

SWEETNESS

Written by

Meghan Gill

meghan.gill98@gmail.com

(631) 579-3481

FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK- EVENING/NIGHT

LESLEY (15) and MABLE (15) are sitting on the curb, both looking straight forward. They are wearing an assortment of red, white, and blue clothing. The block is closed for a block party.

Most of the houses around them are Cape Cods with a Colonial or two mixed in. Some houses have fences. Others may have lawn work done. All-in-all, it screams south-shore Long Island suburbia.

Mable looks content. Lesley touches a spot on her forehead in concern.

LESLEY

I can feel a pimple coming on.

MABLE

Don't touch it. You'll only make it worse.

LESLEY

I know, but I always seem to have a zit right in the middle of my face.

Lesley still touches the pimple. The area on her forehead becomes somewhat red.

MABLE

Well, if you keep touching your face, you'll for sure break out.

(beat)

That's what my mom tells me.

Lesley stops touching her face.

LESLEY

(sighs)

Yeah, Francine's always right.

TIM (mid 40s) approaches the two girls. He wears a polo shirt with an American flag pattern. He even has a "Kiss the Cook" grill apron on, too.

MABLE

(To Tim, politely)

Hello Mr. Connors.

LESLEY
 (to Tim)
 Hi Dad.

TIM
 Hi girls. Having fun?

MABLE
 Yep.

Tim pauses and stares at Lesley's forehead.

TIM
 Do you need a little bug spray for
 that bite, kiddo?

Lesley covers her pimple.

LESLEY
 (embarrassed)
 Dad!

TIM
 What?

LESLEY
 It's not a bug bite!

TIM
 (taken back)
 Oh, I'm so sorry. That's no
 problem, though. We have cream at
 the house for that, too.

LESLEY
 Dad, stop.

TIM
 I'm just trying to help.

Lesley sighs and attempts to move her hair a bit to cover the zit.

JANET (mid 40s) joins the group. It's a little obvious that she is just a wee bit tipsy. She kisses Tim on the cheek.

JANET
 (to Lesley)
 You ready to go, Sweetness?

Lesley and Mable look at each other and communicate without talking.

LESLEY

Actually, Mable and I were curious
if we could have a sleepover.

JANET

Oh, no. I'm sorry. You know the
deal. No sleepovers on school
nights.

LESLEY

(smirking)
It's not a school night.

JANET

(confused)
It's Sunday.

TIM

It's Memorial Day. They have off
tomorrow.

JANET

That's right!
(beat)
I'm okay with that, then. Who's
house would you girls be staying
at?

LESLEY

Mable's.

JANET

You don't want to come home?
Cassandra and Aunt Heather are
visiting.

LESLEY

They're not visiting, Mom. They
moved in.

JANET

No need to get snippy, Lesley
Marie.

LESLEY

(defensive)
I wasn't being snippy.

JANET

(stern)
Just be cautious.
(pause)
Anyways, you two have fun tonight.

Janet and Tim begin to walk away.

Tim turns around towards Lesley.

TIM

Do you want me to drop off the acne cream?

LESLEY

(embarrassed)

No...

(under her breath)

oh my God...

Janet and Tim begin walking again.

JANET

(to Tim)

Why does she need that?

TIM

(to Janet)

It's not a bug bite.

Janet eyes grow with realization.

Finally, Janet and Tim are gone. Lesley and Mable sit for a moment.

Lesley digs out concealer from her pocket and daps it on her pimple. A few moments pass.

LESLEY

(to Mable)

Shall we?

MUSIC UP: A bubbly, pop song.

SUPERIMPOSE: SWEETNESS

INT. MABLE'S HOUSE- NIGHT- MONTAGE

-Lesley and Mable enter the house

-They grab candy, cookies, and soda from the kitchen.

-They play games with the food such as catching popcorn with their mouths in the hallway.

-They enter Mable's bedroom, still goofing off.

-Mable goes into her closet and grabs a yearbook. She throws it on the bed and they open it.

END MONTAGE.

LESLEY
 (flipping the pages of the
 yearbook)
 How do we always end up looking at
 the yearbook?

MABLE
 'Cause I have no idea who we are
 talking about half the time!

LESLEY
 You've been here since the sixth
 grade and our grade isn't even that
 big...
 (stops flipping through
 the pages)
 And I can prove that because girls
 like her are all that.

Lesley shows Mable another girl's yearbook photograph from the sixth grade. The girl has blonde wavy hair and braces. She is smiling a bit awkwardly, though.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 (scoffs)
 Courtney Levingston.
 (beat)
 She's so fake.

MABLE
 I never really got a good
 impression from her.

LESLEY
 Believe me, if you ever do, it
 won't be a good one.
 (pause)
 Like how is she nice to *everybody*?

MABLE
 'Cause she probably thinks she's
 better than everyone. That's what
 happens when you're popular.

Beat.

LESLEY
 Do you think she's all that?

Mable thinks for a moment.

MABLE

From what you've told me, not necessarily. She seems so entitled to everything. It's like no one can compare to her. Kinda wish there was more of a playing field.

LESLEY

Well, yeah.
(beat)
I wish I was that pretty.

MABLE

(consoling)
You're pretty, too, Lesley.

LESLEY

No need to lie.

Lesley and Mable continue looking at the yearbook. After a few moments, a bored Mable looks up.

MABLE

Can we watch the movie now?

LESLEY

(closing yearbook, eager)
Yeah.

Mable begins the movie. John Hughes' "Sixteen Candles" begins playing.

MABLE

(stepping back from the
T.V.)
I love this movie.

LESLEY

Yeah, it's a classic. Watch how my sixteenth birthday is worse than Molly Ringwald's.

MABLE

Nah, what if you have a Sweet 16?

LESLEY

I can't imagine ever having a Sweet 16..

MABLE

How come?

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

Lesley sits on the couch. She looks very irritated.

LESLEY

Because they're stupid!

It's revealed that she is talking to Janet and Tim, who are sitting on the opposite couch.

JANET

Why do you think having a Sweet 16 would be so bad? I'm sure a lot of your friends are going to end up having one.

LESLEY

No. Mable and I discussed this last night. We both don't see the point.

JANET

What about your other friends besides Mable?

LESLEY

They're nonexistent.

JANET

(sighs)

Lesley. You have friends. You're a sweet girl, and I think if you put yourself out there like how Mable does-

LESLEY

Why are you comparing me to my friends?

JANET

(really trying)

I'm not. Your father and I saved some extra money for this. We thought that throwing you a party would maybe help you open up a bit.

LESLEY

(mean)

I'm fine and I really don't need
your charity.

Janet is hurt by this.

TIM

Lesley, don't talk to your mother
like that.

LESLEY

(looking down)

I'm sorry.

JANET

If you really don't want to invite
your friends, then at least it
would be good to see some family.

LESLEY

What family? Aunt Heather and Cass
are here and Gramma literally lives
right down the street.

(sarcastically amazed)

You want to see *more* family?

We hear a door close from the other room.

HEATHER (O.S.)

We're back!

JANET

(shouting)

We're in the living room!

CASSANDRA (7) runs into the room very eagerly. Her hair is up
with a red headband. A stuffed toy horse is clenched by her
arm. In addition, she has a candy similar to a Kinder Egg, ya
know, the ones with the toy inside. She opens the egg to
reveal a kazoo.

CASSANDRA

Look, Lesley! It's a kazoo.

She plays the kazoo right into Lesley's ears.

LESLEY

(pushing Cassandra away)

Alright, that's cool. I get it.

HEATHER (early 40s) enters the room. She looks hyper and
exhausted all at the same time. She sits on the couch next to
Lesley.

HEATHER
 (sitting on the couch)
 How ya guys doing?
 (to Lesley)
 You're acne cream is in the
 kitchen.

LESLEY
 (annoyed)
 Wait, wha-

Lesley glares at Tim and Janet.

TIM
 (interrupting)
 Lesley isn't on board with the
 Sweet 16 idea.

HEATHER
 (surprised)
 Really, Lesley? I thought you
 would've loved the idea.

LESLEY
 It's too much. I'm only turning
 sixteen.

JANET
 What's with the attitude,
 Sweetness?

LESLEY
 (defensive)
 I don't have an attitude. It's just
 that it's not like I invented the
 baconeggandcheese or anything.

HEATHER
 Do you want to go into the city or
 anything? Maybe around the island?

LESLEY
 (scoffs)
 Oh, God no. Long Island is a
 wasteland with nothing but sand.

CASSANDRA
 (interrupting)
 My birthday is coming up!

No one acknowledges her.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
 (to Heather)
 Mom! My birthday is soon!

HEATHER
 (softly)
 Yes, Cassandra, I know.

CASSANDRA
 Lesley, do you know about my
 birthday?

LESLEY
 (annoyed)
 That it's the week after mine? Yes,
 Cass, I know. It's soon.

CASSANDRA
 Stop calling me Cass! My name is
 Cassandra.

Cassandra walks up to Lesley and puts her mouth up to
 Lesley's ear.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
 (whispering, but not
 really)
 Cass sounds like A-S-S.

LESLEY
 (pushing Cassandra off)
 Ok, Cass.

Cassandra gives Lesley a look.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 (correcting herself)
 I mean, Cassandra. I got it.

Lesley stares at Cassandra as she walks away.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 (to Cassandra)
 Give me back my headband.

CASSANDRA
 But, I don't want to.

LESLEY
 Sometimes you gotta do what you
 don't want to do.

JANET
 (to Lesley)
 She can borrow your headband if
 you're not using it.

LESLEY
 (getting annoyed)
 She didn't ask!
 (to Cassandra, stern)
 Now, give it back to me.

Cassandra sulks as she walks over to return the headband. She takes over the headband and turns around.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 And the ponytail holder...

Cassandra turns back around and takes out her hair, revealing that the front half is still pinned down. She hands over the ponytail holder and turns around.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 (to herself)
 Jesus Christ
 (to Cassandra)
 ...and the bobby pins...

Cassandra looks really disappointed now. She takes out way too many bobby pins from her hair and hands them over.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 You really had *eleven* bobby pins in
 your hair for a *ponytail*?

Cassandra shrugs. Lesley rolls her eyes and gets up out of her seat.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 (to Janet and Tim)
 I know you guys really want to, but
 seriously, please don't throw me a
 party.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY- DAY

Lesley and Mable stand at Lesley's locker. The hallway is crowded, but not so crowded that they can't recognize anyone.

MABLE
 I'm sorry your parents freaked out
 on you.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

MABLE (CONT'D)

Why do parents freak out about the simplest things? Shouldn't they be glad that they don't have to waste money on a party?

LESLEY

Exactly! And when my grandma came over for dinner, she kept mentioning it. I think my mom put her up to it.

MABLE

That's insane. Like I said, I don't even think I'll have a Sweet 16 even if my parents offer it to me.

LESLEY

(pleasantly surprised)
I'm glad you agree.

Lesley closes her locker and locks eyes with someone.

It's revealed that someone is COURTNEY (15). She looks much better than her sixth grade yearbook photo.

Courtney finishes up a conversation with a few other girls. It's obvious that Courtney has very good manners.

She approaches Lesley and Mable.

COURTNEY

(genuinely friendly)
Hi Lesley! Hi Mable! How was your long weekend?

LESLEY

It was fine. How was yours?

COURTNEY

Oh! It was great! My family went to my Uncle's house on Shelter Island and we got to play with some fireworks he had brought back from Pennsylvania, but the funniest thing was-

LESLEY

I hate to do this, Courtney, but Mable and I should really be on our way to Trig.

COURTNEY

Oh, right! No worries! I should probably get to study hall.

(MORE)

COURTNEY (CONT'D)
I have to finish that poetry
assignment for AP Lang.
(to Lesley)
Did you finish it yet?

LESLEY
Uh, yeah. But, I lost it.

COURTNEY
You lost it?

LESLEY
(sighing)
Yep. I could of sworn I left it on
my desk...

COURTNEY
Aw, that's too bad. I mean, how
hard is it to find a bright red
notebook?

LESLEY
(stern)
Apparently pretty hard.

An awkward pause passes.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Alright, see you later, Court.

Lesley and Mable begin to walk away.

COURTNEY
Oh, wait, before I forget!

Courtney reaches into her bag and pulls out two invitations.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)
(giving the invitations to
them)
You guys are invited to my Sweet.
It won't be until after finals, so
no rush on the RSVP.

LESLEY
(underwhelmed)
Great! Thanks Court!

COURTNEY
Of course! Lesley, you've been one
of my longest-lasting friends here.
And Mable! I know we've only had a
class or two together, but we
should definitely hang out!

MABLE
(forcing the answer out)
Definitely!

COURTNEY
Aw! You two are the greatest!

LESLEY
(kinda fake)
No, you are!

Silence between the three girls. Courtney looks at Lesley a little confused for the comment.

The school bell rings. All the students start entering classrooms.

COURTNEY
Oh, crap! I'll see you two later.

Courtney runs down the hall.

Lesley and Mable look at each other.

LESLEY
Courtney Levingston is having a
Sweet 16...and she invited us?

MABLE
Seems like it. I wonder why.

LESLEY
Probably to prove how fantastic she
is with an overly well-executed
Sweet 16.

MABLE
How great could a Sweet 16 possibly
be?

LESLEY
Who knows?

MABLE
Like you said, she's probably just
gonna use the party show off how
perfect and popular she is.

LESLEY
Do you think that would actually
work?

MABLE

Well, yeah. It's a room full of people who'll praise you for four hours.

LESLEY

Even if I had agreed with my parents, I doubt mine would be like that.

MABLE

But you're not having one, so it doesn't matter anyways.

Lesley takes this comment the wrong way.

MABLE (CONT'D)

I mean, how could you out-do Courtney? Barely anyone can.

LESLEY

(a little hurt)
Yeah, I guess...

The girls turn around and begin to head to class when:

TEACHER (O.S.)

Do you girls have passes?

LESLEY

(under her breath)
Crap.

INT. KITCHEN- NIGHT

Lesley is putting dirty dishes into the dishwasher. She does not seem bothered doing the chore.

JANET (O.S.)

(shouting, from another room)
Thanks again for doing the dishes!

LESLEY

(shouting)
No problem!

TIM (O.S.)

(shouting, and jokingly)
There's sure to be something you want from us.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT- CONTINUOUS

Lesley runs into the living room to where her parents are sitting. They are cuddling, watching T.V. Lesley stands in front of the T.V.

LESLEY

Is the Sweet 16 still on the table?

TIM

(to Janet, jokingly)

I told you.

(to Lesley)

How come?

LESLEY

(almost hesitant)

I want a Sweet 16.

JANET

(smiling)

What made you change your mind,
Sweetness?

LESLEY

Just a change of heart.

HEATHER (O.S.)

Did I hear that correctly?

Heather enters the room, almost as eager as Cassandra from earlier.

LESLEY

(eager)

Yep! I want a Sweet 16.

HEATHER

That's wonderful news!

LESLEY

I really want it to be the best.

HEATHER

Of course! How could a double
birthday party not be the best?

LESLEY

(confused)

A double birthday party?

HEATHER

Oh, did they not tell you yet?

Lesley shakes her head "no."

JANET
(to Heather)
We haven't had to the chance to.

Heather understands.

HEATHER
(to Lesley)
We decided to throw Cassandra the birthday celebration because you said "no."

LESLEY
(anxiously)
What?

HEATHER
But, now we can split the party because you two share similar birthdays.

LESLEY
But that wasn't part of the original deal.

TIM
That was before you rejected the idea in the first place.

LESLEY
(whining)
That's so unfair!

JANET
(jokingly)
Hey, beggars can't be choosers.

Lesley scoffs.

LESLEY
(pouting)
Fine.
(pause, then to the room)
You guys haven't seen a red journal around anywhere, right?

Tim and Janet shake their heads "no."

Nadda.

TIM

Nope.

JANET

Heather just stands there, looking confused.

LESLEY

Okay. If you do, can you return it
to me?

Lesley exits the room. Heather goes to talk, but Janet interrupts.

JANET

(acknowledging Heather)
We know. Just not now.

Heather makes a concerned face.

CUT TO:

EXT. LESLEY'S HOUSE- DAY

Lesley sits eagerly on the front steps of her house, looking out on the road. Her house is a light yellow colonial with a white fence and some moderate lawn work done.

She seems to perk up every time a car passes the house. Two cars pass the house until Tim's car (some type of Subaru) pulls in and parks in the driveway.

Lesley stands up and smiles. Tim, dressed in business casual clothing and holding a few folders, exits the car.

TIM

(jokingly)
Are finals over already?

LESLEY

(smiling)
Yep.

TIM

Alrighty. Let me just put my stuff
inside.

Tim enters the house. Lesley looks at her surroundings, kinda bored.

After a few moments, Tim exits the house. Cassandra is right behind him.

CASSANDRA

(overly eager)
Can I come? I want a slurpee, too!

Before Tim has a chance to say a word, Lesley speaks.

LESLEY
(harsh)
No.

CASSANDRA
(whining)
But I never get to go to 7-11.

TIM
Oh, c'mon, Lesley. She can join.

LESLEY
No, slurpees after finals is our
thing.

Tim gives Lesley a look.

CASSANDRA
I wanna come!

Tim walks up to Cassandra and gets down to her level.

TIM
How about I take your order?

CASSANDRA
I want to do it.

TIM
We can go another time.

CASSANDRA
Promise?

TIM
Yes. Just you and me, okay?

CASSANDRA
Pinky swear?

Tim and Cassandra pinky swear.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
I want a soda slurpee.

TIM
Coca-Cola, it is.

Cassandra gives a thumbs up, turns around, and enters the house again.

Tim and Lesley start walking down the:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK- DAY

The road seems to become more busier as they walk down the block.

Lesley doesn't look at Tim. Tim looks disappointed.

TIM

You should include Cassandra more.

LESLEY

She annoys me.

TIM

I doubt she means to be. She looks up to you, Lesley.

LESLEY

Why would she though?

TIM

She's hurting and could use your friendship. Aunt Heather and Cassandra didn't move in with us for fun, ya know.

LESLEY

(defensive)

Why are yelling at me? I had nothing to do with Bret leaving.

TIM

(sarcastic)

Yes, you're right. You had nothing to do with her stepdad walking out, so you don't need to worry about anything. She'll be fine.

(pause)

Bret has been a huge part of Cassandra's life.

LESLEY

Bret and Heather weren't even married.

TIM

All the more reason she needs the support of family right now.

Lesley almost rolls her eyes at this.

The two approach a busy corner by the Diner.

EXT. DINER- DAY

The camera moves around Lesley and Tim to showcase how the building is chrome to a max. It is revealed that Lesley (wearing different clothes) and Gramma are inside. Sounds of clanking utensils are heard.

INT. DINER- DAY

Lesley sits across from GRAMMA (70s) in a booth. Most of the diner's interior is also chrome with an insane amount of America-themed decorations hung leftover from Memorial Day.

The two have just finished their meals.

GRAMMA

I think it's very sweet of you to include Cassandra on your big day.

LESLEY

Yeah, after thinking about it, it's probably not going to be the best day of my life anyway.

GRAMMA

(taken back)

But, I thought you wanted it to be the best...

A WAITRESS approaches the table and hands Gramma the check.

GRAMMA (CONT'D)

(to the waitress)

Thank you.

The waitress leaves.

LESLEY

No, I meant it in the way that I'll probably get married or something which subjectively would be better than a Sweet 16.

GRAMMA

Oh.

Pause.

LESLEY

What I said was rude, I'm sorry.

GRAMMA
 (smiling)
 That's quite alright. I know what
 you meant.

Gramma puts some cash down in a check holder.

GRAMMA (CONT'D)
 We have to pay at the counter.

LESLEY
 Thanks for lunch, Gramma.

GRAMMA
 It's my pleasure, Sweetness. Now,
 let's go get you some dresses for
 these parties you've been invited
 to, Miss Popularity.

Lesley half-smiles.

INT. DRESS SHOP DRESSING ROOMS- DAY

Gramma sits on a chair outside a curtained dressing room.

LESLEY (O.S.)
 This dress is so much better than
 the last three.

GRAMMA
 (excited)
 Oh! I can't wait to see it.

LESLEY (O.S.)
 (softly)
 I'm just zipping up the dress...

Lesley opens the curtain and steps out. She is wearing a short, turquoise cocktail dress. There are no sparkles, but the bottom of the dress is flowy and shiny. Lesley twirls in it a little bit.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 (smiling)
 I love it. I like how it's simple
 yet elegant.

Gramma looks overjoyed.

GRAMMA
 Me too. You're going to be the most
 beautiful girl at this Sweet 16.

LESLEY
(chuckles)
There's no way I'm looking better
than Courtney.

GRAMMA
(shaking her head)
Aww, Sweetness...you're stunning.

Lesley stares at the mirror, really concentrating on every detail of the dress, and herself.

GRAMMA (CONT'D)
Why don't you let me buy your Sweet
16 dress while we're here.

LESLEY
No, Gramma, that's alright. Mom's
got it.

GRAMMA
Oh! It couldn't hurt to look.

Lesley smiles.

INT. DRESS SHOP DISPLAYS- DAY

Lesley, still in the turquoise dress, walks throughout the store, browsing the dresses. She makes her way to the sale rack and really digs through it.

Lesley's eyes light up.

INT. DRESS SHOP DRESSING ROOMS- DAY

Lesley comes back to where Gramma is seated. She has a dress behind her.

LESLEY
Look at what I found.

Lesley reveals a beautiful silver and white short party dress. The bottom part shimmers with streaks of jewels and gems. Gramma's eyes light up.

Lesley heads into the dressing room and closes the curtain. A few moments pass and the curtain reopens.

She looks absolutely stunning. She pridefully walks out of the dressing room in high fashion.

GRAMMA
Oh, Lesley.

LESLEY
(smiling)
I think I might say yes to the
dress on this one.

Gramma stands up to inspect the dress' beauty. Gramma is
blown away by dress.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
I found this on the sale rack.

GRAMMA
(shocked)
You didn't!

LESLEY
I did!

GRAMMA
Well, how much is it?

LESLEY
I didn't see. Is the tag in the
back?

Lesley turns around and Gramma grabs the tag.

GRAMMA
(disappointed)
Oh.

LESLEY
What?

GRAMMA
It's \$700.

LESLEY
What?! How is that possible?

GRAMMA
It must have been in the wrong
spot.

LESLEY
(disappointed)
Oh...

Lesley sulks down.

GRAMMA

Hey! No worries. It's just a dress.
 (hugging Lesley)
 I have no doubt that we'll be able
 to find a dress like this, maybe
 even prettier, but for just a
 little less money.

Lesley stays quiet until:

LESLEY

This was the only dress I truly
 loved.

GRAMMA

(jokingly)
 I mean, I can give you your
 inheritance now.

LESLEY

(giggling)
 No, that's okay.
 (facing Gramma)
 And like you said, it's only a
 dress.

CUT TO:

EXT. VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS HALL- NIGHT

The exterior is decorated with a few balloons and the roadside message board says: "Happy Birthday Courtney!" Janet's car (it's a minivan) pulls up to the venue and Lesley gets out.

Before she opens the door, she takes a deep breath.

INT. VFW ENTRANCE- NIGHT

Lesley enters the venue through two doors. Although it is obvious that this is a VFW, Courtney's decorations and decor hide most of the evidence. Teenagers are dancing while most of Courtney's family is sitting.

Lesley looks a little overwhelmed and intimidated. She wears the short, turquoise cocktail dress from before.

Courtney is dancing with a few other girls. She wears a long, poofy, baby blue gown with gems all around the top. Everything about her is perfect.

Some of the girls are wearing identical blue party dresses, similar to a wedding party.

Mable runs up to Lesley all excited-like. She is very hyper and is holding a Shirley Temple drink.

MABLE

Lesley! You're late! What happened?

LESLEY

Hey! I needed to fix my hair and makeup...I couldn't get it right.

Mable studies Lesley.

MABLE

You look fine.

Lesley gives a faint nod and smile as she looks away from Mable. They face the party.

LESLEY

This is insane, isn't it?

Mable starts dancing a little to the music.

MABLE

Oh, yeah.

LESLEY

Like who knew a VFW could look so good? I guess Courtney really *can* do anything.

MABLE

(still semi-dancing)
Oh, definitely.

Mable takes a large gulp of her Shirley Temple.

LESLEY

Whatca drinking there?

MABLE

A Shirley Temple! You want a sip?

Mable hands Lesley the drink. She takes a second before drinking it, just looking at the deep reddish coloring of the liquid.

LESLEY

Aren't these alcoholic?

MABLE

Some are.

Lesley starts taking a huge gulp.

MABLE (CONT'D)

But these kind are just made out of-

LESLEY

(finishing her gulp,
interrupting)

-Sugar.

MABLE

(nodding)

I've had about five already.

LESLEY

Jesus, the party only started
thirty minutes ago!

MABLE

But they're so good!

LESLEY

Agreed. I'm gonna go get one. You
want another?

Mable nods enthusiastically. Lesley gives a thumbs up and walks over to the:

INT. VFW HALL BAR- NIGHT

Lesley approaches the bar acting all adult and stuff even though she going to order a non-alcoholic drink.

She stands at the bar next to RICHIE (15). He's cute and has a nice hair wave thing going on. Lesley smiles at him. He smiles back politely.

The BARTENDER comes to Lesley.

BARTENDER

What can I get you, young lady?

LESLEY

(real adult like)

I'll have two Shirley Temples,
please.

The bartender nods and turns around to make the drinks.

RICHIE
What's that?

LESLEY
Excuse me?

RICHIE
The Shirley Temples...what are they?

LESLEY
Oh. They're the drink of the evening.

RICHIE
What do they taste like?

The bartender hands Lesley the two drinks and walks away.

LESLEY
They taste like sugar with just a hint of cherry.
(holding out a drink to Richie)
Here, would you like this one?

RICHIE
(taking the drink)
Sure, thanks!

Richie considers the drink as Lesley did earlier. He jokingly mixes the drink in the cup and smells it as if it were a glass of wine. He drinks the Shirley Temple.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
Holy crap, that's good!

LESLEY
(smiling)
Told you.

RICHIE
I think I might be in love with this drink.

LESLEY
(giggling)
If you love it so much, why don't you marry it?

Lesley stops giggling when she realizes that she is horrible at flirting. She drinks in embarrassment.

Richie looks at the ground.

Trying to make the awkward silence goes away, Richie extends his hand.

RICHIE
I'm Richie by the way.

LESLEY
(shaking his hand)
Lesley. Nice to meet you.

CUT TO:

EXT. VFW HALL PARKING LOT- NIGHT

Lesley and Richie sit on the curb. Surrounding them are about seven to ten empty Shirley Temple glasses. Lesley is giving off those flirtatious vibes. Richie seems to be having a decent time as well.

LESLEY
I just don't like monkeys!

RICHIE
(laughing)
But why not?

LESLEY
(giggling and rambling)
Because they just know that they're cute and it pisses me off. Plus, my face is bad enough that if God forbid, I made one mad and it ripped off my face, I don't know what would happen and if it killed me, well, geez, I doubt I'd be found for days...

RICHIE
(smiling, looking at Lesley)
That's absurd.

LESLEY
I know.
(putting her hand on his arm)
That's why I've never told anyone that before.

Lesley's hand lingers on Richie's arm before she quickly takes it away. Another awkward silence ensues. They both look away towards the ground.

Richie takes out his phone and Lesley looks over to watch. The phones they use are similar in age to the 5th generation iPhone.

Richie opens up Facebook Messenger and begins typing.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
You have Facebook Messenger?

RICHIE
Ah, yeah.

Richie finishes typing and turns his phone's screen off.

LESLEY
I have Facebook Messenger, too.
(beat)
You should follow me.

RICHIE
(chuckling, taking out his
phone)
Um, yeah. Sure. I can *friend* you.

LESLEY
It's Lesley Connors.

Richie hits a few buttons on his phone. Lesley checks her phone.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Okay, Richie...Richardson...we are
now friends.

RICHIE
Indeed, we are *friends*.

Richie smiles. Lesley smiles back.

Off screen a door closes and someone runs towards Lesley and Richie. It turns out to be Mable.

MABLE
Lesley! Come inside! Courtney's
about to do the last candle!

LESLEY
So?

MABLE
It's the candle ceremony! Only the
most important people get the last
candle, Lesley!
(MORE)

MABLE (CONT'D)
 (pulling Lesley's arms)
 Come on!

LESLEY
 Alright, I'm coming. But, why would
 we get a candle?

MABLE
 Because we might be important
 people.

LESLEY
 You're taking this too seriously.

MABLE
 (almost whining)
 Come on!

Lesley and Richie finally stand up and Mable runs back
 inside.

INT. VFW HALL- NIGHT

Lesley and Richie join Mable at a table with a few other
 teenagers. They all focus their attention to Courtney.

Courtney stands in the middle of the dance floor behind a
 table. On the table is a display of sixteen candles. All the
 candles, but one are lit. Courtney reads off a speech from a
 piece of paper into a microphone.

COURTNEY
 (almost tearing up)
 -And that's why I wanted my last
 candle to go to the people I care
 about most in life: my friends.

CLOSE UP: COURTNEY'S PARENTS RAISING AN EYEBROW.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)
 You guys have been by my side
 through it all...
 (starts getting emotional)
 ...even when I only made JV
 lacrosse last year. We all knew I
 should of been on varsity, and
 thank you for petitioning my
 rightful spot. You guys are my
 sunshine and I love you all so very
 much.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

So I would be honored if all of my friends here tonight could join me in lighting my sixteenth candle.

All the teenagers start to get out of their seats and head towards Courtney. Lesley and Richie stay seated. Lesley looks around, confused, and doesn't get up. Mable notices this before she walks away.

MABLE

Guys, we were just asked to help her light the candle. The least we could do is stand next to her.

LESLEY

(sarcastically)
For what? Moral support?

MABLE

(snippy)
Yes.

Lesley is taken off guard by Mable's attitude and stands up. She motions for Richie to join her. He shrugs his shoulders and stands up.

They join the rest of Courtney's friends by the table. There are easily thirty kids around the table, so only about five of them can actually "help" Courtney light the candle.

The candle is lit and afterwards, everyone remains paused so the PHOTOGRAPHER (late teens) can take a picture.

As everyone is moving back to their seats, Richie leans into Lesley's ear.

RICHIE

You smell nice.

LESLEY

What?

RICHIE

I like the perfume you're using.
What is it?

LESLEY

"Sweet Pea" by Bath & Body Works.

RICHIE

That's what I thought.

Lesley smiles at this comment. They arrive back at their seats. Lesley continues to smile and smells her wrist.

MABLE
 (smirking)
 What's got you in a good mood?

LESLEY
 Hmm?

MABLE
 (shaking her head,
 smiling)
 Never-mind.

Everyone's attention is directed back on to Courtney and the table. The DJ (early 20s) gets in the middle of the dance floor and tries to get the crowd going.

DJ
 (into a microphone)
 Alright everyone! Courtney's gonna need some encouragement to blow out all these candles! And to do so, we gotta be as loud as we can when we sing to her!

The crowd is pumped.

DJ (CONT'D)
 (into a microphone)
 On 3!
 (beat)
 1...2...3!

Everyone, including a surprisingly pleasant Lesley, begins to sing "The Happy Birthday Song."

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S CAR- NIGHT

Janet is driving and both Lesley and Mable are in the back seat. Lesley stares out the window, smiling.

MABLE
 (sighs)
 That was...awesome.

LESLEY
 (still looking out the
 window)
 Yeah...

Outside the window, the populous roadside stores become full of trees as the car turns down a parkway ramp.

EXT. JANET'S CAR- NIGHT

Janet's car approaches the parkway with only having fifteen feet to merge into traffic.

INT. JANET'S CAR- NIGHT

Janet's eyes are looking into the rearview mirror as she merges.

JANET

I'm glad to hear that, girls.

Suddenly, a car honks its horn at Janet as the two cars narrowly miss each other.

JANET (CONT'D)

(yelling at the other car)

You gonna let me merge ass-wipe!?

Janet merges. Mable's eyes are wide. Lesley remains looking out the window, unfazed.

Pause.

JANET (CONT'D)

How's Courtney these days?

MABLE

Really well!

JANET

Aww. That's nice. I remember when she used to come over after elementary school.

(beat)

She hasn't been at the house since she moved back, right Lesley?

LESLEY

Yeah...

MABLE

Where did she move from?

JANET

(to Lesley)

She moved to Smithtown, right?

LESLEY

Yep, in fourth grade.

MABLE

That's so funny! I'm from
Hauppauge. We were practically
neighbors!

JANET

(looking towards Mable via
mirror)

I didn't know that. Do you know
Teresa Miller? She lives
there...off of Hoffman?

MABLE

No...

JANET

Oh, she's my hairdresser. Lovely
woman.

(beat, to her herself)

Maybe Courtney knows her.

MABLE

Yeah! I gotta see if we ever went
to same places back then. The high
school is always popular for
sledding when it snows.

LESLEY

(Rolling her eyes)

Probably. The island's not that
big.

Mable goes silent. Janet studies Lesley in the mirror.

INT. BEDROOM- NIGHT

Lesley and Mable sit on Lesley's bed with a yearbook open
between them. They are out of their party dresses and wear
pajama's now.

MABLE

Can I just say: that party was so
much fun.

LESLEY

Seemed liked it.

MABLE

What do you mean? You looked like
you were having fun, too. Who was
that boy you were talking to?

LESLEY
(smiling)
Richie.

MABLE
Where is he from?

LESLEY
He mentioned something about
Smithtown.

MABLE
I wonder how he knows Courtney.

LESLEY
Probably 'cause of Smithtown.

MABLE
(softly)
Right...
(pause)
I think I want to get to know
Courtney more.

LESLEY
Why?

MABLE
I don't know. What she said at the
candle ceremony, she just seems
nice.

LESLEY
Just because you guys grew up in
the same town, doesn't mean she'll
be your best friend.

MABLE
And just because I said I wanted to
hang out with her doesn't mean
she's gonna be my best friend.
You're my best friend.

Lesley smiles, but isn't convinced.

LESLEY
I'm thinking about having a Sweet
16.

MABLE
(caught off guard)
Seriously?

LESLEY

Yeah. My parents and I have agreed to make it the best party anyone's ever seen.

Mable is silent.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

What?

MABLE

I thought we thought Sweets were pointless.

LESLEY

My folks really wanted me to have one.

MABLE

Weren't they fine with you not having one, though?

LESLEY

(lying)

They kept pushing and it honestly became overbearing.

MABLE

(skeptical)

That sucks.

(beat)

I guess you just have to make the best out of it.

LESLEY

(smiling)

That's the plan.

MABLE

I'm sorry they're making you go through with this.

LESLEY

It's okay...you'll come though, right?

MABLE

Of course! And although I'm not a fan of these parties, we'll make it spectacular!

INT. DINING ROOM- THE NEXT MORNING

Lesley and Mable sit at the dining room table. They are eating scrambled eggs and pancakes.

Lesley has a notebook out and is jotting down notes as the two discuss.

LESLEY

So, we'll have the party at Leonard's Palazzo 'cause the marble pillars will be great for photos.

MABLE

And you want a buffet...with bacon-wrapped scallops, remember that.

LESLEY

And the DJ's gotta be cute.

MABLE

Of course, that's a must. Are you having a court?

Mable sits up eagerly. Janet walks into the room. She brings a bowl of fruit salad to the girls.

LESLEY

(to Mable)

I'm not too sure if I want a court.

JANET

Who's going to court?

LESLEY

(frustrated)

No one.

MABLE

A Sweet 16 court, Mrs. Connors. Courtney had one.

JANET

Ooh! That sounds like fun!

(slight beat)

What is that?

LESLEY

(unenthusiastic)

It's just a few girls who dress up identically and play pretend as if they were part of a bridal party.

JANET

But, why not get some of your friends together for that? You could ask Amber or Jess to be in yours.

LESLEY

I don't know. Everyone would be focused on the court's matching dresses.

JANET

(chuckling)

Sweetness, it's your party, though. Why would they be focused on that?

LESLEY

(shrugging)

It's possible.

Janet looks over Lesley's and Mable's shoulders and reads what they have on the paper.

JANET

Is this what you've come up with for the party?

LESLEY

Just logistics.

JANET

Are you done?

Lesley and Mable nod towards each other.

LESLEY

I believe we are.

JANET

Well, if you give me the list, your father and I can discuss.

LESLEY

(handing over the notepad)

Fine.

Janet looks over the notepad. She looks intimidated, yet impressed.

JANET

(to Lesley)

We'll see what we can do. This looks like a lot, though.

LESLEY
I never ask for anything.

Janet glares at Lesly.

JANET
(stern)
We do a lot for you, Lesley.

LESLEY
(softly)
Sorry.

Janet inhales deeply.

JANET
We'll see what we can do.

Janet exits the room.

A few moments pass and Mable puts down her fork. Lesley can tell she's embarrassed. Lesley takes offense.

LESLEY
(to Mable)
What?

MABLE
She was just trying to help.

LESLEY
I thought you were on my side.

Mable looks shocked at this comment. She rolls her eyes and slowly shakes her head "yes."

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Okay...

They slowly continue eating.

The sounds of the ocean are heard.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRE ISLAND FERRY DOCK- EVENING

Janet, Heather, Cassandra, Lesley, and Mable wait first on line with a crowd of people behind them. Behind the crowd, there is a sign that reads: Ocean Bay Park.

The group is wearing bathing suit coverups and carry a ton of beach gear.

It is evident that there is a lot of sand in Lesley's, Mable's, and Cassandra's hair.

Mable keeps poking her newly burnt skin. Every now and then, Lesley checks her cell phone and smiles. Mable just stares at her.

A large passenger ferry approaches the dock. After all the frat boys and sorority sisters of the world exit the ferry, the CAPTAIN (50s) steps onto the dock to direct those on line.

CAPTAIN
(shouting)
Have your tickets out and no carry-
ons larger than 3 feet wide!

The Captain motions for the family to move forward. Cassandra gets too excited and runs onto the boat.

INT. FIRE ISLAND FERRY- EVENING

Cassandra aimlessly scans the inside of the ferry. It's mostly blue and white with bench-styled seating.

HEATHER
Cassandra!

Cassandra runs up the ferry stairs.

Heather quickly shows her and Cassandra's tickets and tries to catch up with her daughter.

After giving Heather a look, the captain begins to check Lesley, Mable, and Janet's tickets.

EXT. FIRE ISLAND FERRY- EVENING

Lesley, Mable, and Janet walk up the ferry stairs to the top of the boat.

Heather waves them over and Janet joins them. Lesley pulls Mable to sit on a separate bench.

Cassandra runs over to the two girls, Lesley gets annoyed.

LESLEY
(to Cassandra)
Leave Mable and I alone!

Cassandra makes a face.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

Go...

HEATHER (O.S.)

C'mon, Cassandra, leave the girls
alone.

CASSANDRA

(turning around towards
Heather)

But-

HEATHER

C'mon, We'll count the seagulls.

Cassandra huffs and puffs as she returns to Heather and Janet.

The rest of the ferry fills quickly. Soon the ferry horn goes off and the ferry begins moving across the Great South Bay.

Everyone looks over the water in excitement, except Lesley, who keeps checking her phone and smiling. Mable notices.

MABLE

You gotta tell me about this guy!

LESLEY

(smiling)

What's there to tell?

MABLE

I don't know, but you keep smiling!
You're glued to your phone.

Lesley smiles.

MABLE (CONT'D)

What's his name?

LESLEY

Richie Richardson.

Pause.

MABLE

So his full name is Richard
Richardson?

LESLEY

(seriously)

No, Riley Richardson.

MABLE
(confused)
Wait, so how did he get Richie from Riley?

LESLEY
(making eye contact)
I don't know. It's like the same way you get Dick from Richard.

MABLE
(smiling)
You ask him nicely.

Lesley gives Mable a look.

LESLEY
(prideful)
I for one like his name.

MABLE
I think you might like him.

LESLEY
(blushing, but mature)
I might see something beginning to form between us.

MABLE
(checking her phone)
O.K.

The ferry slows down to a complete stop and the captain gets on the intercom.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)
This stop is Ocean Beach, I repeat:
Ocean Beach.

MABLE
(getting up)
Good luck with this, Lesley.

LESLEY
Must you go now?

MABLE
Yeah, my mom and aunt are waiting on the dock.

Lesley makes a jokingly sad face.

MABLE (CONT'D)

Believe me, the last thing I want is to hear my aunt talk about how nice her new beach house is, but my mom wants me there.

(touching her burnt arm)

Geez...Francine is gonna kill me.

LESLEY

(melodramatic)

But what will I do without you?

MABLE

(melodramatic)

I don't know...I won't be here.

(to Janet)

Bye, Mrs. Connors! Thank you for inviting me!

JANET

Of course! I hope you had fun!

Mable smiles, hugs Lesley, and leaves. The rest of the family say 'goodbye' as Mable heads down the stairs. The sound of the ferry horn is heard.

Lesley looks immediately bored as the ferry starts moving again.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM- EVENING

Lesley lays on her bed. She holds her cell phone above her, texting away.

TIM (O.S.)

(shouting)

Lesley! Come downstairs!

Lesley remains in the same position. She does not take her eyes off her phone.

LESLEY

(shouting)

Now?!

TIM (O.S.)

(still shouting)

Yes, please!

Lesley lets out a sigh and stands up. As she stands up, she tosses her phone on her bed. She exits the room to:

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

Lesley walks down the stairs and enters the room. Tim and Janet sit in their usual spots on the couch.

Lesley stands in front of them for a second.

LESLEY

What?

TIM

We wanted to talk to you about your party.

LESLEY

Oh.

JANET

We had to move some funding around, but think that everything you had on the list is doable! Isn't that great!

LESLEY

Actually, yes!

JANET

(excited)

Oh, I'm so glad!

LESLEY

Me, too!

JANET

Oooh! It's so exciting! Let's start planning.

Janet begins to get off the couch.

LESLEY

Right now?

JANET

Yeah, why not?

LESLEY

Do I have to?

JANET
(sitting back down,
sighing)
I guess we don't have to start
right now. It's still a few weeks
away.

There is a short pause.

LESLEY
So...can I go now?

Tim reaches over to a side table and picks up a piece of paper.

TIM
Well, actually, why don't you take
a look at this.

Tim hands Lesley the piece of paper. It's a final report card.

On the report card lists all A's except one class: AP Language. That grade is a C.

TIM (CONT'D)
Now, I hate starting the summer off
like this, but what happened?

LESLEY
(disappointed)
My journal.

Tim and Janet look at each other, confused.

TIM
What journal?

LESLEY
The journal I asked you about. We
had to write stupid poems or
whatever for the year. I didn't end
up finding it in time and it was
30% of our final grade.

TIM
Oh...

Janet looks at Tim again and shrugs. He makes a face in return.

JANET
Just don't do that again.

LESLEY
I'll try, but it wasn't my fault.

TIM
I'm sure it wasn't, but just for
next time.

LESLEY
Okay...

TIM
Session adjourned. You're free to
go.

Lesley nods and slowly turns around. She heads back up the stairs.

INTERCUT- INT. LESLEY'S BEDROOM/ INT. MABLE'S BEDROOM- DAY

Lesley enters her room. She is wearing a different outfit and has a towel wrapped around her hair. We hear her phone buzz on the bed. She runs up to answer it.

LESLEY
Hello?

MABLE (V.O.)
Heyo! How's it hanging, my dude?

LESLEY
It's hanging alright. How are you?

Mable is sprawled out on her bed. There are five fans facing her, but she seems to still be sweating.

MABLE
Bored out of my mind! Today I
called seven ice cream shoppes, ya
know, to see about my application,
and you know what? All seven aren't
hiring! I think that's a load of
bull, but I guess I'll just have to
soak up the benefits of
unemployment, amiright right?

LESLEY (V.O.)
Yeah. It's been pretty quiet over
here.

Lesley takes her hair out of the towel.

LESLEY
I actually can't stay on the phone
for too, too long.

MABLE (V.O.)
Oh, you got a hot date or
something?

LESLEY
(smiling)
Actually, I might.

Mable sits up straight on her bed, excited.

MABLE
Really!? With Richie?

LESLEY
Yeah, I don't know. We've been
talking for a weeks...

MABLE
(correcting)
Well, you've been texting.

LESLEY
Yeah, I know that. It has to mean
something, though, right?

MABLE
Oh, for sure.

LESLEY
I just don't want to be on the
phone for too long in case he
calls.

MABLE (V.O.)
(screaming)
Oh my God! He calls you?!

Lesley moves the phone away from her ear.

LESLEY
Uh, no. Not yet. But he's sure to
any day now!

MABLE
(laying back down on her
bed, still excited)
When he does, it's going to be so
romantic!

LESLEY

I know! It'll be the perfect beginning of our twenty-first century love story!

MABLE

Well, the reason I called was to see if maybe you wanted to grab apps later or something?

LESLEY

I'd love to, but today Richie and I have been texting with only half hour intervals, so I think I have a chance on a date with him.

MABLE

You think so?

LESLEY

One hundred percent.

(beat)

But, I really have to go. I don't want to keep him waiting.

(pause)

Okay...bye.

Lesley hangs up the phone and plops onto her bed.

Immediately, her phone buzzes again. It's a Facebook Message from Richie.

INSERT: I guess we can grab food.

Lesley's eyes grow wide and so does her smile. She dials a few numbers on her phone and puts it up to her ear.

MABLE (V.O.)

(confused)

Hello? Lesley?

LESLEY

(almost yelling)

He asked me out!

Mable stands up.

MABLE

Richie!?

LESLEY

(jumping up and down)

Yes!

MABLE

Lesley! That's awesome! Is he taking you someplace fancy?

LESLEY

I think so!

The girls give out a giddy scream.

END OF INTERCUT

CUT TO:

EXT. ALL AMERICAN HAMBURGER DRIVE IN- EVENING

Lesley and Richie stand in front of the All American sign.

It's a dive drive-in restaurant with very limited seating and even less available parking. All they serve is grease.

INT. ALL AMERICAN- EVENING

Lesley and Richie enter the restaurant. Inside there are only counters with a few registers. In front of every register is a line made up of at least five people. It's very chaotic and Lesley looks overwhelmed as the two look at the menu.

Lesley crinkles her nose.

LESLEY

What's that smell?

RICHIE

(looking at the menu,
smiling)

Dinner.

CLOSEUP: A PATTY BEING FLIPPED AND COOKING IN GREASE

Lesley nods, understanding.

CASHIER (O.S.)

Next!

Lesley and Richie approach the CASHIER (late teens) simultaneously.

LESLEY

Hi, can I please get a cheeseburger and small fries, please?

CASHIER
Would that be all?

Lesley looks at Richie, signaling him to order.

RICHIE
Nah, we're separate.

CASHIER
Alright. You're total comes to
\$5.43.

Lesley hands the cashier a \$20 bill and receives her change. She steps back so Richie can order, all while pursing her lips.

RICHIE
Yeah, I'll take a quarter pound
with cheese, fries, and a chocolate
shake, please.

CASHIER
That'll be \$9.87.

Richie takes a credit card out of his wallet and hands it to the cashier. The cashier looks at him.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
(rolling his eyes)
Cash only.

Richie is taken aback by this and looks at Lesley.

RICHIE
(to Lesley)
Can you spot me?

LESLEY
Hmm?

RICHIE
Can you help a guy out? I don't
have cash?

Lesley takes out a \$10 bill and pays the cashier.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
Thanks so much, Les!

LESLEY
Please don't call me Les.

RICHIE
Ahhh, you got it!
(side-hugging Lesley)
But, seriously, you're the best!

LESLEY
(holding in a smile)
You mean that?

RICHIE
Well, yeah! Thanks for dinner!

Lesley lets the smile out.

EXT. ALL AMERICAN SEATING AREA- EVENING

Lesley and Richie are both done with their meals. The burger wrappers are crumbled and Richie sucks on the straw to his shake that is obviously empty.

LESLEY
We must've been hungry.

Richie nods.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
We barely said anything the entire time.

RICHIE
I'm sorry about that.

LESLEY
No need to apologize.
(beat)
Dates are difficult.

Lesley's face gets red as she realizes what she just said.

RICHIE
(confused)
Like in general?

LESLEY
(embarrassed)
Yeah. You just don't know what to say. Plus, I'm only fifteen...what is there to possibly talk about?

RICHIE
(smiling)
I hear that.

LESLEY
You ever been on date before?

Richie looks at the ground.

RICHIE
Yeah.

LESLEY
Was she nice?

RICHIE
I thought so at first, but it
didn't work out...obviously.

A moment of silence passes.

LESLEY
I've never dated anyone before.

Richard looks at Lesley.

RICHIE
That's okay. Most of the time, it's
not worth it.

LESLEY
I just feel like people make things
too complicated.

RICHIE
(sighing, then slightly
chuckling)
Yeah...I can't see myself dating a
girl right now.

Richie goes back to looking at the ground. Lesley lightly
sighs and looks around her surroundings of the busy roads and
the even busier restaurant.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAMMA'S CAR- DAY

Gramma is driving and Lesley is in the passenger seat. Gramma
keeps looking over and smiling towards Lesley, but Lesley
doesn't notice and stares out the window.

Outside the window reveals a very busy road with four lanes
of traffic and stop lights every quarter of a mile.

GRAMMA
Well find a dress soon, Sweetness.

LESLEY

I know. I just hate looking at myself for such a long period of time.

GRAMMA

Ya know, if I still looked that good-

LESLEY

Gramma!

GRAMMA

I'm just saying. You're very pretty, Lesley.

Lesley is silent.

EXT. LESLEY'S HOUSE- DAY

Gramma's car parks on the street because there are already three cars parked in the driveway.

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

Lesley and Gramma walk through the front door into the living room. Janet, Tim, Heather, and Cassandra are there. There are lots of magazines, craft stuff, and stationary sprawled out across the floor.

CASSANDRA

(running up to Gramma)

Gramma!

Cassandra gives Gramma a huge hug. Afterwards, Cassandra turns to Lesley, holding out her toy horse.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

(very eagerly)

Can we have the party horse-themed?

LESLEY

(harsh)

No.

Cassandra sulks and slowly walks back to the pile of planning material on the floor. Gramma sits down in a chair.

HEATHER

We were hoping that maybe we can incorporate horses somehow.

LESLEY
I don't like horses.

HEATHER
But, Cassandra does.

Lesley rolls her eyes and begins to make her way towards the stairs.

TIM
Wait, where are you going?

LESLEY
My room.

JANET
Oh, but, Sweetness. We were planning the party. Don't you want to join us?

Lesley steps on two stairs and looks out over the family.

JANET (CONT'D)
C'mon! It'll be fun!

LESLEY
(getting stern)
Mom, I don't want to.

JANET
But, this is *your* party.

LESLEY
(looking at Cassandra)
Yeah, but it's also *her* party, too.

GRAMMA
Sweetness, just help out for a little bit.
(standing up)
Here, you can have my seat.

JANET
(to Gramma)
No, Mom. You don't have to get up.
(to Lesley, annoyed)
Just contribute something...anything.

LESLEY
Fine.

Lesley gets off the stairs, walks into the living room, and stares at the cluster of things.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

I just want this Sweet 16 to be unbelievable...the absolute best.

JANET

(stern)

Then why don't you help plan. Do you have a specific theme or color scheme in mind?

LESLEY

No...I trust all of your judgements and as long as there are no horses at this party, I do not care what is there as long as it's out of this world.

JANET

(almost shaking she's so mad)

Is that all you have to say?

LESLEY

(making eye contact with Janet)

Yep.

JANET

Alright. You are excused.

Lesley turns around.

JANET (CONT'D)

And you'll be excused from your other weekend plans too, missy.

Lesley looks at Janet.

JANET (CONT'D)

You're grounded.

LESLEY

But, Mom!

JANET

No buts! Maybe when you learn to respect your family a little more, then we'll talk.

Lesley walks upstairs. Tim puts his hand on Janet's shoulders.

JANET (CONT'D)
I'm done with her, Tim. I really
am. I try and I try-

Tim shrugs.

TIM
I know.

INT. STAIRCASE- DAY

Lesley remains halfway up the staircase, overhearing her family below. She becomes very angry, inhales, and continues up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM- A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Lesley is on her bed with an agitated look upon her face. She is reading, when a knock on the front door is heard.

MABLE (O.S.)
Hi, Mrs. Connors. I was curious if
Lesley was home. She's not
answering her phone.

Lesley looks up.

JANET (O.S.)
Oh, that's because she's grounded
for the weekend. We took her phone
away a little while ago. Anyways,
she's home in case you were
worried.

INT. FRONT DOOR- DAY

Mable stands at the front door.

MABLE
Aww, that's too bad. I'm guessing
she can't possibly come to the mall
with Courtney and I? My mom's
driving.

Her mom, FRANCINE (50s), is waving from her car at the street. Janet waves back.

JANET

I'm sorry, Mable, but not today.
Maybe next weekend if Lesley can
learn how to talk to her parents
nicely.

MABLE

Ok. Tell her I said hi.

INT. LESLEY'S BEDROOM- DAY

Lesley is up against her door, listening on the conversation.

JANET (O.S.)

I will. Have fun and tell Francine
I say hi, too.
(pause)
Ok, bye!

The front door closes and Lesley sighs.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET- MORNING

Lesley and Mable walk down the street in casual summer
clothes. It is a beautiful morning. The birds are chirping.
Few cars drive by. A neighbor is mowing their lawn.

LESLEY

(to Mable)
I missed you.

Mable looks up and smiles.

MABLE

I missed you, too.

CUT TO:

INT. BAGEL STORE- A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Lesley and Mable sit at a table, facing one another. In front
of them are huge breakfast sandwiches. They are bacon, egg,
and cheese sandwiches on bagels.

Courtney and COURTNEY'S MOM (late 40s) enter the bagel store.
Courtney sees the girls and waves to them.

Mable waves back while Lesley only gives a hint of a smile.

LESLEY
 (to Mable)
 How was the mall?

Mable gives a confused look.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 Last weekend, didn't you and
 Courtney go to the mall?

MABLE
 Oh, yes!
 (beat)
 It was good. Nothing too crazy.

LESLEY
 (hurt)
 When did you start talking to
 Courtney?

MABLE
 Only about a week ago.

LESLEY
 Who reached out to who?

MABLE
 Does it matter?

LESLEY
 So, you?

MABLE
 It had been awhile since the sweet,
 so I wanted to see how she was
 doing.

Lesley looks disgusted.

Courtney approaches the two girls at the table.

COURTNEY
 (to Mable)
 Hi Mable!
 (to Lesley)
 Hi Lesley!
 (to both)
 How's it hanging?

MABLE
 Not too bad.

LESLEY
 Okay, I guess.

COURTNEY

Lesley, are you still talking to
Richie?

Lesley perks up to this question.

LESLEY

Uh, yeah. We text now and then.

COURTNEY

Aww, yay! He was telling me about
you. I'm so glad you two met. I
knew you two would be friends. I
haven't seen him since my sweet and
I'm looking forward to seeing him
again. He's definitely a great guy-

LESLEY

(defensive)

Yeah, he's such a great guy.

COURTNEY

That's wonderful to hear!

(to Mable)

Omigod, Mable! I still can't get
over the Forever 21 incident!

Mable starts to chuckle.

MABLE

Omigod, Court! Stop!

COURTNEY

(leaning into Mable)

And remember:

(loudly, and almost as if
sneezing)

SEAFORD!

Mable and Courtney laugh loudly. Lesley just sits there.

Courtney looks over her shoulder, sees her mom with a bag of
bagels by the door, and nods.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

My mom's waiting for me, so I gotta
go. My brother and his girlfriend
are visiting from college.

(quietly)

She's from New Jersey and thinks
her bagels are better than ours, so
we need to teach her a lesson. It's
all in the water, ya know and-

COURTNEY'S MOM (O.S.)

Courtney!

COURTNEY

(to her mom, almost shouting)

I'll be right there!

(to Lesley and Mable)

Hopefully I'll see you two later!

(to Mable)

If not before your Sweet, I'll see you next weekend!

Courtney walks away and exits the store. Lesley looks horrified at Mable.

LESLEY

Are you having a Sweet?

MABLE

Yeah.

(reaching into her bag)

I wanted to give this to you earlier.

Mable holds out a Sweet 16 invitation.

MABLE (CONT'D)

It's nothing crazy. It's at my house and it'll be mostly family there.

LESLEY

I thought you hated the idea of Sweet 16's.

MABLE

I did, but after seeing you planning yours and how Courtney's was so much fun, I thought, why not? I want to have my close friends and family there to celebrate with me.

Pause.

LESLEY

(scoffs)

I can't believe you're friends with Courtney...

MABLE

I know you butt heads with her...a lot. But, I think if you gave her a chance-

LESLEY

(interrupting)
-I'm tired of giving Courtney chances.

MABLE

Lesley...

LESLEY

What? What does it matter to you? You just worry about yourself and your new friend.

Lesley begins eating her sandwich again.

MABLE

Are you jealous of me?

LESLEY

(talking with her mouth full)
Of you? No way?

MABLE

Then why are you acting this way?

Lesley swallows.

LESLEY

I'm just acting the way a stranger would be acting in this situation. I obviously am one and don't know much about you.

(getting increasingly louder and more angry)
Who knew you were such great friends with Courtney? Or that you think Sweet 16's are fun? And what's the big deal about Seaford?!

MABLE

Well, on the train, the loudspeaker says Seaford in a funny-

LESLEY

(interrupting)
You don't have to explain it to me.

Beat.

MABLE

Ok...I guess I thought you'd wanna know.

LESLEY

(passive aggressive)

I don't see why you would think that. Any ways, what has Seaford has to do with anything?

MABLE

(confused)

The Seaford thing was from App's on Tuesday.

LESLEY

You went to Applebee's without me?

MABLE

Courtney invited me.

LESLEY

Why didn't you invite me? I wasn't grounded anymore.

MABLE

I know.

Lesley gives Mable a look.

MABLE (CONT'D)

(continuing to eat)

You wouldn't have gone with Courtney.

LESLEY

(picking a fight)

Oh, I see. I just make things too complicated for you.

MABLE

What's that supposed to mean?

LESLEY

I know I can be a pain sometimes. I don't want to waste your time.

MABLE

Lesley, what are you talking about?

LESLEY

Just admit that Courtney's better than me.

MABLE

No! What is wrong with you?

LESLEY

Nothing! And now that I do think of it, you're jealous of me!

MABLE

(annoyed)

Oh! With you are your imaginary boyfriend?

LESLEY

He's not imaginary.

MABLE

But your relationship is. It's a little screwed up, isn't it?

LESLEY

You're screwed up. You're hanging out with Courtney!

MABLE

You could hang out with us, too, if you weren't such a bitch all the time!

Lesley is taken aback. A pause passes.

MABLE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I called you a bitch.

LESLEY

(eerily calm)

No, no. Message received.

A long, painful silence sweeps over the two.

Mable plays with her food and Lesley looks like she's becoming more upset. Lesley checks her phone.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

(quickly)

My mom's here. I'll see ya later.

Lesley stands up, grabs her things, and walks away without looking back. She throws out the barely eaten bagel sandwich.

Mable turns towards Lesley. She looks upset now.

EXT. BAGEL STORE- CONTINUOUS

Lesley walks out of the store of the strip mall and stands on the sidewalk. Janet is nowhere to be seen.

Lesley sighs and holds in her tears as she begins to walk away from the store.

INT. BEDROOM- DAY

Lesley has a bunch of yearbooks and old memorabilia sprawled across her bed. Her eyes are red and her cheeks have tear lines stained down them.

She is focused on the superlative page in an old elementary school yearbook. A photo shows a young Lesley and Courtney hugging one another.

INSERT: Best Friends: Lesley Connors & Courtney Levingston

Lesley takes a tissue and blows her nose in it.

She stands up and walks over to her bookcase and grabs a photo album. She pauses. Next to the photo album is a red journal; the missing poetry journal.

She lets out an angry, annoyed sigh.

Without grabbing the photo album, Lesley walks over to her desk and opens her laptop. She opens the web browser and begins to email someone named MS. KELLY.

INSERT: Dear, Ms. Kelly, Hello. I hope your summer is going well. I have found my poetry journal and was curious if I could still get a grade-

A BING from the laptop is heard.

Lesley saves her email as a draft and opens her inbox. It's an email from Ms. Kelly. Lesley clicks on it.

INSERT: Greetings Lesley! I am happy to say that I have graded your poetry journal. You're parents explained that there was a little misunderstanding at home and have since reached out to returned it. You have a way with words, Lesley, and I would strongly suggest you continue writing throughout the summer and maybe join the literature club next year. Think about it; I think you can benefit from it. I hope you have a great summer! See you next year! Sincerely, Ms. Kelly.

Before we can read the part congratulating her, Lesley slams her laptop shut, furiously.

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

Lesley stomps down the staircase, holding her journal. Janet and Tim are on the couch. They look relaxed. Lesley is not.

LESLEY

Mom! Dad!

Lesley stands in front of the television, blocking their view.

JANET

What's up, Sweetness?

LESLEY

Ms. Kelly just emailed me.

Janet gives Tim a look.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

She said that you guys handed in my poetry journal.

(holding up the journal)

What the hell?!

JANET

Please, Lesley, your language.

LESLEY

(angry)

You had my journal!

TIM

We returned it.

LESLEY

Was that before or after you lied to my face!?

JANET

Your Aunt Heather found it under Cassandra's pillow. We didn't know you needed it for class until your grades came in...so we submitted it and then put it back in your room.

LESLEY

You guys still hid it from me.

JANET

Cassandra's not going to get away with it. Aunt Heather is punishing her. She's gonna know that she can't keep doing things like this.

Heather and Cassandra open the front door. Cassandra runs by the living room.

CASSANDRA (O.S.)
(yelling)
I'M GETTING ICE CREAM!!!

Heather puts down her stuff by the door and smiles to the crowd. Janet sighs in frustration.

Lesley holds up the journal in annoyance. Heather gets the cue.

HEATHER
Oh.
(shouting)
Hey, Cass.

CASSANDRA (O.S.)
(yelling back)
Cassandra!

HEATHER
(shouting)
Yes, Cassandra! You're only allowed
1 scoop of ice cream!

Janet gives Heather a look.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
(shouting)
And go to your room after that!

Heather smiles for approval. A silence sweeps over the room.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Lesley.

Heather shrugs, picks up her stuff, and heads out of the room.

LESLEY
(frustrated)
That journal had sensitive
information in it.

TIM
(sighs)
We know-

Janet gives Tim a "Are you kidding me?" look.

LESLEY
 (irate)
 You read it!?

JANET
 Sweetness, we skimmed it a little
 bit.

Lesley almost shakes with anger.

LESLEY
 (quietly)
 I can't believe you guys read it.

TIM
 It was written beautifully with
 such truth and vulnerability.

LESLEY
 That's not the point, Dad!

JANET
 Sweetness, the whole journal had us
 in awe.

Lesley's jaw drops and her eyes pop.

JANET (CONT'D)
 We're sorry. We really are, but we
 got concerned.

LESLEY
 Concerned about what?

TIM
 (reciting from memory,
 nonchalantly)
 "Sometimes I get sad at night."

JANET
 (reciting from memory,
 nonchalantly)
 "I force the retreats of others."

TIM
 (reciting from memory,
 nonchalantly)
 "Too bad I blame myself for most
 things."

LESLEY
 (to herself)
 Oh, my, God.

JANET
Sweetness, we just are concerned
that you feel this way.

LESLEY
It's none of your business!

JANET
I was talking to Gramma about this-

LESLEY
You talked to Gramma about this?!
Why? Why did you have to bring her
into this?

Lesley starts becoming upset.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Why are you doing this to me?

JANET
Sweetness, don't get upset. Come
here.

Janet approaches Lesley to give her a big hug. Lesley
retreats.

LESLEY
She's never gonna want to see me
again.

JANET
Sweetness, what do you mean?

LESLEY
(yelling)
Just let me be by myself!

JANET
(smiling)
No! That's actually our point! You
don't have to feel alone! Think of
the Sweet 16! So many people will
be there; so many people who love
you and want to be with you!

Lesley stops in her tracks.

LESLEY
That's why you guys wanted me to
have a Sweet 16...

Tim and Janet lock eyes to confirm this claim.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 I appreciate the effort and I'm
 gonna try to get over this without
 therapy.

A long awkward pause. Lesley sniffles and wipes her face.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 I'm fine with having the party.
 The invitations have already been
 sent.
 (beat)
 But I really don't need it to be a
 pity party...from my parents.

Lesley attempts to pull herself together with dignity. She heads up the stairs and we hear a bedroom door open and close.

Tim and Janet stand there, knowing they messed up at least a little bit. Janet's fist is covering her mouth. Tim puts his hand on Janet's shoulder to comfort. Janet leaves the room, upset.

EXT. MABLE'S BACKYARD- DAY

Mable's backyard is big enough for an in-ground swimming pool, an old swing set, and a patio. There are luau decorations around.

The backyard is decently full with Mable's family and friends. Most of the kids and teenagers are in the pool and the adults are hanging around the patio.

EXT. MABLE'S OLD SWING SET- DAY

Lesley is hanging out by the old swing set. She is alone and on the swings. She wears a bathing suit, but covers it with a large beach towel.

She looks at all the other girls and envies their confidence. Lesley kicks the dirt with her bare foot.

MABLE (O.S.)
 (quietly)
 Hey.

Lesley looks up to stare at Mable. She wears a cover up over a bathing suit, a flower crown, and a lei or two.

LESLEY
 Hey, happy birthday.

MABLE
(doing a curtsy)
Why, thank you.

Lesley half-smiles.

MABLE (CONT'D)
What are you doing here all alone?

Lesley shrugs.

MABLE (CONT'D)
Do you want to come hang out with
us?

LESLEY
(skeptical)
Are you sure?

MABLE
Oh my God, yes! C'mon!

Lesley smiles and stands up. Mable and Lesley start to walk to the main group of people.

LESLEY
(stopping)
Hey, I'm sorry about the bagels.

MABLE
No, no, no. Let's forget about it.

LESLEY
You're my best friend.

MABLE
(smiling)
You're my best friend, too.

Mable hugs Lesley. They continue.

EXT. MABLE'S POOL- DAY

Lesley and Mable approach a few girls in a group. Courtney is in that group. Lesley still clings to her towel.

COURTNEY
Hi Lesley!

LESLEY
Hey, Courtney.

COURTNEY
 (genuinely)
 I love your towel! Are those
 dolphins?

Lesley checks her towel.

LESLEY
 Ah yeah, thank you.

COURTNEY
 On the phone the other day, my
 grandpa was telling me that they
 are considering letting guests at
 the aquarium swim in the tank with
 the dolphins or at least that's
 what he heard from my uncle. So if
 it's true, we should all go there
 like ASAP.

Courtney smiles to signify the end of her comments.

MABLE
 So, are we going in the pool, or-

Lesley dreadfully grips the towel.

FRANCINE (O.S.)
 Or!

Francine approaches the girls. Mable looks at her. Francine
 squeezes Mable's cheek.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)
 We have to eat the cake now.

MABLE
 Why now?

FRANCINE
 Well, you're Uncle Alan took the
 ice cream cake out the freezer
 about forty minutes ago and it's
 about ninety degrees today-

MABLE
 But, I have to do the candle
 ceremony!

FRANCINE
 You can do it afterwards, okay?

Mable nods. Francine hugs her as she walks away.

MABLE
 Alright, let's go eat some cake.

EXT. MABLE'S PATIO- DAY

Mable leads the crowd of friends to the table where the mostly melted ice cream cake lays. Lesley is towards the back of the crowd.

Francine, who is now wearing a party hat, puts a "1" and a "6" candle on the cake.

FRANCINE
 Ok, everybody! Let's sing before these candles tip over!

All eyes are on Mable.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)
 Alright! And 5, 6, 7, 8-

CUT TO:

EXT. MABLE'S PATIO- DAY- A FEW MINUTES LATER

Mable is up in front, before everyone, reading speeches off a piece of paper. The cake is now off the table and there sits a candle display with sixteen candles. Thirteen are lit.

MABLE
 -You are my rock, my hero, my mom.
 Mom, will you please come up to help me light my fourteenth candle?

Francine walks to Mable with tears in her eyes. They light the candle. When Francine walks away, Mable begins another speech.

MABLE (CONT'D)
 So, my next candle is for hands down the coolest people in the world or, maybe, I don't know, the universe!

Lesley smiles. She looks over to ANOTHER GIRL and they smile together.

MABLE (CONT'D)
 They've both been by my side for awhile now. Both I have met since I moved here and I am so thankful to call them my best friends.
 (MORE)

MABLE (CONT'D)
We've been through a lot,
especially these past few months,
but I'm thankful for every moment.
I'm sure we all know who I'm
talking about. Please stand up:

This time, Lesley proudly smiles towards the other girl.

MABLE (CONT'D)
Lesley and Courtney!

Lesley's smile drops immediately.

Courtney screams with joy and runs up to Mable. They hug and ever-so enthusiastically. Lesley slowly stands up and heads over to Mable.

She smiles politely at Mable and the girls awkwardly light the fifteenth candle.

Courtney hugs Mable and runs off stage, elated. Lesley pauses and then goes back to her seat.

Lesley looks dumbfounded.

Mable begins the final speech, but for us, it's mumbles. Lesley scans the patio and focuses on Courtney.

Courtney smiles and giggles with other girls while Lesley's face gets redder and redder. Lesley looks away.

Tears begin to form in Lesley's eyes when-

MABLE (CONT'D)
(to Lesley)
Lesley, are you coming up?

Lesley jumps and shoots a look at Mable.

MABLE (CONT'D)
(holding up the lighter)
Well?

All of Mable's friends are up by her to light the last candle.

Lesley gets the idea and stands up. All eyes are on her. She grips the towel even tighter as she steps over people to get to the table.

Once she gets there, she is on the edge of the group. Ever so gently and awkwardly, the teenagers light the sixteenth candle. People clap as they do.

CUT TO:

EXT. MABLE'S OLD SWING SET- DAY

Lesley is back where she was earlier, on the swing, kicking dirt with her bare foot.

Mable, with wet hair, walks up to Lesley with a confused look on her face.

MABLE

You don't want to come swimming
with us?

LESLEY

(looking down)
Not really.

MABLE

Why not?

LESLEY

(still not making eye
contact, sarcastic)
I like kicking the dirt.

MABLE

I think you're acting a little
ridiculous.
(joking)
You'd rather be all alone out here?

LESLEY

I'm used to it.

MABLE

C'mon! I wanna hang out with you!

LESLEY

I'd rather stay here.

Silence.

MABLE

(nicely)
I'm sorry you feel that way. I'm
gonna go swim now.

(MORE)

MABLE (CONT'D)

It is *my birthday* and I would really like to hang out with my best friend for a little bit.

Mable starts to walk away.

LESLEY

(bitchy)

I don't see why you even need me now that Courtney's your best friend, too...

Mable pauses and turns around.

MABLE

Courtney isn't a bad person.

LESLEY

She leaves friends behind. When she finds better people, she'll drop you. She did that to me after she moved to Smithtown. By the time she moved back, she had a ton of newer, better friends.

Beat.

MABLE

Friendly doesn't necessary mean fake. People can be friends with others besides just you, Lesley. I have friends from a lot of places, especially Hauppauge. Heck, some are even here today! No one has left you because of other people.

(beat)

No one hates you, Lesley. But, you sure as hell hate a lot of people based on your petty assumptions. That'll make people hate you.

(beat)

Then you'll have no one.

LESLEY

I have a ton of friends, real friends. Just wait until my Sweet 16.

MABLE

(up in Lesley's face,
slowly and stern)

And what's that got to prove, huh? You're gonna buy a whole party for this crap?

A quick beat.

MABLE (CONT'D)

(stern, but concerned)

You're using people for your own gain. How pathetic do you have to be?

(sighing)

I don't have time for you today.

Mable storms off and Lesley stands there, appalled.

Lesley sees Mable join the other girls and jump in the pool. Lesley holds her towel tightly, grabs her things, and leaves the party quietly.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK- DAY

Lesley walks down the block, still holding all of her things. She looks like she's struggling. A few steps more and Lesley throws her things onto the sidewalk.

She sits on the curb and the surroundings should be the same as the first scene. She takes out her phone and dials a number.

She waits as it rings. Richie answers.

RICHIE (V.O.)

Hello?

LESLEY

Hey, Richie. What's up?

RICHIE (V.O.)

(confused)

Uh...um...nothing much. Just chilling with some friends.

The rowdy friends can be heard over the phone.

LESLEY

That's cool, that's cool. Um...you remember when you said that if I ever needed someone, they're only a phone call away?

RICHIE

Yeah...why?

Pause. Lesley makes a face.

LESLEY
Can I talk to you?

RICHIE
Wait, me?

LESLEY
(sad)
Yeah.

RICHIE (V.O.)
Uh, yeah, sure. What's up?

LESLEY
Well, Mable and I just got into
this awful fight and- I feel really
bad 'cause-

The boys on the other end are so loud Lesley can't speak.

RICHIE (V.O.)
(to his friends)
Holy crap! Stop!
(laughing, and then back
to Lesley)
Sorry, what was that?

LESLEY
Mable and I had a fight.

RICHIE
Woah...Who won?

LESLEY
(confused)
Um...I don't think either.

RICHIE (V.O.)
That sucks. Are you okay?

LESLEY
Like physically, yes, but-

The boys are insanely loud again. Their laughter is
overwhelming.

RICHIE (V.O.)
(giggling)
Aw, no way! Yo, Will!
(back to Lesley)
But, you're okay?

LESLEY
Yeah...but-

RICHIE (V.O.)
 Okay, I'm glad you're okay and I
 hate doing this, but I got to go.
 (beat)
 I'll see you later!

LESLEY
 Wait, I just-

Richie hangs up the phone. Lesley puts the phone on the
 grass, looks down, and sighs.

FADE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

Janet, Tim, Heather and Gramma sit on the couches, all
 looking towards the room's doorway.

Cassandra stands near the doorway in a cute, frilly red dress
 with the red headband from before. She is elated.

JANET
 Ok, Sweetness! Time to come out!

CASSANDRA
 (jumping up and down)
 Fashion show! Fashion show!

LESLEY (O.S.)
 I don't see why it has to be such a
 big deal, though.

JANET
 You have to show your dress off to
 Gramma!

LESLEY (O.S.)
 (annoyed)
 She's seen it before.

Lesley walks into the doorway. She is wearing the turquoise
 cocktail dress from before again.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 (slouching, to Gramma)
 It's the dress we picked out at the
 store.

Gramma is taken back in admiration looking at Lesley.

GRAMMA

I have the prettiest
granddaughters.
(to Janet and Heather)
Can you believe that?

JANET

(smiling at Lesley)
I sure can.

LESLEY

Mom, stop staring at me.

Janet makes a funny face towards Lesley.

HEATHER

Now, Cassandra, what we say to
Lesley?

CASSANDRA

(to Lesley)
Thank you.

LESLEY

(confused)
For what?

HEATHER

(to Lesley)
The headband.

LESLEY

Oh, well, she asked, so I don't
mind.

Heather gives out a smile.

CASSANDRA

Lesley! Did you hear? Bret's gonna
be there on Saturday!

LESLEY

At the party?

Lesley looks at Heather.

HEATHER

Yeah. I'm fine with it. He's
practically a father to her, so he
should be there.

Cassandra is elated.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Cassandra, you can go take off your dress now.

CASSANDRA

I want to keep it on.

HEATHER

But we have to keep it safe for the party.

(standing up)

C'mon, I'll help you hang it up.

Heather and Cassandra leave the room.

LESLEY

(to Janet)

Can I take this off or do you want to take prom pictures a year early?

JANET

You can take it off.

Lesley turns around and leaves.

INT. BATHROOM- DAY

Lesley enters the bathroom and closes the door behind her.

She attempts to unzip the dress until she looks in the mirror and sees a garment bag hanging on the back of the door.

She approaches and unzips the bag. She shockingly steps back.

It's the expensive, sliver, jeweled party dress she tried on at the store.

Lesley can't take her eyes off the dress.

A light knock is heard and Lesley opens the door. Gramma is there, smiling ear-to-ear.

GRAMMA

Do you like it?

Lesley nods quickly.

LESLEY

I- I love it.

(beat)

When did you- How did you- wait, did you spend-

GRAMMA
You don't need to worry about
anything.
(beat)
Your parents are going to love it.

LESLEY
Yeah?

GRAMMA
I'm 100% certain.

Beat.

LESLEY
Why did you buy the dress?

GRAMMA
Because I love you...
(beat)
And I knew that it was special to
you.

Lesley studies the dress. Gramma notices.

GRAMMA (CONT'D)
You're beautiful.

Lesley nods.

LESLEY
(softly)
I love you, too.

GRAMMA
I'll be outside.

Gramma exits and Lesley closes the door behind her. She takes
the dress out of the bag.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

Lesley walks into the living room with never-before seen
beauty, grace, and confidence. Her parents are speechless.

JANET
Oh, Lesley.

TIM
Where did you get this dress?

LESLEY

Gramma.

JANET

Mom, is the dress you told me
about?

Gramma nods.

TIM

(to Gramma)

Oh, Marge. You didn't have to do
that.

GRAMMA

Of course I had to. Look how pretty
she is. And my gosh the dress only
adds to her beauty.

Lesley cannot stop smiling.

JANET

Give us a twirl!

Lesley giddily twirls in place. She giggles as she starts to
sway in place, admiring all the details of the dress. She is
comfortable and goes quiet for a moment until:

LESLEY

(to Gramma)

Thank you, Gramma.

GRAMMA

Anything for you, Sweetness.

LESLEY

(elated, but soft)

Thank you. I absolutely love it.

EXT. BANQUET HALL- NIGHT

The night of the Sweet 16! The banquet hall resembles all the
opulent nature that Long Island's North Shore could possibly
offer.

INT. BRIDAL SUITE- NIGHT

Lesley paces the floor. Her hair and makeup are done and the
dress has never looked better before. Lesley looks
overwhelmed.

There's a knock on the door.

LESLEY

Come in!

Janet and Tim walk in. They are dressed all snazzy, too. They look more excited than Lesley. Janet holds a corsage.

JANET

Hi, Sweetness!

LESLEY

Hi, Mom.

TIM

(taken back)

You look so-

LESLEY

-Bad.

JANET

What? Why would you say that?

LESLEY

My face looks weird. The contour isn't right. People will notice.

TIM

I think it looks *fine*-

Janet gives Tim a look.

LESLEY

It's not what I showed the woman. I don't look like this!

Lesley holds up a magazine with the exact same makeup design as a famous actress. Janet sighs.

JANET

Do you want to take it off?

Lesley looks away.

A moment passes and Janet sighs. She hands the corsage to Tim.

JANET (CONT'D)

(approaching Lesley)

Here.

Janet takes a tissue and gently wipes away some (not most) of the makeup. It's a small difference, but still a difference. Lesley snuffles.

JANET (CONT'D)
I think you look beautiful with or
without it.

Lesley looks in the mirror and smiles a little bit.

JANET (CONT'D)
All good?

LESLEY
(nodding)
Better.

JANET
Alright,
(taking the corsage from
Tim and placing it on
Lesley's wrist)
I'm going to go out and make sure
the DJ is ready for your
introduction.
(beat)
Happy thoughts tonight. We love
you.

Lesley nods. Janet hugs Lesley.

LESLEY
(smiling)
Remind him not to let Uncle Ed have
the mic.

JANET
(pointing to Lesley)
You're right!

Janet leaves. Tim waves at the closed door.

TIM
When do we walk out?

LESLEY
When we hear my name.

TIM
That would make sense.

LESLEY
Thanks for walking out with me.

TIM
Well, you did have a large
selection of uncool dads to choose
from.

LESLEY

But, you're the coolest of them
all.

TIM

(soft laugh, then quietly)
Come here.

Tim hugs Lesley.

From the outside, we hear the music get louder, and the DJ
speak into the mic.

DJ (O.S.)

(into a microphone)

Now in a second, we are about to
welcome the birthday girl-

(pause)

One of the birthday girls!

Lesley smiles at Tim.

INT. BANQUET HALL- NIGHT

The (cute) DJ (late teens, early 20s) wanders around. The
camera follows him, but the background is blurry, so the
theme of the party is not revealed.

DJ

(into a microphone)

Now when she comes out, I want this
crowd to go CRA-ZAY! Ladies and
gents, please welcome: LESLEY!

The doors open to reveal Lesley and Tim. Both Lesley and Tim
are ear-to-ear with smiles. Lesley's eyes are filled with
amazement. As Lesley continues to walk in, her eyes get even
wider, but with horror.

The theme of the party is magical unicorn and there are a
bunch of eight year old children running and screaming all
over the place. Cassandra invited way more friends than
Lesley did.

Cassandra runs over to Lesley.

CASSANDRA

Happy Birthday Lesley!

LESLEY

(distracted)

Uh...thanks.

Lesley looks around the room. Cassandra tries to grab her attention.

CASSANDRA
(annoyed)
Lesley!

LESLEY
Huh? What?

CASSANDRA
(whining)
You didn't wish me a happy
birthday. It's my birthday, too!

Lesley walks up to Janet, ignoring Cassandra. Janet is socializing with Heather.

LESLEY
Mom?

JANET
Hi! That welcome was
gorgeous.

HEATHER
Hey, birthday girl!

LESLEY
Thanks.
(motioning around the
room)
What is this?

HEATHER
(excited)
It's unicorn-themed!

LESLEY
(snippy)
I know that, but why?

HEATHER
You didn't want it to be horse-
themed.

JANET
Lesley, you had your chance to help
us plan the party.

LESLEY
But, I said it had to be great.

JANET
Sweetness, I don't know what else
you want from us. This technically
is out of this world!

Lesley is speechless.

A few girls (15 through 17) approach Lesley and shower her with hugs and gifts.

LESLEY
 (holding the gifts)
 Thanks guys.
 (pointing behind her)
 Gifts go on that table.

GIRL (O.S.)
 Lesley, come dance!

LESLEY
 Okay...

Janet gives Lesley a look.

JANET
 Try to have fun tonight.

LESLEY
 I will.

JANET
 We did this for you.

LESLEY
 (a little stern)
 I know.

Lesley goes off with her friends. The music is jamming.

Occasionally, Lesley looks around for someone.

CUT TO:

INT. BANQUET HALL- NIGHT

The music is now chiller for dinner.

Lesley carries a plate of food away from a buffet. She is laughing with some of the girls from before.

Lesley sees Mable across the room. Mable sits at a nearly empty table with no food in front of her. They make eye contact. Mable looks sad and gives a faint wave.

LESLEY
 (to the girls)
 I'll be right there.

The girls head off to another table away from Mable. Lesley takes a second and then approaches her.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 (to Mable, confused)
 You came?

MABLE
 (looking down)
 Yeah.

Lesley looks at her.

MABLE (CONT'D)
 (looking down)
 Listen, I know that last weekend at
 my party was a little crazy-

Lesley sits down next to Mable.

LESLEY
 (interrupting)
 I still wanted you to come, Mable.

Mable hugs Lesley.

MABLE
 Oh, Lesley, I'm so happy.
 (breaking away from the
 hug, but maintaining eye
 contact)
 You are going to have a perfect
 night.

LESLEY
 (smiling)
 I know. And you know what's going
 to make it spectacular?

MABLE
 What?

LESLEY
 If I get a boyfriend by the end of
 it.

Mable's eyes grow with excitement.

MABLE
 You're gonna ask Richie out!?

LESLEY
 Well, kinda...

MABLE
What are you going to do?

LESLEY
(smiling)
I'm...I'm going to give him the
last candle.

Mable sinks down.

MABLE
What? Why the last candle?

LESLEY
Because I'm going to tell him how I
feel during the candle ceremony
speech.

MABLE
But that candle is saved for the
really important people in your
life.

LESLEY
I know.

MABLE
Then why is he getting your last
candle?

LESLEY
Because I want him to be an
important person in my life.

MABLE
What about the people who already
are important people in your life.

LESLEY
I've made up my mind, Mable!

MABLE
Are you punishing me for the
Courtney situation?

Lesley looks around the room to try and spot Richie. He's not there.

LESLEY
(mockingly)
No, that would be pathetic.
(looking for Richie)
(MORE)

LESLEY (CONT'D)

I just think that he's the most important person who will be in attendance tonight.

MABLE

(hurt)

Shocking you think he's the most important in your life 'cause you obviously aren't in his. Look around, he isn't here yet and it's an almost two hours into the party.

Lesley doesn't turn around and stands up, leaving Mable behind. Mable's face gets red.

Lesley moves across the banquet hall, awkwardly says hello to some family and friends, and tip-toes towards the doors.

All of a sudden, all smooth-like and dressing snazzy, Richie opens the door and walks in. He smiles while gazing at the banquet hall.

Lesley stops dead in her tracks, straightens her dress, and smiles. She looks up just when Richie turns around, opens the door, and waves to someone behind him.

MUSIC UP: "IT'S MY PARTY" BY LESLEY GORE

Following Richie inside this time is Courtney. Lesley jolts to stop herself from walking over as she is visibly upset.

Lesley retraces her steps around the hall with intercuts of Richie and Courtney together introducing themselves to others. Lesley looks towards where Mable was, but she is no where to be found.

Lesley makes it around the entire banquet hall and exits, right under Richie and Courtney's noses.

MUSIC STOPS.

CUT TO:

EXT. BANQUET HALL PARKING LOT- NIGHT

Lesley approaches the parking lot. She abruptly stops.

LESLEY

Cass?

Cassandra turns around and faces Lesley.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

What are you doing out here? Go back inside.

CASSANDRA

I can't.

LESLEY

Why not?

(walking up to Cassandra)
C'mon, leave me alone.

CASSANDRA

I can't!

LESLEY

(annoyed)
Why not?

CASSANDRA

I'm waiting for Bret.

Lesley steps down her defense. A few moments of silence pass.

LESLEY

Cass, standing out here isn't going to make him come sooner.

CASSANDRA

If he sees me, he'll know this is where the party is.

LESLEY

He knows where the party is.

CASSANDRA

(quietly)
So he isn't coming?

LESLEY

(quietly)
I don't know.

Beat.

CASSANDRA

Am I a bad person?

LESLEY

Why would you ask that?

CASSANDRA

(sad)
'Cause no one wants me.

LESLEY

That's far from the truth.

CASSANDRA

But, Bret said he would come.

LESLEY

Bret said a lot of things, Cass.
But just know that his actions have
nothing to do with you.

(pause)

You're like those unicorns inside.
You're extraordinary in a world
full of regular horses. And Bret
isn't even a horse. He's like a
donkey with a paper towel roll
taped to his forehead. He thinks
he's extraordinary like you, but
you're different. You're full of
kindness and love and...we will
never leave you behind.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

Cassandra looks up towards Lesley.

CASSANDRA

Really?

LESLEY

(sticking out her pinky)
I pinky swear.

They pinky swear. Cassandra hugs Lesley.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

(into Cassandra's ear)
You should go back inside before
your mom gets worried.

Cassandra nods and runs back inside the banquet hall.

Lesley sits on the curb, almost a little emotional. She plays
with a stick, scratching the blacktop of the parking lot.

RICHIE (O.S.)

Hey! There you are!

Lesley jolts up.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

I've been looking all over for you.

LESLEY

Oh, hey...

Richie sits down next to Lesley.

RICHIE
(handing Lesley a card)
Here, I got you this.

LESLEY
Thanks. The gift table's inside.

Richie still holds out the card. Lesley takes it.

RICHIE
You like iTunes, right?

LESLEY
Yeah...

RICHIE
Sweet. That's what I got you. A
gift card, that is.

LESLEY
(sadly smiling)
Thank you.

A moment of silence passes.

RICHIE
How have you been?
(half laughing)
I feel like we always catch up in
parking lots.

LESLEY
Heh. Yeah...
(beat)
How did you know I was out here?

RICHIE
Cass.

LESLEY
It's Cassandra.

RICHIE
Oh.

Another moment passes.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
But, really, why are you out here?

LESLEY
I just wanted to be alone.

RICHIE
Mind if I'm here?

LESLEY
Not at all.
(pause)
Does Courtney mind?

RICHIE
(confused)
Why would she care?

LESLEY
You two are dating, aren't you?

RICHIE
(appalled)
What?! Ew, God no! Why would you
think that?

LESLEY
You two walked in together.

RICHIE
(chuckling)
We're cousins, Lesley.

LESLEY
Wait, I'm confused.
(pause)
Why then at Courtney's sweet did
you come up for the last candle?
That candle was for friends, not
family!

RICHIE
I missed the family one because I
was enjoying talking to you and you
convinced me to go up.

LESLEY
(smiling)
So I was right...

RICHIE
About what?

LESLEY
(quietly)
This is possible?

Richie looks utterly confused.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
 (putting her hand on his)
 Can I give you my last candle?
 (beat)
 I really like you.

Lesley looks into Richie's eyes. Lesley leans in.

RICHIE
 Oh, Lesley, no.

LESLEY
 You don't want to be with me?

RICHIE
 No.

LESLEY
 (under her breath, upset)
 Oh my God...
 (aloud, almost panicking)
 I'm going to be forever alone...

RICHIE
 Lesley...you don't know, do you?

LESLEY
 (avoiding eye contact)
 There's somebody else, isn't there?

RICHIE
 No...

Lesley looks confused.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
 I'm gay.

LESLEY
 What?

RICHIE
 Yeah...

LESLEY
 Wait, what? How? Is it because of
 me? I'm sorry, I-

RICHIE
 Lesley! Oh my God! No, not
 everything is about you. I've been
 out for almost a year now.

LESLEY
I thought we had something.

RICHIE
A *friendship*.

Lesley turns away, obviously upset at the situation.

LESLEY
I'm sorry. Please don't hate me.

RICHIE
I don't hate you.

LESLEY
That's what everyone says.

RICHIE
'Cause it's true!
(beat, almost trying to
make a joke)
Do you think we all showed up
tonight because we hate you?

Lesley starts tearing up. Richie becomes serious and comforting.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
It's okay.

COURTNEY (O.S.)
Hi guys!

Lesley springs up to see Courtney running over to her and Richie.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)
I brought tissues!

Lesley viciously wipes her face as if Courtney shall not see. Courtney stands in front of Lesley, holding out a wad of toilet paper.

LESLEY
(taking some toilet paper)
Thank you!

COURTNEY
No problem! It was really funny
actually.
(MORE)

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

Well not so much funny as it is sad, but I had to pee, so naturally I went to the bathroom and Mable was in there upset, so I asked her, "What's wrong, Mable?," and she said that you were upset, so she was upset and then I grabbed some toilet paper and sought out to find you!

Richie pats Lesley's back. Lesley wipes her eyes.

LESLEY

(looking at Courtney)
I'm so sorry, Courtney.

COURTNEY

For what?

LESLEY

(making eye contact with Courtney)
For everything. I haven't been the best lately and I need to start taking responsibility for my own actions and feelings. You have been nothing, but sweet to me and I want us to be friends.

Courtney makes eye contact with Richie. They both shrug their shoulders.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

I hope you can forgive me. I'm going to try to do better.

COURTNEY

(confused and naive)
Yeah...I-I forgive you.

LESLEY

You do?

COURTNEY

Yeah...but we've always been friends, right?

LESLEY

(smiling)
You've always been a friend to me, Courtney.

Courtney smiles. Lesley looks towards Richie.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Can we still be friends?

Richie nods.

Lesley blows her nose loudly with the toilet paper in hand.
She looks up.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Is Mable still in the bathroom?

CUT TO:

INT. BANQUET HALL GIRLS BATHROOM- NIGHT

Mable sits on a toilet in a stall in full clothing. Her eyes
are red and watery.

The door is heard opening and closing.

LESLEY (O.S.)
Mable?

MABLE
(sniffles)
Yeah...

LESLEY (O.S.)
Do you want to come out of the
stall?

MABLE
(quietly)
No...

LESLEY (O.S.)
Come on, Mable. Think about all
those other people's germs on the
toilet. I know you're sitting.

Mable considers her options and slowly slides off the toilet
seat. She stands now.

Lesley walks over to the mirror and talks into the
reflection.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
I haven't been a good friend lately
or even a good person to say the
least. And I just wanted to say
"I'm sorry."

Silence.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

Reflecting, I think our friendship needs some work. I love you, Mable, and I know you have and always will be there for me, but we fight constantly. I don't know about you, but I'm exhausted *all the time*.

Silence.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

You've been my friend for years and I don't want that to change, but our friendship needs to. I'm sorry for getting angry over other friends you have and I really want to start over. I know I can't turn my problems onto you just to bring you down with me. I'm sorry I used you.

The stall door opens. Mable walks out.

MABLE

I've been tired, too, Lesley.

Lesley gives a faint smile.

MABLE (CONT'D)

Why did we do this to each other?

LESLEY

I guess we need better coping mechanisms.

Mable chuckles.

MABLE

Can we still be friends?

LESLEY

I hope so.

MABLE

Can we try?

LESLEY

I'm going to try my hardest.

MABLE

Me too.

They hug.

As they hug, the door opens and Courtney walks in. Behind her is Richie, but he merely stands in the doorway.

COURTNEY
(excited)
So?! Did you guys make up? Are you
still friends?

LESLEY
I think so.

The DJ approaches the doorway.

DJ
(to Richie)
Hey, have you seen Lesley? It's
time for the candle thingamajig.

Richie points to the girls inside the bathroom. The DJ looks in and sees the girls talking.

DJ (CONT'D)
(shielding his eyes)
Hey, Lesley. Your mom said it's
time for the candle thingy.

The girls give the DJ an odd look, but he can't see it because he is covering his eyes.

LESLEY
Um...yeah. Tell her I'll be out in
a minute.

The DJ leaves abruptly, leaving all confused on what his deal is.

LESLEY (V.O.)
Will you please come up and light
my fourteenth candle?

INT. BANQUET HALL DANCE FLOOR- NIGHT

Lesley stands in the center of the dance floor. She is holding a microphone and notepad which presumably has all the speeches written on it.

A girl from earlier walks up to join Lesley. They light the fourteenth candle. They pause for a PHOTOGRAPHER (late 20s) to snap a picture. The crowd cheers and the girl returns to her seat.

Lesley clears her throat.

LESLEY
(reading off the notepad)
My next candle is for Mable.

INSERT SHOT OF MABLE LOOKING GENUINELY SURPRISED.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
We've had some issues in the past...the past two months to be exact and I've come to realize how much I value her as a person. I mean, she practically kicked me out of her Sweet and she still would not have missed this party for the world. I don't know what I did to deserve a friend like her. Since meeting her, she has taught me how to accept and always be a friend to others. I only wish someday I can be like her.

Lesley looks at Mable.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Mable, you're my best friend and you've stuck through all the pettiness of the majority of my teenage years at this point and I hope you don't mind sticking with me a little longer.

Mable smiles.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Mable, will you come up here and help me light my fifteenth candle?

Mable nods and smiles. She awkwardly walks/skips/runs to the table and the two girls light the candle. After the picture, they hug.

They squeeze out one more hug and let go. Lesley looks relieved until she picks up the notepad and microphone again.

For a few moments, she stares at the notepad. She looks at the speech she prepared for the last candle. She gently shakes her head and sighs.

Lesley dramatically closes the notebook. Courtney gasps.

Lesley looks up and smiles at the room confidently.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

Um...hi. As some of you know, it's my birthday and this is my birthday party. What some might not know is that I'm sharing the party with my cousin, Cassandra.

Cassandra sits up proudly.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

She's going to be eight next week and she did most of the planning and theme work which I have come to really enjoy over the course of the night. My cousin and Aunt Heather just moved in with my folks and I. I've enjoyed it a lot. It makes me happy to see them every day. I've never had a sibling, nor a sister nonetheless, but with Cassandra here, I get to experience it and I love it and I love her.

(beat)

I love my family.

(slighter beat)

I don't say that enough whatsoever. My parents have always put me first, before anything else in their life and I didn't exactly notice that until these past few weeks. I mean, they threw me this giant party and

(looking at Janet and Tim)

It's the best Sweet 16 I could have ever imagined it to be.

(beat)

They aren't perfect, but at the end of the day, who is?

Janet and Tim smile.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

Everything they do, they do to try to help me and boy, do I need a lot of that, but I know that no matter what, they've got my back.

Lesley pauses as if thinking of what to say next.

LESLEY (CONT'D)

My Gramma is one of the nicest people on this planet-

CASSANDRA

(yelling)

-It's true!

LESLEY

(chuckling)

Yeah. See, even Cassandra agrees. She is the only person who has never fought with me to this day. Sure we have some disagreements, but she always listens to me and we always compromise. I don't know where I would be without her.

(looking at the family as a whole)

My family are the people who I can bring any situation to the table and they will stick around for hours trying to solve it. They give me the world and I am so grateful and rather lucky to have been born into it.

Gramma mouths "I love you."

Lesley smiles and takes a breath before:

LESLEY (CONT'D)

Would you guys be able to come up and help me light my sixteenth and final candle?

The crowd claps as Janet, Tim, Heather, Cassandra, and Gramma walk towards the middle of the dance floor towards Lesley.

Janet's eyes are a little watery. She and Tim hug Lesley. Afterwards, Heather and Cassandra hug her.

Lesley looks at Gramma and she could not look any happier. She takes Lesley's arms and holds them as she kisses Lesley on the cheek. Before pulling away, Gramma whispers:

GRAMMA

Thank you, Sweetness.

The whole family squeezes in to light the candle. They pose with great smiles and the photographer takes their picture.

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE FLOOR- NIGHT

Music plays in the background. Lesley studies her guests dancing on the dance floor. Cassandra seems to be having the time of her life with her friends and mom.

Lesley walks up to the DJ and tells him something. The DJ nods and Lesley walks away.

MUSIC UP: A nice, sweet slow-dance song.

DJ
(into a microphone)
Alright everybody. As per request of Lesley, she invites her father, Tim, to the dance floor to share a Father/Daughter dance together.

Everyone, but Tim, exits the dance floor. He takes Lesley's hands.

Lesley and Tim awkwardly sway back and forth. The rest of the banquet hall quietly watches them from the tables.

TIM
(quietly)
Did any of your friends have a Father/Daughter dance?

LESLEY
(shaking her head)
No, but I wanted to have one.

From afar, Janet cannot stop smiling and takes a few pictures with her phone (with the flash on).

A few moments pass and Lesley stops dancing.

TIM
What's wrong?

LESLEY
Just one second.

Lesley walks to the edge of the dance floor and waves to Cassandra.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
(to Cassandra)
Come here!

Cassandra walks up to Lesley.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
Do you want to take over?

Cassandra smiles greatly and nods over enthusiastically.

Tim welcomes Cassandra and the two continue the dance for a few more moments until the song ends.

Cassandra gives Tim a big hug.

CLOSE UP: LESLEY SMILING AT THE TWO.

Soon the music is back to its regular pumped-up music and more people join on the dance floor.

CUT TO:

INT. BANQUET HALL- NIGHT

Lesley and Mable chat while sitting at a table. They laugh and seem to be on better terms now.

Richie and Courtney appear from the dance floor and stand in front of the two girls.

RICHIE
Are you two going to dance?

COURTNEY
Yeah! C'mon! Dance with us! Lesley,
it's your party. Dance!

LESLEY
I don't know any of these songs,
though.

COURTNEY
So?

LESLEY
Didn't you see me earlier? I'm bad
at dancing.

RICHIE
Lesley, here's the secret:
everyone's bad at dancing, but it's
still fun.

Lesley gives the group a look.

LESLEY
 (to Mable)
 Do you want to dance?

MABLE
 I'm fine with anything.

COURTNEY
 Guys, c'mon! It's so easy!

All of a sudden, a simple song like "Cha Cha Slide," by DJ Casper, comes on.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)
 This is the easiest song to dance
 to known to man.

LESLEY
 (jokingly annoyed)
 Fine!

The four of them head over to the dance floor. Most of Lesley's friends are there dancing to the song correctly. Lesley starts dancing with her friends.

Within a matter of seconds, Cassandra and her friends swarm the dance floor. They do not bother to dance correctly and dance crazily.

Lesley laughs and begins to dance with the younger crowd. She cracks herself up laughing and soon everyone has joined in.

FADE TO:

INT. LESLEY'S LIVING ROOM- DAY- A FEW MONTHS LATER

Lesley, Mable, and Courtney are sitting on the couch watching T.V. They are sharing one large blanket and they all wear fuzzy sweaters.

Janet walks in the room, all excitedly, and stands in front of the T.V., blocking it.

LESLEY
 Mom, move. You're blocking the T.V.

JANET
 I will, but guess what?

LESLEY
 What?

JANET
You're senior pictures came in!

COURTNEY
(to Lesley)
Oooh! Mine came in today, too!

LESLEY
Can I see?

Janet hands the envelope to Lesley. She opens them and studies them.

LESLEY (CONT'D)
I look nice!

MABLE
Can I see?

Mable and Courtney move in to see the pictures.

COURTNEY
Awww, Lesley! You look so pretty!

MABLE
Those are great!

LESLEY
Thanks, guys.

JANET
You look beautiful in them.

LESLEY
Thanks, Mom.

Lesley puts the pictures back in the envelope and hands it back to Janet. Janet smiles and starts to leave until:

JANET
Oh! Your father and I were talking...would you want a graduation party?

Lesley is surprised and looks at Mable and Courtney would nod their heads "yes" to Lesley.

LESLEY
(smiling)
I'd love one.

CUT TO BLACK.
THE END.