

FADE IN:

INSERT - MICROCASSETTE RECORDER - CLOSEUP

A cassette is inserted and a finger (feminine) presses the play button. We hear the voice of FELICITY on the recording.

FELICITY

(V/O)

Sally: today I am filled with a joy that verges on mania. Everything is electric, vibrating. My nose started bleeding earlier today and the blood was so bright red that it hurt my eyes. But let me explain.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Students are celebrating the end of the year and upcoming graduation. The energy in the air is crazed, almost scary. Football players chest bump and high five over and over like they're trapped in an endless loop. A student throws graded papers up in the air and lets them rain down over two cheerleaders making out. One of the cheerleaders grabs a drifting paper and stuffs it into the other cheerleader's mouth, whose eyes roll back in ecstasy. Another student runs down the hall laughing, crying, hyperventilating.

FELICITY

(V/O)

It was a normal day aside from being the most important day of all of our lives.

Felicity moves through the chaos with an air of innocent naivete, like an oblivious fawn in a Hieronymus Bosch painting.

FELICITY

(V/O)

I still thought then that what happened in High School really mattered. That my feelings, so deep and profound at the time, would stay that way. The idea that all of these memories were trash that wouldn't matter at all in my actual life seemed so impossible that if you'd told me that at

the time I would have laughed out loud
and maybe spit in your face.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LOCKERS - DAY

The wild celebration continues, students ripping out the contents of their lockers and hurling them onto the floor. Felicity is calmly entering her combination.

FELICITY

(V/O)

I'll admit I felt pretty depressed about my future. But my sadness at that time at an almost romantic quality. Not like the horrible rotting feeling I have now. Maybe I thought if I felt sad enough, a prince would rescue me and I would live happily ever after.

Felicity looks over longingly at BEN, standing at his locker nearby. Her eyes glisten with both sadness and desperate hope.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Scenes from a graduation. People get called up to a podium, caps are thrown in the air, etc. I really don't care about this scene tbh.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - BLEACHERS - LATER

Felicity sits with her parents PETER and BARBARA. They are ecstatic, she stares blankly into space.

FELICITY

(absentmindedly)

My period of youthful innocence is almost at an end. There's some sort of massive crisis coming, I can feel it.

PETER

Oh hush. Don't be so dramatic. There's no massive crisis, just a slow erosion of hope and joy that grinds you down day by day until, gradually, it dawns on you that there's

nothing to look forward to and every memory that you thought was precious is actually worthless.

BARBARA
(chipper)

I don't know what either of you are talking about

I've never been unhappy even a single day in my whole life.

Felicity, as if half awake, turns to see Ben sitting over on the other side of the bleachers. A hoard of girls, all more popular and attractive than her, surround him waving their yearbooks for him to sign. Grinning, Ben is signing each in turn.

ANGLE ON - FELICITY'S FACE - TIMELAPSE

Her expression doesn't change but everything behind her moves in fast motion. Her parents (in fast motion) try to talk to her, wave their hands in front of her eyes, then shrug, give up, and leave without her. The bleachers around her clear out around her as day turns to night.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - BLEACHERS - NIGHT

Felicity sits alone. The bleachers are desolate. Stray papers blow past in the wind. On the other side of the bleachers, Ben sits signing one final yearbook, then hands it back to the exhausted but happy cheerleader who asked him to sign it. She turns to leave. As if roused from a deep trance, Felicity gasps and shoots to her feet. She hurries towards Ben, stumbling over the bleachers. Just as he turns to leave, she reaches him and puts a timid hand on his arm.

FELICITY
(timidly)

Hey. Do you think you could...?

Ben turns to her, his eyes flash with annoyance for a fraction of a second before his charming and pleasant mask returns.

BEN
Of course! Anything for you.

Smiling, he takes the yearbook from her and starts writing in it. Felicity's eyes well with tears of joy, watching him write. Finally he hands it back to her with another smile.

BEN

Here you go. See you around!

Trembling, Felicity opens the yearbook and looks at what he wrote.

FELICITY

(V/O)

This is what Ben Covington wrote to me:
"Dear Felicity. I know we didn't talk much
but this is my chance to finally let you know
how I feel..."

As Felicity narrates, we see a MONTAGE of other girls at home in their various bedrooms, each bedroom decorated to reflect their stereotypical high school girl personality type; one room pink and decorated with Disney princesses, another with boy band posters on the wall, another with grunge music posters, etc. They're all eagerly reading what Ben wrote to them, each smiling, eyes wet with tears of joy.

FELICITY

(V/O, continued)

"...I never had the courage to say it out loud,
but I think you are very special. Most of the
people in this school are interchangeable,
basically robots with no soul. But not you..."

In the montage, we start to see close ups of what the various other girls are reading in their yearbooks. The text written in each of them is exactly identical to what Felicity is saying out loud. We see maybe fifty different girls reading yearbooks with identical inscriptions over the course of the montage. Alternate shots of the yearbook pages with shots of the girl's faces, mouthing the words as Felicity says them.

FELICITY

(V/O, continued)

"...you alone are special. You alone are the

one real person in this school. The only one
with a soul. I can see the beauty of your soul
every time I look into your eyes. In everyone
else's eyes I see nothing. It's like looking
through a window into an empty room. Do you
ever
looking into a room in a stranger's house at
night? It's empty and the yellow light makes
everything look sad and sickly. Everyone else's
eyes are like that. But with you it's
different.
In your eyes I see something otherworldly,
like an infinitely ornate 4th dimensional
fractal
of glass and gold, folded in on itself and
always
in flux, shifting, changing, perpetually
becoming.
Becoming in each moment, impossibly, even
more beautiful than the last. I am so, so
thankful that I got to see this beauty in you
even if only for the briefest of moments.
But my greatest regret will be not being
able to live in that other place, that
shimmering place within you, forever.
Have a good summer!
- Ben."

CLOSE UP - FELICITY'S FACE

Her eyes widen with rapturous joy. A single tear runs down her cheek.

FELICITY

(V/O)

The happiness I felt at that moment was
something I'd never felt before and
something I would never feel again.

Felicity cries, holding the yearbook to her chest.

FELICITY

(sobbing)

This is it. Finally everything is ok.

I can feel it. Everything will be ok
forever.

INT. LIVING ROOM - PORTER'S HOUSE - DAY

Peter hurls a plate full of breakfast against the wall, shattering it, his face contorted with rage.

PETER
What did you just say?!!

Felicity sits frozen in terror at the breakfast table. Barbara sits next to her, calmly eating a bowl of Lucky Charms.

FELICITY
(quietly)
I said I'm not going to law school.
I'm going to go to state college instead.

PETER
Because that's where Ben is going, is that it?

FELICITY
Yes.

Peter howls with rage and pain, clawing at his face with his fingernails. He screams repeatedly, each cry less human and more bestial than the last. He pounds his fists on the table over and over. Barbara watches as her bowl of cereal bounces up and down, splashing milk on the table before finally crashing to the floor. She calmly sets down her spoon.

PETER
How could you do this to me?! To us?!

He whips his head around to glare at Barbara.

PETER
Don't you have anything to say about this?!

Barbara shakes her head slowly.

BARBARA

I don't need to say anything. It doesn't bother me that Felicity is throwing her whole future in the trash. Honestly, I'm going to enjoy watching the trainwreck of the rest of her life, watching her learn every single day that she made a huge mistake. My life will be perfect and her's will be shit, and seeing her fail will only make my perfect life all the sweeter.

Peter screams again, sinking his teeth into his forearm until blood drips down his chin. He spits blood onto the floor.

PETER

Well I'm sorry we can't all have your enlightened attitude, Barbara. Some of us care about the shame and humiliation of having a failure of a daughter, the permanent black mark it puts on us as parents and our genes!

Barbara shrugs.

BARBARA

I am a being of pure light. No guilt or shame can sully me.

Peter leaps to his feet, knocking his chair to the ground, spins and punches a hole in the wall.

FELICITY

(voice shaking)

I'm going with Ben and Ben will love me.
And then everything will finally be ok.

Peter and Barbara turn to look at each other. Abruptly, they burst into raucous laughter. Peter doubles over, then falls onto the floor laughing. Barbara stays seated at the table with perfect posture, her palms flat on the table as she laughs.

Felicity stands up from the table, trembling, and walks out of the

room. Her mother, still laughing, turns her head to watch her daughter leave.