Title page/Story info

Echoes of Her

A Musical

Written by Mariyah Harvey

CHARACTERS

CHARM (16, Black)
Vibrant, emotionally complex Black teen whose brilliance was as striking as her suffering. Through Naomi's eyes, Charm is a whirlwind—artistic, impulsive, radiant, and fragile. Living with bipolar disorder, she struggles to be heard in a family that doesn't know how to hold space for her intensity. Her charisma masks deep pain and unfolds in fragments: diary entries, memories, and the echoes of love and misunderstanding left behind.

NAOMI (14-15, Black)
Quiet, observant, and emotionally guarded, Naomi is the "easier" daughter—the one who stays small to survive. Her relationship with Charm is tangled: she admires her, resents her, and fears becoming like her. Naomi doesn't understand the depth of her sister's pain until it's too late.

NARRATOR (late 20s-early 30s, Black)
The adult version of Naomi, guiding the audience through the story of her sister and their family. Wounded by regret and fueled by love, she is trying to break the silence she once lived in. Her voice is thoughtful and raw, sometimes poetic, sometimes plainspoken. She doesn't claim to have the answers—only a need to tell the truth as she sees it now.

GRAMMY (late 60s, Black)
Wise, complicated, proud, and fiercely loving, Grammy was the only one who truly saw Charm for who she was. She lived with bipolar disorder herself, and though she couldn't escape her own pain, she passed on a kind of emotional language the rest of the family never spoke. Naomi remembers her as both mystical and grounded, full of contradictions—and full of love. Someone she also couldn't reach.

MOM (late 30s-early 40s, Black)
A tough, emotionally distant mother who carries her own unspoken traumas. She tries to hold the family together through control and criticism, but her love comes out as frustration and fear. Naomi remembers her as someone impossible to please, yet now sees a woman shaped by survival. Her silence is heavy, but not without cause—and that understanding comes too late.

DR. P (late 50s, White)
A calm, steady presence in the chaos, Dr. P is the kind of therapist who listens more than she speaks. Naomi remembers her as someone who showed up, took notes, and followed the process—but not someone who truly reached Charm. She may have been the wrong fit: too measured for Charm's storm, too cautious for the urgency of her pain. While her presence brought structure, her inability to intervene meaningfully haunts Naomi in hindsight.

ENSEMBLE

SETTING

It's modern-day New York City during the 2010s. The play takes place in an apartment, a therapist office, and a highschool.

NOTES FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT:

The use of "//" will indicate when one character is interrupting another.

PROLOGUE.

(*A spotlight shines on a stool that sits center stage. NARRATOR enters from the darkness. She has her diary in her hand, her hair is pulled back into a sleek bun and she wears business casual clothing. Narrator sits on the stool and opens her diary.*)

NARRATOR *(reading from the diary)*
I wish I could pinpoint when things started, but all I can tell others when they ask is to always check up on your loved ones. Even if they aren't very loved by you, there's a connection. It's hard to pinpoint the start, but there is always a breaking point.

(Narrator pulls out an amber vial of pills. CHARM enters wearing her school uniform, and her hair is a bit of a mess. Narrator gives the bottle to Charm.)

CHARM
Thanks for holding my meds for me. You know how much trouble I'll be in if I don't stay on top of them.

NARRATOR
You were fine without them.

CHARM
You know how I was without them.

NARRATOR
But//

MOM *(OS)*
Naomi!

(MOM enters, quickly walking up to Narrator. She wears scrubs.)

CHARM
Here she goes.

MOM
What did I say about your sister?

CHARM *(shaking the amber vial)*
You don't have to treat her like a baby. Coddling her like she's 12.

MOM *(ignoring Charm, focusing on Narrator)*
I deal with her. Not you. You stay away. You are to stay perfect the way you are. She'll break you.

(Beat. Narrator pulls out another bottle of pills and hands it to Mom.)

NARRATOR *(reading from diary)*
Like I said before. I can't remember when things turned this bad…or maybe when I realized that families don't normally act like this.

(Narrator pulls out another amber vial. Together they all give the bottles a shake. The three start to harmonize a deep soulful tune. Music for "THE PIECES THAT FALL BEHIND" starts. They don't sing, they talk through the song as if they are at a spoken word poetry slam.)

ENSEMBLE
THE SOUND THAT RINGS ALMOST EVERYDAY.

NARRATOR
THE SOUND THAT REMINDS ME OF MY SISTER'S PAIN.

CHARM
A REMINDER OF HOW MUCH I HAVE TO STAY IN MY LANE.

MOM
ALL I SEE ARE HER LOOSE PILLS AND MY MOTHER'S CANE.

ENSEMBLE
THE SOUND THAT RINGS ALMOST EVERYDAY.

CHARM
"I wish. I wish. I wish." That can't be all you can say?

NARRATOR
I wish//

CHARM
Hey!

(Beat.)

NARRATOR
If only she knew how much I saw of her and how much I understand her now.

(*In unison, they shake their bottles again. Lights out. Through the dark, the shaking continues, getting louder and louder.)*

SCENE 1.

(*The echo of the shaking gets lower and lower. It's 2010 in New York City.*

Lights up on a High school hallway. It's mid fall. The lockers are decorated with little orange and red leaves. There's a door that reads "PRINCIPAL OFFICE". Sitting by the door is CHARM, still quietly shaking her vial of pills. You can hear yelling coming from the other side of the door.

NARRATOR enters with the diary and the same stool from the prologue.)

NARRATOR *(to the audience)*
There she is, my Charm.

(*MOM comes out of the Principal's office, slamming the door behind her. Charm jumps up onto her feet and shoves the amber vial into her pocket. Her mother pauses and takes a deep breath as she looks over at her daughter. Charm opens and closes her mouth like a fish out of water. Mom walks away annoyed. Music for "PUSH THROUGH" starts.)*

NARRATOR
It's been hard, real hard. The people she craves are gone. She wants to talk and speak, but she doesn't know where to start.

CHARM (*falls back into the chair by the office*)
I AM SO CONFUSED.
I AM SO FAR REMOVED.
I DON'T KNOW WHY I FEEL LIKE THIS.
EMPTY AND FLOATING INTO AN ABYSS.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY I FEEL LIKE THIS OR WHAT I SHOULD DO.

(*The bell RINGS and the sound of STUDENTS comes flooding through the hallways. Charm stares off with longing. We see a clique of students walk by.)*

CHARM (cont')
I KINDA JUST WANT TO LET GO.
OR AT LEAST TAKE IT SLOW.
IS THAT AN OPTION?

CAN I HAVE TIME TO MAKE MY REFLECTION?

IT'S NOT A PROBLEM ABOUT FITTING IN.
I THINK IT'S MORE ABOUT BEING SOCIAL AND WHERE TO BEGIN.
THE TEACHERS CALL IN MY MOTHER
AND NOW SHE THINKS I'M BEING MORE OF A BOTHER.

NOW I'M IN THERAPY.
IT WAS A DECISION MADE BEGRUDGINGLY.

ENSEMBLE
OH BOOHOO!
JUST DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO.

NARRATOR
She was never a runner, and she didn't know how to fight. Charm always had this idea to just get through. As if there was this mystical bright light at the end of the tunnel.

ENSAMBLE *(whisper)*
PUSH THROUGH.
PUSH THROUGH.
PUSH THROUGH.

(As the whispers start, the lights start to dim, forming two spotlights, one on Narrator and the other on Charm.)

CHARM
THERE'S A WAY OUT.
THERE'S ALWAYS A LOOPHOLE.
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT GRAMMY WOULD SAY.
BUT SHE'S GONE, A DEAR PIECE OF MY SOUL.

IT'S OKAY TO LOSE MY COOL.
BUT MAYBE I SHOULD SMILE?
I JUST HAVE TO PUSH AND PUSH AND PUSH AND PUSH…
TODAY FEELS LIKE RUNNING A MILE.

I AM STILL CONFUSED.
I AM A BIT FAR REMOVED.
I WISH I COULD UNDERSTAND WHY I FEEL LIKE THIS.

EMPTY AND FLOATING INTO AN ABYSS.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY I FEEL LIKE THIS OR WHAT I SHOULD DO.

(NAOMI enters and stands next to Narrator, and the spotlight grows to include her. Naomi watches Charm's struggle.)

NARRATOR *(to Naomi)*
You know, you could really do something.

(Naomi does a small surprised jump and looks around. She shakes her head as she tugs at her backpack and walks off stage. Lights out. There is a low hum because the music never stops.)

SCENE 2.

(*Lights up on the family home. Naomi enters her room. Narrator sits at the edge of the bed with the diary in hand. Naomi shuts the door behind her, drops her bag to the ground, and launches herself onto the bed.*)

NARRATOR
Long Day?

NAOMI
Too long.

NARRATOR
What's on your mind?

NAOMI *(sits up.)*
I don't know what I'm doing wrong.

NARRATOR
You're doing something wrong?

NAOMI
Or maybe I'm not doing enough?

(The two share a look.)

NARRATOR & NAOMI
Charm.

(Beat. Narrator starts to flip through the diary unamused.)

NAOMI
I want to help Charm. At least I am trying to. She's in therapy now and she may hate it, but it'll help. It has to.

NARRATOR
"Has to"?

NAOMI
Mhm. Has to.

(The lights begin to dim. Fog blows from under the bed and a pink light follows. Narrator drops the diary into Naomi's lap.)

NARRATOR
You know what would help?

NAOMI
What does a writer do when she's stuck?

(Music for "WHAT ABOUT HER?" starts.)

NAOMI
TICK TOCK TICK TOCK
HOW DO I SHUT OFF THE CLOCK?

NARRATOR
Why?

NAOMI
TICK TOCK TICK TOCK
OH PLEASE MAKE IT STOP.

I WANT TO WRITE, DREAM, AND ESCAPE,
BUT I CAN'T LEAVE CHARM.
I'M WAY TOO AFRAID.

GRAMMY IS GONE AND WITH NO TIME TO SAY BYE.
I'M ALL CHARM HAS AND I CAN'T LET HER TAKE THE BAIT.
YET, I'M STUCK ON THE SIDE. AFRAID TO LOOK HER IN THE EYE.
A FEW MONTHS AND NO FUNERAL, SHE'S PROBABLY LOOKING AT THIS AS IF THIS IS HER FATE.

NO, I CAN'T JUST WRITE.
I CAN'T JUST ESCAPE.
I CANNOT USE THE PEN, NOT JUST YET.
ESPECIALLY WHEN MY SISTER LOOKS LIKE SHE'LL BREAK.

WHY WOULD I LEAVE HER ALONE WHEN SHE'S SUFFERING?
I WANT TO GET IN CHARM'S HEAD AND SAY ITS OKAY TO BE SCARED
I'M USUALLY QUIET AND OBSERVING.

YET NOT SEEING THAT GRAMMY WAS ALONE.
CHARM NEEDS TO KNOW THAT I AM NEAR.

I CAN'T JUST WRITE.
WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE TO ESCAPE?
I'LL HOLD HER HAND AND PUT UP A FIGHT.
I'LL DO ANYTHING FOR CHARM'S SAKE.

(The music slowly fades out, the pink light and fog slowly disappear as the room returns to its original state. Naomi shuts the diary and hands it back to Narrator.)

NARRATOR
Don't forget to look into yourself, too.

(Narrator takes the diary and exits. Beat. BANG. Naomi is immediately up on her feet. She looks out towards the audience anxiously. Lights out.)

SCENE 3.

(*Mom is in the kitchen moving pots and pans around loudly. There are ingredients on the counter next to her and she mumbles belligerently. There's also a table center stage that is cluttered with letters and a few bags. Narrator sits at the table as if she's viewing the scene with the audience. Charm enters with a piece of paper in her hand.*)

MOM (*frustrated with everything*)
Fucking shit!

(*Mom turns around towards the table but jumps back once she sees her daughter just standing across from her*.)

CHARM
I'm sorry//

MOM
You can't just stand behind me like that. What if I was holding something hot? What's wrong with you?

(*Mom trudges over to the bags on the cluttered table. She opens the big purse, taking out a pack of cigarettes and a lighter.*)

CHARM *(hesitantly extends the letter to Mom*)
I just…this is for you.

MOM
What's that?

CHARM
A letter from homeroom.

MOM
About?

CHARM
It's the child protective service warning again…

(*Beat. Mom snatches the letter out of Charm's hand and takes a seat at the table. A somber melody starts.*)

MOM
They couldn't talk about this crap at the meeting today?

CHARM
They can't take us away, right?

MOM (*laughing*)
Who's us? You're the crazy one here, not your sister.

(*Charm stares at her, speechless. Narrator stands in front of Charm defensively. Music for "TOUGH LOVE, HARD TIMES" starts.*)

CHARM
I'VE BEEN TRYING.
JUST LIKE YOU TOLD ME.
I PROMISE I'M NOT LYING.
IT'S JUST HARDER THAN IT SEEMS.

MOM
YOUR BEST IS CLEARLY NOT GOOD ENOUGH.
WHAT ARE YOU SHAKING FOR?
I RAISED YOU TO BE TOUGH.
IF YOU CAN'T HANDLE IT, THERE'S THE DOOR.

CHARM
What? You can't kick me out.

MOM
I can do whatever I want. I brought you into this world and I can take you out.

CHARM (*starts crying*)
WHY? WHAT DID I DO?
WHY DO YOU HATE ME?
WHY ARE WE SO OUT OF TUNE?

MOM
You.

CHARM
Me? What did I do?

MOM
IF I COULD DO ANYTHING, I'D EASILY PRESS UNDO.
THIS CHILD OF MINE DOES NOTHING BUT MAKE THINGS HARD.
BUT AS I THINK LIKE THAT, THEN I FEEL CRUEL.
I SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN RID OF YOU FROM THE START.

CHARM
You don't mean that. Shut your mouth!

MOM (*laughing*)
WHAT IS THIS, A LOVER'S SPAT?
MY JOB AT THE HOSPITAL ALREADY BRINGS MY THOUGHTS SOUTH.
I DON'T NEED YOU AND I DON'T NEED THIS.
I'VE BEEN TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU SINCE I WAS SIX.

CHARM
I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A SITUATION SO THICK.
I KNOW THIS FAMILY IS TROUBLE.
BUT, I AM NOT YOUR PROBLEM TO FIX.
I JUST HAVE TO GRADUATE. JUST TWO MORE YEARS.
GIVE ME THAT TIME AND I'LL BE OUT OF YOUR HAIR.

(*At this point, Charm can barely keep herself up. Narrator is her anchor. The two slowly walk off stage. The lights dim, closing in on the messy table with Mom still puffing on her cigarette.*)

MOM
DO WHAT YOU WANT.
I'D BE SURPRISED IF YOU BECOME A GRAD.
TWO YEARS? WOULDN'T THAT MAKE YOU EMOTIONALLY IMPAIRED?
AT THIS RATE AND THOSE GRADES, TWO YEARS WOULD ACTUALLY BE FAB.

BUT I KNOW YOU, MORE THAN YOU THINK.
I BORE YOU, I MADE THOSE EYES YOU USE TO BLINK.

YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE THE GOLDEN CHILD.
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE BETTER THAN ME AND FLAUNT YOUR SMILE.

IF ANYTHING, I AM DISGUSTED.
NOT ONLY WITH YOU BUT WITH ME.
MY MOTHER WAS JUST AS BUSTED…
I ONLY WISH YOU COULD HAVE SEEN.

(Mom puffs on her cigarette again, this time a bit more defeated and regretful. Naomi enters. Mom quickly puts the cigarette out and tries to look a bit more put together.)

MOM
Welcome back home, my sweet pea! I haven't started dinner yet, just taking a little break.

NAOMI
Can I talk to Charm?

MOM
Do you need something?

NAOMI
No, it's just//

MOM
You were eavesdropping?

NAOMI
I'm just a bit worried about her.

MOM
She's fine. What you need to focus on is college. Maybe picking up extracurriculars again?

NAOMI
Mom…What about Grammy?

MOM *(starts to shuffle with the envelopes on the table)*
What about her?

NAOMI
You know what she meant to Charm. I mean, look how things are. You came to our school today. Don't you see what's happening? Charm and Grandma…they are//

MOM *(angry, overbearing, and loud.)*
She is nothing like that old bag.

(Beat.)

NAOMI
Are you sure about that?

(*Naomi walks away. Mom sits there defeated at the messy table of letters, before reaching into her bag and pulling out an amber vial of pills. Lights out.)*

SCENE 4.

(*Lights up on a room in a Nursing Home. GRAMMY sits upright in her bed with her knitting needles and balls of yarn, a pitcher of water, and a basket of medicine sits on the side table next to her, the TV is on with a game show. Narrator sits at the foot of Grammy's bed. Her window is open, chill air blowing, the sound of leaves fighting against the windy weather.*

Mom and Naomi enter the room holding flowers and pastries. Charm lags behind the two. Mom finds a vase in the closet and starts setting up the flowers on the table with the medicine. Naomi is next to her, holding the box of pastries. Charm stands by the door watching them quietly as she tightly holds onto the strap of her bag.)

NARRATOR
Grammy was old and senile, but at least she cared for Charm. She was the only person I could remember who showed an ounce of light for her.

GRAMMY (*gestures for a hug*)
My babies! I've missed you all.

MOM
We come every weekend.

GRAMMY
You come every weekend. I haven't seen the girls in forever. (*To Charm*.) and why are you way over there when I'm way over here?

(*Charm looks over at Mom, who pays her no mind, before walking towards Grammy's bedside. Grammy gives Charm a tight embrace. Charm is stiff at first but relaxes after a second.*)

MOM (*pushing Naomi*)
Alright, well, I have a busy schedule. I pay all the bills here. Now it's Naomi's turn. *(To Naomi)* Hug your Grandmother while I check her meds.

GRAMMY
You don't have to do that.

(*Beat. Grammy lets go of Charm and hugs Naomi who is trying not to squish the pastries. She hugs Naomi a little less aggressively.*)

MOM
We're not going to argue over this again.

GRAMMY
All you do is speak and never listen. Blah, blah, therapy. Blah, blah, Medicines. Blah Blah death!

MOM (*shifting through the cabinets and medicine bottles*)
You're making no sense.

GRAMMY
I'm fine!

MOM
You're acting like a child. Just let me help you.

GRAMMY *(to Charm)*
Charm, baby, show me your bag of crafts.

MOM
Medicine first.

GRAMMY
I'd rather piss in a cup.

CHARM
It's okay, Big G. Take your pills and then we can crochet!

GRAMMY
I don't like how they taste.

MOM
Throw it back like a shot. You used to do that all the time.

(*Beat. Everyone freezes except Narrator. Music for "WOMEN IN OUR FAMILY" starts.*)

NARRATOR
I miss Grammy…and when I told stories of her, I'd get apologies. At my prime teen years, I didn't know what to say back when they did. I just gave them a sad smile.

NAOMI
I always hated doing it, but I don't know what to do in those situations.

NARRATOR
And then mom would say//

NARRATOR & NAOMI
just smile and nod. Then give them a quiet thank you.

NAOMI
STAND UP STRAIGHT
DON'T LOOK WRECKED.

NARRATOR
WIPE YOUR TEARS.
WE HAVE TO BE PERFECT.
WHO CARES WHAT SHE SAYS?

NAOMI
YOU KNOW I CAN'T DEFLECT.
WELL, THAT'S HOW MOM IS.
WE HAVE TO BE PERFECT.

NARRATOR
THE WOMEN IN OUR FAMILY…
THEY ALL BECOME JUST A BIT UNHINGED.

NAOMI
I THINK YOU MEAN DERANGED OR INSANE.

NARRATOR
BUT HEARING THESE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO…
I KNOW THAT GRANDMA IS NOT TO BLAME.

YOU HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO.

AND WE LIVE IN A CIRCUS
CONTROLLING, DEMANDING, NO MATTER WHAT MOM WILL SAY
YOU'LL SOON LEARN THAT NONE OF US IS PERFECT

NARRATOR & NAOMI
AND THAT'S OKAY.

NAOMI
Then…why'd she have to die?

(*THUNDER roars. Everyone starts to move again. Mom goes over to close the window. Narrator and Naomi stare at each other before Narrator finally breaks the tension between the two.)*

MOM
I thought I told you to stop keeping your window open.

(Grammy shrugs. Her face is now looking down into her hands. Her mood shifts from the burst of happy energy to something low and cold.)

NAOMI
Grammy?

(She ignores Naomi. Mom sighs in frustration and starts fidgeting with things in the room.)

MOM
She doesn't want this. She doesn't want that. I can tell you right now that I am//

CHARM *(putting a hand up at her mother to stop her)*
It's alright, Grammy. Why don't we just lay in bed? It could be like a sleepover.

(Grammy finally moves just a bit to look over at Charm curiously. She nods slowly. Charm turns towards her mom and sister, giving them a knowing look before tending to her grandmother. Mom leaves the room, and Naomi follows after her hesitantly. Narrator watches contently.)

NARRATOR
If I paid more attention, this could have been me and Charm. Things could have been better. We should've watched and learned from her.

CHARM
Should. Could. Would. You're not the only one who wants things to be different.

(Grammy starts to laugh like a little girl getting ready for a playdate. The lights flash again before it goes dark.)

SCENE 5.

(The lights flash bright and blindingly back home to Charm's bedroom, similar to Naomi's but, the bed is on the other side. The rug color is different, and so are other furnished pieces. The room is a complete mess. We see Naomi's bedroom on the opposite side of the stage.

Charm enters her bedroom and slams the door behind her. She's huffing and puffing for air before she slowly slides down the door. Yelling is heard from outside her room.

Charm starts to cry.)

MOM *(off stage)*
I didn't tell you for your own good! But now I'm a bad mom. I'm the monster. I put a roof over your head! I feed you!

CHARM
Grammy…

(There's a knock on the door. Charm covers her mouth, trying to shut herself up. Beat. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. It happens again, and Charm jumps away from the door and starts to wipe her eyes.)

NAOMI *(from the other side of the door)*
Charm? It's me.

(The door slowly creaks open. Charm and Naomi hold intense eye contact for a second. Charm starts to break down again. Naomi catches her sister and pulls her into a hug. Narrator enters the room, dragging a chair with her. She closes the door behind her.)

CHARM *(aggressively sobbing)*
Why! Why!

NAOMI
I'm sorry.

(Naomi slowly walks Charm to her bed. Narrator sets up her chair across from the siblings.)

CHARM
I just wanted to see her. I did the right thing this time. I've been good and quiet. I've been trying my best. But she won't let me see her. Just to find out that she's gone? Grammy is gone!

NAOMI
I'm sorry, Charm.

CHARM
And she knew! That woman! She never cared about Grammy. She has always been mean.

NAOMI
I know, Charm. I know how close you were to Grammy. I wish there was something I could do for you.

(Charm shakes her head, letting go of her sister and wiping away tears.)

CHARM
No. I just should've been there.

NAOMI
I'm sorry.

CHARM
You knew, right?

(Beat. Naomi nods slowly. Charm laughs.)

NAOMI
Charm//

CHARM
It's not that I am amused or surprised, but a part of me hoped for better from you. You can't even say anything more than "I'm sorry." What can you do for me when you've barely been a person I can call my sister?

(The lights begin to dim. A spotlight shines on Narrator as she opens the Diary.)

NARRATOR
"Dear diary, where do I start?"

(Another spotlight shines on the girls in their rooms. Music for "STUCK" starts.)

CHARM
I'M STUCK. *(She takes an audible deep breath.)* I'M STUCK.
THE ANXIETY EATS ME, AND MY BODY JUST WANTS TO CRUMBLE.
IS THIS JUST MY LUCK?
AM I FORCED TO GO DOWN WITH A HARD TUMBLE?

NARRATOR *(reading from the diary to the audience)*
"I don't know if I can go on right now."

NAOMI *(pacing back and forth)*
WAS I WRONG?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
IT'S NOT LIKE I STRUNG HER ALONG.
AND FOR HER I KNOW WHERE I LAND.

NARRATOR
"I'm all alone now. My Grammy…Oh my Grammy! Why'd you leave so soon?"

CHARM & NAOMI
BREATHE IN. BREATHE OUT. THAT'S WHAT THEY'LL SAY.
I'M BREATHING AND I'M BREATHING, BUT THAT WON'T HELP THE PAIN.

NARRATOR
"Why is there no one who can understand me? Who can understand what I see? Or how much this hurts me?"

CHARM *(turns towards the wall that's connected to Naomi's room)*
IT'S AN UNBEARABLE PAIN.

NAOMI
NOT BEING ABLE TO HELP MY SISTER?
I THINK I MIGHT GO INSANE.
I KNOW I HAVEN'T BEEN THE BEST, BUT I CAN'T DISMISS HER.

CHARM & NAOMI
I'M STUCK AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

NARRATOR
"Maybe I shouldn't have kicked out Naomi? I don't know…I guess I wanted to be alone. Everything was so overwhelming. My face was hot, and my throat hurt. My chest felt like there was a huge hole carved out of it. I didn't know what to do…I couldn't say anything…"

CHARM
I'M STUCK. I'M STUCK.
YES, MY BODY WON'T MOVE.

NAOMI
SOMEONE MIGHT AS WELL HIT ME WITH A TRUCK.
IF I CAN'T SAVE CHARM, THEN THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO PROVE.

CHARM & NAOMI
BREATHE IN. BREATHE OUT. THAT'S WHAT THEY'LL SAY.
I'M BREATHING AND I'M BREATHING, BUT THAT WON'T HELP THE PAIN.

CHARM
IT'S AN UNBEARABLE PAIN.

NAOMI
NOT BEING ABLE TO HELP MY SISTER?
I THINK I MIGHT GO INSANE.
I KNOW I HAVEN'T BEEN THE BEST, BUT I CAN'T DISMISS HER.

CHARM & NAOMI
I'M STUCK AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

(Charm falls to the floor, onto her side, and pulls her knees into her chest. She cries. Naomi falls to her knees, distressed. Beat.

Narrator slams the diary shut. The music suddenly stops. All eyes are on Narrator as she gets up, leaving the diary on the chair. She walks over to Naomi. The melody changes to something softer and warmer.)

NARRATOR
YOU PACE. YOU SIT. YOU MAY CRY ABOUT THIS SHIT.
BUT THE WORLD IS NOT ENDING AND YOU CAN OPEN THE DOOR.

HER WORLD IS DIFFERENT AND I KNOW SHE DOESN'T LISTEN.
YET YOU HAVE THE POWER TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

(Naomi looks at Narrator as if she's shown her the way. As Narrator sings to Naomi, they walk over to Charm's room. Naomi sits on the floor next to Charm.)

NAOMI
BREATHE IN. BREATHE OUT. I THINK THAT'S A GOOD START.

CHARM *(slowly sits up)*
I'M BREATHING AND BREATHING, YET I FEEL LIKE I'LL FALL APART.

NAOMI
WE MAY FIGHT, BUT WE CAN LAUGH.
SO GO AHEAD AND CRY. FEELING YOUR EMOTIONS WON'T MAKE YOU BAD.

CHARM
BUT I'M STUCK//

NAOMI
YEAH, SO WHAT?
TODAY THAT'S OKAY, BUT GRAMMY ALWAYS BELIEVED YOU WERE ABLE TO TAME.

CHARM & NAOMI
BREATHE IN. BREATHE OUT. THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT.

(Narrator walks out of the room. Before walking out the door, she looks over her shoulder and smiles at the girls. Lights out.)

SCENE 6.

(*Lights up on Dr P's office. Charm sits with Dr. P. Her bag of yarn is next to her. The yarn balls are overflowing, and the crochet hook and large pair of scissors stick out of a ball.)*

DR. P
How old were you when your grandmother passed?

CHARM
Five months ago. A week before my birthday. I guess you can say I was pestering my mother about seeing Grammy.

DR. P
Haven't you snuck out other times to see her?

CHARM
Yeah…but I thought I'd ask.

(Beat.)

DR.P
When did the funeral happen?

CHARM
It didn't.

DR. P
How does that make you feel?

CHARM
I'd just like to know when we'll be able to hold a send-off for her…or if we'll be able to.

DR. P
Why wouldn't there be some sort of send-off?

CHARM
If you came to the house, you'd see why.

DR. P
This is important and-

(There's a knock at the door.)

DR. P
Come in.

(Naomi walks in. Narrator pops her head in very curiously, looking over the small therapy room.)

NARRATOR *(to audience)*
I have two words for you. "Family Therapy."

NAOMI *(to Charm and Dr. P)*
Mom won't be here.

CHARM
Of course.

DR. P
Okay, that's okay. We're really here for you guys. Always.

CHARM
You mean me, right? I don't think Little Miss Perfect needs anything.

(*Naomi doesn't react.)*

CHARM (con't)
And there it is. *(Mimicking mom)* "Don't speak to her. She is a bad influence. Nothing good ever happens if you talk to her. Stay in your room." *(normal voice to Naomi)* Don't you ever think for yourself?

NAOMI
How do you think you got here?

NARRATOR
Therapy was something Charm started recently. It was before Grammy died, and she started to "act out." Mom was frustrated that she wasn't quiet and obedient anymore. Charm found a voice that she didn't know how to use.

CHARM
I'm here because Grammy said it would be good to talk to someone.

NAOMI
And you think Mom would listen to her?

CHARM
And you think I would listen to you?

NAOMI
Whose side do you think I'm on?

CHARM
I don't know…and I thought I did but…

(Charm doesn't finish her sentence as if there's something stuck in her throat. She sighs, not making eye contact with anyone.)

NAOMI
Charm//

CHARM *(putting a hand up to stop Naomi)*
No.

(Beat.)

DR.P
Do you get shut down like this at home?

CHARM & NAOMI
I'm sorry?

DR.P
Charm, do you get shut down like this at home?

(Charm attempts to answer the question. She gives up. A soulful melody plays for "PUSH THROUGH".)

DR. P (con't)
It's alright. Take your time.

CHARM
I WAS SO CONFUSED.
I WAS SO FAR REMOVED.
I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING, DOC.
BUT I DID EVERYTHING AS I FOUGHT.

(Charm can't look at her sister or Dr. P. The tune shifts to another soulful melody for "STUCK".)

NAOMI
IF I COULD TAKE YOUR PAIN, I WOULD INSTEAD.
BUT, DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT I SAID?
BREATHE IN. BREATHE OUT. THAT'S A GREAT START.
JUST BREATHE AND BREATHE, AND HOPE YOU WON'T FALL APART.

CHARM *(pleading, begging, frustrated, and angry)*
I KINDA JUST WANT TO LET GO.
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TAKE IT SLOW.
GIVE ME ANOTHER OPTION, PLEASE.
I THINK I HAVE A DISEASE!

(The music immediately stops, and there's a moment of silence. The only thing that we can hear is Dr. P writing notes on a notepad.)

NARRATOR
Grammy had a disease.

NAOMI
Grammy had a disease.

(Naomi and Narrator look over at Charm. All eyes on her.)

ENSEMBLE *(whispering)*
DISEASE.
DISEASE.
DISEASE.
DISEASE.

DR. P
Yes, I did look at the family history as requested by your mother. Grammy had Borderline Personality Disorder and bipolar disorder. Now, I wouldn't call this a disease. It's a matter of adapting.

NARRATOR
Adapting.

NAOMI
Adapting?

DR. P *(to Charm)*
Tell me how you feel. Ease into your seat and get comfortable. You've been tense since you walked in here, and then Naomi comes in. Do you get what I'm saying?

(Charm slumps back into her chair. She hesitates before she starts talking.)

CHARM
…I don't think there's a way to describe everything. I can't even help explain how I feel, let alone look you in the eye and tell you that everything I see is real.

DR. P
So why don't you make something of that?

CHARM
Well, I'm here, right?

DR. P
I did see you're struggling in school//

CHARM
Oh, spare me, you've been in high school. This stuff is hard…and I'm not like the others. I can't stand in the front and give a speech. I can't have letters and numbers mixing.

DR. P
Yeah, but you always choose an art elective. How long have you been doing art?

(Beat.)

NAOMI
She'd draw Grammy little things all the time. Her room was filled with pictures, letters, and so many other little projects that Charm made by hand. If there's one thing I know about my sister, it's that she…is amazing.

CHARM
Okay, okay, it's not that big of a deal.

DR. P
I think it is. If you can't express yourself with words, why not do it with your hands and your art? What can you convey with the colors flying around and the paint hitting your face? Don't tell me, show me. Show everyone.

(Charm looks at everyone in the room. All the characters then turn their heads to the audience. Charm gets up and walks to the edge of the stage, looking out in awe.)

CHARM
Show everyone.

(Lights out.)

SCENE 7.

(Lights up on the kitchen. The table is cluttered with letters, a landline phone, and garbage bags sit around on the floor. It's late. Mom sits at the table, cigarette in her hand, while rummaging through the piles of letters.)

MOM *(to herself)*
Bills. Bills…more bills…

(Mom sighs. Narrator walks in, diary in her hand. She takes a seat across from Mom.)

MOM (con't)
Mommy dear, if you were going to die, you should've at least had some wealth and left it behind for your kid…or your grandkids?

(Mom opens a letter and continues to become more frustrated.)

NARRATOR *(to audience)*
I have this tendency of waking up sweaty, but my mouth is so dry. I felt like a fish out of water. So sweaty, yet so thirsty.

(Naomi sleepily walks in.)

NAOMI
Mom? What are you doing?

MOM
Oh my love, it's so late. Why aren't you sleeping?

NAOMI
I'm just thirsty//

MOM
Has Charm been keeping you up? I swear to god she's a mess. What's the point of therapy?

(Beat. Mom opens a letter. Naomi pours herself a cup of water.)

NAOMI
Smoking is bad for you.

MOM
I know, sweetie, but mommy needs a pick-me-up.

NAOMI
I wouldn't say that therapy is bad. It's something that takes time.

MOM
Time and money. I mean, the appointments are so expensive. I'm going to have to pick up more shifts.

NAOMI
I thought you were already doing overtime?

MOM *(shrugs)*
Mommy is always working. Forget more shifts, maybe a second job will be the next step.

NAOMI
I could work.

(Mom starts to laugh. Naomi sets her cup down and folds her arms over her chest.)

MOM
My baby cracks the funniest jokes.

NAOMI
No, I want to help Charm.

MOM
She's getting help. That's what the appointments are for.

NAOMI
Okay, well, she needs more than a doctor. Maybe her family? Grammy is gone but//

MOM
I'm doing the best I can.

NARRATOR
Give me a break.

(Naomi hesitates before speaking again.)

NAOMI
Your best is not good enough.

MOM
That's rude.

NAOMI
How do you think Charm felt when you said it to her?

MOM
It's tough love. My mother did it to me. What's so wrong about giving her a little push?

NAOMI
That's psychotic.

MOM
You wouldn't know what a psychotic person looks like.

NARRATOR *(to audience)*
I had hit my limit.

(Naomi is furious. Her hands are balled into fists as she takes a few deep breaths, trying to understand her mother, but that only makes things more complicated for her.)

MOM
Everything is going to//

NAOMI
Why don't you listen to me?!

(Beat. Mom is shocked. Music for "NOT ANOTHER WORD" starts. It's definitely giving an angry rock song vibe.)

NARRATOR
And, god, what a good feeling this was.

NAOMI
DON’T YOU SAY ANOTHER WORD.
ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU MOVE AS IF IT'S NOTHING.
I’M NOT OBLIVIOUS OR JUST SOME NERD.
I KNOW HOW YOU ARE SO UNLOVING.

MOM
I don’t understand where this is coming from.

NAOMI
PLEASE DON’T SAY ANOTHER WORD.
I’M DONE, JUST IN WALKING ON BY.
EVERYTHING YOU SAY AND DO DOES NOT GO UNHEARD.
YOU ARE NOT SO SLY.

I DON’T UNDERSTAND WHAT THE DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN ME AND HER.
YOU TREAT CHARM LIKE GARBAGE, NO WONDER SHE HATES ME.

MOM
Hates you?

NAOMI
YES AND IT’S ALL YOUR FAULT.
YOU BICKER AND WON’T STOP.
CHARM IS AT THE EDGE!
I CAN’T HELP BUT BE SCARED AND PLEAD AND BEG.

SO I ASK YOU TO STOP AND HOLD YOUR WORDS.
YOU’RE A GROWN-UP. WHY DON’T YOU ACT LIKE IT?

MOM
I WORK, I FEED, AND THERE’S A ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD.
HOW UNGREATFUL YOU ARE TO SAY THAT I AM UNFIT.

NARRATOR *(to Naomi)*
She has to be kidding, right?

NAOMI
OH YES, THE BARE MINIMUM IS QUITE NICE.
OH, MOMMY, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE ONE TO NEVER PUT UP A FIGHT.
BUT THINGS HAVE CHANGED AND GRAMMY HAS DIED.
WHAT WERE YOU DOING WHEN CHARM COULDN'T DO ANYTHING BUT CRY?
I'VE WATCHED AND WATCHED…
YOU DEGRADED HER SO MUCH.

(Naomi starts tearing up. Her voice breaks.)

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHARM AND I.
SO I BECAME THE BYSTANDER BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I COULD PROVIDE.

(Narrator gets up and walks over to Naomi, hugging Naomi. Mom gets up to help Naomi. Naomi puts her hand in front of Mom.)

MOM
What do you want me to say?

NARRATOR
I didn't need an explanation from someone who didn't know how to deal with their trauma. I couldn't even look at her.

NAOMI
You're supposed to be here. You're supposed to be strong for <u>both</u> of us.

MOM
I am trying my best. I am trying my very best, Naomi. I just…I don't know what to do. But as you said, my best isn't good enough. So my spoiled kids can come and just yell at me for whatever they want as I work my ass off//

NAOMI
This isn't about you!

(Mom walks back to her chair and reaches for her bag. She pulls out an amber vial of pills and slams it on the table.)

MOM
What about now? Huh? I'm just like her. Just like your grandmother. I'm a mess. The whole family is a mess. Everything is a mess. Is that what you want to hear? That I am defeated? My mother died, and Charm isn't the only one coping. I can't help her any more than I can help myself. I don't have time for therapy. I don't have time to cook and clean. So I'm trying to give her what my mother didn't. Someone to talk to. I provide because that's my place in the world. I've been doing this since the day I could walk and talk on my own. I grew up. We're all different but the same. You might be next…or maybe not at all. I can't promise more than the bare minimum that I've given you.

NARRATOR
I couldn't fully digest what my mother said to me…or maybe I just didn't want to. None of that is an excuse for anything and everything she's been doing.

(Naomi walks away. Mom takes her amber vial of pills and shakes them. She sits at the table. Mom is distressed.

Lights out.)

SCENE 8.

(Lights up back at the nursing home. We're in Grammy's room where Grammy lies in her bed, neatly tucked in. Charm sits next to her. She is drawing in her sketchbook. It's a warm, calm, sunny day.)

GRAMMY
Charm, my darling.

CHARM
I'm almost done! Just a few more minutes.

GRAMMY
My little artist. What are you making me?

CHARM
It's a surprise.

GRAMMY
A surprise? I think I should be giving you a surprise.

CHARM
Stop talking nonsense.

GRAMMY
Your birthday is in two weeks.

CHARM
God no. Don't remind me.

(They both laugh.)

GRAMMY
Have you been seeing someone?

CHARM
Grammy, you know I don't like anyone being around me.

GRAMMY
No dummy, a therapist. Remember what I asked you?

CHARM
Oh, yeah…Yeah, I remember.

GRAMMY
Well?

CHARM
Do you really think I need to talk to someone? I don't even know what to talk about. I told you I'm fine. Everything is fine.

GRAMMY
Why do you refuse help?

CHARM
I don't need help.

(Beat.)

GRAMMY
You remind me a lot of myself when I was younger. I definitely needed a bit of guidance.

CHARM
Seems like you're doing well today.

GRAMMY
Yeah, well, some days are better than others. I have to treasure the days that I have left to be okay.

CHARM
Don't say that. You're still so young, even if you are sick.

GRAMMY
Sick? I'm not sick. I used to exercise every day and take my vitamins right on time.

CHARM
What about your meds?

GRAMMY
The nurses come in and we chat and laugh. It's like we're having a tea party on a warm day. A day like today. I think they'd agree with me.

CHARM
Then why are you here? Why can't you be home with us? Why can't you come home with me?

GRAMMY
Well//

CHARM
It's so suffocating. Every day we argue. Mom won't even try to understand me. I always cause problems. She…She hates me, and I haven't even done anything.

GRAMMY
That's probably my fault.

CHARM
Why does that even matter?!

(Grammy reaches over and strokes Charm's face, gaining her attention from the sketchbook.)

GRAMMY
Listen to me.

(Music for "A PLACE TO ESCAPE" starts.)

THERE ARE THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW.
THINGS YOU WON'T UNDERSTAND.
PEOPLE LIKE US GO WITH OUR OWN FLOW.
WE DO AND FEEL THINGS THAT ARE…UNPLANNED.

CHARM
What are you saying?

(Grammy shakes her head.)

GRAMMY
YOU WON'T GET ME,
BUT THAT'S OKAY BECAUSE I'VE ACCEPTED IT.
I KNOW I CAN'T MAKE YOU SEE,
BUT I STILL WANT TO PICK YOUR BRAIN A BIT.

SO WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT WE'RE NOT SICK.
TALKING TO THE THERAPIST MIGHT GIVE YOU THE ICK,
BUT IT HELPS TO LET GO
AND IT'S A SPACE TO BE SLOW.
FORGET YOUR TROUBLES AND GO AT YOUR OWN PACE.
I JUST WANT YOU TO HAVE AN ESCAPE.

CHARM
I won't really need it.

GRAMMY
Why?

CHARM
I MAY NOT UNDERSTAND, BUT I DO HAVE YOU.
YOU'RE THE REASON WHY I'M ABLE TO BLOOM.

GRAMMY
BUT YOU HAVE SO MUCH MORE AROUND.
WHEN YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, YOU CAN EVEN LEAVE TOWN.
THIS ISN'T YOUR END.

CHARM
BUT YOU'RE TALKING LIKE IT'S YOURS.

(Beat. The music slows down to something more soulful.)

GRAMMY
YOU WON'T GET ME,
AND THAT'S OKAY BECAUSE I DO UNDERSTAND YOUR LITTLE BRAIN.
TODAY IS TODAY, AND FOR TODAY LET'S BE A TEAM.
TOMORROW I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'LL ATTAIN.

SO WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT IT'S OKAY AND DO NOT STRESS.
DON'T TAKE THINGS TOO SERIOUSLY, IT'S JUST A TEST.
A TRIAL OF WILL AND STRENGTH I KNOW YOU'LL DO GOOD.
THERE'S NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE FOR MY GIRL,
IF YOU PUT YOUR MIND TO IT, I KNOW YOU COULD.

I WON'T BEG AND I WON'T PLEAD,

BUT I AM ASKING YOU TO TAKE YOURSELF SERIOUSLY.
WE'RE A DIFFERENT TYPE OF SICK.

GO AHEAD AND WALK IN LIKE YOU OWN THE PLACE.
FORGET YOUR TROUBLES AND GO AT YOUR OWN PACE.
I JUST WANT YOU TO HAVE AN ESCAPE.

(Grammy smiles at Charm. Charm is taking in all the information. She's conflicted.)

GRAMMY (con't)
Alright, time for my meds!

CHARM
Oh, you remembered? Should I get the nurse?

GRAMMY
No, no, it's fine. Everything is okay.

(Charm watches as Grammy collects her basin of medication. She picks up each one to read it and gives them a shake. Charm falls back into her head. The lights slowly dim as the sound of the pill shaking gets louder. Charm is the last thing the audience sees before everything goes dark.)

SCENE 9.

(Lights up on the school, in the art room.. Charm enters with a large blank canvas. She's wearing a dirty smock covered in paint and has her name embroidered in gold.

Charm places her canvas on an easel. A bright white light shines as if it's projecting the canvas.

Charm's phone starts to ring. She picks up the phone from her bag and looks at it, watching it ring. Charm places her phone on the table. It continues to ring. She takes a deep breath. Narrator walks in, Charm's Diary in hand, and sits at an empty easel.)

CHARM *(to herself)*
Just create. Like Grammy said.

NARRATOR
I knew Charm had her solo time at the art classroom in school. A time to just close everyone off. A moment when she can just be her. At least that's what I thought.

(The phone stops ringing. Charm digs into her painter's bag to collect her materials: a few tubes of paint and some paint brushes.)

NARRATOR (con't)
The only way I could have an understanding of my dear sister was when I found her diary.

(Charm finishes her setup, uncapping all the tubes and choosing the right paint brushes. Now she starts to paint. With each of her strokes, the bright white light changes to match what she's doing. A soft melody starts to play.)

NARRATOR (con't)
I was so desperate when I found this. I dived right into it without a care in the world. I would do anything and everything for my sister. So I flipped…and flipped…and flipped and flipped and flipped through the pages!

(Narrator flips open the diary to a page that has a tab.)

NARRATOR (con't)
Then I saw a day like today. A day in December. A cold and hard day for her.

(White-cloud like fog fills the room. It gives the stage a very dream-like vibe.)

NARRATOR (con't)
"Dear diary, I wish could have a redo. I just feel like I'm in this cycle since Grammy left us. Or at least since the last conversation I had with her. Now realizing it, I think she knew she was going to leave us. I should've known. I could've done something. I didn't do anything…What am I supposed to do without her?"

(As Narrator reads, Charm creates different strokes across the canvas. Each stroke matches the feelings Narrator is describing, and the lights change to match.

Charm's phone on the table vibrates. It's a short vibration. Charm reaches for her phone and looks at the new notification. Charm opens her voicemail box, and an automated voice starts. She places the phone back on the table.)

AUTOMATED VOICE
Your mailbox is full. Your mailbox is full. Would you like to listen to your messages?

(Charm reaches over and taps her phone.)

AUTOMATED VOICE (con't)
Here's your first message.

DR. P (VO)
Hi Charm. Just wanted to check in and schedule another appointment. I know things get a little busy, and missing appointments here and there is very common, but//

(Charm reaches over again and presses delete.)

AUTOMATED VOICE
Voicemail deleted.

NARRATOR *(reading from the diary)*
"I missed my therapy appointment last week. I don't feel comfortable there. I was only trying it because Grammy said to, but…it's not doing anything for me. The doctor there is annoying, and now I'm on these meds that make me feel…weird? I don't know if that's the right word, but I

don't like them. I feel like I've been saying that a lot. I don't like anything anymore, and it's just easier to stare up at the ceiling than to try things…I wish I could hear Grammy's voice again."

AUTOMATED VOICE
…Second Message.

MOM (VO)
Charm. I'm sorry…I just…I'm trying my best here. That's why I agreed to the whole therapy thing. I mean, your grandmother really was adamant about it. I have never seen her like that before. She doesn't listen to me. She never has, but when it came to you, it was like you were her own child. I didn't exist to her when I was your age. I cooked, cleaned, worked my ass off and took care of her while she was throwing herself everywhere. Your grandmother…my mother saw something in you and//

(Charm presses delete again.)

AUTOMATED VOICE
Voicemail deleted.

NARRATOR *(to the audience)*
I am really shocked that Mom said anything to Charm. In my mind, it felt like it was too late. Everything felt like it was too late. I would be mad if I were my sister, but the only thing she wrote here is that there's no going back anymore. "She wants me to listen? I am. Grammy died, and that's exactly what she told me. How can my own mother tell me to just stop feeling?"

(Charm goes back to painting as she listens to her messages. Narrator closes the diary and gets up, standing behind Charm. She studies Charm's painting.)

NARRATOR
Oh, this piece of art…It'll go up in our school, and she won't even know that everyone loved it. I wish she allowed me in.

AUTOMATED VOICE
Here's the next message.

NAOMI (VO)
Hey, can you pick up my calls? At least mine? I am just trying to help, but you won't let me, C. Please don't push me out. We have some good times, right? Let's keep having them. Let me hold your hand. Let me be there. Let me//

(Charm presses delete again.)

AUTOMATED VOICE
Message deleted.

(Beat.)

NARRATOR *(to audience)*
It just continued to go on like that. I think it felt like a fever dream to Charm, but realistically, this is all she can do to pass the time. At this point, we both knew and understood that Grammy wasn't going to get a funeral. Charm was done fighting how she felt. Yet, we haven't even touched the most interesting part yet.

AUTOMATED VOICE
Here is the last message.

GRAMMY (VO)
YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE.
MY BRIGHT SHINING SUNSHINE.
MY LITTLE TOT,
I REMEMBER WHEN YOU COULDN'T TALK.

COME HERE, MY SUNSHINE.
EVERYTHING IS ABOUT TO FALL IN LINE.
JUST LIKE THE SEASONS CHANGING,
I KNOW YOU GET WHAT I'M SAYING.

YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE,
MY BRIGHT SHINING SUNSHINE.
YOU MAKE ME HAPPY,
EVEN WHEN THINGS ARE CRAPPY.

YOU WILL ALWAYS GLOW.
NO MATTER HOW FAR YOU GO.
IF YOU'RE EVER SAD, JUST LOOK UP.
THERE I AM SAYING "GOOD LUCK!"
YOU DESERVE TO BE A SUNSHINE.

YOU'LL ALWAYS BE MY SUNSHINE,
ALWAYS FINISHING MY PUNCHLINE.

MY LITTLE ARTIST,
SHINING EVEN WHEN IT SEEMS TO BE THE DARKEST.

You are loved, Charm.

(The message stops, and you hear a click as if the person hangs up. Beat.)

AUTOMATED VOICE
Do you want to delete this message?

(Narrator opens the diary again and reads.)

NARRATOR
"Her message played again. I forgot that I left it there. I mean, how could I delete this? It's the last thing I have of her. The last thing I have from her. It's all I have left."

AUTOMATED VOICE
Do you want to delete this message?

(Charm lets out a deep breath and presses save.)

AUTOMATED VOICE (con't)
Message saved. No more messages in the voicemail box.

(Charm gets up, placing her brushes on the paint palette on the table. She starts capping the tubes of paint. Once she's done, Charm brushes her smock to rub off the excess paint on her hands. She stands next to Narrator as they both admire her painting.

Narrator looks over at Charm, and Charm does the same to her. They nod. Narrator takes this as her cue to leave. Charm takes her painting and places it on the easel that faces the audience. The painting is of the sun shining into Grammy's room, but there's no one there. Charm looks out to the audience with tears in her eyes.)

CHARM
I am <u>her</u> sunshine.

(Lights out.)

SCENE 10.

(Lights up on Charm and Naomi's rooms. Charm is up, pacing in her messy room with her hair undone. She has paint on her face and her painter's bag on the ground with tubes of paint open. There is also an array of crumpled paper on the floor. Naomi is lying in bed, but she isn't sleeping. She shifts in bed, trying to get comfortable while Charm continues to pace.)

CHARM
Wait. Wait. Okay.

(She instantly drops to the ground, rifling through some of the crumpled pieces of paper. Nodding with a strong sense of satisfaction after opening a few papers, Charm hums loudly. Naomi sits up.)

NAOMI
God, she's doing it again.

(Naomi gets up, leaving her room and entering Charm's.)

NAOMI (con't)
Oh my…

CHARM
Oh, you're up?

NAOMI
What's happening?

CHARM
A creative boom!

NAOMI
Shh! It's two in the morning.

CHARM
I can't stop. If I stop, then my mind stops, and then I'm stuck again.

NAOMI
Stuck?

CHARM
Mhm. Mhm. Mhm. Grammy always said to let my mind run wild. I miss Grammy. She's gone, but I can't stop. This is what she would've wanted.

NAOMI
I think you should go to bed.

CHARM
Maybe you should. It's past your bedtime, and you're interrupting me.

NAOMI
You can't even choose something to focus on.

(She starts going through the mess Charm created.)

NAOMI (con't)
Stories. Poems. Portraits. *(reaches towards the knotted mess of yarn)* Projects?

CHARM
Hey!

NAOMI
Shh!! Do you wanna wake up Mom? She's actually home for once, and I don't want the one time she's home to be her yelling.

(Beat.)

CHARM
I…um//

NAOMI
Where's your medication?

CHARM *(shrugging)*
I took them.

NAOMI
Okay. That doesn't answer my question, though. Where are they?

CHARM
The doc said I'm making good progress. I don't think I need you to monitor me. Besides, isn't it good that I am a spark of energy instead of lying in bed, dead to the world?

NAOMI
Yeah. I don't know. I'm just worried about you.

CHARM
I am okay.

(Beat. Naomi takes a long look around the messy room. Music for "A MILLION IDEAS" starts.)

NAOMI
THIS IS WORRYING.
I FEEL LIKE THERE SHOULD BE SOMETHING ELSE I CAN DO.
YOU SHOULD BE SLEEPING,
NOT STUCK IN HERE BEING KOO-KOO.

CHARM
DON'T YOU SEE? I HAVE SO MUCH TO DO.
I THINK AND I THINK,
NOW IF I STOP, THAT'S WHEN I'LL TURN BLUE.

YOU SHOULD KNOW ME BY NOW,
MY HEAD. MY BRAIN.
IF I COULD, I WOULD GO OUT ON THE TOWN,
SO MANY THINGS TO DO, BUT I HAVE TO KEEP MYSELF TAMED.

NAOMI
CHARM?

CHARM
NO! DON'T BE RUDE, I'M STILL TALKING.
I HAVE THINGS TO DO, CAN'T YOU SEE I'M JUST STARTING.

WHAT TO DO NEXT? WHAT CAN I CREATE?

I HAVE A MILLION IDEAS AND SO MUCH ON MY PLATE.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD JOIN ME, THEN YOU'LL UNDERSTAND.
I'M NOT CRAZY, JUST A BIT SAD THAT GRAMMY KICKED THE CAN.

(The song ends abruptly as Charm slaps her hand over her mouth, in disbelief at what was just said.)

NAOMI
Hey//

CHARM
Get out. You're ruining my flow.

(Naomi tries to reach out to her sister. Narrator enters through the door and stops Naomi by putting a hand on her shoulder. Narrator shakes her head. Lights out.)

SCENE 11.

(*Lights up on Dr.P's office. Narrator sits on the couch crocheting. The door opens and it's Dr. P entering with Naomi.)*

DR. P
You know the drill. Sit wherever you're comfortable.

NAOMI
Thanks for seeing me.

DR. P
Well, my 3:30 canceled on me. You caught me right when I was getting a snack.

NAOMI
I haven't really been here without Charm. Well, obviously Mom won't be standing here holding her hand, so I do it. Because, you know, I care. And now I'm just worried.

(Narrator reaches over to hold Naomi's hand. Naomi doesn't make eye contact with the therapist, she stays focused on her hands on her lap.)

DR. P
Worried about Charm?

NAOMI
Yeah, who else? Aren't you, too?

DR. P
I'm worried about all my patients. They are all here to get the help they need.

(Beat.)

NARRATOR *(to audience)*
Fun fact, she was a shitty therapist…at least to me. I'm literally crying for help on my sister's behalf. Later in life, I've met easier people to talk to.

NAOMI
I've done some research about her condition.

DR. P
How helpful was it?

NAOMI
What if I start developing symptoms?

DR. P
I mean, I have taken that into consideration, and honestly, anything can happen. Maybe you will, maybe you won't, maybe not today, but maybe in the future. What I can say is that as I've been with both of you, everything seems okay.

(Narrator gets up, walks away from the sitting area, and starts pacing.)

NARRATOR *(to audience)*
Honestly, that bit didn't reassure me much. This is a constant thought and feeling I have to wake up and live with. I'm scared and worried about my sister, my grandma, my mom, and me, yet it seems no one gets that.

(Beat.)

NAOMI
There was a time when I'd just ignore Charm. I mean, I didn't have much of a choice…or more like I didn't give myself a choice. I just followed what my mom told me.

DR. P
Charm always said you were the "star child."

(Naomi laughs. Music for "MY FIGHT" starts.)

NAOMI
Some people shouldn't be parents. As much as I wish for someone to be different or to change, it doesn't work. Then the next stable person gets roped into the chaos.

DR. P
And that's you?

(Naomi nods slowly.)

NARRATOR *(to Naomi)*
TELL HER YOU'RE TIRED.

TELL HER THINGS ARE HARD.
CHARM IS ON FIRE!
NOT LITTERALLY BUT ITS A GOOD FUCKING START.

NAOMI
I DON'T THINK THAT'S NECESSARY.
I SHOULD START WALKING.

NARRATOR
YOU SAID YOU WERE READY.
CHARM NEEDS TO BE STOPPED.

NAOMI
I JUST NEED MORE TIME.
I HAVE SO MUCH ON MY MIND//

NARRATOR
You can say that again.

NAOMI
THE AIR FEELS THIN.
I FEEL LIKE I'M CHOKING.
IF I DON'T DO WHAT I NEED TO DO//

NARRATOR
IT'LL FEEL LIKE YOU COMMITTED A SIN?

DR. P
What else is going on?

(Naomi slumps over herself as if she's giving up or just exhausted from a long day.)

NAOMI
WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON?
I THINK YOU MEAN WHAT ELSE COULD GO WRONG.

NARRATOR *(to naomi)*
JUST TELL HER YOU'RE TIRED.
EXPLAIN HOW THINGS ARE HARD.

I KNOW YOU WANT TO HELP CHARM, BUT YOU CAN'T FORGET YOU.

NAOMI
Me?

NARRATOR
YES YOU. THE TROUBLED GIRL LOOKING BLUE.
I KNOW YOU WANT TO RUN.
BUT THINK ABOUT WHAT'S TRUE.
CHARM MAY NEED YOUR HELP,
BUT YOU CAN'T FORGET ABOUT YOU.

(Beat. Narrator takes this moment to leave.)

NAOMI
I'm sorry Doctor, I think I need to go.

DR. P
Something you realized?

NAOMI
Well, I came here thinking about how much I'd like to help my sister, but not want to fall down that spiraling hole that comes with my family's problems. Then I realized that I wasn't made to support this family. It's my choice to help my sister because she is someone I don't want to lose. I regret some of my choices from the past and I regret not being there for her till now. So things have to change and I'm the force to get it going.

(Lights out.)

SCENE 12.

(Lights up onthe Family living room. We're back at the house and another mess is made and Charm is humming songs to herself. Her clothes and skin have dried paint all over them. The walls have scribbles and notes that say "Gotta take the meds" and "Finish Grammy's Portrait." On the ground, there's a crate of painting supplies and crumpled papers around a blank canvas. Charm is lying on the couch, happily drawing in her sketchbook. Narrator sits next to her.)

CHARM
Grammy is going to love this!

NARRATOR *(to the audience)*
How do you process death? How can one truly come up with the idea that they are okay after someone is gone forever?

CHARM
Maybe I should give her more hair? I think it would make her look a tiny bit younger.

(Charm laughs. The sound of a door opening and closing catches her attention. Naomi enters, taking in the newly redecorated living space.)

NARRATOR *(to Naomi)*
Don't be mean. Don't be mean. Don't be mean.

NAOMI
Wow.

CHARM
Nay, where have you been?

NAOMI
Why does that matter? Look at the room!

CHARM
What about it?

NARRATOR *(to Naomi)*
This is her way of processing.

(Naomi walks around the room in shock.)

NAOMI *(laughing to herself in disbelief)*
You can't make this up.

CHARM
I'm making something for Grammy. Look!

(Charm jumps up and runs over to show Naomi her sketchbook.)

NAOMI
Is that//

CHARM
Can you recognize it? It's Grammy when she first had mom.

(Naomi takes the book, inspecting the sketch more. Charm skips back to the couch and the wall of notes. Music for "THIS IS HOW WE SHINE" starts.)

CHARM (con't)
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE GREAT,
THE SURPRISE ON YOUR FACE
I JUST COULDN'T WAIT.
THE IDEA CAME TO ME WHEN WE VISITED GRAMMY'S PLACE.

NAOMI
When we visited…please don't tell me you're talking about the after-death clean-up? *That* inspired you?

(Naomi looks at Narrator for help. Narrator shrugs.)

CHARM
I SAW HER LIVE.
WE SAW HER LIFE.
THE REALITY OF GRAMMY.
SHE WASN'T JUST A MOM AND A WIFE.

THEN IT HIT ME.

I KNOW I'M ONLY 16,
BUT I'VE DONE NOTHING.
I WANT MY LIFE TO MEAN SOMETHIING.

NAOMI *(unimpressed)*
IF MOM WAS HERE, SHE'D SAY YOU'RE CARRYING THE LEGACY OF THE MENTALLY INSANE.

CHARM
BUT SHE'S NOT, RIGHT?
WHAT'S THERE TO BE AFRAID OF?
I HAVE TO TAKE A BITE.
MAYBE IT'LL BE SOMETHING I LOVE.

SO BE MY PARTNER IN CRIME,
OR THE PEANUT BUTTER TO MY JELLY?
WE CAN DO ANYTHING BECAUSE WE HAVE THE TIME.
YOU HELP KEEP ME STEADY.
THIS IS HOW WE'LL SHINE.

NARRATOR *(to audience)*
I don't know what enticed me in this moment, but I can't say no to my struggling sister who never wanted my help. I think this actually made my day. *(Beat)* I mean sure Charm is going a little bit manic, but if you can't stop them, you join them.

NAOMI
I'M LISTENING, BUT I DON'T HEAR YOU.
WE HAVE TO STAY CLOSE TO WHAT'S TRUE.
WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU WENT TO THERAPY?
YOU NEED TO TAKE THAT SERIOUSLY.

(Narrator shakes an amber vial of pills.)

CHARM
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
I'M JUST DOING WHAT YOU TOLD ME.
BREATHE IN AND BREATHE OUT.
I'M NOT THE PROBLEM HERE, SO DON'T BE ANGRY.

NARRATOR
How did I know that Charm was out of her mind? Is it safe to say I was stalking my sister? I went to Dr. P for help, but I felt like I was the only one really seeing how serious this is. Grammy is dead!

NAOMI
YES! I AM ANGRY.
THINGS HAVE BEEN REAL SHITTY.
I ALREADY LOST ONE, I DON'T NEED TO LOSE YOU.
LIKE YOU SAID, I'M YOUR ROCK. I KEEP YOU STEADY.
YOU NEED TO LOOK IN THE MIRROR BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT FINE.
HOW DO YOU THINK YOU'LL STAND IN FRONT OF EVERYONE?
HOW CAN YOU SHINE?

(Beat. Naomi snatches the vial of pills from Narrator and forces it into Charm's hand.)

NARRATOR
I had bottled everything up. I had to take charge. I had to do everything to keep Charm off the edge. And good God, that was a recipe for a disaster.

NAOMI
You've been up almost every night for the last week and a half. When was the last time you showered? Have you eaten? Why do you think I came into your room the other night? I know you aren't okay, but it's been months now since Grammy passed. You're doing better. So please, just listen to me. I am begging. If you want, I'll get on my knees and plead.

(Naomi steps back and starts cleaning up the room. Then, blackout.)

SCENE 13.

(Suddenly, someone SCREAMS. Then, AMBULANCE SIRENS and a crowd of VOICES follow after. An audible CRY starts to drown everything out. Lights up on the stage, cluttered with amber vials and pills. Naomi and Narrator sit on stools; they both have diaries in their hands. Charm sits between them on the ground with her sketchbook in a white dress. She is drawing. Naomi is crying. Narrator sits with her makeup running and visible tear streaks on her face, but no tears.)

NARRATOR *(to the audience)*
I remember this day like it happened yesterday. I would close my eyes to sleep, and then there's Charm on the floor. I can tell you everything I felt without opening this book because I have relived that day…that situation…opening her door over and over again.

(Narrator opens her old diary, and Naomi follows and opens hers. Narrator looks down, and Naomi looks up. Her face is damp from the tears. Narrator opens her mouth as if she's reading, but it's Naomi talking.)

NAOMI
What happened? I don't understand. I don't understand what happened. I can't breathe. I can't. I couldn't do anything. I..um…she was there in front of me. I tried to wake her up. She had missed school again that day, but I didn't think much of it. Charm can take care of herself…she's 16. I had tutoring after school and some errands. Mom wouldn't do it. So you know I do them. I shop, I cook, and I clean. I do what I can to support her, but when I got home, it was too late. Her body? Cold. She was always like a hot water bottle. When we would share a bed as kids, she'd warm me up when it was cold.

(Naomi loses her cool and starts crying again. Narrator looks up and continues.)

NARRATOR
Charm was in a fetal position, and her phone was in her hand. She looked so at peace. I opened the door and I smiled, thinking she was at peace in her dreams. I'd like to think now that she's at peace with Grammy. After everything happened, the ambulance came to scoop her up and away, explaining to mom on the phone, and just going emotionally insane, I went back to her room.

(The stage starts to rotate. Narrator and Naomi get up and start walking. They walk to the girls' bedrooms. Naomi sits on Charm's bed. The bed is

made and set very cleanly, with fake flowers covering the top. Charm's diary sits at the head of the bed with a paper sticking out of it. Charm is there again in her white dress, this time she is lying on her stomach playing with flowers on the floor, not paying attention.)

NAOMI
I couldn't stop staring at her bed. How nicely made it was. Charm's room was always a mess with her art supplies and yarn everywhere. Dirty clothes always piled high in a corner. I didn't notice it before, but the only thing that was so messy was the amber vials and pills lying on the floor when I found her. I didn't clean it up.

NARRATOR
I couldn't even think of entering the room, so of course, I couldn't clean it up. Her canvases were stacked with her painter's bag beside them. The basket of yarn was full and not messily placed. The bed…beautiful flowers she put here.

(Naomi lies on the bed of flowers. Narrator grabs Charm's diary. Charm starts paying attention to Narrator once the diary is in her hands.)

NARRATOR (con't)
(To Charm) This is one of the only things I have left of you.

(Narrator sits next to Charm on the ground. As she opens the diary, Charm looks over her shoulder. Music for "HER FINAL WORDS" starts.)

NAOMI
I'M SORRY.

NARRATOR
DEAR DIARY,

CHARM
I AM LETTING GO//

NAOMI
NO!

CHARM
THERE'S SO MUCH YOU DON'T KNOW!

(Naomi plops down next to Narrator, also looking at Charm's diary.)

NARRATOR
SCREAMING, PLEADING, CRYING, AND TRYING.
WHY COULDN'T WE SEE THAT SHE FELT LIKE DYING?

CHARM
I TRIED TO TELL YOU THOUGH,
BUT YOU LET ME GO.

NAOMI
GRAMMY, WHEN WILL I JOIN YOU?
GRAMMY, WHAT DID I GET MYSELF INTO?

ALL
WAS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD'VE KNOWN?

CHARM
SO YOU KNOW, I GOT TO THINKING.
THEN I WAS ON THE FLOOR,
AND EVERYTHING WAS JUST…SINKING.
I COULDN'T DO IT ANYMORE//

NAOMI & NARRATOR
NO MORE?

CHARM
SCREAMING, PLEADING, CRYING, AND TRYING.
I KNOW YOU SAW MY HEALTH DECLINING,
BUT I COULDN'T ASK FOR HELP.
I COULDN'T EVEN RECOGNISE MYSELF.

ALL
WAS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD'VE KNOWN?

NAOMI
SOMETHING I COULD'VE DONE TO CHANGE THIS DREWRY TONE?

NARRATOR
SOMETHING I SHOULD'VE DONE TO MAKE YOU FEEL LESS ALONE?

(Charm gets up in a frenzy. She's pacing. Narrator and Naomi watch her.)

CHARM
THERE'S STILL SO MUCH YOU DON'T KNOW.
SO MUCH I CAN'T SAY.
SO MUCH I CAN'T DESCRIBE.
SO MUCH THAT ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS RUN AWAY.

NAOMI & NARRATOR
WAS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD'VE KNOWN//

CHARM *(facing the audience)*
I'M WEAK! CAN'T YOU SEE?
I CAN'T BE WHO YOU WANT ME TO BE!
STOP, STOP TALKING.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST LET ME LEAVE?
I JUST NEED TO LET GO…
I WANT TO BE WITH MY GRAMMY.

NAOMI
TO BE LESS ALONE.
WITH PEOPLE LIKE ME.

NARRATOR
TO BE UNDERSTOOD.
SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE THAT REALLY KNEW WHAT TO SEE.

ALL
TO BE WITH MY GRAMMY.

(The three girls harmonize together. Charm walks over to her set of canvases and pulls out the large one in the back. She sets the large Canvas on the bed, where the diary was originally. It's the finished portrait that Charm was making of Grammy.

Lights out.)

SCENE 14.

(Lights up on Dr. P's office. Naomi sits with Dr. P. Naomi looks very closed off and worn out, wearing dark clothes. Narrator sits next to Naomi and holds on to her diary. It's quiet except for the sounds of scribbling from the doctor's pen and the clock ticking.)

DR. P
You don't have to say anything, but it would help if we can talk for a bit.

(Naomi hesitates as she opens her mouth, but nothing comes out. She gives up.)

DR. P (con't)
When your sister started her solo sessions, she didn't talk much either.

NAOMI
I'm sorry.

DR. P
No, it's just that you two are more alike than you'd think.

(Naomi starts to tear up.)

NAOMI
It's been three weeks. We're not having a funeral.

DR. P
Why not?

NAOMI
I…it was my choice. We didn't have one for Grammy. It didn't seem right if Charm got one and she didn't. We haven't touched Charm's room. I know mom won't and I honestly don't plan on it either. It's so different.

DR. P
Grief is hard. It's different//

NAOMI
But haven't we been through enough?

(Beat.)

NARRATOR *(to the audience)*
How do you process death? How can one truly come up with the idea that they are okay after someone is gone forever?

NAOMI
I just can't be in the center of this.

DR. P
What is this?

NAOMI
I guess my family, even though it's just me and my mother now.

DR. P
I mean, nothing should really change now that it's just you two?

NAOMI
But it should. Things wouldn't be like this if she were different.

DR. P
So it's your mother's fault?

NAOMI
No, that's not what I'm saying//

NARRATOR
What kind of question is that?

NAOMI *(starts crying)*
Things could've been different. I could've been different. I neglected her, too. I can't help thinking that it's all my fault. I could've done so much for her. I could've done anything if she just asked!

DR. P
But you also know that's not easy.

NAOMI
Why? Why can't it be easy? Why did she have to struggle alone? Was my help not good enough?

(Beat. A soft melody starts to play for "MOURNING AND MORE".)

NARRATOR
This was a new side of this quack doctor that really spoke to me. Made me think twice of my initial thoughts.

DR. P
NAOMI, YOU MUST KEEP YOUR HEAD UP HIGH.
I KNOW YOU MOURN AND IT'S OKAY TO CRY.
DON'T SWEAT IT AND TAKE YOUR TIME.
WHEN YOU'RE READY, YOU CAN SAY GOODBYE.

NAOMI
I don't want that.

DR. P
YOU AREN'T THE FIRST TO SAY THAT.
I AM NOT HERE TO FORCE AND ATTACK,
BUT THE TRUTH IS IN FRONT OF YOU.
I CAN GIVE YOU A TOOL.

NAOMI
What are you talking about?

DR. P
I CAN PROVIDE HELP,
YES, WE CAN TALK AND YOU'LL MELT.
THERE'S ALSO AN AIDE.
SOMETHING YOU'D TAKE EVERYDAY.

NAOMI
PILLS? DRUGS?
I DON'T GET INTO THAT TYPE OF BUZZ.

DR. P
NO, NOT A BUZZ, BUT A BOOST.
I THINK YOU'RE STRESSED, AND THIS WILL HELP YOU GET LOOSE.

(Rattles SHAKING start and grow louder and louder.)

NAOMI
DID YOU FORGET I FOUND MY SISTER ON THE GROUND?
HER PILLS WERE ALL AROUND.
DO YOU THINK I CAN SWALLOW ONE?
I CAN'T EVEN TAKE VITAMINS FOR FUN.

DR. P
YOU AREN'T THE FIRST TO SAY THAT.
I AM NOT HERE TO FORCE AND ATTACK,
BUT THE TRUTH IS IN FRONT OF YOU.
ALL I'M SAYING IS I CAN GIVE YOU A TOOL.

NARRATOR
Now that response really brought me back to what a shitty person she was because that was a shitty response. But I was struggling, and I needed a pain reliever.

DR. P
I am writing a prescription for a simple starter mood booster. It doesn't mean anything serious, take it if you want. You don't have to, but it's there. It's hard to try new things, but sometimes talking isn't enough.

NAOMI
I don't know. I'm surrounded by pills.

DR. P
That's okay. What also helps is to express. You can sit and stare at that ceiling. That's never bad, but there has to be more.

NAOMI
I used to write.

DR. P
And the last time you did?

NAOMI
Months before Charm left us. I've tried, but I couldn't put my pen on the paper when she was struggling. But now? I don't know. I just can't.

DR. P
What's stopping you?

(Beat. Naomi shrugs.)

NAOMI
I just can't.

DR. P
Yes, you can. You just have to try. Nothing is stopping you, but yourself. You can't sit with this pain forever. If you can't speak, then write.

(Narrator places the diary in Naomi's lap. Dr. P leans over and drops a pen onto the book. Lights out.)

SCENE 15.

(Lights up back at the home, the stage is set to Charm and Naomi's room. Naomi sits with her diary in her lap. Narrator sits on the floor, leaning against the bed. The lights are dim. Fog blows from under Naomi's bed, and a pink light follows.)

NAOMI
Dear diary, how do you process death? How can one truly come up with the idea that they are okay after someone is gone forever?

NARRATOR
How many times have we said that now?

NAOMI
Can you answer that?

NARRATOR
I'm still asking.

NAOMI
So, not enough. It's like a science lab. It's a hypothesis. A question that everyone feels different about.

NARRATOR
Nerd.

NAOMI
Today marks the three-month anniversary.

NARRATOR
What do we do? Do we mourn?

NAOMI
We celebrate. She's at peace.

(The door to Charm's room opens. It's Mom, and she has flowers in her hands. As she enters the room, Charm and Grammy follow behind her. Music for "THE PIECES THAT FALL BEHIND" starts. They all start to harmonize.)

ALL
TODAY IS THE DAY.
A DAY THAT WILL STAY.

MOM
THE DAY I LISTEN.

NAOMI
A DAY I HAVE HOPE.

NARRATOR
TODAY WE TRANSITION.

(Mom walks in, flips the light on, and looks around the room. Charm and Grammy follow.)

ALL
TODAY WE SHOULD NOT DELAY.

MOM
I GUESS YOU CAN SAY I STILL SEE HER LOOSE PILLS AND MY MOTHER'S CANE.

NAOMI
I STILL THINK OF MY SISTER'S PAIN.

NARRATOR
I WISH SHE KNEW SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO BE AFRAID.

ALL
TODAY IS THE DAY.
A DAY TO REFLECT ON THEIR PAIN.

CHARM & GRAMMY
BUT THOSE ARE THE PIECES THAT ARE LEFT BEHIND.

(They all pull out amber vials of pills, and they shake. Mom lays the flowers on Charm's bed. Naomi takes her diary, walks over to Charm's room, and places the diary down next to the flowers.)

ALL
THE PIECES THAT ARE LEFT BEHIND.

(Curtain. End of play.)