

LETTERS FOR DAWN

Written by

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INT. LIZ'S HOUSE - DAY

Liz gets ready for school as the following monologue unfolds. She completes her morning tasks unenthusiastically.

LIZ (V.O.)
October 12th. 7:30 AM.

Dawn,

I find that life is much harder without you. I knew that I would miss you. I knew that your room would be empty, and that you would be avoided in conversation. Not a lot has changed, though; not enough, I mean. It's not like I thought that the entire world would stop.

She puts on a necklace, half a heart charm on it's chain.

EXT. BUS STOP - MORNING

She stands at a bus stop, earbuds in.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Or, maybe I did. For a little bit.

For just a second, she sees a young woman across the street; slightly older and similar in appearance, looking. A car passes and she's gone.

LIZ (CONT'D)

But it didn't. The sun comes up every day. No one steals clothes from my closet, or asks to braid my hair. No one makes me pinky promise that I love them. I miss that.

She shakes it off. She checks the time. She's going to be late. She begins to walk.

LIZ (CONT'D)

You died the night of the Homecoming game; you were found 43 hours later, in the basement of the school. I almost asked to come with you. I didn't.

EXT./INT. THE SCHOOL - DAY

She walks into the school, and opens her locker. She grabs books. On the wall of the locker, there's a picture of her and the girl from the bus stop, holding pinkies. She stares at it for a second.

LIZ

When your sister throws herself down a flight of stairs, people stare at you. People wait for you to *change* somehow. But you don't. No one ever does.

She shuts the locker.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

She walks into class and sits next to an empty seat. Close-ups as the different characters are mentioned. Juni laughs at Greg as he says something crude and throws a paper airplane across the room to another student.

LIZ

I'm still pulling a C in most classes. Juni is still with Greg and has the same bangs that you told her not to get. Greg is... Greg. Matt was pretty tore up about it. Doesn't really talk. Doesn't really do much at all. At least he's got the whole "tortured artist" thing going for him now. His songs got better after it happened.

A golden retriever-esque boy sits in the chair next to her.

HUNTER

(With a smile)

Hey.

LIZ

(Smiling back)

Hey.

LIZ (V.O.)

Oh, I'm still with Hunter. You'd hate to hear this, but he was a sweetheart during it all. He even helped us pick out a stone for you, He was the first one at the scene.

Liz notices his jacket is missing a letter, loose threads still there.

LIZ
Hey, where'd your letter go?

HUNTER
I haven't seen it since Hoco weekend. Must've lost it after the dance.

LIZ (V.O.)
I never understood why you didn't like him. He's so good for me.

HUNTER
Psst.

He hands her a small bag of weed under the desk, and winks. Liz takes it.

LIZ (V.O.)
He's good for a lot of things.

She raises her hand.

LIZ
Can I be excused?

MR. NEWMANN
Class just started.

LIZ
Feminine issues.

Mr. Newmann relents and gestures for her to leave. Liz leaves.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

LIZ (V.O.)
Sometimes I hate it here. It's hard to sit in a classroom surrounded by people who might have caused it. I wish I could know who pushed you over the edge. I wish you had left a note, or something. Anything.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - DAY

Liz searches in her bag for a lighter, and finds one. She pulls out some rolling paper and begins to put together a joint. She hears something, and looks around. Nothing.

DAWN (O.S.)

You really shouldn't do that, you know.

She looks to the half open stall, no one. Liz continues to roll.

LIZ

What, you gonna snitch?

She hears no answer. She turns back to the mirror above the sink. A girl is there; slightly older. She looks pale, wears all white, and half of a heart necklace.

DAWN

Not really my style.

Liz screams, and frantically splashes her face with water, taking breaks in between to see if her sister is still there. She is.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Oh my God! Don't be so dramatic!

LIZ

I'm dreaming. This is a dream. Or a prank. HAHA. VERY FUNNY.

Liz closes her eyes and pinches herself. Hard. Dawn watches.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Wake up. Wake up.

DAWN

You're awake, dumbass.

LIZ

Is this hell? Am I dead?

DAWN

What? No. Hey, pinky promise- I'm real.

She holds out her pinky. Liz is at a loss. She begins to leave.

LIZ
 Okay. I've gone crazy. I've gone insane.

DAWN
 No, no. Stop.

Liz leaves.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Liz walks into the hallway. She seems to be alone. Dawn appears.

DAWN
 Hey! I'm talking to you!

Liz turns to run the other way. Dawn appears in front of her.

DAWN (CONT'D)
 Okay, this is getting ridiculous.

Liz falls against a locker, attempting to decipher if this is real. A panic attack begins.

DAWN (CONT'D)
 Hey, hey-

LIZ
 Go away.

DAWN
 You're okay. It's okay.

LIZ
 (Yelling)
 GO AWAY.

HUNTER (O.S.)
 Liz?

DAWN
 Shit.

Hunter spots Liz, and runs to her.

HUNTER
 Lizzy? Hey, hey- What happened?

Liz lifts her head. Dawn is gone. Hunter grabs her hand, it's shaking. He gives her his jacket.

LIZ
Um- just. Nothing. I'm gonna go to
the nurse.

HUNTER
Hey, wait a minute. Let me walk you-

LIZ
(Growing frustration)
I can do it.

HUNTER
Oh- okay. Did I do something?

LIZ
I just- I need a second.

She walks away, Hunter watches.

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY

Liz walks into the nurse's office to see JUNI and NURSE LYONS. They're chatting, laughing, "kiki-ing" of sorts.

JUNI
(Smiling)
So I told him, "Maybe you're just
compensating for something.

They laugh. Juni notices Liz.

JUNI (CONT'D)
Oh my GOD, LIZ. I was just telling
Sharon what Greg said-

LIZ
Hey, uh-

NURSE LYONS
Also trying to get out of Calc?

LIZ
Do you have anything for like,
hallucinations?

They look at her, blankly.

JUNI
Are you micro-dosing?

LIZ
I'm not on shrooms.

JUNI
I wouldn't judge if you were-

NURSE LYONS
Can you give us a second, Juni?

JUNI
I'm not taking that quiz.

NURSE LYONS
Wait outside if you must.

Juni reluctantly leaves.

NURSE LYONS (CONT'D)
Okay. What's up, Chica?

LIZ
Um, I think I'm having like-
hallucinations, or something?

Nurse Lyons looks horrified.

LIZ (CONT'D)
I don't need to be put in an
institution or anything, I swear-

NURSE LYONS
Here's an excuse. Go home and get
some rest.

LIZ
(Taking the slip)
Thank you.

She begins to leave.

NURSE LYONS
Liz-

She turns to face her.

NURSE LYONS (CONT'D)
Don't let this ruin your life.

Liz leaves.

INT. LIZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Liz sits awake in the evening. She writes in her diary,
presumably a message to Dawn.

LIZ (V.O.)
October 12th, 9:26 P.M.

Dawn,

You're dead, and I know you're dead. You decided to BE dead. You threw yourself down a flight of stairs, I don't know why, and I won't know why. So I can't figure out why the hell-

DAWN (O.S.)
You still see me.

Liz looks around, and finds nothing.

LIZ (V.O.)
I still see you. And I still-

DAWN (O.S.)
Hear me.

Liz stops writing to look at a picture of her and Dawn as children. Dawn looks on from the corner of the room.

DAWN (CONT'D)
I always hated that one.

LIZ
Please-

Dawn throws a piece of paper on Liz's desk, along with a cracked phone. The paper reads: "LadyKiller69 - 321-932-4482"

LIZ (CONT'D)
You're joking.

DAWN
Call him.

She looks at Dawn. Absolutely fucking not.

DAWN (CONT'D)
You wanna know why I'm here? Call him.

Liz looks at the paper, and looks up to find herself alone once again. She thinks. She calls.

EVAN (O.S.)
Yello? Evan speaking.

LIZ
Is this, um-

At the sound of a girl's voice, Evan puts on a facade of masculinity/coolness.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Lady..Killer..

EVAN
(Quickly interrupting)
Yep. Yep. What can I do ya for?

LIZ
Um, I think you might have some
info on someone.

EVAN
Uh....

LIZ
Does the name Dawn Anderson mean
anything to you?

The camera pans up to show an evidence board and multiple screens showing electronic tracking maps. Dawn's face is in the middle, surrounded by question marks.

EVAN
806 North Russell Lane. Be here at
10. Bring the phone.

The call ends. Liz sits for a moment, then grabs the phone.

INT. LIZ'S CAR - NIGHT

Liz sits in her car, prepping herself to go in. She checks the address. It's correct.

DAWN
Do you need some hype music?

Liz ignores her. Dawn beatboxes or raps or sings something off-key. She's trying her best.

LIZ
You're not helping.

DAWN
Okay.

Silence.

DAWN (CONT'D)
OH COME ON-

EXT. EVAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Liz opens the car door. Dawn disappears. Liz gets to the front door, and begins to have second thoughts. Dawn appears and rings the doorbell for her.

DAWN
Oops.

Evan opens the door abruptly. Dawn disappears once again.

EVAN
I told you to come in through the garage.

LIZ
I'm sorry, I-

EVAN
Follow me.

INT. EVAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Evan leads her through a suburban house, talking to her on their journey.

EVAN
I've been following Dawn's case since the night of the game.

LIZ
Her case?

EVAN
SH!

LIZ
(Whispered)
Sorry.

EVAN
You don't see a suicide like this everyday. Homecoming Queen Candidate throws herself down basement stairs days before her win? Oh please. I mean, a novice citizen detective could've figured out the true story.

LIZ
(Confused)
The true story, right.

EVAN
It's child's play, really. You've
of course figured out that Dawn
Anderson was murdered. I couldn't
believe you waited so long to call.

Liz definitely had not figured this out. He unlocks a door.

LIZ
Yeah, me neither.

INT. EVAN'S "LAIR" - NIGHT

Liz takes in her surroundings. It's a basement turned into an elaborate, mismatched detective's lair.

EVAN
Did you bring it?

Liz produces her sister's phone, shattered. It doesn't turn on. The screen only glitches. He takes it, quickly, on a mission; Liz looks on. Fingers fly across a keyboard, glasses slip on his nose, eyes narrow in concentration, wires are plugged into the phone. The following dialogue unfolds during this sequence.

EVAN (CONT'D)
When I learned about Dawn's death,
I knew something was up. I watch
the *True Crime Network* with my Mom
all the time. Happy girl, nice
friends, a loner boyfriend who
everyone hates- never turns out
well.

LIZ
Hold on-

EVAN
That was just the thing though-

Evan begins typing in code.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Everything was so perfect except
for that... guy. Greg is the one
who gave me the idea. I was just
surprised Greg could form thoughts
for himself.

LIZ

Greg?

Breaking from the hacking:

EVAN

I do his chem homework.

Back to the hacking:

EVAN (CONT'D)

He used to rattle on about how nervous Matt made Juni. She overheard some pretty heated phone calls during sleepovers. Word on the street is she was planning on breaking up with him before the game that night.

LIZ

She was planning on throwing herself down the stairs.

EVAN

Oh, really?

He points at spaces on the evidence board for reference.

EVAN (CONT'D)

3:18 P.M. Dawn heads to Juni Newmann's house at 897 Main St after Accelerated Geometry. 5:39 P.M. An account from Juni states that *this* is the time at which Dawn receives a heated phone call, presumably from Matthew Hudspath, her freak-faced boy toy. She re-enters Juni's bedroom and states that she left her flat-iron at home, and she must run back to 732 Billiard Avenue to obtain it. That's your house.

LIZ

Got that.

EVAN

But she doesn't go there. Because at 5:58 P.M., Greg Abernathy is in the concession stand stealing pre-game snacks. The student council concession stand schedule, (see copy A),

He points to a copy of the schedule.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Shows that Dawn is working the register on the night of the Homecoming game. Greg claims that at 6:04 P.M. He hears Mrs. Forsyth asking Dawn to go to the boiler room to pick up an extra can of butter-flavored oil for the popcorn machine.

He begins to flip through security camera footage

EVAN (CONT'D)

Security footage collected by my friends at the AV club shows Dawn walking into the north entrance of the school at 6:07. At the same time, followed by the football players walking in at the south entrance for the pre-game pep rally. On Friday nights, Jazz band releases at 6:15, in which Matt Hudspath plays the bass guitar. This puts both Dawn Anderson and Matthew Hudspath in the north wing of the school, WHICH CONTAINS THE BOILER ROOM, AT APPROXIMATELY 6:18 P.M., SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2003.

He makes an explosion sound, and is smiling ear to ear.

LIZ

I need proof.

His smile fades.

EVAN

And what do you call all of this?

LIZ

Delusion.

EVAN

Ouch.

He gets back online, and searches through Dawn's voicemails.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Proof...proof...proof.

He finds a voicemail labeled "Matt <3."

EVAN (CONT'D)

Proof.

A voicemail plays.

MATT (V.O.)

Listen, Dawn. I don't mean to keep calling, I just- I can't leave things like we left them. You don't get to leave me. Not like this. I'll find you at the school. We're having this out, if it's the last thing we do.

Liz and Evan are speechless.

EVAN

Gotcha.

LIZ

I have to go.

Liz takes the phone and leaves.

EXT. EVAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dawn waits patiently in the backseat. Liz gets back in. The following dialogue should be rapid fire.

LIZ

Why didn't you just tell me yourself?

DAWN

I was *TRYING* to-

LIZ

Are you crazy?

DAWN

Lizzy, hear me out.

LIZ

No. NO. Why would you send me on a wild goose chase just to have some dweeb-

DAWN

I'M SORRY, okay? You didn't even think I was real! Would you have been any calmer if I told you that I was murdered?

LIZ
I thought you left me alone. That
you just- That you didn't CARE
enough to stay. That you broke
every single promise.

DAWN
Hey, I would never, ever leave you-

LIZ
And how was I supposed to know
that?

DAWN
Because I'm your sister.

She holds out her pinky. Liz relents, they pinky swear.

LIZ
So I'm supposed to-

DAWN
I need to figure it out so I can-
you know. Move on.

LIZ
Move on.

DAWN
Yeah.

LIZ
Move on where?

DAWN
Just ...on.

LIZ
Do you think that it was Matt?

A beat.

DAWN
I don't know.

LIZ
Let's find out.

Liz puts the car in drive.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON

Gym class. Hunter and Greg run on the track in gym shirts and shorts. Greg makes it to the bench before Hunter, and glances at his watch. Hunter is off, something is clearly wrong.

GREG

HAHA! Beat you by 5 seconds, dweeb.

HUNTER

(Frustrated)

I'm not on my game today, man. I told you that.

GREG

Can't take the heat, get outta the kitchen, broski.

Greg produces finger guns. Juni approaches.

JUNI

I come bearing snacks.

GREG

Sick! Did you get the-

JUNI

Fruit snacks are in the front pocket. Have fun.

Greg gets into the snacks and begins to eat.

HUNTER

Hey, can I talk to you?

JUNI

I have to get back to band practice-

HUNTER

It's about Liz.

JUNI

(Beginning to walk away)

Now isn't a good time.

Hunter grabs her shoulder and turns her around, violently.

HUNTER

Now.

He pulls her to the side. Greg's words trail off as he notices them leave. He produces two Gatorades from the bag.

GREG

Hey, did you want the white or the blue....

He shrugs, opens both, and pours them into his water bottle. He begins to run again.

EXT. BLEACHERS - AFTERNOON

HUNTER

What's going on? Where is she?

JUNI

Okay, chill-

HUNTER

She's been weird, recently, yeah?

JUNI

She's grieving, Hunter.

HUNTER

You know what I'm talking about.

A beat. Juni doesn't answer.

HUNTER (CONT'D)

I know you know where she is.

JUNI

I know she was with Evan last night, but-

HUNTER

Evan Kilgore? That computer-hacking motherfucker?

JUNI

We had a tough calc assignment. People pay him for answers all of the time.

HUNTER

He's a creep. Do you think he- Listen, if something happens to her, I don't know what I'll do. I'll, I CAN'T BE WITHOUT HER-

JUNI

(Raising her voice)

HEY.

A beat. A few students notice the scene. Juni quiets down.

JUNI (CONT'D)

Look, today marks a month since
Dawn- you know. If she's anywhere,
she's with her.

HUNTER

With-

JUNI

With her.

Greg enters, handing a half-full Gatorade to Hunter.

GREG

Hey, you guys okay?

HUNTER

(Still looking at Juni.)
Yeah. I'm gonna head home. Think I
twisted my ankle on that last mile.

GREG

I'll walk you to Nurse Lyons-

HUNTER

I'm good alone. Thanks.

Greg deflates. Hunter exits.

GREG

(False confidence)
Sure, man. I'll be here if you need
me.

The camera pans up to Matt, who's sitting on one of the top bleachers listening to music with only one earbud in. He's been watching the whole time, listening.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - SUNSET

Liz's car enters the parking lot. She get's out, and walks into the school.

INT. HUNTER'S CAR - SUNSET

Hunter drives. He's frustrated, and clearly speeding. He parks, and slams the door.

EXT. CEMETERY - DUSK

Hunter walks up to a headstone with fresh flowers. No one else is there. He calls Liz, no answer. He throws his phone at the grave. It breaks. He gets back in his car, and drives away.

INT. HUNTER'S CAR - SUNSET

A knife sits in the passenger seat.

INT. EVAN'S "LAIR" - SUNSET

Evan sits, kicked back. He plays video games on one of his vintage TVs, shoveling apple slices into his mouth. The door bursts open, loudly. Apple slices fly through the air. Matt makes a b-line towards him. Evan screams.

MATT
(Stern, slightly scary)
Where is she?

EVAN
(Terrified)
HEY MAN-

Matt grabs Evan by the collar of his hoodie, who is still curled into a protective ball in his chair.

MATT
WHERE THE FUCK IS LIZ?

Evan breaks free of Matt's grip.

MATT (CONT'D)
HEY-

EVAN
I'M WORKING ON IT MAN, ONE SEC-

He pulls up a tracking application of sorts. It shows the location of not Liz's phone, but Dawn's. Both boy's eyes widen.

MATT
Shit.

Matt storms out. Then returns, quickly, grabbing the knife off of the aforementioned apple slice plate.

MATT (CONT'D)
Can I have this?

Evan nods. Matt grabs the knife, pops an apple slice into his mouth, and exits.

EXT. PARKING LOT - EVENING

Greg grabs a skateboard and gets ready to head home. He turns on his walkman and puts in a pop-punk cassette tape. Then, running up behind him-

JUNI

GREG-

Greg sings along to the song and plays some air guitar, beginning to put on the other earphone-

JUNI (CONT'D)

GREG.

She grabs his hand, stopping him.

JUNI (CONT'D)

Hey-

GREG

Hey, boo thang!

Greg notices that she has tears in her eyes.

GREG (CONT'D)

Hey- what's going on?

JUNI

I think we were wrong.

Greg looks at her.

INT. SCHOOL BOILER ROOM - NIGHT

DAWN

Can I, like, wait here?

LIZ

Oh. Yeah.

Liz walks down the stairs, and begins to look around. Dawn stays at the top.

DAWN

What are you even looking for?

LIZ
I don't know, finger prints? Shoe
tracks? Anything?

Dawn watches her sister spiral.

So, let me get this right. You were
there.

She points to the top of the stairs.

LIZ (CONT'D)
You were looking there.

She points at the window across from Dawn. She looks to Dawn
for approval.

DAWN
Right.

LIZ
I, I don't get it.

DAWN
Yes, you do. Someone-

LIZ
Someone pushed you, I know. I know.

Dawn begins to walk down the stairs.

DAWN
Maybe this is too much.

LIZ
I need you to tell me the truth.
You didn't jump.

DAWN
I didn't jump.

INT. EVAN'S LAIR - NIGHT

Evan receives a call.

EVAN
Yello? Evan- Oh. Hey, man what's-

He listens as his eyes widen. He connects to the school
security camera. We do not see the footage, but he does.

EVAN (CONT'D)
I'll be there in 5.

INT. LIZ'S CAR- NIGHT

Evan hops on a bike and skids out of the driveway.

INT. BOILER ROOM - NIGHT

LIZ
I KNOW, I know. Someone pushed you.
Someone killed-

Dawn attempts to calm her down.

DAWN
Hey.

LIZ
There's nothing HERE, though.
THERE'S NOTHING HERE.

DAWN
I-

Dawn is at a loss. The door opens atop the stairs.

DAWN (CONT'D)
Hide.

HUNTER (O.S.)
Liz? Lizzy?

Liz ducks behind, like, something; I don't know- figure it out on set. She breathes heavily. Terrified. Footsteps. Then, by her foot she sees something. A football letter. She feels the loose threads on Hunter's jacket, and puts some pieces together. She reaches for the letter and barley grabs it in time. Hunter suddenly appears, and pulls her into an embrace. He is wearing his jacket. Liz looks at the empty threads as her head lays against his chest. Dawn watches the next altercation from the shadows.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
You're hard to find, you know that?

She breaks free of the hug.

LIZ
I'm sorry.

Hunter notices the letter. He looks at her. A moment of tension.

HUNTER
Hey, come on.

He reaches for her hand, she pulls away.

LIZ
You did this.

HUNTER
Listen, I know that today is hard
for you-

LIZ
You pushed her.

HUNTER
Don't be crazy, Liz.

LIZ
I'm not. You know that I'm not.

He stares at her.

HUNTER
I needed you. She was pulling you
away from me.

LIZ
She knew you were-

HUNTER
What, crazy? Yes. I'm crazy. I'm
crazy about you. Don't make this
hard. You won't tell. You're not
going to tell.

Liz looks at him. Silence.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
Damn it. I didn't want to do this
to you, I really tried not to.
Just know that I'm doing this
because I love you.

Hunter pulls out a knife. A struggle ensues. Dawn is helpless. She is not real. She cannot stop this.

DAWN
No.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Evan and Greg run through the hallway, on a mission. Evan is on the phone with the police.

EVAN
(Terrified, voice shaking)
Central high school, the boiler
room. YES- JUST GET HERE QUICK-

Dawn grabs Hunter's arm, and he flings her to the side; as if she weighs nothing, because she does. She is nothing. Hunter advances on Liz, closing her in.

A door opens above the staircase, unnoticed.

Liz closes her eyes, waiting for what's coming. Hunter falls. Matt stands above him, a kitchen knife dripping blood in his hands.

Matt rushes to Liz, who is shaking, crying, scared. Liz looks on.

MATT
Liz. Lizzy.

LIZ
Please don't.

MATT
Hey-

Greg and Evan burst through the door, leaving it open behind them.

GREG
LIZ-

EVAN
She's down there-

GREG
Get the fuck away from her!

MATT
It's okay. Hey, please- You're okay-

Dawn notices a light emitting from the doorway. It's bright, but comforting.

GREG
Shit.

EVAN

Holy-

Matt looks up at them as they eye the body in front of them.

DAWN

Lizzy?

Liz opens her eyes. Matt hugs her.

Liz hugs him back. Tightly. Distant sirens. Dawn walks toward the light.

Dawn begins to exit through the doorway, but before leaving;

LIZ

(Through tears, To Dawn)

Please stay.

MATT

I've got you. I'm not going
anywhere.

Greg and Evan bend over Hunter's body. Greg falls to his knees, Evan puts his hand on his back.

LIZ

Please-

DAWN

Write me, okay?

Liz nods.

She holds out her pinky. Liz holds hers out, too. Dawn smiles, and leaves. She has moved on. Police lights begin to show through the windows.

FADE TO BLACK.