

A FEW GOOD WOMEN

BY

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INT - COUNTY COURT HALL DAY

MIA LASH, a 16 year old leans against the wall her head tilted back, eyes closed, rubbing her forehead. Her stylish blue plaid suit signals she is from the wealthy north side of Manhattan. ABBY WATTS, her nanny, comes over and puts her hand on Mia's shoulder.

ABBY

It's over. Just be thankful that it's over.

Mia turns her head away, defiant.

MIA

It's not supposed to be this way.

ABBY

Nine months is not the end of the world. With time off for good behavior, your mother could be out by Christmas.

MIA

But Abby, buying prescription drugs on the street? JESUS H. CHRIST. How stupid can you get?

ABBY

It's an addiction. You lose control.

MIA

I thought I was the one around here who's supposed to make everyone worry.

ABBY

Who say's you haven't?

MIA

So they found a little weed in my friends car. Big deal.

ABBY

You're about to find out what a big deal it is.

The County POLICE OFFICER leans out of the court door.

POLICE OFFICER

Miss Mia Lash.

ABBY

Right here, officer. She's right over here.

POLICE OFFICER  
Judge Winfrey will see her now in  
her chambers.

Abby and Mia begin walking toward the door.

POLICE OFFICER  
Just Miss Lash. You'll have to wait  
out here.

Abby stops and pats Mia's shoulder.

ABBY  
Everything's going to be alright.  
Just tell the judge the truth.

Mia disappears through the court door.

INT - JUDGE'S CHAMBERS DAY

Mia is ushered into the Judge's chamber, an austere wood paneled office with large leather books filling the deep mahogany shelves. JUDGE SANDRA WINFREY is sitting behind a large wooden desk, peering at papers spread before her over her small horn-rimmed glasses. Without looking up she waves toward Mia.

JUDGE  
Sit.

Mia sits on a large black leather sofa. The judge continues studying papers on her desk. The Judge finally looks up at Mia.

JUDGE  
Do you know why you're here?

MIA  
Yes, ma'am, I do.

There is a soft KNOCK on the door and JOB LASH enters. The Judge motions him to sit. He is smartly dressed in a pin-striped suit.

JUDGE  
Then you know that your father has  
been directed by the court to resume  
responsibility for you and that  
you'll be remanded into his custody  
under certain conditions.

MIA  
Your honor, please, I haven't even  
seen my father since I was a little

girl. I don't know him and I don't want to.

JUDGE

I'm sorry, Miss Lash, the law is clear on these matters.

Mia looks toward Job. Job starts to say something, but is cut off by Mia.

MIA

Please your honor. You don't understand. If you did, you'd never make me go with him. Not with his reputation. I mean he's a complete sleaze ball.

Job shakes his head

JOB

A sleazeball by definition is a dishonest or immoral person. Six days out of seven I don't qualify. But, don't ask me about my seventh day.

MIA

What are you talking about? How would you know?

JUDGE

Miss Lash, meet your father, Job Lash.

Mia looks at Job in surprise, then squints her eyes in anger.

MIA

Oh, my God, why is this happening to me?

JUDGE

(to Mia)

Here's my ruling. Mrs. Tremont is scheduled for lock up tomorrow, so Mr. Lash will take custody of you effective at 8:00 PM tomorrow night.

The Judge pulls out a folder and opens it.

JUDGE

Now let's talk about Miss Mia Lash's position. She was recently cited for driving in a car possessing

marijuana.

MIA

I told the police I didn't even know it was in the car. I was just going with a bunch of friends to a party.

JUDGE

That's immaterial. If convicted it will go on your record and your next offense you'll find yourself in possible juvenile detention. Do you understand the seriousness of the situation?

Mia purses her lips and nods.

JUDGE

You don't leave me much wiggle room here. I've considered your case thoroughly and decided to give you one last chance if you follow my direction. And I do mean last.

MIA

I don't understand?

JUDGE

The Court feels you need to develop self discipline. I will consider suspending the last charge if and, only if your father enrolls you in the military school he's advised me he's teaching at now.

MIA

Military school? That's not fair.

JUDGE

Are you prepared to take on these responsibilities, Mr. Lash?

JOB

As much as any bachelor who's been living alone for the last sixteen years could, your honor.

JUDGE

I expect you to be there and watch over her as any father would. Do we have an understanding?

JOB

We do, your honor.

JUDGE  
Are we all in agreement here?

JOB  
Yes, I'll do my best.

MIA  
So I'm either way I'm going to jail.  
It's just a matter of where. Is that  
it?

JUDGE  
Maybe you two need to get together  
and make a decision.

JOB  
Right here and now?

JUDGE  
There no rush. Take two minutes.

JUDGE  
Good. Than you three go outside and  
talk it over and come back in two  
minutes with a decision.

Mia and Joh exit. Job looks at Mia with his hand on his  
hips.

JOB  
(to Mia)  
Your call.

Mia buries her face into her hands, her head bowed.

MIA  
I'd rather go to jail then have to  
have to be around you.

JOB  
Good. That was easy.

Job walks to the door.

MIA  
WAIT!

Job stops with his hand on the door knob and turns to Mia.

MIA  
At the Academy I'd get weekends off  
or something, don't I?

JOB

Only if you earn it and only I can sign you out.

MIA

I'm sure we can work something out if you know what I mean.

Mia flashes a knowing grin.

JOB

No, I don't. You tell me.

MIA

My mom has a condo overlooking Central Park and is chauffeured in a Bentley. I'll let you do the math.

Job looks disgusted.

JOB

A have a one bedroom apartment looking over a dried up country pond and my furniture looks like it came from the thrift store if that gives you any idea how important money is to me.

MIA

Boy, Mom had you pegged right. A loser who brags about being a loser.

JOB

Time's up. Which gray outfit do you prefer, the one with big vertical black stripes or the plain ones with a matching hat?

Job and Mia re-enter the room.

JUDGE

What did you decide?

JOB

She's about to tell us.

Mia answers quietly looking at the floor.

MIA

School.

JUDGE

(to Job)

I expect you to be around as much as possible to support her.

JOB

I understand. She'll never be far from my side, I can promise you that, your honor.

Mia looks out the window, her eyes glistening.

JUDGE

Miss Lash, are you okay with this?

Mia wipes her eyes with the back of her hand and nods looking away.

JUDGE

Good. Then it's settled.

The Judge rises and everyone gets up and files out the door. Mia storms off. Job cell phone vibrates.

RENE' OS

Can you come by the Zebra Club in upper Manhattan at 4:00 PM to discuss the situation with Mia?

JOB

Have you forgotten the restraining order you put on me. I can't be any closer then fifty feet from you.

RENE' OS

It's important that we get it right for Mia.

JOB

Okay, I'll be there, but you've got the first round.

INT. ZEBRA LOUNGE -- EVENING

Job enters the dark upscale lounge, decorated with zebra stripped upholstery. He spots RENE' TREMONT in a corner booth and approaches. She's wearing dark glasses and is smoking from a long cigarette holder. She stares at him sternly. Job smiles faintly and nods.

JOB

It's been a long time.

Rene' flicks the ashes off her cigarette.

RENE'

Not nearly long enough.

JOB



Look, I didn't drop thirty bucks on a cab to get here just to be insulted. If you recall, I came at your request.

RENE'  
You always were thin skinned.

JOB  
After living with you for a year, try alligator skinned.

RENE'  
Actually, one year, one month, four days and eight hours but who's counting?

JOB  
You've got five minutes.

Rene' nods her head and points to the seat. Job slides in.

RENE'  
Let's get right to it.

Job motions for the waiter who comes over.

JOB  
You don't mind if I get a drink first, do you? I have a feeling I'm going to need it.

Rene' points to her glass.

RENE'  
Another one of these and remind them that I always get three fingers. And whatever he wants.

JOB  
Stinger. Three fingers too.

The waiter bows and disappears.

JOB  
Just so you don't have an advantage.

Rene' leans forward inches from Job's face, her eyes squinting with intensity.

RENE'  
You have her for nine months. Nine months. Not one second more. Do you read me?

JOB

Yeah. Is it okay if I wipe my face now?

RENE'

This is just a legal necessity. Don't get any ideas about winning her over.

JOB

Don't worry. I've talked to her. Right now I'm ranked somewhere between Attila the Hun and Jack the Ripper.

RENE'

I'm afraid she'll find a soft spot for you. I don't want her to get hurt. Fortunately, I've groomed her to be like me.

JOB

You means she drinks like a sailor on a three day pass, thinks being rich is a birth right and is going to major in shopping?

RENE'

It's not my fault I'm rich and you're still schlepping in the make believe scene for a few farthings.

JOB

The word is theater.

The waiter lays down their drinks with great formality.

RENE'

She asked about you a few years back. A curiosity thing. I told her the truth.

JOB

I wouldn't want to drink from that well.

RENE'

I actually said some nice things about you so she'd think I was being fair.

JOB

Must have broken into a rash.

RENE'

I told her you are the model of respectability and responsibility. I mean the last boy scout.

JOB

Why does it sound so evil the way you say it?

RENE'

You've always been a prude, and a suffocating bore. And I'm talking one king size, eyes glazed over bore.

JOB

I hope you didn't tell her about my insisting everyone put coasters under their drinks.

RENE'

Those were just the highlights.

JOB

It's amazing we stayed together long enough to conceive a child.

RENE'

I was young and foolish and loved you then.

JOB

Foolish and horny if I recall.

Rene' hands Job a check.

RENE'

Here's some money. There's no need for Mia to suffer just because you can't make a decent living.

Job looks at the check that Rene' is holding, but makes no motion to take it.

JOB

Well, I'm driving an eleven year old Volvo that hasn't been washed in seven months with a missing hubcap and more than two hundred and fifty thousand miles if that's what you mean.

RENE'

Don't be vain. Take the money. She's

going to need it.

Job takes the check and WHISTLES.

JOB

You're taking a big chance. A wild guy like me, you never know what I might do with this kind of money.

RENE'

I don't know. How much money can you blow on church bingo ?

Rene' hands Job a business card.

RENE'

If you run out of money, call my accountant and he'll arrange a transfer.

Job holds up the check to the light and then scrunches up his face as if trying to decide. He caresses the check, lays it gently on the table, and nudges it back to Rene'.

JOB

It'll be bread and water once a day, but we'll survive.

RENE'

Don't be stupid.

JOB

This may come as a surprise to you, but there are some of us that actually live without having lunch at Le Brouchard's with a limo parked outside.

RENE'

No wonder you're still playing second rate venues in the sleazy parts of town.

JOB

I know it's not as exciting as going to penthouse cocktail parties gossiping about who's sleeping with who, but then you've always been the deep one.

Rene' SNORTS indignantly.

RENE'

One of these days you're gonna have

to take a long hard look at yourself  
in the mirror and see yourself for  
what you are.

JOB

Maybe you'll appreciate the irony of  
you telling me that when they're  
giving you your new gray cotton  
prison garb tomorrow. I hear they  
come in three sizes.

Rene' gets up and tries to grab the tab, but Job picks it up  
first.

RENE'

I'll take that. You can't afford it.

JOB

I'll raid my penny jar.

Rene' grabs the tab and a tug of war ensues.

RENE'

GIVE IT TO ME.

The tab tears in two.

JOB

Looks like I win. Got the bigger  
piece.

Rene' rolls her eyes, and tosses her head back in  
frustration.

RENE'

Geez! Still living by the Boy Scout  
manual I see.

She begins to leave, hesitates, then turns back, grinds her  
cigarette into the ashtray and SPEAKS tersely.

RENE'

She doesn't like tomatoes, needs  
help with her math and likes to  
sleep with the TV on.

JOB

Got it.

Rene looks at the floor and then at Job, her face a picture  
of despair.

RENE' SOFTLY

Take care of her, Job. She's just a

kid.

Job's face relaxes. He nods in understanding and puts two fingers over his heart.

JOB  
Promise on my Double Eagle badge  
honor.

Job looks at the tab, his eyes widening as he reaches into his pocket.

JOB  
Maybe they have a payment plan

Rene' looks pained, shakes her head and leaves.

INT. TREMONT ESTATE DEN-- NIGHT

ZACKARY BLOOMINGTON III, a tall dark handsome young man has LORETTA MAHONEY, a pretty blond cheerleader type, pinned against the wall kissing her neck passionately. Loretta's head is thrown back, her eyes closed in ecstasy. She MOANS softly. Mia walks in, sees them and KNOCKS on the door. MUSIC wafts in from the adjoining farewell party. Zack turns around looking irritated. Loretta fusses with her hair as she recovers.

MIA  
You're going to hate me for this,  
Lori, but your Dad's on the phone.

LORETTA  
God, that man. His timing is always  
so incredible.

Loretta exits hurriedly. Zack pulls out a comb and begins stroking his long black hair preening himself in the mirror. He pulls out a small bottle and sprays his mouth. He turns and smiles broadly into the mirror. He nods his head confidently and then suddenly notices Mia.

ZACK  
Hey, baby, didn't know you were  
still here.

MIA  
Your mind was on something far more  
exciting...yourself.

ZACK  
Hey, you're looking hot tonight.

MIA

Not as hot as you're feeling right now from the looks of the bulge in your pants.

ZACK  
You know what I mean.

Zack cocks his head and smiles mischievously. Mia GRUNTS.

ZACK  
You still mad at me, baby? Mia turns to leave, but Zack blocks her path.

ZACK  
Hey, wait a minute. I've missed you.

MIA  
Since when? You dumped me two months ago.

ZACK  
Dumped? That's nasty. Let's just call it a time out. Sounds better.

MIA  
Whatever.

ZACK  
Look, I brought some good stuff tonight. Be nice and I'll share.

Zack gives Mia a killer grin. Mia SCOFFS.

ZACK  
Gets you all juiced up, if you know what I mean?

Zack winks at Mia.

MIA  
I don't think you're talking about weed anymore.

ZACK  
Much better. I'm talking bowling.

MIA  
Bowling? I don't think so.

ZACK  
It's the best high you'll ever have. Unbelievable.

Loretta returns looking distraught.

LORETTA  
My Dad's coming in a half an hour.

ZACK TO LORETTA  
Close the door.

Loretta closes the door with a GIGGLE. ZACK pulls out a plastic bag and small spoon.

ZACK  
This is primo stuff. I know. It cost me big.

Zack spreads it on a nearby desk.

MIA  
I don't think this is a good idea.

LORETTA  
Don't be a baby, Mia.

Zack begins sorting it into lines.

ZACK  
I'll go first so you can see how to do it.

Zack rolls a dollar bill and SNORTS up a line. He wipes his nose and rolls his eyes.

ZACK  
Better than sex. Well, almost.

Zack hands the dollar bill to Loretta who SNORTS a line also. She wipes her nose with the back of her hand.

MIA  
You've done this before?

LORETTA  
Yeah. It's no biggie.

Zack hands the dollar bill to Mia. There is a KNOCK at the door. Mia walks to the door and opens it a crack to see Abby, her nanny.

MIA  
What is it, Abby?

ABBY  
There's a man to see you.

MIA  
A man? Who?



ABBY  
Says he's your father.

MIA  
What? That can't be. He's not  
supposed to be here until tomorrow.

ABBY  
What shall I tell him?

MIA  
Tell him to go away. Tell him I'm  
not here. Tell him anything. But get  
rid of him.

ABBY  
Okay.

Zack is SNORTING his second round.

ZACK  
You going blow blue, or not?

MIA  
Sure, why not. With any luck it'll  
keep me high forever.

Zack hands her the dollar bill.

MIA  
Here's to the good life. May a  
bluebird fly up your nose.

Loretta LAUGHS.

LORETTA  
That's good. Really good.

ZACK  
Freudian. Fucking Freudian.

Mia leans over to snort the line. The door bursts open and Job is standing there in a dripping wet trench coat and a fedora hat. Abby follows behind him.

ABBY  
I'm sorry, Mia, I couldn't stop him.

Job surveys the scene.

JOB  
What the hell's going on here?

Zack, Mia and Loretta look at Job, frozen in surprise. Job

takes off his hat, slaps at the powder and it scatters into a white cloud.

JOB  
You stupid, stupid kids.

Job looks at Mia and shakes his head.

JOB  
That's a dead end. And I do mean dead.

Zack walks over to Job and jabs a finger in his face.

ZACK  
What are you doing? That's expensive stuff. And who the hell do you think you are, anyway?

Mia slaps her forehead with her hand.

MIA  
DAMN, DAMN, DAMN!

Zack steps in one step closer to Job.

ZACK  
I asked you a question.

Job grabs Zack's shirt and pulls him in.

JOB  
Look punk, back off or I'll spread that smug smirk all over your face.

ZACK  
Just try it and you'll pay.

Job releases Zack's shirt and pushes him back.

JOB  
Whatever it costs, it would be worth it.

Zack takes a step toward Job, sees his withering face, hesitates and backs off.

ZACK  
I'm out of here. Come on Lori.

Zack storms out with Loretta following him sheepishly.

JOB  
(to Abby)

Tell the rest of them the party's over.

Abby exits. Mia runs her fingers through her hair, distraught, CRYING.

MIA  
God, I hate my life.

JOB  
Good. Then get it in order.

MIA  
Leave me alone and I will.

Job shakes his head.

JOB  
You're in my custody as of ten minutes ago.

MIA  
I'm not going. I don't care what the law says.

JOB  
You can do it the easy way or the hard way.

MIA  
You'd better not touch me. I'm warning you.

Job points to the door.

JOB  
Either you get moving or I'm going to throw you over my shoulder and take you kicking and screaming.

MIA  
Touch me and you'll regret it.

JOB  
Get going.

MIA  
HELP, ABBY, HELP.

Abby enters looking distraught.

JOB  
(to Abby)  
Get her stuff.

ABBY  
I don't know what to do.

MIA  
CALL MOM AND TELL HER I'M BEING  
ABUSED.

JOB  
I don't think you'll find Federal  
prisons listed in the yellow pages.

Job grabs Mia's hand and starts dragging her to the door.

MIA  
LET GO OF ME OR I'LL SCREAM.

JOB  
Only if you promise to settle down  
and get packed.

Mia nods.

JOB  
I can't hear you.

MIA  
OKAY!

JOB  
Better.

Job lets her down.

MIA  
I hate you. More than I've ever  
hated anyone in the whole world.

JOB  
And you're not registering to high  
on my fondness scale either.

MIA  
You're mean, ugly and I hope you  
die.

JOB  
Hey, you are your mother's daughter.

Mia leaves casting dagger eyes at Job. Abby follows her.

INT OAK RIDGE MILITARY ACADEMY - DAY

AMBER WEST, a thirty something tall, attractive woman,  
sitting behind her desk smiles at Job and Mia. Mia is

bristling with anger while Job is frowning.

AMBER

Oak Ridge is one of the oldest military academies in the country. Not many people know that.

MIA

Oh no, one look and they'd know it.

JOB

You may want to give Mia the unadulterated version. Her attention span is barely registering.

AMBER

Okay. 80% of the kids are here because they screwed up one way or another. Drugs, grades, attitude are the big ones.

Job glances at Mia.

JOB

Sometimes all three.

AMBER

The other 20% are for families with a military tradition.

MIA

I don't fit either of those categories.

AMBER

Really? Tell me about it.

MIA

Is there a category where one parent is brain dead stupid and the other's a clown?

AMBER

No, but there is a category where the parents don't really understand them, if that's what you mean. And that's a 100% category.

Mia throws her hands up in the air in disgust.

MIA

I can't believe this is happening to me.

JOB

You might want to listen to Mrs. West.

AMBER

It's okay. I understand how she's feeling. I've seen a lot of kids come and go. Some make it easy on themselves and follow the rules. Others don't and prolong their misery. It's your call.

MIA

Please. Spare me the preaching.

AMBER

Alright. Let me give you the short version. There are 22 girls and 151 boys in our school. Eighteen of the girls live on campus. Once again your attitude will determine your acceptance.

MIA

Something to look forward to.

AMBER

I will tell you the ones who have been here awhile will chew you up and spit you out with the slightest hint of an attitude, if that helps any.

Mia rolls her eyes and looks out the window SIGHING heavily.

AMBER

One last thing, Colonel Lloyd is the Commandant here and what he says goes. He's the first person you're going to see at six in the morning and the last person when you fall out. He's where it all begins and ends so I suggest you keep one eye on him at all times.

Mia SPEAKS softly to Amber without taking her eyes from the window.

MIA

Doesn't matter. In nine months I'll be out of this rat hole. And there's nothing you can do about that.

AMBER

And there's one thing you can't do anything about either. When you walk out of here in nine months you won't be the same person you are now.

MIA

You don't know me and never will.

AMBER

Sure I do. I've seen 100 versions of you walk in here with the same chip on their shoulders.

MIA

You know what, fuck you and you're pathetic school. You must be pretty desperate to be working in this dump.

JOB

Don't listen to her. If she get's a rise out of you, she wins.

AMBER

Don't worry. I've heard much worse.  
(looking at Mia)  
The pay's not that great if that's what you mean.

MIA

Just take me to my cell or the torture chamber or wherever you take criminals like me.

Amber gets up.

AMBER

If you need someone to talk to, I'll always be here.

MIA

Gee, maybe we can have tea and crumpets someday and bond.

Job gets up.

MIA

Wait.

MIA

(turning to Amber)  
Can I at least bring my guitar?

AMBER

If you keep your nose clean, it's possible.

JOB  
Thanks, Amber. Where do I take her now?

AMBER  
Abbot Hall, her dorm. The commandant's assistant will take over when you present her.

JOB  
You ready, girl?

MIA  
What, no handcuffs?

Mia storms out of the room. Job follows.

INT DORM ROOM - EVENING

FIRST SERGEANT LOUISE is giving Mia her clothes and a rules book.

FIRST SERGEANT  
Have your room clean, your bed made, and be on the grinder in the uniform of the day by 0630.

MIA  
We have to make our own beds? How do you do that?

The First Sergeant cocks one eye and shakes her head in disgust.

FIRST SERGEANT  
You've never made a bed before?

MIA  
Our maid always did that stuff.

FRANCIS MEADOWS, a seventeen old, cadet dressed in her uniform enters and studies Mia.

FRANCIS  
Is this my new roommate?

FIRST SERGEANT  
Yeah. Mia, Cadet Francis Meadows.

FIRST SERGEANT  
This is her second year. Learn from



her. Maybe even how to make a bed.

The First Sergeant exits. Mia throws her purse against the wall.

MIA  
DAMN, DAMN, DAMN THE WORLD

FRANCIS  
Unbelievable. Another spoiled princess.

MIA  
Another what?

FRANCIS  
Brat. A wretched, miserable, rotten smelling brat.

MIA  
Excuse me.

FRANCIS  
Excuse me, excuse me. I don't like you already.

MIA  
What'd I do?

FRANCIS  
You're pretty and think you're hot shit.

MIA  
Well I hear make up can do wonders, but then again it's no guarantee.

Francis grabs Mia and shoves her against the wall pushing her blouse up to her neck.

FRANCIS  
Look here you little snot. You're lower than an amoeba in this jungle and I can step on you anytime I want.

MIA  
You're hurting me.

Francis release her grip, but throws her finger in Mia's face.

FRANCIS  
From now on keep your flapper shut

unless spoken to. And keep your shit  
out of my way or I'll trash it. You  
dig, princess?

Mia meekly nods. Francis steps back and looks at Mia.

MIA  
My name's Mia, not princess.

FRANCIS  
I'm not a betting type, but I'd bet  
my last dime you're the next one to  
run the "G".

MIA  
Run the "G"?

Francis smirks.

FRANCIS  
The gauntlet. An Oak Ridge tradition  
cherished by one and all who  
survive.

MIA  
If you're trying to scare me. It  
won't work.

FRANCIS  
They're going to suck you up and  
spit you out into so many pieces  
even your mama won't recognize you.

Mia leans back against the wall and rubs her eyes in  
anguish.

MIA  
Mama, Mama! Why did you do this to  
me?

Francis studies Mia who is now crying softly.

FRANCIS  
Okay, okay. Can it. Pity won't buy  
you no slack here, princess.

Mia looks up and nods her face still contorted. Francis  
pulls out a marijuana joint, lights it and takes a big drag,  
blowing the smoke out the window.

MIA  
Are you allowed to smoke in here?

FRANCIS

You're not only a crybaby, but  
stupid too.

Boot steps CLANG in the hall. Francis throws the joint to  
the floor and steps on it. The first sergeant enters.

FIRST SERGEANT  
I forgot to tell you. Report to the  
quartermasters office in ten minutes  
to requisition your gear.

MIA  
Gear? What's that?

The first sergeant turns to Francis.

FIRST SERGEANT  
Cadet Meadows will give you the  
directions.

FRANCIS  
Yes, first sergeant.

The first sergeant sniffs the air.

FIRST SERGEANT  
What's that smell?

FRANCIS  
Smell?

The first sergeant gets in Francis's face.

FIRST SERGEANT  
Don't play me for the fool. I smell  
smoke and I want an answer right now  
or I'll have you out on the grinder  
until the sun goes down.

No one says anything. The First Sergeant walks to the door  
and turns to Francis.

FIRST SERGEANT  
Be on the grinder in ten minutes in  
your fatigues and rifle.

As the First Sergeant turns to leave, Mia steps forward.

MIA  
It wasn't her, it was me.

The First Sergeant looks puzzled.

FIRST SERGEANT

Didn't you get briefed on the rules  
of the Academy?

MIA  
I did. I didn't think smoking a  
cigarette would be a big deal.

FIRST SERGEANT  
Cigarette? More like the funny kind.

MIA  
I stashed one in my clothes. The  
unfunny kind.

FIRST SERGEANT  
You should have spoken up sooner.  
Report to the grinder at 1800  
tomorrow with your fatigues and  
rifle.

The First Sergeant exits. Mia and Francis look at the door  
in silence.

FRANCIS  
That was close. One more write up on  
my record and I would be a goner.

Mia begins unpacking her personal effects in silence.

FRANCIS  
You'd better get over to the QM  
before it closes.

MIA  
Where is it?

FRANCIS  
I'll take you. Let's double time it  
or we'll miss chow.

MIA  
You're going to help me?

FRANCIS  
Unbelievable. You covered my back  
and now I'm covering yours and  
you're putting me through the  
wringer. C'mon. Let's go, princess.

Mia and Francis jog out of the room.

EXT DRILL FIELD - DAY

Mia is in formation with a company of girl cadets. They are

at ease waiting for the Commandant to arrive. ANNE WARD, a pint sized 14 year old cadet is standing next to Mia struggling to keep her cap on.

ANNE

This cap is too small. It won't stay on.

MIA

Let's see.

Mia studies the cap and pulls on a strap.

MIA

Try it on now.

Anne smiles as the cap fits better.

ANNE

Thanks. You're the only one that's been nice to me.

MIA

Hey, when you're going through hell week you've got to stick together.

ANNE

Does that mean we're friends?

Anne looks anxiously at Mia.

MIA

Oh, haven't you heard, whenever you do a favor for someone that automatically makes you friends.

Anne smiles.

ANNE

As long as you're my friend I'll be okay.

Mia extends her little finger to Anne who shakes it with her little finger. They both LAUGH.

ANNE

This is the first time I haven't been scared since I got here.

KALLI FOX a tall lean muscular blond at the head of the formation YELLS OUT.

FOX

BRAVO COMPANY, ATTENTION!

The company of girl cadets comes to attention. COMMANDANT COLONEL CARL LLOYD, an imposing black man dressed in fatigues marches in and surveys the company.

COLONEL LLOYD

Welcome to boot camp. You will be learning the rigors of military discipline and the measure of your character before you're finished here, if you last that long. Do you hear me so far?

CADETS

YES SIR!

COLONEL LLOYD

Good. Just do what you're told and stay clean and you'll come to learn the first lesson of life, that your future depends on the choices you make. Do you hear me?

CADETS

YES SIR!

COLONEL LLOYD

Captain Fox here has already drilled you on the basics of marching so let's see what you've learned.

CADETS

YES SIR!

The Commandant walks to the end of the formation.

COLONEL LLOYD

COMPANY, ABOUT FACE!

The cadet formation turns a full 180 degrees.

COLONEL LLOYD

COMPANY, LEFT FACE!

The cadet formation turns left.

COLONEL LLOYD

COMPANY, FORWARD HARSH!

The cadet formation begins marching.

COLONEL LLOYD

HUT TWO THREE FOUR, HUT TWO THREE FOUR. COMMAND, HALT!

The Commandant looks at Anne who is lagging behind.

COLONEL LLOYD  
You're still at attention so I don't  
want to see anyone moving.

The Commandant stops in front of Anne who looks terrified.

COLONEL LLOYD  
What's your problem, Cadet? Don't  
you know your right foot from your  
left foot?

Anne nods with a weak smile.

COLONEL LLOYD  
When I ask a question I expect an  
answer with a "sir" at the end of  
it. DO YOUR UNDERSTAND?

ANNE  
Yes sir.

COLONEL LLOYD  
Yes sir, what? AND I CAN'T HEAR YOU.

ANNE  
YES SIR, I THINK I DO, SIR.

COLONEL LLOYD  
Drop. Give me ten.

Anne hits the ground and starts doing push ups.

COLONEL LLOYD  
I NEED TO HEAR YOU COUNTING AND  
START FROM HE BEGINNING.

ANNE  
One, sir...two,sir...three, sir...

COLONEL LLOYD  
I CAN'T HEAR YOU FOR THE SECOND TIME  
AND MAKE IT TWENTY.

ANNE  
FIVE, SIR...SIX, SIR...SEVEN, SIR...  
EIGHT, SIR...

The Commandant turns to the cadet formation as Anne  
continues doing push-ups YELLING numbers.

COLONEL LLOYD  
You're still at attention. That

means you keep your eyes looking  
straight ahead and nowhere else. DO  
YOU HEAR ME?

CADETS  
YES SIR`

ANNE  
SIXTEEN, SIR...SEVENTEEN,  
SIR...EIGHTEEN, SIR...

Anne push ups get slower and slower. The Commandant walks  
within one foot of her face. The cadets sneak looks at the  
perspiring struggling Anne.

ANNE  
NINETEEN, SIR...

Anne's arms start to quiver.

COLONEL LLOYD  
I HAVEN'T GOT ALL DAY.

Anne tries to push her body up for the last push-up, but  
only makes it half way up and collapses.

COLONEL LLOYD  
Get back in formation. You still owe  
me twenty tomorrow.

Anne raises herself to her knees, exhausted and perspiring.  
She suddenly starts vomiting.

COLONEL LLOYD  
What's your problem, Cadet?

Anne tries to answer, but only GURGLES. The Commandant walks  
toward Anne.

COLONEL LLOYD  
Don't try and get up. It'll pass.

Anne starts CRYING softly. She looks up toward Mia.

ANNE  
Mia.

Mia rushes to her side.

MIA  
Are you okay?

Anne shakes her head, her body trembling.



COLONEL LLOYD  
Who gave you permission to break  
formation?

MIA  
Sir, she's sick. She needs help?

The Commandant studies Anne a little closer.

COLONEL LLOYD  
Cadet Captain Fox, get over here  
double time.

FOX runs over.

FOX  
YES SIR?

COLONEL LLOYD  
Take her to the infirmary. I'll be  
there shortly.

Colonel Lloyd walks away. Fox grabs Anne by the back of her  
fatigues and pulls her up roughly.

FOX  
C'mon you.

Anne gets up to one knee PANTING.

FOX  
I SAID LET'S GO.

Fox yanks the back of Anne's shirt even rougher. Mia pushes  
Fox's hand away.

MIA  
WHAT'S A MATTER WITH YOU? Can't you  
see she's hurting.

Fox looks shocked that Mia would challenge her.

FOX  
Did you just put your hand on me?  
Cadet Lash, did you just hit me?

MIA  
Don't be a drama queen. I just  
pushed your hand away.

The Commandant turns to see what the commotion is about.

COLONEL LLOYD  
What's going on there? Fox, I told

you to get her to the infirmary. NOW  
MOVE IT.

FOX  
I'll deal with you later.

COLONEL LLOYD  
(to Mia)  
And you, why aren't you back in  
formation like I told you to?

Mia runs back to her spot in the formation as Fox drags Anne slowly away from the grounds. Francis winks at Mia and smiles.

COLONEL LLOYD  
BRAVO COMPANY, ATTENHUT. COMPANY  
DISMISSED.

The cadets break rank and begin dispersing.

FRANCIS  
Good job, princess.

COLONEL LLOYD  
CADET LASH, FRONT AND CENTER.

MIA  
(under her breath)  
Oh, crap.

Mia marches to the front of the Commandant and stands at attention.

COLONEL LLOYD  
Report to the gym latrine at 1800  
tonight in your work fatigues.

MIA  
YES, SIR!

COLONEL LLOYD  
You need to learn when you break the  
rules, you pay a price.

MIA  
YES SIR!

COLONEL LLOYD  
Now get out of here.

MIA  
YES SIR!

The Commandant leaves and Mia shuffles her way back to her dorm dejected.

INT WOMAN'S CADET DORM LOUNGE - EVENING.

Mia comes shuffling in with her fatigues and rifle with her face dirty and perspiring. HILLARY RICHFIELD, ALY MORGAN, IRENA FLORINA, BROOKS ANN NEWPORT and Fox are all watching Mia as she leans against the wall, her head down PANTING barely noticing them.

FOX

I guessed you learned that being rich and pretty don't cut you no slack here.

Mia looks up and sees everyone focused on her.

MIA

What?

FOX

You heard me. I don't like you and didn't the first minute I saw you. You're like one of those divas who think their shit don't smell.

MIA

I just got off the grinder after two hours of drilling and double timing and you think I've got it easy?

IRENA

I've seen the way the guys look at you. Just don't be getting any ideas about crowding in on our guys.

Mia SCOFFS.

MIA

Ha! What a laugh. I wouldn't touch them with a ten foot pole.

FOX

Starr said the guys think you're hot and maybe he's thinking the same way too.

MIA

Don't know him, don't care to know him. I'm just marking time until I can get out of here.

HILLARY

The buzz with the guys is that  
you're the new hot chick, but  
looking you over I don't know what  
they're seeing.

MIA  
Hey, with all you beauty queens  
around, why are you all so worried?

FOX  
Step out of line and we'll work your  
face over so bad even plastic  
surgery won't help.

Francis walks in with Anne and senses the drama going on.

FRANCIS  
What's going on here?

BROOKS ANN  
Just letting your princess know  
where she stands.

FRANCIS  
And where is that?

FOX  
A dark evil place you don't want to  
know about.

FRANCIS  
She's my roommate and if you got a  
problem with her you come see me  
first.

FOX  
If we have to we'll take you down  
too.

FRANCIS  
(to Mia)  
They work in packs like hungry  
hyenas, gutless alone.

FOX  
Listen to the drug queen. Must have  
just snorted some candy cane.

MIA  
Let it go, Francis. I can handle it.

FRANCIS  
(to Mia)  
In case you hadn't noticed, there's

a pecking order around her based on who's got the biggest tits, tightest ass and, oh yeah, the most beautiful.

ALY

And you're not on any of those lists.

FRANCIS

What they're worried about is that you just might crowd in on their ranking with the guys.

MIA

You're kidding?

Francis shakes her head and points to Irena.

FRANCIS

Irena there's got a lock on numero uno. Of course she does lay it on pretty thick with the make up. And Hillary's not too far behind. But then with all her boozing and smoking in a few years even a drunken sailor on a two day pass wouldn't touch her.

HILLARY

You should talk.

FRANCIS

Aly is number three with a bullet, going down that is.

ALY

And when's the last time you took a serious look at yourself in the mirror, bitch?

FRANCIS

And Fox there is bringing up the rear. Has all the classic features to be a runway model beauty, but then when they see what's inside she morphs into a frog. Make that an ugly frog.

FOX

Next time why don't you take a triple dose and give us all a break.

Francis ignores Fox.

FRANCIS

So you see, they're all just worried that they're going to slip in the charts especially with the "Junior Ring" Dance coming up.

MIA

Ring Dance?

FRANCIS

It's the night the Juniors receive their class ring.

MIA

So what?

FRANCIS

The men in the Junior class vote for who they think is the prettiest Junior girl and the winner walks underneath a giant ring sculpture and the seniors raised sabers as everyone sings the school song.

ANNE

Cool.

FOX

(to Francis)

Don't hold your breath.

MIA

Whoopee! Why would anyone care about that?

FRANCIS

It just a way for the guys to let everyone know who they think is the hottest babe.

The first sergeant walks in.

FIRST SERGEANT

You have fifteen minutes to clean up and get in your rooms.

FOX

Okay everyone, lets get a move on here.

Fox points to Francis

FOX

And I'm not forgetting you're little

bravado act here as you'll learn soon enough.

Fox signals to the girls and they file out.

MIA  
(to Francis )  
I think you pushed to hard.

FRANCIS  
Not hard enough. They'll eat you alive if they smell any weakness.

Mia pinches her lower lip.

FRANCIS  
Hey, princess how did you think they got in our wonder world? But don't worry, I've got your back covered.

MIA  
Yea, but have you got your back covered?

INT. THEATER - DAY

Job addresses his theater class. BRENT STARR, a poster boy for the Academy, is sitting in the front row next to Fox, Brooks Ann and Irena. Mia, Francis, Hillary and Aly are sitting in the back row.

JOB  
Welcome to Theater 101. If I do this right, you will learn that theater can be fun, dramatic and revealing.

BROOKS ANN  
Revealing? I never think of drama as revealing.

JOB  
Theater is a mirror of many of our lives dramatic experiences. And maybe, just maybe, if we do it really well it will reveal a truth that we can all learn from.

HILLARY  
Dancing and music is much better.

JOB  
Your first assignment is an easy one. Write down in a few words what best describes who you are or think

you are.

CHRISTIAN BONNAN, a tough looking athletic type with a tattoo of an eagle on his arm SNICKERS.

BONNAN

What? I thought this was a theater class.

JOB

It is, but you can't tell a story that rings true unless you know yourself first. And it will glean, if not with wisdom, at least with an honest core that will make it compelling, because you lived it.

STARR

Can you give us an example?

JOB

Sure. If I had to write one word that best describes myself I would say "question mark", because I'm always looking for answers to life's mysteries and doubting the answers I get sometimes.

ALY

No offense Mr, Lash, but why can't we just do a simple fun song and dance play like normal theater folks without all the word games?

JOB

Ah, an answer from the back row. Wasn't sure you were listening. We'll decide on a story line and genre later, but first I want you to write down who you think you are. I mean who knows you better than yourself.

IRENA

Just a few words? That's kind of confining. How about a paragraph?

HILLARY

Or a drawing?

JOB

You can put anything you want on that piece of paper as long as it represents who you think you are.



And, the briefer the better.

The cadets look at each other and then begin scribbling away.

JOB  
Okay, who wants to go first?

Fran raises her hand.

FRANCIS  
A pig and a bird.

JOB  
Interesting combo. Care to elaborate?

FRAN  
A pig has a big appetite and a bird gets high. Oops, flies high.

The cadets LAUGH.

JOB  
How about you, Irena?

IRENA  
A black swan.

Job paces the floor stroking his chin, nodding his head.

IRENA  
They're not too many of them around, they stand out and they're admired.

JOB  
I see. Bonnan?

Bonnan looks up surprised.

BONNAN  
What was the question again?

JOB  
When you look in the mirror who is that person looking back.

BONNAN  
You know, Mr. Job, I've been asking that person in the mirror that question for a long time and he never answers.

The class GIGGLES.

JOB

The acting class isn't until next week, Bonnan. You don't have to answer if you don't want to.

BONNAN

Sure, why not, if you insist. A feather.

JOB

I would have guessed something heavier. Why a feather?

BONNAN

Because It's always blowing from one place to another and it lets the wind take it where ever it wants to go.

STARR

Maybe it's because you're a lightweight.

Starr smiles at his own joke. The cadets SNICKER. Bonnan gives Starr a dirty look.

JOB

Mia, did you come up with anything?

MIA

This whole thing is silly.

BONNAN

C'mon girl, how we going to get to know you if you just stonewall us?

MIA

Okay, a cat. They're loners and do their own thing and are hard to pin down.

The cadets watch Job walk to a blackboard and scribble the words "Arustotle = mimisis. He turns around and faces his class.

JOB

Does anyone have any comments on the meaning of those two words?

ALY

Wasn't Aristotle that Greek guy from way back?

JOB

Very good, Aly. He was that Greek guy from way back, actually from 384BC to 322BC. You're not going to believe it but I wasn't even born yet.

The students MOAN. Job shrugs.

JOB

The word *mimisis* is the word he used for his theory on drama, or that "drama imitates life".

IRENA

I thought it was "art imitates life"?

JOB

Either one is okay. The point is he's saying that all drama or art comes from observing life as we experience it. The good, the bad and the ugly, all of the above. It all goes into some place deep inside of us and at some point if we make the effort it's all there to for us to pull out and study. And, or, to write a play

FRANCIS

Why not just leave it buried? Maybe that's better sometimes.

JOB

Sure, we've all eventually have skeletons in our closets, right?

FRANCIS

You got it.

JOB

But if you go that way then you'll never really know who you are or what makes you tick. You'll just go through the day to day events without uncovering the mystery of the inner you.

STARR

What we put down is all confidential, right?

JOB

It will be our little secret. Okay, go ahead and take a minute to think

about it and bring it up to me when you're finished.

The cadets start writing in their notebooks.

JOB

And your grade is an A if you hand anything in because it cannot be anything but correct if you answer the question honestly.

IRENA

So when do you decide on the play we're going to do?

JOB

In our next class. And I'm not going to decide on the story line, you are. That's all for today. Bring up your paper and I'll see you here tomorrow same time.

The class drops off their papers and exit.

JOB

Mia, I'd like to talk to you for a minute before you leave.

Mia rolls her eyes and shuffles to the front of the class.

MIA

(sarcastically)  
YES SIR!

JOB

You're free to check out this weekend under my care if you want. Maybe I can take you someplace. I'm sure you could use a break.

MIA

You mean I have to choose between staying in my prison dorm or going out with you?

JOB

If you want to put it that way.

MIA

Easy decision. Prison any day is better then spending one minute with you.

JOB

Must be a real burden carrying that heavy chip on your shoulder.

MIA

I like it. Every time I think I'm about to lose it I remember the hate I have for you and somehow I feel better.

JOB

What ever gets you through the night. By the way I brought you your guitar. Colonel Lloyd said you can play it once you finish Hell Week.

MIA

Why'd you do that for?

JOB.

Oh, haven't you heard, "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast"?

Mia shoots daggers at Job.

MIA

Is there anything else?

JOB

There are so many things I'd like to tell you, but I don't think you'd be listening.

MIA

You got that fucking right, SIR.

Job rubs his forehead as he watches Mia storm out.

INT AMBER'S OFFICE - DAY

Mia KNOCKS on Amber's office door.

AMBER

Come in.

Mia enters.

AMBER

Mia. Everything okay with you?

MIA

Fine. Well, not fine, but I'm surviving.

AMBER

I'm been keeping up with you.

MIA  
You said if I ever needed help to  
come to you.

AMBER  
I did and I meant it.

MIA  
Good, only it's not me that needs  
the help but Anne Ward.

AMBER  
I know Anne Ward. How can I help  
her?

MIA  
She shouldn't be here. I know that's  
what we all say, but in her case  
it's true.

AMBER  
How do you mean?

MIA  
Isn't it obvious? She a tiny little  
wisp of a nothing who hasn't a clue  
why she's here. A house of sticks  
ready to crumble with the first  
breeze.

AMBER  
That's why her parents brought her  
here, to toughen her up as in brick  
x-rated house.

MIA  
That's insane. She can barely lift  
her rifle during drills. They have  
no idea what she's going through.

AMBER  
It's called tough love. She's here  
because her mother and father think  
it's the best thing for her.

MIA  
They're wrong. And they could be  
dead wrong before it's all over.

AMBER  
What are you saying?

MIA

She's fragile and cannot survive in your program. And I'm not just talking about the physical stuff.

AMBER

If you have something to say, just say it.

MIA

She's slow. I'm no expert, but she needs to be in a school that helps kids who have trouble figuring things out.

AMBER

Are you suggesting she's mentally retarded?

MIA

No, not completely. She's a child who is always a step behind. And in this jungle someone's going to push too hard and she's going to break.

Amber gets up and walks around her desk and looks out the window. She turns and faces Mia.

AMBER

Don't you think her parents would know if there was anything wrong before they'd send her here?

MIA

Maybe this is their way to get rid of her so they don't have to be reminded of not having the perfect child.

AMBER

Parents aren't made that way. I know, I'm one of them.

MIA

Sure they are. If they weren't you wouldn't have a thriving business here.

AMBER

And here I was thinking it was the kids who had screwing up.

MIA

Oh, hadn't you heard, apples don't

fall far from the tree.

AMBER

You're exaggerating and I'm not buying it.

MIA

Oh, really. She gets on her knees every night before bedtime and recites "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the lord, my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to keep."

AMBER

Prayer is good for for all of us.

MIA

Pleeeeee! She sleeps with Pinky, her pink bear doll, for Christ sakes.

AMBER

How old is she?

MIA

Thirteen, going on eleven. I'm just asking you to look into it.

Amber turns away from Mia and then looks back.

AMBER

I'll think about it, but I'm not making any promises.

MIA

About what I expected. And I was so impressed with your milk and cookies reception when I got here. Especially the sincerity part.

Mia glances at Amber's painting in the corner.

MIA

Looks like you can't get your painting right, either.

Mia exits.

EXT THEATER - DAY

Job is addressing the cadets in the theater 101 class.

JOB

Bonnan, I commend you for your



entry. I have chosen it as the best candidate for our class play.

BROOKS ANN

Bonnan won? I can't believe it unless it's a story about gang bangs, street fights and drugs.

JOB

Bonnan, why don't you share your story with the class and show them the kinder, gentler Bonnan.

BONNAN

Sorry, Brooks Ann. It's more of a fairy tale about a young girl who lives in a faraway hidden valley who yearns to learn the secret tune that will give her flute magical powers to protect her from the evil queen.

JOB

I chose this story because of the power of metaphors in fairy tales. In this case the metaphor is really more about the search for love.

BONNAN

If you say so, Mr. Lash. I just wanted it to be magical.

JOB

And it is, because fairy tales usually have an underlining truth in them that resonates with us at a deep level.

FRANCIS

C'mon Bonnan, let's hear what this big story is all about.

BONNAN

Okay. This girl was given a flute when she was a little girl by her mother and learned to play it so beautifully she became famous in the valley. But her good fortune ended when she was kidnapped by the rich evil queen who was jealous of her beauty and talent. A mean and ugly bitch who did every nasty thing imaginable to destroy her spirit.

FRANCIS

(looking at Fox )  
Shouldn't be hard to cast.

ALVAREZ  
I've always liked romantic comedies.

BONNAN  
But the young girl escapes from the dark castle to find the old wise man who lives at the top of the forbidden mountain to learn the magic tune to break the evil spell put on her by the cruel queen.

STARR  
And what a coincidence that you play the flute, fairy boy or is it fairy girl?

BONNAN  
I'll be playing the flute offstage.

STARR  
How about way offstage, like the next building?

BONNAN  
Once she learns the secret of playing the magic tune the evil queen no longer has any power over her and happiness reigns once again in the kingdom.

JOB  
According to Greek mythology, music was the last gift from the gods. Actually, the word music comes from the word Muses who were the patron goddess daughters of Zeus who inspired the creation of literature and the arts.

ALVAREZ  
Hey, this could be fun. Mia plays the guitar and Irena the piano. And I can bring my claves. Maybe we can even make up some songs.

ALY  
And I sing pretty good in the shower.

STARR  
Can we watch to make sure?

ALVAREZ

Yea, we should definitely include that scene of her singing in the shower...with no curtains. And it won't even matter if she can sing or not.

Everyone LAUGHS.

JOB

Okay, let's not get ahead of ourselves. First we need to break this story into three acts. Based on Bonnan's one page story line I've broken it down into multiple scenes headings and each of you will be assigned to flesh out the scene with drama, wit and action.

IRENA

I want the scene where the beautiful young girl meets the old man and uses her charms to persuade him to part with his secret.

BROOKS ANN

Honey chile, I don't think we need to be going there or we'll end up being "X" rated.

ALVAREZ

But, it will sell a lot of tickets.

MIA

So, what's this girls name?

BONNAN

I haven't decided yet.

ANNE

How about Solana?

Everyone looks surprised to hear Anne speak up.

FOX

No wetback foreigners allowed in this play.

BROOKS ANN

You know, Fox, you have a gift for spoiling everything you touch.

IRENA

Solana's a pretty name.

ANNE

That was the name of my best friend  
in kindergarten.

JOB

Anybody got a problem with Solana?

Every one shakes their head except for Fox who points her  
thumbs down.

ALY

The setting is in a far away land so  
the name should sound foreign.

JOB

Solana it is than.

Anne smiles.

JOB

Mia, I'm putting you in charge of  
the music for this play. I will  
provide you with the musical  
instruments and we will begin  
practicing in our next class.

MIA

Okay, I need volunteers for singers  
and back up singers.

Numerous hands go up. Bonnan smiles.

BONNAN

I never knew school could be fun.

STARR

The big tough guy playing the pussy  
wuss wuss flute. Hilarious.

BONNAN

And we all know the only thing you  
ever play with and it's very small.

Everyone LAUGHS.

STARR

Hey, teach, can't you find a spot  
for Bonnan, you know like the town  
druggie?

Bonnan walks over to Starr and pulls him in by his uniform.

BONNAN

You've got rank and suck up points

with Colonel Lloyd, but they won't help you golden boy if I decide to take you down to your real puny size.

JOB  
Knock it off you two.

Starr straightens his uniform as Bonnan lets him down.

STARR  
My, my, must have struck to close to the bone.

JOB  
Pick up your scene assignments as you exit.

The cadets exit.

INT MIA'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Anne burst into Mia's dorm room excited.

ANNE  
MIA, YOU'VE WON!

Mia looks up from the book she's reading.

MIA  
What are you all excited about?

ANNE  
You've been voted the Ring Queen. It's in the school paper.

MIA  
What? I thought Fox was supposed to win it.

ANNE  
Here, look for yourself.

Anne hands Mia the Oak Ridge weekly paper.

MIA  
I can't believe it. How did this happen?

ANNE  
Easy, the guys like you. It doesn't hurt that you're pretty.

MIA

But Starr's taking Fox to the dance  
and the cadet Commandant always  
takes the Ring Queen.

ANNE  
Not this time.

Fox walks in with Brooks Ann.

FOX  
You sneaky bitch. You've screwed me  
for the last time and I'm going to  
find out how you did it.

Mia gets up and walks up nose to nose to Fox.

MIA  
Doesn't look like you're the fairest  
lass in the kingdom after all.

Francis walks in.

FRANCIS  
What's going on here?

FOX  
Shut up and stay out of this.

MIA  
It's about the Ring dance queen.

FRANCIS  
(to Fox)  
Oh, maybe you need to talk to the  
137 guys who voted for Mia first  
before you start weaving your evil  
web.

FOX  
(to Mia)  
You might as well tell me how you  
cheated me, cause I'm going to find  
out eventually. And you will pay  
dearly for it I can promise you.

FRANCIS  
You forgot to cackle, Wicked Witch  
of the West or is it with a "B"?

MIA  
Go now, begone with you or I'll  
throw water on you.

Fox storms out. Brooks Ann, Francis, Anne and Mia LAUGH.

BROOKS ANN  
You've got spunk Mia. I've got to  
hand it to you.

MIA  
There's something scary about her  
and sad at the same time. Nobody can  
be that mean without a reason.

FRANCIS  
No, some people are just born that  
way.

INT COLONEL LLOYD'S OFFICE - DAY

Mia enters and salutes.

COLONEL LLOYD  
At ease.

MIA  
You called for me, sir?

Colonel Lloyd continues checking off names without looking  
up

COLONEL LLOYD  
Sit.

Mia sits. Colonel Lloyd looks up.

COLONEL LLOYD  
It's been brought to my attention  
that there were irregularities in  
the voting for the Ring Dance queen.

MIA  
Irregularities, sir?

COLONEL LLOYD  
It seems someone put a heart next to  
your name on the ballot drawing  
attention to your name and giving  
you an unfair advantage.

MIA  
You don't think that the students  
know us well enough to vote on the  
basis of who we are, sir?

COLONEL LLOYD  
However small, it's an edge that I  
can't ignore. Therefore, I am  
disqualifying you from the contest

and declaring the cadet with the second most votes as the queen.

MIA  
And who would that be, sir?

COLONEL LLOYD  
Captain Fox.

MIA  
And who brought this heart to your attention, sir, if I may ask?

COLONEL LLOYD  
Commandant Starr and it was the right thing to do. This institution is about integrity and doing the right thing.

MIA  
Commandant Starr is Fox's boyfriend, sir. Or, is that just a coincidence?

COLONEL LLOYD  
This matter is closed and not a subject for further discussion.

MIA  
I could care less about the stupid Ring Dance queen thing. I just hate how you preach righteousness every fricking second and then when things don't go your way you suddenly bend the rules to get what you want.

COLONEL LLOYD  
What did you just say to me?

MIA  
Why bother, you won't be listening.

COLONEL LLOYD  
You will report to the grinder Friday for your insubordination in full fatigue gear to run the "G", 8 miles with a 25 pound pack on your back.

MIA  
It won't change my mind about how I feel about you and this jail. Oh, excuse me, self righteous institution.



COLONEL LLOYD  
You'd better get out of here right  
now before I march you down to the  
grinder for a night march.

Mia exits.

EXT GRINDER - DAY

Colonel Lloyd is addressing four male cadets including  
Bonnan and two female cadets Mia and Francis who are dressed  
in fatigues with heavy back packs filled with powder. Marine  
sergeants JAKE LEVY and BARRY GIBBONS stand behind Colonel  
Lloyd.

COLONEL LLOYD  
As I warned you earlier there are  
always consequences for the choices  
you make. When you continue to make  
the wrong ones we need to teach you  
the value of discipline. Do you hear  
me?

GROUP  
YES SIR!

COLONEL LLOYD  
Good. The marines here will be  
marching you through 8 miles of back  
roads. It will be a hot grinding  
unpleasant task, but you will  
complete it as instructed. Do you  
hear me?

GROUP  
YES SIR!

COLONEL LLOYD  
Are there any questions?

MIA  
What if you can't make it, air? I've  
never even walked 8 miles before.

COLONEL LLOYD  
That is an irrelevant question and I  
will disregard it. Failure is not an  
option, so don't waste any time  
thinking about it. You will complete  
the assignment.

Colonel Lloyd returns to the front.

COLONEL LLOYD

Sergeants Levy and Gibbons take charge.

The marines salute Colonel Lloyd.

SERGEANT LEVY  
Yes sir. Cadets, in formation.

The cadets hurry into formation.

SERGEANT LEVY  
Cadets, left face.

The cadets turn left.

SERGEANT LEVY  
Cadets, jog in place.

The cadets jog in place.

SERGEANT LEVY  
FORWARD MARCH!

The cadets begin jogging down the road following the marines. Bonnan jogs his way next to Mia.

BONNAN  
What did they get you for?

MIA  
Disrespectful to Colonel Lloyd, Fox and everyone in general. How about you?

BONNAN  
I don't remember reading anywhere that pushing a guy's face against a brick wall was against the school's rules.

MIA  
Ouch! But, then you've never been a reading the fine print type of guy.

BONNAN  
I can't tell you the serious jollies it gave me. You know, a Roman orgy with 76 virgins, sweet harp music and a fountain of wine? Better than that.

MIA  
But, Starr's the Cadet Commandant, and Colonel Lloyd's darling. You

can't win that one, Bonnan.

BONNAN

Yeah, you're probably right. It's like trouble just has a way of finding me. If I played hide and seek with it, I'd be the first one that mother fucker would find every time.

SERGEANT LEVY

Okay, let's pick up the pace a little bit, you're slowing down.

MIA

I don't think I'm going to be able to make it, Bonnan.

BONNAN

Don't worry, I'll take care of you.

The group continues jogging down the road.

INT COLONEL LLOYD'S OFFICE - DAY

Job walks in looking distraught.

JOB

What's this I hear you're punishing my daughter for voicing her opinion about the Ring Queen vote being rigged and you're making her march 8 miles with a 25 pound pack on her back?

Colonel Lloyd ANSWERS without looking up.

COLONEL LLOYD

That's right.

JOB

Mia's only sixteen and can't be more than 95 pounds dripping wet. This goes beyond a reasonable punishment. Abuse comes to mind.

Colonel Lloyd looks up.

COLONEL LLOYD

I was afraid your being here might be a problem. She's here because her parents couldn't handle the job and now you're going to challenge me?

JOB

All this pushing and shoving is some kind of far fetched thinking that suffering is actually good for you. It's either that or maybe you're getting some kind of perverse jollies with the whole set up?

COLONEL LLOYD

A sadistic bully, is that it?

JOB

You've never had anyone punish you unfairly just because they don't like you or because of who you are so you don't understand.

COLONEL LLOYD

(softly)

Yes, I have and I do understand since the day I was born.

Job makes a face, rubs it and closes his eyes.

COLONEL LLOYD

The measure of a person is their ability to know themselves and what it's going to take to get where they wants to go. The ability is usually there, but not the discipline to make it happen.

JOB

But, there are limits.

COLONEL LLOYD

Mia is one of those few kids who always had it from the beginning and just needs a little nudge. Most of the ones who come through here need much more.

JOB

You call making a kid march 8 miles with a 25 pounds back pack in the blazing sun a nudge?

COLONEL LLOYD

It's all about learning how to handle the inevitable hard knocks they're eventually going to face in this experience we call life.

JOB  
And if she breaks are you willing to  
accept the consequences?

COLONEL LLOYD  
That sounds like a threat. I suggest  
you leave before I take it personal.

Job hesitates and then storms out the office.

EXT COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING.

The cadets are marching down a back country road as the  
Marines cajole them to keep up the pace.

GIBBONS  
C'mon, c'mon. Let's pick it up. This  
isn't a stroll in the park. Let's  
go.

Francis is lagging behind.

GIBBONS  
Cadet Meadows let's get those feet  
moving. You're falling behind.

FRANCIS  
Yes sir.

Francis picks up her pace and then wobbles and finally flops  
to the ground her face in anguish.

GIBBONS  
COMPANY, HALT!

The cadets stop and look back at Francis who is breathing  
hard, obviously in pain.

GIBBONS  
Cadet Meadows, get up and in  
formation.

Francis slowly struggles to her feet, walks a few feet and  
collapses again. Sergeant Levy crouches down over Francis.

LEVY  
Are you okay, Cadet Meadows?

FRANCIS  
I don't think so, sir.

LEVY  
Can you continue?

FRANCIS

I can try if you want me too, sir.

Sergeant Levy puts his hand on Francis's forehead looking concerned.

LEVY

You're excused from this exercise, cadet Meadows and will be transported back to school clinic posthaste.

Sergeant Levy signals the trailing mini van and Francis is gingerly placed in the van.

LEVY

We'll take a ten minute break.

The cadets flop to the ground with Bonnan next to Mia. A beat up old bus with "The Fugitives" painted on the side pulls up next to Sargeant Levy. ACE TRAGGART leans out the window.

ACE

Hey, General, you don't happen to know where Oak Ridge is do you?

LEVY

Sure, straight ahead 3 miles turn right at the church and you'll run right into town. It's on the right side.

ACE

Thanks, General.

BONNAN

Hey, looks like you're a rock and roll band.

ACE

More like country rock. How'd you know?

BONNAN

Red eyes, shaggy hair and don't give a shit attitude.

ACE

Hey, thanks. You're too kind.

MIA

Where you playing?

ACE

Ugly Mug Pub, the home turf of the Hellfire Bikers. Can't get in unless you've got a tattoo, confirmed jail time and serious substance abuse problems.

BONNAN

You can't miss it. The paints peeling off, the signs about ready to fall off and the bartender looks like he just stumbled back from the Crimean War.

ACE

Sounds like a place where we'll fit right in. Come visit. First one's on me.

BONNAN

I'll bring my flute just in case you want to show those bad boys what real music is.

MIA

And I'll bring my guitar.

Ace smiles.

ACE

You got a deal, brother. You too, sister. Hey, but where are your tattoos?

Mia and Bonnan LAUGH. Ace jumps in the van and it coughs and stutters its way down the road. Bonnan pulls out a plastic container with food in it and hands a spoon to Mia.

BONNAN

Want some?

MIA

What is it?

BONNAN

Green Chile and beans. I made it myself. An old family recipe.

Mia tentatively takes a spoonful.

MIA

Delicious. You're going to make someone very happy one of these days.

BONNAN

Have some more.

Mia and Bonnan take turns scooping out the green chile.

BONNAN

I heard you won the Ring Dance queen contest.

MIA

I have no clue how that ever happened.

BONNAN

I think the guys seeing you jumping up and down in your short shorts at volley ball practice had something to do with it.

MIA

Are your folks coming?

BONNAN

My mon died when I was seven and more then likely my dad will be a no-show.

MIA

I'm sure he'll make it. You told me you're an only child.

Bonnan throws the last of the chile away and puts the plastic container back in his bag. He silently starts digging a hole in the ground with a small branch.

MIA

What's the matter?

Bonnan looks away.

MIA

Really, Bonnan, what's wrong?

BONNAN

When I was twelve I was told to watch my six year old brother in our back yard. I went into the house for a minute to get a drink and when I came out he had slipped into the pool and was at the bottom.

Mia puts her hand over her mouth.

MIA



Oh, no!

BONNAN  
I pulled him out, but it was too late.

MIA  
Oh my God, I'm so sorry.

BONNAN  
He didn't know how to swim and I knew it. I just wanted a drink.

Bonnan snaps the branch. Mia puts her hand on Bonnan's shoulder.

MIA  
I wish I knew what to say.

BONNAN  
He was my Dad's favorite, but he never said a word to me.

MIA  
I'm sure he loves you.

BONNAN  
I wish he'd have just kicked, punched and beaten me bloody. I would have felt better. But no, he just looks away when I'm around. I know he's never forgiven me, nor should he. And all for a fucking Coke.

MIA  
Bonnan, you're all he has now, so don't be so hard on him or yourself.

Mia rests her hand on Bonnan's shoulder.

MIA  
You know I'm your friend.

Bonnan looks up at Mia, nods and smiles.

BONNAN  
You know, you're the only girl I've even known whom I'm ever been afraid of trying to kiss. I haven't figured out why yet, but I eventually will.

MIA  
Is that a threat or a promise?

Bonnan LAUGHS. Sergeant Gibbons approaches the cadets.

GIBBONS

Okay, everybody up. We've got three more miles to go.

Bonnan jumps to his feet and pulls Mia up.

BONNAN

You've got dirt on your nose.

Bonnan pulls out a cloth from his pocket and wipes her nose.

BONNAN

You're never going to be crowned queen looking that way.

MIA

I'm not going.

BONNAN

You've got to go. You can't have a dance without a Ring queen.

MIA

I guess you hadn't heard, Fox is going to be the queen with Starr her escort.

BONNAN

What? That's not possible. You won. It was in the school paper.

MIA

I got bounced on a technicality.

BONNAN

It doesn't matter. You won and everyone knows it. In fact, I'm going to make you a ring and you'll still be the Ring Queen in my eyes.

MIA

Bonnan, I've changed my mind. I'm going to the Ring dance and you're going to take me and you don't need to get me no stinking ring either.

BONNAN

I have a feeling this is a dance that will be remembered for a long time.

Mia smiles and the cadets continue marching down the road.

EXT OAK RIDGE PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

The remaining marching cadets straggle in as a crowd gathers, including Colonel Lloyd and Job. Mia staggers toward the finish line.

BONNAN  
Here, let me help you.

LEVY  
BACK OFF CADET, NO HELP.

Mia stumbles across the finish line swaying crazily. Job rushes toward her and catches her just as she collapses.

JOB  
Are you okay?

Mia takes off her boots and one foot is bleeding from a blister.

MIA  
I don't think I can take another step.

JOB  
Your foot's bleeding.

Mia fumbles for her water bottle, but it slips and falls to the ground. Job picks it up, takes off the top and puts it to Mia's mouth. Mia takes a sip.

MIA  
I'm dizzy...the heat.

Mia slowly get's to her feet, tries to walk, but wobbles and faints. Job catches her again just before she falls.

JOB  
Someone splash some water on her face.

Bonnan picks up the water bottle and pours some water into a cloth and wipes Mia's face with it. Mia opens her eyes.

MIA  
Take me home, Daddy.

Job picks up Mia and starts walking toward her dorm.

JOB  
You must be delirious. You just called me "Daddy".

MIA

I did? I'm sorry. I screwed up. I take it back. Don't tell Mom.

JOB SMILING

It will be our little secret.

Job glares at Colonel Lloyd who stands imperiously over the scene as he carries Mia by him.

INT DORM ROOM - EVENING

Mia walks into her dorm room and notices a sheet of paper on the floor. She picks it up and sees that it's a poem on aged parchment paper. She READS it softly to herself.

MIA

*Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the village, though; He will not see me stopping here To watch his woods fill up with snow. My little horse must think it queer To stop without a farmhouse near Between the woods and frozen lake The darkest evening of the year.*

Annie stick her head in the doorway.

ANNE

Can you help me with my homework?

MIA

Of course, but stay for a moment as I finish reading this poem.

ANNE

I love poems.

MIA

(reading softly)

*He gives his harness bells a shake To ask if there is some mistake. The only other sound's the sweep Of easy wind and downy flake. The woods are lovely, dark and deep, But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep, And miles to go before I sleep.*

Francis walks in the room.

FRANCIS

What's going on here?

MIA

I'm reading a poem to Annie that I found on the floor.

Francis walks over and peers at the paper sheet Mia's holding.

FRANCIS

What are you doing with my stuff?

Francis yanks the paper sheet from Mia.

FRANCIS

I told you to stay away from my stuff. How many times do I have to tell you.

MIA

I told you it was laying on the floor. What are you so excited about? It's just a poem.

FRANCIS

I don't want you going through my personal stuff. Do you understand?  
(pointing at Annie)  
And, that goes for you too.

MIA

It's a famous Robert Frost poem. I've read it before so you can pull in your fangs. You must of mistakenly dropped it when you were putting it away.

FRANCIS

Whatever.

MIA

(to Anne)

I'll meet you in your room in a few minutes. And close the door behind you.

Annie nods and exits closing the door behind her.

MIA

What's going on with you? You been a shit with everyone the last couple of days.

FRANCIS

I just want out of here. I can't take it anymore.

MIA

This doesn't have anything to do  
with you not being able to get weed  
anymore, does it?

FRANCIS

It's not just about getting high.  
It's about staying sane in this  
cesspool, don't you understand?

MIA

That's not it. Never has been.  
That's what got you here to begin  
with.

Francis closes her eyes and rubs her forehead.

FRANCIS

I just want to go home. I just want  
to go home and live normal again.

MIA

This poem. So, That's what you've  
been reading every night. Talk to  
me, Francis, so I can help you.

FRANCIS

Leave me alone.

MIA

I know you've had it tough with your  
mom passing two years ago, but drugs  
are a one way ticket out of here.  
And, by here I mean the real world  
you're living in.

Francis walks to the window and SOBS softly.

MIA

C'mon, girl.

Fran stops crying and turns to Mia.

FRANCIS

The day my mom died, she asked me to  
read her this poem. I had even  
practiced how to recite it since I  
knew how much she loved it. She had  
been sick and was laying on the  
sofa.

MIA

it's like when I write songs, the  
melody is sweet, but it's the lyrics

that tell the story and make it complete.

FRANCIS

When I finished reading the poem she closed her eyes with a smile on her face. I thought she had fallen asleep, but soon realized she had slipped away from me never to return.

Francis closes her eyes in deep distraught. Mia hugs Francis who SOBS quietly on her shoulder.

MIA

It's okay to cry, but just remember, we've all got promises to keep.

INT SCHOOL GYM - EVENING

The male cadets in their dress whites march in single file into the gym and assume parade rest behind PRESIDENT HARRY GIVENS who is standing in the center in his dress whites as well. The female cadets in their party dresses march in next in single file and stand relaxed behind the President as well. The gym has a large ring arch replica in the center of the gym. Six male cadets on each side are standing in front of the Ring at attention with their sabers on their shoulders. First Sergeant Louise is standing next to a door in front of the gym.

FIRST SERGEANT

(to Anne)

Go to the waiting room and tell them the roll call will start with the music.

Anne disappears through the waiting room door. The girl cadets are lined up with their male cadet escorts ready to march out.

ANNE

FIRST SERGEANT SAYS TO COME OUT WHEN YOU THE MUSIC STARTS.

Bonnan in his full uniform regalia is standing next to Mia in her formal full length dress.

BONNAN

I want you to know the guys heard about Fox and Starr ratting on you and screwing you out of being the Ring Queen.

MIA  
It doesn't matter anymore.

BONNAN  
Sure it does and we've plotting our  
revenge. You know the patients  
taking over the asylum kind of  
thing.

MIA  
Whatever it is, don't tell me. I'm  
in too much trouble already. It's  
like there's this big black hole and  
everything is sucking me into it.

INT SCHOOL GYM - EVENING

PRESIDENT  
LET THE RING DANCE FESTIVITIES  
BEGIN.

The DJ begins PLAYING marching music. First Sergeant Louis  
begins READING from her tablet.

FIRST SERGEANT  
CADETS ALVAREZ RAMON AND ALY MORGAN.

The back door opens and Ramon and Aly come out together and  
walk through the Ring and the file of cadets who bring their  
sabers to the floor tapping it as they pass by.

FIRST SERGEANT  
CADETS CALLAN WEEKLY AND HILLARY  
RICHFIELD.

Callan and Hillary walk through the Ring and the cadets who  
repeat the tapping of their sabers to the ground as they  
pass. Anne has come over next to Amber watching the  
ceremony.

ANNE  
(to Amber )  
This is so exciting.

AMBER  
When the Ring queen and her escort  
walk through the Ring the cadets  
will lift their sabers forming an  
arch for them to pass through and  
when President Givens presents her  
with the ring the whole student body  
will sing the school song.

ANNE



So who is the Ring queen?

AMBER  
We're about to find out.

FIRST SERGEANT  
CADETS WILLIAM STOFER AND FRANCIS  
MEADOWS.

Bill and Francis walk through the Ring and cadets who repeat the tapping of their sabers to the ground as they pass by. Mia and Bonnan stand by the door.

MIA  
I don't know why I'm so nervous.

BONNAN  
Relax, everything's okay.

MIA  
Is your Dad here?

BONNAN  
He called me this morning and said something came up.

MIA  
Oh, Bonnan.

FIRST SERGEANT  
CADETS MIA LASH AND CHRISTIAN  
BONNAN.

Mia and Bonnan walk through the Ring and as they approach the file of cadets they raise their sabers forming an arch. The students begin SINGING the school song. Mia looks stunned and stops in her tracks looking around. Bonnan is grinning from ear to ear and nudges Mia forward. The students continue SINGING. Colonel Lloyd and President Givens look at each other confused.

AMBER  
Oh, oh. This is not going according to the script. The President is supposed to announce the queen.

President Givens and Colonel Lloyd begin waving their hands frantically motioning the students to stop singing, but the students continue SINGING. Colonel Lloyd signals to the DJ to stop the music. President Givens grabs a microphone and begins YELLING.

PRESIDENT  
STOP, STOP. THIS IS AN ORDER, STOP

RIGHT NOW.

Colonel Lloyd rushes around the room SCREAMING and pointing at the students. The SINGING slowly dies down.

COLONEL LLOYD  
BATTALION ATTENTION!

Every cadet in the room jumps to attention. The gym is silent.

COLONEL LLOYD  
If you all don't start acting like  
Oak Ridge cadets right now all  
weekend passes for the next month  
will be rescinded.

Brent Starr and Malva Fox have come out of the waiting room and are standing by the door. Colonel Lloyd takes the microphone.

COLONEL LLOYD  
This was deliberate and calculated  
and the those involved in planning  
it will regret their duplicity.

Amber closes her eyes and rubs her forehead.

AMBER  
This is awful. Heads will roll.

ANNE  
The little people have spoken.

President Givens steps forward.

PRESIDENT  
The dance will go on. The rightful  
queen is Captain Malva Fox.  
Commandant Brent Starr, please  
escort Captain Fox forward to  
receive her ring.

Cadet Starr marches with exaggerated stiffness to the front with Cadet Fox who is seething looking at Mia with hate in her eyes as she passes.

PRESIDENT  
As President it is my honor to  
present the Ring to Cadet Fox who  
has displayed the most maturity,  
friendship and popularity among the  
core of cadets as voted by you the  
students.

The student body HISSES. Colonel Lloyd's face is purple with rage as he scours the students faces.

PRESIDENT

Let the music begin with Captain Fox and Commandant Starr taking the floor first.

The DJ PLAYS some music. Cadet Starr grabs Fox and begins dancing. The majority of the student body put their hands over their eyes. President Givens grabs the microphone again.

PRESIDENT

Your behavior will be duly noted and those who continue to be disrespectful will face the consequences.

President Givens appeals to Colonel Lloyd.

PRESIDENT

You're the Commandant. Do something.

Colonel Lloyd shakes his head.

COLONEL LLOYD

It's too late. They win this round for the moment.

Mia puts her face in her hands and looks pleadingly at Bonnan.

MIA

CRAP! Colonel Lloyd's going to blame me for this and I didn't have anything to do with it.

BONNAN

Fuck 'em. Savor the exquisite moment. We don't get too many of them. What ever they dish out will be worth if for the look on their faces. C'mon let's go. If we're going to be crucified, let's at least have a little fun.

Bonnan drags Mia to the dance floor and they begin dancing. The cadets turn and begin CLAPPING. Starr and Fox stop dancing looking helpless in the middle of the floor. The DJ motions to Colonel Lloyd with his hands up.

COLONEL LLOYD

Keep playing. The dance will go on.

PRESIDENT  
How did this happen?

COLONEL LLOYD  
I don't know, but by God I will find  
out and there will be a reckoning.

Hillary, Brooks Ann, Aly and her dates join the dancing and soon the whole dance floor is filled with cadets dancing. Colonel Lloyd eyes are narrow slits of anger.

EXT PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

Bravo Company is drilling to Colonel Lloyd's COMMANDS.

COLONEL LLOYD  
BRAVO COMPANY HALT.

Bravo company halts. The cadets are sweating profusely and look ragged.

COLONEL LLOYD  
Are you tired? thirsty and feeling  
the pain? When I ask I question I  
want an answer.

BRAVO COMPANY  
SIR, YES SIR!

COLONEL LLOYD  
Good. Maybe now you'll remember your  
disgraceful performance at the the  
Ring dance?

BRAVO COMPANY  
SIR, YES SIR!

COLONEL LLOYD  
You're the most pathetic company in  
the whole battalion. You will  
continue marching until you get it  
right.

Colonel Lloyd faces Mia.

COLONEL LLOYD  
I used to think you had the makings  
of a fine soldier, but you've been  
nothing but one big disappointment.

MIA  
YES SIR!

COLONEL LLOYD

Let's see if you've got the stuff to do something with this pitiful group of screw up untouchables. Take over, cadet Lash.

Colonel Lloyd hands Mia his saber. Mia salutes Colonel Lloyd with the saber.

MIA  
YES SIR! THANK YOU, SIR.

COLONEL LLOYD  
And we're not leaving until you get it right.

Mia marches stiffly to the front of the company with her saber on her right shoulder. Colonel Lloyd steps back.

MIA  
AT MY COMMAND. BRAVO COMPANY,  
ATEN...HUT!

Bravo Company comes to attention.

MIA  
THE COMMANDANT THINKS WE'RE JUST LOW  
LIFE CRAP NOT WORTHY TO BE IN HIS  
COMMAND. THE GRIMY UNTOUCHABLES.

Mia starts walking along the front row of cadets.

MIA  
LET'S SHOW HIM THAT WE'RE THE  
UNTOUCHABLES BECAUSE NO ONE CAN  
TOUCH US. DO YOU HEAR ME?

BRAVO COMPANY  
YES SIR!

MIA  
SO WHO ARE WE?

BRAVO COMPANY  
THE UNTOUCHABLES!

MIA  
WHO, I CAN'T HEAR YOU.

BRAVO COMPANY  
THE UNTOUCHABLES.

MIA  
BRAVO COMPANY, RIGHT FACE.

Bravo Company does a right face.

MIA  
FORWARD, HARCH! CADENCE COUNT.

Bravo company begins marching with a spring in their step.

MIA  
YOUR LEFT, YOUR RIGHT, YOUR LEFT,  
YOUR RIGHT. SOUND OFF, CADENCE  
COUNT, ONE TWO.

BRAVO COMPANY  
ONE TWO!

MIA  
SOUND OFF, THREE FOUR!

BRAVO COMPANY  
THREE FOUR! BRAVO COMPANY

MIA  
ONE TWO, THREE FOUR.

BRAVO COMPANY  
THREE FOUR! BRAVO COMPANY

MIA  
REPEAT AFTER ME.

Mia begins her cadence marching SONG.

MIA  
MAMA, MAMA, CAN'T YOU SEE?

BRAVO COMPANY  
MAMA, MAMA, CAN'T YOU SEE?

MIA  
WHAT THE ARMY DID TO ME.

BRAVO COMPANY  
WHAT THE ARMY DID TO ME.

MIA  
THEY TOOK AWAY MY FADED JEANS.

BRAVO COMPANY  
THEY TOOK AWAY MY FADED JEANS.

MIA  
NOW I'M WEARING ARMY GREENS.

BRAVO COMPANY

NOW I'M WEARING ARMY GREENS

MIA  
I USED TO DRIVE A CHEVROLET.

BRAVO COMPANY  
I USED TO DRIVE A CHEVROLET.

MIA  
NOW I MARCH IN BOOTS ALL DAY.

BRAVO COMPANY  
NOW I MARCH IN BOOTS ALL DAY.

MIA  
LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT. TO THE  
REAR...HARCH.

The first row of Bravo Company pivots off their right foot and reverses the march. After the company completes the maneuver, Mia issues a new command.

MIA  
LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT RIGHT. LEFT  
OBLIQUE...HARCH.

The entire Bravo company pivots off their right foot marching at a 45 degree angle.

MIA  
LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, FORWARD..  
HARCH!

Bravo Company pivots on their right foot back to a forward march.

MIA  
BRAVO COMPANY HALT..

Bravo company halts.

MIA  
RIGHT FACE.

Bravo company does a right face.

MIA  
BRAVO COMPANY, ATTEN...HUT!

Bravo Company comes to attention. Mia turns to Colonel Lloyd.

MIA  
BRAVO COMPANY IS READY FOR YOUR

INSPECTION, SIR.

COLONEL LLOYD TO MIA  
Very clever using your marching  
song. I give you credit for  
creativity, but you've still got a  
long way to go to meet the Oak Ridge  
Academy standards and I'm going to  
be pushing you every step of the way  
until you get it right.

MIA  
YES SIR!

COLONEL LLOYD  
Dismiss the company.

Mia salutes Colonel Lloyd, does an about face and marches to  
the front of Bravo Company.

MIA  
BRAVO COMPANY, FALL OUT.

Hillary, Brooks Ann, Anne and Irena all gather around Mia  
congratulating her, LAUGHING.

INT THEATER - DAY

Mia is STRUMMING the guitar Irena TICKLING the organ, Bonnan  
BLOWING into his flute, Alvarez BANGING his claves with Aly,  
Brooks Ann, Francis, Irena and Anne SINGING the back up  
chorus. Job stands up in the mezzanine front row. Fox and  
Starr are dancing to the music. The music ends and they turn  
toward Job.

JOB  
That was pretty good. The only thing  
left to decide now is the resolution  
on the fate of the evil queen.

IRENA  
Why not just throw her in the  
poisonous swamp where the dragon  
lives and be done with her.

BROOKS ANN  
No punishment could be too wicked  
for that bitch.

HILLARY  
How about burning her at the stake?

JOB  
I think we need to think of



something original that will surprise the audience.

ANNE

We can forgive the queen and tell her we want to be her friend. Maybe she'll be so surprised she'll forget to be mean.

JOB

Is that realistic?

ANNE

I gave an apple to a bully once who was always picking on me. He just took it surprised and walked away without saying a word. And, he never bothered me again.

Everyone thinks about Anne's story and grow silent.

MIA

That's a beautiful story, Anne. I think there's a deep meaning in it somewhere.

JOB

Anne, you've just shown us an example of what the French call "Lumière" which translated is close to "illumination" or "enlightenment".

ALVAREZ

Like we've seen the light or learned something?

JOB

Something like that. Instead of destroying her why not lead her out of the valley of darkness and evil into the mountain top of goodness and light?

FOX

It'll never play in Peoria.

STARR

Kicking ass is more dramatic.

JOB

Do you remember when you did something good in kindergarten your teacher would put a gold star on

your paper?

The class looks at Job perplexed.

IRENA

A gold star, sir? Really? Where did they put the abacus and ink well?

JOB

I don't have any gold stars handy so I'm going to have to improvise.

HILLARY

Somewhere along the way I got lost.

Job walks up on stage to Anne and chalks a star on Anne's forehead.

JOB

This is a mark to show the compassion you have in you. Eventually it will wear away, but no one here will ever forget that I put it there. Revenge is a strong emotion, but then so is love. We're going to go against the grain on the side of forgiveness.

FOX

You can't change the spots of a leopard. It'll never work.

JOB

Maybe not, but it makes for good drama and I think way down deep we all have a good side in us that wants to give people another chance and that's what we'll be tapping into.

FRANCIS

Is this like normal drama, sir?

JOB

The best drama has beauty, truth and values in its story. And surprises don't hurt either.

BONNAN

I thought drama was conflict? That's why you always have the big fight at the end.

JOB

When Solana offers her hand in friendship as Anne said she shows compassion. It rings true because we sense the evil within the queen is coming from the hurt and pain in her. The very basic values of her choosing between good and evil is at play here.

FOX

The world ain't like that, trust me.

JOB

Goodness wins here and that underlying theme will be felt and enjoyed by the audience.

FOX

The whole thing is phony.

JOB

Okay, Anne since it was your idea you'll write the first part of this scene and then we'll all contribute from there.

Bonnan starts SINGING. Mia STRUMS her guitar. The other cadets soon join in SINGING.

BONNAN

*"I want to live, I want to give.  
I've been a miner for a heart of  
gold. It's these expressions I never  
give, that keeps me searching for a  
heart of gold and I'm getting old.  
Keeps me searching for a heart of  
gold and I'm ..."*

Job raises his hand to end the singing which dies down.

JOB

Bonnan's music is pretty good. All of you who say we should include it in the play raise your hand.

Everyone except Fox and Starr raise their hands.

JOB

Great, now let's try it one more time from the top.

The cadets move to their places and begin PLAYING the opening song.

INT OUTSIDE MIA'S DORM ROOM - EVENING

Bonnan raps on Mia's dorm window. Mia opens it.

BONNAN  
C'mon let's go.

MIA  
I can't. Fox has me on restriction.

BONNAN  
Just sneak out the window. She's on a date with Starr. She'll never know.

MIA  
I'm in pretty deep already with Fox and Colonel Lloyd. I'd better not.

BONNAN  
I've got wheels. We'll only be out for a couple of hours. And Alvarez is with me.

MIA  
Where are we going?

BONNAN  
The Ugly Mug Pub. The band we met on our march is playing there and I told them about the song we've been practicing.

MIA  
They're a country band not a rock band.

BONNAN  
I told them you were a good singer and he said, "bring that lass over here and let's see what she's got."

MIA  
You're kidding. Wow!

Mia bites her lip.

BONNAN  
We need to know how our music plays with a tough audience.

MIA  
Did you bring your flute?

ALVAREZ  
And I brought my claves.

Mia smiles.

MIA  
Couldn't find a tougher crowd than  
the Ugly Mug Pub bikers.

BONNAN  
Good, let's go.

INT MIA'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Francis is in her bunk reading a book.

MIA  
I'm heading out with Bonnan for a  
couple of hours. Cover for me.

FRANCIS  
Sure, princess. I got your back.

Mia looks at Francis scrunching her eyes.

MIA  
You reading a book. Are you okay?

FRANCIS  
Who me? I'm fine.

MIA  
You look like the cat who just  
swallowed the canary.

FRANCIS  
If you want me to help you you've  
got to stop nagging, princess.

Mia grabs a sweater and crawls out the window.

INT UGLY MUG PUB - NIGHT

The Fugitives are ROCKING. The pub is full of rowdy, raucous bikers and their ladies. Bonnan, Alvarez and Mia are sitting at a table near the stage.

MIA  
Looks like a rough crowd.

ALVAREZ  
No weekend bikers here.

MIA

Let's face it, these are just guys  
who never got over sticking their  
heads out of car windows.

BONNAN

Ace Traggart, the band leader told  
the manager we were coming so we're  
in good hands.

The Fugitives finish their song and Ace notices the trio.

ACE

Hey, guys. You showed up after all.

BONNAN

With your reputation how could we  
not.

ACE

Okay, folks, we're going to take a  
small break to refuel and unload if  
you know what I mean.

Ace comes down off the stage and approaches the trio.

ACE

So do you want to sit in for that  
number you been practicing?

Bonnan nods.

BONNAN

If you let Mia borrow a guitar and  
start the rhythm I think your guys  
will catch on pretty quick. It's the  
standard C, E minor, F, G sequence.

ACE

Give me the name of the song and  
I'll do the intro.

MIA

"A Little Bit of Love". Thanks.

ALVAREZ

I'll do the claves and Bonnan will  
be do the flute.

Ace grabs a beer off a waitress's tray as she walks by.

ACE

Don't know how this crowd's going to  
take to this. I mean this ain't no  
Christian social.

MIA

It all comes down to if it's good or no damned good and that's what were here to find out.

ACE

All right, follow me on up and let's give it a go.

Ace ambles up on the stage and grabs the mike as the trio sets up with Mia taking Ace's guitar, Bonnon pulling out his flute and Alvarez his claves.

ACE

Hey, all you "one kickers" out there we've got a special treat for you from the cadets up at the Academy if you can take a moment from groping your old lady. A "high & tight" number called "A Little Bit of Love". Hey, and let's be nice and show them a little love.

Ace looks back at the trio.

ACE

You guys ready. The band will follow your lead.

Mia nods.

MIA

One, two, three.

Mia kicks the guitar into gear and the music ECHOES loudly through the room.

MIA

(singing)

*Yeah! Woo...ooh...ooh...ooh... A little bit of love, a little bit of you. The reason you're still here is because I'm strong and got lots of love to give. The kind that'll jar your teeth and make you wish you never met a woman like me. Yeah! Woo...ooh...ooh...oho.. Oh, yeah, there's a little bit of me and lot a bit of love to take you here, there and everywhere.*

By now the band has picked up on the rhythm and the music is ROCKING the room. Bonnan plays a flute intermezzo as Alvarez keeps the beat with his claves. Mia continues SINGING.

MIA  
(singing)  
*A little bit of love and yeah a  
little bit of scared makes a ramble  
jamble mess out of you. But life  
ain't worth living if you don't just  
take what comes your way and and  
keep on giving till the sweet spot  
of love falls your way. Yeah!  
Woo...ooh...ooh...ooh...*

Mia ends the song with a guitar riff slowly fading away. The crowd CLAPS enthusiastically. The trio bows in thanks and walks off the stage where Ace is waiting.

ACE  
You got into it, front row stuff.

MIA  
Thank you Ace and the Fugitives for letting us play our song.

ACE  
By the way, one of your cadets came in here yesterday looking to buy drugs.

MIA  
Nobody could be that stupid.

ACE  
She was corralling Shorty over there and looked like some serious negotiating going on.

BONNAN  
What did he look like?

ACE  
Not he, she. A tall blond with good looking wheels. Not bad chops either.

ALVAREZ  
A girl. Hmmm!

BONNAN  
Sounds like our favorite blond who we all love to hate.

MIA  
What kind of drugs does Shorty traffic in?



ACE  
Heavy stuff. Dangerous heavy stuff.

MIA  
Oh, my God. It's got to be Fox and I think I know where's she's going with it.

ALVAREZ  
Francis?

Mia starts punching numbers in her cell phone.

MIA  
I knew something was not right with Francis. She was too eager to see us go.

Mia fingers some new numbers.

MIA  
She's not answering. That's not good.

A VOICE can be heard on Mia's phone.

MIA  
(to the phone)  
Go to Francis room and see if she's alright...No, don't call me back, stay on the line with me.

BONNAN  
We're probably overreacting.

MIA  
(to the phone)  
She's sleeping? NO, NO,NO, WAKE HER UP.

Fear is etched in Mia's face. She starts rubbing her face.

MIA  
((to the phone))  
Call Colonel Lloyd and the First Sergeant. Tell him I'll be calling 911 for an ambulance. We'll be there in ten minutes.

Mia looks at Bonnan and Alvarez.

MIA  
I knew it. I knew it. I shouldn't have left her alone.

ALVAREZ  
What happened?

MIA  
She OD'd and is unconscious.

BONNAN  
Damn! Let's double time it.

The three cadets rush out of the bar. Mia pulls out her cell phone and dials 911 as they get in Bonnan's car.

MIA  
(on the phone)  
We have a drug overdose at the girls barrack at Oak Ridge Academy. Address? 1300 Oak Ridge Road. It's a red brick building across from the administration building with the flag poles. Please hurry.

BONNAN  
DAMN, DAMN, DAMN!

INT DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Mia rushes into her dorm room where Irena is mopping Francis face with a wet towel.

IRENA  
Thank God you're here.

MIA  
I called 911. They should be here any minute.

IRENA  
Where did she get the drugs?  
Everyone knows she can't handle them.

MIA  
Someone who wants to hurt her.

A siren BLARES its arrival. In a few seconds two paramedics are at the door and immediately one of them kneels down feeling for a pulse.

PARAMEDIC 1  
She's got a pulse and is still breathing.

PARAMEDIC 2  
Does anyone know what drug she might

have taken?

Irena shakes her head.

IRENA

I came in looking for Mia and found her on the floor unconscious.

PARAMEDIC 2

We need someone with authority to sign off for us to take her to the hospital.

MIA

I called Colonel Lloyd and he's on his way.

At that exact moment Colonel Lloyd enters the room.

COLONEL LLOYD

(to Mia)

What's going on here?

MIA

Francis has overdosed, sir.

COLONEL LLOYD

WHAT? Crazy, crazy girl...

PARAMEDIC 1

We need to rush her to the hospital, but you need to sign this release before we can do anything.

The paramedic shoves a form in front of Colonel Lloyd who promptly signs it. In seconds the paramedics have Francis on a stretcher and are carrying her out to their flashing EMS van. Everyone follows them outside and watch as they put Francis in the van.

COLONEL LLOYD

What hospital?

PARAMEDIC 1

Clancy Hospital in Newburgh.

COLONEL LLOYD

I'll follow you there.

MIA

Can I go with your, sir?

COLONEL LLOYD

No, get a hold of first sergeant

Louise and Amber and advise them of the situation. They'll know what to do.

MIA

Sir, I have Francis's father's cell phone number. Shall I call him?

COLONEL LLOYD

No. Give me the number and I'll call him on my way to the hospital.

Mia pulls out her cell phone and quickly runs through her saved phone numbers.

MIA

Here it is, sir, I just text'd it to you.

The paramedic van barrels out of the parking lot and down the road sirens SCREAMING, red light flashing.

COLONEL LLOYD

Now the rest of you get back to your rooms.

MIA

Sir, can you call us back and let us know how she's doing?

Colonel Lloyd nods and runs back toward his car, jumps in and peels rubber chasing the paramedic van. Irena, Mia, Bonnan and Alvarez watch them race away silently deep in their own thoughts.

MIA

Something smells here, as in a stinking rat, no make that a stinking fox.

BONNAN

You think Fox set her up?

MIA

Yeah, who else wanted her gone.

ALVAREZ

All roads lead to Rome.

Mia purses her lips.

IRENA

We'd better get into our rooms, before the rest of the girls get

wind of this.

Mia nods.

MIA

Let's all say a silent prayer for Francis. She's going to need them.

IRENA

No, let's pray loud to make sure he can hear us.

Mia, Irena, Alvarez and Bonnan wrap their arms around each other with their heads down.

IRENA

Think, o God, of our friend who is on her sickbed and ease her suffering, renew her strength and heal her with your loving care. Thank you, Lord.

GROUP

Amen.

Everyone makes the sign of the cross and slowly make their way back to their dorms.

EXT FLAG COMPOUND - MORNING

Bravo Company is assembled in front of the Administration building in their fatigues. Colonel Lloyd approaches.

FOX

BRAVO COMPANY, TEN HUT.

Bravo company comes to attention.

COLONEL LLOYD

AT EASE.

Bravo company relaxes.

COLONEL LLOYD

I got a call from Mr. Meadows a few minutes ago and he's reported that Cadet Meadows has finally regained consciousness and the main danger is over.

Mia hugs Anne CRYING and the other cadets also embrace each other equally emotionally.

COLONEL LLOYD

We came close, very close to losing her. Be thankful to God for answering our prayers. Cadet Meadows very nearly lost her life for her mistake.

Colonel Lloyd begins walking slowing across the front row of cadets.

COLONEL LLOYD

If you walk through a river you'll come out wet. If you walk through a fire you'll get burnt. It's a lesson I want all of you to learn.

Mia raises her hand.

COLONEL LLOYD

Yes, Cadet Lash?

MIA

When can we visit her, sir?

COLONEL LLOYD

Her father has requested privacy until she's released from the hospital and he can take her home. So the answer is, when he finally decides she's physically and emotionally ready for visits.

MIA

Will she eventually be coming back to Oak Ridge, sir?

COLONEL LLOYD

That's a negative. She's beyond our help now. We failed, belay that; I failed.

Colonel Lloyd continues pacing in front of Bravo Company.

COLONEL LLOYD

My responsibility was to give her the strength to overcome her temptations; a responsibility I failed to keep.

Colonel Lloyd stops in front of Hillary.

COLONEL LLOYD

I don't want to fail anyone else. I'm not going to fail you am I, Cadet Richfield?

HILLARY

NO, SIR.

Colonel Lloyd keep walking and stops in front of Brooks Ann.

COLONEL LLOYD

Have I instilled the necessary values in you to meet life's challenges?

BROOKS ANN

YES SIR.

Colonel Lloyd keeps walking and stops in front of Anne.

COLONEL LLOYD

And what have you learned from me today, Cadet Ward?

ANNE

To stay dry at all times, sir, especially when crossing rivers.

COLONEL LLOYD

That's all for now. Captain Fox, dismiss the company.

FOX

YES, SIR. BRAVO COMPANY FALL OUT.

The cadets slowly disperse talking to each other in groups.

INT THEATER - NIGHT

Job comes out from behind the stage curtain and address the assembled crowd.

JOB

Thank you for coming. It means a lot to the kids to know that you cared enough to show up, especially when so many of you are family and have come a long way.

INT BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Bonnan pulls Mia aside from all the actors.

BONNAN

It was Fox who gave Francis the drugs.

MIA

Figures. Payback for all the times

she stood up to her. How'd you find out?

BONNAN

Starr. It was too much even for him. She was actually bragging about it. He dumped her on the spot.

MIA

Maybe that's why she dropped out of the play.

INT THEATER - NIGHT

Job addresses the crowd of family members and faculty.

JOB

This play was conceived by the students, the storyline, characters, music, it all came from their collective imagination. Now sit back and enjoy.

The stage curtain is pulled back and Mia is sitting near Hillary's at her rocking chair PLAYING the flute. Hillary is made up to look older. Suddenly the door explodes open and several palace guards enter with their spears.

PALACE GUARD CAPTAIN

We have been instructed to take Maiden Solana immediately to the castle.

HILLARY

By whose authority is this violation perpetrated.

PALACE GUARD CAPTAIN

From our beautiful Queen Rembria herself came the command.

MIA/SOLANA

Mother, mother what am I to do?

HILLARY

You must follow the Royal command and do as they say or the queen of darkness will put a curse on you that will linger forever.

MIA/SOLANA

But mother I did nothing to deserve this.



Hillary pulls Mia aside.

HILLARY  
(whispering)  
Keep your flute close, hidden from  
all. Remember Morzak the Wizard's  
secret when he gave you the flute  
many years ago.

MIA/SOLANA  
I remember, mother. He said that  
playing the magic tune on this flute  
would bring me many powers.

HILLARY  
(whispering)  
But, only if you can convince Herbog  
the wise old man on Mount Verhana to  
reveal the secret of his magic  
melody.

The Palace guards drag Solana to the stage exit.

MIA/SOLANA  
I'm scared mother. What am I to do?

HILLARY  
Hold it tight to your breast and  
never let it go.

Solana and Palace Guards exit. A choir of Brooks Ann,  
Alvarez, Aly, Bonnan and Anne quietly go to the back of the  
stage SINGING.

CHOIR  
HOLD IT TIGHT AND NEVER LET GO. HOLD  
IT TIGHT AND NEVER LET GO, FOR IT  
HAS THE SECRET TO SET YOU FREE...SET  
YOU FREE AND NEVER LET GO.

INT BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Job grabs Mia's arm and steers her away from everyone.

JOB  
Colonel Lloyd asked me to relay a  
message to you from Francis.

MIA  
What is it?

Job hands Mia a slip of paper. Mia begins READING it.

MIA

Whenever you're sad or all alone  
just call my name and I'll be there.  
Whenever you're tired and beaten,  
call my name and I'll lift you up.  
Whenever you feel life's too heavy  
call my name and I'll lighten your  
load. Your friend forever, Francis.

Mia wipes a tear from her eye.

MIA

Oh, Job, she's going to be alright.

Mia walks to the back door and looks out at the night sky.

MIA

Everything feels right tonight. I  
never want to forget the feeling.

JOB

You'd better get ready. You're on  
next.

Job hands Mia a tissue and she BLOWS her nose.

INT THEATER - NIGHT

The whole cast joins the choir on stage SINGING the last  
song together. They finally take one group bow together to  
the crowds APPLAUSE. JOB takes center stage.

JOB

That concludes our program. The cast  
will be out in a few minutes after  
they get out of their costumes for  
all who want to meet them.

The crowd exits toward the lobby. The actors disperse to the  
dressing rooms to change.

INT THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT -- MORNING

The cadet actors spill out into the lobby and search out  
their friends and family members. Job approaches Mia.

JOB

You were all great. I'm proud of  
everyone, but especially you.

MIA

Thanks. The play was wonderful. I  
can see why you love it so much.

JOB

It gave us a way to bury the hate  
and resentment between us. That  
beats any applause any play could  
have given me.

MIA

I know.

Job looks around.

JOB

Where's Bonnan?

MIA

He's still getting changed. He's  
stalling cause he doesn't want  
anyone to know no one's come to see  
him

JOB

He's wrong. His dad's here. That's  
him over there walking around  
looking for him. I called him  
earlier this week and told him how  
much it would mean to Bonnan.

Mia gives a little YELP and rushes to the back stage. Job  
approaches Mr. Bonnan.

JOB

Mr. Bonnan, your son Christian  
should be coming out any second now.

MR. BONNAN

Thank you.

Bonnan and Mia come down off of the stage.

BONNAN

Dad? I can't believe it.

MR. BONNAN

How are you, son?

BONNAN

Fine, fine, just a little confused.  
What are you doing here?

MR. BONNAN

I'm your father, remember?

BONNAN

It's just that...

Bonnan voice trails off.

MR. BONNAN

I know. I know. I've decided it was finally time I became a full time father again.

BONNAN

Full time? You mean it, Dad, really?

MR. BONNAN

Yes. I was punishing you, but at the same time I was hurting myself too.

BONNAN

I'm so happy to see you again. It's been a long time.

Mr. Bonnan extends his arms to Bonnan who runs into them for a long and hard hug with tears coming down both their cheeks. Mia and Job drift away.

MR. BONNAN

What happened, happened and I've got to accept it and get us back to being father and son again. The hurt was so deep I couldn't think straight. You made a mistake, but I made one too. Life is short and for the living. You once asked me once if I could forgive you and for a time I never could. Now it's my turn to ask you if you'll forgive me for all the pain I've brought you.

BONNAN

Yes, Dad, yes. Always and forever.

Both men dry their eyes, still SOBBING.

MR. BONNAN

I want you to come home next break and we're going to Ocean Park Beach like we always used to when your mom and Skip were alive.

BONNAN

We still have each other.

MR. BONNAN

Yes we do son, and that's not going to change ever again.

They hug again. Mia is watching from afar and drying her

eyes too. She turns and looks at Job.

MIA

I was wrong about you. I never gave you a chance. You're not bad. You're good. And I want to be your daughter again if you'll let me.

JOB

Yes...yes!!

MIA

And from now on, I'm calling you Daddy just like all the other daughters in the world call their fathers.

JOB

As the new official Daddy can I now hug you? MIA

Please, long and hard.

Job embraces Mia who struggles to hold back her tears.

MIA

Francis going home, the play, us being family again. My cup truly runneth over.

JOB

Hey, this theater is starting to rub off on you after all.

MIA

But don't ask me who said it.

JOB

Actually it was in one of Shakespeare's plays and it was "Your couplet runneth over".

MIA

Couplet runneth over, really? Sounds more like a pole dancers malfunction at the Cheetah Club.

They both LAUGH.

INT DORM LOBBY - NIGHT

Fox walks in and spots Mia sitting at a table, walks over and kicks the chair. Irena, Aly, Anne, Brooks Ann and Hillary all jump up startled.

FOX  
(to Mia)  
GET UP!

As Mia tries to get up, Fox hits her in the face. When Mia falls, Fox kicks her again.

FOX  
You've been screwing with me for too long. So now you're going to have to learn the hard way it doesn't pay to fuck with me.

Mia gets up and wrestles Fox to the ground. They flail at each other CURSING. Fox pins Mia's hands back with her legs when she gets on top of her. Fox reaches into her side satchel and pulls out a knife.

FOX  
I've been waiting a long time for this.

As she raises the knife Aly jumps up and grabs her arm.

ALY  
Not this time, my little pretty.

FOX  
WHAT THE HELL! I'll cut you too if I have to.

Fox jumps up with the knife. Aly swings her school bag into Fox and the knife goes flying.

ALY  
Now show me what you got big bad girl.

FOX  
You bitch. I'll kill you.

Aly walks up face to face to Fox.

ALY  
It's over. You're finished. Done.  
KAPUT!

Fox swings at Aly and misses. Fox grabs a lamp and throws it at Aly and misses again. Aly charges Fox and wrestles her to the ground. They claw and punch at each other on the ground. Finally, Aly ends up on top and pulls Fox's blouse over her face pinning her two arms with her legs. Fox CURSES incoherently.

ALY  
How does it feel, Fox? You're not  
looking so tough now.

FOX  
I'LL KILL YOU, YOU SLUT.

ALY  
No, baby. We're going to fix it so  
you can never hurt anyone again.

Aly looks up to Brooks Ann and YELLS.

ALY  
Get my my big scissors.

Brooks Ann pulls a big pair of scissors from a drawer.

BROOKS ANN  
What are you gonna do?

ALY  
When I'm done with her face even her  
Mama won't want her back.

Fox struggles furiously, but Aly keeps her pinned down.

FOX  
LET ME GO. LET ME GO.

Aly brings the scissors to Fox's face. Mia SCREAMS.

MIA  
NOOO!

Everyone looks at Mia startled.

MIA  
No. Please, Aly, no. Let her up.

ALY  
What do you mean? She's hurt you the  
most.

MIA  
Good. Then let me deal with her.

ALY  
What? Are you nuts?

MIA  
Let her up. Please.

ALY

I don't get it.

MIA

Don't you see? This isn't the way.  
This is her way. If we do it her way  
then we become like her?

HILLARY

This is the only thing she  
understands.

MIA

No. She can take anything we can  
dish out. Her whole life has been  
one beating after another. Mental or  
otherwise. That's why she's the way  
she is.

ALY

So what are you going to do?

MIA

Let her up, Aly, for me.

Aly looks at Mia with a frown, but relaxes her grip and get  
up. Fox looks puzzled, pushes her hair back and slowly gets  
up.

FOX

I'm not forgetting nothing as you'll  
soon learn the hard way.

MIA

It's no good, Fox. No one's afraid  
of you any more.

FOX

Just don't ever turn your back on  
me.

ALY

Mia, I told there's only one way to  
deal with her.

MIA

Every instinct in my body screams to  
get revenge and hurt you in every I  
can.

ALY

Good, then do it or try anyway.

MIA

No. Can't you see. Like in Dad's



play. You're only alone and afraid  
like the evil queen was.

Aly screws up one eyebrow in a question mark. Mia turns to  
her friends.

MIA

I know it sounds crazy, but if we  
keeping beating on her like  
everyone's been doing to her all her  
life she'll always be mean and ugly  
and never change. I don't know how I  
know this but I do.

FOX

You're crazy as a loon bird. First  
chance I get I'll beat the crap out  
of you. You can put it in the bank.

MIA

I went back to your home town and  
learned all about you. I wanted to  
know how you could be so mean and  
twisted. You grew up with pain and  
abuse your whole life and even your  
father did things to you that are  
too despicable to repeat.

FOX

Mind your own fucking business.

MIA

You've had your quota of misery. No  
one's going to hurt you anymore.

Fox looks confused.

MIA

(softly)

I won't let them.

FOX

You stay away from me.

MIA

It's going to take a while, but one  
day you're going to discover that  
there are more good people than bad  
in this world, if you just give them  
a chance to show it.

FOX

I don't like you, never did and  
never will. And first chance I get

I'm going to fuck you over in ways  
you could never imagine.

MIA

This is my hand. I can make a fist  
and hit you or or can open it up and  
offer it in friendship.

Mia extends her open hand to Fox as a fist and then opens  
it. Fox looks at it suspiciously. Mia takes a step closer to  
Fox. Fox grabs the scissors.

FOX

Stay away. I'll cut you. I'm warning  
you.

MIA

Go ahead. One day you'll come to  
know that no matter how much you  
hurt other people if will never take  
away the hurt and anger you lived  
with your whole life.

Mia takes one step closer her hand still extended.

FOX

I TOLD YOU, GET BACK OR I'LL CUT  
YOUR MOTHER FUCKING FACE.

MIA

Let me make it easy for you.

Mia steps right in front of Fox. Fox drops the scissors, her  
shoulders slump, she puts her hands to her face and begins  
SOBBING quietly.

FOX

Why can't you just leave me alone? I  
just want people to leave me alone.

MIA

No, never again. You're part of us  
now and one day you'll learn you can  
trust us and even come to be our  
friend.

Fox falls in a heap, hands over her face, BAWLING.

MIA

Okay you guys, I want you all to put  
your hands with mine to show you  
will try to open up your hearts to  
Fox.

Mia extends her hand towards her friends.

ALY

You're asking a lot for a a low life  
bitch who should be getting a little  
of what she's been dishing out.

MIA

All I'm asking is for one of you to  
stand by me on this.

Anne slowly shuffles next to Mia who smiles.

MIA

I always knew you would be the  
first.

Hillary shuffles over and stands next to Mia and then Brooks  
Ann, Irena and Megan walk over too.

MIA

No matter what and for as long as we  
live we'll always be comrades in  
arms. All for one, one for all.

Mia looks over at Aly.

MIA

It means more if we're all in this  
together.

Aly pauses and then slowly comes over and puts her hand with  
the other girls.

MIA

Hate and anger will no longer dwell  
in this dorm. We have cast it out  
and we will never allow it in here  
again.

Fox never looks up continuing to shake her head WHIMPERING.

MIA

Hate is learned, but so is love. And  
one day Fox will come to learn that  
truth.

All eyes turn to Fox who finally raises her head barely  
perceptively nods her head wiping a tear with the back of  
her hand.

MIA

The first step is half the journey  
as the poet once said. C'mon we'd

better get back or the First  
Sergeant will be on us.

The cadets disperse quietly except for Fox who just stands  
alone with her head down.

INT AMBER'S OFFICE - DAY

Mia walks in and sees her mother sitting there looking at  
her tenderly.

RENE'  
(softly)  
My baby.

Rene' gets up and hugs Mia trying to control her emotions.

MIA  
Mom, what are you doing here?

RENE'  
I got off early for good behavior  
and pulling stings didn't hurt  
either.

MIA  
That's great mom. It's good to see  
you. I've never seen you look so  
good.

RENE'  
Put me through the ringer they did;  
worse then going through rehab.

MIA  
Gee, does this mean I get some time  
off this weekend with you.

REN'  
Honey, you don't get it. They're  
releasing you to me. The judge  
approved it. You're going home.

MIA  
Going home, but I've still not  
finished here yet.

RENE'  
I'll get you back in Wesleyan Prep  
School again where you belong. I can  
hardly wait to take you shopping for  
some new clothes.

MIA TO AMBER

Is that true, I can just walk out of here now?

AMBER  
Only if you want to.

Rene' LAUGHS.

RENE'  
Only if she wants to? No offense, Amber, but why would anyone ever want to stay in in this institution when they can be free.

AMBER  
Teaching young people discipline to face the challenges of life is a gift they'll treasure more when they get old enough to appreciate it.

MIA  
Somehow it's all too unreal.

RENE'  
What's the matter with you, honey? You're long ordeal is over. Happy days are here again.

MIA  
I don't know. Somehow it feels funny, not "ha ha" funny, I don't know how to explain it.

RENE'  
Ah, honey, for the next two days I'm taking you to the Spa, the best restaurants that Manhattan has to offer, the theater. We've got a lot of catching up to do.

MIA  
That sounds nice.

Rene hands Mia a bag.

RENE'  
I brought some of your clothes. Go ahead and change in the bathroom and we can go ahead and get out of here. The limo's waiting outside.

Mia just looks at the bag.

MIA

Mom, I can't just leave without saying goodbye to my friends, the teachers and Dad, I mean Job.

Rene studies Mia closely.

RENE'  
(sternly)  
What's going on here?

AMBER  
I'm sure your friends would appreciate you taking the time.

RENE'  
Don't be sending any cards asking for alumni contributions. This is a chapter of her life that's going to take lots of therapy for recovery.

MIA  
I'll be back in five minutes.

Mia exits.

INT GIRLS DORM - DAY

Mia enters the dorm lounge where Aly, Irena, Brooks Ann, Anne and her other friends are sitting. They watch her walk in looking solemn without speaking.

MIA  
Looks like you've already heard the news.

A couple of the girls turn their head away from Mia.

MIA  
I didn't know anything about it. My mom just showed up and checked me out. I'm still kind of in shock.

ANNE  
So we won't see you again?

Mia walks up to Anne.

ANNE  
Of course, you will. You're still my friends. I promise.

ALY  
No you won't. You'll be living the good life and never look back.

That's just the way it is.

MIA  
You're wrong. I'm not like that...  
anymore.

IRENA  
I thought we made a blood bond,  
remember? One for all, all for one?

MIA  
Nothings changed. I still feel the  
same way. This was my Mom's idea.

BROOKS ANN  
Sure, we understand. Good luck.  
Let's go. It's time for drill  
practice.

The girls march out without looking at Mia except for Anne  
who lingers at the door.

ALY  
(from the hallway)  
C'mon Anne, get your butt in gear.  
She's not longer part of us.

Anne exits. Mia bites her lip, look at the floor and then  
slowly shuffles off too.

INT THEATER - DAY

Mia enters the theater where Job, Bonnan and a few of the  
other cadets are building stage props. Job spots Mia and  
looks up and down at her street clothes.

JOB  
Looks like you're going to a party.

Mia rubs her face and looks away from Job.

MIA  
I'm leaving Oak Ridge, Daddy. Mom's  
here to take me home.

JOB  
What? She's out early?

Job GRUNTS and shakes his head.

JOB  
But, of course. You had to know  
she'd find a way.

MIA  
You can't blame her for that.

JOB  
I've seen you blossom here into a new person I never dreamed you could become. As your father I can tell you how proud I am of how you handled the adversity you faced here.

MIA  
You left the part out about how I found my Dad.

Job nods his head smiling. Mia hugs Job and they look at each tenderly. Bonnan strolls over.

BONNAN  
Who's the classy lady? The face looks familiar, but I just can't place her.

MIA  
I'm leaving, Bonnan, but not forever.

BONNAN  
I heard, and just when I was getting to know you.

MIA  
Don't fuss at me, please.

BONNAN  
"Parting is such sweet sorrow". Isn't that the line you Dad taught us. Well, it's not true.

MIA  
We're not parting. I'm just going away for awhile.

BONNAN  
You know, I don't believe you. Maybe you believe it, but I don't. But, don't worry about it. Leave with your head high. You don't owe anybody anything, me included.

MIA  
It's not like that. I'm not just going to go away and forget everyone. You're all my friends.



It's like we were in battle together  
and we became family.

BONNAN

You're feeling that way now, but the  
next good party with a little blow  
around and all those emotions will  
drift away, no pun intended.

MIA

I'll have to wait and see how I  
measure up.

BONNAN

Next time you're hiking with 25 lbs.  
in your back pack, call out my name  
and I'll be there.

MIA

You're the best. Get close to me and  
squeeze me as hard as you can.

Bonnan hugs Mia tightly. Mia gives Bonnan a loving last look  
and exits.

INT CAMPUS SIDEWALK- DAY

Mia approaches Colonel Lloyd who is watching cadet Alvarez  
doing push-ups.

COLONEL LLOYD

What, you call those push up? Do  
them right, all the way down, your  
nose to the ground or we'll be here  
all day.

ALVAREZ

Eighteen, sir. Nineteen, sir.  
Twenty, sir.

COLONEL LLOYD

Hold it there until I give you  
permission to get up.

Cadet Alvarez holds his up position.

COLONEL LLOYD

On your feet. If I ever catch you  
strutting around campus without your  
cover you'll be down doing thirty.

Cadet Alvarez jumps to his feet.

ALVAREZ

Thank you, sir.

Alvarez salutes Colonel Lloyd and walks away. Colonel Lloyd notices Mia all dressed up with street clothes.

COLONEL LLOYD

And where do you think you're going?

MIA

I'm leaving, Sir. I'm already checked out.

COLONEL LLOYD

Who said you can leave? Nobody told me anything about this.

MIA

My mother's enrolling me in another school that she thinks is better suited for me.

COLONEL LLOYD

She's wrong and I'd love to tell it to her face.

MIA

Believe it or not sir, I'm pretty confused about this myself.

COLONEL LLOYD

I'm sorry to see you go. I've seen you grow here. You're a natural leader.

MIA

I never felt comfortable ordering people around, sir.

COLONEL LLOYD

Leadership isn't about ordering people around. It's about knowing who you are and being confident in that person. People sense it and respond to it.

MIA

I'm sorry I let you down, sir.

COLONEL LLOYD

Right now you're a work in progress. If you walk away from here now there's always the chance you'll fall back into your old bad habits. You know, the ones that got you here

in the first place.

MIA  
I guess we'll have to see what happens, sir. I just know my mother needs me now.

COLONEL LLOYD  
Just remember, if you ever do come back you will be starting from scratch again. Do you understand me?

MIA  
Yes, sir.

Mia salutes Colonel Lloyd.

COLONEL LLOYD  
You don't need to sir me or salute me. You're not a cadet anymore.

Colonel Lloyd turns and walks away. Mia walks slowly to the waiting black limousine.

INT LIMOUSINE DAY

Mia and Rene' are in the back seat of the limousine as it drives off the campus.

RENE'  
What is it honey, you're acting strange?

MIA  
Everything just happened so fast.

RENE'  
Don't tell me that sanctimonious jerk got to you? His pious drivel can brainwash anyone.

MIA  
If you're talking about Dad, you're wrong. He's not anything like that.

RENE'  
Dad, is it now? Well, well, looks like he has gotten to you. I'm surprised you got sucked in by his phony act.

MIA  
It's probably best if we didn't talk about him anymore or we'll end up

fighting.

Rene' studies Mia closely.

RENE'

It doesn't really matter honey,  
cause you're with me now. And I'm  
going to make sure we make up for  
our lost time together and for all  
that you've gone through.

MIA

I just want to go home and be alone  
for awhile so I can sort things out.  
I'm feeling a little mixed up right  
now.

RENE'

I've told all your friends you're  
coming home. In fact I'm throwing a  
little party for you tomorrow. And  
you'll be happy to know that you're  
old boy friend Zack will be there.

MIA

Zach, the serial mirror abuser?

RENE'

Oh, honey, he's still the same  
darling he always was. And last I  
heard he dumped that blond he was  
cavorting with. I mean she was kind  
of a bimbo, let's face it.

MIA

You mean, naive and suggestible.  
Probably the best thing that ever  
happened to Lori.

RENE'

Honey, you've got to get rid of  
whatever it is that's got you beaten  
down. Laugh, sing, whistle, jump up  
and down for joy. Let the bells  
ring. Good times are here again.

MIA

Then why am I feeling like one  
stomped on chewed up old rag doll in  
a Barbie limo?

RENE'

First thing we're going to do when  
we get home is break that bottle of

1952 Chateau Elan Cabernet I've been saving for a special occasion. And I'll have Abby cook up your your favorite linguine with clam sauce.

MIA

Thanks Mom. But for some reason I'm craving green chile stew.

RENE'

I promise you, honey, what ever's ailing you will pass and I'll do everything I can to speed it up.

MIA

Thanks Mom, but I'm no so sure

INT - TREMONT ESTATE GREAT ROOM NIGHT

A party is in full swing and Mia is alone by the bar. Rene' comes over.

RENE'

Honey, c'mon lets' get with it. You're being impolite to your friends.

MIA

Mom, it's now clear I never knew these people. It's like their from another planet, or maybe it's me who's from outer space.

RENE'

You grew up with them, honey.

MIA

But it's like they're living in this make believe phony world and don't even know it. It's so annoying I want to scream.

Loretta ambles over with a young man, BEN FRALEY on her arm. Rene' leaves.

LORETTA

Oh, Mia, it's so good to see you back home again. How did you ever survive that horrible place? You've lost a few pounds and your face is a little pinched, but you look great.

MIA

Translation, you're a sack of bones

and you look like like your ready  
for the undertaker.

LORETTA

You're funny. I'm glad to see that  
your personality hasn't changed.  
Always the cut up.

MIA

Yeah, cut up as as in bleeding. For  
once you're right.

LORETTA

Oh, this is my boyfriend, Ben, from  
Phillips Exeter Academy.

BEN

Hi, nice meeting you. The party's  
great.

MIA

You know the old standard that a  
girl won't you let you kiss her on  
the first date?

Ben nods.

MIA

Well, Lori's on an accelerated  
program. And we're not just talking  
kisses anymore are we, Lori?

LORETTA

Why are you so hateful tonight?

BEN

That's kind of mean, don't you  
think?

Mia rubs her face and closes her eyes.

MIA

It is. Thanks for setting me  
straight academy guy. I'm sorry,  
Lori. Put it down to "misery loves  
company".

Loretta smiles weakly. Mia looks at Ben.

MIA

I can tell you're a nice guy. I hope  
your the one guy who won't take  
advantage of her.

BEN  
So you are friends?

Mia looks at Loretta, nods and smiles.

MIA  
I know her well enough to know that  
when someone finally treats her with  
just a sliver of respect and  
sincerity she'll blossom into the  
prettiest flower in the garden.

Loretta blinks back some tears and hugs Mia.

LORETTA  
Welcome home, Mia, really.

MIA  
For some reason I'm having trouble  
getting back in the groove.

LORETTA  
C'mon, Ben let me show you off some  
more.

BEN  
And I can promise you I won't be  
taking advantage of this fair lass.

LORETTA  
(smiling)  
Damn, Mia, you've ruined everything.

Loretta and Ben exit. Zach makes a grand entrance with a pretty girl on his arm. Several youths crowd around greeting him. After high fiving several of his friends he grabs a drink from a passing waiter and notices Mia standing by the bar alone. The smile turns to an intense stare silently MOUTHING the words "Mia" and glides toward her.

ZACH  
God, I've been waiting a long time  
for this moment. A little thinner,  
but still hot.

MIA  
Oh, haven't you heard, lean and mean  
is the new vogue.

Zach leans over and gives Mia a kiss on the cheek.

ZACH  
Whatever it is, it wears well on  
you.

MIA

Thanks. And I can see you haven't changed much either with your slippery sincerity and bottom dwelling values.

ZACH

I get it, like something slithering through the slime. You're not still mad at me for something that happened long time ago, are you?

MIA

You mean what didn't happen. You know, dumping me after a frantic week of trying to get into my pants.

ZACH

And that's why I respect you so much to this day.

MIA

If I could believe you knew the meaning of the word I would be looking at you through a kinder pair of glasses.

ZACH

So you are still pissed?

MIA

If I gave it any thought I'm sure I could come up with an emotion that more closely fits what I feel towards you. Contempt comes close, but still doesn't quite do you justice.

ZACH

Ah, you're starting to hurt my feelings. You know how sensitive I am.

MIA

At some point we have to grow up and learn what makes us tick and until then we're just treading water.

ZACH

I haven't got the slightest idea what you're talking about, but it sounds like a bunch of pretentious bullshit to me.



MIA

Maybe I'm talking more to myself  
then you.

ZACH

Now, that's more like it. You know  
I've always had a soft spot for you.

MIA

No, Zach you've always had a stiff  
hard spot for me. There's a quiet  
desperation about you always wanting  
to hook up, only it isn't really  
that quiet.

ZACH

There you go with the mumbo jumbo  
again. And what's wrong with a  
little loving? Isn't that what makes  
the world go around?

MIA

Sure, but then what are you going to  
do with the rest of your 23 hours,  
59 minutes in your day?

ZACH

Let me try one more time. A bunch of  
us are going skinny dipping after  
the party at Jenny's place. They'll  
be some good stuff there too, if you  
know what I mean.

MIA

In the same spirit let me try one  
more time, too. Trying to fuck every  
or anything that moves and comes  
within range of your predatory eyes  
won't bring you anything worthwhile  
or lasting. It has a smell of  
sickness to it.

Zach shakes his head in disgust.

ZACH

You used to be hot, now you're just  
weird. And you could use a few  
pounds. Looking a little drawn  
around the gills. I hear Twinkies  
help.

MIA

Twinkie's are immortal, but then  
cockroaches don't die easily either.

Guess you'll be around for awhile.

Zach gives Mia the finger and storms off. Rene' joins Mia.

RENE'

It's good to see Zach all excited again.

Mia walks behind the bar and pours a stiff drink and hands it to her mother.

MIA

Take a big hit. You're going to need it.

RENE'

What's this all about?

MIA

I'm going back, mom.

RENE'

What? What did you just say?

MIA

Oak Ridge, Mom. I've come to realize that I don't belong here anymore. I've changed.

RENE'

Honey, don't talk to me this way. Let me get my pills.

Mia grabs Rene' by her arm.

MIA

NO! The drink will have to do.

RENE'

Why are you doing this to me? You're my baby. I can't live without you.

MIA

Mom, let's not be a drama queen. I'm not leaving you. I just know I belong at Oak Ridge. It feels like home to me. The people there, everything.

RENE'

Job, too I suppose?

MIA

Yes, him too, Mom. I got to know

him. He's a good man. And no matter how you feel about him, he's my father. Father and daughters are supposed to be together.

RENE'

I knew this would happen, I just knew it.

MIA

And nothing's changed between us. You're still my Mom and I'll always love you no matter what. But, there's plenty of room in my heart to love Dad too.

RENE'

How could you do this to me after everything I've given you?

Mia hands Rene' a tissue.

MIA

You fell in love with Dad and he didn't want to marry you so you used the oldest trick in the world, getting pregnant.

RENE'

Are you saying it was a shotgun marriage?

MIA

I don't know, Mom, but I do know Dad's a straight arrow guy and it would have worked with him.

RENE'

It wasn't planned. It just happened.

MIA

So, he married you even though he felt tricked into doing it.

RENE'

I never pressured him.

MIA

But, you knew he would. The irony is that Dad's forgiven you, but you can't forgive him.

RENE'

For what?

MIA

For not loving you enough to want to marry you in the first place.

RENE'

I can see he's been brainwashing you with his usual lies and deceit.

MIA

Dad never said a word. The further irony is that you don't really hate Dad. In fact you never really stopped loving him, but your pride couldn't take it, the woman scorned thing.

RENE'

Now, you're going to hate me.

MIA

No, Mom, it's just time to clear the air and give truth a chance to breathe. And, It's not all your fault either.

Rene grabs another tissue and wipes her eyes.

MIA

Dad shouldn't have been sticking his finger into the pie unless he was going to buy it, figuratively speaking, that is.

RENE'

And what if I refuse to take you back?

MIA

If you tell me to stay I will, but I will never find myself unless you let me go.

RENE'

I loved you just the way you were.

MIA

That girl no longer exists. And looking back I now know that that girl was lost and never knew it. I need to learn what I'm all about Mom and I know I never will unless I go back.

Rene' starts SOBBING quietly and Mia puts her arm around her

stroking her head.

RENE'  
My baby, my baby.

INT - AMBER'S OFFICE DAY

Mia enters Amber's office as she's working on her painting.

MIA  
I see you've made progress on your  
painting, but it's still not  
finished.

Amber gets up out of her chair and rushes toward Mia.

AMBER  
Mia, you're back. I'm so happy to  
see you.

Amber hugs Mia.

MIA  
I don't think this passes  
regulations, but it will be our  
little secret.

AMBER  
Screw regulations. All that matters  
is that you're going to be with us  
again.

MIA  
I never thought I'd say this, but it  
feels good to be back.

AMBER  
Almost everyone who comes here is  
broken in one way or another. And in  
a larger sense none of us are  
completely whole either. That's what  
makes us human.

MIA  
I know I fit that category when I  
came here.

AMBER  
Maybe that's why I can never quite  
finish my painting. Because I know  
it will never really be complete.

MIA  
We're all works in progress?

AMBER  
Until the day we die.

MIA  
I suppose there will be some sort of  
punishment for my leaving.

AMBER  
I told Colonel Lloyd that you were  
coming back and I expect he has  
something planned for you.

MIA  
I'm sure he has, but in an odd way  
it will feel good to have him  
yelling at me again.

AMBER  
I suspect you won't be disappointed.

INT - COLONEL LLOYD'S OFFICE DAY

Mia walks in with her suitcase and guitar and hands a slip  
of paper to Colonel Lloyd. Mia salutes the Commandant.

MIA  
Miss West told me to give this to  
you, sir.

Colonel Lloyd looks at Mia sternly.

COLONEL LLOYD  
I heard you were coming back. Do you  
remember what I told you when you  
left?

MIA  
Yes, sir, you said I would have to  
start from the beginning again. I'm  
ready to take any punishment you  
think necessary, sir.

COLONEL LLOYD  
Get in your dress whites and report  
back here.

MIA  
Dress whites? Sir, I turned in all  
my gear when I left.

COLONEL LLOYD  
First Sergeant Louise has your  
uniform next door. Get dressed and  
report back to me ASAP.

Mia exits.

INT - SERGEANT LOUISE'S OFFICE DAY

Mia is buttoning the last button on her dress white tunic. First Sergeant Louis is stroking her chin as she surveys Mia.

MIA  
Does everything look okay, first sergeant?

First Sergeant Louis inspects Mia and moves her cap slightly down.

FIRST SERGEANT  
Perfect, Like you grew into it.

Mia smiles.

FIRST SERGEANT  
No matter what, keep your chin up.

MIA  
I hope I can hold up for whatever Colonel Lloyd has in store for me.

INT - COLONEL LLOYD'S OFFICE DAY

Colonel Lloyd rises when Mia enters.

COLONEL LLOYD  
TEN HUT!

Mia snaps to attention. Colonel Lloyd walks around inspecting Mia.

COLONEL LLOYD  
At ease. Follow me.

EXT- FLAG COMPOUND DAY

Mia and Colonel Lloyd walk out to the main Flag compound in front of the Administration building. Mia's Bravo Company is in front, facing them in their dress whites. Fox YELLS at Bravo Company.

FOX  
BRAVO COMPANY, TEN HUT!

Bravo Company comes to attention. Fox has her saber out and turns to Mia and Colonel Lloyd.

FOX

BRAVO COMPANY IS READY TO BE  
INSPECTED BY LIEUTENANT LASH, SIR.

Mia purses her lips with tears in her eyes and looks to  
Colonel Lloyd. Colonel Lloyd addresses Bravo Company

COLONEL LLOYD  
AT EASE.

Bravo Company comes to at ease.

COLONEL LLOYD  
Cadet Lash showed character by  
coming back to Oak Ridge and  
character is the foundation for  
leadership. This is our way of  
recognizing her character.

Colonel Lloyd turns to Mia.

COLONEL LLOYD  
(to Mia)  
Relieve Captain Fox and march Bravo  
Company to the Parade Grounds.

MIA  
YES SIR!

Mia marches towards Fox with her head held high. Fox is  
standing in front of the company. Mia marches to the front  
of the company. She stops centered to Fox, renders a salute.  
Fox swiftly takes her saber, hands to her and smartly  
salutes back. Mia puts the saber into it's scaffold.

FOX  
TAKE COMMAND, LIEUTENANT LASH.

Fox does an about face and marches back to the company  
formation. Irena, Hillary, Brooks Ann, Aly, Bonnan and  
Alvarez are all in the front row smiling. A crowd of cadets  
begins forming on the sidelines. Mia raises her saber from  
her belt, renders a salute with the saber, and now has it  
tightly against her right shoulder.

MIA  
Bravo Company, At my command TENHUT.  
DRESS RIGHT (pause) DRESS (pause)  
READY FRONT COVER (pause) AT CLOSE  
INTERVAL (pause) DRESS RIGHT.  
(pause) LEFT FACE.

The company turns left. Mia brings her saber up sharply on  
her shoulder.



MIA  
FORWARD MARCH. CADENCE COUNT. HUT  
ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, HUT, HUT,  
HUT.

Bravo Company marches to the Parade Grounds with a solitary  
Anne bringing up the rear out of step. Colonel Lloyd, Job  
Lash, the faculty and half the student body follow CHEERING.  
When they get to the center of the field Mia COMMANDS.

MIA  
YOUR LEFT, YOUR LEFT, YOUR  
RIGHT, YOUR LEFT. CADENCE COUNT.

Mia begins her cadence marching SONG.

MIA  
MAMA, MAMA, CAN'T YOU SEE?

BRAVO COMPANY  
MAMA, MAMA, CAN'T YOU SEE?

MIA  
WHAT THE ARMY DID TO ME.

BRAVO COMPANY  
WHAT THE ARMY DID TO ME.

MIA  
THEY TOOK AWAY MY FADED JEANS

BRAVO COMPANY  
THEY TOOK AWAY MY FADED JEANS.

MIA  
NOW I'M WEARING ARMY GREENS.

BRAVO COMPANY  
NOW I'M WEARING ARMY GREENS

MIA  
I USED TO DRIVE A CHEVROLET.

BRAVO COMPANY  
I USED TO DRIVE A CHEVROLET.

MIA  
NOW I MARCH IN BOOTS ALL DAY

BRAVO COMPANY  
NOW I MARCH IN BOOTS ALL DAY.

MIA  
YOUR LEFT

ONE...TWO...THREE...FOUR...YOUR  
LEFT...RIGHT...LEFT. HALT.

EXT PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

Bravo Company marches into the parade grounds and halts.

MIA  
BRAVO COMPANY (PAUSE) ATTENHUT!  
DRESS RIGHT.

The company puts their arms up, touching the brim of the shoulder to the right of the cadet next to them.

MIA  
COMPANY, OPEN RANKS.

The first squad takes four steps forward. The second squad takes two steps forward. The third squad takes one step forward. The fourth squad stands still. Mia begins walking in front slowly inspecting each cadet as she passes. Mia stops in front of Aly.

MIA  
Cadet Morgan, your shoes need a  
polish. Don't let me see them like  
this again.

ALY  
YES SIR!

Mia stops in front of Irena.

MIA  
I hope that's not lipstick I see on  
your face, Cadet Florina?

IRENA  
NO SIR!

Mia stops in front of Hillary, grabs the rifle from her shoulder and looks into the barrel.

MIA  
When's the last time you cleaned  
your piece, Cadet Richfield?

HILLARY  
LAST NIGHT, SIR.

Mia walks through the three rows ending with Anne who's hat is tilted askance and her tunic top unbuttoned.

MIA

You're a poor excuse for a cadet,  
Cadet Ward.

ANNE

YES SIR!

Mia straightens Anne's hat, fastens her button and walks to the front of the company.

MIA

We have all been through a lot of tough times together. Tears, fears, and loneliness are all part of the curriculum here, but you're all better for the experience. It's all about becoming champions. Our teachers are champions because they made us look at the world around us and learn their secrets to better cope with life.

Mia gestures toward the horizon.

MIA

Cadet Meadows is a champion because she had to come back the furthest and we will hopefully see her again soon.

Mis looks at Anne.

MIA

And, Cadet Ward is a champion too, a small fragile champion, but still a champion because she had to do it all with less, much less.

Mia salutes the company. The Company salutes back.

MIA

I saluted you because you too are all champions. Oak Ridge and Colonel Lloyd threw everything they had at you and you showed you were up to the task and could meet and/or surpass their challenges.

Mia turns toward Colonel Lloyd.

MIA

And, finally, Colonel Lloyd is also a champion, for being the tough, never giving up on us, unpopular champion who forced us to the best

that we can be. He made us realize  
that respect is the close cousin of  
love.

Colonel Lloyd stands stiffly expressionless. Anne takes a  
step forward.

ANNE

Cadet Ward requests permission to  
speak.

MIA

Yes, Cadet Ward.

ANNE

What about Cadet Lash? Is Cadet Lash  
a champion too, sir"

MIA

(softly)

Yes, I am finally a champion too.

Mia turns toward Colonel Lloyd.

MIA

REQUEST PERMISSION TO DISMISS THE  
COMPANY, SIR?

COLONEL LLOYD

PERMISSION GRANTED.

MIA

CADET WARD, FRONT AND CENTER.

Anne marches to the front of the company.

MIA

DISMISS THE COMPANY.

Anne turns toward the company and YELLS.

ANNE

BRAVO COMPANY, FALL OUT!

Hillary, Brooks Ann, Aly, Bonnan, Alvarez, Fox and Irena and  
the other Bravo Company cadets throw their hats into the air  
and rush to Mia excitedly hugging her and LAUGHING. The  
whole group of cadets, faculty and bystanders nearby CHEER  
loudly. Francis who was standing next to her father on the  
sidelines runs down the embankment to the parade grounds and  
hugs Mia.

MIA

Francis. You're here. Now

everything's perfect.

FRANCIS

I wouldn't have missed it for anything, princess.

MIA

Let's hear a mighty cheer for Cadet Meadows.

The cadets CHEER loudly.

HILLARY

LET'S HEAR A MIGHTY CHEER FOR LIEUTENANT LASH.

CADETS

BARA BOOM BAM BAM, BARA BOOM BAM BAM, WHO'S OUR MAN? LASH, LASH, THE MIGHTY LASH, SHE'S OUR MAN!

Mia waves to her mother who is standing by her limo and her father who is with the faculty watching nearby. Anne walks up to Colonel Lloyd and hugs one of his legs tightly looking up at him with an impish smile.

COLONEL LLOYD

(gruffly)

This is borderline insubordination.

Colonel Lloyd face slowly gives Anne a hint of a smile who grins back widely from ear to ear.

FADE OUT