses her back. They break apart.

MINNIE
 Why does your mouth taste hot?

KAT
 I was worried about my breath so I
 popped a fire ball.

She sticks out her tongue, which is fireball-red. Minnie
 playfully licks her tongue. Kat laughs. They kiss.

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Helen sits on the porch, a cordless phone in her lap.

She checks her watch and hears LOUD MUSIC. Callie's car
 approaches from around the corner.

Helen walks into the lawn and freezes when she sees the
 silhouette of a girl in the passenger seat.

Minnie parks the car and turns off the ignition. She and Kat
 exit.

HELEN
 Where were you?

MINNIE
 What do you mean?

HELEN
 I've been waiting since four.

MINNIE
 We were studying at Kat's
 house- HELEN (CONT'D)
 -I called your mom, she
 didn't know where you were.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
 You called my mom?
 (beat)
 I'm fine.
 (beat)
 Helen, this is Kat. Kat, Helen.

KAT
 Hey.

Kat smiles at Helen, Helen studies Kat somewhat coolly.

HELEN
 (to Minnie)
 You ready to rehearse?

MINNIE
(proudly)
No need, we got it figured out.

CUT TO:

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

Helen sits uncomfortably on the couch as she watches Minnie and Kat perform, pictures of Callie visible on the walls around them.

Minnie and Kat giggle throughout.

KAT
(with a flourish)
Mein Damen und Herren! Mesdames et
Messieurs!

MINNIE
(to Helen)
We haven't worked this part
out yet.

KAT (CONT'D)
Ladies and Gentlemen!

KAT (CONT'D)
We are...

Kat lights a burst of fire paper in her hand.

KAT (CONT'D)
The Mathmagicians!

MINNIE
The Mathmagicians!

KAT (CONT'D)
(dramatic beat)
How many of you here love the
ancient art of mathematics?

Minnie quickly raises her hand. Kat pretends to scan the crowd.

KAT (CONT'D)
I don't need numerical skills to
see that Minnie is the only one.
But what if I could transform you
all into instant math prodigies?

Minnie gasps dramatically.

MINNIE
"She can't!" "She can!" "We'll
see!" "Let's watch!"

Helen is unamused. Kat pulls a sealed envelope from up her sleeve.

KAT
This sealed envelope contains a
numerical prediction.
(MORE)

KAT (CONT'D)
 A view into the future, if you
 will. We don't claim to be mediums,
 psychics, or mind readers- con
 artists who feed on desperate souls-

Minnie clocks Helen's discomfort.

KAT (CONT'D)
 Oh no, you see we-

MINNIE
 (interrupting Kat)
 Can we get a volunteer from the
 audience?

Minnie and Kat look at Helen. She doesn't raise her hand.

KAT
 How about you, ma'am! Come on up
 here.

HELEN
 (politely)
 No, thank you.

KAT
 (still in character)
 Don't worry, you don't have to be a
 math genius.

Minnie holds out a blank card and pen to Helen.

MIINIE
 (in character)
 Just write a number between one
 hundred and a thousand.

HELEN
 I don't want to play.

Minnie, worried, doesn't know what to do.

KAT
 Aw, she's shy! Audience, let's give
 her some bravery!

Kat applauds uproariously.

MINNIE
 (breaking character)
 You won't actually have to do it in
 the show, it's just for now.

Minnie holds out the card to Helen. Helen doesn't take it.

HELEN
 (to Minnie, betrayed)
 This is what you're doing?

Minnie is silent.

Helen looks down at her hands. Kat looks to Minnie, confused.

KAT
It's just a first draft...

Minnie looks like she might cry, but she doesn't.

KAT (CONT'D)
(to Minnie)
I guess... we should get going...

MINNIE
(to Kat)
You go ahead.

HELEN
No, it's late. Go home.
(beat)
Nice to meet you, Kat.

KAT
Yeah, you too-

HELEN
Mrs. King.

Kat exits the front door.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Minnie?

Minnie turns back, hopeful.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I forgot, I have to get Callie's
car serviced tomorrow. I'm going to
need the key.

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE

Kat waits by the car. Minnie emerges.

MINNIE
Let's walk.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE

Helen watches out the window as Minnie and Kat walk down the sidewalk together.

Helen sits at the piano, fingers on the keys. She plays a few chords from "You'll Never Walk Alone." She stops mid song.

CUT TO:

Helen watches a home video on the tv screen: A five year old Callie opens Christmas presents while YIA YIA and PAPOU (Helen's parents who speak only in Greek) watch, delighted. A much younger Helen watches while Mark operates the camera. Helen pauses on an image of her family intact, happy.

INT. MINNIE'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

Sheet music haltingly spits out of a noisy printer, which jolts to a stop halfway down the page.

INT. MINNIE'S ROOM

Minnie sits studying the half page of sheet music. Barbara opens the door.

BARBARA
It's confirmed, the printer's
fucked.
(she catches herself)
I mean broken.

Barbara on the floor next to Minnie's bed. She gets a glimpse of the paper.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
That for the talent show?

Minnie stares at the paper, brow furrowed.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
You know you don't have to do that
if you don't want.

MINNIE
I wished you believed in me.

BARBARA
(earnest)
I do. I just know the way you're
talented can't be summed up in some
little two minute performance. Your
talent's too big for that stage.

Minnie rolls her eyes. Barbara is clumsy but sincere:

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I don't claim to understand you,
Minnie, and I have no idea where
you got your brain 'cause I'm no
Einstein, and your dad was the
dumbest piece 'a shit I ever met-

MINNIE
Mom.

BARBARA
-but you're good, just as you are.
You don't have to prove a thing.

Minnie doesn't know what to say; she stares at the music.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Did you have a fight with your
girlfriend?

Barbara looks patiently at Minnie. Minnie tried to hide her panic.

MINNIE
...I don't have a girlfriend.

Barbara stands.

BARBARA
Well, when you do, I'd love to meet
her.

She gently shuts the door behind her.

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE- DAY

Helen sets a carved jack o'lantern on the front porch as kids in costume walk by.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE

Helen sets a full bowl of candy by the front door. She sits on the couch and waits.

She sees an empty box in the corner.

CALLIE'S ROOM

Helen stands with the empty box in front of Callie's closet. She takes a few shirts off the hangers and folds them. She stops.

She hangs the shirts back up and puts them back in the closet.

The doorbell rings. Helen goes downstairs, while we stay in Callie's room, still unchanged.

KIDS (O.S.)
Trick or Treat!

HELEN (O.S.)
Oh my gosh, look at you! I love
your sparkly dress!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - THEATRE - DAY

Everyone is dressed in various Halloween costumes, except for Minnie.

Minnie sits in the house studying her half sheet of music as other students tech their pieces, a rock band playing onstage.

Cara and Brandi sit behind her, arguing.

BRANDI
I don't know if the masks are appropriate.

CARA
How's else'll the audience know you're me?

BRANDI
Maybe it's not crucial they know it's you, maybe you're not the most important part.

MRS. MURDAUGH
(from the God Mic, also in costume)
Students!
(after they settle)
No talking in the house! If you are in the audience, all your energy is to be directed up on that stage!
Ensemble!

The rock band begins again.

CUT TO:

Minnie stands on the stage in front of a full house. The mic shakes in her hand as the accompaniment for "You'll Never Walk Alone" starts to play.

Minnie freezes, misses her cue.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
(from the God Mic)
Hold! Diego, can you...?

The STAGE MANAGER stops the music.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
(from the God Mic)
You missed it Minnie! Start again.

The accompaniment starts from the top. At her cue:

MINNIE
-and this is when I'll sing-

MRS. MURDAUGH
(from the God Mic)
-into the mic-

MINNIE
(into the mic)
-I said this is when I'll sing.

Beat.

MRS. MURDAUGH
(from the God Mic)
When?

MINNIE
In the show. I'll sing in the show.

Beat.

MRS. MURDAUGH
Practice now, Minnie, that's the
point of rehearsal.

MINNIE
That's not my process. I have to
respect my process.

CARA
She's not gonna do it.

Minnie glares at Cara.

CARA (CONT'D)
Are you?

Minnie is silent.

CARA (CONT'D)
Yup. Thought not.

Minnie walks off the stage.

MRS. MURDAUGH
(from the God Mic)
Ok. Let's move on.

DRESSING ROOM - END OF REHEARSAL

Minnie packs her bag. The walls of the dressing room are covered in handwritten quotes from previous productions signed by the student performers.

Minnie sees: "Anything you can do, I can do better," Callie's swooping signature huge underneath. Minnie uncaps a Sharpie and raises it to Callie's quote.

MRS. MURDAUGH (O.S.)
I wonder what you're doing-

Minnie caps the Sharpie as Mrs. Murdaugh stands in the doorway.

MINNIE
Nothing. I was just-

MRS. MURDAUGH
-putting so much pressure on
yourself to perform when you've
never shown any interest before.

MINNIE
...Interests change, I'm changing.

Mrs. Murdaugh studies Minnie.

MRS. MURDAUGH
You know I don't just teach
Meisner, I practice it. At seeing
past the bullcrap into people's
deepest truths.

Minnie looks away.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
And I think your deepest truth...

Minnie tries to look away. Mrs. Murdaugh holds her gaze.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
-is that you're not doing this for
you.

MINNIE
I am. This is my chance to prove
I'm special, I'm talented, I'm
mother-freakin' it.

MRS. MURDAUGH
Of course you are, but you can't
sing.

Mrs. Murdaugh shrugs: "so, who cares?" Minnie looks at the floor.

MINNIE
Helen likes that song.

MRS. MURDAUGH
You've been hanging out with her a
lot, huh?

MINNIE
Someone needs to, she's all alone.
(beat)
And we're going through the same
thing.

MRS. MURDAUGH
(gently)
No, you're not.

Minnie looks at Mrs. Murdaugh.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
I'm not saying that what you're
going through isn't terrible,
losing a friend at any age-

MINNIE
-not friend. *Best friend. Not*
Cara's, or Brandi's, or anyone else
pretending to like, to I don't
know, win the Grief Olympics-

MRS. MURDAUGH
We know that. No matter how loudly
anyone else *claims* it, we *saw* you
and Callie together for years. Your
heartbreak isn't for show, it's
real. But it's not the same as
losing a child.

(beat)
In less than a year, you're going
to go away to college.

MINNIE
Not far, just to Fayetteville.

MRS. MURDAUGH
...since when?

Minnie looks at the ground.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
Minnie. Helen is grieving Callie's
future. You still have one. But if
you stay here to try to take
Callie's place in any way-

MINNIE
That's not what I'm doing.

MRS. MURDAUGH
-you're going to fail. And you'll
hurt Helen and yourself in the
process.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL- DAY

Minnie bursts through the doors, where Kat waits outside.

KAT
How'd it go?

Minnie doesn't break stride, heading for Callie's car in the
lot. Kat rushes to catch up.

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Helen steps out of the backdoor and puts on her running shoes, the first time she's attempted a run since the accident.

She stretches, warms up her ankles. She starts at a gentle jog down a path that leads from behind her house.

I/E. CALLIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The DOORBELL RINGS. Another ring. Minnie holds down the doorbell.

KAT
(eager to leave)
Looks like nobody's home...

Minnie puts the key Helen gave her in the lock. Kat clocks the key, weirded out.

MINNIE
(off Kat's look)
I just need to talk to her.

Minnie steps inside.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Helen?

Kat hesitantly follows.

KAT
Mrs. King?

EXT. RUNNING PATH - CONTINUOUS

Helen picks up speed, enjoying this more than she expected.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Kat clocks the framed photo of the family on a beach.

KAT
Bet there's some serious
dysfunction under those smiles.

Minnie heads upstairs.

KAT (CONT'D)
(whispered)
Hurry up! I don't want her to catch
me here alone!

Minnie vanishes out of sight. Kat begins to snoop.

HELEN'S BEDROOM

Minnie enters Helen's bedroom tentatively.

MINNIE
Helen?

Minnie looks around the room. It's the first time we/she has seen it. Family pictures, a Greek icon of the Virgin Mary.

On a book shelf, Minnie sees a row of children's books: from "Goodnight Moon" to "Bunnicula". Below them, a long line of parenting books, including "Reviving Ophelia" and "Get Out of My Life But First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl To The Mall".

On the nightstand: "The Unspeakable Loss. How Do You Live After a Child Dies."

Helen's journal sits beside it, open, with Minnie's note from the gravesite tucked in.

RUNNING PATH

Helen picks up speed.

KITCHEN

Kat spots a pic of Minnie and Callie on the fridge. It's the one from the last day of school.

HELEN'S BEDROOM

Minnie sits on the bed, journal open in her lap. She's suddenly overwhelmed by Helen's grief.

LIVING ROOM

Kat stands in front of Callie's self portrait. She studies it.

She opens the fancy CD player and sees a blank CD. She pushes play. The CD player lights up.

RUNNING PATH

Helen runs as fast as she possibly can, until she's stopped by:

BACKYARD

From Helen's POV, a girl's silhouette standing in the living room. Helen stands, frozen.

LIVING ROOM

Kat steps back as the sound system comes to life.

HELEN (V.O.)
Minnie?

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
Did she ever call her Minnie Mouse?

HELEN'S BEDROOM

Minnie's reading is interrupted by the voices playing downstairs.

HELEN (O.S.)
Do you think I could talk to her?

LIVING ROOM

Kat stands listening, confused, as the backdoor opens.

MALE PSYCHIC (V.O.)
Of course, what would you like to say?

Minnie walks down the stairs. Helen stands in the doorway as sounds of crying play overhead.

HELEN (V.O.)
Callie, honey...I don't know if you can hear me...please come back.
Come home. I'll wait. I'll be waiting-

Helen hits stop on the CD player. She looks at Minnie, deeply betrayed.

INT. CALLIE'S CAR - MINUTES LATER

Minnie and Kat drive in silence.

KAT
That was your friend in the pictures? The one who-?

MINNIE
Callie.

Beat.

KAT
And Helen's Callie's mom?

Minnie nods.

KAT (CONT'D)
Okay. Kinda wish you had told me
that. (beat) Actually, really wish
you had told me.

MINNIE
What do you want to know?

Beat.

KAT
How'd she die?

MINNIE
Car accident.

Kat nods.

MINNIE.
This car, actually. Flew through
this windshield.

Kat's eyes go wide.

KAT
What do you mean?

MINNIE
We don't know why she crashed, but
she wasn't wearing a seat belt-

KAT
-no, why are you driving her car?

MINNIE
Helen gave it to me.

KAT
Does your mom know that?

MINNIE
No, she'd think it's weird.

Beat.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
What??

KAT
Nothing! I just, I didn't even know
you were friends with this woman,
I just thought she was your music
teacher.

MINNIE

Well, she's not, she's Callie's mom.

KAT

Got that.

MINNIE

And now she's kind of like...

Beat.

KAT

Dude. Your mom sounds great.

Minnie scoffs.

MINNIE

No, she sucks. Just like yours.

Silence.

KAT

My mom doesn't suck.

MINNIE

Kinda sounds like she did.

MINNIE

...She was a dick sometimes, but she's like, the *most important person-*

MINNIE

-why do you do that? You keep switching back and forth between past and present tense.

KAT

Because I don't think of her as gone.

(beat)
Sorry you think that's weird.

Silence.

KAT (CONT'D)

Pull over.

Minnie looks at Kat, Kat stares forward. Minnie pulls over the car. Kat opens the door and gets out.

MINNIE

You're just gonna leave?

KAT
I know you're in the lashing out
phase, but I'm still fresh, dude.

MINNIE
It's been over a year.

KAT
That's fresh. You'll see.

Kat shuts the door and walks away. Minnie hits the gas.

INT. MINNIE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Minnie lies on the floor, staring into space. She hears keys in the door and pretends to be asleep

Barbara walks in, exhausted, carrying a sleeping Dustin. She goes into Dustin's room, then reappears after putting him to bed.

Barbara carefully drapes a blanket over Minnie, then lies on the couch to be close to her. Barbara closes her eyes.

Minnie opens hers.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - EVENING

Minnie approaches the theatre as students hang a banner.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Minnie walks through the theatre as different acts warm up.

DRESSING ROOM

She enters the dressing room and freezes.

Callie stands before her in a white dress and angel wings.

Minnie blinks. This is not a dream. She looks again, and realizes that the face isn't moving.

MRS. MURDAUGH (O.S.)
Are you insane??

Mrs. Murdaugh stands in front of Cara and Brandi - Cara wears a mask of Callie's face, Brandi is dressed in purple wearing a mask of Cara.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
You thought this was a good idea?

BRANDI
(meekly)
I didn't.

CARA
Shut up, Brandi! We wanted to make
it clear that Brandi is me, and I'm
Callie-

MRS. MURDAUGH
-so you thought, why don't I wear
the face of my dead friend when her
mother is going to be here-

CARA
-best friend. It's a piece about
best friends, 'cause that's what
Callie and I were.

Beat.

MRS. MURDAUGH
Cara, I've never said this in my 30
year teaching career, but if you
don't do some serious self-
examination soon, you're going to
calcify into a putrid person and
lead a selfish, desperate, hateful
little life.

The room is speechless.

Cara throws her mask down and runs from the room. Brandi
throws both the masks in the trash and follows out the door.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
I'm gonna get fired for that.

Mrs. Murdaugh looks at Minnie.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
Sure you want to do this?

Minnie nods.

MRS. MURDAUGH (CONT'D)
Let's get this show on the road.

PRELAP of AUDIENCE APPLAUDING over:

PARKING LOT

Families, students and teachers file into the theatre doors,
carrying bouquets of flowers.

Helen parks and walks toward the front doors, parents and
students making room for her along the way.

MRS. MURDAUGH (V.O., PRE-LAP)
Good evening, everyone, welcome!

She stops when she sees the banner overhead: "The Callie King Memorial Talent Show: Remembering Our Shining Star."

Helen steadies herself.

DRESSING ROOM

Students put on makeup in front of brightly lit mirrors. Minnie's hand shakes. She tries to steady it.

MRS. MURDAUGH (V.O., PRELAP)
Thank you for coming, dear friends
and family. We're so glad that
you're here.

THEATER

Mr. McClendon escorts Helen to a seat, "Reserved: Family." Mark sits a few seats down. Helen and Mark nod to each other civilly.

Brad sits in the back, cozy with a NEW GIRL in a Razorbacks sweatshirt.

Kat sits near the front, alone.

THEATER WINGS

Students in costumes, including Cara and Brandi, stand in the wings listening.

THEATER

Mrs Murdaugh stands in a spotlight onstage in front of the darkened house. Barbara rushes in with Dustin on her hip and shimmies past sitting parents to take a seat.

MRS. MURDAUGH
(into a mic)
Now, the past three talent shows,
something unprecedented happened:
The same student won all three
years.

Mrs. Murdaugh looks at Helen; Helen smiles bashfully.

GREENROOM

Minnie stares at herself in the mirror.

Mrs. Murdaugh's voice carries through the speaker overhead.

MRS. MURDAUGH (V.O.)
 Maybe all this was just Callie's
 way of letting someone else win for
 a change.

Minnie looks at Callie's signature above.

THEATER

Mrs. Murdaugh makes eye contact with Helen, who looks away.

MRS. MURDAUGH
 No, that's not true...

DRESSING ROOM

Minnie puts a hand on Callie's signature, and closes her eyes. She prays.

THEATER

MRS. MURDAUGH
 Without further ado, I give you
 your multi-talented Charging
 Wildcats!

Mrs. Murdaugh exits as a group of teens take their places with instruments. A BOY WITH A GUITAR grabs the standing mic.

BOY WITH GUITAR
 (solemnly:) This is for Callie.
 (yelling:) One, two, three!

They play an assaulting, loud, metal "song". They SCREAM into the mics and bang their heads. Helen grimaces.

BOY WITH GUITAR (CONT'D)
 (scream-singing)
 I want to hit you with a hammer,
 watch your brain drip down your
 spine!...

THEATER - BEGIN MONTAGE

A student tap dances, throwing kisses up to heaven.

A male magician clumsily makes pictures of Callie disappear in small bursts of flames across the stage. His scantily clad female assistant stands next to him and smiles. Kat watches disapprovingly from the audience.

A female student in a ballgown sings, "L is for the way you look...at me...Callie, O...is for the only one....I See, Callie..."

The audience APPLAUDS intermittently. Helen tries to smile.

A coed duo play an acoustic cover of "Time After Time." It's simple and lovely.

After the first verse, lights come up on Brandi and Cara center stage. No masks.

They begin to move. At first it's just a dance, but it becomes beautiful - they're exceptional dancers, but it's more than that. They move with longing and sincere grief.

As the song ends, Cara exits in a pool of light and Brandi stands alone.

After a pause, the audience rises in earnest applause. Everyone - Barbara and Helen, too - cries.

WINGS

Minnie watches the dancers bow. As Cara exits into the wings Mrs. Murdaugh envelops her in a sincere, maternal hug.

MRS. MURDAUGH
(to Minnie)
Go on.

Minnie takes a breath, and walks onstage into the dark.

THEATER

Helen wipes her eyes as parents all through the theater SNIFFLE and pull it together.

The lights go down, and the first few notes of "You'll Never Walk Alone" begin. Onstage, a light fades up, Minnie resembling Callie's silhouette.

Minnie hears her cue and begins to sing.

She's not tone deaf, but it's close. This is an act of raw bravery and catharsis that is ultimately awkward and painful for everyone.

Minnie begins to falter but then spots Helen in the audience. Her commitment level rises while her talent level does not.

WINGS

Mrs. Murdaugh watches with Cara and Brandi.

MRS. MURDAUGH
(to Cara)
Don't say a word.

I didn't. CARA

THEATER

All the key players have a different reaction. Barbara wants to look away but forces herself to watch.

Helen watches with a journey of disbelief, disappointment, and guilt. Suddenly, she stands and walks up the aisle.

Minnie sees and her heart breaks. Barbara watches.

She finishes to polite applause. Barbara applauds loudly. Minnie leaves as a group of cloggers crowd the stage and jaunty country music begins to play.

Barbara stands and hurries up the aisle with Dustin.

LOBBY

Barbara tries to catch Helen as she moves to the doors.

BARBARA
Helen? Are you leaving?

HELEN
Yes, I don't feel well.

BARBARA
Can you wait a few minutes? I'm
sure Minnie will want to see you.

HELEN
I'd love to, but this is all a bit-

BARBARA HELEN (CONT'D)
-a lot, I can't even imagine. -overwhelming.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I'll go get her, you wait here.

HELEN

BARBARA
But she didn't.
(beat)
She sucked.
(MORE)

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 She can't sing, she knows that,
 she's not delusional. She did it to
 please you-

HELEN BARBARA (CONT'D)
 That's not- -to make you happy.

Helen stares at Barbara.

HELEN (CONT'D)
*Nothing can make me happy right
 now.*

BARBARA
 I know, but she's a kid.

HELEN
 Barbara, put yourself in my place
 for one second.

BARBARA
 I've been doing that, I've been
 trying to understand-

HELEN
 -well, you can't, you have your
 kids, you have two. I'm sorry if
 Minnie misunderstood-

BARBARA
 Please stay. She saw you walk out,
 it'll break her heart.

HELEN
 I can't.

BARBARA
 Okay, then you're an asshole.

HELEN
 What?

An USHER pokes his head out from the theater.

USHER
 (whispering)
 Excuse me, ladies?

LINDA BARBARA
 Not now! Get out!

He ducks back in.

THEATER

The cloggers enthusiastically clog on. Barbara and Helen's VOICES can be heard slightly over the music. A few audience-members notice.

LOBBY

Barbara puts Dustin down and points to a can on the floor.

BARBARA
Hey, go play with that-

HELEN
(to herself)
And the fantastic parenting
continues.

BARBARA
You're the one abandoning-

HELEN
-she's *your* child, it's *your* job to
take care of her.

BARBARA
She won't let me anymore! She's
found an upgrade, she doesn't want
me.

HELEN
That's not my problem-

BARBARA
-you created the problem!

HELEN
Well, I screwed up, she's not my
kid!

Beat.

HELEN (CONT'D)
She's not...

Helen cries. Barbara softens.

BARBARA
I know.

Barbara places a hand on Helen's back.

HELEN
I don't know what I'm doing.
I don't know what to do.

Barbara holds Helen; Helen lets her.

DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Other performers giddily trade compliments. Minnie wipes off her makeup, and stares at herself in the mirror, face bare. Back to herself.

LOBBY - LATER

The lobby bustles with post-show energy. Parents present kids with flowers. Cara and Brandi pose with a huge trophy, but Cara doesn't look happy. Winning didn't help.

Mark stands in a corner, alone. Brad approaches him and shakes his hand. Mark's smile fades as Brad introduces him to the new girl.

Barbara and Dustin wait in a corner, Kat nearby.

Minnie enters from the theater doors. A few boys WHISPER and LAUGH.

Barbara pulls her into a hug.

BARBARA
Great job, honey.

MINNIE
Where's Helen?

BARBARA
She had to go home. But she told me
to tell you-

Dustin tries to hand Minnie a rose.

DUSTIN
-Min, look!

BARBARA
(to Minnie)
He's got something for you.

Minnie takes the rose, distracted.

DUSTIN
Good job, Min!

BARBARA
You gonna tell him thank you?

Minnie hands the rose to Barbara and heads toward the door.

KAT
Minnie!

MINNIE
(to Kat)
I have to go.

And she's gone. Barbara watches Kat's face fall.

BARBARA
Sorry about that.

KAT
 That's okay.
 (beat)
 Your Minnie's mom?

BARBARA
 That's right.

KAT
 I'm Kat.

BARBARA
 Holy crap, I recognize your voice.

KAT
 What? BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Name. Recognize your name.

Barbara takes her in.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 It's very nice to meet you.

Kat smiles warmly.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
 Dustin and me are gonna go back to
 the house, treat ourselves to some
 homemade root beer floats. I can't
 guarantee Minnie will join, but
 you're welcome to come.

KAT
 Oh...
 (beat)
 Sure. That sounds fun.

EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Minnie approaches the front door. She looks to Callie's window where the electric candle glows. MUSIC plays inside.

She walks to the base of the ladder and climbs.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - CALLIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Minnie reaches the top as Callie's voice, from a CD player, sings "You'll Never Walk Alone." Callie's voice is, of course, lovely, but it should sound different than what we've imagined. Not quite as exceptional.

Helen sits on the bed. When she sees Minnie, she shuts off the CD player.

MINNIE
 That's what it's supposed to sound
 like?
 (beat)
 (MORE)

MINNIE (CONT'D)
You're sitting by yourself in the dark.

HELEN
Come in from the window, you might fall off that thing-

MINNIE
I'm not going to fall, look.

Minnie shakes the ladder roughly. It almost tips over.

HELEN
QUIT THAT AND GET IN HERE RIGHT NOW.

Minnie climbs in.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Teenagers are emotional terrorists, I swear.

They sit on the bed together.

MINNIE
What are you doing?

Helen looks at the candle.

HELEN
It's strange, I feel like two people: There's the me that's out in the world, and I'm "handling things very well." Then there's the other me. And the other me thinks she's coming back.

(beat)
I know how that sounds.

Beat.

MINNIE
Tonight, I thought, I mean not really, not in my brain, but I thought I was going to open my mouth onstage and that Callie's voice was gonna come out. Or not her voice exactly, but something special. Not like mine. 'Cause she was gonna, like, help.

HELEN
I feel like I can't give her clothes away, because she'll need them when she comes back. And I can't move houses because she won't know my new address.

MINNIE

I think God's pretend, but I've
been praying since she died.

HELEN

I don't think I believe in God
anymore.

MINNIE

Everything I see is a sign.

HELEN

(nodding)

I looked at my watch the other day,
at 12:05-

MINNIE

Her birthday, I did that, too.

HELEN

Then I saw this little girl who
looked so much like her.

(beat)

I wanted to pick her up and carry
her home.

The clock downstair chimes. They sit for the full ten chimes.

MINNIE

I'm going to go home now.

Helen nods. Minnie heads for the window.

MINNIE (CONT'D)

Do you want to come over? I could
ask my mom. She's mortifying, but
sometimes she's cool.

HELEN

I want to stay here. But thank you.

Minnie climbs out the window and starts to descend down the ladder. Helen averts her eyes.

HELEN (CONT'D)

If you fall-

MINNIE

I'm not going to.

EXT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Minnie walks down her street and stands outside her house. Through the window, she sees Kat performing the mentalism math trick act for Barbara, Dustin, and the pets.

Minnie walks inside. We watch her join in.

FADE TO:

BLACK

FADE UP:

EXT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Minnie and Kat load Barbara's car with suitcases and boxes, The dogs jump all around them. There's a new dog - it has three legs.

Barbara wears a "University of Chicago Mom" sweatshirt. Dustin chases Minnie, and they chatter back and forth.

Kat's eyes are red and puffy. She kisses Minnie and Minnie kisses her back. Barbara lets it go on for a minute.

BARBARA
Ok, I'm right here, break it up.

CUT TO:

Barbara shoves the last box in the car.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
We got two hours left 'til we gotta go. Anything left you want to do?

INT. NOVA/EXT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Minnie drives the stick shift Nova and parks a little way down from Callie's house. The ladder is gone. The house has been repainted light green. The electric candle sits lit in Callie's window.

Just then, Helen backs her car (not Callie's car) out of the garage, not seeing Minnie.

As Helen pulls away, Minnie follows.

INT. NOVA/EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

Minnie drives, following Helen. They pass the high school, where cheerleaders and the football team practice. The scoreboard reads, "Welcome back, Wildcats!"

They pass houses with a few pieces of toilet paper still stuck up in the trees.

EXT. SAINT ATHANASIUS CHURCH

Helen parks her car in the full lot and Minnie watches her hurry inside.

INT. SAINT ATHANASIUS CHURCH - DAY

Minnie slips through the door. This is a Greek Orthodox church. It's not hip, it's ancient in its traditions and aesthetic.

Minnie watches Helen take a seat, warmly greeting the WOMAN who'd saved it for her.

A PRIEST stands at the alter. His back is turned to the congregation and he speaks only in Greek.

Minnie listens to the sermon. She tries to understand at first but then gives herself over to making the meaning herself.

CUT TO:

After the service, Minnie watches as Helen talks easily to people who mill about. Minnie realizes Helen has friends.

Minnie sees a row of candles on the side of the church and walks over to them. She lights one.

Helen notices Minnie for the first time. She watches Minnie light the candle, then leave.

EXT. MINNIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Barbara sits on the porch with Kat, Dustin, and the dogs. Dustin runs up to Minnie, and she picks him up.

BARBARA

All set?

MINNIE

Yeah, I'm ready.

Barbara, Dustin, and Minnie load into the car, Minnie driving. Kat waves as they drive down the block and out of sight.

FADE TO BLACK.