

ABSTRACT

Miles to Go

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Director: Greg Garrett, Ph.D.

For my honors thesis, I have written an original screenplay that explores the themes of tragedy, family, and friendship. Inspired by independent movies such as *Sunshine Cleaning* and *Perks of Being a Wallflower*, and screenwriters like Scott Neustadter and Michael Weber, the screenplay focuses on a young woman, Charlie Abbott, who is dealing with the aftermath of tragedy and a revelation that changes her entire life. In an effort to escape her problems, Charlie leaves home and moves to a small town where she meets a group of people that have a huge impact on her life. While there, Charlie is forced to come to terms with all of the issues that she is trying to outrun. The screenplay focuses on the importance of family and friends in times of difficulty, and the instinct to run away from problems rather than facing them.

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MILES TO GO

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Honors Program

By

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INTRODUCTION

I never know how to start when I write. I have too strong a relationship with the backspace key, and more often than not, it takes me at least ten different tries before I write something that sticks. I'm not very good at beginnings. Or endings. And not just when I write, but in life in general.

I spent the entire month leading up to my freshman year here trying to convince my parents to let me stay home. And now that I am nearing graduation, I spend most of my time trying to extend my time here at Baylor.

When move-in day inevitably arrived, I cried and reverted back to childish antics to try to get them to stay, clinging to my dad like a toddler who does not want to go to daycare. I hated the idea of having to start over, without the comfort of my longtime friends, my family, and the house I grew up in. I was, and still am, painfully awkward with strangers, and I was certain that I would never make any friends in college. Despite all the reassurances from my family that college would be the best time of my life, I convinced myself that by choosing to go to Baylor I had doomed myself to four years of misery.

In the midst of my dramatics, I did what I had always done, and turned to books to comfort me. Specifically, the Harry Potter books. Ever since I was little, books have been my safe haven. I was too shy and introverted to talk to other kids, so I made friends with characters in books. I spent my childhood travelling to Terabithia, solving mysteries

with Nancy Drew, and most importantly, waiting for my invitation to Hogwarts.

Naturally, my love of reading developed into a dream of being a writer.

Throughout middle school and high school, I took every opportunity offered to write stories, whether that was the actual assignment or not. Once, in seventh grade, after I turned in a story about a young girl with cancer (I was always attracted to the dramatic, sad, and melancholy stories) my teacher called my mom to ask if I had cheated. My mom informed her that, no, I did not cheat, I was just a little too creative and too angst-ridden for a twelve year old.

Unfortunately, over the years, my love of writing dwindled as I worried about grades, friends, and most importantly (to my teenage self), boys. I soon learned that being the weird girl in the back of the classroom who spends most of her time consumed in books and writing was not going to result in any large measure of popularity. It only took me about ten minutes to come to the realization that I was definitely not cut out for sitting at the cool table during lunch. Luckily, I found a group of people that accepted me despite all of my quirks. Without the small group of friends that I made in high school, I doubt I would have made it to college with any shred of confidence. As I powered through the first semester of my freshman year, I reread *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* at least five times. During that time of transitioning to college, there were many other things in my life that began to fall apart.

One Sunday, when I was in fifth grade, my family was eating breakfast before going to church when something happened to my mom. I do not have a clear memory of what, but I remember that nothing was ever the same after that. I remember my dad

having to take her to the hospital, and that we did not go to church that day. I was ten and my sister was eight. Nobody ever really explained to us what happened. My mom and dad returned from the hospital later that day and we slipped into a routine of constant doctor's visits and medication.

One day, about a year later, I was at school helping paint props for an orchestra concert later that week when I saw my grandmother walk into the school. Instantly, I knew something was wrong. Either my mom or my dad always picked me up, and nobody had called to inform me that anything would be different that day. I vividly remember a sense of dread and fear. The rest of the day was a blur. I remember almost nothing after my grandmother told me that my mother had a stroke and was in the hospital. My mom spent the next eight weeks in the hospital, slowly relearning how to walk and talk. Slowly but surely, everything fell back into a routine again, just with a few more doctor visits and a lot more medication. Over the next eight years hospital visits became a part of that routine. I developed a keen sense of detecting when something was wrong. Oftentimes, my phone would ring and I would know instantly that my mom was back in the hospital. Yet, during that time, my mom remained the amazing and inspiring woman that she had always been.

Over the twenty-one years I have been alive, I have been to nineteen Baylor Homecomings. The only two times I missed were because my mom was in the hospital. My grandfather, mom, aunt, uncle, and many more distant relatives all went to Baylor. My grandpa played football here and never loved anything more than cheering on the Bears for the rest of his life. I never had any intention of going to any other college. I

only applied to Baylor, which in hindsight probably was not the smartest decision I ever made, but it was all that I ever wanted to do. I grew up walking around the campus with my mom hearing her talk about her religion professor, living in Collins, and eating at Penland. It never dawned on me that going to Baylor would mean that I would have to be four hours away from my mom, something that terrified me.

I spent most of my freshman year in constant fear that I would get a phone call telling me that she was in the hospital again. Luckily, an entire year went by without any bad news. During that time, I joined a Christian sorority, Kappa Chi Alpha, and finally found my place at Baylor. The friends that I have made through KXA made my years here the best time of my life. Without their support and encouragement, I would have been miserable. There's this saying that is often expressed in church and in chapel that God puts the right people in your life right when you need them most. I firmly believe that is what happened when I joined KXA. I did not know it then, but everything was about to fall apart, and I would need people to help me hold the pieces together.

The spring semester of my sophomore year was when everything began to crumble. My younger sister, who had been struggling with anorexia, was put into a program at Texas Children's Hospital for teens with eating disorders. She ended up staying there for almost three months. The third day of her stay, a week before Christmas break ended and I was supposed to return to school, my mom's heart reacted badly to all the stress and she was moved into St. Luke's Hospital, right across the street from Texas Children's. I had every intention of withdrawing for a semester to stay home, but my dad assured me that it was better for me to continue in school, that my mom and my sister

were in good care, and I could not do much for them by coming home. So I returned to school to start what would be one of the most challenging and stimulating semesters of my college career.

That semester, I was able to take Dr. Garrett's screenwriting class, which would be the first time in my life that I had the opportunity to take an entire class devoted to writing. Our big assignment for the semester was to develop and write our own screenplay. I knew that I did not want to write an action-packed thriller or a suspenseful mystery, but rather something that dealt with familial relationships and the effects of tragedy. At the suggestion of another girl in the class, I decided that my protagonist would be dealing with the revelation that she had a terminal illness. Through a fair bit of research, I decided on Huntington's disease, a genetic mutation that is incurable and difficult to treat. Slowly, I began to develop a story about a young girl, Charlotte Abbott, who is diagnosed with the disease soon after her mother's death. Throughout the screenplay, Charlie has to come to terms with her diagnosis, as well as the issues raised by her mother's death.

Over the course of the semester, I discovered that writing a screenplay was a lot harder than I imagined. There were all these terms I had never heard of, rules that were completely different than anything I had been taught before, a format that, frankly, was super weird, and my love affair with the delete key was still going strong. I never could keep anything on the page, often rewriting the same line over and over before I just decided to get rid of it completely. By the end of the semester, I only had forty-four

pages, and it was like pulling teeth just to get that much to stick. I left for the summer break with every intention of finishing it by the time I returned for the fall.

As usual, life got in the way of those plans. After having spent just two weeks out of the hospital in almost six months, my mom passed away. The days and weeks that followed felt impossible to get through. Half of the time I wanted to lay in my bed and pretend it was all a dream, and the other half I wanted to go out and act like nothing had happened. I refused to talk at the funeral and did almost nothing to help plan it. All I could think about was that my mom was gone, and that I had no idea what I was going to do without her. The last thing I wanted to do was return to writing a screenplay about a girl dealing with her mother's death. Writing fell to the back of my mind as it became a struggle to just get through each and every day. Even now, there are days where it seems like it will be impossible.

People always say that it gets easier to deal with death. It's not true. It is never easy, it just becomes routine. I think about my mom constantly; she's always in the back of my mind, talking to me and giving me advice. It will always be hard, but life always is, so I might as well grow stronger from it. As Dory says in *Finding Nemo*, just keep swimming. Who knew that advice from an animated fish with short term memory loss could be so influential? Although, I guess Winston Churchill said it first when he said "When you're going through hell, keep going." And that's all I could do, I just kept going.

Soon I found myself having to pick what I was going to do as my thesis for the honors program. I always intended on doing something that involved creative writing, but

I was not entirely sure whether it would be a novel, a series of short stories, or a screenplay. The more I thought about it, the more I was drawn to the idea of finishing a screenplay. I have always heard that college is the time to explore and do something different, and this seemed like a great way to do so. I did not know when I would ever get the opportunity to write something like this again, so I took it. I began to do some more research into screenwriting. I, along with Dr. Garrett, choose a few scripts to study, along with the book *Save the Cat* by Blake Snyder.

One of the screenplays that I chose to read was the script for *500 Days of Summer* by Scott Neustadter and Michael Weber. The script is clever, funny, and quirky, which makes for a great movie. I love the non-linear structure and the play on traditional romantic comedies. I knew that my script was going to be very different from theirs, but there were many characteristics of their writing that I wanted to emulate in my own script. One of the other scripts that really enjoyed studying was *Sunshine Cleaning* by Megan Holley. The screenplay deals with many of the same issues that I wanted to touch on in my own writing. The movie features two sisters, their father, and their dysfunctional lives. The two sisters start their own crime scene cleanup business as they struggle to keep their personal lives together. The movie is sad but funny, which is what drew me to it originally. I liked that there was no clear happy ending, that there were a lot of terrible things that occurred in the protagonists' lives, yet they kept going. The girls' mom died long before the start of the movie, but she still has a major function in the movie. The story of her death is revealed slowly, following many hints about what happened to her. I really wanted to include something similar in my script. I wanted

Charlie's mom to play a large role in the script, despite the fact that she is no longer alive at the time when the script begins. *Sunshine Cleaning* emphasizes the fact that the dead still have a huge impact on those they leave behind. That is a theme that I wanted to include as well.

As I continued to write, still struggling with keeping things on the page, I realized that I did not really know what I wanted my protagonist to learn from her journey. I knew that I wanted her to have to deal with her mother's death, and with her own terminal illness, and I wanted to focus on her relationship with her father, but I still did not have a real lesson I wanted her to learn. While I was writing, I realized that I kept having Charlie say that she could not keep going on her own without her mom. Strangely, I wrote that line a long time before my own mother passed away, but I realized that I felt the exact same way. I thought about the lessons that I had to learn. I thought about the people in my life who carried me through that time, about my family and my friends that shouldered my burden with me. I knew then that I wanted for Charlie to come to that realization as well that there are always people willing to do anything for the people they love. In *The Stranger*, Albert Camus writes "in the midst of tears, I found there was, within me, an invincible smile... For it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there's something stronger—something better, pushing right back" (*The Stranger*). This is exactly what I wanted Charlie to realize, a lesson that I myself had to learn. Despite all the misery in the world, something inside every person allows her to fight back and find something joyful in every day.

I struggled quite a bit with choosing a title for my script. For a long time I considered what would happen if I just left it as *Untitled*. That idea was quickly shot down by everybody I mentioned it to. I knew I wanted something that reflected both the physical journey Charlie goes on, but the mental one as well. The same semester that I started writing the script, I read the poem “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost. I loved the last stanza of the poem, especially the last two lines. I was immediately drawn to the idea of calling it *Miles to Go*, which would reflect not only the physical miles that Charlie travels, but would also represent everything that she wants to do in her life before she dies. For some reason, I talked myself out of that title, and left it as untitled until the last minute. People always say to go with your first instinct, and I would have saved myself a lot of trouble if I had stuck with mine. In my struggles to find a title, I came full circle back to *Miles to Go*. I never found another title that represented everything that I wanted it to as well as Frost’s poem does.

I drew inspiration from a lot of different scripts, but one of my major sources of inspiration came from music. I know that screenwriters have literally no control over the soundtracks to their movies, but that did not stop me from pondering what music would fit my writing. I thought about what song I would like playing during each specific scene. It’s slightly weird and I know that nobody will ever know what songs I was thinking about, but I still planned out an entire soundtrack as I wrote. From Simon and Garfunkel to Kelly Clarkson to Mumford and Sons, I carefully chose what songs would play in the background of each scene. One of those influences did make it into the script. My parents used to play Simon and Garfunkel in the car all the time when I was growing up. “Sound

of Silence” and “Homeward Bound” are two songs that I listened to a lot throughout the writing process. The opening line of “Sound of Silence” was particularly influential. I often pictured Charlie listening to the song over and over, hearing the words “Hello darkness, my old friend” during the time after her mother’s death. I listened to songs that reflected the sadness that Charlie feels, but that show the spark of hope that is still there.

I said earlier that I’m not good at endings. One reason for that is because I hardly ever finish anything I start. I’ve never been particularly driven or ambitious, which has caused me to spend a large part of my life only doing the bare minimum needed to get by. Admittedly, I still do that much of the time. And to be completely honest, I was fairly certain throughout every step of the thesis process that I was not going to finish it. Even now, as I write this, I am struggling to write an ending.

Over the past couple of months, as I am finishing up my time at Baylor, I have thought a lot about endings. I’m coming to the end of the most significant time of my life so far. Since I started my freshman year, my life has changed drastically. And surprisingly, I’m okay with that. Not all of the change has been good, but it has all changed me for the better. This thesis is something that I never would have followed through on in years past. I would have gotten tired, or stressed, or confused, and just given up. But I finished. Yes, I am tired, I have definitely been stressed and confused over the past semester, but I did not give up. With the encouragement of my family and friends, I finished writing an entire screenplay, something that I never thought I could ever do. Endings are still scary, but I know now that if I just keep going, something good will emerge from every one.

ACT I

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM MORNING

CHARLIE, a young girl, early twenties, is getting ready for the day, wearing worn jeans and a polo. She grabs a bag, throws it over shoulder and walks out of the room.

Only to open the door a second later and walk back in. She walks over to the side of her bed, picks up a picture of a beautiful young woman holding a baby off the bedside table.

CHARLIE

Love you Mom.

Charlie sets the picture down and leaves the room again.

EXT: GROCERY STORE DAY

A small, mom and pop type grocery store in the middle of a small suburban area of Arizona.

INT: GROCERY STORE: DAY

CU on CHARLIE leaning against the cash register reading a book, looking very bored. The store is empty, save one elderly woman with a cart full of cat food.

A PHONE RINGS

OTHER WORKER O.S.

(yelling)

Charlie, phone for you!

Charlie picks up the phone

CHARLIE

Hello?

What, again?

I'll be there as soon as I can,
please just---- Okay, I understand,
give me five minutes.

Charlie hangs up the phone and grabs her bag from under the counter, puts on her jacket and runs over to the worker, BRADY, at the register next to her.

CHARLIE

Brady, I need you to cover for me
for an hour.

BRADY

Seriously, Charlie? I can't keep
doing this for you.

CHARLIE

I know, I know, but I have to go.
I promise I'll make it up to you!

Charlie runs out of the store, hops into an old beat up
Toyota Camry. The car is messy, with books and CDs thrown
everywhere.

EXT POLICE STATION DAY

Charlie gets out of the car and grabs her bag. When she
slams the door shut, her jacket gets caught. She turns to
walk away but can't because of her jacket, she drops her bag
and everything falls out. Receipts, pieces of paper, gum,
her wallet and phone spill out around the ground. Charlie
sighs heavily, pulls her jacket out of the door, and
gathers her stuff back in her bag.

INT POLICE STATION DAY

Charlie runs in looking frazzled, things spilling out of her
bag. She runs up to a middle aged male cop, Richard,
standing at a desk filling out paperwork.

CHARLIE

(frantically)

Richard! Where is he? He is okay?
What happened?

RICHARD

He's fine, in the same place as
usual. What do you think happened?
The same thing as the last three
times he was here.

CHARLIE

Look, Richard, I'm sor-

RICHARD

I know, Charlie, but he's out of
control.

CHARLIE

(yelling)

You think that I don't realize that
he needs help? I'm doing everything
I can right now.

Charlie stops, breathing heavily and sinks down into the chair next to her. She looks back up at Richard.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry, it has been a really rough couple of months since—Well, it's been hard.

RICHARD

I understand you're going through a difficult time, but this needs to stop. I'll let it slide again, but this is the last time.

CHARLIE

Thank you so much Richard!

RICHARD

Have your dad call me when he gets back okay, I need to talk to him.

CHARLIE

I'll tell him, but you know how he is.

LUCAS, a young man, early twenties, looking disheveled and a little worse for the wear comes walking out alongside a police officer.

Luke sees Charlie and Richard talking to each other.

LUKE

'Sup?

CHARLIE

Lucas, we're leaving. Go out to the car, I'll meet you there.

Lucas rolls his eyes, and leaves dramatically, waving to each cop as he goes by.

CHARLIE

Thanks again, Richard. I won't let it happen again.

Charlie turns to leave.

RICHARD

(flustered and stuttering)
Charlie, wait. I know you probably
(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

don't want to hear this right now,
but have you thought about...well
I mean, have you gone to see the
doctor to get..

CHARLIE

(cutting him off from his
stuttering)
I'm going tomorrow. And before you
ask, I'm fine. I just don't want to
think about it right now.

RICHARD

(hesitantly)
Okay, well, good luck.

Charlie grabs her bag and throws it over her shoulder.

CHARLIE

Thanks, but I'm fine. I swear.

INT. CAR DAY

Charlie walks up to the car. Lucas has all the windows
rolled down and is blasting odd heavy metal music.

Charlie opens the car door, sits down and immediately
changes the station. Nice classic rock plays instead.

Lucas leans over and changes it again.

Charlie rolls her eyes and pulls out of the parking lot.

As they drive, Charlie and Lucas continue to fight over the
radio station.

Finally Charlie just gives up and turns the radio off
completely.

Lucas turns to Charlie and gives her a large grin.

LUCAS

So, Char, how has your day been?
Anything interesting happen in the
wonderful world of groceries?

CHARLIE

(sarcastically)
My day has been absolutely
fantastic, how about you?

LUCAS

It's been okay. A little boring.
Not nearly as exciting as last
night. Not that I really remember
much of it...

CHARLIE

Lucas, I'm sick of having to pick
you up from the police station or
drunk at a bar or passed out in a
field somewhere!

LUCAS

Charlie, you seriously need to calm
down. Everything's fine, chill out.

CHARLIE

Luke, this is the fourth time this
month I've had to bail you out of
jail.

LUCAS

It's not a big deal.

The car pulls into the driveway of a small, but cozy
looking, house.

Lucas gets out of the car, slams the door and walks into the
house.

Charlie follows and immediately trips over Luke's shoes that
he kicked off and left right by the door.

CHARLIE

Seriously? It isn't that hard to
just act like a normal human being.
LUCAS!!!

Silence

CHARLIE

LUCAS!

Charlie rolls her eyes and storms off

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM EVENING

Charlie lies on her bed, surrounded by bookshelves. Her room
is fairly messy, and a large map covers one whole wall.

She is lying on her bed staring at the same picture from
earlier.

ECU on the picture

FLASHBACK

INT KITCHEN DAY

A young Charlie, about 10 years old, is sitting on tall stool, her feet swinging. A beautiful young women, late twenties to early thirties, Charlie's mother MARGARET, walks up behind her.

MARGARET

Ready to bake some cookies,
princess?

YOUNG CHARLIE

Yeah! Can we make the peanut butter
ones? With the chocolate chips?

MARGARET

(grinning)

Is there any other kind?

Margaret starts to get the supplies together to make cookies. Young Charlie gets up to help.

Margaret turns on a stereo and Simon and Garfunkel's Sound of Silence begins to play.

Margaret turns back to Charlie and starts to sing along. Charlie joins in and they start to back cookies, laughing and singing along to the CD.

FLASHFOWARD TO PRESENT

Charlie is broken out of her reverie by the sound of a door slamming shut. She quickly stands up, puts the frame on her night stand and walks out. ECU as she throws one last glance at the picture before she exits the room completely.

INT. KITCHEN EVENING

GREG, Charlie and Lucas' Dad, a rough looking middle aged man, stands at the refrigerator, staring in.

Charlie walks in.

Greg continues to stare in the refrigerator.

There are a few moments of uncomfortable silence.

CHARLIE

Anything interesting happen at work
today?

GREG

Nope.

CHARLIE

Were you really busy?

GREG

Not any more than usual.

CHARLIE

Is your phone working okay?

GREG

My phone is fine. What's with all the questions?

CHARLIE

Dad. I called you like six times. Luke was arrested and I had to get him. That's supposed to be your job, not mine!

GREG

Look, Charlotte, I've had a long day and I just want to relax for a while.

CHARLIE

Dad, you can't ignore everything that goes on around here. Luke needs help!

Greg sighs and leans on the counter. He looks tired and run down.

GREG

Charlie, please just let me sit down for little bit. I'll talk to Lucas about it later.

CHARLIE

That's what you always say. He's constantly begging you for attention. Why do you think he keeps getting arrested? All you ever do is ignore him!

Greg says nothing but turns and walks out of the kitchen, grabbing a beer as he leaves. Charlie watches him go out.

CHARLIE

(calling out to Greg)

Mom would have never let Luke keep

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

acting like this! She would have talked to him!

Greg's back is still to Charlie.

ECU on his face. He looks crushed, but he doesn't turn around.

The door swings shut and a few seconds later the television turns on.

Charlie leans back against the counter, eyes closed, rubbing her temples.

Lucas walks in, pulling headphones out of his ears.

LUCAS

Char what's with all the yelling going on down here? I can barely hear my music. Is it possible for you to go five minutes without screaming at somebody in this family?

CHARLIE

Luke, I'm really not in the mood to deal with you right now. Can you please just go back to your room and try not to get arrested?

LUCAS

Did you seriously just tell me to go to my room?

Charlie stays silent, she turns and faces away from Lucas, breathing deeply, trying to calm herself down.

LUCAS

Charlotte, what has been going on with you lately? You've been acting like a drill sergeant and I'm kind of sick of it.

CHARLIE

A drill sergeant? That's what you think I'm doing? I'm trying to help you Lucas.

LUCAS

Well, you're not helping, okay. I feel like you're trying to control me.

CHARLIE

I'm not trying to control you, I'm sorry that's what it feels like. But Lucas, your behavior lately is ridiculous.

LUCAS

My behavior, seriously, Charlie? It's not your job to be worried about my behavior. Go out and have some fun every once and a while instead of worrying about me.

CHARLIE

I have to worry about you because nobody else will! Dad sure doesn't pay attention to anything that happens. And Mom--

LUCAS

Oh, so that's it. You're trying to replace Mom. Well you know what Charlotte, you're not her. And you never will be, because she's DEAD. SO JUST STOP!

Lucas runs out of the kitchen and out the front door.

Charlie turns to leave the kitchen with tears in her eyes. She heads back up the stairs to her room.

INT CHARLIE'S ROOM NIGHT

Charlie walks in her room, flops down on her bed and turns on her television. On the screen is the same scene from the earlier flashback, with Young Charlie and Margaret baking cookies.

Charlie lays on her bed and watches old videos of her mom for hours.

Charlie rolls over and looks at her clock. It reads 3:15 AM. She stands up, puts of a jacket and runs out of the room.

EXT. GRAVEYARD NIGHT

Charlie pulls up to a cemetery and gets out of the car. She grabs a flashlight, flips it on and begins to walk towards her mother's grave.

Finally she reaches it.

ECU on Margaret's grave, which reads "Margaret Johnson

Abbott, Loving Wife and Mother" Below that is a Walt Whitman quote "This is thy hour, O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless"

Charlie sits down in front of the grave.

CHARLIE
Mom, I can't do this without you. I
can't do it alone.

FLASHBACK

EXT CEMETARY DAY

It is the rainy, gloomy day of Margaret's funeral. Greg, Luke and Charlie are all standing and holding roses. People dressed in black are walking about, occasionally walking up to one of them to give them a hug.

CU on Charlotte's face. She has tear stains on her face, but she isn't crying. She looks sad, but strong.

CU on Greg. He looks exhausted and broken.

CHARLIE VO
I'm going to see Dr. Reeves
tomorrow to get the test. I know
you didn't want me to do it, but I
have to know. I've done my research
and I would rather know if I'm
going to die.

Everybody is gone from the grave, the funeral is over, and only Charlie still stands there.

She drops the rose on the top of the rest of them, then turns and walks away.

FLASHFOWARD TO PRESENT

EXT. MARGARET'S GRAVE NIGHT

CHARLIE
I miss you, Mom. So much.

INT CHARLIE'S ROOM MORNING

Charlie is lying asleep on her bed, the home videos still playing in the background, the picture frame in her hand.

CU on the alarm clock next to her bed, the time flips from 7:59 to 8:00 and an alarm goes off. A stuffed bear comes flying towards the clock, hitting the top and stopping the

noise.

Charlie rolls over and groans, puts her head in her hands and sighs. After a couple of moments she gets out of bed and stumbles into the bathroom.

INT KITCHEN MORNING

Charlie sits at the counter eating a bowl of cereal and reading a book. Lucas comes through the door and sits at the counter next to Charlie.

Charlie looks at him incredulously.

CHARLIE

Wow, I've never seen you up this early in the morning.

LUCAS

I couldn't sleep. And I'm hungry. Make me some eggs or pancakes or something.

CHARLIE

Getting up early must have really messed with your brains, I'm not your cook. Make your own food.

LUCAS

(in a whiney tone)
Why don't you ever do anything for me?

CHARLIE

There's some cereal in the pantry and milk in the fridge.

Lucas opens his mouth to reply but Charlie's phone goes off and interrupts him.

Charlie looks at her phone.

ECU on the phone which is displaying a reminder of her doctor's appointment.

Charlie stands up and turns to face Luke.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

On second thought, I will make you something. Eggs or Pancakes?

Charlie walks over to the refrigerator and starts to rummage through it.

Charlie looks back up at Lucas who is giving her an odd look.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
What? Is there something on my
face?

Charlie reaches up and touches her face, turns and tries to see her reflection in the microwave.

Charlie looks back at Lucas who is looking at her like she has two heads.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Luke! Quit staring at me!

Lucas stands up and walks over to the window, looks out it and stares up at the sky.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

LUCAS
Sorry, just checking for flying
pigs.

CHARLIE
I just felt like cooking. There's
nothing unusual about that!

LUCAS
(grinning)
Whatever. I'll have eggs, wouldn't
want you to burn the house down
trying to make pancakes.

CHARLIE
(smiling and chuckling)
Hey! I've only started a couple of
fires. I'm not that bad at cooking!

LUCAS
(laughing)
Not that bad? You failed home ec...twice!

Charlie looks down at the egg in her hand and looks back up at Luke and grins.

Lucas sees what she is about to do and starts to back away, putting his hands up in surrender.

LUCAS
Now Charlie, this isn't necessary.
I was just kidding!

Charlie winds up to throw the egg, still laughing.

Lucas backs away, a large grin on his face.

Charlie throws the egg and Lucas ducks as it comes toward him.

Greg opens the kitchen door at the exact moment Lucas ducks and the egg hits him square in the face.

Both Charlie and Lucas stop laughing immediately at the look on their dad's face.

LUCAS
(pointing at Charlie)
It was Charlie's fault!

CHARLIE
Luke!

GREG
One of you please explain what was going on in here.

CHARLIE
I was being good sister and making breakfast for Luke and-

LUCAS
(cutting Charlotte off)
And she tried to throw an egg at me!

Greg looks between Charlie and Luke, a serious look on his face. Finally he can't hold it in any longer and his face breaks into a large grin.

GREG
So Charlie was trying to cook? Well at least the kitchen is still standing.

Lucas and Greg burst into laughter while Charlie huffs and crosses her arms, but her amusement shows on her face.

CHARLIE
Fine, you guys can make your own breakfasts. I have to go to work anyway.

Charlie turns and grabs her bag off the counter, throwing different stuff in it. She turns and starts to walk out.

Charlie stops halfway out the door and turns around to look at Luke and her dad. They are laughing and cooking breakfast. Charlie smiles, happy to see them getting along, but there is a hint of sadness behind the smile.

Charlie walks out and gets into her car. She turns the car on and Simon and Garfunkel's The Sound of Silence is playing.

INT GROCERY STORE DAY

Sound of Silence is playing in the store, but it is faded and garbled through the grocery store speakers.

Charlie stands at a cash register reading a large book of poems. It is worn down and has obviously been read many times.

A women walks up to Charlie's lane and begins to load her items on to the conveyor belt, breaking Charlie out of her stupor.

Charlie sighs and gets to work.

INT EMPLOYEE LOUNGE LATE AFTERNOON

Charlie stands in front of a locker throwing her stuff into her bag, getting ready to clock out. Other employees are spread around the room, some talking, others just sitting around.

Charlie takes a deep breath, turns, and walks out of the room to her car.

INT CHARLIE'S CAR LATE AFTERNOON

Charlie pulls into a parking lot to a doctor's office. Simon and Garfunkel play in the background.

Charlie pulls into a parking spot, puts the car in park, but doesn't turn it off. Instead she sits still as a statue, staring out the windshield.

After a couple of moments, Charlie takes a slow, shaky breath, turns the car off and steps out. She visibly straightens up before walking into the building.

INT DOCTOR'S OFFICE LATE AFTERNOON

Charlie walks up to a front desk where a young, bored

looking female secretary sits.

CHARLIE

Um, Hi. I have an appointment for
Dr. Reeves at 3:30.

The assistant looks at the clock which reads

3:35 ASSISTANT

You're late.

CHARLIE

Yeah, well it's been a rough day.

ASSISTANT

Name?

CHARLIE

Charlotte Abbott

The assistant looks up from her computer for the first time, getting her first real look at Charlie. Her previously emotionless, bored look turns compassionate.

ASSISTANT

Are you Margaret's daughter?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

ASSISTANT

I heard she passed. I'm really
sorry. She was so sweet, always
smiling. We don't see many patients
that smile much.

CHARLIE

(looking sad/pensive)

Yeah, she was like that.

ASSISTANT

Have a seat, Dr. Reeves will be
with you in one moment.

Charlie sits down and looks around the waiting room. It is plain and boring, like any other waiting room. People sit around the room, some alone, others with family. A couple is sitting together in the corner crying. Charlie stares at them.

Charlie forces herself to look away and instead turns to look at the papers that are lying on the table. There are a variety of magazines that deal with living with terminal

illnesses, information pamphlets on genetic diseases, and flyers for support groups.

ASSISTANT

Charlotte Abbott? Dr. Reeves is ready for you.

Charlie stands up and walks out. The assistant gives her a sympathetic smile when Charlie passes her.

INT DOCTOR'S OFFICE LATE AFTERNOON

Charlie walks into the room, where a kind looking, grandfather-esque man, mid to late 50s, DR. REEVES, sits on a stool, writing something in a chart.

When Dr. Reeves hears her come in he stands up to greet her and shake her hand.

DR. REEVES

Good afternoon, you must be Charlotte. You look so much like your mother.

CHARLIE

(shyly/hesitantly)

Thanks. I, umm, I am here to do a blood test.

DR. REEVES

Ahh, yes, I thought as much when I saw your name on the appointment book. Would you mind taking a seat on the table?

Charlie walks over to the table, and props herself up on it, setting her bag down on the floor as she does so.

Dr. Reeves pauses for a moment, flipping through the pages of the chart in front of him. He looks unsure of where to start.

A couple of uncomfortable moments go by.

DR. REEVES

Now, are you sure you want to do this? Both of your parents expressed the wish that you and your brother not be tested.

CHARLIE

I'm sure. I have to know.

DR. REEVES

An understandable feeling, but have you truly taken the time to think about this?

CHARLIE

I've done the research, I know what taking this test could mean, but I have to know. I can't live the rest of my life wondering.

DR. REEVES

Well, let's go ahead and get started then.

Dr. Reeves gets off the stool and walks over to a counter, where his supplies are. He pulls on some latex gloves and grabs a syringe. He walks over to Charlie and stands in front of her.

DR. REEVES

Now take a couple of deep breaths. I'm just going to draw some blood. You'll just feel a small pinch.

Charlie nods and starts to breath deeply.

After a few moments, Dr. Reeves stops. He walks over to the counter, where he sets down the vial of blood, the syringe and takes of the latex gloves.

He walks back over to the stool and sits down.

CHARLIE

When will I know?

DR. REEVES

I'll send the sample to the lab and tell them to rush it. It will still take a few days though.

CHARLIE

How many? Like 2 days? Or a week?

DR. REEVES

(gently)

I'm not sure, but I will call you as soon as I get the results.

CHARLIE

So that's it then? I can leave?

DR. REEVES
That's it, unless you have any
questions.

CHARLIE
Not any I can think of, thanks.

Charlie hops off the table and grabs her bag. She begins to
walk out of the room.

DR. REEVES
Charlotte?

Charlie stops and turns around.

DR. REEVES
I'm very sorry about your mother. I
had such high hopes for her, the
medical trials seemed to be working
so well.

CHARLIE
Yeah, that's what we all thought.
Just when I allowed myself to think
that maybe she would get better,
everything suddenly got worse.

DR. REEVES
That's the unfortunate nature of
the disease. It's terrible. She was
just such a wonderful person.

ECU on Charlie's face. Her eyes are full of tears.

Charlie smiles slightly.

CHARLIE
Yeah, she was.

Charlie turns and walks out of the office.

INT CHARLIE'S ROOM EVENING-DAY ONE

Charlie sits at her desk, playing countless games of
solitaire.

She goes from sitting at her computer to walking in circles
around her room.

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM MORNING-DAY TWO

Charlie is laying upside down on her bed reading a book.

INT CHARLIE'S ROOM LATE AFTERNOON-DAY TWO

Charlie finishes the book that she was reading earlier, throws it on the ground and picks up another one.

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM MORNING-DAY THREE

Charlie is frantically cleaning her room.

INT CHARLIE'S ROOM NIGHT-DAY THREE

Simon and Garfunkel is playing loudly. Charlie is lying on her bed reading the large book of poems, yet again.

Lucas walks in.

LUCAS

Charlotte, would you quit playing that CD over and over. It is driving Dad crazy.

CHARLIE

I like to listen to it. It reminds me of her.

LUCAS

It makes Dad upset.

Charlie rolls her eyes, but gets up and turns down the music anyway.

LUCAS

Charlie, you've been up here for three days straight.

CHARLIE

That's not true.

LUCAS

Sneaking downstairs to raid the kitchen doesn't count. By the way, quit eating all the ice cream!

CHARLIE

Please leave, Luke. I just want to be alone right now.

LUCAS

Fine, I'll go. But you can't stay locked up here forever.

Luke leaves. As soon as he is gone, Charlie turns the music back up and goes back to reading.

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM AFTERNOON-DAY FOUR

Charlie is rearranging the furniture in her room. It is back to being a mess, despite her earlier cleaning.

After rearranging all the furniture multiple times, Charlie ends up putting it all back right where it was when she started.

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM EVENING-DAY FIVE

Charlie is sitting on her bed, surrounded by empty chip bags and wrappers from various junk foods, watching a cheesy horror movie.

On the screen a girl starts to walk down into a basement.

Charlie throws a piece of popcorn at the screen.

CHARLIE

Don't go down there, you idiot!

GIRL ON SCREEN

Hello? Is somebody here?

CHARLIE

Yes, I'm a monster here to eat you,
now follow the sound of my voice.

Charlie sighs and falls back onto her bed, the wrappers crunching and shifting as she does.

CHARLIE

Why are the people in these movies
so stupid? If you think you're
going to die, just leave, run away.

LUCAS OS

Charlie!

CHARLIE

What? I'm extremely busy right now.

Charlie grabs a Twinkie, unwraps, and takes a bite.

LUCAS OS

Doing what? Watching stupid movies
and eating Twinkies?

CHARLIE

No....I'm-

Charlie is cut off by the door to her room opening. Luke walks in the room and plops down on the bed next to Charlie.

He grabs a bag of chips from the bed and begins to eat.

LUCAS
-doing exactly that.

CHARLIE
Haven't you ever heard of knocking?

LUCAS
Whatever. So this is what you've
been doing up here the whole week?

CHARLIE
Did you come up here just to make
fun of me and steal my food?

LUCAS
To make fun of you, the food was
just a bonus.

CHARLIE
Ha-ha, you're hilarious. Now get
out.

Lucas gets up and walks out of the room. He takes a bag of
chips with him when he goes.

He turns and sticks his head back in the door.

LUCAS
By the way, your phone has been
ringing for the past twenty
minutes. You left it downstairs in
the pantry during your last food
raid.

Charlie bolts off the bed, food, wrappers and dvds spilling
onto the floor.

CHARLIE
What? Why didn't you say anything
earlier?

Charlie runs out of the room and down the stairs.

When she is gone from the room, Lucas grabs some more food
and goes into his room.

INT KITCHEN EVENING

Charlie runs into the kitchen. She begins to search
frantically for her phone, but the kitchen is a mess.

Her phone starts to ring and Charlie runs over to it.

She hesitates a second before answering.

CHARLIE

Hello?

DR. REEVES OS

Hello Charlotte, it's Dr. Reeves.

CHARLIE

Yes, I know. Did you get the results?

DR. REEVES OS

The lab sent the results to my office this afternoon.

CHARLIE

Well?

DR. REEVES OS

I'm sorry, Charlotte, I haven't seen the results. They came in after I left.

CHARLIE

Oh, okay.

DR. REEVES OS

Why don't you come in tomorrow and we'll take a look at the results together.

CHARLIE

Okay, I'll come when I get off work. Thank you.

DR. REEVES OS

I'll see you tomorrow. Good bye.

Charlotte puts the phone down, turns and walks out of the kitchen. She looks blank and robotic.

Charlie walks back into her room and slams the door.

INT GROCERY STORE DAY

Charlie stands at her register looking anxious. She glances up at the clock. 5 minutes until the end of her shift.

Charlie sighs and helps a customer that walks up to her.

INT. WAITING ROOM AFTERNOON

Charlie walks into the waiting room at Dr. Reeve's office.

At the desk sits the same assistant that was there before.
Charlie walks up to the assistant.

CHARLIE
Hi, uhh Charlotte Abbott. I'm here
to see Dr. Reeves.

ASSISTANT
Ahh, yes. You can go right in.

Charlie turns to walk in.

ASSISTANT
Good luck.

INT DOCTOR'S OFFICE LATE AFTERNOON

Charlie walks into the room. Dr. Reeves is sitting down
holding some papers. He looks grave and serious.

Charlie sees the look on his face and immediately knows the
results.

She wobbles and nearly collapses, but Dr. Reeves catches
her. He sits her down in a chair and takes a seat next to
her.

DR. REEVES
I'm so sorry. I'm so so sorry.

Charlie just sits in the chair looking down at her lap. She
isn't crying, just sitting still and staring blankly.

DR. REEVES
Charlotte? I know that this is hard
to process. Can I get you some
water or something?

CHARLIE
I'm fine.

DR. REEVES
Okay, well I assume you must have
some questions.

CHARLIE
So what do I do know? Just go home
and wait for the symptoms to show?

DR. REEVES
I recommend continuing on with your
normal life. When symptoms do

(MORE)

DR. REEVES (CONT'D)

start, we will begin treatment.

CHARLIE

How am I supposed to live a normal life? I'm going to die and you're telling me to go home and watch Ellen like it's just another normal day of the week.

DR. REEVES

Charlotte, there are a lot of experimental treatments, research is being done, and it could be another fifteen years before any symptoms show up.

CHARLIE

None of them worked for my mom. And they aren't going to work for me.

DR. REEVES

Every person is different. Your mom's case is completely different from yours.

CHARLIE

With my mom it started with shaking, then tripping and falling, then seizures. She couldn't walk or talk or do anything.

Charlie stands up and begins to pace around the room. Her speech grows more and more frantic. She begins to cry harder and harder.

CHARLIE

She used to love to sing and read out loud. When I was little she would read me poems. She loved to sing while she cooked. And she couldn't do any of that by then end.

The door opens and the assistant walks in carrying a glass of water.

CHARLIE

By the end, she didn't even know who I was. She kept asking what my name was, over and over.

Dr. Reeves stands up and tries to stop Charlie's pacing and

ranting, but she keeps going.

CHARLIE

That's what is going to happen to me. I'm not going to be able to do anything. I'm going to die, just like she did, confused and falling apart.

DR. REEVES

Charlotte, it is going to be a long time before anything starts to happen to you. You still have so much time left.

Charlie is crying hysterically by this time, practically hyperventilating.

CHARLIE

I have to get out of here.

Charlie runs out of the room, knocking into the assistant as she does. Water spills out of the cup and onto the floor.

EXT. MARGARET'S GRAVE EVENING

Charlie is sitting in front of her mom's grave, tears streaming down her face.

FLASHBACK

EXT. BEACH DAY

Young Charlie, Young Luke, and Margaret are playing in the sand. Each one is trying to build their own castle, they are having some sort of contest. Margaret's castle is clearly the best.

A younger and happier looking Greg runs and knocks over Margaret's castle.

Margaret stands up and chases Greg. They are both smiling and laughing.

FLASHFOWARD TO PRESENT

EXT. MARGARET'S GRAVE EVENING

Charlie is still sitting and staring at the grave.

CHARLIE

I'm scared, Mom. I don't know what to do.

Silence is the only response.

CHARLIE

I can't do this. I have to get out
of here.

Charlie stands up and runs out of the graveyard. She gets in her car and speeds away.

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM EVENING

Charlie is in her room, frantically throwing clothes and books into a suitcase. When the suitcase is nearly full, Charlie carefully places the picture of her mom on top, along with a few home videos.

Charlie walks over to her desk and scrawls a message on a piece of scrap paper.

She grabs her bag and the note and heads out of the room.

Charlie takes one last look around the room. It is oddly empty, all of the books are gone and it looks cleaner than it has ever been.

Charlie walks out of the room and down the stairs. She leaves the note on the banister at the bottom of the stairs and walks out of the house.

EXT ABBOTT HOUSE EVENING

Charlie loads all her stuff into her car, gets in and drives away without a second look.

INT. ABBOTT HOUSE NIGHT

Lucas stands in the kitchen.

LUCAS

Charlie? CHARLIE?

Lucas walks up the stairs to Charlie's room, walking right past the note. He opens the door and looks in. He sees that it has been cleared out.

LUCAS

DAD!

Lucas turns and runs out of the room. As he is running down the stairs, he sees the note lying on the banister. Lucas picks it up and reads it.

Lucas looks shocked at the note. He turns and walks into the living room, where Greg sits watching tv.

LUCAS
Dad, you need to read this.
Charlotte left.

Lucas hands Greg the note.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR NIGHT

Charlie is driving. The signs "Welcome to Nevada", "Welcome to California", and "Welcome to Oregon" pass by.

CHARLIE VO
Dad, I had to go. I'm sorry, but I
couldn't stay there any more. I saw
her everywhere and I just couldn't
handle it. I'll call you. I love
you, goodbye.

Charlie passes a sign that says "Welcome to Yachats, Oregon"

FLASHBACK

INT CAR DAY

A much happier looking Greg, Margaret, Charlie (about 18 or 19), and Luke (about 15 or 16) are riding in a car.

They pass the same "Welcome to Yachats, Oregon" sign.

They all are laughing, talking, joking and having a good time.

ECU on Margaret's face. She looks beautiful and happy. There is a large grin on her face.

Margaret turns and looks at Charlie sitting in the back seat.

FLASHFOWARD TO PRESENT

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR NIGHT

The sound of a horn breaks Charlie out of the memory. A large truck passes her.

Charlie shakes her head, like she is trying to get rid of the memories.

She pulls into the parking lot of a slightly rundown hotel and walks into the office. A second later she walks out, grabs her bags out of the trunk and walks up to a room.

Charlie opens the door to the room. She doesn't bother turning the lights on, she simply throws her bags on the

floor, lays down on the bed and goes to sleep.

ACT II

INT HOTEL ROOM AFTERNOON

Charlie slowly begins to wake up. She rolls over to look at the clock which reads 1:15.

Thinking she is late to work, Charlie sits up quickly and jumps out of bed.

When she realizes that her surroundings don't look familiar, she sits back down on the bed.

ECU on her face.

We see all the memories of the previous day come flooding back to her.

She reluctantly gets up off the bed and walks into the bathroom and shuts the door.

Water starts to run.

Charlie's phone starts to ring, the ringtone is Homeward Bound by Simon and Garfunkel.

ECU on the phone which shows that her dad is calling. When the ringing ends the screen shows fifteen more missed calls from her dad.

EXT. STREET IN YACHATS DAY

Charlie is now dressed and ready for the day.

She is walking down a street that looks like the typical small town. Mom and Pop stores and restaurants line the road. It is the type of town where everybody knows everybody.

Charlie sees a cozy looking coffee shop called The Silken Tent. She walks in and gets in line for coffee.

INT THE SILKEN TENT DAY

The coffee shop is very cozy and homey. Couches and big comfy chairs fill the place, book shelves line the walls, and there is a stage in the middle where musicians can perform.

The shop has a few people in it, but it isn't crowded at all, there are only two people in line in front of Charlie.

Finally it is Charlie's turn.

She walks up to the counter.

The barista turns around.

It is a young guy, JAY, early to mid twenties. He is the definition of hipster-big glasses, messy dark hair, wearing a vest and jeans.

He flashes Charlie a big smile.

JAY

What can I get for you today?

CHARLIE

Umm just a regular coffee, I guess.

JAY

Are you sure? I make a great caramel frapp.

CHARLIE

Plain coffee is fine, thanks.

JAY

Maybe next time then. One regular coffee coming right up. Name?

CHARLIE

Umm, Charlotte.

Jay grabs a cup and scribbles her name on the side. He turns to get the coffee started.

While she is waiting, Charlie looks around the coffee shop.

JAY (CONT'D)

So Umm Charlotte, what brings you to Yachats?

CHARLIE

Sorry?

JAY

Well, you're not from here, I know everybody in this town. So are you on vacation?

CHARLIE

You could say that. It's more of an extended vacation.

JAY

Oh, right. We get a lot of people
around here on "extended
vacations".

There is an awkward silence. Charlie looks uncomfortable,
but Jay never loses his charming smile.

Jay pours her coffee from the pot into a cup and snaps a
lid on it.

He grabs the sharpie one more time and writes something else
on the side of the cup.

He hands her the cup.

CHARLIE

Umm, so I guess I'll be going.
Thanks for the coffee.

JAY

Anytime. See you around.

Charlie walks out of the coffee shop.

EXT. YACHATS STREET DAY

Charlie stands on the sidewalk, The Silken Tent behind her.
She looks around the street at all of the stores and sighs.

She begins to walk down the street aimlessly when
she notices the writing on the side of the cup.

ECU on the cup. Charlotte is scribbled in messy cursive.
Below that is a message that reads: 1175 Market Street,
7:00.

Charlie looks surprised at the message and slightly
confused. She continues to walk down the street, but
doesn't enter any of the stores.

INT HOTEL ROOM AFTERNOON

Charlie is lying on the bed in the room flipping channels on
the television.

The coffee cup is sitting on the nightstand, the writing
facing out.

Charlie reaches over and grabs her phone.

She sees the missed calls from her dad, there are more than
before, but doesn't call back.

She unlocks the phone and begins to look at her pictures.

She scrolls through the pictures and stops at one of her mom, her dad, Lucas and herself standing on the Golden Gate Bridge. They all look very happy.

All of a sudden, her phone starts to ring and Greg's picture pops up on the screen.

Charlie looks panicked and throws the phone down as it continues to ring.

INT ABBOTT HOUSE AFTERNOON

Greg stands holding his phone up to his ear.

CHARLIE VO

You've reached Charlotte Abbott. I can't get to the phone right now, but if you leave a message, I'll get back to you as soon as possible.

BEEP.

GREG

Charlie please call me, I need to know where you are. I don't know what happened but---

AUTOMATED VOICE VO

The voice mailbox for this number is full. Please try again later.

Greg sighs and hangs up.

He turns and walks into the kitchen where Lucas is sitting with headphones in his ears, eating a sandwich.

Greg walks over to the fridge and opens it.

Lucas looks up when he realizes that Greg is in the room and pulls out his headphones.

LUCAS

Lemme guess, she didn't answer.

GREG

No.

LUCAS

I don't know why you keep trying. She didn't answer the last 500

(MORE)

LUCAS (CONT'D)

times.

GREG

I just want to know that she's okay.

LUCAS

She's probably just PMSing or something. She'll be back in a few days.

GREG

I hope you're right.

At that moment, Greg looks ten years older. He has bags under his bloodshot eyes and his clothes are rumpled.

LUCAS

Dad, go take a nap. You look awful.

GREG

I'm fine. I think I'll try to call Charlie again.

Lucas rolls his eyes.

LUCAS

Dad, just leave her-

Lucas is cut off by the door shutting as Greg leaves the room.

INT HOTEL ROOM EVENING

Charlie is still lying on the bed. A cheesy reality show is playing on the television.

She rolls over and sees the cup with the message on it.

She sits up in the bed and picks up the cup, reading the message again.

Charlie glances at the clock and sees that it is nearly 7:00.

CU on Charlie's face.

She looks like she is seriously debating whether she should go or not.

We see in her face that she has decided to go, even though it is slightly out of character for her.

Charlie gets off the bed, grabs her purse and phone, flips

the tv off, and leaves the hotel room.

EXT YACHATS STREET NIGHT

Charlie is walking down Market Street, reading the address numbers as she goes.

Finally she arrives at 1175 and pauses outside of it.

It is an ominous looking building. It is made of brick with a couple of large windows and not much else. In the dark, it looks almost creepy. There is a sign, but it is too dark to read.

Charlie takes a deep breath and opens the door.

INT ROOM NIGHT

The inside is the complete opposite of the outside. It is bright and welcoming. There is a large open space with a few couches and chairs and not much else. A table on the side of the room has chips, cookies, brownies and other snack foods.

There are people all around the room, mingling around with each other.

Charlie looks extremely uncomfortable and confused. She turns to leave.

JAY

Charlotte, wait!

Charlie turns back around and sees Jay heading toward her.

JAY

Hey! I'm really glad you came. I thought you wouldn't.

CHARLIE

I almost didn't. The whole address on the coffee cup thing was sort of creepy.

JAY

Yeah, I realized later that it was kinda serial killer-y.

CHARLIE

I don't think that's a word.

JAY

Eh, whatever, it sounded good.

CHARLIE
So what is this?

JAY
Oh, yeah I should probably clarify
what is going on here. This-

Jay pauses and gestures to the room around him

JAY CONT'D
-is the Young People of Yachats
Community Group.

CHARLIE
I'm sorry, the what?

JAY
It's basically just all of young
adults in the town. We get together
once a month and just hang out.

CHARLIE
Oh that's...different.

JAY
Well, when you live in a small town,
it's pretty easy to fit everybody
under the age of 35 in one room.

CHARLIE
Why did you invite me?

Jay shrugs.

JAY
You looked sad earlier. I figured
you could use some people to talk
to.

CHARLIE
Oh, thanks I guess.

Someone off screen catches Jay's attention.

JAY
Ella!

Charlie follows his gaze to a young woman, mid twenties,
Ella. She has short hair and is grinning. She gives off an
air of happiness. She is the type of person that makes a
room brighter when she walks in.

Ella turns to walk over to Jay and Charlie.

ELLA
Hey Jay! Is this the girl you were
talking about earlier?

JAY
Yep, this is her! Charlotte, meet
Ella. Ella, meet Charlotte.

Charlie and Ella shake hands.

CHARLIE
I go by Charlie.

ELLA
Well, Charlie it is nice to meet
you.

CHARLIE
Thanks.

JAY
Charlie is here on an "extended
vacation"

Ella and Jay exchange a knowing glance.

ELLA
Oh okay, well Yachats is the
perfect place for that.

JAY
So what are you running away from?

ELLA
Jay! You can't ask her that.

JAY
What? I want to know.

CHARLIE
What do you mean?

JAY
Nearly everybody that comes here is
running from something.

CHARLIE
I don't think I understand.

ELLA
It's the town. For some reason,
people that are running away from
something always come here.

JAY

Ella moved here about two years ago. She showed up in the shop looking sad and lonely, just like you did this morning.

ELLA

Yeah, but he actually sat and talked to me about these meetings. He didn't leave a creepy message on my cup. Sorry about that, he doesn't think sometimes.

CHARLIE

I'm not running from anything. I just wanted a change.

JAY

Yeah, sure. I'll get it out of you eventually.

ELLA

Jay, leave her alone. C'mon Charlie, I'll introduce you to some of the other people.

Ella takes Charlie's arm and leads her away from Jay and into the crowd.

INT DINER NIGHT

Charlie, Jay, and Ella are sitting in a booth in a small diner.

The diner is a 50s style diner, complete with karaoke machines and red pleather. The rest of the diner is empty.

A waitress comes over and sets three chocolate shakes down on the table and a plate of french fries.

Charlie, Jay, and Ella each grab one and begin to drink.

JAY

So Charlie, tell us about yourself.

CHARLIE

Um, there isn't really anything to tell.

ELLA

Sure there is! Where are you from?

CHARLIE

Arizona.

ELLA

Okay, that's a start. What about your family?

CHARLIE

I have a brother, Lucas and my dad, Greg. I live, um lived, at home with them.

JAY

What about your mom?

Charlie looks visibly upset by the question and Ella notices.

ELLA

Jay!

JAY

What?

He notices the look on Charlie's face.

JAY CONT'D

Oh, sorry.

CHARLIE

It's fine. My mom...

Charlie pauses a beat and takes a deep breath.

CHARLIE CONT'D

My mom was sick for a while. She passed away a few months ago.

ELLA

Oh, I'm so sorry!

CHARLIE

It's okay.

Awkward Silence.

CHARLIE

Why did you move here, Ella?

ELLA

What?

CHARLIE

Jay said earlier you moved here a

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

couple of years ago.

ELLA

Oh I did, about two years now. I had just graduated from college and I was about to get married. I had been having doubts about the wedding for a while and the night before I decided I couldn't go through with it. So I packed my stuff and came here.

CHARLIE

What happened that you decided you didn't want to get married?

ELLA

I was only 22 at the time. My fiancé wanted to have kids right away and for me to be a stay at home mom. But I have wanted to be a teacher since I was five and I wasn't ready to give it up.

CHARLIE

Oh, I'm sorry, that must have been rough on you. Do you still talk to him?

ELLA

Not really...

JAY

She stalks him online alllll the time though!

ELLA

(Blushing)

JAY! I do not!

JAY

Yes you do! I'm pretty sure you have his facebook page bookmarked on your computer.

Ella throws a French fry at him. Jay retaliates by throwing a piece of his waffle, the syrup sticking in her hair a little bit. Charlie sits back, watching their food fight, she is clearly more relaxed than she has been since the call from the doctor. She is startled by a fry hitting her nose.

Charlie bursts out laughing and joins in on the fight as the

scene fades out.

INT HOTEL EARLY MORNING

Charlie is tossing and turning in the bed, her sleep obviously not restful.

Suddenly she bolts up.

CHARLIE
(Shouting tearfully)
MOM NO!

She frantically looks around the room. Slowly she recognizes where she is. She visibly deflates and sinks back into the sheets.

FLASHBACK

INT HOSPITAL ROOM AFTERNOON

Margaret is lying in a hospital bed as Greg, Charlie and Lucas stand around her. Charlie and Lucas looked extremely confused.

CHARLIE
I don't understand, what are you talking about?

MARGARET
I'm so sorry, honey.

CHARLIE
How long have you known?

MARGARET
I've always known it was a possibility. My grandmother had it.

GREG
She was only diagnosed a couple of months ago. We didn't want to burden you kids with it.

CHARLIE
Burden? I'm your child, I deserve to know when my own mother gets diagnosed with a fatal disease.

LUCAS
Wait, its fatal? I thought you said it can be treated?

MARGARET

There are treatments, but...

GREG

Luke, there are some treatment options, but your mother's case is very aggressive. The chances of the treatments working long term are pretty slim.

LUCAS

I don't understand. There's nothing wrong with you, you're fine!

MARGARET

Luke, I've been developing symptoms for a while, I just didn't want you and Charlie to worry.

LUCAS

(shouting)

I can't believe this!

MARGARET

Luke, please-

LUCAS

Just stop!

GREG

Lucas, don't yell.

LUCAS

Don't yell? That's all you have to say? You've been lying for months, and all you can say is "don't yell."

GREG

Luke, this is not an appropriate time for arguing.

LUCAS

(Sarcastically)

Oh I'm sorry, when is an appropriate time? Should I wait a couple of months and then we can talk about it?

Margaret reaches out to grab Luke's hand but he just wrenches it out of her grasp. Lucas turns and runs out of the room, slamming the door behind him. Charlie jolts at the

sound.

CHARLIE
Mom, we tell each other everything.
I can't believe you kept this from
me.

Charlie turns and follows Luke out of the room, only she
doesn't slam the door.

CU on Margaret, who is visibly upset by her children's
reactions.

Greg sits in the chair next to the bed and holds Margaret's
hand.

FLASHFOWARD TO PRESENT

INT HOTEL ROOM MORNING

Charlie's phone rings. She reaches over and grabs it off the
bedside table.

CHARLIE
Hello?

ELLA OS
Hey, Charlie? It's Ella!

CHARLIE
(hesitantly)
Hey Ella, how did you get my
number?

ELLA OS
Jay gave it to me, I hope that's
okay.

CHARLIE
Oh, yeah that's fine, I guess.

Awkward Silence

CHARLIE
So...what's up?

ELLA OS
Oh, yeah, sorry! Do you have any
plans for today?

CHARLIE
Not really, mostly just marathoning
bad TV and ordering pizza.

ELLA OS

Well, if you're not too committed to that, would you like to hang out with me today?

Charlie hesitates and looks around the hotel room. The idea of spending the day alone doesn't seem so appealing anymore.

CHARLIE

Yeah, actually, I would love to.

ELLA OS

(surprised, like she didn't really expect Charlie to say yes)
Great! You're staying at the Firefly Inn, right? I'll be there in twenty minutes!

CHARLIE

Okay.

ELLA OS

Awesome! See you soon. Oh, and wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty!

CHARLIE

Wait, what?

Ella has already hung up though. Charlie stands up slowly, stretching and popping her shoulders as she does so. She grabs some clothes and heads into the bathroom.

EXT OLD BUILDING DAY

Charlie and Ella get out of the car and head towards the people.

CHARLIE

Where are we?

ELLA

This is the old town library. When the new one opened on Main Street, this building was turned into a homeless shelter.

CHARLIE

There are a lot of people here.

ELLA

Yeah, I told you that this town
(MORE)

ELLA (CONT'D)

attracts people that are running away. A lot of them end up here.

CHARLIE

So what are we doing here?

ELLA

I've been coming out here on weekends ever since I came here. I usually just walk around and talk to them, listen to their stories.

CHARLIE

Why?

ELLA

Most of the people here don't have families or friends. They just want to know that there is somebody in the world that will remember them when they're gone.

Ella notices somebody in the crowd waving at her. She grabs Charlie's arm and starts to walk towards the crowd.

A woman, with bright red hair and eccentric clothing, GERTRUDE, is walking towards them with a large smile on her face.

GERTRUDE

(loudly and emphatically)

Ella!

ELLA

Hey Gerty, how's it going?

GERTRUDE

Oh you know, the usual. My bunions are terrible, my scoliosis has been flaring up, I have an ache in my left knee, and this morning I ran out of Frosted Flakes so I had to eat Cinnamon Toast Crunch.

ELLA

Have you talked to a doctor about the bunions?

CHARLIE

Or the scoliosis?

ELLA

Or your left knee?

GERTRUDE

Are you kidding me, those hacks don't know anything. I haven't been to a doctor since I was three and I broke my wrist trying to capture a raccoon.

ELLA

Maybe you should give medical professionals another chance, they could probably help relieve your pain at least.

GERTRUDE

Nonsense. I've been drinking this special herbal tea I found online that's supposed to help. It works wonders.

Ella and Charlie share a glance, both clearly trying to hold in laughter.

ELLA

Uhh Gerty, I don't think-

GERTRUDE

That's enough about me. Who's the newbie?

Gertrude gestures toward Charlie.

ELLA

Oh, sorry. Gertrude, this is Charlie, she's new in town. Charlie, this is Gertrude.

CHARLIE

Hi, nice to meet you.

Charlie extends her hand for a handshake, but Gertrude ignores her hand and pulls Charlie into an awkward hug.

GERTRUDE

Welcome to Yachats, Charlie. If you ever need anything, don't hesitate to ask!

Something behind Ella and Charlie catches Gertrude's attention.

GERTRUDE

(yelling at somebody OS)
Scott! What on earth do you think
(MORE)

GERTRUDE (CONT'D)

you're doing?

Gertrude walks away, towards the commotion behind Charlie and Ella.

ELLA

So that's Gerty. She's the town's resident crazy, but everybody loves her anyway.

CHARLIE

How long has she been homeless?

ELLA

Homeless?

CHARLIE

Yeah. You said this was the homeless shelter, right?

ELLA

No. Well, I mean yes, this is the homeless shelter, but Gerty isn't homeless.

CHARLIE

She's not?

ELLA

No, she actually runs the shelter. And owns the skating rink. And the coffee shop.

CHARLIE

Seriously?

ELLA

Yeah, I know it sounds odd, but she's like crazy rich. Jay told me that she used to be this big time investment banker for like Merrill Lynch or Goldman Sachs, one of those big companies.

CHARLIE

Wow, I would not have guessed that.

ELLA

Apparently, she just got tired of the whole greedy businessman life, quit her job and moved here. She uses the money she made to keep the town running. Without her, most of

(MORE)

ELLA (CONT'D)

the businesses here would have collapsed a long time ago.

CHARLIE

She just helps out anybody that needs it? Why?

ELLA

I'm not really sure. Just because she's got a good heart and cares about people, I guess.

CHARLIE

Do you think she might be able to help me get a job here?

ELLA

Oh definitely! We can ask her later, but first, I want you to meet someone.

Ella and Charlie walk towards the group of people mingling outside the building. Ella waves and greets a couple of different people as they pass.

They walk up to an old man, LARRY, with a long beard wearing worn out clothes and sunglasses sitting in a chair.

ELLA

Hey Larry, it's Ella.

Ella kneels down in front of the chair and puts one of her hands on top of Larry's. He smiles widely and brings his other hand to pat Ella's.

LARRY

Hello darling, I've missed you.

ELLA

I've missed you too Larry. I have somebody to introduce you to, if that's okay?

LARRY

Oh of course! Is it that old boyfriend of yours?

ELLA

Larry!

LARRY

(chuckling)

Sorry, dear. So who is this new

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

friend of yours?

Ella gestures to Charlie to come kneel down.

ELLA

Larry, this is Charlie. She just arrived in town a few days ago.

CHARLIE

Hello, it's nice to meet you, sir.

LARRY

Nice to meet you too, Charlie.

Larry reaches up a hand and takes off his sunglasses to reveal eyes that are clouded over, with scars around his eyes.

Charlie lets out a small gasp of shock. Larry hears and only smiles in response.

LARRY

Ella, you didn't warn her about my extremely good looks?

CHARLIE

Sorry, I didn't mean-

LARRY

Oh it is quite all right darling, most people's reactions are much worse.

ELLA

Larry was injured in combat during World War II.

CHARLIE

Oh, that's awful. I'm sorry.

LARRY

Don't be sorry, I was defending my country. Besides, there are worse things than losing the ability to see.

ELLA

Larry, why don't you tell Charlie how you ended up fighting?

LARRY

Oh, I'm sure she doesn't want to hear the ramblings of an old man.

CHARLIE

Actually, I would love to hear the story, if you don't mind telling it.

LARRY

Well, I was only 15 when the US entered WWII. My brother and I had been on our own for a long time and after Pearl Harbor we decided to enlist.

CHARLIE

But you were only 15?

LARRY

(proudly)

I lied.

ELLA

Larry is very proud of the fact that he was able to pull off that lie.

LARRY

Yes, I am. Anyway, Walter, my brother, and I spent about three years fighting in minor battles, but in April 1945 we were both sent to fight in Okinawa. The fighting went on for what felt like forever. I was blinded by shrapnel and spent three days lying on the sand.

CHARLIE

What happened to your brother?

LARRY

He never even made it on to the shore. He was shot in the boat.

CHARLIE

Oh, I'm so sorry! That must have been extremely hard for you.

LARRY

Yes, of course it was, but just because his body was killed, does not mean his soul was too.

CHARLIE

What do you mean?

LARRY

My brother has been with me every day of my life. Sometimes I can even hear him talking to me.

CHARLIE

But he's gone.

LARRY

Not really. He'll always be here, even if it is only in my mind.

CHARLIE

Have you ever just felt like he was fading away? Like you can't remember what his voice sounded like, or what he smelled like?

Charlie grows more and more frantic as she talks. Ella wraps an arm around her.

CHARLIE

Do you ever wish you could talk to him, just one more time? So badly it hurts, like somebody has punched you in the chest repeatedly? And you can't breathe, like all the air has been sucked out of the world. And then you realize that nothing will ever be the same again, and- and-

At this point, Charlie is crying full on. Ella is holding her up. Larry looks worried and upset that he is unable to do anything.

ELLA

Charlie, I need you to take a few deep breaths.

Charlie starts breathing deeply. Her breaths start out ragged and almost painful sounding. After a few moments her breathing evens out to normal.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry, I don't know what happened, I just-

ELLA

It's okay, you don't need to apologize.

CHARLIE

No, I do, I shouldn't have just lost it like that. Larry, I'm sorry, I ruined your story.

LARRY

Oh no, darling, you did nothing wrong. Trust me, I've had more than my share of those moments over the years. Sometimes it just all needs to come out.

Charlie still looks upset, but now she looks more upset at herself for breaking down.

ELLA

Why don't we go get something to eat? There's this place on Main Street that has the best waffles in the entire world.

LARRY

Make sure you eat a waffle for me.

ELLA

Will do. Take care of yourself Larry.

CHARLIE

Bye, it was nice meeting you.

LARRY

Goodbye darlings, see you next week.

Ella and Charlie turn to leave.

LARRY

Oh, and Charlie?

Charlie stops and turns around.

CHARLIE

Yes?

LARRY

If you ever need anyone to talk to, I'm always around.

CHARLIE

Thanks Larry, I really appreciate that.

Charlie and Ella head back to the car.

INT CAR LATE MORNING

Charlie and Ella get in the car and drive away from the shelter. This time the only sound in the car is music quietly playing in the background.

ELLA
Waffles are okay with you, right?

CHARLIE
Yeah, anything's fine.

Silence fills the car, not awkward, but there is clearly some tension.

Charlie sits, just staring out the passenger window. Ella is focused on driving, but every couple of seconds her glance flicks over to watch Charlie.

Charlie turns her head and catches Ella watching her.

CHARLIE
I'm really sorry again for what happened earlier.

ELLA
(frustrated by Charlie's apologies)
Charlie, quit apologizing!

CHARLIE
Sorry.

Ella and Charlie make eye contact and immediately burst out laughing. The tension is broken.

The car pulls up to a small restaurant, overly decorated with crocheted flowers and brightly colored paintings of landscapes. A large sign reads "Miss Sue's Bakery and Cafe".

Charlie and Ella get out of the car and walk inside.

INT BAKERY LATE MORNING

Ella and Charlie are sitting at a table eating waffles and talking.

The door opens and Jay walks in and walks over to the booth Ella and Charlie are sitting in. He slides in next to Charlie and puts his arm around her.

JAY
Good morning!

ELLA
Jay, it's not really the morning
anymore.

JAY
Eh, any time earlier than noon is
too early and I prefer to pretend
it doesn't exist.

CHARLIE
Agreed.

ELLA
(fondly)
You two are ridiculous.

CHARLIE
That lady, uh Gertrude, I think?
You said she can help me get a job,
right?

JAY
When did you meet Gertrude?

ELLA
This morning, at the shelter. And
yeah, she definitely can.

CHARLIE
Anywhere in town?

ELLA
Yeah, for the most part. Did you
have something particular in mind?

CHARLIE
Is there a bookstore or library
that could use a new employee?

JAY
There's Weeping Willow. It's a
bookstore right across the street
from the coffee shop, you could ask
there.

CHARLIE
That sounds perfect.

ELLA
I can take you there right after we
(MORE)

ELLA (CONT'D)

finish up here.

Charlie smiles and nods. They all return to eating, chatting and laughing every once in a while.

The shot goes wider and shows them from the outside, through the window, eating together.

EXT BOOK STORE EVENING

It is now winter. There are Christmas lights and decorations all along the streets. Somewhere in the distance Christmas carols can be heard. A book store, small, disorganized and almost dingy looking with a sign that says Weeping Willow Books is one of the only stores with the lights still on, Charlie is inside standing at the counter.

INT BOOK STORE EVENING

Inside the store there are piles and piles of books, some new, some old. Charlie is at the counter reading an old beat up book.

The door chimes and opens. The sound causes Charlie to look up. When she sees that it is Ella and Jay, she smiles and closes the book.

Ella and Jay are both wearing winter clothes, scarfs and hats. Ella is carrying two cups.

CHARLIE

Shouldn't you guys be at the carnival?

JAY

We went, grabbed some of the free food, and decided to come here.

ELLA

We brought you hot chocolate.

Ella hands Charlie one of the cups.

JAY

Besides, it was sort of boring without you there.

A phone rings, the ringtone is Adele's Someone Like You. Ella starts, grabs her phone out of her pocket and stares at the screen, looking shocked.

CHARLIE

Ella? What's wrong?

ELLA

It's James.

CHARLIE

James? James as in the guy you-

JAY

Left standing at the alter like an idiot?

Charlie reaches over the counter and smacks Jay on the arm. Ella doesn't seem to have noticed the exchange, her gaze focused on her phone.

ELLA

What do I do?

CHARLIE

Answer it!

Jay reaches over and grabs the phone, clicks accept and hands it back to Ella before she can protest.

ELLA

James?

Ella turns and walks out of the store. She stands right outside the door, still in view through the window, talking on the phone.

CHARLIE

I wonder why he called.

JAY

In the two years she has been here, he hasn't called once. She's still in love with him though, probably always will be.

CHARLIE

I hope they get back together, it would be so romantic.

JAY

Romantic?

CHARLIE

Yeah, you know, high school sweethearts that break up and then find each other years later? True loves always finding their way back to one another.

Silence for a beat. Charlie is watching Ella talk on the phone with a smile on her face. Jay is staring at Charlie.

JAY

Charlie?

CHARLIE

Hmm?

Charlie does not turn away from looking out the window.

JAY

I was just wondering...

Jay trails off, and Charlie turns to look at him.

JAY CONT'D

Well, umm, I was- I mean, uhh
areyoubusyfridaynight?

The last few words come out jumbled and unintelligible.

CHARLIE

Sorry, I didn't-

The door chime sounds again and Ella walks back in with a large grin on her face.

ELLA

He's coming here, James is coming
to visit next week. He still loves
me!

CHARLIE

Ella, that's fantastic!

Charlie moves from behind the counter and goes to hug Ella.

CHARLIE

Tell me exactly what he said!

JAY

As much as I would love to hear
this, I need to head home.

Jay puts his hat and scarf back on and heads toward the door.

CHARLIE

Wait!

Jay turns back and looks at Charlie,

CHARLIE

What were you going to ask me
earlier?

Jay pauses for a moment and then smiles, but it is clearly
forced.

JAY

Nothing, it wasn't important.

Jay leaves the store. Charlie turns to Ella again.

CHARLIE

Okay, so start from the very
beginning!

FADE OUT

INT. HOTEL AFTERNOON

Charlie is still staying at the hotel. The room is much
messier and looks more lived in. The picture of Margaret is
on the night stand.

Charlie is sleeping fitfully in the bed and an alarm is
blaring.

There is a loud knock on the door.

JAY OS

Charlie?

Jay knocks again.

JAY OS

Charlie, are you in there? You were
supposed to be at work an hour ago.

Jay waits a beat before knocking again, this time even
louder. The sound wakes Charlie and she sits up in the bed.

JAY OS

Charlie!

CHARLIE

Sorry, just a sec!

Charlie gets out of the bed, getting tangled in the sheets
and falling on the floor with a loud thump.

Slowly, Charlie stands up with a groan. She walks over the
door and opens it.

JAY
You look awful.

Jay pushes his way past Charlie and walks into the room.

CHARLIE
Did you come here just insult me or
is there an actual reason you are
here?

JAY
Wow, looks like somebody woke up on
the wrong side of the bed.

Jay looks around the room and sees all the sheets on the
floor.

JAY
Or the floor, by the looks of it.

CHARLIE
Jay. What do you want?

JAY
You were supposed to be at work an
hour ago, remember?

CHARLIE
It's Sunday, I don't work on
Sundays.

JAY
Charlie, it's Monday.

Charlie looks confused.

CHARLIE
No, it's Sunday. Yesterday was
Saturday, I went to the shelter
with Ella in the morning and then
we all had lunch together.

JAY
Charlie, that was two days ago.
After lunch, you said you wanted to
come back here and take a nap and
we haven't seen you since.

CHARLIE
I don't- I can't-

Charlie starts breathing heavily. She reaches up to push her
hair out of her face.

CU on her hand. It is shaking.

JAY
Charlie, your hand-

CHARLIE
What?

Charlie looks at her hand and realizes it is jerking. She immediately moves her arm behind her back.

CHARLIE
Oh, that's nothing. I just-I
haven't eaten much lately, so I'm a
little shaky.

There's a beat as Jay and Charlie just stand there, looking at each other. Jay looks concerned while Charlie looks nervous.

CHARLIE
I'm going to get ready for work.
It'll only take me a second.

Charlie grabs some clothes and walks into the bathroom.

INT BOOK STORE DAY

Charlie is standing at the counter, scanning and stacking books. Jay leaning over from the opposite side messing with the stacks of books next to him.

CHARLIE
Jay, don't you have something else
you could be doing? Other than
bothering me?

JAY
Nah, I have the day off and Ella is
teaching. Congratulations, you get
to spend the day with me!

CHARLIE
(sarcastically)
Wow, lucky me.

Charlie continues scanning books.

CHARLIE
Well, if you're going to stand
there, you can at least help out.

JAY

At your service, madame.

Jay bows and tips and imaginary hat at Charlie. She rolls her eyes, but still smiles.

CHARLIE

Can you just stand here at the counter while I go shelve these books?

JAY

That's all? You want me to just stand here?

CHARLIE

Yep. And if anybody comes in, don't talk to them!

JAY

What? Why?

CHARLIE

You'll scare them away.

JAY

I would not!

CHARLIE

Would too.

Charlie laughs and walks away, out of frame.

JAY

(yelling)

WOULD NOT!

Charlie's laugh can be heard from off screen.

Jay starts to hum along to the song playing over the speakers, drumming with a pencil on the counter.

All of a sudden, there is a loud crash from of screen, in the direction that Charlie walked.

Jay looks up.

JAY

Charlie? Is everything okay?

CHARLIE OS

Uhh yeah, everything's fine. I just, uh, tripped.

JAY

Do you need any help?

Jay doesn't wait for a response before he starts walking towards Charlie.

He finds her sitting on the floor in an aisle, with a bunch of books lying around her. Her jeans are ripped at the knee, where she is cut and bleeding.

JAY

Are you alright? What happened?

Jay kneels on the ground next to Charlie.

CHARLIE

I just tripped, I'm fine.

Charlie moves to get up but loses her balance and begins to fall again. Jay jumps up and grabs her to keep her steady.

JAY

You don't seem fine.

CHARLIE

It's nothing, I just got a little dizzy. Stood up too fast or something.

Charlie shakes herself out of Jay's grip and starts to pick up some of the books off the ground.

JAY

Let me do this, you can go up front.

Charlie nods and heads back to the front counter. Jay begins to put the books on the shelves.

Charlie is standing at the counter, eyes closed with her head resting in her hands. All of a sudden, her hand starts to jerk again. She looks at it.

JAY OS

Done!

Jay walks back in the shot. Charlie quickly hides her hand under the counter.

CHARLIE

Thanks, Jay.

JAY
What time is your shift over?

CHARLIE
7, why?

JAY
Would you like to get dinner?

CHARLIE
Yes! I'm starving. I'll text Ella
and let her know!

JAY
Why would you tell Ella?

CHARLIE
So she can come too, duh.

JAY
Wait, no, I meant-

Jay sees that Charlie is already typing on her phone, so he just sighs and gives up.

INT DINER NIGHT

Charlie, Jay, and Ella are sitting at a booth eating dinner. Jay is sulking because his attempt to ask Charlie out failed once again.

ELLA
I'm just really nervous.

CHARLIE
You have nothing to worry about!
James is going to be so excited to
see you. Right, Jay?

Charlie elbows Jay to get his attention.

JAY
Hm?

CHARLIE
Have you heard a single word we've
said this entire time?

JAY
Yes!

CHARLIE
Really. What have we been talking
(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

about?

Jay clearly doesn't know.

JAY

Uhh the fact that 27% of Americans think the moon landing was fake?

ELLA

What?

CHARLIE

Is that actually true?

Jay shrugs.

JAY

Dunno, read it online somewhere.

CHARLIE

Weird.

ELLA

Don't try to distract us!

CHARLIE

What's wrong with you?

JAY

Nothing!

Ella and Charlie just look at him knowingly.

JAY

Ugh fine. Charlie, can I ask you something in private?

CHARLIE

Why can't you just ask me right here?

JAY

Because I-

Jay pauses and takes a deep breath.

JAY

Fine. Charlie, will you go on a date with me?

Ella bursts out laughing. Jay glares at her then turns back to Charlie. She looks shocked.

CHARLIE

A date?

JAY

Yes a date. You know, where two people go out together. Alone.

Jay glares at Ella as he speaks. Ella tries to stop laughing, but is still giggling under her breath.

CHARLIE

Wait, is that what you meant when you asked me to go to dinner earlier?

JAY

Yes. And last week after the carnival.

Ella starts full on laughing again. Jay looks at her angrily.

JAY

This is exactly why I didn't want you here!

ELLA

Sorry. I'm just gonna go...somewhere else.

Ella gets up and leaves. Charlie still looks shocked.

JAY

I'm going to try this again. Charlie, would you like to go on a date with me?

CHARLIE

I-I'm not-

Jay notices her hesitation and looks crushed.

JAY

Never mind, it was stupid of me to ask. Just pretend I never said anything.

CHARLIE

No! I would love to go out with you sometime, its just-

JAY

Great! How about tomorrow night?

(MORE)

JAY (CONT'D)

I'll pick you up at 7.

Jay gets up, grabs his coat and leaves, grinning.

ECU on Charlie's face. She looks sad.

Ella comes back over to the booth. She notices that Jay is gone and that Charlie looks upset.

ELLA

Did you say no? Why would you say no? Charlie, I can't believe you would crush his heart like that!

CHARLIE

Ella, I said yes.

ELLA

He's been half in love with you since the day you got here. And don't think I haven't noticed how you look at him when- wait, you said yes?

CHARLIE

Yes.

ELLA

Then why do you look like somebody just told you that your favorite band broke up.

CHARLIE

I can't date Jay.

ELLA

Why not?

Ella sits down in the booth across from Charlie.

CHARLIE

It'll end badly.

ELLA

How do you know if you don't even try?

CHARLIE

I just do.

ELLA

No, you don't. You can't know.

CHARLIE
But I do. I know exactly what will
happen and I can't do that to Jay.

ELLA
What do you mean?

CHARLIE
I can't tell you.

ELLA
Charlie, you can tell me anything!

CHARLIE
Not this.

Charlie gets up and walks out of the diner, leaving Ella
sitting in the booth alone.

EXT. HOTEL ROOM EVENING

Jay is standing outside Charlie's hotel room. He is dressed
nicely and holding a rose.

Jay takes a deep breath and knocks.

No response.

Jay knocks again.

JAY
Charlie?

He knocks again.

JAY
Charlie? Are you asleep again?

Jay tries the doorknob and realizes it is open. He pushes
the door open and walks inside and sees...

INT. HOTEL ROOM EVENING

...Charlie lying on the floor seizing violently. Jay runs
over to her.

JAY
Charlie!!

Jay pulls his phone out of his pocket and dials 911.

JAY
I need an ambulance at the Firefly
Inn, room 223. Please hurry!

Charlie has stopped seizing and is lying on the floor motionless. Jay reaches over to touch her shoulder lightly.

JAY

Charlie? Please wake up! Charlie!

Sirens are heard in the distance. Fade out.

ACT III

INT HOSPITAL ROOM NIGHT

Charlie is lying in a hospital bed. Greg and Lucas are both asleep in chairs next to the bed. Greg is holding Charlie's hand with his head resting on the bed.

Charlie begins to wake up slowly. She looks around, clearly confused by her surroundings.

CHARLIE

Dad?

Charlie moves, trying to get comfortable amidst the IVs. Her movement wakes Greg.

GREG

Charlie?

CHARLIE

Dad, what are you doing here? What happened?

GREG

You don't remember?

Lucas stirs in the other chair and wakes up. He sees that Charlie is awake.

LUCAS

Charlie! You're up!

CHARLIE

What is going on? Why am I here?

LUCAS

You don't know?

The door opens. Jay and Ella walk inside.

ELLA

Charlie!

Ella runs over to the bed.

ELLA CONT.

I'm so sorry we weren't here when you woke up. I had to take Jay home to shower and change. And trust me, he needed it.

JAY

Hey!

ELLA

You did!

LUCAS

She's right, you did.

ELLA

Thank you, Luke.

Lucas grins at Ella. It is clear is developed a bit of a crush. Jay roll his eyes and Greg smiles.

CHARLIE

Can somebody please tell me what is going on?

Everybody stops and looks at Charlie.

ELLA

What?

JAY

You don't remember?

Charlie is obviously frustrated and confused.

CHARLIE

No, I don't! Now would someone please answer my question?!

Beat. Jay, Ella, Greg and Luke all look at each other, as if silently trying to determine who is going to explain.

GREG

What is the last thing you remember?

CHARLIE

I was in my hotel room, getting ready for dinner.

GREG
What is the very last thing you
remember doing?

CHARLIE
I don't know! Taking a shower, I
think?

They all share a worried glance. Charlie notices.

CHARLIE
What's wrong?

JAY
Charlie, when I went to pick you
up, you were fully dressed with
makeup on and everything.

Charlie shakes her head.

CHARLIE
What? How-?

GREG
The doctor said that you may not
remember everything. It will come
back eventually.

CHARLIE
But why am I here?

GREG
Charlotte, when Jay found you, you
were having a seizure.

CHARLIE
A seizure?

GREG
The doctor said you may have
tripped and hit your head hard
enough to cause a seizure.

LUCAS
Your clumsiness is actually
life-threatening, apparently.

Charlie laughs weakly. Greg rolls his eyes again, but
looks extremely relieved and happy to see his daughter
again.

CHARLIE
When did y'all get here?

GREG

A couple of hours ago, we took the first flight here that we could find.

CHARLIE

Wait, how did you even know I was here?

LUKE

Jay called me.

CHARLIE

Jay? But how?

JAY

Don't think I haven't noticed you ignoring their calls the entire time you've been here. I've seen Luke's name pop up on your phone at least once a day since I met you. When the paramedics arrived, I took your phone and called him.

LUKE

It was quite a shock to see your name pop up on my phone.

Beat.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry, I shouldn't have-

GREG

It's okay, we can talk about it later.

The door opens and a nurse walks in.

NURSE

Nice to see you up, Charlie.

The nurse walks over the bed and adjusts one of the IVs.

NURSE

This will put you to sleep pretty quickly.

CHARLIE

But I just woke up.

NURSE

Seizures are hard on the brain and
(MORE)

NURSE (CONT'D)

the body. You need to rest in order to give your body some time to recover.

CHARLIE

But I have to-

GREG

It's okay, Charlie. We'll be here when you wake up.

Charlie nods. Her eyelids are already closing. She opens them briefly and grabs Greg's hand. She closes her eyes again and falls asleep.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM MORNING

Charlie wakes up. Greg and Lucas are still there, eating breakfast and talking quietly. Charlie moves, drawing their attention to her.

LUCAS

Finally. You were asleep forever and Dad wouldn't let me turn on the TV until you woke up.

GREG

Because you watch TV way too loudly.

LUCAS

I do not.

CHARLIE

You do, it is actually a little bit concerning.

GREG

Do you think we should get his ears checked while we're here?

Charlie nods.

CHARLIE

Definitely.

LUCAS

My hearing is fine! Charlie, maybe you should get that hideous thing on your neck checked out.

Lucas leans over and pretends to squint at something disgusting.

LUCAS

Oh, no wait, that's just your face.

Charlie throws a pillow at Luke. It hits him square in the face.

GREG

Kids, you're not four, please try to control yourselves.

LUCAS

She started it.

Charlie begins to retort, but Greg stops her. He sighs.

GREG

Luke, just sit down.

Lucas sighs loudly, but does so anyway.

CHARLIE

When can I leave?

GREG

This evening. They wanted to monitor you a little bit more before you're discharged.

CHARLIE

Okay.

GREG

You can show us around the town later. Ella said you're working in a bookstore, maybe you can take us there?

Charlie nods.

LUCAS

Can I watch TV now?

Greg sighs and Charlie rolls her eyes.

LUCAS

I'm going to take that as a yes.

Lucas reaches over the grabs the remote. He turns on the TV at and abnormally high volume.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM AFTERNOON

Charlie is lying in the bed. Ella and Jay are in the room

with her. They are all watching the TV intently. Maury is playing.

JAY
He's definitely not the father.

CHARLIE
Yes he is! Look at his hair color.

JAY
Oh yeah, he's obviously the only person on the planet with red hair.

ELLA
Red hair is extremely uncommon.

CHARLIE
Exactly.

JAY
He is not the father.

Ella's phone dings, interrupting their debate.

CHARLIE
Is it James?

ELLA
Yeah, his flight just landed. I need to go pick him up.

Ella stands up and grabs her coat and bag.

ELLA
Do you need me to bring you anything?

CHARLIE
Ella, just go have fun with James. I have Jay here if I need anything.

JAY
What? No, I'm very invested in this show now. I'm not moving until I know who the father is.

Both Ella and Charlie roll their eyes. Ella hugs Charlie and leaves.

Charlie and Jay sit in silence. Jay is watching the TV, but Charlie is looking at Jay.

JAY

This show is genius. There's nothing more entertaining than paternity tests and fist fights.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry.

JAY

For getting me addicted to this show? You should be.

CHARLIE

For ruining our date.

Jay turns to look at Charlie.

JAY

What?

CHARLIE

I screwed up everything.

JAY

(confused)

No you didn't.

CHARLIE

I shouldn't have even agreed to go out with you. I knew this would happen.

JAY

Charlie, unless you've developed psychic powers, you couldn't have known.

Charlie just shakes her head.

JAY

What's going on with you lately?

CHARLIE

You wouldn't understand.

Charlie rolls over in the bed, facing away from Jay.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Can you please leave, I'm tired.

Jay sighs and walks out.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY AFTERNOON

Jay walks out of Charlie's room. Greg and Lucas are walking towards the room. Greg is holding a bag.

LUCAS
Are you leaving?

JAY
For now. Something's going on with Charlie.

GREG
What happened?

JAY
Nothing. Everything was fine and then she started talking about how she ruined everything and then she told me to leave.

GREG
That doesn't sound like Charlie.

LUCAS
She's probably hungry. She gets means when she doesn't have food.

GREG
I'll talk to her. Just walk around for a bit and head back. She does want you here.

Jay nods and heads off down the hall. Greg and Lucas walk into the room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM AFTERNOON

Charlie is lying on the bed, but she still wide awake.

GREG
Hey, Charlie. We brought you some clothes.

No response.

LUCAS
You're welcome.

Silence.

GREG
We saw Jay. He said you told him to leave.

LUCAS
Where's Ella?

GREG
Luke.

LUCAS
What? I was just wondering?

GREG
Leave her alone, she has a fiancé.

LUCAS
Ex-fiancé! They haven't seen each other in two years.

GREG
You're too young for her anyway.

LUCAS
Dad, I'm 21.

GREG
You live at home and don't go to school. She probably has a million better options.

LUCAS
Plenty of successful people didn't go to college! Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Harrison Ford.

GREG
Harrison Ford? You didn't go to college because you want to be Han Solo?

LUCAS
You-

CHARLIE
I have Huntington's.

Greg and Lucas both freeze and look at Charlie.

LUCAS
What?

CHARLIE
I have Huntington's. I got tested back home, right before I left.

Greg sinks down into a chair. Lucas stands, frozen and

staring at Charlie.

CHARLIE CONT'D

I know you and Mom didn't want me to get tested, but I had to know. I went to Dr. Reeves and he did the test.

GREG

Why-why didn't you tell us?

CHARLIE

I didn't know how. I needed to know so badly, but I didn't want to burden you.

LUCAS

So you just left?

CHARLIE

I felt like I was suffocating. Dad, you just shut down and Luke was a mess that I couldn't clean up, no matter how hard I tried. I had to get out of there.

LUCAS

You left. You found out you're going to die and you left.

JAY

What?

Charlie, Greg and Lucas all look toward the door, where Jay is standing.

CHARLIE

Jay!

JAY

What is he talking about? You just hit your head.

Lucas laughs bitterly.

LUCAS

She didn't tell you either, huh?

CHARLIE

Luke, please.

LUCAS

Charlie has Huntington's.

GREG

Luke!

Jay looks confused for a moment, then realization shows on his face.

JAY

IS that what your mom...?

Charlie nods.

Jay shakes his head.

JAY (CONT'D)

No. You're lying.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry, Jay, I wanted to tell you but-

JAY

I have to go.

Jay turns and runs out of the room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM AFTERNOON

Charlie and Ella are packing up Charlie's clothes. The room is a mess, clothes are everywhere and pop music is playing loudly.

ELLA

Are you sure you have to leave?

CHARLIE

Positive.

ELLA

Will you come visit?

CHARLIE

All the time! You probably won't even notice I'm gone, now that James is back.

ELLA

You know that's not true!

CHARLIE

And now you have a wedding to plan too.

ELLA

Speaking of...

Ella reaches into her bag and rummages around for something. She pulls out a small box.

ELLA

Will you be my maid of honor?

Charlie opens the box. Inside there is a silver necklace.

CHARLIE

Ella, of course! Are you sure you want me?

ELLA

Who else would I ask? I don't have a sister. You and Jay are my best friends.

CHARLIE

Well, in that case, I would love to be your maid of honor.

Charlie and Ella hug.

ELLA

Speaking of Jay...

CHARLIE

I don't want to talk about him.

Charlie goes back to folding clothes.

ELLA

Okay.

Ella starts packing clothes again too.

CHARLIE

Have you talked to him?

ELLA

I thought you didn't want to talk about Jay.

CHARLIE

I just want to know if he's talked to you.

ELLA

He has.

CHARLIE

Well?

ELLA

You need to talk to him yourself.

CHARLIE

Elllllaaa, please tell me what he said.

ELLA

He said he loves you.

Charlie drops the shirt she is folding.

CHARLIE

What?

ELLA

Don't act surprised, you had to know.

CHARLIE

Even though he knows...everything?

ELLA

He doesn't care. And neither do I. It doesn't change anything.

CHARLIE

It changes everything.

ELLA

No, it doesn't. You're the same person that I met six months ago. Your DNA may be a little messed up, but that doesn't mean anything.

CHARLIE

You don't know what it's like to watch somebody lose their ability to do basic things. It's horrible and painful and I don't want you and Jay to have to go through that.

ELLA

Jay and I are both adults. We can make our own decisions.

CHARLIE

I've been through this before, you haven't.

ELLA

Charlie, let us be there for you, don't push us away.

CHARLIE

But-

ELLA

Nope, sorry, the discussion is over. You're stuck with me forever, better get used to it.

There is a knock at the door.

GREG OS

Charlie? It's almost time to go, are you all packed?

Charlie and Ella look around at the mess in the room and both start laughing.

CHARLIE

Uhh, yeah almost done!

ELLA

We just need like 5 more minutes.

They give up on folding and start throwing clothes into bags.

LUCAS OS

You packed and left in the middle of the night, how much stuff could you possibly have?

CHARLIE

The normal amount! I've been here for six months, I can't just pack it all in half an hour.

GREG OS

Charlie, we're leaving for the airport in fifteen minutes, with or without your stuff.

CHARLIE

Got it. We'll be done in twenty minutes.

GREG OS

Charlie, I'm serious, hurry up.

Charlie and Ella both just laugh in response and throw clothes into the bags.

EXT. AIRPORT DAY

Ella is dropping Greg, Lucas, and Charlie off at the airport. Greg and Lucas are getting luggage out of the trunk. Charlie starts to help, but Ella stops her.

ELLA

You need to call him.

CHARLIE

What?

ELLA

You know what.

CHARLIE

Ella, I can't.

ELLA

Yes, you can. That's your problem Charlie, you keep saying that you can't do things. You never know until you try.

CHARLIE

I don't want to hurt him.

ELLA

You're hurting him right now! And yourself.

CHARLIE

I don't even know what I would say to him.

ELLA

Just tell him how you feel.

CHARLIE

You make it sound like it's easy.

ELLA

It is! With the right person, love is the simplest thing in the world. Everything else might be hard, but love is easy.

Charlie still looks uneasy.

GREG

Charlie, come on. We have to go.

Charlie nods and turns back to Ella.

ELLA

Please just think about calling him. He'll want to say goodbye before your plane leaves.

CHARLIE

I will.

Charlie and Ella hug.

ELLA

I expect you to call me as soon as you land.

CHARLIE

Will do.

ELLA

And I want to Skype at least once a week.

CHARLIE

Of course. And I want to hear all of the wedding plans.

ELLA

You're probably not going to hear about anything else for a long time.

Greg and Lucas are walking toward the door.

GREG

Charlie, let's go.

LUCAS

Bye Ella! Call me if that wedding doesn't work out.

CHARLIE

Ignore him, that's what I usually do.

ELLA

I'm going to miss you so much.

Charlie and Ella hug again. Ella has tears in her eyes.

CHARLIE

I have to go. I'll call you as soon as we land.

ELLA

You better.

Charlie picks up a suitcase and walks away. She stops and turns around.

CHARLIE

Hey, Ella?

Ella turns around to face Charlie.

ELLA

Yeah?

CHARLIE

Can you tell Larry something for me?

Ella nods.

CHARLIE CONT'D

Can you tell him that he was right?

ELLA

Right? About what?

CHARLIE

Just because somebody's dead, doesn't mean they're gone.

The confusion on Ella's face turns to understanding. She smiles and nods.

ELLA

I'll tell him as soon as I get back.

CHARLIE

Thank you.

Charlie turns around again and walks into the airport to join Greg and Lucas.

INT. AIRPORT GATE DAY

Charlie, Greg and Lucas are sitting in the gate waiting for their plane. Lucas is listening to music, Greg is reading, and Charlie is staring off into space, fiddling with her phone.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

(over loud speaker)

Flight 4389 to Phoenix is now

(MORE)

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

boarding in Gate 14.

Greg looks up from his book at the announcement. He taps Lucas on the shoulder. Luke pulls out a headphone and looks up.

GREG

We're boarding.

Lucas nods and stands up, grabbing his carry on. Charlie doesn't move, still zoned out.

GREG

Charlie, get your stuff.

Lucas waves a hand in front of Charlie's face.

LUCAS

Hellooo, anybody in there?

Charlie snaps back into focus and slaps Luke's hand out of her face.

CHARLIE

Sorry, I got distracted.

Charlie stands up and grabs her bag.

CHARLIE

Ready?

She doesn't wait for an answer, just starts walking towards the boarding line.

Greg and Lucas walk over and join her in the line. She is playing with her phone again as they move up in the line.

ECU on her phone. She is staring at Jay's contact. She is about to press call.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Ma'am?

Charlie looks up. It is her turn to scan her ticket. She is holding up the line.

CHARLIE

Sorry.

She hands the flight attendant her ticket.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

You won't be able to make any calls once we take off, so if you need to

(MORE)

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

call somebody, you should do it
now.

CHARLIE

Oh, it's okay. It isn't anything
important.

Charlie locks her phone and sticks it her bag. She walks
down the hallway.

EXT. HOTEL ROOM AFTERNOON

Jay is standing outside of Charlie's hotel room, knocking on
the door.

JAY

(to himself)
Please still be here.

Jay keeps knocking.

JAY

Charlie!

Jay stops and sighs. He gives up and turns around, starting
to walk away.

A door opens. Jay hears it.

CU on his face. He thinks that Charlie has opened the door.
He turns around.

It is the door next to Charlie's. An old, rough looking,
man wearing a dirty wife-beater and holding a beer is
standing in the door frame.

MAN

You looking for the girl next door?

JAY

Yeah, have you seen her?

MAN

A little while ago. She was in
there with that blonde girl, making
a ton of noise. I could barely hear
my TV.

JAY

Do you know where they went?

MAN

Nope. Had an awful lot of luggage

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

with them though.

JAY

Were they going to the airport?

MAN

How should I know? Now stop banging
on the door, I'm trying to watch
the game.

The man shuts the door. Jay stands there alone.

INT. PLANE NIGHT

Charlie, Greg, and Lucas are sitting on the plane. Lucas is asleep in the window seat. Charlie is in the middle and Greg in the aisle seat. Greg is reading again and Charlie is messing with her phone.

CU on her phone. She is scrolling through pictures of her time in Yachats. There are a bunch with Ella and Jay, even one of Larry. She stops on one of her and Jay.

Greg is watching her. He sees what picture she stopped on.

GREG

How did you meet him?

Charlie looks up.

CHARLIE

What?

GREG

Jay. How did you meet him?

Greg gestures towards her phone. She looks down and realizes what picture is on the screen. She locks the phone.

CHARLIE

I met him in a coffee shop the
first day I was there.

GREG

He seems like a nice kid.

CHARLIE

Yeah he's great.

GREG

Did he introduce you to Ella?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

GREG
The town seemed really interesting.
Did you like it there?

CHARLIE
Yeah.

It is obvious that Charlie isn't really paying attention. She is still fiddling with her phone, like she wants to unlock it and look at the picture, but doesn't want her dad to see.

GREG
I bet there are a lot of
interesting people there.

CHARLIE
Yep.

GREG
You're in love with Jay, right?

CHARLIE
Yea-wait, what?

Charlie turns and looks at Greg, who is smiling smugly.

GREG
You love him.

CHARLIE
I-who tol-how did you know?

GREG
Charlie, this may be a surprise to
you, but I'm not completely
oblivious. I can tell when my only
daughter is in love.

CHARLIE
Even if I do love him, and I'm not
saying I do, it doesn't matter
anyway.

GREG
Why?

CHARLIE
It's too late. Besides, it's
better for him to not get
involved with me.

GREG

Why do you think that?

CHARLIE

All I am going to do is cause him pain. I can't burden him with all of my issues and problems.

GREG

Don't you think you should let him be a part of this decision?

CHARLIE

Dad, you of all be people should agree with me.

GREG

Well, I don't.

CHARLIE

Dad, if you had known that Mom was sick when you met her, would you have still married her?

GREG

I did know.

CHARLIE

What?

GREG

I knew.

CHARLIE

You've never said that before.

GREG

When I met Margaret she told me about her family history with Huntington's. She hadn't been tested, but she knew there was a very real possibility that she would have it as well.

CHARLIE

What did you tell her?

GREG

I told her it didn't matter to me. I loved her, some mutation in her genes didn't change that.

CHARLIE

But it would have been easier for you if you had married somebody else.

GREG

Marrying your mom was the easiest thing I have ever done and I have never regretted it.

CHARLIE

Never?

GREG

Not once.

CHARLIE

Even when she got sick?

GREG

I was married to your mom for 25 years. She was showing symptoms for almost 20 years.

CHARLIE

(loudly)

What?

Several people around them turn and glare at Charlie.

CHARLIE

(quieter)

What?

GREG

Margaret was your age when she began to have some problems with coordination, trouble sleeping, things like that. The serious symptoms didn't start for another 20 years.

CHARLIE

But, I thought-

Charlie trails off. She's clearly confused.

GREG

I'm guessing you've been having some of those same troubles.

CHARLIE

They started a few weeks ago. I

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

thought that-with Mom, it was only about a year since the first time she was in the hospital, and I thought...

GREG

Charlie, you have a long time before your symptoms will develop. I would have thought that Dr. Reeves would have told you that.

CHARLIE

He might have tried to...

GREG

What do you mean?

CHARLIE

I may have run out of his office while he was trying to talk to me.

Greg laughs and shakes his head.

GREG

We'll make an appointment to go talk to him when we land.

Charlie nods. Greg goes back to reading his book.

Beat.

CHARLIE

Dad?

GREG

Yeah?

CHARLIE

I'm sorry for leaving. I wasn't thinking about you or Luke. I shouldn't have done that.

GREG

You don't need to apologize. You can't spend your entire life thinking about us before you do things for yourself.

CHARLIE

I shouldn't have just left you two alone like that.

GREG

Charlie, Luke and I can take care of ourselves. You need to do what is best for you.

CHARLIE

But-

GREG

It isn't your job to worry about us. Believe it or not, I took care of myself for many years before you were born.

CHARLIE

What about Luke?

GREG

What about him?

CHARLIE

All of the trouble he has been getting in to, you never did anything about it.

GREG

It was his way of mourning. I was a lot like Luke when I was younger, I knew he would work through it eventually.

CHARLIE

How has he been since I left?

GREG

A lot better. Richard has him working with some of the at-risk kids at the high school.

CHARLIE

They trust him around kids alone?

GREG

Surprisingly, yes.

CHARLIE

Those poor kids. They're never going to be the same.

Luke sits up and looks at Greg and Charlie.

LUCAS

I can hear you.

Charlie and Greg laugh and exchange guilty looks.

GREG
We thought you were asleep.

CHARLIE
And it was all true.

LUCAS
Whatever. I'm hungry.

Luke reaches over and grabs a bag of pretzels off Charlie's tray table.

INT. ABBOTT HOUSE NIGHT

Charlie, Greg, and Lucas walk into the house.

LUCAS
Finally!

Luke throws his suitcase on the ground and flops onto the couch.

LUCAS
Charlie, next time you decide to run away, go somewhere closer. That plane ride was way too long.

CHARLIE
I'll be sure to keep that in mind.

GREG
Y'all hungry?

LUCAS
Starving. I haven't eaten in forever.

CHARLIE
You ate almost an entire pizza before we left.

LUCAS
That was a long time ago.

GREG
We can make burgers.

LUCAS
YES!

GREG
Come help me get them started.

Luke groans and rolls over on the couch.

LUCAS
I can't move.

GREG
Luke, get up.

LUCAS
I can't.

GREG
Lucas, now.

LUCAS
Ugh fine. I'm only doing it because
there's food involved.

Luke walks into the kitchen, the door swinging shut behind him. Greg turns and looks at Charlie.

GREG
You coming?

CHARLIE
Yeah, I'm just going to put my
stuff in my room.

Charlie gestures to the suitcases on the ground. Greg nods.

GREG
Okay. Don't take too long or Lucas
will eat everything in sight.

CHARLIE
I won't.

Charlie turns and walks up the stairs.

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM NIGHT

Charlie opens the door to her room. Everything is exactly the same, nothing has been touched since she left. She throws her bags on the floor and lays down on the bed.

Charlie sits up and reaches down to open one of her bags. She pulls the framed picture of Margaret out, the one that sat on her bedside table.

She holds it up and looks at it.

FLASHBACK

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM DAY

A young Charlie, about 15, and a younger, healthy, Margaret are sitting in front of a mirror. Charlie is wearing a formal dress, while Margaret is curling her hair.

MARGARET

Are you excited for your first dance?

CHARLIE

Yeah, but I don't like my date.

MARGARET

Why not?

CHARLIE

He's weird.

MARGARET

I thought your dad was weird when I first met him.

CHARLIE

Really?

MARGARET

Yep. I only said yes when he asked me out because I felt bad.

Charlie laughs.

CHARLIE

Does he know that?

MARGARET

He does. I told him on our second date.

CHARLIE

When did you realize you actually liked him?

MARGARET

About ten minutes in to our first date.

CHARLIE

But you didn't like him before that?

MARGARET

No, but I didn't really know him. Turns out, I was completely wrong about him.

CHARLIE

Are you glad you went out with him?

MARGARET

Definitely. Saying yes to him was the best decision I ever made.

CHARLIE

How will I know when I meet the guy I'm going to marry?

MARGARET

You'll just know. One thing that I learned is to take chances, you may end up passing up the perfect person.

FLASHFOWARD

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM NIGHT

GREG OS

Charlie!

Greg's voice snaps Charlie out of her memories. She sits up.

CHARLIE

Yeah?

GREG

You coming? Dinner's almost ready.

CHARLIE

Oh yeah, sorry.

Charlie walks out of her room.

INT. KITCHEN NIGHT

Charlie walks in to the kitchen. Greg and Lucas are getting dinner ready. Greg is putting burgers on buns. Luke is sitting on the counter snacking on some chips.

GREG

Luke, stop eating chips!

LUCAS

But I'm hungry.

GREG

And you can eat a burger in one minute, have some self-control.

LUCAS

I have self-control!

Luke hops off the counter and puts the chips away. He grabs a plate with a burger on it from Greg.

Luke sees that Charlie has finally come down.

LUCAS

Charlie didn't help at all!

GREG

Neither did you. All you did was eat.

LUCAS

I did not! I practically did all the work.

GREG

That's exactly what Margaret used to do. She was a great cook, but she never had the patience to finish anything. We would get half way through cooking a meal together and she would get bored. She used to always get that book of poems she was so obsessed with and read them to me while I cooked.

CHARLIE

She told me once that she didn't like you when you first met.

GREG

Yeah, she only agreed to go out with me because she couldn't figure out how to say no without hurting my feelings.

LUCAS

You were a pity date! Life makes much more sense now, I always thought Mom was too pretty for you.

Greg laughs.

GREG

Oh she definitely was.

Greg hands Charlie a plate.

GREG
Ready to eat?

LUCAS
I've been ready.

Luke grabs his plate and walks to the table. Greg follows.
Charlie just stands there.

Greg turns around.

GREG
Coming, Charlie?

CHARLIE
I uh-

Charlie puts her plate down on the counter.

CHARLIE
I think I have something I need to
go do.

Greg just smiles and nods.

Charlie turns and walks out of the room.

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM NIGHT

Charlie walks back in to her room. She grabs her phone off
the dresser and sits down on her bed. She picks up the
picture of her mom and then dials a number.

ECU on the phone, which shows her calling Jay.

EXT. MARGARET'S GRAVE EVENING

Charlie is sitting in front of Margaret's grave.

CHARLIE
I'm sorry I haven't been to visit
in a while. Things have
been..crazy. I still miss you. All
the time. But things are getting
better. Dad is getting back to
normal, Luke isn't so out of
control anymore. And me? Well...

Charlie turns around to glance at something behind her.

CHARLIE
I'm still really scared. Terrified,
actually. But maybe that's not so
bad. I have Dad, and Luke. And you,
(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

even if you aren't here physically.
I can't do this alone, but I don't
have to.

The shot widens. Jay walks up and stands next to Charlie.
She reaches out and holds his hand.

FADE OUT.

THE END.