

**THE ROCK STAR'S HOMECOMING**

Screenplay by  
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Based on the novel by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. GLENDARY COLLEGE - DAY

In the distance, gentle peaks of the Appalachian Mountains fill the horizon.

But closer, bathed in golden autumn light, quaint Glendary College campus bustles with activity.

TITLE OVER: 1981.

Shots of small town college life:

- STUDENTS criss-cross the quad on their way to class. -
- A group of PRIM GIRLS leave the on-campus CHAPEL...
- They pass a group of STONED HIPPIES lounging on the lawn...

- Just underfoot of a group of JOCKS, who toss a football back and forth and sneer as they have to step over the lounging hippies. Meanwhile, the jocks don't even notice...
- A group of NONDESCRIPT GIRLS eyeing the jocks longingly before entering--

EXT. MARY ELLEN CLEMENS LADIES' DORM - CONTINUOUS

A squat stone building. As the girls enter they pass a large, no-nonsense sign proclaiming DORM RULES and CURFEW.

INT. MARY ELLEN CLEMENS LADIES' DORM - DAY

A group of DORM MATES gather in the cozy common room. The room is abuzz with excited conversation.

One voice, at near-frantic pitch, rises above the rest. CAROLYN (21), a desperately bleached blonde with a few extra pounds, wears an expression of worry that belies her attempt at enthusiasm.

CAROLYN

I can hardly believe it's almost here!  
Our last Homecoming. Ever. It's so...  
exciting. Don't you think? Everyone has  
their dates squared away, right?

She glances around at the others.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)

Everyone who wants to, that is.

The expressions on the other girls' faces range from smugness to anguish to disdain -- all depending on their date status.

CHRISTINE (21), a pretty cheerleader type, tilts her head with false sympathy.

CHRISTINE

Carolyn, it's not the end of the world if  
you don't go to Homecoming.

CAROLYN

Oh, I'm not worried about getting a  
date. Jack already asked me. A few girls eye her  
with envy.

CHRISTINE

Then why are you going supersonic?

CAROLYN

It's just... he's so cocksure. Like we're a foregone conclusion. If we go to Homecoming, sooner or later he'll propose, right? It's tradition. And, I don't know... all he's ever going to be is a boring accountant. I want to get some excitement out of life before I whither away. Is that so wrong?

A ripple of incredulity spreads through the girls; to them, walking away from a marriage proposal *is* so wrong.

Carolyn looks to IMOGENE (21), a cute but unassuming ingenue, for reassurance. But Imogene seems lost in her own thoughts.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)

Don't you ever wonder, Imogene?  
Is Steve... *it*?

SHELLEY (22), a chubby, sarcastic girl, snorts through her Diet Coke.

SHELLEY

Imogene better hope there's more than Steve, considering...

CAROLYN

Considering what?

All eyes turn to Imogene.

Shelley's matching bookend, BETTY (21), stuffs a handful of popcorn in her mouth, enjoying the show.

SHELLEY

Considering Steve hasn't popped the Homecoming question yet...

Imogene bites her lip, blushing furiously at the girls' chorus of GASPS.

CHRISTINE

(not sorry at all)  
Oh, Imogene. I'm so sorry.

SHELLEY

What's he waiting for?

IMOGENE

It's not like he's *not going* to ask me.  
He's my boyfriend--

Shelley snorts into her Diet Coke again. This time, Imogene meets it with a defiant look.

IMOGENE (CONT'D) In fact,  
I'm sure it'll happen tonight.

CAROLYN

Well, he better. Time is ticking away!

Imogene's confidence wavers. Some of the girls exchange knowing looks. Christine even clucks a little under her breath.

BETTY

Ah, who cares if you have a date for the magical Homecoming dance. It's -- just -- a -- dance. You ladies do realize that, don't you? Clinging to some lame guy just so he'll ask you to Homecoming, just so he'll propose, just so you can check that off the list? I'd *rather* sit at home than hook my wagon to someone I'm just so-so about.

CHRISTINE

(catty whispering)

Like she has a lot of options...

CAROLYN

Yeah, Betty. Who are you to judge?

As the girls' attention shifts, Imogene quietly slips away from the crowd.

INT. IMOGENE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Imogene hurries around her dorm room, setting up for a night of romance. In quick shots we see:

- She spreads a clean sheet over an end table.
- Lights a couple of mismatched candles.
- Sets out plates and silverware.
- Accepts a pizza delivery box from a scruffy DELIVERY GUY.

- And finally, wedges two bottles of beer into the slightly open window -- a makeshift chiller.

She surveys her work with satisfaction. No detail left untended. She checks her watch.

INT. IMOGENE'S DORM ROOM - LATER

The burned-down candles sit in puddles of wax. Imogene's sound asleep at her desk, her face planted on an open textbook. An empty beer bottle and half a slice of pizza, cold and greasy, lay nearby.

A sharp KNOCK startles her awake. Imogene peers at her watch, annoyed.

Imogene opens the door to find STEVE (21), might be considered handsome but trying too hard to look disaffected, waiting impatiently in the hallway.

He pushes past her into the room with a smirk he thinks looks charming.

STEVE

Take a little longer, maybe I'll get a chance to chat with your House Mother.

IMOGENE

Oh, I'm sorry. I stood by the door for the first hour after you said you'd show up, but in hour two -- I admit it -- I gave up my post. Sorry, sir, it won't happen again.

Steve plants a quick peck on Imogene's cheek on his way to the window to grab the remaining bottle of beer.

STEVE

Well somebody's in a mood tonight. Don't tell me... that time of the month?

IMOGENE

It's not a mood, Steve. I'm upset because you said you'd be here two hours ago and now you waltz in without so much as an apology.

When he responds only by cracking open his beer, Imogene huffs in disgust.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

You could have called.

STEVE

I'm sorry, babe. I got caught up.

He casts an eye to her bed, glances around the empty room.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Where's your roommate?

IMOGENE

Unbelievable.

STEVE

Oh, come on! Do we have to be in a fight over this? I'm here now...

IMOGENE

Listen, there's something we have to get straight before this can go any further. Homecoming. Are you taking me to the dance or not?

STEVE

I haven't really thought about it.

IMOGENE

It's on Saturday!

STEVE

Didn't I almost break your foot last year?

IMOGENE

We're seniors. It's our last Homecoming as students here. The biggest dance of the year. The biggest event of our college lives.

STEVE

Do you mean other than, like, graduating?

Steve smirks at his own joke, but Imogene shakes her head -- not ready to let it go.

IMOGENE

A date for Homecoming shows at least some kind of commitment.

STEVE

Who told you that? Some pom-pom waver?



Steve grabs the rest of the pizza and barely glances at Imogene as he lets himself out.

As the door closes behind him, Imogene looks around her now silent, lonely room.

INT. IMOGENE'S DORM ROOM - LATER

A DRAMATIC ROCK BALLAD blasts as Imogene sings along with every ounce of emotion she possesses. The whole room is her stage.

IMOGENE

*Like an angel  
Just out of reach...  
She moves me...  
She moves me...*

So lost in her performance, Imogene doesn't notice the window open and SARA (22), a stunning brunette, climb into view.

Sara pauses, perched halfway in, to eye the disheveled room and her roommate's performance.

SARA

Wow, guess I missed a real party!

Imogene startles and hurries to turn off the music.

SARA (CONT'D)

No, leave it! I love this song!

Sara stumbles the rest of the way into the room and semidrunkenly joins in, singing along with equal passion. When the song ends, she flops on her bed with a laugh.

SARA (CONT'D)

So why the heartbreak music?

IMOGENE

Oh, I don't want to go into it. I mean, you probably don't want to hear about it--

On the bed, Sara's already losing interest.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Steve and I broke up.

Imogene sighs, waiting for the sympathy to flow. But Sara gives an excited whoop and jumps to her feet.

SARA

That's a cause to celebrate!

IMOGENE

What do you have against Steve?

SARA

Nothing to do with Steve. It's you -- you're a free, independent woman now! That's something worth toasting, and I have just the thing.

She winks at Imogene and flings open her closet door, revealing a case of champagne.

SARA (CONT'D)

A gift from my big brother, a rock star in more ways than one!

Sara grabs a bottle and POPS the cork, letting out a WHOOP of delight.

IMOGENE

Shhh... Lynne's already been by once tonight. She'd have a conniption if she saw this.

But Sara waves off the warning and swigs right out of the bottle before pressing it into Imogene's more hesitant hands.

SARA

How about some mood music? Something for a celebration. Or at least something that doesn't make me want to slit my wrists.

Imogene nods, getting into the vibe now. She crosses to the record player and switches out the music, shooting Sara a sly smile as the first notes hit the air.

Sara's face registers recognition and she jumps to her feet, dancing to the rock music.

SARA (CONT'D)

That's what I'm talking about!

Imogene laughs, takes a drink of the champagne.

SARA (CONT'D)

How do I look? Just like Jake?

IMOGENE

There's quite a family resemblance.

SARA

Yeah, my brother didn't get all the talent!

Sara continues to dance and sing around the room. Imogene watches her with a mixture of adoration and envy.

SARA (CONT'D)

If I tell you a secret do you promise not to tell anyone? I mean *anyone*.

Imogene nods eagerly, sitting up in rapt attention.

SARA (CONT'D)

I have a little surprise planned for Homecoming.

IMOGENE

What kind of surprise?

SARA

The kind that will make this Homecoming absolutely unforgettable. It will go down in Glendary history. (a beat) Are you ready?

Sara clearly relishes the spotlight, even with an audience of one.

SARA (CONT'D)

My brother, and the Sunburst, are coming to campus.

IMOGENE

No!

SARA

One night only. A very special show. Be there or be sorry!

IMOGENE

Ohmygod, this is huge!

SARA

I know. We're going to blow everyone's minds!

Sara gleefully resumes singing and dancing around the room.

SARA (CONT'D)

I'm driving up to the city tomorrow to pick them up.

IMOGENE

(wistful)

Wow. I can't believe it. The Sunburst. Playing at the little college campus where they first met? A homecoming at our Homecoming.

Sara eyes her, and Imogene tries to play it cool.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Sounds like fun.

Imogene turns mopey, remembering her predicament.

IMOGENE (CONT'D) I

guess this Homecoming dance is definitely not one to miss.

SARA

Uh, yeah! Good bye lame, school-approved music... hello real raunch and roll!

Oblivious to Imogene's change of mood, Sara turns the music up triumphantly and starts to really rock out again.

INT. IMOGENE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

The aftermath of the night before. Empty champagne bottles. An unmoving lump of girl in each of the two dorm beds.

Insistent knocking at the door. Neither lump stirs. But the knocking persists and finally Imogene rouses herself, throwing the covers back as she groggily sits up.

She stumbles to open the door and finds Lynne Mason frowning in the hallway.

LYNNE

Good morning...

Lynne cranes her neck to get a glimpse inside the room.

LYNNE  
(CONT'D) ...I presume.

Imogene tries to scoot past Lynne into the hall, closing the door to Lynne's prying eyes. Imogene whispers and gestures toward the room.

IMOGENE  
Sara's still sleeping.

LYNNE  
Sara's the one I need to speak with.

Lynne pushes the door open and steps into the room, snapping on the lights as she goes.

Sara groggily lifts her head at the intrusion.

SARA  
Wha--?

LYNNE  
I heard there was quite a ruckus last night.

SARA  
Really? We didn't hear anything.

LYNNE  
From what I hear, the ruckus was coming from your room. It involved loud music and--

She gazes at the bottles strewn across the floor.

LYNNE (CONT'D)  
I'm guessing drunken singing...?

She waits, but Sara doesn't take the bait.

LYNNE (CONT'D) I know your brother is famous for his rock star temper tantrums, and you may feel the need to live up to his reputation--

IMOGENE  
Oh, Lynne--

LYNNE  
This doesn't concern you, Imogene.

IMOGENE

Lynne, it was me. Sara's not to blame.

Lynne eyes her with obvious suspicion.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

It was-- I got carried away. Steve and I-- we broke up. You know how that can be.

Imogene hopes for a bit of sympathy but doesn't find it.

Off Lynne's look--

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

It won't happen again.

LYNNE

Make sure it doesn't. Either of you.

As soon as the door is closed, Sara breaks into laughter.

IMOGENE

Shhhh! She'll hear you! I can't believe she let me get away with it.

SARA

Please. She has a soft spot for you. I think she's trying to mold you in her very tightly wound image.

IMOGENE

Ugh! Nightmare!

Sara jumps out of bed, apparently recovered.

SARA

Well I owe you one. Breakfast?

IMOGENE

With me? I mean--

Imogene glances casually at the clock.

IMOGENE (CONT'D) I

think I have time before my meeting with Mr. Jaffee.

As Sara turns to grab a sweatshirt, Imogene's giddy smile belies her attempt at nonchalance.

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

As Imogene and Sara weave through the maze of tables, they pass a cross-section of the student body:

A group of uptight students, the JESUS FREAKS, praying together before eating.

At a table in the corner, the half-baked BURNOUTS.

At another table, the group of dateless girls from the dorm including Betty and Shelley, known as the NONDESCRIPTS.

As Sara and Imogene near the middle of the cafeteria, the prime real estate, they pass:

A table of CHEERLEADERS, pretty and perky. Christine reigns at the center.

The cheerleaders look like they're engrossed in their own conversation, but it's clear their attention is at all times tuned into the table next to them, where--

A group of FOOTBALL PLAYERS stockpiles calories from their trays full of food.

Sara, even hungover, is her charming and trouble-making self. She pauses by the table of football players, keeping one eye on Christine but sliding a hand over the broad shoulders of JIM GUTHRIE (22), an athlete with smoldering good looks.

SARA

How are you holding up, Jim? Can't wait to see you play at Homecoming but it must be so much pressure. The weight of the Glendary football world rests on these shoulders.

Jim looks up, surprised but pleased, while Christine burns a look at Sara from the other table.

SARA (CONT'D) If you want to talk, let me know. Anytime. I have a very sympathetic ear.

Caught in the middle, Imogene can't help but catch the overflow of Christine's hateful glare as it ripples through the table of cheerleaders.

Imogene tugs at Sara's sleeve.

IMOGENE

Hey-- Look what they're serving today.

Sara rolls her eyes at Imogene but allows herself to be pulled away toward the cafeteria line. As they pass the cheerleaders, Sara directs a cheeky wink at Christine.

Once they gain some distance, Imogene laughs to Sara--

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Did you see the look on Christine's face?  
She was ready to attack!

Imogene turns thoughtful.

IMOGENE (CONT'D) Funny,  
since she seemed so ambivalent about  
Jim yesterday. (beat)  
Was that all just to get under  
Christine's skin, or are you really  
interested in him?

Sara ponders a brief moment then offers her typical coy smile.

SARA

I'm interested in seeing where the day  
takes me.

As she walks ahead of Imogene to the cafeteria line, Imogene can't help but stare after her in wonder as if Sara is some rare, exotic creature.

INT. MR. JAFFEE'S OFFICE - LATER

Imogene pokes her head in, offers a nervous smile and wave.

IMOGENE

You wanted to see me, Mr. Jaffee?

MR. JAFFEE (40s), pure bespectacled English Lit professor, looks up from grading papers. He waves her in, red pen in hand.

MR. JAFFEE

Senior Thesis. (beat)  
You're behind  
schedule.

IMOGENE

I guess *technically* I haven't met the exact milestones that we discussed... but I feel like, once I decide on a topic I'll be able to get back on track. I

just want to choose absolutely the right topic. Something I'm passionate about.

Mr. Jaffee shakes his head.

MR. JAFFEE

It's a senior thesis. It doesn't have to be a work of art. If you want to be passionate about something, be passionate about graduating! Which will not happen if you do not complete this project. *On time.*

Imogene nods.

MR. JAFFEE (CONT'D) What topics have you narrowed it down to?

IMOGENE

Well, um... you know how I've been writing music reviews for the newspaper? I was thinking I'd like to write my thesis about something involving music. Maybe music's relation to poetry or something...

Her voice trails off as she notices the disapproving look on Mr. Jaffee's face. Imogene presses forward anyway.

IMOGENE (CONT'D) Like maybe... take the Sunburst, for example. They're this band--

MR. JAFFEE

Yes, even I know who they are.

IMOGENE

So take their evolution over three albums. From, you know, totally unabashed rock music to, well, something more lyrical since Jake's songwriting collaboration with Byron Roberts, who is... well, he's more than just a musician, he's a *rock legend*--

Mr. Jaffee nods impatiently.

MR. JAFFEE

I haven't been living in a cave, Imogene. I like popular music just as much as the next person. But to call it poetry... I

think that's a bit of a stretch, don't you?

IMOGENE

It's an avant-garde style of poetry. Suited to our confused times. It's a very timely topic, if you think about it.

MR. JAFFEE

It's a convoluted topic. I can't dictate what you write about, but as your advisor I am here to guide you in the direction of success. I strongly suggest you choose something more manageable. If you're interested in poetry, choose a poet and delve into his work.

He reaches into his desk drawer and pulls out a slim volume of self-published poetry.

MR. JAFFEE (CONT'D)

You could even study me, if you're interested.

IMOGENE

Sure, Mr. Jaffee. I'll think about it.

EXT. GLENDARY COLLEGE - DAY

Imogene checks her watch and sets off across campus.

EXT. CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

Imogene walks past the cafeteria, doing her best to look casual as she scans the students coming and going.

There -- Steve, heading to the cafeteria, his work uniform slung over one shoulder. He catches sight of her, and bursts out LAUGHING. Imogene feigns surprise.

IMOGENE

Oh. Hey, Steve.

This only makes him laugh harder, nearly doubled over. Imogene watches, irritation creeping in.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

Steve struggles to catch his breath before he can speak.

STEVE

I knew you'd come around.

IMOGENE

Come around? You mean come around the cafeteria? That's no surprise. I do eat here every day, you know.

STEVE

Sure, but are you going to eat right now?

His eyes twinkle knowingly.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Or are you here to see me?

IMOGENE

I just happened to be passing by.

STEVE

Right...

IMOGENE

You think I'd want to see you after your sorry display last night? But if you were hoping I would come by to give you one more chance...

At this, Steve bursts out laughing again and Imogene can take no more.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

You'd be sorely disappointed!

STEVE

I'm sorry, babe. I want to make up, I do. I'm not making fun of you.

Imogene starts to soften.

STEVE (CONT'D) It's

just that you're so predictable.

He reaches for her playfully but she pushes him off.

IMOGENE

I am not!

STEVE

But I'm glad you're here so we can make up.

(laughing again)  
I was counting on it--

Irritated, Imogene looks away while Steve struggles to regain his composure. Her attention wanders to--

Across the parking lot, where Sara packs up her van for the road trip.

Imogene watches her a moment, then turns back to Steve with a look of defiance.

IMOGENE

Actually, Steve. I'm here to say goodbye. I'm going with Sara to New York. To hang out with the Sunburst.

Steve turns sober.

STEVE

Since when?

IMOGENE

Just wanted to let you know so you weren't waiting around for me. Since you think you know *everything* about me.

STEVE

Is this to get back at me?

IMOGENE

This has absolutely nothing to do with you.

Imogene starts away.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

It's just me, doing what I want to do for once.

She turns and heads toward Sara, her look of confidence evaporating.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Imogene reaches Sara and puts on her sunniest smile.

IMOGENE

Sara! Hey. Heading out soon?

SARA Why do you sound so perky?

Imogene nervously tries to play it off.

IMOGENE

Who me? I guess I'm just an upbeat sort of person. You know, easygoing, fun, low maintenance. That's me. Someone you never mind having around because I'm just there, not bothering anyone!

SARA

Sure. That doesn't sound weird at all.

IMOGENE

Well I was just thinking, you know, maybe you could use some company on your trip. And plus you might need an extra set of hands. Or someone to trade off driving duties? I'm an excellent driver...

Sara shoots her a skeptical look.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

And you'd really be doing me a favor too because I'm desperate to find an interesting thesis for my senior project and I was thinking maybe I could do something about the influence of poetry on rock music, you know? And so this would be a great research trip for me...

SARA

Ugh. I have no interest in thinking about homework on this trip.

IMOGENE

Oh, yeah. Well I wouldn't be talking about it. Just, you know, observing.

SARA

Like lurking?

IMOGENE

Not in a creepy way. I'll be on my best behavior, I promise.

Sara leans in conspiratorially.

SARA

That's not really a selling point, you know.

IMOGENE

Oh, I just meant--

SARA

Yeah, I know what you meant. Here's the thing, though... my brother doesn't know you. The band doesn't know you. It's kind of a delicate situation, and it needs to be handled with a certain finesse. I just don't think bringing a stranger into the mix is a good idea.

Sara sees the disappointment on Imogene's face.

SARA (CONT'D)

You're not going to cry, are you?

IMOGENE

No. I get it. You're going to have your hands full...

Imogene levels a look at her.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

But without you here I might get lonely. I might, I don't know, start talking to someone like Lynne... about your secret stash of champagne...

SARA

You bitch!

IMOGENE

You said you owed me one!

Sara eyes Imogene, a little impressed. Imogene holds her breath.

SARA

Fine! Fine. You can come.

Imogene squeals and throws her arms around Sara in a hug.

Sara rolls her eyes but can't help but laugh.

INT. SARA'S VAN - LATER

Music cranked. Rural scenery speeds by in a blur. Two girls on the road.

IMOGENE

So what was that this morning? With Jim?

Sara shrugs, all innocence.

SARA

What do you mean?

IMOGENE

Be real. Are you into him, or was that little show all for Christine's benefit? If that's the case, I think it worked. She looked ready to shove her pom poms down your throat!

The girls laugh at the thought.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

But if you're into him...

SARA

What if I am?

IMOGENE

Wow. I guess I just never thought of him as your type.

SARA

Have you seen him? I'd have to be blind for him not to be.

IMOGENE

Well, sure. But he's still... I don't know. A small town boy. And you're like this worldly woman.

For just the briefest moment Sara looks genuinely vulnerable, but she recovers with a mischievous smile.

SARA

Yeah, but just think how much I could teach him.

Imogene shakes her head, awed yet again by Sara's confidence.

IMOGENE

Have you decided on a topic for your honors thesis?

SARA

Of course. The Psychology of Winning. Drawing on my own experiences.

IMOGENE

That sounds... great. I still haven't settled on one yet.

Off Imogene's miserable look.

SARA

You are taking this way too seriously. Get it over with so you can get on with the rest of your life!

IMOGENE

That's what Jaffee said to me this morning.

SARA

See? Even your *advisor* is telling you to relax! In the grand scheme of things, this is just a tiny hurdle on the way out into the real world.

IMOGENE

Thanks. That's not stressful to think about at all.

SARA

Oh come on. Aren't you excited? The world is your oyster. Full of possibilities for adventure, excitement--

IMOGENE

*Your* oyster maybe.

SARA

If you could do anything after graduation, what would it be?

IMOGENE

I don't know...

SARA

Sure you do. Anything. What would it be?

IMOGENE

Maybe... move to New York. Become a fabulously stylish rock journalist. Get into all the best shows. Be one of those women who looks like they were born cool.

SARA

See? Now that sounds like a plan!

IMOGENE

There's a difference between a plan and a fantasy.

SARA

Sure. A fantasy is something you never do anything about. What's stopping you?

IMOGENE

Oh, I don't know. Just my parents, who would probably disown me--

SARA

You're crazy. Your parents would not disown you for going after your dream. You know what I think? I think you're afraid of it, so you make excuses.

Sara nods knowingly.

SARA (CONT'D)

Happens all the time. You're just lucky you met me. I think maybe this is why I was brought into your life. To shake you up a little. Show you there's nothing to be afraid of.

Imogene looks at her with a mixture of doubt and hope.

IMOGENE

Okay, so what are your big plans?

SARA

I've narrowed it down to a few options. Either live in the city near my brother. Or maybe go out to Hollywood. But first I might just travel the world for a while. The usual.

IMOGENE

You know what most people think is the usual? Graduating, getting married, settling down. All the things I'm expected to do.

Sara wrinkles her nose at the thought.

SARA

Who expects you to do that?

IMOGENE

I don't know. Everyone. Me, I guess.

SARA

Well it sounds boring. You should totally go for the rock journalism thing.

Sara sounds so sure of it, it's as if the matter is already settled. Sara ponders as she gazes out the window.

The van shuttles along, the rural scenes giving way to twinkling city lights in the distance.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

The van rolls through the toll checkpoint and plunges into the darkness of the Holland tunnel.

A breathless beat before they emerge into the workaday Manhattan streets.

Imogene gazes out at the sheer enormity of the city. The lights, the traffic, the crowds; everything pulses with life.

Sara gives her a sidelong glance and has to smile at Imogene's look of rapture.

The van joins the madness, continuing on.

INT. PEACE ENTERPRISES OFFICES AND STUDIO - NIGHT

Imogene is still awestruck as Sara leads her into the converted studio.

They make their way through dim hallways. Faint rock music drifts out to them from somewhere deep within the building.

Sara's a few steps ahead as they round a corner and she bumps straight into BYRON (40s), a folk legend with a matching swagger.

SARA

Oh, I'm so sorry.

Byron greets Sara warmly, oozing animal magnetism.

BYRON

Aren't you a sight for sore eyes.

Imogene is star-struck, unable to do more than whisper--

IMOGENE

Byron Robarts.

He glances from Imogene back to Sara with an amused look. Sara plays it off, offering her hand to Byron.

SARA

Have we met?

Byron takes her hand. They shake, and do not let go. There is history in their shake. Their eyes tell all.

Imogene watches them, eyes widening as she puts two and two together. It isn't hard. They clearly know each other -- well.

BYRON

Where did you disappear to, young lady?

SARA

School. I'm trying to graduate and make something of myself.

BYRON

College degrees are overrated, you know.

SARA

That's what you artist types are always saying, but I think I'll hedge my bets. Besides, college is a pretty good time.

IMOGENE

You should come for Homecoming.

Sara blanches, but Imogene blusters on.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

The Sunburst are coming. They're going to play at the dance--

Sara practically jumps on Imogene to shut her up.

BYRON

The Sunburst-- really? I didn't know they played school dances.

SARA

They're playing ours. I'm very persuasive when I want to be.

BYRON

I seem to remember that about you.

Sara and Byron share a secretive smile. Imogene looks from one to the other, her presence clearly forgotten again.

BYRON (CONT'D)

So how long before you have to rush back to school for this Homecoming?

SARA

We'll see. Depends on how much trouble I get into.

BYRON

Let me know if you need any help.

SARA

With?

BYRON

Getting out of trouble. Or into it. Your call.

Sara grins as Byron walks away. She lets slip a delighted laugh when he glances back for one last look.

Finally Sara turns her attention back to Imogene. Sara's whole demeanor is changed, electrified.

SARA Come on, follow the music.

IMOGENE

What just happened?

SARA

What?

IMOGENE

You-- and Byron Robarts-- I'm not blind. Byron Robarts! Spill!

Sara pulls Imogene farther down the hall, checking to make sure the coast is clear.

SARA

Can you stop saying his name over and over? Be cool, woman.

IMOGENE

But he's Byron Robarts!

SARA

It's no big deal. He writes with my brother.

IMOGENE

I know. I shouldn't be surprised that you know him. But you, like, *really* know him. And he's--

SARA

He's sweet.

IMOGENE

Sweet.

SARA

Yeah, I got to know him over the summer. When I interned here.

Imogene waits for more but Sara just stares at her with a my-lips-are-sealed expression.

IMOGENE

Isn't he married?

SARA

(vague)

I don't know, is he...? Come on, let's find the guys.

Sara continues down the hall, effectively ending the conversation.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

And then they're inside the recording studio.

Imogene lays eyes on JAKE (20s), aloof, moody, and completely oblivious to Imogene's existence. It's obvious from moment one, he is a star.

SARA

Brother!

Jake looks up from idly picking a tune on his guitar as if bothered out of a deep pondering. He doesn't return Sara's cheerful greeting.

She races over to hug him anyway.

SARA (CONT'D)

Yes, yes, you're a brooding rock star. We get it.

Sara looks around at the empty room. Imogene shifts nervously by the door.

SARA (CONT'D)

We're here to collect you. Where are the other guys?

Jake flops onto a chair.

JAKE

They went outside for a smoke. Like that's going to help.

SARA

Help what?

Jake gestures ambiguously in the air.

JAKE

This. All of this.

IMOGENE

I thought you guys sounded great. From what I could hear.

Jake and Sara both turn to Imogene, still rooted to her spot by the door.

Wordlessly, Jake looks to Sara.

SARA

My roommate.

(a beat)

So what's going on? Why the pouty face?

JAKE

The guys... they're acting like assholes. Complaining that I'm the only one the press cares about.

Sara reaches over and pinches Jake's cheek.

SARA

Well can you blame them? You're just so cute...

He slaps her hand away, in no mood. It doesn't faze her.

SARA (CONT'D)

They're just jealous.

JAKE

They think I'm a sell out -- but they don't know what it's like! I have a wife to support, responsibilities. It's not like I've run off to write commercial jingles or something.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

I'm still here, with them. With the Sunburst. But that doesn't matter. We fight more than we play. And I haven't been able to write any new music for months.

He turns his forlorn eyes to Sara, then Imogene.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I've run dry.

Imogene's about to pipe in again when they hear approaching voices from the hallway. The door swings open and the rest of the band enters.

CHARLIE (20's), the drummer, quiet and even-tempered, long arms hanging limply at his sides.

ERIC (20's), the bassist, a compact body with luxurious rock star hair hanging in sheets around his head.

KEITH (20's), the guitarist, a portrait of intensity and a brooding look that's a match for Jake's.

The room goes thick with tension as the guys take in Sara, then Imogene, then Jake's scowl.

CHARLIE

Hey, Sara. Surprise visit?

Sara looks from Charlie to Jake, gauges the other guys' reactions.

SARA

I'm here for you guys.

Charlie, Keith, and Eric all seem confused by that answer. Sara turns a questioning look to Jake.

JAKE

Yeah, Sara and her little friend here have a big Homecoming football game coming up. They go to school together, at Glendary. The old stomping grounds.  
(beat)

They want us to play the dance after the game.

Silence. Then Keith breaks into laughter. Eric and Charlie smile tentatively, like they're waiting for the punchline to the joke.

CHARLIE  
You're... serious?

ERIC  
Bad timing, little sister. We're way behind schedule--

KEITH  
(grumbles)  
What schedule?  
(to Sara)  
We're not going anywhere.

Sara folds her arms, not taking no for an answer.

SARA  
You guys made a commitment--

KEITH  
This is the first I've heard of it.  
(to the other guys)  
You guys know anything about this?

Eric and Charlie shake their heads, with apologetic glances at Sara.

KEITH (CONT'D) Then I guess Jake is the only one who made the commitment, so he can be the one to keep the commitment. (to Jake)  
Take a few days off. Yeah, don't worry about it. It's not like we have our careers on the line. Do whatever you want, like you always do. I'm over this.

Imogene shoots a panicked look at Sara, but Sara only fumes silently.

IMOGENE  
You can't just leave!

Now all the guys look at Imogene, as if seeing her for the first time.

CHARLIE

Who are you?

IMOGENE

I came with Sara.

Keith crowds up to her, practically growling in her face.

KEITH

And now you can go home with Sara.

Jake finally interjects, attempting to diffuse the situation.

JAKE

Dude, you're not even considering the possibilities... (beat)  
You know what college campuses have? College girls. Think of the crowds of adoring young ladies.

SARA

Adoring crowds... where else are you going to find those?

Keith shoots her a glare.

SARA (CONT'D)

Lighten up, Keith. It's one day. One show. And you know it will be fun.

He evaluates her. Turns to Charlie and Eric.

KEITH

If you guys think this is what's best for the group, I'll suck it up. But a college Homecoming dance? Is that a Sunburst show?

Charlie and Eric trade looks, shrug unenthusiastically. Keith nods, as if it's settled.

KEITH (CONT'D)

(to Sara)

Looks like you're out of luck. But you girls are welcome to stick around and party with us.

He picks up his guitar.

KEITH (CONT'D)

You guys ready to try again?

As the rest of the guys prepare to play, Imogene and Sara exchange defeated looks. Sara pulls Imogene over to a corner seating area.

Discordant sounds of the band warming up cover worried conversation between the girls.

IMOGENE

(whispering)

What are we going to do?

SARA

Don't worry. I'm not giving up yet.

IMOGENE

But they seem so... angry--

SARA

I said don't worry. We'll hang out, have some drinks, everybody'll relax. It might take a little longer than expected to get on the road, but we'll get there.

IMOGENE

We have to be on the road by tomorrow, noon at the latest--

SARA

I know! Stop whining. Be cool and maybe they'll actually want to go back to campus with us.

Imogene cringes at Sara's irritation, tries to act cool as she turns her attention back to the band just as they start into a new song.

As the kick drum counts in and the rock music fills the room, the guys hit a groove together that reminds everybody how they became rock stars.

Imogene stares at them, mesmerized by the sights and sounds of the band, the whole experience.

Jake winks at Sara, and Imogene glances over -- coveting this fantasy life.

The band plays on, reaching the end of the rousing song. The last notes still linger in the air and the band mates are already in seemingly better moods.

Imogene sighs, coming back down to Earth, a smile of pure contentment on her face.

The studio door CRASHES open and MARIANNE (20s), the ultimate glam diva, barges in.

SARA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Oh, god.

MARIANNE

Hello, gentlemen.

Marianne makes her way over to Jake.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Baby...

She kisses him on the cheek. But then continues on to Eric... then Keith... and finally Charlie. Greeting them all with kisses, lingering too long with Charlie.

Jake scowls at her and flops into a chair for a break.

Marianne continues to hover by Charlie as she glances at Sara and Imogene.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

(to Sara)

Little sister! Surprise visit?

Sara feigns a smile.

SARA

Can't stay away from my big brother for too long.

ERIC

Guess you might stay away after this visit, though.

Marianne looks from Sara to Eric, but Sara isn't forthcoming.

MARIANNE

What am I missing?

KEITH

The girls are here to snatch us away from the glitz and glamour of the big apple, and take us to Glendora--

JAKE

Glendary.

KEITH

Glendary. College.

Marianne raises her eyebrows.

ERIC

To play at the Homecoming dance.

He snickers. Sara glares at him.

MARIANNE

That is so cute. Just precious. But you girls must know that the guys are too busy for that type of thing.

She talks to Sara as if she's three.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

They're *professionals*.

Marianne throws an arm around Charlie and smiles condescendingly.

SARA

Yeah, I know--

But Marianne continues on to Charlie, ignoring that Sara's even talking.

MARIANNE

Jake's always been a bit of a softie for her...

Marianne and Charlie share a laugh. Jake notes their intimacy and visibly stiffens. Then he shakes it off and the usual slow, sexy smile spreads over his face.

He crosses the studio to Sara and Imogene's corner, collapsing into a chair near them.

JAKE

I'm really sorry about this, Sara. You know I want to help out.

SARA

I still love you, big brother, but you really make it hard sometimes.

She walks away. Jake watches her leave, his gaze drifting over Marianne and Charlie, still flirting shamelessly.

Jake turns to Imogene, who is suddenly very aware of being the focus of his attention.

JAKE  
Sara's friend?

IMOGENE  
Imogene.

JAKE  
Imogene... do you think Sara will forgive me?

IMOGENE  
Well, yeah. She adores you.

JAKE  
She does?

Seeing Jake's woeful look, Imogene nods emphatically to reassure him.

IMOGENE  
Of course she does, you're her big brother, and a talented musician, and--

JAKE  
And what about you?

IMOGENE  
Me?

JAKE  
Do you adore me?

IMOGENE  
I- Well, I- of course, I'm a huge fan of your music. I've always thought--

She stops, seeing the old confidence return to his face, and knowing his pity party has all been a ruse.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)  
I'm sure you're used to adoration.

He laughs pleasantly, still keeping her in his sights. Scoots a tiny bit closer.

JAKE

A little more is always nice.

Flustered, Imogene practically jumps out of her skin as Jake reaches over to brush a strand of hair back from her face.

She trips over herself scrambling to her feet.

IMOGENE

Uh, excuse me just a moment. I should go check on Sara.

As she heads out, behind her she overhears:

ERIC

Dude, you've lost your touch -- girls are running away from you now!

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Just outside the studio door Imogene collapses against the wall, still hearing the faint laughter and the other guys ribbing Jake. She looks ready to kick herself.

Imogene shakes it off and starts down the hall, peering into each darkened room as she passes.

As she rounds a corner, faint voices emerge. She pauses, unable to tell which direction they're coming from.

Finally Imogene sees an open door leading to a terrace, the sea of lights that make up Manhattan laid out beyond.

Standing in the moonlight are Sara and Byron. They're intimately close but there's a desperation to Sara's posture.

Imogene stays out of sight, hesitating, not really wanting to eavesdrop, but...

EXT. TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

BYRON

Hey, don't be like that. You know I love spending time with you.

SARA

But you don't love me, is that it?

BYRON

Sara--

SARA

I don't understand why I'm not enough for you.

BYRON

Hey, hey, hey. You know that's not true. What we had was beyond the stars. It was like being in another dimension. But eventually, even an old hippie like me had to come back to reality.

SARA

What we have is real.

BYRON

I'm married, Sara. That complicates things. And I don't want complicated. I'm too old for complicated.

SARA

If you loved me enough, you'd deal with the complications.

BYRON

My marriage, my wife... that's my life. They're not the complications.

SARA

Don't say that. Please.

Byron walks away, leaving Sara alone in the near dark, wiping away her tears. Her world privately crumbling.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Imogene doesn't have time to react. As Byron passes her, their eyes meet.

Once he's gone, Imogene hurries away, turning a blind corner in the dark hall, just outside the studio doors, and running smack into--

JAKE

Who stops her short with a steady grip on her shoulders.

JAKE

Whoa there. Missed me that much?

That slow grin spreads across his face. The combination of circumstances leaves Imogene breathless.

He gently releases her, making sure she's steady on her feet, but doesn't back away. They're face to face.

JAKE (CONT'D) I'm sorry about earlier. I was just having fun, but maybe it seemed like I was making you the butt of the joke.

The memory comes back to Imogene and she flushes, part embarrassed, part angry. Before she can argue, Jake lifts a hand to her face, gently brushes her cheek, and her anger is forgotten.

JAKE (CONT'D) Sometimes I get goofy around pretty girls. That's not the real me, though. You see that, don't you?

He meets her eyes with his own, full of hope, imploring her.

JAKE (CONT'D) I feel like I can be myself around you. There's a connection. I don't want to rush things, Imogene, but I want to know you. Really know you. In every way...

Now both hands are cupping her face, moving gently around her neck to the back of her head, where he grips her hair gently but firmly.

Imogene's breath catches in her throat. She tries to gather herself, her voice only a whisper.

IMOGENE  
You know, I do really admire you as a musician. In fact, I'm thinking of writing my senior thesis about your music and some of its influences, or maybe the influence it's had on other forms... I'd love to interview you--

Cackling laughter from the direction of the studio stops her mid-sentence. Imogene looks over to see the rest of the band peeking comically through a crack in the door.

Jake backs away from her, throwing his hands up in mock surrender.

JAKE

(to the guys)

You guys were right -- I'm losing it! I'm putting the moves on her and all she wants to talk about is interviewing me!

The guys laugh and tumble out into the hallway.

The full weight of it hits her and Imogene shoves Jake. Genuine but only hard enough to rock him onto his heels.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Come on, baby. My fragile musician's ego can't take any more.

She's upset, her humiliation turning to anger.

IMOGENE

Do you get to call yourself a musician if you can't even write a song anymore?

The room silences.

CHARLIE

Ouch. That was personal.

IMOGENE

It is personal! Music should be personal. And that's what you've all lost.

ERIC

Hey now, don't take it out on us -- he's the one acting like a jackass.

IMOGENE

(to Jake)

Maybe you should be thanking Sara for trying to help you reconnect with your roots, instead of disappointing her...

Jake shakes off the comments, but a spark of recognition in his eyes reveals her words may have hit home.

Sara comes up the hall, absorbing the tense scene in front of her.

SARA

So what did I miss?

IMOGENE

Nothing.

KEITH

Your friend was just telling us why we're failing as musicians. And that we're talentless, soulless hacks.

(beat)

So, not much.

Imogene bites her lip, regretting her outburst.

IMOGENE

I'm sorry, that didn't come out right--

JAKE

No, I think you said something we've all been thinking.

(to the guys)

If we're not feeling it anymore... why are we doing it? At all?

Sara looks to Imogene, incredulous. *How could you do this?*

Imogene looks stricken.

SARA

Hey, I'm sure this will all look different in the light of day. Let's not make any decisions right now, huh?

But the guys don't answer her. Instead they avoid each other's eyes, letting the very pregnant silence linger.

INT. STUDIO - MORNING

Sunlight streams across the couch where Imogene sleeps.

The studio in the light of day has lost some of its romance. A sleeping bag lies rumpled and empty on another couch.

Imogene's eyes flutter open and she takes a moment to orient herself, realizing what's brought her out of her slumber.

SARA (O.S.)

Get up, we've got a problem.

Imogene looks around to find Sara, poking her head in the studio's door.

SARA (CONT'D)

Hurry.

IMOGENE

What's going on?

SARA

Jake's missing.

Imogene's rocked.

IMOGENE

Oh, no. Do you think it was what I said last night?

Sara laughs.

SARA

Not to be mean, but I hardly think you have that kind of effect on him. If any at all. No offense.

IMOGENE

(hiding her hurt)

None taken.

SARA

It was Marianne. They got in one of their epic fights. She says it was his fault. She kicked him out, thinking he'd be back to grovel by now.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

I'm not sure I believe anything she says, but either way-- I've gotta find him.

Imogene nods and hustles to her feet.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

Sara leads Imogene into the plush bedroom where they find Marianne, looking breathtaking and much more relaxed than might be expected. She's clad in a silk negligee, propped up in bed by a pile of pillows. Her tanned arms glitter with bracelets, her makeup heavy but perfect.

SARA

(deadpan)

Marianne, you're going to worry yourself to death. You really must calm down.

Just then, a crashing noise from behind a closed door draws all three ladies' attention.

Marianne raises her voice in the direction of the door.

MARIANNE

Don't be nervous, Charles. Come out and greet my visitors.

Charlie, the Sunburst drummer, now almost nude, emerges from behind the door. He nods at the girls, then wraps himself in a bathrobe and leaves the bedroom. Imogene and Sara gape after him.

SARA

(to Marianne)

Are you nuts?!

MARIANNE

Oh, calm down. We have a perfectly chaste working relationship.

SARA

Working. Yeah, that's what that looked like.

MARIANNE

I'm writing songs for the new album, and frankly, I hate to work alone.

SARA

Could this have had anything to do with Jake's disappearance?

Marianne repositions herself on her pillows and shrugs in a languid way.

MARIANNE

Don't be silly. Jake knows exactly where we stand.

(a beat)

He took an acoustic guitar with him.

A disdainful look clouds her pretty face.

MARIANNE (CONT'D) I guess he's decided he's a street musician now.

So let him wander around out there like  
a lost soul. I don't care.

Sara turns incredulous eyes from Marianne to Imogene  
and back again.

IMOGENE

(to Sara)

Maybe we should just worry about finding  
him for now.

SARA

Apparently we're the only ones who are  
worried about that. Where should we look,  
Marianne? You know his usual haunts.

MARIANNE

If it were only that simple. You can't  
bring him home if he's not ready to come.  
Maybe you can retrieve his body, but not  
his spirit.

SARA

Spare me the mystical crap. I intend to  
retrieve the whole man.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

The street is already alive with cars and people of  
every walk of life. Imogene trails Sara's purposeful  
stride. Sara doesn't glance back to make sure she's  
keeping up.

Imogene takes a few hurried steps, dodging other  
pedestrians to walk side by side with Sara.

IMOGENE

I'm sure he's fine, Sara.

SARA

Huh?

IMOGENE

Jake--

SARA

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Of course. He's always  
fine. But if he's on a bender I'd like to  
get to him before he goes full tilt.

Imogene looks thoughtfully at Sara.

IMOGENE You  
really look out for him.

SARA  
We look out for each other. We've always  
sort of been... all we've had, you know.  
And all we've needed.

The girls walk in silence a moment.

IMOGENE  
Is Jake the only thing on your mind right  
now?

SARA  
It's a pretty big concern, don't you  
think?

IMOGENE  
Sure, I just meant... is everything else  
okay? With, like, you and Byron...?

Sara does a double take. She covers, but it's clear  
she's a little rattled by Imogene's pointed question.

SARA  
Byron? Why would you even--? That guy. I  
mean, I get it. We had a great time  
together. But I keep telling him it was  
just what it was. Let it be, you know?  
He's married, I'm in college with my  
whole future ahead of me. I wish he  
wouldn't agonize over me so much. It's  
romantic, but I feel bad rejecting him  
over and over again. Know what I mean?

Imogene bites her tongue and nods, not giving away what  
she saw the night before.

IMOGENE  
Yeah--

SARA  
(pointing)  
Here's his usual bender landing pad.

A seedy bar with no sign to indicate it's a bar, or  
open for business at all. A locals' dive bar.

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS:

The girls look around inside the dark dive bar. Regulars on bar stools barely glance their way.

The girls check other likely spots - a favorite guitar shop, a record store, another bar.

They grow increasingly discouraged with each location.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - SAME

They stand dejectedly on a busy street corner, out of options. Imogene's expression brightens -- a lightbulb moment.

IMOGENE

Where's Central Park?

SARA

We really don't have time for sightseeing right now--

IMOGENE

No, for Jake. Remember?

She searches Sara's face, waiting for her to have the same realization but Sara's coming up empty.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

There was a spot in Central Park where Byron held a legendary spontaneous performance. Maybe Jake went there in search of inspiration.

Sara looks skeptical.

IMOGENE (CONT'D) Come

on, I think what I said last night... maybe he was feeling like he needed to reconnect with his passion.

SARA

Well I'm out of ideas so we might as well give it a shot.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

The girls stride through the park. Even as they hurry along, Imogene tries to take in the vibrant surroundings.

They hear a few low strains of acoustic guitar at just about the same time they see in the distance a small group gathered in a grassy area.

The girls reach the group and squeeze through the curious bystanders to find--

Jake, in his own world, struggling through a new song on his beat up acoustic guitar. The girls stand and listen along with the others, reluctant to interrupt the moment.

Imogene looks up to see two BEAT COPS coming their way. She nudges Sara and gestures with her eyes.

SARA

(mutters)

Shit.

Sara grabs the guitar from Jake. He jumps up, ready to blow up at her. But just then the cops arrive.

PUDGY BEAT COP

Is there a problem here?

The young cop's eyes go wide with recognition.

YOUNG BEAT COP

Hey, Jake Murphy!

Jake instantly drops his defensive stance and turns on the charm. Imogene marvels at the sudden change.

JAKE

(to the cops)

Gentlemen. Sorry if I'm causing any problems here. I was just working out a new song, and this spot is particularly inspirational to me. I didn't mean to get in your way.

YOUNG COP

Yeah, this is Byron's spot, right?

(to the Pudgy Cop)

Oh, man. Have you heard that story?

The girls hold their breath. To everyone's amazement, the pudgy cop is cool.

PUDGY COP

Have I heard it? I was there, buddy.

YOUNG COP

No way!

Even Jake is engaged.

JAKE

Oh, what I'd give to have been there. You lucky asshole.

A tense beat as the pudgy cop registers what Jake's said. The pudgy cop laughs, breaking the tension.

YOUNG COP

So what's the new song? Can we hear a little?

Jake shrugs modestly and reaches for his guitar, still in Sara's grasp.

Without any fanfare, Jake launches into a beautiful and haunting tune. The crowd watches, rapt. At the end, there's a round of reverent applause.

PUDGY COP

It's been a pleasure, but we do need you to clear out of here now.

JAKE

No problem officers.

YOUNG COP

(to the bystanders)

You heard him, people. Clear it out. Nothing left to see here.

When the crowd has cleared out, Sara turns to Jake.

SARA

You had us really worried, Jake, and you didn't even think to leave a note?

JAKE

I didn't know I needed to make you aware of my whereabouts.

SARA

It's common courtesy!

JAKE

I wasn't leaving the country. Just needed to get out. Clear my head.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

(beat)

I realized someone had something very  
right on.

He looks pointedly at Imogene and gives her a little  
wink.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Did you like the new song?

IMOGENE

It was beautiful...

JAKE

You were right. I need to get real again.  
Reconnect with my inspiration. So do the  
rest of the guys. I think playing at  
Glendary for people who are excited to  
see us... I think that could be just  
what we need. It might just save us.

Imogene blushes a little. A flash of jealousy crosses  
Sara's face.

SARA

Do you think the other guys will go for  
it?

JAKE

They're not the hard asses they pretend  
to be. More than anything, I think  
they're scared. A taste of fame changes  
people. That's why we need to do this.

SARA

I hope you're right...

JAKE

I can be very convincing when I want to  
be.

Jake smiles his cocky rock star smile and Imogene can't  
help but smile back at him.

IMOGENE

It must run in the family!

INT. PEACE ENTERPRISES - LATER

Eric and Keith sit with Jake. Imogene and Sara wait pensively off to the side. There's an air of apprehension that's making everyone antsy.

Jake attempts a joke.

JAKE

A drummer who can't keep time.  
Suspicious...

Just then the studio door bangs open and Charlie walks in... followed by Marianne.

MARIANNE

Band meeting without me? Clearly an oversight on *someone's* part.

She shoots a pointed look at Jake.

JAKE

Marianne. Dear. This doesn't concern you.

MARIANNE

It does if it concerns the welfare of this business venture, of which I am a partner. *Dear*. I'm just as much a part of this band as any of you guys.

Keith nearly snarls, while Eric's eyebrows shoot up in disbelief.

SARA

You? You're nothing but an opportunist who happened to get lucky by hooking up with a world-class talent.

MARIANNE

Little sister, I'd watch my mouth if I were you--

SARA

Or what?

MARIANNE

Or your monthly stipend, a business expense I've approved in the past, may just become too much for the company to bear.

SARA

Oh, don't even--

IMOGENE

Ladies, ladies. We're not solving anything this way.

They turn, half amused, half incredulous, to Imogene.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Jake, tell the guys what happened to you this morning.

JAKE

I wrote a new song. The beginning of a new song.

He gazes at the other musicians.

JAKE (CONT'D)

It felt great. And I remembered why I love playing. Why I love this band. (a beat)  
Let's not walk away yet. We're not over. We haven't accomplished half of what we wanted to.

KEITH

One morning of inspiration isn't going to fix all the stuff that's messed up. You think we can really go on, with *that*--

Keith gestures to Charlie and Marianne.

KEITH (CONT'D)

(to Charlie)

Come on, dude. That's just disrespectful.

CHARLIE

What?

MARIANNE

Shut up, Keith. You don't know what you're talking about. Charlie and I have been *writing* together.

A stunned silence, and then-- Keith, Eric, and Jake all burst out laughing.

CHARLIE

What's so funny?

ERIC

We've heard your songs, Charlie. Stick to the drums.

JAKE

(to Marianne)

And, *dear*. You may be many things:  
beautiful, fierce, ambitious... but  
musical is not one of them.

Marianne's taken aback, which makes the guys laugh even harder.

Imogene and Sara snicker quietly, earning a sharp glare from Marianne. Charlie shifts uncomfortably.

JAKE (CONT'D) Guys.

We still have road to travel  
together. What do you say?

Slowly, Keith and Eric nod at him; they're in. All eyes turn to Charlie. Marianne burns a look at him as well.

CHARLIE

Count me in.

MARIANNE

Charles!

CHARLIE

(to Marianne)

Sorry, but the guys are right. I'm a  
musician, I gotta make music.

The guys break into cheers and hoots of approval, to Marianne's chagrin.

Jake catches Imogene's eye and winks at her. Surprised, Imogene look to Sara to gauge her reaction. Sara seems just as surprised for a moment, then covers with a smile and offers Imogene a high-five.

EXT. PEACE ENTERPRISES - LATER

The band loads the last of their equipment into the van.

The guys and Imogene climb in on the passenger side. Sara jumps into the driver's seat and as the strains of early 80's rock music play over, the van pulls into the stream of cars and heads back down the road.

EXT. GLENDARY COLLEGE - DAY

The van rolls onto the quaint, idyllic college campus.

INT. SARA'S VAN - SAME

Jake, Charlie, Keith, and Eric practically press their faces to the windows to check out the scene.

Imogene watches them, amused at their wonder.

Outside, students bedecked in school colors criss-cross the quad.

Robust jock types happily rough-house on the grass, their cheeks pink with exertion.

Smiling coeds prepare for the big game, hoisting a handpainted good luck banner above one of the dorm windows.

Youthful enthusiasm fills the air.

EXT. MARY ELLEN CLEMENS LADIES' DORM - CONTINUOUS

The van pulls into a parking spot.

The sliding door rolls open and the straggly crew of rockers cautiously piles out. Contrasted with the bright, shining faces of the students, the guys look out of place -- and a bit self-conscious.

As the first students recognize the rockers, excited whispers begin to spread. Their presence has been noted.

Sara and Imogene start pulling bags and equipment out of the van as the guys get their bearings. Keith eyes the pretty girls on campus, looks to the other guys with a smile, and pulls his backpack from the van with a look that says, *I'm staying!*

Sara tugs hard to free a backpack from under a pile of equipment. It spills open, contents scattering.

Charlie reacts, but Sara beats him to it -- grabbing up what's on the ground and whooping in delight.

SARA

Who's been holding out on me?! Look at this party starter!

Imogene moves closer to investigate and sees Sara holding a stash of pills.

Charlie reaches for them but Imogene grabs them from Sara's hand.

SARA (CONT'D)

Hey--

IMOGENE

Give me those!

Imogene shoves the entire stash in her purse while she checks the surroundings for any prying eyes.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

(to the guys)

Maybe it's been a while since you've been to a college campus, but for the record - these will get us--

She gestures to herself and Sara.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

-- kicked out of school!

ERIC

Lighten up!

IMOGENE

And you guys could be arrested. Just so you know.

They guys boo and grunt their disapproval. Imogene looks to Sara for a little support, but Sara rolls her eyes for the guys' benefit. Isolating Imogene in an instant.

SARA

C'mon guys. I know there's a party somewhere. Let's make the best of your time here, huh? Whaddya say?

The guys follow after her without a backward glance to Imogene. She clutches her purse and stares after them.

EXT. MARY ELLEN CLEMENS LADIES' DORM - LATER

Carrying the band's bags and equipment like a pack mule, Imogene heads into the dorm.

INT. MARY ELLEN CLEMENS LADIES' DORM - CONTINUOUS

Imogene struggles through the door with her load. She starts down the hall, hearing the chatty voices of the dorm girls.

At the doorway, Imogene stops and gazes at the cluster of girls -- the regulars. Just waiting for one of them to ask what's up.

Shelley is the first to bite.

SHELLEY

What's with the luggage? Did you take on a second job as a sherpa?

IMOGENE

Oh, hi ladies. Yeah, we just got back -- me, Sara, Jake, and the rest of the Sunburst...

She can barely contain herself. The other girls react with raised eyebrows and murmurs of disbelief or excitement.

SHELLEY

For real?

BETTY

Well where are they?

IMOGENE

Oh, uh. I'm just dropping off this stuff and then going to meet up with them...

CAROLYN

Imogene, have you talked to Steve yet?

IMOGENE

No, why? Did something happen?

CAROLYN

I would think that would be your priority, rather than running around after rock stars like a drooling fan.

IMOGENE

Who's drooling? Sure, I'm a fan, but we've also become good friends--

Betty snorts. Imogene flinches but doesn't let it faze her.

IMOGENE (CONT'D) New York was amazing. We had the best time. I think I packed more living into the last day than I have the last three years here.

CAROLYN

That's great for you... I just hope Steve is the understanding sort. I mean, it looks awfully suspect, you showing up with a gang of guys after an overnight trip...

SHELLEY

She makes a good point, actually. Are you willing to trade a day or two of fun with rock stars for your entire future?

IMOGENE

My future?

CAROLYN

With Steve!

IMOGENE

You guys. Take it easy! I don't know that Steve is my future. And I don't know that I have to decide that right now, either.

She levels a defiant look at the girls, but they return only looks of pity.

CAROLYN

As your friend, I feel like it's my duty to tell you how crazy you sound right now. Are you trying to derail everything you've built?

Imogene looks at the other girls, silently gauging their reactions.

SHELLEY

You might as well go to the dance with him now and decide about the future later.

BETTY

I hate to admit it, but that's not a bad plan. I mean, what would it hurt?

Imogene turns away, uncertainty creeping in.

IMOGENE

Thank you for your concern, ladies. I really have to drop off this stuff. Sara and the guys are probably wondering where I am.

After clearing the doorway with as much dignity as she can muster, Imogene hustles at double time down the length of the hall toward her room.

EXT. GLENDARY COLLEGE - LATER

The sun has just dipped below the horizon. The sky beyond the campus is lit with a hazy splash of color.

Imogene, now sans equipment, heads across the campus toward another of the dorm buildings.

INT. SIZEMORE DORM - SAME

A spontaneous party in another bland dorm room. The Sunburst are at the center, soaking up the attention.

Keith has a girl under each arm. Charlie passes a joint to a cute young coed with stars in her eyes. Jake has several girls gathered around as he regales them with a story, his charisma effortless.

Sara holds court in another corner, enjoying near-rock star status with girls fawning over her and guys waiting to get her the next beer.

Nearby, a few JOCKS clutch red cups full of beer and seethe amongst themselves. Jim Guthrie stands with them, but he's oblivious to their grumblings; Jim's eyes are locked on Sara.

JOCK 1 Can  
you believe these guys?

JOCK 2  
What losers.

JOCK 1 Why  
are they even here?  
(loudly, to the party)  
I'd like to see these dudes try to bring  
home the glory tomorrow.

Other students roll their eyes at the jocks; they're enjoying the party.

PARTY GUY  
(to the jocks)  
You're killing my buzz!

Other students laugh. Jock 1 steams silently, gulps from his red cup to cover.

AT THE DOOR

Imogene appears, taking in the scene.

Her eyes find Steve, affecting a casual slouch across the room. His eyes catch hers, but she glances away.

Imogene instead makes her way through the packed crowd, emerging at Jake's story circle. She holds her breath a beat, hoping this goes well.

IMOGENE

Jake--

JAKE

Hey, little sister's friend.

The other girls' eyes burn through her as Imogene soaks it up, smiling as if Jake's just told an inside joke.

IMOGENE

Hey, friend's big brother.

He smiles at her word play and she sidles closer, crowding out the nearest girl. Imogene checks to make sure Steve's still watching.

Steve maintains his casual lean, but is obviously watching like a hawk.

Imogene leans in to whisper to Jake so the other girls can't hear.

IMOGENE (CONT'D) I just  
wanted you to know that I took care  
of the equipment.

He meets her eyes with a bemused smile. Playing along, loud enough for the others to hear.

JAKE

You're the best.

The other girls look on, green with envy.

Jake plants a kiss on her cheek, surprising even Imogene.

Her eyes dart back to Steve. Regret begins to creep in around the edges as Imogene clocks Steve's expression.

As Jake returns to his storytelling, Imogene pushes back into the sea of partiers until she reaches Steve.

STEVE

Good show, Imogene.

IMOGENE

Don't be that way. I really came here to see you.

STEVE

Well, you saw me.

Imogene searches Steve's face for any of their old connection, but he remains unreadable.

IMOGENE

Let's get past this. Start fresh. I want to go to the dance with you.

STEVE

Not what it looked like from here.

(a beat)

You win, okay? I get it -- you don't need me.

IMOGENE

That wasn't the point--

STEVE

Then what was the point? Hanging all over that guy. Turning yourself into a groupie. I always thought you were a classy girl.

IMOGENE

Screw you, Steve.

STEVE

That's what you look like. Just being honest. FYI, no guy wants a girlfriend who puts herself out there like that. Serves herself up on a platter like a piece of meat, just because a guy's got a little money and fame.

IMOGENE

I was just talking to a friend.

STEVE

Yeah. Okay. Tell yourself that, if it makes you feel better.

IMOGENE

What do you think, that I'm sleeping with him or something? I'm not!

Steve levels a gaze at her, clearly disbelieving. Imogene forces a brittle laugh.

STEVE

Who are you right now?

IMOGENE

Not your girlfriend. So I guess it's not your concern who I am or what I do. And since we're being honest? I couldn't care less what you think I'm doing wrong.

But she does care, and so she turns away before he can see the hurt on her face.

THROUGH THE CROWD

Imogene spots Sara with her most flirtatious smile directed at someone. As the crowd shifts and parts Imogene sees the recipient is Jim Guthrie.

And just a short distance away, Christine watches them with an penetrating glare and steam practically billowing from her ears.

Imogene redoubles her efforts to reach Sara but the crowd makes it impossible. Her voice rises an octave in nervous warning.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Sara!

But the noise of the crowd drowns her out, and Sara and Jim are locked in their own world.

Until Christine crashes the party, shoving Jim out of the way with a warning glare. Christine whirls on Sara, poking a perfectly-manicured finger to her chest.

CHRISTINE

Look who's back - the good time girl.

Sara rolls her eyes at Christine and slaps her finger away.

SARA

I do love a good time. So sue me.

CHRISTINE

But that's all you have to offer, so don't think for a second that Jim or any other respectable guy would seriously consider anything more with you. *Slut*.

The crowd falls to a hush around them. And then just as suddenly, Sara grabs Christine by the hair and complete chaos breaks out.

SARA

You don't know anything about me, you self-righteous little bitch!

The girls grapple. It's messy and vicious, the way only a catfight can be. The excited, half-drunk crowd cheers them on.

Imogene turns with panicked eyes to see Jake and the other guys watching idly from the other side of the room.

Off the guys' lack of concern, Imogene shoves her way toward the girls. She throws herself between them.

IMOGENE

Stop! Sara! Christine!

Without skipping a beat, Christine grabs Imogene by the hair -- dragging her into the whirlwind of grabbing and scratching.

CHRISTINE

And you! You're supposed to be my friend and you're encouraging her. Following her around like a puppy! Imogene reacts, fighting back.

IMOGENE

I'm no one's puppy!

Just then a new panic starts to ripple through the crowd.

PARTY GOER (O.S.)

R.A.!

Imogene looks out from the mess to see Lynne and a MALE RESIDENT ADVISOR arrive on the scene.

Christine drops the fight and grabs Jim, dragging him along with the rest of the stampede toward the exit.

Imogene turns to find Sara, but she's gone. Scanning the crowd, she sees Sara's already across the room rounding up the Sunburst.

Sara herds Jake and the other guys out into the night without a backward glance. They whoop it up along the way, a party on the move.

In the dorm room, only stragglers are left. Before Imogene can make a move, she feels a firm hand on her shoulder.

MALE RESIDENT ADVISOR

I got one!

Imogene locks eyes with Lynne, who shakes her head with a look of disappointment.

INT. RESIDENT ADVISOR OFFICE - LATER

A cramped closet-sized space, fluorescent light buzzing overhead.

Imogene and Lynne sit practically knee-to-knee in the only two chairs in the space. It's a stand off.

LYNNE

Fighting... violating dry campus  
policy... should I go on?

Imogene remains tight-lipped, only staring at Lynne in response.

LYNNE (CONT'D)

Help me out, here. I don't want to see  
you wind up with more than your share of  
the blame.

IMOGENE

Why do you care?

LYNNE

Believe it or not, I'm not the enemy. I  
know you look at me... the narc... and  
you think I'm nothing like you. But I  
don't see it that way. When I look at  
you, I see me, two years ago.

Lynne laughs at Imogene's horrified look.

LYNNE (CONT'D)

Whether you think I'm uptight or mean  
or just boring... I like the way I am.  
(a beat)

The hard part is figuring out who you  
want to be. It's pretty easy after that.

Imogene remains silent, but Lynne's words hit home.

IMOGENE

What happens now?

Lynne eyes her, contemplating.

LYNNE

Technically I haven't seen you in  
possession of anything illegal. So you're  
free to go.

IMOGENE

Really? You're sure?

LYNNE

Please don't make me regret that choice.

Imogene nods gratefully.

EXT. MARY ELLEN CLEMENS LADIES' DORM

Night has descended and the quad is quiet.

Imogene glances around, hoping for some hint as to  
where her friends have gone.

Only by now, she's been left behind. She stands in the  
dark outside the dorm. Alone.

INT. IMOGENE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Bright morning sunlight streams through the windows.  
Imogene lies awake in bed, staring across the room at  
Sara's empty bed.

A knock at the door. Imogene reacts slowly, pulling  
her ruffled self out of bed. She opens the door to  
find

JAKE.

Instantly self-conscious, Imogene straightens her  
pajamas and hair. He flashes his usual smile.

JAKE

Hey.

IMOGENE

...Hey.

JAKE

I didn't wake you up, did I?

IMOGENE

No, no... but I am surprised you're up...  
and about.

She digs a little.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Wild night, huh?

Jake shrugs, as if the night was no wilder than any other.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Where are the other guys?

JAKE

Sleeping it off.

IMOGENE

Well Sara didn't make it home. I assumed she was with you.

JAKE

Nope, we split up after that dorm raid.

IMOGENE

Are you worried about her?

JAKE

Nah, she knows how to take care of herself.

They stare at each other an awkward beat.

IMOGENE

Do you want to come in?

JAKE

Sure.

He steps past her into her room, and Imogene struggles to remain her composure.

Jake wanders the small space, taking it all in. Imogene's eyes wander over her belongings, as if regretting each small knickknack and bit of college paraphernalia.

He crosses to her desk and peruses a collection of framed photos showing Imogene with her family. He picks one up, looking at it almost wistfully.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Mom and Dad and apple pie, huh?

IMOGENE

Pretty much.

JAKE

Where is this American dream?

Off Imogene's blank expression.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Where'd you grow up?

IMOGENE

Oh. Nowhere exciting.

Imogene fights off a blush of embarrassment.

IMOGENE (CONT'D) Just, uh.

Just down the road actually. I didn't go very far from home.

JAKE

Yeah?

IMOGENE

Yep. Just a local farm girl. As if you couldn't tell, right?

JAKE

Sounds kind of exciting.

IMOGENE

Shut up.

JAKE

For real. I've never been to a farm.

She gives him a skeptical look, can't tell if he's mocking her or what. Hedges her bets with sarcasm.

IMOGENE

Well, let me know next time you're in town, I'll take you home to meet the family.

JAKE

I'm free this afternoon.

Imogene laughs it off.

IMOGENE

Great, let's go.

JAKE

Cool.

IMOGENE

I'm kidding.

JAKE

Why? You have something else to do today?

IMOGENE

Yes! I mean, no-- but I'm not taking you to my family's farm!

JAKE

Why not?

IMOGENE

Because! My parents are there, and they would not understand this...

She gestures vaguely in the air between them.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Besides, how would we even get there? It would take too long to hike.

JAKE

We'll take Sara's van.

IMOGENE

(weakly)

I don't know where the keys are.

Jake moves in and turns on the charm.

JAKE

That sounds like a lame excuse to me.

He crosses to Sara's desk, opens the drawer and rummages around a moment before triumphantly holding up a key ring.

They stare each other down, Imogene trying hard to be as resolute and sure as Jake.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Oh, come on, Imogene! Show me. You know you want to...

She resists, but he is irresistible.

INT. SARA'S VAN - LATER

Imogene drives as Jake takes in the surrounding countryside.

JAKE

Man, talk about peaceful country.

He thrusts his head out of the window and breathes in the crisp autumn air.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Not a soul in sight, just animals. Are those real cows over there?

IMOGENE

They're not props.

JAKE

I could honestly live in a place like this. You're so lucky.

IMOGENE

Yeah, right!

JAKE

I'm serious. Look at this place. No bullshit to distract you. No illusions. It's so... real.

Imogene gazes out, trying to see what he sees.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I could live here.

IMOGENE

Somehow I can't picture you and Marianne in a farmhouse.

JAKE

Yeah, Marianne doesn't fit in that picture, does she?

IMOGENE

(laughing)

Not at all.

But Jake doesn't match Imogene's laugh. His tone is serious.

JAKE

In case you couldn't tell, Marianne and I have different ideas of what marriage should look like. It's just a matter of admitting it to each other.

(a beat, changing the subject)

How about you? You gonna marry a local boy and settle down on a nice patch of land?

IMOGENE

That's not my plan. In fact, I think I could fall in love with New York City.

In the distance, a farm house comes into view.

JAKE

That your place?

IMOGENE

That's it.

JAKE

What do you think your parents are doing right now? Pancake breakfast? Birdwatching? Hay ride?

IMOGENE

Work, like any other day. The only day off is Sunday, church day.

JAKE Even at this time of year?

IMOGENE

Every season has its own chores on a farm.

They see a middle-aged man and woman bustle about the front of the house and Imogene slows the van to a stop some distance away.

She and Jake both watch the activity for a moment.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

You know, let's not interrupt them. How about a walk instead?

JAKE

Scared?

IMOGENE

Just... not ready.

Jake nods in agreement and Imogene puts the van in gear.

EXT. IMOGENE'S FAMILY FARM - LATER

They walk past a pasture where horses graze. Imogene points to an orchard farther away.

Jake and Imogene pause to watch the animals, lost in their own thoughts.

Imogene turns to sneak a look at Jake, his expression preoccupied.

But then he turns to her and winks, letting her know he's there. She tips her head toward an open field, eyebrows raised -- a silent question. He smiles in response, in sync in this moment.

Without needing to say anything they both take off running. They race through the open field, reveling in the freedom.

Finally they slow down, out of breath but laughing at each other.

JAKE

So tell me the truth...

He regards her with seriousness.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Did you bring me out here to the middle of nowhere so you could get your interview? Expose all my dirty little secrets?

IMOGENE

You're the one who begged to come out here!

JAKE

It seemed that way, but that's the way you girls work. Using your influence and your... womanly wiles.

IMOGENE

Womanly wiles? Have you seen me?

Imogene avoids his gaze, suddenly self conscious.

JAKE

You underestimate yourself.

He shrugs, gives her his sexy smile.

JAKE (CONT'D)

But it works for you.

Imogene ducks her head, embarrassed, but can't hide her smile.

IMOGENE

I guess we better get going. You have a show to get to.

JAKE

God, you're uptight for a country girl. Can't we just sit down awhile and commune with nature?

IMOGENE

I'm not uptight.

Jake gives her a penetrating look, a challenge. What's she going to do about it?

Imogene gazes at the horizon. After a moment, she turns to him. She moves toward him haltingly.

JAKE

You're unusual, you know. Not many chicks hesitate.

IMOGENE

I'm not hesitating.

She kisses him. He kisses her back, their spark growing in intensity.

He pulls away--

JAKE

Are you okay with this?

She unzips her jeans. He grins and does likewise. They melt into each other, sinking to the ground in the middle of this field, tugging at each others' clothes.

Imogene and Jake make love. It's equal parts playful and urgent.

Their rhythm reaches a crescendo until finally they collapse with contented sighs, their half-naked bodies still intertwined.

They're silent, just laying together. Imogene turns to examine Jake's face. His eyes closed, his breathing even.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Are you watching me?

IMOGENE

No. Definitely not.

(beat)

We really should get going, though.

He shakes his head and laughs.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

See? I really do belong in the city.

Finally he opens his eyes and looks at her in all seriousness.

JAKE

I'm starting to think I belong right here.

IMOGENE

Really.

JAKE

You don't think so?

IMOGENE

I have a hard time picturing you living anywhere so... normal. But hey, if you want to move to a farm and have a quiet life, who am I to stop you. I definitely don't have all the right answers. (a beat)

I just have one request... can you play at Homecoming first?

He laughs again.

JAKE

Fine.

(beat)

But give me one more moment to take this all in.

He rolls over, both on their backs staring up at the impossibly vast sky.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I like being under this sky.

IMOGENE

It's the same sky everywhere, isn't it?

JAKE

No. This sky makes me feel... free. Like I could do anything I wanted to do, not what anyone else thinks I should do, or expects me to do. I feel like there's no one watching me.

Imogene mulls it over.

IMOGENE

Maybe that's how you figure out what you really want... ignore everyone. Pretend no one's watching.

JAKE

That's not so easy when your whole life is looking for an audience.

IMOGENE

There'll always be an audience. But they're just as worried about figuring their own lives out. You're the only person who can tell if you're doing the right thing for you. So all you can do... is do what makes sense to you.

Now it's Jake's turn to mull. He turns to her again.

JAKE

Pretty smart for a farm girl.

They share a smile, holding on to this fleeting moment for as long as possible.

EXT. GLENDARY FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

The stadium stands are packed with students in Glendary school colors. The teams battle it out on the field below, bathed in the stark glow of the kleig lights.

Imogene and Jake, slightly disheveled, arrive at the edge of the student seating section. A low whisper ripples through the girls in the stands. More and more eyes turn to catch a glimpse of the latecomers.

IMOGENE

(whispering to Jake)

Want to find Sara and get out of this spotlight?

JAKE

Nothing wrong with a little attention.

Imogene shakes her head with a laugh.

In the stands, the whispers reach Sara at just this moment. Her gaze finds Imogene and Jake mid-laugh, looking very friendly.

Imogene looks over and spots Sara and the other Sunburst guys in the stands. She starts to wave, but Sara meets her gaze with the iciest of glares. Imogene's smile instantly fades.

IMOGENE

This looks bad.

JAKE

Let her cool off. It'll be fine.

Imogene shoots Jake a worried look but he just shrugs and leads her to a couple of open seats.

Out of nowhere, Carolyn sidles up beside Imogene, eyes eager for the scoop. Betty and Shelley hover behind her.

CAROLYN

What happened to Steve? Are you with Jake now?



SHELLEY

So... just... alone?

IMOGENE

Well, are you going with anyone, Shelley?  
I mean, we could go stag, together.

SHELLEY

Oh, no-- not me.

Imogene raises her eyebrows, daring her to go for it.  
As

Shelley wavers, another voice pipes up--

BETTY

I'll go.

SHELLEY

Betty!

BETTY

What else are we gonna do? Watch TV and  
stuff our faces?

IMOGENE

Alright!

BETTY

(to Shelley)

Come on. We'll do it together.

Shelley hesitates, seeing Carolyn's disapproval.

SHELLEY

Too weird for me.

CAROLYN

See? Traditions become traditions for a  
reason.

(to Shelley)

Don't worry. It's only one night, not the  
rest of your life.

Shelley sees Betty's disappointed reaction, and has her  
own lightbulb moment--

SHELLEY

You're right.

CAROLYN

I know--

SHELLEY

No, I mean-- you're right. It is only one night. Why not do something crazy and unexpected. I don't have to be that way forever.

(a beat)

It's one night!

CAROLYN

Wait--

BETTY

So you'll come?

SHELLEY

Yeah. I'll go.

IMOGENE

Our posse is growing!

(to Carolyn)

Guess we'll see you at the dance.

CAROLYN

That's ridiculous.

JAKE

Why?

Jake leans around Imogene to hear Carolyn's answer. At his presence, Carolyn becomes flabbergasted.

CAROLYN

Well, because-- it just is!

Jake moves in conspiratorially.

JAKE

You know what I think?

All the girls hang on his words.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Independence... is sexy.

He smiles and winks at Imogene. The other girls practically fall over.

Imogene smiles and laughs. But as she does, she glances over in the stands and sees Sara still leveling a cool but watchful eye at them.

The crowd erupts in a cheer, ending the moment.

## ON THE FIELD

The Glendary team celebrates a touchdown. They've taken the lead.

## IN THE STANDS

The crowd goes wild with excitement. Everyone's attention is focused on the field, but Imogene can't help but glance back with worry at Sara.

## EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER

The game just over, exuberant Glendary students begin to leave the stands, still riding an adrenaline high from their team's win.

Sara lingers near the edge of the field. She scans the stream of sweaty, uniformed athletes as they pass her on their way toward the locker rooms.

Still in the stands, Imogene spots Sara, waiting alone. Imogene turns to Jake.

IMOGENE

We should talk to Sara.

JAKE

You're worried about nothing. Nothing gets to Sara. She's tough.

IMOGENE

Humor me, okay?

Imogene cuts through the crowd toward Sara, Jake in tow.

Before they can reach her, Christine and a group of cheerleaders flank Sara.

Christine pauses to make sure she has Sara's attention, then flashes her left hand.

As Imogene comes up behind the group she sees an engagement ring sparkling from Christine's finger.

An expression of shock strikes Sara's face for all to see. She tries to recover, but the effect is apparent. Christine smiles wickedly at her reaction.

Sara, still trying to gather herself, looks to the passing crowd. A stream of rubbernecks watch the confrontation, ready to report to the gossip mill.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Sara--

But Sara avoids Imogene's eyes and simply rushes from the stadium as fast as she can go.

Christine and the other cheerleaders titter meanly at her retreat.

Imogene casts a worried look to Jake.

JAKE

Give her some time to deal, Imogene. Not everything has to be a dramatic, lifechanging event, you know?

Imogene bites her lip, torn.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Come on. The rock star can't be late to his own show.

IMOGENE

Really? I thought that was one of the perks of being a rock star.

Against her better judgement, Imogene lets Jake pull her away.

EXT. DANCE - LATER

Jake peels off and heads toward the backstage entrance.

DJ music permeates the night air, inviting students into the celebration.

Imogene hesitates outside the dance, watching as happy students head inside.

Couples holding hands walk past her. Carolyn walks by Imogene without a glance, holding hands with her date, JACK (22), kind but plain-looking.

A group of Nondescript girls -- Shelley, Betty, and others -- bravely approach the dance without dates. They throw Imogene nervous but excited smiles as they pass.

She smiles and winks at them in return.

A familiar voice surprises Imogene and she turns to face Steve. For a moment, neither knows what to say.

STEVE

I'm sorry about... everything that's gone down lately.

IMOGENE

Me too.

STEVE

If you want to go to the dance, I mean... I guess we're both here... I don't know if I mean we should get back together, or if you would even want that. Hell, I don't know what I want. But I'm willing to give it a try.

She weighs his offer thoughtfully.

IMOGENE

Don't take this wrong, but I feel like... that would be a step backward in a weird way. No offense.

STEVE

None taken, I guess?

IMOGENE

I just mean-- we both know-- don't we? We're not *it* for each other.

He's quiet a moment, but nods.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

And that's okay. I think good things are going to happen for both of us. I'd rather be happy for you to be happy without me, than to force something that's just not right.

STEVE

Likewise.

(a beat)

Pretty smart.

IMOGENE

For a farm girl?

STEVE

For any girl.

They smile, but there's a tinge of sadness there.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Does this mean we can't even have a dance later?

IMOGENE

You don't dance!

STEVE

I'm trying to be more open-minded.

She smiles as she heads off, calling over her shoulder--

IMOGENE

Save me one.

EXT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

Imogene arrives to find Jake and the rest of the Sunburst arguing with a burly SECURITY GUARD.

KEITH

Listen, dude. We were *invited* to be here.

SECURITY GUARD

Don't know what to say, fellas. There's been a change of plans.

IMOGENE

Listen, I'm their... student liaison. And I haven't been informed of any changes. Who did you speak with?

The security guard folds his arms and levels a look at Imogene.

SECURITY GUARD You have questions? Take it up with someone on a higher pay grade.

Students have begun to loiter nearby, eyeing the Sunburst. The beginnings of a mob scene brewing.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Until then, no access.

JAKE

What's the big deal? Just let us in, we'll do our show, everyone'll be happy.

SECURITY GUARD

Except my wife, after I get fired for not doing my job.

Imogene gestures to the growing crowd.

IMOGENE

You want a riot on your hands? These guys are playing tonight, and they're not leaving until they do. They're the Sunburst. That might not mean anything to you, but to these students? They're heroes.

The guard gauges the crowd, weighing his options.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

I suggest you let these guys wait inside, out of sight. Otherwise... I'm not sure one security guard will be enough to keep the situation under control.

SECURITY GUARD

I'd love to help you out, honey, I would. But my job is to stand here and make sure no one goes in.

Imogene and the guys exchange defeated looks. They move a few steps away.

IMOGENE

Okay, what happened? Why are you being locked out?

The guys exchange guilty looks.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Come on. You ran out of the party. I didn't rat you out. You stayed out of trouble after that, right?

START FLASHBACK:

Late at night, Eric, Keith, Charlie, and Jake, side by side in a row, peeing on the side of a building.

They're singing one of their songs, more loudly than they realize.

Out of nowhere a flood of light hits them and as they all squint into it, trying to get their bearings--

We realize the building they're peeing on is the campus chapel, and they're now in the high beams of a campus security truck.

END FLASHBACK.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

(to Jake)

How could you forget to tell me about this! The show's just... cancelled?!

JAKE

Yeah, I think they said something about that last night...

IMOGENE

After we worked so hard to get you here. Where's Sara? Does she know about this?

Jake shakes his head.

JAKE

I don't think so.

IMOGENE

Okay. We have to straighten this out or she'll never forgive either of us.

KEITH

It's been fun, but maybe we should just call it.

IMOGENE

But-- the bonding! And the inspiration!

ERIC

Yeah, well. We're good.

The guys nod along, leaving Imogene sputtering incredulously.

CHARLIE

I say we pack up and head home.

IMOGENE

You can't just leave! You promised them -- you promised us -- a show!

ERIC

If the school won't let us play, what are we supposed to do?

KEITH

And it's not like we were getting paid, anyway.

IMOGENE

Oh, come on! This isn't about the money and you know it. This is about having one incredible experience. Because it makes you happy.

JAKE

What do you want us to do, play out here?

Imogene's eyes light up with a sparkle.

EXT. BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Within minutes Imogene has thrown open the doors of the van and the guys are pulling out whatever equipment they can use to jam acoustically.

They start up, a quick and dirty jam session. The loitering students gather around.

As the Sunburst play, coming together and finding their groove, the crowd grows and becomes more energized.

Singing, dancing, soon it's an all out block party in the loading zone outside the Homecoming dance.

Imogene gestures to the guys to keep it up, and then makes her way over to the security guard. He watches her with a wary eye.

IMOGENE

Quite a crowd, huh?

SECURITY GUARD

If you say so.

IMOGENE

Do you have any idea how quickly a happy, celebratory gathering like this can turn into an unruly, even violent situation?

He eyes her, but doesn't give any ground.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Right now, while everything's copacetic, I think you should let the band inside to play their show on stage where they're supposed to be.

He glares at her but she holds her ground. Finally, he nods.

Imogene gives the Sunburst a triumphant thumbs up. They finish out their song, looking more alive than ever.

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

The security guard lets Imogene and the guys through the door. There's no love lost, but Imogene smiles appreciatively as he closes the door behind them.

Eric laughs and slaps Imogene on the back as they shuffle down the hall toward their green room.

ERIC

Good work, little sister's friend.

Concern clouds Imogene's face.

IMOGENE

We still haven't heard from Sara.

INT. GREEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The guys enter the modest green room and immediately flop into chairs, lounging like rock stars.

Imogene hovers by the door.

IMOGENE

I feel like I should look for her.

JAKE

Relax a minute--

KEITH

Yeah, we just got here. Have a drink with us. She'll turn up.

ERIC

She always does!

JAKE She

won't miss the show.

Imogene looks at them -- her heroes.

IMOGENE

Okay, okay.

The guys cheer her decision. They're in good spirits, and right now she's one of them.

Eric passes out bottles of beer from a cooler.

ERIC

At least they stocked the bar before they decided to lock us out!

Jake holds up his bottle in toast. The others follow suit.

JAKE

To Imogene, who might just have a future in rock and roll!

The guys clink bottles with each other and Imogene -- including her in the moment. She smiles and soaks in the experience.

CHARLIE

Little sister's friend--

JAKE

That's Imogene!

CHARLIE

*Imogene...*

Charlie makes moony eyes at her, and Imogene looks back completely confused.

IMOGENE

Yes?

CHARLIE

I'm so happy to see you.

She looks behind her, still trying to make sense of it.

IMOGENE

...Me?

CHARLIE

Yes, you. Of course!

Jake rolls his eyes and smiles at Imogene.

JAKE

You didn't know you're his favorite person in the world right now?

IMOGENE

I don't understand. Is this another joke at my expense?

JAKE

No... it's just that you're holding his stash, remember?

Charlie prances in front of her like an eager puppy dog, hand out and waiting.

IMOGENE

What? Oh, no. No way. You saw what we had to go through just to keep the show as scheduled. We are under a microscope here. Do you know how much trouble we'd all be in if you got caught? Especially me? You're on school property! I'm a student! I'm practically your sponsor here.

CHARLIE

Oh, come on! Technically you're keeping my own stuff away from me. That can't be legal. There's gotta be some rule for that, right guys?

He turns to the other guys with a pleading look. They join in the cause with hoots of solidarity.

KEITH

Let him have his stuff!

ERIC

Yeah, no fair!

Imogene shoots a look to Jake, silently begging for his help. Instead he joins the guys.

JAKE

Aww, you're not that uptight... are you? Take a chance... do something *fun* and... unexpected!

IMOGENE

Are you kidding me?

JAKE

What?

IMOGENE

You know I'm not uptight. I'm fun.

JAKE

Because you got a little frisky in a field?

The other guys let out a chorus of "ooohs". Imogene flushes with embarrassment and can't hide her hurt.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Oh, was that-- that was a big deal?

IMOGENE

Of course it was a big deal! I thought--

Her voice trails off.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

You were different out there.

He eyes the other guys. They stare back, hoping he has some sway. Jake turns back to Imogene.

JAKE

It's not so bad being the guy everyone expects me to be. I'm a rock star, remember?

He laughs, but his eyes show resignation.

Defeated, Imogene reaches into her purse. The guys let up a cheer of victory and anticipation.

But she comes up empty handed. Peers into her purse, searching. Digging through its contents.

KEITH

Stop faking! We know you have 'em!

CHARLIE

Yeah, give 'em up!

Imogene's eyes widen as she remembers --

IMOGENE

Jake--

JAKE

Come on, we have to go on in a minute. Just give 'em the stash.

IMOGENE

It had to be Sara.

A P.A. knocks and pokes his head in the door.

P.A.

Guys, they're ready for you.

They guys grumble as they get to their feet and head out to go on stage, shooting Imogene irritated looks as they pass her.

IMOGENE

I think-- we have to find her.

JAKE

I have to go on.

Imogene grabs Jake's arm.

IMOGENE

How do I make you take this seriously? I have a bad feeling--

JAKE

Don't worry, I'm sure she'll turn up. If anyone can take care of herself, it's my sister.

He heads for the door.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Come on -- you'll watch from offstage. Best seat in the house.

Imogene watches him walk out the door. A puzzled look grows on Jake's face as he realizes Imogene's not following. Finally, he gives up and goes with the rest of the guys -- his show must go on.

INT. STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

House lights go down. The crowd cheers.

Jake, Keith, Eric, and Charlie pause just off-stage for their pre-show ritual. They huddle up, touch hands then *break*, heading for the stage.

Plugging in, still in darkness, Keith hits a practice chord, steps on the effects pedal. The crowd's roar grows in anticipation.

Then--

Light hits the stage and the band launches into a rousing rock song.

EXT. CAMPUS - SAME

Meanwhile, Imogene races across campus, slowing down for nothing. Driven by a growing, instinctual fear.

INT. STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

On stage, the Sunburst rock the house.

IN THE CROWD

Students of all types are going wild:

Christine and Jim. Carolyn and Jack. Betty, Shelley, and Steve.

They're each enjoying the moment in their own way. Dancing, singing along, in love with being young and on the threshold of the rest of their lives, whatever it may bring.

EXT. MARY ELLEN CLEMENS LADIES' DORM - SAME

Imogene reaches her dorm and races inside.

INT. MARY ELLEN CLEMENS LADIES' DORM - SAME

Running full tilt down eerily deserted hallways, apprehension mounting with every step.

Imogene reaches her own dorm room door but it's locked. She pounds on it, frantic.

IMOGENE

Sara! Sara, are you in there?

Only silence.

Imogene fumbles her keys, finally forcing them into the lock but the door won't budge. She shoves with all her weight but is unable to force it open.

Momentarily at a loss, Imogene begins to tear up in frustration.

Then she remembers -- she runs for the outside door, back where she came from.

Imogene passes Lynne's door on her way out and is already past when Lynne pokes her head out, curiously looking around. Lynne heads down the hall to investigate.

EXT. MARY ELLEN CLEMENS LADIES' DORM - MOMENTS LATER

Imogene circles to the side of the building, finds her dorm window from the outside. Scrambles to climb up to the ledge.

As she finally gets a view inside--

INT. IMOGENE'S DORM ROOM - SAME

What's revealed to her is--

Sara, sprawled out on the bed. She isn't moving.

Imogene pushes the window open and climbs through. In her haste she stumbles in sloppily and sends a table lamp crashing to the floor.

She hurries over to Sara, who is fading in and out of consciousness.

IMOGENE

Sara--

SARA

(slurring)

S'okay--

Pills of different shapes and colors lie strewn around the bed and floor, along with empty champagne bottles.

IMOGENE

Sara, you need to get up. We need to get you to a doctor. Do you hear me?

Imogene tries to pull Sara from the bed, but she's limp in Imogene's arms.

Unsure what else to do, Imogene's momentary indecision is interrupted by sudden POUNDING on the door.

LYNNE (O.S.)

Imogene? Sara? Is everything okay in there?

Imogene looks fearfully at the door, and eyes the mess of pills and champagne bottles.

IMOGENE

(to Sara)

Oh, God. I'm so sorry. I have to let her in.

Imogene hurries to shove aside the desk blocking the door.

Lynne takes one look at the scene and springs into action.

LYNNE

Call 911. Now, Imogene!

Lynne grabs Sara, wrapping her arm around her own neck and propping Sara up to walk to the sink. Imogene watches their progress as she grabs the phone and dials with a shaky hand.

At the sink, Lynne tries to force Sara to vomit but Sara fights off every attempt.

Over the frantic action, Imogene begs into the phone, barely keeping her panic at bay.

IMOGENE

(into phone)

Please send help. An ambulance. My roommate has taken a bunch of pills... no, I don't know what they all are. She's slurring her words... Barely conscious. Hurry, please!

(to Lynne)

Keep her moving, Lynne. Don't let her fall asleep!

Lynne can't hold Sara any longer. Sara's slumps to the floor, pulling Lynne down with her.

Imogene runs over to help and between the two of them they manage to hoist Sara up again, each one propping an arm over their shoulders.

LYNNE

Sara... Sara... you have to stay awake.

IMOGENE

Why did you do this?

SARA

Nobody cares...

IMOGENE

I care. Just stay awake. Please.

Sara lapses back into silence, her chin falling to her chest. Imogene jostles her and Sara's head lolls to the side, but she's struggling to stay awake.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Let's sing. What's your favorite Sunburst song?

When Sara doesn't answer, Imogene launches into the song they sang and danced to in that very dorm room only days earlier.

IMOGENE

(CONT'D) *Like an angel Just out of reach...* (a beat)  
What's next, Sara? Come on.

Sara's voice is barely a whisper but she manages to slur out the next lyrics.

SARA

*She moves me...*  
*She moves me...*  
(gives up)  
I'm tired.

IMOGENE

Keep going. Keep going, Sara. What's next?

But Sara's head droops, she's woozy.

SARA

I don't have anybody--

The paramedics come crashing into the room. They pull Sara out of Imogene and Lynne's arms, toward the sink.

Imogene sits on the edge of the bed, watching them work on her.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Drawn shades allow just the tiniest slivers of daylight.

In the hospital bed, Sara rests peacefully.

Imogene appears in the doorway. She hesitates, stunned momentarily by the sterile room; Sara's pale, sleeping form.

Shaking herself into action, Imogene busies herself by straightening up a profusion of flower arrangements and Get Well cards on the window sill.

Sara stirs awake and Imogene puts on a smile for her.

IMOGENE

Hey. You're awake.

SARA

Yeah. Pathetic I had to come all the way here to get some sleep, huh?

Sara eyes the cards and flowers.

SARA (CONT'D)

Looks like a Hallmark store exploded in here.

IMOGENE

A lot of people are worried about you.

SARA

Great, I'm sure the gossip mill has totally spun this out of proportion. What are they saying?

IMOGENE

Nothing.

Off Sara's look.

IMOGENE (CONT'D)

Don't worry about it. Who cares what people are saying, right?

SARA

They're probably saying it's about time... always knew this would happen... I'm such a mess, it was inevitable. I bet the worst are Carolyn and Christine and all those gossipy girls in the dorm. And Lynne. It's always the ones who pretend to care about you...

IMOGENE

No, that's not-- Lynne's not so bad, you know.

Sara acts blase.

SARA

Go back and tell them I'm fine. Really. So the party got a little out of hand. Sometimes that's what happens when you live the rock star lifestyle. But I survived it, right?

The old, mischievous twinkle comes back to Sara's eye.

SARA (CONT'D)

That's how legends are born, you know.

Imogene watches her, looking for an opening. But there's none.

IMOGENE

Sure. I'll let them know. You can't keep a good woman down.

SARA

That's right. I'll be back in no time.

IMOGENE

Hurry up. I miss having you around.

SARA

Don't worry, I'll be back to finish out the year right. And then we're graduating and moving on with our real lives. Finally!

It looks as though Imogene wants to say more, but Sara holds onto her false bravado.

EXT. GLENDARY COLLEGE - DAY

It's a new day, a new season. Trees are alive again with delicate green leaves, and flowers bloom along the walkways. All traces of Homecoming are gone from campus.

A group of jocks cross the grassy quad. One casually tosses a basketball to another as they go.

Another group of students, in shorts sleeves and sun dresses, lounges under a tree.

In classrooms, students listen to professors' lectures.

In the library, Imogene works intently on her thesis paper amidst the hushed surroundings.

INT. PROFESSOR'S OFFICE - DAY

We see Imogene turn her paper in to her professor. Over the scenes of the campus we hear:

IMOGENE (V.O.) In rock music, as in life, allowing expectations to dictate our choices only limits our possibilities.

Blazing our own paths, trying a different direction just because it seems interesting, might not be met with critical acclaim or the approval of our peers... but it's the only way to learn the lessons we each need to learn.

(MORE)

IMOGENE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Advice is everywhere -- everyone will tell you what they think you should do. But a lesson is yours and yours alone. And my lesson, so far, is this: everyone and everything has its own story, and something to teach you, and they're also trying -- consciously or unconsciously -- to learn and grow from you and everything else around them. And they're trying with the same passion and hunger and confusion, no matter where they are in their lives, no matter how old or how young.

Worrying about others' expectations drains the life out of life. We're all just trying to be happy. And while there are no guarantees, the best we can do is to take our chances and enjoy the struggle.

Imogene smiles as she crosses the campus, passing students of all types, taking in the sights and sounds of her world.

FADE OUT.

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