

LATE BLOOMER

Written by

Rick Garman

Fourth Draft - Oct. 5, 2015
Production Draft - Nov. 4, 2015

As the opening credits roll we set the scene by leafing a yearbook, the cover of which reads PINE HILL, CALIFORNIA HIGH.

We start with a picture of of 17-year-olds SHANE RUTHERFORD and ALLISON CRANE, who are high school perfection - him a handsome, athletic all-American basketball player and her a blonde, beautiful all-American cheerleader. *

The photo caption identifies a third person in the picture - Jenny Taft but when we ZOOM IN all we see is a little bit of frizzy hair sticking into the frame.

We see several more photos of Shane and Allison and in all of them, Jenny is shown in the caption as being in the photo but all we ever see is a hand, her hair, the back of a head.

The pages flip ahead almost all the way to the back and we see a photo of the yearbook staff, which includes NANCY ALBRIGHT, who has her arm around someone who is cropped out of the photo. Yep, that's Jenny.

And then finally we see JENNY TAFT. At 17 she is almost perfectly nerdy - hair too frizzy, glasses too thick, teeth too metal clad. It's not that she's unattractive but she hasn't grown into her looks yet.

The photo shows her as the president and only member of the school's Botany club, surrounded by plants and no one else.

As the opening credits end, we FADE INTO...

2 EXT. TAFT HOUSE - NIGHT

2

Establish

3 INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

3

*

We PAN down a row of potted plants and flowers, each marked with both the common and scientific name carefully printed on cards in front of them. There's a pretty yellow flower identified as *rosa foetida* or the Austrian Copper Rose and a cactus with a blooming purple flower billed as *thelocactus rinconensis* or Mexican Limestone Cactus, among others.

On the last spot of the shelf, there is no pot here but there is a picture. It's of a breathtakingly beautiful red flower with drooping petals that give it a distinctive shape. The card in front of it reads *dendrophyllax spectabilis* or the Heart Orchid.

We PULL BACK and see Jenny staring at the photo. She's wearing a rather garish, bright green prom dress and looks like she might have been crying at some point.

4 INT. TAFT HOUSE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 4

Jenny's mother, EILEEN TAFT is busy in the kitchen. She's a wholesome "mom" type with longish hair in her late 40s currently baking cookies - lots of cookies. *

Jenny's father JORDAN TAFT enters. He is a salt-of-the-earth type in his early 50s wearing a look of sad concern.

JORDAN
Is she still out there?

EILEEN
Yes. I tried to talk to her, *
but... Jordan, who would do *
something like that? Make her *
think she was going to prom but it *
was just a prank. How can kids be *
so cruel? What kind of *parents* do *
they... *

Jordan walks over and puts his arms around her from behind, *
interrupting the cookie making and her rant. *

JORDAN
Eileen, I think that's enough
cookies for... ever.

EILEEN
You handle things your way, I'll
handle them mine. *

Jordan turns her around to face him. *

JORDAN
She'll be okay. She's stronger *
than she knows she is. Takes after *
her mother. *

He kisses her on the cheek and she smiles, putting her hand *
on his cheek - they clearly love each other. *

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Wish me luck.

He grabs a couple of cookies and heads toward the back door.

5 INT. GREENHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

5 *

Jenny is still staring at the Heart Orchid photo as Jordan comes in.

JORDAN

Jenny, it's getting late. Are you coming inside soon?

JENNY

No. I'm never leaving the greenhouse again. Ever.

He sits on a stool near her and holds out a cookie. She doesn't take it.

JORDAN

(sighs)

You know, sweetheart, locking yourself away and avoiding everyone is not going to solve anything.

JENNY

Sure it will. See because plants aren't mean to each other. They don't invite other plants to prom just so they can stand them up and then go off with pretty flowers and all their cool flower friends and laugh... plants don't make fun of each other.

JORDAN

I don't know. I think that yellow one over there was looking at the purple one kinda funny.

Jenny tries not to smile.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Jenny, what those kids did was unforgiveable but you're going to have to find a way to face it because there are always going to be mean people. Unlike your Heart Orchid, people don't go extinct... Yet.

JENNY

Dendrophylax spectabilis is not extinct!

Jordan rolls his eyes and sighs. He has heard this before.

Jenny goes to the wall where there are maps of various places around the world with push pins and other notes on them.

JENNY (CONT'D)

At least they don't think it is.
It's just very rare in the wild
because it can hibernate for
decades until conditions are
exactly right. There have been
unconfirmed sightings in Borneo and
South America.

JORDAN

(by rote)

And they call it the Heart Orchid
because it only blooms when someone
finds true love...

JENNY

Daddy, that's just a myth!

JORDAN

Okay, okay, but if this flower only
blooms when conditions are
perfect... what happens if they
never are?

Jenny hadn't really considered that before.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

You can't hide from the world,
sweetheart. There's just too much
of it out there.

JENNY

Then I'll go find the Heart Orchid.
I'll get out of Pine Hill,
California and as far away from
Shane Rutherford and Allison Crane
and high school as I can get and
never come back.

JORDAN

I thought you were never leaving
the greenhouse?

She finally gives in and starts to cry. He holds out his arms and she goes to him, allowing her father to comfort her.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

(kisses her on the head)

I know it hurts right now, honey.

(MORE)

JORDAN (CONT'D)

But someday you'll come back to Pine Hill and say, "I am Jenny Taft and the worst mistake you ever made in your life was underestimating me!" Because sweetheart... you're going to conquer the world.

Jenny doesn't seem to believe him but she lets him hug her anyway. And on this, we...

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE CARD: 8 YEARS LATER, MARGATE UNIVERSITY, PENNSYLVANIA

FADE IN:

6 EXT. MARGATE UNIVERSITY - DAY 6

Establish

7 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY 7

The audience inside a university auditorium looks a little bored as they listen to a lecture being given by two people. One is a now 25-year-old Jenny. She is different and yet somehow the same as the 17-year-old version was. The braces are gone, of course, and maybe she looks a little more settled in her own body. She still wears glasses but they are a little more stylish than they used to be and her hair... well, her hair is still a disaster.

The other person at the lectern is OWEN LASSITER, a 20-something guy who was probably a total nerd as a kid but who has grown up to be kind of a cute nerd now.

Next to the lectern is a table with a drape covered box.

JENNY

We were in Belize because we heard the locals telling tales of red flowers blooming in the jungle and I immediately thought *dendrophyllax spectabilis*. Of course someone on the bus said maybe it's *rhododendron calendulaceum*, and I'm like...

*

Owen jumps in to steal the punch line.

OWEN

We're like, that flower is yellow!

Jenny and Owen roll their eyes and laugh, but the audience doesn't really react. Owen sees this and covers the lectern microphone so he can whisper to Jenny.

OWEN (CONT'D)

I think maybe we should skip ahead to Bolivia.

JENNY

Owen, that's the end! What about Guatemala and Malaysia? We can't skip Malaysia.

OWEN

Jenny, people are falling asleep.

They both look out at the audience and sure enough several are asleep.

JENNY

(defensively irrational)
Maybe they're not asleep. Maybe they're dead.

One of the people in the audience snores. Definitely asleep.

OWEN

Jenny, just trust me, okay?

JENNY

(reluctantly)
Okay.

They turn back to the audience.

JENNY (CONT'D)

So a few weeks ago our team hiked into a remote valley in Bolivia and made a startling discovery. After over four years of expeditions, countless hours of research, and a bout with malaria that you'd know about if I hadn't skipped Malaysia.

She directs this toward Owen who just rolls his eyes.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, I present...

Again, Owen steps in and steals the spotlight.

OWEN

Dendrophylax spectabilis, the Heart Orchid!

He dramatically removes the drape to reveal a large glass box filled with three inches of dirt. To say that it's a a letdown is an understatement. They look around the room, expecting applause and acclaim. There is only silence.

OWEN (CONT'D)

I know, it looks like a box of dirt. But it's more than that.

JENNY

The box is a climate controlled environment with the exact temperature, humidity, and soil makeup to provide the perfect conditions for the *dendrophylax spectabilis* seed inside to bloom. Which could happen tomorrow or next year or decades from now.

OWEN

(smiles)

Or, maybe it will bloom when someone finds true love.

JENNY

(annoyed)

Well, that's just a silly myth!

OWEN

Who knows? We fell in love while we were hunting for the Heart Orchid so maybe we'll inspire it!

He puts his arm around her - she looks a little uncomfortable of the public display of affection.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Thank you, everyone!

There is half-hearted applause, which Owen accepts as if it is a thunderous ovation. Jenny manages a meager smile.

8 EXT. JENNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 8

Establish.

9 INT. JENNY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 9

Jenny and Owen enter her small, but cheery apartment. She is still carrying the glass box.

JENNY

I still don't understand why you had to bring up the whole "true love" thing.

OWEN

It's part of the mythology of the Heart Orchid. You have to at least acknowledge it.

She puts the box down carefully on a table.

JENNY

But this is a graduate studies presentation. It's about science, not wife's tales.

OWEN

Just trust me, okay? It makes it more interesting.

Owen picks up the glass box and moves it to a counter.

JENNY

Owen, I cleared this table...

OWEN

(ignores her)

I definitely think cutting where we did helped the flow.

Owen walks by the coffee table and straightens the magazines that were splayed out on it.

JENNY

But, Malaysia...

OWEN

I know, you got malaria. But none of the rest of us did, so...

He glances at the laptop computer on her desk.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Jenny, you left your computer on again. That's a waste of energy.

Owen shuts off the computer.

JENNY

I'm expecting a call from Nancy...

He goes to her and takes her by the arms.

OWEN

I think we should kiss at the end.

JENNY

Kiss?

OWEN

Yes, it's perfect! The botany grad students who fell in love while looking for the Heart Orchid? That's gold.

JENNY

Owen, I don't think...

OWEN

(glances at his watch)

I have to go, but how about dinner and a movie tomorrow night? Pizza and that new superhero movie?

JENNY

(grimace)

What about Thai food and the documentary about migrant workers?

OWEN

(matches her grimace)

You know what Thai food does to me. How about Italian and superheroes?

Jenny grimaces again.

OWEN (CONT'D)

All right. It's okay. We'll figure it out. I'll call you tomorrow.

He gives her a quick kiss and with that he is gone. Jenny stands there for a moment and then, with a resolute sigh, starts putting her apartment back the way she wants it. She splays out the magazines and moves the glass box back to the table, appreciates it for a moment, then grabs her laptop.

10

INT. JENNY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

10

*

Jenny has changed into more comfortable clothes and is sitting on her sofa working on the laptop. A notification pops up that a video call is coming in from Nancy Albright. Jenny accepts and a window pops up.

*

JENNY

Hi, Nancy.

11 INT. HAIR SALON - NIGHT

11

Nancy looks a bit different than she did in the yearbook photo we saw her in earlier. She's found her sense of style, with a flattering hair cut and a nice blouse that highlights her curvy figure. She is calling from a hair salon, with a couple of stations in the background that are currently empty.

NANCY

Hey! How did it go? I bet it was great! Malaria in Malaysia!

JENNY

(unconvincing)

Yeah, no. It was great.

NANCY

I wish I could have been there. You've been telling me about that Heart Orchid since we were 12 years old. I think I know more about it than I do about hair. Speaking of which, what's going on with yours? Did you try the volumizer I sent?

*

JENNY

Yes, but Owen said it smelled like chemical waste.

NANCY

I had to go industrial strength, sweetie. I'll tell you right now, if you ever meet a guy that likes your hair the way it is, marry him.

JENNY

I'll be sure to add that to the list of qualities my future husband should have.

*

*

*

NANCY

Well, hopefully you won't have to. Someday I *will* conquer your hair. It's my Mount Everest.

*

*

*

There is some commotion off camera at Nancy's.

NANCY (CONT'D)

(to someone in her salon)

What? Oh is she ready? Okay... Jenny, I have a surprise for you. You ready? Ta-da!!!

Another woman steps into the frame in the video call - Jenny's mom Eileen. She is now in her early 50s but actually looks better than she did in the first scene - her hair is certainly more stylish - a short pixie cut.

JENNY

Mom?!

EILEEN

Hi, sweetheart!

JENNY

Mom, your hair!

EILEEN

I know! I thought it was time for something a little different. Do you like it?

JENNY

Yes, it looks great. It's just... I didn't know you had ears!

EILEEN

(laughs)

Stop! But you really do like it?

JENNY

I really do. Change is good.

EILEEN

Oh, I'm so relieved to hear you say that. Because as long as we're on the subject of change, I was wondering when you could come home for a visit.

JENNY

Uh, I don't know. Maybe over the summer? Why?

EILEEN

Well, it actually needs to be sooner than that. See...

(beat)

I'm selling the house and I need you to come clean out all your stuff.

Jenny is gobsmacked and literally speechless.

12 INT. JENNY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY 12 *

Jenny is preparing things for her trip while Owen frets. *

JENNY
I have to go, Owen.

OWEN
But what about our presentation?

JENNY
We've got weeks to prepare. I'll
be back in plenty of time.

OWEN
Can't your mom wait?

JENNY
She's already put down a deposit on
a condo. I think after my dad died
the house just got to be too much
for her, you know?

OWEN
What about the Heart Orchid?

JENNY
You can take care of it.

OWEN
No! No, no! I can't. What if
something goes wrong?

JENNY
Owen, I can't very well take it all
the way to California with me.

QUICK CUT TO: *

13 EXT. AIRPORT CURBSIDE LUGGAGE DROP OFF - DAY 13 *

Jenny comes out of the airport terminal under a sign that
says "Welcome to California" lugging a suitcase and carrying
the glass Heart Orchid box. *

14 INT. YEARBOOK ROOM - DAY 14 *

Several students are busy at work in the headquarters for the
yearbook staff at layout and editorial stations scattered
around the room. They are all looking at old yearbooks as
their advisor walks around the room.

He looks familiar because this is SHANE RUTHERFORD, now in his mid-20s but otherwise pretty much exactly as he appeared in the yearbook photos at the beginning - handsome with a bright smile.

SHANE

We don't want to copy anything from the old yearbooks but you can use them as inspiration. They solved the same kinds of layout problems we're dealing with for this year's book. Take them home, study them. Report back tomorrow with your brilliant ideas. Questions?

(beat)

See you tomorrow afternoon.

And with that all of the students get up and leave except for one. Her name is FRANKIE MYERS, who at 16 is Jenny 2.0 - she has thick glasses, braces, and an incomplete vision of what her personal style should be. At least her hair isn't as bad. She has a camera around her neck - almost always.

Frankie is paging through Shane's high school yearbook - the same one we saw at the beginning.

FRANKIE

I can't believe you were, like, the big man on campus.

SHANE

First of all, I wasn't, and second of all, why not?

FRANKIE

Come on, look at you, Mr. Rutherford. I mean, you're old.

SHANE

Frankie, I'm in my twenties!

*

FRANKIE

Like I said, old.

Shane shakes his head as Frankie flips through the yearbook.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Class president, valedictorian, star of the basketball team? You played basketball?

*

*

SHANE

(sore subject)

Yes, I did.

FRANKIE

But you don't anymore?

SHANE

Not in a long time.

FRANKIE

Why not?

SHANE

(beat)

It's ancient history.

FRANKIE

Because you're so old.

SHANE

(smiles)

Yes, exactly.

FRANKIE

I'm surprised you even had sports
back then. Weren't you too busy
trying to invent fire?

*
*
*

SHANE

(smiles despite himself)

You may go away now.

Frankie starts to head out the door but he stops her, waving
a piece of paper.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Don't forget your photo
assignments. Student council and
school poll winners.

Frankie comes back for the paper and looks at it.

FRANKIE

Um... wait. Ethan Redding?

SHANE

He's president of your class.

FRANKIE

Yeah, but I thought by student
council you meant the whole council
at once.

SHANE

The editors decided they wanted
each person individually.

FRANKIE

Okay, but Madison Arthur? She's not even on the student council!

SHANE

She won Most Likely to Succeed in the poll.

(beat - concerned)

Is there a problem?

FRANKIE

No. No, it's fine.

SHANE

Because I can get somebody else if you're not comfortable with it.

FRANKIE

No! Photos are mine.

SHANE

Okay. I'll see you tomorrow. Thanks again, Frankie.

Frankie exits the classroom.

15

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

15

Frankie comes out into the classroom staring at the list, a mixture of dread and revulsion on her face. She glances up and sees a boy in the hallway about 100 feet away. This is ETHAN REDDING, the most popular boy in school - basically the kid Shane was in his day. In short: he's dreamy.

Frankie practically melts when she sees him - it's obvious she has a mad crush. She takes a deep breath and starts to walk toward him but stops as MADISON ARTHUR comes from around a corner toward Ethan.

She is a blonde, pretty cheerleader type and Frankie immediately ducks into a corner to avoid being seen by her.

As Madison heads in Ethan's direction another pretty blonde comes around the same corner, matching her confident strut. This is ALLISON CRANE, a 20-something version of the girl we saw in the yearbook photos on Shane's arm. If it's possible, she's even more beautiful than she was in high school, wearing a finely tailored suit and carrying a briefcase.

She passes by Frankie who barely notices her - all attention is on Ethan and Madison.

16 INT. YEARBOOK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

16

Allison enters the yearbook room just as Shane is putting things away in his briefcase. She walks up and gives him a peck on the cheek.

ALLISON

Hi. Are you ready?

SHANE

Almost. I have to turn in this liability waiver at the office.

ALLISON

For what?

SHANE

They asked me to chaperone the prom in a couple of weeks and apparently it's a very dangerous assignment.

ALLISON

Chaperone the prom?

SHANE

Yeah. Do you want to go? Relive old times?

ALLISON

(laughs)

No. We were king and queen of our prom. How do you top that?

SHANE

Okay. Just don't blame me if Mrs. Hargrove tries to steal me away.

ALLISON

The 90-year-old librarian?

SHANE

I hear she's got mad moves on the dance floor.

ALLISON

I'll take my chances.

(glances at her watch)

We really need to go. Mr. Ellerby is a stickler for punctuality.

He grabs his briefcase and they head for the door.

*

17 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 17 *

Shane and Allison come out of the yearbook room and he stops to close and lock the door. *

SHANE

He'll pass you over for the job if we're five minutes late to his dinner party?

ALLISON

I heard people who don't show up to meetings on time have to stand with their faces pressed against the glass of the conference room.

SHANE

Allison, why do you want to work for a guy like that?

ALLISON

Because, this is one of the biggest real estate agencies in San Diego. It's an amazing opportunity.

SHANE

I know. I just want to make sure you're sure. This is a big thing we're considering here.

ALLISON

Are you having second thoughts?

SHANE

About giving up my job and moving away from my family and friends to a city where I don't know anyone? No, of course not.

He starts walking down the hall. She follows and puts her arm in his. *

ALLISON *

You'll know me.

SHANE

(smiles)

Right. What's your name again?

ALLISON

Shane, I really think this is what we need. A fresh start, you know? Get us back on track.

(MORE)

ALLISON (CONT'D)

But if you don't want to move to
San Diego we don't have to.

She doesn't sound very convincing.

SHANE

I'm not saying I don't want to.

ALLISON

Then what are you saying?

It seems as if he wants to say something but can't or won't.

SHANE

I'm trying to say... that we can
talk about this later because Mr.
Stickler for Punctuality is
waiting.

*
*
*

ALLISON

You're sure?

SHANE

I'm sure.

He gives her a kiss on the cheek and then walks toward a door
marked "OFFICE" as he waves the piece of paper he needs to
drop off.

*
*
*

SHANE (CONT'D)

Two seconds...

*
*

Allison smiles until he is gone and then we see the concern
creep in. Things are not great between them and she knows
it.

*
*
*

18

EXT. TAFT HOUSE - DAY

18

A cab pulls up in front of Jenny's childhood home and she
gets out carrying the glass box. The driver pulls her
suitcase out of the trunk and she pays him before he drives
off. She looks up at the house - a traditional, two-story
California Craftsman - and then at the box under her arm.

JENNY

Welcome home.

She smiles a melancholy smile.

19 INT. TAFT HOUSE ENTRY HALL - CONTINUOUS

19

Jenny opens the door and comes into the comfortably wide entry hall, which is open to a living room on one side and a dining room on the other. A set of stairs leads to the second floor and everything has a vaguely small-town-America decor scheme to it - lots of wood, a big antique mirror on the wall, plaid prints, etc.

JENNY

Hello?

Jenny puts down her suitcase and the glass box as Eileen comes through the living room to greet her.

EILEEN

Oh, sweetheart! You're home!

They embrace.

JENNY

Hi, Mom.

EILEEN

It's so good to see you! Those silly video calls are fine but I can't hug you through the computer.

They head into the living room.

20 INT. TAFT HOUSE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

20

Jenny and Eileen enter the living room. Jenny looks around.

JENNY

The place looks exactly the same.

EILEEN

Well, you know me. Creature of habit. Can I get you something? A glass of lemonade or iced tea?

JENNY

Or whatever you baked?

EILEEN

Oh, honey, I didn't bake anything. I'm sorry.

JENNY

You always bake something. You bake things when you come to visit me. You had to check a bag once just for the cookies.

EILEEN

I've just been so busy. What with the condo and trying to get the house ready. The realtor is coming Monday so there's been so much to do. Plus with my spin class...

JENNY

Your spin class? You're taking a spin class?

EILEEN

No, sweetheart! I'm teaching one.

JENNY

(laughs)
Since when?

EILEEN

(shrugs)
Oh, awhile now. It's silly, huh?

JENNY

No! Not at all. It's just unexpected, I guess. Why didn't you tell me?

EILEEN

It's those computer chats. It's not the same as a real conversation. Besides, you're too busy to listen to all the silly stuff I do. Traveling around the world and making all these big discoveries. I'm so proud of you.
(spies the glass box)
Oh! Is that the flower?

Eileen walks over to it and peers inside the case.

JENNY

Yep, that's it. The Heart Orchid.

EILEEN

Well, we need to find someplace to put it. Someplace safe.

JENNY

I think I know a good place...

Jenny smiles wistfully.

21 INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

21 *

Jenny enters the greenhouse carrying the glass box. The place hasn't changed a lot since the last time we saw it except that it looks like no one has been in here for ages. Most of the plants are dead and native ones have sprung up here and there. Dust coats most of the surfaces and there is just a general sheen of neglect.

She walks along the wall with all the maps on it - places that she dreamed of going and has now been to.

Finally she gets to the shelf that had the plants we saw in the very first scene, still with their identifying photos, now faded - the plants long dead. Jenny reaches the end of the row and sees the picture of the Heart Orchid right where she left it. This makes her even sadder.

She dusts off the shelf, picks up the photo, and sets the glass box down in its place.

22 EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

22

Establish

23 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

23

Frankie comes around a corner, engrossed in her camera as usual, and runs headlong into Ethan Redding.

FRANKIE

Oh, sorry! I'm sorry.

ETHAN

No worries. Are you okay?

FRANKIE

Yeah, I'm fine. Sorry.

ETHAN

(a winning smile)

Don't worry about it.

He keeps walking and Frankie screws up her courage.

FRANKIE

Ethan!

He stops and turns around.

ETHAN

Yeah?

FRANKIE

I need to take you. *

ETHAN

What?

FRANKIE

Take your picture. For the yearbook. *

ETHAN

Oh, right. Okay...

He runs his hand through his hair and poses.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

How do I look?

FRANKIE

(under her breath)

Perfect.

ETHAN

What?

FRANKIE

Fine, you look fine. But I can't do it here.

ETHAN

Why not?

FRANKIE

I don't have the right lens. And the lighting isn't right. See, with the right shutter speed I could get the color saturation balanced but I only have the...

ETHAN

I trust you. So, when and where?

FRANKIE

Oh, uh... I don't know... maybe...

ETHAN

Tell you what, I'm working at the market tonight. Maybe afterwards? We could go to the statue in the town square. Unless you think it would be too dark.

FRANKIE

No, that would be good. There's good lighting there.

ETHAN

Okay. Like nine o'clock? Thanks, Frankie.

FRANKIE

(shocked)
You know my name?

ETHAN

(laughs)
Of course I know your name. Why wouldn't I?

FRANKIE

Because you're you and I'm me.

ETHAN

(smiles)
You're funny. I'll see you tonight.

He heads off and Frankie is left agog with a dreamy smile on her face. She takes a few steps backward and then turns around only to plow into Madison Arthur.

MADISON

Hey! Watch where you're going!

FRANKIE

Sorry, Madison. I'm sorry.

MADISON

Yes, you are.

Madison keeps going without giving her another thought.

MADISON (CONT'D)

Ethan! Wait up.

She rushes down the hall to catch up to Ethan. Frankie's dreamy smile is definitely gone.

*

24 EXT. HAIR SALON - DAY 24
Establish

25 INT. HAIR SALON - DAY 25
The All's Hair in Love & War Salon is a cute space with a few stations, bright colors, and modern decor. Nancy is doing the hair of a middle-aged woman while Jenny sits nearby.

JENNY
(laughing)
We spent all night talking about all her friends and her new condo. Oh, did I tell you? She's teaching a spin class.

NANCY
I know. I took it.

JENNY
You did?

NANCY
Well, I took half of it. She's really good, but she's really tough. When she says "feel the burn" she means it.

JENNY
Moving into a new place, spin class, new friends... my mother has more of a life than I do.

NANCY
Oh, stop it. You've been around the world! That's a pretty cool life if you ask me.

JENNY
I guess so.

NANCY
Listen, I think it took awhile after your dad died, but your mom is ready to start a new chapter in her life. Maybe it's time for a new chapter for you, too.

JENNY
What do you mean?

NANCY

You spent years looking for that flower and now you've found it. Now what? Plus, you're going to be finished with grad school soon and you'll be starting a new career. Maybe moving someplace. A new home. Maybe get a boyfriend...

JENNY

I have a boyfriend.

NANCY

A different boyfriend.

JENNY

How can you not like Owen? You met him once when you came out for that beautician convention last year.

NANCY

At dinner he called you an "intellectual."

JENNY

That's a good thing!

NANCY

Not the way he said. It's like how people call me curvy but they really just mean fat. You're smarter than him, he knows it, and he's threatened by it.

JENNY

How can you figure all that out after one dinner?

NANCY

I'm good at reading people. For instance...

She turns on a hair dryer and aims it at the woman in the chair.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I knew Brenda here was a little nutty even before she showed me pictures of her cats dressed up like vampires.

She turns off the hair dryer. Jenny's eyes get wide as she looks at Brenda with concern.

NANCY (CONT'D)

My point is, you can do better.

JENNY

Owen is very sweet, we share the same interests.

NANCY

Such as?

JENNY

Botany, for one.

NANCY

Okay, and...?

JENNY

(beat)

We both like going to the movies.
And eating!

She leaves out the part that they don't like the same movies or food.

NANCY

(nods)

Okay. All I'm saying is maybe you should start thinking about some changes in your life like your mom is making in hers.

Jenny considers this for a moment.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Starting with that hair.

She points a brush at it.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I will tame you, you beast. You are my white whale.

Jenny looks a little scared.

Jenny is walking down the sidewalk, obviously deep in thought over her conversation with Nancy. She looks up and realizes that she is across the street from the Pine Hill High School, which is mostly deserted at this late hour of the afternoon. The sight of it does not seem to be pleasing.

JENNY

(as if to the school)

Tell you what. You stay on your
side of the street and I'll stay on
mine and that way nobody gets hurt.
Deal?

The school doesn't seem to have a comment on that.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Deal.

She continues walking but then something catches her eye.

Next to the school is a small field with some athletic
equipment scattered about - a soccer goal net, some benches
for teams, etc. A tree stands near the end of it and hanging
from the tree is a mossy vine with flowers on it.

Despite what she just said, Jenny crosses the street and goes
to the tree. She tries to get a better look at the flowers.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Who are you? *Hydrangea petiolaris*?

She can't quite get a good enough look from where she's at so
her only option is to climb the tree.

Up she goes, carefully, and not without a bit of
uncoordinated clumsiness. Finally she ends up sitting
astride a limb about 10 feet off the ground. She inches out
on to the limb toward the flowers and then slips, twisting
around so she is now hanging upside down from the limb.

FRANKIE (O.S.)

Uh, do you need some help?

Jenny looks to see where the voice came from. From her POV
all she can see is an upside down person.

JENNY

No, I'm fine. I'm good. I've got
it completely under con...

And of course then she slips entirely and crashes to the
ground.

27

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

27

*

Jenny is sitting on the floor of the otherwise empty hallway
outside of the yearbook room holding an ice pack to her
forehead while Frankie stands nearby watching her intently.

*

FRANKIE

Are you sure you're not slipping
into a coma?

JENNY

I'm pretty sure.

FRANKIE

Because they say that people with
head injuries can slip into comas.

JENNY

It's just a little bump.

FRANKIE

I bet lots of people say that right
before they slip into comas.

JENNY

I'm not going to slip into a coma!
(too loud)
Ow.

FRANKIE

Why were you in that tree?

JENNY

I was looking at a flower.

FRANKIE

Why?

JENNY

Because I'm a botanist.

FRANKIE

Botanists climb trees?

JENNY

We go where the botany is.

FRANKIE

I get it. I'm a photographer.

JENNY

Hence the camera.

FRANKIE

And I'll go anywhere for a good
picture. Up a tree, in a sewer...

JENNY

You've gone in sewers?

FRANKIE

Well, no, but I would if that's where the picture was. I'm Frankie, by the way.

JENNY

Jenny. Thank you for the ice pack.

FRANKIE

No problem. I always have one handy. I have a tendency to bump into things.

JENNY

Been there.

Shane comes down the hallway toward them.

FRANKIE

Oh, there's Mr. Rutherford.

JENNY

(shocked)

Mister... Mister Who?

But he is there before Jenny has a chance to freak out.

SHANE

Frankie? I got your message, what's going on?

Jenny practically faints at the sight of Shane Rutherford.

FRANKIE

She fell out of a tree.

SHANE

What?

(to Jenny)

Are you okay?

JENNY

I... I...

FRANKIE

Uh-oh. She's lost the ability to speak. I think that means she's slipping into a coma.

JENNY

I'm not. No coma.

SHANE

There's a first aid kit in the
yearbook room. Come on...

*
*

He holds out his hand and Jenny looks at it as if it's a
snake about to bite. She takes it warily and Shane helps her
up, guiding her toward the classroom door, which he unlocks
and opens.

*

28 INT. YEARBOOK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

28

*

They come into the office and Frankie gets the first aid kit
while Shane points Jenny toward a chair.

*
*

SHANE

Have a seat. Let me take a look.

She sits down, still wary. Shane looks at her head.

SHANE (CONT'D)

That's quite a bump there.

He holds up two fingers.

SHANE (CONT'D)

How many fingers am I holding up?

JENNY

Fourteen?

SHANE

Okay, you're probably going to need
to go to the hospital.

JENNY

Really, I'm fine.
(holds up 2 fingers)
Two fingers. See?

SHANE

(smiles)
Okay, well, at least let me clean
it up a bit.

*
*
*
*

He takes a sterile wipe out of the first aid kit and attends
to the bump. Jenny is still flabbergasted and a bit angry
facing this guy after all these years.

*
*

SHANE (CONT'D)

So, do you mind me asking what you
were doing up in that tree?

JENNY

(cold)

I was trying to get a closer look
at the flowers.

FRANKIE

She's a botanist.

SHANE

Really? Wow. I'm just an English
teacher.

FRANKIE

And the yearbook advisor. And you
direct the school plays.

SHANE

I'm a triple-threat. But I like
it. I enjoy working with kids.

(teasing Frankie)

Well, some of the kids.

FRANKIE

He loves me. We have a love that
dare not speaketh its name.

SHANE

And this is a good place, you know?
So what if I never left Pine Hill?
I've heard the world is overrated.
How's your head?

JENNY

It's fine.

SHANE

Well, if you get dizzy or feel
nauseous at any point in the next
24 hours, go to the hospital.

FRANKIE

Because...

JENNY

Coma. Got it.

SHANE

Oh, I'm sorry. I never introduced
myself. I'm Shane Rutherford.

Jenny is stunned. He obviously doesn't know who she is.

JENNY

Yeah, I know.

SHANE

You do?

JENNY

We went to high school together.

SHANE

We did? I'm really sorry, but I am terrible with names... you're...

JENNY

Jenny. Jenny Taft.

SHANE

(fakes it)

Oh! Jenny! Of course. Jenny Taft. It's good to see you.

JENNY

(insulted)

You don't remember me, do you?

SHANE

I'm sorry. Did we know each other?

JENNY

(beat)

No. Not really.

(beat)

I better go.

She starts to get up but then stumbles and knocks the first aid kit to the floor.

*
*

JENNY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

SHANE

Don't worry about it.

Jenny leaves quickly. Shane is wondering what just happened.

29

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

29

An obviously upset and angry Jenny comes out of the high school and starts down the sidewalk toward home. Moments later, Frankie falls into line behind her. Jenny stops.

JENNY

Hi.

FRANKIE

Hi.

JENNY
Are you following me?

FRANKIE
Me? No.

JENNY
Because it kind of seems like
you're following me.

FRANKIE
I'm very worried about the whole
coma thing.

JENNY
(sighs)
Okay. Tell you what. My house is
about five blocks from here. How
about you walk me home and make
sure nothing tragic happens?

FRANKIE
Okay.

The two of them start walking.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
So you knew Mr. Rutherford, huh?

JENNY
(scoffs)
You could say that.

FRANKIE
Did you date or something?

JENNY
No! No, not even close.

FRANKIE
What was he like?

JENNY
He was... he was like a god. Like
this perfect all-American boy. The
most popular kid in school.

FRANKIE
And let me guess... he didn't know
you were alive.

JENNY
Pretty much.

FRANKIE

Yeah, I've got one of those. Ethan Redding. Although I found out today that he actually knows my name.

JENNY

Well, that's something.

FRANKIE

Yeah, but he hangs out with all the popular kids, of course. And he dates this total witch Madison.

JENNY

I had one of those. Her name was Allison Crane.

FRANKIE

That's Mr. Rutherford's girlfriend.

JENNY

He's still dating Allison Crane?!

FRANKIE

Yeah. So she was your Madison?

JENNY

Something like that.

(beat)

So what's he like now?

FRANKIE

Mr. Rutherford? He's really cool.

JENNY

Really?

FRANKIE

Oh yeah. He's my favorite teacher. He's funny and he's really nice. He doesn't treat us like dumb kids, you know? I totally had a crush on him last year but I got over it.

JENNY

How?

FRANKIE

Did I mention Ethan Redding?

JENNY

Right.

FRANKIE

I don't know what he was like in high school but if he was like the popular guy jerk then he's totally changed.

Jenny considers this for a moment as they walk.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

How's that whole coma thing going?

JENNY

So far so good.

FRANKIE

You let me know.

JENNY

Will do.

They continue on down the sidewalk.

30 EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT 30

Establish

31 INT. SUTTER'S MILL RESTAURANT - NIGHT 31 *

Shane enters a small restaurant and joins Allison at a booth. *

SHANE

I'm sorry I'm late. There was an emergency at school.

ALLISON

Is everything okay?

SHANE

(laughs)

Some woman fell out of a tree and my student Frankie found her.

ALLISON

What was she doing in a tree?

SHANE

I don't know. But get this: we went to high school with her. Some girl named Jenny Taft?

ALLISON
(laughs)
What?! Are you kidding?

SHANE
You remember her?

ALLISON
Of course! Don't you?

SHANE
No.

ALLISON
Jenny Taft! She was that girl with
the braces and the glasses and the
hair. You must remember the hair.

Allison starts going through pictures on her phone.

SHANE
That sounds like her, yes.

ALLISON
Someone posted our class photos
recently, I just have to find...
Jenny Taft. She was obsessed with
plants, remember? Oh, here!

*
*

She holds the phone out to him.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
I mean if nothing else you must
remember prom.

He looks at the class picture, zoomed in to show Jenny in all
her high school glory. It all comes flooding back to him.

SHANE
(horrified)
Oh, no... That's the girl that
we... Now I remember.

ALLISON
I still can't believe she actually
thought you were going to take her
to prom! Can you believe some of
the things we did in high school?

Allison laughs and shakes her head, not cruelly, but as if
the whole thing is a bit of innocent nostalgia.

SHANE

Why are you laughing? What we did was horrible!

ALLISON

(still laughing)

Oh, I know. We were terrible!

SHANE

No, Allison, I mean it. Like, really, actually horrible.

ALLISON

Oh, Shane, come on. We were just kids. We didn't know any better.

SHANE

Well, we do now. We owe her an apology. You for sending her those emails from my account inviting her to the prom and me for not stopping it when I found out.

*

ALLISON

Shane! I am not going to apologize for some harmless prank that we pulled eight years ago! I'm sure she's gotten over it by now.

SHANE

Allison, I see how kids are bullied every single day.

ALLISON

We didn't "bully" her.

SHANE

We used to call her names. We called her...

ALLISON

(laughing)

Poison ivy!

SHANE

Allison, stop laughing.

ALLISON

(tries to stop)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. You're right. We're terrible people. Now, can we order? I'm starved.

He shakes his head and stands, tossing his napkin on the table as he walks away.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Wait, where are you going? Shane?

But he is gone.

32 EXT. TAFT HOUSE - NIGHT 32

Re-establish

33 INT. TAFT HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT 33

Jenny, wanders into the kitchen and stops suddenly. As if the day couldn't get any weirder, Eileen is there in a karate outfit, complete with a headband, practicing her martial arts moves. She's pretty good.

JENNY

Mom?

EILEEN

(doesn't stop)

Oh hi, sweetheart. You hungry?
You want me to fix you a bite?

JENNY

No. What are you doing?

EILEEN

Karate. One of the women at the fitness club where I teach spin class got mugged in the parking lot and I thought I should know how to defend myself. Want me to flip you over my shoulder? *

Eileen takes up an aggressive pose, ready to attack.

JENNY

(bemused)

I'm good for now. Maybe later.

The doorbell rings. Jenny shakes her head and exits.

34 INT. TAFT HOUSE ENTRY HALL - CONTINUOUS 34

Jenny comes into the hall and opens to the door to find Shane standing there. She is taken aback.

SHANE

Hi.

JENNY

(shocked)

Hello. What are you...?

SHANE

I should've called first.

JENNY

How did you...?

SHANE

I remembered who you were.

JENNY

Oh!

(realizes what that means)

Oh...

SHANE

Yeah. Can we talk? Do you mind?

JENNY

(beat)

I don't think that's a good idea...

She starts to shut the door but he stops her.

SHANE

Please. Just five minutes...

JENNY

(sighs)

Okay.

She starts to invite him in but looks toward the kitchen to see Eileen practicing her karate chops in the kitchen.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You know, on second thought, why
don't we go get coffee or
something?

*
*

SHANE

Sure. Okay.

She goes out onto the porch and closes the door.

35 EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

35

Shane and Jenny are walking down the sidewalk of Pine Hill's main street, a charming Downtown that is fairly quiet on a weeknight. They are both silent and obviously uncomfortable.

*
*
*

SHANE

It's a nice night.

JENNY

Yes, it is.

More silence.

SHANE

So, you're a botanist?

JENNY

Yes.

SHANE

That's good. I mean, you know.
You were really into plants.

JENNY

Still am, I guess.

SHANE

Right. So you, like, grow things?

JENNY

No, I look for things. A thing,
specifically. The Heart Orchid.

SHANE

Heart Orchid? What's that?

JENNY

It's a rare flower. We found one
in Bolivia.

SHANE

You went to Bolivia to find a
flower?

JENNY

(offended)

It's an important flower. And
after Guatemala and Borneo and
Malaysia, especially Malaysia,
Brazil really wasn't that...

SHANE

No, I meant, it's amazing. I think the furthest I've ever gotten from Pine Hill is Vegas for a buddy's bachelor party.

They walk in silence for another moment, still uncomfortable. Jenny doesn't want to talk to him but her curiosity gets the better of her.

JENNY

So, how did you wind up here? I mean, weren't you going to go play basketball at some big school? *

SHANE

Yeah, but the summer after graduation I was shooting hoops in my driveway, just messing around, and I went in for a lay-up and when I landed... I snapped my Achilles tendon. Goodbye scholarship. So I stayed here, went to a local college, got my teaching certificate, and here I am. *

JENNY

But you said you like it? Teaching? *

SHANE

Oh yeah, absolutely. It's...
(smiles genuinely)
It's actually great. I guess life has a way of pointing you in the direction you were supposed to go all along. *

He stops walking and it takes her a few steps to realize it. She turns back to him.

SHANE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

JENNY

For what? *

SHANE

For what we did to you. The prom. There was this kid in my class... a senior my first year on the job. He was a piece of work. Captain of the football team, president of the class, total jerk. A bully. *

(MORE)

SHANE (CONT'D)

And one day I saw him teasing this girl with braces and glasses... and I confronted him. "Don't ever treat people like that. You're no better than they are!" And as the words were coming out of my mouth I realized that I had been just like him. I was vain and entitled and mean... to you. I was mean to you and I have wanted to apologize for that ever since.

*

That floors Jenny. He extends his hand.

SHANE (CONT'D)

What we did to you was... I'm really sorry.

She hesitates for a moment and then she shakes his hand.

JENNY

Thank you.

There is a moment that passes between them that is more than just about this apology. Then it's gone and he lets go of her hand.

SHANE

Do you still want that coffee...?

*

JENNY

(shrugs and nods)

Sure... But you're buying.

*

*

SHANE

(smiles)

It's a deal.

*

They continue walking.

36

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

36

The Pine Hill town square is straight out of every small-town America movie you have ever seen, with well-kept older building surrounding a well-tended green complete with a statue of who we will presume is the town's founder, surrounded by a large, lush flower bed. That's where we find Frankie, sitting on the edge of it and nervously playing with her camera.

*

*

She glances at her watch and we see that it says 9:15. Frankie shakes her head and gets up, gathering her things.

FRANKIE

Stupid.

She starts to walk off but Ethan calls out to her.

ETHAN

Frankie! Hey, Frankie.

He runs up to her. Frankie is relieved that he showed up but also totally panicked. She tries to be cool.

FRANKIE

Oh, hey. Hi. How's it going?
Yeah, good. Okay.

ETHAN

Sorry I'm late. You know how old
man Shepard is about his market.

FRANKIE

(no clue)
Yeah. Of course. He's such a...

But all she can do is make some snorting noises.

ETHAN

So are you sure this is good for
the photo? Kinda dark.

FRANKIE

No, it's good. I brought the right
equipment. It'll pick up the light
and it'll be good. So, okay.

ETHAN

You're the expert. Where do you
want me?

FRANKIE

Uh, over there. With the statue in
the background, I think. *

Ethan goes to the edge of the flower bed and turns back
toward her. *

ETHAN

What do you want me to do? Should
I pose or something?

FRANKIE

No... just, you know, look casual.

He sort of slumps down against the low wall of the flower
bed. *

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
(laughs)
Not that casual!

ETHAN
Okay, how about this?

He starts going through a series of silly poses, each one more ridiculous than the next. Frankie is laughing and taking pictures as he does and he is laughing along with her.

FRANKIE
Oh that's perfect. That's the one.

ETHAN
This is good?

FRANKIE
Oh yeah. Work it. Own it.

The two of them continue in this vein.

37 EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

37

Jenny and Shane are still walking, now carrying cups of coffee.

*
*

SHANE
I wish there was some way I could make it up to you.

JENNY
(shrugs)
You don't have to. I got over it. I hadn't thought about it, really, until I saw you today...

SHANE
Still. It's one of those moments that calls for a do-over.
(inspiration)
Hey... we could have one! How long are you in town?

*

JENNY
A week or so, probably.

SHANE
Perfect. A week from Saturday is the Pine Hill High School prom. And I'm chaperoning. You want to go with me?

JENNY
(laughs a little)
What? No.

SHANE
Why not?

She just looks at him with a "really?" kind of look.

SHANE (CONT'D)
Well, yes, of course, but I promise
this time will be different.

JENNY
Aren't you dating Allison? Like,
still dating Allison?

SHANE
Yes, but she hates these school
things. She said she doesn't want
to go. Besides, this wouldn't be a
date.

JENNY
No, of course not. I didn't
mean... Never mind. I don't think
it's a good idea.

SHANE
Well, just think about it, okay? I
owe you a dance.

He smiles and she smiles back, then laughs a little.

SHANE (CONT'D)
What?

JENNY
I just can't believe I'm talking to
Shane Rutherford. And that he's
being nice to me. I mean...

SHANE
No, you're right. But that was the
high school version of Shane
Rutherford. And that was a long
time ago.

JENNY
Doesn't seem like it sometimes.

Shane nods and they continue walking. This time the silence
is more companionable.

38 EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS 38

Madison comes out of a store and stops short when she sees Ethan and Frankie laughing and having fun by the statue. *

MADISON

What?!

She makes a beeline for the square.

39 EXT. TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS 39

Ethan and Frankie are still having fun with their photo shoot when Madison comes storming up.

MADISON

What is going on?!

ETHAN

Hey! We're just goofing around.

MADISON

We? You and... that?

ETHAN

Madison, it's just a picture for the yearbook. She has to get yours, too. Right, Frankie? *

FRANKIE

Right. *

MADISON

Interesting. Because you didn't ask me, you just asked my boyfriend.

FRANKIE

I'm sorry, I...

ETHAN

Madison, what is wrong with you? You're not jealous are you?

MADISON

(points at Frankie)

Of that?!

(laughs)

No. Not at all.

Madison walks up close to Frankie as she says the following.

MADISON (CONT'D)

(malevolent)

But there are certain rules that must be abided by in order to maintain a civilized society. You don't talk to my man without getting my permission. Got it?

FRANKIE

(terrified)

Got it.

MADISON

Good. Okay, now take my picture.

Madison looks down at her phone to text.

FRANKIE

Oh, okay. Uh, do you want to... get ready or...

MADISON

I'm ready. I always look good in pictures.

Frankie hesitates and then shrugs and raises her camera. She snaps a photo of Madison while she has her head down and hair across her face and doesn't actually look good. But when Frankie looks at the digital display it is as if Madison is in a model in a glamorous photo shoot.

FRANKIE

Wow.

Madison looks up at Frankie.

MADISON

Told you.

(to Ethan)

Are we ready to go? I'm bored.

Ethan puts his arm around Madison and they start to head off.

ETHAN

Thanks, Frankie. Bye!

Madison glares at him and then back over her shoulder at Frankie, who is a little freaked out over the incident.

Shane and Jenny come up the front walk of her house, laughing like they are old friends.

SHANE

And then what did you say?

JENNY

I said fine, but if you're going to take my truck then I'm going to take your donkey.

SHANE

So what happened?

JENNY

Apparently he really liked that donkey.

Shane practically doubles over laughing.

SHANE

Oh, man. You have the best stories.

JENNY

I do?

SHANE

Yes! I can't believe the things you've done and the places you've gone. My biggest adventure is when they have Taco Tuesdays at school.

JENNY

I remember Taco Tuesdays. If they're anything like they were when we were kids then that's more dangerous than anything I've done.

He laughs again and then looks up at the house.

SHANE

Here we are.

JENNY

Yes.

(looks at her watch)

I can't believe we were out walking for so long.

SHANE

Time flies. You know, this is going to sound weird, but... it was really nice to meet you Jenny Taft.

JENNY

You too, Shane Rutherford.

They smile and shake on it. He starts down the walk but then turns back to her.

SHANE

And think about the prom, okay?

He sort of pantomimes dancing with someone as he walks away. She laughs and watches him go, rapt and more than a little goo-goo eyed. She finally heads up to the front porch.

41 EXT. TAFT HOUSE PORCH - CONTINUOUS 41

Jenny is about to go inside when her phone rings, startling her out of her reverie. The caller ID says it is Owen. She looks out toward where Shane was, maybe a little guilty, and then answers the call.

JENNY

Hello?

QUICK CUT TO:

42 INT. OWEN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 42 *

Owen is driving, using the hand's free to talk to Jenny. *

OWEN

Has anyone found true love yet?

QUICK CUT TO:

43 EXT. TAFT HOUSE PORCH - CONTINUOUS 43

Jenny is shocked by the question. We begin intercutting between the two of them.

JENNY

What? No! What do you mean?

OWEN

The Heart Orchid. Has it bloomed?

JENNY

(relieved)

Oh. No, it hasn't.

OWEN

Good. I would hate to miss it. Maybe I should've kept it here. Or maybe I should've gone with you.

JENNY

Owen, the chances of it happening in the next week and a half are pretty slim.

OWEN

I know. I guess I just miss it.

JENNY

(beat)

You miss *the flower*?

OWEN

Of course!

JENNY

(beat - smiles)

Hey, Owen, you know what I was just thinking of? That time in Guatemala with the guy who tried to steal our truck? With the donkey? Do you remember that?

OWEN

How could I forget? It was terrifying. We barely got out of there alive!

JENNY

(smile fading)

Oh, come on. It's kind of funny, now, don't you think?

OWEN

Not in the slightest. Jenny, just trust me, okay? I'm happy we found the Heart Orchid but if I never see another jungle it'll be too soon!

We stay with Jenny who seems disappointed in his response. She looks out toward the sidewalk where Shane was.

44 EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

44

Re-establish

45 INT. YEARBOOK ROOM - DAY

45

Shane is at a desk in the yearbook room. There's a knock at the door and Allison comes in a little sheepishly.

ALLISON

Hey.

SHANE

Hey.

ALLISON

I wanted to stop by and talk about last night...

SHANE

I'm glad. I didn't like the way we left it.

ALLISON

Me either.

She goes to him and they hug.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

So I guess an apology is in order.

SHANE

You don't have to apologize.

She pulls away.

ALLISON

Me? I meant, an apology from you.

SHANE

What? What did I do?

ALLISON

You left me at the restaurant after you made it sound like I was some horrible ogre who ate innocent children on a bridge.

SHANE

Allison, what we did was cruel.

QUICK CUT TO:

46

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

46

Madison Arthur comes walking down the otherwise deserted hallway and hears the arguing coming from the yearbook room. She stops to eavesdrop.

47 INT. YEARBOOK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

47

The fight is continuing.

ALLISON

Okay, fine. I get it. We did a bad thing and I'm sorry. Okay?

SHANE

I'm not the one you should be saying I'm sorry to. Jenny Taft deserved the apology and I'm glad I gave her one.

ALLISON

Wait. What? You actually went and apologized to her?

SHANE

Yes. And you know what, she's actually a pretty cool person.

ALLISON

I'm sure she is, but...

SHANE

She's had this fascinating life and she's smart and funny and... I think we would've been friends if we had just taken the time to get to know her. But we were too busy being popular to ever pay attention to someone who wasn't like us.

ALLISON

Oh, great. So now in addition to being cruel I'm also an elitist? I'm the one percent and now you're standing up for the 99?

SHANE

Look, all I did was apologize for pretending to invite her to prom and standing her up. Why is that such a big deal?

ALLISON

Because you're making me out to be the bad guy here.

SHANE

We were the bad guys!

ALLISON

I suppose you told her it was all
my idea.

SHANE

I didn't tell her that, even though
it was all your idea. You emailed
her with my account!

ALLISON

But you found out and didn't stop
it!

They keep bickering as we PULL BACK and out into the hallway.

48 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 48

Madison is still listening to the fight and it has given her
an awful idea. She sashays down the hallway filled with evil
glee.

49 EXT. FRANKIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 49

Establish

50 INT. FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 50

Frankie is doing homework when her phone signals that she has
a text. She pulls it out to look at it and nearly falls off
the bed.

It reads:

ETHAN R: Hey - know this is last min but do u have a date 4
prom?

Frankie stares at the phone as if it has suddenly turned into
a rabid ferret but regains her composure and types back:

FRANKIE: No. Y?

ETHAN R: Wanna go with me?

FRANKIE: Seriously?

ETHAN R: Sorry. Dumb, I guess. Never mind.

FRANKIE: No no no! Of course I want 2 go 2 prom w/u! But
what about Madison?

ETHAN R: We broke up. She found out I liked u...

Frankie almost passes out at this statement.

ETHAN R: But u cant tell anyone, k? If Mad finds out I dunno what she might do. Keep it just between us.

FRANKIE: Understand. OK.

ETHAN R: I'll see you then. Can't wait.

FRANKIE: Me too!!!!!!!

Frankie puts her phone away, pauses, and then waves her arms and legs around in celebration. This time, she actually does fall off the bed.

51 EXT. TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

51

Madison hits the delete key on the chat she has just been having with Frankie and then turns to Ethan who has no clue what she has been doing.

MADISON

Thanks for letting me borrow your phone.

ETHAN

No problem.

They leave the square as Madison flashes a wicked grin.

52 EXT. TAFT HOUSE - DAY

52

Re-establish

53 INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

53

*

Nancy is examining the glass box with the Heart Orchid in it while Jenny stands by expectantly.

NANCY

As boxes of dirt go, it's nice.

JENNY

It's more than a box of dirt!

Jenny heads toward the door of the greenhouse and Nancy follows.

*

54

EXT. TAFT HOUSE BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

54

They come out of the greenhouse and walk toward the house. *

NANCY

Okay, okay, it's a plant miracle.
Now, tell me more about Shane
Rutherford!

JENNY

I already told you everything.

NANCY

Tell me again!

JENNY

He was... nice.

NANCY

(suspicious)

See, that's where you lose me.
Shane Rutherford nice? He really
apologized?

JENNY

Yes. He felt badly about it.

NANCY

And he really invited you to prom?

JENNY

Well, he invited me to go chaperone
the prom with him. It's not
exactly the same thing.

NANCY

That's what I'm worried about -
that it's not the same thing as the
last time.

JENNY

Oh, I don't think so. I really do
think he's changed.

NANCY

He's still dating Allison Crane,
you know.

JENNY

I know, but I guess she doesn't
want to go.

NANCY

That's not surprising.

JENNY

What do you mean?

NANCY

(shrugs)

People get very gossipy when they sit in my chair. Mrs. Hargrove, the school librarian? She says they're having problems.

JENNY

(interesting)

Really?

(suddenly ashamed)

That's terrible. Well, anyway, Allison wouldn't be there.

NANCY

You're not actually thinking of going, are you?

JENNY

No! Of course not.

NANCY

Good. Although I am already envisioning how I would do your hair. I'd need the heavy duty brushes.

JENNY

Well, forget it, because I'm not going. He's just being nice to apologize.

NANCY

And that's the best case scenario. Worst case is you're sitting on your porch in another ugly green dress.

JENNY

Hey! My dress wasn't ugly!

NANCY

Honey... you know they had cameras back then, right?

Jenny laughs and playfully swats at her friend as they go inside the house.

55 INT. TAFT HOUSE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

55

They enter the kitchen to find Eileen making breakfast.

EILEEN

Good morning, girls!

NANCY

Hi, Eileen. The hair looks great!

EILEEN

I know! I really love it. So easy to maintain. Are you hungry?

NANCY

What are you making?

JENNY

Scrambled eggs and bacon. It's what she always makes for breakfast when there's company.

EILEEN

Actually, I'm making an egg white and goat cheese frittata!

Jenny stares at her for a moment.

JENNY

Who are you and what have you done with my mother?

Eileen claps her hands as if to kick off the day.

EILEEN

Okay, we have a lot to do. Boxes to pack, cleaning, get the house in order for the realtor on Monday. Oh, and then the yard sale next weekend.

NANCY

Wow, would you look at the time. I have to go open the salon. Saturday is our busiest day!

EILEEN

But you're closed on Monday, right? So maybe you could give us a hand then? I did make you a frittata.

She hands her a plate.

JENNY

Using food to guilt people into
doing things they don't want to do?
You are my mother after all!

Eileen takes this in the good natured spirit it was intended.

56 EXT. SCHOOL - DAY 56

Re-establish

57 INT. YEARBOOK ROOM - DAY 57

Shane is sitting at his desk in the yearbook room looking at the computer, doing research on Jenny and the Heart Orchid - he seems impressed. He glances over at the photo of him and Allison on the desk and seems to have mixed emotions about the two women in front of him.

Frankie comes into the room and pulls up a chair directly to his desk and sits.

SHANE

Frankie.

FRANKIE

Mr. Rutherford.

SHANE

What's going on?

FRANKIE

I have a problem.

SHANE

Okay. How can I help?

FRANKIE

You can't.

SHANE

Glad we had this little talk.

FRANKIE

Me too.

She gets up and heads toward the door.

SHANE

Frankie.

She stops. He points at the chair and she sits.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Speak.

FRANKIE

I can't.

SHANE

Why not?

FRANKIE

Because I promised I wouldn't say anything and even if I could you'd never get it.

SHANE

Why not?

FRANKIE

Because you've never been a teenage girl.

SHANE

Well, that's true. But I'm sure we can find you someone who used to be a teenage girl.

FRANKIE

Like who? And don't say the Mrs. Hargrove the librarian. Teenage girl in this century, please.

Shane looks over at the computer, which has Jenny's picture in an article about the flower.

58

INT. TAFT HOUSE ENTRY HALL - LATER

58

Jenny and Nancy are cleaning out the closet in the hallway right by the front door. It doesn't look like it's fun work.

*

*

NANCY

I can't believe I'm spending my day off cleaning out closets that aren't even mine. I should've faked a back injury.

JENNY

You didn't have to come.

NANCY

Yes, I did. It was this or her spin class and my thighs just can't take it.

There's a knock on the front door. Jenny brushes herself off and opens it to find Shane and Frankie standing there. *

SHANE
(with a small wave)
Hi. *

Jenny is dumbstruck, to say the least. *

59 EXT. TAFT HOUSE BACKYARD - DAY 59 *

Jenny and Shane are standing outside the greenhouse. *

SHANE
I really appreciate this. The two of you seemed to hit it off the other day and...

JENNY
It's no problem.

SHANE
I'm guessing it probably has something to do with a boy.

JENNY
Most teenage girl drama does. Wish me luck.

Jenny goes into the greenhouse and Shane turns around to find Nancy standing there, looking at him suspiciously. *

NANCY
(menacingly)
Hello, Shane.

It appears that Shane may be a little frightened of her.

60 INT. GREENHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 60 *

Jenny enters the greenhouse and shuts the door. Frankie is looking at the glass box. *

FRANKIE
Cool. It's like its got its own biodome.

JENNY
Yes! Exactly. Everyone else is calling it a box of dirt.

FRANKIE

It's much more than a box of dirt.

JENNY

Right?

Frankie moves on to examine the rest of the room as they speak, looking at the maps and other plant related items.

JENNY (CONT'D)

So... do you want to talk about whatever you couldn't talk to Mr. Rutherford about?

FRANKIE

What's going on with you two?

JENNY

What? Nothing. He's just...

FRANKIE

A couple of days ago he didn't even remember you and now he's entrusting you with his favorite student?

JENNY

I think he thought you and I might have some things in common.

FRANKIE

Do you like him?

JENNY

Sure. But I mean, you know, not like him, like him. It's complicated. Why don't we talk about *your* problem.

FRANKIE

Which, linguistically speaking, would mean that *he* is *your* problem.

JENNY

(smiles)

I can see why he likes you.

Frankie goes back to looking at the maps.

FRANKIE

I will talk to you about the... issue... but I have to be purposefully vague.

JENNY

Okay.

FRANKIE

Somebody asked someone to do something and someone wants to know if they should do it.

JENNY

(beat)

That's pretty vague. May I ask clarifying questions?

FRANKIE

Yes, but I may not be able to answer.

JENNY

Fair enough. Is the something that somebody asked someone to do dangerous, illicit, or illegal?

FRANKIE

No.

JENNY

Is the somebody a person that the someone can trust?

FRANKIE

The someone doesn't know for sure.

JENNY

The someone should know for sure before she... Or he... does the something.

FRANKIE

Yeah. I guess so.

(beat)

Did you go prom?

JENNY

No. I didn't.

FRANKIE

Why not?

JENNY

It's a long story. Is that what this is about? Did somebody ask you... I mean *someone* to the prom?

Frankie doesn't reply.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Look, I know that it's probably
kind of scary but sometimes you
have to put yourself out there.

She pauses for a moment, echoes of the past coming back to
her. She smiles.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You know my dad once said to me,
right here in this very room... you
can't hide from the world. There's
just too much of it out there.

This obviously resonates with Frankie.

61 EXT. TAFT HOUSE BACKYARD - LATER

61

Shane is sitting nervously on a bench in the backyard while
Nancy just stares at him with a scowl on her face.

SHANE

(clears his throat)

So, Nancy...

Jenny and Frankie come out of the greenhouse.

*

SHANE (CONT'D)

Oh, thank goodness.

He gets up and rushes over to Jenny and Frankie. Nancy
hovers in the background, watching carefully.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Everything okay?

FRANKIE

I think so. Someone feels much
better about somebody and
something.

SHANE

Glad to hear it?

FRANKIE

I better go. Thanks Mr.
Rutherford. Thanks Jenny.

JENNY

You're welcome. You have my
number. If you need anything...

FRANKIE

Got it.

SHANE

See you tomorrow, Frankie.

Frankie waves and heads off toward the street.

JENNY

What a great kid.

SHANE

Yeah. She's one of a kind. Thank you for doing this.

JENNY

My pleasure.

They shake hands and smile. Nancy, still hovering, clears her throat in disapproval.

NANCY

Jenny, don't we have to get back to work?

JENNY

Oh, yeah. You're right.

(to Shane)

We're having a big yard sale next weekend.

SHANE

Do you need any help?

JENNY

Really?

SHANE

It's the least I can do after you helped with Frankie. Besides, all I'm supposed to be doing is grading papers and if I read one more essay comparing Faulkner to the Hunger Games books I will quit my job.

JENNY

(smiles)

Well, we wouldn't want that.

Jenny gestures toward the house and Shane heads in that direction. Nancy gives Jenny a glare that says "what are you doing?"

JENNY (CONT'D)
(whispers)
It's the least he can do.

Jenny hurries to catch up to Shane. Nancy is not happy with this development.

62 EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS 62

Frankie has started down the sidewalk toward home but glances back to see Jenny and Shane smiling and laughing as they go toward the house. She quickly hoists her camera and takes a few pictures.

63 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY 63 *

Eileen comes out of a door marked "Fitness Club" into a parking lot, wearing her workout outfit. She heads toward her car parked at the far end and is the only one around until the door she came through opens and someone comes into the lot after her. *

Eileen hears the footsteps and doesn't look back, instead hurrying her pace nervously. The footsteps behind her pick up their pace also. *

Eileen is almost running now as she gets to her car and fumbles in her bag for her keys. The person who was after her comes up and puts his hand on her shoulder. *

GEORGE
Excuse me...

Eileen drops her bag, grabs the man's arm, and flips him over her shoulder using her karate moves. He lands on the ground with a thud, still holding his arm.

The man opens his hand and dangles a set of keys.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You dropped your keys.

EILEEN
Oh, no! Oh, dear! I'm so sorry...

She helps him up and gets her first good look at him. This is GEORGE MCALLISTER, a silver-haired fox of a man in his late 50s.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

GEORGE

Well, my pride is a little injured,
but other than that, I'm fine.

EILEEN

I'm sorry. I thought you were...

GEORGE

Totally my fault. I should know
better than to chase after a woman
in a parking lot. Especially a
woman that can beat me up.

*

EILEEN

I feel terrible. Is there anything
I can do?

GEORGE

You could show me how you did that.
Up until a few moments ago I
thought I'd be able to take care of
myself in a fight but now I'm not
so sure.

EILEEN

Well, it's easy really. It's all
about positioning your weight
and...

She reaches for his arm again but he pulls back with a smile.

GEORGE

Perhaps you could explain it to me
over a cup of coffee?

EILEEN

(smiles - blushes)

Oh, well... yes, I think I could do
that.

GEORGE

Lovely. I'm George.

EILEEN

Eileen.

They shake hands and he feigns that she has hurt him.

GEORGE

Ow!

EILEEN

I'm sorry! I didn't...

He laughs and she realizes the joke, joining in on the laughter.

64 INT. TAFT HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

64

Jenny, Nancy and Shane prep the packing boxes.

NANCY

I'll start in the living room.

Nancy goes into the living room as Shane holds up a whisk. *

SHANE

What about this?

JENNY

Hmmm... my mom is suddenly fond of making frittatas. She probably needs the whisk.

He nods as he puts it back in the drawer.

SHANE

So, I looked up the Heart Orchid. Fascinating stuff.

JENNY

(flattered)

You looked it up?

SHANE

Yeah. I wanted to know what made you trek around the globe. What do you think about the whole "it only blooms when someone finds true love" thing?

JENNY

That's just a silly myth.

SHANE

Oh, come on. It's kind of romantic, don't you think?

JENNY

I'm a scientist. We deal with facts, not fantasy.

SHANE

There's nothing scientific about love.

JENNY

Sure there is. It's pheromones and the chemicals in your brain. Things like body language and the tone of someone's voice create these reactions and we interpret that as love. Studies show that it takes less than four minutes for us to decide that we like someone.

SHANE

Love at first sight?

JENNY

That's a romance novel way of describing it, but yes, I suppose.

SHANE

Is there someone to whom you are chemically attracted back in Pennsylvania?

JENNY

(nods)
I have an Owen.

SHANE

What's an Owen?

JENNY

His name. I mean, his name is Owen. He's... a good guy.

SHANE

What does he do?

JENNY

He's a grad student like me. Botany also.

SHANE

Shared interest. That's good.

JENNY

Yes. It's hard, though, sometimes - keeping that connection going.

SHANE

Those brain chemicals don't last forever, I guess.

Both of them consider this for a moment. Jenny picks up a box and they go into the living room.

65 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

65

Jenny puts the box down with some others and then she and Shane arrange things in them while Nancy lurks in the background.

JENNY

(beat)

So... You and Allison... How's that going?

SHANE

(shrugs)

You remember Allison, don't you?

JENNY

Oh, yeah.

SHANE

She can be...

(beat - changes direction)

We're actually considering moving to San Diego.

JENNY

Really?

SHANE

She's up for a job there.

JENNY

Wow. That would be a big change.

How do you feel about it?

SHANE

Good, I guess. I don't know. It's funny. In high school, I was king of the world. I wish someone had told me that it doesn't last. Maybe I would've appreciated it more.

Jenny is a little taken aback but she doesn't comment.

SHANE (CONT'D)

I know high school wasn't a great time for you... and that I had a lot to do with that. I apologized, didn't I?

JENNY

Yes, you did.

SHANE

Good. See, for you, I'm guessing it couldn't get any worse than high school, right?

JENNY

Pretty much.

SHANE

After I lost the basketball scholarship I spent a lot of time thinking, what if for me, it never gets any better? And then something kind of remarkable happened.

*

JENNY

What?

SHANE

It got better. When I started teaching I met kids like Frankie and all I can think of now is that tearing my Achilles was the best thing that ever happened to me.

*

(beat)

I've never told anyone that.

There's a knock on the front door and Nancy jumps up.

NANCY (O.S.)

I got it.

SHANE

Sorry. Way too much information about me, right?

JENNY

No, it's... it's good.

Jenny musters up her courage.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You know, I've been thinking. If the offer still stands... I'd love to go to prom with you!

Someone clears their throat and Jenny and Shane turn to see Nancy standing in the doorway... with Allison.

NANCY

The realtor is here!

Allison isn't pleased. In fact, she looks really angry.

66 INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

66 *

Jenny opens the door to the greenhouse and enters with Allison, who is taking notes - or at least pretending to. Shane and Nancy hang out near the doorway.

JENNY

So, Allison... my mom never mentioned that you were our realtor.

ALLISON

(looking around)

Oh, I'm not. Yours had another appointment so I'm just helping out. Tiny little world, huh?

JENNY

Microscopic. Well, this is the end of the tour. I guess you'll be going now?

ALLISON

This is going to need some TLC before we can show it to any prospective buyers. I mean you've got dead plants and old maps and... a box of dirt?

Allison picks up the glass box. Everyone, but mostly Jenny, holds out their hands as if she has just picked up a bomb.

JENNY

Don't... be careful!

ALLISON

What's in it?

JENNY

A very rare, very valuable flower. Please, just...

Allison puts the box down and holds up her hands as if to say, "It's all good."

ALLISON

Right. Shane tells me you're a botanist now, which of course explains the box of dirt.

*
*
*

JENNY

It's not a... Yeah, I'm close to being a botanist. I'm finishing up my masters' degree.

ALLISON
 (dismissive)
 Good for you. I'm sure that will
 be very rewarding or something.

JENNY
 Okay, uh, is there anything else
 you need to see before you go away?
 Far away?

ALLISON
 (looks around) *
 Just be careful when you clean out *
 this place. I mean, you might have
 mice or mold or, I don't know,
 poison ivy?

SHANE
 Allison!

NANCY
 (taking off her earrings)
 Oh, no... no she did not.

ALLISON
 What? I'm just concerned about her
 well-being.

SHANE
 Allison, we're leaving. Now.

ALLISON
 Oh. Okay. If you say so, darling.

She walks over to the door, allowing Nancy and Shane to go
 outside first.

ALLISON (CONT'D) *
 But first I need to have a little *
 "one-on-one" time with the *
 homeowner. Why don't you two wait *
 outside. *

She smiles an "I'm really angry so don't mess with me" smile *
 and shuts the door with Shane and Nancy outside. *

67 EXT. GREENHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

67 *

The lock on the door is audibly engaged. Shane and Nancy *
 look at the closed door then at each other. *

NANCY

If it's any consolation, she's much nicer than she was in high school.

Shane, having seen that particular smile from Allison more than once, nods in reluctant agreement. *

*

68 INT. GREENHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

68

*

Jenny is not happy about the situation, pretty much standing in one place while Allison circles the room like a hungry shark and ends up back by the glass box. She puts her hand on it and leaves it there.

ALLISON

So, Jenny, I just wanted to take this opportunity to talk. *

*

JENNY

Okay, can I just...

Jenny motions to take the glass box but Allison's hand is firmly in place.

ALLISON

That's okay. I've got it. So, what I'd like to talk about is this: why is my boyfriend asking you out on a date?

JENNY

It's not a date.

ALLISON

I believe your exact words were, "I'd love to go to prom with you."

JENNY

No, but see, I mean, yes, but we...

ALLISON

Stop saying random words.

JENNY

(deep breath)

It's not a date. It's just Shane trying to apologize for...

ALLISON

Ah. That. I suppose you're expecting me to apologize, too?

JENNY

Expecting? No, not really.

ALLISON

Good, because I'm not going to. Do you want know why?

JENNY

Want to? No, not really.

ALLISON

Because we were kids and it was a million years ago. You need to let it go. It's as silly as a childhood fantasy of Prince Charming taking Cinderella to the ball. Because in this particular version of the story, the only reason the Prince asked is because he felt sorry for her.

Jenny is cowed and hates herself for it.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Move on, Jenny. You really shouldn't hold on to stuff like that. Who knows what kind of damage it could do.

Allison pats the glass box.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

I'm really glad we had this chat. *

Allison struts out of the greenhouse, leaving Jenny shaking and practically in tears. *

69

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

69

Frankie is walking through the main part of town, a charming little street of stores and boutiques. She is staring at her phone, reviewing the text conversation with Ethan about prom. Something catches her eye.

In the window of a small shop is a display advertising prom dresses and tuxedos. There's a handsome boy mannequin, all dressed up and dapper in a black tux, and a pretty girl mannequin, wearing a beautiful blue gown, both surrounded by flowers and twinkle lights and glitter encrusted stars.

She shakes her head and walks away but we stay focused on the window. A moment later she comes back, walking with her head down in focused determination. She enters the store.

70

EXT. TAFT HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

70

Jenny and Nancy are at the kitchen table eating a cheesecake.

JENNY

I have accomplished a lot.

NANCY

Yes, you have.

JENNY

I'm at the top of my class. I'll have my pick of jobs.

NANCY

So smart!

JENNY

I have traveled the world and gone to dangerous places and survived malaria!

NANCY

So sick!

JENNY

I was so sick.

NANCY

No, not you. I meant me.

For a moment it looks like she might be sick. But it passes.

NANCY (CONT'D)

No, I'm good.

She digs back into the cheesecake.

JENNY

So why is it that five minutes alone in a room with Allison Crane and I'm suddenly a scared little girl?

NANCY

(shrugs)

They will always be the popular kids and we will always be the nerds.

JENNY

We're not nerds!

Nancy gives her an "oh please" look.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Okay, but the popular kids don't always stay popular and the nerds don't always stay nerds.

NANCY

You're just saying that because you have a crush on Shane.

JENNY

I do not!

Another "oh please" look.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I don't! I mean, he's nice. And he's, you know, handsome. And smart. Sensitive. He's got this sort of soft side that, oh no, I do have a crush on him. What do I do?

NANCY

Every time you start to think of how nice and handsome and sensitive he is, just picture Allison. It's like aversion therapy.

JENNY

(beat)

If I tell you something stupid will you promise not to laugh?

NANCY

I promise.

JENNY

For a minute... I mean just for a second... I thought he sort of, kind of, maybe might like me, too.

Nancy doesn't reply. She just digs into the cheesecake.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You're not laughing.

*

NANCY

I promised not to.

JENNY

When has that ever stopped you? You thought he sort of kind of maybe might me like me, didn't you?

NANCY

I did not!

JENNY

What if he actually really does
sort of kind of maybe like me?

NANCY

Okay, fine, what if? He's got a
girlfriend who apparently will not
hesitate to hurt you and you have a
boyfriend, who for reasons that
still escape me, you actually like.

JENNY

Owen.

NANCY

Yes. Look, Jenny, I know it's fun
to think that the star of the
basketball team is going to dump
the hot cheerleader and ask out the
plant geek, but it never works out
that way.

*
*
*

JENNY

Well, one thing's for certain...
There's no way I'm going to the
prom with him.

They continue with the cheesecake.

71 INT. SHANE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

71

Allison and Shane are having a battle.

ALLISON

There is no way you are going to
the prom with her.

SHANE

Allison, you are being ridiculous.

ALLISON

Why? Because I don't want my
boyfriend going out on a date with
someone else?

SHANE

It's not a date. It's just
chaperoning a dance. It's not like
I'm going to buy her a corsage and
rent a limo.

ALLISON

Tell me you're doing it because you feel sorry for her.

SHANE

I'm not going to say that.

ALLISON

You like her.

SHANE

Okay, now you're being insane. Why is this such a big deal?

ALLISON

(beat - looks down)

I got the job.

Stunned silence.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

And I want to be happy about it and I want you to be happy about it. But instead I'm scared that you're going to tell me you don't want to go to San Diego... and I'm scared that I'm going to go anyway.

(beat - looks at him)

Should I be scared?

SHANE

(beat)

I don't want to go to San Diego.

ALLISON

(beat)

I'm going to go anyway.

(beat)

Is this really happening? Are we really breaking up? Over prom?

SHANE

It's not about the prom. Or San Diego. We were perfect together when we were kids...

ALLISON

But we're not kids anymore.

Allison pauses for a moment and then walks over to him, gives him a heartfelt kiss on the cheek, and then leaves. Shane can do nothing but watch her go.

72 EXT. TAFT HOUSE - NIGHT 72
Re-establish

73 INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT 73 *
Jenny is sitting on a stool staring at the glass box.

JENNY

Bloom.

(beat)

Bloom!

(beat)

On the count of three, bloom.

One... two... three...

(sighs)

I guess California is not the place you want to make your big debut, huh? I don't blame you. I never really wanted to come back here, myself. After Daddy died, there's just too much... past, you know? A lot of it was good. I had parents who loved me and I had friends like Nancy... I never really knew I was unpopular until that night. That one night colored everything that happened before it. All the good washed away just like that.

(beat)

So I get not wanting to bloom here, but... I really could use some *good* here again. Just a little.

But the box of dirt remains just that.

Jenny's phone dings to let her know she has a text. She looks at it and it's a text from Frankie.

Frankie: Thought you might like this picture.

Jenny opens the attachment and it's a photo of her and Shane in the back yard earlier that day. They both look happy - really happy. Jenny smiles.

There is a knock on the door and Jenny looks up expectantly. Could it be him? Could it be Shane?

She straightens her hair - or tries to - and walks over to the door. She opens it... and Owen is standing there.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Owen?!

OWEN

Surprise!

He gives her a kiss and then they embrace.

JENNY

Owen, what are you doing here?

OWEN

I just couldn't stay away. I missed you so much!

JENNY

Oh, Owen, that's sweet...

He practically drops her as he goes over to the Heart Orchid box.

OWEN

(to the box)

Did you miss me? Daddy's home!

JENNY

(a little hurt)

You came all the way to California for the Heart Orchid?

OWEN

We went all over the world to find it. Going across the country is nothing. You know, I've been thinking about our presentation and I want to add multi-media. Video and maybe animation.

JENNY

Don't you think that's a little overboard?

OWEN

Jenny, just trust me, okay? It'll be amazing. Maybe we should put in some music. Should I write a song?

Owen goes on like this and all Jenny can do is pretend that she is paying attention.

Eileen is sitting in the chair while Nancy does her hair.

NANCY

Owen is here?

EILEEN

Yes. I swear, I don't know what Jenny sees in him.

(blanches)

Oh, don't tell her I said that!

NANCY

You should say that to her! She might listen to you. She certainly doesn't want to hear it from me.

EILEEN

You don't like him either?

NANCY

He's not good enough for her.

EILEEN

Exactly. I just wish she had more confidence in herself.

NANCY

It's amazing, isn't it? She can go to these crazy dangerous places looking for a flower but she doesn't know how to take a chance with people.

EILEEN

It's hard to open up... try new things.

NANCY

Speaking of which, is there some particular reason why you are back in my chair so soon?

EILEEN

(blushes)

Well...

NANCY

I knew it. There's a guy, isn't there? I'm so good at reading people. Spill!

EILEEN

His name is George. We... ran into each other at the fitness center.

NANCY

Atta girl! You're going out on a date with him?

EILEEN

Well, we're just meeting for some coffee.

NANCY

You should have told me that. Now I have to totally rethink my strategy here. We have to do something special.

EILEEN

(beat)

I haven't told Jenny yet.

NANCY

Why not?

EILEEN

It's my first real date since Jordan died and I know she's not totally comfortable with all the changes. The house...

NANCY

She'll be fine. In fact, I think she'll be thrilled. It'll give her something to think about other than Shane Rutherford.

EILEEN

I don't understand that. He was so mean to her in high school. Why is she spending all this time with him now? I ask her about it and she gets all fidgety and nervous and stammers and oh dear, she has a crush on him.

NANCY

Bingo.

EILEEN

(sighs)

Well... he'll probably break her heart. Again.

(beat)

And yet he's still better than Owen.

The two of them try not to laugh but can't help it.

75 EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

75

Jenny is walking through the town square by the statue, deep in thought. As she gets to the edge of it she is distracted from her ruminations by the flowers in the bed around its base. She stops and stares.

JENNY

Who mixes *Ceanothus Victoria* with
Tulipa Gesneriana? That's just
crazy.

She leans over the low wall to get a closer look. From behind her...

SHANE

Jenny?

Jenny wheels around and almost falls into the flower bed but Shane catches her and pulls her back from the brink.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Careful. Are you okay?

JENNY

Yes, I'm fine. You... what are you
doing here?

SHANE

(shrugs)

I was just out for a walk. Trying
to...

(deep breath)

...get a little clarity. What
about you?

JENNY

Same. Definitely in need of some
clarity. So if you find some...

SHANE

(teasing)

Get your own.

JENNY

(smiles)

Come on! Don't hog all the
clarity.

SHANE

Nope. It's mine. I called it.

JENNY

Fine, be that way. Then I'll just
look for... less ambiguity.

*
*

SHANE

That's the same thing! Don't try
to thesaurus your way out of
stealing my clarity.

*
*
*
*

JENNY

(snaps her fingers)

I knew I should've paid more
attention in English class.

*
*
*
*

They sit on the low wall of the flower bed, smiling for a
moment. But then the smiles fade for both of them.

*

SHANE

I'm sorry about yesterday.
Allison...

JENNY

Hates me.

SHANE

No. Well, kind of, but it really
doesn't have anything to do with
you. It's about us. Or it was.

JENNY

Was? What do you mean?

SHANE

We broke up.

JENNY

I'm sorry.

SHANE

Me too. Now, I just need to decide
if I should try to fix it.

JENNY

Hence the need for clarity.

*

SHANE

What about you? What are you
trying to make less ambiguous?

*
*

JENNY

Everything? School, career, men...

Shane looks up at her.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Owen's here.

SHANE

The boyfriend? Here?

(beat)

That's nice.

JENNY

He missed the Heart Orchid.

SHANE

That can't be the only reason he came.

Jenny looks at him and then away.

*

SHANE (CONT'D)

Ambiguity. Got it.

(beat)

So about Saturday night. The prom.

JENNY

I totally get it. Not a good idea considering everything.

SHANE

No, I was going to ask you what time you wanted me to pick you up.

JENNY

Shane, we can't. If you decide you want to get back together with Allison, us going to prom would not help. And it'll only complicate my stuff with Owen. Besides, I know you're just doing this because you feel sorry for me.

SHANE

What? No! I don't feel sorry for you. I think you're amazing.

JENNY

You do?

SHANE

Of course. You're very impressive, Jenny. Asking you to chaperone the prom with me is totally selfish on my part because all I can think is how much I missed in high school by not knowing you.

Jenny doesn't know how to respond to that.

SHANE (CONT'D)

I'll tell you what... If you decide
you want to come just show up.
I'll be there.

He stands and walks away with a little wave and a smile and
Jenny can't help but watch him go.

76

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

76

George and Eileen are walking down the sidewalk of the
commercial district of Pine Hill, enjoying coffee and each
other.

EILEEN

...so when the teacher didn't show
up one day, I figured, I've been
coming to this spin class for a
year. I can do that. So I did!

GEORGE

That's amazing. You should be very
proud of yourself.

EILEEN

I am. Oh, listen to me. I've been
going on and on about myself. Tell
me more about you.

GEORGE

Well, it's nowhere near as
interesting. I was a lawyer but
I'm retired now, although I help
out a few days a week at the legal
aid center.

EILEEN

That's nice. Were you married?

GEORGE

I was. She divorced me many years
ago and for good reason. I was a
very flawed man.

EILEEN

But you're not anymore?

GEORGE

No, now I'm quite perfect.

EILEEN

Good to know.

GEORGE

Well, almost perfect. I do get
beat up by girls, so...

They have reached a bench and George gestures toward it.
They sit and as they do, he moves slowly and grimaces a bit.

EILEEN

Oh, are you sure you're okay?

GEORGE

Just a bruise. Mainly my ego.

EILEEN

Have I apologized enough?

GEORGE

You have. And there's no need. I
got to meet you, so it's totally
worth it.

He smiles and she smiles back, blushing and giddy.

77

EXT. TAFT HOUSE FRONT YARD - DAY

77

The yard sale is in full swing with people perusing the various tables, racks, blankets, and boxes that are filled with all the stuff that Eileen is getting rid of. Jenny, Eileen, and Frankie are all working the crowd, happily talking to people and collecting money. George is there also, helping, but also flirting with Eileen. Owen is sitting on the porch with a laptop computer, not helping at all.

But it is Nancy who is most engaged, running around like a hyper used car salesperson. She comes running up to Eileen, George, and Jenny holding a ten-dollar bill.

NANCY

I just got ten bucks for that
cracked vase!

JENNY

How?

NANCY

I told her it was once owned by the
British royal family and that it
broke during a fight over who would
inherit the crown.

GEORGE

Give me the ten dollars.

NANCY

Why?

GEORGE

I have a feeling by the end of the day you're going to need a lawyer.

She nods and hands over the money then spies someone looking at a suitcase.

NANCY

Ah. I see another potential victim... I mean, customer.

Nancy runs off.

GEORGE

(to Eileen)

I better go with her. Make sure you don't wind up having to put the house up to cover her bail.

He kisses Eileen on the cheek and then follows Nancy. Eileen stands there, grinning like a schoolgirl.

EILEEN

(to Jenny)

Well?

JENNY

Well, what?

EILEEN

Stop torturing me. What do you think?

JENNY

(beat - smile)

I think he's great.

EILEEN

Really?

JENNY

Yes! He's very charming and handsome. That doesn't hurt. And he's obviously smitten with you.

EILEEN

You think so?

JENNY

He's following your daughter's friend around to make sure she doesn't get arrested. That's smitten.

EILEEN

And it's okay with you? That I'm going out with him?

JENNY

Of course. I'm just glad you're enjoying yourself.

EILEEN

I know all of this has been hard on you. The house and all of the other changes, but I *am* enjoying myself - for the first time in a long time.

JENNY

I know. I can tell.

EILEEN

And it doesn't mean I don't miss your father. I do... every day.

JENNY

Me too.

They embrace warmly. Frankie comes over with some cash.

FRANKIE

I got two bucks for the candle.

EILEEN

Nice job, Frankie. It probably wasn't worth fifty cents.

JENNY

(to Frankie)

Thank you for your help today. I really appreciate it.

FRANKIE

Helps keep my mind off of that thing that somebody asked someone to do.

JENNY

Oh, right. That's tonight. Is someone going to do it?

Frankie pauses a second and then nods, blushing and smiling at the same time.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Good for you. I mean, for someone.

Frankie goes back into the yard sale fray.

EILEEN

What was that all about?

JENNY

Teenage girl stuff.

EILEEN

Ah. Say no more.

Owen calls out from the porch.

OWEN

Jenny? Jenny!

JENNY

(to Eileen)

Duty calls.

Jenny heads for the porch.

78

EXT. TAFT HOUSE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

78

Jenny walks up to Owen.

OWEN

I have a new opening for the presentation. Do you want to hear it?

JENNY

Owen, can we do this later? I'm a little busy with the...

OWEN

I know, I know, but our presentation is hanging in the balance here. It'll only take a minute and you're going to like it. Trust me.

Jenny reluctantly sits down next to Owen.

79 EXT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - DAY

79

Allison is just getting into her car as Shane pulls up in his. He gets out and walks over to her.

SHANE
(contrite)
Hey.

ALLISON
(cool)
Hi.

SHANE
Can we talk?

ALLISON
I don't think there's anything left
to talk about, is there?

SHANE
I don't know. But I feel like we
should at least make sure, don't
you?

ALLISON
(nods)
I'm just on my way to go drop off
some papers.

He sees that the envelope she has in her hand says TAFT.

SHANE
You're going to Jenny's house?

ALLISON
Don't worry. I'll be nice.

SHANE
Why don't I go with you?

ALLISON
Seriously?

SHANE
And then we can talk afterward.

Allison thinks it over for a moment. She nods and he walks around to the other side of the car.

80 EXT. TAFT HOUSE FRONT YARD - DAY

80

The yard sale continues.

Frankie is arranging some clothes on a table when she glances up and is shocked to see Ethan at a nearby table looking at books. She checks to make sure that no one else - specifically Madison - is nearby and then carefully approaches him, then pretends to be looking at books also.

Ethan looks up at this and then notices Frankie.

ETHAN

Hey Frankie. They have some cool books here, huh? A lot of stuff about plants, though.

FRANKIE

Yeah. Cool.

ETHAN

How did the pictures turn out?

FRANKIE

Good. Yeah, good.

ETHAN

Great. Can't wait to see them.

FRANKIE

Maybe you can see them tonight.

ETHAN

Tonight? At the prom? Well, we may be too busy dancing, but sure.

FRANKIE

Dancing?

ETHAN

Yeah... it's a dance so you kind of have to dance. I think it's like a rule or something.

FRANKIE

Right. Right.
(looks around - whispers)
I haven't told anyone.

ETHAN

(also whispers)
About what?

FRANKIE

(nods)
Exactly. So I'll see you tonight?

ETHAN

I'll be there.

Frankie tries to contain her glee as she walks away.

As she goes back to join the rest of the sale, Allison's car pulls up to the curb and both her and Shane get out.

81 EXT. TAFT HOUSE PORCH

81

Up on the porch, Jenny sees them and stands suddenly, watching them as they approach Eileen.

JENNY

Oh no.

OWEN

What?

JENNY

Nothing. Stay here.

She rushes down off the porch and Owen, of course, follows.

82 EXT. TAFT HOUSE FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

82

By the time she gets down into the yard, Allison has handed Eileen the envelope.

ALLISON

Read them over and then just sign the copies where it's indicated. I'll pick them up from you next week sometime.

EILEEN

Great. Thank you so much, Allison.

Jenny and Owen join the little group just as Nancy comes rushing up also, followed by George.

NANCY

(to Jenny)

Do you want me to get my mace?

JENNY

Not yet.

EILEEN

Oh, Jenny. Allison, was just dropping off papers to get the house listed.

JENNY

Great. Thanks for stopping by.

OWEN

Aren't you going to introduce me?

JENNY

(reluctantly)

Owen, this is Allison, our realtor,
This is my... this is Owen.

Allison and Owen shake hands and then he extends it to Shane.

OWEN

I didn't catch your name.

SHANE

Shane. Nice to meet you.

OWEN

So, how do you know Jenny?

EILEEN

They went to high school together.

OWEN

Oh really? You have to tell me
what she was like back then. I
mean, I know her pretty well now
but I'm guessing she was kind of
nerdy back then, huh?

*
*
*
*

Allison laughs a little but then covers it. Shane looks
annoyed on Jenny's behalf.

*

OWEN (CONT'D)

I mean hey, we were all a little
nerdy in high school, right?
Unless you were like class
president or head cheerleader or
something.

*

JENNY

Owen, they were class president and
head cheerleader.

OWEN

Oh... Yeah, that makes sense.

Frankie comes up to join the group.

FRANKIE

Hi, Mr. Rutherford.

SHANE

Hey Frankie. What's going on?

FRANKIE

Just helping out with the sale.

EILEEN

She is a very good negotiator.

SHANE

I believe it.

FRANKIE

(to Shane)

Are you still chaperoning the prom tonight?

SHANE

Yes. Are you going?

Frankie looks at the ground and tries not to smile.

SHANE (CONT'D)

With who?

JENNY

(to Shane)

Somebody and the someone with the something?

SHANE

(smiles)

Ohhh... I understand.

ALLISON

(shakes her head)

Great. Now you have like, inside jokes with her?

*
*

SHANE

Allison...

EILEEN

(trying to defuse)

The prom sounds like so much fun. I didn't get to go to mine...

GEORGE

That's terrible. Everyone should have a prom.

(to Shane)

Do you need more chaperones? Because we'd be happy to volunteer.

SHANE
(shrugs)
Sure. Why not? *

OWEN
(to Jenny)
Maybe we should go, too.

ALLISON
You're a little late, Owen. Jenny
was already invited.

OWEN
You were? By who?

ALLISON
(points at Shane)
By him. My boyfriend. Former
boyfriend, that is.

OWEN
Wait, a minute.
(points at Allison)
You were dating her...
(points at Jenny)
But you invited her?!

Evan looks back and forth at Allison and Jenny like they are
a math equation that don't add up. He doesn't get it and it
is this cluelessness that makes him say the worst possible
thing he could say in that moment. *

OWEN (CONT'D)
(incredulous)
Why? *

Jenny is visibly hurt by this - once again she's the girl
that isn't good enough just like in high school. *

Shane sees the expression on her face and it breaks his heart
a little - and makes him angry at the same time. *

SHANE
(to Owen)
You're an idiot. Because if you
really need to ask why then you
don't know Jenny at all. *

Jenny is stunned by what Shane has said. Allison is too, but
in a much different way. *

ALLISON
(to Shane)
Really? You're, what? *

(MORE)

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Defending her honor? All this for
the girl that thinks the most
important thing in her life is a
box of dirt?

*
*

SHANE

Allison, enough!

*

ALLISON

You're right. You're absolutely
right. Enough.

(to Jenny)

He's all yours. But someday I hope
you'll understand what it feels
like when someone takes away
something you really care about.

*

She storms off. Shane turns to Jenny.

*

SHANE

I'm sorry.

*
*

He goes after Allison.

*

83 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

83

*

Allison has reached her car but before she gets in something
catches her eye.

*

From her POV we see the greenhouse behind the Taft House.
She contemplates that for a moment.

*

ALLISON

Hmmmm....

Should she or shouldn't she? But then she sees Shane
approaching and she gets in the car and drives away quickly.
Shane watches her go and then sits on the curb.

*
*
*

84 EXT. TAFT HOUSE FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

84

The rest of the group has watched this play out.

*

OWEN

(still clueless)

What just happened?

*
*
*

Jenny shakes her head and walks toward Shane.

*

85 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS 85 *

Jenny walks up to Shane who is sitting on the curb. She sits next to him. *

JENNY
Are you okay?

SHANE
Peachy. I was looking for clarity. *
Guess it couldn't get any more
clear than that.

JENNY
You could still fix it.

SHANE
How?

JENNY
You could call her boyfriend an *
idiot. *

SHANE
True. *

JENNY
(beat) *
I'm sorry. I feel like it's my *
fault. *

SHANE
It's not. It's mine. Ours,
Allison and me. We're not the same
people we were in high school.

He looks at Jenny directly.

SHANE (CONT'D)
And you're not either. You get
that, right? You don't have to
settle for...

He looks over toward Owen.

SHANE (CONT'D)
For anything.

JENNY
Neither do you.

Shane nods and then stands up, brushing off his pants.

SHANE

I'll see you tonight?

JENNY

(shaking her head)

Shane...

SHANE

(firmly)

I'll see you tonight.

He turns and walks off down the street.

86

EXT. TAFT HOUSE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

86

Eileen, Owen, Nancy, and Frankie have retreated to the porch.

OWEN

That guy has anger issues. It
looked like he wanted to punch me.

*
*

Jenny joins them on the porch.

JENNY

He wasn't going to punch you, Owen.

*
*

NANCY

(to Jenny)

Can *I* punch him?

OWEN

Are you going to tell me what's
going on? Did he really ask you to
go to prom?

*
*
*

JENNY

No, he just... it was just a big
misunderstanding.

*
*

(a little hopeful)

But if he did... would you be
jealous?

OWEN

(scoffs)

Don't be silly. I mean it's not
like he's going to ask you out on a
real date.

*
*
*
*

NANCY

(to Jenny)

Oh *please* let me punch him.

*

JENNY

(to Owen)

What if he did? What if he asked
me out on a "real" date. Would
that bother you?

*
*
*

OWEN

Well, of course!

*

For a brief shining moment, Jenny has hope for him after all.
And then he goes and ruins it with his cluelessness again.

*
*

OWEN (CONT'D)

I mean, how would that look for our
presentation on the "romantic"
Heart Orchid if you were going out
with some other guy?

*
*
*
*
*

Jenny looks at him, shakes her head, and steps to the side,
clearing a path for Nancy. Nancy smiles.

87

EXT. TAFT HOUSE FRONT YARD - DAY

87

The yard has been mostly cleaned up, with a few remaining
boxes here and there. Frankie approaches Jenny.

*

FRANKIE

I'm going to take off, if that's
okay.

*

JENNY

Absolutely. Thank you for all your
help and sorry about all the
craziness.

FRANKIE

Are you kidding? You should have
yard sales every week. You could
sell tickets.

JENNY

Have a great time tonight.

FRANKIE

I will. I hope.

She waves and takes off down the sidewalk. Jenny heads to
the front porch.

88

EXT. TAFT HOUSE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

88

Jenny walks over to Eileen and George who are sitting on the front porch, putting some books in boxes. Nancy is nearby counting the money. *

EILEEN

We got rid of most of it. *

NANCY

And turned a nice profit. I may have to give up hair and go into sales full time. *

JENNY

(beat) *

Has anyone seen Owen? *

EILEEN

I heard him say something about the airport, I think. It was kind of hard to tell with his fat lip.

Eileen tries to stifle a smile and Nancy openly laughs. *

JENNY

(to Nancy) *

It's not funny.

NANCY

I wasn't really going to punch him. I just started taking off my earrings and he turned and ran face first into the door. *

Jenny shakes her head and sits down, dejected. *

EILEEN

George, Nancy. Can you give us just a minute? *

GEORGE

Of course.

George and Nancy start to walk off. *

NANCY

(to George) *

It was a *little* funny. *

GEORGE

(nods) *

More than a little. *

And they are gone. Eileen pats the seat next to her and Jenny sits down. Eileen puts her arm around her daughter. *

EILEEN

You know, sweetheart, I didn't want to be one of those mothers that butts into their children's lives, but I never got what you saw in him.

JENNY

I saw someone who was smart. I saw someone who was a scientist like me.

EILEEN

But did you see someone you could love?

Jenny doesn't have a response to that.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Your father was always so much better at giving advice than I was. All I could ever think to do was bake cookies.

JENNY

You bake good cookies.

EILEEN

True. But can I tell you a secret?

JENNY

Sure.

EILEEN

I hate baking. All the measuring and the math. Did you know that baking involves math? It's hard.

JENNY

Then why did you do it?

EILEEN

Because I thought that's what I was supposed to do. I thought that's all I could do. It's like everyone just saw me as Jordan's wife and Jenny's mom and I never knew I could do anything else.

JENNY

I'm sorry.

EILEEN

Oh, no. No, sweetheart. Don't get me wrong. I loved being your dad's wife. And I still love being your mother. And I wouldn't trade a single second of it for the world. But now I understand that I can be Jenny's mom and I can be Eileen Taft, too. And what's great about it is that I think Eileen Taft is a really interesting person.

JENNY

Me, too.

EILEEN

And I think she has a really interesting daughter, too. Someone who is more than just smart and more than just a scientist. She just needs to believe that.

Jenny and Eileen hug. Nancy walks up to the steps.

NANCY

Sorry to interrupt, but I'm going to take off. Do you want me to drop these last couple of boxes at the thrift store?

*
*
*
*

EILEEN

That would be terrific. Thank you. Jenny, is there anything else you want to get rid of?

*
*

JENNY

I don't think so. Oh, wait... I may have a couple of things in the greenhouse.

Jenny heads off toward the back of the house.

89 INT. GREENHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

89 *

Jenny comes into the greenhouse and picks up a box that is sitting on a table near the door. Then she stops suddenly - a look of horror spreading across her face.

*

The box with the Heart Orchid in it is gone.

The horror starts to turn to anger.

JENNY

Allison...

She runs out of the greenhouse. *

90 INT. CAR - DAY

90

Jenny is driving her mother's car with fierce determination. *

She sees something that catches her interest.

91 EXT. TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

91

Allison is walking across the square toward the statue carrying a large bag - one that would be big enough to have the Heart Orchid box inside. *

Eileen's car comes to a halt nearby with a screech of the brakes. Jenny jumps out and runs into the square just as Allison has gotten to the statue. *

During the following, Jenny follows Allison around the statue and flower bed faster and faster. Eventually it turns into something akin to a chase. *

JENNY

Give it back.

ALLISON

(genuinely confused)

Give what back?

JENNY

Dendrophylax spectabilis.

ALLISON

What are you talking about?

JENNY

The Heart Orchid!

Allison is still stumped.

JENNY (CONT'D)

The box of dirt!

ALLISON

Oh! Next time, lead with that.

Why are you asking me?

JENNY

Because you took it!

ALLISON

I did not.

JENNY

It's in that bag!

Jenny tries to grab for it but Allison keeps it out of reach.

ALLISON

Why would I take your box of dirt? *

JENNY

Because you're determined to get back at me! You said you hoped I'd know what it was like to lose something important.

ALLISON

You're insane.

JENNY

You have been out to get me since we were kids! *

ALLISON

Is this about our high school prom?

JENNY

It's about everything! The time in tenth grade when you tripped me in the hall and I dropped an entire box of seeds. The time in eleventh grade when you told everyone that I had a contagious case of Dutch Elm Disease. It's about the prom, it's about "Poison Ivy," it's about...

Jenny has caught up to Allison and grabs the bag, but Allison doesn't let go. They struggle over it.

ALLISON

Shane?

JENNY

Yes, it's about Shane, too. He just wanted to be nice to me by inviting me to the prom. Why did that bother you so much?

ALLISON

Because I knew he didn't want to go with me!

Jenny is so surprised by this comment that she lets go of the bag. Allison stumbles backward and starts to fall into the flower bed so Jenny reaches out to grab her to stop it from happening. *

JENNY
Watch out for the *Tulipa*
Gesneriana! *

But the physics don't work out and they both go over and into the dirt and plants. *

92 EXT. FRANKIE'S HOUSE - DAY 92

Re-establish

93 INT. FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - DAY 93

Frankie steps in front of a full-length mirror in her bedroom wearing the blue dress. Her hair and makeup aren't done and she's wearing sneakers, but she already looks lovely.

She admires herself for a moment, twisting and turning and checking it out from every angle, filled with the kind of teenage girl glee that is impossible to describe.

Her phone dings to tell her she has a new text and she scrambles to take a look. On her phone:

Madison: I'm thinking of taking up photography. What do you think of this one?

The photo is of her and Ethan all dressed up for the prom.

Frankie is crestfallen already, shaking her head and holding back tears. She throws the phone and breaks down in sobs.

94 EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY 94

Jenny and Allison right themselves and wind up sitting side by side in the flower bed, covered in dirt and the remains of flowers and plants. They are silent for a moment. *

ALLISON
Watch out for the what? *

JENNY
Tulipa Gesneriana.
(holds up a tulip)
Tulip. *

ALLISON
Couldn't you just say tulip?

*
*

JENNY
(beat)
What makes you think he didn't want
to go with you? He asked, didn't
he?

*

ALLISON
Yes. But only because he was
supposed to. He *wanted* to go with
you. And then somehow or other
that made me into the bad guy.

JENNY
Well... you did steal my flower.

ALLISON
I didn't steal your flower! I
thought about it, but I didn't.

She pulls a box out of the bag; it's a laptop computer.

*

ALLISON (CONT'D)
It's for my new job.

*

She shakes the box - it sound broken inside.

*

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Or, it was.

*
*

JENNY
(beat)
So you're going to take the job?

*
*

ALLISON
(beat)
Yes.

Allison looks up toward the sky for a moment.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Shane and I have been together
since we were fifteen. Can you
believe that?

JENNY
Yes, I was there.

ALLISON
What do you mean?

JENNY

I was there the first time Shane asked you out. It happened right after you tripped me that day in the hall. I was picking seeds up off the floor.

ALLISON

Oh.

(shakes her head)

I really do owe you an apology, don't I?

Jenny doesn't respond to that.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

I was so desperate to be popular. I wanted to be Queen of the High School Jungle. And the easiest way to get there is to go after the weakest members of the herd.

(looks at Jenny)

I'm sorry.

JENNY

Thank you.

ALLISON

Should we...

JENNY

Hug? Sure...

Jenny goes to hug her. Allison pulls away.

ALLISON

I was going to say get out of the dirt. Just because I said I'm sorry doesn't mean I like you.

*

JENNY

Right. Got it.

They climb out of the flower bed and try to brush the dirt out of their clothes and hair.

*

ALLISON

For the record... it was my idea. The prom thing. I sent you the email from his account.

JENNY

(beat)

Thank you for telling me that.

ALLISON

Are you going to go tonight? No
wait... I don't want to know.

(beat)

So who else are you going to go
falsely accuse of stealing your box
of dirt?

JENNY

It's not... never mind. I don't
know. I can't imagine who else
would take it.

ALLISON

I can. That idiot boyfriend of
yours. *

JENNY

(building anger)

Owen!

She runs off toward her mom's car. *

95 EXT. AIRPORT LUGGAGE DROP OFF - DAY

95

Owen is outside the airport along the curb, arguing with a
skycap at the luggage check in.

OWEN

I don't know how many times I have
to tell you, I am not going to
"check" a rare flower through
baggage. It's going to go on the
plane with me and no, I'm not going
to buy it its own seat!

The skycap is ready to say something but stops as he sees
something going on behind Owen. Owen turns to look as well.

Jenny, still covered in dirt with various plants sticking out
of her hair and clothes, is walking toward them with menace
in her eyes. *

OWEN (CONT'D)

Jenny! I'm glad you're here. I
expect you have come to apologize.

Jenny just glares at him. That throws him.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Listen, I only took the orchid to
keep it safe. That greenhouse just
wasn't secure enough. *

The glare continues.

OWEN (CONT'D)
You know, Jenny, I think maybe it's
time we started seeing other
people.

The glare intensifies.

OWEN (CONT'D)
(genuinely frightened)
Okay, okay.

He hands her the box carefully.

OWEN (CONT'D)
I guess I really underestimated
you, didn't I?

JENNY
(smiles)
Yeah, you did. And it was the
worst mistake you'll ever make in
your entire life.

She turns and walks away with the flower.

Owen turns back to the skycap who immediately puts a
"Position Closed" sign on the counter and walks away.

96 EXT. TAFT HOUSE - NIGHT 96

Re-establish

97 INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT 97 *

Jenny is putting the Heart Orchid box back in its place of
honor. She admires it for a moment and looks around the
room, focusing on the stool on which her father sat all those
years ago on prom night. *

JENNY
(smiles)
Thanks, Daddy.

The door to the greenhouse opens and Frankie comes in, *

JENNY (CONT'D)
Frankie? What's wrong?

But all she can do is cry.

98

INT. TAFT HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

98

Frankie is sitting at the kitchen table, the tears abated for now. Jenny is looking at Frankie's phone.

JENNY

(shakes her head)
Deja vu all over again.

FRANKIE

What do you mean?

JENNY

Remember when you asked me if I went to prom? I didn't... because the mean girl in my class made me think that the most popular boy asked me to prom just so he could stand me up.

FRANKIE

Wasn't Mr. Rutherford the most popular boy?

JENNY

(nods)
But that was a long time ago and he's not the same person he was. Don't hold it against him, okay?

Frankie nods.

FRANKIE

(beat)
Why do people do things like that?

JENNY

I don't know...
(beat)
Though maybe I kind of do. I just learned something a little while ago about the mean girls. They can be just as scared and insecure as the rest of us. It just manifests itself in different ways.

FRANKIE

What did you do when it happened?

JENNY

I ran. I left Pine Hill, I left California, I left the country.

FRANKIE

But you saw the world.

JENNY

I saw a jungle in Borneo. And another jungle in The Philippines. And then there was the jungle in Malaysia. And I got malaria! I don't know why I was proud of that.

(shakes her head)

Anyway, after awhile the jungles all start to look the same. And they were the same, in a way. They were just someplace to hide.

FRANKIE

Hide from what?

JENNY

(beat)

The girl that gets stood up at the prom.

(beat)

I wish I had gone that night anyway. I really do. I should have walked in there and found my friends and just had fun.

Jenny relishes the thought of it for a moment and then she gets an idea. She looks at Frankie and starts to smile. Frankie looks a little worried.

99

INT. TAFT HOUSE ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

99

There's a knock on the front door. Jenny answers it and reveals Nancy, loaded down with every hair care, make-up, and beauty tool and product known to man.

NANCY

(growls)

Let's do this!

She walks in with purpose and Jenny shuts the door.

MAKEOVER MONTAGE

SHOTS of Nancy hard at work on Frankie - cutting, spraying, spritzing, brushing, and more.

100 INT. TAFT HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

100

Jenny walks into the doorway to the entry hall, wheeling in a full-length mirror.

JENNY

Are you ready?

Jenny holds up the mirror and we see Frankie. She looks amazing - still her unique, oddball self, but definitely ready for prime time. Nancy is watching expectantly.

Frankie examines herself and then starts to smile. The three of them whoop in celebration, jumping up and down.

NANCY

(to Frankie)

Watch the hair, watch the hair!

Frankie stops jumping.

FRANKIE

Sorry.

NANCY

Okay...

(to Jenny)

Now it's your turn.

Jenny starts to back away?

JENNY

What? No.

NANCY

You can't go to the prom looking like that.

JENNY

I'm not going to the prom. Not after everything.

FRANKIE

But you have to! I can't go in there by myself.

JENNY

But I...

FRANKIE

No more hiding. Remember?

Jenny thinks about it for a moment and then finally nods.

JENNY

Okay.

Nancy gets a grin on her face as she starts to circle Jenny.

NANCY

(to Jenny's hair)

At last we finally meet...

Jenny is now officially worried.

101 INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

101

The prom is in full swing with the requisite decorations, snack table, music from a DJ, and a bunch of kids dancing and having fun. We see Ethan and Madison amidst it all, dancing with abandon. George and Eileen are there as well as chaperones but more so they can dance together. *

Off to the side is Shane. He looks at the door to the gym and then at his watch.

102 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

102

Outside the gym, the hallway is done up with twinkle lights and colorful streamers leading to the entrance to the prom. The sound of music can be heard from inside. Nancy and Frankie approach the doors. They are ready to go inside when they realize they are missing someone. Nancy turns back and calls down the hall. *

NANCY

Jenny, come on!

Jenny comes around the corner looking nothing short of amazing. She's wearing a simple, but very flattering summery dress, her hair is tamed in a way that no one could have thought possible, and most importantly, she appears more confident than we have seen before.

She joins Nancy and Frankie at the doors.

FRANKIE

(to Jenny)

Are you ready?

JENNY

Ready. *

Nancy and Jenny opens the doors and then follow Frankie into the gym. *

103 INT. GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS 103

The three of them walk into the gym, all smiles. They pause on the edge of the action.

FRANKIE
(to Jenny)
Come on.

JENNY
No. This is your prom, not mine.
Go ahead.

Frankie takes a deep breath and smiles then starts making her way through the crowd toward Madison and Ethan.

104 INT. PROM DANCE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS 104

Frankie is moving through the crowd and several kids notice her, giving her surprised looks and appreciative nods. She makes it over to Madison and Ethan and taps him on the shoulder. Ethan turns and is shocked by what he sees.

ETHAN
Frankie? Wow, you look amazing!

FRANKIE
Thank you.

ETHAN
Madison, doesn't she look
incredible?

MADISON
(annoyed)
No.

A few feet away, Shane notices what is happening and watches intently. George and Eileen are nearby and see it happening as well.

FRANKIE
I'm sorry to interrupt, but I just
wanted to say thank you to Madison.

MADISON
(suspicious)
For what?

FRANKIE
For making me think that Ethan had
invited me to go with him tonight.

ETHAN

What?
(to Madison)
You did what?

FRANKIE

It's okay, Ethan. Because if she hadn't I'd just be sitting at home alone tonight, feeling sorry for myself. Instead, I'm here. I'm at the prom. And I'm going to have fun tonight if for no other reason, Madison, than it'll bug the heck out of you.

She turns and starts to walk away but then turns back.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Oh, and Madison. Your boyfriend said I looked incredible. And he was right.

This time she does turn and walk away to the applause of everyone around her who heard it. The music switches to an up tempo hit and she starts dancing with a group of other kids, smiling and having the time of her life.

105 INT. GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS

105

Back over on the side of the gym, Nancy and Jenny are thrilled at the way things turned out.

Jenny looks around for a moment and sees Shane who hasn't seen her yet. She smiles nervously.

NANCY

There he is. This is what you've been waiting for!

Jenny hears this and her smile fades but then returns as something more satisfied - calmer - more grown up. She shakes her head.

JENNY

No. I got what I needed. I showed up at the prom and had fun with my friend. I don't know how it could get any better than that.

NANCY

Are you sure?

JENNY

Positive.

Nancy nods and puts her arm around Jenny as they leave.

106

INT. DANCE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

106

On the dance floor, Shane works his way into the group including Frankie and gets her attention.

FRANKIE

Oh hey, Mr. Rutherford!

SHANE

Frankie, that was amazing!

FRANKIE

I know. I owe it all to Jenny.

SHANE

Jenny?

FRANKIE

Yes! It was all her idea. Ask her yourself. She's right over there.

Shane looks in the direction of where Frankie is pointing but Jenny is nowhere to be seen.

SHANE

Where?

FRANKIE

(looks)

Huh. I don't know. She was there a minute ago.

Shane takes off in that direction and Frankie keeps dancing for a moment until Ethan walks up.

ETHAN

Frankie!

FRANKIE

Oh, hey!

ETHAN

I'm really sorry. I didn't know that Madison had done that. It was really not cool.

FRANKIE
(shrugs it off)
No big deal.

ETHAN
(beat)
Can I join you guys?

FRANKIE
(smiles)
Sure.

Ethan starts dancing with Frankie's group.

107 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 107 *

Jenny and Nancy are walking down the twinkle-light lit hall outside the gym, the music from the prom echoing, when Shane comes running out. He sees her. *

SHANE *

Jenny! *

Jenny and Nancy stop and turn around. Jenny can't help but smile. Nancy is practically giddy. Shane runs up to them. *

SHANE (CONT'D) *

You came. *

JENNY *

I did. *

SHANE *

You look beautiful. *

JENNY *

Thank you. I got dressed up for the prom but this time I actually went. *

They are silent for a moment, just looking at one another then both at Nancy who is still standing there grinning at them like an idiot. She starts backing away down the hall toward the gym. *

NANCY *

I'm just going to go... dance. *

Yeah. I love this song. Whatever *

this song is. It's got a good beat *

so I'm going to go and... *

Nancy goes into the gym. Shane turns his attention back to Jenny. *

SHANE
Were you leaving?

*
*

JENNY
I was.

*
*

SHANE
Why didn't you find me? I owe you
a dance, remember?

*

JENNY
That's why. Shane, you asked
because you felt like you owed me
something. That would've been okay
with high school Jenny. But
someone reminded me recently that
I'm not high school Jenny anymore.
So the next time someone asks me to
dance it's going to be because he
wants to dance with me, not because
he feels like he has to.

Shane pauses for a moment and then, during the following,
moves a trash can out of the way.

*

SHANE
You know, high school Shane was a
bit of a jerk and if he ever met a
smart, funny, brave, a little weird
but in a good way, talented woman,
he wouldn't have any idea what to
do with her.

He straightens his tie and buttons his jacket.

*

SHANE (CONT'D)
Luckily, I'm not high school Shane
anymore. And I know exactly what
to do.

He flicks a light switch and some of the hall lights go out,
increasing the effect of the twinkle lights.

*
*

SHANE (CONT'D)
I'd ask her to dance. Not because
I have to. But because I really,
really want to.

*

He holds out his arms and she smiles, then goes to him. He
folds her into an embrace and they sway to the music echoing
down the hall from the prom.

*
*

SHANE (CONT'D)
You really do look beautiful.

JENNY

Thank you.

SHANE

Except...

Jenny stops dancing and pulls away enough to look at him, concern in her face.

JENNY

What? What's wrong?

SHANE

Nothing, no. It's just... I kind of liked your hair the way it was before.

Jenny smiles and leans in to him for their first kiss.

108 INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

108 *

Just as with the opening, we PAN through the greenhouse, the moonlight streaming in through the glass, until we see that it is no longer just a box of dirt... the Heart Orchid has started to bloom. *