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Original: A Screenplay Adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's
Novel An Old-Fashioned Girl

By

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EXT. TWIN CITIES- WINTER- DAY

Snow covers the cities: The Capitol and the Cathedral. Summit Avenue. Grand Ave. Arched bridges over the Mississippi. Lakes. Mall of America. Airport. I-35. Basilica. Warehouse District.

EXT. ZOEY'S APARTMENT- DAY

A bustling upper-class neighborhood in the Warehouse District of Minneapolis. Layers of snow unite the apartments, streetlamps, and shops. Each of the cars parked on this street could pay a year's college tuition. The shops interspersed between apartments are trendy and spendy. An upbeat pop song plays as cars whoosh down the tree-lined street and warmly dressed passersby walk their dogs.

A figure in a bright yellow coat bounces down the sidewalk. She is the brightest point on the street. This is ROSE MILTON (23), and something about her is eye-catching, more than her well-worn boots and strawberry knit hat, more than the unselfconscious skip to her walk and bulky package under her arm.

Rose is dictionary definition medium: Medium height, medium brown hair of medium length, medium brown eyes. Her coat is old and patched, and her boots are neither stylish nor new. Every quirk of her head and hands is quick and excited.

The harsh scrape of a window being opened and the furious holler of a woman's voice fractures the nondescript city noises.

Rose looks up. Two houses in front of her, ZOEY SHAW (25) leans out of her second-story window.

Zoey is expensive almost beyond good taste, from her professionally done hair and manicured nails, to her unflattering brand-name outfit and ring-clad hands.

Zoey grasps a fistful of expensive-looking silk shirts in one hand and brandishes a lighter in the other. A flock of flaming shirts flutter to the snowy driveway below like exotic birds in a brush fire.

ZOEY

(yelling)

You **don't** get to tell me what to do! Get this in your overgrown turnip of a head: I **don't** want to sleep with you.

(CONTINUED)

A MAN IN A SUIT storms out the front door. He almost knocks Rose over in his haste to get away. He turns around, ignoring Rose, and hurls a book at Zoey's window.

MAN IN SUIT
You're freaking weird!

ZOEY
I wasn't the one who started with
the fire, jerk!

MAN IN SUIT
It was an ugly dress! You wouldn't
have wanted to wear it anyway.

Rose quietly scoops up handfuls of snow to heap on the gently flaming shirts.

ZOEY
Hey- Sleep with THIS, cabbage face!

Zoey lights a coat and several ties on fire and flings them in the air. They land with a heavy, expensive-sounding thud.

MAN IN SUIT
Those are Armani!

ZOEY
We are over!

The man opens his mouth. Rose suddenly appears at his shoulder.

ROSE
It's quite cold out.

I think it's time for you to go
home.

She smiles politely and steers him toward his car.

The man drives away hastily. Rose waves.

ZOEY
Yeah, you better go.

She shuts the window.

Rose walks inside.

INT. ZOEY'S APARTMENT- DAY

Zoey sprawls on an expensive-looking couch, pillow dramatically covering her face. Original artwork hangs on the walls and none of the furniture is secondhand.

Rose enters the room without fuss. Pulls off coat and hat. She perches on one of the linen chairs.

A beat of silence. Two.

ROSE

So.

Zoey whips the pillow off her face and groans theatrically.

ZOEY

Can you believe that guy?

ROSE

What'd he do?

ZOEY

It's more like, what **didn't** he do? Men are totally nuts. You know what I mean.

ROSE

Not really, no.

ZOEY

Okay, well, take it from me. You think it's love and you look up one day and realize it was just lust- and even that's gone. You sleep with a guy once and he thinks you're his forever. I am so over that.

ROSE

Um, Zo? Was the fire really necessary?

Zoey grins with the smugness of a well-fed cat.

ZOEY

It worked, didn't it?

ROSE

That's not the healthiest way to express your feelings.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

(rolls her eyes)

You think? Look, I know I'm a drama queen. It's not too late- you can still be friends with someone boring.

ROSE

I've already got my best friend.
I'm not going anywhere.

The two share a smile. Zoey sits up and scoops the pillow back onto the couch. Rose relaxes into the chair and takes her coat off.

ZOEY

Speaking of, please tell me you're gonna move in with me. It's hella boring here without you.

ROSE

I told you, I have to be independent.

Rose unwraps the brown package under her arm. One layer, a second, a third. Inside the swaddled layers: a basket of fresh fruit.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Your family was amazing for letting me live with you guys during undergrad, but now I've got to pay my own way. And we both know you'd never live anywhere I could afford.

ZOEY

C'mon Rose, you wouldn't have to pay anything, you know that. You're totally part of the family.

(sees the basket)

Ooh, thanks!

ROSE

Early Christmas gift from a client. They gave me two. You haven't been getting enough Vitamin C lately, so...

ZOEY

Oh, Mother Rose.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

(laughs)

You're family to me too. It's not just the money. I have to do this. Prove to myself that I can make it on my own.

ZOEY

I get it. But you gotta promise you'll come hang out, all the time.

ROSE

Of course.

Rose moves into the kitchen and pours ground beans into a pot of coffee. Rose reaches into the cupboards with evident familiarity and pulls out a colorful matching set of mugs.

Zoey remains ensconced on the couch, idly flicking through her late-model iPhone.

ZOEY

(slightly raised voice)

And you'll come to my parties and go out with everybody. College is over now, studying isn't a legit excuse anymore.

ROSE

(slightly raised voice)

I'll come to your parties, Zo, but I'm not buying a new outfit every week. I can't afford it, and anyway I don't have much time between jobs.

ZOEY

Come on, Rose!

ROSE

Look, Zoey,

ROSE (CONT'D)

I don't even know your friends that well. We don't have a lot in common.

The coffee pot hisses. Rose pours milk into a steamer.

Zoey glances at Rose's worn yellow coat on the chair, kitty corner from her place on the couch, and frowns.

ZOEY

(hedging)

Well, maybe if you didn't dress so weird, they'd like you better.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE
Seriously, Zoey?

ZOEY
I'm just saying, you don't have to
be so different all the time.

ROSE
I don't mean to be. I just--

ZOEY
Then let me take you shopping!

ROSE
Zoey, leave it. I'm happy the way I
am.

Rose swirls the milk foam into the two coffee cups and walks
into the living room with her hands full.

ZOEY
How're your students?

ROSE
(lights up)
They're wonderful! This one little
girl, she'd never even touched a
piano before. By the end of our
first lesson, she had figured out
finger placement and everything!
Give her a month and she'll be
belting out "Twinkle, Twinkle."

Rose begins humming "Twinkle, Twinkle."

ZOEY
(cajoling)
Speaking of pianos... Play for me,
Rosie!

Rose abandons her coffee at once and stands up.

She walks over to the piano in the corner and sits down.

ROSE
You know, sometimes I wonder if
you keep this piano here just for
me. I never see anyone else play
it.

ZOEY
Who else would I let play it?
You're the Beyonce of piano music,
Rose! Your fingers are like--

(CONTINUED)

Zoey makes a drumming noise and waggles her fingers wildly.

ZOEY (CONT'D)
And everyone else is like *dum dum*
dum.

Her index fingers plod through the air like a yawn.

ROSE
I hope so. It's my job now.

Rose turns around to face the piano. Her white hands hover above the keys. Rose starts playing "Birks of Aberfeldie." Zoey makes a face.

ROSE (CONT'D)
What should I play, Zo?

ZOEY
Adele. I'm in the mood for some
revenge tunes.

Rose's fingers descend upon the keys and begin their slow, even dance across the ivory. Rich, deep music fills the apartment and wraps comfortably around the two women. Zoey closes her eyes and visibly relaxes.

ZOEY
Jeez. How are you still doing all
that, Rose?

ROSE
What? Teaching music? I love those
kids!

Zoey frowns, unconvinced.

ZOEY
Yeah, but it sounds so bor-- so
difficult.

ROSE
Like, "one does not simply walk
into Mordor" difficult?

ZOEY
What?

Rose's hands lift off the keys. She swivels on the bench and looks at Zoey.

ROSE

Never mind. I'm not sure how to answer that-- I like kids and I like music. The lesson plans are a lot of work, but watching the kids master a piece after weeks of practice is rewarding.

Zoey puts down her iPhone and toys with her coffee cup.

ZOEY

But... don't you ever get tired of working, like, all the time? It sounds exhausting, going around from house to house... don't you wish you had more time for fun?

(teasing)

You do know what fun is, right? It's a difficult concept to grasp. It's this crazy thing where you do things just because you want to. Swing your hips a little. Go out, have a drink, chill with other cool people...

And I don't care what you say, bowling doesn't count. Anything where you have to borrow someone else's stinky shoes is not *fun*.

ROSE

The shoes were not that bad! You haven't gone since that time our junior year, have you?

Zoey grins and shakes her head in an emphatic "no."

ROSE (CONT'D)

I don't mind working, Zoey. It gives me something to do. Running around giving lessons and meeting people is a lot more interesting than staying at home and doing nothing.

Zoey looks slightly ashamed. Rose realizes her faux pas and blushes.

ROSE (CONT'D)

(hastily)

Anyway, I love playing. I'm blessed to have a job that lets me make music every day.

(CONTINUED)

Rose turns around and her fingers alight once more on the keys like birds perching on a wire.

The sonorous melody continues as the light outside begins to fade. Outside the window, the streetlamps wink on, amplified by the snow below.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ZOEY'S PLACE- DUSK

Rose tramps along the snowy sidewalk. Two blocks away from Zoey's apartment, Rose approaches a tree-covered park. Shouts and blurs of color catch her eye.

A throng of kids, mostly teenagers, sleds through the trees. They are more preoccupied with pushing each other around than they are with actually sledding.

Rose's face breaks into a wide grin. She jogs toward the teens, waving her hands in the air.

INT. ZOEY'S APARTMENT- DUSK

Zoey sits on the couch with the TV turned to a reality show. She looks bored.

BANG! The door bursts open and rebounds off the wall like a basketball. TOM SHAW (21) saunters in, looking like he owns the place. He swings his keys around on his lanyard in slow, lazy circles.

Tom is a lanky redhead, a chronic underachiever and a real softie, with an air of irrepressible mischief.

ZOEY

What's up, Tom?

TOM

Just wanted to see my dear sister.
And borrow your credit card.

ZOEY

Dad capped you off again? Jeez,
Tom, you're worse than me. What do
you need it for?

TOM

Was that Rose I saw walking down
the street?

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

Tom.

TOM

It's cold out there. Is she walking home?

The spinning lanyard slips out of Tom's hands and flies sideways. The lanyard smacks into a wall and lands in a fruit bowl on the entry table. The keys land with an unfortunate thud on top of a pair of overripe bananas.

Zoey turns her head slowly toward the fruit bowl. She sends Tom a disparaging glance.

ZOEY

Was that really necessary?

TOM

Is your face really necessary?

ZOEY

(ignoring him)

Rose is taking the bus home. I can't believe she still doesn't have a car.

TOM

Better a bus than a horse and buggy. And a hovercraft would be even cooler.

ZOEY

Rose can be so judgey sometimes.

TOM

What about?

ZOEY

Jobs. She doesn't get that we can't all be martyrs.

TOM

Of course not. Rose is an angel.

ZOEY

Do you have anything better to do than come here and annoy me, Tom?

TOM

I consider annoying you to be my life's work, Pug.

Zoey chucks a pillow at Tom.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

Don't call me that! Agh, you're obnoxious. Like a tag itching the back of my neck. Or gum under my shoe.

TOM

You're grumpy today. Is What's-His-Face being a jerk again?

ZOEY

What's-His-Face left earlier with the burning scraps of his dignity.

Tom stills his energetic limbs- looks thoughtfully at Zoey- opens his mouth to speak.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Go do something useful. Offer Rose a ride home.

TOM

Zoey, I saw her like five minutes ago. I'm sure she's on her bus home now.

ZOEY

No, you can still catch her if you leave now. The nearest bus stop is like a ten-minute walk away.

TOM

Well, why don't you go, then?

He casually holds out his hand, palm up. Zoey shakes her head no. Deflated, he shoves his hand back in his pocket.

ZOEY

You're already dressed for the cold, and it's started snowing again. I need to look awesome for tonight and that's not gonna happen in 20 minutes. I need at least half an hour for a shower.

TOM

What do you care about more, your friend or your hair?

ZOEY

C'mon Tom, please?

(CONTINUED)

Tom groans and scoops his keys out of the fruit bowl. He shakes the keys a little to shed the mushy banana coating them. Tom stomps slowly out the door, exaggerating every movement.

He slams the door. Zoey shakes her head in sisterly disapproval.

EXT. ZOEY'S APARTMENT-DUSK

Tom hurries out of the apartment and hops into his BMW. He drives down the road but Rose is nowhere around. Through the trees, a canary yellow coat catches his eye.

Tom slows the car and sees a yellow-clad figure whizzing through the trees on a dinky little sled.

Tom laughs, pulls over and parks the BMW.

EXT. SNOWY PARK- DUSK

Clear droplets of ice cling to delicate sliver branches. A bright-eyed sparrow lands on a branch in a flurry of wings. Dry flecks of snow hover crystallized in the still air. Strains of golden light filter through trees that stand sharply defined under the softening snow. The moment hangs, suspended like an icicle in the stillness of the air.

High-pitched shrieks shatter the calm. The sparrow takes flight as a spray of snow flies through the air. Rose, seated on a neon disk sled, glides along the slick crust of snow with uncaring abandon. Her sled soars through the oak trees and scatters snow in all directions. A tree root sends the sled skidding. The sled and its contents spill onto the glittery snow in a wild tumble.

All that is discernible of Rose is the fuzz of her red hat and the breathlessness of her laughter.

ROSE
(shouting)
I'm over here!

Her head and arms pop out of the snow.

A gaggle of teenagers around middle school or high school age break through the trees clutching sleds identical to the neon disk Rose is using. The bright colors of their coats, hats, and scarves splash shockingly amid the white blanket of snow.

(CONTINUED)

TEEN IN JESTER HAT
I can't believe you made that jump.

ROSE
(still laughing)
I don't think I did. Unless flying
face-first into a snow bank counts.

Tom appears through the trees behind Rose, inadequately dressed with coat hanging open at the front.

TEEN IN TRENCH COAT
Need a hand?

Rose struggles to break free of the snow she's half-buried in.

ROSE
Oh, I'm fine, thanks! Go ahead and
keep sledding. Just find a smaller
jump to go off.

The teens trudge back through the trees, dragging their sleds behind them, and whooping excitedly.

Rose rolls free of the snow in a series of awkward, crablike motions. She brushes the snow out of her coat.

TOM
I had no idea I'd be meeting the
abominable snow-woman when I got up
today.

Rose whirls around, clearly surprised.

ROSE
Tom! What are you doing here?

TOM
Watching you attempt to hibernate,
I guess.

He raises his hand as if to swat snow off the back of Rose's coat. He rubs the snow into back of her neck instead.

Rose squeals and elbows Tom in the stomach.

ROSE
Apparently changing direction in
midair doesn't actually work. I
blame gravity.

TOM

Zoey would have a fit if she could see you, hanging around with those kids and getting soaking wet in the snow. In the dark, too, I might add.

ROSE

Well, Zoey isn't here right now.

Rose's face scrunches up like a dissatisfied customer. She resumes dusting snow off herself in hurried, choppy movements.

ROSE (CONT'D)

And anyway, why should she care what I do? I'm an adult, I can sled if I want.

TOM

Hey, don't ask me. I think this looks funner than midnight skinny-dipping.

Rose winces.

ROSE

More fun. You mean "more fun."

TOM

You're too easy to bait.

He picks up her borrowed sled and swings it around to shake the snow off.

TOM (CONT'D)

This is a pretty dinky sled. I've got a sled in my car that has all the bells and whistles. Literally, it makes a whistling noise when you go downhill.

ROSE

How on earth do you have a sled just sitting in your car?

TOM

Dude, who doesn't? Actually, I decided I've worked hard enough for this week, and took a brief leave of absence from my psych class this morning.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Tom, do you ever go to class?

TOM

Sure I do. But a guy can't live at school, Rose.

(coaxing)

I know the perfect hill for sledding. You wanna try it out?

ROSE

(considering)

Sure, but only if you stop shoveling snow down my collar.

Tom grins and walks away. Rose follows.

INT. ROSE'S ROOM- MORNING

The tiny soapbox of a room is scrupulously clean. A battered keyboard/piano dominates the room like an immense, dramatic opera singer. Two futons spread with cheerful homemade quilts rest to the side of the piano in place of a bed and chairs. There isn't a TV or computer in sight.

Chipped plaster walls are lovingly draped with handmade decorations: paper streamers, drawings and paintings. Rough wooden shelves cling haphazardly to the walls, supporting worn books. Dozens of photographs cover the walls. Oversize patchwork pillows are piled up in the corner to use as seats in the narrow space.

The room is much more lived-in than Zoey's place.

Sunlight streams in through drafty windows, spills over wooden floorboards, and brings a golden glow to the space. A small charcoal-gray cat curls on the sun-warmed floor.

Rose bustles about, looking very organized. She switches on an electric kettle and sits down at the piano.

Rose caresses the scratched surface of the piano and pats it.

ROSE

Good morning, baby.

WILL MILTON (19) pops his curly head in the doorway, a huge grin lighting his face.

Hand still caressing the piano, Rose catches sight of him.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Will!

What's up, little brother? Dorm food not good enough for you?

WILL

Hey! Can't I just come visit my big sis because I love her so much?

ROSE

(grins)

Of course you can. I just don't believe you.

Will gives her puppy dog eyes. Very exaggerated puppy dog eyes.

WILL

If you don't believe in me, Rose, who will?

Rose waits, head cocked to the side.

WILL (CONT'D)

If you did have some extra food sitting around, I wouldn't say no.

Rose nods her head and makes a sweeping, "I knew it" gesture with her arms.

ROSE

There's a lasagna in the fridge.

Will gives a gleeful shout and dashes into the hall towards the fridge.

ROSE (CONT'D)

(raised voice)

I taped the recipe to the top, Will. Try it out on your own sometime and call me if you have any trouble.

Will pops back in the room.

WILL

Sure, sis.

Thanks for the grub. Gotta go to my next class. See you Friday, Rose!

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Don't forget to call Mom and Dad!

He waves a hand in acknowledgment and walks out the door.

Rose pulls her dress out of the closet. She holds the dress against her front, whirls around to make the dress swish.

She replaces the dress in the closet. Picks up a cobalt-blue plate of homemade lemon bars from a side table. Rose sets the plate down by the window and picks up a bar as she stares out the frosted window, chewing thoughtfully.

INT. BELLE'S PLACE- EVENING

A scalloped cobalt-blue platter filled with tiny, fragile-looking lemon tarts rests on the coffee table.

Top 40 music plays in the background and mixes with the rapid chatter of women in the living room. None of them are wearing much makeup-- incongruous with their attire.

The place looks like a showroom. Impeccable, stylish, and cold.

BELLE (24), an Asian American woman with a curtain of glossy black hair and a forgettable dress. Belle is smarter than she acts, with a weakness for gossip. She sits on the sofa cradling a crystal glass of wine. She looks bored.

Zoey holds a glass of white wine, fingertips wrapped casually around the stem. She is encased in a dress of the latest style-- a large bow pokes out from her shoulder and threatens to impale passersby. Her hair frizzes around her shoulders.

Zoey leans against the wall and talks to a tall, athletic brunette in a tight dress.

Rose walks in and TRIX (26), the brunette, turns around.

Trix is the kind of woman who gets along with men better than women- partly because she judges both harshly but softens the blow by flirting madly with the men. Even more than flirting, she is prone to scathing comments that send her peers scuttling for cover. She has mastered passive aggressive like an art form. Trix thrives on the tension in a room. Her pretty face is usually twisted into a smirk.

TRIX

Why Rose, I swear that dress looks better every time you wear it.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE
(dryly)
Thanks, Trix.

TRIX
Which is a good thing.

ZOEY
We get it, Trix. You wish you had a dress that flattered your figure as well as Rose's does. Don't worry, you'll find the right dress someday.

Trix toys with her Tiffany necklace. The other women ignore her. She adjusts the necklace ostentatiously.

BELLE
Is that a new necklace, Trix?

TRIX
This? Oh yes, Thomas got it for me.
(pause)
It's our one-week anniversary.

Rose's face drops in surprise. She compulsively smooths her dress. Zoey shoots a pained glance at Rose, then narrows her eyes and aims an unfriendly stare at Trix.

ZOEY
So, Trix and Tom are dating now.

TRIX
(to Rose)
Of course, it probably comes as no surprise to any of you. Our chemistry is **electric**.

Rose and Zoey exchange glances. Belle tries, and fails, to conceal her amusement at the spectacle.

Zoey steps forward, around Trix, and takes charge of the situation.

ZOEY
Right. Well, we don't have all night, ladies, so we'd better finish getting ready. Rose, can you help me with my hair? It always looks better when you do it.

Belle looks disappointed by this halt in gossip-worthy conversation. Rose smiles at her on her way to Zoey.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

I hope you're going to wear that mauve lipstick of yours tonight, Belle. It would go perfectly with your dress.

Belle brightens up and begins digging in her suitcase-sized makeup bag. Trix arches a perfectly plucked eyebrow, the very picture of supercilious as she looks from Belle to Rose.

Together in the next room, Rose runs a straightener through Zoey's hair while Zoey begins applying makeup to her face.

ROSE

So, who else is gonna be there tonight?

ZOEY

Tom, of course, and probably Frank.

ROSE

(slyly)
And Sydney?

ZOEY

(blushes)
Yes, Belle mentioned-- Yeah.

ROSE

I knew it! It's the hair.

ZOEY

Shut up!

Both women fall silent. As Zoey applies a heavy layer of mascara and Rose continues straightening her hair, both barely conceal their grins.

BELLE (O.S.)

Hey! Come back in here, we're taking a group selfie!

The women, now fully dressed and hair mostly done, crowd together around Belle's couch and pose. FLASH.

EXT. LANDMARK CENTER- NIGHT

The historic, brightly lit building looks like a fairy tale between the snow and stars.

(CONTINUED)

SYDNEY (26) stands outside in the snow, looking dignified in a trench coat and dark blue scarf. The battered gold watch on his wrist was a gift from his mother and it never comes off. He's a total gentleman, timeless, a black Cary Grant. Entirely self-possessed. Syd is older than the rest of the group, and more serious. They all, Zoey especially, consider it a big deal to earn Sydney's admiration. He's kind and a little reserved. A hard worker, less lively than Tom.

INT. LANDMARK CENTER- NIGHT

The chandeliers swoop like bunches of grapes, casting a golden glow of light on the tropical flock of people in the wide room below. The Humane Society Charity Ball is tastefully decorated and perfectly calculated to persuade patrons to donate, from towers of flowers to pictures of puppies to fine champagne.

Rose nibbles on appetizers as she looks around her in wonder. Wide eyes, mouth ajar, she takes genuine pleasure in her surroundings. She turns to Tom and Sydney, her smile evident in the lines of her shoulders, the light in her eyes, and the clasp of her hands.

ROSE

I feel like Elizabeth Bennet, all dressed up and going to a ball.

Sydney and Tom exchange amused glances. Trix, within earshot, lifts her eyebrows.

TRIX

Imagine, finding this exciting!
The champagne is the 1999 Pierre Peters Cuvee Special Brut. That's so mainstream. And the plates are straight up Ikea. No originality. It's like being at a frat party.

Someone offers Trix a tray of appetizers- and wilts under her glare.

TRIX (CONT'D)

(snaps)

Don't you have anything with arugula?

(to Tom)

No one actually eats these fatty hors d'oeuvres.

Trix shoots a sly glance at Rose, who smiles placidly and raises the artichoke dip to her mouth.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Rose seems to be enjoying it, at least.

TRIX

To each her own, darling. I'm just so glad we could come tonight. You know how much I love animals. I have the best boyfriend here.

TOM

And I have the best girlfriend. Rose, has Trix told you about these cool local artists she's into right now?

Rose shakes her head, her mouth full of hors d'oeuvres.

TRIX

You probably haven't heard of them. The King sisters. Becca and Biz. They're not really sisters, of course. They do these avant-garde installations, using every medium from paint to ironworks to mosaics.

Rose coughs a little and swallows her food.

ROSE

That sounds incredible, Trix.

TOM

Trix is amazing at finding stuff like that.

Trix and Tom continue to talk amongst themselves-- typical new-couple talk. Rose shrugs and turns to talk to Sydney.

Down the table, Belle and Zoey whisper. Zoey's eyes are fixed on Sydney.

BELLE

(to Zoey)

She's so sweet! Rose has such a **unique** sense of style. I would never have the courage to wear something I'd made myself, or reuse an outfit. But Rose is such an odd duck. I never know what to expect.

Sydney leans over and says something to Rose, who laughs. Zoey absently adjusts the bow on her dress. Tom glances fondly at Trix. She smiles at him and whispers something in his ear.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

Rose is independent. She does her own thing.

BELLE

Her family lives up North, don't they?

ZOEY

What? Oh yeah, they have a farm up in the Great White North. It's basically Canada. They don't even have WI-FI or cable.

BELLE

(gasps)

How awful! No wonder she's so... you know. I bet she doesn't even have a Tumblr.

Zoey nods absently.

BELLE (CONT'D)

She's working now, isn't she? Like, five jobs?

Trix leans across the table.

TRIX

How many jobs are you working, Rose?

ROSE

Actually, I just started teaching music lessons this month. I'm still working at Java Hut, and I have a few kids I tutor for the ACTs.

Trix turns to share a sardonic glance with Tom, but he's looking at Rose. Belle looks baffled. Zoey is uncomfortable.

SYDNEY

That's wonderful Rose! Do you have room in your schedule for another pupil?

ROSE

(teasing)

Why, are you looking to learn piano?

(CONTINUED)

SYDNEY

I'm afraid I've gotten as far as I can on the piano. I don't know how far Chopsticks can take me, but I'm not holding my breath for a musical career.

Everybody laughs.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

I'm asking because my niece, Amy, has been wanting to learn piano, and I think you would make an incredible teacher.

ROSE

Thanks, Sydney! I'm always looking for more students, especially ones who actually want to learn—sometimes the parents are more enthusiastic than their kids.

Speaking of enthusiastic, Sydney, did Zoey tell you about the play we saw last week?

The group smiles and continues chatting under golden ropes of twinkling lights. Champagne glasses raise and lower. The sound of voices grows too clamorous to make out individual conversations. The colors and lights blur together...

Rose dances, spinning, the embodiment of enthusiasm. The musicians grin at the sight of her and double the energy behind their instruments. Zoey laughs happily from the side. Trix raises one patronizing eyebrow and stays put. Sydney and Tom look like they're enjoying themselves. Giggling couples from the crowd join Rose on the dance floor. Belle shrugs and goes for it. Rose pulls her into the fray.

EXT. STREET- NIGHT

Glittering snow surrounds the yellow-lit street.

Zoey laughs, stumbles a little. Rose walks up to her, holds out her hand palm-up.

ROSE

Give me your keys, Zo. I'm driving.

ZOEY

It's cool.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

I haven't had any champagne. I'll drive you home and crash at your place for the night.

ZOEY

Don't be a stick in the mud, Rose.

Rose isn't budging.

SYDNEY

Zoey, let her drive. It's the smart decision.

Zoey drops her keys in Rose's palm. Rose's fingers close over the keys.

Zoey's phone trills an indie-rap song.

ZOEY

Hiya. Grandmere? What? Sure. I'll come right over.

She hangs up the phone.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Tom, Grandmere says to come over to the house. I guess Dad has something to tell us.

TOM

Damn! I bet he convinced the Dean to give him my grades.

ZOEY

Don't be stupid. Why would he want to see both of us?

(guiltily)

Did you go over your allowance this month?

TOM

Did you?

ROSE

I can drop you off, Zo.

ZOEY

No way. You're coming with. Dad likes you better anyway.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE
That's not true, he--

TOM
Oh, it so is.

ZOEY
He totally does!

ROSE
He loves you both. But of course
I'll come, if you want me to.

TRIX
Thomas!

TOM
I'll catch up with you two.

Tom and Trix embrace-- over-the-top PDA.

Rose and Zoey roll their eyes and walk down the sidewalk,
waving goodbye to Sydney.

EXT. SHAW HOME- NIGHT

An impressive Summit Avenue brick Victorian coated in a
light dusting of snow. Immaculately manicured yard.

GRANDMERE, a pleasant-looking woman of about 65 and wearing
plain but brand name clothes, opens the door.

GRANDMERE
Hello, Zoey dear.

ZOEY
Hi, Grandmere. Good to see you.

Zoey and Grandmere neatly execute, as if by rote, a European
greeting: Arms on one another's shoulders, they lean in,
kiss the air, and move away.

ROSE
Grandmere!

She impulsively sweeps Grandmere into a big hug.

GRANDMERE
Rose! How are you, darling? And
your family, how are they?

The trio steps inside the doorway.

INT. SHAW HOME- NIGHT

In the brightly lit and well-maintained hallway, Turkish rugs line the floor and priceless art lines the walls.

ROSE

I'm doing great. Zoey makes sure I mix some fun into my busy schedule. My parents are keeping busy with 4H, and Will of course is studying hard.

GRANDMERE

That's lovely to hear.

(to Zoey)

I'm sorry dear, but your father has some news for you.

ZOEY

(to Rose)

He's probably just grumpy that I exceeded my credit card limit again. I'll talk him down in fifteen minutes and then we can leave.

Grandmere's face closes.

ROSE

Zoey! You promised you'd pay off your credit card bills!

ZOEY

I know, I know, but will you look at this outfit?

Zoey's spiky heels, fitted dress, chunky gold necklace, and dangly gold earrings, are attention grabbing.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Trust me, it was worth it.

Rose shakes her head.

ROSE

Alright, I'll wait in here. You go easy on your dad, okay?

Zoey waves her hand in response and walks away, her heels muffled by the thick burgundy carpet. She opens a tall set of double doors and walks into her father's study.

PARLOR

Rose sits straight-backed on a cream-colored sofa. A Turner hangs on the wall behind her. Across from Rose, a wide mirror dominates the space above the fireplace. Grandmere perches on a winged chair kitty corner to Rose. Nothing about this ruthlessly lavish parlor seems especially inviting, but Rose manages to look at home here-- giving the impression that she would look at home anywhere, be it a Tibetan village or the White House.

ROSE

So much has changed since graduation! It's nice to have a few places that will always stay the same.

Grandmere looks pained.

GRANDMERE

It is nice to see you, Rose. It's been too quiet since you and Zoey graduated.

ROSE

(concerned)

We miss you too. Grandmere, are you alright?

GRANDMERE

Actually, we've had some bad news-

A door slams.

TOM (O.S.)

Gran? Yo! What's the urgent news?

Grandmere rises stiffly and walks out of the room.

Rose frowns thoughtfully. She settles into the couch and pulls knitting needles and purple wool out of her bag.

Zoey drifts through the room in a daze, eyes wide with shock, ignoring Rose entirely.

Rose packs away her knitting quickly and precisely. Quietly, follows Zoey out of the room.

HALLWAY

Rose is a small, lone figure in the hallway. She makes several turns, as if she knows exactly where Zoey was headed.

POOL

The white walls dance with blue reflections. Rose pauses in the doorway of the Shaws' indoor pool. Zoey stands looking down the length of the pool, her back to Rose. Zoey seems small beside the pool, holding her heels limply in one hand.

Zoey hurls her shoes into the water.

Rose and Zoey stare at the Louis Vuitton heels, 7 1/2 feet under. Rose glances at Zoey as if she wants to say something. She looks back at the shoes' watery grave. Rose puts an arm around Zoey.

The girls rest their heads together for a long moment.

ZOEY

We're broke.

Dad says it's been coming for a while. I guess a lot of Dad's money was tied up in real estate or stocks or something. I didn't really understand all of what he was saying. I can't take it all in.

Rose hugs Zoey.

ROSE

Come on, let's sit down.

They sit on the edge of the pool and dangle their bare legs into the water. Their flashy dresses seem garishly out of place now.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I'm here for you, you know.

ZOEY

I know.

ROSE

How bad is it?

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

Well, it's not like we're gonna be out on the street, living under a bridge...

ROSE

Like I'd let you do that! You can crash on my couch anytime, you know that.

ZOEY

It's a pretty damn comfy couch.

They smile a little.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

But we're not gonna be going on a Caribbean cruise anytime soon, either.

ROSE

Good.

Zoey looks at her in surprise.

ROSE (CONT'D)

You hated that cruise anyway. You got all sunburned, remember? You came home the same shade as strawberry ice cream.

Zoey laughs.

ZOEY

There you go. It's a good thing. I'll never have to buy SPF 70 again.

ROSE

And you can eat Ramen noodles without shame, like the rest of us.

Zoey turns back to face the chemical-blue water.

ZOEY

Seriously-- it's pretty bad. Dad had to file for bankruptcy. I'm gonna have to sell the apartment to pay off my credit card bills. We'll live with Grandmere, I think.

I'll get a job. Somehow. And learn how to budget.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

I can help with that. I've been balancing my own budget for years now. And you'll find a job.

ZOEY

Thanks.

They stare out at the water again, their backs dark against the wide swath of blue in front of them.

INT. TARGET - MORNING

Bright primary colors dance under the hum of florescent lights. An empty red shopping cart rolls by, obscuring the orderly collection lining the aisles.

Zoey's hands grip the cart's handle, sleek red nails matching the cart and rings glinting. She pushes the cart around the corner. Zoey wears a flannel shirt and matching vest, skinny jeans and brown boots, and a purse voluminous enough to house a cat. Her hair is pulled into a ponytail and she looks determined.

Rose walks at Zoey's side, a list in her hands. She's dressed in jeans and a t-shirt under her yellow coat, her hair pulled into a messy bun. She is focused on the task at hand.

ZOEY

Where do we start?

ROSE

(sings cheerily)

Let's start from the very beginning, that's a very good place to start...

ZOEY

Rose!

Rose laughs. Zoey looks around uncomfortably.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Will you please not sing in public?
It's weird!

ROSE

When has that ever stopped me?

(sings)

I'm weird, weird, or so it appeared. I'm weird, weird, and totally cheered.

(CONTINUED)

(operatic voice)
Weird, weird, but I don't got a beard!

Zoey wheels the cart away from Rose.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Okay, okay, I'm done. Let's see, we'd better start with the essentials. What do you need?

ZOEY
Toilet paper.

Rose nods and leads the way toward the correct aisle. Zoey follows.

ZOEY (CONT'D)
Toothpaste. Shower gel.
(faster)
Air freshener, mascara, exfoliating lotion, nail polish remover--

ROSE
(interrupts)
Wait! Zoey. Think necessities. You're on a budget now. You need food more than you need exfoliating lotion. Let's get that toilet paper, then look at food. If you're doing okay budget-wise, then we can come back and check out the mascara.

ZOEY
(groans theatrically)
Rose, this is ridiculous. How did I make it to 25 and not even know how to shop?

ROSE
Oh, you know how to shop.

ZOEY
(elbows Rose)
Shut up!

ROSE
Don't stress about it, Zo.

Zoey picks up the most expensive brand of toilet paper, as seen on TV.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE (CONT'D)

Budgeting is a skill and a habit. Once you get used to it, you won't think twice. The problem is, you don't look at price tags.

Rose shakes her head. She reaches over and switches Zoey's toilet paper out with a better-priced pack.

ZOEY

I'll learn! I'm going to be the best budgeter you've ever seen! I'm going to buy the cheapest of everything and -- oh look Rose! This is on sale!

She holds up a wooden birdhouse.

ROSE

You don't need that.

ZOEY

They're only \$5 each!

ROSE

If you buy three. What are you going to do with three birdhouses? Your Grandmere's little house has a yard the size of a postage stamp. Sales don't always save you money, remember that. And you don't want to buy the cheapest option every time, or everything you own is going to start falling apart the first time you use it.

Zoey puts it back in the bin, chastened.

They continue pushing the cart through the store.

ZOEY

I feel like things **are** falling apart already. When Dad told me the money was gone, I just thought, everything will change. I thought about poor Dad, you know? He's working harder than ever. Out of town all the time, "tying up loose ends." And Tom's still in school, and I'll have to move. But I didn't think my friends would change too.

They stop in the "ethnic food" aisle and start pulling tortillas, refried beans, egg noodles, etc., into the cart.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Most of the girls just totally dropped me. Carrie actually texted me to uninvite me from her big New Year's party a couple weeks ago. She **said** she didn't want me to feel uncomfortable, since I couldn't afford tickets or new heels anymore. Most of the girls just ignore me now.

ROSE

Those girls aren't your friends. If they're going to ditch you when you hit a bump in the road, they're not worth it. But Sydney is sticking by you, right?

ZOEY

(smiles)

Yeah. Syd is sticking by m-- by us. Me and Tom.

Zoey fumbles with a box of microwave pad thai. She tosses it in the cart and they move down the aisle.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

The weird thing is, Trix didn't break up with Tom!

ROSE

Really? I didn't see that coming.

ZOEY

Right? I totally had her pegged for a gold-digger. I guess she likes him more than I figured.

ROSE

Who wouldn't like Tom?

Rose turns abruptly into another aisle. They both stop short. A sea of aggressively red valentines stretches out before the pair. As one, Rose and Zoey backtrack and turn away.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I'm surprised Tom likes her. I never thought-- they don't seem to have much in common.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

Not at first. Now they have plenty in common: They both think life can only be enjoyed ironically, and they both act like making out is their favorite hobby.

ROSE

You can't carry out a decent conversation with Tom any more without him talking about that band he liked before they were cool.

ZOEY

Now that he's banging Trix, they're together **constantly**.

She sticks her finger toward the back of her throat, pokes her tongue out, and makes a gagging noise.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Even worse, Trix still flirts with other guys. I don't know why Tom doesn't stand up for himself.

ROSE

I don't think he's figured out what she's really like yet.

ZOEY

Yeah. Trix is like a totally different person around Tom.

ROSE

True. I miss the old Tom, the one who didn't care what anybody said and constantly joked instead of trying so hard to be cool. Tom doesn't get enthusiastic about things any more.

Dry goods section. Zoey pulls random boxes off the shelf and tosses them into the cart. Rose returns about every other one.

ZOEY

Since Dad filed for bankruptcy, it's gotten worse. I don't think Tom's doing so hot at school, either.

A TARGET EMPLOYEE approaches. Typical red shirt, pale-lichen face, slumped shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

TARGET GUY
Can I help you girls?

ROSE
No, thanks.

Target Guy eyes Zoey. Kinda creepy.

TARGET GUY
Are you finding everything okay on
your own?

ROSE
Yes.

ZOEY
Yes.

TARGET GUY
Are you sure? I'm here to help.

He's staring at Zoey.

ZOEY
No, really. We're fine.

TARGET GUY
Are you looking for anything in
particular?

Rose and Zoey exchange glances. Zoey straightens up a little and looks him in the eye. Rose looks like she wants to laugh.

ZOEY
Yes, we're looking for pads. All I
see here is pasta and rice.

Target Guy looks a little uncomfortable.

TARGET GUY
Oh. Yeah, um, those are over in
Personal Hygiene.

Zoey is magnificently straight-faced.

ZOEY
Pasta and rice?

TARGET GUY
No...

Zoey waits.

TARGET GUY (CONT'D)

Pads.

He fidgets in growing discomfort. Zoey holds herself taller, looking increasingly at ease. Rose stands to the side, hand over her mouth, trying not to laugh.

ZOEY

Yes, why aren't they here?

TARGET GUY

In the dry goods aisle?

ZOEY

Pads are dry goods, aren't they?

TARGET GUY

I... guess. But, not really. I mean, this is a **food** aisle.

Target Guy backs off a little. Zoey steps forward.

ZOEY

I guess. But can you really call this food?

She lifts a bag of especially gray lentils from the shelf. Target Guy looks confused.

TARGET GUY

Yes.

ZOEY

You have a really messed up idea of what dry goods are.

TARGET GUY

What?

He is halfway down the aisle now. Zoey advances.

ZOEY

Lentils are art. You should see the lentil mosaics I made in kindergarten. I keep them framed in my house.

Target Guy looks around wildly, backs into a shelf of Minute Rice. Zoey is glowing in straight-faced triumph. Rose steps forward.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Okay, thanks for your help. I think we've got it from here.

Target Guy stumbles out of the aisle and disappears.

Zoey and Rose high five -- an elaborate process, complete with a high five, a low five, three fist bumps, and a hip bump.

Zoey leans on Rose as they laugh hysterically.

ZOEY

Every time! It works every time!

ROSE

I can't believe how good you play crazy.

ZOEY

I have Trix for a model.

ROSE

That's mean.

ZOEY

But true.

Rose shrugs, nods.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Speaking of Trix--

They both crinkle their noses.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

I'm kinda worried about Tom. Not because of Trix. That can't last forever. It's that he's screwing around way more than usual at school.

ROSE

Has he picked a major yet?

ZOEY

No, but I didn't settle on a major until my fourth year of college.

ROSE

I don't think Tom's going to be able to spend six years in undergrad, Zoey, now that your family's financial situation--

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY
(interrupts)
Now that we're broke.

ROSE
Yes.

A pause. They wheel the cart through the produce section.

ROSE
You'll manage. We'll keep practicing budgeting until you get the hang of it, and we'll find free fun things to do.

ZOEY
(Incredulously)
Like what?

ROSE
Like going to the park.

Zoey glances pointedly at their heavy winter boots.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Or board games.

Zoey looks unimpressed.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Quilting. Baking. Dancing? Art!

I'll tell you what, Zoey, we'll go to an art gallery some time and look at the art.

ZOEY
Okay, I think I can handle that. Speaking of the arts, did you get Syd's tweet about tickets to see *Oliver*?

ROSE
Yes. It sounds awesome, if I can get time off. You're going, right?

ZOEY
Maybe. I don't want Syd to treat me like I'm someone he has to feel sorry for.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Syd wouldn't do that! He knows how much you love the theater. Besides, I think Grandmere helped a little.

You're not doing anything next Friday, are you?

Zoey drops her head against the cart handle. When the metal touches her face, she recoils in disgust.

ZOEY

Not unless you count cutting out coupons and filling out job applications.

ROSE

(laughs)

Given the right music and ample snacks, coupon cutting can be prime entertainment.

Zoey gives her A Look.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Too soon. Right. Well look, I'll swing by your place and help you pack, then we'll go see *Oliver*. Tom said something about karaoke after. It'll be fun!

ZOEY

Okay, if you're sure you want to hear my voice.

ROSE

We can duet. In the meantime, I'll take you to visit some friends of mine. They're artists and best friends, and always find something to do. You'll love it.

They wheel the cart to the checkout line.

INT. ZOEY'S APARTMENT- DAY

The apartment is full of empty space like a mouth after a particularly grim dentist appointment. A couple pieces of furniture lie scattered around the unfurnished room, surrounded by a horde of cardboard BOXES.

Classical music (Mendelssohn, "Songs without Words") tinkles in the background.

(CONTINUED)

Zoey and Rose pack the last few electrical appliances into boxes. They push boxes into the entryway.

ZOEY

He acts all tough and cool and ironic, but inside, Tom's as softhearted as a baby. You know how they got together in the first place? Trix was crying her eyes out over her skinny vanilla latte at Caribou and Tom walked in and saw her. She had just broken up with her fiance, and apparently my genius brother decided the best way to comfort her was to ask her out.

ROSE

Well, he must like it. Like her. You've seen them together-- squids are less clingy.

ZOEY

You know Tom, he'll stand by her through the tantrums and the tears. I've never met anyone as loyal as Tom, other than you.

ROSE

Poor Tom!

They shove boxes across the room with varying degrees of competency. Zoey doesn't quite know what she's doing, and puts all the heavy stuff into one box. She tries to drag it, then gives up and pushes it along in front of her. Rose keeps trying to carry too much, and staggers around with 2-3 boxes in her arms. Continuous...

ZOEY

That's not even the worst of it. She was actually crying over her broken iPhone. Tom has no idea. I hope she breaks up with him soon. I don't like people bothering Tom.

ROSE

No one but you.

ZOEY

Obviously. He's *my* brother. To be fair, he can be a real brat sometimes. Still. I do love him.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

I know.

Zoey picks up a thermos of coffee and sips it.

ZOEY

Yeah, and he's always been so good with Grandmere, through her heart problems and all. It's going to be weird, though, living with Grandmere and Dad and Tom again. I thought I was finally independent, and then I got that huge wake-up call. I just hope I've hit the bottom now, 'cause I'm ready to start over again.

ROSE

Well, you can start by meeting some new friends.

ZOEY

I'm so looking forward to doing something just for fun. Oh! I forgot to tell you-- Grandmere got invited to speak at a conference, and she invited me along as her guest. We're going to Boston for a long weekend.

ROSE

That's great, Zoey!

She waves the thermos in the air in triumph.

ZOEY

I can't wait to get out of here for a bit. I've never spent the whole winter in Minnesota before.

They lapse into a companionable silence. Mendelssohn continues to play. They work on sorting the boxes. Zoey walks into the other room. Rose looks at the doorway Zoey just walked through, her face undecided. Zoey strides back into the room dragging a lamp. Rose nods to herself, steeling up to say:

ROSE

You know how we were talking about budgeting the other day?

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

I've been good! I promise! I found a great deal online for a reversible poncho, but I didn't buy it.

ROSE

No, not you...

She blushes, a guilty look on her face. Zoey does a double take and turns to face Rose with great drama.

ZOEY

Rose! I don't believe it! Good for you, girl! What did you buy? A piano?

ROSE

(groans)

I wish. At least I'd have some use for it, or be able to resell it. As is- no returns. I just, I lost my head and I totally splurged what should have been next month's rent money, and now I feel terrib--

ZOEY

(interrupts)

Out with it, Rose. What did you buy?

Rose shifts a stack of cardboard boxes. From behind the cardboard barrier, she mumbles something.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

What?

Rose emerges from the boxes.

ROSE

Boots. I bought a pair of high-heeled, gorgeous, utterly useless in the snow, boots.

ZOEY

Ooooo! Rose, you've gotta show 'em to me!

ROSE

You don't understand. I never should have spent that much money at all, especially not on shoes. Will's birthday is coming up, what

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROSE (cont'd)
will I get him? There are a
thousand other expenses, too. And
all for boots I can't even wear
outside most of the year!

Zoey sits on one of the boxes. She pats the low box next to
her. Rose sighs and sinks down besides Zoey.

ZOEY
Rose, honey. Snap out of it! It
happens. Don't spend all your time
moping about it. This is one of
those times you learn from your
mistakes and move on. You always
worry so much about being
"practically perfect in every way."

ROSE
I'm not trying to be perfect, I
just, I don't--

ROSE
I don't want to mess up.

ZOEY
You don't want to mess up.

ZOEY
But that's the fun part! Don't you
ever get sick of following the
rules? How do you know what works
and what doesn't if you never mess
up a little?

ROSE
I admire you, Zo. You're not afraid
to make mistakes. You don't spend
your time worrying about things
outside your control, and it always
seems to work out for you.

ZOEY
Well, more or less. I'm telling you
Rose, you can't worry so much.

Rose sighs, and wraps an arm around Zoey.

ROSE
I'll try. Anyway, I may as well
enjoy those boots, now that I've
got them.

ZOEY

Yes, those fabulous boots! We've got to find somewhere you can wear them.

ROSE

I was thinking, how about for that performance of *Oliver*? I know people don't really dress up for the theater anymore, but--

ZOEY

It's perfect! The guys won't know what hit them.

Rose makes a face.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Oh, don't give me that look!

A P!nk song BLARES. Zoey picks up her PHONE and looks at the number.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Oh no. Not again.

(Answering the phone)

What is it, Tom?

(Pause)

I can't keep covering for you, Tom.

(Pause)

Yes, of course I'll be there. Give me fifteen. Uh huh. I know.

She hangs up. Rose pastes on a neutral face and picks up her purse.

ROSE

I'll come over later. We can head over to Biz and Becca's place together.

ZOEY

(wearily)

Yes and yes. I'll see you at six. I just have to go fish Tom out of trouble again.

They exchange knowing looks.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Thanks for helping me move.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

That's what friends are for:
 lifting boxes, being available for
 midnight pizza runs and two a.m.
 breakdowns, admiring new shoes, and
 providing alibis.

ZOEY

I think that last one is what
 sisters are for.

They laugh. Rose props the door open and the pair hoist tottering stacks of boxes through the door.

INT. BIZ AND BECCA'S LOFT - EVENING

Open space and concrete angles. A long, solid oaken table dominates one side of the room. Art in process makes a maze of the room: Statues, wide swathes of bespattered canvas, oilcloth swirled beneath to protect the wood floor, bowls of fruit, mannequins draped in heavy brocade cloth, color palettes, brushes and pens strewn everywhere, nests of wires, rough penciled sketches on newsprint, photos dangling from the ceiling, drying papier-mache, blocks of clay, paper scraps layered into animals, ironworks, a misshapen kiln in the corner, trays filled with beads of wood and clay and glass, and a pile of found trash to be re-purposed...

Four women sprawl on a paint cloth in a rough circle of space carved out of the Renaissance clutter. Zoey sits next to Rose, opposite BECCA, a tall brunette with a pixie cut and muscled arms, and BIZ, a blond, dreamy-looking wisp of a girl with a pale face and faraway eyes. Becca looks like she could lift anything, twice. Biz promises to be as whimsical as the pink highlights tipping her hair.

The center of the cloth holds a half-eaten basket of fruit (looking suspiciously like still-life fruit), cheese and crackers, apple cider. The only silverware is a lone knife, and the glasses are mason jars of varying sizes.

BECCA

Now that's a picnic!

BIZ

"I know a bank where the wild thyme
 blows, Where oxlips and the nodding
 violet grows, Quite over-canopied
 with luscious woodbine, With sweet
 musk-roses and with eglantine."

(CONTINUED)

BECCA
(to Zoey)
Midsummer Night's Dream. Act 2,
scene 1.

ROSE
Becca, Biz, can you tell Zoey what
you are working on?

She throws her arm around Zoey.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Zoey's looking for inspiration on
this great path we call--

ZOEY
(interrupts)
Figuring out what the hell to do
with our lives.

BIZ
"The lunatic, the lover, and the
poet, are of imagination all
compact."

Biz picks up the cheese knife, wipes it absentmindedly on
the picnic cloth, and dips it in a dish of wet plaster. She
spreads it over a cardboard object.

BECCA
(to Zoey)
Midsummer Night's Dream again. Act
5, scene 1. She's been commissioned
to design the set for the Guthrie's
summer production.

ZOEY
Really? That's incredible! I love
the Guthrie. I've loved everything
about theater for as long as I can
remember. Do you design sets as
well?

BECCA
Whenever Biz has an idea that calls
for an extra set of eyes and hands.
Usually I meddle in ironworks and
clay. Biz will paint anything that
stands still long enough, and last
month she began working on mosaics,
too. My current obsession is...
Her.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY
 (looking at Biz)
 Her?

Becca stands up, strides across the room, and tugs the cover off a giant, lumpy shape.

BECCA
Her.

The thing under the cover is an iron woman, twice Rose's height. She is a work in progress, one-armed and rough. But the high cheekbones and generously curving breasts and hips speak of a noble woman, a strong woman. Zoey cannot tear her gaze away.

ROSE
 What do you think of Her, Zoey?

ZOEY
 She's awesome. Strong and somehow wise. Not like any woman I've met. Who is she?

Becca rests her arm reverently on the Woman.

BECCA
 She's my ideal woman. The woman I want to be someday. The woman I hope we can all become. Stronger, wiser, kinder. Tough enough to go anywhere and do anything, tender enough to make her time worthwhile.

ROSE
 Sometimes when I dream of making it somewhere with my music, I picture Her face.

ZOEY
 She makes me want to be more of a woman. A stronger woman, I mean.

Biz's hands fly with the plaster. The object in her hands takes on the shape of a tree: A remarkable tree with delicate twisted branches.

BIZ
 "My soul is in the sky."

BECCA
 Act 5, scene 1. Personally, I turn to the pompous Polonius for this
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BECCA (cont'd)
 one: "This above all: To thine own
 self be true." Act 1, scene 2.
 Hamlet.

ROSE
 That's it, isn't it? Be true to
 ourselves, and we'll become strong
 like Her.

BECCA
 Funny how hard that ends up being.

The women fall silent. Three of them look up at Her
 silently. Biz plasters her tree, humming to herself.

EXT. SKATING RINK- AFTERNOON

Twinkling lights twine around bare-fingered trees
 surrounding the rink. Zoey stomps and slides out to the ice,
 clutching at the sides with careening desperation.

KATIE, a little girl of about 8, skates backwards. She stops
 beside Zoey, points at her legs, and corrects Zoey's form.
 The girl skates a little, demonstrating, then motions for
 Zoey to try. Zoey skates a few steps forward, arms flapping.
 The girl shakes her head. She shows Zoey again. They go back
 and forth.

Zoey and Katie make a slow circuit of the rink.

Rose arrives, out of breath, and glides onto the ice.

ROSE
 Zoey!

Rose waves her arms over her head. Zoey sees her and waves
 back.

ROSE
 (shouts)
 Sorry I'm late. I missed my bus.

ZOEY
 (hollers)
 That's okay! Katie here was
 teaching me how to skate.

KATIE
 I've got to go home now. You should
 really work on your turns.

Rose grins. Katie holds herself very tall and skates away.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

Thanks.

ROSE

Show me your skills! Let's go.

Zoey and Rose hold hands. They skate-- surprisingly graceful. For 20 seconds.

They lose balance and tumble over, then scabble at the ice like hamsters on a wheel, tugging at one another to stand up.

Laughter. They manage to get upright. The duo makes slow, wobbly strides in zig-zags around the ice.

ROSE

Goodness, is this place usually so empty?

Zoey pauses, clings to the side.

ZOEY

Probs not. People keep acting like they're surprised it's snowing in Minnesota.

ROSE

More room for us!

ZOEY

Good, 'cause we need it.

Rose pushes off from the wall and manages a pretty decent glide.

ROSE

Relax, Zoey.

She turns to grin at Zoey-- and falls.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Even Tony Stark needed practice before he got the hang of his Ironman suit.

ZOEY

Just the inspiration I needed!

She tries for a pirouette. Ends up in the splits instead.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY (CONT'D)

Or not. Maybe I need an Ironman suit.

Rose helps her up.

ROSE

Oooh--if you could actually talk to Ironman, what would you say?

ZOEY

You smug bastard.

Rose cracks up.

ROSE

Really?

ZOEY

Totally. In my version of me meeting Ironman, I'm the villain. I have a cape and everything.

ROSE

I think villains wear cloaks.

ZOEY

As long as I get a mask to go with my sexy bad guy costume, I don't care.

They clump along, walking and sliding more than skating.

ROSE

I'm so glad Tom made us watch those movies.

ZOEY

I can't believe Tom and I like the same movie. Hey, who would you be, if you met Ironman?

ROSE

I don't know.

ZOEY

Oh, come on, Rose! Are you the love interest, or are you working with me to defeat our arch-enemy?

ROSE

I think I'd just be the one playing the piano in the background.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

We can't have that. You'd have to run for cover when the battle starts, and then you'd sacrifice yourself for a little kid or something. No, you get to be... a superhero.

Every time Zoey gets excited and waves her arms around, she loses her balance again. She's getting better at catching herself before falling down. A little better.

ROSE

"Super Rose"? I don't think so.

Rose manages to circle the entire rink without a wobble.

ZOEY

You already play the piano! This is a fantasy, Rose. Movies aren't real life. Movie characters get to be glamorous and change the world. Seriously, dude. Pick a super power!

Zoey slips and pops back up again.

ROSE

Super power, okay.
(thinks)
Healing powers. Weather control.
Ability to talk to animals. Super voice.

ZOEY

What the hell is super voice?

The more they talk, the better they skate.

ROSE

I don't know. I'm just trying to think of something I already love to do and make it super.

ZOEY

You already have a super voice, Rose.

ROSE

Thanks, Zo.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

No, I really mean it. You should do something with that, like perform. Oooh, you could go on The Voice! Or American Idol.

Two skaters enter the ice rink. They look like art in motion. Rose and Zoey watch them spin.

ROSE

I'm not really a fan of the spotlight.

ZOEY

I know that, dork. Look, you would **rock**. Why not totally go for it? Once you publish a couple albums, you could become a mysterious hermit. That kind of stuff always makes celebrities seem way cooler, anyway.

ROSE

Why don't **you** go under the spotlight, Zoey? You have the dramatic flair for it. I can picture it now: The audience waits with bated breath. Suddenly, a fabulous woman in a sequined dress appears on stage.

ZOEY

What am I, a magician?

ROSE

'Zoey.' No last name, just Zoey. Or 'Z.' The unforgettable Z, electrifying the room.

ZOEY

What am I supposed to be doing? I don't have half your talent, Rose.

Zoey and Rose hobble back to the edge of the rink. They take off their skates, clutch at their ankles and wince as they pull their boots back on.

ROSE

You'll find your thing, Zoey. You have such a commanding presence, people will just sit up and pay attention.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY
We sound so amazing.

ROSE
We are.

They walk away from the rink, down the sidewalk.

ZOEY
Oh God.

ROSE
What?

ZOEY
If we make it big, some blogger is gonna dig up that time we went a little crazy during finals week, milked all those cows, and wore cowboy boots and spurs to bed.

Rose's eyes get big and round.

ROSE
We destroyed your Grandmere's nice silk sheets.

ZOEY
I told Dad it was moths.

ROSE
The truth can't get out. That's it. We can never be famous.

ZOEY
We can never be famous.

They solemnly shake on it and do their multi-step high five.

INT. POSH RESIDENCE OF ROSE'S CLIENT- DAY

A very elegant room. Senators would feel at home here; anyone else would be too frightened to touch anything lest they smudge a Greek statue or rustle a flower arrangement.

Rose sits on a piano bench before a glossy black piano. GUS, the little boy who sits beside her, plays "Fur Elise" in a wobbly manner. He arrives at the end of the song, only slightly off measure.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Good job remembering the keys, Gus.
You can have a five-minute break
now, and when you come back I'll
let you play "La Cucaracha."

Gus runs out of the room. Rose walks over to her bag and picks up her phone. The SCREEN reads: 4 missed calls. She hits redial.

ZOEY (O.S.)

Rose! Thank God! Tom's hurt, he's been in an accident, and we're still out of town. Dad too, with another work thing. Gran and I are trying to get a flight back from Massachusetts but we need someone to go be with Tom now. He's in the hospital. I don't know how bad it is.

ROSE

(calmly)

Of course I'll go see him. Take a deep breath with me, Zoey. Good. I'll call you as soon as I know how Tom's doing. I'm heading over there right now.

Rose looks at her phone for a moment and sets it down. She takes a deep breath herself and walks out of the room.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY- DAY

Sterile gray-blue walls press in on the little figure in the yellow coat and the strawberry hat. Over her shoulder, a door slams. Heels clack against tile like a hammer and nails.

Rose turns. Trix storms down the hall, arms wheeling in distress.

ROSE

Trix! Is Tom alright? Have you seen him?

TRIX

It's awful. Awful! There's blood everywhere. You know I can't stand the sight of blood. Who knows what kind of diseases there could be, swimming around in that sea of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TRIX (cont'd)
gore? I don't have to deal with
that. I'm leaving.

ROSE
Wait! Is it-- is it bad? Is he
going into surgery?

TRIX
How should I know? Oh, don't go in
there! His face is disfigured.
Horribly. First he loses his money,
and now... Oooh!

Trix covers her flawless face. Rose gives her a disgusted
look and rushes down the hall toward the door Trix came out
of.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM- DAY

Tom lies in bed, covered in bandages, his arm in a sling,
bruises on his face. Clearly not on death's door.

Rose enters quietly. One look and she sighs in relief.

TOM
Rose! I hope you're here to visit
me and not to fill that empty bed.

ROSE
Zoey called me. You alright? Except
for being in the hospital, I mean.

TOM
A couple bumps, some bruises, and a
bit of a concussion. I'll bounce
right back, like a cartoon
character that's had the lights
punched out of him. Come to think
of it, I did see cartoon stars when
I woke up.

Rose ventures further into the room. She perches on a
bedside chair.

ROSE
What happened?

TOM
I slipped on some ice.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Really.

TOM

(sheepish)

I was wearing skates. See, I told Rumples I could skate at 30 miles and hour, but he goes, No way man, so I had to prove it. We had a rope around me and everything. It should of been fine. I grabbed onto the door of Spider's Toyota FJ Cruiser, and Rumples and Sherry held my rope. We got up to about 35 when we hit a bump or whatever, and then it was all blackness and stars.

Rose winces.

ROSE

Are the other boys alright?

TOM

Oh yeah, they were safe in the car. It was just the genius hanging outside the vehicle that got busted up.

DR. PERKINS walks in, chart in hand. She stands at the foot of Tom's bed.

DR. PERKINS

Thomas Shaw? Hi there, I'm Dr. Perkins. How are you feeling?

TOM

Like a steel door hit me in the face.

DR. PERKINS

Unfortunately, you're going to feel like that for the next few weeks. That's what it feels like to have a dislocated elbow, a sprained wrist, multiple contusions, and a mild concussion.

TOM

What happens next? Can I go home?

DR. PERKINS

You'll need to stay for observation overnight. We'll release you in the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. PERKINS (cont'd)
morning if you have someone to look
after you and sit up with you for
the next 3-4 nights. I understand
you have no family in town right
now?

ROSE
I will stay with him.

TOM
Thanks, Rosie.

DR. PERKINS
(to Rose)
You'll want to get some rest
tonight, while he's being looked
after here. The next few days are
going to be tiring for both of you.

ROSE
I can handle it.

Dr. Perkins nods briskly and exits the room.

ROSE (CONT'D)
I'll ask Will to come over and sit
up with you tonight.

Tom splutters in protest.

TOM
I'll be fine.

ROSE
I know you think Will is just a
nerdy freshman, but I don't like
leaving you alone in the hospital
overnight.

Your family is a second family to
me. Besides, did you really think I
hadn't noticed all the little
things you do for Will to smooth
his way into college life?

Tom blushesrawn-color under his bandages, embarrassed.

ROSE (CONT'D)
You and Zoey have been true friends
to us, Tom. You must know Will and
I would do no less for you.

Tom reaches out his hand. Rose takes the scratched hand gently, careful not to jar his bandaged wrist.

INT. GRANDMERE'S LITTLE HOUSE- LIVING ROOM- EVENING

Tom sprawls on the living room couch, bandaged head propped up on a teetering tower of pillows.

Rose sits on the floor beside him, leaning against the couch. Nearby, a cluttered COFFEE TABLE supports bottles of over-the-counter medication, textbooks, paperback thrillers, water glasses, and a bowl of unshelled peanuts.

TOM

Pass me another peanut, Rose?

He raises his sling-bound arm and brace-bound wrist to indicate his helplessness.

Rose reaches into the bowl of peanuts and cracks a couple nuts open before passing it on.

ROSE

Are you sure that peanuts are the best thing for your head right now? I could whip up a peanut butter milkshake for you, or some nice peanut butter bars.

TOM

Nah. The joy of peanuts is the noise they make when you crunch 'em.

He pops a handful of peanuts into his mouth with a CRUNCH. Rose laughs, reaches for more.

ROSE

Alright. Who doesn't love peanuts? Remember the time my first year living with your family, you were still in high school, and I tried to teach Zoey how to make peanut brittle?

TOM

Oh no.

ROSE

Oh yes. You said you wanted to help us, but after you shelled all the peanuts for us...

(CONTINUED)

TOM

I ate all the nuts and dumped the shells into the mix.

Rose shells the peanuts neatly and precisely. No mess.

ROSE

Zoey was so mad! I thought she was going to smack you.

TOM

Do you remember her revenge? She spread peanut butter on my pillow, two nights in a row. I was cleaning peanut butter out of my hair and ears for a week.

ROSE

(laughing)

After all that, I'm surprised you can still stand peanuts.

TOM

Look Rose, you're supposed to be nursing me back to health, not dredging up painful, suppressed memories.

Tom waves his arms to illustrate his point and winces. Ow.

ROSE

I'm supposed to be keeping an eye on you. I made no claims about my nursing ability.

TOM

The least you can do is sing me a song to soothe my poor, concussed head.

ROSE

(skeptical)

I don't want to give you a headache. Anyway, there's no piano.

TOM

Please, Rosie? I'll let you sing anything you want.

ROSE

"Friday" it is, then.

(CONTINUED)

TOM
You wouldn't.

ROSE
I wouldn't.

Rose straightens up against the couch. She sings "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." Tom inclines and closes his eyes, enjoying the song.

Rose starts into "We'll Meet Again"...

ROSE (CONT'D)
We'll meet again/ Don't know where,
don't know when/ But I know we'll
meet again, some sunny day./ Keep
smiling through/ Just like you
always--

She breaks off with a sob.

Tom freezes. He awkwardly pats at her shoulder, at a loss.

TOM
Rose?
(pause)
Are you-- What's wrong?

ROSE
First the hospital yesterday, and
now being here with you all
bandaged on the couch... It reminds
me of when Will was sick.

TOM
(hesitant)
That's when he had the blood thing,
right?

ROSE
Yes. He- Will got really sick. He
was little, only 7, but he was so
patient. Every day, I thank God
that Will is still with us. It was
a bad scare. I used to sit beside
him and sing to him, just like
this.

Tom reaches down with his sprained wrist and squeezes Rose's hand.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE (CONT'D)

Tommy?

TOM

Yes?

ROSE

Will you tell me one of your stories? Something funny. Please.

A pause.

TOM

Ha! I've got it: This guy almost set our classroom on fire a couple weeks ago.

Rose gasps.

TOM (CONT'D)

Nobody got hurt! We put the fire out in time. This guy put a little firework, a noisemaker, under the podium, and when it went off, BANG! it started a fire.

ROSE

It was a firework. Indoors. Of course it set off a fire!

TOM

The best part is, the guy who pulled the prank burned his pants putting out the fire. He went to the Dean and got money to replace his smokey, holey pants.

ROSE

It serves him right, putting all those people in danger.

TOM

They were **fine**. Let me tell the story, Rose! So he bought the cheapest, ugliest pants he could find and spent the rest of the money on booze for a party and invited the entire class. Now every time we have class, he wears these horrid plaid pants to complete the joke.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE
(suspicious)
What did you say his name was?

TOM
I didn't.

ROSE
Oh, Tom. No.

TOM
It was hilarious! I didn't think
the podium was going to catch on
fire.

ROSE
If you aren't careful, you're going
to get suspended.

TOM
They love me. I'll be fine. If you
want to help me with school, you
can listen to me recite my speech
for next week.

Rose cranes her neck toward the clock.

ROSE
It's late and you need your rest.
We can study tomorrow.

TOM
That's what I always say!

Rose shakes her head at him, hiding a smile. She stands up
and rounds up dishes. The little wood stove in the corner
sparks and pops.

INT. GRANDMERE'S LITTLE HOUSE- LIVING ROOM- NEXT EVENING

Tom sits on the couch. He scribbles figures on graph paper
that's propped on the little rickety wooden table. Rose
curls up with her feet tucked beneath her in the shabby
armchair, across from Tom. She also scribbles, and pauses
now and again to stare into space before she returns pencil
to paper with frenetic satisfaction.

The room is more cluttered than before. Stacks of bowls,
legions of cups, trios of spoons, piles of knitting, grace
the room. Tom tosses his pencil down, triumphant.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Done!

ROSE

Hooray! Goodbye, Trig homework.

TOM

Actually, I like Trig. I've always been good with numbers.

ROSE

Excellent. Now you can practice that recital and I'll listen. What class is it for?

TOM

Communication. You've got to be kidding me, Rose! The whole point of being an invalid is getting a break from homework.

ROSE

Really? Now you're an invalid?

TOM

I'm wounded, aren't I? Fine, I'll do the speech. We're practicing cadence and projection and all that and I memorized a piece called "The Battle of Lake Regillus." It's a long, epic poem about an old Roman battle.

ROSE

Let's hear it!

Tom unfolds his limbs and stands legs spread, head high, across the room from Rose. He spreads his arms as wide as the sling allows.

TOM

"Ho, trumpets, sound a war-note!
Ho, lictors, clear the way! The
Knights will ride, in all their
pride, along the streets to-day.
To-day the doors and windows are
hung with garlands all, from Castor
in the Forum, to Mars without the
wall. Each Knight is robed in
purple, with olive each is crowned;
a gallant war-horse--"

Rose's cell phone rings out a pop beat. Tom deflates.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Oh Tom! I'm so sorry. That was a brilliant start. It's Zoey, hang on.

(to Zoey)

Hi Zo! Hold on, I'll put you on speaker.

ZOEY (O.S.)

Don't bother. I already talked to Tiny Tim today.

Rose leans over the side of her armchair and scoops up a blanket. She tosses it over her lap and curls deeper into the chair.

TOM

I'll grab you a sweater from Zoey's room.

He leaves the room before Rose can respond. Rose reaches over to the rickety table and tugs at the graph paper Tom's been working on. The paper Rose was writing on, half-written sheet music, tumbles from her lap to the ground as she glances over Tom's math homework.

INT. BOSTON AIRPORT- SAME TIME

Zoey props her arm against a blank wall. Behind her, harried travelers rush along the conveyor belt in a cacophony of color.

INTERCUT- TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

ROSE

What are you calling Tom now?

ZOEY

Tiny Tim. You know, the little orphan boy with the crutches, the one from Mark Twain's book about the chained-up ghost.

ROSE

Dickens. *A Christmas Carol*. The orphan is from *Oliver Twist*. Twain wrote *Tom*-- hey!

Zoey sniggers.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE (CONT'D)

You did that on purpose!

ZOEY

Maybe. Well, Tom keeps referring to himself as "the invalid," so I've started calling him Tiny Tim. He's lucky I'm not calling him Aunt Maud. She's the only "invalid" I know. She lost both feet in a jet-skiing accident off the coast of Belize.

ROSE

This is the same Aunt Maud who fell out of a plum tree and landed on a pug?

ZOEY

The one and only. Anyway, Gran and I are at the airport again. We finally got another flight, but there's a weather delay. How is Tom?

INT. GRANDMERE'S LITTLE HOUSE- ZOEY'S ROOM- SAME TIME

Tom sits in front of the vanity, barely suppressing giggles as he applies makeup to his face in much the same way a three-year old applies crayons to a coloring book.

INTERCUT BETWEEN TOM AND ROSE

ROSE

He's doing fine. He's pretty banged up, but that will heal. The doctor said his concussion is the biggest concern, but there haven't been any problems so far. She also told me to keep an eye on his cognitive abilities, so I made him do some math problems. He got all of them correct.

Tom bends and rummages through the vanity's drawers. He holds up a fistful of tampons. Recoils. He drops them like ice down the back of a shirt and slams the drawer shut. Tom sidles over to the closet and awkwardly opens it with his less-bandaged arm.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

He always was a math whiz, just like you. I can't stand it myself. I see those little fraction signs and I just want to hit someone. Oh right- Grandmere says to ask about work. Did your boss understand about you having to take time off?

With a Cheshire Cat grin, Tom snatches a slinky dress off the hanger and attempts to shimmy into it, wriggling like a caterpillar hatching out of a chrysalis in reverse. He looks down and sees straight through the bodice to the floor. Tom scoops up a push-up bra dangling from the closet door handle with an *aha!* gesture.

ROSE

I made it to most of my music lessons and I took sick leave for my other jobs. My supervisors can get along without me for three days.

ZOEY

Thanks for looking after Tom. We can't thank you enough, Rose.

Zoey leans her head back against the wall wearily.

INT. GRANDMERE'S LITTLE HOUSE- LIVING ROOM- EVENING

Rose cradles the phone, still in her chair.

ZOEY (O.S.)

By the way, Sydney just texted me. He's dropping by the house with some kind of wild rice hot dish he made for you and Tom. He said he's on his way over. I hope you didn't let Tom trash the place.

ROSE

I'll tidy up before he arrives. Don't be so hard on Tom. He's just a big old teddy bear, a total--

Tom strikes a pose in the doorway, fairly bursting out of the sequined dress. The neon pink push-up bra flashes out of the neckline.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY (O.S.)

A total what? You don't want to leave that one hanging, Rose. You can't imagine the words I could add to it.

ROSE

(staring at Tom)

Oh, I think I can.

Tom basks in her shock. He sashays into the room, stops, and tugs up the skirt of his dress, revealing hairy, muscled legs. Rose breaks into laughter, shaking like Jell-O salad, and slides to the floor.

TOM

What do you think?

ZOEY (O.S.)

What's he done this time?

ROSE

Tom, put that away.

TOM

What? She can't see me.

ROSE

Sydney's coming.

TOM

So?

The doorbell RINGS.

ROSE

(to Zoey)

Sydney's here. I have to go. Everything's fine. Give our love to Grandmere.

She hangs up hastily and stands up. Tom and Rose look at each other for a moment, then bolt for the door.

ROSE

Tom, you have a dislocated shoulder and a concussion! You can't run!

TOM

Then don't chase me!

Rose blocks the front door.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

I don't care how concussed you are,
I am not letting Sydney see you in
Zoey's bra and stuff. He'll think
we're all insane.

TOM

He already knows we're all insane.

ROSE

Tom. Please.

The doorbell RINGS. Again.

TOM

Fine. I'll go hide out in Zoey's
room while you show your little
crush how not-crazy you are.

He stomps away, the little dress riding up his thighs.

Rose stares at him, a frown creasing her face. She opens the door.

Sydney stands on the doorstep looking cold and carrying a covered dish in his hands. Waiting patiently, as usual.

SYDNEY

Rose, hi! May I come in? I hope
Zoey had a chance to tell you I was
coming over.

ROSE

Of course, Sydney! Come on in.
Sorry about the mess. You're such a
dear to bring a dish for poor,
unfortunate Tom. You're like a
knight in shining armor for the
little invalid.

SYDNEY

(startled)

How bad is it? Zoey said he would
be all right in a few weeks.

ROSE

It's really the mental capacity I'm
referring to. He's concussed. But
enough about Tom! How are *you*
doing, Sydney? Tell me all about
your work at the firm.

She puts her hand on his arm.

(CONTINUED)

A CRASH like a panda on a pogo stick sounds from the other room.

SYDNEY

What was that?

ROSE

I'd better go check on Tom. Thank you so much for dropping by.

SYDNEY

Can I help with Tom at all? That sounded--

ROSE

Don't even worry about it. You know Tom! He's not happy if he isn't in some kind of trouble. I'll see you later?

Rose smiles brilliantly and ushers Sydney gracefully out the door.

Tom emerges, divested of Zoey's clothes, save for the makeup, which blotches brightly on his face.

TOM

What was that?

ROSE

What?

TOM

You know what. You were flirting with him.

ROSE

It's none of your business if I was.

TOM

You're acting absurd.

ROSE

How's Trix?

TOM

Sweet as ever.

ROSE

Good.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Yes, it is. Don't I look like the
happiest man alive?

ROSE

I don't think you do.

TOM

What should I look like, then?

ROSE

(quietly)

Like you've learned to care for
someone a whole lot more than you
care for yourself.

Red-faced, they stare at each other, barely a foot apart.

EXT. ORPHEUM THEATER- EVENING

A sign reads ORPHEUM in bright lights.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE- EVENING

Soaring arches, gilded walls, and the warm golden glow of a
summer morning. The air is vibrant. Rose, Zoey, Tom, Trix,
Belle, FRANK, and Sydney, are decked in finery. Tom still
wears a sling.

Tom and Sydney hover over Rose, hanging on to her every
word. Her back partly turned on the trio, Zoey flirts with
Frank, a vest-clad guy with more hair than personality. Trix
stands between the two groups, ignoring Belle, a violent
glint in her eye.

ANNOUNCEMENT sounds for the end of intermission.

Zoey pulls Tom aside.

ZOEY

(to Tom, sotto voce)

Trix is going to be furious with
you.

TOM

Why?

ZOEY

Where do I start? You've been
comparing her to Rose all evening,
AND you've been flirting with Rose.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

What? C'mon Zoey, it's only Rose.

ZOEY

Exactly. She can't stand Rose.

Rose turns away unnoticed, shoulders tense.

TOM

Well, I can. Why can't I have as much fun as Trix?

ZOEY

I bet you anything Trix would rather be shopping for off-brand clothing than here with us.

TOM

Look, I know you don't love Trix, but--

ZOEY

Do you?

Tom freezes. He turns to look at Trix. She snaps at something Belle says. Tom's face folds into a thoughtful frown.

INT. KARAOKE BAR- NIGHT

Pop music pumps through the veins of the place. Greasy appetizers lay abandoned on plates. Trix sits at the table like a bored Grecian statue.

Rose shines onstage with a rendition of "Go Your Own Way." She's good.

The group cheers as she finishes. Trix stirs her drink.

Rose drags a laughing Zoey onstage. They crush it with "Hit Me With Your Best Shot."

Sydney enjoys the singing from the crowd.

Tom jumps up there for a badly sung version of "Brown-Eyed Girl." Hand motions and everything: he's loving it.

Belle and Tom belt out "Rock and Roll All Nite." Zoey and Rose laugh hysterically.

EXT. STREET IN ST. PAUL

Mid-afternoon sun trickles through the gray. No hint of green yet on the trees. Bits of ice still cling to the gutters. Rose walks along the sidewalk, on the phone.

ROSE

No, no, of course I won't charge you.

Her fingers twist nervously in her hair. She listens to the person on the other end of the phone.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I understand. Have a good time in Nice.

She hangs up and lets out a huge sigh. Rose turns and walks into JAVA HUT. As she walks in, she takes off her coat to reveal an employee uniform.

INT. BURLAP & RYE- EVENING

FLASH! Trix scoots back to her seat and begins putting filters on the selfie she and Tom just took on her IPHONE.

Soy candles light the restaurant, which is as hip as a restaurant can be while still sending off a haughty, expensive vibe. The menu is vegetarian/vegan. The produce is fresh and local. The waiters are bored and expressively arrayed in various black and white ensembles. An Indie band plays.

Tom looks uncomfortable. Trix is dressed to kill.

TOM

Actually, there's something I need to tell you, Trix.

TRIX

Tell? Or *ask*?

TOM

Tell. See, I--

TRIX

Because this is the kind of place where a man proposes to his girlfriend.

(CONTINUED)

TOM
(caught off-guard)
You picked this restaurant, Trix!

TRIX
Call it a woman's intuition.

TOM
No- Trix, I actually have some bad news.

TRIX
Wait. We're sitting at Burlap and Rye, the hottest spot this side of the river, I'm wearing **this** outfit, and you're telling me that not only are you not proposing, you've got bad news.

TOM
Trix, you picked the restaurant. I was perfectly fine with a more low-key place.

TRIX
You mean cheap. Thomas, if I wanted to pay my own bills, I would be single.

The band walks the floor.

TOM
Trix, will you just listen to me? This is really hard for me to say.

TRIX
Oh, like you listened to me last night? Oh wait, you were too busy talking to the little mouse. Rose.

TOM
Don't talk about her like that. Rose is a good friend. You could learn something from her, like thinking about someone beside yourself.

TRIX
I see. I should be more like your precious Rose. A naive, chirpy, old-fashioned stick-in-the mud. You know what, Thomas? I could dress in a paper bag or one of those

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TRIX (cont'd)
 homemade dresses of hers and bounce
 along singing merrily while I
 sprinkle flowers on poor little
 orphans, but I still won't match up
 to perfect, boring Rose.

TOM
 Knock it off, Trix.

The band serenades their tiny, cloth-draped table.

TOM
 Not now.

TRIX
 Beat it!

The singing continues, instruments at Tom and Trix's elbows.

TOM
 Listen, Trix, when my family lost
 everything, I thought you would
 break up with me. But you didn't,
 and I figured you must love me more
 than I'd thought. And then when I
 got hurt, you weren't there.

Trix scrolls through her iPhone. Metallic nails clack
 against the screen as she splits her focus between Tom and
 Instagram.

TRIX
 You barely got scratched. What was
 I going to do, spoon soup into your
 mouth?

TOM
 The point is, you weren't there for
 me. I just needed someone to stay
 with me. And- I don't think you're
 that person.

TRIX
 You're hardly Prince Charming
 yourself, Thomas Shaw. Did you ever
 think of that?

TOM
 More than you know. Trix, why are
 you still dating me?

He leans across the table earnestly.

TRIX

Tom! We're perfect together, you know that.

TOM

No, I don't, Trix. My sister thinks you started dating me for my money, but that can't be true. Tell me, Trix.

TRIX

Don't be so down on yourself, Thomas. You have plenty to offer. When your dad gets over this little money problem, you'll--

TOM

No. No, Trix, that's not going to happen. We're not getting our money back. What I am now, that's all I'll ever be. Look real close, 'cause this is exactly what you get.

Trix looks him over, raises an eyebrow.

TRIX

Never underestimate my ability to make changes happen, Thomas.

Tom looks at her, shakes his head in disbelief.

TOM

Trix, this never was going to work out, was it?

TRIX

(hisses)

Don't you dare.

TOM

This has to end. We're both miserable. Trix, it's over. We're over.

Trix SCREECHES. In one fluid motion, she reaches up, snatches an ACCORDION out of the hands of one of the musicians, and smashes it across the table.

TRIX

Now we're over.

(CONTINUED)

The band stutters to a halt. Trix stomps away. FIRE! Tom lunges for the accordion and uses it to beat out the spreading flames from the soy candles. The accordion groans in protest.

Tom stands alone in the silent restaurant, charred and drooping accordion at his side. He looks at the shocked band in dismay.

INT. ROSE'S ROOM- NIGHT

Rose sits on a rainbow-colored crocheted blanket on her futon, a dejected slump to her shoulders. Boxes and cans of food pile up on every surface. A green apron dangles out of a trashcan. Anguished music BLARES.

A KNOCK at the door.

TOM

Rose? Can I come in?

ROSE

It's been a long day, Tom. Can you come back tomorrow?

TOM

Please, Rose? I don't know who else to talk to.

Rose throws her head down on the blanket.

ROSE

Come in.

Tom eases the door open. He looks around the crowded room. There are no uncovered surfaces. Rose gets up and shrugs on her coat.

TOM

What is all this?

ROSE

Food for families at the Mills shelter. Jenny Mills is my landlady, remember? I told her I would package 50 boxes over the weekend.

TOM

Wow.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

My mom always says, if you can't cheer yourself up, at least you can make someone else feel better.

TOM

That bad of a day, huh? Join the club. Where are you going?

ROSE

Out for a walk. Come on. I don't want to be cooped up any more.

She winds a ladybug scarf around her throat and walks out the door like a queen, with Tom following obediently behind.

EXT. RIVER WALK- NIGHT

A clear spring night. The city skyline is partially visible in the glow of street lamps. Rose and Tom walk shoulder to shoulder down the sidewalk.

ROSE

Out with it.

TOM

I just don't know how I'm going to get out of this one, Rose.

ROSE

Is it Trix? Is she--?

TOM

No! It's nothing to do with Trix. Well. I just broke up with her.

ROSE

Oh.

TOM

Yeah. But that's not what I wanted to tell you. Rose, I got kicked out of school.

Rose gasps-- a quiet, sympathetic gasp, devoid of drama.

TOM (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Give it to me. I deserve it.

He hangs his head.

(CONTINUED)

TOM (CONT'D)

I wasted my education, disappointed my family, proven how useless I am.

ROSE

You're not useless. What happened?

TOM

You know the Three Strikes rule? Well, this was more of a 20 strikes kind of deal.

Rose hugs him. The wind sounds around them, mixing with the rush of cars and steady murmur of the river behind them.

They walk onto the bridge.

ROSE

Everyone makes mistakes, Tom, but the fact that you had strike after strike... You know better.

TOM

I know. I'm an idiot. Let me just say, most of those strikes were from before dad went bankrupt. All but one. Or two. Anyway, after the roller skating incident, I've been a lot better.

ROSE

You'll get over this, try something new. Whatever you choose to do, I expect it will be spectacular.

Tom looks at her, a long look. They pause and watch the light glint off the river.

TOM

Tell me, what was your bad day about?

He swings over the guard rail, holds out an inviting arm.

ROSE

I got fired.

She abruptly joins Tom, legs dangling over the river.

TOM

What? Why? Which job?

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Where to start? Half of my music clients dropped out with zero warning. Some of them got hit by the recession too, and decided the internet was a better option to teach their kids the piano. But most of them apparently forgot to tell me they would be in Europe for the entire summer.

TOM

Idiots.

ROSE

Yeah. My job at the coffee shop, though, that's been coming for a while. My supervisors weren't thrilled with me taking some vacation and sick time suddenly, and they've always been a little tough to work with.

TOM

That sucks, Rose. What are you going to do now?

ROSE

Look for a job. Jobs. My rent's paid off till the end of the summer, so I'll be fine for now. Maybe it will be a grand opportunity. Imagine if I got to play piano somewhere!

TOM

Is that what you want to do?

ROSE

Sure, I love playing music. More than anything.

TOM

I mean, if you could do anything, absolutely anything, with nothing holding you back, what would you do?

Rose leans her head against the railing. The night is clear enough for a miser's handful of stars to appear. She contemplates them.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

I'm doing what I love already.
Teaching music, playing piano...
I'd be content with doing that
every day for the rest of my life.
All the other stuff, that's just to
pay the rent so I can do my music.
And that's alright, I mean, I'll do
anything to keep making music. I
guess... If there was really
nothing holding me back, I would
write and perform my own songs. But
I'd still want to teach. I just
wish I could teach kids who really
want to learn, like the kids who
can't afford lessons or even a
piano. Those are the ones that need
me. Those are the ones whose music
the world needs to hear.

TOM

Whoa. I don't think I've ever heard
you talk as much as you have
tonight. You know, the rest of us
love listening to your music as
much as you love making it.

Rose smiles. They swing back-- Tom slips-- Rose lunges, one
hand on the railing and one hand on the back of Tom's coat.
They freeze. Adrenalin-fueled laughter breaks up the moment.
They fall back to the safe side of the guardrail, collapse
looking at each other.

EXT. STREET IN THE THEATER DISTRICT- DAY

Busy street. Bright lights. Lively atmosphere.

Zoey bumps into Sydney on the sidewalk.

SYDNEY

Zoey! It's so good to see you! What
are you doing here?

Sydney wraps Zoey in a quick, friendly hug.

ZOEY

I could ask you the same thing and
we could stand here all day going
back and forth until the slush at
our feet turns to ice. Or we could
duck into the little cafe around
the corner and catch up.

(CONTINUED)

SYDNEY

(laughs)

Always a woman of action. You've got me convinced, Zoey.

They walk together past the people rushing by. Winter coats are out, fleeces and light jackets are in. The cafe is indeed around the corner. Sydney holds the door open for Zoey and they walk in...

INT. THE JUMPING BEAN- SAME

Crowded, cozy cafe.

Zoey unzips her jacket and sits down. Sydney remains as is, unruffled. They order.

ZOEY

I'll have a small caramel macchiato.

SYDNEY

What? No double shots of espresso? No scones?

ZOEY

I'm being good! I get my coffee in a pot at home these days.

SYDNEY

My treat.
(to the cashier)
Black. Medium. And two scones, please.

Zoey smiles at Sydney-- Not her usual smile, a lemon twist of sarcasm-- A smile that takes her whole face to make.

They take their coffee and scones and sit by the window. Zoey takes a bite.

ZOEY

Nothing beats a scone. Now. You were going to tell me what you're up to.

SYDNEY

(smiles)

I just finished dropping off my niece Amy at her ballet lessons. You?

(CONTINUED)

A pair of squirrels chases each other outside the cafe window. One latches onto a Big Mac and scampers in circles. Their antics are frenetic, amusing, distracting. Continuous...

ZOEY

I lurk in the back of the theater for rehearsals and soak it in. Grandmere's been taking me ever since I was old enough to see over the seats. There's a spark in the air when the actors walk on with voices and gestures masking who they really are.

Zoey becomes animated. She leans in, gestures with her hands, looks more alive than usual.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

I love watching the story unfold on stage, but even more than that I love watching the transformation from one rehearsal to the next-- that moment when an actor repeats the same line over for the twentieth time and it finally clicks and I see the character come alive before my eyes. It's like peeking behind the scenes. It clears my head. All this change makes me feel like an actor trying to master my lines and movements, except it's not a rehearsal. It's my life.

SYDNEY

Is it really that bad? Losing all the material things you're used to?

ZOEY

I thought it would be. Looking back at how entitled I was, how much I took for granted, it's embarrassing. I can't even blame the others for ditching me, 'cause I would've done the same. Only, now that I've gotten used to living like this, I just don't want the same things I used to care about.

Sydney looks at Zoey like he's discovered a new species of butterfly.

(CONTINUED)

SYDNEY

You really have changed, Zoey. I've never heard you talk like this. I remember how much you loved theater when we were kids. Are you thinking about taking up acting?

ZOEY

For God's sake, Syd! I'm trying to become financially independent, not broke!

They laugh.

ZOEY (CONT'D)

I would make a terrible actor. I would be too busy bossing around everyone else on stage, to remember my own lines.

SYDNEY

(laughs)

I can see that happening. You're good at organizing people, Zo. You're never afraid to step up and tell it like it is.

ZOEY

God, I hope not.

SYDNEY

How do you get into the theater, anyway?

ZOEY

We may have lost our money, but Grandmere still has a long history as a donor. I don't bother them and they don't mind me watching.

Zoey looks down at her mug, but Sydney stares at her, eyes resting on the curve of her chin and the restless tap of her fingers on the mug's edge.

INT. COMO PARK CONSERVATORY- AFTERNOON

Under the glass palm dome, lush plants defy the lingering chill outside and steam curls along the windows. In the North Garden, Rose and Tom walk along, reflected in the water.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Why do you have to do just one thing? Why limit yourself?

ROSE

Isn't that what we're supposed to do? Pick a path, follow it down, stick with that one thing for the rest of our lives? I found the thing I love, now I just have to stick with it.

TOM

I'm not saying, don't do music. Music is, it's all around you. It's in you. Anyone can see that. Now you're out of a job- well, a couple of jobs- and you can step outta the box and go for something new. If you want. You have options. So don't think you have to stick with this one thing.

ROSE

(laughs a little)

Well said, Mr. Shaw. I'll think about it.

TOM

Whatever it is, just go for it. I can't wait to see what you choose to do. I know it will be spectacular.

Rose beams. They duck under something green and leafy.

ROSE

Did you contact my Aunt Sam about that job?

TOM

That's the news I have for you, actually. I got the job! I start next week.

ROSE

Wow. That's so- soon. I mean, amazing. Tom, I'm so pleased for you!

TOM

I know. Montana is about as far as anywhere, considering I've got my whole life here.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

You have to do what's best for you.
It's a good idea to get out of the
Twin Cities for now, and wipe the
slate clean.

Rose looks at the plants, an elderly couple, the ceiling--
anywhere but Tom. Tom just looks at Rose.

TOM

This is just what I needed. I don't
know what you said to your aunt-

ROSE

I just told her the truth. She's
fair. Their business needs someone
good with numbers more than it
needs someone with a college
degree. She wouldn't have offered
you the job if she didn't think you
would be good at it.

TOM

I hope I will. I really need to do
well, for once.

ROSE

You're great at math! Working the
books will give you a chance to
prove to yourself how smart you are
if you work for it.

TOM

I'll work hard, I promise.

She looks Tom in the eye.

ROSE

I know.

TOM

It's not a bad time to make a move.
You don't have a job tying you
down-

Rose winces.

TOM (CONT'D)

You could find some kind of music
job out there, you have aunts,
family in the state, why not?

Rose halts. Steels herself. Tom stops short, looks down at
her earnestly.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Why are you asking?

TOM

I'm about to set off all on my own for the first time. First job, first time living away from home. I'd love... to have a familiar face.

Rose turns her face, letting her hair fall across it in a protective curtain.

ROSE

No.

She walks away, into the sunken garden. Tom follows.

TOM

You don't have to decide right now. You could see what jobs are there, maybe, and then come a little later.

ROSE

This is my home. I'm going to keep working till something works out. But this will be a great opportunity for you to start up on your own. I- We'll miss you.

TOM

I'll miss you.

ROSE

Yeah.

Reflected in the water: Tom leans down and hugs Rose. A ripple shakes their reflection back into water.

INT. MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART- DAY

Rose stands, animated, besides an immense painting. She describes the history and technique of the piece to a group of kids. They hang on to her every word.

Zoey arrives. She catches Rose's eye. Rose finishes her bit and motions to the next room. The kids straggle in that direction.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

I can never resist. If you act confident enough, anyone will believe you're supposed to be there. Sometimes I lead hour-long tours.

She laughs. Zoey does not.

ZOEY

What the hell was that, the other night at the theater?

ROSE

What?

ZOEY

You were flirting hardcore with Sydney.

ROSE

I'm "only Rose." Why does it matter if I was or I wasn't?

They walk into the Asia wing. Cranes and cherry blossoms frame their upset faces.

ZOEY

My own brother told you about getting expelled and breaking up with Trix, two days before he told me!

ROSE

Tom had a lot on his mind. I'm sure--

ZOEY

No. This always happens. Dad likes you better than his own kids. Grandmere too. And now Sydney.

ROSE

Zoey! It's not like that. They're just really kind to let me be part of your family. You all are. And Sydney was the only person besides Tom that I was comfortable with that night at the theater, since you wouldn't talk to me. You know I don't like Trix and Frank.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

And you know I like Sydney! He's not like anyone I've ever met, he's more exacting than any of the people I've dated, and he thinks I'm the same shallow little girl I always was. And now Syd thinks you've hung the moon. How could you?

ROSE

I wasn't doing anything. I know you like Sydney. We're friends. That's all.

ZOEY

Like you and Tom are just friends? He broke up with Trix; why aren't you chasing after him?

A gaggle of patrons stop, transfixed. Art forgotten, they gawk at Rose and Zoey as the argument grows louder.

ROSE

Stop it. I don't chase after anybody. Tom's my friend.

ZOEY

Yeah, he's your friend. Because you don't have the guts to make it anything more. What are you so afraid of, Ms. Perfect?

ROSE

Plenty! I'm afraid of plenty. I've got more on my mind than Tom or anyone else. I just lost multiple jobs. My load of student loans is appalling. I feel like I'm trying to climb Everest with no equipment and no clue what I'm doing. And I. Am. Not. Perfect!

The kids from Rose's faux tour join the onlookers with horrified fascination.

ZOEY

You are. You obsess over being the perfect little woman. But you're too old-fashioned to fit in with everything else. It's just weird. Do you know how hard I had to work to make sure you were accepted by

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY (cont'd)
my friends in college? You didn't
make it easy on me.

ROSE
I never asked to be accepted. I
like myself the way I am, weird as
that must sound to you. Your
friends still don't like me, but
you don't like yourself.

KID IN SUPERHERO SHIRT gasps.

ZOEY
Oh, I'm sure that Perfect Rose
loves herself.

ROSE
Will you stop calling me that?

ZOEY
Will you stop acting like that?

ROSE
Maybe if you actually had a job or
did anything worthwhile, you would
have a better perspective. Working
hard isn't the same as being
perfect. You can't even see the
difference.

ZOEY
Oh, I should just work harder?
Maybe I should just throw Zoey Shaw
out the window and become a perfect
clone of perfect Rose Milton.

They yell at each other, moving through the gallery. The
onlookers' eyes bob anxiously between the duo and the
precious works of art they weave so carelessly between.

ROSE
That's not fair. I never asked you
to be like me.

ZOEY
No, but you preached at me and you
sighed and muttered about the evils
of TV and the stupidity of my
friends. You would be thrilled if I
became just like you.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

So I don't watch much television.
So I don't love all your friends.
But I don't think I'm better than
you!

ZOEY

Don't you? You prance through life
like in your absurd, homemade
clothes, chirping songs all day and
grinning like a 1950s housewife.
Should I do that, too? Then
everyone will stare at the two of
us crazies.

Zoey throws out her arm in an extravagant, angry gesture.
She narrowly misses a vase on a pedestal behind her.

ROSE

Why do you care so much about what
everyone else thinks? You're always
afraid I'm going to embarrass you.
You embarrass me. I can't believe
I'm friends with someone who's
never done a day's hard work in her
life.

ZOEY

Don't worry about it. You're not
friends with her anymore.

ROSE

Fine.

ZOEY

Fine!

They stomp off in opposite directions. Zoey makes a clean
exit through a room filled with African artifacts, but Rose
stops short of running smack into a low sculpture.

KID IN SUPERHERO SHIRT

That's like me and Clare on the
playground last week! Except
they're meaner.

The crowd disperses back to quieter forms of art.

INT. ROSE'S ROOM- LATE AFTERNOON

Rose sits on her bed, crying into a tub of ice cream. Mournful violin music wails through the room.

Will walks in.

ROSE
Thanks for coming.

Will takes the ice cream from her.

WILL
Come on, put this back in the freezer. We're getting out of this den of sadness.

Rose pulls on her jacket over her striped PJs.

EXT. PARK ALONG THE RIVER- SAME

They walk among the trees overlooking the bluff. Few other people walk in the twilight and late April snow. Occasional car lights.

WILL
So you lost your job, your best friend, and the guy you-

ROSE
Are friends with.

WILL
Right.
(whistles)
Damn. That's rough.

ROSE
Will, I just want to go home.

WILL
Rose, you can do this.

ROSE
Do what? Get a new job? A new friend? Zoey isn't talking to me.

WILL
She'll come around.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

The worst thing is, I deserve it. I said awful things to her. And the things she said to me, they were true. Horrible and true.

Will throws an arm around Rose.

WILL

I know you two. You're the oddest pair of friends, but you work. Give it some time.

ROSE

I don't even know where to start.

She stops in front of a fallen nest. Looks around. Lifts the nest up to the tree. Walks on.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I feel so tired. Is it always going to be like this, working all the time just to make a little music? I had all these dreams, and now they seem stupid and unreachable.

Will bends down and scrapes at the snow. Rose stops with him.

WILL

That's what dreams are. You have to work hard and be a little crazy to believe they'll pull through. Since when do you shy away from hard work and talk about giving up?

ROSE

(sighs)

Since now, maybe. No, you're right. I know better.

Will stands up suddenly. He hurls a snowball at Rose.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Hey!

She scrapes a bit of the remaining snow to form a return missile. Rose lets it fly in a perfect arch, right for Will's forehead.

EXT. TWIN CITIES- LATE SPRING- DAY

Multiple locations. A handful of grubby snow patches linger here and there. Flowering trees support early blooms. The people walking by look summer-ready. A few squirrels chase each other around under the trees.

EXT. STREET IN THE THEATER DISTRICT- EVENING

Same busy street as before. Bright lights. Cheery bustle and warm light of early summer. Sydney spots Zoey and flags her down.

SYDNEY

Zoey! I hoped I'd bump into you here at some point. It's been weeks.

ZOEY

Coffee?

Sydney nods enthusiastically. His eyes don't leave Zoey's face. They walk around the corner.

INT. THE JUMPING BEAN- WINDOW SEAT AGAIN- EVENING

Same table. Iced drinks. No squirrels in sight.

SYDNEY

Were you sitting in on a practice again?

ZOEY

I was working.

SYDNEY

(beams)

You got a job! Congratulations!

ZOEY

Thanks! Finally, my first job.

SYDNEY

What is it?

ZOEY

I still can't believe how it happened. Last week, I was sitting in the back, working on my job applications and watching the rehearsal as usual...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. THEATER- DAY

Darkened theater. Zoey sits in the back row, computer on lap, bright screen lighting up her face. She's on Facebook. Below, the lit stage ...

ZOEY (V.O.)

...When everything went to hell on a unicycle.

The six actors on stage break character and advance on the director, a man with a pointed beard and Mad Scientist hair. Shouting, shoving, arm waving, one false swoon.

The director slaps a hefty script into the arms of the nearest actor. He storms out, chugging something from a large glass bottle.

Zoey's hand snaps the glowing laptop shut.

The actors gather in an anxious cluster at the edge of the stage.

PALE WOMAN

(in a terrible British accent)

Whatever are we to do now? He's not coming back this time. Our careers will go up in bloody flames after this rot.

MAN IN FEDORA

No, this is good! We can finally have a decent show.

TATTOOED WOMAN

He was awful. We can do better ourselves. Let's start it from the top.

The actors troop back to their places. They get through a quarter of the first scene. Fedora guy tries to direct the pale woman's delivery. They argue.

Zoey stands up in the dark. Over her shoulder, the actors continue to squabble. Voices rise. Fedora guy knocks a prop chair to the ground. A short, burly woman decks fedora guy. The hat flies through the air--

Zoey catches it.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY

That is enough. You are a troop of grown-ass actors, not kindergartners before nap time. You there, you're the best at body language. Let your physicality carry the audience into the opening scene. You, stop fretting over the exact wording of your lines. You've got time. You need to focus on the props you have around. They're there for a reason, use them. And you-- drop the accent.

A pause. The actors' faces are a mixture of affront and astonishment. Zoey stands tall.

BURLY WOMAN

What gives you the right to butt in? Aren't you the one who always sits in the back?

ZOEY

I'm the one who's going to keep this sorry boat from sinking. You're not getting anywhere if you keep stopping to direct each other. Run through it again, and see if I can't do a better job than that guy who just tried to inhale half a whiskey factory.

The cast stares at Zoey.

BACK TO PRESENT

Sydney leans across the little circular table, transfixed.

SYDNEY

And they just let you tell them what to do?

ZOEY

They let me give it a try. Something just clicked, the rehearsal went smoothly, and everything felt so right. I'm the director now. It took about a week for me to learn that every moment of purpose and victory comes with three or four moments of keys-on-a-brand-new-Porsche agony.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY (cont'd)
It's still the most fun challenge
I've ever had.

SYDNEY
That sounds just right for you. I'm
proud of you, Zo.

ZOEY
Hold the applause for opening
night.

SYDNEY
I'll be there.

They smile at each other across the tiny table, suddenly holding hands. They kiss, framed by the fading light of the window behind them.

INT. ROSE'S ROOM- MORNING

Rose stands at the window. Her cat is curled in the windowsill. Outside, summer has come. Flowers are bright primary colors. Bicycles outnumber cars. Soft, early morning light streams through and lends a glow to her face.

ROSE
(to the cat)
I can do this. I can be bold.

MONTAGE- VARIOUS

A) INT. ROSE'S ROOM- MORNING- Trembling fingers hover above ivory keys, descend. After a few notes, the fingers stumble. Rose draws a deep breath and begins again.

B) INT. ROSE'S ROOM- DAY- Rose scribbles notes on blank sheet music. She plays some keys, stops, erases and revises. Doesn't glance outside, despite the bright July light blaring through the window.

C) INT. BAILEY & WELLER ACCOUNTING- DAY- Tom bends over a desk in a tiny cubicle, crunching numbers. He looks serious, concentrates on his work.

D) INT. ROSE'S ROOM- EVENING- Cup of tea in hand, Rose curls on the bed, filling out forms.

E) INT. THEATER- EVENING- Zoey directs a dress rehearsal. An actor breaks into hysterics.

(CONTINUED)

F) INT. A CLUB- NIGHT- The club glitters. Trix glitters even more from her spot at the center of the crowd. She looks fabulous-- and bored. Some minor celebrity swaggers in amidst a group of hangers-on. Trix beelines towards the group. A tall, attractive man turns aside to reveal a short, grumpy-looking man. Trix puts her arm around the grump possessively and starts talking rapidly.

G) INT. ROSE'S ROOM- AFTERNOON- On the floor, surrounded by empty teacups and half-eaten casserole, Rose writes another song.

H) INT. ROSE'S ROOM- EVENING- Rose's fingers curl around her phone's SCREEN: Zoey's contact, a picture of Zoey striking a dramatic pose with the contact name UNFORGETTABLE Z. Her thumb hovers over the send button. She sets the phone down. Rose's forehead and eyes look odd crinkled into a frown.

I) INT. THEATER- EVENING- Zoey sits on the edge of the stage, legs swinging. She scrolls through her phone, a thoughtful look on her face. Her thumbs rest on Rose's contact, a picture of a rose. She shoves her phone in her pocket, hops down, and calls her actors back on stage.

J) EXT. CLUB- NIGHT- Trix exits alone.

K) INT. THEATER- NIGHT- Zoey watches her actors deliver a scene just right. She almost contains her grin.

L) INT. ROSE'S ROOM- NIGHT- A deliberate hand rests a wad of handwritten sheet music on the piano rack. Rose plays her songs through the night.

M) EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ROSE'S PLACE- MORNING- Rose hops on her yellow bicycle, shoves a manila envelope in the wicker basket, and wheels off through the quiet streets on red and orange leaves.

INT. ROSE'S ROOM- DAY

The table is set simply, but with cloth napkins and a few autumn blooms in a mason jar. Rose and Will move around the kitchen, chopping veggies, slicing bread, and stirring rice.

WILL

Out with it. What's your good news?
Did you make up with Zoey?

ROSE

(face falls)

No. We're still not talking. But...
You're looking at an employed
woman!

(CONTINUED)

WILL

Congrats, sis! Tell me everything.
Are you teaching piano?

ROSE

Yes and no. I helped Ms. Mills get
a grant from the Davenport
Foundation. We're going to open up
youth music classes for three local
schools in low-income districts.
I'll teach voice lessons, piano,
and probably recorder to the kids.
Thanks to the Davenport grant, I'll
get paid and the kids will get free
lessons.

They pick up the dishes of food and sit at the table.

WILL

That's amazing! Way to think
creatively, Rose. Is it a full time
job?

ROSE

Yes- for as long as the grant
lasts. In the meantime, I'll work
hard for the kids, and-- this is
unbelievable-- I'll get paid to
write music!

Will pauses in the midst of shoveling food into his mouth.
Rose is eating just as heartily but with rather more
politeness.

WILL

What? Who's paying you to do that?
I didn't even know you wrote music.

ROSE

I don't talk about it a lot. It's
always been something I do when I'm
feeling overwhelmed. A... friend of
mine made me realize that people
might actually want to hear my
music. So I polished up some songs
and talked to some people in the
local music scene. We'll see where
it goes.

WILL

My sister, the composer!

(CONTINUED)

ROSE
Composer.

WILL
Whatever.

Will strides to the fridge out in the hall and returns with a couple slices of cake. He sets one before Rose and waits for her to take a bite before he starts eating.

WILL (CONT'D)
Rose, that's amazing news. I think Zoey would want to hear it.

ROSE
I don't think she wants to hear anything from me right now.

WILL
Stop being so stubborn, Rose. So your pride got hurt. So you realized you weren't perfect. I bet Zoey feels the same way.

Will lobs a carrot at Rose's ear. She swats it away absentmindedly.

ROSE
What do I even say, after a fight like that? After months of not talking?

WILL
Say you're sorry. Say hi. Say you love peanut butter and jelly. It doesn't matter. Just say something.

Rose pushes back her plate. She pulls a flower out of the jar and twirls it thoughtfully. The petals spin.

EXT. LIGHT RAIL- BLUE LINE- DAY

The light rail STATION is crowded with people. No trains yet. Rose stands apart, looking around.

The TRAIN pulls into the station. Rose looks disappointed. Zoey shows up at her side. They stand, awkward, until Rose motions toward the open doors. They get on the train.

INT. BLUE LINE- DAY

It's crowded. Rose and Zoey grab handles and stand facing each other.

ROSE
I'm sorry. Me too.

ZOEY
I miss you. Me too.

They laugh a little.

ROSE
Turns out, life without your best friend is worse than being fired.

ZOEY
And worse than losing all your money.

The train clangs to a stop. The next station is announced and the doors hiss open. People stream in and out. Doors close.

ZOEY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for all the things I called you. You're not weird-- you're original.

ROSE
Maybe I'm both. I'm okay with that. You know, you're original too, Zoey. And look, I'm sorry about Sydney. I didn't mean--

ZOEY
It's fine. I know you didn't. I was so jealous, because Syd never talked to me like that. But now... we're dating!

ROSE
Really? That's marvelous! You two are perfect for each other. You've got to give all me the details.

ZOEY
Of course. What about you?

Doors open and shut. A guy with a toddler in a stroller rolls up beside them.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

I'm employed again! And writing my own songs. You were the first person I wanted to tell as soon as I got the news.

ZOEY

Good for you! Guess who else got a job?

ROSE

(squeals)

Zoey! That's fantastic! We have a ton to catch up on.

ZOEY

It's like the year you went home for Christmas and stayed all January-- when you got back, I was totally screwed. Dad threatened to send me to a Canadian convent if I didn't get it together, remember?

Next station. Stroller guy leaves. Two college students in backpacks carrying armfuls of cabbages take his place.

ROSE

Oh gosh, that's right!

ZOEY

(gruff voice)

"And Canada is no joke in the winter time, let me tell you!"

ROSE

(laughs)

How much colder did he think Canada was going to be than Minnesota?

ZOEY

No idea. That's dad for you.

ROSE

Let's never not speak again.

ZOEY

Promise?

ROSE

Promise.

They reach across the aisle and pinky swear, like middle schoolers.

INT. GRANDMERE'S LITTLE HOUSE- THANKSGIVING- EVENING

The little living room glows with warmth. Autumn decorations cover various surfaces and the remains of Thanksgiving dinner appear in the form of pie plates. Zoey, Sydney, Will, and Rose sit comfortably.

WILL

I can't believe your dad and grandma are napping already.

ZOEY

We're lucky they lasted this long.
(to Sydney)
Are you sure you don't want any more wild rice?

SYDNEY

No thanks, sweetheart. I'm full. Dinner was wonderful.

ROSE

A Thanksgiving potluck was a brilliant idea. Your cranberry quinoa dish was delicious, Sydney.

SYDNEY

Thank you, Rose. Your pies were excellent, and of course you prepared the potatoes perfectly, Zo. And Will, your green bean gelatin was so... different.

WILL

Family recipe.

ROSE

No it isn't!

WILL

The site I got it from was called "Grandma's Kitchen." It counts.

Rose throws a pillow at him.

Tom walks in the front door. Rose freezes. Will clobbers her with a couch cushion.

ZOEY

Tom! You're home!

A huge clamor towards Tom. Rose gives him half a hug and slips away. Tom sweeps Zoey into a spinning hug. He hugs Sydney and Will.

(CONTINUED)

ZOEY (CONT'D)

It's so great to have you home!

TOM

It's great to be home.

ZOEY

Come on, everyone, let's play a game!

TOM

Sure. I'll get Rose.

He slips out the back door.

EXT. GRANDMERE'S HOUSE- NIGHT

The ground covered in frosted brown leaves. Rose sits on the porch swing. The swing squeaks back and forth as she looks down.

TOM

This yard seems even tinier after the wide-open spaces of Montana.

ROSE

I guess everything looks different now.

TOM

Not everything.

He sits beside her on the swing.

TOM (CONT'D)

I hear you got some hotshot grant.

Rose nods.

TOM (CONT'D)

And you're teaching kids, just like you wanted. I wish I could be here to watch you live out your dreams.

ROSE

Me too. But it sounds like you're a success out West.

TOM

Not quite a success- not yet. I'm off to a good start, though. It's hard work, but not boring, thank God.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

My aunts are certainly impressed with you.

TOM

I'm lucky they're letting me live with them. They treat me like family.

ROSE

You are family.

They swing in silence for a moment.

TOM

I start at the local community college next term. I'll go to school part-time until I've finished my degree. I can do the job, I just need a piece of paper proving it.

ROSE

You've been working so hard. I knew you could.

TOM

I needed to prove to myself that I'm better than the Tom Shaw everyone else saw. I needed to see myself the way you see me.

Rose looks head-on at Tom.

ROSE

Why did you break up with Trix?

TOM

She's not-- She isn't kind.

ROSE

That's important to you.

TOM

It should be.

ROSE

You have a good heart, Tom Shaw.

TOM

I don't always use it.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE

Maybe you just need someone to remind you.

TOM

You remind me. That's the other reason I broke up with Trix. She's not you.

Zoey bursts out onto the porch. Tom and Rose still stare at each other.

ZOEY

Are you coming? Oh.

Rose smiles. She beckons to Zoey, still looking at Tom.

ROSE

Come on, Zoey.

Rose scoots toward Tom and Zoey squeezes beside them on the swing. Rose throws her arms around Zoey and Tom.

ROSE (CONT'D)

It's been a wild year. Almost more downs than ups. But I'm glad I've gotten to spend it with my best friends. Whatever comes next, I expect it will be spectacular.

ZOEY

Or at least, better. Whatever comes next, I could use a decent insurance plan.

The trio laughs. Their heads crane up at the stars together.

EXT. TWIN CITIES- FROM AIR- NIGHT

The city glows with life and light, reflected in the river. GOLD MEDAL FLOUR shouts in passing. Lights from airplanes wink low over dark silhouettes of buildings. The stars wink in return.

THE END

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