

no place like home



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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. PARK - DAY

It's a family picnic. A beautiful early fall day. And around the table, the COLLIERS: ANDY, mid forties, physically fit, a warm, enveloping personality; LIZ, the same age, a little cooler, still beautiful; ZOE, seventeen, past any awkwardness of adolescence; and JESS, fifteen, a little distant and judgmental, but you can ascribe it to her age. The party is in full swing. Andy reaches across the table:

ANDY

Pass some more of that -- that --

LIZ

-- Shrimp salad.

ANDY

Yeah, this yours, Zo -- ?

ZOE

-- Jess made it --

ANDY

-- I haven't had anything this good in a long time. When d'you get to be such a great cook?

A glare. That's the stupidest question Jess's ever heard.

JESS

... I don't know.

ANDY

(pressing on)
Anyone watching the Laker game tonight?

ZOE

I'm seeing Jamie tonight.

JESS

Every night.

ANDY

Oh, yeah? His house or ours?

(off her look)

Is his father gonna be around?

ZOE

Dad?!

(CONTINUED)

ANDY
Hey, I'm just doing my job,
here.... What about you, Jess?

JESS
I'm single.

ANDY
No, I mean --
(to Liz)
Does she tell you anything about
her life or is it just me?

Liz looks sympathetically at Jess, then back at Andy.

LIZ
I talked to Cameron today. He said
this semester's been great and he --

GUARD (O.S.)
-- Time's up!

Andy looks over. There's a prison guard standing there. And
in this direction it becomes clear: this is no park, it's the
grounds of a prison. We've been watching a family visit.

ANDY
What?... Can't we just have a few
more minutes?

The guard shrugs "sorry." Everyone gets up from the table.
The girls start cleaning up.

ANDY (CONT'D)
(to the guard)
Give me a second here.

Andy pulls Liz a few feet away. The girls watch.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Everything okay?

LIZ
Great, Andy. I mean apart from the
way people look at me when --

ANDY
-- Please don't do this.
(beat)
I'm still waiting to see the brief
from the civil suit.

LIZ
I'm working on it with Nick
tonight.

ANDY
You want me to call him?

LIZ
No, Andy. You've done plenty.

GUARD
Let's go!

Andy tries to take Liz's hand. She pulls away. He shakes it
off, turns to his daughters

ANDY
So. When do I see you guys again?

Jess shrugs.

ZOE
Same as always.

He puts his arms out to hug them. Pulls them in. Zoe hugs him
back. Jess merely allows him the moment. He kisses them.

ANDY
I love you both. You know that,
right?
(trying so hard)
I think you got a little taller,
Jess.

She pulls away. He holds on to Zoe a moment longer.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Listen to your mom, okay? Take care
of each other.

ZOE
... Sure Dad.

He steps back. The guard takes his arm. And they watch as
their father is led away.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - JAMIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Jamie Parra, 18, Hispanic, handsome, naked under the sheets, sits up in his bed, sketching intently, making reference to Zoe who sleeps beside him. She stirs. Groggy.

ZOE

Hey.

He leans over, kisses her, goes back to drawing. She props herself up on an elbow, looks at the drawing. It's a comic book panel: a superhero strikes an avenging pose. Behind him, a vixen with Zoe's features.

ZOE (CONT'D)

What're those?

JAMIE

Wrist deflectors. If someone so much as shoots her a dirty look, he's able to intercept it, harness it, convert it into energy and shoot it back at them.

ZOE

No, I mean her. Those.

JAMIE

Those? Are breasts.

ZOE

On what planet? Clearly, not earth.

She goes to swat him with a pillow, but he's too fast. He pins her arms down and kisses her.

ZOE (CONT'D)

You heard your dad leave, right?

She slides away, reaches for a sweater.

JAMIE

(looks at the clock)
Seven ten. Yeah, definitely. He's always outta here by seven.

ZOE

(scrambling)
Seven ten. Damn!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZOE (CONT'D)

I gotta stop home before school or
else my mom'll --

She steps out into --

INT. PARRA HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

-- where she collides with Rafael Parra, Jamie's dad. He's
tucking his shirt into his pants.

ZOE

Oh. Hi. Mr. Parra. It's. Well.
The thing is. Anyway.
(a cry for help)

JAMIE!

Jamie bolts into the hallway, wrapping a sheet around
himself.

JAMIE

Pop. Uh. Listen. Zoe spent the
night.

RAFAEL

What a relief. I'd hate to think
this is how she makes an entrance.

ZOE

I'm gonna -- I should probably --

She dashes into the bathroom.

JAMIE

Don't make a deal of this. Please.

RAFAEL

Because --?

JAMIE

Because, look, it's better than us
doing it someplace else, like, I
dunno, a car or something. At
least you know where we are.

RAFAEL

And, what, the parenting manuals
say I should be okay with that?
This is not some motel, Jamie --

ANGELA (O.S.)

-- Excuse me?

They turn. An attractive 22 year old white woman stands at
the other end of the hall wearing a man's shirt.

CONTINUED:

ANGELA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I don't know where you keep your
coffee. Like, the fridge? Or the
cupboard? Hey, Jamie.
(off his blankness)
Angela. From your dad's office?
(still nothing)
"Parra Landscaping, how many I
direct your call?"

JAMIE
Angela. Hi. How's it going?

ANGELA
Oh, you know. Pretty good. Can't
complain.

Jamie pats his dad on the chest as he heads into his room.

JAMIE
You, neither, huh, Pop?

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Jess is emptying the dishwasher, when her mother pads in in
stockinged feet, wearing yesterday's clothes, her hair a
mess. Jess barely looks up.

JESS
I hope that afghan was warm enough.
I tried to get you upstairs but you
were out.

LIZ
I was at the lawyer's going over
the brief until, like, God, nine,
and then I stopped off to have a
quick bite --

JESS
-- Yeh? Where?

LIZ
Ferrente's. I just sat at the bar.

This piece of information sends Jess into a drawer, where she
retrieves a vial of aspirin, shakes out three.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Anyway, when I got home, I was
sorting through the mail on the
sofa and I musta just closed my
eyes for a minute and bham. Down
for the count.

(looks around)

Do you know if we have any --
(Jess puts the pills down)
-- oh, thanks, honey.
(it occurs to her)
Where's Zo?

From the kitchen window, Jess sees her sister coming up the
lawn. Zoe stops in her tracks, shoots Jess a questioning
look. Jess silently indicates for her to go around the back.

JESS

She's getting dressed.

LIZ

The thing's today, you know. At
two. Nick's really confident it's
gonna go our way.

JESS

Good. That's good.

Zoe appears in the doorway.

ZOE

Hey.

LIZ

'Morning.

JESS

There's coffee.

Zoe moves to get some.

LIZ

Didn't you wear that yesterday?

She looks down at her clothes. Then at her mom's.

ZOE

Didn't you?

CUT TO:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - KITCHEN.- DAY

Jamie and Rafael sit on opposite sides of the breakfast table. Angela's oblivious to the tension.

ANGELA

Breakfast is really the only kind of food I can cook. Pancakes. Waffles. I would've, only, you're out of eggs.

JAMIE

We don't usually, you know -- it's just the two of us so we kinda eat on the run --

RAFAEL

-- I thought you had swim practice first thing Tuesday.

JAMIE

Coach is letting me use the pool nights.

RAFAEL

Nights are for homework.

ANGELA

(sunny)

Homework! Man, there's something I don't miss!

JAMIE

I'm getting it all done, Pop.

RAFAEL

Are you? Thirty minutes and you're finished -- and off messing with that girl.

ANGELA

She is so pretty, by the way!

RAFAEL

You're not doing your work right if you're finishing it that fast. Steve sat here at this table three, four hours every night.

Angela crosses herself at the mention of Steve's name. Jamie and his father register this and are momentarily thrown.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

Even if your grades were great,
colleges look at your whole
transcript. And if they see you're
slacking off --

JAMIE

I'm not slacking --

RAFAEL

-- they lose interest in you.
You're not gonna get anywhere
taking the easy way out, Jamie.
You gotta start thinking about how
things look to other people.

ANGELA

You know, if you got one of those
biscuity mixes you wouldn't have to
worry about keeping eggs around.

A beat. Jamie looks at his dad.

JAMIE

How it looks, huh?

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - CAFETERIA AREA - DAY

Jess is sitting alone, leaning up against a wall of the
school, her books on the ground next to her, when she's
approached by a cute, slightly nerdy boy, AARON.

AARON

You're Jessica Collier, right?

She looks up. Unimpressed.

JESS

... Why?

AARON

I was sick last week when we
started the life skills unit.
Conklin paired me with you for the
"Build Your Own Family" project.
Apparently, you're the only one in
the grade who hadn't picked a
partner.

JESS

So... you're my husband.

AARON
And you're my wife. For thirty
percent of our total grade.
(she just looks at him)
Don't get up.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

JUDGE CONSTANCE PURVIEW presiding. Liz sits at one table,
with NICK, her lawyer. A select few of the named plaintiffs,
old friends of Liz's, sit on the other side with theirs.

JUDGE PURVIEW
The defendant, Andrew Collier, has
filed a motion to have all claims
against him dismissed.

(beat)

He argues that since his jewelry
business was a corporation, the
plaintiffs should not be allowed to
go after his personal assets.

Nick smiles at Liz. Exactly.

JUDGE PURVIEW (CONT'D)
When, however, a corporation is
underfunded, it constitutes little
more than a fraud.

(Liz looks at her lawyer)

Not only did Mr. Collier steal from
his customers, claiming to do
appraisals while swapping their
good diamonds for lesser ones -- he
funneled his ill-gotten profits out
of the corporation and into his own
pocket. He got rich, the
corporation stayed poor, and his
victims are left with nothing. That
is not what the law intends.

LIZ

What?

NICK

Shhh.

JUDGE PURVIEW
The motion to dismiss is denied. We
proceed with trial.

Liz turns, ashen, to her lawyer.

LIZ
What the hell just happened?

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - AISLE - DAY

Jess and Aaron are in mid-assignment. Aaron's got the pad,
Jess is just over-seeing.

AARON
Conklin says he wants our
preliminary household budgets in by
next Wednesday.

JESS
That's not a problem. I'm almost
done here.
(scans the shelves)
... We still need snacks for our
kids. Pretzels and stuff.

AARON
(checking his total)
Not on our combined salaries. We're
up to almost \$150 a week.

JESS
Who told you to be a teacher? You
couldn't go to law school?

AARON
(gives her a look)
Why don't we cut out your beer?

JESS
I like beer. It relaxes me. After a
long day with the kids. God knows
you don't pitch in.

AARON
Who said I don't pitch in?

JESS
Please, I know how it goes.

She heads to the front of the store. He follows

AARON
(rolls his eyes)
I guess we're done.

As she gets to the door, something catches her eye.

JESS
One more stop.

CUT TO:

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

She's checking out the counter.

AARON
What are we doing here?

JESS
I feel strongly you should've
gotten me a bigger wedding ring.

Aaron looks around, feeling a little weird. Whispers:

AARON
Isn't this your father's store?

JESS
... Was.

This is an emotional experience for her. She hides it well.

JESS (CONT'D)
I don't think it's as nice. The new
people didn't do a good job fixing
it up.

She goes over to a side counter. Laid out on it is display of
leather watch bands. Jess examines them, takes a quick look
around, and then, in one smooth move, deposits a particularly
nice one in her back pack.

Aaron takes this in with a mixture of horror and fear. He's
stuck to the floor when she brushes past him.

JESS (CONT'D)
Let's go, dear.

As she ushers him out the door, he whispers:

AARON
I saw that.

JESS
Hey, they all belonged to me,
anyway... a year ago.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Liz and Nick try to find some privacy in a corner.

LIZ
You said you would take care of it.

NICK
Lizzie --

LIZ
-- Don't you Lizzie me! You told me everything would be okay!

NICK
I didn't expect it to go this way.

LIZ
Uh-huh.
(beat; she's fuming)
So now what? I go through another trial?

NICK
(now the bad news)
...I think we have to settle.

LIZ
Settle?... So I pay them. How much?
(he waivers)
How much am I going to lose?
(no answer)
Am I going to lose my house?

He doesn't answer. And that's her answer. She reels from it.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - INDOOR POOL - NIGHT

Dark and empty, save for Jamie who slices through the water on his final lap. He stretches for the edge, slaps it, and comes up out of breath. Zoe steps in, stopwatch in hand.

ZOE
Three twenty two.

JAMIE
(puffing)
Not a chance.

ZOE
Three twenty two.

JAMIE
No frickin' way. Lemme see.

She moves to the edge, kneels down with the stopwatch
outstretched.

ZOE
Three. Twenty. Two -- ahhhh!

And he yanks her into the water. She ad libs screams and
protests, which give way finally to the two of them slowly
twirling through the water.

ZOE (CONT'D)
I'm slowing you down.

JAMIE
Exactly the opposite.

ZOE
I am. I'm dead weight.

JAMIE
If you could just run from one side
to the other -- each lap, that'd be
my motivation -- reaching for you.
I'd be the world record holder.

ZOE
(simply)
I love you.

He kisses her. Puts his arms around her neck. She rests her
wrists on his biceps. He starts to say something. Stops.

ZOE (CONT'D)
You can say it back.

JAMIE
Yeh? 'Cause I know you got this
thing about that.

ZOE
Just when it's like:
(all one word)
"I-love-you-I-love-you-too." Like
it's just an automatic response.

JAMIE
But now, see, you're expecting it.

A beat.

ZOE

Wanna know how I'm feeling? Right now? Right this second?

JAMIE

Damp?

ZOE

Optimistic. It's like I'm sorta seeing a light at the end of the tunnel.

JAMIE

Is it a white light? Because that could mean something else.

She splashes him.

ZOE

Shut up. I'm serious. I mean, it's been such a horrible year. But I'm getting kinda used to it now -- and things are settling down. And soon, all this court stuff'll be behind us. And then, things are actually gonna get better.

JAMIE

They are.

ZOE

They have to.

They consider this, then:

JAMIE

Oh, hey, here's a piece of news.

ZOE

Yeh?

JAMIE

I love you.

(smiles)

How was that? Surprise you?

ZOE

Neeeeh.

JAMIE

Damn. You already knew it, huh?

ZOE

Hey. It's the thing that's gonna
save me.

And she leans into him, and they kiss, and kiss harder and
we're underwater with them as he pulls at her clothes and at
her sweater, and then bra, and then pants float slowly,
slowly down to the bottom of the pool.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Liza has just presented her daughters with the bad news. They're struggling to digest it.

ZOE

That's what they want? To leave us with nothing?

LIZ

... I don't know what to tell you.

JESS

So we're gonna have to move? To another house or --

LIZ

-- We can't afford a house, Jess. Probably an apartment.

JESS

But you said he was confident. Your lawyer.

LIZ

He was. It's just... the judge...

It's too much for her.

ZOE

Can't we, like, appeal?
(Liz doesn't answer)
Mom?

She's in her own thoughts now. Lost and confused. Tears coming.

LIZ

I can't... What was he thinking? Stealing from people. What did he think we needed. I mean, we had so much already. And now....

(in tears)

I don't know what to do.... What am I gonna do?

And the two kids watch their mother dissolve. They exchange a look, helpless.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - JAMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zoe, clearly upset, sits with Jamie on the bed.

ZOE

She's freaking out. And it's not like I blame her, but...

(beat)

I know her, she can't handle seriously bad stuff like this.

JAMIE

So, what do you think's gonna happen?

From the other room we begin to HEAR the unmistakable sound of a BED CREAKING, back and forth, back and forth. The repeated BANG against the wall.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Ignore it.

ZOE

We're obviously gonna move, I probably have to get a job --

RAFAEL (O.S.)

-- Oh, boy! Oh, boy! Oh, BOY!

Jamie closes his eyes, embarrassed.

ZOE

It's okay.

JAMIE

I feel bad for your mom. I mean, your dad --

ANGELA (O.S.)

-- Don't stop, Mr.! Don't stop, Mr.!!

Jamie jumps up.

JAMIE

Okay, this is -- ! We have to get out of here!

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jamie and Zoe sit on the hood of his car, facing a small sad house, in a poor Hispanic neighborhood.

(CONTINUED)

JAMIE

Steve and I shared a tiny room in the back. You can't see it from here.

ZOE

That's why we drove all this way?

Not the response he hoped for. He tries to stay upbeat.

JAMIE

You've never seen the house I grew up in. I just thought --

ZOE

-- What?

JAMIE

I don't know. Just, it doesn't really matter what the house looks like. I was a happy kid.

ZOE

Of course you were happy, you didn't know anything different.

JAMIE

Yes, I did. I knew what the houses looked like where my father worked. I remember tagging along in the summer when he was cutting your grass.

ZOE

It's not the same thing.

JAMIE

Why not?

ZOE

Because I'm moving backward.

(beat)

Your father is this amazing guy who worked hard and achieved all this stuff for his family. My family's just screwing it all up.

JAMIE

Okay. But the point is --

ZOE

-- You don't have to fix this for me overnight!

Her intensity takes him aback. This is unusual.

ZOE (CONT'D)

You don't have to give me a Sunday school lesson. That's not why I came over.

JAMIE

(a little hurt)
... Okay.

ZOE

I just wanted someone to talk to.

That he understands. He takes her hand. He can do that.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - BATHROOM - DAY

Liz is fixing herself up. A little lipstick... an adjustment of the hair. A final peek in the mirror.

CUT TO:

SHOE DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Liz talks to her MANAGER, a man who is clearly younger than she. There's some desperation here.

MANAGER

... You've only been here six months, Liz.

LIZ

I know. But I'm a quick learner. And you yourself said that you've been happy with my work.

MANAGER

Absolutely. But I have no openings right now for assistant manager. I already have two girls in that position.

LIZ

Right. Okay. I'm just... I need to make a little more money than I'm pulling in.

MANAGER

I understand. Listen, if that forces you to look some place else, I won't --

LIZ
-- No, that's fine.
(beat)
Just... if an opening comes
available....

MANAGER
You bet!

Liz nods and, with as much dignity as she can, goes back to work.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - DAY

Aaron and Jess sit at a picnic table. She's distractedly blowing bubbles with her gum while he lectures.

AARON
..and my dad said I could borrow his, like, spreadsheet program, so I listed all the required categories here in these columns, plus I added a few of my own --

JESS
-- Recreation and leisure!? You have a recreation and leisure category?

AARON
We have three kids. You think they're gonna watch TV all summer?

JESS
-- Four hundred bucks for, what's this? Science summer camp? You gotta be kidding me.

AARON
What? It's so impossible that our son inherited some of my abilities in the math/sciences?

She just stares at him.

JESS
You are such a freak.

AARON
I'm a freak? Me?

CONTINUED:

JESS

You realize, don't you, we're gonna need serious marriage counseling and that's, what? About a hundred and fifty a pop. I don't see you budgeting THAT. And frankly, I think we should be socking more away for when you get canned from your teaching job.

AARON

Why would I -- ?

JESS

-- sexual discrimination. You only like to call on the girls with big tits.

A beat. He hesitates, looking for a way to strike back.

AARON

I actually budgeted legal fees. Here. Column 9. It seemed kinda obvious. I mean, in light of everything.

Jess recoils, on the defensive. Is this a jab at her father?

JESS

What the hell does that mean?

AARON

You know, for when your shoplifting catches up with you.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - POOL - DAY

It's a meet. Kids in the stands, swimmers wandering. Six swimmers, Jamie included, stand by the pool loosening up. Jamie seems agitated -- he's pacing.

REFEREE

Fifty meter freestyle. Swimmers take your marks.

ANGLE on Zoe, in the stands. She's clearly nervous.

The SWIMMERS step onto the blocks. Jamie's eyes are focused. Ready. The GUN FIRES. And they're off.

INTERCUT. Zoe watching. Cheering. And JAMIE, in the lead... being caught... falling behind the swimmer next to him.

(CONTINUED)

As the hand of the rival swimmer reaches forward to the wall,
we're in:

INT. PIZZA PARLOR/POOL HALL - NIGHT

Jamie, Zoe, and three other couples (Splaver and Thea; Beller
and Cathryn; Bryson and Jill) playing pool after the meet.
The mood is celebratory mode.

SPLAVER

Central's gotten pretty good since
Willits retired.

JAMIE

Carleton sure as hell beat my ass.

ZOE

Well, not by so much --

BRYSON

-- He's ahead four meters, the
second he's off the block.

THEA

Plus, he's still incredibly cute.

CATHRYN

The way he kinda swings his head
from side to side --

JILL

-- YES! To get the water out!--
And that spider tattoo --

THEA

-- it's not a spider, it's a
starburst --

ZOE

-- actually, it's a hedgehog.
(they look at her)
And there's a cool story behind it.
You wanna hear?

SPLAVER

(to Jamie)

This doesn't worry you, dude?

Jamie looks across to Zoe.

ZOE

Hey, it was two years ago. Why
don't we talk about you and Jill?

Zoe and Jamie both turn to Jill.

JILL
Please, that was nothing. We made
out a few times. It was purely
physical. Meaningless.

JAMIE
Thanks a lot!

Zoe smiles at Jamie, who smiles back. A cell phone chirps.
Everyone digs in their pockets, jackets, backpacks for their
phone.

ZOE
Mine!

But before she can answer it, Cathryn grabs it away.
Breathy:

CATHRYN
Uh, hello, Josh?

The others laugh as Zoe tries to snatch the phone back.

CATHRYN (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Oh, hey, Jess -- it's Cathryn...
Yeah, one sec, she's right here --

ZOE
(she takes the phone)
What's up?

And we stay on her, pushing in slowly, as the others
continue, oblivious.

ZOE (CONT'D)
Uh huh...what? What do you mean?
When? Slow down... just slow down,
Jess. Uh huh. Uh huh. Is she --?

THEA
You know who else is h-h-h-hot?

BELLER
Hey, we just won -- can we
get a little respect here?

BRYSON
(standing)
I'm dry. Anyone for seconds?

THEA (CONT'D)
I don't want to name names, but his
initials are Marcus DeSalvo.

Jamie gets up to help Bryson with drinks. He mimes to Zoe "you want another round?" just as she hangs up. In shock. She tugs on his sweater, pulls him close.

ZOE
I've gotta -- I need you to -- can
you drive me --

JAMIE
What? What is it?

ZOE
My mom, she's -- she's been
arrested.

And on Jamie, trying to take this in, and Zoe reeling, we --

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Jess, Zoe and Jamie move in, and up to the desk, where a uniformed officer sits in front of a computer.

JESS
Excuse me, we're here for Liz Coll--

ZOE
-- Elizabeth. Elizabeth Collier.

OFFICER
(consulting the screen)
Collier. Elizabeth. Driving under
the influence.
(looks up)
You her ride?

Zoe nods. The officer picks up a phone. Punches an extension.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Hey, Bobby, it's me. I need G-
34203; Collier. Yup. Thanks.

He hangs up. Turns back to them.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
It's two hundred and fifty dollars.
Cash or cashier's.

Jess takes a wad of bills out of her coat pocket.

JESS

We've got it all here.

The officer counts the money -- two hundred sixty dollars all in 20's. A few bills stick together.

OFFICER

Fresh from the ATM, huh?

He gives her back a ten. Slides a form over the counter.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

I'll need you to sign here... And here. Her car's been impounded so--

He removes a info sheet from a rack of handouts, circles an item, barely looking.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

--here's the number she's gonna need to call in the morning.
(circles another item)
And she's gotta call this number to find out when she's due back in court.

Zoe turns to Jamie. Overwhelmed by it all.

ZOE

She's due back in court. In court.

He moves to her, puts an arm around her. She starts to cry.

JAMIE

Hey. Hey.

ZOE

It's everything all over again.

JAMIE

No, it's not.

ZOE

I can't --

JAMIE

-- It's okay. It's gonna be okay.

A door buzzes open, and Liz stands shakily in the door frame.

JESS

Mom.

She holds up a hand, shaky.

LIZ
I -- I dunno how -- I know I
screwed up -- bad -- so bad --

She trails off. Zoe regards her stonily.

ZOE
Let's go home.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - LIZ' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zoe is turning down the sheets as Jess struggles with the cap on an aspirin bottle. Liz emerges from the bathroom in a nightgown, her hair wet. She moves to the bed. Jess hands her the aspirin and a glass of water. She looks at the pills in her hand. Just looks. Then, not to either of them, more to herself:

LIZ
I had two glasses of wine when I
got home from work -- and then
there wasn't enough left in the
bottle worth saving and instead of
pouring it out, I -- and then I
noticed there wasn't anything in
the fridge for you girls to eat,
and what if you came home, hungry,
and there wasn't anything? And I --
I thought about the dinners we used
to have -- how your friends would
come by and I'd make spaghetti --
and your father would --

(this is hard)
-- your father -- and it just
seemed important, you know? Really
important. Going to the market.
Stocking up. Having there be
enough of something here for you
girls.

(breaking down)
I didn't think. I shouldn't've --
I didn't mean to -- I'm sorry. I'm
so so sorry.

She buries her face in her hands. We dissolve to:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Zoe emerges wearily, looks back at her sleeping mother, turns out the lights and quietly closes the door. Jamie's standing at the end of the hallway, having waited.

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CONTINUED:

He opens his arms to her, and she moves to him. They hold each other for a moment.

ZOE
Will you -- can you -- stay
tonight? I know your Dad'll --

JAMIE
-- Yes. Just: yes.

And she takes his hand, and they move into her bedroom and close the door.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Liz is on the phone, still in her bathrobe, looking very much like it's been a rough night.

LIZ

Mr. Silberberg, please.

(beat)

Oh.... Okay. Mr. Cohen, Mr. Belnap,
or Mr. Fuchs, then.

(beat)

... I'm not sure who I need to
speak to. I found your ad in the
yellow pages --

Jess walks past her, on the cell phone.

JESS

-- The license plate is KHJ4929.

It's a grey Acura.

(beat)

My name is Elizabeth Collier... I
need to come pick up my car.

(beat)

Uh-huh. How much is that?

She makes a face. That much?

JESS (CONT'D)

(whispers to her mother)

Four hundred.

(back to the phone)

Thank you for your help.

It's just another insult. Liz turns away.

LIZ

Hello?... Yes. Are you a lawyer
with the firm, Mr. Gelman?

(obviously not)

... Paralegal. No, that's fine....

Yes, if we could schedule that.

Right. And how much is the initial
consultation -- ?

(listens)

Uh-huh.... Yes, I'll hold.

She turns to Jess.

LIZ (CONT'D)
I have to pay a retainer just to
meet with them?

JESS
How much?

Before she answers, Zoe walks into the kitchen.

ZOE
Morning!

And Jamie appears beside her. Liz stares at the two of them.

LIZ
Did he stay the night?

ZOE
Yes. Is there something you want to
say about that?

There is. But Liz doesn't. She holds her tongue.

LIZ
(back to the phone)
I'm still here.... Next Tuesday
would be fine.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - MORNING

Jamie trudges up the stairs. From his father's room, he hears
GRUNTING. He stops. The grunting continues.

That's it! He's had enough. He storms up, heading to his
father's room. But the door is open. Inside, he sees his
father, on the floor, doing sit-ups. Grunting. Grunting each
time. Rafael sees him.

RAFAEL
... She has me doing these. Crazy,
huh? It's a whole regimen.

Jamie nods and walks away. Angela is heading up the stairs,
in her sexy nightie, with her bathrobe untied.

ANGELA
I thought I heard you come in.

JAMIE
Would you cover up?!... Man!

She looks down, now embarrassed. She closes her bathrobe.

ANGELA

... Sorry.

Rafael calls out from the room.

RAFAEL (O.S.)

Hey, I gotta get to the office.
Give me five minutes, I'll drive
you to school.

CUT TO:

INT. RAFAEL'S MERCEDES - MOMENTS LATER .

Rafael driving, Angela's next to him. Jamie's in the back
seat. Awkward silence. She eyes them both.

ANGELA

How about we turn on the radio?

No answer. Matter of fact:

RAFAEL

You didn't come home last night.

Jamie doesn't answer.

ANGELA

...Or not.

RAFAEL

What happened at your swim meet?

JAMIE

I lost, Dad. Okay? I came in
second. You have something you
wanna say about that? You wanna
tell me how that's gonna screw up
my chances for going to college?

Rafael keeps his cool.

RAFAEL

Not really..... You wanna tell me
how studying for your math test
went?

JAMIE

(shit!; he forgot)
I have study hall second period.
Zoe had this emergency last night.

RAFAEL

Right, well it's always something with those people. I'm not gonna let you fail out because of that girl, Jamie.

JAMIE

That girl? I'm in love with that girl, okay, Dad?

RAFAEL

She's an excuse for everything you don't wanna do.... You're not seeing her the rest of the week.

JAMIE

What?

RAFAEL

You get your work done. You raise your grades. Then we'll talk about it.

JAMIE

Man! I'm eighteen. I don't have to be responsible all the time.

RAFAEL

Sure -- cause there's plenty of time for that later!

JAMIE

Yes.

RAFAEL

That's what your brother thought!

Jamie stops. Quiets down. The car sits at a light.

JAMIE

Why do you always have to go there?
Why is everything always about that?

(he unbuckles)

I'm getting out.

RAFAEL

Jamie --

JAMIE

-- It's three blocks to school.
I'll walk.

And he gets out of the car and slams the door. A beat.

(CONTINUED)

ANGELA

Teenagers. That's all it is. I
remember like it was yesterday.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

We follow Jamie as he moves through the hall as it thins with
kids just before the bell. He's still chewing over the
conversation with his dad, when he sees Zoe at her locker.
He comes up from behind, pins her up against the wall, happy
for the distraction.

ZOE

Hey you! Did your dad say anything
when you got --

JAMIE

(nuzzling her neck)
-- he didn't notice.

ZOE

(the bell RINGS; shit)
I've got to get to French.
(he doesn't move)
Don't you have Soc?
(he tries to kiss her)
One more C and you're gonna get in
trouble. Jame...

JAMIE

...I need something to get me
through the four periods until I
see you again.

She kisses him.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

That's only gonna get me through
Soc.

(another kiss)

Study hall.

(another kiss)

Lit.

She really kisses him. He breaks away, considers.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Yup, good to go.

And he abruptly turns away from her and moves down the now empty hall. Zoe's left up against the locker wall. She smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Kids are pairing up, saying goodbye, heading home. Aaron is by himself, loaded down with all his project materials. He checks his watch, annoyed... and waits.

AARON (V.O.)

What happened to you? I thought we were meeting at school?

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - FRONT HALL - DAY

Jess has just let Aaron in. She's frazzled.

JESS

(genuinely frazzled)

What?... Oh, right. Sorry. It's been kind of a crazy day.

AARON

Uh-huh. I waited for a half hour... and then I went looking for you!

JESS

I got stood up by my connection.
(off his look)
My drug connection. I ran out of weed.

AARON

Look, I just wanna work on our presentation and --

JESS

-- Do you have any?

AARON

... What? No. Listen --

JESS

-- You know what I bet? Come with me.

She runs off. Reluctantly, he follows.

GUEST ROOM

Jess is rummaging though the bottom of a closet.

JESS
Cameron's room. He's at college.
But sometimes he hides some stuff
in here --

AARON
-- Jessica --

JESS
-- If we're gonna work, we should
definitely get high first.

AARON
I don't wanna smoke pot with you.

JESS
C'mon, it's too depressing
otherwise. Plus, you're way too
uptight as it is. A couple of
hits'll do you good.
(smiles at him)
And sometimes, when I get stoned, I
get really horny --

AARON
-- Would you cut it out!!!

She stops.

AARON (CONT'D)
You're not scaring me. And you're
not funny. You're just pissing me
off.
(she's taken aback)
I don't know what you're trying to
prove. Like -- I'm cool, or I'm
wild, or look what I can get away
with. It just seems kind of
pathetic to me. So you're really
inappropriate, so what? Hasn't
anybody ever told you to just knock
it off?

There's the gist of it.

JESS
... No. Not recently.

AARON

I'm leaving. I'll finish the presentation on my own. Consider yourself divorced!

And he walks out on her.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARRA HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Jamie enters through the back gate. Angela's on a lawn-chair, reading a magazine, getting some sun. Jamie's surprised to see her.

ANGELA

Hola! Your dad gave me the afternoon off. Sometimes I get these terrible headaches. With auras and everything.

JAMIE

You don't maybe want to save that excuse for the evenings?

ANGELA

What?

(gets it)

-- Oh. Right. Ha.

(a beat, then)

Are you mad at me or something?

JAMIE

Why would I be mad at you?

ANGELA

For, like, being with him?

(he shrugs no)

Your mom left a long time ago -- he's been alone for a long time.

JAMIE

I know. Look, he's entitled. He is. I hope you guys are really happy.

ANGELA

Your dad just wants the best for you, y'know. He's always like, "my son this" and "my son that" to his clients.

JAMIE

You sure he's talking about me?

ANGELA
Why would you say that?

JAMIE
'Cause for like the first sixteen years of my life, I was not on the man's radar.

ANGELA
I'm sure that's not --

JAMIE
-- He was either at work or he was with his good son. Me? I was pretty much just another plate at the dinner table. All this concern about my future? That's only since Steve died.

(she crosses herself)
-- Why do you do that?

ANGELA
What? Oh. It's just a thing I do -
- out of respect.

JAMIE
He wasn't a saint, you know.
Steve. Far from it.

ANGELA
I'm, um, I'm kinda like superstitious? About speaking ill of the dead?

JAMIE
I'm just saying how it was. You'll never hear it from Pop, of course. He'd rather pretend it was one of those wrong-place-at-the-wrong-time kinds of things. Like a normal person would be strolling through Allistar Park at two in the morning -- just for the hell of it, just for the fresh air.

ANGELA
I don't understand.

JAMIE
Well, the toxicology report on Steve makes it pretty damn clear. I could show it to you. Of course, Pop never looked at it.

ANGELA

Look -- I -- I don't think your
father'd be okay with us talking
about this --

JAMIE

-- He sure wouldn't. Just like I'm
not okay with him throwing my
brother up to me as some, like,
shining example -- because, you
know what? It's a load of crap.
It's just easier for Pop to be
disappointed in me than him.
Because I'm, like, still here. I'm
the only one he's got left.

And he moves on into the house.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Liz is on a laptop computer on the kitchen table. On line.
Something about "Sunny Scottsdale, Arizona." Zoe walks in.

ZOE

What are you doing?

LIZ

(nervous)

Nothing, I'm just -- I thought you
were asleep.

ZOE

I couldn't sleep. Let me see --

--Liz hits a button, the screen changes.

LIZ

It's nothing.

ZOE

Wha'dyou do that for?
(sees stuff on the table)
What's with the maps?... Arizona?

LIZ

...I was just --
(beat)

I looked at places for us to live
today. Horrible places. I
couldn't see us being happy in any
of them.

ZOE

What does this have to do with
Arizona?

LIZ

I didn't want to talk about this
until I had it all worked out.

ZOE

What does this have to do with
Arizona!

LIZ

There's this woman who used to work
in Sleepware? Dorothy? And she
couldn't really make ends meet
here, you know? So she moved her
family to Scottsdale --

ZOE

Ohmygod!

Jess wanders in.

JESS

What's going on in here?

ZOE

Mom wants to move us to Arizona.

LIZ

Listen to me. Some of the girls at
work were talking about how well
she's doing there. Dorothy. She
found a good job, a nice place to
live that's way nicer than what she
could've afforded here and --

ZOE

You're kidding, right? You might
as well have thrown a dart at some
map!

LIZ

That is not true! I have been
doing research. Arizona makes a
lot of sense when you think about
it.

ZOE

It doesn't make any sense! It's
crazy. Our whole lives are here!
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

ZOE (CONT'D)

Plus, you're gonna move like
hundreds of miles away from Dad?
You can't do that!

LIZ

Why can't I? Look what he did to
us! How long am I supposed to try
to hold on here?

ZOE

(to Jess)

Don't you have anything to say
about this?

JESS

What difference is it gonna make?
Whatever happens, happens. Haven't
you figured that out yet?

And Jess walks out. Zoe turns to her mother, in tears.

ZOE

Please.... please, let's find
another way. I don't care what
house I live in --

LIZ

I'm sorry, honey, but --

ZOE

-- Please!

LIZ

(in agony)

I can't make it work here! I've
tried. I don't know how. And I
can't walk down the street anymore
and have people look at me the way
they do. I'm too ashamed, baby!

ZOE

So, what -- ? You think things are
gonna be so much better there?
Like we're not gonna just move our
problems with us? Like you're
gonna get some great job in
Scottsdale --

LIZ

I could --

ZOE

-- Without any training, Mom?
Without any skills? Come on.

LIZ
Maybe Dorothy could help me find --

ZOE
And on that chance you'd move us
hundreds of miles away? Don't.
Please. I'm begging you, Mom.
It's a fantasy. And what happens
when Arizona doesn't work?

LIZ
Why wouldn't it --?

ZOE
You think once we get to Arizona,
you're gonna pull yourself
together? You're gonna stop going
from job to job? You think, all of
a sudden, Mom, you're not gonna
drink so much?

Liz reaches out and slaps her, hard.

LIZ
You don't talk to me that way!
(beat)
I am still your mother! And,
whatever you think of me, I still
make the decisions for this family.

Zoe raises her hand to her cheek, her eyes fill with tears.
This is what it feels like to have the very last thing taken
away from you.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROMANTIC LOCATION - NIGHT

The edge of a reservoir, maybe. Or a vista overlooking the
city lights. Or the beach. Zoe's in a craze --
hyperventilating.

ZOE
I can't breathe.... I mean it --
it's like I got hit in the stomach
and I can't catch my -- I can't --

JAMIE
Zoe? Zo? Try putting your head
between your legs --

ZOE
(bending over)
She's serious, Jamie.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

ZOE (CONT'D)

She really thinks this is the answer. She's gonna make us go with her. What'm I gonna do? I don't know what to do.

(sits up)

Okay, that's not working.

He takes her hands, gently.

JAMIE

Hey --

And the tears come.

ZOE

Everything's like --

JAMIE

What?

ZOE

-- I don't know -- slipping away. I can't hold on to anything anymore. Remember that counselor I went to go see that time?

JAMIE

That boneheaded chick, yeh --

ZOE

She said, one foot in front of the other -- that's how to get through it. One foot in front of the other. But if that's really gonna work -- something's gotta be, like, solid, you know? Like your father, or your mother, or your friends, or your house, or something. And it's not -- it's all falling away.

He takes her face in his hand, wipes her tears. Very intense.

ZOE (CONT'D)

You're the one thing -- the only thing that makes it better. You always make it better. How do you do that?

JAMIE

I don't know. I just -- I love you.

ZOE

It's more than that.

(CONTINUED)

JAMIE...
I dunno. I guess...
(the truth)
You're the one thing I'm really
good at.

She looks at him tenderly.

ZOE
No, Jame, that's not --

JAMIE
-- It's okay. I'm okay with that.
I love that. That makes me happy.
You make me really really happy.
You're not gonna lose me.

ZOE
I could. Arizona is, like, far.
And what? Are we gonna go back and
forth? How? And, look at me,
Jamie. I lose, God, everything.
And this is next. We're what's
next.

JAMIE
We're gonna be together.

ZOE
Wanting it doesn't make it true.

JAMIE
Okay, that's -- you're right. Just
wanting it doesn't make it true.
So let's us make it true.

ZOE
How? We can't --

JAMIE..
Yes, we --

ZOE
-- no! I'm telling you -- she's
gonna make me go --

JAMIE
Not if --

ZOE
-- she's gonna make me go!

JAMIE
-- we get married.

A beat.

ZOE
What?

JAMIE
Let's get married.

ZOE
What?

JAMIE
You and me. Let's do it.

ZOE
What?

JAMIE
Marry me.

There it is. There's the answer.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rafael is railing at his son.

RAFAEL

You want to be with her? Fine! So be with her! You want to sleep with her in my house? Okay, then. You made your point. Maybe that's something we can negotiate.

JAMIE

It's not about -- you just don't get it, man.

RAFAEL

I know what it's about. It's about you rescuing her, like some hero from one of those comic books of yours. You think you're just gonna swoop in and solve all her problems?

JAMIE

That's not --

RAFAEL

-- This is real life, Jamie. You know how many people who get married at your age are together in even five years?

JAMIE

So what! We'll be the one couple who --

RAFAEL

-- everyone says that, Jamie!

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Zoe has corralled her mother out by the garbage cans.

LIZ

-- and you think moving to Arizona is going to ruin everything?!

ZOE

I didn't expect you to be happy about this.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

How do you think this is gonna work? You think his dad's gonna help you out with money, now that he's got so much of it?

ZOE

Jamie and I are doing this on our own.

LIZ

How? He's a boy. He's a sweet boy. But he's a boy. He's not a man. How will you pay the rent? How will you pay for food? Which one of the two of you is dropping out of school to get a job?

ZOE

I don't know, okay?

(beat)

How are you gonna pay the rent? Tell me how you've prepared for the future, Mom?

(points to the house)

Tell me how I'm protected in there!

LIZ

You are!

ZOE

Well, it doesn't feel like it any more.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

RAFAEL

You really want to marry into that? Her father's a felon! A thief!

JAMIE

That's her father. That's not Zoe.

RAFAEL

But it's her family -- and they're gonna lose everything! Those people're gonna end up with even less than I had when I started -- 'cause at least I had my good name. I had people's respect. I'm telling you, she's not nearly good enough for you.

(CONTINUED)

JAMIE

You got it backwards. What makes me good enough for her? What have I ever done in my life to deserve someone who loves me that much? I know what you'd say: nothing, right? Well, I'm gonna marry her anyway, Pop. Because she loves me. And she said yes. And I'm eighteen. And there's nothing you can do about it.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

LIZ

You're seventeen years old. You can't get married unless I say it's okay. And I'm not gonna do that.

(beat)

You can hate me if you want. You can think I'm a terrible mother -- and maybe I am. But not because of this. The answer is no.

ZOE

Then I'll ask Dad.

LIZ

...What?

ZOE

He doesn't want to lose me... he'll do anything.

This freezes Liz.

ZOE (CONT'D)

He'll give me permission. You know he will.

And she walks by her mother into the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON - GATE - DAY

A car drives up to the main gate of the prison. Stops. Waits to be admitted into the grounds. Liz leans her head out the window. To the guard:

LIZ
Elizabeth Collier. I'm here to see
Andrew Collier.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON ROOM - DAY

Liz and Andy are in mid-conversation. As always, there is a
GUARD posted in the room.

LIZ
You have to promise me you won't
let her do this...

ANDY
... Sure, Liz, if you promise you
won't take her to Arizona.

LIZ
Oh, no. You don't get to give any
ultimatums, Andy. Not after what
you've done to us.
(beat)
So, I'm sorry. I can't wait around
for ten years of visiting days to
be over. I have to raise our
family...alone.

ANDY
In Arizona?

LIZ
... I'll bring the children to
visit you as often as I can.

This is terrible for him.

ANDY
What does that mean? As often as
you can? Once every six months?
(no answer; distraught)
All I do is wait for you to come
back, so I can see you again...
Once every six months?

Liz understands. She also needs his help now.

LIZ
Letting her get married isn't going
to change that, Andy.... All it
does is punish me.

Beat.

ANDY

... Uh-huh. Well... Shouldn't I listen to her arguments before I decide?

LIZ

You just wanna be forgiven. That's not a reason to let her screw up her life. And, you watch, she'll blame you for that one day.

He thinks about it.

LIZ (CONT'D)

I'll be the bad guy. I promise.

ANDY

... Liz. She loves that boy. You can say no to her. You can drag her to Arizona. You have the authority.
(beat)

But how long do you think it'll be 'till she's gone for good? She's gonna run away from all of us so fast... And then she'll be eighteen. And that'll be it.

(beat)

You've gotta come up with a better answer than no.

Liz sits with that. And she knows he's right.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

Zoe walks into the crowded office, leans over the front desk to get the attention of a secretary.

ZOE

I got a message, Mrs. Hom?

MRS. HOM

Yeah, Zoe, your mom's in there.

Zoe looks over to a small side office. Liz is waiting.

CUT TO:

SIDE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

It's just the two of them.

ZOE

It couldn't wait til after school?

LIZ

I was afraid I'd come home and find
a note that you'd already left with
Jamie.

(Zoe looks away)

... What if I don't go to Arizona?

ZOE

Mom -- ?

LIZ

-- You made your point. What if I
stay here?

Zoe shakes her head.

ZOE

That's not... Don't do that for me.
I didn't threaten to marry Jamie to
keep you in LA. If moving to
Arizona is actually gonna make you
happy, you should do that.

LIZ

... But if I stay in LA, you don't
have to marry him.

ZOE

I want to marry him. He is where I
want to be. Can't we leave it at
that?

LIZ

No.

Zoe would have keep this to herself. As gentle as possible:

ZOE

... I don't want to be in your
house anymore. I don't wanna wait
up all night for you to come home.
I don't want to come pick you up at
midnight when you've had too much
to drink.

(beat)

I love you, mom. But I feel safe
with him.

Liz is struggling to keep it together.

LIZ
I lost your father last year. It's
too soon for me to lose you too.

ZOE
It happens to everyone doesn't it?
Doesn't every mom say that to her
daughter? It's just a little sooner
and a little weirder for us.

Liz has no where else to go.

LIZ
... If I give you permission to
marry him, you have to promise to
stay close.

ZOE
... What?

LIZ
I'll try to manage it in LA for as
long as I can. Some apartment
somewhere -- me and Jess. And you
have to do the same thing. Close
by. So I can still look after you.

Zoe goes over to Liz. Puts her arms around her.

ZOE
I know this is not how you imagined
it.

LIZ
Oh, we are so far beyond that,
baby.

And she holds her daughter tight, as if she could keep her
close with just her two arms.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Zoe emerges from the office to find Jess leaning up against a
bank of lockers in the empty hallway.

ZOE
What're you --

JESS
-- Jenna Berklund said she thought
she saw Mom at school.

ZOE

She said yes. To letting Jamie and me... With, like, conditions. But yes. And she's not gonna take you to Arizona. You guys're gonna stay.

JESS

Wow, huh?

(so conflicted)

So... when, do you and Jamie think you're gonna --

ZOE

(in shock)

I dunno. I'm still kinda -- Soon, I guess. Why not? Why not right away? Today, even.

She sees her sister is struggling with something.

ZOE (CONT'D)

What?

JESS

You gotta promise you won't, like, disappear.

ZOE

I won't. Look, it's gonna take us awhile to figure out how this is gonna work. Where we're gonna live. What we're gonna live on. It's not like, poof, I'm gone.

JESS

I know, but still. I need to know that if I call you with something, some problem, something I can't deal with by myself, you'll come. You'll help.

ZOE

Of course, I will. Jess. Of course.

JESS

(this is hard)

'Cause otherwise it's just me.

ZOE

It's not just you. I promise.

She kneels down, hugs her sister.

(CONTINUED)

ZOE (CONT'D)

Hey.

JESS

(fighting tears)

I'm happy for you. Really. I am.
He's great. He is so great. And
he really loves you. And it's
gonna be great. You're gonna be
really really happy and you should
definitely do it.

(a beat)

I just -- sometimes I wish it were
me who was getting out, you know?

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM/HALLWAY - DAY

Jamie's in a science class, sitting at one of those long
granite tables, not paying attention to the lecture. His lab
partner nudges him, indicates the wall of windows that faces
the hallway. It's Zoe. She presses a hand to the glass.
And nods. Yes. The bell RINGS.

We CUT outside, to Zoe's POV, as Jamie rises from his chair
and moves up the aisle, as the rest of the students rise,
begin collecting their things. Jamie navigates his way
through them, his eyes fixed on Zoe the whole time. He
reaches the door, throws it open. Zoe meets him on the other
side. Out of breath. Disbelieving.

JAMIE

Yes?

ZOE

Yes.

He takes her hand and together they start down the hallway,
where they are quickly joined by a throng of students,
discharging into the hallway. They thread their way through
the mass, disappearing around the corner and we're in --

INT. CITY HALL -- REGISTRAR'S OFFICE - DAY

And circling around them as they stand on line, still holding
hands, couples ahead of them and behind them, and they're
giddy and dizzy with the craziness of it all and then we're
in --

INT. CITY HALL - JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Still circling as Zoe and Jamie stand before a justice of the
peace.

(CONTINUED)

We see the justice speaking, addressing them both, but the only sound we hear is their BREATH. The world falls away: it's only the two of them there, together, taking this leap.

JAMIE

I do.

A moment passes. She's crying a little.

ZOE

I do.

And then it's over. The twirling stops. And the camera sits on them, still. Quiet.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Are you scared?

JAMIE

(yes)

No.

ZOE

(me, too)

Me, neither.

Instead of kissing, they move in to each other, and stand, forehead to forehead, so close.

CUT TO:

EXT. AARON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aaron opens the door to find the doorstep empty. He takes a step out, catches sight of Jess scurrying away.

AARON

Uh, hello? HELLO? I, like, see you. What is this, Doorbell Ditch? Man, you never stop, do you?

JESS

(stops, turns)

No. That's not -- I was gonna -- but I changed my mind -- look, just, never mind.

AARON

You were gonna what?

JESS

I came to say I was, like, sorry, okay?

AARON

You're sorry.

JESS

Yeah. Stuff's been going on. With me. At, you know, home. And it was kinda making me a little crazy. Not that I'm not crazy, I am. I'm totally crazy and wild and, like, really unpredictable and I'm not apologizing for that because that's just who I am and if you don't get me, well, then screw you.

AARON

Um, how is this is an apology exactly?

JESS

It just is.

A beat. He looks at her.

AARON

Okay then.

JESS

Really?

AARON

Yeah.

(a small smile)

I'm unpredictable, too.

AARON'S MOM (O.S.)

Honey, who is it?

They both turn. Aaron's mother's standing in the doorway.

AARON

It's Jessica. The girl I did my family project with. Well, sorta.

JESS

Hi, Mrs. Rappaport.

AARON

It's Thayer, actually. She kept her name.

JESS

Shut up.

AARON'S MOM
Have you had dinner, Jessica?

AARON/JESS
What?

AARON'S MOM
We're just sitting down. Maybe
you'd like to join us?

Jess looks to Aaron. He shrugs.

AARON
You can. If you want. I mean,
it's okay.

Jess considers for a moment.

JESS
I kinda should get home --

AARON
-- Right.

JESS
-- my sister and her boyfriend,
today, they --

AARON
-- Look, it's okay. Whatever.

JESS
But I mean, I'd like to. Maybe...
Could I come some other time?

She means it. And something in her voice lets him know this.
Aaron nods, okay. Sure. Some other time.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

The front door opens and quietly, so as not to disturb
anyone, Zoe and Jamie slip in. And stop. Liz and Jess are
hanging a cardboard "Congratulations" banner from the stairs.

ZOE
Oh my God... You guys...

JESS
You like it?

LIZ

We thought: this is where you're gonna spend your wedding night. It shouldn't be ordinary.

JAMIE

It's... man.

ZOE

You didn't have to do this, Mom.

LIZ

What do you mean? You're my baby girl.

(a beat)

I was pregnant with you when we moved in here. Bringing you home from the hospital, that was the first milestone we celebrated in this house... And this'll be the last. Which seems just about right.

ZOE

It's my whole life.

LIZ

Your whole life, part one.

A beat. Jess points over to the table.

JESS

Did you see? We got you a cake.

Jamie moves to it. Looks. Zoe follows.

JAMIE

I've never seen a wedding cake with, like, writing on it.

ZOE

Or, hmmm, sprinkles.

JESS

It was kinda all they had left. Sorry.

JAMIE

It's great, Jess.

ZOE

It's perfect.
(overwhelmed)
Really.

(CONTINUED)

JESS

I'll get a knife. And plates. And
glasses. We should make a toast.
Somebody think of a toast.

LIZ

And make sure you save the top.

JAMIE

Yeah? Really?

ZOE

For what?

Liz smiles.

LIZ

For what? For what? For luck.

She shakes her head. At all the things her daughter doesn't
yet know.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Somber. Rafael sits at kitchen table, picking at his dinner.
Angela is across from him, respectful of his sadness. Rafael
turns to look at Jamie's empty chair. Finally:

RAFAEL

His mother was seventeen, you know.

A beat. Angela waits for more.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

It didn't even last three years.

And he goes back to his dinner.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON - YARD - DAY

It's the same yard where we began. Zoe waits patiently.
Jamie is next to her, holding a small package. She sees, a
short distance away, a door open... Her father comes out,
accompanied by a GUARD. She walks toward him, and he comes
to meet her. Jamie hangs back.

ZOE

Hi.

ANDY

Zo.

ZOE

... I got married yesterday. That sounds weird, doesn't it? It's the first time I've said it out loud. I got married yesterday. I'm married.
(it hits her)
I'm married.

ANDY

Zoe --

ZOE

-- What? You don't have to say it. I know you think it was a terrible idea.

ANDY

No, that's --
(beat)

This is because of me, Zo. I understand that. If I hadn't done what I did -- you'd just be a happy high school kid with a boyfriend.

ZOE

Okay.... Probably. So what? So things happen. Jamie's brother died, and you got in trouble, and I got married. That's our lives. I'm just trying to deal with it.
(beat)

I want you to be happy for us.

ANDY

... I will be.

ZOE

Good. Because I love him. And he loves me.

(beat)

And it's like as soon as he asked me to marry him, my whole world just snapped into place, you know? I'm not saying I have all the answers or anything. It's just, the questions don't scare me so much anymore. Because I have him.

ANDY

Right.

ZOE
You think it's not that simple.

ANDY
It's not that simple. But it's very
hopeful... which is an okay place
to start.
(beat; sadly)
I would like to have been there.

ZOE
(turns; calls out)
Jamie! Come on over!

And he does, carrying a plate with foil. Extends a hand.

JAMIE
Mr. Collier.

ANDY
Jamie.

JAMIE
I want you to know: we're gonna
take care of each other. So don't
worry, okay?

ANDY
... Sure.

ZOE
We brought you something.

ANDY
... You did?

ZOE
It's some cake -- a piece of our
wedding cake.

Jamie unwraps the package. It's a big piece of cake, with
three forks on the side. Andy is genuinely moved.

ZOE (CONT'D)
I wanted to share it with you.
Daddy.

ANDY
Will you look at that?

And the they dig in, the three of them, celebrating the only
way they can.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PRISON GATE - LATER

Jamie and Zoe in his car. The great front gate of the prison sits closed in front of them. Jamie hands his pass to the guard to let them out.

He turns back to face the gate. He and Zoe wait patiently. Jamie puts out his hand... and she takes it. And the gate slowly slowly begins to slide open. And then comes to a stop the world spread out in front of them.

They look at each other and smile, full of hope. He turns back... and steps on the gas... and they're through the gate and free.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END