

THE COOLEST GIRL IN THE WORLD

By Bo Burnham

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A young girl sits at the desk beside her bed. This is KAYLA (13, tiny). She fixes her hair in the mirror of her webcam's feed which broadcasts on the bright screen of the laptop in front of her.

A strand of hair falls out of place. She huffs and fixes it. Turns her head, checks her face from all sides, winces. "Satisfied," she takes a deep breath, hits the space bar and snaps into an affected brightness, speaking to her laptop's built-in webcam.

KAYLA

Hey guys! It's Kayla! With back
another video-URGHH!!!

Kayla hits the spacebar again, furious. Shakes her head. Talks to herself.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

(quiet)

Back WITH another video, back WITH
another video, back WITH another
video.

She adjusts her hair again. Sets. Hits the spacebar. Snaps into brightness.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Hey guys! It's Kayla! Back with
another video. I haven't been
getting tons of views on these so
if you like them, please share them
with your friends. I'd really
appreciate it. Cool...so, um...
today I want to talk to you guys
about - Being Yourself. Okay, so,
like, Being Yourself? What does
that mean? Like, aren't I always
Being Myself? Well, like, yes, for
sure. But "Being Yourself" also
means, like, not changing the um--
(looks down at her lap)
--uh...sorry, I'm reading these off
a piece of paper-- ...OKAY "Being
Yourself" also means like not
changing yourself to be cool or
like to try to impress a guy or
whatever.

As she speaks, her eyes wander with her thoughts. She plays with her hair, twirling it around a finger, tilting her head to piece out a thin strand with both hands then fixing it. She does this constantly.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

And it's really important to Be Yourself, because like you could be the most popular kid at school or have like the hottest boyfriend or whatever, but if you're not Being Yourself, then like what's the point? Cause, like, if you aren't Being Yourself...then what's the poi-I said that already. Okay.okay. So...okay, but what makes Being Yourself hard sometimes is that it's not always easy. Cause sometimes people will make fun of you for Being Yourself but you just have to ignore them because you are Being Yourself and that's good and if someone's being mean, that sucks but evil people exist and you can't change that. Okay...and you can't let other people tell you who you are. Like, for instance, like sometimes people say that I'm shy or quiet just because I don't talk a lot at school or whatever. But just because I'm quiet sometimes, doesn't mean...okay, like...like I'm not *shy*. Like if someone is nice then I will talk to them and I can be really funny and fun to talk to. But like, just cause I'm not talking all the time like everyone else doesn't mean that I'm a quiet person. It just means that I... like, I'm not scared to talk, I just choose not to.....Okay, so, like, yeah, you should Be Yourself and don't worry what other people think, and if they think you're something that you're not, just let it go and try to not care and eventually everything will work out. Cool. So hopefully some of you found this video helpful. Please remember to share this video and subscribe to my channel. Thanks for watching! Byeee!

Kayla waves and smiles, freezes, holds for a few seconds, then exhales, relieved. She hits the spacebar. A message pops on her laptop: **INTERNAL ERROR - RECORDING DID NOT SAVE.**

Kayla exhales, annoyed. Sits up straight, fix herself, takes a deep breath and hits the spacebar again.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Hey guys! It's Kayla! With back
another--UHHHH!!!

2 INT. BEDROOM. THE NEXT MORNING

2

The bedroom is small and brightly-colored. Posters of pop stars and movie stars and pretty photos on the wall. A twin bed with a massive pink down comforter and something tiny beneath it.

A BUBBLY ELECTRO-POP SONG fades up.

Just as the song starts to get loud, just as the song starts to reveal itself as the perfect accompaniment for a spring morning, the pink comforter on the bed stirs and a tiny hand emerges, turning off the song that's blaring from an iPhone docked on a small speaker on the bedside table.

Kayla emerges from the bed in her pajamas. She gets up and stretches, making weird morning sounds in the quiet room.

3 INT. KAYLA'S HOUSE - VARIOUS. MOMENTS LATER

3

BEGIN SEQUENCE

-- Post-it notes lining the border of a large bathroom mirror. Reminders and lyrics and quotes: **"TRUST YOURSELF."** **"DON'T JUST FLY, SOAR."** **"BE YOUR OWN KIND OF BEAUTIUF.**" **"GET NEW TOOTHBRUSH."** Some look freshly made, others old, their bright colors fading.

-- The bathroom is filled with steam. Kayla appears in front of the mirror freshly showered, one towel wrapped around her body, another wrapping her hair.

-- Kayla gets close to the mirror, rubs moisturizer on her face, takes the towel of her head.

-- Kayla blow dries her hair.

-- Kayla opens her LAPTOP on the bathroom counter. Opens her browser. Goes to her BOOKMARKS tab and scrolls down to a YouTube link titled: **MY EVERYDAY CASUAL MAKEUP TUTORIAL.**

-- Kayla applies foundation, glancing back and forth from her own reflection to her laptop's screen.

-- ON KAYLA'S LAPTOP - a beautiful, well-lit YOUNG WOMAN (16) sits in her bedroom, applying foundation in close-up. The video has seven million views.

-- Kayla applies some subtle eyeliner. Consults the mirror, the laptop, the mirror again, Blush. Lip gloss. Kayla. Her reflection. The Young Woman on the screen. All getting ready together.

-- Kayla inspects her finished hair and makeup from multiple angles.

-- Kayla grabs her laptop and pajamas off the bathroom counter and exits.

-- BACK IN HER BEDROOM, Kayla has changed back into her pajamas and is now climbing back into bed.

-- Kayla gets under the covers, careful not to mess up her hair. She puts her head on the pillow, lifts her iPhone and takes a selfie, straining to seem casual.

-- Another selfie on the bed from a different angle.

-- Another. And Another. And another.

-- Kayla sits on the edge of her bed, still in her pajamas. She looks at her phone.

-- ON KAYLA'S PHONE SCREEN: Kayla is on Instagram, posting the selfie of her "waking up." She chooses a filter. She captions the photo: "**just woke up. ughhhhh**" She posts it.

ELECTRONIC MUSIC. LOUD. BRIGHT.

MACRO SHOTS: a grid of a thousand pixels, forming pictures, text, moving images, then closer, to the stark reality of a Liquid Crystal Display: dozens of rectangular blocks of light, the SUBPIXELS, in repeating groups of three, red/blue/green, arranged in rows and columns, so close now that no image can form, no colors even beyond the three present, flashing and pulsing with abstract order:

Redbluegreenblueredgreenblueredbluegreenredbluegreenbluered.

4 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. LATER 4

Kayla, now dressed for school, walks down the sidewalk. Her massive backpack forces her to lean forward, hands clutching the shoulder straps. She has headphones in. We follow her close, at eye-level.

The world is big. She is small and moving quickly through it.

5 EXT. ANOTHER STREET. LATER 5

Kayla walks, headphones blaring. The sun is shining. She doesn't notice. A car passes and someone inside screams at Kayla as it whizzes by.

SOMEONE
YOU LIKE DICK.

Kayla doesn't notice.

6 EXT. ANOTHER STREET. LATER 6

Kayla and an OLDER BOY (17) wait on one side of a crosswalk. Kayla presses the large WALK button on the pole beside her. She presses it over and over again.

OLDER BOY
That doesn't do anything.

Kayla removes her headphones.

KAYLA
What?

OLDER BOY
That button doesn't do anything.

KAYLA
I know...

Kayla takes out her iPhone and looks at it.

ON THE SCREEN: her Instagram photo has received zero likes and one comment. The comment, from asherk1313, reads: "ew."

Kayla stares at the phone and deletes her photo. She looks up. The Older Boy is gone. She puts her headphones back in and hustles across the street.

Pan to reveal, MILES GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL, a giant brick building, wide and sturdy, beyond a large parking lot.

Kayla walks toward it, getting smaller and eventually disappearing into the mass of kids and cars and buses that are all being pulled inward toward the school.

7

INT. CLASSROOM. LATER

7

Kayla sits at her desk, doodling in her notebook. An announcement on the intercom.

OLDER WOMAN'S VOICE (INTERCOM)

Attention all eighth grade classes:
if you haven't returned your
permission slips for next
Wednesday's High School Shadow
Program, you *must* do so by Monday.
Those who do not return their
permission slips will not be able
to participate in next Wednesday's
Shadow Program or the Dance. So
please return those slips by Monday
at the *latest*. Thank you and enjoy
your last days.

Kayla is drawing hearts and star-shapes in the borders of her notes. The boy sitting beside her, EDMUND (13, short), talks to the boy sitting in front of him, GARRETT (13, freckles).

EDMUND

Dude, did you hear about Desi?

GARRETT

(turning)

Huh?

EDMUND

You know how Desi's been absent for
like a week?

GARRETT

Yeah.

EDMUND

Do you know why?

GARRETT

No.

EDMUND

Dude, I heard...that she had to go
to the hospital...

(leans in, whispers)

because her period was coming out
like *Jello*.

GARRETT

Uchh what?

EDMUND

I know.

GARRETT

What does that even mean?

EDMUND

I don't know. Apparently it was just like, I don't know, I think it was because um.....I don't know, it was just coming out like Jello.

GARRETT

Does that happen?

EDMUND

It happened to Desi.

GARRETT

That's crazy. Why would it come out like that?

EDMUND

I don't know.
(turns, whisper shouts)
Kayla!

Kayla freezes, having heard all of this. Doesn't turn.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Have you had your period yet?

GARRETT

(taking out his phone)
I'm gonna look it up.

EDMUND

Good idea. Kayla nevermind.
(leans toward Garrett)
Search "period...Jello".

GARRETT

Okay.

EDMUND

Actually, Jello is the brand.
Search "period.....gelatin".

Kayla continues to doodle.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Your body is changing.

8 INT. HALLWAY. LATER 8

Kayla puts a textbook into her locker. Rather than the sounds of the busy hallway, we hear a calm adult female voice and the cheesy educational score accompanying her.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
This change can be scary. But this change is a good thing.

Kayla shuts her locker.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
It means that you are becoming an adult.

Kayla waits at her closed locker. Doesn't move.

9 INT. BATHROOM. LATER 9

Kayla sits on the toilet in a stall.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
You may have noticed hair starting to grow in new places.

Kayla reaches for toilet paper.

10 INT. BATHROOM. MOMENTS LATER 10

THREE GIRLS (14) stand in front of the three available mirrors, preening themselves. Kayla stands behind them, her hands out awkwardly, waiting to wash them.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
You may have begun to gain some weight or grow taller....This is normal...This is healthy.

Kayla waits, hands out. The three girls don't notice her.

11 INT. GYMNASIUM. LATER. 11

Half a dozen games of two-on-two BADMINTON are happening. Tiny Kayla, in gym clothes, stands on one side of the net with her racket.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Your body...is an *amazing* thing.

As a shuttlecock floats toward Kayla, her partner - A MASSIVE BOY (14) - runs in front of her and slams the shuttlecock back over the net.

12 INT. HALLWAY. LATER

12

Kayla waits at the water fountain, behind a GIRL (13) who is drinking at it.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
And your body deserves respect. By understanding exactly how your body is changing, you are respecting your body *and yourself*.

The girl finally stops drinking, then immediately reaches into her backpack, takes out an empty water bottle and begins filling it at the fountain. Kayla waits.

13 INT. CLASSROOM. LATER

13

The room is dark and a TV has been wheeled out in front of the students. We see THE WOMAN (40s) who has been speaking on the screen - looking directly into camera. Behind the TV, MRS. NOLAN (50s) works behind her desk.

The students watch the movie with a mixture of awe, confusion and disgust. In the back, Kayla cranes her neck to see over her taller peers.

WOMAN ON THE TV
Over the course of these next thirty minutes, we will begin to explore and understand these changing bodies of yours.

Kayla gives up trying to see. She stares at her desk and listens.

BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)
Kayla....Kayla.

Kayla turns to see TRISTAN (13) staring at her.

KAYLA
(annoyed, hushed)
What?

TRISTAN
Guess what I'm doing?

KAYLA
I don't know, shut up.

Kayla turns away, faces forward.

TRISTAN
Kayla.....Kayla-

KAYLA
What??

TRISTAN
Guess what I'm doing?

Kayla notices Tristan has his hand inside his pants and she immediately turns away. She stares at her desk, frozen.

WOMAN ON THE TV
Chapter One: The Hair Down There.

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)
TRISTAN, ARE YOU MASTURBATING???

A silence. Then the class FREAKS OUT. Laughs and screams and "ewww"s. Mrs. Nolan tries to calm them down.

MRS. NOLAN
Hey! Quiet! QUI-ET!

It's no use. It's chaos. Boys point and laugh. Girls scream and heckle in disgust. Tristan denies everything. Mrs. Nolan fails to control the situation.

And way in the back, Kayla sits quietly.

The commotion in the classroom builds, crescendos, and transforms into--

14 INT. GYMNASIUM. DAY.

14

--FRENZIED APPLAUSE. A crowd of unseen kids GO WILD in a gym that echoes and amplifies.

And Kayla, dressed in black sweatpants and a black t-shirt, crouches on the floor of the gym's basketball court. Her eyes are closed. She is ready for something. The cheers go quiet.

Then, LOUD MUSIC. Kayla snaps up and begins doing a choreographed dance.

Every ten seconds, the music changes from one top 40 hit to another in sudden, jarring transitions.

Kayla dances. The choreography is goofy and Kayla is struggling with it. Misses a move here. Clearly spins the wrong way there. She is concentrating hard, her face grimaced.

She doesn't seem to be enjoy this but, somehow, the unseen crowd very much is. They are loving it. Cheering at the flashy gestures. Whooping at any move that is vaguely sexual.

Her dance reaches its climax and ends as Kayla freezes, pointing out to the unseen crowd. They go wild. Her dance went over *really well*.

It is revealed just why it went so well as we slowly pull back from her, and past dozens of other girls dressed in black just like she is, frozen in the exact same position.

We land on a wide view of the entire gymnasium: the bleachers full of Kayla's peers and a group of forty or so girls having done a choreographed dance on the basketball court in front of them. Kayla is in the back row of frozen girls, and from this angle, the angle of her classmates, can barely be seen.

MAN (O.S.)

Okay!

PRINCIPAL MCDANIEL (40s, gentle) walks onto the court as Kayla and girls leave it.

MR. MCDANIEL

Let's hear it one more time for the
Girls' Dance Club!

The kids applaud. Kayla finds a seat in the bleachers.

MR. MCDANIEL (CONT'D)

...Alright, eighth graders! Next
week is your last week here at
Miles Grove Middle School.

Huge cheer.

MR. MCDANIEL (CONT'D)

Okay, okay, yep, very good -- but,
BUT...we still have a lot of
important work ahead of us. *And* a
lot of FUN work ahead of us. We
have the High School Shadow Program
early next week...We also have a
few guest speakers. Should be fun.
And the end of the year dance.

Whoops and cheers from the crowd.

MR. MCDANIEL (CONT'D)

And, AND...we have your sixth grade Time Capsules for you to pick up today. Remember those shoeboxes that you made during the first week of sixth grade? Remember how we said that those Time Capsules were going to be a gift for the future "you" that would eventually "make it" here at Miles Grove Middle School? Well, YOU have MADE IT. So pick those up in the lobby when this assembly is over...Alright, now I'm going to turn things over to Mrs. Roach who will read the results of the eighth grade class superlatives!

Hushed excited reaction from the crowd. Whispers, "yesssss".

MR. MCDANIEL (CONT'D)

Mrs. Roach?

MRS. ROACH (50s, stone-faced) walks onto the court. She stands behind a podium and reads.

MRS. ROACH

If your name is called, please report to the Band Practice Room after this Assembly to have your picture taken for the yearbook.

MR. MCDANIEL

But pick up your Time Capsules first!

MRS. ROACH

Yes...okay...Class Superlatives, as voted by you - the students. Each category has a male and female winner from the student body. Okay...Most Athletic... Danny Atchison and Olivia Elder...

SOME GIRL

Woo! Yeah Oliviaaaa!

MRS. ROACH

Most artistic...Wyatt Conville and Dawn Ringelheim...

Kayla sits in the crowd, picking at her nails.

MRS. ROACH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Class Clowns...Jed Goodwin and
 Missy Vitale...

Somewhere in the crowd, Jed makes a loud FART NOISE and the auditorium laughs. Classic Jed. Kayla continues to pick at her nails. Bites them. Bored, not nervous. We stay on her.

MRS. ROACH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Most Talkative...Pat Druschel and
 Jackie Stasiak....Most Quiet...

This gets Kayla's attention. She stops fidgeting. Closes her eyes.

MRS. ROACH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 ...Andrew Fields and Kayla Day.

Kayla grimaces. Balls her hands into fists. Shrinks.

MRS. ROACH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Best eyes...

15 INT. BAND PRACTICE ROOM. LATER

15

The twenty or so superlative winners sit in the Band Room amongst the music stands and instruments.

Kayla sits by herself.

She looks over at a GROUP OF GIRLS who are inspecting and sharing each other's Time Capsules -- bright shoeboxes full of personal trinkets. The girls laugh and do a lot of "OH my god"s and "shut UP"s.

Kayla looks down at her Time Capsule sitting on her lap -- the outside made purple and pink with construction paper. On the top of the shoebox's lid, in large glittery pink lettering, sixth-grade Kayla wrote:

TO THE COOLEST GIRL IN THE WORLD.

Kayla stares at this. A door opens. Mr. M enters.

MR. MCDANIEL
 Okay superlative winners, so after
 you've taken your picture please
 return to your fourth period
 classes. Okay, we will start
 with...Mr. and Mrs. Best Eyes!
 Aiden Wilson-Carter and Kennedy
 Graves!

The group of girls cheer as one of them stands. This is KENNEDY GRAVES (13, beautiful). She walks past Kayla.

KAYLA
(weak thumbs up)
Good job.

Kennedy passes her, doesn't hear and/or care.

MR. MCDANIEL
Aiden...AIDEN!

TIME SLOWS and MUSIC BLASTS as AIDEN WILSON-CARTER (13, perfect) looks up from his phone in the back of the room. His face is blank and bored. His eyes are the best.

He gets up and walks toward the front of the room, in slow motion, annoyed and bored. Kayla turns and looks at him, her face deflating into awe - he somehow gets hotter every time she sees him.

He passes her and the music stops abruptly and we snap back into real time just in time to hear a faint, breathy:

KAYLA
Good j-....

Aiden arrives at the front of the room.

KENNEDY
Hey, Aiden.

AIDEN
Hey.

KENNEDY
(fishing)
So embarrassing that we got voted best eyes, like honestly like I don't even think my eyes are that great.

AIDEN
(almost a robot)
Yeah...

Kennedy and Aiden follow Mr. McDaniel out of the room. Kayla watches them leave and then looks down at the time capsule in her lap.

TO THE COOLEST GIRL IN THE WORLD

Kayla gently lifts the lid off of the shoebox. She begins removing and inspecting things. A movie ticket stub. A small frog figurine. A Justin Bieber magnet.

Then, a picture of a young Kayla on a field trip with her class. She's smiling in this picture. Surrounded by her classmates.

She's about to close the capsule, when she spots something. A TINY PLASTIC KOALA BEAR. She picks it up with two fingers and stares at it.

The plastic Koala Bear stares back as we hear a door open.

MR. MCDANIEL (O.S.)

(whispering)

Shhhh...hey....hey....I'm looking
for Mr. and Mrs. Most Quiet, Andrew
Fields and Kayla Day. Shhhh....

Kayla looks up. :-|

16 INT. MUSIC CLASSROOM. MOMENTS LATER. 16

A PHOTOGRAPHER (50s, tired) sits on a stool behind a camera and tripod. Mr. McDaniel enters the room, trailed by Kayla and ANDREW FIELDS (13, silent, very weird).

MR. MCDANIEL

Alright guys, just pop a squat over
there and we'll get a few glamour
shots.

Kayla and Andrew walk over to the "photo shoot area" -- two adjacent chairs set up in front of a hung backdrop, flanked by mounted lights and reflecting umbrellas. They sit.

MR. MCDANIEL (CONT'D)

So we've been trying to do sort of
funny poses that reflect the
superlatives. Like for the Most
Athletic, Danny pretended to be
running for a touchdown and Olivia
pretended to be tackling him. So,
it should be fun, you know? You
guys have any ideas?

No response, obviously.

MR. MCDANIEL (CONT'D)

Oh! Maybe Andrew, you could be holding a book, and Kayla, maybe you could be shushing him like you're at a library or something?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Battery's dead. Gotta run to my car.

MR. MCDANIEL

Oh, okay. No problem. You know what, I think I'll run to the restroom. Hang tight kids!

The Photographer and Mr. McDaniel exit. Kayla and Andrew sit together, alone, side-by-side.

Kayla fidgets with her nails, busy. Andrew stares straight ahead, slack-jawed, teeth in braces, ostensibly brain-dead.

They are quiet from two totally different places -- self-consciousness and unconsciousness.

They sit in silence for a FULL MINUTE. Sixty excruciating seconds. No one enters.

17 EXT. SCHOOL. LATER 17

Kayla exits the school, wearing her backpack. An SUV pulls up and honks. Kennedy Graves (Miss Best Eyes) climbs into the passenger seat. DIANNE GRAVES (40s) shouts past her daughter to Kayla.

DIANNE GRAVES

Hey! Little one!

She honks. Kayla notices, walks over, hesitantly. Kennedy rolls her eyes.

DIANNE GRAVES (CONT'D)

(to Kayla)

You're Mark's girl, right?

KAYLA

Yeah.

Kennedy, stuck in the middle of this, glares at Kayla.

DIANNE GRAVES

Your dad was such a huge help with the spring fundraiser. Thank him again for me.

KAYLA

I will.

DIANNE GRAVES

What's your name again?

KENNEDY

(annoyed)

Kayla.

DIANNE GRAVES

Kayla! Yes! You know, we just opened our pool...

Kennedy turns to her, widens her eyes.

DIANNE GRAVES (CONT'D)

(to Kennedy)

Shush.

(to Kayla)

We just opened our pool and we're having our first big pool party of the summer for Kennedy's birthday tomorrow. You should come. Gonna be lots of fun, right Kennedy?

KENNEDY

Yep.

DIANNE GRAVES

You should come. It's gonna be a blast. Kennedy will send you an invite on facebook. Right Kennedy?

KENNEDY

Yep.

DIANNE GRAVES

Great! Can you make it?

Kayla looks at Kennedy, sees how unwanted she is.

KAYLA

Maybe...I probably can't. I'll try but I probably can't.

DIANNE GRAVES

Try to make it. You'll have a blast. And say thanks to your dad again for me.

KAYLA

Okay.

DIANNE GRAVES
Great! See you tomorrow maybe!

KAYLA
Okay maybe, probably not though,
thank you.

DIANNE GRAVES
Say bye, Kennedy.

KENNEDY
Bye.

KAYLA
Bye.

They drive away. Kayla stands in place, staring straight ahead, perfectly still.

Then, suddenly, she RUNS. We follow her, close, as she sprints across the parking lot, away from the school.

18 EXT. STREET. MOMENTS LATER 18

Kayla continues her sprint down the sidewalk, her backpack weighing her down, forcing her to run awkwardly in weird, forceful lunges. She breathes heavily, running as hard as she can with the weight on her back.

She sprints across the street, tiring but pushing through, down a sidewalk, then another street, passing a woman walking her dog, a couple kids walking back from school, she runs past them, her arms swinging to counteract the backpack that wants to pull her down.

She forces herself forward.

Can't anymore.

She slows and collapses onto a patch of grass, backpack first, like a flipped turtle.

She closes her eyes and catches her breath, nearly hyperventilating.

As her breath returns, she slowly rocks to her side, lifts herself to her feet, and continues in the same direction she had just been running - now just walking, head down.

19 INT. KAYLA'S HOUSE. NIGHT 19

CLOSE ON on Kayla's iPad. Her tiny finger opens her iTunes app and selects a BRIGHT CHEERY POP SONG. It plays loudly. Her tiny finger touches the screen, minimizing iTunes and opening her Instagram app.

She scrolls through the feed of the accounts she follows:

A PICTURE OF A BOY HER AGE BOWLING, captioned: "matty getting ready to suck lollllllll". A PICTURE OF THREE GIRLS HER AGE PAINTING THEIR NAILS, captioned: "friday nite nail party #GETIT"

Kayla scrolls past dozens of photos - all showing various fun, eighth-grade Friday nights being had by her classmates.

A wide view reveals Kayla's Friday night: a quiet dinner at home with DAD.

Homemade chicken breast and green beans on each of their plates. Two bowls of extras between them. Kayla scrolls through her iPad with her headphones in, the iPad propped up on a stand in front of her plate of food.

Dad eats quietly. Kayla doesn't touch her plate, the sounds of Kayla's music now buzzing quietly in her ears.

DAD
...Kayla.

She doesn't hear him.

DAD (CONT'D)
.....Kayla.....Kay....

Dad waves his arms, flagging her down. Kayla removes one of the earbuds from her left ear.

DAD (CONT'D)
Food's getting cold.

KAYLA
I like it cold.

DAD
Okay.

She puts the earbud back in. Resumes scrolling.

DAD (CONT'D)
One more week of eighth grade, huh?

Kayla removes her earbud, annoyed.

KAYLA
What??

DAD
I said one more week of eighth
grade, right??

KAYLA
Yep.

DAD
Crazy...Can't believe you're gonna
be in high school. You excited?

KAYLA
Yep.

DAD
You're getting a little taste of it
next week, right? The high school
shadow thing?

KAYLA
Yeah.

DAD
That's fun. Do you know who you're
following around yet?

KAYLA
No.

Kayla goes to put her earbud back in, Dad cuts her off:

DAD
Hey, I got an email from Mrs.
Graves. Said you're going to
Kennedy's birthday thing tomorrow?

KAYLA
I'm not.

DAD
Really?

KAYLA
Yeah, no.

DAD
Sounded kinda fun.

KAYLA
Kennedy doesn't like me.

DAD
That can't be true.

KAYLA
Cool.

DAD
You know sometimes kids act like
they don't like you but really
that's just cause they got their
own stuff going on or whatever-

Dad stops as he notices that Kayla has put her headphones
back in and is staring at her iPad, not listening to him.

DAD (CONT'D)
.....Kayla?.....Kayla.....

He crumples up a napkin and tosses it across the table,
hitting Kayla in the head.

Kayla rips out her headphones.

KAYLA
ARE YOU KIDDING ME RIGHT NOW?

Dad laughs, Kayla doesn't.

DAD
Hey, come on, I'm being funny.

KAYLA
It's not funny if you're the only
one that thinks it's funny.

DAD
(crossing his eyes)
Whaaaaaat?

KAYLA
STOPPP. It's Friday night, you said
I can do whatever I want on Fridays-

DAD
I know, I know and you can, sorry.
Just let me say one thing and then
you can do your iPad and I'll leave
you alone, alright??

Kayla huffs, slams down her iPad, glares at him.

KAYLA
Fine. What.

DAD

Okay...But you gotta listen. Don't be angry before I even say it or you won't really hear it, okay?

KAYLA

OHMYGOD, Dad, just say it--

DAD

Alrightalrightokay -- I'm saying it....

Dad gathers himself. Pauses.

KAYLA

DAD.

DAD

I'm *thinking*. Just give me a sec.

Kayla closes her eyes. So frustrated.

DAD (CONT'D)

...I...I think you're so cool-

KAYLA

(huge huff, so embarrassed)

Dad, seriously, I'm gonna stop eating with you if--

DAD

You said I could say my one thing so let me say it...

KAYLA

....

DAD

I think you're so cool. When I was your age, I wasn't cool like you. You have all these interests and you make all your videos and stuff and that's so great and cool. But...You know but sometimes I just worry that you don't put yourself out there--

KAYLA

Please stop--

DAD

I know, look, I know the kids at school aren't great.

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

I'm not saying you have to be best friends with Kennedy Graves, alright?...I just - and you're gonna think this is lame - but I just think you're a really special person.

Kayla buries her head in her hands. So embarrassed.

KAYLA

(muffled through hands)
UHMUHGUEH.

DAD

I do! Sorry, I do. You know, and I know dads are supposed to think their kid is special no matter what but I'm telling you Kayla, if I wasn't your dad, I'd still think that. Sorry. I would. And, I just--

KAYLA

This is more than one thing.

DAD

It's one chunk. I'm saying one chunk of stuff...And I know it's like "shut up, dad" and I get it, I really do, I know I'm being lame but I'm not trying make you feel bad when I say this stuff, I'm actually trying make you feel better.

KAYLA

Then let me use my iPad.

Dad sees that this isn't going anywhere.

DAD

...sure, yeah, do your thing.

Dad smiles, sad, as his daughter puts her headphones back in and stares at her iPad.

They sit in silence.

DAD (CONT'D)

Hey, Kay, remember when I used to do Monkey Chicken Man?

Kayla ignores him, doesn't look up.

DAD (CONT'D)
 (doing a funny voice,
 weird arm gestures)
*I'm a Monkey Chicken Maaaaan, I'm a
 Monkey Chicken Maaaaan. Oo oo BOCK
 BOCK ooo oo BOCK BA-COCK!*

Dad laughs. Kayla stares at her iPad. Dad gives up, for now, goes back to eating.

They sit in silence.

20 INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM. LATER 20

Kayla lies on her bed, earbuds in, buzzing quietly, her laptop open on her chest. She is looking at her FACEBOOK PROFILE. Her profile picture is a moody photo of her with her hair covering her face.

She clicks away and starts browsing her facebook NEWSFEED - a page that lists the recent activity of her "friends".

LINDSAY DAVIS COMMENTED ON GREG CRONIN'S PHOTO. ALEX BOHMAN CHANGED HIS PROFILE PICTURE. AVNI PATEL CHANGED HER RELATIONSHIP STATUS. Kayla clicks on RELATIONSHIP STATUS - bringing her to Avni Patel's profile page.

Avni's profile picture is a selfie of her and a BOY who is kissing her on the cheek. On her wall, her latest updates: AVNI CHANGED HER PROFILE PICTURE, AVNI CHANGED HER RELATIONSHIP STATUS TO "IN A RELATIONSHIP".

The latter status change has been "liked" thirty-one times. Comments underneath: "yay!" "ommmggg avni! Ahhh!!!!"

Kayla likes the relationship change and adds her own comment: "**Congrats! You two look so cute together!**" Kayla stares blankly as she types, her face in sullen contrast to the perky comment she's writing. She posts it.

BLOOP. A notification for Kayla appears at the top of the page. She clicks it.

It reads: YOU HAVE BEEN INVITED TO "**KENNEDY'S BIRTHDAY POOL PARTY!!!!!!**"

Kayla clicks on the notification and is brought to the event page of Kennedy's pool party. Twenty kids "attending". Two kids "cannot attend". Only one person, the very late invite, has "yet to respond" -- Kayla.

Kayla clicks on the ATTENDING subsection and is brought to a list of her classmates. She scrolls through them. Stops at a name: **AIDEN WILSON-CARTER**. She clicks on it and travels to:

AIDEN'S PROFILE PAGE. His profile picture is a douchey picture of him looking sweaty and hot after a lacrosse game. Kayla turns up the volume on her computer and the pop song she's been listening to now **BLASTS**, scoring the following:

Kayla clicks through AIDEN'S PHOTO SECTION. Dozens of photos that Aiden has been tagged in. She cycles through, breathing heavily. Comments underneath photos: **"UNFFF why are you perfect" "aiden whoaaa ;)" etc.**

She returns to his profile page and scrolls down through his wall, into his recent past. Something stops her. A video Aiden has posted titled **"STRAIGHT FLEXIN BRUH."** She clicks it.

It's a iPhone video Aiden took of himself. He's wearing a tank top and flexing his muscles in his bathroom mirror. Kayla watches it. She watches him. Her heart practically vibrating.

She brings her hand up to her mouth and bites her nails. Aiden flexes, smiles. Kayla stops biting. Keeps her hand at her mouth. As the song climaxes, Kayla turns her hand over and kisses it.

Aiden keeps flexing as Kayla begins to full-on make out with the back of her hand, eyes closed, like Aiden and her are kissing in the rain. The music follows suit.

Then, **A KNOCK ON HER DOOR.**

Kayla jumps, rips out her headphones, and slams her laptop shut. In the commotion, her phone slips off the bed and hits the floor **HARD.**

KAYLA
UHH!! WHAT???

DAD (O.S.)
I'm going to bed.

KAYLA
OKAY.

DAD
Alright, good night.

KAYLA
.....

DAD
You mad at me?

KAYLA
Just don't knock so loud.

DAD
Right. Yep. Sorry. Night.

We hear Dad leave as Kayla rolls over to the edge of the bed and leans toward the floor, her lower body still on the bed, her upper body hanging down, reaching.

The bed is tall and she is little. She grabs her phone.

KAYLA
Pleasepleasepleaseplease.

Still hanging over the bed, Kayla flips her phone over and turns it on:

THE SCREEN IS CRACKED.

Behind the violent web of jagged black lines, her homescreen is a picture of Demi Lovato laughing. The time, **11:13 PM**.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Sssssssshit. Shitshitshit.

Kayla chucks the phone into a pile of dirty clothes. She grunts and whines, so angry she could cry. She pulls herself back up to her bed, lies down, stares at the ceiling. Ugh.

Then, with sudden purpose, still mad, she sits up, rolls off her bed, walks across the room and unzips her backpack. She takes out her TIME CAPSULE, puts it on the floor, rips off the top, fishes through the box, grabs something, and storms back to bed.

She get under the covers and lays still. The room is dark. She brings her hand up close to her face and we see what she grabbed out of the box:

The tiny plastic KOALA BEAR. She stares. The koala stares back. She rips off the Koala's head - it's a USB DRIVE.

She grabs her laptop and opens it. HARSH LIGHT. She plugs the koala bear in to her laptop and minimizes her browser. The USB appears on the desktop as an icon "**16GB FileSystem.**"

Kayla clicks it. The drive contains one video file.

It's titled "**DEAR 8TH GRADE KAYLA.**"

Kayla puts her headphones in. Stares at her screen. Hesitates. Then clicks.

We hear Kayla's voice. It's younger.

YOUNG KAYLA (O.S)
Hey, Kayla! It's you, Kayla.

Young Kayla laughs. We stay on our Kayla, never seeing what's playing on the screen.

YOUNG KAYLA (V.O.)
I'm just making this video to congratulate you on finishing 8th Grade! Woohooo! I am so, so, so, so, SOOOOO proud of you.

Kayla watches, squinting, uncomfortable.

YOUNG KAYLA
I'm making this video on a FRIDAY. I just finished my first week of sixth grade and I'm about to have my first middle school *weekend* so that's pretty cool - you've had a bunch of middle school weekends so they're probably not cool to you anymore.

Kayla cringes at herself. Keeps watching.

YOUNG KAYLA (CONT'D)
I have so many questions for you. Are you still doing karate? I'm a yellow belt now, what belt are you? Do you have a boyfriend? Is he nice? What's the COOLEST thing you've done? What's the SECOND coolest? You don't have to answer because I can't hear you obviously but anyway, yeah, I'm really excited for middle school and, um, like, I just wanted to make this video to say great job and you're the best and I hope you had a lot of fun in middle school and I hope all your new friends are being nice to you because you deserve it. Okay. Stay cool! I can't wait to be you. Byeeeeee.

The sound stops. Kayla stares.

ON THE SCREEN: we get our only glimpse at the sixth-grade Kayla, frozen in her seat, giving a smile and a wave to the camera. Her face is smaller. Rounder.

Kayla Xs out of the video. Clicks on her browser. Aiden's video is still up. Kayla returns to the pool party's Event Page.

She clicks the "respond to invite" button and is presented with two options - "WILL ATTEND" and "WILL NOT ATTEND".

Kayla thinks.

21 EXT. KENNEDY'S HOUSE. THE NEXT DAY. 21

Low angle on a colossal MCMANSION. Green lawn that looks fake. Stone walkway. It's all just big and gross and scary.

Dad's pickup truck is parked in front of it. Kayla sits shotgun, staring out the window away from Dad who stares at her from the driver's seat. Kayla doesn't move. A long silence.

DAD

I'm so glad you're doing this.
This'll be good. I think you're
gonna have a lot of fun.

KAYLA

Mmm.

Kayla keeps staring at the house, tense. Doesn't move.

DAD

Want me to walk you in?

KAYLA

No.

Kayla keeps staring. Dad sits patiently. Kayla takes a deep breath and exits the car, holding a backpack and a small wrapped gift.

DAD

Text me when you want to get picked
up.

KAYLA

Okay.

Kayla shuts the door and walks towards the front door. The sounds of splashing and screaming in the backyard. The sounds are strange and abstract and unsettling.

They get louder as she gets closer to the house.

Kayla arrives at the front door and rings the doorbell. She turns and sees Dad still parked on the street. She shoos him, annoyed. He waves back and drives away.

The door opens. Dianne Graves stands in the doorway, smiling a bit too wide.

DIANNE
Kayyylaaaa!

KAYLA
Hi, Mrs. Graves.

DIANNE
Call me Dianne.

KAYLA
Okay.

DIANNE
Where's your father?

KAYLA
He drove away.

DIANNE
Mmm bummer. Everyone's out back by the pool. Did you bring a swimsuit?

KAYLA
Yeah, it's in my bag.

DIANNE
Great! Come on inside and we'll get you changed.

Dianne puts her hand on Kayla's back and leads her inside, closing the door behind them.

The foyer of the house is huge. Kayla looks around. It's the largest house she's ever been in.

DIANNE (CONT'D)
You can put your gift right over there on the dining room table.

Dianne turns Kayla towards the dining room and a table piled with wrapped birthday presents.

Kayla adds her small gift to the huge mass, making no difference.

DIANNE (CONT'D)

We'll open gifts after cake. Here,
let's find you a bathroom to change
in.

KAYLA

Okay.

Dianne leads Kayla out of the dining room and down a hallway towards the back of the house. Dianne opens one of the many closed doors in the hallway.

DIANNE

You can change in here. And then
the kids are just out back through
the sliding door just out here,
okay, honey?

KAYLA

Okay. Thank you, Dianne.

DIANNE

No problem!

Kayla walks into the BATHROOM and closes the door. The party outside is closer and louder now. The small marble room is dark, lit only by a single bright window that flickers as unseen kids run past it outside.

Kayla is careful to remain unseen by the party as she unpacks her bag, standing close to the window's wall, out of view. The shadows of the kids outside are projected on the wall across from her in sharp, dizzying negatives.

The party's loudness is intense and constant.

22

EXT. KENNEDY'S BACKYARD. LATER

22

The pool party is in full peripubescent swing. In and around the pool, A DOZEN GIRLS (13-14) and another DOZEN BOYS (13-14) swim and splash and dive and yell and laugh. The boys are shirtless, the girls are in bikinis.

The boys flirt with the girls in that aggressive, antagonistic way young teens do. Splashing them to get their attention. Wrestling with them just to touch them. The girls pretend not to like it.

A FEW BOYS play an overly-intense game of pool basketball in the shallow-end, showing off to the few girls around them floating on pool noodles.

Kennedy does a perfect dive off the diving board, making a pea-sized splash upon entry. A BOY squirts a Super Soaker at a GIRL running around the perimeter of the pool.

It's a hormonal frenzy. A grape soda bacchanalia.

BY THE HOUSE, the sliding glass door opens and Kayla makes her non-entrance, wearing a green one-piece swimsuit. She steps out of the house and onto the stone walkway.

She looks at everyone. No one looks back. Young women in their new bikinis. A little girl in her old green one piece. She walks towards the shallow end of the pool. A boy, MASON (14, athletic) runs past her.

MASON

Z! Z! HIT ME! YO, Z, HIT ME!

Madison jumps into the pool as a BASKETBALL comes whizzing towards him, which he catches and DUNKS in the hoop before hitting the water. Kayla flinches from the splash.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Woo! Mason! Nice one!

GINA DEGROSSO (40s, sunglasses) appears beside Kayla, notices her.

GINA

Oooo honey do you have sunblock?

KAYLA

Huh? No.

GINA

You poor thing, you're gonna fry without some sunblock. Here, put your arms out.

KAYLA

I can do it.

GINA

It's a bit cold.

Gina SPRAYS sunblock onto Kayla's shoulders. Kayla winces with each cold squirt. Gina rubs it into Kayla's arms and shoulders. Kayla stands and takes it, looking like a 7 year-old.

A FEW GIRLS on the diving board notice this and laugh.

Gina stops.

GINA (CONT'D)

There you go.

KAYLA

(ugh)

Thank you.

Kayla walks toward the built-in steps in the pool's shallow end. She gets in the pool, step by step. First up to her ankles, then shins, thighs, waist, stomach and finally chest. The water is cold, and each step makes her inhale sharply.

She waddles along on her tiptoes. The water's surface is an embarrassing and perfect measurement of height. She is the shortest one at the party and the shallow end's water coming up to her shoulders lets everybody know it.

People splash and talk all around her without acknowledging her presence. Kayla doggy paddles over to an empty corner of the pool and dips down in the water up to her neck. She stays still.

DIANNE

Hotdogs and hamburgers in 20 minutes!

On the diving board, Kennedy is being bear-hugged and wrestled into the pool by TYLER (14, cute). Kayla watches.

KENNEDY

(loving it)

Tyler! Seriously! Seriously!
SERIOUSLY! TYLER!

TYLER

You're going in! Don't fight it!

KENNEDY

Uurghh noooo!

Tyler sends Kennedy and himself into the pool in a clumsy tangle. They splash and resurface, Tyler laughing, Kennedy faux-furious.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

I hate you! Oh my GOD.

Kayla watches - hating it, wanting it - her chin resting on the surface of the water. Then she sees something that makes her forget how to breathe.

Aiden. He's on the diving board. Shirtless. Once again, TIME SLOWS and MUSIC BLASTS as he runs to the end of the board, jumps and does the sexiest cannonball that Kayla has ever seen. A large splash.

Kayla watches, mouth open slightly. He resurfaces, swims over to the pool's edge and pulls himself out. He sits on the lip of the pool, looks at someone, makes a peace sign and licks the V of it -- miming like he's eating pussy. He laughs.

Kayla watches him, then: **BWUHHHHH** - a small, wiry boy emerges from the water directly beside Kayla, wearing a wet t-shirt and a large pair of clunky scuba goggles. He coughs up water and gasps. This is GABE (12) and he is out of breath.

GABE

All the way. Did it all the way.

KAYLA

What?

GABE

Swam all the way across the pool underwater.

KAYLA

Oh cool.

GABE

Could've went further if I wanted.

Gabe catches his breath. Breathing through his nose and fogging up his giant goggles.

GABE (CONT'D)

What's your name?

KAYLA

Kayla.

GABE

Cool, I'm Gabe - wanna see me do a handstand?

KAYLA

Okay.

Gabe ducks underwater. A second later, his legs shoot up from the water, splashing Kayla. They flail clumsily, fall over, and he resurfaces, coughing and catching his breath again.

GABE

Too many people in the pool. Can't do it for long if the water isn't still. How do you know Kennedy?

KAYLA

Um...we go to school together.

GABE

Cool. She's my cousin. I'm gonna try again--

He dips back down. Legs back up, splashing Kayla. He lasts a second longer, resurfaces.

GABE (CONT'D)

Water's not calm enough. How old are you?

KAYLA

Thirteen.

GABE

Cool. I'm twelve. Want to do a breath holding contest?

KAYLA

Sure.

GABE

Cool. One, two, three-

Gabe takes a giant breath and goes underwater. Kayla, a bit behind, plugs her nose, closes her eyes and does the same.

UNDERWATER -- Kayla uses her free hand to paddle and keep herself submerged.

After ten seconds, Kayla resurfaces, panting. She wipes the water off her face and looks over at Gabe. He's floating face down in the water, perfectly still, like a drowned corpse.

Just as Kayla is getting concerned, he resurfaces, panting.

GABE (CONT'D)

I won. The trick is to waste as little energy as possible. When you move, your body uses oxygen and then you won't be able to hold your breath as long.

KAYLA

That makes sense.

GABE
Do you have a boyfriend?

KAYLA
...Wh--

DIANNE
PICTURE TIME!

Dianne stands by the pool's edge with a digital camera.

KENNEDY
Mommmmm!

DIANNE
Oh hush. Girls first! GIRLS! All
girls by the diving board!

The girls group by the board. Kayla watches.

GABE
(to Kayla)
She said all the girls by the
diving board.

KAYLA
Right.

Kayla climbs out of the pool and walks over to the girls. They are already posing together - hands on hips, peace signs, arms around each other. Kayla stands in the back, blocked by her taller, more developed peers.

DIANNE
Make sure we can see everyone.
Kayla! Kayla! Up front, honey,
can't see you.

Kayla awkwardly makes her way to the front of the group. A few girls give her weird looks.

DIANNE (CONT'D)
That's it.

The girls all pose in a tangled, wet mass - except for Kayla, who crouches awkwardly up front.

DIANNE (CONT'D)
Smile!
(takes picture)
Perfect.

KENNEDY
Can we get one of just The Squad?

DIANNE

Sure! Okay, Squad members only for this one.

Kayla **AND ONLY KAYLA** shuffles out of the group.

DIANNE (CONT'D)

Great! Smile!

The girls pose. They look like weird, wet ducks.

23 EXT. KENNEDY'S BACKYARD. LATER 23

Everyone is sitting around a patio table, watching Kennedy open her presents. Kayla looks on, wrapped in a towel, shivering, standing just outside the group. Kennedy opens a box.

KENNEDY

Yesssssss.

It's a yellow tank top.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

Oh my god, so cute.

LINDSEY

I know you have ones like it.

KENNEDY

Not in this color.

LINDSEY

That's what I was thinking.

Kayla sneaks a look at Aiden, who is sitting in a chair, bored, towel hanging around his neck. He looks over at Kayla and she immediately looks away. Dianne brings over a small square box.

DIANNE

This one is from Kayyyyla.

Kennedy looks up and gives Kayla a half-smile. Kayla gives her a full smile and a little wave. Kennedy opens the box, revealing a small, card-based board game.

KENNEDY

...what is it?.

KAYLA

It's a game, it's really fun. You, you um, you take turns - like everyone gets ten cards and then you take turns doing - you'll see. It's like Go Fish but funner...

KENNEDY

...Cool.

The other girls contain their laughter.

Kennedy puts the box aside. Kayla shrinks.

DIANNE

Okay, next is Julia--

GABE (O.S.)

BELLLLLYYY FLOPPPPP AHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

Gabe, goggles and shirt, comes sprinting out of nowhere and does a large, loud belly flop into the pool.

KENNEDY

Mom!

DIANNE

I know.

KENNEDY

Seriously, I'm gonna--

DIANE

I'll talk to him, it's fine --
JULIA'S PRESENT! Here we go!

Kennedy rolls her eyes. Kayla watches Gabe.

24

INT. KENNEDY'S HOUSE. LATER.

24

Drift through the LIVING ROOM, where the girls and boys are taking turns playing a KARAOKE VIDEO GAME. Continue past them, down a hallway and into the LIVING ROOM, where Kayla is sitting alone on a chair by the window, talking on the phone, quietly.

KAYLA

(whispering)

Yes...yes, please just come. The party's over, it ended early....I don't KNOW it just did, can you please come pick me up please?

(MORE)

KAYLA (CONT'D)

...DAD...ohmygod everyone's leaving, I'm like the last person here...I'm not whispering, it's just bad service here who cares please just come...that's too long. Why can't you come quicker?...UGHH. Okay whatever, fine, just come please. And don't come inside just text me when you're close...thanks. Okay...THANKS I said, I said thanks...okay...love you too bye.

Kayla hangs up. Huffs. Looks down at her phone.

ON HER PHONE'S SCREEN: still violently cracked, Kayla opens twitter and begins scrolling through her feed. Scrolls down, down, down, - OUCH!

Kayla winces, looks at her thumb. A tiny drop of blood. She cut herself on the cracked glass of her phone. Kayla puts the tiny cut to her mouth.

Then:

AIDEN (O.S.)

Oh sorry.

Kayla turns, freezes. It's Him.

KAYLA

...No.

AIDEN

I just gotta...

Aiden walks towards her, purposefully, sipping soda from a cup with a crazy straw stuck in it. He stops directly beside her and bends down on one knee.

KAYLA

Wh-....

He reaches under her chair.

AIDEN

Was just grabbing my phone. Had to charge it.

KAYLA

(forced)

Oh, hahahah. Yeah. My phone, um...my phone runs out of batteries sometimes too.

AIDEN

Cool.

Aiden is pretty dull. Kayla doesn't notice/care. He gets up.

AIDEN (CONT'D)

Everyone's in there, you know.

KAYLA

Are they? Oh yeah, yeah, I was just um...yeah, I'm going in there in a second.

AIDEN

Okay.

Aiden leaves. Kayla catches her breath. She notices something on the floor where Aiden knelt down -- HIS SODA AND CRAZY STRAW. Kayla makes sure no one is watching, and then quickly grabs the straw and sticks it in her back pocket.

KAYLA (V.O.)

Hey guys! It's Kayla! Back with another video. Today I want to talk about - Putting Yourself Out There.

She gets up and walks toward the family room.

25

INT. FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

25

The kids are piled on couches and chairs, watching Z (13, a big boy) who is standing and singing into a cheap microphone in front of a giant flat-screen TV displaying a Karaoke Video Game. Z is hamming it up. The others watch, laugh.

The scene looks raucous and loud, but we hear none of it. Instead, we hear Kayla's speech to her webcam and the quiet of the bedroom in which it is being delivered.

Kayla enters the family room. Stops in the doorway.

KAYLA (V.O.)

Okay, so, like, "Putting Yourself Out There". What does that mean? Like, Putting Yourself Out *There*? Where's *There*? Okay, these are all good questions but they're also bad questions.

Kayla inches towards the couch, stands behind it, forces a smile.

KAYLA (V.O.)

Cause it's really about Putting Yourself Out *Anywhere*. It doesn't matter, like, *where* you do it, you just have to do it. Just Put Yourself Out There. Just go for it.

Kayla tries leaning on the couch. Tries a few different positions.

KAYLA (V.O.)

Now Putting Yourself Out There can be really scary. So if you're scared to Put Yourself Out There, like, don't worry cause that's normal and lots of people feel that way.

Z hits his final note, arms out like a diva. The kids laugh and applaud. Kayla does too. Z turns and holds out the microphone, saying "Who's next? Who wants it?"

KAYLA (V.O.)

I used to be scared but then I Put Myself Out There and now I do it all the time.

Kayla looks around, then at Z. She clenches her jaw, then raises her hand. Z notices and waves her over. Kayla slowly walks towards him.

KAYLA (V.O.)

And the first time you Put Yourself Out There is usually the hardest.

Kayla takes the microphone from Z. She stands in the middle of the large, crowded semi-circle of kids in the family room. She has zero stage presence.

KAYLA (V.O.)

But once you do it, you'll be really glad that you did. I promise.

Kayla looks up at the TV. The song starts. She begins to sing quietly. Not moving. Stealing glances at the kids around her. They watch, bored.

KAYLA (V.O.)

So, like, next time you get the chance to like play a game or sit at a new lunch table, or like, I don't know, go skydiving or something, you should do it.

Kayla starts to sway back and forth as she sings, picking up steam.

KAYLA (V.O.)
 But once you Put Yourself Out
 There, things aren't gonna change
 right away.

Kayla starts getting more into it. A few hand gestures. Nothing major. She closes her eyes.

KAYLA (V.O.)
 Think of Putting Yourself Out There
 like a little snowball or
 something. Like you put the little
 snowball up on a hill, you Put It
 Out There, and then it'll roll down
 the hill and get bigger and bigger
 and bigger.

Kayla sings and looks around, kids are nodding and starting to smile politely. In the corner, Gabe watches, smiling huge. Kayla finally sees his face without those big goggles on. He is cute like her. He gives her a very real and enthusiastic double thumbs up.

KAYLA (V.O.)
 The first time I Put Myself Out
 There, like, nothing really changed
 at first. But then I just kept
 doing it and doing it and doing it.

Kayla keeps singing, looks at Aiden, who is texting on the couch.

KAYLA (V.O.)
 And now I have tons of friends who
 really like me and I Put Myself Out
 There all the time.

Kayla closes her eyes and hits her big final note.

KAYLA (V.O.)
 So be brave. Put Yourself Out
 There. It's the best.

The song ends. She looks around. Light, unenthusiastic applause from her peers. Nothing major. But for Kayla, it's a huge win. She looks around and smiles, still holding the microphone.

26 INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM. THAT NIGHT.

26

Kayla is at her desk, speaking to her webcam in the same clothes that she was just singing in.

KAYLA

As always, if you liked this video,
please share it with your friends
and subscribe to my channel. Thanks
for watching! Byeee!

She hits spacebar on the computer and exhales - happy.

She minimizes her webcam's application and opens her internet browser - it is displaying her **YOUTUBE CHANNEL HOMEPAGE**. The heading reads: **Kayla's Korner: Advice for people like me.**

Thumbnails from a dozen of her 156 videos. Titles include: **"KAYLA'S KORNER: Being Yourself", "KAYLA'S KORNER: Flirting", "KAYLA'S KORNER: Dealing With Parents", "KAYLA'S KORNER: Cool Vs. Weird"**. Every video has less than 20 views.

Kayla clicks the **UPLOAD** button in the upper right hand corner of the screen.

She smiles.

MUSIC STARTS.

BEGIN SEQUENCE:

27 INT. KAYLA'S ROOM. MOMENTS LATER

27

Kayla digs through her closet. Takes out a large cardboard box, sets it on the floor. Opens it, rummages through it. Old shirts, pictures, her sixth grade year book.

She stops. Sees something. Holds it up.

It's a tightly folded **YELLOW BELT**.

CUT TO:

Moments LATER:

Kayla standing in the center of her room, dressed in her old **KARATE UNIFORM**. All white with a yellow belt. It's a little small for her.

Her eyes are closed. Hands at her side. She straightens her posture, standing taller than we've ever seen her do. She breathes long, deep breathes. Centering herself.

Slowly, she opens her eyes, and as she exhales, slowly transitions into a fighting stance.

28 INT. BATHROOM.

28

Kayla paces back and forth, stealing looks at herself in the mirror. Her face twisted into what many recognize as "I just smelled something awful" but what Kayla recognizes as "I am cool and I am confident and I don't care."

She has fake conversations with unseen people.

KAYLA

(quiet, almost mumbled)

What? Oh hey....what's your name again? -- cool.... yeah I'd be up for that.... Oh heyyyyy...yeah. TOTALLY. HAAAAHA!

29 EXT. KAYLA'S BACKYARD. AROUND THE SAME TIME

29

Kayla takes selfies in different locations. Smiling against a tree. Laying in the grass.

BUILDING IN INTENSITY AS WE CUT BETWEEN:

- Kayla practicing Karate in her room. Karate chops a pillow.

- Talks in the bathroom, continuing to practice future conversations:

KAYLA

Who told you that?...someone said that? Whoayeah, totally hahaha...it was great....it. was. GREAT.... it was SO MUCH FUN....it was THE BEST.....

- More selfies outside.

- More Karate. She's yelling. "HYA! HIIII-YA!" Kicking, breathing, alternating between slow controlled movements, and bursts of energy.

- Kayla in the bathroom. She leans against the counter, changing gears, making flirty eyes. She stares at someone who is not there.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

(so flirty)

nope.....noooo.....thanks.....
...what?.....sure.....

She reaches into her back pocket. Takes out Aiden's crazy straw.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
 ...I can't believe this.....wow....

She brings the straw up to her face.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
I love you too.....

Kayla closes her eyes, and pops the straw in her mouth.

- Back in her bedroom, in the clothes she was taking selfies, in. She's on her laptop, her phone plugged into it. She opens her facebook profile page. Clicks on her profile picture: that photo of her with her face, barely visible.

She clicks on a small icon on the photo's lower left hand corner: **CHANGE PROFILE PICTURE**. She selects RECENT IPHONE PHOTO UPLOADS from the menu. Chooses one the pictures she just took - her in her backyard, smiling and looking directly into camera.

She clicks UPLOAD and is brought back to her profile, complete her new picture.

She stares at the screen. Smiles.

END OF SEQUENCE.

30 INT. CAFETERIA. LATER 30

Kayla sits by herself in the crowded cafeteria, her brown bagged lunch beside her. She is writing in a large school notebook, hunched over it, her face six inches from the paper.

She has bisected the paper with a vertical line. On the top of the left side: **THINGS I WANT**. On the top of the right: **HOW TO GET THEM**. The list has been filled out on both sides - with five or six bullets of "how"s for each corresponding "thing."

On the left: **more confidence**. To the right of that: **don't slouch. smile more. speak louder**.

On the left: **more friends**. On the right: **make small talk. be nice. more nice comments on peoples fb/instagram. dress cooler**.

On the left: a **BEST friend**. On the right: **get more friends first. pick favorite one. be there for her NO MATTER WHAT. share secrets.**

On the left: **boyfriend (Aiden?)**. On the right, Kayla fills in the solutions: **flirt. be sexy. new clothes. haircut?? play it cool.**

The sound of girls giggling and Kayla looks up, sees someone and quickly grabs a binder out of her backpack. Tucked in the inside pocket of the binder, is a neatly folded piece of paper with "KENNEDY" written on the outside.

Kayla snatches the letter and gets up from her table and approaches the giggling Kennedy and her friend, STEPH.

KAYLA
Kennedy, hey.

They turn.

KENNEDY
Hey...?

KAYLA
Hi, thanks for letting me come to your pool party.

KENNEDY
No problem.

KAYLA
I wrote you a little letter thing just thanking you for inviting me.

She hands it to Kennedy, who takes it, weirded out.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
I had a ton of fun. Your house is really cool.

KENNEDY
Thanks...

KAYLA
Hey Steph.

STEPH
Hi.

KAYLA
...if...if ever need another person to swim with...or like if you um...if you--

KENNEDY

Yeah, sure. Sounds good.

KAYLA

Great! Great seeing you guys! Have a great day!

KENNEDY

Cool.

They turn and leave. Kayla walks back to her table, smiling. Then, we hear **THREE LOUD GUNSHOTS**.

31 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY. MORNING.

31

A large man, a SHOOTER, wearing a Kevlar vest and a Balaklava, gas cannisters attached to a military belt, holding a large black automatic rifle, strolls down an empty hallway. Firing shots ahead of him.

The shots crack and echo. **GACK! GACK! GACK!**

He steps over a downed BODY (13) and continues down the hallway. **GACK! GACK!**

SHOOTER

COME OUT AND FIGHT! YOU WILL DIE IF YOU STAY WHERE YOU ARE!

At the end of the hallway, dozens of eighth-grade students lean against the lockers, creating a gauntlet for the shooter to walk through. The students watch him, some bored, some riveted. They are not scared.

GIRL (O.S.)

AHHHH!

A BRAVE GIRL (12) comes charging out of the boy's bathroom towards the shooter. The shooter easily picks her off - **GACK! GACK! GACK!** She flops dramatically to the ground, "dead".

The Shooter removes his Balaklava, he is OFFICER TODD (50s). He speaks to the students.

OFFICER TODD

OKAY! Let's give a big hand to our volunteers from the drama club.

The students lightly applaud as the dead bodies, spattered with fake blood, get up and dust themselves off and bow. Kayla is leaned against a locker amongst her peers, watching Officer Todd.

OFFICER TODD (CONT'D)

Now kids, we've went over what you should do if you hear gunshots in the distance. And what are we supposed to do in that situation?

STUDENTS

(unison)

Run in the opposite direction.

Kayla mouths along, as her attention shifts from Officer Todd to someone else:

It's Aiden, across the hallway, looking impossibly bored, banging the back of his head slowly against the locker behind him. Kayla watches him. A girl beside her, DYLAN (13), notices.

DYLAN

You staring at Aiden?

KAYLA

(embarrassed)

What?

DYLAN

He's a dick. He dumped Chelsea because she wouldn't send him naked pictures.

KAYLA

Wh-...really? That's weird.

As Officer Todd continues to speak, we switch between Aiden, being a bored brat, and Kayla, watching him, straining to figure out her mysterious, sexy classmate.

OFFICER TODD (O.S.)

Good. But now we're gonna learn about what should be done when the gunshots are close. When the shooter is just down the hallway or just outside your classroom. What you just saw was an example of what NOT to do. If the shots are loud and close and you are in a classroom or bathroom, you are to STAY PUT. TURN OFF THE LIGHTS. FIND COVER. STAY CALM. AND, IF POSSIBLE, BARRICADE THE ENTRANCE.

Aiden has begun trying to blow spit bubbles. Kayla stares at him, biting her nails.

OFFICER TODD (O.S.) (CONT'D)

If you are within range of the shooter, if you are in the same hallway as the shooter, YOU ARE TO RUN AWAY AS FAST AS YOU CAN. If you are being shot at or feel as if you could be being shot at, you should run away in a ZIG-ZAG PATTERN. This will make you a harder target to hit. Attacking or rushing the shooter WILL NOT WORK. Negotiating or pleading with the shooter WILL NOT WORK. If someone has entered your school with a gun, you are to assume that he or she CANNOT BE REASONED WITH. If others have been wounded, lying down and staying perfectly still can work. This will protect your vital organs and the shooter may mistake you for one of the dead. BUT IF YOU CAN RUN, RUN. DO NOT BE A HERO. SAVE YOURSELF. BE YOUR OWN HERO AND SAVE YOURSELF.

Kayla stares at Aiden.

32

INT. CLASSROOM. LATER

32

The students sit at their desks. MR. DANKERT (30s, quiet) stands at the front of the classroom. They are all waiting for something. An announcement on the intercom:

OLDER WOMAN'S VOICE (INTERCOM)
COACH RED to the main office. COACH
RED to the main office, please.

MR. DANKERT
Alright, guys, that's the signal.

He turns off the lights. All the students take cover under their desks.

MR. DANKERT (CONT'D)
Okay, everyone please be respectful
of the drill and stay quiet. Should
only be a few minutes.

Mr. Dankert climbs under his desk. In the back, Kayla is crouched under hers. Across the room, she sees Aiden, under his desk, playing a game on his phone. She makes a decision and slowly crawls towards him.

She passes other students who give her weird looks as she crawls on all fours across the classroom. She arrives at Aiden. She whispers.

KAYLA

Hey.

He looks over at her, doesn't care, goes back to his phone.

AIDEN

Hey.

KAYLA

Whatcha doing?

AIDEN

Playing a game.

KAYLA

Cool.....you excited for high school next year?

AIDEN

Yeah. Should be cool.

KAYLA

Yeah, totally, I was thinking the same thing. I think it'll be cool, too.

A silence.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

(making small talk)

You think there'd ever be an actual shooting here?

AIDEN

I wish.

KAYLA

Yeah, me too.....Why do you wish there was one?

AIDEN

Cause I'd fuck him up. Take his gun and elbow him right in the jaw, lay him out. I wouldn't be sitting under my desk like a pussy.

KAYLA

Yeah, you would fuck him up. Totally. He'd be screwed.

AIDEN

Yep.

After a long silence, Kayla takes out her phone. Starts scrolling through it. She keeps looking up at Aiden as she does it, seeing if he's looking over at her. He's not.

She pretends to see something on her phone that surprises her and she holds the phone to her chest, hiding the screen.

KAYLA

Whoa...oh man, that was close. That was almost *really* embarrassing.

She waits for Aiden to ask her about what just happened, he doesn't.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Oh my god that was so funny. Aiden, guess what just happened?

AIDEN

(doesn't care)
What?

KAYLA

Oh my god it's so embarrassing, I can't even say it.

AIDEN

Okay.

KAYLA

...I opened my phone to look at Instagram and I accidentally opened my photo section, and thank god no one was looking over my shoulder, because a dirty photo I took the other night came up.

Aiden looks up, immediately interested. This first taste of Aiden's undivided attention nearly paralyzes Kayla.

AIDEN

...really?

KAYLA

(words barely forming)
...yeah...so embarrassing...

AIDEN

What was the photo of?

KAYLA
Just.....me.

Aiden looks her up and down.

AIDEN
Doing what?

KAYLA
Just.....hangin' out.

AIDEN
...Can I see it?

KAYLA
No, cause...those pictures are for
my *boyfriend* only.

AIDEN
Who's your boyfriend?

KAYLA
...um...I don't...I don't have one
right now. But I take lots of dirty
pictures so that I'll have plenty
to send my boyfriend once I have
one.

AIDEN
Really?

KAYLA
Yeah...

AIDEN
...do you give blowjobs?

KAYLA
...um-

The lights turn on.

MR. DANKERT
Okay, everyone back up.

Kayla looks up, panicked that she's not at her seat.

KAYLA
(to Aiden)
Okay, nice talking to you.

AIDEN
Yeah.

KAYLA

To answer your question, though,
yes I do. I do give them and I'm
really good at it.

Aiden watches Kayla scoot away, intrigued, maybe even
interested.

33 INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM. DAY 33

Kayla sits on her bed, Indian-style. Her laptop in front of
her. She has a small, plastic bag of Cheez-Its.

ON THE SCREEN - Google's homepage. Kayla types in the search
bar: "**how to give a blowjob**". She pauses. Adds a word: "**how
to give a great blowjob.**" She hits enter and is brought to
the results page.

A list of helpful articles: "BLOW LIKE A PRO: 5 WAYS TO SUCK
IT LIKE A PORNSTAR." "eHOW: THE INS AND OUTS OF THE BLOWJOB."
"THE ART OF HEAD: LEARN HOW TO PLEASE HIM."

Kayla scans. Rather than clicking on one of the links, she
clicks on the Google's **VIDEO** tab and is brought to the video
results page.

The first link is to a video entitled, "**BLOWJOB TIPS FROM
PROFESSIONAL BJ ARTIST LEXXI MAZE.**" Kayla clicks on the link
and is brought to the porn site.

A large triangular play button is superimposed over a
screenshot of LEXXI MAZE ("18"). Kayla clicks the play button
and the video starts. Lexxi sits on a well-lit couch and
speaks to camera.

LEXXI MAZE

Heyyy guys, I'm Lexxi Maze and I'm
here to teach you guys how to give
a *really good blowjob*. Okay...so
first thing you're gonna want to do
is get it wet--

Kayla winces, turns down the volume on her laptop. Lexxi's
voice is heard, quieter now.

LEXXI MAZE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

A dry blowjob is a bad blow job. So
make sure you're well hydrated
before you start.

Even the low volume is too much. Kayla reaches over to her
desk, grabs her earbuds, and plugs them into the computer.

Lexxxi's voice stops. Now we hear just a vague buzzing from the earbuds as Kayla puts them in her ears and listens.

Kayla watches the screen intensely as Lexxxi says and does God knows what. We don't see the screen or hear Lexxxi. We just watch Kayla as she nibbles on Cheez-Its and tries to take everything in.

Kayla winces. Squints.

She stops eating her Cheez-Its. Can't even chew them.

Kayla clenches her jaw. Covers part of the screen with her hand. Looks away, looks back. This is way too much.

Kayla shuts her laptop.

Takes her earbuds out.

Stares straight ahead.

The room is quiet.

34

INT. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER

34

Kayla stands at the refrigerator. She opens the freezer, looks around, moves a few things. Nothing. She tries the fridge. Opens a few drawers. Nothing.

She slowly turns toward the kitchen counter. There, in a large wooden bowl, atop half a dozen red delicious apples, is **A BUNCH OF BANANAS.**

Kayla walks toward them like a nervous bride. She picks up the entire bunch. Looks at it. Looks at each of the five bananas. Picks one, yanks it from the bunch, and returns the rest to the bowl.

Kayla leans against the counter. She grips the banana and holds it a foot away from her face, pointing it at her mouth like a microphone (stem down).

She stares at it. She stares hard. It is yellow and brown and weird-looking. She closes her eyes and just as she opens her mouth:

The front door opens and Dad enters - wearing work boots and jeans spattered with white paint. Kayla jumps and lowers the banana (still holds it). Acts casual.

DAD

Hey. Sorry, didn't mean to scare ya.

KAYLA
You didn't.

DAD
Whatcha up to?

KAYLA
Nothing.

DAD
Cool. School was good?

KAYLA
Yeah.

DAD
Good. I ran into uh.....is that a
banana?

KAYLA
(too quick)
What?

DAD
You having a banana?

KAYLA
Oh, yeah, I was just grabbing a
banana.

DAD
I thought you hated bananas.

KAYLA
...No.

DAD
Cause I swear like a month ago I
asked you if you wanted a banana
and then you got all mad because
you said that you hate bananas and
I always forget that you hate
bananas. I actually think I wrote a
note for it on my app thing so I
wouldn't forget.

Dad takes out his iPhone and plays with it.

DAD (CONT'D)
...it's...it should be like...yeah,
here, look--

He holds up his phone, showing the note he wrote.

DAD (CONT'D)
"Kayla hates bananas." I wrote it
down.

KAYLA
Well I don't hate them anymore.

DAD
That's great. Yeah, you always
gotta check to see if you still
hate stuff.

KAYLA
Mhmm...

A silence with only one solution. Kayla grabs a hold of the stem and peels the banana. Dad watches her, smiling. Kayla does her best not to react to that smell she hates so much.

Kayla slowly brings the peeled banana to her mouth. She closes her eyes and opens her mouth. The banana goes in. She bites, chews, tries not to gag, tears welling in her eyes.

DAD
You sure you like them?

Kayla closes her eyes. Tries to swallow. Can't.

DAD (CONT'D)
You really don't seem to be
enjoying that.

More chewing. Tries to swallow again. Gags.

DAD (CONT'D)
Honey, you don't look like--

Kayla SPITS out the banana.

KAYLA
FINE! I DON'T LIKE BANANAS. HAPPY?!

She throws the banana at her father. It hits him in the chest. He is too confused to flinch. Kayla storms out of the kitchen and into her room, slamming the door shut.

DAD
(to himself)
...no clue...

35 INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM. LATER THAT NIGHT. 35

Kayla lies on her bed, her laptop open on her chest. She types into Google: **things that are shaped like bananas.**

Then, **BLOOP.**

She clicks on her facebook tab on her browser. Someone has sent her a message on facebook's chat section. It's Gabe.

He's written: **hey kayla!**

She responds: **hey!**

Gabe: **thanks for exepcting my friend request.**

Kayla: **no prob!**

Gabe: **it's gab from kennedy's pool party.**

Gabe: **GABE I mean.**

Kayla: **yea i know. how r u?**

Gabe: **i'm good. u?**

Kayla: **me too.**

Gabe: **cool.**

When Gabe types, Kayla can see via a message in the chatbox saying, "**GABE IS TYPING...**" He types. Stops. Types again. Stops. His next thought is going through a few drafts.

A KNOCK on the door. Kayla closes her laptop.

KAYLA
Yeah?

The door opens. Dad pokes his head in.

DAD
Hey.

KAYLA
Hi.

DAD
How ya doin?

KAYLA
Good.

DAD
Good...me too...

KAYLA
....

DAD
So you got the high school thing
tomorrow right? The shadow thing?

KAYLA
Yeah.

DAD
That's cool. That'll be fun.

KAYLA
Yeah.

DAD
Cool...can't wait to hear about it.

KAYLA
Yeah.

DAD
...Alright, well good night, I love
you, don't stay up too late.

KAYLA
Just so you know, you don't have
to...I'm not mad, I'm just saying
you don't have to worry about me
anymore cause I'm actually doing
really good and my life is going
really great now.

DAD
...that's awesome. That's great.

KAYLA
Yeah...okay, goodnight.

DAD
Night. Love you.

KAYLA
Love you too.

Dad closes the door.

Kayla sits in the dark. Doesn't move. After a long silence,
she closes her eyes and whispers into the dead air:

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Dear God. Tomorrow is a really important day for me and it would really mean a lot if you could make it a good day. I know everyday can't be a good day but if tomorrow could be a good one I would really appreciate it. Even if, like, I have to have a bunch of bad days sometime in the future, I'll take that if it means that tomorrow can be a really, really good day. That's all. Thank you. Love, Kayla.

Kayla sits in the dark. Then opens her laptop again. The light is sudden and intense. She doesn't react.

36

INT. BUS. MORNING

36

A bus-load of eighth graders parked outside MILES GROVE HIGH. The kids talk and laugh and goof around. Kayla sits against one of the windows toward the back of the bus. She is attentive, quiet, nervous, ready for something.

Mr. McDaniel stands at the front of the bus, no one pays attention to him - except for Kayla, who sits up straight and listens very carefully.

MR. MCDANIEL

Settle down! Settle! Okay, you are all here as part of the High School Shadow Program...we're going to all walk in as a group, then you will be individually paired with one of the students from Miles Grove High. You will stay with that one person for the entire school day. You are not, I repeat, NOT to leave their side. These students volunteered and are here to help you and guide you through a day of high school. Some of you will be paired with freshmen, others will be paired with sophomores or juniors. So please be respectful and take it all in. This should be a learning experience.

In the back, Kayla is listening, nodding.

MR. MCDANIEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

This is your chance to get a
glimpse of what life will be like
for you next year. So pay
attention.

Kayla listens to this intensely, psyching herself up.

MR. MCDANIEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And have fun.

37 INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY. LATER

37

The hallway is crowded with high school kids. They are bigger. Older. They talk and move and load things in and out of lockers. Then, from within the chaos, a LINE OF MIDDLESCHOOLERS, moving slowly down the middle of the hallway, bisecting the crowd.

The middle-schoolers move in single file - and each middle schooler has his or her right arm attached to the right shoulder of the person in front of him or her. They march, like prisoners through the gauntlet of the older kids.

And somewhere in the line, Kayla, her eyes scanning everything around her.

38 INT. HIGH SCHOOL- STUDY ROOM. LATER

38

Kayla sits as various high school students pair off with Kayla's classmates. She scans the crowd for her potential Shadow. A BIG WEIRD KID (16) walks towards Kayla, Kayla sees him, freezes, horrified.

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)

Kayla?

Kayla turns to see OLIVIA (16). She is well-dressed and beautiful. Kayla is immediately nervous to impress her.

KAYLA

Hey.

OLIVIA

I'm Olivia.

KAYLA

(so excited)

Hey.

OLIVIA
 (laughs)
 Ohmygod you're so cute.

KAYLA
 Hahaha th--...thanks!

OLIVIA
 Ready?

KAYLA
 Yeah, yeah, definitely.

39 INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY. MOMENTS LATER 39

Kayla walks as close to Olivia as possible.

OLIVIA
 So, you excited to be a freshman?

KAYLA
 Totally, yeah.

SOME BOY (17) passes.

SOME BOY
 Yo Liv - Martin got it.

OLIVIA
 Shut UP.

SOME BOY
 I'm serious.

OLIVIA
 Oh my god.

Olivia laughs as the boy laughs and passes. Kayla laughs too.

KAYLA
 What was that?

OLIVIA
 Stupid inside joke.

KAYLA
 Oh cool.

OLIVIA
 So I have like two study periods
 today, which is sweet cause we
 won't be, like, sitting in boring
 ass classes all day--
 (MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 (calling to someone)
 Babs! Babs, did you do the thing
 for Kiley's class?

BABS (16) stands by her locker.

BABS
 Fuck no.

OLIVIA
 Thank god.

Olivia and Kayla keep walking. Kayla looks at Olivia, in complete awe of her. Olivia has everything that Kayla could possibly want.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 Feel free to ask me any questions.

KAYLA
 Okay, cool. Um...how do uh...or um,
 why is...

OLIVIA
 If you don't have a question yet,
 it's fine.

KAYLA
 Okay.

OLIVIA
 (laughs)
 Ohmygod you are literally the
 cutest. I think we're best friends.
 Is it okay if we're already best
 friends?

KAYLA
 Hahah! Yeah, yeah, totally.

They continue down the hall, Kayla unable to wipe the smile off her face.

40 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - COURTYARD . LATER. 40

A big LAUGH shared between Olivia and her two actual best friends, MARISSA (16, second in command) and EMILY (16, a distant third) all seated at a picnic bench.

MARISSA
 I can't. I just can't.

OLIVIA

I know I was literally dead. When it happened I was like, um...okay?

The three girls burst out laughing again. Kayla sits up straight and laughs with them, a tiny fourth wheel.

EMILY

Did you hear about Skyler and Lindsey?

OLIVIA

No.

MARISSA

What happened?

EMILY

I don't know. I heard something crazy happened and thought maybe you guys heard what it was.

OLIVIA

Em...like I'm not trying to be a bitch but are you retarded?

MARISSA

Seriously.

OLIVIA

No, Em, like seriously though, are you maybe like a little retarded?

MARISSA

(looking at her phone)
SHUT. UP.

OLIVIA

What?

MARISSA

(eyes widening on phone)
Oh. My. God.

EMILY

What is it?

MARISSA

(she scrolls on her phone)
No.....way.

OLIVIA

Rissa, I will seriously deck you if you say another thing that isn't you telling me what you're looking at right now.

MARISSA
Max Robleski nudes.

OLIVIA
SHUT UP.

Olivia grabs Marissa's phone, scrolls through the it.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I can't deal with this.

EMILY
Can I see?

OLIVIA
How'd these get out? Vanessa?

MARISSA
Yep. Apparently he cheated on her
with Jillian Moroney --

OLIVIA
JILLIAN MORONEY?! Are you
serious? Uchhh. Like, I can't
even.

EMILY
JILLIAN MORONEY?! Jinx.

MARISSA
I know. Crazy.

OLIVIA
No, like, seriously I can't even. I
can't. This is too much.

MARISSA
Show Kayla.

OLIVIA
Ew, Riss.

MARISSA
(to Olivia)
What?
(to Kayla)
Kayla you've seen a dick before
right?

KAYLA
Totally.

EMILY
Are you a virgin?

OLIVIA
Em!! Jesus fuck, psycho
much?!

MARISSA
Ewww, Emily what the fuck is
wrong with you?

EMILY
What?? You were gonna show her
Max's dick.

OLIVIA
Guys, we should actually be letting
Kayla ask the questions.

MARISSA
Yeah, Kayla, what do you want to
know?

KAYLA
Oh, um....how.....how do you do
it?

OLIVIA
...

MARISSA
...

EMILY
...

OLIVIA
...do what?

TWO BOYS (O.S.)
Ehhhhhhh/whhaaddupp skanks?

RILEY (16) and TREVOR (17) approach the group and sit. Riley
sits across from Kayla. Trevor bear-hugs Olivia and kisses
her neck.

OLIVIA
Treevvvv stoppp hahaha.

TREVOR
Who's this?

OLIVIA
This is my shadow, Kayla. Kayla
this is Trevor.

KAYLA
Hi.

TREVOR
She's cute.

OLIVIA
Don't be a perv.

RILEY
Hey Kayla, I'm Riley.

KAYLA
Hey.

Riley looks at her, smiles. He is cute. Seems kind.

RILEY
Having fun with these guys?

KAYLA
Yeah definitely.

RILEY
Is Marissa teaching you how to be a bitch?

MARISSA
Fuck you.

RILEY
A joooke. It's a joke.

MARISSA
Then why aren't I laughing?

RILEY
Cause of the bitch thing.

The others laugh.

OLIVIA
Kayla was just asking us questions before you two interrupted us--
(Trevor squeezes her)
Trevvvv hahahaa stoopppppp.

RILEY
Oooo questions? Great, yeah, what do you want to know?

TREVOR
Are you a virgin?

EMILY
That's what I asked!

MARISSA
You happy Trevor? You're asking the same shit Em does.

EMILY
What's that supposed to mean?

MARISSA
(firing back)
What's it *not* supposed to mean?

EMILY
(confused)
What?

OLIVIA
Do you have any questions Kayla?

KAYLA
Yeah, um...what were you guys like
in eighth grade?

Um...

MARISSA

OLIVIA
Ooo good question.

TREVOR
I had a smaller dick, I think it
was only like eight inches back
then.

MARISSA
Ew, Liv, why is your boyfriend
obsessed with his dick?

OLIVIA
You want me to answer that?

EMILY
I was shorter.

MARISSA
Really Em?! Whooaaa.

EMILY
Fuck you.

KAYLA
Were you guys all friends back
then?

OLIVIA
Um, Em and I were. Marissa moved
here Freshman year.

RILEY
And I didn't know any of these
guys.

EMILY

Yeah, Riley, you were super shy back then.

RILEY

Yeah, I guess.

KAYLA

You...you were shy?

RILEY

I wouldn't really say shy. I was just, I don't know--

TREVOR

Dude, you were mute.

The group laughs.

RILEY

Yeah, I guess.

OLIVIA

Shit, Kayla we gotta go.

KAYLA

Oh, okay.

Olivia gets up, Kayla follows.

OLIVIA

Alright, see you guys.

KAYLA

Nice to meet you all.

EMILY

You too!

MARISSA

Bye Kayla!

TREVOR

Peace.

RILEY

Bye.

KAYLA

(back to Riley)

Bye.

Olivia leaves and Kayla goes to follow her, but just before she does, she turns and whispers to Riley:

KAYLA (CONT'D)
I used to be quiet too.

RILEY
(whispering)
I won't tell anyone.

He winks at her. Kayla smiles and follows Olivia out.

KAYLA (V.O.)
Hey guys! It's Kayla, back with
another video. So today I want to
talk about - GROWING. UP.

41 INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM. LATER.

41

Kayla sits at a small desk in the back of a crowded classroom. She is half the size of every other kid. All the students look forward, staring bored at an unseen teacher. Kayla looks all around her, smiling, so happy to be here.

KAYLA (V.O.)
Okay, so Growing Up can be a little
bit scary and weird but it's also
really good because you get to
change things that you might not
like about yourself and that's good
because change is a good thing.

42 INT. CHOIR ROOM. LATER.

42

Kayla stands next to Olivia in the middle of an all-female high school choir group. Again, Kayla is tiny amongst them. All the girls sing and look straight ahead. Kayla stands up straight, mouth closed, smiling. Truly happy.

KAYLA (V.O.)
Okay, so I'm an eighth grader which
means next year I will be in HIGH
SCHOOL. Now high school is a lot
different than middle school
because middle school is, like,
really, um, like, well, in middle
school everyone is a lot younger
than high schoolers and when you're
young, you haven't changed as much
as when you're older.

43 INT. CAFETERIA. LATER.

43

Kayla sits at the lunch table with Olivia, Marissa, Emily, Trevor and Riley. Everyone is chatting and laughing. Kayla is participating. Riley is seated across from her. Kayla and Riley make eye contact and smile, intermittently.

KAYLA (V.O.)

So, yeah, high schoolers have changed more than middle schoolers and since change is a good thing that means that high schoolers are really good. Okay - next thing about Growing Up. Um...yeah, okay so...

44 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL. LATER.

44

Olivia walks Kayla out of the high school, hugs her, says goodbye. Kayla thanks her. Olivia walks away and Kayla stands in the dizzying rush of high schoolers leaving school for the day.

KAYLA (V.O.)

...yeah, okay, so the thing about Growing Up is that it's GOING TO HAPPEN. So DON'T FIGHT IT. Some parts of Growing Up will be hard and not good but I promise that Growing Up will eventually get REALLY GOOD. I used to be afraid of Growing Up but then I realized that it's going to make everything better and now I can't WAIT to Grow Up.

Kayla looks around, taking everything in, smiling.

45 INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM. LATER THAT DAY.

45

Kayla speaks to her webcam.

KAYLA

Cool. Okay. If you liked this video please share it and subscribe to my channel. Thanks for watching! Byeee!

Kayla hits the spacebar to stop the recording.

She takes her phone out of her pocket and unlocks it. Goes to her CONTACT LIST. Scrolls through the few names she has, down to a contact she has named: **RILEY HIGH SCHOOL**.

She opens the contact. It's a phone number. She stares at the screen.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
 (practicing)
 Hey...Hey, Riley...Oh hey, Riley,
 it's Kayla....nothing much,
 you?...Hey.....Hey there...

Kayla takes a deep breath. Presses the number, holds the phone up to her ear. Waits. It rings. Once. Twice. He answers.

RILEY ON THE PHONE
 Hello?

KAYLA
 Hi...

46 INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM. LATER.

46

Kayla lies on her bed, earbud headphones in. She's holding the small microphone attached to one of the two headphones' wires up to her mouth.

KAYLA
 Yeah, yeah, totally. I was thinking
 the same thing.

RILEY (O.S.)
 (voice distorted through
 headphones)
 It's like, if you don't like each
 other then why are you friends?

KAYLA
 Yeah hahahaha.

On Kayla's phone's screen: she has been speaking to Riley for 18 minutes.

RILEY
 So you excited about next year?

KAYLA
 Totally.

RILEY

You should be. You're the coolest freshman I've ever met and you're not even a freshman yet.

Kayla laughs, shifts in her bed.

KAYLA

Thanks.

RILEY

You gotta be careful with guys, though. They'll be all over you next year.

KAYLA

(taken aback, blushing)
Wh-...Really?

RILEY

Oh definitely. They'll all want you.

KAYLA

Hahah yeah right.

RILEY

I'm serious.

Kayla picks at her nails.

RILEY (CONT'D)

What are you up to tonight?

KAYLA

Tonight? Nothing, just-...hanging out probably.

RILEY

You wanna do something?

KAYLA

What?

RILEY

You wanna hang out?

Kayla's brain shuts down.

KAYLA

.....

RILEY

I'm not doing anything tonight if you wanted to hang out or something. I have a car. I can pick you up.

Kayla sits up. Tries to form a response. Can't.

She hangs up the phone, rips her earbuds out, gets up and starts pacing around her room - doing little hops, exhaling, breathing heavy. She's one part excitement, nine parts panic.

KAYLA

OhmygodohmygodohmygodOHMYGOD.

She takes a deep breath, tries to quickly calm herself. She picks up her phone off the bed, unplugs the earbuds, dials, holds the phone to her ear, closes her eyes and waits.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

....HEY! Sorry about that, I have bad service at my house. I'd love to hang out if that's still-
...GREAT, COOL....COOL...Cool, yeah, cool. Okay, cool, great. See you then!...Okay...you too--I mean, me too hahaha. Yeah, cool. Okay!
Bye!

Kayla hangs up, tosses her phone on the bed and begins to *really* freak out.

She walks over to her closet and rifles through her clothes -- *ugly, stupid, ugly, dumb, ugly* -- no good date outfits, let alone good date-with-a-cute-high-school-boy outfits.

Kayla moves quickly to the other side of the room. She opens the top drawer to her bureau and digs through a large pile of brightly-colored socks. From the back of the drawer, she retrieves a BIRTHDAY CARD. She opens it.

The card reads: **HAPPY 13th KAYLA! Love, Nana.** There is a fifty dollar bill in the card. Kayla puts the fifty in her back pocket.

47

INT. KAYLA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

47

Dad is watching TV. Kayla enters.

KAYLA

Can you bring me to the mall?

DAD

Sure.

Dad continues watching TV. Kayla stands in place. Dad turns to Kayla.

DAD (CONT'D)

Right now?

48

INT. CAR. LATER.

48

Dad drives. Stares ahead. Kayla texts on her phone, squinting as if in slight pain.

On Kayla's screen, a text from Riley: **ill come get u at 8?**

Kayla responds: **perfect :)**

Contrary to her emoticon, Kayla is nervous, agitated. She notices her father. Goes back to texting. Looks up again.

KAYLA

Can you not look like that please?

DAD

Wh-? What, like what?

KAYLA

Just like the way you're looking.

DAD

Looking at the road?

KAYLA

You can look at the road, Dad, obviously I didn't mean that. Just don't be so weird and quiet while you do it.

DAD

(getting annoyed)
Sorry.....so how was the Shadow--

KAYLA

No - it's fine that you were being quiet. Just don't be *weird* and quiet. Cause I look over at you and it looks like you're about to drive us into a tree or something and then I get freaked out and can't text my friends, so just be quiet and drive. But just don't look so weird and sad. Please.

DAD
 (gritting teeth)
 ...Okay.

Kayla texts. Dad looks out the window and tries to look happily out the window. It's creepier than before.

KAYLA
 (not looking up)
 That's worse.

49 EXT. MALL. LATER. 49

Dad and Kayla pull up to the front entrance of the mall.

DAD
 Pick you up in an hour?

KAYLA
 Okay.

DAD
 Is everything all right? You seem a little--

KAYLA
 Bye.

DAD
 ...Okay, have fun.

Kayla leaves. Dad watches her go and then drives away toward the mall exit. As he reaches it, he pauses, bangs a U-turn and parks in an open parking spot in the lot. He turns the car off and sits in it. He looks toward the mall.

50 INT. MALL - CORRIDOR. LATER 50

Kayla stands in front of TRENDY TWEEN, a clothing store for girls age 7-13. The store is an explosion of color -- bright pinks and purples and lime greens. Dresses with polka dots. Jeans with sequins.

Kayla looks in the DISPLAY WINDOW - little girl mannequins with happy cartoon faces frozen mid-jumping-jack in fun summer clothing. Their clothing is like hers: young, simple and completely unsexy.

Kayla reaches into the back right pocket of her jeans, removes the fifty dollar bill and transfers it to her front right pocket.

IN THE DISTANCE, Dad emerges from around a corner of the mall corridor, looking for Kayla, trying not to be noticed. He sees her and ducks behind a vending machine.

Kayla walks away from the store and from where Dad is hiding. Dad emerges and follows at a safe distance.

51 INT. MALL - CORRIDOR. LATER. 51

Dad looks around, having lost Kayla. After a few neck cranes, he spots her.

Kayla is talking to A MAN working at an EYEBROW PLUCKING KIOSK. Kayla is speaking to him, shyly asking questions. She gets an answer, tells the man no thanks, and continues down the corridor. Dad follows.

52 INT. MALL - CORRIDOR. LATER. 52

Kayla turns a corner. She stops and stares.

A large, well-lit, high-end clothing store - **ZINC** - the name in sleek black and gold lettering. Kayla approaches the store and stops just short of it. FIVE MANNEQUINS guard the entrance.

The mannequins are six-feet tall - shiny and jet black - their heads are smooth, faceless eggs. They resemble aliens and each wears a completely different yet equally sexy outfit. They tower over Kayla.

She stares at them.

Though expressionless, each mannequin strikes a very expressive pose. Cross-armed, weight on one leg. Hands behind head, one knee slightly lifted. One hand to face, other on hip.

From the neck down, the mannequins are sassy and sexy and flirtatious and easy-going and powerful and relaxed and confident. From the neck up, they are a smooth egg-shape.

Kayla stares, then walks past them and into the store.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Can I help you?

Kayla jumps a bit. An EMPLOYEE (beautiful, dressed sharply, late 20s) is beside her.

KAYLA

(scared, defensive)

I'm 13, I know I look 11 but I'm
old enough to be in here alone--

EMPLOYEE

(kind, not patronizing)

I didn't think you were 11. Just
wanted to see if you wanted help
finding something.

KAYLA

I don't need help.

EMPLOYEE

Yeah...no, I know, I just mean if
you have any questions about
anything, feel free to ask.

KAYLA

Okay I'm actually going to go look
in this section over here.

Kayla wanders into the store and away from the Employee who
watches Kayla go.

EMPLOYEE

Okay. Let me know if I can help.

Employee does a tiny hand-to-heart, pout, exhale through
nose. It's small, undramatic. Kind, not patronizing.

NEARBY, Dad, standing by a KIOSK, watches Kayla disappear
into the store.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Let me touch your hands
sir.....Sir, let me touch your
hands.

Dad snaps out of it and turns, confused. A KIOSK EMPLOYEE
(30s, asian) stands with her palms out, shiny with lotion.

DAD

What?

KIOSK EMPLOYEE

For your hands - soft, soft - give
me your hand.

DAD

Wh- okay.

Dad gives her his right hand and she begins rubbing the lotion into it. Dad turns back toward the store and stares at Kayla as the Kiosk Employee works the lotion into his hand.

BACK IN THE STORE

Kayla walks up to a rack of leather jackets. She touches them, lightly, like she could ruin them if she touched them incorrectly. She checks a tag - \$800.

EMPLOYEE

Want to try it?

KAYLA

(spooked again)

What? um...no--

EMPLOYEE

You don't want to try it on?

KAYLA

It's uh, I think it's too--

EMPLOYEE

That's a cool one, I like that one.

You should try it on.

The Employee looks through the jackets, finding the right size. She takes one out and starts to walk away.

EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

Here.

KAYLA

Okay.

Kayla follows her.

53

INT. CHANGING AREA. MOMENTS LATER

53

The Employee waits outside of a row of slick black changing rooms - each with a shiny black shutter door. She leans against the wall in her designer suit, hands behind her back.

The Employee scans the store as she waits. A WOMAN and HER BOYFRIEND (both 20s) look at a rack of lingerie.

Past them, Dad appears by the entrance - subtly scanning the store for Kayla, holding a bag labeled HAND BUTTER.

The Employee watches him, as he slinks around by the entrance, searching while trying not to be seen, looking like a huge creep.

The SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING. The Employee turns, lights up.

EMPLOYEE

WOW...That looks great on you.

Kayla stands in the doorway of her changing room in a black leather jacket. Straps, chains, zippers - it's got a lot going on. It's a little too big for her and it's fitted for a body that she hasn't got yet - loose in the shoulders and chest area.

Kayla likes it but is scared to think she looks good in it.

KAYLA

It's pretty cool.

EMPLOYEE

Lots of girls -- lots of women can't rock leather jackets. I couldn't rock a jacket like that. You totally rock it, though.

KAYLA

Thanks...Yeah...I actually...I already have one like this so...

EMPLOYEE

...yeah, so you probably don't need two of them.

KAYLA

Yeah...

Kayla starts to take the jacket off. The Employee goes to help her out of it. Kayla stops.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Actually...sorry, could you...could you take a picture of me in it?

EMPLOYEE

In the jacket?

KAYLA

Yeah, is that allowed?

EMPLOYEE

Of course!

KAYLA

Cool.

Kayla takes out her phone, unlocks it and hands it to the Employee.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

I cracked the screen but I'm gonna get it fixed.

EMPLOYEE

Oh yeah, I cracked my phone a couple months ago. Sucks.

KAYLA

Totally...

Kayla stands against the wall. Puts her hands on her hips. Forces a smile. The Employee holds up the phone to take a picture.

EMPLOYEE

Okay, ready? One, two...three.

Kayla keeps forcing a smile, hands on her hips. The jacket is big. It looks like she shrunk in it. The Employee moves closer with the phone.

EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

I took a bunch. You look great.

KAYLA

Thank you.

Kayla takes off the jacket and hands it to The Employee who hands her back her phone. Kayla looks at the pictures, head down.

EMPLOYEE

You want to keep looking around?

KAYLA

Um...yes.

Kayla puts her phone back in her pocket.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Actually...

EMPLOYEE

Yeah?

KAYLA

I have this thing tonight...?

EMPLOYEE

Okay.

KAYLA

And I was...looking for something
to maybe wear or--

EMPLOYEE

Like a date?

KAYLA

(panicked at the word)
Um...well--

EMPLOYEE

(saving her)
Honestly? Like, I'm not supposed to
say stuff like this but you clearly
have your look figured out.

KAYLA

Yeah.

EMPLOYEE

Most women that come in here need
to buy something big and flashy
because they don't really have a
look figured out yet, you know? But
you have that already.

KAYLA

Right, yeah.

EMPLOYEE

But you could add a little
something if you're feeling like
mixing it up a little.

KAYLA

Yeah, that'd probably be good.

EMPLOYEE

Here, follow me.

MOMENTS LATER, ACROSS THE STORE.

Kayla sits on a bench by a table with a VANITY MIRROR on it.
The Employee stands beside her and unscrews a tiny tube of
LIP GLOSS.

EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

We just got this stuff in. Super
cool. Here.

Kayla presents her lips. The Employee applies the gloss
gently, like a mother would. Kayla looks straight up at the
ceiling.

EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

You have such a pretty face that
you don't want anything that's too
heavy or flashy.

KAYLA

Right.

EMPLOYEE

See?

The Employee hands Kayla the small vanity mirror. Kayla looks
at herself, her lips now a shiny soft pink.

KAYLA

Cool.

EMPLOYEE

We're actually supposed to give a
couple of these away for free to
people that look good in it, you
know, to help promote it.

KAYLA

(not following)
Right.

EMPLOYEE

So yeah, it's yours.

The Employee hands Kayla the lip gloss.

KAYLA

(taken aback)
Oh...Thank you.

EMPLOYEE

No problem. Good luck with your
thing.

KAYLA

Thank you.

The Employee smiles, turns and immediately sees Dad, peeking
in at Kayla from behind the frame of the store entrance.

EMPLOYEE

(stern, accusatory)
Can I help you?

Dad turns to leave.

EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

EXCUSE ME? SIR?

Dad turns quickly.

DAD
Shh, it's fine, I'm leaving--

EMPLOYEE
Did you just shush me??

KAYLA
Dad?

Dad winces. The Employee immediately feels terrible.

EMPLOYEE
Oh -- I'm so sorry. I thought--

DAD
No, I know. I was looking weird--

KAYLA
Oh my god.

Kayla has turned bright red. She rushes out of the store with her head down, past her father.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
(as she passes him)
I hate you so much.

DAD
Honey...

Kayla is gone down the corridor. Dad turns to The Employee.

EMPLOYEE
I'm so sorry.

DAD (CONT'D)
Nononononono, I'm the worst.

54 INT. DAD'S CAR. LATER.

54

The car is parked in the mall parking lot. Kayla sits shotgun, staring out the window, furious. Dad sits in the driver's seat.

DAD
I wasn't spying.

KAYLA
...

DAD
I'm sorry.

Dad reaches into his pocket and takes out a small BLACK GIFT CARD. He holds it out to Kayla.

DAD (CONT'D)
I got you this. It's a gift card
for that store.

Kayla doesn't turn.

DAD (CONT'D)
I'll hold on to it for you.

Kayla stares out the window, tears welling in her eyes.

KAYLA
I'm going out tonight. I won't be
home til late.

DAD
....okay.

55 INT. KAYLA'S BATHROOM. LATER

55

Kayla stands in front of the mirror above the sink. She stands up straight, as tall as she can, staring directly into her own eyes. After a long pause, she speaks:

KAYLA
You are cool. You are sexy. A high
school boy likes you and wants to
hang out with you because you are
cool and sexy. You deserve this. He
likes YOU. So just be YOU. Also,
it's okay to be nervous because
everyone gets nervous sometimes.

Deep breath, closes eyes. Opens them. Look back at herself.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
This is gonna be a fun.

She forces a smile.

56 EXT. STREET. NIGHT

56

Kayla waits at a vacant intersection in the middle of her neighborhood. She wears a black zip-up fleece jacket and a skirt. The skirt is young and unsexy and ends just above her knee. She hikes it up, much further up than it was designed to go, so that most of her bare thighs are showing.

She checks her phone. Stands. She reaches into her front pocket and pulls out the small tube of lip gloss from ZINC. As she applies her umpteenth layer of it, a car pulls up. The window lowers.

RILEY
Hey.

KAYLA
Hey.

She gets in the car.

RILEY
You look really pretty.

KAYLA
Thanks.

57 INT. RILEY'S CAR. MOMENTS LATER

57

They drive in silence. No music.

KAYLA
I like your car.

RILEY
Thanks. Just got it.

KAYLA
It's cool.

Riley puts his hand on Kayla's left thigh, causing her to inhale sharply.

RILEY
Your legs are so smooth.

KAYLA
Thanks. I um...I just shaved them.

They drive in silence. His hand on her thigh. Both staring straight ahead.

58 EXT. STREET. NIGHT

58

Riley's car drives down a suburban street, banks a left and pulls over on the side of a quiet, dark street.

59 EXT. POND. NIGHT 59

A long silence, Riley looks at Kayla, smiles. She smiles back, nervous, unable to hold eye contact for long.

KAYLA
What do you wanna do?

RILEY
What do you wanna do?

KAYLA
Whatever.

A silence.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
You wanna play a game or something?

RILEY
(laughs)
Sure.

KAYLA
Have you ever played "Ghost"?

RILEY
No.

KAYLA
It's really fun, it's like a word game, we try to spell words, we each say a letter and we go back and forth-

RILEY
How about Truth or Dare?

KAYLA
....yeah, okay, cool, yeah.

RILEY
Truth or Dare?

KAYLA
Are you asking me? Okay, yeah, um.....truth.

RILEY
Okayyy.....uhhhh....how far have you gone?

KAYLA
...how far have I gone?

RILEY

Yeah, like...first base, second base--

KAYLA

Oh yeah, totally, I know, I was just thinking...trying to remember...are you asking recently or all time?

RILEY

All time.

KAYLA

Hm.....probably third.

RILEY

Probably third?

KAYLA

Yeah, third definitely. I've done third...and second and first obviously too.

RILEY

Wow. That's crazy.

KAYLA

You know what actually just second I think, I get confused and mix second and third up sometimes.

RILEY

Hahaha, you're funny.

KAYLA

...thanks.

RILEY

Wanna ask me?

KAYLA

Sure. How far have you gone?

RILEY

No, Truth or Dare?

KAYLA

Oh Ha ha, yeah, durrrr, um, Truth or Dare?

RILEY

Dare.

KAYLA
Okay....um....

Kayla looks around, trying to think of something. She bends down, picks up a quarter off the floor of the car.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Put this quarter in your mouth.

RILEY
Ew!!

KAYLA
(panicked)
Sorry, you don't have to, what do you want to do?

RILEY
Um....I don't know, take off my shirt? Is that stupid?

KAYLA
(forgetting to breathe)
.....no.

Riley takes off his shirt. Kayla blushes hard. Tries not to look. Heart pounding out of her chest.

RILEY
Truth or Dare?

KAYLA
.....Truth.

RILEY
Aw you're no fun.

KAYLA
Okay....Dare....

60 INT. RILEY'S CAR. LATER

60

Riley drives, staring straight ahead. Kayla sits shotgun. The mood has shifted. A long, tense silence.

KAYLA
I'm really sorry.

RILEY
It's fine.

KAYLA
.....I'm sorry.

RILEY
IT'S FINE.

Kayla shuts up, scared. Riley regains his composure.

RILEY (CONT'D)
It's just...look this was about
you. You're the one who hasn't done
any of this before. I'm trying to
help you.

KAYLA
I know, I'm sorry.

RILEY
(angry)
Stop saying you're sorry. I said it
was fine so stop saying that, okay?

KAYLA
Okay.

RILEY
I came here to help you. I-....And
now you're gonna have your first
hookup with some asshole at a party
next year and you're not gonna be
good at it and he's gonna tell all
his friends about it and you're
gonna get made fun of and feel like
shit. Do you want that?

KAYLA
No.

RILEY
I didn't need this. You did. I'm on
the other side, already. I hook up
all the time. I know what I'm
doing.

KAYLA
I know--

RILEY
But I said to myself, you know
what, this Kayla is a good girl and
she needs to be looked out for...so
I'm gonna do her a favor. I'm gonna
pick her up and I'm gonna let her
hook up with me and I'm gonna let
her make mistakes and I'm not gonna
judge her if she's not good at it.
(MORE)

RILEY (CONT'D)

I'm just gonna be there for her and I'm gonna give her tips and I'm gonna help her get good at hooking up with guys.

KAYLA

I know...I really appreciate it. Really. I know you're just trying to help me. It's just...I don't know...I'm sor--...I just didn't want to do it...It was just a lot all at once.

Riley shakes his head.

RILEY

I tried to help.

KAYLA

I know.

RILEY

But you don't want help.

KAYLA

I do. I *really* do.

RILEY

No you don't.

They drive in silence. Tears well in Kayla's eyes.

KAYLA

Please don't tell your friends about this.

RILEY

I won't.

KAYLA

Thank you.

61

EXT. STREET. MOMENTS LATER

61

Riley's car pulls up to the same corner that Kayla was picked up at. Stops. Kayla gets out.

KAYLA

Goodnight.

Kayla closes the door and the car drives away.

Kayla begins walking down the street, fists and body clenched, breathing through her nose. We get close and follow her as she walks down the dark suburban street back towards her house, moving quickly, tense and pained.

62 INT. KAYLA'S HOUSE. LATER. 62

Kayla walks through the front door, moving quickly through the house towards her room.

63 INT. KAYLA'S ROOM. CONTINUOUS. 63

Kayla enters her room, closes the door, and finally lets go. She collapses onto the floor by her bed, sobbing into her hands. It is loud and heavy. Her body shakes.

DAD (O.S.)

Honey?

Dad enters the bedroom and rushes over to Kayla.

DAD (CONT'D)

Kayla, what's wrong?? What happened?

He kneels on the ground beside her - rubs her back. He drops off his knees so that he is sitting on the ground with her, holding her while she cries.

DAD (CONT'D)

Jesus, sweetheart, what happened?...honey, honey, what happened? God, ff-, Kayla. Are you okay? You can tell me...Kayla what's wrong?...oh sweetheart, it's fine, it's okay...it's okay...I'm here, I'm here, I'm right here, I'm right here, I'm right here.

Dad hugs her. She does not hug him back. She has her knees up to her chest, her arms wrapped around her knees, her eyes shut tight, trying to collapse herself to a single point.

64 INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM. LATER THAT NIGHT. 64

Kayla is in bed, under the covers. Lying in the dark. Eyes open. No laptop. She grits her teeth and shakes her head, furious, upset, ready to burst into tears or scream.

She grabs her phone. Unlocks it. Goes into the PHONE APP and dials a TEN DIGIT NUMBER that she has memorized.

She holds the phone to her ear. It rings. Once. Twice. Three times. Four times. Five times. A voice answers, groggy, having been woken up.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(muffled through phone)
Hello?

KAYLA
.....

WOMAN'S VOICE
Hello???

Kayla speaks sternly. A quiet anger.

KAYLA
Hi...

WOMAN'S VOICE
Who is this?

KAYLA
...It's me.

WOMAN'S VOICE
....Kayla?? KAYLA! Hiiii, honey,
hihi how are you? Are you okay??
It's so good to hear your voice.

Kayla's face is tense.

KAYLA
I got an B plus in algebra this
year.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Wow, that's great.

Kayla speaks quickly and sternly.

KAYLA
And math is my worst subject but I
worked really hard and got a B
plus. And also I got third place in
the essay contest this year and
there were over eighty entries to
it. And I have a lot of interests
and I'm really good at things and I
fucking hate you.

Kayla hangs up. Opens her recent call list. Selects the ten digit number she just dials and BLOCKS IT.

She puts her phone, turns over, buries her face in her pillow and cries.

CUT TO BLACK:

KAYLA (V.O.)
Hey guys, it's Kayla.

Her voice is quiet and unaffected, her usual energy gone. She speaks slowly, thinking out loud.

65 INT. KAYLA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM. THE NEXT MORNING 65

Kayla, standing in front of the mirror, covers her face in concealer. Applies eyeliner.

Her eyes are puffy from crying all night.

KAYLA (V.O.)
So...I'm making this video to say that I don't think I'm gonna be making anymore videos for a while, I think. I don't know if anyone is even watching or cares, but if you are I just want you to know that I'm gonna take a break from videos for a while and I'm sorry if that's a bummer for you but I think it's the right thing to do.

66 INT. MILES GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL - CLASSROOM. LATER. 66

It's before class has started, kids chat, leaning towards each other in their small desk chairs. Kayla sits in the middle of this, talking to no one. Zoning out.

KAYLA (V.O.)
I started making videos, um, I started making videos so I could give, like, advice and stuff and give you guys tips on what to do to make your lives better or whatever but, um...I don't know, it's-...

67 INT. CAFETERIA. LATER. 67

Kayla sits by herself, eating a sandwich. No list-making. No looking around her for kids to potentially approach. She's as quiet as we've ever seen her but, for the first time, resigned to be so.

KAYLA (V.O.)

If I'm being really, totally honest, I'm probably not the best person to *give* advice cause, I don't know, I mean I like giving advice and it's fun to give advice but...I don't know...I guess I don't really know how to do a lot of stuff. I know how to talk about stuff, but I'm not really good at *doing stuff*.

68 INT. BATHROOM. LATER

68

Kayla sits in a stall on the toilet, browsing her phone, pants on, just wanting some privacy.

KAYLA

And I'm...I'm really *nervous* ...like, all the time, like...for no reason. Like I'll be nervous even when there's nothing to be nervous about really. Like...it's sort of like when you wait in line for a roller coaster and you have that nervous stomach, like I feel like that all the time, like every day, and I don't ever get that feeling you get after you ride the roller coaster when you feel better. It's just like I'm waiting in the line all the time. And I try really hard not feel like that but, I don't know, I just can't.

69 INT. HALLWAY. LATER.

69

Kayla walks down the hallway, her backpack on, hands on either strap by her shoulders, her eyes somewhere on the floor in front of her.

KAYLA (V.O.)

And so like if you guys are going through tough times, or whatever, you deserve somebody who knows how to get through tough times, you know? Like you deserve someone who's good at making *themselves* feel better, cause then maybe they can help *you* feel better.

Kayla turns a corner and continues down the hallway and away from us. On a nearby wall is a bulletin board displaying the eighth grade class superlatives.

KAYLA (V.O.)

So yeah, those are, um, some of the reasons I'm gonna take break from videos for a while. Thanks for watching and I hope you all have good lives. I'll see you around, maybe. Bye.

Among the dozen or so pictures is the one for MOST QUIET. It shows a strange boy with his finger to his lips. He is shushing the tiny girl beside him, who is hunched over a book, her face barely visible.

70

INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM. THAT NIGHT.

70

Kayla lies on her bed, lights on, laptop open on her chest. She's on facebook, scrolling through her feed. Comments being posted, friends tagging each other in pictures, new relationships budding and breaking, Kayla looks but doesn't participate.

KENNEDY GRAVES posted a new album of pictures: **SUMMER POOL PARTY!!!** Kayla clicks on the album and scrolls through the pictures. Everyone is happy and energetic and having a blast. She can't find herself in any of the photos.

She arrives at the group picture at the diving board. She's not in it. Kayla stares at the photo and then closes her eyes.

BLOOP. A facebook chat.

From Gabe: **"did you see the photos Kennedy posted?"**

Kayla responds: **"no."**

Gabe: **"there stupid. she didn't post any of my handstand pics."**

Kayla: **"that sucks."**

Gabe: **"it's fine. how are you?"**

Kayla: **"i actually have to go. Lots of homework. Sorry."**

Kayla closes her laptop, rolls over onto her side and faces the wall.

71 INT. KAYLA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 71

Dad is watching TV. Kayla walks in behind him.

KAYLA
Will you help me burn something in
the backyard?

DAD
Yep.

72 EXT. KAYLA'S BACKYARD. LATER. 72

Kayla and Dad are sitting next to each other on plastic lawn chairs around a small fire burning in the patio's fire-pit. Kayla looks down at the TIME CAPSULE in her lap.

Its writing glows by the light of the fire: **TO THE COOLEST GIRL IN THE WORLD.**

DAD
You sure you want to do this?

KAYLA
Yes.

DAD
I'm not exactly sure what "this"
is...or *means*...I'm just hoping
that whatever we're doing here is a
positive thing...?

KAYLA
Yeah...

DAD
Alright then.

Kayla places the box in the fire pit. It starts to burn. Kayla and Dad watch it.

DAD (CONT'D)
What was in there?

KAYLA
Nothing, really. Just...sort of my
hopes and dreams.

DAD
.....Right.....and you're burning
them?

KAYLA

Yes.

DAD

Alright.

Dad puts his arm around his daughter and watches the fire with her. As always, he's searching for something - anything - to say or do to make his daughter happier.

And just as he's about to say something, just as he's about to make another admirable and kind and probably slightly off-the-mark attempt at helping the little girl that he loves so very very much, more than anything, she speaks:

KAYLA

Do I make you sad?

DAD

Wh-.....Sweetheart, no. No. You make me so happy. You're my favorite thing in the whole world. Not at all. Kayla - *not at all*. Do I seem sad?

KAYLA

No.

DAD

Why would you think you make me sad?

KAYLA

I don't know...Sometimes I think that, like, when I grow up, maybe I'll have a daughter. And then, like, I was thinking, if she was like *me*, I think that would make me really sad all the time. Cause I would love her a lot because she's my daughter but...I don't know, I guess if she ended up being like *me*, I think being her mom would make me really sad.

Kayla stares down at her lap, picks at her nails.

Dad pauses, devastated, and then leans in, purposefully, sternly, and says what may be the only thing that he is absolutely, one hundred thousand percent certain of.

DAD

You're wrong. Kayla...Kayla, look at me:

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

(she does)

You're wrong...If you grow up to have a daughter like you, she will make you so, so happy. Being your dad makes me so happy, Kayla. You don't know. You don't know how happy you make me. It's beyond anything. I can't describe it to you. And it's not just because you're my daughter. It's not because I'm your dad and I would love you no matter what. It's because of you. Some parents have to love their kids in spite of who their kids are. Not me. I get to love you *because* of who you are. Do you get that? Kayla, you are so good. You're such a *good person*. You're better than me in every way. I'm not just saying that. I swear to God I'm not just saying this. It's...It's so easy to love you. It's so easy to be proud of you. I really mean that. And yeah, sometimes when I see you're upset or having a rough day, it makes me sad. But that being sad, that sort of day-to-day sad stuff or worrying that I do is, it's -- Kayla, I am always, beneath all that stuff, always just so unbelievably happy that I get to be your dad....But you know what? If I didn't think you were going to be okay? Yeah, I'd probably be really sad all the time just like you said. But I don't think that. I can't. It's not possible. You're going to have such a great life, Kayla. You just are. You are too good of a person not to. You're too easy to love.

(a pause, a deep breath)

...Kayla, when your mom left, I was really scared. Like really, *really* scared. Because now I was all alone with this little girl that I loved so much and wanted everything for and I wasn't sure if I could give it to her and I knew that the world can be really tough on little girls so I was really scared. I was scared that you weren't going to be okay. I was scared just like you are right now.

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

Maybe more...But then you got older. And you took your first steps, and you said your first words, and you wrote your first letter to Nana and you made your first friend; and everything that I thought I was going to have to teach you - how to be nice, how to share, how to care about other people's feelings - you just started doing on your own. Your teachers would say, "you've got such a lovely daughter, you've done such a great job with her." But I didn't do anything. I really didn't. I just watched you. I just watched this amazing and strong and kind and good little girl reveal herself more and more every day...I stopped being scared about whether you'd be okay or not a long time ago, Kayla. You know why? Because of you. You were too good. You made me brave, Kayla. And if you could just see yourself like I see you...the way you really are, the way you always have been...I promise you wouldn't be scared either.

Kayla scoots out of her chair and onto her dad's lap. She hugs him tight. Hugs him in a way that she hasn't in a very long time. He hugs her back, wrapping his big arms around the little girl on his lap.

The fire burns. The hug does not break.

73

EXT. HOUSE. NIGHT

73

Kayla is at the front door of a small house. She goes to ring the doorbell, stops. Turns and walks away. Stops. Turns back to the house. Walks back to the front door. Stops. Takes a deep breath and rings the doorbell.

Gabe answers the door, dressed in khaki pants and a shirt and tie - his hair gelled in a neat part. He is nervous.

GABE

Hi Kayla.

KAYLA

Hi Gabe.

GABE
You look really nice.

KAYLA
Thank you. You too.

GABE
Thanks. You want to watch a movie
later?

KAYLA
Sure.

GABE
Cool.

A long pause.

GABE (CONT'D)
Come on in.

Kayla steps inside.

74 INT. GABE'S HOUSE. CONTINUOUS

74

Gabe's house is small and messy. Kayla stands stiffly as Gabe closes the door, turns to Kayla, and does a slow bow at the waist, hands at his side.

GABE
Welcome.

KAYLA
Thank you.

GABE
How are you tonight?

KAYLA
Good, you?

GABE
I'm good and you?

KAYLA
Good.

GABE
Cool...May I take your coat?

KAYLA
Sure.

Gabe helps Kayla out of her hoodie like a gentleman. Then holds the hoodie awkwardly, not sure what to do next.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
I can hold it.

GABE
Okay.

Gabe hands her hoodie to her.

GABE (CONT'D)
Are you hungry?

KAYLA
Yeah, sure.

GABE
Cool.

Gabe starts walking, Kayla follows. Gabe leads her into the kitchen where he has set up a romantic DIY dinner for two at the table -- two lit candles, two glasses of soda and two plates full of chicken tenders and fries.

Everything has been set up very neatly and carefully.

KAYLA
Wow.

GABE
Do you like chicken tenders?

KAYLA
Yeah.

GABE
Cool. I got a twenty piece and I also got two of every kind of sauce - but if you have a favorite sauce and want more than one packet of it, you can have mine. I like all the sauces equally.

KAYLA
Thanks.

Kayla walks toward one of the chairs. Gabe pulls it out for her and she sits.

GABE

The chicken tenders have been sitting out for a little bit because I didn't know when you'd be here so tell me if they're too cold and I can heat them up in the microwave.

KAYLA

Okay.

GABE

Whoops, left this out by accident.

Gabe picks up a PIECE OF PAPER that was sitting right beside Kayla's plate. He stands in front of her, holding it.

GABE (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to leave this out. Sorry. So stupid.

KAYLA

No problem.

Gabe doesn't move. Holds the paper out to Kayla.

GABE

You wanna see it? It's stupid.

KAYLA

Sure.

She grabs it and looks at it. It's a cheap, print-out award with Gabe's name on it.

GABE

It's stupid.

KAYLA

What is it?

GABE

I go to archery camp every summer and last summer I got five bull's eyes in a day so they gave me the Sharpshooter of the Week Award.

KAYLA

Wow. That's really cool.

GABE

It's stupid.

Gabe takes the paper and places it on top of a nearby bureau. He then walks over to the opposite side of the table, stops, poses, shoots an imaginary arrow and then takes his seat opposite Kayla.

He grabs his glass of soda and holds it up.

GABE (CONT'D)
To our first date.

Kayla smiles and lifts her glass. They toast and drink. Gabe digs in to the tenders. Kayla eats cautiously, careful not to mess up her lip gloss.

GABE (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming.

KAYLA
No problem.

Kayla eats a single fry in three bites.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
I like your house.

GABE
Thanks. It's my mom's.

KAYLA
Cool.

GABE
What movie do you want to watch?

KAYLA
What ones do you have?

GABE
I have Netflix so we can watch anything. What kind of movies do you like? What genre?

KAYLA
Um...I don't know. What do you like?

GABE
Lots of stuff. I can watch scary movies without being scared.

KAYLA
Cool.

GABE

The tenders are a little cold.

KAYLA

They're fine.

GABE

Okay, good. I actually kind of think they're better when they're cold.

KAYLA

Me too.

GABE

Cool.

They eat in silence for a bit.

GABE (CONT'D)

Do you believe in God?

KAYLA

Um....yes.

GABE

Cool.

More eating.

GABE (CONT'D)

Know any good jokes?

KAYLA

Jokes? Um...

GABE

I know a few. Okay, so you know how bikes have two tires? Like on the wheels?

KAYLA

Yeah, totally.

GABE

Okay, so why couldn't the bicycle stand up?

KAYLA

Why?

GABE

Because it was two tired.

Kayla laughs a little out her nose, nervous.

KAYLA
That's a good one.

GABE
I made it up.

KAYLA
Wow, that's really funny.

GABE
Do you have any?

KAYLA
Um.....what did the fish say, hold
on...what did the fish say when he
swam into the concrete wall--

Damn.

GABE

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Damn.

GABE
I've heard that one, that's a good
one, I like that one.

KAYLA
Thanks.

GABE
You have a good sense of humor. A
lot of girls don't have a good
sense of humor but that's what I
like so it's good that you have
that.

KAYLA
Thanks.

GABE
You're welcome.

Gabe stares at his food, looking agitated. Then:

GABE (CONT'D)
I have to tell you something.

KAYLA
(little freaked out)
What?

GABE
I didn't make up that bike joke. My
dad told it to me.

KAYLA
Oh that's okay.

GABE
I shouldn't have lied to you I'm
sorry.

KAYLA
It's fine. I also sort of think you
made the joke you're own in the way
you said it so it's sort of like
you wrote it anyway.

Gabe smiles.

GABE
Totally.

They eat some more in silence.

GABE (CONT'D)
I watched some of your videos.

KAYLA
(embarrassed)
Oh...those are stupid.

GABE
No! No, they're really cool. You're
really smart about stuff. You know
so many things.

KAYLA
Thanks.

GABE
I was thinking you should have your
own talk show.

KAYLA
Hahaha yeah...

GABE
I'm sorry if I'm being weird, I'm
just really nervous.

KAYLA
You're not being weird.

Gabe smiles. Kayla smiles back.

75 INT. GABE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM. LATER 75

Gabe and Kayla sit on the couch "together" (three feet apart, stiff, both facing forward, nervous).

GABE
...what do you wanna do?

KAYLA
Oh...whatever.

GABE
Yeah, me too, I can do whatever.

KAYLA
...you wanna watch something?

GABE
Sure.

Gabe grabs the remote off the coffee table in front of them. He hesitates, puts the remote back down.

GABE (CONT'D)
Actually...can I show you something?

KAYLA
Sure.

GABE
Okay.

Gabe hops up from the couch and runs out of the room. Kayla stays put, sitting up straight, knees bouncing, nervous.

We stay on Kayla as we hear the sounds of Gabe's frantic search: loud footsteps up stairs, down a hallway, a door opens, closes, a pause, door opens again, more footsteps, back down the stairs again.

GABE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(just outside the room)
Okay, I'm ready to show you.

KAYLA
Okay.

GABE
It's not that cool. But maybe you'll think it's really cool, I don't know, it's kind of cool, I guess.

KAYLA

Okay.

GABE

Close your eyes.

Kayla does. We stay on her as Gabe enters the room. Lots of little, strange sounds.

GABE (CONT'D)

Keep your eyes closed.

KAYLA

Okay.

GABE

Okay, you can open your eyes.

Kayla does. Gabe is standing in front of her with his hands behind his back. There's a large cardboard box behind him and a laptop now open on the coffee table between Kayla and him.

GABE (CONT'D)

So, like, I told you about how I do archery and, um, like, this is sort of like another one of my passions.

Gabe keeps one hand behind his back as the other reaches out and hits the laptop's spacebar. HEAVY METAL MUSIC begins to blast as Gabe pulls TWO LARGE SILVER RINGS from behind his back and begins his magic routine.

Gabe's hands shake with adrenaline as he does his linking rings routine. Then reaches into the box, does more tricks - color changing scarves, cutting and melding ropes.

The face-melting guitar doesn't quite match up with Gabe's routine. But Gabe is taking this very seriously, too nervous to look up at Kayla and see if she's liking it or not. He's practiced this a thousand times, and this is it: his moment.

And as Gabe struggles through his act, messing up here, dropping a prop there, Kayla watches him.

Someone is doing something for her.

And she is watching it.

Smiling.

Her world upside-down.

The pressure, finally, for a moment, off.

76 EXT. STREET. LATER 76

Dad waits in his truck, parked on the street in front of Gabe's house. He stares ahead, turns, sees something, smiles.

Kayla enters the car.

DAD
Hey.

KAYLA
Hey.

Dad pulls away and starts driving. We stay on the two of them, sitting quietly.

A long silence between them, then:

DAD
Did you have fun?

KAYLA
Yeah, yeah it was fun.

DAD
Good.

They drive. Both staring forward. Sitting in silence.

Together.

77 INT. SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM LOBBY. MORNING 77

We move slowly through the lobby. The floor somehow both scuffed and shiny. A giant trophy case with way too much in it. A high ceiling.

And empty.

PRINCIPAL MCDANIEL (O.S.)
Friends, Family, and Loved Ones.

The strange sounds of a speech happening in a large, nearby space. Loud and echoing and muffled through the walls. Barely discernible.

We continue to move slowly through the lobby and toward an open hallway entrance.

PRINCIPAL MCDANIEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Today is a celebration. A chance
for us to applaud the achievements
of these amazing kids. Miles Grove
Middle School's Class of 2017.

Applause. Even louder. Even stranger sounding. Principal
Mcdaniel's speech fades to barely audible as we move down the
hallway.

It's dark. Something in the distance.

We keep moving. Get closer.

Kids waiting in the dark, lined up against the right wall of
the hallway in single file. Dressed in caps and gowns.

A CHAPERONE (40s) at the front of the line by the entrance to
the Gym. The kids are chatting, bored, not really caring
about whatever they're supposed to be caring about right now.

CHAPERONE

(whisper yelling)

Guys! Guys! We're almost there, a
few more minutes, please, please
just, guys! Shhhh, just shhhh
please and thank you.

We pass the Chaperone and continue down the line. Boy, girl,
boy, girl, girl, girl, boy, boy, boy, girl, b--wait.

Kayla.

Cap too big for her head. Swimming in her gown. She stands up
straight, hands clenched into fists at her side. She looks
down the hall, sees something.

Aiden. He's late, hustling toward the back of the line.
Looking cute even in that stupid robe.

Kayla watches him as he passes. Then faces forward. Stares.
Then makes a decision.

She steps out of her place and begins walking quickly down
the line. We follow her. She moves with confidence and
purpose. Aiden's ahead, fixing his cap over his stupid head.

Kayla reaches him. And passes. Keeps walking. She finally
stops and turns.

Kennedy Graves is standing with Steph and another friend. All
on their phones.

KAYLA

Hey.

Kennedy looks up. Too confused to even react.

Kayla speaks the following in what seems like one breath.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

I wrote you that letter thanking you for having me to your party and you didn't write back, like not even a facebook message, and that's really stupid and mean. And being mean isn't cool, it's MEAN. When someone does something nice you're supposed to do something nice back. I'm always nice to you and you're never nice to me and that's not fair. I'm a good person and you should be nicer to me.

Kennedy looks shocked/disgusted. Kayla turns to walk away, whips back.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

(angrier)

And that card game I got you for your birthday is actually REALLY FUN and you'd know that if you actually PLAYED IT. And I know you probably think it's stupid but stupid games can be fun sometimes, like if it's raining outside or whatever, it's a great game, it's like a really fun version of Go Fish, and if you actually just tried playing it instead of trying to be cool all the time you'd realize that it's really fun game to play when you're bored.

KENNEDY

(...???)

...Okay.

Kayla turns and walks away. Back up the line. The adrenaline of the moment still coursing through her. She retakes her spot in line. Taking deep breaths to calm herself.

She smiles.

KAYLA (V.O.)

Hey Kayla, it's me, Kayla.

The line starts to move. Kayla walks with her classmates, as the line funnels from the dark hallway through the bright door to the gymnasium.

KAYLA (V.O.)
 Congrats on finishing high school!
 I'm so, so, so, so, SO proud of
 you.

78 INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM. LATER THAT DAY 78

Kayla is sitting at her desk, still in her graduation robes, speaking to her laptop's webcam.

KAYLA
 It's crazy to think that you're
 almost 18. You probably look a lot
 different than me, which is cool,
 but also if you still sort of look
 like this that's cool too.

79 INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM. LATER. 79

CLOSE ON the in USB DRIVE Koala bear, plugged into Kayla's laptop. Kayla pulls it out. We continue to hear Kayla's video.

KAYLA (V.O.)
 How did you do on the SATs? Did you
 suck at the math part? It's okay if
 you did. Math is stupid.

Kayla places the Koala Bear into a BRAND NEW SHOEBOX full of tiny trinkets and keepsakes: a picture of Kayla and her dad, a bracelet, Aiden's crazy straw, the lip gloss from ZINC, a sauce packet from Gabe's.

KAYLA (V.O.)
 Do you have a boyfriend? If you
 don't that's fine! And if you do, I
 hope he is treating you well. You
 deserve it.

Kayla puts the lid on the shoebox. On the lid, in freshly colored marker, are the words: **TO THE COOLEST GIRL IN THE WORLD.**

80 EXT. KAYLA'S BACKYARD. DAY. 80

Kayla places her new time capsule into a two-foot deep, crudely-dug hole in her backyard - a pile of loose dirt beside it. Dad watches her, smiling, holding a shovel. He begins shoveling the loose dirt back into the hole.

KAYLA (V.O.)

Is dad still a dork? If he's not still a dork, he's probably an alien just wearing dad's skin as a disguise and you should kill him right after you read this.

The brightly-colored shoebox disappears more and more with every shovelful of dirt.

81 INT. KAYLA'S BATHROOM. NIGHT. 81

Kayla stands in front of the mirror. Dressed for something. Hair and makeup done up.

KAYLA (V.O.)

I hope you're not too sad about leaving all your friends for college.

Kayla lifts up her phone, poses for a selfie.

82 INT. DAD'S CAR. LATER THAT NIGHT. 82

Kayla rides shotgun. Dad drives. They are talking about something, making small talk, laughing, happy.

KAYLA (V.O.)

But if you are sad, just remember that you can still stay in touch with all of your high school friends *and* you'll make tons of new friends at your new school next year.

83 INT. MILES GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM. LATER. 83

The END OF THE YEAR DANCE is bumping. Sweaty pubescent kids grind and "dance" with each other. Kayla walks in, looking beautiful as always.

KAYLA (V.O.)

And I know you probably don't want advice from an eighth grader...

Kayla walks into the middle of the large mob of her peers.
She starts to dance.

KAYLA (V.O.)
...but I just want you to know that
you should always be yourself
because you are a really good
person.

She dances harder. Arms, hips, shoulders, head. All moving.

KAYLA (V.O.)
And if things aren't going great
for you, I'm sorry and that sucks
but just remember that you're a lot
stronger than you think you are.

She is dancing her heart out. No one is paying attention. She doesn't notice. She doesn't care. Eyes closed. Hips and arms and hair wildly in motion. She is, without question, The Coolest Girl in the World.

KAYLA (V.O.)
Stay cool. I can't wait to be you.
Love, Kayla.

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END.