no place like home
TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. PARK - DAY

It’s a family picnic. A beautiful early fall day. And around the table, the COLLERS: ANDY, mid forties, physically fit, a warm, enveloping personality; LIZ, the same age, a little cooler, still beautiful; ZOE, seventeen, past any awkwardness of adolescence; and JESS, fifteen, a little distant and judgmental, but you can ascribe it to her age. The party is in full swing. Andy reaches across the table:

ANDY
Pass some more of that -- that --

LIZ
-- Shrimp salad.

ANDY
Yeah, this yours, Zo -- ?

ZOE
-- Jess made it --

ANDY
-- I haven’t had anything this good in a long time. When d’you get to be such a great cook?

A glare. That’s the stupidest question Jess’s ever heard.

JESS
... I don’t know.

ANDY
(pressing on)
Anyone watching the Laker game tonight?

ZOE
I’m seeing Jamie tonight.

JESS
Every night.

ANDY
Oh, yeah? His house or ours? (off her look) Is his father gonna be around?

ZOE
Dad?!

(CONTINUED)
ANDY
Hey, I'm just doing my job, here... What about you, Jess?

JESS
I'm single.

ANDY
No, I mean --
(to Liz)
Does she tell you anything about her life or is it just me?

Liz looks sympathetically at Jess, then back at Andy.

LIZ
I talked to Cameron today. He said this semester's been great and he --

GUARD (O.S.)
-- Time's up!

Andy looks over. There's a prison guard standing there. And in this direction it becomes clear: this is no park, it's the grounds of a prison. We've been watching a family visit.

ANDY
What?... Can't we just have a few more minutes?

The guard shrugs "sorry." Everyone gets up from the table. The girls start cleaning up.

ANDY (CONT'D)
(to the guard)
Give me a second here.

Andy pulls Liz a few feet away. The girls watch.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Everything okay?

LIZ
Great, Andy. I mean apart from the way people look at me when --

ANDY
-- Please don't do this.
(beat)
I'm still waiting to see the brief from the civil suit.

(CONTINUED)
LIZ
I'm working on it with Nick tonight.

ANDY
You want me to call him?

LIZ
No, Andy. You've done plenty.

GUARD
Let's go!

Andy tries to take Liz's hand. She pulls away. He shakes it off, turns to his daughters

ANDY
So. When do I see you guys again?

Jess shrugs.

ZOE
Same as always.

He puts his arms out to hug them. Pulls them in. Zoe hugs him back. Jess merely allows him the moment. He kisses them.

ANDY
I love you both. You know that, right?
   (trying so hard)
   I think you got a little taller, Jess.

She pulls away. He holds on to Zoe a moment longer.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Listen to your mom, okay? Take care of each other.

ZOE
... Sure Dad.

He steps back. The guard takes his arm. And they watch as their father is led away.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - JAMIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Jamie Parra, 18, Hispanic, handsome, naked under the sheets, sits up in his bed, sketching intently, making reference to Zoe who sleeps beside him. She stirs. Groggy.

ZOE

Hey.

He leans over, kisses her, goes back to drawing. She props herself up on an elbow, looks at the drawing. It's a comic book panel: a superhero strikes an avenging pose. Behind him, a vixen with Zoe's features.

ZOE (CONT'D)

What're those?

JAMIE

Wrist deflectors. If someone so much as shoots her a dirty look, he's able to intercept it, harness it, convert it into energy and shoot it back at them.

ZOE

No, I mean her. Those.

JAMIE

Those? Are breasts.

ZOE


She goes to swat him with a pillow, but he's too fast. He pins her arms down and kisses her.

ZOE (CONT'D)

You heard your dad leave, right?

She slides away, reaches for a sweater.

JAMIE

(looks at the clock)
Seven ten. Yeah, definitely. He's always outta here by seven.

ZOE

(scrambling)
Seven ten. Damn!
(MORE)
CONTINUED:

ZOE (CONT'D)
I gotta stop home before school or else my mom'll --

She steps out into --

INT. PARRA HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

-- where she collides with Rafael Parra, Jamie's dad. He's tucking his shirt into his pants.

ZOE
Oh. Hi. Mr. Parra. It's. Well.
The thing is. Anyway.
(a cry for help)

JAMIE!

Jamie bolts into the hallway, wrapping a sheet around himself.

JAMIE
Pop. Uh. Listen. Zoe spent the night.

RAFAEL
What a relief. I'd hate to think this is how she makes an entrance.

ZOE
I'm gonna -- I should probably --

She dashes into the bathroom.

JAMIE
Don't make a deal of this. Please.

RAFAEL
Because --?

JAMIE
Because, look, it's better than us doing it someplace else, like, I dunno, a car or something. At least you know where we are.

RAFAEL
And, what, the parenting manuals say I should be okay with that? This is not some motel, Jamie --

ANGELA (O.S.)
-- Excuse me?

They turn. An attractive 22 year old white woman stands at the other end of the hall wearing a man's shirt.
ANGELA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I don't know where you keep your
coffee. Like, the fridge? Or the
cupboard? Hey, Jamie.
(off his blankness)
Angela. From your dad's office?
(still nothing)
"Parra Landscaping, how many I
direct your call?"

JAMIE
Angela. Hi. How's it going?

ANGELA
Oh, you know. Pretty good. Can't
complain.

Jamie pats his dad on the chest as he heads into his room.

JAMIE
You, neither, huh, Pop?

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Jess is emptying the dishwasher, when her mother pads in in
stockinged feet, wearing yesterday's clothes, her hair a
mess. Jess barely looks up.

JESS
I hope that afghan was warm enough.
I tried to get you upstairs but you
were out.

LIZ
I was at the lawyer's going over
the brief until, like, God, nine,
and then I stopped off to have a
quick bite --

JESS
-- Yeh? Where?

LIZ
Ferrente's. I just sat at the bar.

This piece of information sends Jess into a drawer, where she
retrieves a vial of aspirin, shakes out three.
CONTINUED:

LIZ (CONT'D)
Anyway, when I got home, I was
sorting through the mail on the
sofa and I musta just closed my
eyes for a minute and bham. Down
for the count.
(looks around)
Do you know if we have any --
(Jess puts the pills down)
-- oh, thanks, honey.
(it occurs to her)
Where's Zo?

From the kitchen window, Jess sees her sister coming up the
lawn. Zoe stops in her tracks, shoots Jess a questioning
look. Jess silently indicates for her to go around the back.

JESS
She's getting dressed.

LIZ
The thing's today, you know. At
two. Nick's really confident it's
gonna go our way.

JESS
Good. That's good.

Zoe appears in the doorway.

ZOE
Hey.

LIZ
'Morning.

JESS
There's coffee.

Zoe moves to get some.

LIZ
Didn't you wear that yesterday?

She looks down at her clothes. Then at her mom's.

ZOE
. Didn't you?

CUT TO:
INT. PARRA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Jamie and Rafael sit on opposite sides of the breakfast table. Angela's oblivious to the tension.

ANGELA
Breakfast is really the only kind of food I can cook. Pancakes. Waffles. I would've, only, you're out of eggs.

JAMIE
We don't usually, you know -- it's just the two of us so we kinda eat on the run --

RAFAEL
-- I thought you had swim practice first thing Tuesday.

JAMIE
Coach is letting me use the pool nights.

RAFAEL
Nights are for homework.

ANGELA
(sunny)
Homework! Man, there's something I don't miss!

JAMIE
I'm getting it all done, Pop.

RAFAEL
Are you? Thirty minutes and you're finished -- and off messing with that girl.

... ANGELA
She is so pretty, by the way!

RAFAEL
You're not doing your work right if you're finishing it that fast. Steve sat here at this table three, four hours every night.

Angela crosses herself at the mention of Steve's name. Jamie and his father register this and are momentarily thrown.

(CONTINUED)
RAFAEL (CONT'D)
Even if your grades were great, colleges look at your whole transcript. And if they see you're slacking off --

JAMIE
I'm not slacking --

RAFAEL
-- they lose interest in you. You're not gonna get anywhere taking the easy way out, Jamie. You gotta start thinking about how things look to other people.

ANGELA
You know, if you got one of those biscuit mixing you wouldn't have to worry about keeping eggs around.

A beat. Jamie looks at his dad.

JAMIE
How it looks, huh?

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - CAFETERIA AREA - DAY

Jess is sitting alone, leaning up against a wall of the school, her books on the ground next to her, when she's approached by a cute, slightly nerdy boy, AARON.

AARON
You're Jessica Collier, right?

She looks up. Unimpressed.

JESS
... Why?

AARON
I was sick last week when we started the life skills unit. Conklin paired me with you for the "Build Your Own Family" project. Apparently, you're the only one in the grade who hadn't picked a partner.

JESS
So... you're my husband.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

AARON
And you're my wife. For thirty percent of our total grade.
(she just looks at him)
Don't get up.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

JUDGE CONSTANCE PURVIEW presiding. Liz sits at one table, with NICK, her lawyer. A select few of the named plaintiffs, old friends of Liz's, sit on the other side with theirs.

JUDGE PURVIEW
The defendant, Andrew Collier, has filed a motion to have all claims against him dismissed.
(beat)
He argues that since his jewelry business was a corporation, the plaintiffs should not be allowed to go after his personal assets.

Nick smiles at Liz. Exactly.

JUDGE PURVIEW (CONT'D)
When, however, a corporation is underfunded, it constitutes little more than a fraud.
(Liz looks at her lawyer)
Not only did Mr. Collier steal from his customers, claiming to do appraisals while swapping their good diamonds for lesser ones -- he funneled his ill-gotten profits out of the corporation and into his own pocket. He got rich, the corporation stayed poor, and his victims are left with nothing. That is not what the law intends.

LIZ
What?

NICK
Shhh.

JUDGE PURVIEW
The motion to dismiss is denied. We proceed with trial.

Liz turns, ashen, to her lawyer.
LIZ
What the hell just happened?

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - AISLE - DAY

Jess and Aaron are in mid-assignment. Aaron’s got the pad, Jess is just over-seeing.

AARON
Conklin says he wants our preliminary household budgets in by next Wednesday.

JESS
That’s not a problem. I’m almost done here.
(scans the shelves)
... We still need snacks for our kids. Pretzels and stuff.

AARON
(checking his total)
Not on our combined salaries. We’re up to almost $150 a week.

JESS
Who told you to be a teacher? You couldn’t go to law school?

AARON
(gives her a look)
Why don’t we cut out your beer?

JESS
I like beer. It relaxes me. After a long day with the kids. God knows you don’t pitch in.

AARON
Who said I don’t pitch in?

JESS
Please, I know how it goes.

She heads to the front of the store. He follows

AARON
(rolls his eyes)
I guess we’re done.

As she gets to the door, something catches her eye.
CONTINUED:

JESS
One more stop.

CUT TO:

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

She's checking out the counter.

AARON
What are we doing here?

JESS
I feel strongly you should've gotten me a bigger wedding ring.

Aaron looks around, feeling a little weird. Whispers:

AARON
Isn't this your father's store?

JESS
... Was.

This is an emotional experience for her. She hides it well.

JESS (CONT'D)
I don't think it's as nice. The new people didn't do a good job fixing it up.

She goes over to a side counter. Laid out on it is display of leather watch bands. Jess examines them, takes a quick look around, and then, in one smooth move, deposits a particularly nice one in her back pack.

Aaron takes this in with a mixture of horror and fear. He's stuck to the floor when she brushes past him.

JESS (CONT'D)
Let's go, dear.

As she ushers him out the door, he whispers:

AARON
I saw that.

JESS
Hey, they all belonged to me, anyway... a year ago.

CUT TO:
INT. COURTROOM - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Liz and Nick try to find some privacy in a corner.

LIZ
You said you would take care of it.

NICK
Lizzie --

LIZ
--- Don't you Lizzie me! You told me everything would be okay!

NICK
I didn't expect it to go this way.

LIZ
Uh-huh.
(beat; she's fuming)
So now what? I go through another trial?

NICK
(now the bad news)
... I think we have to settle.

LIZ
Settle?... So I pay them. How much?
(he waives)
How much am I going to lose?
(no answer)
Am I going to lose my house?

He doesn't answer. And that's her answer. She reels from it.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - INDOOR POOL - NIGHT

Dark and empty, save for Jamie who slices through the water on his final lap. He stretches for the edge, slaps it, and comes up out of breath. Zoe steps in, stopwatch in hand.

ZOE
Three twenty two.

JAMIE
(puffing)
Not a chance.

ZOE
Three twenty two.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JAMIE
No frickin' way. Lemme see.

She moves to the edge, kneels down with the stopwatch outstretched.

ZOE
Three. Twenty. Two -- ahhhh!

And he yanks her into the water. She ad libs screams and protests, which give way finally to the two of them slowly twirling through the water.

ZOE (CONT'D)
I'm slowing you down.

JAMIE
Exactly the opposite.

ZOE
I am. I'm dead weight.

JAMIE
If you could just run from one side to the other -- each lap, that'd be my motivation -- reaching for you. I'd be the world record holder.

ZOE
(simply)
I love you.

He kisses her. Puts his arms around her neck. She rests her wrists on his biceps. He starts to say something. Stops.

ZOE (CONT'D)
You can say it back.

JAMIE
Yeh? 'Cause I know you got this thing about that.

ZOE
Just when it's like:
(all one word)
"I-love-you-I-love-you-too." Like it's just an automatic response.

JAMIE
But now, see, you're expecting it.

A beat.

(CONT'D)
ZOE
Wanna know how I'm feeling? Right now? Right this second?

JAMIE
Damp?

ZOE
Optimistic. It's like I'm sorta seeing a light at the end of the tunnel.

JAMIE
Is it a white light? Because that could mean something else.

She splashes him.

ZOE
Shut up. I'm serious. I mean, it's been such a horrible year. But I'm getting kinda used to it now -- and things are settling down. And soon, all this court stuff'll be behind us. And then, things are actually gonna get better.

JAMIE
They are.

ZOE
They have to.

They consider this, then:

JAMIE
Oh, hey, here's a piece of news.

ZOE
Yeh?

JAMIE
I love you.
(smiles)
How was that? Surprise you?

ZOE
Neeeh.

JAMIE
Damn. You already knew it, huh?
ZOE
Hey. It's the thing that's gonna save me.

And she leans into him, and they kiss, and kiss harder and we're underwater with them as he pulls at her clothes and at her sweater, and then bra, and then pants float slowly, slowly down to the bottom of the pool.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Liza has just presented her daughters with the bad news. They're struggling to digest it.

ZOE
That's what they want? To leave us with nothing?

LIZ
... I don't know what to tell you.

JESS
So we're gonna have to move? To another house or --

LIZ
-- We can't afford a house, Jess. Probably an apartment.

JESS
But you said he was confident. Your lawyer.

LIZ
He was. It's just... the judge...

It's too much for her.

ZOE
Can't we, like, appeal? (Liz doesn't answer) Mom?

She's in her own thoughts now. Lost and confused. Tears coming.

LIZ
I can't... What was he thinking? Stealing from people. What did he think we needed. I mean, we had so much already. And now.... (in tears) I don't know what to do.... What am I gonna do?

And the two kids watch their mother dissolve. They exchange a look, helpless.

CUT TO:
INT. PARRA HOUSE - JAMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zoe, clearly upset, sits with Jamie on the bed.

ZOЕ
She’s freaking out. And it’s not like I blame her, but...
(beat)
I know her, she can’t handle seriously bad stuff like this.

JAMIE
So, what do you think’s gonna happen?

From the other room we begin to HEAR the unmistakable sound of a BED CREAKING, back and forth, back and forth. The repeated BANG against the wall.

JAMIE (CONT’D)
Ignore it.

ZOЕ
We’re obviously gonna move, I probably have to get a job --

RAFAEL (O.S.)
-- Oh, boy! Oh, boy! Oh, BOY!

Jamie closes his eyes, embarrassed.

ZOЕ
It’s okay.

JAMIE
I feel bad for your mom. I mean, your dad --

ANGELA (O.S.)
-- Don’t stop, Mr.! Don’t stop, Mr.!!

Jamie jumps up.

JAMIE
Okay, this is -- ! We have to get out of here!

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jamie and Zoe sit on the hood of his car, facing a small sad house, in a poor Hispanic neighborhood.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JAMIE
Steve and I shared a tiny room in
the back. You can’t see it from
here.

ZOE
That’s why we drove all this way?

Not the response he hoped for. He tries to stay upbeat.

JAMIE
You’ve never seen the house I grew
up in. I just thought --

ZOE
-- What?

JAMIE
I don’t know. Just, it doesn’t
really matter what the house looks
like. I was a happy kid.

ZOE
Of course you were happy, you
didn’t know anything different.

JAMIE
Yes, I did. I knew what the houses
looked like where my father worked.
I remember tagging along in the
summer when he was cutting your
grass.

ZOE
It’s not the same thing.

JAMIE
Why not?

ZOE
Because I’m moving backward.
(beat)
Your father is this amazing guy who
worked hard and achieved all this
stuff for his family. My family’s
just screwing it all up.

JAMIE
Okay. But the point is --

ZOE
-- You don’t have to fix this for
me overnight!
Her intensity takes him aback. This is unusual.

ZOE (CONT'D)
You don’t have to give me a Sunday school lesson. That’s not why I came over.

JAMIE...
(a little hurt)
... Okay.

ZOE
I just wanted someone to talk to.

That he understands. He takes her hand. He can do that.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - BATHROOM - DAY

Liz is fixing herself up. A little lipstick... an adjustment of the hair. A final peek in the mirror.

CUT TO:

SHOE DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Liz talks to her MANAGER, a man who is clearly younger than she. There's some desperation here.

MANAGER
... You've only been here six months, Liz.

LIZ
I know. But I'm a quick learner. And you yourself said that you've been happy with my work.

MANAGER
Absolutely. But I have no openings right now for assistant manager. I already have two girls in that position.

LIZ
Right. Okay. I'm just... I need to make a little more money than I'm pulling in.

MANAGER
I understand. Listen, if that forces you to look some place else, I won't --

(continues)
LIZ
-- No, that's fine.
   (beat)
Just... if an opening comes available....

MANAGER
You bet!

Liz nods and, with as much dignity as she can, goes back to work.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - DAY

Aaron and Jess sit at a picnic table. She's distractedly blowing bubbles with her gum while he lectures.

AARON
..and my dad said I could borrow his, like, spreadsheet program, so
I listed all the required categories here in these columns, plus I added a few of my own --

JESS
-- Recreation and leisure!? You have a recreation and leisure category?

AARON
We have three kids. You think they're gonna watch TV all summer?

JESS
-- Four hundred bucks for, what's this? Science summer camp? You gotta be kidding me.

AARON
What? It's so impossible that our son inherited some of my abilities in the math/sciences?

She just stares at him.

JESS
You are such a freak.

AARON
I'm a freak? Me?
CONTINUED:

JESS
You realize, don't you, we're gonna need serious marriage counseling and that's, what? About a hundred and fifty a pop. I don't see you budgeting THAT. And frankly, I think we should be socking more away for when you get canned from your teaching job.

AARON
Why would I -- ?

JESS
-- sexual discrimination. You only like to call on the girls with big tits.

A beat. He hesitates, looking for a way to strike back.

AARON

Jess recoils, on the defensive. Is this a jab at her father?

JESS
What the hell does that mean?

AARON
You know, for when your shoplifting catches up with you.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - POOL - DAY

It's a meet. Kids in the stands, swimmers wandering. Six swimmers, Jamie included, stand by the pool loosening up. Jamie seems agitated -- he's pacing.

REFEREE
Fifty meter freestyle. Swimmers take your marks.

ANGLE on Zoe, in the stands. She's clearly nervous.

The SWIMMERS step onto the blocks. Jamie's eyes are focused. Ready. The GUN FIRES. And they're off.

INTERCUT. Zoe watching. Cheering. And JAMIE, in the lead... being caught... falling behind the swimmer next to him.

(Continued)
As the hand of the rival swimmer reaches forward to the wall, we’re in:

INT. PIZZA PARLOR/POOL HALL – NIGHT

Jamie, Zoe, and three other couples (Splaver and Thea; Beller and Cathryn; Bryson and Jill) playing pool after the meet. The mood is celebratory mode.

SPLAYER
Central’s gotten pretty good since Willits retired.

JAMIE.
Carleton sure as hell beat my ass.

ZOE
Well, not by so much --

BRYSON
-- He’s ahead four meters, the second he’s off the block.

THEA
Plus, he’s still incredibly cute.

CATHRYN
The way he kinda swings his head from side to side --

JILL
-- YES! To get the water out! --
And that spider tattoo --

THEA
-- it’s not a spider, it’s a starburst --

ZOE
-- actually, it’s a hedgehog.
(they look at her)
And there’s a cool story behind it.
You wanna hear?

SPLAYER
(to Jamie)
This doesn’t worry you, dude?

Jamie looks across to Zoe.

ZOE
Hey, it was two years ago. Why
don’t we talk about you and Jill?
Zoe and Jamie both turn to Jill.

JILL
Please, that was nothing. We made out a few times. It was purely physical. Meaningless.

JAMIE
Thanks a lot!

Zoe smiles at Jamie, who smiles back. A cell phone chirps. Everyone digs in their pockets, jackets, backpacks for their phone.

ZOE
Mine!

But before she can answer it, Cathryn grabs it away.

Breathy:

CATHRYN
Uh, hello, Josh?

The others laugh as Zoe tries to snatch the phone back.

CATHRYN (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Oh, hey, Jess -- it's Cathryn...
Yeah, one sec, she's right here --

ZOE
(she takes the phone)
What's up?

And we stay on her, pushing in slowly, as the others continue, oblivious.

ZOE (CONT'D)
Uh huh...what? What do you mean?
When? Slow down... just slow down, Jess. Uh huh. Uh huh. Is she --?

THEA
You know who else is h-h-h-hot?

BELLER
Hey, we just won -- can we get a little respect here? (standing)

BRYSON
I'm dry. Anyone for seconds?

THEA (CONT'D)
I don't want to name names, but his initials are Marcus DeSalvo.

(CONTINUED)
Jamie gets up to help Bryson with drinks. He mimes to Zoe "you want another round?" just as she hangs up. In shock. She tugs on his sweater, pulls him close.

ZOE
I've gotta -- I need you to -- can you drive me --

JAMIE
What? What is it?

ZOE
My mom, she's -- she's been arrested.

And on Jamie, trying to take this in, and Zoe reeling, we --

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Jess, Zoe and Jamie move in, and up to the desk, where a uniformed officer sits in front of a computer.

JESS
Excuse me, we're here for Liz Col--

ZOE
-- Elizabeth. Elizabeth Collier.

OFFICER
(consulting the screen)
Collier. Elizabeth. Driving under the influence.
(looks up)
You her ride?

Zoe nods. The officer picks up a phone. Punches an extension.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Hey, Bobby, it's me. I need G-34203; Collier. Yup. Thanks.

He hangs up. Turns back to them.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
It's two hundred and fifty dollars. Cash or cashier's.

Jess takes a wad of bills out of her coat pocket.
JESS
We've got it all here.

The officer counts the money -- two hundred sixty dollars all in 20's. A few bills stick together.

OFFICER
Fresh from the ATM, huh?

He gives her back a ten. Slides a form over the counter.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
I'll need you to sign here... And here. Her car's been impounded so--

He removes a info sheet from a rack of handouts, circles an item, barely looking.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
--here's the number she's gonna need to call in the morning.
(circles another item)
And she's gotta call this number to find out when she's due back in court.

Zoe turns to Jamie. Overwhelmed by it all.

ZOE
She's due back in court. In court.

He moves to her, puts an arm around her. She starts to cry.

JAMIE
Hey. Hey.

ZOE
It's everything all over again.

JAMIE
No, it's not.

ZOE
I can't --

JAMIE
-- It's okay. It's gonna be okay.

A door buzzes open, and Liz stands shakily in the door frame.

JESS
Mom.

She holds up a hand, shaky.
LIZ
I -- I dunno how -- I know I
screwed up -- bad -- so bad --

She trails off. Zoe regards her stonily.

ZOE
Let's go home.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - LIZ' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zoe is turning down the sheets as Jess struggles with the cap on an aspirin bottle. Liz emerges from the bathroom in a
nightgown, her hair wet. She moves to the bed. Jess hands her the aspirin and a glass of water. She looks at the pills in her hand. Just looks. Then, not to either of them, more to herself:

LIZ
I had two glasses of wine when I
got home from work -- and then
there wasn't enough left in the
bottle worth saving and instead of
pouring it out, I -- and then I
noticed there wasn't anything in
the fridge for you girls to eat,
and what if you came home, hungry,
and there wasn't anything? And I --
I thought about the dinners we used
to have -- how your friends would
come by and I'd make spaghetti --
and your father would --

(this is hard)

-- your father -- and it just
seemed important, you know? Really
important. Going to the market.
Stocking up. Having there be
enough of something here for you
girls.

(breaking down)
I didn't think. I shouldn't've --
I didn't mean to -- I'm sorry. I'm
so so sorry.

She buries her face in her hands. We dissolve to:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Zoe emerges wearily, looks back at her sleeping mother,
turns out the lights and quietly closes the door. Jamie's
standing at the end of the hallway, having waited.
He opens his arms to her, and she moves to him. They hold each other for a moment.

    ZOE
    Will you -- can you -- stay tonight? I know your Dad'll --

    JAMIE
    -- Yes. Just: yes.

And she takes his hand, and they move into her bedroom and close the door.

    FADE OUT.

    END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Liz is on the phone, still in her bathrobe, looking very much like it’s been a rough night.

LIZ
Mr. Silberberg, please.

(beat)

Oh.... Okay. Mr. Cohen, Mr. Belnap, or Mr. Fuchs, then.

(beat)

... I’m not sure who I need to speak to. I found your ad in the yellow pages --

Jess walks past her, on the cell phone.

JESS
-- The license plate is KHJ4929. It’s a grey Acura.

(beat)

My name is Elizabeth Collier... I need to come pick up my car.

(beat)

Uh-huh. How much is that?

She makes a face. That much?

JESS (CONT’D)

(whispers to her mother)

Four hundred.

(back to the phone)

Thank you for your help.

It’s just another insult. Liz turns away.

LIZ
Hello?... Yes. Are you a lawyer with the firm, Mr. Gelman?

(obviously not)

... Paralegal. No, that’s fine.... Yes, if we could schedule that. Right. And how much is the initial consultation -- ?

(listens)

Uh-huh.... Yes, I’ll hold.

She turns to Jess.
LIZ (CONT'D)
I have to pay a retainer just to
meet with them?

JESS
How much?

Before she answers, Zoe walks into the kitchen.

ZOE
Morning!

And Jamie appears beside her. Liz stares at the two of them.

LIZ
Did he stay the night?

ZOE
Yes. Is there something you want to
say about that?

There is. But Liz doesn't. She holds her tongue.

LIZ
(back to the phone)
I'm still here.... Next Tuesday
would be fine.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - MORNING

Jamie trudges up the stairs. From his father's room, he hears
GRUNTING. He stops. The grunting continues.

That's it! He's had enough. He storms up, heading to his
father's room. But the door is open. Inside, he sees his
father, on the floor, doing sit-ups. Grunting. Grunting each
time. Rafael sees him.

RAFAEL
... She has me doing these. Crazy,
huh? It's a whole regimen.

Jamie nods and walks away. Angela is heading up the stairs,
in her sexy nightie, with her bathrobe untied.

ANGELA
I thought I heard you come in.

JAMIE
Would you cover up?!... Man!

She looks down, now embarrassed. She closes her bathrobe.
CONTINUED:

ANGELA

... Sorry.

Rafael calls out from the room.

RAFAEL (O.S.)
Hey, I gotta get to the office.
Give me five minutes, I'll drive
you to school.

CUT TO:

INT. RAFAEL'S MERCEDES - MOMENTS LATER

Rafael driving, Angela's next to him. Jamie's in the back
seat. Awkward silence. She eyes them both.

ANGELA
How about we turn on the radio?

No answer. Matter of fact:

RAFAEL
You didn't come home last night.

Jamie doesn't answer.

ANGELA
... Or not.

RAFAEL
What happened at your swim meet?

JAMIE
I lost, Dad. Okay? I came in
second. You have something you
wanna say about that? You wanna
tell me how that's gonna screw up
my chances for going to college?

Rafael keeps his cool.

RAFAEL
Not really.... You wanna tell me
how studying for your math test
went?

JAMIE
(shit!; he forgot)
I have study hall second period.
Zoe had this emergency last night.
RAFAEL
Right, well it's always something
with those people. I'm not gonna
let you fail out because of that
girl, Jamie.

JAMIE
That girl? I'm in love with that
girl, okay, Dad?

RAFAEL
She's an excuse for everything you
don't wanna do.... You're not
seeing her the rest of the week.

JAMIE
What?

RAFAEL
You get your work done. You raise
your grades. Then we'll talk about
it.

JAMIE
Man! I'm eighteen. I don't have
to be responsible all the time.

RAFAEL
Sure -- cause there's plenty of
time for that later!

JAMIE
Yes.

RAFAEL
That's what your brother thought!

Jamie stops. Quiets down. The car sits at a light.

JAMIE
Why do you always have to go there?
Why is everything always about
that?

(he unbuckles)
I'm getting out.

RAFAEL
Jamie --

JAMIE
-- It's three blocks to school.
I'll walk.

And he gets out of the car and slams the door. A beat.
ANGELA

Teenagers. That’s all it is. I remember like it was yesterday.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

We follow Jamie as he moves through the hall as it thins with kids just before the bell. He’s still chewing over the conversation with his dad, when he sees Zoe at her locker. He comes up from behind, pins her up against the wall, happy for the distraction.

ZOE
Hey you! Did your dad say anything when you got --

JAMIE
(nuzzling her neck)
-- he didn’t notice.

ZOE
(the bell RINGS; shit)
I’ve got to get to French.
(he doesn’t move)
Don’t you have Soc?
(he tries to kiss her)
One more C and you’re gonna get in trouble. Jame...

JAMIE
...I need something to get me through the four periods until I see you again.

She kisses him.

JAMIE (CONT’D)
That’s only gonna get me through Soc.
(another kiss)
Study hall.
(another kiss)
Lit.

She really kisses him. He breaks away, considers.

JAMIE (CONT’D)
Yup, good to go.
No Place Like Home - Network Draft Rev. - 12/9/02

CONTINUED:

And he abruptly turns away from her and moves down the now empty hall. Zoe's left up against the locker wall. She smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Kids are pairing up, saying goodbye, heading home. Aaron is by himself, loaded down with all his project materials. He checks his watch, annoyed... and waits.

AARON (V.O.)
What happened to you? I thought we were meeting at school?

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - FRONT HALL - DAY

Jess has just let Aaron in. She's frazzled.

JESS
(genuinely frazzled)
What?... Oh, right. Sorry. It's been kind of a crazy day.

AARON
Uh-huh. I waited for a half hour... and then I went looking for you!

JESS
I got stood up by my connection. (off his look)
My drug connection. I ran out of weed.

AARON
Look, I just wanna work on our presentation and --

JESS
-- Do you have any?

AARON
... What? No. Listen --

JESS
-- You know what I bet? Come with me.

She runs off. Reluctantly, he follows.
GUEST ROOM

Jess is rummaging though the bottom of a closet.

JESS
Cameron's room. He's at college. But sometimes he hides some stuff in here --

AARON
-- Jessica --

JESS
-- If we're gonna work, we should definitely get high first.

AARON
I don't wanna smoke pot with you.

JESS
C'mon, it's too depressing otherwise. Plus, you're way too uptight as it is. A couple of hits'll do you good.

(smiles at him)
And sometimes, when I get stoned, I get really horny --

AARON
-- Would you cut it out!!!

She stops.

AARON (CONT'D)
You're not scaring me. And you're not funny. You're just pissing me off.

(she's taken aback)
I don't know what you're trying to prove. Like -- I'm cool, or I'm wild, or look what I can get away with. It just seems kind of pathetic to me. So you're really inappropriate, so what? Hasn't anybody ever told you to just knock it off?

There's the gist of it.

JESS
... No. Not recently.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

AARON
I'm leaving. I'll finish the
presentation on my own. Consider
yourself divorced!

And he walks out on her.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARRA HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Jamie enters through the back gate. Angela's on a lawn-
chair, reading a magazine, getting some sun. Jamie's
surprised to see her.

ANGELA
Hola! Your dad gave me the
afternoon off. Sometimes I get
these terrible headaches. With
auras and everything.

JAMIE
You don't maybe want to save that
excuse for the evenings?

ANGELA
What?
    (gets it)
-- Oh. Right. Ha.
    (a beat, then)
Are you mad at me or something?

JAMIE
Why would I be mad at you?

ANGELA
For, like, being with him?
    (he shrugs no)
Your mom left a long time ago --
he's been alone for a long time.

JAMIE
I know. Look, he's entitled. He
is. I hope you guys are really
happy.

ANGELA
Your dad just wants the best for
you, y'know. He's always like, "my
son this" and "my son that" to his
clients.

JAMIE
You sure he's talking about me?

(Continued)
ANGELA
Why would you say that?

JAMIE
'Cause for like the first sixteen years of my life, I was not on the man's radar.

ANGELA
I'm sure that's not --

JAMIE
-- He was either at work or he was with his good son. Me? I was pretty much just another plate at the dinner table. All this concern about my future? That's only since Steve died.
(she crosses herself)
-- Why do you do that?

ANGELA
What? Oh. It's just a thing I do - - out of respect.

JAMIE
He wasn't a saint, you know.
Steve. Far from it.

ANGELA
I'm, um, I'm kinda like superstitious? About speaking ill of the dead?

JAMIE
I'm just saying how it was. You'll never hear it from Pop, of course. He'd rather pretend it was one of those wrong-place-at-the-wrong-time kinds of things. Like a normal person would be strolling through Allistar Park at two in the morning -- just for the hell of it, just for the fresh air.

ANGELA
I don't understand.

JAMIE
Well, the toxicology report on Steve makes it pretty damn clear. I could show it to you. Of course, Pop never looked at it.
ANGELA
Look -- I -- I don't think your father'd be okay with us talking about this --

JAMIE
-- He sure wouldn't. Just like I'm not okay with him throwing my brother up to me as some, like, shining example -- because, you know what? It's a load of crap. It's just easier for Pop to be disappointed in me than him. Because I'm, like, still here. I'm the only one he's got left.

And he moves on into the house.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT


ZOE
What are you doing?

LIZ
(nervous)
Nothing, I'm just -- I thought you were asleep.

ZOE
I couldn't sleep. Let me see --

--Liz hits a button, the screen changes.

LIZ
It's nothing.

ZOE
Wha'dyou do that for?
(sees stuff on the table)
What's with the maps?... Arizona?

LIZ
...I was just --
(beat)
I looked at places for us to live today. Horrible places. I couldn't see us being happy in any of them.
No Place Like Home - Network Draft Rev. - 12/9/02

CONTINUED:

ZOE

What does this have to do with Arizona?

LIZ

I didn't want to talk about this until I had it all worked out.

ZOE

What does this have to do with Arizona!

LIZ

There's this woman who used to work in Sleepware? Dorothy? And she couldn't really make ends meet here, you know? So she moved her family to Scottsdale --

ZOE

Oh my god!

Jess wanders in.

JESS

What's going on in here?

ZOE

Mom wants to move us to Arizona.

LIZ

Listen to me. Some of the girls at work were talking about how well she's doing there. Dorothy. She found a good job, a nice place to live that's way nicer than what she could've afforded here and --

ZOE

You're kidding, right? You might as well have thrown a dart at some map!

LIZ

That is not true! I have been doing research. Arizona makes a lot of sense when you think about it.

ZOE

It doesn't make any sense! It's crazy. Our whole lives are here! (MORE)
ZOE (CONT'D)
Plus, you're gonna move like
hundreds of miles away from Dad?
You can't do that!

LIZ
Why can't I? Look what he did to
us! How long am I supposed to try
to hold on here?

ZOÉ
(to Jess)
Don't you have anything to say
about this?

JESS
What difference is it gonna make?
Whatever happens, happens. Haven't
you figured that out yet?

And Jess walks out. Zoe turns to her mother, in tears.

ZOE
Please.... please, let's find
another way. I don't care what
house I live in --

LIZ
I'm sorry, honey, but --

ZOÉ
-- Please!

LIZ
(in agony)
I can't make it work here! I've
tried. I don't know how. And I
can't walk down the street anymore
and have people look at me the way
they do. I'm too ashamed, baby!

ZOÉ
So, what -- ? You think things are
gonna be so much better there?
Like we're not gonna just move our
problems with us? Like you're
gonna get some great job in
Scottsdale --

LIZ
I could --

ZOÉ
-- Without any training, Mom?
Without any skills? Come on.
LIZ
Maybe Dorothy could help me find --

ZOE
And on that chance you'd move us hundreds of miles away? Don't. Please. I'm begging you, Mom. It's a fantasy. And what happens when Arizona doesn't work?

LIZ
Why wouldn't it --?

ZOE
You think once we get to Arizona, you're gonna pull yourself together? You're gonna stop going from job to job? You think, all of a sudden, Mom, you're not gonna drink so much?

Liz reaches out and slaps her, hard.

LIZ
You don't talk to me that way!
(beat)
I am still your mother! And, whatever you think of me, I still make the decisions for this family.

Zoe raises her hand to her cheek, her eyes fill with tears. This is what it feels like to have the very last thing taken away from you.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROMANTIC LOCATION - NIGHT

The edge of a reservoir, maybe. Or a vista overlooking the city lights. Or the beach. Zoe's in a craze -- hyperventilating.

ZOE
I can't breathe... I mean it -- it's like I got hit in the stomach and I can't catch my -- I can't --

JAMIE
Zoe? Zo? Try putting your head between your legs --

ZOE
(bending over)
She's serious, Jamie. (MORE)
CONTINUED:

ZOE (CONT'D)
She really thinks this is the answer. She's gonna make us go with her. What'm I gonna do? I don't know what to do.
(sits up)
Okay, that's not working.

He takes her hands, gently.

JAMIE
Hey --

And the tears come.

ZOE
Everything's like --

JAMIE
What?

ZOE
-- I don't know -- slipping away. I can't hold on to anything anymore. Remember that counselor I went to go see that time?

JAMIE
That boneheaded chick, yeh --

ZOE
She said, one foot in front of the other -- that's how to get through it. One foot in front of the other. But if that's really gonna work -- something's gotta be, like, solid, you know? Like your father, or your mother, or your friends, or your house, or something. And it's not -- it's all falling away.

He takes her face in his hand, wipes her tears. Very intense.

ZOE (CONT'D)
You're the one thing -- the only thing that makes it better. You always make it better. How do you do that?

JAMIE
I don't know. I just -- I love you.

ZOE
It's more than that.
JAMIE
I dunno. I guess...
the truth)
You're the one thing I'm really
good at.

She looks at him tenderly.

ZOE
No, Jame, that's not --

JAMIE
-- It's okay. I'm okay with that.
I love that. That makes me happy.
You make me really really happy.
You're not gonna lose me.

ZOE
I could. Arizona is, like, far.
And what? Are we gonna go back and
forth? How? And, look at me,
Jamie. I lose, God, everything.
And this is next. We're what's
next.

JAMIE
We're gonna be together.

ZOE
Wanting it doesn't make it true.

JAMIE
Okay, that's -- you're right. Just
wanting it doesn't make it true.
So let's us make it true.

ZOE
How? We can't --

JAMIE
Yes, we --

ZOE
-- no! I'm telling you -- she's
gonna make me go --

JAMIE
Not if --

ZOE
-- she's gonna make me go!

JAMIE
-- we get married.

(Continued)
A beat.

ZOÉ
What?

JAMIE
Let's get married.

ZOÉ
What?

JAMIE
You and me. Let's do it.

ZOÉ
What?

JAMIE
Marry me.

There it is. There's the answer.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rafael is railing at his son.

RAFAEL
You want to be with her? Fine! So be with her! You want to sleep with her in my house? Okay, then. You made your point. Maybe that's something we can negotiate.

JAMIE
It's not about -- you just don't get it, man.

RAFAEL
I know what it's about. It's about you rescuing her, like some hero from one of those comic books of yours. You think you're just gonna swoop in and solve all her problems?

JAMIE
That's not --

RAFAEL
-- This is real life, Jamie. You know how many people who get married at your age are together in even five years?

JAMIE
So what! We'll be the one couple who --

RAFAEL
-- everyone says that, Jamie!

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Zoe has corralled her mother out by the garbage cans.

LIZ
-- and you think moving to Arizona is going to ruin everything?!

ZOE
I didn't expect you to be happy about this.

(Continued)
LIZ
How do you think this is gonna
work? You think his dad's gonna
help you out with money, now that
he's got so much of it?

ZOE
Jamie and I are doing this on our
own.

LIZ
How? He's a boy. He's a sweet
boy. But he's a boy. He's not a
man. How will you pay the rent?
How will you pay for food? Which
one of the two of you is dropping
out of school to get a job?

ZOE
I don't know, okay?
(beat)
How are you gonna pay the rent?
Tell me how you've prepared for the
future, Mom?
(points to the house)
Tell me how I'm protected in there!

LIZ
You are!

ZOE
Well, it doesn't feel like it any
more.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

RAFAEL
You really want to marry into that?
Her father's a felon! A thief!

JAMIE
That's her father. That's not Zoe.

RAFAEL
But it's her family -- and they're
gonna lose everything! Those
people're gonna end up with even
less than I had when I started --
'cause at least I had my good name.
I had people's respect. I'm
telling you, she's not nearly good
enough for you.

(CONTINUED)
JAMIE
You got it backwards. What makes me good enough for her? What have I ever done in my life to deserve someone who loves me that much? I know what you'd say: nothing, right? Well, I'm gonna marry her anyway, Pop. Because she loves me. And she said yes. And I'm eighteen. And there's nothing you can do about it.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

LIZ
You're seventeen years old. You can't get married unless I say it's okay. And I'm not gonna do that.

(beat)
You can hate me if you want. You can think I'm a terrible mother -- and maybe I am. But not because of this. The answer is no.

ZOE
Then I'll ask Dad.

LIZ
...What?

ZOE
He doesn't want to lose me... he'll do anything.

This freezes Liz.

ZOE (CONT'D)
He'll give me permission. You know he will.

And she walks by her mother into the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON - GATE - DAY

A car drives up to the main gate of the prison. Stops. Waits to be admitted into the grounds. Liz leans her head out the window. To the guard:

(continued)
CONTINUED:

LIZ
Elizabeth Collier. I'm here to see
Andrew Collier.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON ROOM - DAY

Liz and Andy are in mid-conversation. As always, there is a
GUARD posted in the room.

LIZ
You have to promise me you won't
let her do this...

ANDY
... Sure, Liz, if you promise you
won't take her to Arizona.

LIZ
Oh, no. You don't get to give any
ultimatums, Andy. Not after what
you've done to us.
(beat)
So, I'm sorry. I can't wait around
for ten years of visiting days to
be over. I have to raise our
family... alone.

ANDY
In Arizona?

LIZ
... I'll bring the children to
visit you as often as I can.

This is terrible for him.

ANDY
What does that mean? As often as
you can? Once every six months?
(no answer; distraught)
All I do is wait for you to come
back, so I can see you again...
Once every six months?

Liz understands. She also needs his help now.

LIZ
Letting her get married isn't going
to change that, Andy.... All it
does is punish me.

Beat.

(CONTINUED)
ANDY
... Uh-huh. Well... Shouldn't I
listen to her arguments before I
decide?

LIZ
You just wanna be forgiven. That's
not a reason to let her screw up
her life. And, you watch, she'll
blame you for that one day.

He thinks about it.

LIZ (CONT'D)
I'll be the bad guy. I promise.

ANDY
... Liz. She loves that boy. You
can say no to her. You can drag her
to Arizona. You have the authority.
(beat)
But how long do you think it'll be
'till she's gone for good? She's
gonna run away from all of us so
fast... And then she'll be
eighteen. And that'll be it.
(beat)
You've gotta come up with a better
answer than no.

Liz sits with that. And she knows he's right.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY
Zoe walks into the crowded office, leans over the front desk
to get the attention of a secretary.

ZOE
I got a message, Mrs. Hom?

MRS. HOM
Yeah, Zoe, your mom's in there.

Zoe looks over to a small side office. Liz is waiting.

CUT TO:

SIDE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER
It's just the two of them.
ZOE
It couldn’t wait til after school?

LIZ
I was afraid I’d come home and find a note that you’d already left with Jamie.
(Zoe looks away)
... What if I don’t go to Arizona?

ZOE
Mom -- ?

LIZ
-- You made your point. What if I stay here?

Zoe shakes her head.

ZOE
That’s not... Don’t do that for me. I didn’t threaten to marry Jamie to keep you in LA. If moving to Arizona is actually gonna make you happy, you should do that.

LIZ
... But if I stay in LA, you don’t have to marry him.

ZOE
I want to marry him. He is where I want to be. Can’t we leave it at that?

LIZ
No.

Zoe would have keep this to herself. As gentle as possible:

ZOE
... I don’t want to be in your house anymore. I don’t wanna wait up all night for you to come home. I don’t want to come pick you up at midnight when you’ve had too much to drink.

(beat)
I love you, mom. But I feel safe with him.

Liz is struggling to keep it together.
LIZ
I lost your father last year. It's too soon for me to lose you too.

ZOE
It happens to everyone doesn't it? Doesn't every mom say that to her daughter? It's just a little sooner and a little weirder for us.

Liz has no where else to go.

LIZ
... If I give you permission to marry him, you have to promise to stay close.

ZOE
... What?

LIZ
I'll try to manage it in LA for as long as I can. Some apartment somewhere -- me and Jess. And you have to do the same thing. Close by. So I can still look after you.

Zoe goes over to Liz. Puts her arms around her.

ZOE
I know this is not how you imagined it.

LIZ
Oh, we are so far beyond that, baby.

And she holds her daughter tight, as if she could keep her close with just her two arms.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Zoe emerges from the office to find Jess leaning up against a bank of lockers in the empty hallway.

ZOE
What're you --

JESS
-- Jenna Berklund said she thought she saw Mom at school.
CONTINUED:

ZOE
She said yes. To letting Jamie and me... With, like, conditions. But yes. And she's not gonna take you to Arizona. You guys're gonna stay.

JESS
Wow, huh?
(somewhat conflicted)
So... when, do you and Jamie think you're gonna --

ZOE
(in shock)

She sees her sister is struggling with something.

ZOE (CONT'D)
What?

JESS
You gotta promise you won't, like, disappear.

ZOE
I won't. Look, it's gonna take us awhile to figure out how this is gonna work. Where we're gonna live. What we're gonna live on. It's not like, poof, I'm gone.

JESS
I know, but still. I need to know that if I call you with something, some problem, something I can't deal with by myself, you'll come. You'll help.

ZOE
Of course, I will. Jess. Of course.

JESS
(this is hard)
'Cause otherwise it's just me.

ZOE
It's not just you. I promise.

She kneels down, hugs her sister.

(continued)
ZOE (CONT'D)

Hey.

JESS
(fighting tears)
I'm happy for you. Really, I am. He's great. He is so great. And he really loves you. And it's gonna be great. You're gonna be really really happy and you should definitely do it.
(a beat)
I just -- sometimes I wish it were me who was getting out, you know?

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM/HALLWAY - DAY

Jamie's in a science class, sitting at one of those long granite tables, not paying attention to the lecture. His lab partner nudges him, indicates the wall of windows that faces the hallway. It's Zoe. She presses a hand to the glass. And nods. Yes. The bell RINGS.

We CUT outside, to Zoe's POV, as Jamie rises from his chair and moves up the aisle, as the rest of the students rise, begin collecting their things. Jamie navigates his way through them, his eyes fixed on Zoe the whole time. He reaches the door, throws it open. Zoe meets him on the other side. Out of breath. Disbelieving.

JAMIE

Yes?

ZOE

Yes.

He takes her hand and together they start down the hallway, where they are quickly joined by a throng of students, discharging into the hallway. They thread their way through the mass, disappearing around the corner and we're in --

INT. CITY HALL -- REGISTRAR'S OFFICE - DAY

And circling around them as they stand on line, still holding hands, couples ahead of them and behind them, and they're giddy and dizzy with the craziness of it all and then we're in --

INT. CITY HALL - JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Still circling as Zoe and Jamie stand before a justice of the peace.
CONTINUED:

We see the justice speaking, addressing them both, but the only sound we hear is their BREATH. The world falls away: it's only the two of them there, together, taking this leap.

JAMIE

I do.

A moment passes. She's crying a little.

ZOE

I do.

And then it's over. The twirling stops. And the camera sits on them, still. Quiet.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Are you scared?

JAMIE

(yes)

No.

ZOE

(me, too)

Me, neither.

Instead of kissing, they move in to each other, and stand, forehead to forehead, so close.

CUT TO:

EXT. AARON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aaron opens the door to find the doorstep empty. He takes a step out, catches sight of Jess scurrying away.

AARON

Uh, hello? HELLO? I, like, see you. What is this, Doorbell Ditch? Man, you never stop, do you?

JESS

(stops, turns)

No. That's not -- I was gonna -- but I changed my mind -- look, just, never mind.

AARON

You were gonna what?

JESS

I came to say I was, like, sorry, okay?
AARON
You're sorry.

JESS
Yeah. Stuff's been going on. With me. At, you know, home. And it was kinda making me a little crazy. Not that I'm not crazy, I am. I'm totally crazy and wild and, like, really unpredictable and I'm not apologizing for that because that's just who I am and if you don't get me, well, then screw you.

AARON
Um, how is this an apology exactly?

JESS
It just is.

A beat. He looks at her.

AARON
Okay then.

JESS
Really?

AARON
Yeah. (a small smile) I'm unpredictable, too.

AARON'S MOM (O.S.)
Honey, who is it?

They both turn. Aaron's mother's standing in the doorway.

AARON
It's Jessica. The girl I did my family project with. Well, sorta.

JESS
Hi, Mrs. Rappaport.

AARON
It's Thayer, actually. She kept her name.

JESS
Shut up.

(continued)
AARON'S MOM
Have you had dinner, Jessica?

AARON/JESS
What?

AARON'S MOM
We're just sitting down. Maybe
you'd like to join us?

Jess looks to Aaron. He shrugs.

AARON
You can. If you want. I mean,
it's okay.

Jess considers for a moment.

JESS
I kinda should get home --

AARON
-- Right.

JESS
-- my sister and her boyfriend,
today, they --

AARON
-- Look, it's okay. Whatever.

JESS
But I mean, I'd like to. Maybe...
Could I come some other time?

She means it. And something in her voice lets him know this.
Aaron nods, okay. Sure. Some other time.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLIER HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

The front door opens and quietly, so as not to disturb
anyone, Zoe and Jamie slip in. And stop. Liz and Jess are
hanging a cardboard "Congratulations" banner from the stairs.

ZOE
Oh my God... You guys...

JESS
You like it?
LIZ
We thought: this is where you're gonna spend your wedding night. It shouldn't be ordinary.

JAMIE
It's... man.

ZOE
You didn't have to do this, Mom.

LIZ
What do you mean? You're my baby girl.
(a beat)
I was pregnant with you when we moved in here. Bringing you home from the hospital, that was the first milestone we celebrated in this house... And this'll be the last. Which seems just about right.

ZOE
It's my whole life.

LIZ
Your whole life, part one.

A beat. Jess points over to the table.

JESS
Did you see? We got you a cake.

Jamie moves to it. Looks. Zoe follows.

JAMIE
I've never seen a wedding cake with, like, writing on it.

ZOE
Or, hmmm, sprinkles.

JESS
It was kinda all they had left. Sorry.

JAMIE
It's great, Jess.

ZOE
It's perfect.
(overwhelmed)
Really.

(CONTINUED)
JESS
I'll get a knife. And plates. And
glasses. We should make a toast.
Somebody think of a toast.

LIZ
And make sure you save the top.

JAMIE
Yeah? Really?

ZOE
For what?

Liz smiles.

LIZ

She shakes her head. At all the things her daughter doesn't
yet know.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRA HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Somber. Rafael sits at kitchen table, picking at his dinner.
Angela is across from him, respectful of his sadness. Rafael
turns to look at Jamie's empty chair. Finally:

RAFAEL
His mother was seventeen, you know.

A beat. Angela waits for more.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
It didn't even last three years.

And he goes back to his dinner.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON - YARD - DAY

It's the same yard where we began. Zoe waits patiently.
Jamie is next to her, holding a small package. She sees, a
short distance away, a door open... Her father comes out,
accompanied by a GUARD. She walks toward him, and he comes
to meet her. Jamie hangs back.

ZOE
Hi.

(CONTINUED)
ANDY

Zo.

ZOE

... I got married yesterday. That sounds weird, doesn't it? It's the first time I've said it out loud. I got married yesterday. I'm married.

(it hits her)

I'm married.

ANDY

Zoe --

ZOE

-- What? You don't have to say it. I know you think it was a terrible idea.

ANDY

No, that's --

(beat)

This is because of me, Zo. I understand that. If I hadn't done what I did -- you'd just be a happy high school kid with a boyfriend.

ZOE


(beat)

I want you to be happy for us.

ANDY

... I will be.

ZOE

Good. Because I love him. And he loves me.

(beat)

And it's like as soon as he asked me to marry him, my whole world just snapped into place, you know? I'm not saying I have all the answers or anything. It's just, the questions don't scare me so much anymore. Because I have him.

ANDY

Right.

(CONTINUED)
ZOE
You think it's not that simple.

ANDY
It's not that simple. But it's very hopeful... which is an okay place to start.
  (beat; sadly)
I would like to have been there.

ZOE
  (turns; calls out)
Jamie! Come on over!

And he does, carrying a plate with foil. Extends a hand.

JAMIE
Mr. Collier.

ANDY
Jamie.

JAMIE
I want you to know: we're gonna take care of each other. So don't worry, okay?

ANDY
  ... Sure.

ZOE
We brought you something.

ANDY
  ... You did?

ZOE
It's some cake -- a piece of our wedding cake.

Jamie unwraps the package. It's a big piece of cake, with three forks on the side. Andy is genuinely moved.

ZOE (CONT'D)
I wanted to share it with you.
Daddy.

ANDY
Will you look at that?

And they dig in, the three of them, celebrating the only way they can.

DISSOLVE TO:
EXT. PRISON GATE - LATER

Jamie and Zoe in his car. The great front gate of the prison sits closed in front of them. Jamie hands his pass to the guard to let them out.

He turns back to face the gate. He and Zoe wait patiently. Jamie puts out his hand... and she takes it. And the gate slowly slowly begins to slide open. And then comes to a stop the world spread out in front of them.

They look at each other and smile, full of hope. He turns back... and steps on the gas... and they're through the gate and free.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END