

DISPLACED

Written by

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OPENING: A car pulls up to a modest home on a small farm. Inside the sedan is a teenage girl. A woman exits the sedan first and she is greeted by an older married couple. After a verbal exchange, the woman opens the rear door and a young girl emerges. She carries a trash bag filled with her belongings. With her head down she enters the home followed by the couple. The woman enters the home as well.

INT: INSIDE THE MODULAR HOME. THE HOME IS TIDY WITH FEW NICK KNACKS. THE COUNTERS ARE CLEAN AND THERE IS A FRESH POT OF COFFEE.

LOUISE IS A YOUNG GRANDMOTHER. SHE IS WELL KEPT BUT NOT FASHIONABLE. SHE IS SITTING AT THE KITCHN TABLE WITH HER HUSBAND DAVID. DAVID IS QUIET, RUGGED AND SPORTS A FIVE O'CLOCK SHADOW. THEY ARE SPEAKING WITH A DCF CASE WORKER.

DCF CASE WORKER

Okay, like I said on the phone. Since her birth father passed, she can stay here temporarily. In a few days I will get the court date and we can go through the steps necessary to place her here full time..

LOUISE

I understand.

DAVID

I don't.

LOUISE

Please don't start.

DCF CASE WORKER

There are steps and procedures.

DAVID

Yes, we have been through steps and procedures before, we tried to protect her before this happened and you....

LOUISE

(to the case worker)
Not you personally.

DAVID

Whatever, the steps and procedures kept her in a horrible place for thirteen years.

Abby enters the room

ABBY
Fourteen years, I'm fourteen now.

DAVID
Fourteen, sorry. You can understand
my anger.

LOUISE
Frustration, we're not angry.

DAVID
I'm angry.

DCF CASE WORKER
I'm sorry. I wasn't involved with
this at that time and placing a
child with family is always
preferred.

Abby enters the kitchen

ABBY
Which the minor has no say in.

LOUISE
Abby, would you like to sit down?
Have something to drink?

ABBY
So I can stay and listen?

DAVID
Heck yeah, you're not some kid with
no opinion. Drink coffee?

ABBY
Yes, just a little cream.

DAVID
The way I take it, cool.

David fixes her a cup

LOUISE
Anyway back to what happens next.

DCF CASE WORKER
She stays here, we check in and set
up a court date.

LOUISE
How soon does she stay here full
time, officially?

DCF CASE WORKER
Do you want the truth?

DAVID
Please.

DCF CASE WORKER
I don't know. If her mom does well.

DAVID
And hell freezes over.

LOUISE
That's enough, go out to the barn
break something. Then fix it. Go
now.

David gets up and leaves

LOUISE (CONT'D)
Sorry, there is a lot of pain
there.

ABBY
Maybe I shouldn't be here either.

LOUISE
That is up to you. I feel that you
need to here this and be involved.

DCF CASE WORKER
I agree.

ABBY
Fine, when do I get to break
something?

LOUISE
I will point out some things in the
barn, that I would be happy to be
rid of.

DCF CASE WORKER
Anyway, we are pretty much done
here. Abby tested well and can
start sophomore year in a few
weeks.

ABBY
Excuse me?

DCF CASE WORKER
School, high school. You know
reading writing and math.

LOUISE
And you have to do one thing
extracurricular.

ABBY
Why.

DCF CASE WORKER
I will leave you two to sort this
out. You have my numbers, if I
don't hear from you, you will hear
from me for the first check up.

ABBY
Extracurricular?

LOUISE
Extracurricular.

ABBY
Shit.

David bursts into the kitchen

DAVID
Swear jar, swear jar.

LOUISE
Shut up.

FADE OUT.

INT. ABBY IS SITTING ALONE ON A SINGLE BED. SHE IS TAKING IN
THE BEDROOM THAT USED TO BE HER MOTHERS. THE ROOM IS
UNDISTURBED. THERE ARE NO TROPHIES, PLAQUES OR POSTERS ON THE
WALL. SHE WANDERS AROUND THE SMALL SPACE OPEN DRAWS AND
CLOSETS.

Louise enters

LOUISE
All your mother left with was her
clothes.

ABBY
The room seems lonely.

LOUISE
She was lonely, I'm sorry this is
happening to you.

ABBY

I get that a lot. The police were sorry, her friends were sorry and the social worker was sorry.

LOUISE

Okay, sorry, I mean, what do you want to do?

ABBY

I don't understand.

LOUISE

Well you have never spent any time here, it is a farm, a small farm. There are things to do. Why don't you have David show you around? We can have an early dinner and tomorrow we can get out of here and buy some stuff to make this room yours.

ABBY

Mine?

LOUISE

Yes, I prefer to think that this is going to work out, you staying here.

ABBY

I guess, I don't know.

LOUISE

Do you need someone other than us to talk to?

ABBY

Like a social worker? No.

LOUISE

There are priests, support groups or a therapist?

ABBY

All wonderful choices, thank you, no.

LOUISE

Abby, you going to have to get used to the fact that being here is going to be a very different life than before. I want to try really hard to make it work.

ABBY

Did you try really hard with my mother?

LOUISE

Yes, I think I did. But you are not her and I'm very person different now. So all I can hope to do is move forward, thats sounds like bad bumper sticker.

ABBY

It does sound like a bumper sticker.

LOUISE

So what do you suggest?

ABBY

I want to move around, I'm tired of sitting in offices, cars and court rooms.

LOUISE

Let's go see what David is breaking.

FADE OUT.

EXT. LOUISE AND ABBY ARE OUTSIDE WALKING THE PROPERTY. THERE ARE A FEW OUT STRUCTURES, A SMALL BARN. CHICKENS ROAM FREELY THERE IS A LARGE ENCLOSED VEGETABLE GARDEN.

ABBY

So what do you guys do?

LOUISE

I have a cleaning business, which pays for everything David breaks. David is retired.

ABBY

Retired?

LOUISE

Yes Honey we are old.

ABBY

You don't seem it.

LOUISE

David and I have be working and saving since we were eighteen.

(MORE)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

He might seem like a bit of a flake, but he is a good provider and frugal.

ABBY

Like you said, this is all new to me.

A goat runs past the two girls with David following behind.

DAVID

You said goats would be fun!

FADE TO:

INT: MALL ABBY AND LOUISE ARE WALKING AROUND.

LOUISE

Ugh, sorry I'm not used to this many people in one place.

ABBY

I used to hide in places like this.

LOUISE

I don't understand.

ABBY

Shelter, when you have no place to live you look for shelter. A couple dollars and a food court buys a few hours of a clean warm place to be.

LOUISE(shaken)

I can't imagine.

ABBY

I didn't have to imagine.

LOUISE

I have to sit. Can you get me a cup of coffee?

ABBY

Sure.

Louise gives money to Abby and finds a place to sit, Abby returns with two cups of coffee.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Cream and sugar.

LOUISE

Yes that's fine.

ABBY

You seem upset, is this a bad idea?

LOUISE

No, we have to get this done. I'm just trying to find a way to deal with all of this.

ABBY

Ha right, new place, a real bed, new clothes and starting school is a lot for me too.

LOUISE

I know, I'm sorry.

ABBY

Again.

LOUISE

Right, what else can I say?

ABBY

You could say "let go try on some clothes"

LOUISE

Good suggestion.

Montage of the two girls trying various things on. Some things they agree on, others not. Louise is uncomfortable when she drags Abby out of Victorias secret. They are sitting in the food court.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

This is not real food.

ABBY

Real enough.

LOUISE

We should go to the thrift store.

ABBY

Why?

LOUISE

So you can get some stuff to make that room yours, not my memory of being a failure?

ABBY

So you think it's your fault? My mother's choices?

LOUISE
 Sometimes. Doctors and therapists
 can tell you all you want that is a
 mental illness, addiction. You
 still feel like you did something
 wrong.

ABBY
 Something we share.

LOUISE
 Really?

ABBY
 Ever since I can remember, I've
 felt like there was something I
 could do, to make it all stop. But
 I couldn't.

Abby starts to get emotional

LOUISE
 Is it time to go?

ABBY
 I'm tired.

Abby starts to tear up.

CUT TO:

INT ABBY'S NEW BEDROOM. DAVID IS TAPING UP A BOX

DAVID
 (Surveying the room)
 I like it.

ABBY
 Really?

DAVID
 Yeah, why?

ABBY
 I've just never had to decorate
 before.

DAVID
 You're a natural. Louise will be
 home soon, can you help me start
 dinner?

ABBY
 I guess.

The three are sitting at the table eating.

LOUISE
So I was talking with the guidance
counselor at the school.

DAVID
Cindy?

LOUISE
Mrs. David. She and your mother
went to school together. No love
lost there.

ABBY
What do you mean?

DAVID
You are going to find out that your
mom had a gift for ruffling
feathers. What did she call it?

LOUISE
Disrupting the status quo.

ABBY
What does that mean?

DAVID
It's a nice way of saying she was
suspended a few times.

ABBY
Do I have to go to school?

DAVID AND LOUISE
Yes.

LOUISE
Have you thought about what else
you are going to do there? Have you
picked an extracurricular activity?

ABBY
Football?

DAVID
If there was a team that would
disrupt the status quo.

ABBY
No I really haven't.

LOUISE

Well think about it, you will have the first week to decide.

ABBY

Are you sure about sending me to this school?

LOUISE

There isn't much of a choice.

ABBY

You could home school, there are computer programs.

LOUISE

No computer program is going to teach you how to interact with people.

DAVID

I'm sure you've got great people skills.

LOUISE

And it's a small town so..

ABBY

Everyone will know my mom is in jail.

DAVID

I didn't think about that.

ABBY

I did, I'm always thinking about it. A bunch of people I don't know and all they know about me and I have a junkie mom behind bars. May I be excused?

LOUISE

Of course.

Abby leaves the table.

DAVID

This is going to be fun.

LOUISE

Are we supposed to hide? Is she not going to go to high school? We have to deal with this head on.

DAVID
Like we dealt with Sarah head on?

LOUISE
We tried.

DAVID
Maybe not hard enough.

LOUISE
I, we cashed out a lot of our savings for rehab more than once.

DAVID
I know, I know.

LOUISE
We are squeaking by.

DAVID
Please I don't need a budget session, I'm depressed enough. The thought of Abby in high school.

LOUISE
Yes, high school sucks.

DAVID
So what do we do?

LOUISE
What can we do, she goes and we get ready for the fallout.

DAVID
And we stopped drinking why?

LOUISE
Shut up.

FADE OUT.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL EARLY MORNING BUSES AND CARS ARE DROPPING OFF STUDENTS OF VARIOUS AGES AND INCOME BRACKETS. SENIORS ARE DRIVING THEMSELVES. SOME IN PLOW TRUCKS, OTHERS ARE IN SPORTS CARS.

David and Abby sit in the front of David's truck.

DAVID
You ready for this?

ABBY
Define ready.

DAVID
I've been meaning to ask you...

ABBY
I don't use drugs.

DAVID
Good to know, but not what I was
going to ask.

ABBY
Sorry, that was rude, I guess I'm a
little nervous.

DAVID
It's understandable, any how. So
are you kinda tough or kinda
broken?

ABBY
I would say both.

DAVID
Can you be tough during the day and
come home a little broken.

ABBY
Why?

DAVID
High school sucks.

ABBY
Inspiring.

DAVID
Anyway, there are a lot of
different kids here.

ABBY
And?

DAVID
And half the staff know you mom.

ABBY
Wonderful.

DAVID
So this isn't go to be easy.

ABBY

Not to keep with the rude theme,
being homeless with an addict mom
is tough. This will be difficult at
most.

DAVID

We'll see. Just call if it's too
much on the first day.

ABBY

Thank you.

DAVID

No problem, so you ready?

ABBY

Not really, but I have to go in
sometime.

Abby gets out of the truck and does not look back.

INT. PRINCIPLES OFFICE. PRINCIPLE KIMBLE SITS ACROSS FROM
ABBY.

PRINCIPLE KIMBLE

So your classes are picked out, (he
hands Abby a slip of paper) you
will also find your locker
information.

ABBY

Thank you.

PRINCIPLE KIMBLR

I have arrange for a junior to give
you a tour and spend the day with
you.

ABBY

Really?

PRINCIPLE KIMBLE

Yes.

There is a knock on the door.

PRINCIPLE KIMBLE (CONT'D)

Come in.

Sara enters, Sara is a junior well put together but not
glamorous. She has a backpack and headphones wrapped around
her neck.

PRINCIPLE KIMBLE (CONT'D)
Sara Johnson, this is Abby Johnson.

SARA JOHNSON
No relation?

ABBY
I wouldn't know.

Abby stands and extends her hand.

ABBY (CONT'D)
It is nice to meet you and thank
you for helping me.

PRINCIPLE KIMBLE
So most of the teachers will expect
the two of you to be wandering a
bit and somewhat tardy, just don't
make a habit of it.

SARA JOHNSON
Yes, sir.

PRINCIPLE KIMBLE
Alright, off you go, Sara my door
might be closed sometimes, but this
office is always open to you.
Always feel free to come here if
you need anything.

ABBY
Thank you.

SARA JOHNSON
Well let's go.

The two girls exit the office and start to walk around the
school.

SARA JOHNSON (CONT'D)
The classrooms are in sections
according to grades.

ABBY
Okay.

SARA JOHNSON
So freshman will all be in one area
and so forth.

ABBY
No mixing of species.

SARA JOHNSON
Ha that's funny. So what do I need
to know about you?

ABBY
How much time do you have?

SARA JOHNSON
Would you need a lot?

ABBY
Let's see, my mom went to school
here, had me when she was
seventeen. Left home, She's an
incarnated drug addict who
basically kept me homeless.

SARA JOHNSON
Wow.

ABBY
Yeah.

SARA JOHNSON
You seem to share easily.

ABBY
(Sighing) I've been going through
this same story for a couple of
months, so I guess it comes out a
lot easier over time.

SARA JOHNSON
Obviously you aren't homeless now.

ABBY
My grandparents have stepped up. I
don't even know them and now I'm
living with them.

SARA JOHNSON
I would say I'm sorry or that I
understand, but it seems stupid.

Bell rings

SARA JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Okay, so this is homeroom, all of
your classes until lunch are within
these four doors. I will be back to
escort you to our fine dining
cafeteria.

ABBY

Really?

SARA JOHNSON

Yes we have a cafeteria, no it is not fine dining.

ABBY

I meant you eating lunch with me.

SARA JOHNSON

It will give me some time to try to create an interesting life to compete with that story.

ABBY

I love creative fiction.

SARA JOHNSON

See you later.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA TYPICAL HIGH SCHOOL LUNCH. EVERY TABLE IS POPULATED BY A DIFFERENT SOCIAL GROUP. ABBY AND SARA ARE SEATED BY THEMSELVES AT A TABLE.

ABBY

This is strange.

SARA JOHNSON

What part?

ABBY

All of it. Sitting in a clean place, looking at people my own age, not having to feel threatened. This is a-lot.

SARA JOHNSON

Should we go to the office? Call and get you home?

ABBY

It doesn't feel like home, yet.

SARA JOHNSON

Well at least you said yet.

ABBY

I guess. What did you come up with, anything creative?

SARA JOHNSON

Oh God no, I'm so boring it's not even funny.

(MORE)

SARA JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Parents met in college, they are environmental scientists. They did some research here, fell in love with it, moved here, bought a small farm and now we are living the life.

ABBY

So you're a farmer.

SARA JOHNSON

Not really, they still do research and lectures. They both teach at the local college.

ABBY

And brothers and sisters?

SARA JOHNSON

One brother, he sits with the theater people. He's over there.

SARA'S BROTHER JOHN IS SITTING WITH HIS CLICHE, HE HAS A BOOK IN HIS HAND WHILE EATING.

ABBY

He actually reads.

SARA JOHNSON

Yeah, he's a freak.

ABBY

Moving on, what do I need to know to survive?

SARA JOHNSON

It's pretty typical. There are the haves, wanna bes, have nots and the don't give awell you know. This is a really small school so

ABBY

Everyone knows everything.

SARA JOHNSON

Yup.

ABBY

What about you?

SARA JOHNSON

Me?

ABBY

Yeah, what is your tribe?

SARA JOHNSON

Lady I'm a jock, Field Hockey
goalie, so watch your ass.

ABBY

(Laughing) Why? Don't field hockey
people have stick up their...

Bell Rings

SARA JOHNSON

Okay enough fun, off to finish the
day of higher learning.

ABBY

Thank you.

SARA JOHNSON

Please, this gives me a free pass
to be tardy. Please need me for the
entire year.

ABBY

Let me know how I can help. You
know, I can have a breakdown or
something.

SARA JOHNSON

Please don't.

FADE OUT.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL. BUSES ARE LEAVING, KIDS ARE PEELING
OUT IN THEIR CARS. SARA AND ABBY ARE STANDING TOGETHER.

SARA JOHNSON

And you've got a ride.

ABBY

My grandfather.

David pulls up with the windows open.

DAVID (SHOUTING OUT THE CAR WINDOW)

I'm too young to be grandfather.

ABBY

Pops?

DAVID

It doesn't work.

Abby gets in the truck.

ABBY
See you tomorrow?

SARA JOHNSON
Where else are we going to be? See
you.

ABBY
Thanks again.

DAVID
So, did you survive? Like it, hate
it? Should we send you to France
for finishing school instead?

ABBY
Is that an option?

DAVID
Not really.

Abby start to get emotional, slight panic attack.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Hey you okay?

ABBY
Everyone was nice, this to too
normal for me. I'm just waiting for
something bad to happen. I know I
shouldn't, but I miss my mom.

DAVID
Why shouldn't you?

ABBY
Because I'm supposed to hate her.

DAVID
Let's drive around, you can get
some air, see where we live and
talk a little.

ABBY
And if I don't feel like talking.

DAVID
Then enjoy the scenery, it's why
most of us moved here.

ABBY
Why did you move here?

DAVID

I was in the city, making money and living the life that was expected. It took a toll and before I collapsed, your grandmother convinced me to come here.

ABBY

Collapsed?

DAVID

A nice was to say nervous breakdown. Anxiety runs in the family.

ABBY

Do you think that was apart of my mom's issues?

DAVID

I'm not sure either of us is prepared to talk about this.

ABBY

(frustrated)

So when do we? I'm the one getting tossed around? I'm the one living with strangers and no on seems to want to talk about it.

DAVID

You're right.

ABBY

I don't care about being right.

DAVID

Sorry.

ABBY (SCREAMS)

Ugh. If I hear that again.

David pulls the car over they are in front of a ice cream store.

DAVID

Can we take a break for a ice cream?

ABBY

Sure, I guess that makes it all better.

FADE OUT:

INT. ABBY'S NEW BEDROOM. THE ROOM HAS BEEN CLEANED OUT. THE BED HAS NEW NON DESCRIPT SHEETS. ABBY AND LOUSIE ARE SITTING ON THE BED

LOUISE

Do you want to paint the room?

ABBY

What?

LOUISE

Pick out your own colors, paint the room. Make it yours?

ABBY

Is it mine?

LOUISE

I hope so, we're trying you know.

ABBY

This is too much too soon. Instant family, and school. Just add water and a boyfriend will appear.

LOUISE

Did you meet someone at school?

ABBY

No no no, I was joking. I'm just trying to breathe, I'm tired.

LOUISE

Not sleeping?

ABBY

No, yes.. I'm used to sleeping with one eye open. For various reasons.

LOUISE

I can't imagine.

ABBY

Do you want to know?

LOUISE

I'm not really sure.

ABBY

At least you're honest.

LOUISE

I try to be, do you think it will help?

(MORE)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

We can arrange for you to talk with
some one on a professional level.
So one with the skills to help.

ABBY

Did you do all this for my mom?

LOUISE

Yes and no, there was a-lot more
anger and shouting, but we offered
I hope as much as we could.

ABBY

I just don't understand this. Why
would she choose how we lived over
this?

LOUISE

Maybe you need to ask her?

ABBY

I'm not ready.

David pokes his head in

DAVID

Are you ready for dinner?

ABBY

I guess.

LOUISE

What did you make?

DCF CASE WORKER

Something exotic, I like to call it
(with a french accent) Le' Mac and
cheese.

LOUISE

We'll be right there. Abby, there
were mistakes and pain all around.
We are all trying to take it slow,
get through a minefield and do what
is best for you.

ABBY

Is it best for my mom to be in
prison?

LOUISE

When you leave here for school
everyday, you will have to make
decisions on your own.

ABBY
I've been doing that for a long
time.

LOUISE
My point is, your mom made her
decisions, not good ones. At least
she made a great one by having you.

ABBY
You don't know me yet.

DAVID (O.C.)
It's getting cold.

LOUISE
We will.

FADE TO:

DINNER TABLE. ABBY, DAVID AND LOUISE ARE SITTING AND EATING
DINNER.

ABBY
So can I get a little history here.

DAVID
I've no secrets.

LOUISE
What are you looking for?

ABBY
Just how you got here.

DAVID
I was in finance, you know
investing other people's money.

ABBY
And?

DAVID
I made enough and we came here.

ABBY
Right.

LOUISE
No secrets?

DAVID

Fine, one day driving across a bridge into the city, I had a panic attack.

ABBY

Panic attack?

DAVID

Yes, heart beats fast, sweat comes pouring down, can't breathe world is closing in.

ABBY

Wow, so then you packed it in and moved to these green acres?

DAVID

Basically.

ABBY

Basically?

LOUISE

David still manages money, he is very good at it. He is careful and not greedy, so we are okay. Not rich, but okay.

DAVID

This week.

LOUISE

Funny.

ABBY

I don't understand.

DAVID

Do you know what the stock market is?

ABBY

Yes.

DAVID

So I move money around just enough not to lose money and make enough to live here.

LOUISE

And I work.

DAVID
(Choking back)
Uh Huh.

LOUISE
Shut up.

ABBY
This makes things even more tough
to understand.

LOUISE
Why your mom did what she did?

ABBY
Yes.

LOUISE
I don't have the answer, I can
guess and tell you what we went
through. But in the end you really
don't know why people make the
choices they do.

ABBY
You just seem so normal and nice. I
don't understand.

DAVID
We don't either.

ABBY
This sucks.

DAVID
I've made better mac and cheese.

FADE OUT.

INT CLASS ROOM STUDENTS ARE SITTING THERE IS A TEACHER AT THE
HEAD OF THE CLASS. ABBY IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM.

MR. GREEN
Okay the topic of the essay is "Can
I change the world?"

BOB (STUDENT)
I don't want to change the world.

CARL (STUDENT)
Can't we give peas a chance?

Students laugh, general talking.

MR. GREEN

Thank you for the comedic interlude. Write how you feel, even if you feel you can't change the world tell me why. 500 words rough draft by Friday.

Students all groan.

MR. GREEN (CONT'D)

Ahh, music to my ears. Thank you and see you all tomorrow.

Students get up to leave. Abby is still writing in her note book not noticing. Mr. Green approaches her.

MR. GREEN (CONT'D)

Abby?

ABBY

Oh sorry.

Abby closes her note book.

MR. GREEN

Are you okay? Keeping up?

ABBY

Yes, I think so.

MR. GREEN

I know this is new, so please let me know if you need more time or extra help.

ABBY

Thank you.

MR. GREEN

Are you settling in?

ABBY

Here, school, this town, or my new home?

MR. GREEN

Pick one.

ABBY (SHAKEN)

I'm trying, everything is happening too fast. So much has changed and I feel less in control now than when I was with my mom.

MR. GREEN
I went to school with Sara, I mean
your mom.

ABBY
Oh god.

Abby gets up to leave, she wants to get out of there quickly.

MR. GREEN
Abby, I just meant if you ever want
to talk to get a different
perspective.

Abby at the door.

ABBY
Thank you, I will keep that is
mind.

FADE OUT.

INT SCHOOL HALLWAY ABBY IS AT HER LOCKER, SHE IS SHAKEN. SARA
APPROACHES.

SARA JOHNSON
Hey you okay?

ABBY (HYPERVENTILATING)
No.

SARA JOHNSON
Okay let's walk.

Sara walks side by side with Sara heading down the hallway.

SARA JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Let's get you some where private.

ABBY
There is no where that feels that
way in here.

SARA JOHNSON
I don't understand.

ABBY
I don't either. I'm living with
people I don't know, going to
school with my mother's past and I
feel like I can't breathe.

SARA JOHNSON
Okay here we are the nurse's
office.

They enter the room

NURSE COLLINS
Hello, Sara.

SARA JOHNSON
Hello Mrs. Collins this is Abby,
please tell me you don't know her
mother.

NURSE COLLINS
I don't.

ABBY
Thank you.

Sara sits Abby down and hands her some tissues. Abby begins
to sob.

NURSE COLLINS
Sara get back to your day, thank
you.

SARA JOHNSON
I can stay.

ABBY
No thank you. I just want to go
home, but not really.

NURSE COLLINS
I'll just call your mom.

Now Abby really cries.

FADE TO:

INT. PSYCHOLOGIST OFFICE. LEATHER CHAIRS BOOK SHELVES ABBY IS
SITTING ACROSS FROM A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN. NANCY WILLIAMS IS A
WARM BUT PROFESSIONAL DOCTOR.

ABBY
Is this typical?

NANCY WILLIAMS
What part?

ABBY
Do crack babies normally get this
kind of attention?

NANCY WILLIAMS

They do when they have grandparents who are involved and caring.

ABBY

Where they this involved with their own daughter?

NANCY WILLIAMS

So you are angry at them? They caused your mother to be a drug addict and get arrested?

ABBY

How would I know? Again, crack baby.

NANCY WILLIAMS

If you aren't ready we can reschedule.

ABBY

I don't feel ready for any of this.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Why don't we start with that, trying to get to ready for where you find yourself now. After a bit we can work with the past and talk about the future.

ABBY

Do I have one?

NANCY WILLIAMS

A future? We all do.

ABBY

Right okay, now. I live in a town where everyone knows my convicted mom. I go to school with some of her classmates, the school is nothing I'm prepared for.

NANCY WILLIAMS

This is where I'm supposed to say how does that make you feel?

ABBY (CHUCKLING)

I think I have expressed it.

NANCY WILLIAMS

So what do you want to do?

ABBY

Excuse me?

NANCY WILLIAMS

What do you want to do?

ABBY

I don't remember being ever asked that.

NANCY WILLIAMS

So let's work on that, let's work on things you can control. How is school?

ABBY

The school isn't bad, just I'm not sure I can keep up? You know doing everything right?

NANCY WILLIAMS

Why is that important?

ABBY

What?

NANCY WILLIAMS

Getting it right.

ABBY

I don't know.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Abby everyone creates expectations. Good or bad, nothing meets them. Let's talk about that.

ABBY

Sure.

NANCY WILLIAMS

So what are your expectations?

ABBY

From what or who?

NANCY WILLIAMS

Pick one.

ABBY

I've never done this, everything has been on the run. Trying to eat not get caught or.....

NANCY WILLIAMS

Or?

ABBY

Being taken advantage of, from...
people.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Men?

ABBY

Yes.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Is this something we can discuss
now?

ABBY

Nothing ever really happened,
enough close calls to make me sleep
with one eye open.

NANCY WILLIAMS

How are you sleeping now?

ABBY

After four whole weeks of my new
life? Not well, I stare at the dark
ceiling wondering what will break
next.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Do you read?

ABBY

Can I, yes.

NANCY WILLIAMS

No I mean do you? There is a
difference. I have a few kids, some
read because a school told them to,
my other one always has something
on him reading.

ABBY

Oh, I don't know. Seems like a
luxury or something, why?

NANCY WILLIAMS

Well rather than staring at a
ceiling, letting you mind wander
creating nightmares, you could get
lost in a book.

ABBY
You sound like a commercial.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Well maybe.

Nancy gets up and pulls a book off here shelve and hands it to Abby.

NANCY WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
Try this.

ABBY
The Count of Monte Cristo? Really?

NANCY WILLIAMS
Oh you've read it?

ABBY
No, I think I've seen the movie.

NANCY WILLIAMS
The book is a bit different, a lot more detail. Take some time to get lost in that.

ABBY
I guess.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Well give it a try, our time is about up.

Nancy hands Abby a card.

NANCY WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
My number is on there, the service will contact me, if I'm able I will call back if you need to talk.

ABBY
If your able?

NANCY WILLIAMS
Other patients and a life, I don't want you to think that I'm ignoring you.

ABBY
Right a life.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Which you can start to build.

Nancy walks Abby to the door, David is in the waiting room looking at a fly fishing magazine.

ABBY

Thank you.

Abby approaches David, he rises to meet her.

DAVID

Why do they always have fly fishing magazines in waiting rooms. Have you ever fly fished?

ABBY

I can't say I have.

DAVID

Me neither, we should do it?

ABBY

Really?

DAVID

Why not, I'm always looking for a way to waste time on the weekend, better than having the list from Louise.

ABBY

Sure, fishing why not.

FADE TO:

INT. BIG BOX ELECTRONICS STORE. DAVID IS LOOKING AT A LARGE FLATSCREEN TV. ABBY IS NEXT TO HIM.

ABBY

How is the fishing?

DAVID

I'm fishing for a deal.

ABBY

That's funny.

DAVID

Well this is the way I see it. You don't have a TV in your room.

ABBY

Don't need one.

DAVID

Let me finish.

ABBY

Sorry.

DAVID

So, you are probably going to want to catch up on the latest show so you can y'know relate.

ABBY

Yes, I long to belong.

DAVID

Now I figure you will need an opportunity to to

ABBY

Catch up.

DAVID

Right.

ABBY

Are you going to use me in order to justify a new TV?

DAVID

That would be?

ABBY

Bad.

DAVID

Right, well I think bad s a bit strong. Gangsters are "bad". I just made a poor choice, so I will take the heat, you smile and nod.

FADE OUT.

INT ABBY'S NEW BEDROOM. DAVID AND ABBY ARE FINISHING MOUNTING THE TV IN HER BEDROOM.

LOUISE (O.C.)

Why is there a very large new TV in the living room?

David and Abby look at each other.

DAVID

Do you want the long version or the short version?

LOUISE (O.C.)
 You two are in charge of dinner,
 I'm going to watch my new TV.

DAVID
 What can you make?

ABBY
 I've never really cooked.

DAVID
 Really?

ABBY
 Really.

DAVID
 Our next adventure.

FADE OUT.

INT. CLASS ROOM STUDENTS BOOK DESK MR. GREEN IS STANDING AT
 THE FRONT OF THE ROOM.

MR. GREEN
 Okay, so everyone has their first
 drafts back. Don't forget edits and
 notes do not mean bad work. Every
 writer has to rewrite.

Bell Rings

MR. GREEN (CONT'D)
 I will see your young minds
 tomorrow, Abby hang back please.

All the students begin their exit.

ABBY
 Did I do something?

MR. GREEN
 Well yes, but not anything bad.

ABBY
 I mean, why did you want me to
 stay.

Mr. Green open his desk draw and hands Abby a book.

ABBY (CONT'D)
 Hooray another book.

MR. GREEN
You don't like to read?

ABBY
No, but everyone seems to be
throwing books at me.

MR. GREEN
Sorry, here.

ABBY
No pity.

MR. GREEN
Not really, this is fundamentals of
writing.

ABBY
And.

MR. GREEN
And you write well, but you need to
go through this. Start reading it
and let me know if you want to have
some help with it.

ABBY
I know how to use a semi colon.

MR. GREEN
That's a relief, you can teach me
all about it. Good day.

ABBY
Thank you.

Abby exits. Sara is waiting for her outside of class.

ABBY (CONT'D)
My bodyguard.

SARA JOHNSON
Someone has to eat your lunch. What
was that about?

ABBY
My fundamentals are lacking.

SARA JOHNSON
What does that mean?

ABBY

Extra homework. He gave me a book to use to help with my grammar and stuff.

SARA JOHNSON

He must like you.

ABBY

Why?

SARA JOHNSON

Mr. Green only gives out Fundamentals in writing to kids he likes or feels can write. He is always trying to get a student on that young writer's thing on the radio.

ABBY

Radio, what's a radio?

SARA JOHNSON

Oh it's "I think I'm funny day."

The two girls walk to the lunch room.

FADE OUT.

INT ABBY'S NEW BEDROOM. ABBY IS SITTING ALONE ON A SINGLE BED. THE BED IS COVERED WITH BOOKS AND PAPERS. SHE IS HARD AT WORK.

Louise enters

LOUISE

Hard at work?

ABBY

Yes.

LOUISE

Are you okay do you need help? It looks like you could use a desk and some shelves?

ABBY

I like working on the bed, but some shelves would be nice.

LOUISE

I'll let Mr. Fixit know.

Louise picks up a book from the bed.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
Fundamentals ...ugh I hate this
book.

ABBY
Sorry?

LOUISE
I could never write.

ABBY
(Looking up))
Could my mother write?

LOUISE
No she liked history and art. What
do you like?

ABBY
Sleeping in a warm safe place,
thank you. Have I said thank you?

LOUISE
You just did twice, do you like
writing?

ABBY
Kinda of, it's a safe way to
express stuff and no one can judge
you.

LOUISE
As long as no one reads it.

ABBY
Mr. Green reads it.

Abby hands the paper to Louise.

LOUISE
That's a lot of red.

David enters

DAVID
"Better dead then red" What are we
talking about?

ABBY
We were conducting a meeting about
my love of writing and lack of
basic skills.

DAVID

Ahh the fundamentals. Did he give you copy of your own, or do you want to borrow mine?

ABBY

Really?

LOUISE

Really, Mr. Romance still has his copy from college.

ABBY

(Starting to get emotional) I don't understand this.

Abby starts to cry.

ABBY (CONT'D)

This seems so normal so nice, why would my mom mess this up?

Abby is full on sobbing.

DAVID

I'll get some tissues.

Louise makes room for herself on the bed. Trying to console Abby.

ABBY

I mean, I don't mean to be rude. You and David seem great, nice loving, why did she do the stuff that she did?

LOUISE

David?

ABBY

He doesn't like Grandpa.

LOUISE

I do, call him that.

David returns with the tissues.

DAVID

Should I stay or should I go.

ABBY

I'm okay, I mean not really but somewhat.

Abby blows her nose.

ABBY (CONT'D)
I can't make sense of this.

LOUISE
Abby, we can't either. And we are
scared and confused just like you.

DAVID
We are just better at hiding it.

LOUISE
Is there anything we can do?

DAVID
Say go camping.

ABBY
What?

LOUISE
I do not want to go camping.

ABBY
What?

LOUISE
He is looking for any excuse to buy
something, he has a problem.

ABBY
You could buy me a car or a
computer.

DAVID
Oh Oh Oh a computer. Amazon or big
box?

LOUISE (TO ABBY)
See a problem.

FADE TO:

INT. SCHOOL LUNCH ROOM. GENERAL NOISE AND MOVEMENT FROM
STUDENTS. ABBY IS SITTING ALONE WITH A BOOK. A BOY APPROACHES
HER.

Scott is a freshman like Abby. He is the kind of kid who is
not yet grown into his own skin, not shy but awkward.

SCOTT
The Count of Monte Cristo? That's a
little light reading.

ABBY
I'm sorry what?

SCOTT
Hi, my name is Scott, my sister is Sara, your bodyguard. She has something to do so she asked me to check in with you.

ABBY
Your obligation is complete.

SCOTT
That was overly warm.

ABBY
And?

SCOTT
And do you mind if I sit? I need to eat.

ABBY
And your friends?

SCOTT
Are far and few between, I'm an oddity in that I like to read.

Scott sits and begins to unpack his lunch.

ABBY
Another freak.

SCOTT
Says the Dumas fan.

ABBY
I have to read this.

SCOTT
Have to?

ABBY
Doctor recommended.

SCOTT
Ah, wish I had a doctor like that.

ABBY
You don't.

SCOTT
Don't what?

ABBY
Wish that.

SCOTT
Oh sorry, I was being flip.
Sarcastic.

ABBY
I understand what flip is.

SCOTT
I'm doing well.

ABBY
Sorry, this is uncomfortable for
me.

SCOTT
Lunch, school or me?

ABBY
All of the above.

Abby gets up to leave.

ABBY (CONT'D)
But you are welcome to try
tomorrow.

SCOTT
It's a date.

ABBY
Excuse me?

SCOTT
Stop you know what I mean.

ABBY
Learn to say what you mean, it will
be easier.

FADE TO:

INT PSYCHOLOGIST OFFICE LEATHER CHAIRS BOOK SHELVES ABBY IS
SITTING ACROSS FROM NANCY.

NANCY WILLIAMS
How is the book?

ABBY
Good, I think I understand why you
want me to read it.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Okay.

ABBY

Edmond is a victim of circumstance, things he could not understand or control. But then he spends his energy escaping and in the end finds some happiness.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Or?

ABBY

Or?

NANCY WILLIAMS

It's just a really good book, it's one of my favorites. Transporting me to a fantasy world where although things weren't easy for Edmond, he could take control of how he choose to react and feel.

ABBY

So the revenge thing.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Is bad, plus you don't know how to fence.

ABBY

Yet.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Yet, but it is a good book. How is reading for enjoyment?

ABBY

A bit weird, I don't see a lot of people around me doing the same.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Their loss. How are the uncontrolled sobs this week?

ABBY

There were a few. I still feel confused and then I get angry. Like my Mom had this life and well threw it away.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Do you want to talk about that? Or are you ready to talk about her?

ABBY

Not really, but I know it is something I will have to do.

NANCY WILLIAMS

The fact that you know not to ignore or run from it, is a good sign.

ABBY

It doesn't feel good.

NANCY WILLIAMS

And?

ABBY

Maybe she had a problem with reality. Maybe escaping to drugs is what she did to ignore it..

NANCY WILLIAMS

Well not to get too into it, that is one aspect of it. We here more about you and how you are doing.

ABBY

What happens when my mom is released?

NANCY WILLIAMS

When?

ABBY

If? Why is this a question? She is getting out soon?

NANCY WILLIAMS

I don't really know.

ABBY (FRUSTRATED)

Well who does, why am I here?

NANCY WILLIAMS

Before we escalate. Can you breathe a little?

ABBY

You're concerned I'm going to escalate, what does that even mean?

(MORE)

ABBY (CONT'D)

I just want to know how long I'm staying here with grandparents I don't know.

NANCY WILLIAMS

I want you to try to breathe so you can control how you choose to react to a situation. Do you think we don't have your best interest in mind?

ABBY

What about my mother's best interest?

NANCY WILLIAMS

You will have to speak to someone else about that. I'm hear for you, not her.

ABBY

That was warm and fuzzy.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Abby, you're old enough and you were there.

ABBY

She's not a drug dealer.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Maybe but she is a drug user an addict who put you at risk.

ABBY

I don't care.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Well a-lot of other people do, the state, your school and your grandparents.

ABBY

I want to be with my mom.

NANCY WILLIAMS

She is going to have to work very hard if she wants to be with you. And that is up to her not you. This is enough for today. I know this is difficult.

ABBY

Difficult (Abby scoffs) trying to find food is difficult, staying safe was difficult, this is not those things.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Yes, but talking about those things and accepting where you are now is.

ABBY

Can I go now?

NANCY WILLIAMS

Yes.

Nancy walks Abby to the door.

NANCY WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Did you finish the book?

ABBY

Almost.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Do you like it?

ABBY

It's a bit wordy, but yes.

Abby exits David is waiting for her.

ABBY (CONT'D)

How are the fishing magazines today?

DAVID

Annoying, how'd it go?

ABBY

I want to know when I can see my mother.

DAVID

Okay.

ABBY

Okay?

DAVID

Yeah okay, this is not some conspiracy to keep you apart. I, we are just trying to keep you safe.

ABBY
Thank you.

DAVID
You're welcome.

FADE OUT.

INT DAVID AND LOUISE'S KITCHEN THEY ARE JOINED BY THE SOCIAL WORKING AND ABBY.

ABBY
Can you please just tell it to me simply?

DCF CASE WORKER
It's not simple.

ABBY
Do your best.

DAVID
Abby, that was a bit rude.

ABBY
Sorry, I'm upset.

LOUISE
That's okay, it's okay to be upset, not okay to be rude.

ABBY
Again I'm sorry, can you please try to explain it to me?

LOUISE
Please.

DCF CASE WORKER
Okay, your mother will be the care of the state.

ABBY
Prison.

DCF CASE WORKER
For at least 18 months.

DAVID
I don't know if I can listen to this.

LOUISE
David.

DAVID
No I can't, sorry.

David gets up and walks out

LOUISE
I'm sorry.

DCF CASE WORKER
I understand.

ABBY
I don't.

LOUISE
Abby, Sara is your mom.

ABBY
Yes.

LOUISE
But she was our baby first.

Louise goes to the counter, pours some coffee and comes back with a box of tissues.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
18 months.

DCF CASE WORKER
Right, so when she is done with that, she goes to a halfway house.

ABBY
That sound great.

DCF CASE WORKER
It's not, Abby your mom went beyond the definition of user to dealer.

LOUISE (UPSET)
My Sara, a drug dealer.

ABBY
No she isn't.

LOUISE
What, a victim of circumstance?

ABBY
I told them, she didn't know what she was doing.

DCF CASE WORKER
Not a great defense.

ABBY
Thank you.

DCF CASE WORKER
Abby, your mom crossed the line,
child endangerment. You might not
feel that way, but the court does.

ABBY
So?

DCF CASE WORKER
It is going to be a while before
you can be alone with her.

ABBY
I don't feel well.

LOUISE
Neither do I.

DAVID (O.C.)
Creamy run.

ABBY
Sounds good.

FADE OUT.

INT. KITCHEN LOUISE AND DAVID ARE GETTING READY FOR THE DAY.
ABBY ENTERS DISHEVELED.

DAVID
Good morning sunshine, the earth
says "Hello"

ABBY
Can coffee say hello?

LOUISE
Here, (Louise set her up with a
cup) long night.

ABBY
I didn't sleep much. My mind kept
racing.

LOUISE
Anything we can help with?

ABBY

I don't want to seem ungrateful or angry, but I'm angry.

LOUISE

And no where to put it?

ABBY

Yes, I'm sorry. Why didn't you guys help her?

DAVID

Abby, you're a kid.

ABBY

Thank you.

DAVID

No I mean because you're a kid, we will give some leeway. But you don't know what our lives were and what Louise and I went through.

ABBY

I'm mature for my age, experience will do that. I think it will help.

LOUISE

David? What do you think?

DAVID

Abby has been homeless, her mom is in prison and now she is stuck here with you, so it can't get much worse.

LOUISE

Me?

DAVID

I'm charming and fun.

LOUISE

Really?

ABBY

And trying to distract me.

David walks over to a kitchen draw and pulls out a thick file and puts it on the table in front of Abby.

DAVID

This is just the stuff on paper,
nothing to do with the emotional
stuff. Open the file and the first
thing you see?

ABBY

(Opening the file) A big house.

DAVID

Yes, the one we sold to pay for
treatment, doctors and anything
else we could think to try. Then
you can drill down and see all the
different things, we tried.

ABBY

That's a big house.

LOUISE

It was a pain to clean.

DAVID

Yeah, Abby it's not about the
money, or what we supposedly gave
up. We never gave it a second
thought and would probably do it
again if we thought it would have
any impact.

LOUISE

Sooner or later, your mom will have
to change or I don't know what.

ABBY

I'm sorry. I was kinda thinking of
myself.

DAVID

You're fifteen, you're entitled.

ABBY

It looks like my mom was too.

DAVID

Yes, it all looks great on paper it
didn't do much to help her.

FADE OUT.

INT. SCHOOL LUNCH ROOM ABBY HAS A BOOK OPEN AND LUNCH. SCOTT SARA JOHNSON BROTHER APPROACHES.

SCOTT
How is today's adventure Mercedes?

ABBY
Huh?

SCOTT
Mercedes, Count of Monte whatever.

ABBY
Oh right funny.

SCOTT
Wow tough crowd. How are you?

ABBY
Why?

SCOTT
Why what? Oh are you one of those types, "what do you care, I'm alone and that's the way I like it"?

ABBY
Not really.

SCOTT
Well it can't be me, I'm polite well groomed and charming.

ABBY
You forgot humble.

SCOTT
I'm working on that, youtube classes.

ABBY
You are mildly funny.

SCOTT
Charming.

ABBY
Sorry, no.

SCOTT
Wow, okay now I have a goal. May I sit?

ABBY
If you must.

SCOTT
I must, I must.

ABBY
Blazing saddles?

SCOTT
A classic, I'm impressed.

ABBY
I'm catching up, watched it last weekend.

SCOTT
Catching up?

ABBY
Homeless kids, don't usually have access to Netflix.

SCOTT
Wow, really?

ABBY
Well yes, the food is great through.

SCOTT
I think you're being sarcastic. Mercedes was not.

ABBY
Mercedes was a victim of her time period. The damsel, I'm not.

SCOTT
Victim, Damsel?

ABBY
Yup. Carrot?

SCOTT
Thought you would never ask.

Scott sits and opens his lunch.

ABBY
What is that?

SCOTT
Hummus, you've never tried hummus?
Here.

ABBY
Thank you.

SCOTT
See charming.

ABBY
Almost.

FADE OUT.

INT PSYCHOLOGIST OFFICE LEATHER CHAIRS BOOK SHELVES ABBY IS
SITTING ACROSS FROM A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN.

NANCY WILLIAMS
And?

ABBY
And I can't see her for a few weeks
at least.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Okay, but I was asking about the
lunch with the boy.

ABBY
We shared hummus, it was life
changing.

NANCY WILLIAMS
I wasn't implying that it should
be.

ABBY
I know, it's tiring that these
normal experiences have to be
treated like some life changing
event.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Okay, how about "how are you"?

ABBY
Okay no fits of crying lately.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Abby, there is nothing wrong with
crying.

ABBY
Uncontrollably?

NANCY WILLIAMS
That could be an issue, when was
the last time?

ABBY
I don't know, at my locker a few
days ago, I was having trouble
opening it.

NANCY WILLIAMS
That's a reoccurring nightmare for
some.

ABBY
Really?

NANCY WILLIAMS
Oh sure, I have adults in here with
nightmares about high school,
missing tests walking around naked
and such.

ABBY
People are weird.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Keeps me employed. Back to the
locker.

ABBY
Right, so as soon as I knew I was
losing it, I walked down to the
nurse and just let in run it's
course.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Okay, that's good.

ABBY
Good.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Sure, Abby you found a safe place
and let it out in a healthy way.

ABBY
It didn't feel that way at the
time.

NANCY WILLIAMS
And then?

ABBY

Dried my eyes and went about the day, when do we talk about seeing my mom?

NANCY WILLIAMS

I don't, Your mother is in prison, I don't have anything to do with it.

ABBY

I just want to see her.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Have you written to her?

ABBY

What?

NANCY WILLIAMS

You know, pen and paper, stamps. An old fashion letter.

ABBY

Worth a try.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Don't type it. Write it make it personal.

ABBY

Okay.

NANCY WILLIAMS

All right, see you next time.

ABBY

For how long are we doing this?

NANCY WILLIAMS

Up to you.

ABBY

Okay, see you next time.

Abby exits David is there reading a fishing magazine.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Again with the fishing.

DAVID

It's like I'm being programmed.

ABBY
I need to get some stationary.

DAVID
Stationary?

ABBY
Paper and envelopes.

DAVID
Thank you, I've always wondered.

ABBY
See, I'm helpful.

DAVID
What about a nice pen too?

ABBY
Louise is right, you have an issue.

DAVID
I like to shop.

ABBY
It's weird.

DAVID
Could be worse, I could like
fishing.

FADE OUT.

INT ABBY'S NEW BEDROOM. EVENING ABBY IS ON THE BED WITH HER
NEW STATIONARY. LOUISE ENTERS

LOUISE
How's it going.

ABBY
It's not.

LOUISE
Sorry, do you want to talk or be
left alone.

ABBY
I've been left alone too much.

Louise pulls up a chair.

LOUISE
So talk.

ABBY

Thinking about all this makes me sad, which turns into anger. And I don't think getting a mean letter from your kid is going to lift your sprits while you in jail.

LOUISE

No I can't imagine it would.

ABBY

So?

LOUISE

So write the angry one, just don't send it.

ABBY

Really?

LOUISE

Well that is what my therapist used to tell me what to do.

ABBY

You go?

LOUISE

Went. I stopped after a few years, I got what I needed.

ABBY

How many letters?

LOUISE

I usually write one a week or so, more depending on how things are going.

ABBY

Where are they, did you mail them?

LOUISE

No, I put them in a box and burn them every year.

ABBY

That sounds depressing.

LOUISE

It is very, usually there is crying and a few glasses of wine.

ABBY
I could use the crying.

LOUISE
But no wine.

ABBY
No wine.

FADE OUT.

INT CLASS ROOM STUDENTS ARE SITTING THERE IS A TEACHER AT THE
HEAD OF THE CLASS.

MR. GREEN
So when I asked for an essay, I
didn't want to limit you. I
thought, to my grievous error.

CARL
Wasn't that a general in Star Wars?

BOB
Obi-wan took him out.

MR. GREEN
Thank you, I will be a little less
cryptic. The essay with be 1000
words, due the end of the week.

Bell Rings

MR. GREEN (CONT'D)
And Friday would be the end of the
week.

CARL
I'm glad he clarified.

MR. GREEN
May the force be with you.

Students begin to leave.

MR. GREEN (CONT'D)
Abby?

ABBY
Yes.

MR. GREEN
Stay behind.

ABBY

Great.

Everyone leaves.

MR. GREEN

So your essay.

ABBY

I think it was a little more than a thousand words.

MR. GREEN

Yes, well that was evident, I marked it up and would like the revision by Friday.

He hands her the paper.

ABBY

Wow, again that's a lot of red.

MR. GREEN

You write well, work on some of the mechanics.

ABBY

Okay.

MR. GREEN

Abby, I'm serious you write well. This could be something for you to pursue.

ABBY

I don't understand, pursue?

MR. GREEN

College, career.

ABBY

I've never really thought that far.

MR. GREEN

I don't pretend to know or understand, but you've been given an opportunity to be in a safe environment. College is right around the corner.

ABBY

You think I'm college material?

MR. GREEN

Yes and that is just based on your writing. I have no idea how you are doing in P.E.

ABBY

I could be a ninja.

MR. GREEN

I'll bet. Just start thinking about it.

ABBY

I'll try.

MR. GREEN

Fair enough, now go and may the force be with you.

ABBY

Really?

MR. GREEN

Sorry, you kids today. Is that better.

ABBY

Yes.

FADE OUT.

INT. ABBY IS SITTING IN THE KITCHEN WITH THE ESSAY. VARIOUS BOOKS PENS AND PAPAER. DAVID ENTERS FROM OUTSIDE.

DAVID

This looks studious.

ABBY

Thank you. I'm in the red again in English.

DAVID

Can I see.

ABBY

Sure.

DAVID

Wow, this Mr. Green must really like you.

ABBY

Why does everyone keep saying that?

DAVID

I'm sure from your perspective it must seem like work or Mr. Green is giving you a hard time.

ABBY

A little.

DAVID

Abby, if he didn't see something, he wouldn't bother.

ABBY

That's a nice way to think about it.

DAVID

I think it's true. Why put any energy or commitment into something you don't believe in. You should really try to respect that and put some effort into this.

ABBY

Sounds like a plan.

DAVID

Excellent, what's for dinner?

ABBY

Excuse me?

DAVID

You've been here for a while and have yet to cook and we need to start discussing the "c" word?

ABBY

Should I be afraid?

DAVID

Chores.

ABBY

Really?

DAVID

Really, really.

ABBY

This is a banner day.

DAVID

Louise hates hamburger helper, go look at that shelve grab some of the cook books and tomorrow I'll help you make dinner.

ABBY

You guys are brave.

DAVID

Our courage knows no bounds. Grab a book.

ABBY

What about tonight?

DAVID

Oh, Louise called she is bringing home pizza.

ABBY

After work?

DAVID

If you can call it that.

ABBY

What do you mean?

DAVID

Louise's work cost me money, she cleans houses and does meals on wheels. I give her a hard time about it, but it makes her feel good.

ABBY

I'll bet. And I would think she is making others happy as well. Oh here we go.

Abby starts to get emotional.

DAVID

What, what happened?

ABBY

I get upset, you guys border on prefect.

DAVID

Thank you, untrue, but i'll take it.

ABBY
 Why with all this did my mom throw
 it all away?

DAVID
 If I knew.

ABBY
 Yeah, I know.

Abby is holding back the tears. Louise walks through the door
 with pizza.

LOUISE (TO DAVID)
 What did you do?

DAVID
 I broke the kid.

ABBY
 Pizza might help.

LOUISE
 It always does.

They start to clear the table and get ready for dinner.

FADE OUT.

INT. GR. GREEN'S CLASSROOM

MR. GREEN
 Thanks to the few that turned
 something in. Everyone else, you
 will lose 10 percent every day
 until you turn it in. We will begin
 the exploration of Othello on
 Monday, which will give you all
 weekend to come up with snappy
 mother jokes.

CARL
 That really isn't enough time.

BOB
 I know, I know. I'm going to have
 to pull an all nighter.

Bell ring, students start to leave.

MR. GREEN
 Abby?

ABBY

Here we go.

MR. GREEN

The latest draft of the essay was very good. I'm thinking about submitting to the young writers project.

ABBY

What's that?

MR. GREEN

Local public radio, it's a way to get young writers recognized for their work.

ABBY

What if I enjoy anonymity?

MR. GREEN

Think about it, you write well enough to take it to college. Plus writers enjoy a certain sense of anonymity.

ABBY

I will, think about it. Thank you.

FADE OUT.

INT. DAVID AND LOUISE'S KITCHEN ABBY IS READING A NOTE.

ABBY

"Went in to the city, be back before eight, food in the frig, no parties" Funny.

Abby opens the frig takes out some Tupperware and sits at the kitchen table. She takes out a chrome book.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Young writers program.

The phone rings.

ABBY (CONT'D)

(Picking up the phone) Will I accept a call from the correctional facility? Yes?

A few beats.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Mom?

FADE OUT.

INT KITCHEN DUSK DAVID AND LOUISE ARE RETURNING. THEY OPEN THE DOOR, THE LAPTOP AND TUPPERWARE ARE STILL ON THE TABLE.

LOUISE

Abby? Abby?

DAVID

I'll put this stuff away why don't you go check her room.

Louise goes to Abby bedroom. Abby is in bed curled up.

LOUISE

Abby, did something happen?

ABBY

Something is always happening, sorry, yes. I got a call from my mom today.

LOUISE

David, David come in here please.

David enters.

DAVID

What's going on.

ABBY

Me, I'm stupid, I took a call from my mother.

DAVID

Sara called here?

ABBY

You guys weren't here, it was a collect call and I'm an idiot.

LOUISE

It's okay, take a deep breathe. Just try to breathe.

ABBY

Okay, she called. It started okay and quickly didn't. She accused me of taking her place and being the perfect robot daughter.

LOUISE
That's not really her talking.

ABBY
You forget that's all I know her
as.

DAVID
I'm sorry.

ABBY
So is that really it, I'm replacing
her?

DAVID
Nobody can replace anybody, we're a
family the four of us. We don't get
to pick and choose.

ABBY
Is this it? Is this my life now?

LOUISE
Is it such a bad life?

ABBY
One without my mother.

DAVID
For now, that is all we have.

ABBY
I don't understand?

DAVID
We can't change the past or predict
the future. Abby try to concentrate
on now, what can we do now?

ABBY
Tea would be nice.

DAVID
That I can do.

FADE OUT.

INT SCHOOL HALLWAY ABBY IS AT HER LOCKER UNLOADING BOOKS.
SCOTT AND SARA APPROACH.

SCOTT
Good Morning Mercedes.

ABBY

Edmund.

SARA JOHNSON

Weirdos. Are you going to let Mr. Green submit that essay?

SCOTT

What essay? It is about me?

ABBY

How did you know?

SCOTT

Really?

ABBY

No.

SCOTT

Wow, that was cold.

ABBY

Ice baby, ice. I don't know. Who really cares?

SARA JOHNSON

It's gets your noticed, helps with college, you know all the bad things that happen when you're talented.

SCOTT

Gosh, I wish I were talented.

SARA JOHNSON

You're annoying, go to class before I bully you.

SCOTT

Again?

SARA JOHNSON

Scot.

SCOTT

See you later.

Scott heads to class.

SARA JOHNSON

So?

ABBY

So what?

SARA JOHNSON

The essay.

ABBY

Right, maybe I don't know, with everything else it seems a low priority.

SARA JOHNSON

Low priority? Where are you? On board a space ship?

ABBY

Sorry, trying to think rationally in an irrational world.

SARA JOHNSON

Well lighten up, it's bad enough to talk to my brother, I wouldn't want to have to start to bully the two of you.

ABBY

A veiled threat.

SARA JOHNSON

Cut it out, strange words frighten me.

They both laugh.

ABBY

C'mom education awaits.

They enter the classroom.

FADE OUT.

INT. MR. GREENS ENGLISH CLASS. STUDENTS ARE SEATED MR. GREEN IS AT THE HEAD OF THE CLASS.

MR. GREEN

Alright, my nightmares of Oedipus have subsided. Thank you all for those rather horrific essays. I'll let you know that your efforts will not go in vain and I'm moving to have Oedipus removed from the curriculum.

CARL
Curriculum?

BOB
Learnin'.

CARL
Ah.

MR. GREEN
Our next unit, or set of
nightmares, will be poetry.

All the students groan.

CARL
Does he mean rhyming?

BOB
Yup.

MR. GREEN
There are many forms, Haiku,
Pastoral, Ballad...

BOB
You know who writes really good
ballads?

CARL
Who?

BOB
Springsteen.

CARL
Word.

BOB
Really?

CARL
Sorry. Yup.

BOB
Better.

MR. GREEN
Epic, Limerick.

BOB
I know a few of those.

MR. GREEN

Please.

BOB

Sorry.

MR. GREEN

We are going to be focusing on Imagery. T.S. Eliot's "Preludes," Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," Sylvia Plath's "Daddy," and Mary Oliver's "At Black River." Are some points of reference. Everyone needs to pick a poet.

BOB

That almost sounds like a limerick.

MR. GREEN

You are getting very close to detention.

BOB

Again sorry.

MR. GREEN

You have 2 days to choose a poet, read a few of their poems and then pick one to write about.

FADE OUT.

INT PSYCHOLOGIST OFFICE LEATHER CHAIRS BOOK SHELVES ABBY IS SITTING ACROSS FROM A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Thank you for returning my book. Can you tell me about the phone call?

ABBY

Again?

NANCY WILLIAMS

Please.

ABBY

She called collect, the conversation was okay for about a minute, then

NANCY WILLIAMS

Then?

ABBY
She turned into the nightmare.

NANCY WILLIAMS
The nightmare.

ABBY
That's what we used to call it, it was like a bad dream, or so she would tell me. It like a nightmare, not real, then you wake up and it's over.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Like it never really happened.

ABBY
Yes.

NANCY WILLIAMS
So she could treat you poorly and not have to be responsible for it?

ABBY
I guess.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Well what do you think?

ABBY
I think this is the "how does it make you feel" thing.

NANCY WILLIAMS
That thing is kind of why we are here.

ABBY
Where does that get me?

NANCY WILLIAMS
Where do you want to go?

ABBY
Another question.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Abby you now have a life away from the nightmare, what do you want to do with it?

ABBY
People at school talk about college.

NANCY WILLIAMS
That is a good start?

ABBY
Why, what am I supposed to do
there?

NANCY WILLIAMS
Well some people study, explore and
decide what they want to become.

ABBY
Is that what some people do? Was my
mother supposed to do that?

NANCY WILLIAMS
I don't know, but this is your life
now. At some point you mother may
come back into it, but not right
now. So you have to come to terms
with that and move forward.

ABBY
Sure, isn't this a bit much for a
teenager, shouldn't I being having
fun and trying out for
cheerleading?

NANCY WILLIAMS
Do you like cheerleading?

ABBY
Does anyone?

NANCY WILLIAMS
Football players?

ABBY
Anyway, way we were talking about
college.

NANCY WILLIAMS
And?

ABBY
And me thinking about it.

NANCY WILLIAMS
And?

ABBY
That's kind of annoying.

NANCY WILLIAMS

It's a thing I do. Seriously is college something so far out of reach?

ABBY

I don't know, I have time to think about this.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Abby it moves pretty fast, my best advice would be to plan and work like you are going, so if you want to you are ready.

ABBY

I'm tired.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Sorry today was a lot. So for next time we'll just talk about thinking about college and what plans you might want to make.

ABBY

That sound really wishy washy.

NANCY WILLIAMS

Really?

ABBY

I get it, I will not be wishy washy about a plan for the next few years.

NANCY WILLIAMS

That's a little better. See you next week.

Abby exits the office this time both Louis and David are waiting.

ABBY

Well two for the price of one.

LOUISE

We have to take you somewhere.

ABBY

That does not sound good.

LOUISE

You mother has pneumonia.

ABBY

What?

LOUISE

She is in the hospital.

ABBY

Is this from being in prison?

DAVID

It's from the years of abuse to her body.

ABBY

Does she want to see me?

DAVID

I don't know, but we are going.

ABBY

Sure, right whatever let's go.
Another chance to get cursed out by mom.

LOUISE

This is serious, she is sick. We all have to put it aside for now and deal what is happening now.

ABBY

She put me aside for fifteen years.

DAVID

Abby we are going, you can sit in the waiting, I need to see my daughter.

ABBY

I'm sorry, you're right. I'm being difficult.

DAVID

That's okay, just be difficult in the car.

ABBY

Right, okay.

LOUISE

Okay let's go.

They get in the car and drive off.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM THERE ARE GUARDS PRESENT.
ABBY AND LOUISE ARE SITTING DAVID ENTERS WITH COFFEE.

DAVID

Here.

LOUISE

Thank you.

DAVID

I got you a hot chocolate.

ABBY

What? Oh thank you.

LOUISE

I'm sorry you have to be dealing
with this.

ABBY

I'm trying really hard not to be
angry.

LOUISE

Angry?

ABBY

Do you know how many "visits" I've
had like this?

DAVID

Abby, she never told us.

LOUISE

Anything.

ABBY

Right sorry, we have been through
this for "friends" and once or
twice with mom.

LOUISE

Oh my....

ABBY

Please don't, I didn't really know
better. This was my normal. Now
things are different and I'm angry.

A doctor enters the waiting room. Louise rises.

DOCTOR

She is stable, not out of the
woods, but it looks positive.

LOUISE
Is she awake?

 DOCTOR
No still sleeping.

 LOUISE
Can I see her?

 DOCTOR
Yes, of course.

 DAVID
You go in and I'll stay here.

 ABBY
I'll stay with David.

 LOUISE
Are you sure?

 ABBY
No not really, which is why I'm
going to stay here.

 LOUISE
Okay.

Louise leaves with the doctor. Abby crosses to the waiting area with David grabbing a box of tissues.

 ABBY (HANDING TISSUES TO DAVID)
You first.

 DAVID
Thank you. (David blows his nose
and wipes his eyes)

 ABBY
So what should we talk about?

 DAVID (LAUGHS)
Funny, how many times.

 ABBY
I really don't remember. Honestly
most were for other people, going
in making sure they were taken care
of.

 DAVID
Really?

ABBY

Yeah, despite the calm bright appearances, things were pretty rough.

DAVID

I'm sorry.

ABBY

I'm not sure you're the one who should be apologizing.

DAVID

Let's change the subject, how's school?

ABBY

Good, okay actually I love it, but don't tell anyone.

DAVID

Teenage angst?

ABBY

Just trying to be normal, whatever that is.

DAVID

She loved school too.

ABBY

I hear that a-lot, it's very weird learning about your mom from complete strangers.

DAVID

They aren't strangers, just a lot of people who cared and tried to help.

ABBY

And failed, sorry. The shrink, excuse me, my therapist is trying to work with me sorting this all out.

DAVID

Well I'm not a therapist, but we all need to look forward right now.

Louise enters.

LOUISE

She is still out.

DAVID
And?

LOUISE
They are pretty sure she will be
okay.

ABBY
So we can go?

LOUISE
What?

ABBY
I'm sorry, I really don't want to
be here.

LOUISE
I do.

DAVID
I'll get Abby home and come back.

LOUISE
Really?

DAVID
We can discuss this when I get
back.

LOUISE
We will.

David and Abby leave. Louise fall into a chair grabs the box
of tissues and sobs.

Fade out

INT. DAVID AND LOUISE'S KITCHEN. DAVID AND LOUISE ARE TALKING
OVER COFFEE.

DAVID
I don't agree.

LOUISE
And?

DAVID
And what? I'm allowed to disagree.

LOUISE
I never said you weren't.

DAVID
We have to concern ourselves with
Abby and how she can move forward.

LOUISE
I agree.

DAVID
And...

LOUISE
This is where I don't.

DAVID
You've made that clear.

Abby enters the kitchen.

LOUISE
Sorry.

ABBY
It is a small house, a very nice
house for which I'm grateful, but
still I can hear.

LOUISE
We aren't hiding from you.

DAVID
Sometimes we don't agree.

ABBY
Well, I wanted to throw my two
cents in. What does that mean by
the way?

DAVID
I really don't know.

ABBY
Well anyway, I don't currently
forgive her.

LOUISE
I'm sorry?

ABBY
I'm not ready to. Maybe someday,
just not today.

LOUISE
I hope so.

ABBY

But the important word there is
"might".

LOUISE

That makes me sad.

ABBY

Me too, but I've had a lot of sad.
And I'm lucky, the things I've seen
other "parents" do make "sad"
looking like a Disney movie.

DAVID

I need more coffee.

ABBY

I could use some too please. Louise
I'm so thankful to be here.

LOUISE

We love you.

ABBY

I know, and you have no idea how
wonderful and painful it is at the
same time.

DAVID

No we don't.

ABBY

I have to live with these mixed
feeling.

DAVID

Hmm.

ABBY

The therapist is trying to help me
process and come up with plans to
help me manage all this.

DAVID

You sound way too mature for me.

LOUISE

Me too, can't we talk about boys.

ABBY

What, no ewww boys are gross.

They all have a collective laugh.

ABBY (CONT'D)

I just want to be honest and be able to talk to you two, because I didn't have that before.

LOUISE

Okay, but I still think you should see her.

ABBY

And I don't. So we disagree.

LOUISE

Yes we do, David?

DAVID

I'd like to go out for some Chinese food.

LOUISE

Nice.

DAVID

Thank you, any one hungry?

ABBY

I could eat.

LOUISE

You two are not funny.

DAVID

I think I'm a riot.

David grabs his keys

DAVID (CONT'D)

Coming?

LOUISE

Sure.

All three exit

FADE OUT INT Kitchen Louise is sitting drinking coffee and reading what looks a school paper. David enters the kitchen.

DAVID

What's that.

LOUISE

Something Abby left for us to read.

DAVID
Really?

LOUISE
Yes.

DAVID
Well?

LOUISE
It's sad, but good. I'm almost
done.

She hands it to David.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
She should submit it somewhere.

DAVID
Like a contest?

LOUISE
I don't know, maybe we should ask
her english teacher.

DAVID
Well maybe we should ask Abby
before we do anything.

LOUISE
Maybe you should read it first.

DAVID
Right, I will.

David pours himself cup of coffee and begins to read

FADE OUTINT. MR.GREENS ENGLISH CLASS. STUDENTS ARE SEATED MR.
GREEN IS AT THE HEAD OF THE CLASS.

MR. GREEN
Alright that is enough torture or
Shakespeare for the day.

Everyone get up to leave

MR. GREEN (CONT'D)
Abby, give me a minute.

Abby stays behind.

MR. GREEN (CONT'D)
I read the essay.

ABBY

Okay.

MR. GREEN

Well it's not okay. It good. Really good.

ABBY

Thank you?

MR. GREEN

I want to talk to you about sending it around.

ABBY

What does mean?

MR. GREEN

There are young writers associations.

ABBY

I don't know.

MR. GREEN

Why?

ABBY

It's one thing to give it to you and Louise and David.

MR. GREEN

But?

ABBY

I'm really not into anyone else.

MR. GREEN

Why it's good.

ABBY

And personal.

MR. GREEN

Which makes it even more authentic.

ABBY

Why?

MR. GREEN

I can give you some reasons. What are you going to do after high school?

ABBY

I haven't thought that far ahead.

MR. GREEN

Well you could use this talent to further your education.

ABBY

It's not that good.

MR. GREEN

Well you will never know if no one else reads it.

ABBY

And again...

MR. GREEN

It's personal, and probably painful. It is also an opportunity to be able to bring attention to your situation.

ABBY

Who cares?

MR. GREEN

Your grandparents, people here at the school. Apathy is not an epidemic, we can surprise you.

ABBY

And my essay will shed light and make a change?

MR. GREEN

I don't know, but why not?

ABBY

I'm not all that comfortable with sharing this.

MR. GREEN

Well think about the kids who don't have families to take them in.

ABBY

I make a conscience effort not to.

MR. GREEN

Excuse me?

ABBY

The more I think about it, the less I sleep.

MR. GREEN

Really?

ABBY

I know I'm being difficult, and just because I should do something doesn't mean I have to want to.

MR. GREEN

That's very insightful.

ABBY

Wise beyond my years.

MR. GREEN

I won't submit it anywhere without your approval. Which I will have when?

ABBY

Funny, let me talk to my grandparents.

MR. GREEN

Thank you.

FADE OUT

INT Car DAVID and ABBY are driving back from school.

DAVID

So, what did you learn today?

ABBY

I've learned all about my potential.

DAVID

Do tell.

ABBY

Yup.

DAVID

No I meant it, please tell me more.

ABBY

Oh, really?

DAVID

Yes, of course. Why wouldn't we be interested?

ABBY

Sorry, I'm not really wanting to talk about it.

DAVID

Can we talk about why you don't want to talk about it?

ABBY

That seems sneaky.

DAVID

"These aren't the droids you're looking for"

ABBY

Sorry?

DAVID

"These aren't the droids you're looking for"

Still no response from Abby.

DAVID (CONT'D)

No really? You don't get the reference?

ABBY

Umm, not really.

DAVID

Well, that changes the plans for dinner.

ABBY

It does?

DAVID

Yes, now it's pizza night and watching Star Wars.

FADE TO:

INT. DAVID AND LOUISE'S KITCHEN.

David and Abby are sitting at the table there is an open box of pizza.

DAVID

So.

ABBY

Han shot first.

DAVID

Ha! Now you're hooked.

The phone rings

DAVID (CONT'D)

Oh, I hope that's not a flat tire.

ABBY

Louise doesn't change her own tire?

David picking up the phone

DAVID

That's funny.

(David talking into the
phone)

Hello, yes I'm David, excuse me?

(Becoming Upset)

How? When? No, I don't care about
the car, how is Louise?

ABBY

What happened?

DAVID

(To Abby)

Some idiot hit her.

ABBY

Is she okay? Where is she? Why are
we still here let's go!

DAVID

Slow down.

(Into the phone)

Yes, so where is she? Okay right
thank you.

(To Abby)

She seems okay, they are checking
for a concussion.

ABBY

Okay, why aren't we in the car?

DAVID

Because you don't have a coat on.

Abby throws a coat on and she and David exit.

FADE OUT.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAVID IS HOVERING OVER LOUISE. LOUISE HAS NO VISABLE INJURIES.

LOUISE

I'm fine just banged up. So I can get a new truck now?

DAVID

Funny. No, maybe a used late model if they sell them with extra air bags. Are you really okay?

LOUISE

Sure, they did a complete diagnostic on me. I'm olympic material.

DAVID

I'll bet. Did they take a statement?

LOUISE

Yes, the driver was in worse shape than me. They are saying it looks like he was impaired. Where's Abby?

DAVID

In the waiting room.

LOUISE

Why?

DAVID

I think she is really shaken up.

CUT TO:

IN THE WAITING ROOM ABBY IS PACING BACK AND FORTH. DAVID WALKS OUT OF THE HOSPITAL ROOM AND IS TALKING TO THE OFFICER.

DAVID

So what happens now, officer?

OFFICER BOB

Not too much, we have to wait for his toxic screens to come back. Really through, even if we charge him, you folks won't be too involved.

ABBY
(listening in)
If you charge him?

OFFICER BOB
Excuse me miss?

ABBY
What do you mean if?

DAVID
Abby.

ABBY
No, I want to understand, "if".

OFFICER BOB
I don't understand.

ABBY
Some whack job, on drugs slams into
my grandmother and we are using the
word "if".

OFFICER BOB
Miss...

ABBY
(escalating)
If they can toss my mother away and
she never hurt anyone, can you
really tell me that the word "if"
is involved.

DAVID
Abby, breathe try to calm down.

ABBY
(Really losing it)
Calm, calm! I don't think so, these
officers throw moms in jail all the
time and now someone really gets
hurt and what we have it wait for
if?

OFFICER BOB
Miss...

ABBY
(getting too loud)
Stop calling me miss.

OFFICER BOB

(David)

I'm going to walk away now.

DAVID

Thank you.

ABBY

I don't think so.

David steps between the officer and Abby. Abby is about to get physical and sees David's expression. David looks as if he has gone through this and is reliving a nightmare.

ABBY (CONT'D)

(Realizing that she is out
of control)

I'm...I can't believe I just did
that.

DAVID

That makes two of us.

ABBY

You know I would never....

DAVID

Your mom said the same thing..
(Now David is visibly
shaken)

ABBY

David, no really I'm sorry.

DAVID

Let's go see Louise.

ABBY

Yes, that would be good.

The two enter the room, Louise heard some of the noise.

LOUISE

You okay?

DAVID AND ABBY

Fine.

DAVID

Can I get you anything?

ABBY

A coffee would be nice.

DAVID
I meant for Louise.

ABBY
Sorry.

LOUISE
I would like one too.

ABBY AND LOUISE
Cream and sugar.

ABBY
(Starting to cry)
Now that's funny.

LOUISE
It's okay, you can cry.

ABBY
I'm just really upset about the
truck.
(Now really crying)

DAVID
I'll get the coffee.

LOUISE
Do you want to talk?

ABBY
I'd prefer just to sob for a bit.

LOUISE
That's okay too.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN INT. ABBY, DAVID AND LOUISE ARE SITTING AROUND THE
KITCHEN TABLE.

LOUISE
I would have preferred the red
truck.

DAVID
I would have preferred no monthly
payments.

LOUISE
Get a job.

ABBY
Can I talk to guys about something?

DAVID
Is this a trick or rhetorical
question?

ABBY
That essay I wrote. My english
teacher wants to submit to the
young writers project.

DAVID
So he thinks it's good.

LOUISE
Of course it's good.

DAVID
Right, is there a question in
there?

ABBY
It's somewhat personal, and I'm
scared about what people would
think of me.

DAVID
Then why submit?

ABBY
Because I'm angry.

LOUISE
Anyone in particular?

ABBY
No, the situation. You getting hit
by an idiot. Mr. Green thinks that
if I can influence one person it's
worth it.

LOUISE
What do you think?

ABBY
I think right now I'm doing
nothing. I need to start doing
something or at least feel like I'm
doing something.

DAVID
And this is a place to start?

ABBY

Again, I really don't know. But it's better than what I'm doing, being ashamed of stuff that happened to me. Not anything I did. So maybe I should start.

DAVID

Umm doing stuff to be ashamed of?

ABBY

(Laughing)

Anything, start doing anything. I think telling my story, which I hate saying.

LOUISE

Sharing.

ABBY

Sharing sounds even worse. Whichever, maybe it will help someone, anyone.

LOUISE

Maybe it would help you.

ABBY

I guess.

LOUISE

So what's the next step?

ABBY

Talk to Mr. Green.

DAVID

Sounds like a plan.

FADE OUT.

INT. MR. GREENS ENGLISH CLASS. STUDENTS ARE SEATED MR. GREEN IS AT THE HEAD OF THE CLASS.

MR. GREEN

And that is why Socrates took the poison.

CARL

I thought suicide was bad.

BOB

This was a moral statement. It was a judgement.

CARL
Forced suicide? What are we
learning here.

MR. GREEN
Tell me it's June.

CARL
It's June.

MR. GREEN
Class dismissed.

Students get up to leave Abby lingers.

ABBY
Mr. Green?

MR. GREEN
Yes.

ABBY
I've given it some thought and
discussed it with my grandparents.

MR. GREEN
And.

ABBY
I think it would be a good it to
submit the essay.

MR. GREEN
Cool.

ABBY
So what happens now?

MR. GREEN
I send it in, they decide if it
gets published or posted, maybe
read on air.

ABBY
And if it does?

MR. GREEN
Then you become a local celebrity.

ABBY
What? Really?

MR. GREEN

I don't know, I was kidding. Abby the main thing is you are getting your work out there.

ABBY

Right. Okay then.

MR. GREEN

Good, VPR will contact you after I submit.

ABBY

And award me with a large cash prize?

MR. GREEN

You'd have better luck with the lotto, sorry.

ABBY

Oh, well. Thanks for your help and the gentle nudge.

MR. GREEN

It's a calling.

ABBY

I'll bet. See you tomorrow.

FADE OUT.

INT PSYCHOLOGIST OFFICE LEATHER CHAIRS BOOK SHELVES ABBY IS SITTING ACROSS FROM A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN.

NANCY WILLIAMS

So, you submitted your work and?

ABBY

And nothing, not a word. Maybe Mr. Green was trying to prop me up or something.

NANCY WILLIAMS

So what now?

ABBY

What do you mean?

NANCY WILLIAMS

What's the plan?

ABBY

Plan?

NANCY WILLIAMS
Moving forward, keep writing, stop
writing, join lacrosse?

ABBY
Ew, no. Keep writing, I guess.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Well that's good, the writing
doesn't have to be a profession.
It's a great form of self
discovery.

ABBY
Yawn.

NANCY WILLIAMS
Sorry, I am required to say those
things.

ABBY
I was kidding, I know. Sometimes I
think that this is too much for a
kid to handle.

NANCY WILLIAMS
It is, but what choice do you have?
If you choose not to deal with it
what happens, down the road?

ABBY
Ummm, bad things?

NANCY WILLIAMS
Good answer, go home be a kid,
write, read and we'll talk again
next week.

ABBY
K

Abby exits, in the waiting room are David and Louise. Louise
is holding a letter.

LOUISE
This came for you.

DAVID
It's from the young writers
workshop.

ABBY
Wow, really and you didn't open it.

DAVID
We showed great restraint.

David hands the letter to Abby, she sits and opens it.

ABBY
"Dear Abby," That sounds funny.

LOUISE
Please.

ABBY
Right okay, "We received and enjoyed your submission. Although it was well written we were unsure about reading it on air." Well that's a relief.

LOUISE
Go on.

ABBY
And you're sure you didn't read this?

DAVID
C'mon.

ABBY
Okay, okay, "We would like to invite you to join us at our next retreat this summer."

DAVID
Well that's cool.

ABBY
"And offer you a full scholarship for the event"

LOUISE
That's cooler.

ABBY
So I guess I've got plans this summer.

LOUISE
So is this a possible career?

ABBY
Who's knows, but it's some thing to explore.

DAVID
I'd like to explore dinner.

ABBY
I could cook.

DAVID
And maybe watch "Phantom Menace"?

LOUISE
I hate that movie.

DAVID
She needs the education.

ABBY
Can we talk about when we get home?

LOUISE
That sounds like a plan.

FADE OUT.

THE FUTURE

Abby, as a young adult, dressed in semi professional clothing, is backstage at a speaking event, something similar to a TED talk. The Presentation reads "The Opioid Crisis and the ripple effect on families" She takes a deep breathe and enters the stage.