

PATHWAYS

"The Freshman"

by

Richard Gentile

TEASER

INT. LANE RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - MORNING

JULIE LANE is standing in the middle of the kitchen at her house, spreading some jelly onto toast. She is humming to herself as she makes her breakfast.

DARA LANE, Julie's mother, a beautiful Korean woman in her late 30s enters the kitchen, looking a bit weary, but still professional.

JULIE

Oh, morning, Mom.

DARA

Julie - I'm in a hurry this morning. Mr. Dixon just took on a third case-load, and he's letting me help. I've got tons of work to get through today.

JULIE

Okay.

DARA

Is that all you're eating for breakfast?

Julie points to a carton of orange juice sitting nearby on the counter.

JULIE

Don't want something?

DARA

No time! God, I am swamped. If only I didn't have to work so much, but...bills need to be paid.

JULIE

Yep. That they do.

DARA

What's wrong? You seem distracted. Is something wrong? Why do you look like there's something wrong?

JULIE

There's nothing wrong. I promise. I'm just making breakfast.

DARA

Okay. Fine. And school?
Everything is going fine at school?

JULIE

Everything is fine at school.

DARA

Good. School is important. You
need a good education. It's the
only way you're going to get into a
good college and grow up to be
someone important.

JULIE

I know.

DARA

You need to show more enthusiasm,
Julie! You are a scholarship
student - you have to work for what
you accomplish! It's not going to
come easy. A lot of hard work is
going to need to go into it.

JULIE

Mom. I know!

DARA

I just want to make sure you
understand how important this all
is. Your education, your grades,
Brighton Academy...

JULIE

Trust me. I realize.
(under her breath)
Especially now...

DARA

What was that?

JULIE

Nothing. Have a good day at work,
Mom.

DARA

All right. Well, I better go.
Please eat something healthy for
lunch.

Dara quickly leaves through the back door, grabbing a briefcase as she goes, and Julie sighs, going back to eating her toast.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIGHTON - FRONT LAWN - MORNING

It's a beautiful day, and we see throngs of high school students milling about, some alone, some with others. They're talking on cell phones, laughing, and generally enjoying their last few moments of freedom before the school day begins. "SCHOOL DAYS" by the KINKS plays in the background through this entire scene.

A bus arrives, and students begin to disembark, shouldering their backpacks and heading up the cobbled walk towards the school. We FOCUS on Julie and MARK, sitting on a stone wall and talking as students trudge past them.

Almost at the same time, ANNA JONES pulls up to the curb, letting her son GABE JONES out. He steps out, already looking around for his friends.

ANNA
What? No kiss goodbye?

GABE
(embarrassed)
Mom...

ANNA
Humor me.

Gabe looks around, makes sure no-one is watching, and leans back into the car, giving his mother a quick peck on the cheek. She waves once before driving away, and Gabe turns towards the school, hoisting his backpack.

The bell rings, and students groan, beginning to head inside. Amongst those heading towards the school is DOMINIC O'NEIL.

He is being given a wide berth by most of the underclassmen, and he walks right past Gabe, who is staring at him so intently that he fails to notice Julie and Mark approach him.

JULIE
You can put your tongue back in your mouth, now, Gabe.

GABE
I don't know what you're talking about, Julie.

JULIE
Sure you don't, muffin.

She pats his cheek familiarly (and perhaps a little bit sarcastically.)

Mark, however, seems to be paying little attention to Julie and Gabe. He is continuously checking his watch, and looks about to the left and right, looking for someone.

MARK
I'm gonna kill him!

GABE
Who?

MARK
Sam! He's late again! He's bound for detention at this rate. Do you have any idea how many times he's been late already this year?

JULIE
Well, let's go. We can't wait for him forever.

Julie's cool tone is somewhat undercut by the fact that she also finds herself looking about for Sam, even as the three march towards the door. As they enter, the large clock on the wall above the door reads 8:17.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIGHTON - HALLWAY - MORNING

CU: Clock on wall. The time is 8:37 AM.

Pan out to an empty corridor: the front doors are visible at the far end, and the hallway is lined with lockers on either side.

The front doors BURST OPEN, and in runs SAM DAVIDSON. His normal mop of red hair is even more unkempt than usual, and he stumbles as he runs in. He picks himself up, running to his locker and opening it.

SAM
Damn, damn, damn!

The locker opens, and prominently visible on the outside of the locker door are both a rainbow flag, and a sticker bearing a pink triangle. Sam begins shoving his books inside, before stopping and standing motionless for a moment.

We angle in and see that there is an envelope addressed to Sam standing upright in his locker. It's a fine-looking, cream colored envelope, and the handwriting is done in red ink with a strong masculine hand.

Sam gingerly drops his books on the ground, before reaching in and tentatively taking the note out. He opens it and begins reading.

CU of Sam's face. He is pale and looks shocked, and perhaps a little bit happy.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh my God...

FADE TO BLACK.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. BRIGHTON - CLASSROOM - MORNING

We are in MR. GREYSON'S class. He stands in front of the class, a sheaf of papers in his hand.

MR. GREYSON

Well, class, I must say, overall
I'm pretty pleased with the results
of these essays.

He begins walking down the rows of students, placing papers facedown on their desks. He pauses and looks down at the paper in his hand before placing it facedown on Julie's desk.

MR. GREYSON (CONT.) (CONT'D)

I know Shakespeare can be tough,
but most of you showed a fine grasp
of his writing style and what he
was trying to say, and your essays
reflected that.

Mr. Greyson's voice fades into the background as Julie, a confident look on her face, picks up the paper. She holds it for a second before hastily putting it back down.

CU on Julie's face. Her face is pale, and she looks shocked.

JULIE

Oh my God...

Pan out to classroom: the bell rings, and the class begins filing out. Julie seems to move in slow motion, purposefully delaying her exit. Once she sees that the last person has left the classroom, she approaches Mr. Greyson, who is sitting behind his desk, grading papers.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Mr. Greyson?

Mr. Greyson, red pen in hand, looks up.

MR. GREYSON

Yes, Miss Lane? Is there something
I can help you with?

JULIE

(hesitant)

Well, sir.. Umm.. It's about my
paper.

MR. GREYSON

And what about your paper?

He lays his pen down on the table, and folds his hands, looking directly at Julie.

JULIE

Well, I notice that you gave me a "D".

She drops the paper on the table in front of him. It is obvious that she is beginning to let her temper flare a bit. Mr. Greyson pulls the paper towards himself, looking at it.

MR. GREYSON

Yes. Yes, I did.

JULIE

(controlled anger)

May I ask why?

(beat)

Sir?

MR. GREYSON

You may. But let me start by asking you a question, if I may. Do you think that you put forth your best effort on this paper?

JULIE

(startled)

What?

MR. GREYSON

Do you, Miss Lane, think that you gave 100% of yourself in this paper?

JULIE

(indignant)

I always give 100%...

MR. GREYSON

(interrupting)

Please, Miss Lane. Don't insult my intelligence.

He stands, moving towards the door, and closing it quietly, so that the two can talk in private.

MR. GREYSON (CONT'D)

Miss Lane, that paper was beneath you.

JULIE

Mr. Greyson, I...

Mr. Greyson pulls up a chair, and motions for Julie to take a seat. She does so, smoothing her skirt as she does so. He takes another seat and positions it facing her, and then seats himself.

MR. GREYSON

(softly)

I love teaching, Julie. I enjoy imparting knowledge to the students who are our future. I enjoy knowing that they can be anything they want to be as long as they apply themselves. And I flatter myself in thinking that I had a hand in it. Yes, I enjoy all my students..

(chuckles)

Even Parker. But students like you and Dominic are different. I see you, and it gives me renewed hope for the future.

JULIE

(embarrassed)

I don't know what to say..

MR. GREYSON

There's nothing you can say, Miss Lane. Yes, you've disappointed me, but worse, you've disappointed yourself.

He walks to his desk, picks up the paper, and drops it on her desk.

MR. GREYSON (CONT'D)

I know that high school is a trying time, Miss Lane. And if it were up to me, I'd happily let you do a retake of this assignment. But I'm afraid it's not up to me.

Off the puzzled look on Julie's face, we:

CUT TO:

INT. BRIGHTON LUNCHROOM - AFTERNOON

PAN around the Brighton Academy lunch-room. It is packed with students, all sitting in small groups (or, in some cases, by themselves.) Vending machines line one wall, and on the wall opposite is your standard lunch counter line, where students can pick and choose the components of their meal.

We also see, sitting by himself at the end of a crowded table, a tray of food in front of him, is SHAWN CHURCH, a handsome young man, dressing in clothing that accentuates his considerable musculature. At his side is a jacket bearing the "Brighton Academy" logo. He appears nervous, and jabs at his food with his spork, pausing now and then to look around.

We PAN around further, and we can see that both Dominic and Shawn's gaze stop at a table containing our heroes (Sam, Mark, and Gabe), who are talking animatedly. Their conversation is stopped abruptly, when Julie flounces in, essay in hand. She drops her backpack on an empty chair, sitting across from Sam.

JULIE

You'll never guess what happened to me today!

SAM

Oh hey Julie! Glad you're here! I was just about to reveal some news, myself.

JULIE

(defeated)

Oh. Well...by all means. You were here first. Go ahead.

SAM

No, go ahead.

JULIE

No, Sam. You go ahead.

SAM

(pleased)

Okay!

Julie looks visibly put out by this, but Mark and Gabe just look at each other and smile. Sam reaches into his backpack, pulling out with a flourish the envelope we saw in the teaser.

SAM (CONT'D)

I have a secret admirer.

GABE

You're not serious?

SAM

Oh, but I am..

MARK

(dubious)

This isn't like the time you gave yourself a "hickey" with the vacuum cleaner, is it?

SAM

Scoff for now, my friend, but this letter is genuine. I found it in my locker this morning!

Sam unfolds the note, passing it to Gabe, who reads it. Mark leans in over Gabe's shoulder, trying to read the note. He superstitiously places one hand on Gabe's shoulder, as he uses the other to point out a particularly laughable line in the poem.

MARK

(reading aloud)

Oh brother! Listen to this, Gabe!
He's actually quoting Shakespeare!

(in high-pitched,
effeminate voice)

To what, my love, shall I compare
thine eye? Crystal is muddy. O,
how ripe in show they lips, those
kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white, high
Taurus snow, fann'd with the
eastern wind, turns to a crow.
When thou hold'st up thy hand: O,
let me kiss this princess of pure
white, this seal of bliss!"

SAM

It's obvious you philistines don't appreciate real literature. I think it's sweet. Not to mention romantic! And can I help it if people find me irresistible?

Sam leans over, trying to get his note back, but Gabe and Mark begin playing "Keep-Away" with it. So engrossed are the three teens in their reading and talking, that they fail to notice Julie quietly pick up her bag and storm off. We PAN to see Julie leaving the lunchroom. We see Parker, at his table, stand up and push his plate of food away, shoving people out of his way.

PARKER

'Scuse me.

He gets up, heading towards the exit as well.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIGHTON - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Julie is alone in the hallway, everyone else still at lunch. She stands at her locker, glasses in hand, fumbling with the combination, paper still in hand. Several seconds pass, and Julie is still fiddling with the lock. Finally, she breaks down, tears streaming down her face, She crumples the paper in her hand, pounding her fist into the locker, dropping her glasses on the floor.

We see Parker turn the corner into the hallway. He pauses, unsure how to proceed. Taking a deep breath, he approaches Julie. He bends down, picking up the fallen spectacles, wiping them with the hem of his shirt. He turns to the locker, hitting it twice in rapid succession, then once. The locker door opens with a squeak.

PARKER

(shyly)

Just a little trick I learned. My locker used to stick shut, too.

(beat)

Is everything alright?

He offers the spectacles to Julie, who SNATCHES them out his hand.

JULIE

(scornfully)

What do you want? Come to make fun of the brainiac in her moment of weakness? After all, that's what you jocks do, isn't it?

Parker looks hurt, and unsure how to respond.

PARKER

(hesitantly)

It's just... I... I saw your friends ignoring you, when you obviously had something you wanted to share, and I saw you storm off. I just wanted to make sure you were alright is all...

The normally confident and cocky Parker is obviously uncomfortable, putting his hands into the pocket of his pants. Julie whirls, suddenly venomous, tears still streaking her face.

JULIE

You don't know anything about me!
Or my friends! So why don't you go
and tell all your lame-ass friends
that you saw me make a fool out of
myself in the lunchroom! I'm sure
if you hurry, it could be all over
school by the end of the day!

Parker looks hurt, and turns away, trudging off, causing Julie to again burst into tears. She fumbles around in her purse, becoming more and more agitated.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Damn it! Why do I never have any
Kleenex when I need it?

CUT TO:

INT. BRIGHTON - LUNCH ROOM - AFTERNOON

PAN around the largely empty room: we see that Shawn still sits alone at the now-empty table: he has a notebook out and is writing something. Dominic sits alone at his table, his food pushed aside, reading a book. Sam, Gabe, and Mark are still at their table, sitting in front of trays that are scraped clean. Sam burps loudly.

MARK

Nice.

Undaunted, Sam looks around quizzically.

SAM

Where'd Julie go?

He looks around some more, taking notice of Shawn for the first time. He does a double-take, giving Shawn a pretty-obvious "up and down" look.

SAM (CONT'D)

And who is the Grade-A certified
slice of beefcake over there?

Gabe and Mark both crane their heads, looking at Shawn.

SAM (CONT'D)

(hisses)
Don't be so obvious!

Gabe and Mark both shrug, turning their attention back to the table.

GABE

Dunno. Saw him after-school with the track team, though.

Sam smiles, and stands.

SAM

Watch and learn, gentlemen, as I kill two birds with one stone!

Sam shoulders his backpack, and runs a hand through his messy hair: it doesn't help any, but Sam doesn't really care. Confidently, Sam walks over to the table where Shawn is sitting, lost in his writing.

Several seconds pass, and finally, Sam clear his throat. Shawn looks up, closing his notebook swiftly as he does so.

SAM (CONT'D)

Excuse me, I'm wondering if you saw my friend? She's about this tall..

Sam raises his hand to approximate Julie's height, only he's WAY off, indicating that she's much shorter than she actually is. Sam smiles brightly, obviously flirting.

SAM(CONT'D)

(looking Shawn up and down)

Very smart, very pretty..

(beat)

If you're into that sort of thing, I mean.

Sam winks broadly at Shawn. Shawn is obviously quite nervous (and perhaps the tiniest bit amused): he clears his throat before speaking.

SHAWN

She headed out. About 10 minutes ago.

He points to the exit.

SAM

Thanks. I'm Sam, by the way.

Sam extends his hand.

SHAWN

Shawn. Shawn Church.

Shawn extends his hand in return, and the two shake hands. ZOOM IN on Sam running his thumb along the pad of Shawn's hand. ZOOM OUT as Sam extends his other hand, clasping Shawn's single hand in both of his own.

SAM

I haven't seen you around. Are you new?

SHAWN

Yeah, uh, I'm a freshman. Just transferred here after my parents moved to the area.

Shawn seems to be warming up to the conversation.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Though I didn't realize that it would be so tough fitting in and making friends. Fortunately, the track team had a few openings, and Dominic's been awesome at helping me fit in..

Shawn continues speaking, but his voice fades into the background. Sam looks dumbfounded. He drops Shawn's hand like a hot-potato, and runs towards the exit.

SAM

(over his shoulder)
Thanks! It was nice meeting you!

Shawn continues looking towards Sam as he leaves.

SHAWN

(faintly)
Nice meeting you, too.

As Sam exits, we PAN to the table where Mark and Gabe still sit.

GABE

What was *that* all about?

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. BRIGHTON - HALLWAYS - AFTERNOON

Sam runs through the corridors, reflexively running his hands through his hair. Lunch is over, and the hallways are beginning to become congested with people. Sam shoulders his way through, scanning the crowd for signs of Julie's familiar face.

So busy is he looking around, that he misses what is right in front of him, and runs straight into Parker. Parker hastily pushes the smaller boy away.

PARKER

Why don't you watch where you're going, faggot?

SAM

Very nice, very original. Did you come up with that yourself, or did you and your friends have to brainstorm?

Parker's face turns beet-red as he works out the insult. By the the time he turns, fist raised, Sam has already disappeared into the crowd of people.

PARKER

(yelling into crowd)
You're dead, fag! You and your little boyfriend, Gabe!

PAN to Sam, who sees Julie coming out of the ladies room, a tissue in her hands. Sam shoulders his way towards her, grabbing her by both shoulders.

SAM

Uh-uh. We need to talk.

He looks around, seeing the crowded hallway.

SAM (CONT'D)

But not here.
(gestures towards the door)
Inside. Now.

He jerks his head towards the womens room before entering. Julie, mortified, follows. Pan around the bathroom, where women are busy chatting, applying makeup, and looking into mirrors. They look scandalized as Sam pushes into the room.

SAM (CONT'D)

(loud)

Ladies? Out! Now! My friend and I need to talk.

(off the scandalized looks)

Don't worry, honey, you've got nothing I want to see anyway.

Once all the women have departed, Sam sits on a protruding sink, legs swaying.

SAM (CONT'D)

So.. What's up? How's your day going?

JULIE

Oh, okay, I suppose.

It's clear that Julie is lying, though Sam ignores it (or perhaps he just doesn't pick it up.)

SAM

You left the lunchroom before I could tell you about the letter I found in my locker.

Julie visibly twitches as Sam mentions the note.

SAM (CONT'D)

He even quoted Shakespeare! How romantic is that? I wonder who it could be?

Julie's patience finally snaps.

JULIE

Listen, you insensitive jerk! I stuck around long enough to hear all about your "secret admirer". About which, I don't really give a hoot, to be honest.

Julie's eyes betray the fact that she is lying: clearly this "admirer" issue has had as much an impact on her day as the failed essay.

JULIE (CONT'D)

But you, like a typical, boorish male, were so wrapped up in your own little world that you never once asked me how my day was, or what I wanted to tell you!

Sam is taken aback by the sudden outburst.

SAM
(realizing)
Julie! Oh... Oh, Julie, I've been the
worst friend ever, haven't I?

He leaps off the sink, and pulls Julie into a hug. She closes her eyes, and we PAN so that we see the tears coming from her face. She sniffles and reluctantly disengages herself from the hug. She dabs her nose with the tissue.

SAM (CONT'D)
(quietly)
So, how was your day?

Julie laughs, a short, harsh bark.

JULIE
You're such an ass. You know that,
right?

Sam nods, as Julie reaches into her backpack, pulling out the failed essay, which is now a crumpled, sodden mass. Visible at the top of it is the red-letter "D".

JULIE (CONT'D)
Actually, I had a pretty crummy
day.

She hands the essay over to Sam who smooths it out on the sink, and looks at it.

SAM
Well, everyone has an off day every
once in a while, right? And it's
not like you actually failed it or
anything..

Julie shakes her head.

JULIE
You really don't get it, do you? I
can't have an "off-day". If I have
an "off-day", something like this
happens, something that can throw
my whole academic career into
question! Or are you forgetting
that I'm here on scholarship?
(beat)
My mom is gonna kill me.

SAM

Well, it's not like they can revoke your scholarship or anything, especially over one lousy grade.. Can they?

JULIE

I guess we'll find out later today.
(off Sam's puzzled look)
I have a meeting with the Principal and my guidance counselor later this afternoon.

Sam stands silent, unsure how to react with putting his foot in his mouth. Julie turns to look at Sam searchingly, and the two stand in the small room, silent. Fortunately, they are quickly saved by the (lunch) bell.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Guess we should get going, huh?

SAM

Guess so.

Julie dabs her eyes one last time, then throws away the used tissue in a nearby waste-bin. She puts her glasses back on, and adjusts her skirt.

Sam, still unsure how to behave in this situation, opts for the chivalrous approach: he extends his arm towards Julie. She blushes slightly, but then links arm with Sam, and the two leave the room together.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIGHTON - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

There are still stragglers running about, putting stuff into (or taking stuff out of) their lockers. Sam's locker is clearly visible to us because of the stickers that we saw from the teaser.

Shawn enters the frame from the far end. He is writing something as he walks. He stops in front of Sam's locker, facing it, his back to the ladies room.

We see the door to the ladies room open, and Julie and Sam walk out, still arm-in-arm.

Shawn, meanwhile finishes the letter he was writing, and seals it into an envelope, a twin of the one from the teaser. He proceeds to drop the letter into Sam's locker.

ZOOM IN to a two-shot of Sam and Julie. They both have the same flabbergasted look on their faces.

BEAT.

JULIE
(jealous, shocked)
THAT'S your secret admirer?

She pauses a moment, taking in Shawn, who cuts quite an imposing figure, his clothes accenting his muscles, the overhead lights bathing him, making him fairly glow with a fiery nimbus. She's obviously puzzled at how someone like THAT could go for someone like Sam.

SAM
(horrificed)
THAT'S my secret admirer?

Taking a deep breath, Sam unlinks his arm from Julie, and strides purposefully towards the locker.

SAM (CONT'D)
HEY! What do you think you're doing?

Shawn whirls, blushing, which only serves to accentuate his deep dimples.

SHAWN
Caught in the act, huh?

He smiles broadly at Sam, taking a step closer, just enough to invade Sam's personal space. This is a different side of the shy Shawn that we saw in the lunchroom. He's much more confident, perhaps even cocky.

SHAWN (CONT'D)
(huskily)
I was hoping to keep it a secret a little while longer, but...
(leans in closer, almost within kissing distance)
I guess the cat's out of the bag.

This time, it's Sam who's the nervous one, as he takes a (small) step back.

SHAWN (CONT.) (CONT'D)
I mean, I'd heard all about you: everyone has. About how you were "out and proud" and all, but I wasn't sure that someone like you..
(MORE)

SHAWN (CONT.) (CONT'D)
 so smart and handsome and
 confident, I mean.. would be
 interested in me. But, after our
 meeting at lunch, I could tell that
 you were as interested in me as I
 am in you.

Sam gulps, mouth moving but no words coming out. In the background of the scene, we see Julie snort and angrily stomp off down the hallway, once again ignored by her so-called-friend.

SHAWN (CONT.) (CONT'D)
 And just so you know, I usually
 like being the aggressor.

Shawn leans in boldly, attempting to kiss the shorter boy, but is interrupted by the sound of a throat clearing. They turn around and face MRS. CLARK, the guidance counselor.

MRS CLARK
 (clears throat)
 I believe that the bell has rung,
 gentlemen?

SHAWN
 (back to his nervous self)
 Yes, ma'am. Sorry, ma'am.

MRS CLARK
 (to Shawn)
 I can excuse you this once, Mr.
 Church, but I would recommend that
 you re-read your "Brighton Academy"
 handbook. We frown on that sort of
 behavior here.
 (to Sam)
 You, on the other hand, Mr.
 Davidson. Meet me after school, and
 we'll talk about this little..
 incident.
 (to both)
 Now, both of you! Get to class!

Mrs. Clark stalks off, leaving the two alone in the hallway once more.

SHAWN
 That was a close one, huh?

SAM
 Are you NUTS? Not only am I in
 trouble now, I find out that my
 secret admirer is a FRESHMAN!

Shawn looks crestfallen.

SHAWN

But.. the lunchroom.. I thought we had..

SAM

We had nothing! We have nothing!
 (looks around)
 I can't be seen with you! Leave me alone!

SHAWN

But...

SAM

Don't ever leave me a note again!

Sam runs off to class, leaving Shawn standing, bewildered, in the hallway, looking after the object of his affection.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIGHTON ACADEMY - DEAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

This room is elegantly furnished. A stately grandfather clock sits in one corner of the room, and we can clearly see that the clock reads 3:45 PM. Directly opposite the clock is a spinning globe. Framed diplomas line the wall, and an elegant oak desk sits in the center of the spacious room.

Behind this desk, in a stuffed chair, sits DEAN OVERMEYER, a 40-something gentleman, clad in a black pinstriped suit. In front of him is an open manila folder, a copy of the infamous essay on the very top of the stack.

Sitting opposite him, in a straight-backed wooden chair is Julie. She has her hands crossed across her lap, and her fingers are fidgeting nervously. She pauses to adjust her glasses on her nose, and then places her hands back on her lap.

The door creaks open, and Mrs Clark enters, taking a chair and placing it next to Julie, before seating herself on it.

MRS CLARK

Sorry I'm late, sir. We had a little disciplinary problem with a certain Mr. Davidson.

Julie perks up, visibly interested in what is going on with Sam.

DEAN OVERMEYER
Nothing serious, I hope?

MRS CLARK
(looks at Julie)
Nothing I couldn't handle, sir.

DEAN OVERMEYER
Well, good. On to the matter at hand, then.

Principal Overmeyer lifts the essay off the top of the stack, passing it to Miss Reeves. Miss Reeves looks at it, frowns, and passes it Julie.

DEAN OVERMEYER (CONT'D)
I assume, Miss Lane, that this essay looks familiar to you?

JULIE
(faintly)
Yes, sir.

DEAN OVERMEYER
It was, I believe, an essay on the works of Shakespeare?

JULIE
(faintly)
Yes, sir.

Dean Overmeyer pauses, pulling a handkerchief out of his breast pocket and wiping his forehead.

DEAN OVERMEYER
I must confess, Miss Lane, I'm at a bit of a loss here.

JULIE
Sir?

DEAN OVERMEYER
You've been one of our best students so far this year. I'm trying to understand why your grades have suddenly dipped so much in such a short time.

MRS CLARK
Is there something you want to tell us, Miss Lane? Did you not understand the assignment? Are you having problems at home?

JULIE

No, I understood the assignment,
and my home life's fine. I have no
excuses. I just...

Julie pauses and sighs, also at a loss for words.

JULIE (CONT'D)

I don't know what happened.

Mrs. Clark looks uncomfortable.

DEAN OVERMEYER

(reading from folder)

It says here that you are attending
Brighton Academy on an academic
scholarship. Is that correct, Miss
Lane?

JULIE

Yes, sir.

DEAN OVERMEYER

Miss Lane, do you know that, as you
ARE on a scholarship, everything
you do reflects back on the staff
of Brighton Academy, and indeed the
school itself? Do you know how many
people applied and were rejected
for scholarship to Brighton? We
hand-selected you as the best of
the best. We were hoping that by
excelling here at Brighton, YOU
would open the door for more
funding, which would mean other
deserving students could also be
given scholarships to Brighton.

Dean Overmeyer stands up, and walks out from behind the desk,
moving to stand in front of it, facing Julie. He takes the
paper from her hand, placing it behind him on the desk, out
of view.

DEAN OVERMEYER

Honestly, Miss Lane, I don't mean
to sound harsh or overbearing, but
you really have placed us in a bit
of a pickle.

(MORE)

DEAN OVERMEYER (CONT'D)
 You see, in order for Brighton Academy to get the full funding it needs and deserves, we must show to our investors and alumni, not to mention the board, that we are doing our job to educate the youth of today. This means that we require a certain amount of decorum in our halls, that we staff sheperd our flock towards graduation... And, of course, it goes without saying that our students need to maintain a certain GPA

JULIE
 (tremulously)
 Sir.. Are you revoking my scholarship?

MRS CLARK
 (pats Julies knee)
 Now, Julie, it hasn't come to anything as drastic as that yet. Principal Overymeyer and I have met with the board, and, thanks to our assurances that this WILL NOT happen again, we have wrung some concessions out of the board.

JULIE
 My scholarship's not revoked?

DEAN OVERMEYER
 As of this moment, no. BUT..

JULIE
 (prodding)
 But?

MRS CLARK
 You'll have to get an "A" on the next test you take, whatever it may be. AND you must promise to maintain a 3.7 GPA for the remainder of the year.

Julie jumps up in excitement, grabbing her.

JULIE
 (to Overmeyer)
 Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.
 (to Clark)
 Yes, ma'am. Thank you, ma'am.

She turns to exit, beaming happily at being given a second chance.

MRS CLARK
Oh, and Miss Lane?

JULIE
Yes, Miss Reeves?

MRS CLARK
If I were you, I'd be sure to thank Mr. Greyson. He really did a world of good in the meetings with the board: he was quite effusive about you, as a matter of fact.

Julie blushes, turning scarlet.

JULIE
I will. Thank you again.

She exits, the door slamming to behind her.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. BRIGHTON ACADEMY HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Julie exits the Principals office, heading down the corridor. We TRACK with her as she turns the corner, heading towards her locker. To her surprise, who is there at her locker but Sam!

SAM

I was running late, and I remembered about your meeting, so I decided I'd stick around, walk you home.

(beat)

If that's alright with you, of course.

JULIE

No need to lie, Sam. I heard about your run-in with Miss Reeves.

SAM

(blushes)

You did, huh?

Julie nods solemnly.

SAM (CONT'D)

Should've know I can't keep anything from you.

Sam smiles ruefully.

SAM (CONT'D)

So...

JULIE

So...

SAM

Friends?

Julie's face softens.

JULIE

You know you don't even have to ask that! I've just gotta really buckle down with the school-work is all. So, no more late nights at the Blaze, no more calls at all hours..

SAM
 (light-heartedly)
 Gasp! Shock! Horror!

Julie punches Sam in the arm, none-too-gently.

JULIE
 Hey! Goofball! I'm serious here.

SAM
 (somber)
 I know. And I'm sorry.

JULIE
 Thank you.

SAM
 But one final night at the Blaze
 before your self-imposed "academic
 lockdown" won't kill you, will it?
 (smiles)
 Please? Pretty please? With a
 cherry on top?

Julie throws up her hands in exasperation, rolling her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. LANE RESIDENCE - ENTRYWAY - AFTERNOON

Julie walks into her house, still cleaning up her face, and closes the front door behind her.

JULIE
 Mom? Mom are you home?

Around the corner comes Dara.

DARA
 Ah, Julie, there you are. Where
 have you been? Studying late at
 school again?

JULIE
 No...I wasn't studying. I...I had
 a meeting with the Dean today, and
 I had to go somewhere, to think.

This gets Dara's attention.

DARA
 The Dean? Why did you meet with
 the Dean?
 (MORE)

DARA (CONT'D)

What did the Dean want with you?
You're a perfect student, you don't
need to see the Dean.

Julie looks uncomfortable, and she looks down for a moment,
unsure how to continue.

JULIE

Do you think we could sit down? It
might make this whole process
easier.

DARA

I don't want to sit down. Sitting
down means you have something
serious to talk about. If we don't
sit down, it's not as serious. So
I think we should stay standing.
Standing is less serious and much
less dangerous than sitting.

JULIE

Okay. Standing it is.

DARA

Julie, what happened? And why
didn't you come straight home and
tell me about this?

JULIE

I wanted to tell you. But...I felt
so horrible about the whole thing.
I took care of it though, don't
worry! Everything is fine, my
scholarship is fine.

DARA

The scholarship is fine?

JULIE

It's fine. Don't worry.

DARA

Okay. As long as the scholarship
is fine, and you won't have to
leave Brighton, then everything is
fine. Okay? Now give me a kiss, I
have to get to work.

JULIE

But it's almost 5 o'clock.

DARA

I'm picking up some extra shifts.
Somebody has to make the money
around here, right?

JULIE

All right. Well...I guess I'll see
you in the morning?

Dara leans in and gives Julie a quick kiss on the forehead,
and exits the house, leaving Julie all alone, looking a bit
worse for the wear.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLAZE - EVENING

Mark, Sam, Gabe and Julie are all out on the dance floor,
dancing close together in the midst of a crowd of people, to
"SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT" by NIRVANA. Sam and Julie are both
dancing in a lively (if spastic) manner: both are flailing,
hips gyrating, arms whirling. Gabe is dancing in a controlled
manner, with as little movement as he can muster, though he
does seem to have "caught the beat" of the song. Mark, on the
other hand, couldn't catch anything but a cold. He shuffles
lamely from side to side, looking around the crowd of people.

Gabe maneuvers himself so that he and Sam are dancing next to
each other, though they have to shout to make themselves
heard above the pounding music.

GABE

(to Sam)

SO.. What's the deal with you and
Shawn?

SAM

Wh... What do you mean?

GABE

You know what I mean, Sam. We..
(nods at Mark)
saw what happened in the lunchroom.
Remember?

SAM

What happ... Oh, that! No, there's no
deal.

Gabe looks dubious.

SAM (CONT'D)

Really, there's no deal.

JULIE

There! You've heard it out of the jackasses' mouth. Can we PUHLEEZE drop this subject? It physically pains me to listen to this topic.

(beat)

Seriously.

SAM

Sure, Julie, whatever you say.

(BEAT, to Gabe)

You think there was a deal?

GABE

Yuh-huh.

SAM

Okay, he IS cute. And built. Boy, is he built! And his ass? Have you guys SEEN his ass? And the dimples are killer! He would make such PERFECT boyfriend material. And I bet he's a great kisser, too...

(BEAT, realizing)

But, what am I talking about? I can't go out with him! He's a freshman!

(plaintively, to Gabe and Mark)

A freshman!

JULIE

I am so going to get a drink.

She disappears into the crowd of dancers, working her way towards the bar, where we quickly lose sight of her in the crowd.

GABE

What's up with her?

SAM

(evasive)

Something to do with her scholarship. But can we move onto something more important? Like me!

Gabe and Mark just shake their heads.

SAM (CONT'D)

As I was SAYING, before I was so rudely interrupted... I can't date a freshman!

GABE

Why not?

MARK

Yeah, he seems to dig you, and you obviously dig him..

SAM

(to Mark)

Have I taught you nothing, grasshopper? I can forgive the newbie, but you...

(shakes head)

I thought I had trained you better.

(beat)

Sophomores can't date freshman!
It's against the laws of physics.
The very laws of nature forbid it.
You cannot go down...well, not in that sense, anyway...you can only go up.

MARK

Your parents dropped you on your head when you were a baby, didn't they?

SAM

(overreacting, arms flailing)

If I were to start seeing Shawn, they'd revoke my tiara! Take away my tutu! Send the Pink Mafia after me!

MARK

Pink Mafia?

Gabe steps forward, putting his hands on Sam's shoulder.

GABE

Sam, just take a breath. The world is not gonna end if you start seeing Shawn. Anyone here would be interested: Shawn's quite the catch!

(jokingly)

Of course, he's no Dominic, but then, who is?

Julie re-enters the scene, working her way through the crowd, dancing. In her left hand is a glass containing soda: a lime festoons the side of glass.

MARK

Yeah, you've got nothing to lose,
right?

Mark's gaze turns towards the door, where Shawn has just entered. He is clearly in his element: he is outfitted perfectly for the club scene: he wears a tight-fitting shirt, leather pants that leave nothing to the imagination, his hair is moussed just so, and he smiles, again accentuating the deep dimples.

MARK (CONT'D)

(smiling)

And looks like now's your chance.

SAM

(suspiciously)

And what does THAT mean?

But it's too late. Mark is jumping up and down, waving his arms, trying to get Shawn's attention.

MARK

(shouting)

Shawn! Hey! Over here!

A bit of a puzzled look crosses Shawn's face as he is hailed, until he sees the group (and more specifically, sees Sam.) Shawn purposefully strides towards the small group, making his way through the crowd.

SAM

(to Mark)

You are SO dead.

Shawn arrives at last, facing the small group. He turns to Mark.

SHAWN

Hey. Nice to see a familiar face.
Mark, right?

MARK

Yeah, Mark Roberts.

He extends his hand, and the two shake.

MARK (CONT'D)

These are my friends.

(points at Gabe)

That's Gabe.

Shawn extends his hand, and he and Gabe shake.

SHAWN
 (to Gabe)
 Gabe.. Oh yeah, Dominic mentioned
 you.

At this, Gabe flushes crimson.

SHAWN (CONT'D)
 It's nice to finally put a name
 with the face.

MARK
 (points at Julie)
 That's Julie.

Shawn extends his hand towards Julie.

JULIE
 Sorry. My hands are full.

Julie smiles fakely, indicating the occupied hand, making no mention of her free hand. Sam, Gabe and Mark all frown, while Shawn looks puzzled.

MARK
 And I think you know Sam already?

SHAWN
 (deep voice)
 I do.

Shawn turns to face Sam, taking a step closer, once again on the verge of invading Sam's personal space. He extends his hand towards Sam, and Sam reluctantly takes it in his own.

ZOOM IN on Shawn running his thumb along the pad of Sam's hand. ZOOM OUT as Shawn extends his other hand, clasping Sam's single hand in both of his own.

LINGER by the CRANBERRIES begins, and Sam and Shawn both sway together, hands linked, clearly unwilling to be parted. Sam leans in towards Shawn, his head almost resting on the broad shoulder.

SAM
 (murmuring)
 I love this song.

SHAWN (CONT.)
 Me, too.
 (to Sam)
 Would you like to dance?

The moment is broken by Julie. She FORCES herself between the two, breaking their clasped hand stance.

JULIE

(to Shawn)

Okay, wait a second. Am I the only one confused here?

PAN as Mark and Gabe glance at each and take a quick step backward, not wanting to get involved in the trio's problems.

MARK

(to Gabe)

So, how about them Red Sox, huh?

PAN BACK to the trio, where Julie, is, apparently, just getting warmed up, and is about to hit full "Diva" mode.

JULIE

You just swagger and strut in here in your tight little T-shirt and leather pants, and you think it's going to get you ALL the attention.

SHAWN

I'm not trying to get everyone's attention.

JULIE

(undeterred)

UGH. Get a clue already! Mr. Magoo could see this better than you, Shawn. Sam is not interested in you.

SAM

I'm.. I'm not?

JULIE

(to Sam)

No, you are not!

JULIE (CONT.) (CONT'D)

(stomps her foot)

You can do SO much better than this.. this... this FRESHMAN!

(to Shawn)

So why don't you turn around and take your bubble-butt back to the dance floor, and find someone who is ACTUALLY interested, and not someone you have to chase around like a puppy-dog!

Surprisingly, Shawn remains calm through all of this. Julie's tone has reached shouting status, and the song ends, the music abruptly grinds to a halt, as the rest of the club-goers stop what they're doing and watch the dramatics play out.

A SPOTLIGHT from above actually highlights the players in the scene, casting Julie in green, the color of envy, serving to make her look somewhat sinister and witch-like. Similar spotlights highlight the other two- pale blue for Sam, and golden for Shawn. Julie is still trying to get a rise out of Shawn, but to no avail, and this makes Julie even MORE furious.

Sam and Gabe slink back even further out of the area.

JULIE (CONT'D)

That's right! I said puppy-dog. Got nothing to say to that, do you, pretty-boy? All those muscles interfering with your hearing? That's why you wrote a note, isn't it? And Shakespeare? Who quotes Shakespeare anymore, anyway? That's SO last century.

Gabe and Mark interject from the sidelines.

GABE

I think a love note is kinda romantic, actually...

MARK

Oooh, me, too!

JULIE

(ignoring them)
Can't stand the thought of being rejected? Can't stand the thought that Sam is TOO GOOD for you! Because he is...

SAM

(quietly)
Uhh.. Julie?

JULIE

(whirls: to Sam)
Sam? Shut up.

SAM

Julie..

JULIE
(tight voice)
This is between him and me.

Sam steps forward, facing Julie, and looks into her eyes.

SAM
Actually, Julie...

Sam steps aside, turning his back on Julie, walking towards Shawn. The pale blue spotlight TRACKS with him, illuminating him as he heads towards the taller guy.

SAM (CONT.) (CONT'D)
(firmly)
This is between me and him.

JULIE
Sam.. What do you see in him? He's just a big dumb jock. He couldn't possibly make you happy.

SHAWN
(quietly, calmly)
Julie. Why don't you let Sam make his own decision?

Sam has reached Shawn, and the two stand facing each other, only inches apart. Sam extends his hand parallel to the floor, palm up and facing Shawn. Shawn smiles, and places his bigger hand atop Sam's smaller one. In one smooth, expert motion, Shawn bends down for a kiss, which Sam eagerly accepts.

As we ZOOM and LINGER on the kiss, the two spotlights illuminating Sam and Dominic merge into one, covering both of them. The audience breaks into cheers: all save Julie, who, stunned, drops her drink on the floor and runs out, the crowd parting before her, the green spotlight TRACKING with her. As she reaches the edge of the dance floor, the green light WINKS OUT, and we lose sight of her.

Sam and Shawn finally break their kiss, both of them breathing heavily and panting.

SAM
I think I'd like that dance now.

The audience laughs, and the music begins once more (this time BREATHLESS by the CORRS), the spotlight still centered on Sam and Shawn.

Shawn tentatively wraps his arms around Shawn, drawing him close. Sam rests his head on Shawn's chest, and Shawn lowers his head onto Sam's shoulder.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. THE BLAZE - NIGHT

PAN TO Gabe and Mark, on the fringes of the crowd. Gabe, looking on, seems distraught. He turns to Mark.

GABE

Do me a favor? Can you talk to Julie? Make sure everything's okay? I know this situation isn't going to be worked out overnight, but I think Julie really needs a friend right now.

MARK

Sure. But what about you? Where are you going?

GABE

I have someone I need to see.

Without another word, he grabs his coat and heads for the door, leaving Mark looking after him. Mark looks confusedly about, wondering how he got himself into this mess.. At last, he shakes his head in confusion and frustration, before draining his own drink and heading outside.

PAN back to Shawn and Sam, still wrapped in each others arms.

SAM

(muffled against Shawn's shoulder)

Just to be sure.. You're not seeing anyone, are you?

Shawn laughs as we:

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BLAZE - NIGHT

Julie sits on a bench several yards away from the Blaze, waiting for the bus. She has apparently heeded her advice from earlier in the day, as a huge wad of Kleenex is in her hand, and she is dabbing at her eyes. "SO SAD TO SAY" by the MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES plays in the background.

In the distance, we see Mark exiting the Blaze, and catching sight of Julie. He heads over towards her.

MARK

Is this seat taken?

JULIE
Go away, Mark.

MARK
(quietly)
Is that what you really want? You
look like you could use a friend
right about now
(beat)
I know I could.

Julie's face takes on an even sadder look. When she speaks, it's quietly, as if she understands what he's saying and trying to do, but it's also laced with bitterness and vitriol.

JULIE
Listen, Mark. I appreciate what
you're trying to do. Really, I do.
But I have no desire to rehash my
personal problems right now,
especially with a friend of Sam's.
And I have even less desire to
listen to your problems.

Mark's twists his face, resembling nothing so much as wounded puppy.

MARK
I'm your friend, too, y'know.

JULIE
Please, Mark. I can't take another
person lying to me today. Just go.
Go home and leave me be.

MARK
I understand.

Mark turns back towards the Blaze, beginning to walk away.

MARK (CONT.) (CONT'D)
And, Julie? Things will work out
for the best. It may not seem like
it now, but I really believe that.

Mark heads off-screen, leaving us to PAN back to Julie, still crying, her makeup running down her face like a raccoon.

CUT TO:

INT. MCMANN RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Establishing shot.. Anna and James are sitting at the dining room table; though the table is large, Anna and James have chosen to sit next to each other. The room is lit only by the candles on the kitchen table: it's quite a romantic setting. The table is elegant, and nicely set with a linen tablecloth and crystal stemware, which is filled with wine. A veritable feast sits on the table, but Anna and James are too busy talking and looking into each others eyes. MUSIC plays softly in the background. ("WHITE FLAG" by DIDO.)

ANNA

(takes a dainty bite from
her plate)
You didn't tell me you can cook.

JAMES

It's nothing. Really. Just a little
something I whipped up.
(smiles slyly)
And there's a lot of things about
me you don't know.

ANNA

Well, I guess we'll have to work on
that, huh?

Anna leans in for a kiss. James also leans forward and the two share a tender moment. At last the kiss breaks (rather abruptly), as James looks at the clock on the wall.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I know I haven't had much practice
in awhile, but I'm not THAT bad a
kisser..
(beat)
Am I?

JAMES

No, no, it's not that. It's just...

(BEAT)

Parker should be home soon.

ANNA

Ah.

Uncomfortable, she takes another bite from her plate, followed by a (largish) gulp of wine.

JAMES
(deep breath)
Anna.. I want to tell him..
Parker.. About us.

ANNA
James...

JAMES
(interrupting)
Anna, I'm not in the habit of lying
to my son. Ever since his mom, he
and I are very close, and I want to
keep that closeness.

ANNA
James..

Anna reaches out and takes James hands.

ANNA (CONT'D)
I understand. And believe me, I
want that, too. I don't want to be
the one to come between you and
your son.
(beat)
But Gabe.. He's just settling into
his new school, and making friends.
And how will we he react when he
finds out?

JAMES
Anna...

James seems like he's on the verge of saying something biting
and then thinks better of it. Instead, he takes a deep breath
and SIGHS.

Anna, meanwhile, puts on a fake smile.

ANNA
James.. Would you mind if we just
table this discussion for the
moment? Let me think about it for a
day or two?

JAMES
Of course. You're right. We need to
think of both the children.

CUT TO:

INT. LANE RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Julie comes out of a bathroom and the light is still on, shining into the dark hallway. Now dressed in pajamas, and her face fully clean, she is about ready to go to bed.

That is, until she hears muffled SOBBING down the hall. She slowly walks down the hall and stands outside a door, and the sobbing is more clear now. Knocking softly, Julie opens the door and finds Dara sitting on the edge of her bed, crying softly.

She moves into the room, looking concerned.

JULIE

Mom? Mom, what's wrong?

Dara looks up, as if she just noticed that Julie was there. She wipes her face off and takes a deep breath.

DARA

Oh, Julie. I...didn't see you.
What are you doing up so late?

JULIE

I was just...
(beat)
Mom, what happened? Why are you
sitting here crying in the dark?

Dara is silent for a moment, and then she just completely breaks down.

DARA

I want so much for you, Julie.
Don't you understand? It's why I
work so much. It's why I'm always
gone, always looking for another
shift. It's all because of you. I
put pressure on you because I want
you to succeed. I don't want you
to have to work as hard as I do. I
want you to be able to give your
family the kind of life I wish I
could give you.

JULIE

(weakly, eyes shining)
Mom...

DARA

It's okay, Julie. I'm going to be
fine.

(MORE)

DARA (CONT'D)

I just...sometimes I just need to let it all out. I'm not as strong as I pretend to be.

JULIE

You don't have to be.

DARA

Oh, but I do, honey. I really do. It's the only way we're gonna make it. And I want you to make it. So bad. You get that, right?

JULIE

Yeah. I think I do.

Julie smiles and sits next to her mom, and they embrace, sitting silently in the darkened room.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

It's a beautiful night. The stars twinkle in the sky above, and the streetlights cast a pleasant glow on the street. It's a typical suburban town, and the stately houses are mostly dark.

All but one, that is. Gabe enters the scene, looking intently at the house numbers. Gabe stops in front of one particularly large two story house, the only one that shows signs of habitation at this hour. A cobbled walkway leads up the front porch. Gabe takes a deep breath.

GABE (CONT.)

(to himself)

You can do this.

He takes another deep breath and walks up the cobbled path towards the front door. A large sign above the door identifies the house as Number 2132. Gabe reaches out, fingers lingering over the doorbell, which is on the right side of the white door. Taking a deep breath, he PRESSES it.

Seconds pass, and Gabe is beginning to have second thoughts. He turns to leave, but then turns back, looking fixedly at doorbell, trying to get up the nerve to press it again. He sighs deeply, and reaches for the doorbell...

Only to have Dominic open the front door. Dominic is dressed casually, in sweat pants and a wife-beater Tee. He looks out and see Gabe on his doorstep.

DOMINIC

Gabe! What are you doing here?

Gabe smiles goofily, looking into Dominic's eyes. Dominic smiles back awkwardly, realizing he's not gonna get an immediate response.

NOTE that at this point "THERE'S A FINE, FINE LINE" from the Avenue Q soundtrack begins playing quietly in the background.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Gabe? To what do I owe the honor of this visit?

Gabe snaps out of his fugue, and takes another deep breath.

GABE

(deep breath)

Dominic? Can we talk?

DOMINIC

(nods)

Sure. What's up?

Gabe looks uncomfortably about at the house, with the lit windows, and shakes his head.

GABE

Can we go somewhere and talk? Would you mind?

DOMINIC

Sure. Let me get my coat.

Dominic re-enters the house, leaving the door open behind him. Gabe takes a few steps forward, poking his head in and looking around at the elegant interior of the house, before Dominic reappears in a light windbreaker.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

I'm ready. Let's go!

GABE

Great.

The two head down the steps side-by-side in uncomfortable silence, beams of moonlight illuminating the path as they walk.

DOMINIC

(casually)

So...

GABE
 (uncomfortably)
 So...

DOMINIC
 Anywhere in particular you wanted
 to go?

GABE
 Nah. Can we just walk for a little
 while? Do you mind?

DOMINIC
 (smiles)
 Not at all. It's a nice night out.
 And I'm enjoying the company.
 (beat)
 Is everything alright, Gabe? You
 seem a little bit off tonight.
 (chuckles)
 Even more so than usual.

Dominic playfully punches Gabe in the arm, and the two walk
 in silence for a few paces.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
 Or, y'know, if you don't walk to
 talk..

GABE
 (interrupts)
 Dominic, there's something I've
 gotta tell you.

He stops, and turns to face Dominic, who does the same.

DOMINIC
 (softly)
 What is it, Gabe? Is something
 wrong?

GABE
 Yes.
 (beat)
 No.
 (another beat)
 I don't know.
 (sighs in frustration.)
 Dominic...
 (beat, a chuckle)
 Wow, this is harder than I thought
 it would be.

DOMINIC

Gabe...

GABE

No, please, let me finish before you say anything.

(beat)

Ever since I laid eyes on you that first day at Brighton, I haven't been able to think about anything else. You're the first thing I think of in the morning, and the last thing I think of at night.

(wistfully, tears starting to stream down his face)

Whenever I see you, all I can do is get lost in your eyes.

(long beat)

There. I've said it. Now you probably think I'm some kind of freak, and you'll never want to see or speak to me again...

Dominic is completely and utterly silent. Gabe waits for him to say something, but he doesn't. He doesn't say a single word. Gabe looks down at the ground, and then back at Dominic.

GABE (CONT'D)

I'm...gonna go.

He immediately begins walking away, leaving Dominic all alone on the street, watching him as Gabe goes.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE