

Serendipity

Characters:

Arya - College student, suitemates with Gloria, Amy, and Mia, who are also members of the same friend group. She's closest to Gloria, a chipper personality that gets easily anxious or frazzled.

Gloria - A pretty cool and collected girl who intends to go into business or law, and also a college senior in the friend group.

Amy - The third member of the group, a pessimist and cynic, and secretly bi, she was the closest to Mia. In the last scene which takes place in the future, she is a mother.

Mia - A bright and cheerful girl, the final member of the friend group who is, at the time of this story, dead. However, she appears several times as a ghost.

Emma - Amy's adopted daughter, blunt and talkative, she should be played by the same actress as Mia.

Erik - Amy's ex-boyfriend and Gloria's friend who is semi in the friend group. Erik is a pretty level-headed guy.

Note:

1. The actress for Mia and Emma should be the same person, but there should be clothing or the way they speak or something else differentiating them since they are two separate people.
2. Scenes 1 and 10 take place in the mid 2030s. As of now, there's nothing firmly futuristic in the scene. But the director is free to use their artistic sense to add or design the scene in a more futuristic sense or change any language or props, especially to be more futuristic.

Scene 1:

The stage is set as somewhere on a college campus in the mid 2030's. Erik wanders onto the stage, as if seeing the campus for the first time in years, examining what has changed and what remains the same. He pauses at a certain point, examining a statue and muttering to himself.

ERIK:

Huh, I'm surprised they never changed this old thing. Still ugly as ever.

After a few moments of bending down to examine it he stands straight and looks around at the buildings.

ERIK:

They added more to the business school. Other than that...a few things here and there. Not much else.

All of a sudden, his musings are interrupted by the click, click, clicking of heels. Gloria walks on stage, fully clad in heels and a professional outfit as if she arrived straight from work. Erik looks towards her and grins.

ERIK:

Gloria, I see you haven't changed much.

GLORIA:

What's that supposed to mean?

ERIK:

Oh not much, I can still hear you from a mile away.

GLORIA:

Excuse me?

ERIK:

Nothing, nothing...came straight from work?

GLORIA:

Yes, I had a few meetings this morning about a new project we started.

ERIK:

Of course, you did. And still managed to make the reunion early.

GLORIA:

Naturally. This is important. You are earlier than me though.

ERIK:

Eh, I was in the area. I wanted to scope out the territory, you know.

GLORIA:

Scope out what? Not much has changed.

ERIK:

Well...sometimes it's best to be prepared.

GLORIA:

You have a point there...how are things?

ERIK:

Good, I just recently got married.

He holds up his finger to display a ring.

GLORIA:

Congratulations!

ERIK:

Yeah, thanks. I'm pretty happy. We're thinking of adopting soon too.

GLORIA:

Adopting?

ERIK:

Yeah, you know since we're both...His name's Alex.

GLORIA:

Oh. When you were with Amy I assumed you were...

ERIK:

That's what I thought too, till I met him.

There are a few seconds of awkward silence since the two don't have much to talk about. Finally, Erik breaks the silence.

ERIK:

Do you have anyone?

GLORIA:

No, no I don't. I was dating someone but...well, it's over now. My current priority is work.

ERIK:

That's so like you. You've always been hardworking, probably the most driven person I know.

GLORIA:

Thank you.

They have a couple more seconds of silence, then Erik speaks.

ERIK:

I wonder when everyone else is coming.

GLORIA:

Arya should be here soon, something cropped up at work so she's running a bit late. As for Amy I haven't seen her since we graduated.

ERIK:

Is she coming?

GLORIA:

I hope so.

Suddenly, Gloria notices someone offstage from behind Erik and frowns.

GLORIA:

Erik, is that...?

ERIK:

What?

He turns and his eyes widen in surprise.

ERIK:

Isn't that Amy? But wait, who's with her? I'm not seeing things am I?

GLORIA:

No, I see it too. That looks exactly like—

Blackout.

Scene 2:

The lights come on and the stage is set to be a dorm common room in 2022. Arya sits with a notebook or laptop screen as if writing or typing in a journal. She starts out writing or typing, but through the course of the scene, she gets up and walks around the room, narrating her thoughts through a monologue.

Arya:

A four-leaf clover. Rare, but when you do find it...precious beyond measure. Balanced, unlike three. Three is too many or too few, depending on how you look at it, the third wheel, unbalanced, can't be evenly split...unless you get into fractions, and that's a whole nother mess we don't need to address.

But four? Four is perfect. It can be split evenly in so many ways, a mother, a father, a sister, a brother, or with friends, they can go off in pairs of two and two. Like when you need to sit on a bus or roller coaster, and there are only rows of two. Or bathroom buddies like in elementary school. Four is perfect.

Or so I thought. But four also means death. Or, I guess it's associated with death since four and death are both the word "su" pronounced with different tones. In Chinese, Mandarin Chinese. Mina told me that before she...

We were four. Me, Mia, Amy, and Gloria. Whenever we split, it was me with Gloria, Mia with Amy. I mean, we could split other ways too. Regardless, it was *balanced*. But where's the balance now?

I don't know. Is it because Mia told us four means death? One of us had to die? But that's stupid. Just as stupid as me trying to find meaning in every little dumb thing now that she's gone. Even her succulent passed away, within a week despite our best efforts to water it.

Is that a sign? A sign of what, I don't know. But I can't help but wonder why? How many college students, heck, how many people face something like this in their early 20s? Why us?

And the worst part is, it doesn't hit you how often this kind of thing happens till it happens to you. Then you're in the *in-group*. You're the one everyone talks about. Oh, she's the girl whose suitemate passed away. Passed away. It sounds almost peaceful when you say that, but then you remember it was a violent car accident and—

And now I'm rambling. But they say rambling is good. Let it all out, they say. All of it? Even the dirty and the mucky. Even the frustration and the pain? I don't know. When I bring it up to others, they say, "Oh, I'm so sorry," and that's the end of it. If you bring it up again, you're the one being too much, making it too awkward.

It's over and done with for them. But they don't realize it's constantly on your mind. They don't realize it's in your dreams; it's *always* there. The reminder that you're no longer four, that you never will be...ever again.

Never again. The laughs, the jokes, the banter it's still there yet somehow changed. Irrevocably.

It hurts. But what's worse is that it doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense that she's just...*gone*. It's painful. We're all trying to deal with it in our own way. If you ask me, we need an open discussion. It won't fix everything, but it's a start. Well, for those of us who'll cooperate.

Arya turns to look towards Amy's door, then turns back to face the audience.

Arya:

Anyway. We're here now. This is us, us three. And the sooner we come to terms with that, the better...I don't know. I really don't know. But what I do know is we need to talk.

She turns back to Amy's door.

Arya:

Whether we want to or not.

Blackout.

Scene 3:

The lights slowly come on. It's still the dorm common room. Click. Click. Click. The stage fills with the sharp tap tap tapping of heels, brisk and short. Gloria walks on stage in short sharp steps, finally coming to a stop in the center of the stage. She's holding a phone or wearing a pair of AirPods, and her expression is clearly frustrated. As she speaks on the phone, she pauses after each sentence as if listening to the person on the other end.

GLORIA:

I know.

I know, Mom.

Mom, you've been saying the same thing again and again!

No, I'm not trying to be disrespectful. No. No, I'm not undervaluing what you and Dad have done for me. I am not.

Mom, will you just listen to me?

Mom, for God's sake, I know, I know everything you're saying right now; you've said it a million times—no, I'm not being defensive. I just don't want to talk about this right now! ... Yes, I know she was a sweet girl! Yes, I know it was a tragedy, I *know*. I know more than anyone else! And I'm fine, I really am. Ok, Mom! Mom, I'm taking 21 credits; I'm exec for 3 clubs—I *seriously* don't have time for this...

No, no, I'm not changing the subject! *Seriously*.

I'm not raising my voice at you! Mom I—

With a frustrated sigh, Gloria pauses for several seconds, listening to her mother lecture on the other end. She starts pacing impatiently, waiting to interrupt her mother's lengthy lecture. At this point, Arya comes into the room, peering in through the door. Seeing Gloria is on a phone call, she quietly slips into the room and sits down, taking out several pages of stats homework.

GLORIA:

I know. No, I'm not just saying that. Seriously.

Yes...yes, I'll be fine. I'm busy enough with my schoolwork, I really don't have time to think of anything else...

What do you mean I sound perfunctory?

Mom, would you just quit it?!

Arya flinches at Gloria's tone, burying herself deeper in her work. For a moment, Gloria is silent.

GLORIA:

Mom...don't cry...

With a sigh, she slides into the nearby chair.

GLORIA:

Mmhmm...Ok...yes, love you...I'll talk to you later, yeah...

Ending the call, she slumps back in the chair with a gusty sigh. She starts zoning out, her mind still running through her conversation with her mother. Seeing her conversation is over, Arya tentatively calls out.

Arya:

Gloria?

Gloria doesn't respond, still absorbed in her thoughts.

Arya:

Gloria?

GLORIA:

Huh? Arya?

Arya:

Hey, do you have time to answer a question? It's totally okay if you don't.

Gloria glances towards the packet.

GLORIA:

Stats?

Arya:

Yeah.

GLORIA:

Sure.

Arya comes to sit by Gloria, and she shuffles through the paper till she finds what she's looking for. She points it out to Gloria.

Arya:

Here, can you help me find the p-value?

GLORIA:

Yeah, sure...you just use the z table and like do the reverse of what you'd normally do.

Arya:

What?

GLORIA:

Like, instead of starting at this part of the table, do the opposite.

Arya looks at her blankly. Gloria sighs and turns the paper towards herself.

GLORIA:

See here? You use this instead so that the p-value would be...0.025.

Arya:

Why?

GLORIA:

Because...didn't you hear a word of what I just said?

Arya:

My ears did; my brain did not.

For a moment, Gloria is speechless in exasperation. And suddenly, a loud noise comes from offstage. Both girls turn towards it.

GLORIA:

Is she still...?

Arya:

Yeah.

They're silent for a moment. Then Gloria signs exasperatedly.

GLORIA:

Man, this is all so fucked up.

Arya:

Language!

GLORIA:

What? I'm not wrong. Besides, you're worse when you play Breath of the Wild.

Arya:

Fair...I mean, there's got to be something we can do...

GLORIA:

Like what?

Arya:

Well...we could...

GLORIA:

Yeah?

Arya:

We could talk!

GLORIA:

Great idea; let's all sit in a circle and talk about our feelings.

Arya:

That's what we should do.

GLORIA:

I was being sarcastic.

Arya:

I was being serious.

There are several more moments of silence.

Arya:

Mia would have agreed with me.

GLORIA:

Yeah? Well, she's not here.

Arya looks hurt, and Gloria flinches, immediately regretting her words.

GLORIA:

That's not...I didn't mean that.

Arya:

...I know.

They're silent for several more seconds.

GLORIA:

Alright, let's do it.

Arya:

What?

GLORIA:

Talk. Let's all sit down and talk about our feelings. Let's get it all out in the open.

Arya:

Seriously?

GLORIA:

Yeah. And I'll get Amy out of her room...or we can just go in hers.

Both girls turn to look towards Amy's room. After a moment, Arya snaps out of it and starts collecting her papers.

Arya: I may as well do this later. Night.

GLORIA: Night.

Arya walks offstage leaving Gloria lost in thought.

Blackout.

Scene 4:

The stage has a single bench or two chairs to the side. There's a pile of snacks in the corner of the room. The lights come on, but not completely. It's either a different color, or more dim as it's a dream (up to the director's artistic decision). Laughter fills the stage as four girls come in: Gloria, Arya, Mia, and Amy. Gloria strides forward, and Arya keeps pace with her. Behind them, Amy trails behind as Mia accompanies her cheerfully with a bounce in her step. They're giggling as they come to the center of the stage.

GLORIA:

Stupid rain.

Arya:

Who knew it'd just start pouring?

GLORIA:

The weather report...which we *should* have checked.

MIA:

Come on...don't you just love the adventure?

GLORIA:

No.

Arya:

Don't be grumpy...

GLORIA:

I'm not.

Arya:

Aww, look how cute your little pout is!

GLORIA:

I'm not pouting!

Arya:

Yeah, yeah...

Arya and Gloria leave the stage, Gloria walking with quick sharp steps, Arya bouncing along, teasing her, and giggling. Amy and Mia remain on stage.

MIA:

Hey...you ok?

Amy goes over to sit on a nearby bench, and Mia comes over to her.

MIA:

Hey...

AMY:

I'm fine.

MIA:

You sure?

Amy doesn't respond, and for a moment, it's just silent.

MIA:

Have you ever wished you could fly?

AMY:

What? No.

MIA:

Not even once? Wished you could just rise above everything, see everything.

AMY:

Never.

MIA:

I felt that way. In the theatre, when the guy's bald head blocked my view, I wanted to just fly above and see everything!

AMY:

That's because you're short.

MIA:

No, but it's not just there! There'll be times during the day when I just want to fly above, float more like...

AMY:

That's because you're too lazy to walk.

MIA:

Aw, come on, don't be such a grouch.

AMY:

Why do you still hang out with me, then?

MIA:

Because we're friends, stupid, anyway, you've really never dreamed of flying?

AMY:

No.

MIA:

Oh.

AMY:

But I have dreamed of other stuff.

MIA:

Like what?

AMY:

Sometimes...I wish I could teleport. Whenever I'm feeling awkward or anxious or—or being such a miserable, crabby sourpuss that I'm bringing everyone down, I can just snap my fingers and bam! I'm in the comfort of my own room. I don't have to talk with anyone or deal with anything.

Mia sniggers.

AMY:

What?

MIA:

Sourpuss, haha; I've never heard someone use that word before.

AMY:

Wow, you completely ignored what I just said.

MIA:

No! No, I'm not ignoring it, just sourpuss, haha haha...

AMY:

You're being stupid.

Mia laughs.

AMY:

Stop; you're going to make me laugh too!

The two start laughing and eventually find themselves sitting or lying on the ground together.

MIA:

So you wish you could hide from the world in your room whenever you want to?

AMY:

Not hide exactly....well, yeah, hide, sometimes. Other times, I want to protect everyone...from *me*.

For a moment, it's silent. Then Mia smacks her on the shoulder.

MIA:

What do you mean by protect everyone from you? Stop being melodramatic! Do you think you're the vampire dude from Twilight?

AMY:

Of all references, you *had* to choose Edward? And what do you mean vampire dude? If you're going to use that reference get the name right.

MIA:

Sorry, my mind blanked out. But it's literally every cringy teenage romance movie or novel out there. "Oh I'm so powerful and mysterious, I need to protect you from me. Oh I'm dangerous...blah, blah, blah". God, just thinking about it makes me nauseous.

Amy laughs.

MIA:

Anyway, so what's your deal, vampire lady?

AMY:

Huh?

MIA:

Why do you want to "protect us"?

AMY:

I'm not...well, you saw. I'm such a pessimist. I feel like I'll bring you all down by just being here.

MIA:

Oh for crying out—do I look down to you? Does anyone look down to you—well, besides yourself?

AMY:

...No.

MIA:

Exactly! You're not bringing anyone down, but by thinking you're bringing everyone down, you start bringing yourself down. It's like a weird conundrum situation. Ya know?

AMY:

Hmm.

MIA:

Honestly, though, going back to your dream wish, I agree about the anxiety part. Like, sometimes it'd be nice just to escape everything and take a break.

Mia looks out into the distance, her gaze caught by something somewhere.

AMY:

Yeah.

Mia does respond for several seconds and just as Amy gets ready to ask her what's wrong, she starts speaking, her voice dreamy sounding. The director can choose to add faint ghostly or melodious music to the background through the course of the following conversation and Mia continues gazing away from Amy lost in her imaginings.

MIA:

Imagine if you were someone, anyone else in any other situation, who would you want to be?

AMY:

I don't know.

MIA:

You know where I'd want to be? There was one time my family and I went up to Canada. We were hiking, and we reached a certain point. My brother was like 6 at the time, and my parents were tired too, but there was still some way to go. So my dad dared me to go further.

AMY:

Did you do it?

MIA:

Obviously. I started walking, and it got to a point where there was a gap in the trees. I could see the sky and some of the surroundings. I didn't want to give up so I kept going for a while till I came by a cliff.

AMY:

That's where you wish you were? On a cliff?

MIA:

Well, it's not just any old cliff!

AMY:

Oh yeah?

MIA:

Yeah, totally.

AMY:

Then what made it so special?

MIA:

Hmm...I don't know how to express it...it's like in that singular finite moment, I felt...

AMY:

Dumb?

MIA:

No! Small. So, so small, yet at the same time, in all my smallness, *I* was the one standing there in that moment and everything I was experiencing, every glimmer of the sky, every tweet and twitter of the birds, the vast expanse of mountainous...*everything*...just laid out in front of me, at that singular moment, it was all...mine. And, at that moment, there was one word in my mind.

AMY:

What?

MIA:

Serendipity. Because sometimes life works out in mysterious ways. And in that moment, it felt like I was *meant* to be there. Like mysterious forces had conspired to put me in that spot at that exact moment.

AMY:

You're so sentimental.

The background music/noise stops and Mia turns back to Amy with a smile.

MIA:

You say that like it's a bad thing!

Amy gives her a look, and Mia shrugs. She walks over to the center of the room and gives a twirl just for fun.

AMY:

You're such a kid.

MIA:

You ever wonder?

AMY:

About what?

MIA:

Just...within a few years, we'll all be separating, all going our separate ways. No promise we'll be in the same state, in the same country even. Considering that, it's amazing how close we, the four of us, have become in the span of one—scratch that, not even one year.

AMY:

Uh, sure.

Amy looks away from Mia. She goes to pick up one of the snacks piled up in the corner.

MIA:

Why only sure?

AMY:

Three years is a long way away.

MIA:

I suppose...but it'll be here before we know it.

AMY:

...I guess...

MIA:

And then...

AMY:

And then what?

Amy continues staring into the distance, crunching away at her snacks. Mia doesn't answer her, frozen and staring off into the distance, the opposite side from Amy.

AMY:

Mia?

Amy turns back around to see Mia staring somewhere offstage. She gets up to try to see what's wrong with her, dropping the bag of chips/some sort of snack along the way.

AMY:

Hey, Mia?

Mia doesn't answer her. Suddenly, the lights go off, and Mia rushes offstage. The lights flicker on and off, then they turn on fully no longer dim or colored, leaving a confused Amy looking left and right.

AMY:

Mia? Mia! Where are you?

After a couple of second of searching frantically around the room, Amy slowly sinks to the floor and curls up into a ball. She starts rocking back and forth nervously, muttering Mia's name. After several seconds of this, she scrambles up.

AMY:

MIA! I know you're here, I know you're right here!

She's met by either silence or a faint howling sound, like the sound of the wind. Amy bends down and gasps as if undergoing a panic attack.

AMY:

No no no no nonononono!

Amy starts moaning, the sounds once again transforming into Mias name. She walks around the room dazedly, running into and knocking over something on either the bench or one of the two chairs. The objects (maybe binders) clatter to the ground. Offstage, Arya and Gloria call Amy's name.

AMY:

...one, two, three...one, two, three...where's four? Where *is* she?!

Arya:

Amy?!

GLORIA:

Hey Amy!

AMY:

...nonononono...

Arya:

Amy!

GLORIA:

Shit! We have to go in.

Arya:

But how?!

GLORIA:

Give me a sec.

After that, sounds the clatter of a pin being inserted roughly into a doorknob. Amy continues moaning and stumbling and finally crumples to the floor and starts whimpering or sobbing. After several rattles, Arya and Gloria force the room door open. They rush to either side of Amy, Arya whispering comforting words and hugging her while Gloria awkwardly pats her back from the side. Slowly, Amy becomes aware of their presence and starts speaking to them.

AMY:

...as here.

Arya:

What?

AMY:

She was here.

Arya:

Who?

AMY:

Mia! She was here, just a few seconds ago, she was just—just—

Arya:

Amy...

AMY:

She was! I know you don't believe me, but—I...

GLORIA:

Mia's dead.

It's silent for several seconds.

Arya:

Amy...?

Amy takes three breaths, each breath getting softer as she calms down.

AMY:

I know.

Arya:

Are you...?

AMY:

I'm fine.

GLORIA:

You're obviously not.

AMY:

I'm *fine*. I just had a dream. We all have dreams. Gloria, remember that one time you dreamt there was a kumquat in your bed, and you were so sure there was until you woke up and there was nothing? Or Arya! When you dreamed that Gloria helped you with stats and even started dream singing!

Arya:

Amy...that's not the same.

AMY:

But see it is! You have a dream and you think it's true. You think it's true, and you truly believe that it is until you wake up and realize...realize...

GLORIA:

I don't moan, scream, and hit chairs in my dreams.

Arya:

Amy...

AMY:

I'm *fine*. Besides, don't you guys have class?

Arya checks her phone.

Arya:

Oh shit, it's 9:54, we have to run! I can't miss anymore classes, I've already exceeded my drops.

GLORIA:

But what about Amy?

Arya glances toward Amy.

AMY:

I'm fine.

GLORIA:

But—

AMY:

I'm seriously *fine*. Don't you dare skip class because of me.

Arya:

But if you're not okay...

AMY:

Did you not hear me? *Go*.

GLORIA:

You know what? I'll stay.

Arya:

You sure?

GLORIA:

Yeah, I still have a couple drops left, you can go.

AMY:

No, don't—

Arya:

Alright, call me if you need anything.

GLORIA:

Sure.

Arya leaves.

AMY:

No, just go to class! Don't stay here because of me—

GLORIA:

It's not because of you. I don't really want to go.

AMY:

You...I seriously want to be alone right now.

GLORIA:

Okay. I'll be right outside, in the living room.

Gloria leaves the stage. After she leaves Amy slowly sits down, staring into the distance. Her breath starts to get disorderly as she has another panic attack. As she starts whimpering, her phone starts ringing: it's the chorus of Em Beihold's "12345".

Floating Away Like I'm a Kite

Reminding Myself I'm still Alive

Try not to panic every night

One, two, three, four, five

As the music plays, Amy slowly calms down and by five she's calm. She gazes down and the lights go off.

If "12345" cannot be used for copyright reasons, please select another song, maybe the ghostly song from earlier, maybe something else, which helps Amy calm down.

Scene 5:

The scene is set in a classroom. Gloria and Arya are sitting side by side at desks. Each desk has a paper and pencil or an open laptop. Arya has her phone in her hand under her desk, and Gloria has her phone lying next to her on her desk. For this scene, any dialogue after Arya's first line is assumed to be text messages. Either the actors can whisper to each other, or if a projector is available, project the texts behind the actors along with pre-recorded audio. Or, let it be a scene with no talking and only projections and messaging noises.

Suppose it's not feasible to have a phone on stage or use a projector. In that case, this conversation can just be a whispered or lower volume conversation, and in that case, please disregard Arya's first line and continue from her second line: "Is Amy okay?"

Arya reaches over to Gloria's desk and knocks on it with her knuckle. Gloria looks towards her quizzically. Arya gestures with her head toward her phone. Not understanding, Gloria continues to look confused. Arya gestures again, and Gloria continues to look blank. Finally, Arya forcefully grabs Gloria's phone and shakes it in front of her, and speaks in a harsh whisper.

Arya:

Your phone!

Gloria shushes her and Arya looks around in embarrassment as if the students around her are staring at her. She takes out her phone and starts texting Gloria.

Arya:

Is Amy okay?

GLORIA:

Yeah, I made sure she was before I left the dorm.

Arya:

No, like in general. She's been having constant dreams, right?

GLORIA:

Yeah...

Arya:

Today, it has to be today.

GLORIA:

What?

Arya:

The conversation!

GLORIA:

Amy doesn't look ready for it, though.

Arya:

It's *because* she's like this that we need to have it asap.

GLORIA:

I guess...How much will it actually help, though?

Arya:

At the very least, it's better than bottling it up like we're doing now.

GLORIA:

I guess. Word of warning, I can't do it till pretty late.

Arya:

Why?

GLORIA:

I have to work out. And class. And a club meeting.

Arya:

That's fine; I have more class too. And it's probably better to do it once we've finished up everything else for the day.

GLORIA:

Yeah.

They sit in silence for a few seconds.

Arya:

Have you heard anything from Erik?

GLORIA:

No, he hasn't contacted me since...before. And I haven't seen him with Amy.

Arya:

What is he doing? He should be here for her!

GLORIA:

Well...

Arya:

What?

GLORIA:

Never mind, it's probably nothing.

Arya:

Tell me!

GLORIA:

Amy and him got into a fight after...

Arya:

A fight! Why?

GLORIA:

Because, well...

Arya:

What?

GLORIA:

It's nothing.

Arya:

It's *obviously* not.

GLORIA:

I'm not sure about it, and I'm probably overthinking it anyway.

Arya:

Tell me.

GLORIA:

I'll tell you later. Anyway, the professor's going over the problem you had a question about; you probably want to pay attention.

Arya:

Fine, but make sure to tell me later.

Arya and Gloria put down their phones and start watching the board.

Blackout.

Scene 6:

The lights come on and it's Gloria, standing at the side of the stage holding a pair of dumbbells. She's doing bicep curls one at a time. After she does a couple, Erik strides in from the other side of the stage with his own set of dumbbells.

ERIK:

Hey, Gloria.

GLORIA:

...Hey Erik.

Erik starts doing tricep extensions, accentuated with a loud grunt. Gloria glances over at him as if she has something to say, but he remains absorbed in his workout. She does a curl, glances at him, does a curl, glances at him, finally, she can't take it anymore, and opens her mouth to speak.

GLORIA:

Erik.

ERIK:

What's up?

GLORIA:

Why aren't you with Amy right now?

ERIK:

She doesn't want me to be with her.

GLORIA:

What do you mean?

ERIK:

She told me to leave. So I left.

GLORIA:

You're her boyfriend. You should be there for her, and besides, she's not herself right now.

ERIK:

Well, whether she's herself or not, she *obviously* doesn't want to see me.

GLORIA:

She's like that with everyone. She doesn't want to see anyone right now, but someone needs to be there for her. It may as well be you.

ERIK:

Aren't you guys there?

GLORIA:

Yeah but she won't talk to us and Arya thinks you being there might help.

ERIK:

Yeah, well what does she know? Being as dense as she is—

GLORIA:

Erik!

ERIK:

Sorry. But like, you *know* right? That Amy and the dead girl...

GLORIA:

Her *name* is Mia.

ERIK:

Yeah sorry. But like the two of them...

GLORIA:

The two of them *nothing*. Mia and Amy were friends.

ERIK:

So you're deluding yourself too? Huh, I would have expected more from you.

GLORIA:

Hey. Are you going to see Amy or not?

ERIK:

What good would that do?

GLORIA:

It might help, you guys used to be so sweet together. Remember the day we all got ice cream together, or the other time with the puppies, or—

ERIK:

I get it.

It's silent for a few seconds. While the two are discussing, actors can play around with different exercises to add a touch of comedy or to fill the silence, ranging from but not limited to lunges, squats, reverse flies, etc.

GLORIA:

Anyway, she really needs you right now.

Erik gives her a skeptical look.

GLORIA:

Fine, she needs *someone*, and you might as well be it. Try and see her some time?

ERIK:

I don't think this is gonna end well...

Gloria gives him a look.

ERIK:

Okay, fine, you said it, not me. I'm going to go do some pull-ups.

He turns and leaves the stage, Gloria remains behind, still using the dumbbells. After a few seconds, she sighs, setting the dumbbells down; she sits on the floor and starts stretching.

GLORIA:

God, what a mess everything is. We're such a mess without you Mia.

She shakes her head as if to clear it.

GLORIA:

What am I even saying? Mia isn't here anymore. She's...in a better place, away from all this mess.

She looks towards the side of the stage where Erik left.

GLORIA:

He can be an insensitive an asshole sometimes, but...I feel for the guy. Amy, what were you thinking? But then again, I guess it's not that straightforward, is it?

She thinks for a moment, then irritation wells up in her, and she jumps up and yells.

GLORIA:

God! Why is everything so damn complicated!

She looks around her embarrassed by bothering the people around her.

GLORIA:

Sorry.

She picks up the dumbbells. Then turns and exits the stage.

Scene 7:

The scene opens with Amy in her dorm room, same set as the dream scene, sitting on a chair, humming or singing Em Beihold's "12345" (or something else if copyright is an issue). The lighting is either dim or colored. While it's not a dream, a ghost does come on stage.

AMY:

I don't feel a single thing...have the pills done too much...

AMY:

Ah geez, what am I doing?

Amy sits up and looks at the room around her, the binders on the floor, the chair toppled over.

AMY:

I'm a mess. I'm a complete utter mess. God, if Mia were here she'd make me clean it all up....if Mia were here.

She's silent for a moment. Once she speaks there's a waver in her voice.

AMY:

The worst part is...I can never, never have a conversation with her again. I can never see her, never talk to her. I almost feel like if I just go in her room she'll be there, laughing at another one of those dumb cat reels. And she's *everywhere*. She gave me this.

Amy holds out her hand where she's wearing a cute bracelet (maybe one that has a cat design/bead on it).

AMY:

She'd always tease me about how messy my room was. Not like hers was much better, she just stuffed things in the closet and under the bed. Every time you looked under there it'd be clothes, books, shoes. God she had so many shoes and she'd always leave them in my room! Sometimes, I still find a random flip flop of hers lying around. She's *everywhere*. She even recommended my shampoo, something as stupid as *that* reminds me of her. What do I do? What can I possibly do? She's everywhere, but nowhere that I can actually see her. I find a decent Instagram reel, I go to send it to her...then I remember. I remember she can't see it, she'll *never* see it. Again.

And I just. I just can't. Technically I understand that life goes on. I understand I have classes and eventually I'll have interviews and finding a job and I'll be busy. I understand that plenty of others have gone through what I'm going through, and I understand that people die all the time. I get it all; I really do.

But it's not easy to comprehend that she's just... gone. And all the memories, all the moments, all the ice cream sandwiches and cat reels, will never happen again...except in my head or heart. Screw that! It's not fair! Why her? Mia was the brightest person in the world! Why not someone grumpy and dull, like me? She was the one who had dreams, had aspirations, I'm the one who's always running away, always hiding.

No one answers her and Amy buries her head in her hands. After a few seconds, Mia walks on stage. She looks around, confusedly then, notices Amy at the side.

Mia:

Amy?

Amy doesn't hear her. After a few moments, Mia goes to sit by Amy.

AMY:

Mia...

Mia flinches in surprise.

Mia:

Amy?

AMY:

Mia...

Mia:

Amy!

Mia waves a hand in Amy's face, but she doesn't respond. It's clear that she can't actually hear Mia. But Mia decides to respond anyway.

AMY:

Mia, what do I do?

Mia:

Anything you want to Amy. The sky's the limit.

AMY:

Will you ever forgive me?

Mia:

For what?

AMY:

Of course, you won't.

Mia:

For *what*? You haven't done anything that needs my forgiveness.

AMY:

I shouldn't have gone with Erik that day, I shouldn't have stayed with him at all!

Mia:

What? Wait—

AMY:

If I hadn't gone with him, if I'd hung out with you instead...maybe you'd be alive.

Mia:

What bullshit, even if I did hang out with you that day instead of going out, who's to say I wouldn't get into another accident another day! Who's to say you wouldn't go with me and get killed yourself?!

AMY:

It's all my fault...

Amy breaks into sobs as Mia frustratedly circles her. After several moments, Amy's phone starts ringing, same song she was humming earlier whether that's Em Beihold's 12345 or something else. After a moment Amy slowly goes to pick it up while Mia hovers around her.

AMY:

...Hello?

She freezes and her expression visibly changes to a frown upon hearing who is at the other end.

AMY:

...What do you want?

She listens for a moment.

AMY:

I don't want them, you can keep them.

She sharply hangs up the phone, leans against the wall, and sighs. She stays there, staring up reminiscing. Meanwhile, Mia hops around the room, a little curious, a little antsy, a little unsure. After a few moments, Arya's voice sounds.

Arya:

Amy, look who I found outside!

Mia:

It's Arya!

Amy frowns.

AMY:

What?

Arya:

Can I come in?

AMY:

Fine.

Arya steps on stage, bringing Erik behind her. He has a couple bags of clothes and stuff with him: it's Amy's stuff. Note: in this section, Mia interjects between the three who cannot see her. The director/actor can make their own choices when the actors speak at the same time or if there's a pause.

Mia:

And Erik, hi guys!

AMY:

What are you doing here?

ERIK:

I'm just here to give you back your stuff...

AMY:

I told you I didn't need it!

Mia:

Amy?

Arya:

Amy!

Amy rounds on Arya.

AMY:

Why the hell did you let him in?

Mia:

Why are you mad at Arya?

Arya:

I just thought—

AMY:

Yeah, you thought. You're always thinking about everyone else's business! Always thinking you know what's best for *everyone* else. Why don't you just mind your own business for once?!

Mia:

Amy!

Arya looks hurt, and Erik tries to mediate.

ERIK:

Hey, I was the one who asked her to let me in, don't—

AMY:

And you. I said I never wanted to see you again!

Mia:

No, don't say that!

Arya:

Excuse me. Do you think you're the only one that's hurt? She was *my* friend too. Stop acting like the victim and taking it out on everyone else! Besides, that's your boyfriend, and he's here to help. Stop treating all of us like enemies!

AMY:

He is *not* my boyfriend. And you wouldn't be my enemy if you didn't *betray* me like this!

Arya:

What do you mean betray you? I was just trying to help you!

Mia:

She was just trying to help!

AMY:

Ha! Help me? Yeah right.

Arya looks ready to argue further with her, but Erik stops her. Meanwhile, Mia either continues to move around anxiously or watches nervously.

ERIK:

Alright, enough. Stop acting like a brat Amy.

AMY:

What do you—

ERIK:

I get that you're feeling hurt and in pain, but that's no reason to act like this. Especially since Arya and I haven't done anything wrong.

AMY:

Haven't done anything wrong? How dare—

ERIK:

We dated for two years. Then you turn around and tell me that you were leading me on. That you never liked me, you were just fucking lying the entire time. Are you seriously going to blame me for everything right now?

Amy tries to respond, but nothing comes out.

Arya:

What's going on?

ERIK:

Amy's just upset that she couldn't admit her *real* feelings, and now it's too late.

Arya:

What do you mean?

ERIK:

She was in love with the dead girl.

Mia:

Dead girl...*me*?

Arya:

Is that true, Amy?

AMY:

...It's none of your business.

Arya:

You loved Mia? Like romantically?

AMY:

I said it's *none* of your business!

ERIK:

Yeah, keep lying to yourself. That's what you did for the past two years when we were together, isn't it?

Arya:

Erik!

ERIK:

What? It's true. I don't even know why you dated me. What was I, just a spare you could throw away when you were done with it?

AMY:

Get. Out.

ERIK:

You—

Arya:

Come on, let's just go.

Erik opens his mouth to speak, but Arya pulls him out. The two leave, leaving behind Mia and Amy. Amy either slowly sinks to the floor or gets into bed, and Mia watches her, worried. After a few moments, Mia realizes she isn't going to move and she comes further downstage.

Mia:

I always liked math the best. Specifically, calculus. Because it's straightforward...well, it may be challenging, but there's always one right answer. With people, it's rarely ever as simple. Take Amy, for example, I had no idea that she...no, I can't say that. I can't say I had *no* idea.

But what could we do? She was dating Erik, and now...well, she can't even see me, can she? No point in dating a ghost. If I'm even a ghost. I really don't know what I am. Maybe I'm a figment of someone's imagination. A made-up apparition, being transcribed onto some page somewhere in a one bedroom apartment with instant ramen packets scattered around.

She pauses for a moment, thinking about that.

Mia:

Well, when all is said and done, here we are. Here I am. Why am I here, exactly? And, am I even really here? Who's to say? Once again, if I *am* really here, then *why* indeed am I here? Don't they usually say ghosts have some purpose? Some lingering last wish that prevents them from moving on? Do...I have one?

At this moment, Amy sobs and calls out for Mia from her bed.

AMY

Mia...

Mia:

Amy?

Naturally, Amy doesn't answer her.

Mia:

Oh...I wish you could see me.

Blackout.

Scene 8:

The scene is set in the dorm common room, the same space where Arya initially did her monologue and where Gloria had her phone call. At the side is Arya's journal/laptop and a chair.

Arya:

I'm sorry.

ERIK:

It's not your fault.

Arya tries to speak, but nothing comes out. Finally, Erik turns to leave.

ERIK:

I should go.

Arya:

I...yeah.

Arya watches as Erik walks out. Then she comes to sit by the journal and picks up the pencil/gets ready to type. She bites her lip in thought, then Gloria steps into the room.

GLORIA:

Arya?

Arya:

Hey...

As Arya starts to speak, her voice ends in a sob.

GLORIA:

Hey, what's the matter?

Arya:

I—

Arya shakes her head with a sob.

GLORIA:

Hey, hey shh...it's okay.

She gives her a hug and Arya hides her face in Gloria's embrace. After taking a few breaths, she slowly separates and speaks.

Arya:

I don't know what to do...I just, wanted to help her but Amy said I betrayed her and I was a busy body and, and—

GLORIA:

What happened?

Arya:

I let Erik in to see her.

GLORIA:

Ah.

Arya:

I didn't think it would be—wait, you knew didn't you? That's why you said that in class!

GLORIA:

That Amy liked Mia? Yeah, I kind of did.

Arya:

So it was just me?!

GLORIA:

I mean, either way it's not like she could do anything about it. And she probably wouldn't even say anything if not for...

Arya:

Poor Erik.

The two stand in silence for a moment.

Arya:

So...what now?

GLORIA:

Well, first, I have to shower.

Arya:

We need to talk.

GLORIA:

After my shower.

Arya:

But can we? Even? Like, with Amy acting like *that*.

GLORIA:

Well...

Arya:

I don't know if I can face her right now, honestly.

GLORIA:

Why don't we do it another day?

Arya:

When?

Blackout.

Scene 9:

The lights come on and it's still the dorm common space. Arya is sitting at the desk/table, writing in her journal. Near her Gloria sits on the couch, reading a book.

Arya:

Wow, hard to believe exams are in a few days, huh?

GLORIA:

Yeah.

Arya:

Last time we're all living together, and Amy is still...

Amy tentatively steps onto the stage, on the side where Arya can't see and Mia trails behind her. Gloria notices Amy but Arya doesn't (none of them can see Mia for now).

GLORIA:

Amy.

Arya:

Yeah.

GLORIA:

No, Amy's here.

Arya

Yeah in her room, I know—

GLORIA:

No. She's *here*.

Arya whips her head around in shock.

Arya:

Amy?!

AMY:

...Hey guys.

It's silent for a second. The pause is embarrassing.

AMY:

Uh, how are you all?

GLORIA:

We're doing fine; how about you sit down?

Amy awkwardly sits at the very corner of the couch, and Mia sits on the ground next to her or remains standing. Arya looks conflicted but, hurt by the previous remarks, she doesn't speak. After another moment of awkward silence, Gloria finally speaks.

GLORIA:

So...how are things?

AMY:

They're...fine, yeah.

GLORIA:

That's good.

Gloria tries to look toward Arya and signals with her eyes. If telepathy existed between them this is what they'd be saying the following (if a projector is available it can be used).

GLORIA:

Didn't you want to talk?

ARYA:

Yeah, but...she said I was being a busybody

GLORIA:

But she's not herself.

ARYA:

But does that excuse it? Mia's death didn't just affect her.

They might also possibly be texting each other the above, if it's too difficult to show actors having a conversation with their eyes or have a projector for these few words. Or if all options are too difficult, just assume Gloria gives Arya a look, and she's reluctant.

Arya:

Why'd you come out?

GLORIA:

Arya!

Arya:

What? After all this time, she finally decided to show her face. Why now?

AMY:

I...I'm sorry.

Arya:

Are you? Are you really? Stop acting like a victim, Mia's death affected all of us; not just you.

AMY:

Yeah, but you weren't in love with her!

It's silent for a moment. Mia stares at Amy in shock and the other two don't know how to respond.

GLORIA:

Alright, everyone calm down.

Arya:

If you were in "love with her" (*Arya uses finger quotes*), why didn't you ever do anything about it?! You were off happily dating Erik, and you never would have said a word if Mia didn't *die*—

GLORIA:

Arya!

AMY:

Shut up! Shut up shut up!

Arya:

Why? Because I'm *right*?

AMY:

What the fuck do you know?! You're not the one who...

Arya:

Who *what*?

AMY:

I couldn't just—she's a girl...

Arya:

So? This is 2022, not the fucking 1900s.

GLORIA:

Arya, Amy's parents are really conservative. Like *really* conservative.

Arya:

So? Do they make her choices?

GLORIA:

You always complain about how your parents expect all A's even in college. Everyone has their own things.

Arya:

...Fine. That still doesn't excuse your behavior towards me the other day.

AMY:

I said sorry.

Arya:

But you don't really feel that way, do you?

AMY:

Look, I've already apologized. What more do you want?

GLORIA:

Alright calm down.

Arya:

I won't. She says that to me then waltzes in here like everything's fine and—

AMY:

I'm not "waltzing in like everything is fine", does anything look fine to you? Do I look *fine* to you?

Arya:

There you go making everything about *you* again!

GLORIA:

Guys calm down—

Amy and Arya interrupt Gloria and start yelling at each other at the same time. At the side Mia hops around helplessly trying to interrupt the fight.

AMY:

No I will *not* calm down! I just lost...*everything* and now I'm being blamed by everyone and...

Arya:

You're always making it about *you*, *you*, *you*! We're upset about Mia too!

Mia:

SHUT UP! Shut up shut up shut up! Stop fighting like five year olds! You guys are grown ass adults. How do you think I feel seeing all of you fight like this? You think I wanted to die? No! But at least I had you guys as the best friends in the world, at least we got to spend all that time together. Now, here you are fighting like stupid little kids screaming about your problems, problems, problems! At least we had the time that we did together and at least you guys are *alive*.

The minute Mia starts talking Arya, Gloria, and Mia all become quiet listening. After her outburst, Mia grows quiet, only then realizing that the other three seem to be able to hear her.

Arya:

Is that...

When Amy speaks there's a waver in her voice.

AMY:

Mia?

GLORIA:

I heard her too.

AMY:

Mia!

Mia:

...Guys, can you hear me?

Hearing her voice again, the three look for her voice but they can't find her. Arya and Gloria look spooked while Amy looks ecstatic, frantically searching for her location.

AMY:

We can hear you! Where are you?

GLORIA:

What in the...

Arya:

Is this even scientific?

Mia:

I don't know but uh...hey guys it's me. Long time no see? Or I guess hear, since you don't seem to be able to see me...

No one laughs.

Mia:

So...what's up?

Arya lets out a nervous laugh. Meanwhile, Amy continues looking for Mia by the sound of her voice.

Arya:

This is fake, an illusion, an—an—

GLORIA:
We're a mess without you Mia.

Mia:
I can see that.

Arya:
Wait, Gloria are you for real right now? This isn't real, it's—

GLORIA:
It's what? We can obviously hear her.

Arya:
But you're an atheist!

GLORIA:
I don't believe in God. That's different from acknowledging that weird shit sometimes happens in the world.

Mia:
Thanks Gloria.

GLORIA:
You're welcome.

AMY:
Where are you Mia?!

Mia:
I'm here but you can't see me or feel me.

AMY:
But—

GLORIA:
Amy, calm down. At least we can hear her.

AMY:
But what if she leaves?

Mia:
Hey, you know I'm right here? I'm not going anywhere.

GLORIA:
We don't know that. So we should take advantage of this time.

Mia:
To do what?

GLORIA:
To talk. Like Arya said.

The three look towards Arya, she still seems freaked out by the whole ghost thing.

GLORIA:

Anyway, how are you?

Mia:

Eh, however you can expect a ghost to be, I guess.

GLORIA:

Have you been here since you passed away?

Mia:

No, I've been here since two weeks ago.

GLORIA:

In our apartment?

Mia:

Yeah, well...with Amy.

AMY:

With me?

Mia:

Yeah.

Arya:

But why? It doesn't make any sense.

GLORIA:

Are you really talking about what does and doesn't make sense right now?

Arya:

Is this like a, clock strikes midnight and you disappear kind of thing?

GLORIA:

This isn't Cinderella sweetie.

Mia:

Like I said, I have no idea. But you guys are probably right in that we don't know how long this will last and we have to take advantage of it.

Arya:

How?

Mia:

Talk...I guess. Is there anything you want to ask me? Mind you, I don't actually know where people go after death, I've been stuck here since I can remember.

GLORIA:

Do you regret it?

Mia:

My death? Yeah, obviously. But what can I do? Not like I had a choice, and all I can do is treasure the memories I got to have. At least I had a childhood, I got to be an adult. Many don't even get that.

GLORIA:

Wow, what a positive outlook—

AMY:

Do you blame me?

MIA:

What?

AMY:

For everything that happened to you.

MIA:

No. *Never*.

AMY:

But—

Mia:

Look, my death was an *accident*, okay? You hanging out with your boyfriend that day didn't do *shit*, okay? Even if I did stay home and hang out with you that day, who's to say I wouldn't be in another car accident the next week? So stop moping about something you have zero control over. It's *not* your fault, get that in your head.

AMY:

...Did you ever like me?

MIA:

What?

Hearing this, Gloria drags Arya to the side of the stage where they sit or huddle in a corner.

ARYA:

Hey—

GLORIA:

Come on, give them some privacy.

AMY:

Did you ever like me at all?

MIA:

I mean, you were one of my best friends—

AMY:

No, not as a friend.

Mia:

Well, I mean even if—if there was something else, not saying there was or would be at all, it's over and done with now.

AMY:

Because of Erik.

MIA:

No! I mean, well yeah you were obviously taken when I *was* alive. But regardless, it's unfair to blame Erik. And...I'm not alive anymore so I guess none of that matters.

AMY:

It's all my fault, I deserve to have you hate me...

MIA:

No! Stop it! Why the hell do you have to keep acting like this? It wasn't your fault. And I don't hate you, but—but I don't like you that way, okay? I'm dead now but even if I wasn't I'm *straight* and I'm okay so stop ruining your life and get your shit together! Where's the Amy that never missed a class? That got almost straight A's huh?

AMY:

I—

MIA:

You have nothing to blame yourself for—well, except screwing yourself over like this! Get yourself together, if not for yourself, for me. Promise me you will.

Amy doesn't respond.

Mia:

Amy.

AMY:

...Ok.

Mia:

Good, okay the first step is to go and watch all the lecture videos you missed. Man, I feel like a mom.

Amy is silent for a moment, then she speaks.

AMY:

Are you okay?

Mia:

I'm fine, better than ever actually. No more headaches in corporeal form.

Mia awkwardly laughs. Amy frowns, then she opens her mouth again.

AMY:

Was there really never any hope between us?

Mia:

...No. There was none.

Amy is silent for several seconds.

AMY:

Ok.

Mia:

But—but you'll always be my best friend.

AMY:

Me too.

GLORIA:

Hey don't forget about us!

Arya:

Yeah!

Mia:

Love you guys!

GLORIA, AMY, Arya:

Love you Mia!

It's silent for a moment and maybe the clock strikes midnight. Then Gloria speaks.

GLORIA:

Mia? You still there?

Mia:

Yeah I'm here.

But Gloria, Amy, and Mia don't hear her.

GLORIA:

...Guess she left.

Arya:

We should go too.

The two look towards Amy who is still standing there.

Arya:

Come on Amy.

AMY:

Is she really gone?

GLORIA:

Seems like it.

AMY:

But—

GLORIA:

Come, on. You might as well do what she said and catch up on those lecture videos for the exam this week.

AMY:

I guess.

GLORIA:

Come on, you promised her.

AMY:

...Fine.

Amy exits with the other three and Mia is left on the stage.

Mia:

Guess they can't hear me. Huh.

She takes a few steps in the direction the other three left.

Mia:

Lies. I make it a habit not to lie. My mom hates lies, especially after the situation with dad...she was never the same till she met my stepdad. Cause of that, she made me promise never to be like him, never to lie. But...I just did...twice.

I'm not okay. And I'm not...straight. I lied, I lied, hahaha...

Mia starts crying while laughing hysterically. She squats down covering her face.

Mia:

I'm not okay. How could I be okay? I'm fucking *dead*. I'm fucking dead and I can't do anything except stupidly hang around *here*, seeing my friends get on with their lives and—and—

I want a life too! I want to go on dates with a cute girl and even take stupid exams because at least then I'll feel something and be fucking alive! At least then I...I...

She leans back against the wall, heaving for breath. Then, just as it looks like she's calmed down she lets out a shrill scream.

Mia:

Why? Why? FUCKING *why*?

If there's a pillow on the couch or something throwable nearby she chucks it across the stage in her rage (If I wasn't afraid of the actor being hurt, I might have her punch the wall). When Mia speaks again, she speaks with a sob.

Mia:

Why...

Some sort of tinkling music starts to play and maybe the lighting changes too. It takes Mia several moments to hear it but once she does, she looks up as if in a trance. She slowly starts to walk towards it, like a zombie except light, as if she's drifting. She disappears off stage. After several minutes of silence (almost to the point where it's awkward), you hear the giggle of a baby.

Scene 10:

The stage is once again set as the college campus years in the future. To one side, Erik, Amy, and Arya are standing or sitting in a huddle. The audience should and Arya not be able to clearly see Mia, ideally she's wearing a hoodie with the hood up, obscuring her face. Arya rushes onto the stage from the other side, frazzled and dressed in business casual or semi formal attire from having just come from a meeting. She notices the trio and comes over to them.

ARYA:

Hi everyone!

GLORIA and ERIK:

Hi Arya.

AMY:

Hey.

Amy and Arya share a look, they parted on less than the best terms, and it's a little awkward now. A second later, Arya catches sight of Emma who's likely staring at her phone or distracted by the buildings or something around her.

ARYA:

Mia!?

EMMA:

Huh?

ERIK:

Oh boy.

GLORIA:

Arya she's not who you think—

ADITI:

Are you Mia? No, you can't be, but...

AMY:

Arya!

ERIK:

She's not.

EMMA:

Why is this happening *again*?

AMY:

It's complicated sweetie. Arya, come sit down, let me introduce you to my daughter Emma.

Arya comes to sit down, still visibly trying to make sense of the whole situation.

ARYA:

Hi...I'm your mom's friend.

EMMA:

Hey.

There's a moment of awkward silence.

ERIK:

The campus hasn't changed much, has it?

GLORIA:

Yes, I was surprised. Our old dorm is still there.

AMY:

I gave Emma a whole tour, I told her that's where her mother spent her college days.

EMMA:

And you keep telling me to go here too.

AMY:

Well, you still have plenty of time but there's no harm in exploring options.

GLORIA:

Oh? Do you know what you're interested in?

EMMA:

I mean, I like math. Numbers just make sense.

ARYA:

...Just like Mia.

AMY:

Don't.

GLORIA:

Arya.

EMMA:

Who's Mia?

AMY:

A friend.

ARYA:

Our good friend, she was especially close to your mom.

Gloria tries to signal to Arya with her eyes to stop talking, but Arya ignores it.

EMMA:

Really? If she was so close to you guys, why isn't she here?

ARYA:

She passed away.

EMMA:

...Oh.

ARYA:

But in the time she was alive she touched a lot of people. She's one of the brightest people I've known, even today. And she liked math, just like you.

EMMA:

...Are you comparing me to a dead girl?

ARYA:

No, no not like that. I just wanted to—

AMY:

Arya, stop it.

EMMA:

Mom, I want to hear about this person.

ARYA:

Amy, I'm not trying to start conflict. I think it's about time we bring everything out in the open, isn't that why you arranged this reunion?

Arya and Amy have a few seconds of eye contact while Erik and Gloria look slightly awkward on the side. Finally, Amy sighs and breaks the eye contact.

AMY:

You're right. I called you all here so we could all talk and finally lay things to rest.

EMMA:

What things?

AMY:

Hush Emma, don't interrupt the adults when they're talking.

EMMA:

Fiiiine...

AMY:

You guys know I skipped graduation, right? I wanted to go abroad, to travel and see the world like Mia saw it. Then, one day at this temple, I heard a baby crying, and something made me go to the backside of the temple. I only had two hours there, and of that, I'd already spent an hour and a half. I really should have moved on.

But something made me follow that sound, and when I walked to the back of the temple, I saw...

ARYA:

What?

AMY:

...A baby.

When she says this, Amy's gaze goes toward Emma.

EMMA:

Me?!

ARYA:

So she's adopted?

AMY:

Yeah.

ARYA:

But at the time, you didn't even have a stable job. Why did you...do you even have a partner to take care of her with?

As she says this, Arya darts a look at Erik.

ERIK:

Hey, don't look at me. I wasn't in contact with her until a few years ago when I became her editor. And besides, I have a partner waiting at home.

He flashes the ring on his finger.

ARYA:

Congrats!

ERIK:

Thanks.

ARYA:

Wow. It's crazy to think how many of us are married now. I feel so behind.

EMMA:

Okay. Can we focus on what's important here? I just found out that I was picked up at a *temple*.

ARYA:

Didn't you know you were adopted?

EMMA:

I mean, I did, but I didn't think it was in the middle of nowhere!

AMY:

It's actually a pretty well-known temple...

EMMA:

That's beside the point!

It's silent for several seconds.

ARYA:

But *why'd* you do it?

AMY:

Because...it just seemed like fate, you know? As if everything that happened up till that point was predetermined. If someone as bright and beautiful as Mia had to die...well, at least someone else could get a chance to live, you know?

At this, it's silent for several minutes. Finally, Mia speaks.

EMMA:

So it's because of your friend? Because I'm like her, that's why you adopted me?

AMY:

Of course not. How would I know who you'd look like when I picked you up?

EMMA:

So I'm not like a replacement for her?

At this, Amy starts laughing.

AMY:

Obviously not!

EMMA:

But you said I'm just like her!

AMY:

In that, you're bright and beautiful and love math? Yes. Personality wise? Not at all.
You're you, my little Angel.

EMMA:

Hey, don't call me that!

ARYA:

You know, it is kind of weird.

GLORIA:

Like fate.

AMY:

Yeah, that's why I gave Emma her middle name.

ERIK:

What?

AMY:

Serendipity. Because sometimes life works out in the funniest ways.

ARYA:

Serendipity...

AMY:

A death can lead to a life. You never know.

GLORIA:

You really never do...

ERIK:

Well.

He stands up and they all look up at him.

ERIK:

I say this has been enough talking for one evening. Why don't we all take a walk around the campus before it gets dark?

GLORIA:

Sounds good.

ARYA:

Fine by me.

AMY:

Good idea; we'll probably also get going soon after. Emma has school tomorrow.

The five walk across the stage, pointing at, exclaiming at, and looking at how the buildings have changed around them. Either they make it off stage, or they see something that catches their eye.

Blackout.

NOTE: This is a temporary ending. I'm most likely going to extend this scene by a few pages after the read-through.