

EVEN PUNK GIRLS BLUSH

written by  
Colin Cohen

FADE IN:

INT. WOMEN'S HOLDING CELL, IRVINGTON, NJ - DAY, EARLY 1980S

On the floor against the wall sits a girl in her late teens with her arms crossed. She's got spiked hair and a powder-white face, along with bright red lipstick and dark menacing eye shadow.

She's also beyond scared.

Her name is RUDI WEISS, and -- after glancing at the hardened CRIMINALS all around her -- she straps an imaginary pair of headphones to her ears and pushes the play button of an equally imaginary device.

She starts SINGING a punk song, and -- as if swallowing a magic pill -- her fear instantly transforms into strength and confidence and hope.

Noticing her, a tough WOMAN swaggers in front of her like some cowboy in a saloon.

WOMAN

What kind of crazy bitch are you?

Rudi ignores her and continues singing the song.

WOMAN

I'm talking to you!

The woman tries to kick Rudi's face, but Rudi catches the woman's foot at the last second, and she raises her ferocious eyes.

POLICEWOMAN (O.S.)

Weiss!

Rudi spins her head toward a POLICEWOMAN.

RUDI

(growling)

What do you want?

POLICEWOMAN

Your probation officer's here.

Rudi sighs, before pushing the tough woman onto her back.

INT. POLICE STATION OFFICE - DAY

An aging man in a wrinkled suit glares at Rudi, who's slouching in a chair across from his desk. This man is PAUL CROSS.

PAUL

Judge Vinson wants to rescind your probation.

Rudi shrugs, while averting her eyes and forcing an expression of apathy.

PAUL

You really want to go back to juvie?

She again shrugs.

PAUL

I don't know why I try.

RUDI

(glaring at him)

Neither do I.

Paul looks into Rudi's eyes, and he sees the frightened girl underneath the facade.

PAUL

Because you're fucking special, that's why! That's why I spent two fucking hours on the phone with the judge -- to get you one last chance!

RUDI

I don't want it!

PAUL

But you're getting it, you little piece of shit! In fact, I just made arrangements for you to stay with my brother Stephen.

RUDI

Your what?

PAUL

He and his wife couldn't have kids. So they're foster parents.

RUDI

That's really sweet. But I already got a whatchamacallit -- a stepdad. Whom I love dearly.

PAUL

He already signed-off on this.

RUDI  
That motherfucker.

PAUL  
As an added benefit, my brother  
will also be your new guidance  
counselor.

RUDI  
Guidance counselor? Guidance  
counselor where?

PAUL  
Columbia.

RUDI  
In fucking Maplewood?

PAUL  
In fucking Maplewood.

RUDI  
I can't even stay awake in that  
fucking town!

PAUL  
You're gonna fucking learn!

RUDI  
I won't do it!

PAUL  
Listen, you either move to fucking  
Maplewood or spend the rest of your  
childhood in lockup -- it's your  
choice!

Rudi sighs deeply.

RUDI  
Can I think about it?

PAUL  
You got two seconds.

Suddenly, Rudi tilts her head in thought.

RUDI  
Who, who will know I'm in  
Maplewood?

PAUL  
Why?

RUDI  
Just answer the fucking question!

PAUL  
Nobody's gonna fucking know!

Rudi smiles, just a bit.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Paul steps through the automatic doors and stops before looking back inside the building.

PAUL  
Move already!

Reluctantly, Rudi slithers out, wearing a tattered overcoat and LISTENING to loud punk rock through headphones. She also has a small and empty white sea bag across her shoulder.

With obvious fear, she stops by Paul and checks the cars in the street -- and then takes a long deep breath.

PAUL  
If you're not there by six tonight,  
you're on your own. I'll give your  
case to someone who doesn't give a  
fuck, which is just about everyone.

Hurriedly, he marches down the stairs.

PAUL  
And I should warn you, my brother's  
a former Marine. Don't fuck with  
him!

Rudi flips Paul her middle finger -- and at once he stops and spins toward her, and he sees her smiling and waving condescendingly.

PAUL  
I meant it, Rudi -- this is your  
last chance. Don't let me down.  
Don't let you down.

Paul turns and shuffles down the steps. Rudi does the same, but then sprints off in the opposite direction. She runs with great desperation, as if she were trying to escape everything, including herself.

Eventually -- out of both breath and hope -- she stops and doubles over, looking even more desperate. She afterward glances at the run-down city in front of her and sees a small store down the block called Vintage Vinyl.

INT. VINTAGE VINYL - DAY

Behind the counter a man in his twenties LIP-SYNCHS to a loud punk song while shaking his fists. His name is BUTCH.

He sees Rudi burst inside, and he turns down the music. He further smiles at her and lifts his palm.

BUTCH  
Sweet Rudi Brown Eyes!

Rudi smiles back and slaps Butch's hand.

RUDI  
What's up, motherfucker?

Butch leans toward Rudi.

BUTCH  
Is it true?

Rudi nods.

BUTCH  
They get much?

RUDI  
Stash, loot -- fucking everything.

BUTCH  
Does Deke know?

RUDI  
(lowering her eyes)  
I don't know. But he's sure gonna find out. And I can tell you this much: if he finds me, I'm shit-fucked.

BUTCH  
Come on, he's gotta understand this kind of thing. It, it's what they call "the cost of doing business."

RUDI  
(raising her eyes)  
Maybe you could explain it to him.

Fear crosses Butch's face, and he shakes his head.

BUTCH  
Not me.

RUDI  
Butch --

BUTCH  
-- How'd you get out?

RUDI  
Can you keep a secret?

Butch nods, a bit unconvincingly.

RUDI  
You can't say a word, not even to  
Leila.

Again Butch nods, even more unconvincingly.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - DAY

The engine of a parked Porsche ROARS to life and the car speeds down the road and disappears from view.

Waiting from behind the corner of a building, a frightened Rudi takes a long deep breath and peeks her head out.

INT. TENEMENT LOBBY - DAY

Rudi storms inside and sees a disheveled MAN sitting behind the staircase shooting heroin.

She stops and looks at him with a face full of compassion. But she shakes this off and rushes up the stairs.

INT. RUDI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sitting in an easy chair is a bear-like middle-aged man, who's gazing at a TV with a can of beer in his paw. He's wearing a tattered white tank, boxers, and black dress socks -- and his name is DAN REESE.

Rudi bursts through the front door, and from the foyer she glares at Dan, who doesn't acknowledge her.

RUDI  
Hey, Daddy!

Continuing to ignore Rudi, Dan sucks in some beer, and she saunters inside the apartment.

RUDI  
Thanks for helping me out.

DAN  
(without emotion)  
Go fuck yourself.

## INT. RUDI'S BEDROOM - DAY

On a filthy linoleum floor Rudi sits against the wall with her arms crossed, looking much like she did in jail.

She reaches over a small boombox and hits the play button -- and a punk song loudly PLAYS.

At once, she jumps to her feet, forgetting everything other than that she's alive and that there's something positive about this. She also dances on the decrepit single mattress lying on the floor.

Loud BANGING comes from the unit next door.

NEIGHBOR (O.S.)  
Stop that fucking racket!

Rudi rushes up to the wall and pounds her mighty fists against it, smashing lots of plaster.

RUDI  
(screaming)  
How's this for a racket?

## INT. RUDI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rudi, with her packed sea bag over her shoulder, marches toward the front door and passes Dan, who's still watching TV and drinking beer.

RUDI  
Have fun, Daddy! And don't fuck  
with my shit! Or I'll fucking kill  
you!

Dan BELCHES.

RUDI  
I love you, too.

Rudi storms out, slamming the door behind herself -- and Dan slowly turns toward the entrance, looking conflicted.

## EXT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Rudi stands outside the door, with the same conflicted expression of her stepfather. Suddenly, she hears Dan CRYING through the wall, and fighting her own emotions, she runs down the stairs.



EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

While LISTENING to music, Rudi waits next to a bench where sit three ELDERLY WOMEN.

The Porsche comes down the street -- and seeing it, Rudi spins around with great fright and pretends to tie her laceless shoes with her shaking hands.

She soon hears the sound of a BUS, and she turns and sees the vehicle coming to a stop in front of her. She also sees that the Porsche has passed.

INT. BUS - DAY

Rudi plops down behind the DRIVER, and, through the side window, she sees the Porsche disappearing and takes a long deep breath. Though the Porsche comes to a halting stop, and it makes a sharp U-turn before speeding back.

Spinning toward the front doors of the bus, Rudi sees a middle-aged LIMPING MAN climbing the steps, one-by-one.

RUDI

Come on.

Again she looks through the side window, and she sees the Porsche stopping by a light a few blocks away -- and she turns to the limping man, who's sifting through a billfold.

RUDI

Hurry up!

Ignoring her, the limping man takes out a five-dollar bill.

LIMPING MAN

This is all I got.

DRIVER

Sorry -- I don't got change.

LIMPING MAN

Well, I certainly ain't paying five dollars to go to Maplewood.

Rudi once more looks out the side window, and now sees the Porsche parking across the street -- and she jumps to her feet and rushes at the limping man. She also yanks some change from her pants pocket and flings it into the receptacle.

RUDI

Can we fucking go now?

EXT. STREET - DAY

A man steps out of the Porsche. He's in his twenties, with bloodshot eyes, shoulder-length hair, and a slight build. His name is DEKE.

Deke waits for a car to pass, and after wiping his running nose, he struts across the street, just as the bus lumbers off. He afterward continues toward Vintage Vinyl.

INT. BUS - DAY

Rudi takes another long deep breath.

She soon notices that the bus has entered the outskirts of the suburbs and becomes uncomfortable -- and she cranks up her music. She also SINGS along with the vulgar and violent lyrics.

Hurriedly, the three elderly women and the limping man rise and ramble toward the back of the bus -- and Rudi smiles at this a little.

EXT. COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The bus pulls away, exposing Rudi, who's glaring at the empty school.

EXT. CROSS HOUSE - NIGHT

Exhausted and sweating, Rudi reaches the top of a steep hill and turns to her right, where -- in front of a brick house abutting a forest -- two pubescent boys are playing tackle football under a floodlight. Their names are TODD and DEREK.

RUDI  
This Twenty-One Lewis?

Todd points to a number on top of the front door.

TODD  
You can't fucking read?

Rudi angrily marches toward Todd while rolling up the sleeves of her overcoat.

RUDI  
You're gonna be the one who can't read.

Suddenly, the front door swings open, and a middle-aged man steps out. He's tall and well-built, and has a crew cut -- and he eyes Rudi warily. This is STEPHEN CROSS.

STEPHEN

Can I help you?

RUDI

You Mister Cross?

STEPHEN

You must be Rudi.

RUDI

I must be.

STEPHEN

My brother said you'd be here by six. The time we eat dinner every night.

RUDI

Sorry, I didn't realize I'd have to climb fucking Kilimanjaro.

STEPHEN

No cursing.

RUDI

What?

STEPHEN

No cursing while you're staying in my home.

RUDI

(pointing at Todd)

That brat just cursed me.

TODD

She's lying!

RUDI

You're gonna be lying on the ground in a moment!

STEPHEN

That's enough!

Rudi sighs, just as a wholesome-looking woman about Stephen's age saunters outside. Her name is PAM CROSS, and she's smiling -- until she sees Rudi, who scares her so much that she takes a few steps toward Stephen.

STEPHEN  
This is my wife Pam.

PAM  
You must be Rudi.

RUDI  
I must be.

PAM  
(to Stephen)  
Why, she's so . . . so . . . I just  
can't think of the right word.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

With the whole family eating dinner, Stephen hands Rudi a plate of roast beef, which she passes to Derek.

STEPHEN  
What's wrong with it?

RUDI  
I'm a vegetarian.

STEPHEN  
As I was saying, the rules here are  
simple: no sex, no drugs . . .

RUDI  
No rock and roll.

STEPHEN  
Just keep the volume down. And  
curfew's at eleven.

RUDI  
Eleven? I'm barely up at eleven.

STEPHEN  
And our bedroom is off limits.

EXT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Rudi picks up her bag and she and a nervous Pam climb a set of stairs.

PAM  
I, I like your name. My husband was  
saying your real one is --

RUDI  
-- One that makes me chuck.

## EXT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

An even more nervous Pam leads Rudi toward a set of doors.

PAM  
It's gonna be so nice having a girl  
with us. We haven't had one in more  
than a year.

Pam then glances at Rudi, who's ignoring her.

PAM  
I want you to know if you ever need  
advice on anything . . .

RUDI  
Advice on what?

PAM  
You know, girl stuff.

RUDI  
Ah-ha. I'll keep that in mind.

The two come to a stop in front of a pair of doors, and Pam points to the one on the left, which has a sign that states: "No Entry."

PAM  
This is our room. It's --

RUDI  
-- Off limits.

Blushing a bit, Pam opens the right door.

## INT. RUDI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pam turns on the light, exposing a frilly and very pink little girl's bedroom, with dolls and dollhouses and doll accessories -- all of which horrifies Rudi.

PAM  
Isn't it nice?

RUDI  
It's something.

PAM  
Well, goodnight.

RUDI  
Yeah.

Slowly, Pam backs out, looking at Rudi with hopeful eyes -- and Rudi drifts into the room and plops down on a soft pink canopy bed -- which almost swallows her.

EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - DAY

The sun rises behind a mansion-like structure.

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

On the walls are pictures of TOMMY GOODWIN -- a handsome, athletic, and happy-looking boy in his late teens who has lots of friends.

On the bed, though -- next to a display case full of sports trophies -- lies a much different Tommy. This one looks beyond lost and has a face full of tears.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

Tommy, you up?

Tommy wipes his face and raises his muscular frame.

TOMMY

Yeah, Mom.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Tommy drifts inside, and he stares at his image in the mirror above the sink.

With great fury, he flings his big fist at the glass, stopping just a fraction from it -- and he hangs his head.

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

An apathetic Tommy pulls an expensive sweater over a button-down shirt, and he steps into a pair of freshly polished shoes.

He afterward puts on a football jacket and a backpack, and he saunters over to a bureau, where lies a plain brown hardcover book. Which he picks up and stares at.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Sitting beside a table is an elegant middle-aged woman, who's gazing blankly into space. This is ANNETTE GOODWIN.

The woman's gaze is broken when a servant around her age brings her a tray of food and a newspaper. Her name is ELIZABETH, and she places the items in front of Annette.

ANNETTE

Thank you, Elizabeth.

The two women warmly smile at each other, and Elizabeth leaves -- drawing Annette's eyes to the empty chair at the front of the table, which she stares at longingly.

This is broken when Tommy comes up to her with a phony smile and kisses her on the cheek.

ANNETTE

What would you like for breakfast?

Tommy picks up an apple from a nearby fruit bowl.

ANNETTE

That's not a breakfast. It's bad enough this crazy diet kick you're on.

TOMMY

I gotta run.

ANNETTE

Will you be home for dinner?

TOMMY

We'll probably just grab something after practice.

ANNETTE

It seems we never eat together anymore. Why, why don't you invite Darlene over for dinner tomorrow night. I'd love to see her.

TOMMY

There's a football game tomorrow.

ANNETTE

Then Saturday.

TOMMY

Maybe.

Tommy leaves, and Annette returns both her eyes and her longing expression to the empty chair.

INT. RUDI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rudi glares at herself in a full-length mirror as she works on her makeup.

STEPHEN (O.S.)  
(shouting)  
How many times do I have to call  
you down for breakfast?

EXT. GARAGE - DAY

Tommy speeds out on a Harley, wearing a pair of sunglasses. He's also gripping the apple, from which he takes a small bite before tossing the rest into a garbage can as he descends the driveway.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Rudi pushes open a set of swinging doors, and, with lots of nausea, she sees the family eating a breakfast of Eggo waffles, Pop Tarts, and Ovaltine.

STEPHEN  
Hurry up.

RUDI  
I'm not hungry.

PAM  
It's all vegetarian, I think.

RUDI  
I'm going.

STEPHEN  
I'll drive you.

EXT. SOUTH ORANGE AVENUE - DAY

Tommy races down the steep hill on the Harley, way past any speed limit -- with the wind blowing through his hair and his expression as blank as the blue sky in front of him.

He approaches a traffic light at the bottom of the hill that turns yellow, and he speeds even faster.

The light turns red, and cars drive into the intersection. Though Tommy keeps moving forward.

At the last second, he comes to a SCREECHING stop -- and hangs his head.



INT. CAR - DAY

Stephen puts a key in the ignition, with Rudi sitting next to him with a face full of apathy. She's also LISTENING to loud punk music through her headphones.

STEPHEN

I was looking at your transcripts  
last night. It's pretty --

Rudi cranks up the volume of the music, and she SINGS along with it. She further bounces in her seat as the music jacks her soul.

EXT. COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Tommy parks the Harley, and, without emotion, he sees a sea of BOYS in football jackets hanging out in front of the building with an equal number of pretty GIRLS.

One of the boys waves at Tommy, and the rest of the group turns and smiles.

BOY

Tom-me!

Tommy puts on another phony smile and meekly waves back.

EXT. SCHOOL LOT - DAY

Rudi and Stephen walk past the Harley, toward the school.

STEPHEN

The local NA group meets on Sunday  
nights. I'll take you there myself.

RUDI

Sure thing, sheriff.

The two reach Tommy and his friends, who stare at Rudi with disgust. Though she clearly fascinates Tommy.

Rudi glares at Tommy, who's the focal point of the group -- but this cannot hide her own fascination. Suddenly, she stops and thrusts her hands onto her hips, with Stephen stopping just behind her.

RUDI

What are you looking at?

TOMMY

Guys, I, I thought Halloween was  
last month.

Tommy's friends laugh, and Rudi threateningly steps toward Tommy, who takes a step back in fear. He also puts his arm around DARLENE, a tall girl, who replies in kind.

RUDI  
How'd you like to go next Halloween  
as a rug?

Stephen grasps Rudi's shoulder, restraining her.

BOY 1  
Ooooooooooooooh!

BOY 2  
Them's fighting words, Tommy.

TOMMY  
I don't fight girls. Hell, I  
wouldn't even fight her.

Tommy's friends again laugh. At the same time, Rudi breaks free from Stephen and rushes at Tommy, who again steps back in fear. Though Stephen grabs Rudi's coat, and he swings her kicking in front of him, before pushing her forward.

STEPHEN  
Nice start.

RUDI  
Fuck you!

STEPHEN  
What did I say about cursing?

RUDI  
We're not at your fucking house  
anymore!

The two reach the front doors, and Stephen slams one of them open with one hand and pushes Rudi inside with the other. Afterward, Tommy continues staring at the entrance -- something Darlene notices with more than a little agitation.

INT. SCHOOL ENTRANCEWAY - DAY

Stephen leads an angry Rudi toward a perpendicular corridor.

RUDI  
(to herself)  
Innocuous and invisible. Innocuous  
and invisible.

The two stop in the corridor and Stephen points to his right.

STEPHEN

Your homeroom is over --

Someone loudly CLEARS their throat from behind them.

Stephen and Rudi turn toward the sound, and they see standing by the school offices a middle-aged man in a tight dark suit, who's glaring at Stephen with his arms crossed. This is MR. GONZALEZ.

GONZALEZ

This Weiss?

STEPHEN

Yes, sir.

While turning his glare toward Rudi, Mr. Gonzalez points to the offices with his thumb.

GONZALEZ

Inside.

INT. GONZALEZ'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Gonzalez, who's perched on a throne-like chair, peruses a file, with Rudi slouching in a seat across from his desk. Suddenly, surprise crosses his face.

GONZALEZ

(to himself)

There must be some mistake with these transcripts. I, I'll have someone call Irvington. In the meantime . . .

He closes the file and looks at Rudi warily.

GONZALEZ

I'll be quite honest with you, Miss Weiss --

RUDI

-- Ms. Weiss.

GONZALEZ

I'll be quite honest with you, Miss Weiss: I was opposed to letting you attend this school.

RUDI

That makes two of us.

GONZALEZ

Unfortunately, I had no choice. But  
if you step out of line in the  
slightest way . . .

RUDI

Look . . .

Rudi glances at the nameplate on the desk.

RUDI

Look, Mister Gonzalez --

GONZALEZ

-- Gonthaleth.

RUDI

Excuse me?

GONZALEZ

The name's Castilian and is  
pronounced "Gonthaleth."

RUDI

Strange, there are lots of  
Gonzalezes in my old neighborhood,  
and they all just pronounce it  
"Gonzalez."

GONZALEZ

Well, I'm not one of these  
neighbors, am I?

RUDI

No, Mister Gonzalez -- you are  
certainly not one of them.

GONZALEZ

Say "Gonzalez" one more time. Just  
say it one more time. I've kicked  
people in the head for less than  
that!

Rudi doesn't respond for a few seconds, and then bursts out  
laughing -- causing Mr. Gonzalez to fume.

GONZALEZ

You think this is funny?

RUDI

Actually, yes -- I think it's  
hilarious, Mister Gonzalez.

A school bell RINGS, and Mr. Gonzalez points to his door.

GONZALEZ

Out!

Quickly, Rudi jumps up and salutes Mr. Gonzalez.

RUDI

Aye, aye, captain!

INT. KRASNER'S CLASS - DAY

Rudi drifts inside carrying a printout, and she stops and sees three long tables, which along with the teacher's desk form something of a square.

She also sees a dozen STUDENTS, including Tommy, who's sitting up front next to Darlene, who has her arm around Tommy's and who is looking at him with much affection -- something he doesn't return, as he's elsewhere.

Uncontrollably, Rudi starts to fume -- and she marches their way.

DARLENE

Tommy, I . . .

Darlene looks up at Rudi in surprise.

Slowly, Tommy turns toward a glaring Rudi, and he glares right back.

TOMMY

(pointing to the door)  
Special Ed is down the hall.

RUDI

Then you'd better get going.

KRASNER (O.S.)

Can I help you?

Rudi spins around and sees standing by the door MR. KRASNER -- a man in his thirties who's wearing a tie-dye T-shirt underneath a corduroy sports jacket.

RUDI

Help me with what?

KRASNER

I'm the teacher here -- Mister Krasner.

RUDI

Well, I'm the student here -- Ms. Weiss.

KRASNER  
This is Honors English.

RUDI  
Yeah?  
(looking at the printout)  
That's what it says here, too.

Mr. Krasner marches up to Rudi, and, after grabbing the printout, he reads it.

KRASNER  
All right, Gertrude, take a seat.

On hearing her name, surprise crosses the faces of the students.

STUDENTS  
Gertrude?

Many of the students start giggling, including Tommy.

TOMMY  
Gertrude, the punk rock girl! I  
think I saw her once in a sideshow  
-- right alongside the ape boy.

Everyone laughs, apart from Rudi, who looks as if she's about to explode.

RUDI  
(to Krasner)  
The name's Rudi.

Mr. Krasner points to the printout and grins.

KRASNER  
It says here: "Gertrude."

RUDI  
I don't care what it fucking says!  
My name's Rudi! With an "i"!

Rudi snatches the printout and sits in the back, next to a tall BOY, who smiles and gives her a big wave.

BOY  
Hey, Gertie!

Calmly, Rudi drops the printout onto the table and grabs the boy by the collar, and she cocks her mighty fist at his frightened face.

RUDI  
Hey, how would you like some  
dentures?

Suddenly, a plain brown hardcover book plops down in front of her -- and she releases the boy and glances at both the book and Mr. Krasner.

RUDI  
What's that?

KRASNER  
The Catcher in the Rye. Have you  
read it?

RUDI  
Can't say that I have.

KRASNER  
Well, you will be reading it, Rudi  
with an "i." And soon. Because we  
have a paper due tomorrow comparing  
Holden Caulfield to a Shakespearean  
character of your choice. But,  
considering you're new here, I'll  
give you an extra week.

RUDI  
Gee, thanks.

KRASNER  
You're welcome.

Smilingly, Mr. Krasner struts toward the chalkboard -- and, without reverence, Rudi flips open the book. She also happens to notice Tommy, who's staring at her with great inquisitiveness.

She flips him her middle finger -- and he mockingly blows her a kiss in return.

KRASNER  
Yesterday we were discussing the  
subjunctive mood. Can anyone tell  
me the difference between it and  
the indicative?

Not receiving a reply, Mr. Krasner turns from the chalkboard, and he sees that no one is looking at him.

KRASNER  
Come on, guys -- you're supposed to  
be the best and brightest here.

Still, no one replies, and Mr. Krasner looks at Rudi and grins.

KRASNER  
How about you, Rudi?

RUDI  
Excuse me? I wasn't listening.

A couple of students SNICKER under their breath.

KRASNER  
The difference between the  
subjunctive and indicative moods?

She doesn't reply.

KRASNER  
Do you have any clue what I'm  
talking about?

Again, she doesn't reply.

KRASNER  
I guess not.

With a smirk, he returns to the chalkboard and starts writing -- with Rudi turning red with fury.

RUDI  
Indicative: I'm sitting in this  
stupid fucking class.

Instantly, Mr. Krasner stops in shock -- and Tommy looks at Rudi with surprise -- something she can't help notice.

RUDI  
Subjunctive: I wish I weren't  
sitting in this stupid fucking  
class.

Many students SNICKER -- and Mr. Krasner angrily glances around, causing everyone to fall silent.

RUDI  
What's the matter -- am I wrong,  
teacher?

KRASNER  
And the imperative?

RUDI  
Get rid of that stupid fucking  
shirt.



Mr. Krasner glares at Rudi.

KRASNER

You have until Monday to give me  
that paper. Monday.

Still furious, Mr. Krasner spins around and starts writing on the chalkboard -- breaking the chalk as he does.

Uncontrollably, Rudi's eyes drift toward Tommy, and his eyes drift toward her. There is a touch of warmth in their expressions -- enough to send both their heads spinning from each other.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Rudi carries a tray of food through the middle of the hall, creating a wave of head turns.

RUDI

(to herself)

Innocuous and invisible. Innocuous  
and invisible.

She spots a table with Tommy and his friends, and she sees his eyes locked on her, causing her to rush forward. She rushes until she almost collides with a wall, and she sits at an empty table -- unable to not look at Tommy.

AT TOMMY'S TABLE

Darlene notices Tommy and Rudi staring at each other and becomes even more agitated than before.

DARLENE

Heard she's a big-time druggie.

Ignoring this, Tommy continues staring.

DARLENE

A person like that doesn't care  
about anyone.

Reluctantly, Tommy stops looking at Rudi.

AT RUDI'S TABLE

Rudi stops looking at Tommy, just as three geeky boys nervously stop at the other end of the table with trays of food. Their names are PHILIP, DOUG, and ELIOT.

PHILIP  
We, we usually sit here.

RUDI  
So?

DOUG  
So, is it okay if we still sit  
here?

RUDI  
(growling)  
Why are you asking me?

ELIOT  
Sorry.

Slowly, the three step backward, and Rudi sighs.

RUDI  
Sit wherever you want!

The three sit at Rudi's table, though not without  
considerable fright -- something that makes her even madder.

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM - DAY

With a clock on the wall reading a little after three, Rudi  
works on her makeup in the mirror. Some textbooks lie by the  
sink -- including a thick Chemistry one.

RUDI  
What does it matter how you look?

Suddenly, the door opens, and a mousy girl slithers inside,  
who stops and stares at Rudi with eyes as big as moons. She  
has no makeup or jewelry and dresses conservatively, and her  
name is MARIA.

RUDI  
Is something fucking wrong with  
you?

Maria quickly rushes out of the bathroom -- and Rudi shakes  
her head before returning to her makeup.

RUDI  
These fucking people.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Rudi steps out of the bathroom holding the textbooks, and  
she looks around for a certain someone.

But she doesn't spot this someone. Instead she spots a huge bully holding a large book in the air while Philip quixotically reaches for it -- with his two friends standing nearby. The bully's name is OWEN CONNORS.

While trying to ignore him, Rudi heads his way.

RUDI  
(to herself)  
Innocuous and invisible. Innocuous  
and invisible.

OWEN  
This is an awfully big book for  
such a little man.

PHILIP  
Come on, Owen -- please! I need it!

OWEN  
I need it, too. I always wanted to  
learn . . .  
(reading the book cover)  
Phi-sicks.

Reluctantly, Rudi stops beside Owen.

RUDI  
Just give him back the book.

Owen looks down at Rudi and grins.

OWEN  
And who's gonna make me?

RUDI  
You got three seconds. One . . .  
two . . .

OWEN  
Three.

Calmly, Rudi drops all her books except the Chemistry one, which she swings across Owen's jaw -- sending him flying into a nearby locker. There he cracks his head and falls to the floor in a stupor -- amidst dozens of stunned STUDENTS.

Rudi then turns to the geeks, who are looking up at her as if she were some kind of Greek god, and she points to the Physics book, which is still in Owen's grasp.

RUDI  
I suggest you take it while you  
can.

Philip rushes up to Owen and grabs the book.

PHILIP  
Thank you so much!

DOUG AND ELIOT  
Yeah!

RUDI  
Now don't think this means we're  
friends or anything.

Rudi kneels on the floor and picks up her books, surrounded by the students, who are staring at her with expressions mixed of horror and awe.

RUDI  
What's the matter with you people?  
Have you never seen an ass-  
whipping? Go on -- get out of here!

The students hesitantly disperse, and Rudi rises with her books -- and she sees Mr. Gonzalez standing by the school offices with his arms crossed. She further sees him motioning her toward himself with his index finger.

Slowly, she heads down the hall, soon reaching Tommy and a BOY in a football jacket, who are staring at her in utter disbelief.

Rudi takes a quick step toward them -- causing them to jump back in fear and hit a wall, which causes her to chuckle. Tommy afterward smiles at her -- a smile that says "I get you, and I like it." A smile that mesmerizes her.

GONZALEZ (O.S.)  
Miss Weiss -- get over here!

Rudi rushes down the hall -- mostly to get away from Tommy's smile -- and she stops in front of Mr. Gonzalez.

GONZALEZ  
I see your future -- as the village  
idiot.

RUDI  
Cool, we can hang together.

Furiously, Mr. Gonzalez points in the opposite direction.

GONZALEZ  
Detention is the next door down.

RUDI  
Detention? But you saw --

GONZALEZ

-- And the next time something like  
this happens you're finished here.

Rudi slithers off, with Mr. Gonzalez watching TWO TEACHERS  
leaning over Owen -- and he has to try hard not to smile.

GONZALEZ

If Mister Connors comes to his  
senses, drag him into detention!

The man then storms into the offices, exposing Rudi, who's  
standing at the threshold of the detention room and staring  
at Tommy, who's doing likewise.

BOY

Practice, dude.

Reluctantly, Tommy shuffles off with the boy, with his eyes  
locked on Rudi.

INT. DETENTION ROOM - DAY

While sitting behind a long table, Rudi scribbles in a  
notebook -- with Owen a few seats down, leaning back and  
looking upward in a complete daze.

Angrily, Rudi rips out a page. She further crumples it into  
a ball and flings it onto the table. However, she can't help  
reach for it.

EXT. COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

With a dreamy look, Rudi stops at a red light. Suddenly,  
Deke's Porsche comes to a halt in front of her. The  
passenger door soon opens, and Rudi nervously looks around  
and sees that no one's around.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Shaking slightly with fright, Rudi sits next to a smiling  
Deke while averting her eyes from him.

DEKE

Rudi! Rudi! Rudi! What are you  
doing here -- slumming it with the  
suburbanites?

RUDI

How'd you find me?

DEKE

Butch.

RUDI

That motherfucker.

Deke starts down the road.

DEKE

So, where is it?

RUDI

Where's what?

DEKE

Where's what? My fucking money.

RUDI

I got busted.

DEKE

So I've heard. Not from you, of course. You don't call -- you don't write.

RUDI

I was, you know . . .

DEKE

Scared?

Rudi nods, and Deke grins.

RUDI

You're not mad?

DEKE

Why would I be mad, when you're gonna make it all up to me?

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Porsche makes a hard left and parks.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Deke snorts coke off the back of his hand, and he glances at Rudi, who's staring blankly out the front window.

DEKE

You want some?

Rudi doesn't reply.

DEKE

I said, you want some?

RUDI

No.

DEKE

You never turned down anything in the old days. Well, almost anything.

RUDI

The old days were old even when they weren't.

DEKE

Look at me.

Slowly, Rudi turns to Deke, while trying unsuccessfully to control her fear.

RUDI

I, I really need to stay straight.

DEKE

Fuck that shit.

RUDI

Or they'll send me back to juvie -- for the rest of my childhood.

DEKE

There are worse places than juvie. Much worse.

RUDI

Please.

DEKE

I've been trying for years to connect with these preps and jock shits. And now, now you're right inside with them.

RUDI

I can't.

Deke puts his hand on Rudi's thigh and caresses it.

DEKE

Maybe you'd rather pay off your debt some other way.

Rudi pushes Deke's hand away.

RUDI

Neither way -- I'm out!

With lots of fury, Deke slaps Rudi's face.

DEKE

I say who's out! Me! And when  
you're out, you're really fucking  
out!

RUDI

It wasn't my fault I got busted!

DEKE

I still gotta pay for it!

RUDI

It, it's the cost of doing  
business!

DEKE

I don't even know what the fuck  
that means!

He speeds off.

EXT. CROSS HOUSE - DAY

Pam directs Todd and Derek as they rake leaves.

Deke's Porsche comes to a SCREECHING stop in front of the  
house -- and Pam looks at it suspiciously.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Deke again puts his hand on Rudi's thigh.

DEKE

You can pay everything off in one  
afternoon.

Again, Rudi pushes Deke's hand away -- and she flings open  
the door.

DEKE

I'm gonna come collecting real  
soon, babe -- one way or another.

EXT. CROSS HOUSE - DAY

Trying to appear unafraid, Rudi marches toward the front  
door as Deke's Porsche speeds off, and she and Pam meet.



PAM  
Was that someone from school?

RUDI  
Sorta.

PAM  
You're awfully late.

RUDI  
Let's just say I was detained.

PAM  
Stephen's gonna be in meetings late into the evening, so I thought we'd have a little fun tonight and go to the Livingston Mall.

RUDI  
Sounds like a blast.

PAM  
So, if you're ready . . .

RUDI  
I, I actually have a lot of homework to do.

PAM  
But what will you do for dinner?

RUDI  
Why don't you bring me back some of that "fun."

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A panicked Rudi rifles through a bunch of cabinets, and whips open the refrigerator.

RUDI  
They gotta have something!

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Rudi thrusts open a medicine cabinet, and sees only aspirin.

RUDI  
Fuck!

She then slams the cabinet closed so hard that the glass cracks.

## INT. RUDI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

With the bedcovers up to her neck, a shaky-looking Rudi reads the middle of *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Suddenly, she sneers and flings the book onto the floor -- and she sees her bag. Which she grabs, and -- after noticing how the rope keeping it together is badly frayed -- she pulls out the crumpled piece of paper and opens it, before staring at it.

RUDI

You're so not good enough.

She again crumples the paper and chucks it into her bag, and afterward she takes a free pillow and holds it as if it were a person -- with her eyes becoming heavy. They close just as an old and slow romantic song begins to PLAY.

## INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

With the song continuing, Rudi opens her eyes, and, with lots of shock, she notices that she's dancing with some unseen guy cheek-to-cheek.

She looks around and notices many shabbily dressed DANCERS and a small ORCHESTRA led by a tall bespectacled man with a trombone named GLENN MILLER.

Uncontrollably, she caresses her cheek against her partner's. She further desperately clutches his jacket with her fists.

RUDI

Oh . . .

## INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tommy lies in bed with his eyes closed, holding a pillow much the way Rudi was holding hers -- with the old romantic song still playing.

RUDI (V.O.)

Tommy.

Tommy smiles. He smiles big.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

Tommy, you up?

Tommy's eyes open and the music stops.

TOMMY  
 (perturbed)  
 Yes, Mom.

ANNETTE (O.S.)  
 Will Darlene be coming tomorrow?

TOMMY  
 There's a football game tomorrow.

ANNETTE (O.S.)  
 Then Saturday.

TOMMY  
 Ah, perhaps some other time.

ANNETTE (O.S.)  
 All right. Goodnight.

TOMMY  
 Goodnight.

Tommy clenches his eyes closed, but the music won't return.

TOMMY  
 Fuck!

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

A handful of large FOOTBALL PLAYERS wearing suits pass Rudi, who opens her locker and takes out some books. She also senses something amiss and slowly turns her head.

With great surprise, she sees the three geeks, dressed much like her -- in terms of clothes, hair, and even makeup.

RUDI  
 What . . .

PHILIP  
 What do ya think?

RUDI  
 You look like a bunch of Quincy Punks.

DOUG  
 What's a Quincy Punk?

RUDI  
 A fake punk!

ELIOT  
 But, but we look just like you.

RUDI  
 (cupping her ear)  
 What was that last word?

The three geeks confer with each other before timidly turning back to Rudi and shrugging.

RUDI  
 (with exasperation)  
 You said you look just like me. But  
 I dress this way because it's me.  
 Punk means being you -- not me!

Rudi slams her locker closed and starts off, but she abruptly stops and spins around.

RUDI  
 You wanna be punk? Get an attitude,  
 and get that clown shit off you!

Once again, she starts off -- and they follow her.

RUDI  
 And stop following me!

PHILIP  
 We don't take orders from no one!

Doug slaps Philip's palm.

Rudi sighs and rushes toward the girls' bathroom, and once there she slaps open the door.

TOMMY (O.S.)  
 Hey.

Rudi spins toward Tommy, and she sees him wearing an expensive suit, which makes him look like a model and utterly incongruent with her. Which makes her so mad that she storms into the bathroom.

Tommy lowers his head, just as the school bell RINGS.

DARLENE (O.S.)  
 You headed to class?

Turning to Darlene, Tommy sees she's wearing a killer dress and a nervous smile.

TOMMY  
 Yeah.

They start walking and she reaches out her hand, which he reluctantly takes.

INT. KRASNER'S CLASS - DAY

Mr. Krasner writes "Allusion & Metaphor in The Catcher in the Rye" on the chalkboard.

Rudi drifts inside, and she sees Tommy and Darlene holding hands, which makes her rage. She's so angry that when she gets to her seat she loudly drops her copy of the book onto the table -- causing everyone to turn toward her.

KRASNER

Nice of you to join us, Rudi.

RUDI

Yes, it was rather nice.

Like the day before, many students SNICKER under their breath. Ignoring this, Mr. Krasner points to the chalkboard.

KRASNER

Perhaps you can start the conversation rolling.

RUDI

I haven't finished it yet.

KRASNER

So, I gather that means you've at least started it.

RUDI

Unfortunately.

KRASNER

I see. So, I gather you're not a big fan.

RUDI

It's total bullshit.

KRASNER

The Catcher in the Rye -- the greatest coming-of-age novel ever written -- perhaps the greatest American novel, period -- and Rudi Weiss thinks it's total bullshit. Care to tell us why?

RUDI

Why should I care about a spoiled fuck-up from some forgotten time who's whining about how he can't get laid? How does that relate to me and my life?

Rudi looks around the class while pointing at the book.

RUDI  
Does he relate to any of you -- in  
any way?

The students turn from her -- and she grins.

KRASNER  
So tell me, Rudi: what book relates  
to you? Maybe we'll read it next.

RUDI  
No book relates to me. No book I've  
ever fucking read. And I've read  
plenty. Probably as much as you.

KRASNER  
Well, something must relate to you.

RUDI  
You wanna know what relates to me?

KRASNER  
I do.

RUDI  
You really want to know?

KRASNER  
(flailing his arms)  
I wanna fucking know!

Rudi jumps to her feet and onto her chair, and finally onto the table, and she SINGS a punk song about alienation and self-loathing. She further kicks books off the table and begins dancing toward Tommy.

Tommy stares at her in shock, while listening to lyrics that describe him as much as they describe her.

Rudi continues to sing and dance and kick books, and she comes to a halt in front of Tommy before kicking his book into his face.

She then leaps off the table and stops singing.

RUDI  
(to Mr. Krasner)  
Which book says that?

Mr. Krasner doesn't reply.

RUDI  
That's what I thought.

Rudi storms out of the class, with Tommy staring at her -- and he keeps staring at the open door after she's gone.

KRASNER (O.S.)  
Are you all right, Tommy?

Tommy spins toward Mr. Krasner.

TOMMY  
What?

KRASNER  
You were staring out the door.

TOMMY  
I was staring at . . .

Tommy turns his head, and sees Rudi sitting in her seat.

TOMMY  
You're back.

RUDI  
Back?

TOMMY  
But . . .

Looking around the room, Tommy sees that all the books are on the table, including his.

TOMMY  
The books . . .

KRASNER  
What about them? Would, would you like to see the nurse?

TOMMY  
I'm fine.

KRASNER  
Well, Rudi was just about to tell us why she thinks The Catcher in the Rye is total bullshit.

RUDI  
Why should I care about a spoiled fuck-up from some forgotten time who's whining about how he can't get laid? How --

The school bell RINGS.

KRASNER

Ah, isn't that a shame. Perhaps you  
can elaborate in the paper I expect  
to have in my hands Monday morning.

The students rise and saunter toward the door -- apart from  
Tommy, who remains in a daze.

DARLENE

You coming?

TOMMY

But class just started.

Looking worried, Darlene backs out of the room, with Rudi  
looking just as worried.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Like the day before, Rudi carries a tray of food through the  
hall, and again creates a wave. Though this time there is  
silence along with it.

Suddenly, someone starts CLAPPING. Rudi stops and turns  
toward the sound and sees its source: a HEAVYSET BOY with a  
big smile on his face. Others start clapping, too -- and  
others still. Soon, the whole lunchroom is cheering her.

With utter incomprehension, Rudi turns in a circle, and she  
sees Owen, who's sitting on a table by himself and glaring  
at her while slapping his big fist into his palm.

Unfrightened, she continues on -- stealing a quick glance of  
a still dazed Tommy as she does.

Watching Rudi from the entrance is Mr. Gonzalez, who shakes  
his head bitterly with his arms crossed.

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM - DAY

Like the day before, Rudi works on her makeup in the mirror  
with the clock reading a little after three.

RUDI

This is so fucking stupid. He  
doesn't care about you. No one  
cares about you. I don't even care  
about you!

Still, she continues with her makeup, just as the door opens  
-- and, like the day before, Maria slithers inside and stops  
in shock when she sees Rudi.



RUDI

Again?

Again, Maria rushes away -- and again Rudi sighs.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Rudi steps out of the bathroom and marches down the crowded corridor, again looking around for that certain someone. Suddenly, she stops when confronted by a glaring Owen, who has his hands on his hips.

RUDI

Again?

Many STUDENTS encircle the two.

OWEN

You're not gonna sucker-punch me  
this time.

RUDI

Is that so?

OWEN

That's so.

Rudi thrusts her leg up into Owen's groin, and he collapses onto his knees gasping, while holding the remnants of his manliness with a face full of pain. He then tumbles over.

The students CHEER, and Mr. Gonzalez storms out of the school offices -- and he sees Owen on the floor, with Rudi steps from him.

GONZALEZ

That's it, Weiss -- you're finished  
here!

RUDI

Fine with --

TOMMY (O.S.)

-- It wasn't her.

Tommy steps in front of Rudi.

GONZALEZ

What are you talking about, Tommy?

TOMMY

It was me. I lost my temper.

GONZALEZ  
 (to students)  
 Is that what really happened?

The students turn away.

GONZALEZ  
 All right -- all three of you in  
 detention!

RUDI  
 You mean me?

GONZALEZ  
 Detention or suspension, Weiss --  
 you pick!

RUDI  
 Can I think about it?

Furiously, Mr. Gonzalez points to the detention room, and Tommy, Rudi, and a slumped-over Owen head down the corridor.

RUDI  
 (whispering to Tommy)  
 I don't need your help. Or want it.

TOMMY  
 I didn't do it for you.

INT. DETENTION ROOM - DAY

Sitting behind a table gazing straight ahead is Rudi, with Tommy doing likewise a few seats away. A little farther down the table sits Owen, who has his face in his hands.

A SECRETARY steps inside the door and faces a man who's watching the three from up front, whose name is MR. THOMPSON.

SECRETARY  
 Mister Gonthaleth wants to see you.

Mr. Thompson rises.

THOMPSON  
 (to the three)  
 I'll be right back.

Mr. Thompson and the secretary leave.

RUDI  
 Gonthaleth. What a joke. This whole  
 school is a joke.

Tommy glances at Rudi.

RUDI

Don't look at me!

Tommy returns his gaze forward, and, in his head, he HEARS the song Rudi sang in class -- the one with the lyrics that described him as much as it described her.

TOMMY

You know, you were wrong before.

RUDI

(growling)

About what?

TOMMY

The Catcher in the Rye.

RUDI

It's total bullshit.

Tommy steals a quick glance of Rudi.

TOMMY

(softly)

Actually, it's about being alone -- being the only person in the whole fucking world -- the only person who thinks and feels like you. And being so scared because of this that you don't even know if you want to live.

Tommy lowers his eyes just a bit.

TOMMY

Holden Caulfield isn't some spoiled fuck-up whining about getting laid, he, he's you.

RUDI

(crossing her arms)

Speak for yourself.

TOMMY

I am.

Slowly, Rudi turns to Tommy, and she sees her reflection in his watery eyes. She then spins away from him -- fighting back her own tears.

EXT. OUTSIDE DETENTION ROOM - DAY

Mr. Thompson marches inside the classroom.

THOMPSON (O.S.)  
You can go home.

Still fighting her tears, Rudi sprints out the door and rushes toward her locker, followed by Tommy, who watches her a safe distance away.

From her locker, Rudi whips out a thick hardcover copy of The Complete Works of Shakespeare and stuffs it into her bag. She then slams her locker closed and drags the bag toward Tommy, and she stops in front of him.

RUDI  
(with breaking voice)  
Just fuck off.

Not waiting for a reply, she rushes toward the front entrance, continuing to drag her bag.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Rudi bursts through the doors and swings her bag over her shoulder. Which causes the frayed rope to break, and her bag hits the ground -- and its contents spew out.

Hurriedly, she kneels down and tries to collect her things. Though the crumpled piece of paper rolls toward the doors, just as Tommy steps outside. And he picks it up.

RUDI  
That's mine!

Ignoring her, Tommy opens the paper, and his jaw unhinges when he sees a crude but emotive drawing of himself.

Angrily, Rudi rushes up to Tommy with her bag in her arms, and she snatches the paper from him.

RUDI  
I said that's mine!

TOMMY  
Thank you.

RUDI  
For what?

Tommy points at the drawing.

RUDI  
It's not you!

Rudi spins around and rambles off.

TOMMY  
You know, there's a football game  
tonight.

RUDI  
So?

TOMMY  
So, are you going?

Rudi stops, but she doesn't turn around.

RUDI  
Do I look like the type that goes  
to football games?

TOMMY  
I, I'd kinda like you to be there.

With lots of indignation, Rudi spins toward Tommy.

RUDI  
And why would I want to be there?

Tommy points to the drawing again, and she hides it behind  
her back, with her face beyond flush.

RUDI  
I told you -- it's not you!

Tommy smiles.

RUDI  
What's so funny?

TOMMY  
I didn't know punk girls blush.

RUDI  
Fuck you!

TOMMY  
Will you come tonight?

RUDI  
What about your girlfriend?

TOMMY  
I don't have a girlfriend. Not  
really. At least not at the moment.

Rudi turns around and runs as fast as she can.

TOMMY  
It's at eight o'clock -- at  
Underhill!

INT. RUDI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

While leaning against her bedpost, Rudi reads the end of *The Catcher in the Rye*. Unlike the day before, she looks engrossed by it.

TOMMY (V.O.)  
I'd kinda like you to be there.

Rudi turns to an alarm clock and sees that it's almost a quarter to eight. She then gazes at herself in the mirror.

RUDI  
You're so not good enough.

STEPHEN (O.S.)  
Hey.

Rudi jumps a bit in fright, causing Stephen to giggle from the threshold of her room.

STEPHEN  
Sorry about that.

RUDI  
What did I do now?

STEPHEN  
Aren't we defensive.

RUDI  
It comes from everyone being so  
offensive.

STEPHEN  
Well, we're all heading to the game  
and were wondering if you wanted to  
join us.

RUDI  
Do I look like the type that goes  
to football games?

STEPHEN  
We're gonna go to Baskin Robbins  
afterward. You know, they've got  
Bubble Gum Ice Cream this month.

RUDI

Oh my God -- I think I just wet my  
panties!

STEPHEN

Rudi.

RUDI

Look, I've got a paper to write.

STEPHEN

On what?

RUDI

I have to compare Holden Caulfield  
with some character from  
Shakespeare.

STEPHEN

That's sounds kinda interesting.  
Who are you doing it on?

RUDI

The obvious choice, of course, is  
Hamlet. I figure every dipshit in  
class did it on him. So, I'm doing  
it on Helena.

STEPHEN

Helena?

RUDI

From All's Well That Ends Well.

STEPHEN

I'm not familiar with that play.

RUDI

It's the one Shakespeare stole  
almost verbatim from Boccaccio.

STEPHEN

Boccaccio?

RUDI

(with exasperation)  
Giovanni Boccaccio. The Italian  
Renaissance writer.

STEPHEN

Oh. That Boccaccio.

RUDI

Anyway, the play's about this Helena -- who's in love with this guy Bertram, who's completely out of her class.

Rudi drops the book and sits up.

RUDI

She's so in love with him that she risks her life to save this king, in exchange for the king giving her Bertram. But Bertram doesn't want her, and he runs off -- and so she's now got enough angst to sink two Holden Caulfields.

Rudi raises her finger.

RUDI

But what does she do about it? Does she weep in her bed for this guy? No, she goes after what she wants. And she damn well gets it!

STEPHEN

You know, it's been a while since I've read *The Catcher in the Rye*, but if I remember it correctly, Holden handled his angst in a completely different way.

RUDI

Exactly. That's why I'm gonna compare the two.

Stephen smiles.

RUDI

What's so funny?

STEPHEN

You're liking this school.

RUDI

Get out of here.

STEPHEN

I've been a guidance counselor long enough to know when a student is excited about school. It happens about once every other blue moon.

RUDI

I'm always excited.



STEPHEN  
 Whatever you say.

Stephen then starts out, but he abruptly stops and turns back to Rudi.

STEPHEN  
 Remember, curfew's in effect even on Fridays.

RUDI  
 What do you think I'm gonna do -- slamdance with the crickets?

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The sound of TYPING comes from Rudi's room, which is interrupted when a phone RINGS.

Rudi saunters out of her room, and she hears the phone coming from inside Stephen and Pam's room, and, ignoring the "No Entry" sign, she tries the doorknob, without success. She then applies more pressure, and the door opens.

INT. STEPHEN AND PAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rudi steps inside and turns on the light -- and she becomes shocked when she sees that the place is covered with chains and whips and leather garments.

RUDI  
 What . . .

With her mouth agape, she rushes over to the ringing telephone -- and, as she picks the device up, she notices a mirror on the ceiling.

RUDI  
 Hello?

LEILA (V.O.)  
 Rudi?

RUDI  
 Leila? How'd you find me?

LEILA (V.O.)  
 Fucking Butch.

RUDI  
 That motherfucker can't keep his mouth shut.

LEILA (V.O.)  
I forced it out of him.

RUDI  
I bet. What's up?

LEILA (V.O.)  
We are. A bunch of us are cutting  
out of this shithole. Tonight.

RUDI  
And go where?

LEILA (V.O.)  
Does it matter?

RUDI  
I --

LEILA (V.O.)  
-- Where and when do we pick you  
up?

RUDI  
What are you gonna do for money?

LEILA (V.O.)  
We'll hustle something up.

RUDI  
I --

LEILA (V.O.)  
-- Come on, Rudi, you'll be free!

Rudi pauses in thought.

INT. HOUSE FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Rudi storms out, carrying her packed sea bag, which has a  
new rope holding it together.

EXT. ENTRANCE UNDERHILL FIELD - NIGHT

Rudi stops and gazes at the crowd in the stands, which  
suddenly ROARS.

RUDI  
There's no such thing as fairy  
tales. There's no such thing as  
fairy tales.

Hurriedly, she turns and rushes away, just as all sounds FADE. This causes her to stop and spin around -- and she becomes shocked when she sees that the stands are empty.

EXT. UNDERHILL FIELD - NIGHT

A dazed Rudi meanders underneath the stands.

RUDI  
Someone must've slipped me  
something.

She continues on and reaches the outskirts of the football field, where she sees a football player in the left end zone squirming on the ground. The player soon yanks off his helmet, revealing Tommy.

TOMMY  
Rudi!

RUDI  
Tommy?

Rudi runs toward the end zone.

RUDI  
Tommy!

TOMMY (O.S.)  
I'm right here.

Rudi stops and sees Tommy holding his helmet with one hand, and her hand with his other. The crowd and all the SOUNDS have returned, but all she notices is Tommy's hand -- which has taken her breath away. His has been taken, too.

RUDI  
What, what the hell's going on?

TOMMY  
What do you mean?

RUDI  
The field . . . you . . .

The crowd ROARS.

COACH (O.S.)  
Come on, Tommy -- get in there!

TOMMY  
I gotta go.

Reluctantly, he releases her hand and puts on his helmet.

RUDI

No, don't.

COACH (O.S.)

Come on, Tommy -- move your ass!

Tommy rushes onto the field.

RUDI

Don't go!

Tommy doesn't listen, and Rudi glances up the sideline at Darlene -- who's a cheerleader and who's glaring at Rudi with eyes full of hate.

PAM (O.S.)

Rudi!

Rudi looks back and sees Stephen, Pam, Todd, and Derek in the stands -- and Pam motions her toward them.

Instead, Rudi turns around and watches Columbia break huddle at midfield, with Tommy lining up on the right. She also sees that Columbia is losing to East Orange 13-10, with less than a minute to play.

The QUARTERBACK takes the snap, and quickly tosses the ball to Tommy, who's running an inside slant. Tommy right away avoids a large LINEBACKER and runs into the secondary, knocking ANOTHER LINEBACKER to the ground with his shoulder.

Watching this, Rudi -- against her will -- shakes her fists in excitement. Though suddenly shock crosses her face when she sees a SAFETY fly at Tommy, leading with his helmet.

RUDI

Look out!

Tommy ducks, and the safety just misses, and Tommy continues toward the end zone, chased by TWO DEFENSIVE BACKS coming fast at him from different angles.

RUDI

Go! Go! Go!

Tommy reaches the end zone, and the defenders sandwich him to the ground. A REFEREE signals a touchdown, and the crowd ROARS. But Rudi looks horrified, as Tommy's lying at the same spot of the field as when she entered the stadium.

The two defenders rise, exposing Tommy, who's squirming on the ground, just like he was before. Also like before he removes his helmet.

TOMMY

Rudi!

RUDI

Tommy?

Rudi runs across the field, as fast as she can.

RUDI

Tommy!

Rudi reaches Tommy and comes to a sharp stop when she sees blood pouring out of his mouth. She also covers her own mouth, right before someone shoves her to the ground.

She looks up and sees Darlene clutching Tommy's lifeless body.

DARLENE

Stay away from him, druggie! Stay  
the fuck away!

EXT. ENTRANCE UNDERHILL FIELD - NIGHT

An ambulance speeds off, and Rudi slowly follows it a bit. She then turns around and looks at all the PEOPLE leaving the stadium, which include the three geeks, who no longer look so punk apart from their spiked hair.

She runs up to them.

RUDI

You guys got a car?

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM, ST. BARNABAS HOSPITAL - NIGHT

An old station wagon parks, and Rudi jumps out of the front passenger seat. She further looks inside the car at the three geeks and smiles.

RUDI

Thanks.

PHILIP

You want us to wait?

RUDI

You don't have to.

DOUG

We'll wait.

She smiles again.

## INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Rudi steps through the doors, and -- seeing Darlene nervously sitting way down the corridor -- she hides behind a large MAN perched nearby.

A frantic Annette bursts inside and toward Darlene, and she passes a wall clock that reads past eleven.

## LATER

Rudi glances at the clock and sees that it's almost two. She also sees Darlene and Annette rushing toward a DOCTOR, and she hurries there herself.

## BY THE DOCTOR

The doctor stops in front of Darlene and Annette, who have their arms wrapped around one another.

DOCTOR

We had to remove his spleen.

ANNETTE

Oh, my God.

DOCTOR

He's gonna have to be real careful from now on. But, other than that, he should be fine.

Annette closes her eyes and takes a deep breath -- and Rudi, who's listening from around the corner, does the same.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

What room is he in?

## INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Rudi stops in the doorway, and she sees Tommy sleeping.

Slowly, she comes up to his bed and hesitantly takes his hand, causing her to again lose her breath.

Tommy wakes.

TOMMY

Rudi?

RUDI

How are you?

TOMMY  
I don't know.

RUDI  
You're gonna be fine.

TOMMY  
Did we win?

RUDI  
I don't know.

He looks around the room and notices a wall clock, and sees it's well past two.

TOMMY  
It can't still be visiting hours.

RUDI  
I've never been real good at following rules.

He smiles at her, and there's a moment of awkward silence.

TOMMY  
I want you to be my girl.

Shocked, Rudi releases Tommy's hand.

RUDI  
That's crazy, Tommy. We, we're barely the same species.

TOMMY  
It just looks that way.

RUDI  
You don't know anything about me.

TOMMY  
It doesn't matter.

RUDI  
I've got a record. I've done lots of drugs, too. I'm clean right now, but my past is always there. It just won't go away.

TOMMY  
I don't care.

RUDI  
(with breaking voice)  
I'm so not good enough.

TOMMY

Rudi --

RUDI

-- Even my mom thought so. She, she abandoned me when I was three. Even she knew I was trash.

Tommy starts crying, and Rudi has to force her own tears back.

RUDI

Why are you crying? I should be the one fucking crying!

TOMMY

I cry all the time. Every fucking day.

RUDI

Why?

TOMMY

It's like I've been missing something. And only now do I know what it is.

RUDI

You, you're better off with that cheerleader. You should've seen her tonight. She pushed me right onto the ground. No sane person would've done that. She must really love you.

TOMMY

But I don't love her.

RUDI

I can't be your girl. I can't be anyone's anything. Most of the time I don't even want to be with me.

She starts backing up, and points that way.

RUDI

Look, I, I gotta go. A bunch of Quincy Punks are waiting for me.

TOMMY

Who?

She turns and runs out.



TOMMY  
I tried running, too! It doesn't  
work! It doesn't fucking work!

INT. STATION WAGON - NIGHT

The car pulls in front of the Cross house, with a dazed Rudi  
in the front passenger seat.

TOMMY (V.O.)  
I want you to be my girl.

ELIOT  
Rudi?

Suddenly, Rudi comes out of her daze and jumps out of the  
car.

EXT. STATION WAGON - NIGHT

An emotional Rudi closes the door of the station wagon and  
looks inside.

RUDI  
You guys, you're the best.

PHILIP  
You okay?

RUDI  
Sure.

DOUG  
You don't look okay.

RUDI  
You just don't know me.

ELIOT  
We know you.

Unsure how to respond, Rudi rushes toward the house.

RUDI  
I'll see you three on Monday. And  
remember -- no more spiked hair.  
Because I ain't gonna be friends  
with a bunch of poseurs.

EXT. CROSS HOUSE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Rudi reaches for the handle, but before she can get to it the door swings open, exposing an angry-looking Stephen wearing a robe.

STEPHEN  
Where have you been? Slamdancing  
with the crickets?

Instead of answering, Rudi pushes him inside and storms into the house.

INT. CROSS HOUSE - NIGHT

Rudi rushes toward the staircase, followed by Stephen.

STEPHEN  
It's way past curfew. It's almost  
past tomorrow's.

RUDI  
Ground me.

STEPHEN  
How about I just return you to  
juvie instead? It seems you're  
already packed.

RUDI  
Do whatever you want!

With lots of fury, Stephen grabs Rudi's shoulder and spins her around.

STEPHEN  
Why do you insist on self-  
destructing? You could be so great.  
You're probably the smartest kid in  
that whole fucking school!

RUDI  
No cursing in this house!

STEPHEN  
It's my fucking house!

Rudi starts up the stairs.

STEPHEN  
Who were you with all night?

Rudi stops, but she doesn't turn around.

RUDI

Friends.

STEPHEN

You mean Tommy Goodwin, don't you?

RUDI

What?

STEPHEN

You went to see him in the hospital, didn't you?

Rudi doesn't answer.

STEPHEN

Come on, we saw how you two were looking at each other during the game -- and how you ran to him when he was hurt. The whole stadium saw.

RUDI

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

STEPHEN

Tell me, is it such a crime to be normal?

RUDI

I wouldn't know.

Rudi runs upstairs.

INT. RUDI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rudi jumps into her way-too-soft bed fully dressed, and, after grabbing a pillow, she pulls the covers over her head. Then, no longer able or willing to hold back the tears, she starts CRYING.

DAY

While LISTENING to a punk song mocking love and trying to look apathetic, Rudi glances at her alarm clock, which reads a little after eleven, and she starts typing at a desk.

LATER

With Rudi's emotions barely contained -- and the music and the typing continuing -- the clock turns to two.

RUDI

There's no such thing as fairy  
tales. There's no such thing as  
fairy tales.

Slowly, she turns her head and gazes into the forest through  
her window.

INT. TOMMY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Tommy gazes into the forest through his window.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

But Darlene's so perfect. What else  
could you want in a girl?

INT. KRASNER'S CLASS - DAY

Rudi drifts inside, and she sees Darlene staring at Tommy's  
empty seat and she does likewise.

KRASNER (O.S.)

Good morning, Rudi. I sure hope you  
have something for me.

Darlene turns to Rudi, and the two glare at each other as  
Mr. Krasner rushes up to Rudi.

KRASNER

Well?

Rudi sighs, and then reaches into her bag for a huge stack  
of pages held together by extra large rubber bands, which  
she hands to a shocked Mr. Krasner.

KRASNER

I was only expecting a handful of  
pages. You didn't even have to type  
them.

RUDI

You didn't tell me that.

Mr. Krasner looks at the cover page, entitled: "HELENA AND  
HOLDEN: A PARTIAL DICHOTOMY." Then, as Rudi sits, he removes  
the rubber bands and walks toward the front of the room  
while reading the paper with his tail between his legs.

RUDI (V.O.)

Loneliness. Despair. Alienation.  
These are emotions that cross  
gender and time and social status.

Mr. Krasner stops and glances at Rudi, and he sees her staring sadly at the forest through the window. Afterward, he continues reading.

RUDI (V.O.)  
Shakespeare's Helena and Salinger's  
Holden -- despite all their  
differences -- are essentially the  
same lost souls, and they live on  
today because even the modern  
reader can see themselves in them.

INT. GIRLS BATHROOM - DAY

Rudi glares at her reflection.

A stall door opens behind her, and Maria slithers out -- and the two look at each other uneasily through the mirror.

RUDI  
Why are you so afraid of me?

MARIA  
Sorry.

Maria rushes toward the door, and Rudi's expression softens.

RUDI  
How come you don't wear any makeup?

Maria stops, but she doesn't turn around or reply.

RUDI  
You must be the only girl here who  
doesn't.

MARIA  
My dad won't let me. He, he's real  
strict.

RUDI  
Would you like to try some of mine?

Surprised, Maria turns to Rudi.

MARIA  
I just told you, my dad --

RUDI  
-- Is your dad in this bathroom?

LATER

A trembling Maria stares into the mirror while Rudi, who's standing behind her, scrapes excess mascara from a wand.

MARIA  
I don't know about this.

RUDI  
Here, take it.

Maria takes the wand, which now trembles, too. Smiling at this, Rudi takes Maria's wrist and brings the wand up to the girl's right eyelash and applies the mascara.

RUDI  
It's real easy. Start at the base  
and wiggle it a bit, side to side.  
And then sweep it up.

Rudi releases Maria's wrist.

RUDI  
Put on a couple of coats -- and do  
the bottom. And the other eye.

Rudi then looks through her bag while Maria gazes at her eye as if she had never seen it before. Rudi soon pulls out a bottle of baby powder from her bag.

RUDI  
I don't think this is quite your  
color.

Maria shakes her head with a bit of a grin.

MARIA  
Me, neither.

Rudi puts back the powder and takes out some red lipstick, which she opens.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Rudi steps out of the bathroom, and holds open the door.

RUDI  
Come on, you look great.

MARIA (O.S.)  
This isn't a very good idea.

RUDI

You can either come out on your own  
or I'm gonna drag you out.

Maria saunters out, looking anything but mousy, even with  
just a modest amount of makeup.

GONZALEZ (O.S.)

Maria, what are you doing with that  
makeup?

The two girls turn toward a furious Mr. Gonzalez.

MARIA

Nothing, Daddy.

RUDI

Daddy?

Maria shrugs bashfully.

GONZALEZ

Miss Weiss, is there anything at  
this school you haven't corrupted?

RUDI

Just you.

GONZALEZ

Detention!

RUDI

On what charge?

GONZALEZ

For your own protection! So I don't  
strangle you!

EXT. SCHOOL ENTRANCE - DAY

Rudi bursts through the doors. Waiting there is Darlene.

DARLENE

I saw Tommy Saturday.

Rudi pauses for a moment before continuing on.

RUDI

(disinterestedly)  
How is he?

DARLENE

He'll be back after Thanksgiving.

RUDI  
You must be excited.

DARLENE  
He broke up with me.

Rudi stops, without turning around.

RUDI  
Why are you telling me this?

Darlene grabs Rudi's shoulder and angrily spins her around.

DARLENE  
Because I know what you're up to --  
and you're not getting away with  
it!

Rudi glares at Darlene and takes a threatening step toward her, causing her to step back.

RUDI  
Listen, I gave you a pass on Friday  
-- but don't push it.

DARLENE  
You can't have him!

RUDI  
I don't want him!

Rudi turns from Darlene and rushes off.

DARLENE (O.S.)  
I saw how you were looking at him  
during the game! Everyone did!

RUDI  
Just leave me alone! And tell Tommy  
to leave me alone, too!

BY THE CURB

Rudi stops at a red light -- and she shakes her fists with great fury.

RUDI  
Everyone, leave me the fuck alone!

Deke's Porsche pulls up in front of her, and the front passenger door opens.



INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Deke drives off, with a frightened Rudi sitting next to him.

RUDI  
I just can't do it right now.

DEKE  
No problem. There's this motel on  
Twenty-Two I've been liking of  
late. Real classy -- been taking  
all my girls there.

RUDI  
I'm not going anywhere with you.

Deke SLAMS on the brakes and pulls over, and he whips out a  
gun from his waist, which he points at Rudi's head.

DEKE  
What did you say?

Rudi trembles as Deke cocks back the hammer.

DEKE  
(screaming)  
What did you fucking say?

RUDI  
All right! All right!

DEKE  
All right what?

RUDI  
I'll sell!

A bit disappointed, Deke puts away his gun. He further takes  
out a large bag of joints.

DEKE  
We'll start out small.

INT. CROSS HOUSE ENTRANCE - DAY

A still trembling Rudi bursts inside, just as a phone RINGS.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Rudi picks up the phone.

RUDI  
Hello?

DAN (V.O.)  
Hi. Is, is this the Cross  
residence?

Rudi recognizes her stepfather's voice and pauses.

RUDI  
Yes.

DAN (V.O.)  
I . . .

The line disconnects.

INT. OUTSIDE RUDI'S LOCKER - DAY

Rudi carefully looks around, before whipping out the bag of joints from her sea bag, which she tosses into the locker. Afterward, she slams the door closed and turns around -- and she jumps in fright when she sees Maria.

MARIA  
Sorry about that.

RUDI  
It's all right.

Slowly, Rudi and Maria start off down the hall.

MARIA  
So?

RUDI  
So?

MARIA  
You must hate me.

RUDI  
Why would I hate you?

MARIA  
I got you in trouble.

RUDI  
That's not trouble where I'm from.

MARIA  
Still, I should've told you who my  
dad was.

RUDI  
You know, I figured you'd be on  
Devil's Island by now.

MARIA  
He's really not that bad.

Rudi stops by an open classroom, along with Maria.

RUDI  
Tell me something: what, what's  
with all this "Gonthaleth" shit?

MARIA  
(with a smirk)  
Supposedly, that's how they say it  
in Spain. My dad, in fact, is  
always telling me how we can trace  
our lineage back to the Visigoths.

Maria then glances around and leans toward Rudi.

MARIA  
And that may all be true, but we  
came to America via Mehico.

RUDI  
So, what's the big deal?

MARIA  
He thinks people will look down on  
us if we're Mexican. And he's  
probably right.

RUDI  
Yeah, well, I guess I'm in no  
position to talk when it comes to  
people's names.

Rudi starts inside the classroom.

MARIA  
So?

Rudi stops and turns back to Maria.

RUDI  
So?

MARIA  
Got any plans for after school?

RUDI  
There's a good chance I'll be in  
detention. So far I'm batting a  
thousand.

MARIA  
But if you're not . . .

RUDI  
What do you mean?

MARIA  
I don't know. I just thought maybe  
we could, you know, do something.

RUDI  
You must really want to see Devil's  
Island.

MARIA  
I told you, he's not that bad.

RUDI  
What kind of music do you like?

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Carrying her tray of food, Rudi approaches Owen, who's  
sitting by himself with his head in his hands -- with paper  
balls flying at him from all directions. Rudi tries hard to  
ignore this, but she eventually stops beside Owen.

RUDI  
(to students)  
Stop that!

Instantly, the aerial attack ceases.

RUDI  
(to Owen)  
You're just gonna let them get away  
with that?

OWEN  
What's the point? My rep's shot. I  
got beat up by a girl. Twice.

Rudi smirks and sits across from Owen.

RUDI  
You just need better karma.

OWEN  
I don't even know what that means.

RUDI  
It means you don't fuck with  
defenseless little kids.

Owen sighs.

RUDI  
Come on -- lift that chin up.

OWEN  
So you can punch it?

RUDI  
See, that would be bad karma.  
'Cause I don't have any reason to  
punch you.

Owen lifts his head up.

OWEN  
Oh.

RUDI  
So you get it?

OWEN  
No.

INT. CROSS HOUSE ENTRANCE - DAY

Stephen steps inside and hears loud punk rock PLAYING, and he marches toward the staircase.

INT. RUDI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Stephen stops at the open door, and, with lots of shock, he sees Rudi and Maria jumping on the bed in their socks, while SINGING and shaking their fists to the music -- with big smiles on their faces.

Hurriedly, Stephen rushes over to Rudi's boombox and turns it off -- and Rudi and Maria stop singing and look at him.

RUDI  
What's your problem?

STEPHEN  
Rudi, are you trying to get me  
fired?

RUDI  
What are you talking about?

STEPHEN  
Do you know who her father is?

Rudi smiles and jumps off the bed, and she leads Stephen out.

RUDI  
 You want me to be normal, right?  
 Well, this is what normal girls do.

STEPHEN  
 But . . .

Gently, Rudi pushes Stephen into the hallway.

RUDI  
 Just let us know when dinner's  
 ready.

STEPHEN  
 It's always at six.

RUDI  
 Then let us no when it's six.

Rudi then slams the door closed and turns back to Maria,  
 who's standing behind her -- and the two giggle as they head  
 toward the bed.

MARIA  
 It must be really weird having a  
 guidance councilor as a dad.

RUDI  
 No weirder than having a principal  
 as a dad.

MARIA  
 True.

The two reach the bed and Rudi plops back onto its softness,  
 with a dreamy look. Seeing this, Maria smiles and sits next  
 to her.

MARIA  
 So?

RUDI  
 So?

MARIA  
 What's going on with you and Tommy  
 Goodwin?

With lots of indignation, Rudi rises to her waist.

RUDI  
 Not you, too.

MARIA

Everybody saw you guys at the game.  
And everybody's talking about it.  
Everybody.

RUDI

Everybody needs to mind their own  
business.

MARIA

Just about every girl in school is  
in love with him.

RUDI

Not me.

MARIA

Methinks the lady doth protest too  
much.

RUDI

You like Shakespeare, too?

MARIA

Love him. But don't change the  
subject.

RUDI

There is no subject.

Rudi turns away a bit.

RUDI

It's crazy. I mean, I'm no . . .

Slowly, Rudi turns back to Maria.

RUDI

I'm no fucking cheerleader.

Maria puts her hand on Rudi's wrist.

MARIA

You're better. And prettier.

RUDI

You need glasses.

MARIA

Maybe it's you who needs them.

RUDI

What about you?

MARIA  
What about me?

RUDI  
You going with someone?

Maria shakes her head bashfully.

RUDI  
It must be pretty tough with your  
dad around.

Maria shrugs.

RUDI  
But you must at least be hot for  
someone.

Maria shrugs again, this time with a grin -- and Rudi  
playfully punches her shoulder.

RUDI  
Spill it!

Maria turns away from Rudi.

MARIA  
There is this someone in my Math  
class. We're always smiling at each  
other and stuff.

RUDI  
What's his name?

Maria doesn't reply.

RUDI  
Come on, I'll keep it quiet. What's  
his name?

Maria pauses in thought.

MARIA  
Sam.

RUDI  
Sam who?

Maria turns to Rudi and looks deep into her eyes, as if she  
were searching for something.

MARIA  
Sam . . . antha.



RUDI  
(shocked)  
Oh.

MARIA  
Perhaps I should go.

Looking ashamed, Maria begins to stand, but Rudi grabs her shoulder and effortlessly flings her back onto the bed.

RUDI  
Where you going?

MARIA  
You must hate me.

RUDI  
Why would I hate you?

MARIA  
Because I'm a . . .

RUDI  
A lesbian?

Maria nods.

RUDI  
Actually, I think it's pretty cool.

MARIA  
You do?

RUDI  
Sure. And just think, you'll never have to give a blowjob.

MARIA  
Eeewwww. Even if I were straight that'd be disgusting.

RUDI  
Don't change the subject.

MARIA  
There is no subject.

RUDI  
Have you talked to this Samantha?

MARIA  
God no.

RUDI

So, you two are just gonna smile at each other until retirement?

Maria shrugs.

RUDI

Maria, to thine own self be true!

MARIA

My dad would kill me.

RUDI

You're gonna live your whole life for your dad?

Again, Maria shrugs.

RUDI

You're gonna marry some guy and have babies, just for good old dad?

MARIA

Maybe?

RUDI

Listen to me: tomorrow after Math class you're gonna walk right up to this Samantha and say something.

MARIA

I can't.

RUDI

You better. Because if you don't talk to her, I won't talk to you. I won't be friends with a coward.

EXT. UPSTAIRS PATIO, TOMMY'S HOUSE - SUNSET

Tommy gazes into the forest from a chair.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

It won't be much of a Thanksgiving without turkey.

Tommy doesn't reply.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

You sure you don't want to invite someone over? Someone in particular?

TOMMY  
That's not a bad idea.

EXT. CROSS HOUSE - SUNSET

Sitting on the front steps, Rudi gazes into the forest. Suddenly, the front door opens and Pam steps out, along with the sounds of PEOPLE, including SCREAMING KIDS.

PAM  
A little too noisy for you?

Rudi shrugs.

PAM  
The turkeys are almost ready.

Rudi shrugs again.

PAM  
But, but we got yams, too. And stuffing. You can eat stuffing, can't you?

RUDI  
I'm not really hungry.

PAM  
It seems you haven't been hungry since you got here. Well, I certainly know how that is. I was just like that with Stephen.

With a confused expression, Rudi turns to Pam, and Pam smiles and sits next to her. Pam also puts her arm around Rudi -- something Rudi looks at warily, though she makes no move to break their embrace.

PAM  
I had a crush on Stephen all through school. He was the guy. But lots of pretty girls were throwing themselves at him, so he never saw me. Not once. And I got really, really thin.

Pam lowers her head.

PAM  
But when he came back from overseas he no longer was the guy -- and no one was throwing themselves at him.

RUDI  
No one but you.

Pam raises her head and grins, with a bit of a blush.

RUDI  
Just like Helena.

PAM  
Who?

RUDI  
It doesn't matter. So, so you think  
I should throw myself at . . .

PAM  
I don't think you have to, honey.  
And, what's more, I think you  
already know this.

Rudi rests her head on Pam's shoulder.

RUDI  
You know, you're okay.

PAM  
So are you.

INT. OUTSIDE RUDI'S LOCKER - DAY

Rudi stares at the bag of joints through the open door.

STUDENTS (O.S.)  
Tom-me! Tom-me! Tom-me!

Rudi turns and sees Tommy meandering through dozens of STUDENTS, who slap his hands and pat his shoulders -- causing him to wince in pain. Suddenly, Tommy notices Rudi, and he stares at her.

Ignoring this, she slams her locker closed and rushes off in the opposite direction.

INT. KRASNER'S CLASS - DAY

Mr. Krasner passes out papers to their owners, with Rudi's thick one on the bottom.

KRASNER  
Some very solid work here. It seems  
we have many admirers of the Danish  
Prince. Almost all of you, in fact.

He's now only holding Rudi's paper, and his expression turns sour as he approaches her.

KRASNER

Of course, there were a few  
substandard papers.

Rudi crosses her arms and looks away. She then hears her paper PLOP down in front of her.

KRASNER

But this wasn't one of those.

Surprised, Rudi glances at her paper, and, with even greater surprise, she sees an A+ written on top of it.

Mr. Krasner grins at her and heads toward the front of the room, and Rudi slowly turns to Tommy, who's smiling proudly at her. She flips him her middle finger, but his smile refuses to go away.

INT. OUTSIDE RUDI'S LOCKER - DAY

Rudi opens the door, just as a long-haired BOY stops nearby with his back against the lockers.

BOY

I hear you got some shit.

Rudi pauses as she stares at the bag of joints, partially hidden by her thick paper.

RUDI

You heard wrong.

The boy doesn't move.

RUDI

I'd get out of here if I were you.  
Like, right now.

Reluctantly, the boy leaves, and, after grabbing her coat, Rudi angrily slams her locker. She then turns around and sees Tommy approaching.

RUDI

What do you want?

TOMMY

I was wondering if I could borrow  
your notes from last week.

RUDI

Why don't you just borrow the cheerleader's?

TOMMY

She's not exactly talking to me.

RUDI

Look, I have only one notebook for all my classes -- and I need to study it tonight for a Chemistry test.

TOMMY

How about this: we go to my house, and I'll copy the notes. Then I'll drive you home.

RUDI

Do I look that dumb?

TOMMY

You look like you've stopped running.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Tommy and Rudi stop in front of his Harley.

RUDI

You drive a motorcycle?

With some pain, Tommy climbs onto the bike.

RUDI

Where am I supposed to sit?

TOMMY

Behind me.

Rudi sighs, but sits behind Tommy, without touching him.

TOMMY

I suggest you hold onto me. Unless you want to fly out onto the street.

Reluctantly, Rudi puts her arms around Tommy. She also involuntarily caresses her cheek against his back -- causing her to shut her eyes blissfully and causing him to blush.

Afterward, the motorcycle speeds out of the lot -- passing Deke's Porsche, which pulls up to the curb.

EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - DAY

Tommy parks the Harley, and Rudi opens her eyes and sees the opulence of his home, which makes her uncomfortable.

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - DAY

Tommy and a perturbed Rudi step inside, and she tosses her bag by the door.

TOMMY  
You want something to drink?

Rudi notices a fancy staircase nearby and struts toward it.

RUDI  
Actually, I want to see the rest of  
this palace.

Rudi prances up the steps, followed by Tommy, who's in obvious pain.

RUDI  
Man, this is just like the  
staircase Scarlet O'Hara had.

TOMMY  
Not quite.

TOP OF STAIRCASE

Rudi stops in front of a portrait of a handsome and well-dressed middle-aged MAN, and a wincing Tommy comes up beside her.

RUDI  
(nodding at picture)  
This your dad?

Tommy nods, with a glum expression.

RUDI  
I see where you got your preppy  
fuck look. Well, he's sure gonna  
love me.

TOMMY  
He would've.

RUDI  
Would've?

TOMMY  
He, he died.

RUDI  
(lowering her eyes)  
When?

TOMMY  
Over the summer.

RUDI  
Sorry.

TOMMY  
You never get over it.

RUDI  
I wouldn't know.

Rudi swaggers down the hall and points toward a door.

RUDI  
Whose room is that?

TOMMY  
My parents'. I mean, my mom's.

Rudi comes to a halt in front of the door and puts her hand on the knob as Tommy reaches her.

RUDI  
You should see the shit in my  
foster parents' bedroom. It would  
make the Marquis de Sade blush.

Rudi starts to open the door.

TOMMY  
Don't go in there.

Rudi bursts into the room.

INT. ANNETTE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rudi stops in shock at the palatialness of the room, with Tommy right behind her.

RUDI  
Your mom must be the Queen of  
Navarre.

TOMMY  
Not even close. Can we go now?



RUDI

Why?

TOMMY

My mother wouldn't like it.

RUDI

(in falsetto)

My mother wouldn't like it.

Rudi steps backward farther inside the room, followed by Tommy, who's growing angrier with each step.

RUDI

You a momma's boy?

TOMMY

No.

RUDI

You always do what she says?

TOMMY

No.

RUDI

Tell me one time you didn't. Just once.

TOMMY

I don't know. What am I supposed to do -- rebel for no reason, like you?

RUDI

Oooooohhhh! Them's fighting words, Tommy!

TOMMY

Fuck you!

RUDI

I'm not pissing you off, am I?

Rudi bangs into a long closet door, and she turns around and starts to open it. But Tommy grabs her arm.

TOMMY

Don't.

RUDI

Why -- are there dead bodies inside?

Rudi shakes Tommy's arm off and thrusts open the closet, and she sees a large collection of expensive dresses.

RUDI

You'd never see me in one of these.

Rudi saunters along the closet, caressing the dresses as she does.

TOMMY

Can we go now?

Rudi stops and turns back to Tommy.

RUDI

Out of this room -- or out of this house?

TOMMY

What?

RUDI

Don't you see how wrong we are? How I don't fit in your world? How I'd embarrass the shit out of you?

TOMMY

I'm not embarrassed!

RUDI

Not embarrassed? You look like you want to spit in my face!

TOMMY

It's you who's doing all the spitting! One minute you're normal, and the next you're a fucking maniac!

RUDI

I've never been normal in my whole life! And I don't even wanna be!

Tommy lowers his eyes, and, seeing this, Rudi calms and takes his hand -- and, like at the football game, both their breaths get taken away.

RUDI

I don't want to hurt you, but I will. It's just my nature -- like the scorpion in that fable. So, let's just call it a day, shall we?

Reluctantly, she releases his hand, and, even more reluctantly, she starts to leave. But he grabs her arm.

RUDI  
Let go of me.

TOMMY  
No.

RUDI  
Are you crazy? Don't you realize I  
can kill you?

TOMMY  
I have just one more thing to say.

Not waiting for a reply, Tommy flings Rudi into his arms and kisses her hard -- causing both their eyes to shut. She feigns resistance, but soon wraps her legs around his waist and clutches his shoulders, practically tearing them apart.

The same old romantic song the two heard in their dream  
PLAYS.

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Rudi and Tommy dance cheek-to-cheek with their eyes closed, with her fists desperately clutching his jacket. Suddenly, she opens her eyes in shock, and sees the shabbily dressed dancers -- along with Glenn Miller and his orchestra.

RUDI  
Tommy? Do you see what I see?

Tommy opens his eyes and becomes shocked, too.

TOMMY  
I . . .

RUDI  
What is this place?

TOMMY  
It, it looks like a dance hall.  
I've seen them in movies. I've even  
seen that band leader. His name's  
Glenn Miller.

RUDI  
We must be crazy.

TOMMY  
Or in . . .

RUDI  
I don't believe it. I don't believe  
in anything.

TOMMY

Me, neither. So, let's just feel.

Slowly, they pull their heads back and gently kiss while once again closing their eyes -- just as someone loudly CLEARS their throat.

BACK TO ANNETTE'S BEDROOM

Tommy and Rudi break their kiss and open their eyes -- and they see Annette glaring at them, with her hands on her hips.

ANNETTE

(through clenched jaw)

Sorry to disturb you.

Instantly, Rudi releases her arms and legs from around Tommy, and she falls to the floor.

TOMMY

Sorry about this.

Rudi rises to her feet, with her face flush.

ANNETTE

It's just fortunate for all of us that I didn't come ten minutes later.

TOMMY

It's not like that, Mom. Really.

ANNETTE

Aren't you going to introduce me to, to your friend?

TOMMY

This is Rudi, my girl --

RUDI

-- His friend. Sorta.

While averting her eyes a bit, Rudi reaches out her hand toward Annette, who daintily takes it for just a second, with a grimace.

ANNETTE

Shall Rudi be staying for dinner?

TOMMY

Yes.

No.

RUDI

Rudi glares at Tommy.

ANNETTE

Yes, by all means stay for dinner,  
Rudi. I'm just dying to know more  
about you.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

With the sound of a TELEVISION playing in the background,  
Annette sees Rudi's bag lying by the front door, and, after  
glancing around, she rushes toward it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rudi turns off the TV with a remote and turns to Tommy,  
who's sitting next to her on the couch.

RUDI

Look, we had . . . whatever the  
fuck that was.

Tommy smiles, and so does she a little.

RUDI

It was beautiful -- I'll admit it.  
But it doesn't change anything.

TOMMY

Is that so?

RUDI

That's so.

Tommy caresses Rudi's cheek with the back of his hand,  
sending her into flight.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

While kneeling on the floor, Annette hurriedly sifts through  
Rudi's bag, and she soon pulls out a NA key chain.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Rudi, Tommy, and Annette sit in front of a formal table  
setting, which Rudi stares at in confusion.

RUDI

I don't think I've ever seen so  
many utensils.

TOMMY  
(glaring at Annette)  
We don't usually eat so formally.

ANNETTE  
I thought it would be a nice  
change.

TOMMY  
(to Rudi)  
As the courses come, just use the  
utensils farthest from you.

RUDI  
Why don't I just use the same  
utensils? What's the big deal?

Annette derisively laughs.

ANNETTE  
You eat any which way you want, my  
dear. I mean, if I were to invite a  
leopard into my house, I certainly  
wouldn't expect it to change its  
spots on my account.

Rudi glowers a bit at Annette, and so does Tommy.

TOMMY  
Why don't we just eat out.

ANNETTE  
Don't be silly -- Elizabeth's  
prepared a big meal.

RUDI  
Who's Elizabeth?

Elizabeth enters with a tray of hot soup, which she serves.

ANNETTE  
I should warn you, Rudi -- my son's  
been on a weird fad of late, which  
I've unfortunately humored.

RUDI  
What are you talking about?

ANNETTE  
He doesn't eat meat.

Rudi spins toward Tommy in surprise.

RUDI  
You, you're a vegetarian?

TOMMY

Pretty funny, eh? Me, a big bad football player.

Rudi shrugs and turns away. Elizabeth then leaves, and Tommy and Annette pick up their soup spoons. While watching this, Rudi picks up hers.

ANNETTE

So, Tommy, where did you meet Rudi?

TOMMY

We have English together.

ANNETTE

I thought you were taking Honors English.

TOMMY

I am. Rudi's actually the smartest person in class.

RUDI

That's not true.

ANNETTE

I guess looks really can be deceiving. Speaking of which, Rudi, do you actually pay someone to do that to your hair?

Rudi drops her spoon and turns to Tommy.

RUDI

I really think I should go.

TOMMY

Never mind my mom. This is just her way of kidding around.

Rudi sighs and takes a sip of soup, and she SLURPS it a bit too loud, gaining the unwanted attention of Annette.

RUDI

Sorry.

ANNETTE

Tommy, you'll never guess who I saw at the mall the other day: Darlene. Talk about flawless. So unlike . . . anything else.

Annette glances at Rudi, who averts her eyes.

TOMMY

Stop it.

ANNETTE

Just telling it like I see it. I'm  
sure Rudi sees it, too. Don't you?

Rudi again drops her spoon, and again she turns to Tommy.

RUDI

I'm sorry, but I'm feeling very  
uncomfortable.

TOMMY

Yeah.

RUDI

And this is just a small taste of  
what we'd get if we went together.

ANNETTE

(gasping in horror)  
Went together?

RUDI

(to Annette)  
Look, despite what you saw earlier  
-- and despite what Tommy thinks he  
feels -- there's really nothing  
serious going on between us.

TOMMY

Nothing but Glenn Miller.

ANNETTE

Glenn Miller?

TOMMY

(with anger)  
But that's nothing serious. Just  
because we hear the same music and  
share the same dreams doesn't mean  
anything happens when I take her  
hand.

Tommy snatches Rudi's hand, and they lose their breaths --  
with Rudi pretending otherwise.

RUDI

Next week, Tommy, next week you'll  
find another cheerleader -- or  
some, or some preppy fuck.



ANNETTE  
(furiously)  
Excuse me?

RUDI  
I'm not talking to you!

ANNETTE  
Why --

RUDI  
-- Look at me, Tommy. Not just at  
my hair or my makeup or my clothes.  
Look at who I am. I'll never be the  
girlfriend of someone like you.

Rudi rips her hand from Tommy and jumps to her feet, while desperately trying to keep herself together.

RUDI  
Let's not kid ourselves -- I'll  
never be the girlfriend of anyone!

She rushes off, and Tommy goes after her.

ANNETTE  
Let her go.

TOMMY  
Shut up!

Tommy runs out, with Annette watching in shock.

INT. FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

On the verge of tears, Rudi hurriedly puts on her coat and picks up her bag -- and Tommy grabs her arms from behind.

RUDI  
Let go of me!

She yanks her arms away.

TOMMY  
I'll drive you home.

RUDI  
Why can't you just let me be? I was  
doing fine until I met you. I never  
used to get so emotional, and now  
look at me -- I'm all fucked up!

She rushes out the door.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy rambles inside with his fists clenched, and he glares at Annette.

ANNETTE

Really, Tommy -- I understand all  
about rebelling. But this, this  
. . .

TOMMY

She's not a "this"!

ANNETTE

She's a drug addict!

TOMMY

How'd you know that?

ANNETTE

I . . . it doesn't matter.

TOMMY

It does!

ANNETTE

I found one of her key chains --  
from Narcotics Anonymous.

TOMMY

Found it where?

Annette doesn't answer.

TOMMY

Where-did-you-find-it?

ANNETTE

In her bag!

TOMMY

You went through her bag?

ANNETTE

I'd do worse to protect my son!  
Much worse!

TOMMY

You don't understand.

ANNETTE

What don't I understand?

TOMMY

I, I love her.

ANNETTE

Love? What do you know about love?

TOMMY

I know she's the first thing I've ever cared about -- the first thing that's ever made me care!

ANNETTE

There will be others. Lots of them.

TOMMY

Next time you're gonna treat her with some respect!

Annette pounds her fist onto the table and jumps up.

ANNETTE

There won't be a next time! For either of us!

TOMMY

It won't be her I never see again.

Tommy runs off, with Annette watching in shock.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A crying Rudi meanders through the darkness.

RUDI

There's no such thing as fairy tales! There's no such thing as fairy tales!

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A frightened Annette comes to the door and sees Tommy packing a large backpack.

TOMMY

I'll be at Barry's.

ANNETTE

You'd do this to me -- after what just happened to your father?

TOMMY

I didn't do anything.

Tommy puts on the backpack and marches up to Annette.

TOMMY

If you weren't so pigheaded, you'd realize just how much alike you and Rudi are.

ANNETTE

How could you say such a thing!

TOMMY

She is a lot like you. I'm talking about the real you -- underneath the affected language and fancy clothes. Why do you think I'm so damn attracted to her?

Tommy walks off.

ANNETTE

Don't even think of coming back after she spits you out!

Tommy stops and turns to Annette.

TOMMY

I love you, Mom. I don't always like you, but I'll always love you.

INT. RUDI'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A still teary-eyed Rudi dials a number.

GONZALEZ (V.O.)

Gonthaleth.

Quickly, Rudi hangs up -- and she starts to walk off. But she stops and stares at the phone -- and she then hesitantly dials another number.

DAN (V.O.)

Hello?

Rudi doesn't respond.

DAN (V.O.)

Is someone there?

Rudi hangs up.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

With her head down, Rudi picks at her food, watched by the three geeks.

PHILIP  
You okay?

RUDI  
I'm fine.

DOUG  
You don't look fine.

RUDI  
We're not gonna go through this  
again, are we?

A nervous Maria walks up with SAMANTHA -- a girl who looks  
even more nervous than Maria.

MARIA  
Hey.

Rudi looks up at the two and smiles.

RUDI  
Hey.

MARIA  
This, this is Samantha.

RUDI  
Well, what are you two standing  
around for?

The two girls smile and sit down.

BY THE TRAY COLLECTION AREA

Darlene puts her tray down -- a few steps from the long-  
haired boy who tried to buy drugs from Rudi.

BOY  
I'm pretty sure I saw weed in her  
locker.

DARLENE  
Pretty sure?

BOY  
I'm sure.

BY THE DOORS

Mr. Gonzalez steps inside and sees Maria and Rudi sitting  
together.

Angrily, he marches toward them. But he stops when he sees Maria burst out into a mad happy laugh -- and he can't help smile.

EXT. SCHOOL FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Rudi, Maria, and Samantha walk outside, and they stop when they see Tommy in the lot, sitting on his motorcycle with his arms crossed and his head down.

MARIA

So?

RUDI

So?

MARIA

Are you gonna talk to him or what?

RUDI

The plan right now is to ignore him. After all, it's only a few hundred days until graduation.

MARIA

Hmmm. I seem to recall someone talking to me about cowardice.

RUDI

(shaking her head)

Some friend you are.

Maria smiles and watches Rudi slowly approach Tommy.

MARIA

I'll call you tonight.

Maria then turns to Samantha and smiles even bigger.

INT. DETENTION ROOM - DAY

Sitting by himself, Owen watches Darlene step inside and slither toward Mr. Thompson.

THOMPSON

Can I help you?

DARLENE

Can, can I speak to you for a second?

(nodding toward the door)

Out there?

INT. OUTSIDE DETENTION ROOM - DAY

Darlene and Mr. Thompson step out of the classroom.

DARLENE  
What if I knew someone at school  
was selling drugs?

THOMPSON  
Who?

DARLENE  
I'm not sure I should say.

THOMPSON  
Darlene, if you don't tell me,  
you're just as guilty.

DARLENE  
Well, it's Rudi Weiss. She's got a  
whole bunch of weed in her locker.

THOMPSON  
Come with me.

Mr. Thompson drags Darlene down the hall by the arm.

INT. DETENTION ROOM - DAY

Owen, who's standing by the edge of the doorway, rushes to a window, where he sees Rudi and Tommy well off in the parking lot. He also sees the three geeks by the school front entrance.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICES - DAY

Mr. Thompson drags Darlene inside, toward the secretary.

THOMPSON  
I need to speak to Mister  
Gonthaleth.

SECRETARY  
He stepped out.

THOMPSON  
Call the police. Now.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Rudi averts her eyes from Tommy, who's still on his bike with his arms crossed and his head down.

RUDI

Everyone, everyone thinks I've done everything. And that's almost true. But I've never let anyone get close.

Tommy raises his head and opens his mouth.

PHILIP (O.S.)

Rudi!

Rudi and Tommy turn and see the three geeks stop in front of them out of breath.

DOUG

(pointing to school)

Owen wants to speak to you.

ELIOT

He says it's important.

Rudi thinks about it, and afterward starts toward the school.

TOMMY

It's gotta be some kind of trap.

RUDI

Not even he is that stupid.

She continues on.

TOMMY

Rudi --

RUDI

-- Go home.

BY THE FRONT ENTRANCE

Rudi warily approaches, just as a police car pulls up to the curb. She turns toward it and sees a COP burst out of the vehicle.

OWEN (O.S.)

Come on, hurry up!

Rudi rushes forward.

BY THE WINDOW

An out-of-breath Rudi stands in front of Owen.



RUDI  
Narced me?

Rudi spins back to the police car.

RUDI  
Fuck!

She then runs toward the school entrance.

OWEN  
Is this the good karma?

INT. OUTSIDE RUDI'S LOCKER - DAY

Surrounded by dozens of STUDENTS, Mr. Thompson -- who is standing next to Darlene -- points to the locker with an index card.

THOMPSON  
That's the one.

The cop steps up to the locker.

RUDI (O.S.)  
Wait!

The cop turns to Rudi, who jumps in front of the locker with her arms spread out.

RUDI  
You can't do this!

COP  
Why not?

RUDI  
Because there's something called a Constitution -- and the Fourth fucking Amendment!

COP  
Who are you?

THOMPSON  
That's Weiss.

The cop pushes Rudi from the locker.

COP  
Out of the way -- before I arrest you for obstruction of justice.

THOMPSON  
(reading from card)  
The combination is twenty-one,  
eighteen, thirty-five.

The cop dials the numbers on the lock, with Rudi looking on in horror.

GONZALEZ (O.S.)  
What's going on here?

Everyone turns to Mr. Gonzalez, who's a short distance back and wearing an overcoat.

THOMPSON  
Weiss has drugs in her locker.

Mr. Gonzalez glares at Rudi, who looks away. He then turns to Mr. Thompson.

GONZALEZ  
How do you know this?

THOMPSON  
Darlene here saw them.

GONZALEZ  
You actually saw drugs in her  
locker?

DARLENE  
Well, not exactly.

GONZALEZ  
How exactly?

DARLENE  
Someone told me.

Mr. Gonzalez pauses in thought, before turning to the cop.

GONZALEZ  
I believe that's what's called  
"hearsay," officer.

COP  
I'd still like to search the  
locker.

GONZALEZ  
Then, I suggest you get a warrant.  
Because there's something called a  
Constitution. And the . . .

Mr. Gonzalez glances at Rudi.

GONZALEZ

What was that amendment I heard you screaming about, Miss Weiss -- from all the way out the door?

RUDI

The Fourth?

GONZALEZ

That's right -- the one that protects us against unreasonable searches.

COP

I'll get that warrant!

The cop rushes off, and Rudi looks at Mr. Gonzalez in utter astonishment.

GONZALEZ

In the meantime, Miss Weiss, I suggest you tidy up that locker.

RUDI

(with reverence)

Yes, sir.

GONZALEZ

Sir. I like how that sounds. There may be hope for you yet.

Rudi smiles at Mr. Gonzalez, and he smiles back just a little. He then turns and heads toward the school offices, followed by Mr. Thompson.

Suddenly, the students start CLAPPING, and Mr. Gonzalez stops and spins around, and he sees they are cheering him. Surprised, he nods a couple of times and struts toward the offices -- again followed by Mr. Thompson.

THOMPSON

But, Mister Gonthaleth . . .

GONZALEZ

The name's Gonzalez!

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE

Tommy nervously paces as Rudi steps outside -- and she grins at him.

TOMMY

What's going on?

RUDI  
Let's just go.

Rudi rushes off.

TOMMY  
Where?

RUDI  
Anywhere.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Tommy and Rudi speed out on the Harley, and pass Deke's Porsche. The car then stops, but only to make a U-turn -- and it follows the motorcycle.

EXT. SOUTH ORANGE AVENUE - DAY

Tommy and Rudi ride up the steep hill.

RUDI  
Where we going?

TOMMY  
To the best anywhere there is.

EXT. SOUTH MOUNTAIN RESERVATION - DAY

Tommy parks in front of a path leading into the forest.

RUDI  
This? I've been here lots of times.  
It's not the best anything. It's  
boring.

TOMMY  
That's only because you've never  
really looked.

Tommy descends the bike and helps Rudi off by the hand, which makes her smile. He then leads her down the path.

Quietly, Deke's Porsche parks by the Harley.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Angrily, Deke watches Rudi and Tommy fade from view.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Tommy drags Rudi by the hand through the trees, with the sound of RUSHING WATER in the background.

TOMMY  
We're almost there.

RUDI  
Almost where?

Tommy pulls Rudi into a clearing, where below stands a beautiful waterfall -- something that surprises Rudi.

RUDI  
I didn't know this was here.

TOMMY  
Not that many people know about it.

Tommy sits on a rock overlooking the falls and stares into the water, and Rudi joins him.

TOMMY  
I actually come here a lot. When my dad was in the hospital I was here almost every day.

Rudi puts her arm around Tommy, and she rests her head on his shoulder.

RUDI  
You know, you're okay.

TOMMY  
I am now.

Rudi glances at Tommy, and, after a brief pause, she reaches into her sea bag and pulls out the bag of joints -- which she throws into the water below.

TOMMY  
What was that?

RUDI  
My past.

EXT. CROSS HOUSE - NIGHT

Tommy walks Rudi by the hand to the edge of the front lawn, and he nods toward a window.

TOMMY  
We have an audience.

Rudi turns and sees Stephen and Pam standing in the window with their arms around each other, smiling at Rudi like the doting parents they truly are. Pam then drags Stephen away, and Tommy and Rudi turn to each other.

TOMMY

I guess I should --

Rudi falls into Tommy's arms and they hold each other. He further caresses her cheek with the back of his fingers, sending her once again into flight.

TOMMY

I . . .

RUDI

Just don't expect me to wear a dress.

INT. CROSS HOUSE - NIGHT

Rudi passes Stephen, who's sitting on the living room couch, looking as if he had eaten a handful of proverbial canaries.

RUDI

Don't say a word.

He smiles at her, and she reluctantly smiles back, just as the phone RINGS. She then walks to and up the stairs.

PAM (O.S.)

Rudi, phone call.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rudi excitedly picks up the phone.

RUDI

Hey.

No one answers.

RUDI

Maria?

DEKE (V.O.)

I've never been called that before.

RUDI

What do you want?

DEKE (V.O.)

What could I possibly want?

RUDI  
I don't got it right now.

DEKE (V.O.)  
What about your boyfriend?

RUDI  
What, what boyfriend?

DEKE (V.O.)  
That preppy shit I saw you with  
today. Man, it was pretty damn  
romantic fucking him in the woods.

RUDI  
You're wrong! It's not like that!

DEKE (V.O.)  
Don't lie to me! Remember, I taught  
you how! I taught you everything!

RUDI  
Look, I gotta go.

DEKE (V.O.)  
Fine -- just tell me when and where  
I can pick it up.

RUDI  
I told you -- I don't got it!

DEKE (V.O.)  
I bet your boyfriend does. Maybe  
I'll have a little talk with him.  
Or maybe I'll do a whole lot more!

RUDI  
(with sudden fright)  
You leave him the fuck alone!

DEKE (V.O.)  
Then get me my fucking money! Or  
something better! And tomorrow, you  
bitch!

INT. OUTSIDE SCHOOL CAFETERIA DOORS - DAY

An apathetic Rudi looks through the window and sees Tommy, Maria, Samantha, Owen, and the three geeks sitting together and laughing as if they had been best friends since birth.

Rudi rushes off.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

On the floor against the wall sits Rudi with her arms crossed, looking much as she did in jail -- only more frightened.

EXT. SCHOOL FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Rudi slithers out. Waiting there is Tommy.

TOMMY

What's wrong?

Rudi pauses for a moment before continuing on.

TOMMY

Why weren't you at lunch? Why have you been avoiding me?

RUDI

It has nothing to do with you.

Rudi runs off, and Tommy follows.

BY THE CURB

Rudi comes to a stop in front of Deke's Porsche, with her head lowered. The passenger door opens and she steps inside the car.

Watching this, Tommy hesitates a moment before rushing away.

EXT. ROUTE 22 ONRAMP - DAY

Deke's Porsche drives onto the high-traffic road, with Tommy's motorcycle following a safe distance behind.

EXT. SLEAZY MOTEL - DAY

The Porsche pulls up in front of the office.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Deke turns to Rudi, who's looking out the front window with a blank expression.

DEKE

I'll be right back, babe. Don't you go nowhere.



RUDI

I do this, I do this and you'll  
leave Tommy and me alone forever.

Deke smiles and opens the door.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

Deke gets out of the car and skips into the office.

Tommy parks behind the Porsche and rushes up to the  
passenger window, before rapping on it with his knuckles.  
Surprised and angered, Rudi turns to him and rolls down her  
window.

RUDI

What the fuck are you doing here?

TOMMY

What the fuck are you doing here?

RUDI

Go home -- I told you, this has  
nothing to do with you!

TOMMY

It does! You know it does!

Deke struts out of the office and grins.

DEKE

Well, if it isn't lover boy. You  
wanna join us? She's gonna be  
awfully busy, but you're more than  
welcome to watch.

Rudi jumps out of the car, and slams the door closed.

RUDI

(to Deke)

Let's just do this.

Rudi rushes toward Deke, who himself saunters toward a  
nearby room.

TOMMY

(pleadingly)

Rudi, what are you doing?

RUDI

I told you, Tommy -- I don't live  
in your world. I live in a totally  
fucking different one!

TOMMY

But --

RUDI

-- Go home already! Go home and  
forget me! I'm fucking trash!

Deke opens the door to the room and Rudi storms inside, with Deke smirking at Tommy.

DEKE

See ya.

Quickly, Deke backs into the room and slams the door closed. Tommy takes a few steps toward it, but he stops and hangs his head.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Moving slower and slower, Deke approaches Rudi, who's standing by the bed, looking more and more afraid.

He reaches her, and she clenches her eyes closed.

RUDI

Do it already!

Deke starts to unzip his jacket -- the sound of which causes Rudi to open her eyes. She then swings her leg up toward Deke's groin, like she did with Owen. Though, unlike with Owen, Deke catches her foot before it reaches its target.

DEKE

I fucking taught you!

With lots of fury, Deke flings Rudi's leg into the air, knocking her onto the floor. He further reaches for his belt, just as she sweeps her leg across his ankles, knocking him onto the floor. She also jumps up and throws a punch toward his face.

But he blocks it and throws his own punch, which connects with her face, sending her backward. He afterward straddles her waist and pummels her face with his fists -- and she CRIES OUT, with her toughness long gone, leaving only the frightened girl.

DEKE

I would've given you everything --  
fucking everything!

Suddenly, the door breaks open, and Tommy rushes inside -- and, with a GROWL, he picks Deke up by the arms and flings him headfirst into a wall, causing Deke's gun to fall from his waist onto the floor by the bed.

Noticing only Rudi, Tommy kneels beside her and sees her bloody face.

TOMMY

Oh my God, Rudi -- I have to tell  
you something. I . . .

Deke steps behind Tommy and punches him hard in the kidney, causing Tommy to gasp. Deke further grabs Tommy by the ears and drags him onto the floor.

Then, after slamming the door closed, Deke stomps on Tommy's gut and straddles his waist, and he pummels him, much as he did with Rudi -- only worse. Much worse.

A semi-conscious Rudi notices the gun lying nearby -- and she reaches for it. But it's just out of her grasp.

Deke stops punching, and he spits into Tommy's bloody eyes, which are barely registering.

DEKE

Before I kill you, I want you to  
see me fuck your girl!

Deke jumps up, turns to Rudi, and whips off his belt. He further unzips his pants, with a big smile on his face.

DEKE

It's show time, babe!

Rudi lunges forward, and she just grabs the gun -- which she points at Deke.

RUDI

It's show time.

She pulls the trigger.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Rudi tosses and turns in her sleep.

TOMMY (V.O.)

Just go away. I don't want you  
anymore.

RUDI

Tommy, please.

DARLENE (V.O.)

What a joke you are, thinking you could have someone like Tommy -- trash like you. You're nothing but a druggie whore from Irvington!

RUDI

No.

DARLENE (V.O.)

You think you're like Helena, but you're nothing like her! Now, get out!

RUDI

No.

TOMMY AND DARLENE (V.O.)

Get out! Get out! Get out!

RUDI

Nooooooooooooooooo!

A large hand grips Rudi's and she awakes and sees Dan standing over her, on the verge of tears.

RUDI

Dad?

DAN

I'm sorry.

RUDI

For what?

DAN

For what am I not sorry?

Rudi pulls her hand away and looks away.

DAN

I don't blame you for hating me.

RUDI

I don't hate you. I'm not sure what I feel.

DAN

I know how you feel. Boy, that sounded like a really bad pun. You, you look so much like your mom. Apart from the bruises, of course.

RUDI

I don't even remember what she looks like.

DAN

I guess it didn't help that I burned all her pictures.

RUDI

I guess not.

DAN

I loved her so much. But, but it just wasn't enough. Then, I saw you growing up just like her, and part of me just hated you -- and I can never make up for that.

RUDI

I used to hate you. I hated you because I made myself believe she left because of you. But I always knew she left because of me.

DAN

That's not true. It isn't. You were the only good thing she ever did, and that, that includes marrying me.

Rudi turns back to Dan, and she takes his hand.

DAN

Your shit is in good shape.

RUDI

That's good.

DAN

I didn't want you to kick my ass.

Rudi chuckles, and winces because of it.

DAN

Sorry about that. Well, I better let you get some rest. The doctor says you'll be here for a couple of days. So, if it's okay with you, I could drop by tomorrow after work.

RUDI

It's okay with me.

Dan releases Rudi's hand and starts to leave. Though he soon stops and turns back to her.

DAN

I probably shouldn't be telling you  
this. But that boy you came here  
with . . .

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

With a face overflowing with pain and determination, Rudi  
stumbles forward in her gown.

She turns a corner and sees Annette quietly talking to two  
COPS outside a room.

Rudi rushes toward the door, but Annette jumps in front of  
her.

ANNETTE

Where do you think you're going?

Ignoring the woman, Rudi steps around her -- but she again  
steps in front of Rudi.

ANNETTE

Haven't you done enough?

RUDI

You can't stop me.

Annette grabs Rudi by the collar of her gown and flings her  
into a wall.

ANNETTE

(with thick Brooklyn  
accent)

The hell I can't!

Rudi looks at the woman with both shock and fear.

ANNETTE

You think you're tough, but you  
ain't shit. Where I'm from, we ate  
fucks like you!

RUDI

You don't understand.

ANNETTE

(screaming)

What don't I understand?

A set of tears falls down Rudi's cheeks.

RUDI

I, I love him.

Reluctantly, Annette releases Rudi, and, even more reluctantly, she turns to the cops and nods -- and they step away from the door, which Rudi rambles toward.

ANNETTE (O.S.)  
I love him, too.

Rudi stops at the threshold and pauses, before stepping inside the room.

INT. TOMMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Rudi comes up to Tommy, who's lying unconscious -- and, after rubbing away her tears, she takes his hand, causing her to once again lose her breath.

Tommy wakes, looking half dead -- and he turns from her.

RUDI  
So, so you finally hate me.

TOMMY  
It must be way past visiting hours.

RUDI  
I've never been real good at following rules.

TOMMY  
I'm so cold.

Rudi lies on the bed behind Tommy, and she wraps her arms around his torso and caresses her cheek against his back.

Tommy gently takes her hands.

RUDI  
I'm not exactly wearing a dress, but, but I could. I could be, I don't know, I could be someone who wouldn't embarrass you.

Tommy doesn't reply.

RUDI  
Tommy?

TOMMY  
I fell in love with a punk rock girl -- a girl who was no one but her. Nothing less would ever do.

Rudi squeezes Tommy tightly and cries.

RUDI

You were wrong before. This is the best anywhere.

Slowly, Tommy turns his head toward Rudi, and he sees his reflection in her watery eyes.

RUDI

You, you're my fairy tale.

They move toward one another, and their foreheads and noses meet -- and they grimace in pain. He further softly kisses her -- with his lips barely touching hers. And she kisses him back just as softly.

The old romantic song PLAYS.

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Rudi and Tommy dance cheek-to-cheek, with their eyes closed and her fists desperately clutching his gown.

Suddenly, he opens his eyes, and he sees the shabbily dressed dancers -- along with Glenn Miller and his orchestra.

Glenn turns to Tommy and gives him a big welcoming wave.

Tommy waves back, and afterward he brushes the back of his hand against Rudi's cheek and smiles.

FADE OUT.