

If I Stay  
by  
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Based on the novel If I Stay  
By Gayle Forman

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Black asphalt meets the horizon of a dove grey sky.

All's calm. And then - a PINK DODGE DART flies into view, splitting the horizon like a Pepto-colored comet.

PUNK MUSIC blares from the OPEN CAR WINDOWS. CUT TO:

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

A DELICATE FEMALE HAND raises a BOW to meet the strings of a CELLO, then eases into the first notes of a Beethoven sonata.

A SILVER CELLO CHARM dances off her metal bracelet.

We cut back and forth between the Dodge blasting punk and the refined cello, both pieces of music getting louder and louder until -

The disparate melodies merge into one cacophonous wall of sound as the Dodge disappears behind a curve.

And then SILENCE. Followed by the calm voice of MIA, 18.

MIA (V.O.)  
*There's no one to blame. Except maybe  
the snow...*

The grey sky gets WHITER and WHITER until...

EXT. MIA'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING

A few half-assed SNOWFLAKES fall from the morning sky.

We follow the flurries down a modest street of WEATHERED BUNGALOWS, the kind of houses that always need fixing.

We move up the steps of the HALL HOUSE.

At first-glance, it seems like every other quaint abode, but a closer look reveals -

The porch is painted ACID GREEN and overrun with thrift store lawn furniture. And, instead of potted plants, we find a family of GNOMES PAINTED LIKE THE MEMBERS OF THE SEX PISTOLS.

PUSH IN on the "SID VICIOUS" GNOME, a safety-pin in his cheek, UNION JACK SHIRT, AND SMOKING A BLACK PIPE.

INT. HALL HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

We pull out on the PIPE of DENNY SMITH, 40, as he reads the morning paper while NPR drones quietly from a RESTORED STAND-UP RADIO.

Denny is dapper in his '50's CARDIGAN and RETRO GLASSES, but the MINOR THREAT TATTOO on his forearm is a giveaway to his punk rock youth.

MIA (V.O.)

*That's Dad. Seven years ago, he got his teaching degree and went all Father Knows Best with his wardrobe.*

In stumbles KAT, 39, a vixen in a torn t-shirt and yesterday's eyeliner.

MIA (CONT'D)

*And that's Mom. She didn't.*

Kat plops down and reaches for the FRENCH PRESS COFFEE.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*If you went into a lab and created the perfect mix of two of them, you'd get Teddy.*

PAN to TEDDY, an exuberant seven-year-old sitting next to Kat, wildly drumming on his bowl of oatmeal.

TEDDY

Me too, Mom. I want coffee.

KAT

No way. You don't give crack to someone who's already on speed.

As Teddy continues to drum, a chunk of oatmeal flies off his spoon and lands in Kat's hair.

KAT (CONT'D)

Dude, not while I'm caffeinating.

She gives him a look, then chucks it back. But Teddy ducks and the oatmeal blob sails across the table to...

An oblivious MIA, 18, quietly reading her textbook and listening to CLASSICAL MUSIC on her iPod.

MIA (V.O.)

*And that's me. Mom and Dad swear I'm theirs, but I'm still waiting on the DNA test.*

The oatmeal nails Mia on the forehead.

KAT

It was Teddy! He started it!

Mia laughs, wipes away the oatmeal with a napkin.

MIA

You people are animals.

Mia's a sport, but is more comfortable playing her cello than with her food.

Denny looks up from his paper.

DENNY

Hey, Mia. Faceplant got a mention in the Calendar section.

He slides the newspaper across the table. Mia suddenly perks up. Her anxious eyes search and land on a GRAINY PHOTO OF:

A LANKY BOY in a mid-air split with a guitar - ADAM (20). Even in a still shot, the boy has swagger.

Teddy climbs on the table to get a better look.

TEDDY

Look at him, Mia. Our Adam is famous!

Mia's gaze wanders to a HUGE AD on the facing page for THE BROOKE VEGA CONCERT, featuring a smoldering picture of the rock goddess herself, MS. BROOKE VEGA.

And a line that says - OPENING BAND: FACEPLANT.

DENNY

Are they really opening for her?  
Man, that's huge.

MIA

It could be. If she likes them, she'll take them on the whole tour.  
(then, a little melancholy)  
Even Europe.

DENNY

Ah, fame. Wasted on the young.

Denny stands, gathers the breakfast dishes. Kat glances at the photo of Adam then back to Mia.

KAT

Seems like this is the most we've seen of him since summer. You going tonight?

MIA

(suddenly defensive)

Yeah. Why wouldn't I?

KAT

Nothing, I just thought maybe...

(then, changing the subject)

Ugh. This news crap is putting me back to sleep. Mama needs some real music --

Kat reaches for the radio, but there's a breaking announcement.

RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT

*...further weather advisory on that storm, the Clackamous County School District is now calling for a snow day.*

DENNY

Wait -- turn it up, Babe.

Everyone stops and listens -

NEWS RADIO

*....All Clackamous County schools will be shut down for the day.*

Denny breaks into a slow smile.

DENNY

Well, ain't that a bitch.

Teddy immediately starts singing and dancing.

TEDDY

*Schoooooool's out forevah!*

DENNY

Really? Alice Cooper. Son, you're killing me.

Kat slumps.

KAT

I can't believe this. You're all just gonna play hookey without me?

DENNY

It's not hookey if it's a snow day.

KAT  
So not fair.

TEDDY  
Life isn't fair, Mom.

KAT  
(starting to scheme)  
True. But sometimes you can give it a  
little nudge.  
(starting to coughing)  
It would be terrible to go to work with  
this cough...spreading all my germs...

Kat grabs the PHONE and heads into the other room, past  
Mia still at the table, still lost in the photo of Adam.

MIA (V.O.)  
*The first time I saw Adam...*

INT. BOOK BARN - DAY

FLASHBACK - Mia (16), in all her shy preppy glory,  
clutches a stack of RECORDS.

MIA (V.O.)  
*...was at Bookbarn - this dusty, used  
bookstore that sells classical records  
for twenty-five cents in the back.  
Nobody ever buys them. Except for me.  
Not exactly the kind of thing you want to  
advertise.*

Mia looks up as ADAM (18), already a budding rock god,  
and his posse of COOL BANDMATES walk towards her.

When they pass, Adam glances down at Mia's selection of  
classical records. He raises an eyebrow.

Mia turns and walks into a shelf.

INT. HALL KITCHEN - DAY

Mia breaks from her reveries as Kat dances back into the  
kitchen, twirling the phone with a wicked grin.

KAT  
I'm off the hook.  
(off Denny's look)  
What? Don't judge. I happen to love my  
famby. So, what are we doing today?

TEDDY

Let's make a snow monster!

DENNY

(glancing out the window)

You can make a valiant try, but it's not even sticking yet.

KAT

(getting an idea)

I know! Let's drive out to the farm to see Henry and Willow and the kids. Luna's got to be what -- nine months now? How does that even happen?

TEDDY

Can I climb their Hobbit Tree?

DENNY

Of course.

MIA

Have fun. I have to study.

Mia stands, heads for the hall. Kat furrows her brow.

INT. TINY BATHROOM - DAY

In the one bathroom of the old house, an impromptu gallery of FAMILY PHOTOS covers every inch of the faded pink wallpaper.

Kat sits on the sink, trying some blue nail polish as Mia showers behind molted glass.

KAT

No one studies on a snow day, Mia.  
Not even you.

The water stops. Mia steps out in a towel.

MIA

I have to practice.

KAT

Listen. Before you know it, you'll be off at college getting a bad haircut and racking up credit card debt you'll spend the rest of your life trying to pay off, but for now, you're still my baby, and we should savor any chance we have to hang as a fam -- oh, god. I sound like a Lifetime movie, don't I?

MIA

You're not going tell me you have cancer,  
are you?

KAT

Nope, I check my melons. I'm good to go.

MIA

I'm glad. I'll stay here.

Mia kisses her mom on the cheek then heads down the hall.

KAT

(calling after her)

You can play car DJ. Any muzak you want.

MIA

(over her shoulder)

You're just bribing me.

Denny passes in the hall.

DENNY

Honey, bribes are the glue that's kept  
teenagers and parents connected for  
generations. Don't fight tradition.

Mia sighs.

INT. FAMILY BUICK - DAY

On a cold Pacific Northwest road, a brown hand-me-down  
BUICK drives through a tree-lined road, headed for the  
country.

Classical music plays on the stereo. Everyone sits in  
pained silence. Kat squints, trying to make herself like  
it.

MIA

Nevermind, Dad, just turn it off. I know  
you guys hate it.

KAT

No. It's just...an acquired taste. Like  
stinky cheese.

TEDDY

You have to picture a story because there  
are no words. Like, I think this song's  
about robots.



MIA

Really?

TEDDY

Yeah. It's about a robot named Lance. He's an orphan raised by humans so he thinks he's a human too, but then one day all the robots from space attack all the humans.

The classical piece suddenly gets dark and dramatic.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

And, right here, see this is when Barvo has to battle the other robots to save his human family.

MIA

I thought his name was Lance?

TEDDY

He has two names. A robot name and a human name.

Kat and Denny exchange a look.

DENNY

Mia, you could write this as an opera when you're at Juilliard.

MIA

Dad - shhh - I haven't gotten the letter.

DENNY

Oh right. We'll all just pretend it's a "big mystery".

As Teddy continues, Mia's gaze drifts outside as she traces her finger over the fogged up windows, getting lost in the music.

She catches Denny observing her in the rearview.

MIA (V.O.)

*They would never admit it, but I think my parents secretly regret putting me in music class so early.*

INT. CHILDREN'S ROCK MUSIC CLASS - DAY

A bunch of SEVEN YEAR OLDS get acquainted with rock instruments - guitars, drums, bass, tambourines, etc.

MIA (V.O.)  
*They were probably expecting me to be  
some guitar playing badass like Kim  
Gordon...*

FLASH - AN IMAGE of SONIC YOUTH'S KIM GORDON in her early 90's days. Bass slung low, raw and sexy.

MIA (CONT'D)  
*But instead...*

MIA (7) wanders away from the group and makes a bee line for a DUSTY CELLO slumped in a corner.

She slowly reaches out and plucks one of the cello's chords. A low haunting sound comes out of it.

Mia jumps, scared. Then...plucks it again. And grins.

MIA V.O.  
*I loved how human it seemed. Like you  
could play it. Or crawl inside of it and  
it would take care of you.*

INT. MUSIC CLASS - DAY

A younger DENNY (spiky hair, leather jacket) and a younger KAT (mod mini dress, combat boots) enter as the class disperses.

They stop in their tracks when they see tiny Mia clutching the giant cello...then start laughing.

Mia just stares back at them, blankly.

MIA (V.O.)  
*When they realized I wasn't kidding, they  
found a guy who knew a guy who would  
rent us a cello so I could learn to play.*

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Denny, riding his SKATEBOARD, balances the CELLO across his shoulders.

Kat and Mia ride BIKES on the sidewalk next to him. Mia's helmet has a "No Blood For Oil" sticker on it.

MIA (V.O.)  
*And a girl from the local college to give  
me cheap lessons.*

INT. - HALL HOUSE - DAY

The front door opens. An unassuming ASIAN GIRL (20) is startled to see Denny. He leads her inside.

The living room is an explosion of INDIE CONCERT POSTERS, INSTRUMENT and TOYS.

Kat's collection of CREEPY DOLL HEADS lines the mantel.

Despite the seeming-domestic chaos, Mia is in a chair ready to go with her rented cello.

KAT

OK. Do you guys need anything or...?

MIA

Mom, Su-Chen and I can take it from here.

DENNY

Right, cool. Holler if you need us.

Kat and Denny back away, respectful, but bewildered. Kat whispers as they make their way down the hall.

KAT

Are you sure she's my kid?

DENNY

Are you sure she's mine?

She kicks him in the ass with her boot.

MIA (V.O.)

*So, I practiced and practiced...*

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Kat, Denny and a handful of their PUNK SCENE FRIENDS, including HENRY (20s) and WILLOW (20s), bar-b-que in the summer sun and drink PBRs.

Their fun is eclipsed by the SCREECHING CELLO bleeding through the house's open windows.

HENRY

Man. She's ready for our band.

Denny throws a guacamole-loaded chip at Henry.

KAT  
 (rubbing her temples)  
 I love her, but I'm this close to  
 stabbing my eyes out.

WILLOW  
 Exactly. This is why I could never have  
 kids.

MIA (V.O.)  
*And after three years of torturing them,  
 I was finally ready for my first concert.*

INT. MUSIC RECITAL HALL - BACKSTAGE - DAY

A couple dozen KIDS warm up backstage - a painful aria of  
 screechy violins and clunky fingers on the piano.

MIA (V.O.)  
*Well, sort of. I wasn't a natural  
 performer.*

MIA (10) hides in the folds of the stage curtain, her  
 terrified eyes peeking out. She looks left, then right -  
 then runs out.

EXT. MUSIC RECITAL - DAY

Denny, still wearing his leather jacket, but now with  
 longer hair, wanders around calling out for Mia.

DENNY  
 Mia!..Mia!...

He rounds the corner near a row of bushes and then --

MIA  
 Dad. Psst. Over here.

Denny turns and spots Mia crouched in the bushes.

DENNY  
 Oh. Hey, Lambchop. What's up?

MIA  
 I can't do it. I can't perform.

Denny parks himself on the ground.

DENNY  
 Really?  
 (after a long beat)  
 (MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

Well, that's kind of a shame. We already got you a bitchin' recital present and everything.

MIA

You can give it to someone else.

(beat, then)

Sorry. I'm just not like you guys.

Mia looks up as Kat approaches in a vinyl mini, spider web tights, a NEWBORN TEDDY in a black BABY-BJORN, his hair in natural faux hawk.

MIA (CONT'D)

Even Teddy's cooler than me.

DENNY

Are you kidding? I used to get the most gnarly jitters before a gig.

MIA

You're just saying that.

DENNY

Nope. Could barely hold my drumsticks my hands would shake so much.

MIA

Really? But then, how did you play?

KAT

He got wasted. A couple of forties before every show.

(then)

I don't recommend that for you.

DENNY

Yeah, social services frowns on drunk ten-year-olds. Besides, when I puked on stage, it was punk. I don't know if that goes over so well with the classical music crowd.

Mia laughs. She comes out of the bush, plops down next to him, thinking.

MIA

What if I screw up? What if I'm terrible?

DENNY

I got news for you, Mia. There's gonna be all kinds of terrible on that stage, so you won't really stand out.

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

(beat)

The truth is, there's no cure for the jitters. You just gotta fight through 'em like everybody else. That's what we do. We're musicians.

MIA

(sighs)

I was hoping you'd get me a beer.

Denny stands, musses her hair.

DENNY

You wish. Get in there, Ludwig.

INT. RECITAL HALL - DAY

Onstage, Mia, playing with her eyes closed, plows through her first recital. She's...decent. Not great.

But the second she finishes, Denny, Kat (and baby Teddy) are on their feet cheering, throwing the devil horns.

Other parents - classical music types - just stare.

EXT. RECITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

Denny, Kat and Teddy walk with Mia to their GRUNGY FIRST CAR. Denny opens the back door.

There's a CELLO on the seat with a bow. Mia gasps.

DENNY

And this one's not a rental. This baby's yours.

MIA

I love it!

Mia throws her arms around the cello.

LATER, as their car chugs out of the parking lot blasting the NEW YORK DOLLS, we see Mia riding in the backseat, hugging her new cello. MORPH TO -

INT. BROWN BUICK - DAY

Mia in the back of the car with her family now. Beethoven's now playing, Teddy is wrapping up his story.

TEDDY

...it's more like a robot trilogy.

DENNY

It's Shakespearean, Ted.

MIA (V.O.)

*It's weird how quickly your whole life  
can change.*

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Up ahead, around a bend, an OLD GREEN PICK-UP is driving towards them, unnoticed.

INT. BROWN BUICK - DAY

MIA (V.O.)

*One minute you're riding in the car with  
your family, daydreaming about whether it  
will be weird to see Adam tonight.  
And the next...*

Denny's tires hit a patch of ice and SWERVE towards the other lane. Before there is a even a second to react -

The GREEN Pick-Up is suddenly there and --

The SCREEN GOES WHITE. We don't see it. But we hear it:

SCREECHING TIRES, METAL GRINDING AGAINST METAL and GLASS SHATTERING.

A symphony of someone's whole world being ripped apart.

And then nothing...

But the soft, aching sounds of BEETHOVEN STILL PLAYING ON THE RADIO...in the cold outdoor air.

MIA'S POV - her eyes slowly flutter open, looking up at the web of tree branches overhead.

After a moment, Mia sits up on the side of the road, confused, shaken.

She looks down - not a scratch on her. She dusts herself off, then turns back to the road.

MIA (CONT'D)

Mom! Dad!  
(beat)  
Teddy?!

Nothing. Just Beethoven on the radio.

It's starting to snow again. Everything's foggy.

And then Mia spots SOMETHING MOVING on the other side of the road. She runs over.

As she gets closer...she sees it's a BLOODY HAND moving, a hand with a little CELLO CHARM BRACELET.  
It's HER hand.

Mia, untouched, is now standing over her own body, which lies twisted in a ditch, her hair covering her face.

DARK RED BLOOD starts to ooze through her sweater onto the fresh white snow. Mia jumps back.

MIA (CONT'D)

Oh shit.

She takes a deep breath, then exhales in the cold air.

MIA (CONT'D)

I can't see my breath.

She spins around, getting scared.

MIA (CONT'D)

MOM! DAD! ANYBODY! TEDDY!

The distant wail of SIRENS interrupt her thoughts.  
RED SPINNING LIGHTS are fast approaching. CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - DAY

AMBULANCE DOORS burst open and TWO PARAMEDICS JUMP OUT.

Mia has to dart out of the way as A MALE and FEMALE EMT go to work on her unconscious body.

They get busy sticking IVs in her arm. Mia looks away as they stick a tube in her chest.

They don't seem to notice the other Mia watching.



FEMALE EMT  
(working on the body)  
Her Glasgow coma is at eight. Let's bag  
her now!

The Female EMT pulls out an inflatable bag with a balloon  
and starts pumping by hand.

FEMALE EMT (CONT'D)  
(calling out)  
Cedar Creek's not equipped. We need to  
get her Portland. What's the ETA for  
Life Flight?

MALE EMT  
Um...Twenty minutes.

FEMALE EMT  
No. We need to get her there in fifteen.  
Tell Portland to be ready.

They jump up with Mia's body on the gurney and rush  
towards the Ambulance. MIA, not knowing what to do, runs  
along with them.

We get peripheral passing glimpses of OTHER AMBULANCES  
and EMTs on the scene. Mia overhears one calling in to  
dispatch.

OTHER PARAMEDIC  
...one female, late teens, critical,  
enroute to Portland now. One seven year  
old male - conscious. A thirty-something  
Male...

Mia's paramedics load her body and climb into the  
ambulance. And just as the doors are about to shut, Mia  
jumps into the ambulance with them.

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

The female paramedic looks down at Mia's lifeless body,  
still hand-pumping the air bag and barking at the driver.

FEMALE EMT  
C'mon, Dimitri! You drive this thing  
like it's a golf cart. Let's go!

MALE EMT  
It doesn't do her any good if we get in a  
wreck on the way.

FEMALE EMT

And it doesn't do her any good if she's  
dead before we get there.

Sirens wail as the ambulance speeds away from the scene.  
The siren's wail slowly MORPHS into the sound of a cello.

MIA (V.O.)

*I have plans to meet Adam in Portland  
tonight. I doubt this is how he expects  
me to arrive.*

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - SOUND PROOF REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

Mia (16) practices her cello in a solo rehearsal room.  
She's definitely gotten better over the years. CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DIFFERENT REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

In a different solo rehearsal room, Adam (18) practices  
guitar. He's not bad either.

PULL OUT to the HALL to reveal the practice rooms are  
side by side, Adam and Mia both attacking their  
respective instruments, oblivious to one another.

MIA (V.O.)

*It was the fall of my Sophomore year.  
Adam's senior year. We both spent a lot  
of time in the music wing.*

A SCHOOL BELL rings. They both stop playing.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

Mia puts her CELLO away, gathers her books. She glances  
through the glass door as Adam steps out of his booth.

He is met by his POSSE of MUSIC FRIENDS.

Including LIZ (18), a smoldering teenage Helen-of-Troy in  
black skinny jeans. She throws her arm around Adam.

Adam laughs with his friends as he walks away. He  
glances back at Mia who steps out of her booth.

VOICE (O.S.)

Just ignore them.

Mia's best friend KIM (16), a wry, take-no-shit yearbook  
nerd, wanders up.

MIA

Like I'm not supposed to know they're  
mocking me? It's just so...rude.

Kim and Mia start walking as Adam and his friends are  
several paces ahead.

KIM

(watching Adam)

Whatever. Nobody cares about your stupid  
little band or your stupid little club  
shows.

MIA

Or your cooler-than-thou friends.

KIM

Or your vintage T-shirts with whatever  
obscure band on the front.

MIA

Seriously.

Adam and his posse turn off down another hallway.

KIM

You know, Mia, there are two kinds of  
girls. Those who have boyfriends in high  
school...

They pass AN AMOROUS COUPLE MAKING OUT by a stairwell.

KIM (CONT'D)

...and those who have boyfriends in  
college. Good ones. That's us.

They pass ANOTHER COUPLE with their hands in each others'  
back pockets.

MIA

One can hope.

KIM

So, did you finish the Trig homework?

MIA

Yeah, but number four was brutal --

Mia stops. Shocked to see Adam leaned against her  
locker.

MIA (CONT'D)

-- What is he doing at my locker?

KIM  
I'm going to assume he's lost.

ADAM  
(smiles)  
I'm not lost.

Mia swallows. Awkwardly whispers to Kim.

MIA  
Um, Kim? I'll...catch up.

Kim reluctantly heads to the cafeteria.

KIM  
(a firm whisper to Mia)  
Two kinds of girls, Mia...

Kim glares at Adam as she exits. Adam smiles at Mia.

ADAM  
You're Mia, right? Hey. I'm Adam.

MIA  
I know.  
(then, looking around)  
Is this some kind of prank? One of those  
talk-to-the-weird-girl things --

ADAM  
-- What? No. Why would I do that?

MIA  
Because. You and your friends make fun  
of me. I see you guys, always laughing  
and --

ADAM  
"Laughing" - that's your evidence against  
me? Pretty weak.

Mia suddenly feels like an idiot. Maybe she's wrong.

MIA  
Sorry. I just...I thought...

ADAM  
So, do you know who this Yo-Yo Ma guy is?

MIA  
Of course. He's the greatest cellist  
alive.

ADAM

Yeah, but what's with the name? Is that short for like "Yo Mama" or --

MIA

-- It's Chinese. Don't mock The Master.

ADAM

I would dare. But what would you say if I said I had tickets to see "The Master?"

MIA

How did you even get them? They're like 80 bucks a piece.

ADAM

A friend of the family gave them to my mom, but she can't go. I thought you might want to.

MIA

You're...asking me out?

ADAM

Try not to look so shocked.

Mia's flattered, but still unsure. She gives him a look.

MIA

I'm not some novelty, y'know.

ADAM

Neither am I. See you at seven.

Adam pushes off her locker and heads down the hall.

A tiny smile starts to break out on Mia's face. She quickly recomposes herself as Kim walks up.

KIM

OK, what was that about?

MIA

Nothing. He just had a Trig question.

KIM

Liar.

INT. MIA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Teddy is flopped on Mia's bed, cracking himself up reading old Calvin and Hobbes books.

Kat leans in the doorway casually eating a yogurt as Mia nervously sorts through her clothes, hating everything.

KAT

He's just a guy, Mia.

MIA

I know. But he's the first one I've ever been on a maybe-date with. I don't know if I'm supposed to wear date-clothes or hanging-with-friends-clothes.

KAT

Just wear something you're comfy in.  
That way you're covered.

The doorbell RINGS. Mia goes white.

MIA

I think I'm gonna puke.

KAT

(holding up a trash can)  
Better before the date, than on the date.

INT. HALL HOUSE - EVENING

Denny opens the door to find an equally nervous Adam in a FULL SUIT. Skinny black tie.

DENNY

Nice threads. Come on in.

Adam enters. Denny shakes his hand.

DENNY (CONT'D)

I'm the old man. Denny Hall.

ADAM

I know. You were in Witness Protection, right?

DENNY

(a little surprised)  
I was. A hundred years ago.

FLASHBACK - INT. PORTLAND CLUB - NIGHT

1994. Shirtless and sporting a BLUE MOHAWK, a 24 YEAR OLD DENNY bangs the shit out of some drums with his band, WITNESS PROTECTION.

In the audience, a 23 YEAR OLD KAT with PURPLE HAIR and a HELLO KITTY BARRETTE holds a sleeping, TWO-YEAR-OLD Mia with AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL HEADPHONES on her delicate ears.

A SWEATY DUDE flies out of the moshpit, a little too close to Kat and Mia. Not missing a beat, Kat boot-kicks his fat ass back into the pit.

MOSH PIT OAF  
(yelling back at Kat)  
YOU BITCH!

KAT  
THANK YOU! THAT'S JUST ANOTHER WORD FOR  
FEMINIST!

Kat smiles up at Denny who continues to obliterate the drums onstage. Cut back to:

INT. HALL LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Adam tries to make sense of MUSICIAN-DENNY with DAD-DENNY standing before him.

ADAM  
So...like, what happened to you guys?

DENNY  
(a wry smile)  
We fought the man and the man won.  
(then)  
I still play. When I get the itch.

ADAM  
Cool. I have a couple of your CDs.

DENNY  
Well. Bless your heart. They make lovely coasters.

Mia appears. She and Adam share a nervous smile. Then -

MIA  
-- We should go.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - EVENING

Kat, Denny and Teddy wave from the front porch as Adam and Mia pull away in his car.

DENNY

Be careful. I hear the mosh pit at the last Yo-Yo Ma show was insane.

KAT

Have fun! Don't get pregnant!

Adam laughs. Mia's mortified.

ADAM

Man. Your parents are so cool.

MIA

I know. They're cooler than me.

INT. ARLENE SCHNITZER HALL - NIGHT

A historic theatre in downtown Portland. A MIDDLE AGED & UP crowd fills the lobby. Adam and Mia stand there a little awkward.

ADAM

Wow. The scene is very...

MIA

"Early Bird Special?"

Adam laughs and nods. The HOUSE LIGHTS start to blink.

INT. ARLENE SHCNITZER HALL - BALCONY - NIGHT

They settle into their seats, far from the stage.

ADAM

Sorry. They're kind of nosebleeds.

MIA

It's OK. You don't come to Yo-Yo Ma for the view.

LATER, AS THEY LISTEN TO THE PERFORMANCE, Adam shifts awkwardly in his seat.

He looks around. Notices Mia's eyes are closed, already getting into it. Adam closes his eyes, trying to get into it. He can't.

LATER, as the music swells and gets more dramatic, Adam's face starts to change. He's starting to appreciate it.

He reaches for Mia's hand.



ADAM  
Whoa. Your hand's freezing.

Adam blows on Mia's hand, warming it up.

Mia looks down at their entwined fingers in the dark.  
She leans over and whispers.

MIA  
You have calluses.

ADAM  
So do you.

EXT. HALL STREET/ HOUSE - NIGHT

Mia stands with Adam by his car. She's nervous.

MIA  
Um, well, thanks. I should go in.

Mia turns and runs off. Adam stands there, not sure if she's blowing him off or what.

After a few steps, Mia suddenly turns back.

MIA (CONT'D)  
Adam? Um, why me? Why did you ask me out?

ADAM  
(shrugs)  
I dunno...music is my life, but I've never seen anyone get so into it like you. It's why I like to watch you practice. You get the cutest little crease in your forehead.

MIA  
You watch my forehead when I practice?

ADAM  
Sometimes. All the time.

MIA  
Oh. Well, I like your suit.

ADAM  
Thanks for noticing.

And, in a burst of exuberance, Mia runs back to him, lightly kisses Adam's cheek, then runs back towards her house.

Adam watches her go, then calls out -

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Hey. And for the record, it took me  
three weeks of pizza delivery tips to  
save up for those tickets.

MIA  
(smiles to herself)  
Totally worth it.

INT. HALL HOUSE - NIGHT

Kat and Denny jump from the window trying to look casual  
as Mia enters. Teddy's little pajama-clad feet sprint  
out of the room - all of them obviously spying.

MIA  
Subtle. You guys should join the C.I.A.

KAT  
But wait. How was it?

MIA  
Total disaster.

And as soon as she's out of her parents' sight, Mia makes  
a giddy little jump. CUT TO:

EXT. PORTLAND HOSPITAL - DAY

The EMTs jump out of the Ambulance.

INT. ER TRAUMA UNIT - DAY

The scene is chaos. Mia runs behind the EMTs rushing her  
body past the ER, straight to the TRAUMA UNIT where a  
TEAM of DOCTORS and NURSES is already waiting.

EMT  
Collapsed lung, broken ribs - looks like  
three - abrasions on the legs, face.  
Brain contusions, full extent unknown.  
And an internal bleed --

They take over, swarming Mia's body like locusts with  
IVs, ultrasounds, x-ray and cat scan.

A CURTAIN is quickly drawn.

Mia, now outside the curtain, is not sure where to stand or sit. She sees a NURSES' STATION. And approaches.

MIA

Excuse me? How does my family know I'm here? We left them behind. Are they at another hospital? How do they even --

The NURSES ignore her. And now it really sinks in.

MIA (CONT'D)

(scared, to herself)

-- OK, I may not be dead. But I'm definitely not with the living.

DOCTOR (O.S.)

Ruptured spleen! We need to move!

The curtain FLIES back open and the trauma team is on the move with Mia's body again.

Mia, already out of breath, chases them.

MIA

Jeez. It's like I'm the baton in some really twisted, relay race.

The SURGEON looks down at her body as they go.

DOCTOR

If she wants to stay, now would be the time to start swinging.

Mia just looks at him, incredulous.

MIA

Excuse me? Like I have a choice?

They rush past THREE RESIDENTS talking in the hall.

TRAUMA NURSE

Ruptured spleen.

Their eyes light up.

RESIDENT DOCTOR

Awesome. I'm scrubbing in!

OTHER RESIDENT

I haven't seen one of those yet. Do we get to take it out?

DOCTOR

If you're lucky.

They keep going, past a waiting room. Mia's gaze falls on a YOUNG COUPLE who sit holding hands and watching TV.

MIA (V.O.)

*I know it was fast, but I think Adam and I were falling for each other that first night. In books and movies, that's where the story always ends, the happily-ever after is just assumed.*

*(beat)*

*But in real life, it can be much harder.*

EXT. PORTLAND DIVE CLUB - NIGHT

Adam, carrying his guitar, walks up with Mia to the back entrance of a thumping hole-in-the-wall joint.

Mia looks out of place in her plain denim skirt with the hip scenesters.

Liz unloads HER GUITAR and AMP from her PINK DODGE DART. The other, older bandmates, SCOTTY and JO, carry in their DRUMS, etc.

Liz nuzzles up to Adam the minute she sees him.

LIZ

Adam! Biscuit! Mmm, you smell yummy.

ADAM

Thanks, I bathed. Liz, this is Mia.

MIA

Um, hi.

LIZ

*(not sure what to say)*

Hey. Uh, welcome to our world.

CUT TO:

INT. PORTLAND CLUB - NIGHT

Faceplant plays, tearing up the place. It's LOUD.

Mia watches Adam from the wings, surrounded by people getting into it, singing along, knowing every lyric.

A GUY spills his BEER all over Mia as he dances.

GUY  
SO GREAT, RIGHT! THEY'RE TOTALLY GONNA  
GET SIGNED! WHOO!

Mia watches Liz playing back to back guitar with Adam.  
They have amazing chemistry.

BACKSTAGE - LATER

In a graffitied GREEN ROOM, a few bottled waters, an  
empty BEER CAN and a piece of cheese float in a tub of  
melting ice.

Liz chats with her friend with PINK HAIR, ASTRID.

The air is thick with conversations about music.

As Adam changes out of his sweaty T-shirt, Liz reaches  
out and grabs his nipple. They all laugh.

LIZ  
You know you love it, you fame whore.

Mia finds herself backed out of the circle, sitting alone  
on a JANKY OLD COUCH. Scotty plops down next to her.

SCOTTY  
So what bands are you into?

MIA  
I'm sorry. My ears are still ringing.

SCOTTY  
Oh, cool. Are they Swedish?

Mia just nods. She watches PEOPLE take turns talking to  
Adam. After a beat, she stands and walks out.

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT

Mia exits, standing alone among various groups of  
friends, all freely having fun, talking music.

Adam walks up.

ADAM  
What's the matter? Don't you like me  
anymore?

MIA  
I just don't want to keep you from  
basking in it. Go. Bask.

ADAM

OK. Scale of one to ten - how miserable is this?

MIA

Six-ish. It's so weird. You have fans.

ADAM

Ouch, really? A six?

Mia shrugs. There is a long awkward beat.

MIA

Why don't you date Liz? She's stunning and you guys clearly have a lot in common.

ADAM

That's true. One thing Liz and I have in common is we both like girls.

(beat, then)

She and Astrid are together.

MIA

Oh. The one with the pink hair?

(Adam nods)

Wow. Lucky girl.

(beat, then)

I'm sorry. This just isn't my scene.

He takes her hand, blows on it to warm it up.

ADAM

I get that. But maybe you could try? There's an after-party at Darren's and --

Mia pulls her hand back.

MIA

-- Thanks, but I have, um, my curfew.

Adam sighs. *That's cool.*

EXT. HALL HOUSE PORCH - NIGHT

Adam drops Mia off as a trio of drunk band members/friends yell out from his parked car window.

SCOTTY

Do it! Kiss the Amish girl!

JO

Yeah! Rumspringa!

ADAM  
(an embarrassed laugh)  
They're not really pigs, they're just  
drunk.

MIA  
They're drunk pigs.

ADAM  
You sure you don't want to come out?

KAT  
(through the door)  
Oh c'mon, Mia, just go!

MIA  
MOM!?

DENNY  
(through the door)  
Kat, get away from the window.

ADAM  
Wait. Your parents are trying to get you  
to stay out and you are choosing to go  
home? Of your own free will?

MIA  
I'm just getting sick is all.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Actually, I was dying to hang out with  
Adam. I would have sat in a corner just  
to watch him tie his shoe. But I felt  
boring around those people. It was  
better to let him think I was uptight,  
than figure out I was boring.*

ADAM  
OK, Mia, have a good one.

Adam turns, jumps off the porch. Kat opens the door -

KAT  
Adam?

MIA  
Mom. Get in the house!

He turns back. Mia hangs her head, mortified.

KAT

We always have Stragglers Dinners on Sundays. Y'know, for whoever happens to drop by. You're welcome to crash.

ADAM

OK, thanks, maybe I'll check it out.

Adam smiles and heads back in the car with his screaming friends. Mia turns to her mother, incredulous.

MIA

That was so wrong on so many levels.

Mia storms off to her room. Denny intercepts Kat trying to follow. He gives her a *you crossed the line* look.

KAT

What?! He's obviously smitten with her and she's tanking with her crazy insecurity. We can't let her bomb, Den.

DENNY

They'll figure it out. We sure did.

KAT

Yeah, because I didn't act like a crazy insecure girl.

DENNY

No, you acted like a crazy stalker girl.

KAT

It worked, didn't it?

(then)

Ugh. I just wish she'd realize how amazing she is. Why doesn't she know?

All of a sudden, the sounds of Mia in her room playing cello echoes through the house.

Denny and Kat suddenly stop.

DENNY

Is that...that's not a CD, right?

KAT

No, it's her. She's kinda kicking ass, huh?

DENNY

That's an understatement. When did she get this good?



KAT

I don't know. I guess she's just fueled  
by her newfound, sexual frustration.

DENNY

(winces)

Thanks for ruining it.

KAT

(then, seductive)

C'mere. I'll make it up to you.

Kat playfully pushes him on the couch. Mia's Cello  
swells and merges with a LARGER CLASSICAL PIECE...

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

That plays from a little BOSE STEREO as the trauma team  
operates on Mia's body.

Over a dozen doctors and nurses wedged in around her body  
under the hot lights.

MIA (V.O.)

*It's nothing like TV, where the floors  
are clean and the doctors share witty  
banter over a comatose patient.*

The scene is surreal, like a war zone. Blood is  
everywhere.

TWO SURGEONS work in unison, both wearing CLEAR PLASTIC  
FACE SHIELDS that get splattered with blood as they slice  
and suck.

The floor is disgusting. Piles of BLOOD-SOAKED GAUZE and  
TRASH, wrappers from needles and tubes. Even the team's  
smocks are covered in Mia's blood.

A nurse replaces a surgeon's sweat-soaked BLUE MASK,  
slipping a clean one on him. They're going to be here a  
while.

SURGEON

Call down to the blood bank. I need two  
units of O-Neg. And keep two ahead.

Mia looks on in horror from outside the circle as they  
work her body like a piece of meat.

MIA

(shuddering)

Hey, watch it.

Mia leans against a counter. She notices some laid out MEDICAL UTENSILS. She slowly pushes one off the counter. It falls, CLATTERS LOUDLY on the floor.

Nobody looks up. Nobody saw it. To them, Mia is not there. The utensil is back on the counter.

Frustrated, Mia takes a WHOLE TRAY and flips it off the counter, a CACOPHONY OF NOISE ripping through the place.

Again, the team keeps working. The classical music keeps playing.

Mia looks lost, confused.

MIA (CONT'D)

I can't watch this. I need to get out of here. I wonder if...

She turns and tries to walk through A WALL. She bounces off and falls.

MIA (CONT'D)

Ow!

She stands as a nurse walks through the operating door with a BAG FULL OF BLOOD.

Mia brushes past the oblivious nurse and the bag blood and runs out the swinging door.

INT. HALL HOUSE - DAY

Kat opens the front door to find Adam on the porch. He stands with Willow, who is now pregnant and wearing hospital scrubs.

WILLOW

I found this loitering outside. Is he yours?

KAT

Of course. Come on in, Adam.  
(calling over her shoulder)

MIA!

(beat)

She's in the kitchen.

WILLOW

Perfect. I'll take you to her.  
I just worked a double and I need to feast.

Willow waddles in with Adam and Kat towards the kitchen.

The house overflows with a motley crew of old bandmates, new teacher colleagues, a few kids.

INT. HALL KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Mia looks up from setting up the TAKE-OUT buffet. She flushes when she sees Adam.

ADAM

Hey. I hope it's cool I came.

MIA

Yeah. No, it's cool.

Outside the KITCHEN WINDOW, a game of pick-up basketball by aging Punk Dudes is starting on the DRIVE WAY.

Denny pokes his head in.

DENNY

Hey, Adam. You play?

ADAM

I'm no LeBron, but I get the basic concepts.

DENNY

Mia? Can we borrow him?

Mia gives Adam a look - *go ahead, if you want.* Cut to:

LATER

Mia, Kat and Willow, who is stuffing her pregnant face, watch from the game from the window.

Despite Adam's modesty, he and Denny set each other up for some sweet shots. The whole game seems to turn into the Denny and Adam show.

WILLOW

(whispering to Mia)

Well, if it doesn't work out with you guys, maybe your old man can date him.

Adam grabs Teddy from the sideline and hold him over the basket for a dunk. Teddy LOVES it. Mia smiles.

Back on defense, Adam goes to block a pass, and as he catches it, he suddenly winces, gripping his hand.

ADAM

Ow. Fuuuuuu -  
(remembering kids are there)  
-uhaaax Machine. A bee just stung me!

Denny rushes over, looks at Adam's hand.

DENNY

Hey, man, don't move. I have a trick.

Denny proceeds to SUCK the stinger out of Adam's palm.  
Mia looks mortified. But -

DENNY (CONT'D)

Got it.

ADAM

Wow. You did. Impressive.

Everyone laughs and applauds. Kat calls out through the window.

KAT

And on that note, maybe we should nosh  
before Willow eats everything.

EXT. HALL HOUSE/ BACK YARD - EVENING

As everyone heads inside, Mia goes outside to Adam.

MIA

I'm so sorry. Do you feel violated?  
Was that just totally weird?

ADAM

Hm. I guess the only weird thing is,  
I've been hanging out with you - or at  
least trying to - for a couple of weeks  
now, and as of this moment, I've been  
more intimate with your dad than I have  
with you.

He gives Mia a look.

MIA

Well, then maybe we should fix that.

ADAM

(moving closer to her)  
Yeah, I think we should.

MIA  
 (even closer)  
 Hm. I wonder what we could do.

And just as they finally get to kiss --

TEDDY (O.S.)  
 -- Adam! There you are.

Mia and Adam quickly break apart.

TEDDY (CONT'D)  
 C'mon. You're sitting next to me.

Adam smiles as Teddy drags him in the house. As Mia follows behind them, we CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

Mia walking down a hospital corridor. She stops at a waiting room, watching a FAMILY receiving the good news from A HANDSOME DOCTOR.

DOCTOR  
 It's a minor concussion. You'll still need to wake him up every three hours, but he can go home. Come with me.

RELIEVED WIFE  
 Oh, thank God.

They happily follow the doctor out of the room revealing TWO OLD PEOPLE, sitting quietly on chairs. Mia gasps.

MIA  
 Gran? Gramps?!

GRAN - in a dirt-stained Gardening Smock and Wellies. And a fresh coat of coral lipstick.

And GRAMPS - a tough old cob in a flannel shirt and muddy work boots.

Whatever they were doing when they got the call - they dropped it and ran. Mia runs over, sits next to them.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 You guys, don't look so sad.  
 (beat)  
 Did you go to the other hospital? Did they take Mom and Dad there? They went with Teddy and sent you to be here with me?

Of course they can't hear her. Mia's eyes wander to Gran's ANGEL KEY CHAIN. Her ANGEL NECKLACE.

MIA (V.O (CONT'D))  
*Gran thinks angels are everywhere.*  
 (looking around)  
*I'm not so sure.*

A woman in a beige sweater and Birkenstocks, LIDDY (40s) - the epitome of the overworked, underpaid hospital worker - approaches Gran, Gramps. She is calm, but distant.

LIDDY  
 Hi, Mr. and Mrs. Hall? I'm Liddy Davis, the social worker handling Mia's case. She's...been through a lot and they expect to wrap up surgery soon. But she is in grave condition.

MIA  
 Grave sounds bad. Grave sounds like what they put you in if things don't work out.

GRAN  
 She's going to Juilliard, you know. It was my idea.

MIA  
 Gran! Now? Really? --

GRAN  
 -- Oh, she hates when I talk about it, but when you know you know.

LIDDY  
 (a small smile, then)  
 Do you have anyone to call? Relatives who might want to be here? The stronger you can be, the more it will help Mia.

MIA  
 Adam! Call Adam.  
 (then)  
 Crap, like they'd even know how. Who gives their Gran their boyfriend's cell phone number?  
 (thinking, then)  
 Kim! Call Kim!

Gran and Gramps just share a tired look.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*I was afraid to tell Kim about Adam. We  
had a pact - we were the girls who  
weren't going to date until college.  
And now that was changing.*

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

Mia works on her laptop. Kim edits YEARBOOK PHOTOS on her computer, while sucking down a giant FRAPPUCCINO.

KIM  
(talking to her work)  
OK, Hilary Weaver, I'm erasing your  
double chin in this photo, because even  
though you've been kind of a bitch to me  
in Latin, I am the bigger, better person -

MIA  
-- Kim, I need to tell you something.

KIM  
(not looking up)  
Something about having a boyfriend?

MIA  
Maybe. How'd you know?

KIM  
Please. It's the hottest gossip since  
Jen Farrow dropped out to have her baby.  
Anyway, I knew before you did.

MIA  
Shut up.

KIM  
Come on. A guy like Adam going to see  
Yo-Yo Ma? He was buttering you up.

MIA  
(beat, then)  
I was afraid you'd be pissed at me.

KIM  
Why would I be pissed? My bestie's  
finally gettin' some. If it can't be me,  
it might as well be you. You are gettin'  
some, right?

MIA  
Um...working on it.

KIM

Fine, take it slow. Whatever. Just promise me you won't turn into one of those "We" couples.

(beat)

Y'know - "We love the winter, we think The Smiths are a seminal band..."

Kim makes a gagging sound. Mia smiles.

MIA

Oh no. We've already decided we won't do that.

KIM

Seriously, if you turn into one of those girls, I will shoot you.

MIA

If I turn into one of those girls, I'll give you the gun.

KIM

Deal. So, have you been to one of his "shows" yet?

MIA

Once. Hopefully I won't have to go again.

KIM

Yeah, well. Good luck with that.

CLOSE ON a WAITRESS walking by with TWO CUPS OF COFFEE.  
CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

COFFEE being handed to Gran and Gramps in the waiting room by Mia's Aunt Suze (40s), a bundle of nervous energy in her business suit.

SUZE

Here. A decaf and a regular. Anything yet?

GRAMPS

She's grave.

GRAN

She's still in surgery.



MIA

Wow. I can't believe you guys called Aunt Suze.

SUZE

You talk Willow?

GRAN

She's with Teddy at Cedar Creek. We just need to get Mia through first.

MIA

That's good. That's good. Willow's the next best thing to mom.

There is a long, painful beat in the waiting room, then.

SUZE

Mom, you wanna change? I brought you a sweater.

Suze hands Gran a PAPER BAG. Gran just nods and sets it in her lap, clutching it. Rubs her eyes.

GRAN

Did you talk to the twins?

SUZE

They're at the Gunderson's. Brady's picking them up after work and bringing them over.

GRAN

Oh Suze, you really shouldn't go through all the trouble.

SUZE

Mom, it's no trouble.

Mia observes Gramps as he covertly pours his coffee into a nearby plant. Then starts tearing apart his styrofoam cup piece by piece. Just letting them drop to the ground - like snow. They MORPH TO:

EXT/ INT. HALL HOUSE -DAY

Falling leaves in October.

A week from Halloween and spiderwebs and skulls decorate the Hall house with the kind of gusto most folks reserve for Christmas.

Mia opens the front door to find Adam holding a PIZZA.  
Teddy immediately grabs the pizza and runs off with it.

ADAM  
Yo. Where's my tip?

MIA  
I've got your tip.

Adam smiles, then holds up a GARMENT BAG.

ADAM  
Prepare to writhe with envy. I just got  
the best Halloween costume.

He unzips it, giving her a quick peak - a FRILLY SHIRT.

MIA  
You're going as Puffy Shirt Seinfeld?

ADAM  
Try Mozart. And I will be wearing a wig  
and tights. I'm very secure in my  
manhood.

MIA  
Wow. You must have big plans.

ADAM  
We do. It's our first Halloween  
together. And the band has a huge show,  
which you can't back out of because you  
already promised you'd go.

MIA  
(suddenly pained)  
Did I? Well, I also promised Teddy I'd  
take him trick-or-treating. He's --

ADAM  
-- Going as a devil, I know. We already  
discussed his costume at length. He was  
afraid people might laugh because his  
devil suit is just red feetie pajamas.  
But I told him that PJs, plus pitchfork,  
plus devil ears and pointy tail is so  
fully Satanic, no one will challenge him.

Adam fist-bumps Teddy who has wandered back with a piece  
of pizza dangling from his mouth. Adam smiles.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
We're taking Beezlebub out at five and  
the band doesn't go on until ten.  
(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

(beat)

So you better bring it because I'm going  
to look hot in an 18th Century kind of  
way.

Adam turns, jumps off the porch, heads to the street  
where his car sits, FLASHERS ON with a PIZZA DELIVERY  
SIGN strapped the roof.

Mia stands at the door watching. Teddy looks up at her.

TEDDY

How come you don't want to see his band?

MIA

Because. I'm...an idiot.

CUT TO:

INT. MIA'S ROOM - LATER

Mia is distracted, rehearsing her cello. She stops --  
thinking.

Her gaze falls on a WEDDING PHOTO of her mom and dad on  
her dresser. The bride wore black, the groom wore  
leather. Mia gets up.

INT. HALL HOUSE - EVENING

Kat tries to sew a DEVIL TAIL onto TEDDY'S COSTUME, but  
can't thread the bobbin on the OLD SEWING MACHINE.

KAT

Stupid piece of...argh!...

She beats the crap out the machine as Mia enters.

MIA

Mom. I need your help.

KAT

I can't promise results, but I will try.  
Lay it on me like a wet rag.

MIA

OK. I need to know who the all time  
coolest rock chick is.

KAT

(looks up)

Oh. That's one I can actually answer.

(then)

(MORE)

KAT (CONT'D)

Actually, it's kind of a Sophie's choice. I mean, you've got Debbie Harry, Joan Jett, Siouxsie Sioux, Poly Styrene and of course, the Kims: Gordon and Deal. And that little Yeah Yeah Yeah's chick has been bringing it --

MIA

-- Well, whoever's the coolest, that's who I need to be for Halloween.

KAT

(suddenly touched)

Oh, Honey, you don't know how I've waited for this.

(beat)

You can finally borrow my clothes!

CUE COOL MONTAGE MUSIC -

MIA'S HALLOWEEN MAKE-OVER:

Kat fights her way out of an overstuffed closet, dragging GARBAGE BAGS and BOXES.

Kat, Mia and Teddy empty the bags onto her bed, sorting through TIE-DYED VINTAGE SLIPS, COMBAT BOOTS, VINYL MINI DRESSES and god-knows-what-else...

Kat throws pieces at Mia to try on.

She even slips on a few memory-lane outfits herself.

Even Teddy struts around in so many HEAVILY STUDDER BELTS he falls over.

Kat tilts her head, examining Mia in a mod mini-dress.

KAT

Hm. I'm thinking a pastiche of looks might be the better way to go.

(then)

Don't move.

Kat leaps off the bed, darts back to her closet and emerges with a banged-up BOX.

She reverentially takes off the lid --

KAT (CONT'D)

This is the closest you'll ever get to a family heirloom.

And pulls out a perfectly, threadbare VELVET UNDERGROUND T-SHIRT. She holds it up to Mia.

KAT (CONT'D)

Perfect.

She then dives back into mountain of clothes. A pair of SNAKE SKIN PRINT LEGGINGS fly out. Some SILVER DOC MARTENS.

A PLATINUM WIG gets painted with COBALT MANIC PANIC STREAKS.

MIA'S FINGER NAILS get colored with a BLACK SHARPIE MARKER. So do TEDDY's.

Some D.I.Y. SAFETY-PIN JEWELRY goes on.

Kat, now in another outfit, does MIA'S MAKE-UP.

Mia looks down examining the Velvet Underground T-shirt.

MIA

I can't believe your parents never gave you anything else.

KAT

Oh, they gave me plenty. Like, mostly, a big fat lesson on how not to be a parent.

Mia suddenly feels bad for her mom. They all know - but don't discuss - Kat's painful childhood.

MIA

Sorry, Mom. Sorry I brought it up.

KAT

It's not your fault. So they sucked, so what?

(then, refusing to dwell)

The way I see it, you get two cracks at the whole parent-child thing. My first one bit, but the second one's been a beaut. I have zero complaints.

(beat)

Now, do not take that shirt off lest someone grab it and try to sell it on ebay. Oh, and you'll need this.

Kat holds out a small, stick-on NOSE RING. Then steps back, admiring her work.

KAT (CONT'D)

I am a genius.

INT. HALL HOUSE - EVENING

Adam in his Mozart Costume, set off by a pair of RAY-BANS, hangs with Teddy in his Devil Costume (with hastily sewn-on tail) and Denny.

Kat walks in with Mia. The boys gasp - Mia looks killer.

ADAM

Whoa. I wasn't sure you had it in you.

KAT

Are you kidding? Check the family tree.

TEDDY

Wow, Mia, you look sexy.

MIA

Teddy! You don't even know what that means.

TEDDY

I know what it means.

(beat)

Now let's rock this.

As they head for the door, Denny pulls Adam aside and whispers.

DENNY

If any dude looks at her, punch him.

Adam nods, getting the protective message.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK - EVENING

As they trick-or-treat, Adam plays candy-swap with Teddy, clearly tilting the trade to Teddy's favor.

ADAM

OK, Lucifer, I'll trade you my Twix for your candy corn.

TEDDY

Deal. Candy Corn is gross.

(then)

Why can't I go see your band tonight?

ADAM

Sorry, man, it's not an all ages gig.

MIA

You can listen to the CD at home.

TEDDY  
I know, but Faceplant's known for their  
live shows.

Adam and Mia try not to laugh. Mia reaches out and grabs  
Adam's hand. MORPH TO:

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

CLOSE on Adam and Mia holding hands as they enter the  
club. The place is packed with everyone in costume.

ADAM  
I gotta go set up. You cool for a few?

Mia hesitates, then shoves him away.

MIA  
I'm fine. Go. Get out of here.

ADAM  
Is that you or the costume talking?

MIA  
What costume?

Adam exits. Mia smiles. Liz's girlfriend, Astrid,  
dressed as a PINK HAIRE D FLAPPER GIRL dances over to her.

ASTRID  
Oh my god, I freaking love those pants!  
Did you get them in Seattle?

MIA  
...Yeah.

A GUY IN A HILARY CLINTON MASK comes up.

HILARY CLINTON MASK GUY  
Aren't you in the Crack House Quartet?  
Man, I've been hearing about your shows.

Adam's band steps on stage, the guitar rips and the place  
ignites. Astrid grabs Mia's hand, pulls her to the pit.

Mia stands there frozen for a moment as all the bodies  
bounce around her. And then - she starts to dance too.

Adam looks down from the stage, surprised and impressed.

LATER, AFTER THE SHOW - Adam, sweaty from playing, finds  
Mia in the crowd.

ADAM

I'll load up and we can get out of --

MIA

-- No, don't. Let's stay.

ADAM

Really? You never want to watch the other bands.

MIA

I do tonight. Oh, and I'm borrowing your phone for two seconds.

Mia swipes his CELL and heads to the one quiet-ish corner by the bathroom as she dials.

INT. HALL HOUSE - CONTINUING

Mia's parents' Halloween party is in full swing - the usual friends. Teddy and another KID hide under the table sorting candy.

Kat and Denny are dressed as BONNY AND CLYDE, complete with bloody bullet holes in their costumes.

Kat answers her ringing Cell.

KAT

(into the phone)

Mia?! Are you OK!? Are you drunk?

Don't move, I'm getting my keys --

She's already springin into action. INTERCUT as Mia yells over the club noise to be heard.

MIA

-- NO, MOM! I'M NOT DRUNK!

KAT

Oh. Well, if you're not drunk, then why are you calling me?

MIA

I JUST WANTED TO SAY THANK YOU. I'M HAVING THE BEST TIME. AND I LOVE YOU!

Kat hangs up. Looks totally confused.

DENNY

Everything cool?



KAT

I guess so. My sixteen-year-old daughter just called me from a club on Halloween to tell me she loves me?

WILLOW

She's probably on X.

Willow, now super-pregnant and dressed as a NUN, shares a look with Kat and they laugh.

WILLOW (CONT'D)

You're so lucky. She's such a good kid.

KAT

I know. You should have seen her all punked out. She looked like us when we were 16. It was adorable.

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT

Later, Mia even helps load up Liz's pink Dodge.

Liz mouths "I love her like this" to Adam as she starts the car. Then calls out the window as they drive away.

LIZ

Bye, Adam. Bye, Super Cool Chick.

Mia smiles as Adam turns back to her, the two of them alone now against the back wall of the club.

Adam moves in closer. Takes Mia's cold hands and blows on them, warming them up - a habit now.

ADAM

You were so cute in the pit.  
You totally elbowed that guy.

MIA

He had it coming.  
(he laughs, then)  
Hey, Adam? Do you, um, like me better  
...like this?

ADAM

Like what?

MIA

You know, like tonight? With the clothes  
and the make-up and the *grrr*.

ADAM

Well, I definitely like the *grrr*.  
And it's cool that you weren't chomping  
at the bit to leave. And dancing with  
you was fun. And so is doing this...

He leans in, kisses her neck.

MIA

I know. But do you like me better?

Mia looks him in the eye. Adam just shakes his head.

ADAM

Mia, Mia, Mia. Don't you get it? You're  
the same you I was in love with yesterday  
and the same you I'll be in love with  
tomorrow.

(beat)

You're one of the punkest girls I know,  
no matter what you wear or listen to.

And with that, Mia throws herself at Adam with a sudden  
gusto. They fall against the wall, making out.

INT. OPERATING ROOM -DAY

A nurse falls against the wall, exhausted after Mia's  
long surgery. Everyone is peeling off their bloody  
smocks as Mia's body is wheeled out of the room.

INT. HOSPITAL ICU - DAY

Mia follows her body being wheeled by TWO NURSES to the  
LARGE, METAL, LOCKED ICU doors.

One of the nurses hits a button on the wall, the doors  
automatically open and they enter.

ICU is a fortress within the hospital. The hum of  
machines keeping fragile people barely alive.

A Nurse with LOLLIPOP SCRUBS, drawn-on eyebrows, and  
airbrushed fingernails of beach scenes quickly takes  
over, setting Mia up in her own tiny ICU room. Her badge  
says NURSE RAMIREZ (30s).

The Sweaty Surgeon from before enters as Ramirez reads  
Mia's chart. He's exhausted as he writes the orders.

SWEATY SURGEON

Let me finish these orders and she's all yours.

RAMIREZ

Girl's been through the ringer, huh?

DOCTOR

This is the easy part. Mom and Dad died at the scene. Kid's waking up an orphan.

(beat)

If she does wake up.

We pan to Mia standing in room, listening. Shocked.  
CUT TO:

EXT. THE CAR ACCIDENT - DAY

ORANGE FLARES on the road illuminate the fresh layer of snow.

As Mia's ambulance pulls away, we get the full view of the accident.

It looks like a bomb went off. Vehicles reduced to twisted metal carcasses. Debris everywhere.

DENNY'S PIPE, quickly filling with fresh snow, lays near a tire.

A female hand with blue fingernails gets tucked into a BODY BAG as the CORONER zips it up. It's Kat.

MIA (V.O.)

*It's just me and Teddy now.*

*Mom always said he saw me as a second mother. Since I was there for the birth.*

EXT. HALL HOUSE - DAY

FLASHBACK. Winter. A shitty VAN covered in PUNK STICKERS is parked in front of the house.

MIA (V.O.)

*Three days before Mom was due, Dad had a show in Olympia. He wanted to stay. But Mom wouldn't hear of it.*

Kat, 10 months pregnant, in a stretched-out BIKINI KILL T-SHIRT, watches with Mia (10) as Denny loads his drums. Henry and the other guys in the band look terrified.

MIA (CONT'D)

Oh stop it. If I pop, you have plenty of time to get back. And if I don't, you'll have missed a good gig for nothing. I don't want that on my conscience.

Kat is too stubborn to fight with. Denny looks at Mia.

DENNY

Make sure she takes it easy.

Mia nods. Denny glumly gets in the van.

MINUTES LATER, as the van disappears down the street, Kat turns to Mia.

KAT

OK. Let's go Christmas shopping.

INT. MALL STORE - LATER

Kat trucks along at a disturbingly fast clip, her arms full of bags. Mia practically jogs to keep up.

Kat stops at a bin of UGLY SCARVES, starts loading up.

KAT

One for Gran, one for Aunt Suze, one for Willow. Willow would like this, right?

(Mia shrugs)

Eh, who cares. Mia, pregnancy is the one time in life you can make all kinds of crazy decisions and nobody will hold it against you. It's like a free pass to be Courtney Love.

MIA

Oh. Who's Courtney Love?

KAT

Please tell me that's your budding sarcasm.

Kat heads for the check out, but suddenly grabs her side and winces for a long beat. She drops the ugly scarves.

KAT (CONT'D)

OK. It might be time to call Dad.

MIA (V.O.)

*I called. But there was a snowstorm and they closed the roads.*

INT. BIRTHING CENTER - DAY

The place is very granola. A macramé FAMILY OF OWLS hangs on a wall. NEW AGE MUSIC. AROMATHERAPY CANDLES.

Kat, holding 10 year-old Mia's hand, breathes through a tough contraction. She smiles.

MOM

See? Women are superior beings. We can handle the worst kind of pain. You'll find out one day.

Mia nods. Then Kat let's out a DEMONIC SCREAM.

MOM (CONT'D)

Screw this Lillith Fair, windchimes crap. I want some freakin' Melvins!

The terrified MID-WIFE suddenly turns to Mia.

MID-WIFE

Hon, maybe you want to get some fresh air outside, huh?

MIA

No. I'm OK. Here's the CD she wants.

Mia pulls a home-made PUNK MIX from Kat's bag.

LATER: The Melvins are now cranked on the stereo. And as Kat gives the final push, Denny comes rushing in.

Teddy emerges and the Mid-wife turns to Denny.

MID-WIFE

Nice timing. You want to cut the cord?

Denny smiles, nods...then faints. Mia looks at Denny on the floor, then --

MIA

I guess I could do it.

The Midwife helps Mia as an exhausted Kat cheers her on.

LATER: Kat, Mia and a revived Denny huddle around a newborn Teddy, all blissed out and spent.

KAT

So? How was the show?

DENNY

Nothing compared to this.

(beat)

I'm quitting the band. You guys are the best gig I've got.

KAT

Really? OK, but you have to promise you'll still play whenever you feel like it.

DENNY

I will.

(to Mia)

Nice work with the cord.

A high-five between Denny and Mia. Kat pulls Mia into the bed with her and Teddy.

KAT

(closing her eyes)

Mm. Hospitals can bite me.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Back to the hospital with everyone and Mia in the waiting room.

All of a sudden there is a distant, familiar noise. FOOTSTEPS. Mia perks up.

MIA

I know that walk.

Mia jumps up and runs to the hall.

Rounding the corner is KIM, followed by her mother, MRS. SCHEIN (40s), a controlling drama queen and already a hysterical mess.

Kim suddenly stops and spins back to her mother.

KIM

You have to stop it. If I'm not allowed to cry, there's no way you get to.

MIA

I have a right to my emotions, Kim.

KIM

Yeah, but you can't turn them into a one woman show every chance you get.

(beat)

(MORE)

KIM (CONT'D)

Mia is still here and that's all I can deal with right now.

Kim resumes walking and enters the waiting room where Mia's family is. Gran looks up sweetly.

GRAN

Oh hello, Kim, Mrs. Schein, bless your hearts for coming.

MRS. SCHEIN

Anything we can do, anything you need, we're here for -- oh, it's so tragic!

Mrs. Schein dissolves into a puddle of Greek-widow sobs.

Gran, Suze and the cousins find themselves consoling her. Kim sighs, throwing up her arms.

KIM

I need to take a little walk. I'll be back later.

(to her mother)

Don't follow me.

AUNT SUZE

Go ahead. We've got her.

Kim mouths "thank you" and exits.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Kim walks with determination, talking to herself. Completely unaware that Mia is walking beside her.

KIM

You see what happens, Mi? One stupid car accident and you leave me alone with that sack of crazy. You know I can't handle her by myself.

MIA

You're doing better than I would.

Kim stops at an elevator, rapidly pushing the button over and over out of frustration.

KIM

How can this even be happening?

The elevator doors open, Kim steps on. So does Mia.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Mia stands next to her best friend who can't see her, but she can't help trying to communicate.

MIA

Kim?

(nothing, then)

KIIIIIM!

Kim just takes deep breaths, trying not to freak out.

INT. PORTLAND HOSPITAL CHAPEL - DAY

Kim looks around the small empty chapel.

KIM

This is their idea of non-denominational?  
We get a token Star of David and they get  
all this...

Giant CROSSES are everywhere.

KIM (CONT'D)

What about the Muslims, huh? No prayer  
rug? And the Buddhists? Couldn't spring  
for a little gong?

Kim plops on a seat in the back. A couple of moments  
pass, she closes her eyes...starts chanting quietly in  
Hebrew (The Lord's Prayer).

KIM (CONT'D)

*Mizmor l'david -- adonai ro-ee loh ekh-  
SAR beeNot dehSHEH yarbeeTZAY nee al-may  
mih-noo-KHOAT yinna-ha-LAYnee --*

Kim stops, too overwhelmed to finish. Then, quietly -

KIM (CONT'D)

Please don't die, Mia. I can understand  
why you'd want to, but think about it.

She is unaware that Mia has taken the seat beside her.

KIM (CONT'D)

If you go, there's gonna be one of those  
cheesy Princess Di memorials at school  
where everyone puts flowers and notes  
next to your locker. I know you hate  
that kind of thing.

Mia makes a face - she does hate that kind of thing.



MIA

It's nice to hear someone actually talk to me. Instead of just about me.

Kim stands.

KIM

I have to get out of here.

MIA (V.O.)

*The funny thing was, it wasn't until after Adam and I were a couple, that I realized he and Kim couldn't stand each other.*

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Mia runs after Kim angrily walking down the road as Adam hangs back by his car at the coffee shop.

MIA

Kim, wait. He was just joking.

KIM

Yeah, Mia, Adam's hilarious.

MIA

C'mon. We can give you a ride.

KIM

No way. I'm not getting in his car.

Kim stubbornly keeps going. Mia sighs and jogs back to Adam.

MIA

Why do you have to be so harsh with her?

ADAM

Me? She's the one who's all uptight.

MIA

Look. Just because she can't sit around and have deep conversations about your favorite bands, doesn't make her uptight.

ADAM

I'm not dating Kim. I'm dating you.

MIA

So? You could at least try to be friends.

ADAM  
I'm sorry. It's just not there. You  
can't force these things.

Mia looks away, annoyed.

EXT. VINTAGE SHOP - DAY

As Mia and Kim try on clothes, Mia is still wound up.

MIA  
You know what the problem is? He doesn't  
like anybody who isn't exactly like him.

KIM  
Um, hello - he likes you. And you're  
nothing like him.

Mia stops. Kim has a point.

MIA  
I guess. Ugh. This is all so confusing.

KIM  
So deal with that. But don't drag me  
into your couples drama. Besides, I  
don't really click with him either.  
(off Mia's look)  
What? Not every girl swoons over a  
melancholy guitar boy in skinny jeans.

MIA  
I want you guys to be friends.

KIM  
Yeah, and I want to live in New York and  
have a not-psycho mother. But as the man  
said, you can't always get what you want.  
(Mia smiles)  
Look. I accept Adam because he loves  
you. And he accepts me because I love  
you. But we don't have to love each  
other, 'K?  
(then)  
And you better buy that vest because it  
looks hot.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU WAITING ROOM - DAY

Liddy addresses Gran, Gramps, Mrs. Schein and Aunt Suze,  
who is now joined by her husband BRADY, and their three  
kids, LAUREL(10), LONNIE(8) and LEAH(5).

LIDDY

Now, Mia is still unconscious, but her vital signs are improving. She's with the respiratory therapists now. They're running tests to see if her lungs are functioning and whether she can be weaned off the ventilator.

GRAN

Oh. Well, that's good news then? I mean, if she can breathe on her own, then she'll wake up soon.

LIDDY

It's a good step for her lungs and her internal injuries.

(beat)

The big question mark is the brain contusions.

LONNIE

Why?

LIDDY

We don't yet know when or if she can wake up on her own.

(trying to be reassuring)

The first twenty-four hours are the most critical and Mia is getting the best possible care.

(then)

I think it would be good for her to have a short visit. One or two people.

GRAN

We'll go.

Gran and Gramps stand and follow Liddy to ICU.

Kim walks back in, followed by Mia.

KIM

Mom. Get your purse. We're going.

INT. ICU - MIA'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Liddy leads Gran and Gramps to Mia's ICU room. Mia follows them.

They steel themselves when they see her body. Mia looks away, not wanting to face it herself. Then.

GRAMPS

Hi, Duck.

MIA

(smiles)

You haven't called me Duck since I was five.

LIDDY

I'll leave you guys alone now.

GRAN

Can she hear us?

LIDDY

Truly, I don't know. But your presence can be soothing.

She exits. Nurse Ramirez comes in, straightens Mia's blanket.

NURSE RAMIREZ

Of course she can hear you. Doctors and nurses like to think they run this show, but they don't. She does. So talk to her. Tell her to take her time, but tell her to come back. You're waiting.

MIA

(incredulous)

"Come back?" I'm right here, where am I supposed to "come back" from? Like I'm just supposed to open my eyes and this is all over?

Gran looks at Mia's body, forcing herself to be chipper.

GRAN

My angels tell me you'll be back at that cello in no time.

Mia rolls her eyes.

MIA (V.O.)

*You've got to give her credit. Gran still thinks Juilliard was her idea.*

The sounds of Mia's cello take us to...

INT. COLLEGE RECTIAL HALL - NIGHT

Mia on stage, performing an intense solo, her eyes closed.

Gran, Gramps, Mom and Dad are in the audience. Teddy sits in between Adam and Kim, keeping things cordial.

MIA (V.O.)  
*Even though I was still in high school,  
Mrs. Christie had scored me a spot at the  
university's spring concert.*

Mia finishes her piece. The spellbound audience erupts in applause.

ON STAGE, Mia is overwhelmed as people start to stand.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*That had never happened before.*

IN THE AUDIENCE, Gran notices a REFINED HUSBAND and WIFE talking to each other in the row ahead of her.

REFINED HUSBAND  
I've never heard that kind of depth from  
a cellist so young.

REFINED WIFE  
I know. That's talent you just can't  
teach. She's Juilliard material.

Gran perks up at the mention of this, already scheming.

MIA (V.O.)  
*We were all supposed to go to dinner, but  
Adam was just back from a week-long tour  
and we didn't really feel like  
celebrating as a group. And I wasn't  
going to chicken out this time.*

INT. MIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

With the house to themselves, Adam and Mia burst through her bedroom door kissing.

Mia suddenly stops herself. Pushes Adam away.

ADAM  
Hey. Where are you going?

MIA  
(nervous)  
Do you want to play Scrabble? I love  
Scrabble.

ADAM  
(with a look)  
Scrabble is the last thing I want to play  
right now.

He flops on her bed. She takes a seat in a nearby chair.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
What are you doing over there?

MIA  
Just...sitting.

He gets up, walks over to the cello leaning against the wall. He spins it around, plucks a string.

ADAM  
You have no idea how jealous I am of this  
thing.

MIA  
Jealous? Of my cello?

ADAM  
Uh-huh.

Adam picks up the bow and holds it out to her.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Play me.

MIA  
What?

ADAM  
Play me like you play this cello.

MIA  
(her heart racing, then)  
UM, OK.  
(taking the bow)  
You have to sit on the floor.

Mia sits on the edge of the bed and makes Adam sit on the floor in front of her.

MIA (CONT'D)  
This is, um, a Shostakovich piece I'm  
trying to learn.

She grips him with her legs the way she would hold her cello.

She leans down, a little nervous, then slowly drags the bow across his chest.

She starts to play faster and WE HEAR the music she plays to. Her hair grazes Adam's cheek as she plays.

It starts to get more and more intense until --

Adam grabs her wrist, the MUSIC STOPS. He smiles.

ADAM

My turn.

Adam scoops her onto the bed. MORPH TO:

Adam lays next to Mia, "plucking" her torso like his guitar. Mia laughs; it tickles.

ADAM (CONT'D)

(playful)

Stop laughing.

Adam lifts her shirt a little more with each "strum" until they are tangled up in one another. MORPH TO:

LATER: Mia lays against Adam, talking.

MIA

I do too, you know.

ADAM

You what?

MIA

(turning to face him)

...love you.

ADAM

(then a, smile)

You tortuous torturous girl. Now you tell me.

MIA

I just wanted to make sure.

ADAM

That's OK. I already knew.

Mia smiles and kisses him again.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The ping Dodge revs to life, the stereo blares, and the tires squeal out of a dirty parking lot.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DUSK

Mia has roamed from ICU, walking through the halls like she's searching.

MIA (V.O.)

*I need a break from ICU. It's suffocating.*

*(beat)*

*Right now, Adam's probably in the middle of the sound check for the biggest opportunity the band's ever had.*

*(beat)*

*But I wish he were here.*

She looks at a sign that says MATERNITY WARD and keeps going. CUT TO:

EXT. HALL HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Gran walking up the porch, a woman on a mission.

INT. HALL HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Denny sits with Gran at the kitchen table drinking coffee. He yawns. She lays down a JUILLIARD APPLICATION.

DENNY

You drove all the way here at 7 a.m. on a Saturday to give me this?

GRAN

It's where she needs to be. Didn't you hear her last night? You can't teach talent like that.

DENNY

I know.

*(then)*

But it's her gift. And she has to want it on her own.



GRAN

Well, she better make it snappy. You have to send a video just to get an invitation to audition. So.

Gran stands and grabs her purse.

DENNY

You don't want to stay for breakfast? Kat and Teddy will be up soon. Well, at least, Teddy will.

GRAN

Next time. I'm planting my tulips today.

Gran goes. Denny drinks his coffee, looking over the application.

INT. MIA BEDROOM - MORNING

Mia stirs from her bed as the JUILLIARD APPLICATION appears under her bedroom door.

LATER: Mia examines it, then slips it in her BACKPACK.

MIA (V.O.)

*I carried that stupid application around for three weeks. I was too scared to fill it out.*

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Mia hugs Adam goodbye as Liz, Scotty and Jo wait by the VAN, mocking them.

MIA (V.O.)

*Faceplant got invited to play a showcase at South by Southwest in Austin.*

The SCHOOL BELL rings.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*While I got to take a History exam.*

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Mia sits in class, furiously writing an essay. Her backpack hangs off her chair, that Juilliard Application peeking out, daring her.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

Mia and Kim hang out, studying. Mia's CELL RINGS. She reaches her backpack to grab it.

MIA  
(on her phone)  
Adam! Hey.

Kim barely looks up.

INT. AUSTIN CLUB - NIGHT

Adam is backstage-celebrating with his bandmates somewhere in Texas. We intercut:

ADAM  
Mia, guess what. We just got signed!

MIA  
You did?! For real?!

ADAM  
Oh man, I wish you were here. We played the best set of our lives. It was insane.

MIA  
Congratulations. So, are you famous now?

ADAM  
Ha. Not even close. But at least we'll get to record in a real studio with a real producer. It's a step --

Liz grabs the phone from Adam.

LIZ  
Oh, and Mia. I'll have you know some Texas skank totally tried to tear off Adam's leather pants and I head-butted her for you. You're welcome!

MIA  
Wait -- what? Adam, when did you get leather pants?!

Kim, overhearing the conversation, pretends to choke and die on her scone.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - EVENING

As they leave the coffee shop, Mia suddenly turns to Kim.

MIA

Hey. You have access to a video camera  
for yearbook, right?

KIM

I do.

MIA (V.O.)

*I figured if Adam could chase it, then so  
could I.*

INT. HALL HOUSE - DAY

Denny sits in his chair, listening to Sinatra, grading  
papers.

Mia sets the filled-out Juilliard application in front of  
him. He looks up.

DENNY

Really? You think you want this?

MIA

I know I do. Can you film me?

Mia holds out a VIDEO CAMERA she borrowed from Kim.  
Denny breaks into a wide smile.

DENNY

You bet I can.

INT. HALL HOUSE - DAY

The furniture's been cleared to one side. Denny has the  
camera duct-taped to an old tri-pod. Mia finishes  
playing her piece. Really good, as always.

Teddy and Kat applaud from the hallway.

MIA

OK, that just makes me more nervous.

KAT (O.S.)

Sorry. Just ignore us.

Mia looks up at Denny.

MIA

Dad. How was that? Honestly?

DENNY

Well, I think --

(then, just shaking his head)

Oh, C'mon, Mia. I'm just some old dude who occasionally played drums in an early 90's punk band.

(then)

You blew past me a long time ago.

MIA

(then)

I could do better.

DENNY

Fire it up. We've got daylight to burn.

Mia starts again. The sounds of the cello again mingling with...

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The punk music blasting from the open windows of the pink Dodge Dart flying down the highway.

The wailing of punk overtaken by...

INT. MATERNITY WARD - DAY

The wail of NEWBORN BABIES. Mia stands in the Maternity Ward watching all the Babies in their little cribs.

MIA (V.O)

*It's amazing. Watching them fight so hard to be alive.*

Suddenly she hears something outside coming from a nearby window. Mia rushes over to the window to see.

Liz's pink Dodge pulling in the PARKING LOT.

MIA (CONT'D)

Liz?

The driver door opens. And Adam gets out. Mia gasps.

MIA (CONT'D)

You came!

She takes off running with a huge grin on her face.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLS - DAY

Mia runs to get to Adam.

MIA  
You're here! You're here! You're here!

INT. MAIN ENTRANCE DAY - DAY

A Nurse points Adam in the direction of ICU. He takes off running.

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - DAY

Mia running, dodging people in the hall.

INT. OTHER HOSPITAL HALL - DAY

Adam running too.

INT. MIA'S ICU ROOM - DAY

Mia skids into her room. Ready for Adam. She even preps a little - not that he can see her.

She takes a deep anticipatory breath, turns and --

There he is, through the WINDOWS OF THE ICU DOORS.

She jumps up, and just as she gets to the doors, she hears --

ADAM (O.S.)  
What do you mean I can't see her? This is bullshit!

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOORS, OUTSIDE ICU

Is the HEAD ICU NURSE, blocking Adam's entrance.

Adam can't get in. Mia can't get out. But she can see him through the window, looking right past her, not realizing they're practically face to face.

MIA  
Adam!

ADAM  
Mia!

HEAD NURSE

Young Man, you need to calm down.

ADAM

I need to see my girlfriend is what I need.

HEAD NURSE

Well, I'm afraid that's not possible.

MIA

Just let him in!

ADAM

But you don't understand. I would have been here sooner. My car doesn't start in the snow, Liz had to lend me hers and -  
- Mia, she needs --

HEAD NURSE

-- She's being well taken care of.

ADAM

I'm grateful for that. But I really need to see her.

HEAD NURSE

I'm sorry. Visitations are restricted to immediate family only.

Mia is devastated. She starts to pound on the door.

MIA

Just let him in! Please!

IN MIA'S ICU ROOM, tending to Mia's vitals, Nurse Ramirez looks over her shoulder, hearing the commotion outside ICU. She shakes her head.

BACK WITH ADAM pleading with the nurse.

HEAD NURSE

Do I need to call security?

Adam gives her a defiant look, then starts backing away.

ADAM

No. No, I'll go.

As he slowly backs away, Adam stumbles. But someone is there, helping him up - Kim. He turns to her and they fall into a desperate hug.

Mia watches, touched, as Adam and Kim exit the corridor.

After a moment, the Head Nurse - satisfied the threat of a young punk has been thwarted - turns and enters the ICU doors.

And Mia darts out the doors, running through the hospital trying to catch up to Adam and Kim.

MIA (V.O.)

*It's not like I'm Casper. I don't have special powers. I can't float through walls or dive down stairwells.*

INT. HOSPITAL - LATE AFTERNOON

Mia runs past the waiting room.

Down a hallway.

Past a closing elevator.

Tearing down a flight of stairs.

Back through the main lobby where she stops at a window when she sees...the parking lot.

The Pink Dodge is gone.

And she sinks into a tiny nearby Loveseat.

On the chair next to her a left-behind NEWSPAPER sits open to the ad for the Brooke Vega and Faceplant concert.

Just looking at it hurts.

MIA

Great. Maybe they can do a cover of *Girlfriend In A Coma* tonight. They'll tour the world and he can fall in love with her.

(beat)

It's not like things have been that great between us lately.

Mia looks up as a JANITOR pushing a trash can bends down and picks up the newspaper.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*After the band got signed, things were different.*

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Faceplant plays. CLOSE on Mia's faces as she watches from the wings.

MIA (V.O.)  
*They were still playing the same clubs,  
but now they were selling them out.*

PAN to the audience. It's PACKED.

AFTER THE SHOW, Adam is practically mobbed by fans, mostly GIRLS. So is Liz.

Mia hangs back, bored, TEXTING on her phone.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*And when they weren't playing here, they  
were playing somewhere else.*

EXT. HALL HOUSE - DAY

Again, the band waits as Mia and Adam hug goodbye.

MIA  
I feel like this is all we do.

ADAM  
Don't blame me. You're the one leaving  
for Juilliard.

MIA  
I only got invited to audition. I didn't  
get in.

ADAM  
Yet.

MIA (V.O.)  
*And when they actually were in town, they  
were still working.*

INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Mia eats TAKE OUT as Adam skips his meal in favor of a nap on a nearby BEAN BAG. Annoyed, Mia tosses a Fortune Cookie at his head. He keeps sleeping.

MIA (V.O.)  
*And he wasn't working or touring.*



INT. BOOK BARN - DAY

In the back room, Adam helps Mia sort through cheap classical records. He holds one up.

ADAM

What about this one? The guy looks drunk. Traditionally, drunks make some very good music.

Mia laughs and looks up as a trio of SLUTTY ROCKER GIRLS walk up.

MIA

(under her breath)  
Big classical fans, huh?

One of them bats her lashes at Adam.

SLUTTY ROCKER GIRL

You're the guy from Faceplant, right?

Adam smiles and nods.

MIA

*And he started forgetting things. Like my birthday.*

INT. HALL HOUSE - NIGHT

Mia picks at a PIECE Of CAKE surrounded by her family and Kim.

MIA

I'm not really hungry.

Mia gets up and heads to her room. Kim follows.

Then Denny calls out.

DENNY

Hey, Mia, even the best guys are jerks sometimes.

TEDDY

Except for me. I'm not a jerk.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL REHEARSAL BOOTH - DAY

Mia pours herself into practicing her cello. We pull out to the hall, to where she and Adam played in their booths.

Only now, the other booth is empty. Mia plays alone.

MIA (V.O.)  
*And just when I'd be almost over it,  
ready to let Adam go...*

INT. MIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mia opens the door to room to find Adam. And her entire ceiling has been covered with a POSTER SIZE MURAL of AN OLD FRESCO DEPICTING GREEK GODS AND GODDESS PLAYING MUSIC.

ADAM  
I know. I suck for forgetting your birthday.

MIA  
(looking up)  
You do suck. What is this?

ADAM  
This is your own Jolari Hall? In San Francisco? The theatre where you'll be auditioning at. This is the ceiling. The building's a landmark.

Mia falls on her bed, studying the mural.

MIA  
Wow. It's...overwhelming.

ADAM  
I know. Wait until you see it in person.

Adam lays down next to her.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Here's the plan. You look at this every night, getting used to it. And then when you're there auditioning, it won't seem scary. The stage will just feel like home. Just look up and you won't be nervous.

Mia starts to melts. Then.

MIA  
You still suck for forgetting my birthday.

ADAM  
I know.

LATER: Adam and Mia hang out under the new mural. He plays with his guitar, she studies a copy of JANE EYRE.

MIA

(then, looking up)

Hey Adam? How come you've never written me a song?

ADAM

I've tried to. I just don't do love songs.

MIA

What are you talking about? Half the band's songs are about love.

ADAM

No, they're about heartbreak. Love gone terribly wrong. That's my specialty.

MIA

So, you're saying I don't give you enough grief? I'd have to dump you to get a song?

ADAM

Or cheat on me, something like that.

MIA

Ugh. Too much work.

ADAM

No pain, no gain.

MIA

(then)

I know how to make it hurt. I won't kiss you until I get a song.

ADAM

Even you couldn't survive that.

MIA

Please. It'll be so easy.

ADAM

Oh really?

In one fell swoop, Adam puts down his guitar, grabs Jane Eyre out of Mia's hands, and flings it across the room.

Then pins Mia's hands over her head, his lips hovering inches above her face.

It's hot. Mia's eyes flutter. She makes him kiss her.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Ha. See? You can't even resist me for 10 seconds.

MIA

Well, at least I tried.

She gets up to get her book, but Adam pulls her back.

MIA (CONT'D)

Adam, stop. I have to study.

ADAM

No you don't. I know how Jane Eyre ends. C'mere. I'll show you.

And he kiss her even more. CUT TO:

INT. ICU - NIGHT

Nurse Ramirez is making kissing noises into her CELL PHONE as she sneaks a call in Mia's room.

NURSE RAMIERZ

...And did you put your jammies on?  
Good...Now let Pappi read you a book and -  
- of course, I'm taking you to the park  
tomorrow, unless it snows again.

MIA (V.O.)

*Gran was supposed to take me to San Francisco for my Juilliard audition, but...*

INT. HALL HOUSE LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Denny, Kat, Gramps, Mia and Teddy are playing GUITAR HERO.

Gran hobbles into the room wearing a CAST BOOT.

MIA (V.O.)

*She broke her ankle working in the garden and couldn't drive. Mom had to stay with Teddy and Dad had to work. I offered to drive myself, but --*

Gramps leans over to Mia and whispers.

GRAMPS  
I could take you.

MIA  
Really? You would?

GRAN  
(disappointed)  
What? But that was going to be our  
girls' trip. I found an adorable bed and  
breakfast. And had plans for high tea at  
the Fairmont.

GRAMPS  
(winks at Mia)  
So. I like high tea.

GRAN  
You don't know high tea from high tide.

EXT. GRAMPS' TRUCK/ HIGHWAY - DAY

In the back of GRAMPS' OLD PICK UP, Mia's cello is  
strapped down with bungee cord as they drive to San  
Francisco.

INT. GRAMPS' TRUCK - DAY

Inside the truck, classical plays on the radio. Mia,  
with her eyes half-closed, plays "air cello" to the  
music. Gramps glances over.

GRAMPS  
You nervous?

MIA  
No.

She totally is. Gramps nods, looks back at the road.

INT. JOLARI HALL/ LOBBY - DAY

Mia waits outside her audition, nervously tapping her  
cello. Gramps isn't sure what to do with himself.

GRAMPS  
Maybe I'll wait outside.

Mia nods. He exits.

Her cell phone BEEPS, getting a text. It's from Adam.

ADAM'S TEXT

LOOK UP.

Mia lets out a deep breath.

VOICE (O.S.)

Mia Hall?

Mia looks up as the doors open. It's her turn.

INT. JOLARI HALL/ THEATRE - DAY

A FOURSOME of STONE-FACED JUDGES watch from the empty theatre.

On the HUGE STAGE, Mia looks like a pebble lost in the ocean. Sink or swim time. She closes her eyes, her bow shaking as she begins her Shostakovich concerto.

The first couple of notes are rough, but Mia then forces herself to open her eyes and look up. And there it is --

The ceiling mural exactly like the one Adam hung in her room. Only better. Achingly beautiful.

And something happens - Mia ignites. In that moment, her playing goes to new place, the best we've seen her.

The judges remain poker-faced, but they sit just a little straighter, a little more focused -- Mia has them.

INT. JOLARI HALL/ LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Gramps, having snuck back in, leans his head against the door, enjoying the sound of his grand-daughter kicking ass inside.

MIA (V.O.)

*We didn't talk about it. We just enjoyed  
the rest of the time playing tourist.*

INT. FAIRMONT DINING ROOM - DAY

In a palatial, Victorian dining room set off by silk ballroom drapes, giant potted palms and gilt chandeliers, groups of Females dressed to the nines enjoy high tea.

Except in one corner is the lone male - Gramps, in his flannel - sitting with Mia. He enjoys high tea too.

GRAMPS

These lemon cookies are outstanding.

MIA (V.O.)

*Something had happened to my playing in that audition. I finally played the way I heard it in my head. And when Gramps drove me home...*

EXT. HALL HOUSE - DAY

Slow-motion as Gramps' truck pulls up. Mia looks at her house with news eyes, like it's not her home anymore.

MIA (V.O.)

*I suddenly had this vision of myself.*

FLASH - Mia in New York City, in a RED COAT on a crisp wintery day, lugging her cello.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*I just knew.*

*(beat)*

*Which made other things even more complicated.*

EXT. OUTSIDE RECORD/ COMIC STORE - DAY

Adam and Mia hang out, drinking coffees and talking.

ADAM

So, are you going to tell me? Did you knock 'em dead? They gonna let you in on a full scholarship or what?

MIA

I did...okay.

Adam immediately seems a little relieved.

ADAM

Oh, well, that's OK. There are lots of good schools around here and maybe --

MIA

-- Actually, Adam. That's a lie.

*(beat, he looks at her)*

I played better than I've ever played in my whole life. It's like...I was possessed for three perfect songs.

ADAM

(a slow smile)

Oh man. I wish I could have seen that.

Yo Mama better watch his back.

(then)

Why did you downplay it? Why didn't you call me right away?

MIA

I didn't...I mean, you guys are in the studio doing recording and --

Adam scoops her up.

ADAM

-- Stop it. This is great news. We should be celebrating.

MIA

You're right, we should. We can go to Portland this weekend, to the Japanese Gardens. And then maybe to dinner at Beau Thai.

ADAM

Oh, I can't. We're playing Olympia and Seattle this weekend. Mini-tour, remember? You could come. But that's probably not a celebration for you.

MIA

Probably not. How about next weekend?

ADAM

We're back in the studio for the final mix, but -- hey. Let's go somewhere around here tonight. Mexico City?

MIA

Sure.

(pissed)

Let's go the same burrito place we always go to.

ADAM

What?

MIA

Nothing. It's a beautiful day.



INT. BURRITO PLACE - NIGHT

Adam and Mia's date is tinged with awkward silence as they eat their burritos. Adam looks at her, smiles.

ADAM

Hi.

MIA

Hi.

ADAM

(then)

Things are getting complicated, aren't they?

MIA

I dunno. Our schedules are too hectic.

ADAM

That's not what I meant.

MIA

(looks away)

I know.

Adam laughs, trying to make a joke of it all - release the tension.

ADAM

You know, I was reading that Willamette has a really good music program. And Salem's getting cooler by the second.

MIA

Yeah. But you forget, I'm not cool. But speaking of, maybe Faceplant could move to New York. It's the heart of the punk scene, right? The Ramones. Blondie.

ADAM

Maybe thirty years ago. And even if I wanted to move, there's no way the rest of the band would.

The HIP WAITER brings the check. Adam goes for his wallet.

HIP WAITER

No, man. It's on the house. I saw you guys play three weeks ago. You guys just keep getting better and better.

Adam shrugs, proud and embarrassed at the same time.

MIA  
No, he's right. You do.

INT. ADAM'S CAR/ OUTSIDE HALL HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam and Mia sit as he drops her off. She forces a smile.

MIA  
Hey. I won't get in. In a way, I hope I don't. Then I don't have to choose.

ADAM  
If you get in, the choice is already made, isn't it? I don't want to be the guy who keeps you from going. If the tables were turned, you'd let me go.

Mia stares out the window, at Teddy's skateboard on the lawn.

MIA  
I kind of already have. In a way, you're already gone. At your own Juilliard.

Adam doesn't know what to say to that punch.

ADAM  
(admitting the painful truth)  
I guess you're right.

His reaches for her hand and blows on it to warm it up. Mia looks away so he doesn't see her eyes watering.

MIA (V.O.)  
*If we had a big fight, things would be easier. We could just make up. But this was worse.*  
(beat)  
*We were breaking up in slow motion.*

INT. MIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mia walks in, drops her bag. Looks up at the ceiling fresco, peeling back in one corner.

She climbs on her bed, grabs the corner and tears the whole thing down.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Kat walks by, hearing Mia rip apart the mural behind the door. She wants to say something, but stops herself.

INT. ABANDONED HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - EVENING

Mia, alone in the empty waiting room far from ICU, is startled awaked from where she has fallen asleep on the little love seat.

She looks down the hall and can't believe it. A posse of cool walks towards her - Adam, Liz, Scotty, Jo and several other MUSIC SCENE KIDS all headed up by --

MIA

This can't be real.

BROOKE VEGA (20s) in the flesh, a chick so swaggering and cool she makes bad-ass Liz seem like a forgettable wall flower.

Brooke's ready for the stage in her trademark bubble skirt, torn fishnets, knee high boots, vintage fur shrug, and giant sparkly, white sunglasses.

She's like the sun, around which her admiring planets revolve.

Brooke throws her arm around Adam as they walk.

ADAM

Thanks for doing this. I'll have you out of here in fifteen.

And the group passes a gawking Mia.

BROOKE

Anything for you. How you holding up, Baby?

MIA

(watching them)  
"Baby?" You guys just met.

Mia turns and sees...

Kim following from behind, like a little puppy trying to play with the big dogs. Mia follows them too.

AS THEY WALK, Brooke turns to Adam -

BROOKE  
So, what's the plan?

ADAM  
Actually, you're the plan. I hadn't really thought beyond just going up there and causing a ruckus.

BROOKE  
Well, that works. Because causing a ruckus is one of my favorite pastimes. What should I do? Let out a primal scream? Strip? Smash a guitar -- oh, damn. I forgot my guitar.

They all step onto an elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Mia and Kim get wedged to the back. And then Kim calls out.

KIM  
(suggesting a plan)  
Um, hey, Brooke?  
(Brooke looks at Kim)  
Maybe someone could scream, like, "Oh my God, it's Brooke Vega!" and then everyone will be looking at you and that's when Adam can dart in.

Brooke smiles and pulls Kim close to her.

BROOKE  
Good thinking.

And - ding - as the elevator doors open, Brooke steps off, linking arms with Kim, who is kind of freaking out.

MIA  
(following, loving it)  
Kim, you so owe me for this!

And as the posse gets closer and closer to ICU, people stare, some start to follow.

A train gathering steam and passengers, until -

THE NURSES' STATION OUTSIDE ICU

KIM, in the most bad-acting voice ever, screams -

KIM  
OH MY GOD, IS THAT SUPERSTAR BROOKE  
VEGA?! IT IS!!!!

And the place falls to a hush. Several younger nurses look up in awe. Especially a YOUNG MALE NURSE.

YOUNG MALE NURSE  
Yes it is.

It's enough to get everyone's attention. Even the Head Nurse from ICU comes out. And she is already furiously dialing her phone as Brooke Vega climbs onto the nurses' station and claims it as her impromptu stage.

Adam ducks behind a BIG FICUS PLANT so the mean nurse doesn't see him.

And before anyone can pull her down her, Brooke Vega starts to SING --

A raw, SOULFUL BALLAD that just stops the world for a few minutes. And we see this girl is more than just rock star affectation.

People are taking cell phone pictures, video, tweeting.

MIA  
(watching in awe)  
Oh my god. If I weren't already dying,  
I'd be totally dying!

And as Brooke has the whole place in the palm of her hand, she looks over her shoulder at Adam and whispers -

BROOKE  
Go for it, Doll.

LIZ  
Yeah. Everyone!

And with that Adam, Kim, Liz and everyone charge the ICU DOOR, full speed.

Inside, Nurse Ramirez, quickly, secretly hits the button on the wall to open the doors and -

They give way to nearly a dozen young punks young punks tumbling through them.

INT. ICU - NIGHT

Adam and Kim quickly stand and look around.

ADAM  
Where is she? Where's Mia?

KIM  
(spotting Mia)  
Is that her? In the corner?

They make a move.

HEAD NURSE  
Security! Get them!

Adam is dodging nurse and guards and making his way to Mia's body, to the foot of her bed, his hand reaching out to touch her.

MIA  
I want to feel it.

And just before Adam can make contact with Mia, he is moving away from her. GUARDS have him by the shoulder and are dragging him out.

Kim too.

INT. HOSPITAL OUTSIDE ICU -

As Adam and Kim get dragged out, the other kids scatter, headed for the hallway. Brooke blows him a kiss -

BROOKE  
Sorry, Hon, I gotta jet before I miss my show.

And off she goes down the hall, followed by some ORDERLIES begging for her autograph.

Adam and Kim are dragged off in another direction.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - OUTSIDE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES -

Mia follows as the guards hustle Adam and Kim to the door.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Adam? Is that you?

Adam and Kim both turn.

Willow?

ADAM

Willow?

KIM

WILLOW

Excuse me, where are you taking them?

The guards turn to see Willow storming towards them.

GUARD

They were caught trying to break in to ICU.

KIM

Because they wouldn't let us in to see Mia.

WILLOW

Excuse me. I'm an RN at Cedar Creek. I did my training here, so if you'd like we can straighten this out with Richard Carruthers, director of community affairs? I highly doubt he would be pleased to know this is how his hospital treats someone who is trying to visit his critically wounded girlfriend.

GUARD

Uh, we were just following orders.

WILLOW

Right. How about I save you the paperwork and take it from here. The patient's family is upstairs and are waiting for these two. If you have any trouble, call me.

She hands them her card. They shrug, let Adam and Kim go and shuffle off.

Kim throws her grateful arms around Willow.

KIM

Thank you. You're the best.

WILLOW

C'mon. I'll get you in.

They start walking back.

ADAM

What about that Jabba The Nurse? She has it in for me.

WILLOW

If that old cow is who I think she is, she's not nearly as powerful as she wishes.

(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)

Let's just get Mia's grandparents and I'll find out who's in charge of breaking rules around here. Mia needs you now. More than ever.

MIA

This is so great, Willow's here. She's taking care of -- wait.

(it suddenly hitting her)

Why is Willow here? Where's Teddy?!

And we see on Willow's face - the heartbreaking news she doesn't want to deliver to Gran and Gramps upstairs.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*And that's how I know. Teddy is gone too.*

INT. ICU - NIGHT

All quiet now, Nurse Ramirez runs over as Mia's machines start going off like crazy.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLS

She takes off running, careening through the hospital --

Tearing through halls, like a caged animal trying to escape.

FLASH - Young Mia running, pushing Teddy in a stroller.

Mia tears down another hospital hallway.

MIA (V.O.)

*He will never graduate from T-ball to baseball. Never kiss a girl. Never see one of Adam's shows. Never learn to drive. Never sneak booze from Dad's cabinet. Never fall in love.*

FLASH - Mia, a little older, running, pushing Teddy on a his skateboard. He's laughing.

Mia runs past the PEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY WARD with Murals of Rainbows and Sunshine for sick kids.

FLASH - Teddy and Mia running. Getting chased by Adam.

Mia runs towards the hospital doors ready to burst through them and get out of there.



MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*I don't want to be the survivor.*  
*This is not something you survive.*

And when she goes to open the doors, they don't budge.  
 They're locked. Mia starts to shake and bang on them.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 C'MON! I thought it was my choice,  
 right? Open the damn doors!

Tears are running down her cheeks now.

She falls in front of the doors crying and banging.

She suddenly feels WIND BLOWING AGAINST HER. A GALE  
 FORCE pushing her back from the door.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 Noooooo!

INT. ICU - NIGHT

Mia is back, standing in her ICU room.

Her body is surrounded by a new group of nurses and  
 doctors furiously working on her as her monitors blink  
 and chirp like a desperate S.O.S. Signal.

NURSE RAMIREZ  
 Her BP and pulse ox are dropping.

A bleary-eyed DOCTOR, rubbing the sleep from his eyes,  
 yanks down her covers and lifts her gown.

DOCTOR  
 Abdomen's rigid! Ultrasound!

Nurse Ramirez does the ultrasound as the doctor flips  
 through Mia's chart.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
 Jesus. Splenectomy, brain contusions,  
 collapsed lung. Kid's a frigging mess.  
 (checking the ultrasound)  
 Damn. She's full of fluid. Maybe a slow  
 leak from perforated bowel. Car  
 accident, right?

NURSE RAMIREZ  
 Uh-huh.

DOCTOR

Let's get her back to surgery!

MIA

No! Let's not get me back to surgery!  
Just let me go!

The team works rapidly, detaching monitors, sticking another tube down her throat.

A PAIR of ORDERLIES rush in with a gurney and heave her onto it. She's still exposed from the waist down.

MIA (CONT'D)

Well, cover me up, at least!

Nurse Ramirez reaches over and grabs a blanket and drapes it over her.

MIA (CONT'D)

Thanks.

And just before they whisk Mia's body out, Nurse Ramirez leans over and taps Mia's forehead three times with her beach-scene acrylic nails and says -

RAMIREZ

This is it, Sweetheart. After this, it's on you.

Mia, practically shoved in the corner, touches her forehead like she can feel it. *OK, that was weird.*

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY OUTSIDE ICU - NIGHT

Adam and Kim stand there in shock as the ICU doors burst open and Mia is wheeled back out.

Adam and invisible Mia are suddenly face to face. She looks at him for several seconds.

MIA

I'm so sorry. For everything.

But Adam's looking past her. He gasps in horror.

ADAM

Mia.

Mia spins back to see what he's looking at. She gasps too. The two of them looking on in horror show that is now her body.

MIA (V.O.)  
*I spent the whole day avoiding it,  
 looking past it, pretending it wasn't  
 that bad. Adam's reaction suddenly makes  
 it...impossible not to see.*

And this is the first time we get an eye-full of Mia - she looks like something out of a horror movie, her face scraped, her hand bandaged, her hair clumps of dried blood.

Adam zeros in her hand, all bandaged up.

ADAM  
 Your hand.

NURSE  
 Out of the way, please!

And they shove past Adam, rushing her to an open elevator.

Mia follows. Adam just stands there in shock. Watching her go.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

As the elevator doors close - Mia, standing next to her body, surrounded by doctors - looks out and sees Adam, alone in the hall with Kim. He starts to back away.

ADAM  
 I...I have to go.

And as those elevator doors shut, Mia watches him leave.

MIA (V.O.)  
*It's OK. In a way, it makes things  
 easier. We've known for months that we  
 wouldn't end up together. We just didn't  
 want to admit it.*  
 (beat)  
*Even two weeks ago.*

INT. LIZ AND ASTRID'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We move through a Party in full effect. A banged-up Christmas tree decorated with GUITAR PICS and hastily-thrown tinsel anchors the room.

MIA

Even Kim agreed to come to Liz's New Years Eve Party. Because of the college boy factor.

We move past Kim in the corner talking to some EXOTIC COLLEGE BOY. He's laughing at her joke.

We follow Liz dancing through the party with a piece of MISTLETOE, playfully giving a peck to every CUTE GIRL.

Out the back door and up onto...

THE ROOF

Adam and Mia hang out, having a little too much fun.

ADAM

...and every time we see each other, we should do one thing we've never done, so then we'll have all these memories that are cooler than anything else that could ever distract us when we're apart, y'know?

MIA

Totally. Like right now we should, um...

Mia stands and looks at the POOL in the courtyard below.

MIA (CONT'D)

Jump into that pool.

ADAM

Mia, that is a stupid idea.

(then)

Let's do it!

They walk to the edge of the roof, look down -

MIA

Actually, maybe we shouldn't.

Inside, people are starting to count down to midnight.

EVERYONE

10...9...

Adam grabs her hand.

ADAM

Too late.

And they jump.

SPLASH! They land in the pool, then pop up, laughing.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Fother mucker!

MIA  
That's FREEZING!

EVERYONE  
6...5...4...

But exhilarating. Other partiers start to dive in all around them. Adam pulls Mia close.

ADAM  
Just promise me one thing, no matter  
where we are or what happens, we'll spend  
next New Year's together.

MIA  
I promise.

They kiss in the pool as the new year begins, everyone singing and celebrating around them.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*I knew it was a lie. But that lie felt  
so good and warm I forgot how cold I was.*  
(beat)  
*Until the next morning.*

EXT. HALL HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Denny and Kat and Teddy serve New Year's Brunch to the usual crew of friends and kids.

Denny is in full pancake making mode.

Mia drags in, tired and cold.

WILLOW  
There she is!

DENNY  
If you're still drunk, you're grounded.  
(beat)  
Otherwise, it's New Year's, so we'll let  
it slide.

MIA  
Thanks. I'm not drunk.

Kat hands Mia a mug of coffee.

KAT

How'd it go? Did you get to see Adam?

WILLOW

Ooh yeah. Spill. Tell us everything.

MIA

It was...perfect.

Mia then looks up at Kat. A flood of tears come rushing.

Kat jumps up protectively, shielding her girl.

KAT

Thaaat's it, everybody. The buffet is relocating to the living room. Let's go, move it. Take your Mimosa and your Stumptown's finest with you.

Kat shuttles everyone out, even Denny, still holding his spatula in hand.

Kat shuts the kitchen door and heads for the sink piled with dishes.

KAT (CONT'D)

OK. I wash. You dry. We'll talk. I always find it so calming, the warm water, the soap.

They wash for several minutes in silence.

Mia looks out the kitchen window. At the driveway basketball court where Denny and Adam first played.

MIA

It's just. It's like we had this perfect year and a half. I never even thought about the future. About it taking us in different directions.

Kat gives her a sad, knowing smile.

KAT

Really? I thought about it.

MIA

I know. I'm only 18, right? What do I know about love?

MOM

Actually, I was thinking just the opposite.

(beat)

(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)

The love you guys have is real. It's just your age that makes it inconvenient.

MIA

If we weren't musicians we could at least go to college together and it would be fine.

KAT

That's a cop-out. All relationships are tough.

MIA

I guess. But music's pulling us apart.

KAT

Wrong. Music can't do that. Life might give you different roads, but you get to choose which one to take. Adam's not trying to keep you from going to Juilliard, is he?

MIA

No more than I'm trying to make him move to New York. It's all stupid, anyway, I may not even go.

KAT

Maybe not. But you're going somewhere. I think we all get that. And the same is true for Adam.

MIA

So...what do I do?

KAT

I don't know. I don't think you'd be able to be able down Juilliard. But I understand if you chose Adam-love over music-love.

(beat, sighs)

Either way you win. And either way you lose. What can I tell you? Love's a bitch.

INT. ICU - NIGHT

Mia's body is back in ICU. The quiet, drama-free hum of the machines has been restored. Everything is calm.

Too calm. Mia's body looks bereft of color.

And the other Mia is curled up on the floor beneath the bed.

MIA (V.O.)  
*I just want to sleep.*

She looks out and see Nurse Ramirez' BRIGHT YELLOW CROCS in front of her.

Ramirez looks down at Mia's colorless body.

NURSE RAMIREZ  
 OK, that's it for me.

Her voice is warm, but matter of fact. She's spent too much time in ICU to believe everyone's a miracle.

She exits, yawning, as a MALE ICU NURSE, takes over her shift.

Mia looks out and now sees Gramps' boots in the doorway.

GRAMPS  
 May I?

MALE ICU NURSE  
 Sure thing.

He steps out, leaving Gramps alone with Mia. Gramps takes a seat on one side of her bed.

Mia crawls out from under the other side, pulling her spent self into a chair so she is looking at Gramps across her lifeless body.

Gramps looks pretty worn down too.

GRAMPS  
 You know, Duck, there's so much bullshit in the world, it's hard to know where to begin sometimes.  
 (beat)  
 Like, when they say the good Lord never gives you more than you can handle, I'm not sure if I buy that. Only so much one girl can take, right?  
 (beat)  
 Don't torture yourself hanging on for us. If you need to go...  
 (his eyes well)  
 Then you go. We still love you. And nothing changes that.



Mia, touched, reaches out for his hand, even though he can't feel it.

MIA

Thanks, Gramps. For understanding.

GRAMPS

OK. I said my peace.

He stands, then shuffles to the door, and gives her foot a squeeze before he exits.

MIA (V.O.)

*He made it OK for me to go.*

TIME LAPSE IN ICU

All of Mia's relatives coming past her bed. Gran, Aunt Suze, Aunt Suze's Kids, distant relatives she barely knows.

An AWKWARD PRE-TEEN girl just stares at Mia's body.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*I met her once eight Christmases ago at Aunt Suze's. But I don't even remember her name. Julie? No, Jillie.*

A MAN IN KHAKIS makes his way past Mia's bed.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*And him - no idea who that guy is. What if he came for someone else? Awkward.*

Then Kim walks in and sits next to Mia's body. Her hair is crazy-unkept at this point. She flops in a chair.

KIM

Look at me, Mia. I look like I slept in a dumpster.

Mia smiles sitting across from her. Kim sighs.

KIM (CONT'D)

You have no idea how insane this day has been. I just wish you were here to see it.

Mia laughs - *she was here.*

KIM (CONT'D)

Oh, and by the way, Adam's totally great. I suck for not telling you that before.

MIA

Yeah, but except he couldn't handle this.  
 (then, sadly)  
 But who could handle it, right? He's  
 young.

KIM

Oh my god, Mia, my mom totally melted  
 down in front of your relatives. It was  
 humiliating, but your aunt was really  
 cool about it. But then, we got in this  
 HUGE fight outside the Roseland Theater  
 with a crowd of hipsters and punks. My  
 mom started crying and screaming for me  
 not to leave her - it was nuts, as  
 usual. And I told her to get it  
 together and start acting like an adult.  
 And then I stormed in to find Adam. And  
 when I came out, everyone's all cheering  
 me and high-fiving me.  
 (beat)  
 It was pretty great. I didn't know I had  
 that in me.

MIA

I did.

KIM

Oh, and then these security guards tried  
 to throw us out when Adam and I stormed  
 the ICU - with the help of Ms. Brooke  
 Vega - which was surreal. But when those  
 guys grabbed me, Mia, I wasn't scared at  
 all. I was like "what's the worst that  
 can happen? They take me to jail? My  
 mom freaks out even more?" So? I could  
 handle jail.  
 (she stops, getting  
 emotional)  
 I mean, after today, that would be  
 nothing compared...  
 (breaking down)  
 To losing you.

MIA

Kim. Listen to me.

KIM

You can't go.  
 (whispers)  
 You still have a family.

MIA

Kim. Just stop for a second.

Kim suddenly stops. Swallows her tears for a moment.

MIA (CONT'D)

Listen to me. You are going to be OK.  
You are. Yes, losing me is going to hurt  
- the kind of pain that doesn't feel real  
at first, and then it does, it takes your  
breath away. And the rest of this year  
will suck with all the cloying your-best-  
friend-died sympathy you're gonna get. I  
hate that part.

(beat)

But you'll deal with it. You'll leave  
Oregon. You'll go to college. You'll  
make new friends. You'll meet tons of  
great guys. You'll fall in love and  
you'll become a photographer. And one  
day, you'll get married and have a kid  
who you won't smother and embarrass like  
your mom does.

(beat)

And, Kim, you'll be a stronger person  
because of what you lost today.

Kim calmly lays her head next to Mia, wipes away a tear.  
After a moment, she lets out a bittersweet sigh.

KIM

Hey, Mi. Wasn't Labor Day the best?

And suddenly Mia smiles too.

MIA

Totally.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*People always say certain moments are  
going to be "the best day of your life" -  
like your sweet sixteen, or Prom, which  
by the way, kind of sucked. But, for me,  
the best day was the one I didn't plan.*

EXT. HALL HOUSE/ BACK YARD - DAY

End of summer. It's early morning, but already hot. Kat  
stands over -- A GIANT WATERMELON. She calls over her  
shoulder.

KAT

Hey, Babe! Remember those seeds I  
attempted to plant three summers ago?

INT. HALL HOUSE - DAY

THUNK! Kat heaves the watermelon onto the table.

KAT

We're gonna need some people to help eat this.

DENNY

Let's call Willow, Henry and the baby. It's Labor Day. We should bar-b-que.

MIA

Can Adam come?

KAT

Sure. Haven't seen much of him lately though.

MIA

He's just been busy with the band.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*This was before things got weird between us, when I was still genuinely excited for him, before the Juilliard had even taken root.*

DENNY

Well, if the rockstar can handle a humble picnic with a bunch of squares like us.

MIA

Dad. If he can handle a square like me, he can handle squares like you. Maybe I'll call Kim.

KAT

The more the merrier.

(to Denny)

Maybe we should make it a blow out like the olden days?

TEDDY

When Dinosaurs ruled the earth?

DENNY

Exactly. When dinosaurs roamed and your mom and I were young.

MONTAGE: ACCIDENTAL LABOR DAY PARTY.

Music plays, watermelon being passed, steaks and corn on the grill.

Everyone is there - a backyard blowout. Adam and his band, Kim, Henry, Willow, their new baby, Gran, Gramps, Aunt Suze and her family.

Denny turns on the SPRINKLER. Teddy and the kids run through it. Then, it's so hot, the adults run through it.

Adam and Mia laughing, getting soaked.

MIA (V.O.)

*It was so hot, I never put on dry clothes. I just kept dousing myself whenever I needed to cool off.*

All the lawn furniture from the front porch - and some pieces from inside - have made their way to the backyard.

Later in the afternoon, the sprinkler still runs, turning the brown grass into a slippery mud.

Teddy streaks his shirtless torso with mud, running around like he's a character from Lord Of the Flies.

Adam, Mia and Kim throw mud at each other, rolling in it. Getting disgusting, laughing.

They get clean again in the sprinkler as the sun sets.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*When it started to get dark, most folks left to go see the fireworks.*

*(beat)*

*But a handful stayed.*

Adam, Liz, Astrid, Henry, Willow (with the baby) and Kim all stay.

DARK NOW, they have the chairs around a fire roasting marshmallows.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*And then the instruments came out. Dad's guitar from the house, Henry's from his car, Adam's from his car. Liz' bass. And everyone was singing together, some of Dad's old songs, some of Adam's and Liz's songs.*

All the musicians - but Mia - play, while everyone else sings and dances along. Teddy and Kat cut a mean rug together.

MIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*I watched them and I thought this is what happiness feels like.*

Mia looks up. Adam and Denny are carrying her cello out of the house. She blushes.

MIA (CONT'D)  
Oh, no no no. I'm not giving a concert.

DENNY  
We to play for us. We want you to play with us.

MIA  
No way.

KIM  
Why not, Mia? Are you a classical music snob?

MIA  
It's not that. It's just the two styles don't fit together.

KAT  
Says who?

WILLOW  
(rocking her baby)  
Pretty please. I never get to hear you play anymore.

HENRY  
C'mon Mi, it's just family.

Adam takes Mia's hand.

ADAM  
I really want to play with you just once.  
I'll never ask again.

Mia looks at all of them.

Mia hesitates, then grabs her bow from her dad and takes a seat at her cello.

They all play together and it is amazing. It's like one of those great Springsteen concerts where a hundred musicians - all genres - share the stage in an exuberant symphony.

It's best song of the movie, better than Mia's audition.

And fireworks in the distance illuminating their backyard, impromptu stage. Mia radiates joy as she plays. She shares smile with Adam.

MIA (V.O.)

*The thing is. Mom and Dad always had their scene. And Adam had his. And I was envious that I didn't.*

*(beat)*

*Until Labor Day. That was my scene.*

Mia looks at her dad playing, Teddy banging a bongo, Kat dancing -- and whatever party they're at right now, Mia wants to be there too.

They keep jamming, the song carries us to --

INT. HOSPITAL ICU - NIGHT

Mia, alone now, seems to rise up out of her lifeless body.

Stands there for a moment, then turns and walks out of the room. Past the other patients. Past the nurses' station, past the Male Nurse - who's flipping through a magazine - and out the ICU doors -

Mia hears the song from Labor day as she goes. It's comforting.

She walks past the waiting room, where everyone huddles -

Past the HOSPITAL CAFETERIA where the worn out SURGEON and TRAUMA NURSES who worked hard to save her grab a late dinner --

And rounds a corridor to the MAIN WAITING ROOM with the LARGE DOORS. The doors that were locked before.

And even though it's dark now, as Mia approaches, the SKY OUTSIDE GETS a little BLUER, a little BRIGHTER -

And then slowly, the music starts to change. We hear something else, but we're not sure what it is yet.

Mia's hand hits the door. It gives way, opens slightly -

But Mia suddenly stops, looking up at the speakers in the ceiling playing their hospital muzak.

It's the YO-YO MA song she and Adam first held hands to. Mia smiles, stops.

MIA

OK. I'll go after this song.

When she takes a step back into the hospital, the song gets louder, as though it is coming from somewhere.

Mia starts to follow it.

The deeper she goes into the hospital, the louder it gets, almost as if Yo-Yo Ma were there playing it live at the end of some hallway somewhere.

Mia keeps going...

And going...

Until she is stunned to find herself looking back in her ICU room, where her body is in the bed.

And Adam is sitting in the chair next to her body.

GIANT EAR MUFF HEADPHONES are on her body's ears - like the ones her parents put on her ears when she was little - only these are BLASTING YO-YO MA from Adam's iPod.

MIA (CONT'D)

Adam. No.

He takes Mia's hand and UNWINDS THE BANDAGE.

Mia walks around the bed so she can see his face.

MIA (CONT'D)

You're just torturing yourself.

He looks at her bare hand. It's only scraped up, but not seriously wounded.

He holds it delicately, blows on it to warm it up, then -

ADAM

Mia --

MIA

Don't.

ADAM

Stay.



Mia looks at him, unable to say anything. He leans into her, looking at her, not flinching. Holding her hand.

ADAM (CONT'D)

There are no words for what happened to you today. There is no good side of it, there is no silver lining. But there is something to live for. And I'm not talking about me. I...I don't know what I'm talking about. Maybe I'm in shock. Maybe I haven't digested what happened.

(beat)

All I can think of is how messed up it will be if your life ends here. I mean, I know. I know that your life is forever fucked because of this, and I'm not dumb enough to think I could erase it, but I just can't wrap my head around the idea of you not getting old, not having kids, not going to Juilliard, and not getting to play for all those people, so they can get chills the way I do every time I see you pick up that bow. Mia.

The Male Nurse pokes his head in. Adam jumps.

MALE ICU NURSE

It's OK. But sometimes the last thing they do before they go is squeeze your hand. Just...so you're prepared.

Adam nods. The Nurse leaves them alone.

ADAM

C'mon Mia, don't make me write a song.

(beat)

If you stay, Mia, I promise you I will do whatever you want. I'll quit the band, and I'll go with you to New York if that's what you need. But if you need me to stay away I will do that too. I was talking to Liz and she said maybe coming back to your old life would just be too painful, that maybe it would be easier to erase it all.

(beat)

And that would suck, but I would do it. I can lose you like that if I don't lose you today. I will let you go. If you stay.

She closes her eyes and covers her ears - *she can't take Adam going on and on.*

And soon Adam is drowned out by the sound of CELLO. Mia playing as she is flooded with IMAGES -

Sitting at the breakfast table this morning. Laughing as she gets hit with flying oatmeal from Teddy.

Walking down the street and hearing people utter the word "orphan."

Walking arm and arm with Kim in New York, skyscrapers casting shadows on their faces.

Holding Teddy on her lap, tickling him till he rolls off her bed laughing.

Looking down at her hand as she plays the cello.

Looking down, holding Adam's hand. They both have calluses.

Riding her bike next to Denny skateboarding, bringing home her first rented cello.

Kat holding sleeping two-year-old Mia at a punk show.

Kat dressing Mia up for Halloween.

And the cello getting louder and louder and louder. Mia playing harder and harder until her hand starts to bleed -

In ICU, Adam looks down as...Mia comatose hand squeezes his hand.

Mia, playing cello, lets go of the bow.

And then the SCREEN GOES WHITE. And The music stops.

Silence...that seems to go on forever.

And then everything fluttering and OUT OF FOCUS as...

A fluorescent ceiling light becomes clear from Mia's POV.

Then Adam's hopeful face comes into view, leaning over her. He smiles.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Mia?

She looks up. Alive.

Fade to black.

