

Senior Year

by

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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM -- MORNING

The morning sun shines on a young man's spacious bedroom.

Typical teenage decor -- large television, video games, college banners, poster of a sexy celebrity -- as well as a fully-stocked bookshelf adjacent to a computer desk. Each item is neatly organized, without one iota of clutter.

As the clock on an iPod changes to 7:30, a loud rock song BLASTS through the speakers.

CHARLIE LARSON (17, athletic) jolts out of bed, sheds the blanket and turns off the music.

Dressed only in a pair of boxer shorts, he rises to his feet, revealing his tall, lean frame.

Charlie stumbles into the hallway, O.S.

STAIRS -- MINUTES LATER

Fully dressed, Charlie vigorously bounds down each step.

LIVING ROOM

He crosses past the fireplace. PICTURES of young Charlie with his mother and father rest on the mantle, including a studio PORTRAIT of his father in full military uniform adorned with medals and a small American flag.

KITCHEN

Charlie enters and greets his mother JANET (early 40's, classic beauty) as she whips up an omelette.

JANET
There's my high school senior!

CHARLIE
Mornin', Mom.

Charlie takes a seat at the breakfast bar. He casually unfurls a newspaper and begins reading the day's headlines.

JANET
Charlie!

CHARLIE
What?

Janet motions to the breakfast table, revealing more food -- toast, butter, sliced fruit and bacon. Two empty plates, two coffee cups, two sets of silverware and a pot of coffee sit untouched.

JANET

Can't we eat at the table like a normal family just once?

CHARLIE

Mom, I'm just reading the paper. When the omelettes are done, I'll come sit.

JANET

Well, I've got some news for you.

Right on cue, she finishes cooking the omelettes. She places one onto Charlie's plate and sets it down at the table.

JANET

They're done.

Slightly frustrated, Charlie leaves the paper on the breakfast bar and sits down at the table.

Janet still isn't happy.

JANET

Charlie!

CHARLIE

What now?

JANET

I just washed that counter and you're going to get ink all over it!

She grabs the paper, folds it up neatly and places it in a plastic bag.

Charlie salts his omelette.

CHARLIE

What's with you, Mom? You're very high-strung today.

Janet serves herself and sits down to eat. She takes a breath.

JANET

I'm sorry honey. You're right. It's just that today is your first day of senior year, and I'm not coping particularly well.

CHARLIE

Relax, Mom. I'm still at Crystal Bay High. Nothing's changed.

Charlie chews his omelette quickly. No time to savor it.

JANET

The calendar has. I'll only have you here for one more year, and then you'll be away at Dartmouth or Cornell. And I'll be alone.

Janet shrivels on this, anticipating a lonely existence.

CHARLIE

Do you not want me to go? I can stay closer to home. I can take a year off.

JANET

No! Charlie, don't even think of giving up your dream, not even for me. We've sacrificed enough.

Charlie and his Mom attempt to enjoy their breakfast.

JANET

But it is sweet of you to offer.

Charlie scarfs down the last bite of his omelette, in between fruit slices and sips of coffee.

Janet admires her son for a brief moment of gratification.

Charlie's watch BEEPS. 8:00 A.M.

CHARLIE

Gotta go. Class starts in twenty.

JANET

But honey, you didn't touch the --

Charlie shovels two pieces of bacon in his mouth as he rises.

JANET

-- Bacon.

CHARLIE

Bye, Mom.
(kisses her on the cheek)
Love ya.

JANET

Love you too, dear. Have a great
first day!

He grabs his backpack and tosses the bagged newspaper inside.

CHARLIE

I will.

Charlie exits the kitchen with a spring in his step.

The front door SLAMS O.S. Janet sighs in solitude.

INT. CHARLIE'S TRUCK (MOVING)/EXT. DOWNTOWN CRYSTAL BAY

Charlie drives a well-worn pickup truck through downtown
Crystal Bay -- a quaint, vibrant small town.

Early risers jog, walk into work, open their Mom & Pop
stores. Churches, banks, and small retailers form a bustling
downtown area. Colonial New England buildings fight bravely
with modern architecture.

A BANNER high above the main street advertises the upcoming
Labor Day Regatta.

EXT. CRYSTAL BAY HIGH SCHOOL -- PARKING LOT

Charlie's truck approaches the school. He pulls into the
adjacent lot marked "Seniors Only" and parks proudly.

INT. CRYSTAL BAY HIGH SCHOOL -- HALLWAY

Charlie casually strides through the hallway. An assortment
of high school stereotypes greet him: The bubbly cheerleader,
the nerdy valedictorian, "Goth" kids, J. Crew preppies, a
badass biker. Charlie smiles and greets them all equally.

Brimming with self-assurance, Charlie continues toward his
first class until he is interrupted by his friend JAY (18,
rugged, muscular).

Jay SLAPS Charlie on the back, startling him.

JAY

Mornin', Einstein.

CHARLIE

Mornin' Jay.

JAY

Do you know why I love the first day of school?

CHARLIE

No homework?

JAY

Yes, but there are other reasons.

CHARLIE

Like what?

JAY

It's a new year. New goals, new experiences, and a whole new crop of freshman females.

CHARLIE

Let me guess, your goal is to experience the back of a police car? Because 14 year-olds are off-limits, Jay. Especially for you.

JAY

Lighten up, Charlie! I'm just making sure my people are in good hands.

CHARLIE

Your people?

JAY

Subjects. Minions. Whatever. The point is, we've inherited the kingdom of Crystal Bay High. We should be reaping the benefits of ruling over the lower classes.

CHARLIE

We? You're dragging me into this?

JAY

I am. You've been way too serious, bro. You worry too much about Algebra or Chemistry or whatever else you've got in that
(grabs Charlie's head)
big fuckin' brain of yours.

CHARLIE

Ow!

Jay lets go of Charlie's head.

JAY

You'll have plenty of time for that bookworm bullshit when you're in brainiac university. But that's next year. This year, we chillax. We party. We get laid.

CHARLIE

I get A's. I don't get laid.

JAY

Because you don't chillax. You're the man, dude. You're the fuckin' captain of the hockey team. But off the ice, your game is kinda weak. That's why you need a wingman.

CHARLIE

I don't need a wingman. I can get girls. I just don't have time for them.

JAY

You don't have time for your boys, either. And incase you forgot, this is our last year together. The guys have let you off the hook until now. But if you expect us to win a state title together, you're gonna have to prove to everyone that you're with us. On and off the ice.

CHARLIE

So, it's more of a team unity thing than a mission to make Charlie lighten up, have fun, and get laid?

JAY

It's all of the above. We're seniors now. This is our golden age. If there's anything you want to do, anyone you want to get with, this is the year.

Charlie pauses on this. Not only because he's impressed, but because he has reached his homeroom.

CHARLIE

I gotta get to class. If I see any freshman jailbait, I'll text you.

Jay slaps Charlie on the back one more time.

JAY
Send pictures.

Charlie smiles and shakes his head.

HOMEROOM

Students file in slowly, some chat with each other.

Charlie's friends SAM and KYLE (both 17, thin rocker-types) spot him immediately. He makes his way to them in the back of the classroom.

SAM & KYLE
Charlie!

CHARLIE
Sam! Kyle! What's going on?

Sam waves Charlie over to him. He selects a song on his iPod and hands it to Charlie.

SAM
Listen to this.

Charlie follows Sam's request just long enough to get a taste of it. A perfectly orchestrated chorus of screeching guitars, somber lyrics, and precise drum beats emanate from the earbuds.

CHARLIE
This is really good. Is this
Larceny?

SAM
It's me and Kyle, yes. But we're
not Larceny. Not without you.

KYLE
It's cool. We get that you're busy
with the honor society and the
hockey team. It's just ... Ah,
never mind.

CHARLIE
What?

KYLE
Nothing.

SAM
It's not nothing, Kyle. It's a big
deal. Just tell him.

KYLE

You know Doc's always has a "Battle of the Bands" contest on Halloween. We really wanted to enter it this year.

SAM

First prize is a thousand bucks and a free session at a recording studio. We could finally finish our album, except --

KYLE

We need a new guitarist.

SAM

And a new name.

CHARLIE

I can help you with that. And I'll ask around about the guitarist. Maybe I can help you find my replacement.

KYLE

That would be awesome. If you know anyone who could play half as good as you --

Sam has tuned out of the conversation, distracted by something, someone unseen.

SAM (O.S.)

-- Holy shit! Is that... ?

Kyle turns and looks up at the front of the class.

KYLE

No way. It can't be... Who is that?

Charlie turns and looks up at the front of the class. He casually identifies the mystery girl.

CHARLIE

Angela...
(confused)
... Angela?

ANGELA RICCI (17, Girl next-door gorgeous) Porcelain skin sprinkled with an occasional freckle. Willowy, flawless figure.

Her wavy Auburn hair swings behind her as she crosses past the teacher's desk. She recognizes Charlie instantly.

ANGELA
Charlie? Charlie Larson?

CHARLIE
Angela! Is that really you?

ANGELA
Surprised to see me again?

CHARLIE
Very surprised. I almost didn't recognize you. You look so mature.

ANGELA
Mature, huh? Are you sure that's the word you were looking for?

CHARLIE
Yes. Mature. Considering the last time I saw you was... sixth grade! Has it been that long?

ANGELA
It has. Time flies, doesn't it? Seems like only yesterday I was a third wheel to you and Katie.

CHARLIE
Ugh. Katie Conway.

ANGELA
Ugh what? She was the best friend a girl could have. Especially since I was --

KYLE
A butterball?

CHARLIE
Dude!

ANGELA
That didn't take long. I knew one of you would open up the old wound.

CHARLIE
You remember Sam and Kyle, right?

ANGELA
Of course. You boys still fighting over Pokemon cards?

KYLE
No!

SAM
It was Magic the Gathering. Get it
right.

ANGELA
Sor-ry!

CHARLIE
So what brings you back to the Bay?

The bell rings. Their teacher enters the room to begin class.

ANGELA
Guess I'll have to answer that
another time.

Charlie nods in agreement.

CHARLIE
Well, it's good to see you again.
I'm glad you're back.

ANGELA
Me too.

Angela melts Charlie with her smile, then quickly turns to face the teacher. Sam gestures his approval to Charlie, who smiles and shakes his head.

INT. ROLLER HOCKEY RINK -- AFTERNOON

A well-organized hockey game between a dozen friends.

Charlie skates across the center line, flanked by Jay and MATT (17, boyish) a small, speedy player.

Charlie cradles the bright orange ball with his stick, deftly maneuvering around the defense.

Matt blazes forward, a stride ahead of the defender. He YELLS for the ball. Charlie FIRES a pass in his direction.

Not even close. Matt stares at him in disbelief. Play stops.

DOUG (18, linebacker build) chases the ball off-scene.

CHARLIE
My fault, Matt. I'll get the next
one to ya.

MATT
You can see me, right Charlie? I
know I'm a little guy.

Doug returns with the ball.

MATT
Doug, am I invisible?

Doug ignores him. He casually passes the ball to a teammate.

MATT
Doug! Dougie! Ah, screw it.

A face-off restarts play. The two teams skate hard around the rink, whacking at the ball with their sticks.

Two long end-to-end rushes leave Charlie gasping for air. He skates over to the bench, where a substitute patiently waits.

The substitute jumps onto the rink and skates away.

Charlie sits down and chugs a sports drink. He breathes heavily, rapidly. A confused expression appears on his face.

He watches as the opposing team scores a goal. His teammates skate around near him for a short break.

JAY
Charlie! Your wheels broken?

CHARLIE
Just needed a breather.

JAY
Better get your stamina up before
the season starts.

MATT
(to Jay)
The way he's playing, we're better
off without him.

CHARLIE
Whatever. You don't want me to
play? I won't.

Charlie slumps back in his seat, pouting like a petulant child.

MATT
Fine. Sit there, you big baby.

Matt skates away. Jay stays behind. He's not falling for it.

JAY
Get your ass out here!

Charlie obliges. Another face-off, and the game resumes.

After a brief exchange, Matt gathers the ball and passes ahead to Charlie for a 2-on-1 with Doug valiantly trying to defend both players.

Charlie skates hard toward the goal, but puts on the brakes and backhands a perfect pass to Matt. He shoots. He SCORES.

Charlie celebrates with his teammates.

CHARLIE
What did I tell ya?

MATT
Okay, you redeemed yourself. Now
let's see some more of those, eh?

Jay joins in the celebration. He puts his arm around both players.

JAY
See, Matt? Charlie's fine. And you
wanted to play without him!

They smile and skate back for another face-off.

EXT. CRYSTAL BAY HARBOR --- GROUNDS - DAY

On a warm, sunny afternoon the Crystal Bay townspeople gather for the annual Labor Day Regatta. Food stands, gaming booths, street performers -- a carnival atmosphere along the way to the water's edge.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

1. Charlie, Sam, and Kyle purchase large quantities of Mexican food and Mountain Dew.
2. Seated under a tent, the three friends engage in a burping contest. Charlie lets out a mildly impressive burp, while Kyle's attempt belies his small stature.
- As Sam readies his, a small group of young teens wearing Palisades High School paraphernalia pass by. Sam turns to aim his burp in their direction. His booming belch disgusts the Palisades kids, but wins high-fives from his friends.
3. Charlie attempts to win a Boston Bruins jersey at a game booth. He tries three times, but his aim is way off the mark and he fails miserably. He shakes it off, confused.
4. The boys shake hands with two male friends, and give friendly hugs to their female companions.

As they greet each other, a young boy and his father pass them. The young boy is engulfed in the Bruins jersey. Charlie regards them and nods.

5. Rowing crews pass the men's bathroom, stoically carrying their boats to the water's edge. Each team is dressed in a different color, representing their high school.

The Palisades crew bursts out of the bathroom like savage animals, with boundless energy and fire in their eyes.

6. Kyle watches intently as a street musician drums away on an overturned bucket. He bobs his head to the beat. The street drummer finishes his song.

A handful of observers applaud. Kyle grabs a bucket and sits next to the man, exchanging a "May I?" look with his "Be my guest" nod of approval.

Kyle pulls drumsticks out of his back pocket and the two drummers instantly create a jam session that everyone enjoys.

SERIES ENDS as their song concludes in perfect sync to a rousing ovation. Kyle and the street musician pound fists and part ways.

WATER'S EDGE -- BLEACHERS -- MOMENTS LATER

Charlie and his friends find their seats. While Sam and Kyle look out into the bay, Charlie notices Angela seated by herself.

CHARLIE

Save my seat, I'll be right back.

He cautiously steps around the other observers on his way to Angela, who is completely focused on the rowers.

Sam and Kyle admire the sinfully gorgeous girls sitting directly in front of Angela. They raise eyebrows and smile.

Angela shifts her focus to Charlie as he sits beside her.

CHARLIE

Hey, you.

ANGELA

Hey, Charlie!

CHARLIE

Are you here by yourself, or am I taking someone's seat?

ANGELA
Neither. My boyfriend's out there.

CHARLIE
No way! You're dating Kevin?

ANGELA
No, not Kevin.

CHARLIE
Tommy?

ANGELA
Not Tommy.

CHARLIE
Then who?

ANGELA
Joe DeLuca.

CHARLIE
I don't know him. Which one is he?

DOCKS

Six crews of young men ready their shells for the upcoming race.

Charlie looks out at the Crystal Bay team, with index finger extended. Angela grabs his right arm and guides it over to the Palisades team, where JOE is psyching himself up.

ANGELA
There. That's my man.

CHARLIE
Aww, Ange! A Palisader?

ANGELA
I know. I know.

CHARLIE
How could you?

ANGELA
Are you serious? Look at him!

CHARLIE
I see him. I don't see his appeal, though. Perhaps you could explain?

ANGELA

I'm not shallow, Charlie. It's not just his Abercrombie looks and flawless physique that I'm attracted to. He's intelligent. Goal-oriented. Driven to succeed.

CHARLIE

I'm sure he is, but I'm not interested in his resume. Bottom line it for me. Is he a good guy, or is he a trust fund preppy douche bag?

ANGELA

What? No! He's a great guy. Total gentleman, very proper and well-mannered.

CHARLIE

Uh-oh. Sounds like a douche to me!

ANGELA

Shut up!

She pushes him playfully and they both giggle like kids on a playground. Joe observes this from the dock. He scowls.

CHARLIE

I should probably get back to my friends. Maybe I'll see you after your boy gets his ass beat.

ANGELA

Ha! You wish!

Charlie laughs and retreats to his friends.

STARTING LINE

The rowers are seated in position, ready to race.

The six teams are announced. Charlie & friends cheer loudly for the Crystal Bay boat, while scattered cheers are heard for each of the other teams.

As the Palisades boat is announced, the boys lead a chorus of boos.

THE RACE

Is underway. Crystal Bay jumps out to an early lead, strains to protect it. Other teams struggle to keep up.

Past the halfway point. Crystal Bay supporters try to keep their team going.

Palisades boat gradually closes the gap.

Angela, hands clasped, hopes for a late charge. Gorgeous girls in front of her half-interested.

Palisades STROKE MAN, barking orders at his crew.

STROKE MAN
500 meters. Come on, stroke!
Harder! The Bay is beating us!

Joe and his oarsmen shift into overdrive. They pound the water with their oars, faces contorted, fists clenched, muscles tightened. Their eyes burn with determination. Failure is not an option.

FINISH LINE

Crystal Bay loses momentum, fading in the last 100 meters.

The Palisades boat slides past the line, victorious. The HORN sounds and the team celebrates.

As Joe and his mates are awarded the trophy, only Angela and a few others cheer. Disappointed, Charlie and his friends leave the area.

HARBOR GROUNDS

Charlie and friends approach two dejected Crystal Bay rowers -- the aforementioned KEVIN and TOMMY.

CHARLIE
Kev, Tommy. Tough break, man. You guys should have won.

KEVIN
You're damn right we should have won. We smoked those boys all Spring.

TOMMY
You didn't hear this from me, but I think those guys are on something.

The five of them turn their attention to the victorious Palisades team, all celebrating with their Barbie doll girlfriends. Angela, despite her beauty, looks painfully out of place.

CHARLIE
Really? You think they cheated?

TOMMY
You didn't hear it from me.

Charlie, Sam, and Kyle shake hands "Take it easy, guys" and ponder this among themselves.

KYLE
What do you think, Charlie?

Charlie regards their chiseled physiques.

CHARLIE
I wouldn't put anything past a Palisader.

SAM
You see? This is why I don't play sports!

Charlie and friends continue towards the exit. As they pass the Palisades team, Charlie shrugs and smiles at Angela.

Before they reach the exit Joe sneaks up on Charlie. Angela and the rest of the Palisades crew follow closely.

JOE
(arm around Charlie)
Hey, buddy. How are ya?

Charlie regards Joe's arm around him, stares uncomfortably.

CHARLIE
Do I know you?

JOE
You do now.
(holds out his hand)
Joe DeLuca, Palisades rowing champion and longtime beau of your friend Angie here.

ANGELA
Joe, don't --

Joe holds up a finger "sssh!"

Charlie suspiciously shakes Joe's hand. He instantly finds himself PINNED to the ground in a wrestling hold.

JOE
Oh, and I wrestle, too.

CHARLIE

Fuck!

SAM & KYLE

Hey! Let him go!

Joe's cronies have Sam and Kyle double-teamed. They helplessly look on, holding up their hands in surrender.

JOE

Let's get one thing straight here.
You flirt with my woman again, and
I will destroy your ass. Got it?

ANGELA

Joe, stop! He wasn't flirting!

Joe releases his grasp on Charlie. He crosses to Angela.

JOE

I know what I saw.

A brazen Charlie sees an opportunity and pounces on it. He tries to pull Joe's shirt over his head, but his fingers slip on the rubber wet suit.

Joe grabs Charlie's arm and head-locks him.

JOE

Not a smart move.

ANGELA

Goddamn it Joe! Let him go!

JOE

Relax, baby. We're just talkin'.
Tell her, bud.

CHARLIE

(muffled)

Ange, your boyfriend is going to
die.

JOE

What was that?

Joe THROWS Charlie up against a wooden fence. His head SMASHES against the planks, breaking them.

Charlie DROPS to the ground like a sack of potatoes. His lifeless eyes roll into the back of his head. He's knocked OUT COLD.

JOE
Say that again!

Joe POUNDS Charlie like an Everlast bag. He TWITCHES violently.

A crowd has gathered, staring at the spectacle in horror.

Joe and two of his mates stand over Charlie like wolves moving in for the kill. Angela's voice fills with fear.

ANGELA
Joe, I swear to God, you lay one more finger on him and I will call the cops!

Joe mercifully holds himself back. He's done enough damage.

JOE
I think he gets the message. Don't 'cha, asshole?

Charlie holds a hand to his head. Blood gushes from his open wound.

Sam and Kyle tend to their fallen friend. Angela sprints to them. She pulls a tissue out of her purse and hands it to Charlie.

ANGELA
Are you okay?

Charlie examines his bloody hand.

CHARLIE
I told you he was a douche bag.

Joe and his boys prepare to flee. He whistles for Angela.

JOE
Let's go, princess.

ANGELA
Excuse me? Do you really think I'm going anywhere with you after what you just did?

JOE
Yes, I do. I know you, Angela. I know how badly you want to feel important. You crave that ego boost that you get when people see you with me. You won't give that up.

ANGELA

You're a cocky son of a bitch, you know that?

JOE

Maybe. But I speak the truth. I gave you what you always wanted, what you never thought you deserved. I brought you into high society, mansions in Newport, dinner parties with millionaires. I showed you a future you only dreamed of. And you want to turn your back on that? On me? I'm Joe fucking DeLuca! Who the fuck are you?

ANGELA

(defiant)

Your ex-girlfriend.

Angela fights back tears. She turns away from Joe.

JOE

Fine! Go back to being nobody.

He shakes his head and snickers. The Palisades group exits.

Angela breathes heavily, rapidly. Her heart beats out of her chest. She shakes away the fear, the anger. Tries to relax.

She looks back at Charlie, helped to his feet by Sam and Kyle. He slings an arm around each of them and they help their bigger, stronger friend walk to first aid.

INT. FIRST AID BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie, Sam, and Kyle sit uncomfortably in metallic grey folding chairs, awaiting service. The first aid attendant approaches the sullen group. KRISTI (20, perky) notices Charlie pressing the blood-soaked tissue to his head.

KRISTI

Yikes! What happened here?

CHARLIE

(pained, grunting)

'Roid rage.

KRISTI

Looks pretty bad. I'll see what I can get for you. Be right back.

Kristi rifles through the first aid supply.

Angela rushes in, desperate and embarrassed.

ANGELA

Oh my God, I am so sorry. I feel awful.

KYLE

Not as awful as he does.

ANGELA

I can't believe Joe did that! I've never seen him so vicious.

CHARLIE

(incredulous)

Really? You've never seen him act like that?

ANGELA

Maybe once or twice, but I thought he was just screwing around.

CHARLIE

There should be an investigation. Our guys deserved to win.

KYLE

Who would think to drug test for a boat race?

SAM

Who would think to cheat for one?

Angela shudders. A hurricane of guilt washes over her. She turns away from the boys, hiding a pained expression on her face. Charlie notes her suffering and offers compassion.

CHARLIE

Hey.

Charlie carefully places his hand on Angela's shoulder.

CHARLIE

Thank you.

ANGELA

For what? Introducing you to a beat down?

CHARLIE

You stopped him. You got him off of me. And you're here.

Charlie appreciates Angela for a silent beat, broken by Kristi's return.

KRISTI

Here you go. Ice pack, some gauze
and a band-aid. That's about all I
can do for you here.

CHARLIE

It's fine. Thank you.

Angela holds the ice pack to Charlie's wound. Her maternal instincts take over.

Charlie regards Angela as she tends to him.

CHARLIE

How are you holding up?

ANGELA

I don't think first aid can fix me.

Angela puts down the ice pack and dabs the remaining blood with the gauze. She peels the bandage and places it on his wound.

Sam and Kyle admire her selflessness, but it makes Charlie feel vulnerable. Weak. Less of a man. He sighs deeply.

Kristi watches them from her post. She bites her lip, struggling with something. She tries to dismiss it, but can't. She approaches the group.

KRISTI

Okay, so I've been here for six
hours, right? In that time we've
had four people throw up -- three
from the burritos -- a couple
skinned knees, and one older
gentleman battle heat exhaustion.
That's it.

The four listen curiously.

KRISTI

I've handed out barf bags and band-
aids and bottles of water. Glory to
God, it's all I've had to do. Now,
I don't want to overstep my bounds
here, but I really think you should
have that head wound checked out by
someone more qualified than a first
aid attendant.

Charlie rises on this, confident. He wants his manhood back.

CHARLIE
What's your name?

KRISTI
Kristi.

CHARLIE
Kristi, I appreciate your concern.
But I've been playing hockey for
nine years. I've been hit harder
than this multiple times and not
missed a shift. I'll be fine.

ANGELA
No, Charlie. Don't do that. Don't
be all macho. It doesn't suit you.

Charlie stares at Angela, ready to argue -- until he sees the
look on her face. She's been through enough.

His gaze returns to Kristi. Hands her the bag of ice.

CHARLIE
Thank you for the ice.

He exits, with Sam and Kyle close behind. Angela follows
them. She exchanges a worried look with Kristi.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON

Charlie stumbles in, still a bit woozy from the fight. He
grabs an ice pack out of the freezer and tosses it onto the
breakfast bar. The ice pack falls with an alarming THUD.

A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE featuring Charlie as a "Scholastic All-
Star" is stuck to the fridge by magnets. The picture shows
Charlie in uniform for the Crystal Bay ice hockey team.

Charlie opens the fridge and rifles through. He pulls out a
bottle of water and pops two pills into his mouth. Chases
them down with the water.

He takes a seat at the breakfast bar, holding the ice pack to
his wound. Charlie shakes his head slightly, angry and
embarrassed.

Janet enters through the back door, clothes and hands dirty
from gardening. Her entrance startles a still-shaken Charlie.

She takes one look at her son -- bruised, bloodied, beaten --
and she is horrified.

JANET
Charlie? What happened?

CHARLIE
Nothing. It's fine. I'm fine.

Janet frantically washes her hands in the sink. Returns to him in an instant.

JANET
You're not fine. Look at you!

She places her hands on his face and head. Examines his wounds. Disappointment swallows her whole.

JANET
You were in a fight.

CHARLIE
I had no choice.

JANET
Oh, Charlie!

CHARLIE
The guy had me pinned down in a wrestling hold!

JANET
Who? Who did this to you?

Charlie doesn't answer. A blank expression on his face.

JANET
Answer me, Charlie!

CHARLIE
Some kids...

His eyes drift wildly. He can't focus.

JANET
What kids?

CHARLIE
I don't know... rowers... from Palisades.

Janet throws up her hands.

JANET
I should have known. Damnit, Charlie!

She looks back at him. He looks pale, lifeless. Losing it.

JANET

Charlie!

She holds him up as he is about to fall onto the breakfast bar. He snaps out of it, trying desperately to regain his equilibrium.

CHARLIE

What?

JANET

I told you to stay away from those kids. They're nothing but trouble.

CHARLIE

Mom, I wasn't --

JANET

You've got too much going on your life to be getting into fights like this.

She takes off her gardening smock and grabs her purse. She slings it around her shoulder and grabs Charlie's arm.

JANET

Come on. We're going for a ride.

CHARLIE

Where?

JANET

To the hospital.

CHARLIE

What? Why?

JANET

We're getting your head examined.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE -- DRIVEWAY

Charlie and Janet approach her parked car.

CHARLIE

It was just a fight. You know how guys are.

JANET

Don't give me that "boys will be boys" nonsense.

(MORE)

JANET (cont'd)
You're better than that. And you
ought to be smarter than that.

CHARLIE
You think I wanted to get in a
fight? I didn't start this.

She stands in front of the car, arguing across.

JANET
That really doesn't matter, does
it? If your brain turns to oatmeal,
do you think the dean of admissions
will ask how it happened? Ivy
League schools don't accept damaged
goods, Charlie.

CHARLIE
I am not damaged!

JANET
We'll see about that.

They get in, angry. Both mother and son SLAM the doors shut.

INT. HOSPITAL -- PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE -- DAY

A PHYSICIAN runs diagnostic tests on Charlie, checking his
eyes with a small flashlight. His eyes follow the flashlight
dutifully.

PHYSICIAN
Any nausea or vomiting?

CHARLIE
No.

PHYSICIAN
Headaches? Dizziness?

	CHARLIE	JANET
No.		Yes.

Charlie turns to his mother, surprised.

JANET
When I saw him he couldn't keep his
head still. He looked like a bobble
head doll.

CHARLIE
Mom!

JANET

Charlie --

PHYSICIAN

(to Janet)

Have you noticed any other changes
in his behavior? Confusion, slurred
speech, lack of concentration?

Her answer is MUTED. Charlie is overcome with an immense
PRESSURE in his head. He squints in pain, trying to fight it.

JANET

He's usually very attentive. But I
asked him a very simple question
and he didn't answer right away.
His eyes just looked vacant. I
don't know if it's memory loss, or
confusion or what. But he isn't
right, doctor. I can tell.

PHYSICIAN

Charlie? Is everything okay?

CHARLIE

Yeah, I'm fine.

Charlie glances at his worried mother, then back at the
doctor.

CHARLIE

It went away.

PHYSICIAN

What was it? A headache?

CHARLIE

More like a crushing sensation.
Like someone jumped on my head and
pushed down.

JANET

(panicked)

Oh my God!

PHYSICIAN

Mrs. Larson, it's likely that
Charlie has suffered a concussion.
But let's wait and see what the CT
scan tells us.

INT. HOSPITAL -- EXAM ROOM -- DAY

Two RADIOLOGISTS ready the CT scanner.

Charlie and his mother are seated in an
OBSERVATION ROOM

JANET
I don't believe this. How could you
let this happen?

Charlie tries to answer. She doesn't give him a chance.

JANET
A concussion, Charlie! A brain
injury! What are you going to do
about college now? What if you
can't concentrate? What if you have
memory loss?

CHARLIE
I'm sure it's fine. Hockey players
get concussions all the time.

JANET
I could almost understand if this
happened during a game. But a
fight, Charlie? That's just...

The realization hits her. His behavior is changing.

JANET
That's just not you.

Janet takes a somber breath. She starts to cry. Charlie tries
to comfort her.

CHARLIE
I'm sorry, Mom. I wish it didn't
happen. I should have stayed home.

JANET
I can't watch you forever. But I've
got one more year with you, and I'm
going to spend it protecting you as
much as I possibly can.

Charlie nods. He's ready to accept the increased security.

JANET
So if this is a concussion, you
won't play hockey this year.

Charlie blasts off like a rocket.

CHARLIE
WHAT? No way! I am playing!

JANET

Charlie --

CHARLIE

It's senior year! I'm the captain of the team! This is what I've been playing for since I was eight. This is what... this is what Dad would have wanted.

The move backfires. Now Janet is spitting mad again.

JANET

Your father is gone, Charlie! It's just you and me.

Charlie relents. He slumps back down in his chair.

The physician enters the observation room.

PHYSICIAN

We're ready.

CT SCANNER

Charlie lies down, perfectly still. The radiologists monitor his brain activity on a computer.

The scan of Charlie's brain appears on the computer screen. The doctors examine it closely.

RADIOLOGIST 1

Look at this.

RADIOLOGIST 2

You've got something?

RADIOLOGIST 1

I think so.

Radiologist 1 ZOOMS in on a considerable mass near the back of Charlie's brain.

RADIOLOGIST 1

There. That's not a bleed.

The physician appears behind them.

PHYSICIAN

Call Simone. Get her confirmation on this.

INT. DR. SIMONE'S OFFICE -- SAME TIME

The door reads: *Dr. Victoria Simone*
Head of Oncology

DR. SIMONE (early 40's, attractive) Dark curly hair tied back in a bun.

She is seated at her desk, reviewing a patient file. The phone RINGS.

DR. SIMONE
(into phone)
Simone... I'm on my way.

She hangs up and immediately leaves her office.

INT. JANET'S CAR (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Janet drives through a heavy rain shower. Charlie stares out the passenger's side window. Petrified.

The long silence is too much for her to handle.

JANET
Talk to me, Charlie.

CHARLIE
About what?

JANET
How do you feel?

CHARLIE
How do you feel? Your only child isn't going off to college or the real world. Your only child is going to die!

JANET
Don't say that!

CHARLIE
Why not, Mom? You heard the doctor. It's inoperable. It's over.

JANET
She did not say it's over, Charlie. We've got a long, hard fight ahead of us. But we've fought adversity before. We'll fight this together and we'll beat it. You will beat this!

CHARLIE

Maybe I'll have more of a fighting spirit tomorrow, but right now I'm just too pissed off for words.

JANET

Okay, honey. We don't have to talk about this now.

Charlie is too consumed with anger and frustration to put it off. He continues without missing a beat.

CHARLIE

You know, I hate to be one of those "why me" people, but what the fuck did I do? Huh? I've done everything that's been asked of me and then some. I've been the best student, the best teammate, the best person I can be.

JANET

You don't deserve this. No one does. It's a horrible thing to go through. But if there's anyone strong enough to survive it, it's you.

CHARLIE

People depend on me, Mom. The team needs me. My friends need me. You need me. I can't have cancer, I just can't. Not now. Not ever.

JANET

You are the most selfless person I know. Do you know that? Think about yourself for once. Stop worrying about what everyone else needs. You want to do something for others? Then fight this! Fight it with all your strength. And let your friends and teammates help you.

Charlie briefly contemplates this -- and discards it.

CHARLIE

No. No, this is my fight. My problem. They all have college and sports and activities to worry about. They don't need me to ruin their memories of senior year.

JANET

Charlie, you can't do this alone!

CHARLIE

I won't be alone. I've got you to help me. No one else needs to know about this.

JANET

But they will know something is wrong with you when your health deteriorates.

Now Charlie has a mission. No longer defeated, he rises up to his new challenge.

CHARLIE

I won't let it. At least, not in public.

JANET

You want to withhold the truth from the people you've called friends all these years?

CHARLIE

I want to postpone their inevitable misery. Forever, if possible.

JANET

How do you expect to pull that off? Either you beat the odds and alienate them in the process, or they lose you and you deprive them of their chance to say goodbye.

CHARLIE

If Dr. Simone is right, I have roughly one year to live. By then all my friends will be scattered across New England at various colleges. They won't be worried about me anymore. They probably won't even know I'm gone.

JANET

Is that really what you want?

CHARLIE

I can't have much of what I want anymore. I just want to get through this year as quickly and quietly as I can.

EXT. CRYSTAL BAY HIGH SCHOOL -- COURTYARD -- DAY

Charlie crosses the courtyard on his way to his next class. He passes a bulletin board with a notice posted:

GUITARIST WANTED

He retreats to the flyer. Analyzes it more closely. He recognizes the description and phone number.

SCHOOL HALLWAY

Charlie sees Sam walking towards him. He hands the balled-up flyer to Sam.

SAM
What's this?

CHARLIE
Garbage.

Sam unravels the flyer.

SAM
Dude, what did you do that for?

CHARLIE
Because you have a guitarist.

SAM
Really? You found your replacement?

CHARLIE
Sammy my man, I am my replacement.

SAM
You? But I thought you were too busy to commit to the band.

CHARLIE
My schedule cleared up.

SAM
So you're back in? Just like that?

CHARLIE
Just like that.

SAM
You'd better not be fucking with me, Charlie. 'Cause if I tell Kyle you're getting the band back together --

CHARLIE

Go ahead, tell him. You wanted your guitarist? He's right here.

SAM

Dude, this is awesome! But are you sure? We're serious about this.

CHARLIE

So am I. Who knows where we'll all be after this year. I don't want to leave Crystal Bay with any regrets.

Sam appreciates this for a quick second, before his excitement returns.

SAM

I'm calling Kyle. He's not gonna believe this.

Sam pulls a cell phone out of his pocket and calls Kyle.

SAM

(into phone)

Kyle! Sam. Dude, guess who's going to Battle of the Bands?

Charlie observes Sam's excitement and smiles.

EXT. PALISADES PARK -- AFTERNOON

Angela and her friend LAUREN (17, petite) jog through a pristine park in a ritzy neighborhood.

LAUREN

So is the old saying true? About going back home again?

ANGELA

It might be. If I knew where home was.

LAUREN

Not to sound presumptuous, but I think you know where your home is. That's why this is so hard.

Angela stops running, considers this. Lauren notices and retreats.

ANGELA

None of my old friends are there. Not one. No one even recognizes me.

LAUREN
I thought you said that would help.

ANGELA
I was being facetious. The truth is, I feel more alone now than ever.

Angela and Lauren restart their run.

LAUREN
It's only been a few weeks. You'll make new friends. Give it time.

ANGELA
I don't know, Lauren. What if they find out about my family situation, or my less than flattering past?

LAUREN
They'd probably post it on the internet and ruin your social life. You're right. Crystal Bay sucks!

ANGELA
Maybe. But at least I don't have to deal with seeing Joe every day. My life would really be hell.

LAUREN
I'm sure they've got their own Joe DeLuca's in Crystal Bay. The place is probably infested with them.

ANGELA
They're not all bad. There's one guy in my homeroom that's always been nice to me.

LAUREN
Always? You mean like an old friend?

ANGELA
I guess so, yeah.

LAUREN
Who?

ANGELA
Charlie Larson.

LAUREN
Charlie... don't know him.

Angela sheepishly identifies him, almost ashamed.

ANGELA

He's the guy Joe beat up.

LAUREN

(laughing)

Oh! That guy!

ANGELA

Hey, Charlie's one of the good ones. But he doesn't count.

LAUREN

Because Joe kicked his ass?

ANGELA

Because he knew me five years and fifty pounds ago.

LAUREN

Okay, so Crystal Bay has at least one decent guy. So why doesn't he count?

ANGELA

Because he knew me five years and fifty pounds ago!

LAUREN

Am I missing something here? Are we talking about finding you a friend or a boyfriend?

ANGELA

(hopeless laugh)

I don't know!

LAUREN

Well, either way it sounds like you're in need of a night out. We should go dancing tonight. You and me. Like last year.

ANGELA

Sounds like a plan! Not here, though. I don't want to run the risk of running into any psychotic ex-boyfriends.

LAUREN

Okay, then. Where?

ANGELA
There's an all-ages club back home
I've wanted to go to forever.

Lauren raises an eyebrow at this.

LAUREN
Back home?

ANGELA
Shut up!

Angela shoves Lauren playfully and the two share a smile.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE -- BASEMENT -- EVENING

Charlie, dressed in dark rock star apparel, tunes an electric guitar.

He strums the guitar and starts to sing, but misses a note and stops himself. He restarts, only to miss the same note again.

CHARLIE
Damnit!

Matt, Jay, and Doug slowly step downstairs, oblivious to Charlie.

He tries again. As he restarts, the guys quietly observe the basement's decor -- similar to a small recording studio. Posters of various rock bands hang on the wall. Guitars, amplifiers, and effect pedals surround Charlie.

Charlie successfully continues his song, but stops when he notices Jay.

JAY
Back to playing your depressing Emo
music?

CHARLIE
Why not? I've suddenly got more
free time on my hands.

MATT
Doctors wouldn't clear you?

CHARLIE
Mom wouldn't clear me.

JAY
That explains your psycho-Goth
demeanor.

CHARLIE

I can't be Emo and Goth, genius.

JAY

How the fuck would I know? I get down with Lil' Wayne, Jay-Z, Eminem. This is all foreign to me.

CHARLIE

(annoyed)

Do you need something?

JAY

No, but you do.

CHARLIE

Yeah? And what's that?

JAY

You need to put down that guitar and come out to Raze with us.

CHARLIE

No thanks. I'm good here.

MATT

Come on, dude. I know you're bummed about the concussion. We all are. But that's no reason to stay home and sulk on a Friday night.

JAY

Matty's right. It's not the end of the world. Stop being a drama queen and go get dressed.

CHARLIE

I am dressed.

JAY

You're dressed for Halloween. You're not dressed to get... undressed.

Charlie prepares his guitar once again, ready to play.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry guys, but I'm really not in the mood to be seen in public. Not there. Not tonight.

JAY

(dispensing guilt)

Oh. I see how it is.

(MORE)

JAY (cont'd)
You can't play hockey anymore so
there's no reason to chill with
your teammates. Is that it?

CHARLIE
You're way off.

JAY
Am I? Then why won't you come out
with us?

Matt and Doug stoically await Charlie's answer.

CHARLIE
You wouldn't understand.

DOUG
We would if you explain it to us.

Charlie paints himself in a corner. He can't explain it, and
he can't think of a good lie. He has to give in.

CHARLIE
Forget it.

He carefully sets his guitar down and marches upstairs.

JAY
We goin' to Raze?

CHARLIE (O.S.)
(aggravated)
Yesss!

The guys pump their fists and celebrate as they follow him.

INT. RAZE -- NIGHT

Charlie, Jay, Matt, and Doug walk through the entrance to the
all-ages dance club.

Blinding strobe lights accompany the loud, pulse-pounding
music. Attractive young people dance, talk, laugh, and drink
all around them.

JAY
(in heaven)
Yeah! Check out all these gorgeous
hotties! If this doesn't make you
forget about hockey, nothing will.

CHARLIE
(in agony)
This music is so loud.
(MORE)

CHARLIE (cont'd)
And these lights... they're giving
me a headache.

JAY
Oh, suck it up, Grandpa. Damn!

Jay hustles out to the dance floor, with a gorgeous blonde in his sights.

DOUG
Ignore him. He's a shallow, single-
minded sex fiend.

Charlie is relieved that at least one of his friends has some compassion. Until...

DOUG
Come on. Let's go get laid.

Doug and Matt follow Jay, dragging Charlie along with them. As his friends jump right in and dance, Charlie scans the crowd for an attractive dance partner.

Among the sea of people, he hears a familiar voice SCREAM his name.

ANGELA (O.S.)
CHARLIE!

The last person he wanted to see.

CHARLIE
(to himself)
Of course.

Angela makes a beeline for Charlie. He weaves his way through the crowd in the opposite direction.

Angela chases him, with Lauren lagging behind her.

ANGELA
CHARLIE!

LAUREN
Are you sure it's him?

ANGELA
I'm sure.

They finally catch up to Charlie, bumping into him when he's boxed in.

ANGELA
(grabbing his arm)
Charlie!

CHARLIE
(irritated, mean)
Oh great, my human shadow is here.

ANGELA
Ha! Very funny.

CHARLIE
What do you want?

ANGELA
I just wanted to see how you're
doing. You've been silent in school
lately. Are you okay?

CHARLIE
I'm fine.

But clearly he isn't. He is determined to escape, but Angela
won't let him.

ANGELA
Charlie --

CHARLIE
I don't want to meet any more of
your thugs, okay? I'm still
recovering from our last encounter.

Angela is hurt, but swallows her pride and attempts to
lighten the mood. She gently pushes Lauren forward,
presenting her petite companion to reassure him.

ANGELA
This is Lauren, my best friend from
back home. She's harmless.

LAUREN
(shy, cautious smile)
Hi, Charlie.

CHARLIE
You're from Palisades, huh?

LAUREN
(with pride)
Born and raised.

Regarding the girls, Charlie chooses his words carefully.

CHARLIE
(to Lauren)
Take her back. Where she belongs.

He slinks away, leaving the girls stunned and appalled.

As he weaves his way through the crowd, he is startled by a PUNCH on his arm.

Charlie turns bright red, fuming. He turns around, expecting another fight. Instead, he finds Jay.

JAY
Dude, what the fuck is wrong with you? That girl was cute as hell!

CHARLIE
So? Should I give her an award?

JAY
How about you just cut the asshole act for five seconds? 'Cause whatever your problem is tonight, I'm damn sure she didn't cause it.

Charlie looks back at Angela, breathing in her beauty from across the room. The kindness, the innocence, the disappointment in her eyes burns a hole in his heart.

Angela glances at Charlie, then quickly turns away. Too hurt to look at him another second. He holds his gaze a bit longer, until the shame courses through his entire body.

Charlie takes his eyes off Angela and closes them tightly.

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM -- 2 A.M.

Charlie violently tosses and turns in his bed. He gives up on sleep and rolls to one side. Starts to CRY.

INT. CRYSTAL BAY HIGH SCHOOL -- HOMEROOM -- MORNING

Charlie casually reads a book at his desk, surrounded by vacant seats. Only a handful of early birds in the classroom.

A single yellow ROSE lies across the empty desk in front of him.

Angela enters forlorn, until she spots the rose. Approaching her desk, she stares at the rose introspectively. She wants to accept it and forgive him, but she isn't ready to.

Charlie's reading is interrupted when the rose is carefully slid in between the binding like a bookmark.

He looks up to find Angela standing over him, somber.

ANGELA

Don't play games with me, Charlie.
My heart can't handle it.

Charlie closes the book, with the rose inside.

INT. HOSPITAL -- WAITING ROOM -- DAY

Charlie is seated next to Janet. He continues to read the book.

Dr. Simone approaches the Larsons.

DR. SIMONE

Charlie?

He rises out of his seat and follows Dr. Simone to her office, with his mother closely behind.

INT. DR. SIMONE'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Charlie and Janet are seated across from Dr. Simone in a semi-circle of chairs.

DR. SIMONE

How are you coping so far?

CHARLIE

Fine, I guess. I did get a pounding headache at the club though.

DR. SIMONE

Were there a lot of flashing lights?

CHARLIE

Yeah. And I'm sure the loud music didn't help.

DR. SIMONE

No, it's not a healthy combination for anyone.

JANET

Should he be avoiding loud music?
Because he's been playing his guitar an awful lot lately.

Before Dr. Simone can answer, Charlie jumps in, furious.

CHARLIE

What are you trying to do to me,
Mom? You already took hockey away
from me. Now you want to take my
music, too?

JANET

Charlie, I didn't take anything
away from you.

CHARLIE

(defeated, angry)
I don't even know why I need
treatment. I'll die of boredom
first!

JANET

Charlie, please! I'm trying to help
you!

Charlie sees the pain and frustration on her face. More real
and deadly than the disease. He straightens himself out.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry, Mom. You're right. I
just don't want this tumor to
change me. Every piece of myself
that I have to give up just
stockpiles its arsenal against me.

Dr. Simone observes this carefully, making mental notes.

DR. SIMONE

Charlie, I don't see any reason why
you can't continue with your daily
activities at this point, guitar
playing included. But it will get
increasingly difficult for you to
deal with noise and lights and
large crowds in a confined space.

CHARLIE

(desperate, clinging)
I'll wear earplugs. Sunglasses. I
don't care. I just want my life to
be as normal as possible, for as
long as possible.

DR. SIMONE

Hopefully the chemotherapy
treatments will allow you to do
just that. The treatment cycles are
designed to alleviate your symptoms
stemming from the cancer.

(MORE)

DR. SIMONE (cont'd)
Of course, there are side effects.
Mainly nausea, fatigue, and
constipation at first.

JANET
Is it possible to predict when
these side effects will occur?
Charlie doesn't want anyone at
school to know.

CHARLIE
I don't want to burden anyone.

JANET
Is that normal?

DR. SIMONE
Actually, yes. Many patients have
similar thoughts during the
process. They want to be left
alone, or they're in denial. Or,
like you said, some people just
want to maintain the status quo.

CHARLIE
Exactly. I want to fight this, and
I want to beat it. But if I can't
beat it, I need to know that I can
fight it off until graduation.

DR. SIMONE
That's going to be difficult. You
do have some things working in your
favor -- your age and your health
for example -- but the tumor is
sitting right on the edge of your
brain stem. We will know more after
the chemo, but these aren't wonder
drugs. They're designed to manage
your symptoms, not schedule them.

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Charlie's chemotherapy drugs are laid out on the desk in
front of him. He stares at them. Apprehensive. Scared.

He closes his fist around them, squirms, and quickly throws
them in his mouth. Just wants to get it over with.

EXT. CRYSTAL BAY HIGH SCHOOL -- HOMEROOM -- MORNING

Charlie and Angela exit homeroom together. Physically, their
proximity purports a closeness. Emotionally, they're still
distant.

ANGELA

So, do you understand Dostoevsky?

CHARLIE

He's not one of my favorites, but I think I get the gist of it.

ANGELA

That makes one of us.

Charlie smiles modestly. Angela hesitates for a moment. She tries not to leave him.

ANGELA

Well, good luck at your show tomorrow.

CHARLIE

Thanks. You're not coming?

ANGELA

Do you want me to?

CHARLIE

If you want to come, sure. It would be nice to see you there.

Angela pauses, collects her thoughts.

ANGELA

Charlie, I don't know why you're being so standoffish around me lately. But if you're feeling vulnerable because of what happened with Joe, I can assure you that I'm feeling it, too.

CHARLIE

I don't know what you're talking about.

ANGELA

Come on, Charlie. I'm not going to judge you. Give me more credit than that.

CHARLIE

(hint of anger)

I did. I gave you a rose and you gave it back. So I guess I'm not the only one being standoffish.

He starts to walk away. Angela reels him back in.

ANGELA
I told you I could relate.

This stops him dead. He contemplates it for a moment. Crosses back to her.

CHARLIE
We go on at 9. Wear a costume.

EXT. DOC'S (ON THE DOCKS) -- NIGHT

A small but lively dive bar and sanctuary for local rock bands.

More people outside than inside at this point; the night is young.

Teenagers huddled around, smoking cigarettes, trying to look cool. Twenty-somethings share laughs and drinks, clinging to their youth. Many of them dressed in Halloween Costumes.

A SIGN posted outside the bar advertises Battle of the Bands & Halloween Costume contests.

INT. DOC'S -- BACKSTAGE

Sam and Kyle are seated in a cramped dressing room. Instruments and amplifiers surround them.

Kyle is restless, always playing drums. Sam tries to calm himself before the show.

Their preparations are disturbed by a loud VOMIT O.S., followed by two more.

Charlie emerges, as calmly as possible.

SAM
Dude!

CHARLIE
What?

SAM
That sounded awful! Are you okay?

CHARLIE
I'm fine.

KYLE
Probably just nerves.

CHARLIE
Yeah, must be.

SAM

Well, shake 'em off, hombre. We
need you to rock your hardest.

CHARLIE

Sam, don't worry. I'm good to go.

DOC'S -- STAGE -- MINUTES LATER

A well-oiled machine known as *10 Cent Beer Night* finishes
their song to a rousing ovation. Their band members appear
older and more experienced than *Larceny*.

Angela, dressed as a famous comic book heroine, stands alone
near the back of the crowd. She politely claps for the band.

STAGE

DOC, the owner of the bar and emcee of the contest, addresses
the crowd.

DOC

Once again, 10 Cent Beer Night!
(more applause)
And now, our youngest entry in this
year's Battle of the Bands. From
Crystal Bay High School, make some
noise for Larceny!

As the crowd cheers, Charlie, Sam and Kyle take the stage.

Kyle COUNTS OFF with his drumsticks. Sam BANGS away on bass.

Charlie SINGS and plays guitar on a powerful rock song. He
throws all his emotion into it, and it shows. The crowd is
impressed.

However, during the song, Charlie misses a note and grimaces.
Only the band -- and the judges -- seem to notice.

They end their song to a rousing ovation. Angela cheers
loudly, in competition with the anonymous supporters.

BACKSTAGE HALLWAY

Charlie, Sam, and Kyle walk off-stage, instruments in hand.
Charlie isn't satisfied with his performance.

CHARLIE

That was totally my fault, guys. We
had a chance to win and I blew it.

SAM

Don't sweat it, man. 10 Cent Beer
Night had us beat anyway.

KYLE

We've been back together for like a
month. We rehearsed four times. All
things considered, we did fine.

CHARLIE

Fine isn't good enough. Maybe it's
just the competitor in me, but I
really wanted to win this thing.

BACKSTAGE

Charlie and Sam put down their instruments.

SAM

If we had you with us all summer,
we would have. But it was fun being
out there. Being a band again.

Kyle leads Angela into the dressing room.

KYLE

Charlie. You got a visitor.

Angela stands in the doorway of the dressing room.

CHARLIE

Hey there.

ANGELA

Hey. You guys were awesome.

SAM & KYLE

Thanks.

CHARLIE

I screwed up.

ANGELA

I didn't notice.

CHARLIE

I meant with you.

Angela smiles shyly, sweetly.

CHARLIE

I got some time to kill. Want to go
for a walk?

ANGELA

Sure.

EXT. HARBOR WALKWAY - MINUTES LATER

Angela takes in the scenery on a picture-perfect night.

CHARLIE

Thanks for coming out tonight. I'm really glad you're here.

ANGELA

Me too. I had no idea you were so talented. Kyle's right, you should be proud of yourself.

CHARLIE

They've been playing without me all summer. They wanted this more than I did, and it showed.

ANGELA

No, it didn't. You guys did amazing. All of you.

CHARLIE

I don't know, Ange. Sometimes I envy them. They have one thing to throw all their hard work and energy into. I spread myself too thin. I've been so consumed with building an Ivy League caliber resume that I've never been able to give anything my full, undivided attention.

Angela glances at Charlie, smiling with her eyes.

ANGELA

Maybe we should work on that.

They share a brief silence.

CHARLIE

So, yesterday you were talking about your ex-boyfriend and you said you felt vulnerable.

ANGELA

Among other things.

CHARLIE

Do you want to talk about it?

ANGELA

I'm sorry, Charlie. It isn't fair of me to put that on you. When I left this place, I felt like I was leaving home. And now that I'm back, it doesn't feel like home at all. I have no one here to talk to.

CHARLIE

Does that mean I'm no one?

ANGELA

No. You're someone. I just can't figure out who.

Charlie considers this. He feels Angela's apprehension, but knows she's stressed and alone. He tests the waters for her.

CHARLIE

You were right. You're not alone.

ANGELA

I figured as much. I bore the brunt of it emotionally, but you felt it physically. And for a guy, that's just as bad -- if not worse.

CHARLIE

It's not that I'm trying to impress you by being tough and macho, it's just... when we were at the first aid booth and you were holding that ice pack on my head, my initial reaction was "what a sweetheart."

Angela blushes.

CHARLIE

But my more pervasive reaction was "this is embarrassing!"

ANGELA

Why would it be embarrassing? I don't understand why guys are so afraid of being fallible.

CHARLIE

For me, it's simple. You've seen me at my worst, but you haven't seen me at my best. If all you see me do is fail, how can you respect me?

ANGELA

Do you respect me?

CHARLIE

Of course.

ANGELA

Have I ever done anything wonderful to earn it?

CHARLIE

Yes. You were there for me when I needed you.

Angela pauses on this, deep in thought. Guilt returns. She looks out into the moonlit bay, away from Charlie.

ANGELA

I think I may have done more harm than good. The truth is I deserve my share of blame for what happened that day. I should never have dated Joe in the first place.

Charlie sidles next to Angela. Gives her a reassuring look.

CHARLIE

Come on, Ange. Hindsight's 20-20.

ANGELA

Trust me, my eyes were wide open. I saw the signs and I ignored them.

CHARLIE

You must have had your reasons. You even listed some of them for me.

ANGELA

Yes, there were things about him that were very appealing. But I was fooling myself. When I was here and I was heavy, I could have never dreamed of dating a guy like Joe. So when the opportunity presented itself, I jumped right in. I never thought about the consequences, I just thought the experience would be worth having.

Charlie stares longingly into her eyes. Her beauty is suffocating him.

ANGELA

It was probably the most selfish thing I could do, and I paid dearly for it.

(MORE)

ANGELA (cont'd)
And now I see that my desire to
placate my ego didn't just hurt me.
It hurt you, too.

Charlie sneaks over to her and plants a quick PECK on her cheek.

CHARLIE
I forgive you.

ANGELA
I mean it, Charlie. I feel awful.

He stares at her soft, supple lips and KISSES HER passionately. Angela is stunned. Frozen. Breathless.

CHARLIE
Feeling better?

ANGELA
One more should do it.

He grins on this and they share another passionate kiss.

INT. CRYSTAL BAY ATHLETIC CENTER GYM - DAY

Jay, Matt, and Doug are in the middle of an intense workout. Jay grunts through a bench press. Matt lunges around the gym. Doug destroys the dumbbell curls.

Charlie enters, triumphant. His grin catches Jay.

JAY
Look at this smug son of a bitch.
What's your deal?

CHARLIE
Nothing. Can't a guy just be happy
to be alive?

DOUG
Yeah. Alive and in love.

Jay slams down the bench press with a CLAP and rises to his feet.

JAY
You've got a girlfriend? Who?

CHARLIE
Angela Ricci.

JAY
Hmm. Doesn't ring a bell.
(to Matt)
Matt, Angela Ricci.

MATT
(lunging toward them)
What about her?

JAY
Charlie's going out with her.

MATT
(unimpressed)
Why?

CHARLIE
Why not? She's amazing! She's sweet
and cute and she's not some dumbass
bimbo with the IQ of a bottle cap.

Matt isn't listening. He's already lunged away. By the time
Charlie finishes his explanation, Matt has returned.

MATT
Not to sound superficial, but isn't
she a bit... rotund?

Charlie straddles a weight machine.

CHARLIE
Not anymore.
(to Jay)
Jay, you saw her --

Jay has moved to the leg press machine.

JAY
I did?

CHARLIE
At the club, remember? I was a jerk
to her.

JAY
Oh! That girl? The cute one, with
the curly hair?

CHARLIE
That's the one. Did she look rotund
to you?

JAY
No. Not at all.
(to Matt)
She looked *goood*.

MATT
I'll take your word for it.

JAY
You won't have to. Charlie's
bringing her to Danielle's party.

CHARLIE
(news to him)
I guess I could see if she's up for
it. It's Saturday, right?

JAY
No, Friday.

CHARLIE
Friday I can't. It's our first
date.

Jay climbs out of the leg press machine.

JAY
All right, let's get this over
with.

CHARLIE
What?

JAY
I'm not gonna twist your arm to
hang out with us. But if I recall,
you promised to come to more
parties this year.

Charlie finishes his exercise. Matt takes over the machine.

CHARLIE
And if it was Saturday, I'd be
there. But I'm going out with
Angela on Friday. I'm sorry.

JAY
I'm starting to dislike this girl
already.

Doug crosses to them.

DOUG
Does Angela have a curfew?

CHARLIE
I don't know. Why?

DOUG
You think you two could drop by the party after your date so this guy stops whining?

JAY
I'm not whining! It's the last party before hockey season, and since this guy isn't playing we won't get to see him for a while.

DOUG
Dude, listen to yourself. You sound like a chick!

Charlie laughs.

JAY
Fuck you!

DOUG
Fuck me? Yeah, you wish you could. 'Cause you're a chick!

JAY
(raising fists)
Come on, big boy!

Jay and Doug spar playfully. Charlie scampers out of their way.

Matt jumps off the weight machine and observes with Charlie as their friends grapple each other. Matt shakes his head.

MATT
Can't take them anywhere.

INT. ANGELA'S HOUSE -- BEDROOM -- EVENING

Angela, wearing a tank top and shorts, rifles through her closet. She pulls out a shirt and places it on her bed.

EXT. ANGELA'S HOUSE -- PORCH -- MOMENTS LATER

Charlie smooths his hair, straightens out his shirt, checks his breath. Neurotically trying to look his best.

He RINGS the doorbell.

LIVING ROOM

Cozy and clean. Minimal decor gives the room a broader feel.

A middle-aged woman lies on the couch, back turned. Angela YELLS from upstairs.

ANGELA (O.S.)
Mom, can you get that?

BATHROOM

Angela, wrapped in a towel, blow dries her wet hair.

PORCH

Charlie shuffles his feet in anticipation. The door opens.

It's Dr. Simone.

DR. SIMONE
(confused)
Charlie?

CHARLIE
(ditto)
Dr. Simone?

DR. SIMONE
What are you doing here?

CHARLIE
I'm here to pick up Angela.

A long beat as Charlie and Dr. Simone process the new developments.

CHARLIE
For our date.

DR. SIMONE
I see.

Dr. Simone closes the door quietly. Steps onto the porch.

INTERCUT:

BEDROOM

Angela puts on her shirt and squeezes into her most flattering pair of jeans.

PORCH

DR. SIMONE
(quietly)
Does she know about your --

CHARLIE
No.

DR. SIMONE
But you will tell her. Right?

Charlie doesn't answer.

DR. SIMONE
Charlie, I know you planned on keeping this to yourself. As your doctor, I can respect that. But, as Angela's mother I need to know that you'll be truthful to her.

Charlie sighs deeply.

CHARLIE
I can't. Not about this. She's not ready to hear it and I'm not ready to say it.

DR. SIMONE
In that case, let me be truthful for a moment.

BEDROOM

Angela checks her face in a vanity mirror. Applies a subtle dash of eyeliner and lip gloss.

DR. SIMONE (O.S.)
Angela is a very sweet, very trusting soul. She's been through a lot in her life. A lot of people have broken her heart over the years, myself included.

PORCH

DR. SIMONE
But you're not going to do that to her.

CHARLIE
No way.

DR. SIMONE
Because you're going to tell her that you're under my care.

CHARLIE

No way.

BEDROOM

Angela ties a small sweatshirt around her waist. She grabs her purse and leaves the room.

DR. SIMONE (O.S.)

Charlie, this is not something that you can hide from her. Once the chemo takes effect, the symptoms will be too obvious. Your hair will fall out. Your health will decline.

PORCH

CHARLIE

I understand that.

DR. SIMONE

One of us has to tell her. And I'm not legally allowed to.

CHARLIE

I appreciate what you're trying to do, but I'm not going to tell her. I'm not going to break her heart.

DR. SIMONE

Dying would break her heart.

CHARLIE

I guess I can't die then. Can I?

Dr. Simone has no response. She knows the stakes are raised.

LIVING ROOM

Charlie follows Dr. Simone inside. He closes the door behind him just as Angela comes downstairs.

ANGELA

I see you two have already met.

Charlie stumbles to explain. Dr. Simone interjects.

DR. SIMONE

You kept him waiting long enough. Charlie was here right at 7.

ANGELA

(sarcasm)

Oh my God! It's 7:05. I'm so sorry!

CHARLIE
It's my fault. I was gonna do the
"cool guy" thing and come late. But
I couldn't wait to see you.

ANGELA
Awww, you're sweet. Trust me, I've
had enough of the "cool guys".

Charlie and Angela get ready to leave.

ANGELA
Bye, Mom.

DR. SIMONE
Bye, honey. Have fun.

ANGELA
I will.

DR. SIMONE
Charlie, remember what I said.

CHARLIE
Midnight. Got it.

As they get in Charlie's truck, Dr. Simone waves goodbye. She
sighs deeply and shuts the door.

INT. WALLY'S GRILL -- NIGHT

A friendly neighborhood hole-in-the-wall.

Angela looks around, unsure about the surroundings.

Charlie is greeted like a conquering hero by busboys and wait
staff. He greets them all by name.

ANGELA
What is this place?

He waves to the bartender as they pass.

CHARLIE
This is Wally's, official hangout
of the Crystal Bay hockey team.

LOUNGE AREA

A pair of crossed hockey sticks mounted to the wall. One
reads: CRYSTAL BAY along the shaft. The other reads: MARINERS

CHARLIE

We come here after every game, win or lose. It's like a second home.

Charlie and Angela seat themselves. She glances at the pictures of various local athletes.

ANGELA

Hey, how's your head? Any lingering effects from the concussion?

CHARLIE

I have good days and bad days. Some headaches here, some nausea there.

ANGELA

Is it anything serious?

Angela has a concerned look on her face.

CHARLIE

I wouldn't worry about it.

Their waitress MONIQUE approaches the table with two menus.

MONIQUE

Honey, I know hockey season didn't start yet. What 'cha doing here?

CHARLIE

I'm on a date.

Monique regards Angela.

MONIQUE

You bringin' girls here now?

CHARLIE

I need my fix, Mo.

Monique hands them the menus.

MONIQUE

I know you don't need one. But your date does.

(to Angela)

Hi, I'm Monique. Can I get you a drink while you decide?

ANGELA

Diet Coke.

MONIQUE

Charlie?

CHARLIE
Just water for me. Thanks.

Monique leaves. Angela reads her menu. Charlie ignores his.

Charlie grabs a napkin holder, stares at his reflection on the side. He holds his other hand up to his hair, afraid to touch it but obsessed with looking at it.

ANGELA
Your hair looks fine. Don't be so vain.

He replaces the napkin holder.

CHARLIE
Sorry.

ANGELA
(reading menu)
So, what's good here?

CHARLIE
Everything. If it's on the menu, it's good. Can't vouch for the salmon, though. That's the one thing I haven't tried.

ANGELA
Then get it.

CHARLIE
Yeah?

ANGELA
Sure. Why not cross it off the list?

EXT. HOUSE PARTY -- NIGHT

A ritzy ranch-style house with scores of party animals on all sides.

Charlie, Angela and Jay are gathered around the keg, each with a drink in hand.

JAY
You tried the salmon?

CHARLIE
She dared me to.

ANGELA
I did not!

JAY
How was it?

CHARLIE
I've had worse.

DANIELLE, a flawless blonde and the host of the party,
approaches them.

DANIELLE
Hey, guys.

JAY
Danielle! Great party!

DANIELLE
Thanks Jay. That means a lot coming
from you.
(to Angela, biting)
I know you. You're from Palisades.
(back to Jay, fierce)
What the fuck is she doing here?

CHARLIE
She's from here.
(arm around Angela)
And she's with me.

DANIELLE
Thanks, Charlie. You've ruined my
night. And my party.

She leaves in a huff. Angela slams her cup down on the table
and storms off in the opposite direction. Charlie casually
follows her.

ANGELA
I am so sick of this rivalry! This
whole year has been one big
nightmare. And it's all my father's
fault.

CHARLIE
Your father?

ANGELA
Moving to Palisades was his idea.
He wanted us to have a better life.

CHARLIE
(offended)
In Palisades.

ANGELA

Again, his idea. It took me the rest of Junior High to get acclimated, but by Freshman year I actually felt like I fit in. I was making friends, running track, losing weight. I was happy.

CHARLIE

So if you were so comfortable there, why leave?

ANGELA

We had no choice. When we moved there, my parents bought this gorgeous McMansion right on the water. You should have seen this place, it was huge! It was also completely unnecessary. There's only three of us, but Dad wanted us to have all the finer things in life. So he insisted on buying a house we could barely afford. Then, when the economy collapsed, he lost his job at Textron and we went from living in a dream home to being priced out of Palisades.

CHARLIE

And that's why you came back.

ANGELA

Just in time for senior year! So now I rarely get to see any of the friends I made in High School. I won't graduate with them, I won't go to the prom with them. I'm back at the beginning. Only it's worse because I don't have the same friends I did when I left here.

Angela sighs sadly.

ANGELA

I don't know where I belong anymore.

CHARLIE

I know where you belong.

Charlie puts his drink down. Hands on her hips. Pulls her close.

CHARLIE

Right here.

He kisses her gently.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- MORNING

Janet sets the table for a pancake breakfast. Orange juice, coffee, and a plate of sausage links flank the hotcakes.

STAIRS

The sound of Charlie dragging himself down each step O.S.

Janet YELLS for him.

JANET (O.S.)

Charlie! Your breakfast is getting cold!

KITCHEN

Janet sits down to eat without him. She pours herself some coffee, places two pancakes on her plate, douses them in syrup and picks up her fork.

She feels Charlie's presence and turns toward him. Tosses the fork aside and crosses to him.

Charlie slowly lifts his head, revealing a baseball hat. He's upset, embarrassed. Afraid to face his mother.

Mom knows what's wrong. She looks him straight in the eye, comforting.

JANET

Show me.

Charlie slowly removes the hat. He's completely BALD.

A single tear squeezes from Charlie's eye. He wipes it away. Janet places her hands on his face and head.

JANET

(unwavering)

It's only hair.

CHARLIE

(scared to death)

It's only the beginning.

EXT. CRYSTAL BAY HIGH SCHOOL -- FOOTBALL STADIUM -- DAY

Angela and her cross-country teammates stretch on the field. Their tough-as-nails COACH (mid 30's, stocky) circles around them, observing. She stops at Angela and BLOWS HER WHISTLE.

COACH

Palisades! On your feet!

Angela props herself up, annoyed.

ANGELA

I have a name, Coach.

COACH

Excuse me, Your Highness.

Angela's teammates stifle their laughs. Coach puts an end to the charade. She points to the track encircling the field.

COACH

Two laps, ten minutes. If you're under, I'll call you whatever you want. If you're over, you sit out Saturday's meet.

Angela has no patience for this woman; they've butted heads before. She rips off her warm-up jacket and steps onto the track.

ANGELA

Blow your whistle.

Coach BLOWS HER WHISTLE again.

Angela runs fast and powerful, like a gazelle. Her strides are effortless, barely breaking a sweat. The defiant scowl on her face fades into a serene focus.

INT. CRYSTAL BAY HIGH SCHOOL -- CLASSROOM -- SAME TIME

Charlie is slumped down on his desk, tired and pale. Hides himself under the brim of his hat. He looks out the window, watching Angela run her laps.

His TEACHER breaks his concentration. She hands him a graded test paper.

At the top, she has written in red pen:

D-

See me!

Charlie takes the paper and sighs. He steals one more glance out the window.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE -- GARAGE LOFT -- AFTERNOON

Sam and Kyle practice one of their songs in a spacious room above a detached garage. Minimal decor, other than the instruments, amplifiers, and recording equipment.

A handful of Larceny pictures and posters decorate the walls.

Charlie enters, guitar case in hand. A brimmed beanie hat covers his head.

SAM
About time you showed up.

CHARLIE
What? I'm 10 minutes late.

SAM
More like 20.

CHARLIE
Sorry. I had chores to do.

KYLE
Dude, who cares? He's here now.
Let's just get started.

Charlie removes his guitar from the case and plugs it in to an amplifier. He takes his place in front of the microphone.

SAM
Lose the hat. We're not Fall Out
Boy.

Charlie reluctantly removes the hat. Sam and Kyle exchange a disgusted look.

SAM
We're not the Smashing Pumpkins,
either. Put it back on.

CHARLIE
Whatever you say, boss.

SAM
Hey, someone's gotta take charge
here. You obviously don't want the
job.

CHARLIE
What are you talking about?

SAM

I'm writing our songs. I'm booking our gigs. All you've done is show up late and... shave your head.

KYLE

Sam, chill.

SAM

Why should I?

(to Charlie)

This band is just another after-school activity for you. But it means a hell of a lot more to us.

CHARLIE

Yeah. I know, Sam. I get it.

SAM

Do you? Because I'm getting a very nonchalant vibe from you. If you really gave a shit, you'd show up on time and contribute something.

CHARLIE

Why are you being such a control freak? If you want your own band, fucking start one!

KYLE

Guys, stop. Come on!

SAM

Don't you get it? I don't want to be in charge! I want us to be equal partners. The three of us writing, playing, recording together. Like we used to. You're a damn good frontman when you want to be. But if you can't commit to this band long-term, just be honest about it. Don't hang us out to dry like this.

KYLE

Would you just shut up? Haven't you learned anything from last year?

CHARLIE

No, Sam's right. I can't do this long-term. I'm holding you back.

Charlie packs his guitar in the case and SNAPS it shut.

SAM
Charlie, I didn't mean --

CHARLIE
It's my fault. I should have just
let you find someone else.

Charlie exits down the stairs. Kyle turns to Sam, angry. He pockets his drumsticks and slings a backpack around one arm.

KYLE
You couldn't leave it alone. Could
you?

Kyle crosses past Sam and exits.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie and Janet play a golf video game on the Nintendo Wii. They each hold controllers with both hands and take turns swinging an invisible club.

CHARLIE
I quit the band today.

JANET
Why did you do that?

CHARLIE
Because I'm sick of Sam's enormous
ego.

Janet carefully aims her shot and follows through.

JANET
What's the real reason?

CHARLIE
What do you think?

Charlie steps up and takes his swing.

JANET
I think you should start telling
the truth.

CHARLIE
I don't think I can.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The bitter cold New England winter has arrived. Charlie is bundled in a winter hat and coat. Blustery winds have left their mark on his cheeks.

Charlie addresses his father O.S.

CHARLIE

Hi, Dad. Sorry I'm late this year.
I know I usually visit you right
before the season starts, but...
I'm not playing hockey. I think you
know why. In fact, I think you know
about everything that's happened
over the past year. But even if you
know it, I need to say it out loud.
(pause, collects himself)
I'm sorry.

Charlie is in a CEMETERY. His father's headstone is revealed:

LARSON

WILLIAM CHARLES

OCT 4 1966 - AUG 27 2003

BELOVED HUSBAND - FATHER - SOLDIER

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry that I won't be the man
you envisioned the last time you
saw me. I won't win state. I won't
graduate from an Ivy League School.
I won't get married, have kids,
raise a family. I won't be here to
keep Mom company, or take care of
her when she gets older. Everything
you asked of me before you left,
everything I agreed to do when I
barely understood the intent, I
understand now. And I can't do a
damn thing about it. I failed you,
Dad. I failed Mom. I failed the
team, the band. Angela doesn't know
it yet, but I'm failing her, too. I
should have told her. I should have
said something months ago. As soon
as I knew. But I'm not a man. I
never will be. And I'm sorry.

Charlie BAWLS like a baby. He drops to one knee. Eventually,
he composes himself. Wipes away frozen tears. Picks up a
small pebble and places it on his father's headstone.

CHARLIE

Merry Christmas, Dad. I guess we
can have this conversation face-to-
face next year.

Charlie lifts his head to the heavens. Snow begins to fall.

EXT. ANGELA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Blinding snow falls around Charlie.

A snowball hits Charlie's jacket.

Angela wears a heavy winter parka and a sinister grin. She runs into the backyard.

CHARLIE

That's it. You're mine now, girl!

Charlie grabs a handful of snow and charges after her. She trudges away as fast as she can, but struggles to stay on her feet. Charlie catches her and gently pulls her down.

CHARLIE

You're not so fast when there's snow on the ground, huh?

ANGELA

Nope. You win.

CHARLIE

Oh yeah? What's my prize?

ANGELA

This.

Their faces turning pink from the winter chill, Charlie and Angela share a sweet kiss. She gently removes his hat and continues kissing him.

Then she DUMPS a snowball on top of his bald head.

ANGELA

Gotcha!

Another chase begins.

INT. HOSPITAL -- EXAM ROOM -- DAY

Charlie undergoes a physical examination.

A specialist analyzes his blood work.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Charlie enters from the kitchen. He grips a serving tray containing two cups of tea, packets of sugar, and cookies.

Angela admires the pictures of Charlie's father on the mantle.

ANGELA

Your Dad was a handsome man. I could definitely see the resemblance.

Charlie sets the tray down on the table. He sits on the couch and pours sugar into his tea.

ANGELA

Do you miss him?

CHARLIE

Every day.

Angela turns her attention to Charlie. She crosses to him.

ANGELA

I don't know what I'd do if I lost my father. He's stubborn and irrational and he misjudged our means. But I could not imagine my life without him.

CHARLIE

Let's hope you never have to.

Angela prepares her tea. They drink.

ANGELA

Does it get any easier?

CHARLIE

It never goes away. But there are ways to keep it from entering your consciousness. You fill the days with friends, with school, activities, sports, music. Anything to keep yourself from thinking about it. Then when you're immersed in the extra curriculars of life, you forget why you participated in the first place.

Charlie takes a thoughtful sip.

CHARLIE

Life has a way of shrouding what matters with things that don't.

ANGELA
School is important. Friends are
important.

CHARLIE
It's all important to a degree. But
when you lose someone close to you,
you'd give up everything to get
them back.

Angela fills with admiration. She snuggles up to him.

ANGELA
Were you always so profound?

CHARLIE
(arm around her)
I don't know. I've never had anyone
show this much interest in me.

ANGELA
Neither have I.

They stare into each other's eyes.

CHARLIE
I've always loved your eyes. Even
when we were kids. They're just
beautiful. You're beautiful.

ANGELA
I've heard that before. But I've
never felt it.

She kisses him passionately. He kisses back harder. Faster.

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Angela straddles Charlie on the bed. He tosses his shirt to
the floor. Kissing continues.

She peels off her shirt. Charlie admires her body -- and her
confidence.

CHARLIE
Goddamn, you're sexy.

ANGELA
I'm just getting started.

More kissing. She unbuckles his pants. He knows what's next.

CHARLIE

Wait a second, Ange. There's something I should tell you.

ANGELA

I know. It's okay. Sometimes I wish I was a virgin.

CHARLIE

That's not... wait... so you're...?

ANGELA

Do you love me, Charlie?

CHARLIE

With all my heart.

ANGELA

That's all that matters.

Angela softly, passionately kisses Charlie's lips, his neck, and his torso.

Charlie loses himself in ecstasy. His face contorts. His chest swells with every breath.

He summons all of his strength and holds Angela's naked body tightly against his.

As the two lovers close in on climax, Angela MOANS with unspeakable pleasure.

Charlie SHAKES violently, uncontrollably. Angela is too wrapped up in the moment to notice.

Angela exhales like she's been drowning. Her head rolls on a swivel.

Charlie's leg twitches. His right side fails him. Aftershock.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY -- MORNING

Charlie and Jay walk through the halls. Jay notices a flyer advertising the International Club's Spring Break Ski Trip.

JAY

Do you know how lucky you are?

CHARLIE

Me? Lucky? Why?

JAY

Spring Break. Ski trip. Europe.

CHARLIE

Oh... that? No, I'm not going.

JAY

Why the fuck not?

CHARLIE

Because I'm not in the
International Club anymore.

JAY

You're kidding?

CHARLIE

I cut back on activities this year.

JAY

Yeah, don't remind me. We missed
the playoffs because of you.

CHARLIE

And I feel terrible about that.

JAY

You should. Okay, so you couldn't
play hockey. Fine. But you quit all
your after school clubs. You barely
hung out with us. What the fuck
were you doing all year?

CHARLIE

Studying.

JAY

Yeah. Studying Angela.

CHARLIE

Dude, that's not fair.

JAY

Okay, then. Prove me wrong. We're
all going to Cape Cod for Spring
Break. Just the guys. Are you in?

CHARLIE

I can't. I've got --

JAY

Yeah, that's what I thought.

Jay starts to leave.

CHARLIE

Jay, I'm sorry. I want to go. I do.

JAY

What happened to you, man? You used to have time for everyone and everything. You never said no. Ever. Now you finally got a girlfriend and all of a sudden nothing else matters. I thought we were tight, man. I thought we were brothers. But ever since you met Angela, I feel like I don't even know you. And I'm not the only one.

CHARLIE

I hear what you're saying. I know I've been a shitty friend. But I'm just going through some things. I don't expect you to understand.

JAY

Why, because I'm not Ivy League material?

CHARLIE

No! It's not that.

JAY

Don't bullshit me, Charlie. I know what I am. Comic relief. Party animal. Booze hound. I get it. When we're on the ice you need me. Outside of that, I'm not smart enough to be seen with you.

CHARLIE

Where is this coming from? You're being ridiculous!

JAY

Prove me wrong. Please. Because I'm getting sick and tired of your excuses. If you don't want me around now, don't expect me to show up later.

Jay leaves. Charlie is upset with himself. He PUNCHES a locker.

INT. HOSPITAL -- EXAM ROOM -- DAY

Charlie undergoes another CT scan.

INT. DR. SIMONE'S OFFICE -- LATER

Charlie and Janet are seated in front of the desk. Dr. Simone reviews Charlie's medical records.

DR. SIMONE

Unfortunately the tumor has not decreased to this point. But we still have another cycle to go. If there's any progress we will continue the current treatment for as long as necessary.

JANET

And what if no progress is made?

DR. SIMONE

Then we'll have to try something stronger.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE -- DAY

A loud VOMIT is heard behind a closed bathroom door. Another VOMIT is heard, followed by a WHIMPER and a MOAN.

JANET (O.S.)

Charlie! I'm home!

Charlie opens the bathroom door. He wears pajamas and looks weaker and more frail than ever.

Janet approaches him with a bagged prescription in one hand and the day's mail in the other.

Charlie stays in his seated position in front of the toilet.

JANET

Sweetie, are you okay?

CHARLIE

Does it look like I'm okay?

Janet kneels down next to Charlie. She pats him on the back.

JANET

Got any left in there?

Charlie tries to vomit again. Nothing comes out.

CHARLIE

No.

Janet rises. She holds out her hand. Charlie takes it and pulls himself up.

JANET
I've got something for you.

CHARLIE
(sarcasm)
Zofan, yay!

JANET
Well, that too. But this might
actually make you feel better.

She hands him a letter from Dartmouth. He stares at it,
expressionless. He hands it back to her on his way to the

LIVING ROOM

Charlie flops down on the couch. Crackers, sports drinks, and
pills surround him. Janet follows him excitedly.

JANET
Open it!

CHARLIE
Why?

JANET
It's Dartmouth! Your first choice!
Don't you want to know if all that
hard work paid off?

CHARLIE
No.

She pushes the letter in front of him.

JANET
Well I do. Open it for me. Please.

Charlie grabs the letter. He opens it and skims through.

CHARLIE
(nonplussed)
I got in.

JANET
(ecstatic)
You got in! Oh, honey, that's
wonderful! I'm so proud of you!

Janet hugs him tightly. Charlie tries to manage a smile.

EXT. ANGELA'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

Charlie pulls into Angela's driveway. He gingerly steps out of the truck, revealing an emaciated physique hidden behind a five o' clock shadow, baseball hat, and oversized clothing.

Angela darts out of the house and runs toward him at top speed.

ANGELA

Charlie!

She LEAPS into his arms, helping herself to a bear hug. Charlie succumbs to the sheer force of her energy and buckles slightly. Angela is too wired to notice his brief struggle.

CHARLIE

Hey, gorgeous!

Charlie regards his glowing girlfriend.

CHARLIE

Wow, someone's in a good mood.

ANGELA

That's 'cause someone got in to Providence!

CHARLIE

Hey! That's great! Congrats, babe!

Charlie gives Angela a gentle hug. She winds down a bit.

ANGELA

I know it's not the best school in the world, but a lot of my friends are going and I can live on campus and just start over, you know?

CHARLIE

Yeah. That's what you wanted, right?

She nods and smiles. Her excitement is infectious.

ANGELA

What about you? Did you hear back from anyone?

CHARLIE

Dartmouth.

ANGELA

And?

CHARLIE
And I'm in.

ANGELA
Woot woot! I knew you could do it!

Angela squeezes his hand. Pulls him close to her.

ANGELA
This calls for a celebration.

CHARLIE
Oh really? What kind of
celebration?

ANGELA
You'll see.

Angela leads Charlie inside.

INT. ANGELA'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM

Angela breezes past the stairs. Charlie stares back at them.

CHARLIE
Uh, isn't your bedroom up there?

ANGELA
Not today, horn dog. My mom's home.

KITCHEN

Dr. Simone carefully squirts icing onto a large cake.

Angela enters and heads right for the cake. Her eyes light up. Charlie enters, two steps behind.

CHARLIE
Dr. Simone, you made me a cake? How
thoughtful!

ANGELA
Yeah, you wish. This is my cake.
Right, Mom?

Dr. Simone waves them away. She stores the cake in the refrigerator.

DR. SIMONE
Away, both of you! It's nobody's
cake until your father comes home.

ANGELA
Fine. I'll just take this instead.

Angela grabs the tube of icing. She squirts a drop into her mouth.

DR. SIMONE
Angela, don't -- that's disgusting!
Give me that!

Dr. Simone takes the tube from her daughter and throws it in the trash.

ANGELA
What a waste.

DR. SIMONE
If you're that hungry, have a piece
of fruit. There's apples in the
fridge.

ANGELA
Fine.
(to Charlie)
You want one?

CHARLIE
Not right now. I need to use the
bathroom.

DR. SIMONE
You know where it is?

Charlie points to a closed door on his right and enters.

Angela watches as Charlie close the door behind him. She crosses to her mother the second he is out of sight.

ANGELA
Mom, I'm worried about Charlie.
Does he look sick to you?

DR. SIMONE
I can't tell.

ANGELA
You can't tell? Seriously?

BATHROOM

Charlie checks his sunken face in the mirror. Takes a pill out of his pocket and swallows it.

ANGELA (O.S.)
Look at him! He's withering away to
nothing.

DR. SIMONE (O.S.)
Why don't you ask him if he's sick?
You don't listen to me anyway. I
told you to break up with him and
you flat-out disobeyed me. Why?

BACK TO SCENE

ANGELA
Because I'm not a kid anymore. I'm
17, I can make my own decisions.

DR. SIMONE
Honey, don't go there. I've spent
more time in college and Med school
than you've spent on this Earth,
and I've got a wall full of degrees
to prove it. If I'm meddling with
your love life, you can be damn
sure I have a good reason.

ANGELA
And what could that be, Mom? You
can't stand to see me happy?
Charlie has been nothing but sweet
and kind and respectful to me from
day one. I've never had another
boyfriend like him, and I probably
never will. He means everything to
me. And I can't believe that you're
trying to take that away from me.
Why, Mom? Why would you do that to
me? What possible reason could
there be to give up the man I love?

CHARLIE (O.S.)
Because I'm dying.

Angela and Dr. Simone turn their attention to Charlie.

Dr. Simone takes a deep breath. The pressure of keeping
Charlie's secret dissolves.

Charlie crosses to Angela, keeping his emotions and physical
limitations at bay.

ANGELA
You're what?

CHARLIE
I have a malignant cerebellar
medulloblastoma. It's inoperable.

Angela can't believe her ears. She checks with her mother, who confirms Charlie's story with a pensive nod.

It cripples her. She stares deeply into Charlie's eyes.

ANGELA
How much time?

Now Charlie checks with Dr. Simone. She holds up three fingers.

CHARLIE
Not enough.

Angela closes in on Charlie. Her heart sinks. Her lip quivers. Her eyes fill with tears. It cuts Charlie deep. He braces himself to console her, expecting sadness.

Angela SMACKS him hard, rivaling any pain he's ever felt.

ANGELA
(furious)
You knew! You knew you were dying
and you never said a word! Why,
Charlie? Why wouldn't you tell me?

CHARLIE
Because I --

ANGELA
How could you do this to me? I
cared about you. I fell for you. I
slept with you! And you deceived
me, just so you could get what you
want. You selfish bastard!

She SMACKS him again. This time Dr. Simone feels it.

ANGELA
You're just like all the other
guys. No, scratch that. You're
worse.

Angela glares at Charlie in disgust. She can't stand the sight of him another second. Charlie lowers his head like a beaten puppy.

Angela storms past her mother.

ANGELA
(to Dr. Simone)
You got your wish. Happy now?

Dr. Simone shakes her head. She locks eyes with Charlie and gives him an "I told you so" look.

Angela continues toward the stairs. Her father GIANCARLO (late 40's, thick Italian accent) enters through the front door. He blocks her path.

ANGELA
Dad, you're the last good man
alive.

GIANCARLO
(confused)
What did I do?

Angela passes him and runs upstairs. She starts to CRY.

GIANCARLO
Angie, what's 'a matter?

Dr. Simone meets Giancarlo in the hallway.

GIANCARLO
What's 'a matter with her?

Dr. Simone turns to reveal Charlie, seated at the kitchen table. He buries his head. Fights back tears.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT -- MORNING

Charlie parks his truck in the usual spot.

As he hobbles toward the entrance, a CROWD forms around him. They know.

HALLWAY

Filled with well-wishers, all concerned for Charlie's health.

Charlie trudges ahead. He tunes out their condolences.

HOMEROOM

Sam and Kyle jump out of their seats and approach him. They throw their arms around him for a group hug. Sam and Kyle are somber, ashamed. Charlie is numb.

Charlie breaks from their embrace and sits at his desk. He stares at the empty seat in front of him. Angela never comes.

EXT. CRYSTAL BAY -- AROUND TOWN -- DAY

Angela RUNS hard and fast along an empty sidewalk. Sweat drips from her face and arms. Her breathing is labored, strained.

Her feet punish the ground below. She pushes herself harder.

Tears begin to bond with perspiration. She wipes her eyes and continues.

More tears follow. The floodgates open. She can't hold back.

She collapses on a park bench and CRIES.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT -- LATER

Charlie stands by his car. He calls Angela on his cell phone.

ANGELA (O.S.)

Hi, it's Ange. Leave a message.

CHARLIE

(into phone)

Hey, you. It's me. I've been trying to reach you all day and you're not picking up. I guess you're still mad. At least, I hope that's why you're not picking up. Which is fine. I don't think we should talk about this over the phone anyway. So, I'll just see you later then. I hope you're okay. I love you, Ange.

Charlie hangs up the phone and gets in his truck.

EXT. ANGELA'S HOUSE -- PORCH -- LATER

Charlie stands in front of the door, waiting to be let in. Dr. Simone guards it.

DR. SIMONE

Give her time, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I wish I could.

She relents and opens the door. Charlie runs up the stairs.

ANGELA'S BEDROOM

Angela is seated in a chair, eyes glued to a book. Charlie enters. A warm, carefree look appears on his face. He attempts to break the ice.

CHARLIE

So... how'd you talk your Mom into letting you stay home?

ANGELA

I lied to her. I told her my boyfriend is dying.

CHARLIE

I am dying.

ANGELA

But you're not my boyfriend.

CHARLIE

Yes I am.

ANGELA

(puts the book down)

No, Charlie. You don't get to decide. You can't just leave out the most important detail of your life and expect me to trust you.

CHARLIE

I know. I was stupid and selfish and arrogant. I thought I could take on cancer by myself, but I can't. I need you.

Angela is steadfast, unwavering. Charlie pleads with her.

CHARLIE

Angela, please. Say something.

ANGELA

I don't have much choice, do I? You've got me trapped. If I stay with you, I'm accepting your lies and condoning your deceit. If I break up with you, I'm the cold-hearted bitch that left the man I loved when he needed me the most.

CHARLIE

So what are you going to do?

ANGELA

I wish I knew.

She returns her attention to the book. Charlie tries to speak, but eventually gets the message. He exits meekly.

EXT. WILDLIFE REFUGE -- AFTERNOON

Charlie and Janet walk along a nature trail. Large trees cover the sky. Rare and exotic birds nest all around them.

CHARLIE

I don't think I've been up here since Dad died.

JANET

We used to take you all the time when you were little.

CHARLIE

I remember.

JANET

Do you remember climbing those trees over there?

She points to a small cluster of sturdy oak trees.

CHARLIE

Oh yeah. That freaked you out.

JANET

Your father didn't help matters. He threatened to shake the tree and get you to fall out like a cat.

CHARLIE

That's right! I knew he scared me down somehow, but I couldn't remember.

JANET

He would have done it, too. That's the scary part.

The trail empties into a

BEACH

Charlie eases himself onto a large, flat rock that juts out into the ocean. He sits parallel to the shoreline. Janet stands across from him, on more stable terrain.

Charlie observes nature's splendor from atop his perch.

CHARLIE

Angela's not talking to me.

JANET

She will.

CHARLIE

We were supposed to go to the prom together. Doesn't look like that's gonna happen.

JANET

It's probably for the best.

CHARLIE

Do you think she'd go with another guy? If I can't take her, I kinda hope someone else does. Just so she doesn't miss out on it.

JANET

I think all this worrying about you and Angela is exacerbating your illness.

CHARLIE

Are you kidding? I've been on eight different cancer drugs and none of them make me feel as healthy and alive as she does.

JANET

She's not a drug, Charlie! Your health is not her responsibility.

CHARLIE

Maybe you're right. If she's still mad at me, missing the prom won't be a problem. But if we get back together and I don't take her, I might lose her for good.

JANET

And if you don't stop worrying about it, she'll lose you. And so will I.

This hits Charlie like a gut punch. He looks away, ashamed.

A pair of birds fly majestically over the water.

CHARLIE

Mom, do you think you'll ever fall in love again?

JANET

I don't think about it. It isn't important to me.

CHARLIE

Well it's important to me. It's just you and me, remember? And if I don't live through this, I need to know you won't be alone.

JANET

There you go again. Worrying about other people.

CHARLIE

I'm serious. I won't leave this Earth until I know you'll be okay.

Janet places her hands on Charlie's shoulders. She stares at him, eyes like lasers.

JANET

Charlie, you are the only man I'm worried about. And if I lose you, I will never, never, ever be okay.

EXT. CAFE -- DAY

Charlie is seated sadly at a ultra-hip café table. A large coffee is placed in front of him. He looks up. Angela stands over him, a bit disheveled.

ANGELA

They were all out of roses.

CHARLIE

Thanks.

Angela takes a seat across from Charlie, coffee in hand.

CHARLIE

You look tired.

ANGELA

Couldn't sleep.

CHARLIE

Because of me?

Angela takes a sip of her coffee.

ANGELA

I'm trying, Charlie. I'm trying to forgive you. I'm trying to be strong for you. I'm trying to place your needs ahead of mine. But it hurts.

CHARLIE

What, the lying? Or the dying?

ANGELA

Both. I feel used. I feel betrayed. And I feel guilty because those feelings can't possibly be as bad as the ones you're experiencing.

CHARLIE

You have every right to be upset with me. Don't censor yourself. I'm not going to play the "grim reaper" card.

ANGELA

Every boyfriend I've ever had put himself before everything else. I wish you would have done the same.

CHARLIE

I did! I was so consumed with maintaining a sense of normalcy that I never stopped to think of how it would affect other people. I should have told you before we dated. At the club, when I didn't want you near me. I didn't tell you why.

ANGELA

You weren't just playing games?

CHARLIE

Like what? "Be an asshole. Girls will like you." Nah, that's not my style. Could be why I haven't had a girlfriend in three years.

Charlie takes a sip of his coffee.

ANGELA

But it works. Doesn't it?

She stares a knowing smirk at him. He gets the message.

CHARLIE

Better than it should.

They quietly sip their coffee.

ANGELA

Did you lie about anything else?
Did you really love me?

(MORE)

ANGELA (cont'd)
Or were you just looking to get
laid before you die?

Charlie's heart sinks. He grimaces. Angela regrets the words
the second they leave her lips.

ANGELA
Too far. I'm... so sorry.

CHARLIE
It's fine. If I were you, I'd do
the same thing. I dated you under
false pretenses. Your Mom knew this
would happen. She tried to warn me.
But I ignored her because... I
needed you.

ANGELA
I needed you! I needed to be with
someone who wouldn't judge me, who
didn't think of me as some stuck-up
bitch from Palisades. I was
complicit in all of this. I didn't
want to need anyone anymore. It
just happened.

CHARLIE
Do you regret it?

Angela thoughtfully sips her coffee.

CHARLIE
If I had told you from the
beginning that I had less than a
year to live... ?

ANGELA
I would have assumed it was a
cheesy pickup line and laughed at
you.

Charlie smiles, causing Angela to smile. She rises out of her
seat. Finishes her coffee.

ANGELA
Do me a favor, okay?

CHARLIE
Okay.

ANGELA
Fight this fucking tumor. Kick its
ass. And for God's sake, if my Mom
tells you something, listen to her!

She throws down her empty coffee cup into the garbage can.
Charlie rises on this.

CHARLIE
I will. I promise.

INT. HOSPITAL -- EXAM ROOM -- NIGHT

Charlie undergoes another CT scan.

OBSERVATION ROOM

Dr. Simone is seated across from Janet. She holds a folder with Charlie's medical file.

DR. SIMONE
There is an option you might want to consider. Charlie is a candidate for a procedure called Dendritic Cell Immunotherapy. It's a more invasive form of chemo that involves the removal and fusion of tumor cells with healthy immune cells. The idea is to use this compound to form a more targeted and successful treatment.

Janet listens intently.

DR. SIMONE
Unfortunately, this procedure is still in the experimental phase. The results from clinical trials are so varied that there is almost no way to predict any kind of success rate in advance.

JANET
So this is a crapshoot? A Hail Mary pass?

DR. SIMONE
It does work. It does produce significant results in a wide variety of terminally ill patients. It's not a Hail Mary. But it is a gamble. There is no middle ground with this procedure. It will either strengthen Charlie's immune system, or destroy it.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE -- DRESSING ROOM -- DAY

Angela is trying on dresses with Lauren. She stands in front of a mirror. Examines the dress.

ANGELA
What do you think?

LAUREN
I hate you.

ANGELA
Why?

LAUREN
You look great. You look great in everything. You stupid sexy bitch!

ANGELA
Oh, please!

Angela's phone rings.

ANGELA
Can you get that for me?

Lauren reaches into Angela's purse and pulls out the phone. She answers it.

LAUREN
(into phone)
Angela's phone ... Hi, Charlie ...
Yeah, she's here. Hold on.
(to Angela)
It's your boyfriend.

She hands the phone to Angela.

ANGELA
(into phone)
Hey you! ... Trying on prom dresses ... You didn't forget, did you? ... We're still going, right? ... Why not? ... But my Mom said ... Yes, I realize that, but ... Why would I go by myself? I don't know anyone.

INTERCUT:

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM -- SAME TIME

A sickly-looking Charlie talks to Angela on the phone. He slumps down in a chair.

CHARLIE

(into phone)

I don't want you to miss out on it because of me ... Maybe Lauren will take you to the Palisades prom ... I want to go with you, too ... Yes, you can ... Please, just go without me. Have fun with your friends. It will be good for you to take your mind off the dying boyfriend.

ANGELA

First of all, you're not dying. My Mom won't let you. And second, I'm not going without you. How am I supposed to enjoy my prom when all I'll be thinking about is how you're feeling?

CHARLIE

Don't worry about me. I'll be fine.

ANGELA

If that were true, then you'd be going.

CHARLIE

It's all relative. The music will bother me. I won't be able to dance. I'll just sit there and feel miserable.

ANGELA

So if you stayed home by yourself, do you think you'd feel better?

CHARLIE

Maybe.

ANGELA

Would you feel better if I stayed home with you?

CHARLIE

Not on prom night, no.

Angela takes a long look at herself in the mirror. She pictures herself wearing the dress on prom night. Her conscience erases the mental picture -- and her smile.

ANGELA

I don't care. I'm going to anyway.

CHARLIE

Why? Why would you give up your senior prom for me?

ANGELA

Because I love you. And I want you to get better.

CHARLIE

I love you, too. But I want you to have fun.

ANGELA

You don't think we can have fun?

CHARLIE

Not if I'm vomiting all night.

ANGELA

I'll make you some soup. We'll play a game or watch a movie and just chill. But you owe me a dance when you get better. Deal?

Charlie smiles to himself. He doesn't see a downside.

CHARLIE

Yeah, it's a deal.

ANGELA

Good. I gotta go get this dress off. Talk to you later, 'kay?

Angela hangs up the phone and slaps it shut.

LAUREN

You're not going to prom, are you?

Angela shakes her head as she unzips the dress.

LAUREN

Wow. You must really love this guy.

ANGELA

I do. I really do. And I'm scared to death that I'm going to lose him.

INT. ANGELA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie is stretched out on the couch, bundled in a blanket. Pills and other medication surrounds him. He's sick, dying.

Angela, dressed comfortably in summer clothes, enters from the kitchen with a bowl of clam chowder. She places it on the table in front of him.

ANGELA

As promised. Special family recipe.

Charlie discards the blanket and inches over to the table. He blows on the soup before tasting it.

ANGELA

Verdict?

CHARLIE

Delicious.

Angela smiles proudly.

ANGELA

I thought you'd like it.

As Charlie enjoys the soup, Angela tidies up around him. She picks up the blanket, fluffs his pillow and makes sure he's comfortable.

CHARLIE

I think you found your calling.

ANGELA

What, making soup?

CHARLIE

No, caring for sick people. You've got a lot of your mother in you. I can tell.

Angela tries to appease him with a small smile and a shrug.

CHARLIE

You don't agree?

ANGELA

No, I don't. I'm not equipped for this. I couldn't do what she does. I'm too emotional to be a doctor, or a nurse, or even an orderly. I love my mother, but she's detached. She has to be.

CHARLIE

She's not as detached as you think.

ANGELA

Not with you. I know my Mom cares about all her patients, but you're her daughter's boyfriend. There's more of an emotional investment in it than she's used to.

CHARLIE

I put her in a difficult position, didn't I?

ANGELA

You put all of us in a difficult position.

Guilt hits Charlie hard. This time, Angela holds her ground.

ANGELA

You made me feel like I couldn't live without you. Now I have to figure out how.

CHARLIE

I'm still here. I'm not giving up.

Charlie's phone BEEPS -- a text message. Angela gets it for him.

CHARLIE

Who is it?

ANGELA

Jay.

She hands him the phone. He reads the text and smiles.

ANGELA

What did he say?

CHARLIE

(reading)

"What up bro? How r u feeling? Is Angela taking care of u?"

Charlie texts his reply.

ANGELA

That was nice of him.

CHARLIE

Yeah, he's a good dude. Despite himself.

Charlie has more soup.

ANGELA
Do you talk to your friends about
us?

CHARLIE
I talk to my Mom.

ANGELA
What do you talk about?

CHARLIE
The unfairness of it all. I wasted
sixth grade with Katie instead of
you. Now through some cruel twist
of fate you're back in my life.

ANGELA
(offended)
Cruel?

CHARLIE
Yes, cruel. Why are you only in my
life when I'm too young or too
terminally ill to appreciate you?

Angela snuggles up to him on the couch.

ANGELA
You're right. That isn't fair.

They stare into each other's eyes. About to kiss.

Angela's phone BEEPS. She shakes her head in frustration.
Pulls it out of her pocket and reads the text message.

ANGELA
Lauren.

CHARLIE
What did she say?

ANGELA
(reading)
"Hey babe, how r u? How's Charlie?
Are u having fun? Miss u at prom.
Not the same w/o you. Much love."

CHARLIE
That's sweet.

ANGELA
Yeah.

Angela texts her reply.

CHARLIE

You'd probably have been happier at the Palisades prom, huh?

ANGELA

It doesn't matter. I'm where I want to be.

Charlie stands up, straightens himself.

CHARLIE

But this isn't exactly how you pictured prom night. Is it?

ANGELA

What's your point, Charlie? Do you want me to resent you?

CHARLIE

I want you to be honest with me.

ANGELA

Honesty is a two way street.

CHARLIE

I know. I get it, okay? I screwed up. And I apologized.

ANGELA

That doesn't change what you did. It doesn't change how I feel. I can forgive, but I can't forget.

CHARLIE

So you do resent me.

She rises out of her seat. Starts to walk away.

ANGELA

I'm not having this conversation, Charlie. Not like this.

CHARLIE

Incase you forgot, Angela, I won't be around much longer. If you need to get something off your chest, now's the time.

She flops down on the chair across from him. Internally wrestling with her thoughts.

Charlie's phone BEEPS again. He picks it up, aggravated. Quickly reads the text and discards the phone.

ANGELA

Jay again?

CHARLIE

No, Sam. Just checking up on us.
Wants to be sure we're not busy.

ANGELA

And if we are?

Charlie shrugs.

INT. CRYSTAL BAY PROM -- SAME TIME

Jay, Matt, and Doug, uncomfortably dressed in tuxedos, are seated at a table with their dates. The music is lousy, the décor is awful, and the six of them look miserable.

JAY

You guys ready to bounce?

They nod "yeah, this sucks" "let's go". Jay rises out of his seat, followed by the others.

On his way out the door, Jay passes a table with Sam, Kyle, and their dates. He slaps Sam on the back, startling him.

JAY

We're takin' off, little man.

SAM

Okay, we'll meet you there.

Sam and Kyle nod to each other and start to leave. Their dates follow obediently. They know what's happening.

INT. ANGELA'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Angela is curled up in a ball under Charlie's brittle arms. Both are blissfully comfortable as they watch a romantic movie on television.

Bright lights seep through the windows behind them. Angela breaks from Charlie's embrace to trace their origin.

CHARLIE

Is that your Mom?

ANGELA

I don't know who that is.

EXT. STREET -- SAME TIME

Lauren drives her car down Angela's street. The passenger seats are filled by her friends MAGGIE, JEN, and NICOLE -- all wearing colorful prom dresses.

She searches for a place to park. Every inch of space surrounding the house has just been occupied.

LAUREN
What the hell?

FRONT YARD

Scores of teenagers hop out of their cars. Lauren BEEPS her horn at one of them.

LAUREN
Hey!

Jay turns to face her. He smiles knowingly.

ANGELA'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Angela stands in front of the window. Peeks her head out of the curtain.

CHARLIE
What's going on? Is someone having
a party?

The doorbell RINGS.

ANGELA
Uh, I think we are.

The doorbell RINGS four more times in frantic succession.

Angela opens the door. Lauren, Maggie, Jen, and Nicole form the front line of a large crowd extending from the front steps to the curb. The GIRLS can't contain their excitement.

GIRLS
ANGIE!

Angela and her friends SHRIEK and hug.

ANGELA
Maggie, Jen, Nicole ... Oh my God!
What are you guys doing here?

MAGGIE
We're here for the after party.

ANGELA
What after party?

An endless parade of teenagers fill the house. Jay worms his way around them, with Matt and Doug close behind.

ANGELA
Jay, are you behind this?

JAY
I wish.

Charlie jumps out of his seat and SHOUTS over the increasing ruckus.

CHARLIE
Jay!

JAY
Charlie!

Charlie and his friends carefully exchange bro hugs.

CHARLIE
What's going on?

Jay scans the living room.

JAY
You'll see. Just wait 'till Sam and
Kyle get here.

Matt and Doug watch the door.

MATT
Is that them?

Sam and Kyle stumble in, dragging speakers and a large stereo.

DOUG
I got this.

Matt and Doug rush to their aid. Doug effortlessly lifts the stereo over his head. Matt follows with a speaker. Not quite as easy for him.

They pause at Angela's circle of friends.

DOUG
Where do you want these?

ANGELA
Anywhere you can fit 'em, I guess.
Just keep them away from the
breakables.

Doug carries the stereo past the girls. Maggie's eyes follow him.

MAGGIE
Who is that big, sexy man?

ANGELA
That's Doug. He's one of Charlie's friends.

LAUREN
Hey, where is Charlie?

WINDOW

Charlie catches a glimpse of Giancarlo walking towards the back door.

CHARLIE
Uh, Ange. I think we're in trouble.

Angela and her friends follow Charlie into the

KITCHEN

Giancarlo and a DELIVERY GUY carry hot trays of food into the kitchen. Both are wearing green vests with the *Giancarlo's Catering* logo.

They neatly arrange the food trays on the counter. Giancarlo opens a bag of paper plates and utensils. The delivery guy returns with a crate of soft drinks.

GIANCARLO
Hey, pumpkin.

ANGELA
(puzzled)
Hey, Dad.

GIANCARLO
Enjoying your prom?

ANGELA
This was your idea?

GIANCARLO
It's the least I could do for ruining your senior year.

Angela takes Charlie's hand.

ANGELA
It wasn't all bad.

She admires Charlie in a sweet moment. Charlie is oblivious. He sniffs the delicious air.

CHARLIE
That smells amazing.

GIANCARLO
Dig in. Tell your friends.

LIVING ROOM -- LATER

The "prom" is well underway. A large group of girls dance to an upbeat party song. Charlie, Sam, Kyle, Matt, and Doug are gathered around the table. Each of them has food in their hands, their mouths, even on their tuxedos.

Jay stands by the stereo, holding a microphone. He bobs his head to the beat.

Angela and Lauren dance with their friends.

ANGELA
This is so awesome. I can't believe you brought everyone here.

LAUREN
That's what friends do. They show up unannounced with half the senior class.

ANGELA
I just wish I had some warning. I would have worn a dress or something.

LAUREN
Come with me.

Lauren grabs Angela's hand.

EXT. STREET

Angela follows her, somewhat suspicious. Lauren opens the trunk of her car. She takes out a carefully-wrapped DRESS -- the same dress Angela tried on at the department store.

ANGELA
My dress! Oh my God, Laur! I love you! Thank you so much!

Angela squeezes the dress under one arm and hugs Lauren with the other.

LAUREN
That's what best friends do.

LIVING ROOM -- LATER

The music has stopped. All eyes on Jay, standing by the stereo. He takes command.

JAY
(into microphone)
Yeah! Class of twenty ten, how you
feel?

Everyone cheers.

JAY
(into microphone)
We're gonna slow it down in just a
minute, but right now I wanna give
a shout out to my man Charlie
Larson.

Charlie is reclined on the couch. He smiles, embarrassed.

JAY
(into microphone)
Grab your girl and get up, bro.
This one's for you guys.

Jay presses play on the stereo. A sweet, romantic ballad begins.

Charlie props himself up and crosses to Angela, who is now wearing her prom dress. He holds out his hand.

CHARLIE
May I have this dance?

ANGELA
I thought you'd never ask.

They find an empty space on the living room floor and start slow dancing. Charlie holds Angela as tight as he can. She lowers her head and loses herself in his embrace.

Jay takes a break and sits in Charlie's vacated seat. Lauren joins him.

LAUREN
Look at those two. They're so in
the moment.

JAY
We made that happen, you know.

LAUREN

No, you made that happen. You played the song. I just brought her a dress.

JAY

But without the dress, their moment is incomplete.

Lauren thinks on this for a minute.

LAUREN

We did good, didn't we?

JAY

We did.

Jay extends a hand to Lauren.

JAY

I think we deserve a reward.

LAUREN

I concur.

Lauren takes Jay's hand. They rise out of their seats and saunter onto the dance floor.

Charlie and Angela see this and exchange a grin with their friends.

EXT. CRYSTAL BAY HIGH SCHOOL -- FOOTBALL STADIUM -- DAY

Groups of GRADUATES gather around excitedly.

Jay, Matt, and Doug chat with their hockey teammates.

Sam and Kyle horse around with their friends.

Parents take pictures of their sons and daughters. Everyone is in a celebratory mood.

INTERCUT:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- SAME TIME

Charlie lies still in a bed, hooked up to an IV. Skeletal. Lifeless. His mother holds his hand.

HALLWAY

Angela and Dr. Simone are seated on a bench adjacent to Charlie's room. Angela fidgets nervously.

STADIUM

Pomp and Circumstance begins. The graduating seniors assemble on the stage.

The GRADUATION EMCEE begins the ceremony.

GRADUATION EMCEE

Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to Crystal Bay High School commencement 2010. This is a very special day not only for our students and faculty, but for all of you here today in support of your friends and relatives.

HOSPITAL -- CHARLIE'S ROOM

Charlie tilts his head to his mother. He squeezes her hand. Mumbles to her in a soft, throaty pitch.

CHARLIE

Mom, it's time... I'll say hi to Dad for you...

JANET

(desperate)

No, Charlie. Don't you give up. Not now. Please!

CHARLIE

I'm sorry, Mom. I have to go. I...

Charlie's EKG machine BEEPS repeatedly. He shakes violently.

Janet frantically calls the nurse.

JANET

Somebody help!

HALLWAY

Doctors and nurses rush to Charlie's aid. Angela springs out of her seat to get a closer look. Dr. Simone holds her back.

STADIUM

The GUEST SPEAKER addresses the graduates.

GUEST SPEAKER

Some of you are ready to embrace the challenges of college or the real world. Some of you might be nervous, unsure of what to do next.

HOSPITAL -- HALLWAY

Two doctors wheel Charlie to the Emergency Room while a third doctor attempts to restart his heart with a defibrillator.

Janet follows them. She holds Charlie's hand as long as possible.

GUEST SPEAKER (O.S.)

After spending the majority of your
lives together as classmates and
friends, you will now be headed in
various directions.

STADIUM

The graduates sit attentively as one.

Sam checks his pocket and pulls out his cell phone. He reads a text message from Angela: 911

He lowers himself out of sight.

GUEST SPEAKER

But while each of you might walk
your own separate paths through
this world, you will all experience
similar things.

Sam kneels behind Kyle. Tugs on his gown. Kyle turns to Sam. He reads the text message.

GUEST SPEAKER

Trials and tribulations. Triumphs
and tragedies.

Jay reads Angela's text message on his phone. He nudges Matt, sitting next to him. Shows him the text message. They sidle between their seated classmates and exit the stage.

HOSPITAL -- EMERGENCY ROOM

Charlie is lifted onto the operating table. Barely clinging to life.

Janet stands outside the ER, watching hopelessly through a window.

Angela and Dr. Simone are seated nearby. She CRIES in her mother's arms. Dr. Simone motions for Janet to join them.

EXT. STADIUM -- PARKING LOT

Jay drives a van filled with Matt, Doug, Sam, and Kyle. He SPEEDS out of the parking lot and onto the

CITY STREET

Barely pausing for a red light. He weaves his way through traffic at top speed.

EMERGENCY ROOM

A SURGEON makes a small incision. A nurse hands him a syringe.

HOSPITAL -- PARKING LOT

Jay's van SCREECHES to a halt. He parks across two spaces.

Charlie's friends pour out of the van and run for the nearest entrance.

HALLWAY

Jay and friends run to the ER, caps falling off their heads.

Sam and Kyle struggle to keep up. Kyle steadies his cap and HURLS it at the wall.

They arrive at the sealed double doors of the ER and stop dead.

Angela, Dr. Simone, and Janet turn their attention to the group. The guys stare at the door.

The surgeon emerges. He addresses Charlie's mother.

SURGEON

Are you Janet Larson?

JANET

Yes, doctor. Is Charlie alright?

The surgeon thinks for a moment. All eyes on him.

EXT. ANGELA'S HOUSE -- FRONT YARD -- DAY

A small U-Haul is parked in front of the house, back door open.

Angela approaches the van. She wears a Providence College T-shirt and carries a box in her arms. Lauren carries a box and follows a few steps behind.

Giancarlo emerges from the back door of the U-Haul.

Angela and Lauren hand him their boxes. He ascends into the van and shoves them in.

GIANCARLO

Is that it?

ANGELA

Yup. That's the last of it.

Giancarlo closes the doors to the U-Haul. He leads the girls back to the house.

GIANCARLO

Do you need anything else?

ANGELA

I think I'm all set. Grazie, Papa.

Giancarlo puts his arm around Angela. They share a smile. Dr. Simone observes them from the front porch.

DR. SIMONE

Can you believe it, Carlo? Our baby girl is going off to college!

Giancarlo stands by his wife's side. They regard their daughter with a nostalgic gaze.

GIANCARLO

You grew up too fast, pumpkin.

ANGELA

Don't I know it.

DR. SIMONE

Are you going to visit Charlie before you leave?

ANGELA

I suppose I should, but I'm trying not to think about it. I don't want to start freshman year feeling melancholy.

LAUREN

Let's just go. You'll only feel worse if you don't.

DR. SIMONE

Lauren's right. I know you loved him. He meant a lot to you. But you still need to move on.

Angela reflects for a moment.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE -- BEDROOM -- LATER

Charlie is seated at his computer desk, back turned.

ANGELA

Hey, you.

Charlie turns to face her. He looks much healthier, but not quite as athletic as he once was.

CHARLIE

Hey, gorgeous.

Charlie jumps out of his chair and crosses to Angela. They hug somewhat awkwardly and sit across from each other on Charlie's bed.

ANGELA

You look good.

CHARLIE

Not as good as you.

Angela smiles shyly, sweetly.

CHARLIE

How was Aruba?

ANGELA

Cathartic. It felt so good to just get away for a while. I can't tell you how much I needed that.

CHARLIE

Senior year didn't exactly go as planned, did it?

ANGELA

Not at all. But at least it's over!

CHARLIE

(somber)

For you, maybe.

Angela's smile disappears.

ANGELA

Guess Dartmouth will have to wait?

CHARLIE

Yeah. But it's okay. The dean of admissions was sympathetic to my situation.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (cont'd)

All I have to do is show up every day, maintain at least an A average and write a kick-ass essay based on what I've learned.

ANGELA

Compared to your first attempt, Senior Year 2.0 ought to be cake.

CHARLIE

It's just like hitting a reset button. I might even play hockey this time, if I'm strong enough.

ANGELA

I hope you do. I'd like to see that.

An awkward silence. The increasing distance has made them less comfortable with each other.

CHARLIE

How's your dorm?

ANGELA

Small. It's funny. Two years ago I lived in a mansion. Last year I lived in a starter home. Now I'm cramped in a three-room hut. What's next, a cardboard box?

CHARLIE

At least you're out on your own, right?

ANGELA

That's true. I shouldn't complain. It's just that my life has changed so much, so fast, that I have a hard time feeling comfortable. And an even harder time letting that feeling go.

CHARLIE

I know exactly what you mean.

Angela collects her thoughts. She tries to wipe a pained expression from her face.

ANGELA

Charlie, I don't want to --

CHARLIE

I've been unfair to you. I've lied to you, I've used you. I've put you through hell. But the worst thing I've done is cling to you.

ANGELA

Oh, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I couldn't live without you. You were my crutch. My security blanket. My angel.

Angela blushes. Charlie's words make her dizzy.

CHARLIE

And now I want you to fly.

This catches Angela off-guard. A giggle escapes from her lips. She stifles it. Charlie looks offended.

ANGELA

I'm sorry.

She finishes her cackle, breathes deep, and collects herself.

CHARLIE

What? Too cheesy?

ANGELA

No. It's perfect. It's exactly what I would have said.

Charlie and Angela stare deeply into each other's eyes.

ANGELA

I guess I should go. Lauren's outside waiting for me.

They both stand and face each other. Sadness fills the room.

CHARLIE

Guess this is goodbye, then?

ANGELA

Guess so.

CHARLIE

Don't be a stranger, okay? I can't wait another five years to see you.

ANGELA

You won't. I promise.

Charlie and Angela slowly hug. They hold their embrace for as long as they can. Neither wants to let go.

Lauren BEEPS the horn O. S. Angela rolls her eyes.

ANGELA
So impatient.

Charlie nods in agreement. Angela places a hand on his head. She runs her fingers through his hair.

ANGELA
Goodbye, Charlie. Take care of
yourself.

CHARLIE
You too, Angela. Hope freshman year
is good to you.

Angela lowers her head and starts to exit. She looks back at Charlie one last time. Manages a small smile on her way out the door. He smiles back until she is gone.

Charlie closes his eyes. Bites his lip. Fights back tears.

LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Angela wipes away tears as she opens the door.

STREET

Lauren impatiently stands by the car. Angela hastens her walk as she approaches.

LAUREN
Did you let him down easy?

Angela thinks for a moment. She smiles assuredly.

ANGELA
He'll be fine. He's been through a
lot worse.

They close the car doors and drive away.

THE END