

Jailbait  
by  
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
DAISY Tucker	Newcomer. 1st Degree Manslaughter.	15	F
VADA Summers	Homosexual Activity.	16	F
RUSTY Brooks	Loitering, Soliciting, Breaking and Entering.	16	F
DINAH Young	POC. 1st Degree Murder. Insanity Plea.	15	F
MATTIE Greene	Pathological Liar.	14	F
Holly VANDER	Troop Mother. Good.	27	F
Joseph WEBBER	Correctional Officer. Bad.	34	M
TELLER Anderson	Gang Activity.	17	M
SETH Hunt	Suicide Attempt.	15	M
WOODY Carleson	Arson. Possession of Marijuana.	16	M
NEWT Halstead	Vandalization of Public and Private Property. Possession of Cocaine.	16	M
ACE Bright	Petty Theft, Auto Theft, Battery of an Officer.	15	M
MOTHER	Daisy's Mother.	-	F
JUDGE	A Judge.	-	M
ATTORNEY	An Attorney.	-	-

*Judge, Attorney, and Mother should do any doubling needed for dances.*

*Seth should be the same actor in the dance cast and book cast.*

*Daisy can be played by the same actor in both dance and book, but this is not required.*

*All characters should have a Southern Illinoisan accent. Southern Illinoisan accents are not midwestern. It's full of drawl and twang.*

*Cairo is pronounced KAY-row.*

*Vandalia is pronounced Van-DAYL-yuh.*

*Fire is pronounced as one syllable.*

*Vada is pronounced VAY-duh.*

*SLASHES (//) Indicate interruptions.*

*Any content warnings should include -*

*Suicide, Homicide, Mentions of Drug Use, Homophobia, Child Abuse, and Sexual Assault.*

*I, as the playwright, encourage the director to cast the most diverse cast as possible, while also serving the play's needs. "bad kids" come in all shapes, sizes, and colors.*

***Bad kids are good people.***

## Pre-Show

*The sound of a heartbeat.*

*1996. A room of a cabin at Fairlake Correctional Camp, somewhere in rural Southern Illinois. There are five beds. They belong to; VADA, RUSTY, MATTIE, and DINAH. The middle bed is empty. The covers are pristine, as if they haven't been touched in years. A teddy bear sits, waiting. Daisy opens the door, quietly. She has one bag. In it, she has a few necessary belongings and a Bible. The other characters eye her as they say their lines.*

VANDER

Every now and then, you get a kid in and they- They just don't fit in-

MATTIE

In the mess hall she would always, you know ~~Text~~ Keep to herself a bit-

RUSTY

Bit odd. You know? She was just off, but Vada liked her. She always likes the underdog, you know the kind?

VADA

Kind. Just a real sweet one, you know? The other kids gave her a hard time. But no matter what they did or said or tried to get out of her, she was just so, so kind, and-

ACE

And they never tell you what really happens. Most of us don't-

NEWT

Don't get out. We don't get better. We just keep on goin' like this. It's just a circle of- it's-

TELLER

The place where they send all of the bad kids. That's where we are. That's what we are. And no-

WOODY

No, she was just- she was pretty. That's for sure. And Seth, he liked her. We all think he had a little crush on-

DINAH

Her eyes were always so sad. Like they could just start bawlin' at any moment.

VANDER

I just- I need a moment.

Daisy sets her bag down, and takes a seat on the bed. She thinks. She pulls out her journal and begins to write. Webber enters with a freshly folded blanket.

WEBBER

Let's see.. Tucker, Daisy?

*Daisy looks at him silently.*

WEBBER

Not a talker?

DAISY

Not quite.

WEBBER

Those are my favorites.

*He smiles at her. She smiles back.*

WEBBER

Your bunkmates will be coming back from rec time soon. 'Bout a half an hour left. Lights out at 9. Lights up at 5. In-between is work. You get breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

*He starts to search through her bags with a metal prod. She goes to grab it. He picks up her bag and empties it on the floor.*

WEBBER

Ms. Vander will be here in the mornin'. I'm sure the others will teach you how things go before she gets here. Be good and you'll get out. Can't let you go until your momma or- I mean- the judge says you get out. Ain't no one stay unless they want to.

*A beat.*

WEBBER

And you ain't want to.

*He exits, keys jingling. She watches him. She then bends down to collect her things.*

*A silhouette of a man looms over Daisy. A heartbeat. Daisy closes her eyes. She turns around to face him, then:*

*VADA enters, quickly. She's out of breath, sweats, and calls out to the rec yard:*

VADA

Take a hike, Dinah! I ain't playin' with you if you're acting like that!

*She turns to face Daisy.*

VADA

Whoa.

*RUSTY, MATTIE, and DINAH all run into the room. Rusty stops at the door.*

RUSTY

What's your name?

*Daisy looks up.*

RUSTY

Hey, I asked you a question. Are you stupid or somethin'?

MATTIE

Step-off, Rust. She's prolly one of them deaf kids from up at Mulberry.

DINAH

There ain't no deaf kids up at Mulberry.

MATTIE

I thought that's where they put all the SPED kids.

DINAH

Yeah, the slow ones, not the deaf ones-

VADA

They didn't tell us you were coming. That's all.

TELLER

Hey we're all waiting out there-

*He looks at Daisy. Daisy looks at him.*

TELLER

Hi.

DAISY

Hi.

RUSTY

She can talk! Who woulda guessed?

ACE (OFF STAGE)

Quittin' already?

TELLER

Coming!

He runs out.

MATTIE

The boys are waiting. Game ain't done yet.

DINAH

What are ya'll playin' for anyway?

VADA

Ace found a pack of cards in the office when he was cleaning. He swiped em'.

DINAH

A pack of cards? That's it?

MATTIE

That and half a bottle of Smirnoff that Woody's brother slipped him on Easter.

VADA

You guys go ahead. Dinah, jump in for me?

*The girls all leave, but not before Rusty takes one last look at Daisy.*

VADA

They'll warm up to you. They always do.

DAISY

Thank you.

VADA

It ain't no problem. I'm Vada.

DAISY

Daisy.

*They shake hands.*

VADA

They already tell you bout dinner?

*Daisy nods.*

VADA

I'll save you a seat.

*VADA begins to exit.*

DAISY

I like that movie.

VADA

Huh?

DAISY

*My Girl.* You have that name. Vada. Like in that movie.

VADA

You're odd, you know that?

DAISY

I guess.

VADA

I'll see you at six.

*Daisy nods. Vada leaves.*

*A mess hall. Chatter fills the air. VADA, RUSTY, MATTIE, and DINAH all sit at a table. NEWT, TELLER, WOODY, ACE and SETH all sit at a table. DAISY enters.*

MATTIE

Daisy! Over here!

RUSTY

She could've found her own spot, you know.

VADA

Kindness it a virtue, Rusty.

MATTIE

I'm pretty sure that's patience.

DINAH

She could use some of that too.

*Rusty flips her the bird.*

ACE

Ayo, check it out.

WOODY

No one told me she was gonna look like that.

NEWT

A little quick, dontcha think?

WOODY

Oh shut it. Just cause she ain't gonna look at your sweaty ass-

SETH

Don't you have somewhere to be about now?

WOODY

Ha-ha.

ACE

Well, what'd you think was gonna happen?

WOODY

If I woulda known none of ya's was wise enough to stuff it down your pants-

TELLER

Why don't you stop while you're ahead?

SETH

Can we talk about anything else?

TELLER

She's here today, I'm sure her Momma will come get her tomorrow. Probably just a scare case.

SETH

I second that.

WOODY

If you ask me, the punishment should be goin' to the wise guy who DROPPED THE DAMN BOTTLE-

ACE

Why'd you give it to butter-fingers anyways?

NEWT

Better than sticky-fingers, right Ace?

*Ace pulls out the cards.*

ACE

Not if you don't get caught.

*The boys laugh, except for Teller.*

DINAH

And if you're caught in a lie two times, then you get isolation.

MATTIE

Isolation sucks.

DINAH

Mattie's a frequent flyer. Can't help but tell//

Stories. MATTIE/DINAH

It's really loud in here. DAISY

You got your papers? RUSTY

Just picked em up from Vandy. DINAH

Oh yeah? Hand 'em over. RUSTY

Ooh! Lemme see. MATTIE

*All of the girls crowd around the slip of paper.*

Bullshit. RUSTY

She can't help it. It's not like she chose. DINAH

What? What's bull? DAISY

You got office. RUSTY

You get to work in the office, with all of the COs. Files and organizing stuff. DINAH

Is that good? DAISY

See? SHE DOESN'T EVEN APPRECIATE IT. RUSTY

MATTIE

It's real good. You get to be inside. That's good.

DAISY

I hate paper-cuts

*VADA enters.*

DINAH

Vada will show ya the ropes.

*She calls her over. She looks a bit rougher than last time we saw her.*

DINAH

VEE! C'mere!

RUSTY

You look-

VADA

Had to take care of some things. Where we at?

RUSTY

Pinkie Pie gets to work with ya!

VADA

What?

DINAH

Daisy's gonna be another office girl.

VADA

Oh. Congrats.

DAISY

Thank you, I think.

VADA

You hear about Woody?

MATTIE

Nah, what'd he do this time?

VADA

Apparently he dropped the bottle.

DINAH

Why didn't he put it in his pants?

VADA

I dunno. I 'bout cracked up when Vandy told me.

DAISY

Who is that?

RUSTY

Vandy. Ms. Vander. Troop Momma. Counselor for people like Seth.

MATTIE

We like her.

DINAH

Webber is the only actual *officer*. The only one in our wing, anyway.

VADA

Got here the year after Rusty. Military wouldn't take him. He's got flat feet or somethin. Maybe we could show you around after dinner? Would you like that? There are some trails in the woods-

DINAH

Wait- after dinner the boys wanted to play with the cards.

MATTIE

Is Woody even gonna be done by then?

DINAH

Newt said he might be. He's been gettin' faster with it. I think Ace is gonna try and sneak him some help.

DAISY

Can I know about the names?

VADA

The names?

DAISY

Are those their *real names*?

MATTIE

OH! Can I tell this one? Please?

RUSTY

Fine.

*Mattie gets giddy at the idea of story-time.*

MATTIE

Okay. You see that table over there?

*Daisy nods.*

MATTIE

That there on the far left is Newt. He's got sweat problems. He's real nervous, real slippery. Vandalized a whole bunch of schools, and scaled the walls to do it. Graffiti, egging, you name it. Oh and cocaine. Lots of cocaine. That's Ace across from him. He stole a car. A nice one, too. And before that he got some sneakers, a baseball mitt, a baseball bat, a TV, and a ton of movies from Blockbuster. Left behind a pack of cards, that's how they got him.

DINAH

He really likes cards. And games. And gambling. And Mattie has a crush on him.

MATTIE

No I don't. I admire him. Next to him is Woody.

DAISY

I like that one.

MATTIE

He's an arsonist.

DAISY

Oh.

MATTIE

You remember that big fire south of Vienna?

DAISY

The one that went down to Kentucky?

VADA

That's the one.

MATTIE

He only set one branch off with his lighter. The rest was just a perfect reaction.

DINAH

Wouldn't call it perfect, Mattie.

MATTIE

Can I speak? Anyways, forests, fields, you name it. Set a barn on fire. That's what landed him in. Farmer's wife was sitting on the porch. She saw the whole thing. That's Seth. He's from Mulberry. You know Mulberry?

DAISY

The crazy house?

*All of the girls look at her.*

DAISY

That's what my Dad always told me.

RUSTY

Yeah? Well your daddy was wrong.

DAISY

I'm sorry.

MATTIE

Well, Seth tried to off himself but Mulberry was full. So they sent him here with us. To uh.. build character.

*The girls all giggle.*

DAISY

So he's just..

MATTIE

Just Seth. He's a sweetie pie, though. He's only been here a coupla months.

DAISY

The other boy?

MATTIE

That's Teller. His daddy sells all the ice 'round here.

DAISY

Ice?

Meth. VADA

Crystal, to be exact. DINAH

Why's he called Teller? DAISY

Told too much. Got the whole damn gang busted. MATTIE

It was here or the system. He chose here. VADA

Shitty choice. RUSTY

*Vada shoulder checks Rusty.*

Yeah, right. VADA  
(Playfully)

What about you guys? DAISY

Did no one teach you jail rules? RUSTY

This isn't jail, Rusty. VADA

Is that your name? Rusty? DAISY

She was a homeless little orphan girl and stole like, a shit ton of car parts and shit- she's kinda like a little garbage rat-// MATTIE

Wow, thanks Matt. RUSTY

VADA

A very cute garbage rat.

MATTIE

Yeah! Like if Annie and a rat had a baby! She got caught by Mr. Hahn. He used to run the camp across the lake, but then he got fired because he killed a girl.

DINAH

Wrong. Child endangerment.

MATTIE

Same thing.

DINAH

Mattie's a pathological liar.

MATTIE

I'm a story-teller.

VADA

Truth-stretcher.

RUSTY

A full-of-shitter.

DINAH

Pathological liar. Her parents put her in here a year ago.

MATTIE

Yeah, but mine visit! On holidays! Okay, Vada's turn.

VADA

I'm um- Well, my parents were evangelicals-

DAISY

Hey, mine too!

RUSTY

Why do you look happy //about this?

MATTIE

Oh-//

RUSTY

Why does she look happy about this?

VADA

I bat for the other team.

DAISY

Like- you- like..

VADA

Girls. I like girls. I'm gay.

DINAH

A homo.

MATTIE

I like queer. It sounds whimsical.

RUSTY

She's a dyke. We're dykes. Together.

*A beat.*

DAISY

Okay. //I've just-

MATTIE

Do you think she's gonna //throw up?

DAISY

I've just never met one of you. In like- for real. Like, I've seen Mulholland Drive. But that's it.

*An uncomfortable beat.*

DAISY

But, like, I'm excited to meet one of you- a dy- I mean a gay. A gay girl. Two gay girls.

RUSTY

Quit while you're ahead.

MATTIE

Dinah killed a baby. And she's schizo.

DINAH

You are so subtle, you know that?

MATTIE

I mean killed. Not like an abortion or anything.

VADA

Abortion.

MATTIE

Yeah. Wasn't one of those.

DAISY

Is this another lie?

VADA

Technically no. She does have a talent for makin' things seem worse than they are.

DAISY

So-

DINAH

It's..it was a long time ago. It was a- during-

VADA

An episode.

DINAH

Right.

MATTIE

Yeah! She hasn't killed anyone else. Just her baby.

DINAH

Can we change subjects?

DAISY

How long..? Like how much longer are you all in here?

*The girls all laugh.*

DAISY

I'm confused.

MATTIE

Are you kiddin'?

VADA

Till someone comes and gets us.

RUSTY

Or the state says we've learned our lesson.

DINAH

Or the meds start workin'.

RUSTY

Don't be scared. I'm sure daddy'll come get you tonight.

The girls laugh. Daisy does not.

ACE

Well, lookie here!

MATTIE

I heard you was in trouble.

ACE

Are you surprised?

*Mattie giggles and blushes a bit.*

DINAH

How many you got?

*The other boys throw their trays away and begin to head over.*

NEWT

Just the north wing. Nothin' I ain't done before.

WOODY

Hey, who's the fresh meat?

SETH

You know her name.

WOODY

I thought I'd be a little formal with it.

DAISY

Daisy.

WOODY

Woody. You want me to throw that away for ya?

DAISY

Sure.

NEWT

I could throw it away instead, if you wanted.

WOODY

I'm perfectly capable.

NEWT

I've got it, really.

WOODY

Do you? Butterfingers?

*Woody laughs as he grabs her tray and  
races Newt to the trash can.*

DINAH

Can't you control them?

TELLER

I pick my battles.

DAISY

You're Teller.

*He sits next to her. He has a teardrop tattoo.*

TELLER

Matt, you waste no time these days. You know that?

MATTIE

Figured it's only right.

TELLER

Yeah, I'm Teller.

*He shakes her hand.*

DAISY

I like your tattoos.

*Everyone smiles a little. She has no idea  
what she just complimented.*

TELLER

Thanks, thanks.

DAISY

Do you like the rain?

TELLER

Love it.

SETH

I'm Seth.

DAISY

I know.

SETH

You're odd, you know that?

VADA/DAISY

She knows. / I know.

RUSTY

Do you know what time Ace'll be done with the bathrooms?

TELLER

I reckon sometime around 10, why?

RUSTY

They said you was gonna play cards.

DAISY

Cards? What game?

SETH

You play cards?

DAISY

Not really.

SETH

You wanna watch? It makes things.. easier.

DAISY

When do you guys do it? Like, P.E.?

*They all laugh.*

SETH

Uh.. not quite.

TELLER

Speaking of, we can't get caught again.

SETH

Well, *they* can't get caught again.

VADA

That was one time.

DINAH

What about Valentine's day?

RUSTY

We were just being festive.

MATTIE

You're lucky it was just Webber.

VADA

He didn't see nothin. I know he didn't see nothin.

DINAH

Don't ruin this for ya'll.

SETH

I think you guys are cute.

VADA

Thanks, Seth.

TELLER

Cute as ya'll are, you get in trouble, there's no tellin' what'll happen to the rest of us.

RUSTY

Vandy already knows. Ain't no way-

TELLER

Yeah, I ain't talking about her. I'm talking about all of us. Webber.

MATTIE

Webber locked Greg in the cellar for- you know.

DAISY

I think I'm missing some things here-

MATTIE

Greg Benner. You 'member him? He went to Cairo.

DAISY

I go to Cairo . This is where he went?

MATTIE

Yeah. Found him spray painting a silo down in Joppa.

DINAH

Sent him here. He ran off or somethin'.

DAISY

Ran off?

VADA

Some people try to run. Don't get very far. Not before Webber catches 'em.

TELLER

Brings 'em back kickin' and screamin'.

MATTIE

Or they don't come back. Go missing or get killed by cougars or somethin'.

RUSTY

Or they go off themselves before anyone can catch up.

SETH

Either way, Vandy puts 'em up on that nice board over there.

TELLER

If they find 'em they find 'em. If they don't, they don't. They stay up there.

RUSTY

Yeah. We don't quite make the milk cartons.

They laugh.

NEWT

Bet he's already back to taggin' the highways.

DAISY

Is he homeschooled?

DINAH

What?

DAISY

I guess, I just.. I don't know. Maybe he switched math classes.

RUSTY

It's different with the guys, though. Webber ain't as hard on us. Plus, Webber likes Vada.

SETH

(Playfully)

Yeah, a little too much.

*Vada chuckles the tiniest amount.*

VADA

Stop it.

SETH

Don't you guys remember what happened though? After they found him with Bradley-

WOODY

True. That was bad. I never feel bad for queers, but-

*Rusty looks at him.*

WOODY

Queer *individuals, who are male-* but I did for him. He was a good guy, or whatever.

SETH

What about Newt?

NEWT

That was an accident. He was very pretty. The showers are dark.

SETH

There's a light switch, you know.

NEWT

Ever heard of *gay for the stay*?

WOODY

Whatever, fa- FABULOUS! Whatever, fabulous!

TELLER

Back to the cards. 10. South field?

SETH

They fixed the lock last Wednesday, remember?

TELLER

Damn.

NEWT

Eh, it's fine. I'll scale it.

ACE

You sure, butter-fingers?

NEWT

That was one time, and you know that. It's different on concrete.

WEBBER

Newt, they need you back on canine rest of day. Clean-up crew. Got a rowdy one with rabies.

NEWT

I was starting to like trash, plus Teller ain't had canine in weeks.

WEBBER

I ain't takin' suggestions, boy.

NEWT

Fine.

WEBBER

Was that attitude?

*Newt is quiet. Webber slaps him. Quick, suddenly. Daisy gasps. The other kids watch, but no one is surprised.*

NEWT

No, sir.

WEBBER

Do I take kindly to attitude, boy?

*Newt stutters before Webber begins to raise his hand.*

NEWT

NO. No, sir.

*Webber smiles.*

WEBBER

Hop to it and you might be able to eat before we head out.

NEWT

Okay.

WEBBER

Forgetting something?

NEWT

Thank you for the correction.

*A beat.*

NEWT

Sir.

WEBBER

Seth, therapy.

SETH

On it.

*Ace comes to Newt's side, patting him on the back. Woody cracks some joke to make him smile. Daisy lingers a bit too long, staring.*

*Newt barely looks up. Mattie drags her away.*

I.III

*The girl's cabin at night. All of the girls feign sleeping, except for Daisy, who is actually asleep. They all speak at a whisper.*

VADA

Mattie, anything?

MATTIE

You would know as well as I.

VADA

Nuh-uh. You're closer to the window.

RUSTY

What if we just go? I'm sure it's almost time.

VADA

Can't we ask Ace to swipe another watch?

DINAH

Not if he keeps getting caught.

MATTIE

He won't.

DINAH

Tell that to him.

MATTIE

I'm sure it's just an off day.

*Rusty gets out of bed and slings a bag on her back.*

RUSTY

Whatever. I'm going.

VADA

Wait for me.

RUSTY

Always.

*As she gets out of bed, Vada knocks a book off of Daisy's nightstand onto the floor.*

VADA

Shit.

RUSTY

Please for the love of GOD-

VADA

SHH! It was an accident.

*A knock on the window.*

WOODY (OFF STAGE)

Are you guys coming?

MATTIE

SHHH!!

*Another knock.*

DINAH

He can't hear you.

*Mattie opens her window.*

MATTIE

One sec. We don't wanna wake up Mother Teresa.

VADA

Would it be so bad if we took her with?

MATTIE

UH YES-

RUSTY

I love you so much, and you're so kind, but-

MATTIE

Don't fuck this up. I need to drink.

*Woody appears in the window.*

WOODY

Can you guys hurry? Newt just finished up.

MATTIE

Where is he?

WOODY

He's with Ace grabbing the hooch from the greenhouse. Don't get your panties in a twist, he'll be here soon.

*One by one, all of the girls climb out of  
Mattie's window.*

*Vada sets Daisy's Bible back on her  
nightstand. She leaves after the rest of the  
girls.*

I.IV

*The South Field. ACE smokes a cigarette while MATTIE drinks hooch. A lot of it. The  
other girls play cards with the boys. WOODY plays with a lighter.*

ACE

Take it slow.

MATTIE

Why?

DINAH

Can you share, please?

*Mattie reluctantly hands the bag over.*

DINAH

God, what did you put in here?

ACE

Banana, grape, blueberry-

DINAH

We haven't had no blueberries since-

MATTIE

I sure don't taste no blueberries.

ACE

That's how you know it's good.

*All of the kids make various sounds of  
disgust.*

ACE

What?! Older the fruit, better the ferment!

WOODY

Says who?

ACE

Says vodka!

SETH

It's true. Vodka is just rotten potatoes.

WOODY

You're a rotten potato.

SETH

Okay..?

VADA

Ew. Vodka.

RUSTY

You've had vodka?

VADA

I had a life before you, you know.

RUSTY

Oh, I know.

DINAH

Guys stop. There's someone in the woods.

ACE

Don't fuck with me, Dee.

DINAH

I'm not fucking with you.

Where?  
TELLER

There. Right there. By the barn.  
DINAH

*They all look.*

Can you point to it?  
TELLER

*She points to an empty spot.*

Oh.  
TELLER

Not real.  
ALL

My bad.  
DINAH

Nah, thanks for looking out for us.  
NEWT

Any time, any time.  
DINAH

*Woody burns himself. Teller takes the lighter.*

Where'd you get that?  
TELLER

Ace gave it to me. Birthday present.  
WOODY

Is today your birthday?  
NEWT

I dunno. What day is it?  
WOODY

It's July. I think.  
TELLER

DINAH

Sounds right.

WOODY

Nah, it's too cold at night to be July.

ACE

Yeah. Ain't it September?

MATTIE

Nuh-uh. Rusty said there's still a wasp nest on the running trail, right? It'll be gone by September.

ACE

Why's it matter anyway? If he thinks it's his birthday, it's his birthday.

WOODY

It feels like my birthday.

*Ace begins happy birthday. The others join.*

NEWT

Woody, you wanna..?

WOODY

Oh, uh, sure. Be right back, guys.

RUSTY

Use protection!

*They all laugh.*

NEWT

Ha-ha.

WOODY

Rust, you want some?

RUSTY

Yeah-

VADA

No, she doesn't.

RUSTY

Yes I do-

VADA

Are you trying to stay in here forever?

RUSTY

Right. Sorry.

TELLER

Gimme that. You bring anything to chase it with?

ACE

It's fruit.

TELLER

Yeah- old rotten fruit. You ain't got no soda or nothin'?

DINAH

I got an old OJ in my bag.

TELLER

How old?

DINAH

Two days.

TELLER

Easy money.

*She throws it to him. He takes a big swig,  
and a tiny chase.*

WOODY

Oh! Look who's gettin' lit tonight!

TELLER

Just a sip.

MATTIE

I ain't lettin' you hog it all this week. Seth, you want in?

SETH

You know it. Where are the cards?

TELLER  
Where's Daisy?

WOODY  
I called dibs. I saw her first.

TELLER  
No one has dibs. Plus, I just wanna know where she is.

ACE  
Does that mean that you want dibs?

TELLER  
I didn't say anything about dibs.

WOODY  
I heard you say dibs.

ACE  
You said dibs for sure.

WOODY  
He totally wants dibs.

RUSTY  
Asleep.

TELLER  
Really?

RUSTY  
Didn't even wake up to the knocks.

TELLER  
Wow.

*A beat as the other kids carry on, away from them.*

TELLER  
Did you sleep? Your first night?

RUSTY  
Here?

*He nods.*

RUSTY

I don't remember. It was a while ago.

TELLER

I guess it was. It doesn't seem-

RUSTY

I remember when you came in, though.

TELLER

What, kicking and screaming?

*Teller looks at her.*

RUSTY

I never believed all that. All that stuff they were sayin' about you? That you sold 'em all out. I knew it wasn't true.

TELLER

You're fibbing.

RUSTY

I'm not. I can tell the good in a person. I've always been like that. I ain't a liar. I'd let you know.

TELLER

You swear it?

RUSTY

I swear it.

*A beat.*

TELLER

What do you think about her?

RUSTY

I think we'll find out soon.

MATTIE

Are you guys gonna play?

TELLER

Coming!

*The scene shifts back to the girl's cabin. Daisy tosses in her sleep. She dreams. The sound of a heartbeat. The scene shifts back to the boys cabin. WOODY and NEWT dig through a mess of dirty clothes. Woody has two bongos: one made from an apple, and one from a plastic water bottle. He grabs a pack of watches and a bag of weed.*

WOODY

You think apple or water bottle? I think the apple kinda flavors it, ya know? It feels gourmet.

NEWT

I don't know man. Whatever you want.

WOODY

I'm sure Ace'll want some. I got him to smoke last hike. We got away from Webber when he was beatin' on Teller. Had it in my pocket.

NEWT

Uh-huh.

WOODY

He coughs like a girl. If I was stupid enough I'd think he never even smoked a ciggy. Hey, can you-

*He turns to look at Newt, who hides a bag of white powder in his pants immediately.*

NEWT

What? What- what?

WOODY

What was that?

NEWT

What was what? I don't have nothing. Like, what?

WOODY

You shoved something down your pants.

NEWT

NO I didn't-//

WOODY  
Lemme see//

NEWT  
Nah, man//

WOODY  
Do you have more weed?//

NEWT  
I'm not wearing any underwear-//

WOODY  
It's my birthday-//

*Woody pulls Newt's pants down. A bag of cocaine falls out.*

WOODY  
What is that?

*A beat.*

NEWT  
It's nothing. It's-

*Woody snatches up the bag before he can get to it.*

WOODY  
No, man. Hell no.

NEWT  
You smoke all the time.

WOODY  
Yeah, *weed* is a little different than blow, man.//

NEWT  
Oh yeah? How? Give it back.

WOODY  
No.

NEWT

Hand it over.

WOODY

How are you even getting this? You ain't got no visitors-//

NEWT

It doesn't matter-//

WOODY

It's someone on the inside, isn't it?

*Newt lunges at Woody to obtain the bag. Woody opens the bag and pours it on the floor. Newt drops to his knees.*

NEWT

WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING, MAN-

WOODY

YOU LOOK LIKE A FUCKING JUNKIE. Get it together, man. Don't you want out of here?

NEWT

We're stuck here anyways.

WOODY

I'm not leaving this hellhole just to be put in a state-mandated one.

*Newt looks at him. It's a challenge. He leaves and heads back to the field. Woody follows. The scene shifts back to the rec field.*

RUSTY

Where are they?

ACE

You think Vander saw 'em?

MATTIE

This late?

ACE

Maybe. She's been up most nights with Doug. Webber traumatized the poor guy.

MATTIE

Oh, yeah. He sleeps in the office now, or something-

VADA

Whatever. Can we play the game?

SETH

Let's wait for the other guys. Ace didn't you have that radio?

ACE

It don't work too good yet.

SETH

I thought you were gonna fix it.

ACE

I am, genius. It just takes time.

TELLER

Give it here.

*He searches stations for a while. The signal comes in and out, and sharpens. A song begins to play. Teller jams out. Then Seth. Then Ace. Then the girls. It's a sort of dance party. The boys enter. Woody jumps into the circle. He begins to dance. Teller beckons for Newt. Ace and Mattie dance together. They all dance. The radio cuts out abruptly. Ace kicks it.*

WOODY

Where's Barbie?

TELLER

Asleep, and don't call her that.

WOODY

She sits up straight and shit, though.

ACE

That's true. She sits with like, her tits in the air.

RUSTY  
I told ya'll there's something off.

DINAH  
I don't think she's that bad.

RUSTY  
Not you too.

DINAH  
Why not?

RUSTY  
I can't lose you AND her-

SETH  
I like her.

RUSTY  
Yeah, I don't care so much about you.

SETH  
Valid.

VADA  
What? You don't value my opinion?

RUSTY  
I just think you need to remember who we are, and who she is-

VADA  
(As flirty as possible)  
Oh, I know who we are.

RUSTY  
Flirt all you want. I'm telling you, she's.. off.

*Her dream grows more violent, scarier-*

SETH  
Nah, she's sweet. She's good. Deep down, you know? You can tell. She's good.

TELLER  
Seth's got a crush?

Yeah, right. SETH

Hey, no one called dibs. WOODY

Technically. TELLER

Aw, T likes little Barbie? RUSTY

Oh, step off Rust. TELLER

Yeah. She's real nice if you get to know her. DINAH

No way. MATTIE

Hey, I thought you were on our side! DINAH

There ain't no sides! MATTIE

She is nice though. TELLER

She's real quiet, you know? Quiet isn't bad. SETH

You know what they say about the quiet ones- WOODY

*He humps the air.*

Ew. DINAH

*A scream comes from the direction of the cabin.*

Coyotes. ACE

*They all resume the game. A scream again.*

SETH

Shh.

*Again. Accompanied with banging on the door of the cabin.*

TELLER

I'll grab the stuff, you guys go.

*The location shifts back to the girls cabin. Daisy is up, but not awake. She bangs on things, throws things.*

I.V

DAISY

STOP-//

DINAH

What the-//

ACE

Bitches are so-//

NEWT

Stop while you're ahead. //

DAISY

GET OFF OF ME-//

RUSTY

I CALLED IT. I FUCKING CALLED IT- CRAZY//

DINAH

Cut it out, Rust!//

WOODY

BITCHES ARE SO CRAZY-//

MATTIE

Can you shut up?

NEWT

Someone's gonna hear-

*Teller arrives with all of the items. He watches the scene, trying to figure out his next steps.*

DINAH

She was like this when we walked in-

*Vada attempts to get in front of Daisy. She flings her arm, throwing Vada across the room. Rusty rushes to Vada, who's now holding her head.*

SETH

SOMEONE DO SOMETHING BEFORE SHE WAKES THE WHOLE CAMP UP.

*Teller grabs Daisy's arms, which doesn't stop her. He picks her up and pins her on the bed. The girls rush over. Daisy wakes up.*

DAISY

STOP- STOP-

TELLER

HEY- WAKE UP.

*She punches Teller square in the face. His nose begins to bleed. All of the kids look at her.*

TELLER

Ow.

*Daisy begins to hum.*

WEBBER (OFF STAGE)

They're just not there!

VANDER (OFF STAGE)

Well they can't just disappear-

WEBBER (OFF STAGE)

That's not what I'm saying-

TELLER

It's okay.

*They walk into the cabin. Vada climbs on the bed to comfort Daisy. Teller gets off.*

VANDER

What a way to meet.

DINAH

Vandy, we're-

VANDER

Webber, take yours. I'll deal with mine.

WEBBER

Boys.

*All of the boys file out. Teller stays back a little.*

TELLER

It's okay.

WEBBER

Teller!

*He leaves. Silence.*

VANDER

Care to explain?

*All of the girls break into a chorus of excuses and explanations. This does not stop until Daisy speaks.*

MATTIE

THERE WAS A WASP-//

RUSTY

I ain't covering for her-//

DINAH

Really, we weren't doing anything wrong-//

VADA  
I think something's wrong-//

RUSTY  
Shh.//

DINAH  
Really, Vandy, is it any worse than the time that-//

DAISY  
I have nightmares.

VANDER  
I can see that.

*A beat.*

VANDER  
You come with me. The rest of you, back to bed.

MATTIE  
How are we supp-

VANDER  
Back to bed. Don't make me board that window up again.

RUSTY  
You wouldn-

VANDER  
Wanna test it, Brooks?

*Rusty goes quiet. The girls get ready for bed.*

I.VI

Vander's Office. Her desk is messy, and behind it sits a filing cabinet stuffed full of files.

VANDER  
Let me pull your file. Last name?

DAISY  
Tucker.

VANDER

Tucker... Tucker... Tucker. Let's see.

VANDER

Listen, I know those boys can be rough sometimes, especially Teller. He's one of those- you know- but- but that don't mean you can hurt 'em. I know you have a history-

*Daisy looks at her uncomfortably.*

VANDER

But ain't no one able to hurt you. Not here. It's just a place for you to grow, and you know, get the good parts of you back.

*An uncomfortable beat.*

VANDER

You ain't a bad kid. I know bad kids. Teller, Rusty, Woody- I know those kids. You ain't like that, but still- There's a reason you're here, Tucker. There's a reason for everything.

I.VII

*A new day. The girl's cabin. The girls are all awake and moving, except for Daisy.*

RUSTY

I think we should let her get the whistle. Builds character.

DINAH

Don't be a bitch, Rusty. At least she's actually *asleep*.

VADA

She's not being a bitch. How did you get woken up your first day?

DINAH

...the whistle.

RUSTY

Builds character.

MATTIE

I peed the bed.

*The girls all look at her.*

MATTIE

Not today. My first- my first day is what I meant. //I DIDN'T PEE THE BED I SWEAR-

DINAH

//HAHAHAHA-

RUSTY

IS THAT WHAT THAT SMELL WAS?//

MATTIE

I GET NERVOUS.

VADA

She had a hard enough first day, though, don't you think?

RUSTY

It doesn't matter how her first day goes. It'll be the same tomorrow.

DINAH

Maybe if you had a better first day you'd be gone by now, hm?

MATTIE

That was just low.

DINAH

Alls I'm sayin' is that we should use our uh, wisdom to.. guide the youth.

RUSTY

Our wisdom of hooch making and card stealing? Hasn't helped her too much so far.

DINAH

I don't think that's fair.

RUSTY

Fine.

*Rusty splashes the stale water left in her canteen onto Daisy's face. She sits up, gasping for air.*

RUSTY

Rise and shine, Barbie.

VADA

That was mean.

DAISY

What time is it?

MATTIE

Sometime before 6. You need to get goin, Vandy's gonna be here any second.

DAISY

Get going?

VADA

Dammit. Uh- your bed. You need to make your bed, and put some fresh clothes on.

*Vada crosses to Daisy to help her.*

DAISY

Oh- okay-

DINAH

Your camp tee. You should be wearing your camp tee today.

MATTIE

How many they give you?

*Dinah begins to dig through Daisy's duffle bag.*

DAISY

I dunno- I didn't- I'm sorry.

DINAH

It's okay. You should have three.

VADA

You go and fix yourself up. Can I get a little help? Rusty? Dinah?

*Daisy exits to change.*

RUSTY

I ain't doin' her work for her.

VADA

We all need to help her out.

MATTIE

Just for the first few days, okay? I ain't helpin' past next week.

VADA

That's fine.

DINAH

I do like her, I think.

VADA

I knew you would.

MATTIE

She's okay.

DINAH

She's good. I think she's a good one. AND I THINK WE SHOULD ALL BE TREATING HER AS SO.

*Rusty gives her a challenging look.*

VADA

It could be fun to have another girl around, you know. At least I'll have some company in the office.

RUSTY

If she wasn't singin' all the time maybe she'd be easier to have around.

VADA

Oh that was one time. You never hum to calm yourself down?

RUSTY

I ain't like that.

VADA

I beg to differ.

DINAH

And now we have one more member on our team! For games! C'mon Mattie. You can't tell me you wouldn't like to win at soccer once in a while.

MATTIE

I don't need no blondie to win a game.

DINAH

But wouldn't it be nice to have a few more feet on the field?

*Mattie cracks a smile.*

MATTIE

It couldn't hurt.

RUSTY

(Annoyed with the humming)

OH MY GOD- You guys can't tell me that don't annoy you.

MATTIE

I kinda like it. It's kinda calming. You know, my mama used to hum-

RUSTY

Yeah, and your mama also used to be a pro-wrestler.

DINAH

And a chef.

MATTIE

Hey-

DINAH

Rust, I'm sure you guys can find some middle ground somewhere.

VADA

They can. She's nice, you can't deny that.

DINAH

Really nice.

VADA

And a little pretty too.

*Rusty eyes Vada. Vada winks. Rusty smiles.*

*A whistle blows outside. Daisy enters, freshly dressed in her camp t-shirt. Her shirt is the only clean one. The girls line up.*

MATTIE

Daisy, here.

*Daisy stands next to her.*

VANDER

Morning, girls! Hope ya'll had a good nights rest. At least for part of it.

*She marks names off of a clipboard as she lists them.*

VANDER

Alrighty. Here we go. Young?

DINAH

Here.

VANDER

Summers?

VADA

Present!

VANDER

Brooks?

RUSTY  
(Imitating Vada)

Present.

VANDER

Greene?

*Mattie salutes her. Vander gives her a look.*

MATTIE

Sorry. Hehe. Here.

VANDER

And... Tucker. Here.

DAISY

Yes, here.

VANDER

Good deal! Young and Brooks, there's a lot of work out in the greenhouse today, so do your best to finish breakfast early.

DINAH

Is it Brigham or Franks today?

VANDER

Brigham.

DINAH

Oh, thank god.

RUSTY

Yeah, maybe you could get Franks a new brand of deodorant? For his birthday, or Christmas.. or just to make a point?

*The girls all laugh.*

VANDER

You're a bad egg, Rusty.

RUSTY

You know it.

VANDER

Alright. Go on.

*Rusty and Dinah exit.*

VANDER

Greene, you're on south wing - you'll need to grab more trash bags first.

MATTIE

On it.

*She exits.*

VANDER

I don't wanna see that lock go missing again!

VANDER

Tucker, you'll be with Summers on office duty. I'll be around you all day if you need anything, but I'm sure Vada will help you out with anything you need.

*Vada turns and smiles.*

VADA

For sure.

VANDER

I think Webber's got some files that need organizing. You can brief her on the way over, yes?

VADA

Yes.

VANDER

Be good!

*Vander exits. Vada and Daisy begin to walk over. It's quiet for a bit.*

VADA

You really are odd.

DAISY

I'm odd?

VADA

Yes. You freak out on all of us, ask us all why we're here- I'm trying to defend you, you know. You're making this very hard.

DAISY

You don't need to defend me.

VADA

Oh yes I do. Rusty about beat you after that whole preachers daughter stunt.

DAISY

He ain't a preacher. He's a pastor.

VADA

SEE- Listen. You have to like, rub some dirt on you or something. You need to- just fit in better. I know that sounds mean. I swear to you, though- this is the nicest thing I can do for you. You can't have crazy-ass night terrors and have a stick up your ass. We're all here. We all have to be here. You're one of us, whether you like it or not.

DAISY

No, I'm not like you guys-

VADA

You're here, aren't you?

VADA

That means you are. You are like us. You're one of the "bad kids" or whatever you used to call us from your tall white tower. When you were out- but you're in. And trust me, I have nothing against crazy. That's not what this is about. I mean, Dinah is- She killed a baby, you know?//

DAISY

That's real?//

VADA

I like you, Daisy. I do. But- You sit up straight. And you have manners. Like, *good* manners. Like the kind that grandmas teach to those girls that go to those fancy dances. You know those dances? And they always go with the boys- Oh. Debutante balls? The Deb balls?

*Daisy laughs a bit.*

VADA

Did I say it wrong?

DAISY

No.

VADA

Then why are you laughin'?

*Daisy continues to laugh.*

VADA

(Growing in frustration)

Hey, c'mon. TELL ME WHAT I SAID-

DAISY

You said balls.

VADA

No way. You're *so odd*.

DAISY

I know.

*Vada and Daisy laugh. They arrive at the office.*

WEBBER

Ah! My girl!

VADA

Hi.

WEBBER

Ready to work?

*He notices Daisy.*

WEBBER

Daisy! I assigned you to me as soon as I saw you. Office is everyone's favorite.

*Vada catches this.*

WEBBER

Ain't that right, Vee?

VADA

AC is nice. You have some files for us?

WEBBER

In the back, mail room. When you're done showing her the ropes, come see me.

VADA

Should I-

WEBBER

Just you.

I. VIII

*The Greenhouse.* *Rusty, Dinah, Seth, and Woody care for the plants.*

DINAH

She's really not bad.

RUSTY

She's weird. She was like, demon possessed-

DINAH

You don't know what she went through.

WOODY

I heard she was a prostitute.

SETH

Really?

*Everyone looks at him.*

WOODY

No. Just wanted to see what you'd say.

RUSTY

You're so gross.

DINAH

Woody can you help me move this one to the back?

WOODY

What's in it for me?

DINAH

Kill yourself.//

RUSTY

Don't say that.//

SETH

It's fine//

DINAH

Sorry.//

WOODY

Comin right up sunshine.//

*Woody follows Dinah to the back. It's silent.  
There's a long beat.*

RUSTY

I'm sorry.

SETH

Really, it's fine. Don't.

RUSTY

Okay.

SETH

It's an expression, I get it.

RUSTY

I just don't want there to be another- Do you know we all got lashes last time? Four for each. Even Teller. Webber had to like, pin him down, apparently- It was like a hippo and an alligator-

SETH

Please don't make me feel worse than I- Than I already do.

RUSTY

I didn't mean it like that. Just- just let me know if you need anything. Or if you need to talk about it? I know I don't seem like the type to talk about these things. I'm not the type to talk about these things.

SETH

No kidding.

RUSTY

Vada told me you don't like me. I get it. Like, I do. I know I'm mean. I don't mean to be *mean*. I just kinda- am. I guess. I just don't want to cause you to like- like I don't want to be the one to push you off the edge or anything- whoa. Um- bad choice of words. //

SETH

Rust, it's fine.//

RUSTY

You think I'm a bully, I know that. I just. I don't want to be your bully. I do like you. Even if I think you're a little faggy, and that you definitely have a thing for Teller. WHICH IS FINE.

SETH

I don't.

RUSTY

Hey- I'm *gay*, remember? Like queer. Homo.

SETH

Yeah, but-

RUSTY

I read your journal.

*Seth looks at her.*

RUSTY

You left it out in the woods the other day. I know you go to write in there. I see you go in there after your therapy thing. My window faces that big tree, you know the one? The one- the sad tree?

SETH

The willow.

RUSTY

Yeah, the crying tree or whatever-

SETH

The weeping willow.

RUSTY

Yeah. The crying tree. You write under there. Vander made me run three miles the other day for calling Newt a-

SETH

Cock-sucking cuck.

RUSTY

Cock-sucking cuck.

RUSTY

Yeah.

SETH

I like that one. You should use it more often.

RUSTY

Stop deflecting-//

SETH

Oh, big word-//

RUSTY

Fuck off. It was sitting there, on that dead log, and I know I shouldn't have. But I did. I read it. Anyways, I know that you watch Teller in the showers. And I know that you think I'm a bully. And that you're going to run away next week.

SETH

You could come with me.

RUSTY

I can't. I can't leave Vada.

SETH

You won't even try?? Rusty- it's getting bad. People are going to- d- Greg wasn't allowed food for five days, Rusty. Five days-

RUSTY

He knew what he was doing-

SETH

Five days.

RUSTY

Five days is nothing. He was a bit of a fat ass anyway.

SETH

How many days would you get?

RUSTY

Huh?

SETH

How many days of starvation do you think you deserve? And Vada?

RUSTY

I-

SETH

How many days without water? I hear that people like you aren't treated very nicely here either. Thiefs or-

*Ace and Mattie enter with trash duty supplies.*

NEWT

You guys got anything?

SETH

Since when are you back on trash duty?

MATTIE

Since they took him off K9.

RUSTY

No way you-

MATTIE

He did.

NEWT

Ace dared me. Plus, he wanted to come home with me.

MATTIE

Right. So, you guys got trash or no?

RUSTY

There's some empty soil bags in the back. Have fun.

NEWT

I got it.

WOODY

Can I come?

NEWT

Can you WHAT-

*Ace bursts in to laughter. Woody laughs with him and follows him. Mattie speaks at a whisper.*

MATTIE

I know what she did.

RUSTY

Yeah, right-

MATTIE

No, really. Really I do-

RUSTY

Just like you knew what Seth did? What was it again?//

SETH

Bank robbery. HUGE bank robbery.//

RUSTY

RIGHT- the Chicagoan bank robber-//

SETH

I understand, though- I look great in black.

MATTIE

That was one time.

RUSTY

Once is enough, Matt.

MATTIE

Really! I saw it during trash run.

RUSTY

You got proof?

MATTIE

Well, no- but it's like, really bad-

SETH

Not funny, Mattie.

MATTIE

I'm not trying to be funny, I swear!

*The bathrooms. Teller mops. Ace has a mop,  
but tries to fix the radio instead.*

ACE

Do you know what the new girl did?

TELLER

Daisy, and no, I don't. You gonna help?

ACE

What if she like, killed someone-

TELLER

So what? I'm sure that's not the case.

ACE

I know, but she would be the type. Right? Like, super dark and tortured.

TELLER

We're all super dark and tortured. Do you even have a screwdriver?

ACE

But-

TELLER

You're missing a ton of options here, man. Maybe she's a street kid like Rust. And even if she was- even if she did- she wouldn't be the first with violence on her record. There's you know, *me*, and Dinah killed someone-

ACE

You were just protectin' your old man. And Dinah's- That's a baby.//

TELLER

She could be a vandal like Newt-

ACE

Urban artist.

TELLER

Or, or A klepto like you-//

ACE

It's slight of hand. I'm good at it.//

TELLER

Right, right. Too good.//

ACE

Thanks.

*A beat.*

TELLER

Don't matter anyway. Like I said, probably a scare case.

ACE

I dunno. It's something about her eyes, dude. What if she's some cold-blooded serial killer or somethin. Like-

TELLER

A serial killer with bibles and night terrors?

ACE

Like the Jesus-hunter-slasher-girl. Wait, not Jes-

TELLER

Nice ring to it.

ACE

You know what I mean. I'm serious. She's got those sad eyes. You remember when Mattie said that?

TELLER

Mattie says a lot of things.

ACE

Nah, man. About Seth. She said that about Seth.

TELLER

That don't mean nothing.

ACE

Yeah, well Dinah thought so too.

TELLER

Dinah thinks there's people in the walls.

ACE

And she's never been proven wrong, has she?

TELLER

Only by psych evaluations and insanity pleas.

*They laugh a bit.*

ACE

Well, she was right, though. About Seth, I mean. I mean, have you taken a look at her eyes?

TELLER

Yes.

Sad. ACE

Blue. TELLER

Sad. ACE

I guess. TELLER

*A faint whistle in the distance. The scene shifts back to the Greenhouse. Woody and Ace have re-entered the scene.*

DINAH  
If it was that bad, she'd be locked up.

NEWT  
That's what I told her!

WOODY  
So you didn't see the file?

NEWT  
Not me, no. Mattie says she did.

MATTIE  
I did.

NEWT  
Says the liar.

MATTIE  
That's not fair.

SETH  
But you are, though. You're a liar. A professional liar.

MATTIE  
It ain't so simple. And it's not professional. It's a hobby.

SETH

Right. A hobby that landed you here.

MATTIE

That's *different*. My parents put me here.

SETH

Stop with the semantics, Matt.

MATTIE

You don't get it. Some of these kids are, like, bad-

DINAH

We're all bad. We're all here.

RUSTY

Matt's right. She could be crazy.

MATTIE

Told you!

RUSTY

I still don't think you're telling the truth. I just think you have a point. She could be dangerous.

DINAH

How does this change anything?

RUSTY

You just want someone who don't know what you did. I get it. I wouldn't want someone to know I killed my baby.//

DINAH

Mattie already told her.

MATTIE

Sorry.//

DINAH

Plus, she don't need to know the full-

RUSTY

So you admit it. You don't want her to know that you went all Mommy Dearest-

DINAH

I'm just saying that I think you might've forgotten what it's like to be new around here.

*TELLER and NEWT enter.*

TELLER

You guys comin? Lunch whistle blew a bit ago.

WOODY

Oh hell yeah.

*WOODY runs out, followed by ACE, NEWT, MATTIE, SETH, TELLER and WOODY.*

RUSTY

(To Dinah)

This isn't imaginary. If she goes-

*She begins to whisper.*

RUSTY

If she goes-

DINAH

I know.

RUSTY

I'm just sayin you better place your bet on a good horse.

*A beat.*

RUSTY

You ain't gonna have no one to protect you. I've known all of you since you came in. All the guys before you- Ace, Teller, even Mattie. You think they're gonna side with the insanity case who got here five months ago? Ain't no way. There's somethin' off about her. I know it. We all do. I know you see it. It ain't in your head. This is *real*. She ain't your pet.

DINAH

I know it-

*TELLER re-enters, unseen.*

RUSTY

NO. I DON'T THINK YOU DO. If she lays one hand on Vee? Game's over. I ain't gettin' out for another two years. I turn 18 and I'm out. I ain't got nothin' to go back to. I ain't got nothin' to lose except her. You better keep her on a tight leash, Young. Three months from now, Teller is aging out. Ain't no one stickin' their neck out for you. You can either be with me or with her, but either way, you'll be alone. Just like the rest of us.

TELLER

Food's gettin' cold, Rusty.

*After a beat of challenge, RUSTY exits.*

TELLER

C'mon. I saved you a seat.

*The scene shifts to the office, where DAISY organizes files with Vada.*

VADA

What's the last thing you did?

DAISY

Court.

VADA

No, stupid. Before that.

DAISY

I mostly just stayed home.

VADA

You went to Cairo?

DAISY

Yeah.

VADA

Did you know Teller? You know, before you got here.

DAISY

Naw, he from there?

VADA

That's where his dad operates from.

DAISY

He own a factory?

VADA

See *that's* what I mean. You don't know nothin'.

DAISY

What am I supposed to know?

VADA

You never noticed his bandana?

DAISY

I think it's cute.

VADA

You don't think nothin' of it?

DAISY

Am I supposed to?

VADA

Better not to know, I guess.

DAISY

What?//

VADA

//You know what I miss? The mall. I want to go to the mall. Is it still there? That mall up in Vandalia? The one with all the brick?

DAISY

Last time I checked.//

VADA

// I'm gonna go get a pretzel from the food court. You ever been to that food court?

DAISY

Once.

VADA

They got the best damn pretzels you ever had. Sometimes if I was with my dad, he'd buy extra cheese.

*A beat.*

VADA

I do miss him. And my momma. I miss ‘em both. I know they think I’m like, goin’ to burn in the fires of hell forever and stuff, but I still miss ‘em. They were nice most days. Some days.

DAISY

Really?

VADA

On Sundays Mom would teach me how to cook. You know, to be a good wife one day. To a man, I guess. Not that lesbians can’t cook. I guess they might. But she would let me cook. That was nice. I liked that.

DAISY

Then you’re a lesbian who cooks.

VADA

I guess so.

DAISY

I do think about the mall sometimes.

VADA

You do?

DAISY

Yeah. I really liked that Orange Julius place. I think about it a lot.

VADA

Have you always had these.. thoughts?

DAISY

What?

THE COURTROOM

ATTORNEY

Have you always had these.. thoughts?

DAISY

I..no, I think- well, maybe I have-

ATTORNEY

It's a simple question, Daisy.

*A beat as Daisy searches for the answer.*

JUDGE

Ms. Tucker, are you with us?

DAISY

Yes, yes. I'm here, I just-

*A female voice cries out.*

MOTHER

Baby, baby what is it?

DAISY

Momma, momma, please-

MOTHER

What did you do?

DAISY

I didn't- please, you have to understand.

MOTHER

What did you do?

DAISY

Mom-

MOTHER

You stay away. You stay back, now Daisy-

*Police sirens sound. Daisy inches towards her mother.*

MOTHER

Daisy, DAISY-

*A whistle. Reality.*

VADA

Daisy? Lunch whistle just blew.

*She's a bit out of breath.*

DAISY

Right. Is that what that was? It's so..

VADA

Annoying? Loud? Shrill? Makes you wanna blow your brains out?

DAISY

Right on the nose. You comin'?

*WEBBER enters behind her.*

VADA

I have some last minute things to finish. I'll catch up.

DAISY

Oh, but I'm not sure I know the way back.

VADA

You just follow the signs. Mess hall is in the middle of camp, remember?

DAISY

Right, but- could I just wait here?

*A beat. She thinks.*

VADA

I-

WEBBER

I'll get Vander to walk you.

DAISY

I'd really rather wait-

WEBBER

Vander will walk you.

DAISY

Okay.

*Webber watches as she packs her things.*

DAISY

I'll see you?

VADA

I'll be there soon.

I.IX.

*The mess hall. All girls sit at their table, and the guys surround it. DAISY, WEBBER, VANDER and VADA are yet to arrive. NEWT has a notebook. He draws.*

SETH

I don't think we should say nothin'.

TELLER

I agree- it'll be too much.

WOODY

But don't we have a right to know? We're around her all the time, I mean-

MATTIE

I already told you, I know.

RUSTY

Then why won't you say nothing?

*She's silent.*

DINAH

Why do ya'll care so much? I mean, it can't be that bad.

NEWT

Don't you?

WOODY

Crazy or not, she's got a great set of-

RUSTY

Watch it.

WOODY

Personality. She's got a great personality.

DINAH

What if we ask? She might tell us. If ya'll really want to know that bad.

MATTIE

Or she'll lie.

WOODY

Ain't everybody like you, Matt.

DINAH

Shut it. What if us girls asked tonight? Mattie, you got any nail polish left? Maybe that'll soften the blow.

MATTIE

Yes. For me. And only me.

SETH

I think this is worth sharing for.

ACE

Why, you want some?

*Woody and Ace laugh, then high-five.*

*Rusty shoots a look.*

TELLER

What if we move on? She'll tell when she's ready.

SETH

If she's ready.

TELLER

Right.

NEWT

Oh, c'mon man. You can't say she doesn't freak you out. At least a little?

ACE

Maybe we should let her be. And if Mattie knows, then- then someone knows, right?

She don't know.//  
DINAH

No way. //  
RUSTY

I do-//  
MATTIE

I believe you-//  
ACE

Since when are you a buzzkill?//  
WOODY

I'm not a buzz kill, I'm just- trying to be considerate.  
ACE

*Teller smiles at him.*

Okay, well considerate just sounds like another word for boring.  
WOODY

So what? I mean what's worst case scenario? She killed someone? She robbed a bank?  
How is that any different than any of us?  
TELLER

Do you hear yourself?  
RUSTY

I don't wanna eat my dinner with a killer.  
WOODY

First of all we don't even know-//  
TELLER

Why would that matter?  
DINAH

What?  
WOODY

You eat dinner with me every day.  
DINAH

ACE

That's different.

DINAH

I killed someone, Ace.

MATTIE

Can we not do this?

DINAH

Sorry, is this too real for you?

WOODY

Dee-

RUSTY

Calm your tits, Dee.

DINAH

No. I won't calm my tits. It seems that you all think this is some sort of twisted summer camp; somewhere you can make your own disgusting booze outta rotten fruit and fuck behind bleachers like you're in some 80's rom com. I mean, since when did any of you become angels? Model citizens? You've been here two years and you still swipe things from the office on the daily. Woody, I saw you set fire to a dead frog last week. Have we really been in here so long that we forgot that each of us is here for some bad thing-

SETH

Not all of us were bad.

DINAH

You're right. But we're all here for a reason.

*DAISY enters.*

TELLER

Get it together. Say nothing.

SETH

Hey! How's the first day going?

DAISY

It's okay. Lots of files.

SETH

Did you read ours?

DAISY

Mattie had that covered, remember?

ACE

Be honest, did you swipe any?

*She laughs a little.*

DAISY

No. Just ..filed.. them. I'm starving though.

WOODY

Boring.

*Teller shoots him a look.*

TELLER

You want my bread?

WOODY

He's cutting carbs.

TELLER

He's fucking with you.//

WOODY

I could only hope.//

RUSTY

You're so gross.//

DAISY

Sure, thanks. Oh, Mattie- Vada told me to tell you she saw some new soccer balls coming in. Thought you would want to know.

MATTIE

Ok.

*The entire table looks at her. She has never been this quiet in her life.*

SETH

Matt.

DAISY

I'm sorry. Did I say something?

SETH

Don't worry about it. She gets fussy.

RUSTY

Yeah. Everything's peachy.

*MATTIE abruptly exits. VADA enters.*

RUSTY

There you are.

VADA

Here I am.

DAISY

What did he need you for?

*Vada plays dumb.*

VADA

What? Haha- Oh, Ace, I think Webber's onto you. Told Humphreys the greenhouse smelled "fruity" today.

ACE

Ah shit. Gotta go.

WOODY

Right behind you.

*They exit.*

RUSTY

What took you so long? Lunch's bout over.

VADA

Just, a lot to organize-

DAISY

Wait, I'm confused. Webber needed you-

RUSTY  
He did? Did you do something?

VADA  
What? No.

DAISY  
No-

RUSTY  
Then-

WEBBER  
Summers. I need you back with me.

DAISY  
And me?

WEBBER  
Sure, sure. You too.

*TELLER watches WEBBER leave with the girls as he collects his stuff.*

VADA  
I'll see you tonight, yeah? I'll make it up to you.

RUSTY  
Yeah. I'll see you then.

SETH  
Rust?

*Rusty doesn't hear.*

TELLER  
You comin' bud?

SETH  
Yeah, yeah.

*A whistle blows. They exit. Vander lurks in the back. Newt begins to leave. He twitches as he walks. She stops him.*

VANDER

Halstead. In here.

*They retreat to a side room.*

NEWT

It's bad, Vandy. It's so bad.

VANDER

I've already given you two this week.

NEWT

It's not enough. There's just not enough in them-

VANDER

I give you what I can get.

NEWT

I know, I know-

VANDER

You have a fever.

NEWT

I don't have a fever-

VANDER

You're sweating. Here, let me feel- God, you're burning up.

NEWT

What am I 'pose to do, though?

VANDER

Go to medical. Or me.

NEWT

Right. 'Cause that ain't suspicious.

VANDER

No more suspicious than this. Maybe I could get you enrolled in therapy with me or- just tell me you're gonna hurt yourself or-

I got found out. Woody.

NEWT

I told you to hide it.

VANDER

I did.

NEWT

Not well enough. I won't just lose my job, you know. I'll lose everything. I have a kid, Newt.

VANDER

I know, I know.

NEWT

Please don't make me regret this.

VANDER

It's just- it's so hard.

NEWT

How's Webber?

VANDER

Dumb. Hasn't suspected anything.

NEWT

Good. That's good. He's onto Ace, you know.//

VANDER

Yes.//

NEWT

What did you think was gonna happen anyway?//

VANDER

He never goes in the greenhouse.//

NEWT

Not until a boy goes missing from one.

VANDER

Fine.

NEWT

VANDER

One thing leads to another, Newt. He finds the hooch, then Woody's stash, then-

NEWT

Me.

VANDER

Us.

NEWT

Vandy, I'm so tired. Please. I- the shakes, I can't hold nothin'. I can't even

VANDER

I know, I know. Just- Here.

NEWT

Thanks.

VANDER

That's all for this week. I'm not givin' you nothin else. I can't. I ain't got it.

NEWT

Fine.

VANDER

Are you ready?

NEWT

I guess. Can you make it the other side this time?

VANDER

Go.

NEWT

Fuck you. FUCK OFF-

VANDER

BOY, DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS.

NEWT

YOU FUCKIN' PIG-

VANDER

ILL DO IT-

NEWT

THEN DO IT, ALREADY-

*Vander slaps him. Hard. He leaves. Vander watches him.*

END OF ACT I

ACT II

II.I

TELLER

They always ask you why you did it. When you go to the station, you sit down 'cross from the police man. Sometimes they give you a glass of water. Sometimes not. And they always start with 'so why'd ya do it, *son?*' There ain't always an answer neither.

WOODY

When I see a a branch, or a forest, or a.. barn.. I just wonder what it would look like all orange and red. Bright and angry. Raging. It's like a sunset that only *you* can see. Just as pretty as one, too. It makes you feel so powerful. Like you got control over somethin'. Lots of it. Like a big 'ol domino set. One branch, then a tree, then the whole damn forest. Makes your face all beatin' red and you start breathin' all heavy. Sucking in the smoke. Smellin' it. Then you can't stop it. That's when you know you done fucked up.

TELLER

Sometimes it's the cards you were dealt. The way the cookie crumbled, or whatever. Some kids are just born to be.. like us. Someone's gotta keep the system runnin'.

RUSTY

It's a survival tactic. You see the parts, you take 'em. You sell 'em. Sometimes they ain't workin' right so you steal 'em right off a truck. Or a car. Or a bus. You can sell one transmission for about two-fifty, can score four-hundred or more for a catalytic converter. That's food and maybe a hotel room for a night. If the shelters are full. Safer than the streets. You should be writin' this down.

MATTIE

I don't know how it started. I've always done it. Told my whole class I had a pet pig in kindergarten.

They all wanted to come over and see it, so I told ‘em my momma died and my daddy was grieving so they can’t come over and see the pig. Kept that one goin’ till 8th grade, then my momma showed up at graduation.

*A beat.*

It’s kinda.. fun? It’s like I can make up anything and people will just believe me. I just gotta be real careful and only tell lies to people I ain’t told the truth to. And only tell the truth to the people I ain’t lied to. And then you gotta make sure they don’t talk to each other. And- it’s like- it’s like I can make the truth. Whatever I say is true is true. People listen when I tell stor- when I lie. I lie.

VADA

I was born like this. I mean, I think I was. You know? I can’t remember a time that I didn’t- I don’t know. I mean I played with barbies and wore dresses and everything. Went to church. A lot. Sundays, Wednesdays, Holidays, Sunday *nights*. A lot. I know what the bible says. I know I’m goin’ to hell. At least I’ll be with people like me.

NEWT

You might see a brick wall, but I see just one big... canvas. The higher the tag, the more respect you get. You gotta be alert. The 12- I mean, *you guys* are everywhere. But if you go outside of town, out towards 37- there’s a ton of abandoned barns, bridges- you name it. Wait all day- stay up all night, that’s the ticket. Ain’t no one out there once the farmers go to bed. You tag, you go home, pick up some- you know. That’s really the only time you can get it.

*A beat.*

NEWT

I ain’t givin’ you no names.

TELLER

I was just followin’ orders. That’s what they all say though, right? Your old man looks at you and tells you to shoot a guy. He says *this is how we make our money, son. You gonna be a big man someday. Just like your pops.* And you tell him you’re scared. And I mean, real scared. Your hands shakin’ and you feel like you might cry right here. Right now. And he tells you, *Do it. You gotta do it, son. You gotta DO IT NOW. NOW.*

A beat.

So you shoot a guy. You start havin' nightmares and shit. Wettin' the bed at thirteen. All your brothers making fun of you. But ain't none of them ever killed someone. Ain't none of them ever actually pulled that trigger. Saw a man's eyes go all glossy cause of what you did. Feelin' all guilty and like you're gonna go to hell for helping out *your old man*. Keepin' him safe. So you- You go to ask for help and- and then-

A beat.

TELLER

Just the facts. Right. I shot him.

*Daisy tosses and turns.*

RUSTY

I AM SO SICK OF THIS SHIT-

DINAH

At least she's early tonight.

RUSTY

Vee can you..?

VADA

On it.

MATTIE

I hate her.

*Rusty throws something at Mattie. She tosses over and falls back asleep. Vada gets up and walks over to her bunk wrapped in a blanket. Daisy sits up, hyperventilating. Vada sits down.*

VADA

Hey girl.

A beat.

VADA

It's okay. Here, just- Come here.

RUSTY

Be careful. Don't want her to go all Sybil on you.

*Vada shushes her. She holds Daisy's hand.*

VADA

Just take a deep breath.

*Daisy is still in a trance-like state. They breathe.*

MATTIE

Can you breathe quieter?

VADA

Fuck off.

*A knock at the door.*

MATTIE

UGH.

RUSTY

Who is it?

SETH

Rust? That you?

MATTIE

Tell your pet fairy he needs to come at a better time.

DINAH

Harsh, Matt.

MATTIE

Fine. *Please* come at a better time.

RUSTY

Comin!

DINAH

He okay?

*Rusty exits.*

VADA

I'm sure it's fine.

RUSTY

What's up?

SETH

Tomorrow. I want to do it tomorrow.

RUSTY

What? Tomo-

SETH

Webber's out on transport. I just- I've gotta get out of here.

RUSTY

What do you need from me?

SETH

I need you with me. You can come with me. We can go to like, California and just be-

RUSTY

No, no.

*Seth breaks down during the following monologue.*

SETH

I heard screaming. Tonight, I mean. I mean, crying, scary screaming-

RUSTY

What? Where are the other guys-

SETH

No, no- I peaked out of that loose board on our door. You can see into the hallway if you squint enough. They- they pulled him out of the shower. Naked. He was still dripping. And the sound of the belt- it was like a gun. He cried out. And they did it again. It kept going until I couldn't hear him anymore. I couldn't hear anything anymore. //

RUSTY

Webber's cruel.//

SETH

There was one less person in the greenhouse today. One less guy. His, his station was just empty. And no one noticed. You didn't notice. You've worked with him for two months. His name was Wes. And he's gone.

RUSTY

They probably moved him to a different camp-

SETH

In the middle of the night? What do you think Webber is doing to Vada?

RUSTY

Nothing. He likes her. He needs hands in-

SETH

He likes her a lot. It's not normal, Rust.

RUSTY

What are you implying?

SETH

I'm not implying, I'm telling.

RUSTY

What, are you psychic now, too?

SETH

I'm observant. I see things. I can see- I know what they do to people here.

RUSTY

And you don't think I do? I've been here longer than any of you fuckers.

SETH

Which is why you need to come with me.

RUSTY

We won't make it past the gates.

SETH

We will. I have- I have something to help.

RUSTY

Snag a butterknife? Make a shank? That's not-

SETH

The office isn't locked during dinner. They always forget, it's supposed to be Vandy who locks up, but she has my sessions right after. Therapy is right next to the office. I swiped-

*She laughs at the absurdity.*

RUSTY

There's no fucking way.

SETH

Let me finish.

RUSTY

Are you trying to tell me you have a gun? Come get him! Twinkle toes here has a glock!

SETH

It's under my bed. Don't believe me? Go check.

*Rusty's smile fades.*

RUSTY

Jokes over.

SETH

This is real, Rusty.

RUSTY

How long have you-//

SETH

Why does it matter?//

RUSTY

This is fucking crazy-//

SETH

//Listen. For some reason, God, or the universe, or *whatever* wants me alive. And whether I like that or- or not, I'm not going to waste it. I'm not dying at the hands of these *pigs*. These people- they're killers.

RUSTY

Even if I did think that you- Whatever. I'm not leaving without Vada.

SETH

Then don't. Leave *with her*. I'll be waiting by the willow tomorrow night.

RUSTY

The crying tree?

SETH

Sure. I'll be gone by the morning. Please don't make me go alone.

*He walks away.*

RUSTY

HEY- be careful. Okay?

*Rusty re-enters the cabin.*

RUSTY

Are ya'll still at this?

MATTIE

(From her sleep)

Yes.

VADA

She can't help it.

DINAH

Vee, go back to bed. I've got it.

VADA

Your sleep is important.

DINAH

Really. I've got it.

VADA

Thanks.

*Vada crawls back in bed. Dinah crawls back to her.*

DINAH

It's okay. It's okay. I'm here.

*Daisy falls into her.*

DINAH

Someone's here.

*Dinah rocks her, like a mother with a child. She hums a calming tune. Maybe the song they heard earlier. Maybe a nursery rhyme.*

*A dance: Dinah's shadows. A child cries in the distance. She lets go of Daisy after awhile. Tucks her in. She follows the sound.*

*She exits.*

## II.II

*The field.* As she enter's the field, a shadow appears. The baby's cries turn into a grating sound. Like nails on a chalkboard mixed with a chainsaw, mixed with the worse sound you've ever heard. She yells. A shadow kills a child. A baby. *Her* baby.

*Dinah shakes, almost in a seizure state. Webber sees her. He's making his rounds.*

WEBBER  
(Not an ounce of actual care)

You okay?

*She's quiet.*

WEBBER

Hey. HEY.

*He snaps at her. Nothing. Vander enters. He slaps her.*

VANDER

HEY- hey, hey- Young. Young.

WEBBER

She ain't gonna come to. Tried everything.

VANDER

I saw what you tried. Dinah, come to me now-

WEBBER

(Attempting to joke)

These people. Always the troublemakers, huh?

VANDER

Can you go grab a blanket?

WEBBER

Your resident. Your responsibility.

*Webber walks away. Vander is at a loss. She picks her up and carries her to the girl's cabin.*

*The girls have all fallen back asleep. Vander puts her back in her bed.*

VANDER

There you go. Safe and sound.

DINAH

I'm sorry, Vandy-

VANDER

Ain't no need. Get some sleep?

DINAH

What time is it?

VANDER

Pay no mind. You just sleep. I'll wake you up by lunch time.

*She tucks her in, takes one last look, and leaves.*

II.III

*The rec field. It's midday. The kids play baseball. Rusty warms up by throwing the ball to Vada, who throws it back. Seth rolls the ball to Mattie who practices her short-stop stance and speed. The rest of the boys are being boys. Whatever that means to you. Daisy watches Seth and Mattie, but eyes Teller from her spot.*

*The positions should be as follows- Rusty the pitcher, Newt is the batter with Ace next in line. Vander will be the catcher, Teller on first, Mattie on short stop, Dinah on second, Daisy on third. Vada sits to the side cheering them on with Seth. Woody is in the outfield. Some hip-hop music plays from the broken radio. Ace swings a bat- he's practicing.*

TELLER

How'd you get that thing fixed again?

ACE

Took one of them screws outta Brigham's chair. You know the one in the visiting room?

TELLER

That ain't gonna hold. Especially that lard-ass.

WOODY

Yeah, but he's too stupid to figure out why.

*The boys chuckle.*

NEWT

You're gonna knock someone's eye out with that thing.

ACE

Gotta warm up.

*Woody imitates a radio voice.*

WOODY

And now, up to the plate, the world's first thief turned all-star-

ACE

All star turned thief.

TELLER

Ay. Let me take a crack at that.

ACE

Don't fuck it up. My old man brought this down

On Christmas. ACE/WOODY/TELLER/NEWT

We know. We were here. NEWT

How do I look? TELLER

Like a regular little-leaguer. WOODY

*Teller playfully pushes Woody. They wrestle.  
Ace takes the bat and continues to practice.*

You sure you don't want a mitt? RUSTY

I'm fine. Here, just throw it back.// VADA

It ain't a softball.// RUSTY

I can handle it.// VADA

You doin' okay? RUSTY

Yeah. VADA

You seem- RUSTY

Just gets hard sometimes. You know that. VADA

Yeah, but- RUSTY

But what? VADA

RUSTY

You've just been a little *odd*. Ever since whatsername got here-

VADA

Daisy.

RUSTY

You just been a little off.

VADA

Pop-fly.

*She throws the ball high. Rusty chases it.  
She catches it, but barely.*

RUSTY

Not fair.

VADA

Just keepin' you on your toes.

*Vada smiles. Rusty smiles back.*

MATTIE

Come on! That ain't even hard.

SETH

Not exactly my cup of tea, Matt.

MATTIE

Come on. At least try.

SETH

Fine.

*He throws it. Mattie barely has to move to  
grab it.*

MATTIE

Ya'll are too easy. First thing I'm doin' when I get out is playin' with some *real* teams.

DINAH

I think we're pretty good.

MATTIE

Really?

DAISY

I'm havin' fun.

MATTIE

Only one worth playin' with is Ace.

DINAH

Here we go.

DAISY

Well, then why don't you ask Ace to throw?

MATTIE

That ain't his position.

*Seth mocks her.*

SETH

Yeah, Daisy. *It ain't his position.*

*Daisy laughs.*

MATTIE

He's a batter and a runner. Not a thrower.

SETH

Well I ain't none of that.

DINAH

Ain't that the truth?

DAISY

Can I try? Ya'll never let me.

MATTIE

Yeah, let her try-

SETH

What am I supposed to do?

DAISY

Watch how it's done.

SETH

Well, well, well. Look who's found her sass.

DAISY

Mattie's teachin' me trash talk.

*Newt chimes in from across the field.*

NEWT

All she *does* is talk.

MATTIE

Oh, shut up-

*Daisy throws the ball. Fast. Mattie misses it.*

MATTIE

THAT AIN'T FAIR.

DAISY

I thought you wanted to play on a *real team*.

MATTIE

I DO.

DAISY

Well, I'm just tryin' to get you ready.

DINAH

You taught her good, Matt.

SETH

Real good.

*They high-five. Vander enters.*

VANDER

Alrighty! Who's ready to play ball?

*The kids all erupt in excitement.*

VANDER

Vada, you wanna catch?

VADA

I got feminine issues today.

VANDER

You've had feminine issues the last two weeks.

RUSTY

It's true. I would know.

DINAH

Ew.

VANDER

I didn't hear that. Seth, and I guess Vada- you're on bench warmer duty today. Unless either of you wanna be on outfield-

*They both run to the bleacher and sit.*

VANDER

And I guess I'll be catcher. Again.

*The kids cheer.*

VANDER

Ace, you battin' first?

ACE

Naw. Imma let Newt go. I ain't warm yet.

VANDER

Alright, slugger. Remember, ya'll this is a *team buildin' exercise*. No flippin' out, no flippin' *off* any of your teammates.//

TELLER

Ooh. Sorry, Rust.

*She reacts.*

VANDER

There ain't no prize. The prize is-

*All kids answer at the same time,  
unenthusiastically.*

ALL KIDS

Community.

VANDER

It's almost like you're learnin' somethin. Alright, Rust. You ready?

RUSTY

Yuh-huh-

NEWT

Wait- wait. My hands are all clammy again- can I get a second?//

RUSTY

Oh my God.//

VANDER

Sure thing. Get some water. Ace, you're up.

ACE

I wasn't ready.

VANDER

Ain't nothin' on the line. Just playin' for fun.

*He's frustrated. He walks over to the radio  
and searches stations.*

VANDER

How'd you get that?

ALL KIDS

He found it.

VANDER

Right.

DINAH

Can you go already? It's humid as all hell.

TELLER

Perfect day for a game!

MATTIE

Tell that to butterfingers.

NEWT

I have hyperhydrosis.

DINAH

Mm-hm.

*Ace lands on a song. It has a nice groove to it. Another hip-hop song. He bounces to the beat and walks over to the plate. He jams out for a second.*

ACE

Ready.

VANDER

Play ball!

*Rusty pitches the ball. It's fast, Ace moves for it to miss him. He keeps calm.*

VADA

NICE!//

TELLER

//C'mon, bud! You got it!

*Ace preps again. Rusty winds up. She throws it too close for comfort again.*

VANDER

Rust, mind the body.

RUSTY

It's a strategy.

SETH

It's cheatin'.

*Ace preps again. This time, time slows down. We hear a roaring crowd. Over an intercom, an announcer's voice-*

WOODY (VOICEOVER)

Fresh off a life-changing season, Ace Bright steps up to the plate. Expecting a good run for him this year-

TELLER (VOICEOVER)

Right, Carleson- youngest man on the team. Last year's rookie of the year.

WOODY (VOICEOVER)

And here comes the pitch, folks-

*Ace hits the ball. He takes off like a rocket. Woody isn't paying a lick of attention. Seth and Vada cheer him on from the sides.*

TELLER

WOODY- GET-//

WOODY

AH SHIT//

*Woody grabs the ball and throws it to Mattie.*

MATTIE

I HATE YOU GUYS-//

*She throws it to Daisy. Daisy drops it, but it doesn't matter. He's already made it back to the home plate. The imaginary crowd goes wild. The music grows in volume as Ace jams out to celebrate his victory.*

WOODY (VOICEOVER)

I can't believe it folks, another flawless run from Bright on the the field today-

*The crowd dies out and the music lowers in volume.*

ACE

WOO-

*Mattie claps.*

DINAH

He ain't on our team, you know.

RUSTY

Damn it, Daisy.

DAISY

Sorry-

VANDER

It's fine Daisy. Ace is 'specially good.

WOOOOOO- ACE

Nice, buddy! TELLER

My turn now? NEWT

Please can I go again? ACE

Nah, man- it's my *turn*. NEWT

You can't even hold the damn bat! ACE

*They continue arguing during the next bit.*

Simmer down. VANDER

Can we get water? DINAH

Water break for everyone. HEY- including you. VANDER

*Newt walks away.*

Don't ruin this for yourself. VANDER

I ain't ruinin' it. I'm- I really like this. ACE

I know, buddy. VANDER

I'm really good. You know? I'm really good at this, Vandy. ACE

I know you are! I see it! VANDER

ACE

Really?

VANDER

Really really. You could be the next, hell- Jackie Robinson-

ACE

Nuh-huh.

VANDER

Yeah, huh!

DINAH

Nuh-uh.

VANDER

Well, whoever-

RUSTY

Are scouts coming to jail camps now?

VANDER

Correctional camp.

VADA

Hell camp.

VANDER

Go practice or something.

RUSTY

Sure thing.

VANDER

*IN FRONT OF* the bleachers this time, please.

*They laugh.*

DAISY

I think you're really good.

ACE

It ain't nothin'.

DAISY

It's cool. You coulda made the team at Cairo.

*Daisy exits.*

MATTIE

Those boys can't play for shit anyway.

ACE

I coulda beat 'em though, right?

MATTIE

Oh, totally. For sure.

ACE

I guess they are kinda slow-

MATTIE

And scrawny.

*She chuckles a little.*

MATTIE

Not that there's anything wrong with scrawny. I- Hey, I got somethin' to tell you.

ACE

Okay.

MATTIE

I've been meanin' to tell you for a long time, but I was waiting on you to tell me first so that I didn't have to tell you, because I'm a girl, and that would be awkward and stuff, but you haven't said anything, so I figured I should just- I like you.

ACE

I know.

MATTIE

No. I like like you. A lot. More than *this*.

ACE

I know.

*She begins to smile.*

MATTIE

So you...

ACE

No.

MATTIE

But you knew.

ACE

Yeah, but that don't mean nothin. I just don't-

MATTIE

No, no it's okay. It's okay.

ACE

There just ain't no reason for it, you know?

MATTIE

I could follow you, if you were on a pro-team, a travellin' one- I could follow you-

ACE

I ain't gonna be on no team.

MATTIE

Vandy was serious, though. You're good.

ACE

And here. I'm here, though.

MATTIE

You're just like any of them other-

ACE

I'm here. With you. With all of you. That's what we are. I ain't leavin'.

MATTIE

You don't know that.

ACE

I do, though. There's this feeling I got. Real deep down. A feelin' like I'm right where I'm supposed to be. Like the big man decided I was supposed to be a bad kid. And that's what I am. I tried out for the team. Freshman year. I was good then, too.

MATTIE

You did?

ACE

I did. I mean, I was *fast*. That's what bein' scrawny does. Makes you aerodynamic or somethin'. The coach made cuts that afternoon. *But he didn't cut me*. I was there. I did it. I was so proud. My momma was so proud.

I went to practice the next day and it was so pretty- the sky was so blue and they got brand new chalk-lines on that field. I was slidin' all day long. It was awesome. I was better than *everyone else*. Coach came up to me after practice, and I was ready. He was gonna tell me I was gonna be a starter. I just knew it. And he says-

MATTIE

What?

ACE

He says my dad needs to give him the money. So I say 'What money?' And he tells me I gotta pay to play. I gotta pay 150 for the registration, and then I gotta buy my uniform, and a bat- but he tells me he got a mitt I can borrow. But I tell him I don't throw.//

MATTIE

//You don't throw.

ACE

So I go home to ask my old man. And I know- I know he can't give it to me. Momma's sick, and my sister was just born. And she's real sick, you know? Real sick. And the trailer doesn't help- it's real stuffy or somethin' not good for babies. So I go into the Circuit City. You know the one up in Carbondale? I was gonna try and steal a bunch of CDs and just stuff right down my pants. And at the check out- right when I was about to go- I saw these baseball cards. Tons of 'em. And I snagged some. Just one pack. It had Ozzie Smith right on the front. I dropped it. I had stolen something from Radioshack the week before. And a whole heap of pornos from Blockbuster the week before that. It was too much, and they caught me.

MATTIE

You don't have to keep stealin' you know.

ACE

I know. But I wanna. I'm good at it.

VANDER

Ya'll comin'? Bout to be supper time.

ACE

Comin'.

*He reaches out his hand to her to help her up. They exit.*

*The girl's cabin. They all sit playing truth or dare.*

DINAH  
Okay.... Truth, or dare?

VADA  
Mmm.. truth.

RUSTY  
Boring.

DINAH  
Do you....

*Silence.*

DINAH  
I can't think of a good one. Someone else go.

MATTIE  
Then why'd you ask?

DAISY  
You shouldn't ask if you ain't got a question.

DINAH  
Alright, then you go.

DAISY  
Hm. Vada. What is.... The first thing you're gonna do when you get out?

*A beat. The girls are silent. Somehow, this question has never occurred to them. Ever.*

VADA  
Um. Haha- um..

MATTIE  
Can I answer?

DINAH  
That ain't the rules.

MATTIE

But I know.

DAISY

Sure, sure. You can answer.

MATTIE

I'm gonna make the soccer team. I'm gonna go to high school and I'm gonna make the soccer team. And I'm gonna get a boyfriend.

DINAH

Really? A boy? That's what you want?

VADA

What if you and Ace don't get out at the same time?

MATTIE

I ain't talkin' about Ace. I just want a boy. And a boy who *really* likes me. And thinks I'm pretty. Not just cute.

DAISY

Me too. A boy would be good. A tall one.

MATTIE

WITH BLUE EYES-

DAISY

Yeah, yeah! And curly hair!!

RUSTY

I wanna stay with Vada.

VADA

Rust, that's sweet.

RUSTY

I wanna find us somewhere nice. Somewhere with street lights and places to go shoppin'.

DINAH

Did you get possessed, or somethin'?

RUSTY

No, stupid. I just- I been thinkin' I might make it out. Maybe. And I don't know, it's nice to think about it. What it's gonna be like outta here. Who we're gonna turn out to be. Or whatever.

DINAH

I wanna go to school. Get my GED then college, I think.

MATTIE

Whatcha gonna be?

DINAH

Probably an astronaut.

VADA

GIRL-

*The girls laugh.*

DINAH

No, I'm serious! I'm real good at math. Astronauts gotta be good at math.

RUSTY

No way.

DINAH

What, you think we're all stupid? Throw it at me.

DAISY

Fifty-six plus ninety-seven.

DINAH

One-fifty three.

MATTIE

Nine-hundred ninety seven minus five-hundred and forty-two.

DINAH

Four-hundred and fifty-five.

RUSTY

Sixty-six times thirty-four.

*Dinah thinks for a little longer, but not long enough that it's normal.*

DINAH

Two thousand, two-hundred and forty-four.

*They all laugh in amusement.*

RUSTY

I wish I had a calculator to check you!

MATTIE

You think you'll see aliens up there?

DINAH

Maybe. But I don't know if they'll be real.

*They laugh again.*

DAISY

Vee?

VADA

I think I wanna see my momma. Just one more time, and then I'll go.. what was it? Live in a place with street lights. But just one more time. I wanna say bye. Maybe go to church one more Sunday. And then I'll be gone.

*Vander enters.*

VANDER

Lights out, girls! Goodnight!

ALL GIRLS

Goodnight!/Night!/Night, Vandy!

*The girls all get ready for bed. Then, off to the side:*

RUSTY

Vee, can I talk to you?

VADA

I'm really tired tonight, Rust.

RUSTY

It's not like that.

*Vada nods. They go to sit on the same stumps that Rusty and Seth sat on earlier.*

*The boys' cabin. NEWT searches for something. Ace snores, loudly. He throws a book a little too loudly across the floor. Teller wakes up. He watches.*

TELLER

What are you looking for, man?

NEWT

Uh, eh-it's nothing. Nothin'.

TELLER

Okay-

NEWT

Have you seen anything?

TELLER

No. I'll help, here.

NEWT

No, no man. It's fine.

TELLER

Stop it. What am I supposed to be looking for?

NEWT

It's, it's it's not in here. It's fine. I'm going to shower-

TELLER

There ain't no heat.

NEWT

I know. It's fine.

*He goes to leave. Teller stops him.*

TELLER

Whoa. Your eyes, they're like-

NEWT

Let me go.

TELLER

They're bugging out, man. Sit down. Sit down.

*Newt's frustration gets louder.*

TELLER

Are you sick? Do you feel sick?

NEWT

NO. NO-

TELLER

You're so pale you look like-

*A beat.*

TELLER

No.

NEWT

I JUST WANNA SHOWER.

TELLER

YOU LOOK LIKE A JUNKIE-

*Newt begins to break down.*

NEWT

I'M NOT A JUNKIE. I'M SICK, MAN, please-

TELLER

You're not sick. DAMN IT, MAN- Do you realize what you're doing?

NEWT

You don't get it.//

*Woody sits up.*

WOODY

//It's not in the showers.

NEWT

What the fuck do you mean, it's not in the showers?

WOODY

I mean it's gone.

*Newt laughs. Not his normal laugh. This is different. He throws a fit. During it, he kicks the bottom of Ace's bed.*

NEWT

Nah, nah nah.

ACE

Shit, man!

NEWT

You're fucked. You know that?

TELLER

Calm down.

*He grabs Woody's stash.*

NEWT

I can't do this, man. I can't- //I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE.

WOODY

Hands off the// stash. HANDS OFF, MAN-

TELLER

Come on.// YOU GUYS ARE GONNA GET US BEAT-

NEWT

I AIN'T GOT NO MONEY, THIS //WAS MY ONLY-

ACE

WHAT THE HELL //DID I MISS?

NEWT

Your ass is mine, Carleson.

WOODY

Oh yeah? Come get me, flat Stanley.

*A fight breaks out.*

TELLER

HEY, HEY- STOP IT.

ACE

FUCK, MAN-//

*Teller breaks them up.*

NEWT

WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO WHEN HE AIN'T HERE ANYMORE, YEA?

TELLER

THAT'S ENOUGH//

WOODY

YOU'RE DEAD, MAN-

ACE

Yeah, right-

WOODY

AY, I DON'T EVEN WANNA MESS WITH YOU-

ACE

Real nice, Snoop Dogg-

WOODY

AT LEAST I'M NOT A DAMN COKE HEAD-

ACE

I ONLY DID IT ONCE. NEWT'S THE ONLY ACTUAL-

TELLER

This is exactly-

*The boys go for each other again. This time  
Ace joins in.*

TELLER

STOP IT. STOP IT-

*He breaks it up.*

TELLER

God, don't you guys get it? This is how they want us. *THIS* is why we're here. Not to get better. To kill each other. And that's- dammit. Look at us. That's exactly what the fuck we're doing. You guys wanna stay in here? Fine. FINE. BUT I'M GETTING OUT. I ain't gonna end up like my dad. Or yours. Or your dad's dad. I'm done. *I'M* ending this cycle. I ain't a bad kid. I ain't never been a bad kid. I just-

WOODY

Born into it. The cards you were dealt.

ACE

I don't wanna be this. I don't wanna do this. I only got- I don't have nothin' out there. Just jail time. I don't wanna live my life being jailbait.

NEWT

Ain't nothin' else for us.

ACE

I'm gonna make it out. I swear. Ya'll ain't never gonna see me again.

WOODY

Then what?

ACE

Imma be a kid. Not a bad one. Just a kid.

TELLER

Yeah. Me too.

WOODY

Me too.

*They look at Newt. He sits on the bunk across from them.*

TELLER

Hey-

NEWT

I ain't coming over there. That's gay.

TELLER

No. Not you. Where is he?

WOODY

He ain't been in all night. I just assumed he was on transport.

NEWT

They don't put people like him on transport. Afraid they'll jump out.

ACE

Then where is he?

The girl's cabin. VADA and RUSTY talk.

II.VI

VADA

I'm not going to be stuck here. I'm not going to wait to be moved to another place, a worse place.

RUSTY

Like where?

VADA

I DON'T KNOW. A PLACE for- adults like me. Do you know they have those? All the way in Arizona or some shit. In the desert.

RUSTY

Like *us*. Adults like us.

VADA

He said he'd let me go. I can't throw this away.

RUSTY

And you believe him?

VADA

I don't not believe him.

RUSTY

Why you?

VADA

He likes me. You know that. Everybody knows that.

RUSTY

It doesn't feel right.

VADA

Then what, Rusty? What do you want me to do?

RUSTY

Come with me. If we leave tonight-

VADA

It's a stupid plan.

RUSTY

But it's a plan.

VADA

So is this.

RUSTY

What if he comes after you? What if you get arrested- Seth and I-

VADA

Are going to get caught. And then beat, or worse.

RUSTY

I won't let that happen to you.

VADA

You can't control that.

RUSTY

But I would.

VADA

Rusty. Seth, he's not well. He won't get far. What if he takes you out there just for you two-

RUSTY

He's waiting for me. He doesn't want to go alone.

VADA

Then it's settled. He won't go without you. And if Webber catches him- I don't even want to think about what he'd do. He's a bad man, Rust.

RUSTY

Right, a bad man who's just.. letting you go? With nothing in return?

VADA

It's not like- I mean, I guess. I guess, yeah. He's letting me go. But I'll wait for you, or whatever. We can't stay here-

RUSTY

Or whatever?

VADA

I guess-

RUSTY

I don't have anything to lose. All I have is *you*. I have no family- I have no money or home- I don't have a daddy waiting with open arms.

VADA

And I do? HE PUT ME HERE. REMEMBER?

RUSTY

But you met me.

VADA

What a love story, huh? Two dykes meet in the ninth circle of *hell*-

RUSTY

BUT *WE'RE* IN THE NINTH CIRCLE OF HELL. We're here. Together.

*A beat.*

VADA

I need away from here.

RUSTY

Away from me.

VADA

It's not like that.

*The sun begins to rise. A silhouette appears.  
It's Seth.*

RUSTY

Then what is it?

VADA

It's *what it is*.

RUSTY

We *need to go*.

VADA

I'm not going. If you want to go- if you're going to leave me-

RUSTY

I'm *not* leaving you.

VADA

You are.

RUSTY

That's not fair. And how do I know this is *real*? How do you know it's not a trap?

VADA

Because I- Because I know. And I need you to trust me a little.

RUSTY

I do.

VADA

Then let me do this. Come on.

RUSTY

He's waiting.

VADA

So apologize. Tomorrow.

*They kiss. They walk back inside. Rusty and Vada lay down to sleep in the same bed.*

*A dance. Seth waits for Rusty. She never comes. Visions of beatings, of what might happen. Officers begin to call out for Seth. Daisy tosses and turns.*

*A gunshot. A moment.*

*A beat. It's eerily still. The girls wake up.*

II.VII

MATTIE

What was that?

RUSTY

What?

DINAH

You guys heard that? You guys heard that too?

DAISY

Heard what?

*A beat.*

DINAH

I just- I thought I heard a gunshot.

RUSTY

No.

*Rusty gets up and throws her shoes on.*

VADA

Rust, calm down-

RUSTY

COME ON.

All of the girls run out. The Field. They're met by the boys, also running out, reacting to the noise. They gasp. It's Seth.

A moment.

II.VIII

MATTIE

Someone wake him up.

*They all stand there, helpless. Looking. It's like a train wreck. A really horrible train wreck in the shape of their friend.*

MATTIE

WAKE HIM UP.

DINAH

Mattie, stop.

ACE

I'm going to be sick.

*He runs to the exit. Woody follows him. Then Newt.*

MATTIE

No, no no. HELP. SOMEONE HELP. WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WHERE IS EVERYONE? TELLER DO SOMETHING-

RUSTY

Get her off of him. GET HER OFF.

*Rusty pushes her to the side. Dinah helps her up. Vada goes to Rusty's aide-*

RUSTY

Leave me alone.

VADA

What?

RUSTY

*Go away.*

*The girls leave. Vada lingers a moment. Daisy stays. Teller bends down to her level. He keeps his distance. The Office: Webber eats popcorn with his feet on the desk. Vander enters from the filing room. She enters with Seth's file.*

WEBBER

Find your maggots?

VANDER

Don't call them that. I have Frank and Denning looking for them now.

WEBBER

And you?

VANDER

This is my department.

WEBBER

What is?

VANDER

I'm a counselor.

WEBBER

You barely have a degree.

VANDER

Hand me his file.

He throws it in front of her.

WEBBER

You think you're gonna talk him out of it now?

VANDER

You're not funny.

WEBBER

Wasn't trying to be.

*She flips through the file silently. She picks up the phone and begins to dial. Webber stops her.*

WEBBER

Whatta ya think you're doin'?

VANDER

Calling the parents.

WEBBER

Hey, now. It ain't been declared.

VANDER

He's dead.

WEBBER

They don't need to know that. He did himself a favor. Probably would've stayed in the system like the rest of the bastards.

*A beat. Vander reaches for the phone again.  
Webber slides it closer to him, and puts his  
hand on the phone.*

WEBBER

Every death is a cut from our salary. You know that? A big cut. Government funding means we have to be on our best behavior. They're gonna take *your money, Holly*. And you can't have that. No. No, you can't.

*He closes in on her.*

WEBBER

Not with a daughter. Not with your job already on the line. Dealing to a minor. It'd be such a shame to see you go. Too late to go to college, too early to get it over with and off yourself.

VANDER

What, you gonna kill me?

WEBBER

No, no. I ain't a monster. We need people like you! Strong women to lead our girls to tomorrow. You do good with the black one. I always struggled with that, you know./

WEBBER

Troubled kids run away all of the time. Ain't no one comin' to look for him. It's dangerous out there. Probably gonna get dragged off by a coyote. Stung by bees. Dead.

VANDER

It ain't right.

*She begins to leave.*

WEBBER

Counselors go missing, too. All the time.

*The field.*

II.X

TELLER

Come on, Rust.

RUSTY

Shut up.

TELLER

Webber'll be back any minute, we can't get in trouble.

RUSTY

Since when do you care?

TELLER

I've always cared. I'm three-

RUSTY

Three months from out. Yeah, well I'm *not*. I'm not leaving this place, and I'm not leaving him.

*Teller attempts to pick her up.*

TELLER

We have to go.

*She fights him off through tears. He sits on a stump with Daisy.*

DAISY

We need to do something.

TELLER

Not now.

DAISY

It's not going to happen to me.

TELLER

It's- he was-

DAISY

He was kind. He was so *nice*.

TELLER

Yeah, and now he's dead. It's how it goes.

DAISY

What's wrong with you?

TELLER

What?

DAISY

You act like you're.. like, like you're the fucking glue that holds this place together. And everyone just *listens* to you like you're some martyr.

TELLER

You don't even know me. You don't know what I went through.

DAISY

I don't have to. All I know is that you just *give in*. You just give in to this fucked-up system, and act like it's all okay?? This is- that's not okay.

TELLER

I know it might be a little hard for you to wrap your head around, but sometimes life isn't perfect. You don't get no happy ending here. It's not like the goddamn movies.

DAISY

God, have you always been this jaded?

TELLER

Oh, fuck you.

DAISY

NO. FUCK YOU.

TELLER

THERE IS NO SOLUTION HERE. Can you get that through your pretty head?? *NO ONE CARES ABOUT US ANYMORE*. The rest of us don't have to daddy to break us out once we've learned our lesson.

*Daisy goes to slap him. He catches her wrist.*

~~A dance:~~ *In the shadows, Daisy brings a knife to her father's chest. Her father catches and holds her by her wrist. He puts his hand on the small of her back. This is not paternal. This is not defensive. This is sexual. She kicks him in the stomach, and stabs him in the back. She stumbles backwards. From off-stage:*

MOTHER

Daisy? DAISY-

TELLER

DAISY-

*The sirens are closer. They're now accompanied by footsteps. Vada enters, running. She's followed by Dinah and Mattie. Rusty's gone completely numb.*

TELLER

Rusty we have to go.

RUSTY

Don't touch me.

II.XI

VADA

You guys have to go.

*The boys all run in.*

DAISY

We know, we're trying.

NEWT

Just pick her up, man//

WOODY

Me??//

ACE

You're the beefiest.//

*Teller picks her up. The kids take refuge in the girl's cabin.*

RUSTY

STOP IT//

ACE

CALM YOUR ASS DOWN//

TELLER

GET HER LEGS//

TELLER

DAMMIT STOP THIS.

MATTIE

Someone shut her up. Webber's gonna be there, or, or the-

DINAH

The EMTs.

ACE

The police.

*A beat.*

MATTIE

Where's Webber? Has he even done his rounds?

VADA

I'm sure that's the least of his worries.

WOODY

I saw him by the office, leaving on our way over-

NEWT

He had a shovel.

*A moment. They take it in. Some understand. Some don't.*

RUSTY

So much for superman, huh?

*She laughs.*

WOODY

Did you give her something?

NEWT

I don't have nothing. Did you?

WOODY

No, but could it hurt?

VADA

Now is not the time. Rust, go to bed.

RUSTY

I could be miles away by now. You know that? MILES AWAY. FROM ALL OF THIS.

DINAH

Reel it in.

RUSTY

You're just going straight into the system after all this. That's where *murderers* go, Dinah. Especially people like you. You people never get out. The system don't care about you. They don't care if your schizo or not, you don't stand a chance next to people like sweet Daisy-

*They all stare at her.*

VADA

She's in shock.

RUSTY

This is your fault. He's dead because *you just had to get out the right way.*

VADA

I did this for *us*.

RUSTY

Did what?

*A beat. Rusty stops laughing.*

DAISY

He didn't keep you to file.//

VADA

Daisy, stop.//

DAISY

No.// I tried to get you to tell me-

VADA

It's not that easy, you know-//

DAISY

I do know-//

MATTIE

What is she on about?//

DAISY

He's hurting you. I know he is.//

VADA

You don't know the half of it. You don't know *shit*!//

WOODY

What?//

NEWT

Wait, is this?//

VADA  
(Calmly)

Fuck you.

RUSTY

Yeah, well apparently it's pretty easy.

VADA

A ticket out of here is a ticket out of here.

TELLER

Why didn't you tell any of us?//

VADA

It's not like he's-// I didn't struggle-///

DINAH

What?

MATTIE

I thought you were gay.

DINAH

Can someone just knock her out?

*Vada's quiet. She begins to pack Rusty's stuff.*

RUSTY

Oh, you cashing out? Maybe after he buries *our friend* you can have a quickie and he'll let you go.//

NEWT

I think we all need to come back to earth for a second. //

ACE

This is so stupid. We're all so stupid. //

VADA

You wanna run away? Let's RUN AWAY.//I'LL PLAY YOU'RE LITTLE GAME-

TELLER

Stop it.//

DINAH

You're so full of shit.//

DAISY

Can everyone stop?//

TELLER

Oh now you want calm?//

MATTIE

This is too much.//

WOODY

I wanna go to bed, man//

NEWT

I'm gonna throw up.//

VADA

NO, since you're just SO PERFECT-//

RUSTY

REALLY? BECAUSE I JUST KILLED OUR FRIEND. //

DAISY

I'd kill myself too, if I was stuck here.//

MATTIE

You are.//

DINAH

What's wrong with you two?//

RUSTY

He was waiting for me. And I didn't show.//

TELLER

STOP IT. STOP.

*A beat. Teller breaks through his monologue.*

TELLER

We need to- we need to *do something*. I'm not letting this happen. He's not missing. He's not- He's DEAD. Tomorrow, we're all going to sit at a table and eat whatever it is that they feed us. And- and he won't be here. And- And they're going to put him on that fucking board. The board with all the kids, kids who *we knew*. AND HE WON'T BE MISSING.

WOODY

But he's not.

DAISY

None of them are.

RUSTY

I am *so sick of you*. First you come in here, talking about Jesus and shit- to GAY PEOPLE!

MATTIE

Yeah, that was weird.

RUSTY

And then you have night terrors that wake up the entire fucking-

DINAH

I have night terrors.

MATTIE

At least yours are quiet.

*Dinah signals for her to lock her mouth and throw the goddamn key away. Mattie does so.*

DAISY

I can't help that. I'm not- I just needed- I did what I had to do. I needed to get out. And I did.

RUSTY

That seems to be the story tonight.

VADA

Can you just get over it? It's done. He's never gonna let me out now. He'll *know I told*. I'm not leaving. You got your wish. Congratulations.

RUSTY

Oh, I am just so sorry.

TELLER

Oh my god.//

RUSTY

I just can't deal with you.//

VADA

Can you leave her alone? She's *trying* to open up.//

DINAH

Yeah, but now might not be the time.//

WOODY

Thank god this place isn't co-ed

VADA

Now you're against me?//

ACE

Do you think it's safe enough to make a run for it?//

NEWT

I don't want to be hit with a shovel.//

WOODY

I need my weed, man. I can't do this shit.//

MATTIE

She killed him.

TELLER

What?

MATTIE

Her dad. She killed him. It's true. Really.

*Everyone looks at Daisy. She doesn't protest.*

DAISY

Because I had to.

MATTIE

Because she had to.

*Mattie hugs her. Teller hugs them. Then the rest of the boys. Then Dinah. Then Vada. Rusty stands up.*

RUSTY

Teller's right. We need to do something.

MATTIE

What is there to do?

RUSTY

I don't-

NEWT

Anything. I'm not, I'm going to end up like this. I'm not a junkie.

WOODY

We know.

NEWT

Yeah, but, neither are you, you know?

WOODY

I know. I've never done coke, buddy.

NEWT

But you're not an arsonist either. You just burn shit down because you think-

NEWT/WOODY

It's pretty./It's pretty.

ACE

I'm good at stealing. I am. I'm really good.

MATTIE

You are.

DINAH

You should be a writer.

MATTIE

Boring.

DINAH

No, really.

TELLER

A story-teller. Right?

MATTIE

Right.

RUSTY

You're not crazy.

DINAH

I know.

RUSTY

Really. You're not crazy. You're.. interesting.

DINAH

And you're nice. Sometimes.

RUSTY

I guess.

VADA

I'm still gay.

DAISY

That's okay. I like the gays. And I think your Dad is wrong. I don't think you'll burn in the raging fires of hell.

VADA

I'm glad you came around. Orange Julius? When we get out.

DAISY

You know it.

TELLER

We're getting out. All of us.

*A knock at the door.*

*Webber enters, followed by Vander, who looks sick and drained. They're both covered in dirt.*

WEBBER

Bingo.

*It's silent.*

WEBBER

I think we should all start our work day early today. Hm? Nearly 5 in the morning anyway. I can't imagine what you've all been up to.

*It's horrible. It's tense.*

WEBBER

Summers, you come with me. I'm sure there's something to organize.

VADA

I don't feel good. I can't.

*He closes in on her. Just as he did with Vander.*

WEBBER

It wasn't a question, honey.

*Vander begins to walk out.*

VANDER

Rusty, Dinah, you can come on with me. Boys, Tucker, you too.

*Daisy obeys. She exits. Dinah begins to follow.*

NEWT

Vandy?

VANDER

Not now, Newt.

*Ace begins to lash out.*

ACE

WHAT'D YOU DO TO HIM? WHERE IS HE?

*Vander begins to cry. Ace falls into Teller. Teller holds him.*

RUSTY

You're not taking her.

VANDER

Brooks, don't.

RUSTY

I know what you are.

WEBBER

Enlighten me.

*Teller lets go. Webber looks at Rusty. Then Vada. Rusty starts to go after him.*

*Then- quick as lightning, Teller attacks Webber. He lands punch after punch.*

RUSTY

LET ME GO-//

VADA

RUST, STOP-//

DINAH

VANDY HELP THEM-/

*Ace tries to join, stopped only by Vander.*

VANDER

You can't. You can't.

*Webber slaps Teller across the face, then holds it.*

WEBBER

You wanna join your friend, boy?

*Teller sputters, but can't talk. Webber stands. Driving, eerie music begins to play.*

WEBBER

Look at all of you. Heroes. Is that what you are now? What?

FATHER/JUDGE

What, you think you're a hero? You think you-

WEBBER

You gonna graduate high school now? Get married?

FATHER/JUDGE

You gonna have a baby Daisy? Another *perfect little girl*? You gonna-

WEBBER

Have a bunch of jailbait just like you? Whole families of little pricks just like you fillin' up the county jails. Prisons. Asylums.

FATHER/JUDGE

Thou shalt honor thy mother and father, girl. Sweet Daisy. Just like her momma. Gonna end up in-

WEBBER

Hell, you'd be better off takin' a page outta that fairy's book. Save yourselves some time.

FATHER/JUDGE

Time to pay up. Honor me.

*He's shot from behind. He falls. He wheezes.  
He bleeds. The kids scream.*

ACE

Shit, SHIT-

DINAH

//Is this real?// Guys, is that real?//

NEWT

//OH MY GOD-//

WOODY

//He's- guys HE'S- c'mon you bastard. Stay alive. Stay alive.//

TELLER

//You let him go.//

WOODY

//WE'RE ALL GONNA BE PUT IN-

VADA

//I know, I know//

MATTIE

//We had to-// We did something. We did something.

TELLER

//Someone get help-// HELP-

VANDER

No.

*Webber takes his last breath. Daisy enters back into the cabin.*

ATTORNEY/POLICE

Drop the weapon.

*They all look to Daisy, who is holding the gun. Seth enters. He grabs her hand. A heartbeat.*

SETH

It's okay.

ATTORNEY/POLICE

DROP. THE WEAPON.

*Blackout. A gunshot.*

VANDER

Like I said. She was a good kid. They all are.

END OF PLAY.