

The Ones Who Stay

written by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 1

Rain taps against pavement in a quiet neighborhood

Two houses sit close together, bedroom windows facing each other across a narrow gap

Thunder rolls in the distance

2 INT. NOAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 2

Unpacked boxes everywhere

A cork board filled with recruiting letters

A football helmet sits on the desk, Star Wars and football posters line the walls

NOAH stands at his window and pulls the blinds halfway down

Across the gap between the houses he sees a light flip on

He stops pulling down the blinds

In the window he sees AVA roll to the window in her wheelchair, oxygen line on her face staring at the rain

She notices Noah, and they make eye contact

Noah gives a half-wave

Ava hesitates, then gives a small wave back

She closes her blinds slowly

Noah stands there a second longer before closing his blinds

Noah turns and walks to his bed to lay down

JULIA (O.S.)

Noah! Did you unpack your football gear?

(pause)

You've got practice tomorrow!

NOAH

Yes Ma'am!

3 INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

3

Noah is walking through the hall

EMMA sees him and goes up to him, twirling a strand of her hair

EMMA  
(flirty)  
Hey, Noah!

NOAH  
Hi, Emma.

EMMA  
What are you up to later?

NOAH  
Football practice, why?

EMMA  
Are you busy after? I thought we could hang out

NOAH  
Sorry, I can't

She drops her hair and puts her hand down

EMMA  
Oh... okay, no problem

Noah goes to his locker and pulls out his phone

There are multiple unread messages from recruiters

He looks at a few, but doesn't respond

He locks his phone and puts it away

MASON walks up and shoves Noah lightly

MASON  
Yo, Noah!

Noah turns around surprised and then sees it's Mason and daps him up

NOAH  
What's up, man?

MASON  
(teasing)  
Saw you talking to Emma

NOAH

Yeah, she won't give up... I'm just not interested. But I also don't want to make her feel bad or whatever. She's still my friend

MASON

Yeah, well you gotta do what you gotta do

The bell rings for class

NOAH

Alright, see you at practice

MASON

See you then

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE - EVENING

Noah lines up at wide receiver

Mason lines up at corner, across from Noah

MASON

(confidently)  
You're slow today

NOAH

You're delusional every day

Quarterback calls for the snap

Noah runs a post-corner route

Mason tries to jam him, but fails

The ball flies through the sky to Noah

He tracks it and catches it in stride

COACH REYNOLDS blows the whistle

COACH REYNOLDS

(loud)  
Again!

Noah jogs to the quarterback and whispers with him

He jogs to the line and runs a post route

Noah loses Mason at his break with a double move

CONTINUED:

He tracks it again and catches it

Coach Reynolds blows the whistle

COACH REYNOLDS (CONT'D)  
That's what I'm talking about!  
Separation. You create space and  
they can't touch you.

Noah nods

MASON  
He only runs that clean because I  
let him.

Noah shoves him lightly

NOAH  
(confidently)  
Scoreboard on Friday's gonna say  
otherwise.

MONTAGE - NOAH AT PRACTICE

--Running routes

--Dropping a pass

--Staring at the field, distracted

END MONTAGE

Noah goes to get water, taking off his helmet

Coach Reynolds pulls him aside

COACH REYNOLDS  
Recruiters called again.

Noah nods

COACH REYNOLDS (CONT'D)  
You keep this up, you won't be here  
long, kid.

Noah looks around the field

NOAH  
Good.

COACH REYNOLDS  
You love this game don't you?

NOAH

Yeah

COACH REYNOLDS

Good. The second you stop loving  
it, it'll eat you alive.

Noah nods

Coach Reynolds turns around and blows the whistle

Noah jogs back to formation while putting his helmet back on

INT. LOCKER ROOM - EVENING

Noah is sitting quietly scrolling through his texts with  
recruiters, not smiling

Everyone else on the team is joking around and hyped up from  
practice

Mason notices Noah being quiet, and goes over to him

MASON

Noah

Noah doesn't look up, not paying attention

Mason waves in front of his face

MASON (CONT'D)

Noah

Noah looks up, blinking, trying to focus

NOAH

Yeah?

MASON

Bro, you just routed me up all  
practice

NOAH

So?

MASON

So, you're sitting here looking  
like we just lost the Super Bowl or  
something

NOAH

I'm just tired

MASON

Alright

Mason leaves

Noah opens a message from a recruiter

RECRUITER (TEXT)

You're exactly what we're looking  
for from incoming freshmen

The noise around him gets loud again

He pulls out his AirPods and puts them in his ears

He plays the music loud

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - EVENING

Noah is walking through the hall, tired from practice

There's a smaller kid, COLE, head down, hands in pockets.

TRAVIS comes up to Cole in the hall

TRAVIS

You ever gonna say anything? Or  
just stand there.

Cole doesn't respond, keeps walking

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Hey, I'm talking to you.

Noah sees, Cole doesn't respond, but looks uncomfortable

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

What, you only talk when your  
boyfriend's around?

Cole still doesn't respond, but looks increasingly  
uncomfortable

Noah hesitates, but walks over to Travis and Cole

NOAH

Travis, what's your problem?

TRAVIS

No problem, Noah

NOAH

Then quit acting like it

TRAVIS

Whatever.

Travis walks off

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

Not worth it anyway

Noah turns to Cole

NOAH

Hey, what's your name?

COLE

Cole

NOAH

I'm Noah...

(pause)

You don't have to just stand there  
and let him talk to you like that

COLE

Thanks

Cole walks off still keeping his head down

Noah watches him walk away before turning to leave

EXT. OUTSIDE SCHOOL - EVENING

Cole is sitting alone on the curb staring at nothing

Noah walks out of the school and sees him

He hesitates, then walks over to him

NOAH

You good?

COLE

Yeah.

NOAH

You should come to the game Friday.

Cole looks up, surprised

COLE

Why?

NOAH  
It'll be fun

Noah starts walking away, but turns back once

NOAH (CONT'D)  
And not everyone's a jerk like  
Travis.

Noah keeps walking

Cole watches him leave

Julia, Noah, and DAVID are sitting at the table eating  
lasagna

DAVID  
Noah, Coach Reynolds called earlier  
(pause)  
He said you'd easily be able to get  
a scholarship at a lot of the big  
football schools

NOAH  
That's good

JULIA  
Just good?

NOAH  
It's great

JULIA  
You seem... off

NOAH  
I'm just tired... from the move.

DAVID  
Son, you know I tore my ACL in my  
sophomore year of college

NOAH  
Yeah, I know

JULIA  
(quietly)  
David

DAVID  
I'm not reminding you to try to  
scare you or anything...  
(MORE)

8

CONTINUED:

9.  
8

DAVID (CONT'D)

But you have this opportunity and  
you're just saying it's "good".  
Don't waste this.

Noah nods slightly

NOAH

I know

They finish eating and Noah takes his plate to the sink

He puts it in the sink and looks out the window for a few  
seconds

He goes up to his room

9

INT. NOAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

9

Noah lays in bed and looks at his phone

The time reads "8:29PM"

He waits a few seconds and it flips to "8:30PM"

He looks to the window

Through the gap, Ava's bedroom light flips on

He looks for a few seconds before she closes the blinds

He opens his phone and starts watching film

He falls asleep after watching three plays

The phone falls to his chest as he sleeps

10

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE - MORNING

10

Noah walks onto the field sipping a protein shake and puts on  
his gear

Mason walks toward Noah

MASON

Hey man!

NOAH

Morning

MASON

Ready for the game this Friday?

10

CONTINUED:

10.  
10

NOAH

Hell yeah, we got this

Coach Reynolds blows the whistle

Everyone takes a lap and starts practice

11

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE - MORNING

11

Noah sees Travis sitting on the bleachers with a few friends,  
laughing

As that group disperses, Noah goes over to Travis

TRAVIS

What's up?

NOAH

What was that yesterday?

Travis shrugs casually

TRAVIS

Nothing

NOAH

Didn't look like nothing

TRAVIS

He's just weird, man

NOAH

So?

TRAVIS

I was just messing around, it's not  
that deep

NOAH

Didn't look like he thought it was  
funny

Travis rolls his eyes

TRAVIS

Why do you care anyway?

NOAH

I don't know

(pause)

It just seemed unnecessary

Travis rolls his eyes

11 CONTINUED:

NOAH (CONT'D)  
Just stop it.

Noah turns and walks away

12 INT. NOAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

12

Noah laying on his bed throwing a football to himself

Clock shows "8:29PM"

Noah glances at the clock before it flips to "8:30PM"

Noah glances at the window

Across the gap the light flips on

Ava rolls her wheelchair to the window

She holds up a paper to the window:

"U just gonna stare every night?"

Noah reaches over to his desk to get a notebook and pen

He writes and holds up the notebook:

"Depends. U contagious?"

Ava reads it and gasps in mock offense

She writes again and holds up:

"Only emotionally"

Noah laughs slightly, then writes and holds up:

"Why are you always inside?"

Ava takes a deep breath before writing again

She holds up:

"Doctor's orders"

Noah's eyes drift to her oxygen line while she's writing

Ava holds up:

"What's ur excuse?"

Noah writes and holds up:

"Just moved here"

Ava nods

She writes again and holds up:

"Welcome to the most boring street in America"

Noah writes back:

"It has potential"

There's a pause

He writes:

"I'm Noah btw"

Ava pauses and writes:

"I'm Ava"

He writes:

"Nice name. What kind of stuff do you like to do?"

Ava writes and holds up:

"I used to dance"

Noah pauses for a second

He writes:

"What kind?"

Ava writes:

"Ballet"

Noah stares at her for a second, down to her wheelchair, then back up

He writes:

"Like... Serious ballet?"

Ava rolls her eyes dramatically

Then writes:

"Yes. Tutus and drama"

Noah laughs at her response then writes:

"Ok but were u good?"

Ava squints at him

She writes:

"I was better than you"

Noah writes back:

"I've never danced"

Ava writes:

"That's obvious"

Noah laughs at her response

Then he writes:

"So what happened?"

Ava looks down at her hands which are slightly trembling, and adjusts the oxygen tubing

She writes:

"My lungs decided pliés were optional"

Noah doesn't smile, but nods

Then he writes:

"Do u miss it?"

Ava doesn't answer right away

Rain taps against the window

She holds up:

"I miss not thinking about breathing"

Noah writes back slowly:

"I trip over air"

Ava looks confused so Noah writes:

"So I think ur still winning"

Ava laughs at that

Her hands tremble slightly

12 CONTINUED:

She adjusts oxygen tubing

On her nightstand: medication bottles, hospital bracelet, and a transplant list document

Her breathing is slightly labored

She looks out the window

Noah is still there in the other room, watching

13 INT. NOAH'S KITCHEN - MORNING

13

Julia is over the stove making breakfast

Noah comes down looking happier than he usually does

JULIA  
Morning, Noah  
(pause)  
You look excited, is something happening?

NOAH  
No, Mom. Nothing's happening

JULIA  
You sure?

NOAH  
Yes, I'm sure. I was just...  
talking to someone.

JULIA  
Someone? A girl?

NOAH  
Maybe

JULIA  
What's her name?

NOAH  
Ava

JULIA  
That's nice

She walks from the stove with eggs and toast on a plate and hands it to him

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Eat. Then school.

13 CONTINUED: 15.  
13  
Noah starts eating

14 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - MORNING 14  
Ava's sitting alone on her bed  
She looks out the window and sees Noah leaving for school  
She transfers slowly to her wheelchair  
Rolls across the room and tries to stand up  
She falls back into her wheelchair quickly

AVA  
This is so stupid

She looks at her old ballet shoes on the shelf  
She picks one up and throws it across the room  
She holds her face in her hands and starts crying quietly  
She rolls over to where the shoe landed and picks it up  
She rolls back to the shelf and puts it back  
There's a soft knock on her door  
Ava wipes her tears and speaks shakily

AVA (CONT'D)  
Come in

Claire walks into the room and can immediately tell Ava's  
been crying  
She goes to Ava and hugs her

CLAIRE  
What's wrong, Ava?

Ava clings to her, still in the wheelchair

AVA  
I just feel so... Stuck  
(pause)  
I just want it to be over. I hate  
this

CLAIRE

It'll be alright, honey. It'll get better. I'm sure it will be over soon

AVA

Promise

CLAIRE

I want to

Claire pulls back slightly and puts both hands on Ava's face

Ava looks directly into Claire's eyes and they maintain eye contact

After a few seconds Claire pulls Ava back into the hug, tighter now

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You're strong. You'll get through this

Ava leans into her hand

AVA

I want to believe that... But it's hard to when I can't even stand on my own

CLAIRE

I know, but it's okay

Ava glances through Noah's bedroom window to see his empty dark room

Claire notices her glance but pretends not to

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Ready to go downstairs and start school?

AVA

I guess

Claire helps Ava out of her room and down the steps in the wheelchair

Noah is standing with Mason by their lockers

MASON

You okay, man? You look... off

NOAH

I'm good. It's just... There's this girl... She lives next door to me.

MASON

(teasingly)

Oh no. Emma's gonna be jealous

(pause)

Don't get too distracted.

NOAH

I won't

MASON

Okay bro, tell me about her.

NOAH

She's like, really pretty. She has some kind of lung disease. I think I like her.

MASON

Like, like-like her?

NOAH

I mean, we only talked once... But yeah

Noah and Mason don't notice another kid, Cole, listening from a distance

Ava's doing school from her laptop

She looks distracted

CLAIRE

Ava, are you okay?

AVA

Yeah, I'm good

CLAIRE

What are you thinking about?

AVA

Something

CLAIRE  
(knowingly)  
Something? Or Someone?

AVA  
(slightly embarrassed)  
Someone.

CLAIRE  
Does this someone happen to be... a  
boy?

AVA  
Yeah

CLAIRE  
Maybe... the boy next door?

AVA  
How'd you know there's a boy next  
door?

CLAIRE  
Just a hunch  
(pause)  
Plus I saw you glance over at that  
window earlier

Ava rolls her eyes playfully

AVA  
Let me focus

She tries to focus back on her work

17 INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

17

Noah, Mason, Emma, NICK, and JESS are all eating and sitting  
together

Travis and KENZIE are at another table with their friend  
group

MASON  
(teasingly)  
Did you all hear Noah's got a  
girlfriend?

Emma tenses at that

NOAH  
(defensively)  
She's not my girlfriend, and we  
talked once!

MASON  
Yeah, but you said you like her

Emma sits there quietly

Travis glances over from his table

NOAH  
Can we talk about something else  
now?

EMMA  
Great idea! Let's talk about...  
your football game this Friday?

MASON  
Yeah! Last time we played that team  
we put BTA

JESS  
I saw that game, it was good

NICK  
Yeah, you guys did great on  
defense, didn't you get a pick that  
game?

MASON  
Yeah, I did. It was great man

The other voices fade around Noah as his mind drifts back to  
Ava

In Noah's mind he pictures Ava in her ballet outfit, dancing  
perfectly, without any help

MONTAGE - AVA AND NOAH WINDOW ROUTINE:

--Clock at 8:30 each night

--Papers pressed against windows

--Writing responses

--Ava coughing, but acting okay

18 CONTINUED:  
--Rainy nights, clear nights, windy nights  
END MONTAGE

Ava holds up a sign:

"Favorite movie?"

Noah writes something

19 INTERCUT - NOAH'S BEDROOM / AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 19

Noah holds up:

"Star Wars"

Ava gasps in mock offense, writes and shows:

"Wrong. LOTR is superior storytelling"

Noah holds up back:

"Hell no, star wars is way better"

Ava starts writing something

Ava holds up:

"What do you think of Harry Potter?"

Noah thinks for a second and then writes:

"Never seen it"

He holds it up

Ava's jaw drops then she writes aggressively and holds up:

"That's illegal"

Noah laughs

CLAIRE (O.S.)  
(yelling from downstairs)  
Ava! Come here, baby!

Ava waves

Closes her blinds and wheels away from the window

Noah writes another note

Noah leaves the note on the window

20 INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

20

Noah's alone by his locker

Travis and Kenzie talking across the hall

TRAVIS

Did you hear about Noah's new  
"friend"?

He uses air quotes around the word

KENZIE

You mean the sick girl?

Emma walks over and joins the conversation

EMMA

He's going to get his heart broken  
and lose his scholarship, and for  
what? She can't even leave her  
room.

Emma turns to face Noah a bit and tucks a strand of hair  
behind her ear

Noah tries to ignore their conversation, but it escalates

TRAVIS

And he shouldn't be wasting her  
time either. She'll be dead soon  
enough. She's not getting better.

Noah turns slightly, unable to hold back anymore

He walks over to Travis

NOAH

What did you just say?

TRAVIS

You heard me

NOAH

Say it again.

Emma touches Noah's arm

EMMA

Noah. Stop, it's not worth it

Noah shrugs her hand off of him

NOAH  
(ignoring her)  
Say it.

TRAVIS  
I said why waste your time on her,  
when she's already dying anyway?  
She's not gonna get better.

NOAH  
You're not gonna talk about her  
like that.

TRAVIS  
Or what?

Travis shoves Noah slightly

Noah shoves Travis against the locker

Hits him in the face

Blood trickles down Travis' nose

Some teachers come to break up the fight

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Noah and Travis both sit in the office across from PRINCIPAL  
WILLIAMS

PRINCIPAL WILLIAMS  
Alright, Travis... Detention. Noah,  
you're suspended for a week.  
(pause)  
Head back to class

Travis gets up and leaves

Noah stays behind a few seconds longer

PRINCIPAL WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
You want to explain yourself?

NOAH  
I don't have an excuse. But he was  
talking shit about my friend who's  
sick.

PRINCIPAL WILLIAMS  
What did he say?

21 CONTINUED:

NOAH  
He called her "the sick girl"

PRINCIPAL WILLIAMS  
That doesn't justify starting a  
fight.

NOAH  
I know.

PRINCIPAL WILLIAMS  
Go home.

Noah gets up and leaves

22 EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

22

Noah arrives at his house and Julia comes outside

JULIA  
Noah? Why are you home already?

NOAH  
I got suspended

JULIA  
For what?

NOAH  
I got into a fight

JULIA  
You got into a fight?!

She immediately starts checking him for injuries

NOAH  
Yeah, I'm fine

JULIA  
What happened?

NOAH  
I punched Travis

JULIA  
(sternly)  
Why?

NOAH  
He was talking about Ava

JULIA

Ava? The girl next door?

She gestures toward Ava's house

NOAH

Yeah

JULIA

Was she there?

NOAH

No, she doesn't go to school

JULIA

What? Why not?

NOAH

She's got a lung disease... She can't go out

JULIA

Oh... What did they say about her?

NOAH

They called her "The sick girl" and said "She'll be dead soon enough"

JULIA

You could've stood up for her without punching him.

NOAH

I know

He goes inside

David walks in after talking to Julia

DAVID

Son, your mom told me what happened at school

NOAH

Okay

DAVID

Why would you start a fight over something stupid like that? It's not worth getting suspended.

NOAH

I think it was

DAVID

You think it was worth it? You're being reckless. You're going to ruin your future. You have to control yourself

NOAH

I was controlling myself. I knew what I was doing.

DAVID

Then why the hell did you do it?

NOAH

You know what they said

DAVID

Yes, I know what they said. That's not more important than football. You have a serious future in football, son. You can't throw it away because of a stupid fight because you couldn't control yourself.

NOAH

I just told you. I was controlling myself. I made that choice.

DAVID

Go to your room.

Noah goes up to his room

Noah's sitting on his bed scrolling on his phone

It rings with a call from Coach Reynolds

He waits a second before answering

He puts the phone to his ear

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.)

I heard what happened

NOAH

Yeah

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.)  
Why would you do that?

NOAH  
He was being a jackass

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.)  
That's not a reason to punch him.  
You have to think about the team  
too. We needed you on Friday.

(pause)  
After practice Monday, you owe me  
50 up-downs, 40 pushups, 4 laps,  
and 40 yards of suicides.

NOAH  
Yes sir

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.)  
Don't do that shit anymore

NOAH  
Yes sir

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.)  
And study film.

Coach Reynolds hangs up

Noah puts his hand on the drawer of his nightstand and holds  
it there for a second

He pulls it back and opens his phone to watch film

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NOAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Noah's laying in bed still watching film

He takes notes on his mistake

NOAH  
(to himself)  
I didn't break down fast enough

The clock flips to "8:27PM"

His phone is on the nightstand

It starts ringing

Noah picks up the phone and it shows an unknown number

He hesitantly answers it, and puts the phone to his ear

AVA (V.O.)  
You're actually proud of not  
watching Harry Potter?!

Noah immediately smiles and goes to the window

Ava's at her window and waves

NOAH  
You got my number from the sign.

AVA (V.O.)  
You left it

NOAH  
You stalking me now?

AVA (V.O.)  
Please. I can't even walk to my  
mailbox and back

He listens and can hear the strained breathing, doesn't react

NOAH  
Okay. So sell me on it.

AVA (V.O.)  
On what?

NOAH  
Why should I watch it?

Ava thinks for a second

AVA (V.O.)  
Because it's about people who stay.

Ava pauses for a few seconds

AVA (CONT'D)  
Anyway... I saw you got home from  
school early today

NOAH  
Yeah

AVA (V.O.)  
Why?

NOAH  
I got suspended

25 CONTINUED:

AVA (V.O.)  
Why? What did you do?

NOAH  
Got into a fight.

She rolls her eyes playfully

AVA (V.O.)  
Noah.

26 INT. DINER - EVENING

26

Noah, Mason, Emma, Jess, and Nick are all eating dinner together

EMMA  
You've been pretty quiet lately,  
you okay?

NOAH  
Just tired

EMMA  
Okay, you sure?

NOAH  
Yeah, I'm sure

EMMA  
Alright, eat your burger... You  
barely touched it

NOAH  
I'm not hungry

Noah looks at his phone and sees the time: "8:15PM"

Noah stands up

EMMA  
Where are you going?

NICK  
You leaving already?

NOAH  
Yeah, I gotta get home

JESS  
Home? You usually stay out until  
like 9

26 CONTINUED:

29.  
26

NOAH  
Yeah, I know. I can't tonight  
though

MASON  
Alright then. See you tomorrow

Noah waves and leaves

27 INT. NOAH'S BEDROOM - EVENING

27

Noah walks into his bedroom right as the clock hits "8:29PM"  
He sits on his bed looking across the gap through the window  
Ava's bedroom light flips on and she rolls into view, already  
with her phone to her ear  
Noah's phone starts ringing with Ava's name  
He answers it quickly and sits at the window

AVA  
Hi, Noah

NOAH  
Hey

AVA  
So... you're like out a lot, right?

NOAH  
Yeah, why?

AVA  
Can you just, like... Tell me what  
it's like to be able to be outside  
nowadays?

NOAH  
Yeah... You never go out?

AVA  
(one shallow breath)  
I mean... Sometimes.

28 INTERCUT - NOAH'S BEDROOM / AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

28

AVA  
Hospitals count right?

NOAH

You hate that question, don't you?

AVA

I hate the face people make after they ask it.

NOAH

What face?

AVA

The face where they're already leaving.

NOAH

I'm not leaving.

She takes her time answering

AVA

You just got here.

NOAH

Yeah... Still.

Silence for 3 seconds, Both of them looking at each other

AVA

But, now can you tell me what it's like?

NOAH

Being outside? It's amazing, you were able to go outside before... right?

AVA

Yeah, but that was a long time ago

Later that night, they're still on the phone

Her room is dim now, just the bedside lamp is on

She's in bed now, propped up by pillows with oxygen cannula on her cheeks

The phone is between her shoulder and ear

NOAH (V.O.)

How long have you had this?

AVA  
The disease?

NOAH (V.O.)  
Yeah.

AVA  
I was born with it, but it wasn't  
this bad until I was 9. That's when  
I stopped dancing and actually  
having fun.

NOAH (V.O.)  
So you've been stuck inside for 8  
whole years?

AVA  
Pretty much

NOAH (V.O.)  
I'm sorry

There's a long silence

AVA  
You ever feel like you're stuck in  
the wrong body?

NOAH (V.O.)  
Like... What do you mean?

Ava stares at the ceiling

AVA  
Like your brain wants to run, or  
scream, or do something stupid.  
Sneak out, climb something, break  
something. But your lungs are like  
(pause)  
Nope

She tries to laugh, but it turns to a cough

She mutes the phone

Noah waits it out silently, sitting on the floor by the  
window

Ava unmutes herself

AVA (V.O.)

Sorry.

NOAH

Don't apologize for coughing. You  
alright?

AVA (V.O.)

Yeah. I'm good

Noah stares at his corkboard with college recruiting letters

NOAH

When I'm running routes, It feels  
like that's the only time I'm not  
thinking.

AVA (V.O.)

About what?

He hesitates and picks at a thread on his carpet

NOAH

Expectations.

AVA (V.O.)

(serious tone)

Must be hard... Being wanted.

NOAH

(laughs slightly)

Alright, now you're just trying to  
make me feel bad.

AVA (V.O.)

No

She rolls onto her side to look at the rain on the window

AVA

I just mean, People see you and  
they see potential.

(pause)

They look at me like I'm temporary

NOAH

That's not-

He stops himself from arguing

She cuts him off

AVA

It's fine. I'm used to it. Doctors don't talk to me, they talk around me, about me. Like I'm already a memory.

NOAH

When recruiters call, they don't ask me what I want either. They just ask my forty time. My weight, Vertical. Not if I'm tired, or scared

AVA

Are you?

NOAH

Yeah... sometimes

Ava coughs again

AVA

Of what?

There's a long pause while Noah thinks

NOAH

What if I peak at seventeen? What if this is the best I ever am? What if I'm only valuable when I'm fast?  
(pause)  
But this sounds childish and stupid compared to your issues

AVA

It's not  
(pause)  
You know what I'm scared of?

NOAH

What?

AVA

I'm scared that if I get better, I won't know who I am without being sick.

Noah blinks, Not expecting that answer

NOAH

You'd be... You.

Ava gives a tiny smile

AVA

Easy for you to say. You've always had options.

NOAH

You have options.

AVA

Name one.

Noah opens his mouth, but doesn't speak and closes it because she's not wrong

Rain starts falling harder against the window

NOAH

Maybe you're not stuck in the wrong body. Maybe your body's just slower than you

AVA

That was dangerously poetic for a football player.

NOAH

Don't tell anyone. I have a reputation to maintain.

AVA

Noah?

NOAH

Yeah?

AVA

If I ever get to run with you for real, Promise you won't slow down for me.

NOAH

I wouldn't dare.  
(pause. Softer now)  
But I'd stay with you.

She closes her eyes and breathes slowly

AVA

Okay.

Rain continues falling outside

32 EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT 32

It's Friday Night

Stadium lights bright on the dark field, Crowd yelling

Noah lines up at Wide Receiver

Quarterback calls for the motion, then the snap

Noah runs

Silence except for his breathing

The ball flies through the air to him

He drops the pass

COACH REYNOLDS

Noah! Lock the hell in, son!

He lines up again

Quarterback calls for the motion, then snap again

This time, he catches the pass

The crowd erupts in cheers as he scores the touchdown

33 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 33

Ava's wrapped in a blanket on her bed streaming the game on her laptop

She smiles and coughs but keeps smiling

34 INT. NOAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 34

Later that night

Noah is still sweaty from the game

Phone to his ear at the window

NOAH

You watched?

AVA (V.O.)

You allowed an interception in the second quarter.

NOAH  
You don't even know what an interception is.

AVA (V.O.)  
I Googled it, asshole.

Noah laughs softly

A second call comes in on Noah's phone, from a recruiter

NOAH  
Hey, Ava. Give me a few minutes, okay? A recruiter's calling.

AVA (V.O.)  
Okay, I'll wait right here.

INTERCUT:

Ava looks over to the window and sees Noah on the phone talking to the recruiter

After the short call her phone rings with Noah's name on the screen

She answers immediately

AVA  
What'd they say?

NOAH (V.O.)  
(excitedly)  
I might be getting a full ride!

AVA  
That's amazing! I'm so happy for you.  
(pause)  
You deserve it.

NOAH (V.O.)  
I don't know about that

AVA  
What do you mean? You definitely deserve it.  
(pause)  
And you have this opportunity, I don't get a chance like that.  
(firmly)  
(MORE)

35 CONTINUED:

AVA (CONT'D)  
You better not waste it just  
because you feel like you don't  
deserve it.

NOAH (V.O.)  
I know, I just feel... Stuck.  
(pause)  
When I'm running, I feel like I'm  
not stuck.

AVA  
I run in my head  
(pause)  
It's easier there

Long silence

36 INT. NOAH'S BATHROOM - EVENING

36

Noah's phone is on the bathroom counter

The time reads "8:26PM"

Multiple missed calls and messages from recruiters and other  
football related things

He glances at a partially open drawer

His phone buzzes

AVA (TEXT)  
Noah

AVA (TEXT)  
U busy?

AVA (TEXT)  
Can u call?

The phone rings

Ava's name and picture shows up on the screen

He picks up the phone

Hesitates before answering

AVA (V.O.)  
Noah, are you busy right now?

NOAH  
No, why? What's up?

AVA (V.O.)  
Then why didn't you answer my  
texts?

NOAH  
You gave me like 5 seconds before  
you called

AVA (V.O.)  
I guess that's a fair point  
(pause)  
Can you come to the window? I have  
something exciting to show you.

NOAH  
Yeah, I'm coming.

Noah walks out of the bathroom and to the window to look into  
Ava's room

Ava's sitting at her window

AVA (V.O.)  
Okay, don't laugh.

NOAH  
I won't.

Ava grips the window sill

Stands up, slowly, shaky

She falls back into her wheelchair, laughing slightly and  
coughing a bit

NOAH (CONT'D)  
Holy Shit! That's amazing!

AVA (V.O.)  
Thanks, Hopefully eventually I'll  
be able to stand without help from  
a window.

NOAH  
Yeah

Noah sits down like he's ready to talk for the next few hours

Ava stays by her window

Noah trying to stay focused in the huddle

37 CONTINUED:

He's struggling to stay focused, and runs the wrong route

Coach Reynolds pulls him aside

Noah pulls off his helmet and goes with him

COACH REYNOLDS

Noah. You okay? You're out of it today.

NOAH

Yeah, I'm alright.

COACH REYNOLDS

You can tell me if something's bothering you, I want to know what's got you so distracted so I can fix it if it's something here.

NOAH

It's not something here.

COACH REYNOLDS

Then what is it?

NOAH

Just some personal stuff

COACH REYNOLDS

Alright, go back. And lock in.

Noah nods

Puts his helmet back on

Jogs back to the huddle

38 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

38

Ava's laying in bed and the clock is at 6:30PM

Her phone starts buzzing

She checks it and sees Noah's name and photo on her screen

She answers it

AVA

Hey, Aren't you supposed to be at practice?

NOAH (V.O.)  
Yeah... well, fuck practice, I  
wanted to talk to you instead, if  
you're not busy right now

AVA  
(laughs)  
You're gonna be in so much trouble.

NOAH (V.O.)  
Yeah, well it's whatever.

He looks out his window through hers

NOAH  
You look bored.

AVA  
I was, but not anymore. Just don't  
make it a habit of skipping  
practice just to talk to me

NOAH  
No promises

Time speeds up while they're talking on the phone for hours

NOAH (V.O.)  
Okay, well it's getting late. Talk  
to you tomorrow?

AVA  
(disappointed)  
Yeah, tomorrow

NOAH (V.O.)  
Goodnight, Ava

AVA  
Goodnight, Noah

The phone call ends and Ava lays there awake staring at the  
ceiling

Ava's on the phone with Noah, who is at lunch at school

AVA  
Noah

NOAH  
Yeah?

AVA  
Do you ever think about what  
happens after?

NOAH  
After what?

40 INTERCUT - AVA'S BEDROOM / SCHOOL CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

40

AVA  
After me  
(pause)  
I mean... you'll go to college,  
probably forget that this house  
even exists

NOAH  
That's not-

She cuts him off

AVA  
It's fine. That's what people do...  
They move on

NOAH  
What?

AVA  
People move on. Or at least they  
should.

NOAH  
Ava... That's not what's going to  
happen

AVA  
Noah. It better be what happens

There's a long silence before someone speaks again

AVA (CONT'D)  
Promise that you will

NOAH  
I can't

AVA  
Please Noah. I need you to... You  
know that Travis was right before

NOAH  
About what?

AVA

You told me that Travis said I'll  
be gone soon enough anyway.

NOAH

He did say that... But-

AVA

No buts. He's right. So you have to  
promise that you'll live your life  
normally.

NOAH

Ava. Don't-

AVA

Fine. But don't complain when your  
life is miserable because you  
couldn't just move on like everyone  
else.

The bell rings for class

NOAH

I have to go to class

AVA

Okay, talk to you tonight?

NOAH

Yeah, tonight... Bye

AVA

Bye

Ava hangs up

Noah walks out of the cafeteria toward his class

41 INT. NOAH'S BEDROOM - EVENING

41

Another evening

Noah's sitting on his bed alone

Missed texts from Mason:

MASON (TEXT)

Where are you?

MASON (CONT'D)

You're seriously skipping practice  
again?

He ignores the messages and calls Ava

She answers immediately

AVA (V.O.)

Noah.

(pause)

You skipped practice again.

NOAH

Yeah, so?

AVA (V.O.)

So... you don't do that.

NOAH

I wanted to talk to you.

AVA (V.O.)

You could've called after.

NOAH

I didn't want to wait.

AVA (V.O.)

(softer, but tense)

You don't have to keep doing that.

NOAH

Doing what?

AVA (V.O.)

Skipping things, like football practice.

(pause)

Just to sit on the phone with me.

NOAH

I like talking to you.

AVA (V.O.)

Yeah... But why?

NOAH

What do you mean why?

AVA (V.O.)

I mean, is it actually because you want to?

(pause)

Or because you feel like you have to.

NOAH

Ava.

AVA (V.O.)

Because it kinda feels like you're  
just here because I'm the fragile  
sick girl.

NOAH

That's not fair.

AVA (V.O.)

It isn't?

NOAH

No. It's not, Ava.

(pause)

I'm here because I want to be.

AVA (V.O.)

Then stop acting like I'm gonna  
break every time I cough.

NOAH

I don't-

AVA (V.O.)

(cutting him off)

Yeah, you do.

(pause)

You go quiet, you choose your words  
carefully, like I'm about to break.

Noah doesn't respond yet, processing everything

AVA (CONT'D)

And then you skip practice

(pause)

Like I'm more important than the  
rest of your life.

NOAH

Maybe you are.

That statement only makes it worse

AVA (V.O.)

No. I'm not.

(pause)

And I don't want to be.

NOAH

Why not?

AVA (V.O.)  
Because, Noah, That's not real.  
It's guilt.  
(pause)  
You're only here because you feel  
guilty

NOAH  
It's not guilt

AVA (V.O.)  
Then what is it?

He doesn't have an answer yet

AVA (CONT'D)  
Yeah, that's what I thought.

NOAH  
No, that's not-

AVA (V.O.)  
(cutting him off)  
Just stop.  
(pause)  
Stop talking to me just because you  
feel like you have to.  
(pause)  
Stop treating me like I'm this  
fragile thing that's gonna break.  
(pause)  
And stop skipping football practice

NOAH  
Ava-

She hangs up

Noah puts his phone down

Stares at the ceiling

Noah's practicing

He lines up

Runs a go route

Drops it

He lines up again

42 CONTINUED:

Runs it again

Catches it

43 INT. LOCKER ROOM - EVENING

43

Noah sits by his locker sweaty from practice

He pulls out his phone when it clears out

He goes to his phone app

His finger hovers over Ava's contact

He closes the app and goes to messages instead

He opens a text with Ava and writes:

"I went to practice today"

But he doesn't send it

He delete it

Then he types:

"I'm sorry"

He hovers his thumb over send

But deletes it instead and locks his phone

44 INT. NOAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

44

Noah's sitting on his bed

Clock flips from 8:29 to 8:30

Ava's bedroom light flips on

She glances at the window

Noah waves

She doesn't wave back, goes to her bed

He calls her

She hesitates, but answers the call reluctantly

AVA (V.O.)  
What do you want?

NOAH

To talk.

AVA (V.O.)

We talked yesterday.

NOAH

You hung up on me.

AVA (V.O.)

Because you weren't listening to me!

NOAH

I was listening

AVA (V.O.)

No, you weren't. You were waiting to say something that would fix it.

(pause)

You don't have to fix me, Noah.

NOAH

I know that.

AVA (V.O.)

Then act like it.

Noah looks toward her window and she's not there

NOAH

Can you at least come to the window?

She slowly rolls to the window

AVA

Fine, I'm here. Happy?

NOAH

Yes... Look Ava, I didn't skip practice because I feel bad for you

Ava crosses her arms

AVA

Then why did you?

NOAH

Because when I'm at practice it's not like I'm focused anyway.

(pause)

So what's the difference if I'm here instead of there?

Ava's expression softens slightly

AVA

The difference is, that's your life.

NOAH

It's part of it

AVA

Yeah. A really big part of it.

(pause)

Noah. I don't want to be the reason you lose that.

NOAH

You're not making me lose anything.

(pause)

I'm not losing anything

AVA

You are if you keep choosing me over football

NOAH

I'm not

AVA

Yes you are. You just won't admit it.

NOAH

So what do you want? For me to just stop talking to you?

AVA

No, But I want you to stop acting like I'm... temporary.

NOAH

What does that even mean?

AVA

Nevermind... But you shouldn't be shuffling your life around like this. Not for someone who might not even-

She cuts herself off

NOAH

Might not what?

AVA

Nothing

NOAH

No, say it.

AVA

This is exactly what I mean, Noah.  
You keep pushing until it turns  
into something serious like this.

NOAH

It is serious, Ava.

AVA

It doesn't have to be. Not all the  
time.

(pause)

Sometimes I just want to talk about  
it like it doesn't matter.

NOAH

It matters

AVA

Why?

NOAH

It matters because you matter

AVA

Don't say that.

NOAH

Why not?

AVA

(sighs)

Nevermind. Just go to practice  
tomorrow.

NOAH

Okay

(pause)

Goodnight, Ava.

She hesitates before responding

AVA

Goodnight.

She hangs up and rolls away from the window

45 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

45

Another night

Ava laying on her bed with her phone

She glances at the window, the blinds are closed

She opens her phone app and hovers over Noah's name

She locks her phone and sets it down beside her

AVA  
(whispering to herself)  
You're so stupid

She lays there for a few seconds before shifting to her wheelchair

She rolls over to the window and opens her blinds

She looks into Noah's room

It's dark

She writes:

"I'm sorry"

She holds it up, then puts it back down and rips it up

She hovers her pen over the notebook, but doesn't write again

A few seconds later the light in Noah's room flips on

Ava straightens up immediately

Noah sees her, barely acknowledges her

She looks down and scribbles quickly on the notebook:

"did u go to practice?"

46 INTERCUT - AVA'S BEDROOM / NOAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

46

Noah walks to the window and writes back:

"yeah"

Ava exhales, relieved

She writes:

"Good"

He doesn't respond yet

Ava writes again:

"I'm sorry"

Noah writes:

"Can u call?"

She nods and gets her phone and calls him quickly

He answers immediately

AVA  
I'm sorry, Noah

NOAH  
For which part?

AVA  
All of it.

NOAH  
I'm sorry too, you weren't wrong...  
About some of it.

AVA  
I was being a bitch about it

NOAH  
It's fine, Ava.

AVA  
It's not.  
(pause)  
I just... don't want to be a  
problem for you.

NOAH  
You're not a problem

AVA  
So you're going to practice  
tomorrow too?

NOAH  
Okay. Fine, I'll go to practice,  
but as soon as I'm back, we'll  
call?

AVA

Deal.

NOAH

Ava, you know that I actually like talking to you, and that it's not because I "feel bad", right?

AVA

Yeah, I know. It's just... like I said before... I didn't want to be a problem

NOAH

You never have been, and you never will be.

AVA

Thank you, Noah. I really needed to hear that... Goodnight.

NOAH

Goodnight.

Noah goes to bed now and Ava does the same

Ava lays back in bed, looking happier

INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Another night

Her lights are dim, she seems more tired tonight

She plugs in her phone which shows it's dead

She goes to the window with a sign

She writes and holds up:

"My phone died"

Noah writes, then holds up:

"Ok"

Ava writes:

"Do you think God plans everything?"

Noah writes back:

"I used to"

47

CONTINUED:

Ava thinks, then writes:

"What changed?"

He hesitates, then writes:

"I prayed for something important once. didn't happen"

Ava writes back:

"What was it?"

Noah writes again:

"My grandma had cancer. She died"

Ava takes her time writing the next one:

"I don't think he plans it all"

Noah looks confused through the window

Ava holds up the next page:

"I just think he wastes nothing"

He looks at her and thinks for a couple seconds

The wind outside picks up and it starts raining

Ava checks her phone and it's lit up

Her lockscreen shows 9:18PM

She calls Noah and he answers immediately

AVA

My dad left when I was twelve.

NOAH (V.O.)

I'm sorry

AVA

He didn't leave because he didn't  
love me

(pause)

He left because he got tired.

NOAH (V.O.)

You miss him?

AVA

I miss who he was before he got  
tired of me, not the piece of shit  
he is now.

(pause)

That's why I told you I like  
stories where people stay

Long silence

NOAH (V.O.)

Yeah. I like those stories too

AVA

I don't think God would've planned  
for him to leave. But I don't think  
he's wasting this situation either.

NOAH (V.O.)

Yeah

Another long pause

AVA

You know, I thought you would've  
left by now too. It's already been  
like 4 months and you're still  
here.

NOAH (V.O.)

I told you, I'm not leaving.

DISSOLVE TO:

Another night

Thunder outside, wind and rain hitting the windows

Ava's phone is plugged in on her nightstand, so they're doing  
the signs again

Ava laughs at something Noah writes, but it turns to coughing

She looks down

There's a kink in the oxygen tube where it's caught on the  
arm of her wheelchair

She adjusts it, then the airflow returns to normal

48 CONTINUED:

NOAH  
(mouthing)  
You okay?

Ava nods quickly

She holds up a sign:

"When I get out, we're marathoning Harry Potter outside"

Noah writes:

"Deal"

Ava writes back:

"No complaining"

Noah writes back:

"No promises"

She laughs again, this turns into a cough, worse than normal

INTERCUT:

49 INT. NOAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

49

While she's coughing he looks away to write a note:

"I think I'm falling for U"

But he doesn't hold it up yet

NOAH  
You sure you're good?

Ava nods again, but she's still coughing

NOAH (CONT'D)  
Ava?

She tries to answer, but can't

She starts coughing harder and falls out of frame

Noah freezes for half a second, dropping the note

NOAH (CONT'D)  
Ava?!  
(short pause)  
Shit.

49 CONTINUED:  
Thunder crashes outside  
He runs down the stairs

50 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 50  
Noah throws his front door open  
His driveway is empty  
Noah runs to her front door and starts knocking loudly  
Claire opens the door and sees Noah soaked at her door

CLAIRE  
Hello? Noah?

NOAH  
It's Ava... She collapsed in her  
room

Claire and Noah run up to Ava's room  
Claire calls 911 in the background  
Noah kneels beside Ava  
Sirens sound in the distance  
A couple minutes later EMTs rush in  
Noah steps back from Ava to let the EMTs work

51 INT. CAR ON THE WAY TO HOSPITAL - NIGHT 51  
Claire is driving fast  
Noah's in the passenger seat  
Noah looks out the window at the rain

52 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT 52  
Noah is sitting there alone, soaked  
He overhears a doctor speaking

DOCTOR SMITH  
She's gone

Noah assumes they're talking about Ava

52 CONTINUED:

His breath catches in his throat

Tears form in his eyes as he sits there for a few more seconds

Another doctor walks into the room

DOCTOR HIGGINS  
You're here for Ava Bennett?

NOAH  
Yes

DOCTOR HIGGINS  
She's stable. We're still waiting on a diagnosis. Her mother is in the room with her now.

Doctor Higgins points to a hall

Noah calms slightly at this news

NOAH  
Thank you

He gets up and walks into the hall

53 INT. HOSPITAL ICU - NIGHT

53

Machines humming

Ava lies in bed unconscious, chest rising and falling mechanically

Noah stands in the doorway still soaked

Claire sits beside Ava's bed holding her hand

DOCTOR SMITH  
(quietly to Claire)  
She's in severe respiratory failure. Her lungs are barely functioning

Noah listens without meaning to

DOCTOR SMITH (CONT'D)  
She needs a bilateral lung transplant

Claire nods like she understands

DOCTOR SMITH (CONT'D)  
The waitlist for her blood type is  
long. Without that transplant we're  
talking days at most.

Claire breaks down crying, still holding Ava's hand

Noah's jaw tightens and he stares at the ventilator, blinking  
hard

He walks out of the room into the hall

Heavy metal door slams shut as Noah steps into the empty  
stairwell

Silence

He runs his hand through his wet hair

He hits the metal railing, which causes his hand to bleed  
slightly and causes a loud echo of the metal, but he doesn't  
care

He whisper-yells

NOAH  
No no no no.

He grips the railing

NOAH (CONT'D)  
Don't do this. Don't take her.

It's not clear who he's yelling at, God, the universe, the  
disease

He leans against the wall and slides down slowly,  
hyperventilating

NOAH (CONT'D)  
(yelling now)  
Why would you do this?! Why would  
you let her hurt like this?!

He tries to control his breathing slowly and closes his eyes

One tear slips out

He wipes it away immediately

Clasps his hands together

NOAH (CONT'D)

God, I don't know if you're  
listening or if you're even real...  
But if you are, please don't take  
her... I'll do anything, God... I  
need her to be okay. I can't lose  
her.

He stands up and slowly goes out of the stairwell

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Noah stands alone against the wall

He's watching film on his phone

It rings and shows Coach Reynolds Caller ID

He hesitates, but answers

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.)

Where were you today? Rain doesn't  
mean practice is cancelled.

NOAH

I know, I didn't skip cause of the  
rain. I'm at the hospital.

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.)

Oh, I didn't know that... Are you  
okay?

NOAH

Yeah, I'm good I'm not here for me

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.)

Family?

NOAH

A friend

(pause)

She has a lung disease, and she's  
not doing well right now

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.)

I'm sorry to hear that... I do have  
some news that might make you feel  
a bit better though.

NOAH

What is it?

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.)  
I just got of the phone with a  
recruiter  
(pause)  
He's coming Friday. In person. To  
see you play  
(pause)  
You play like you did last week,  
and that offer you got is almost  
guaranteed.

Noah looks toward Ava's ICU room

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
This is everything you've worked  
for, kid.

NOAH  
I know

COACH REYNOLDS (V.O.)  
Show up to practice tomorrow.

Coach Reynolds hangs up

Noah puts his phone away and turns slightly

He hears two doctors speaking in hushed tones around the  
corner

DOCTOR SMITH (O.S.)  
If we had two living donors, we  
could attempt a lobar transplant.

Noah turns slightly more to hear them

DOCTOR HIGGINS (O.S.)  
It's rare. Major surgery. Both  
donors lose about twenty to thirty  
percent permanent lung capacity

DOCTOR SMITH (O.S.)  
Athletes wouldn't be able to play  
anymore

Noah doesn't move

DOCTOR HIGGINS (O.S.)  
But it's faster than waiting for  
cadaver lungs.

Noah glances into the window and sees Ava laying there, then  
back to his phone

He glances into the ICU window

Claire next to her holding her hand

As he sees her laying there the monitor spikes once, then returns to normal

He locks his phone and puts it in his pocket

He takes a deep breath in and goes around the corner

He goes up to the doctors

NOAH

How do I get tested?

Doctor Smith and Doctor Higgins look at him confused

DOCTOR SMITH

What?

NOAH

For the lung donation transplant,  
For Ava.

DOCTOR HIGGINS

Are you her family?

NOAH

No

(pause)

But can't we test anyway?  
The doctors exchange a look

DOCTOR HIGGINS

Don't you play football?

NOAH

Yeah, so?

DOCTOR SMITH

Kid, if you were a match. You  
wouldn't play football ever again.

NOAH

I know, I heard.

DOCTOR HIGGINS

You're still a minor. You'd need  
parental consent even to get tested  
for compatibility.

NOAH

Okay

Noah nods and walks away to call his parents, Julia and David

JULIA (V.O.)  
Hi, Noah. We're almost home if  
that's why you're calling.

NOAH  
That's not why... I'm at the  
hospital, can you and Dad come?

JULIA (V.O.)  
(panicked)  
What? Why? Are you hurt?

NOAH  
No. I'm fine.

JULIA (V.O.)  
Then what's going on?

Noah glances back to the ICU doors, then back to the phone

NOAH  
I just need you both to come. Now.

JULIA (V.O.)  
We're on the way now.

Noah hangs up, then just looks back into the ICU

Mostly empty, Noah sits in a chair, his head in his hands  
Julia and David rush in

JULIA  
Are you okay?

She grabs his face, checking him

DAVID  
What happened? Did you get into a  
fight again? Are you okay?

NOAH  
No. I'm fine.

His parents look confused

DAVID  
Then why are we here?

Noah takes a breath

NOAH  
There's a girl.

JULIA  
A girl... Ava?

NOAH  
Yeah. She lives next to us... She's  
in the ICU

Julia and David's confusion turns to concern

DAVID  
Okay? This is the girl you've been  
talking to?

NOAH  
Yes. She needs a lung transplant

JULIA  
And?

Noah looks them both in the eyes

NOAH  
They can do a living Lobar  
Transplant.  
(pause)  
She'd need two donors.

DAVID  
(sternly)  
No.

NOAH  
They can test me

JULIA  
Noah.

NOAH  
She has days

DAVID  
And that is tragic. But it's not  
your responsibility.

NOAH  
Then whose is it?!

The few other people in the waiting room turn heads at the  
yell

DAVID

You barely even know this girl!

NOAH

I know her well enough!

(pause)

I know she hates when people pity her. I know she pretends her lungs don't hurt when they do. I know she runs in her head because she can't in real life.

JULIA

You've known her for what, a few months?

NOAH

4... Long enough!

DAVID

Long enough to throw away your future?!

NOAH

It's not throwing it away!

DAVID

You will never play football again!

NOAH

I know!

JULIA

You worked your whole life for this. Every camp, every practice, every injury

NOAH

Exactly, and what's the point of it if I'm not doing something that actually matters!

DAVID

Football Matters!

NOAH

Not more than her life!

His father steps closer now

DAVID

You are seventeen. You do not get to make a permanent decision like this over a girl you just met.

Noah steps forward too, so they're eye to eye

NOAH  
I already did.

JULIA  
Noah. Honey... You're scared,  
you're reacting.

NOAH  
I'm not scared. Not anymore.  
Before, I didn't actually care.  
None of it actually mattered.  
(pause)  
Not football, not school. It all  
just felt like something I was  
supposed to do.

He looks down, then back up

NOAH (CONT'D)  
Then I met her through the window.  
And I'm not saying everything just  
magically got better, but I just...  
Before her, none of it felt real.  
(pause)  
So no, I'm not just reacting. This  
is the first thing I've been really  
sure about in a long time.  
(softer now)  
And I can't lose her... I love her.

DAVID  
You love her?

NOAH  
Yes.

DAVID  
Enough to quit football entirely

NOAH  
Yes! Enough to quit anything.  
Everything.

JULIA  
What if something happens to you?

NOAH  
Then something happens. I don't  
care.

Tears start to well up in Julia's eyes

DAVID

You're our son.

NOAH

And she's someone's daughter!

(long pause)

You taught me to be strong, to show  
up, to not walk away. So don't ask  
me to walk away now.

DAVID

You don't understand what you're  
giving up

NOAH

I do. I understand perfectly.

(pause)

They said I won't play again.

JULIA

And you still want to do this?

NOAH

Yes.

DAVID

Why?

NOAH

Because I told her I wasn't  
leaving.

Silence for several seconds

DAVID

If we sign this, your life changes.

NOAH

It already did.

Julia grips Noah's hand tightly and her tears fall freely

David finally looks at Noah again

Noah doesn't move

Julia looks at his chest like she's already imagining the  
scar

JULIA

(whispering)

You shouldn't do this.

NOAH  
I'm doing it.

David gently places his hand on Julia's shoulder

DAVID  
We need the paperwork.

Doctor Smith approaches with the papers and a pen

David and Julia sign the papers

Noah watches them sign everything

Finally, Julia steps forward and hugs Noah carefully as if he could break at any moment

She rests her head on his shoulder for just a second

JULIA  
(whispering)  
Come back to me

Noah wraps his arms around her firmly

NOAH  
I will

Over Julia's shoulder Noah and David lock eyes

David Nods slightly

Noah sits beside Ava's bed holding her hand

In the other hand he's holding a worn copy of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

He reads quietly

He looks at her

NOAH  
You still owe me an explanation  
about this whole Horcrux thing.

The machines continue breathing for her mechanically

He sets the book down and adjusts a strand of hair from her face while being careful not to disturb the tubes

58 EXT. OUTSIDE HOSPITAL - NIGHT 58

Not raining, but still cloudy, dark, and windy

Noah stands alone

He looks up to the sky

NOAH

I don't know if you're listening.

(pause)

But I'm here

He struggles to find the words to say

NOAH (CONT'D)

Take whatever you want from me,  
just don't take her.

The wind blows and he stands there longer than he needs to

59 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - MORNING 59

Noah sits in a chair quietly leaning forward

His phone buzzes, but he ignores it

It buzzes again

He checks it to find two texts from Mason

MASON (TEXT)

Noah

MASON (TEXT)

Why aren't u at film study?

Noah types back

NOAH (TEXT)

Busy

Typing bubbles show up

MASON (TEXT)

You never miss film studies

NOAH (TEXT)

It's important. Can't make it today

Noah locks his phone and puts it away

60

INT. HOSPITAL FAMILY CONSULT ROOM - MORNING

60

Soft morning light filters in through half-closed blinds

Noah sits with Claire

Claire is holding a cup of untouched coffee

She doesn't know Noah's getting tested yet

DOCTOR HIGGINS

We can begin compatibility testing for living donors immediately. But she would need two compatible donors for a lobar transplant, and the chances of that are slim to none.

Claire looks at Noah for the first time since that night

Noah looks back at her

NOAH

I'm getting tested

Claire looks at him alarmed now

CLAIRE

No.

NOAH

It's just testing

CLAIRE

You're a child

NOAH

I'm seventeen

CLAIRE

Exactly

Noah's parents stay quiet

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You think I could live with myself if something happened to you?

NOAH

(defensive)

You think I could live with myself if I didn't at least try to help her?

CLAIRE  
She wouldn't want this

NOAH  
She wouldn't want to die either

Claire closes her eyes briefly

CLAIRE  
You barely know her

NOAH  
I know enough  
(pause)  
She told me she likes stories where  
people stay.

Claire just stares into space

MONTAGE - DONOR SEARCH:

--Church bulletin board with a typed notice: "Urgent donor testing needed"

--A few teenagers at school whispering about it

--A man in his 30s rolling up his sleeve for bloodwork

--A middle-aged woman shaking her head gently as a nurse explains she isn't compatible

--Noah sitting quietly during testing

--Cole seeing Noah's post

--Another potential donor leaving the office disappointed

CLAIRE  
(whispering)  
People are trying, baby

END MONTAGE

Doctor Higgins approaches Claire and Noah

DOCTOR HIGGINS  
We had several volunteers tested  
(pause)  
Two were incompatible. One had  
underlying health issues that  
disqualify him.

61 CONTINUED:

Claire's face falls slightly

Noah nods

DOCTOR HIGGINS (CONT'D)  
We're still waiting on a few more  
results.

62 INT. HOSPITAL BLOOD DRAW ROOM - EVENING

62

Noah sits again

Across the room sits Cole

They both get blood drawn

63 INT. HOSPITAL FAMILY CONSULT ROOM - EVENING

63

Doctor Smith enters with a folder

DOCTOR SMITH  
Noah is a match  
(pause)  
We also have a second compatible  
donor

CLAIRE  
Who?

Cole walks in, already uncomfortable with the attention

He keeps his hands in his hoodie pockets

COLE  
Hey

Claire slowly stands

CLAIRE  
You don't even know her.

Cole shrugs

COLE  
My mom saw the post. Figured I  
should get tested, she said I'd  
regret not trying. Didn't think I'd  
match.

CLAIRE  
Why would you do this

COLE  
Because I can.  
(pause)  
And I know what it's like to wait.  
(pause)  
My... friend died waiting for a  
transplant.

Noah looks over at him

He turns to the doctor

COLE (CONT'D)  
But I don't want anyone to know  
about this.

DOCTOR SMITH  
Of course. Donor confidentiality is  
protected.

COLE  
Good

He looks to Claire again

COLE (CONT'D)  
She doesn't owe me anything. I  
don't want visits. Or attention...  
Just let it help

CLAIRE  
Thank you.

He nods once awkwardly

COLE  
Yeah

He turns to Noah

COLE (CONT'D)  
I guess we're doing this.

Noah nods

DOCTOR SMITH  
I'll be honest. Finding two viable  
donors in this time frame is very  
rare.

Claire closes her eyes and tilts her head up

CLAIRE  
(whispering)  
Thank you

Cole leaves the room but turns back once

COLE  
Just let me know when.

Then he leaves

Dim morning light through the windows

Three separate rooms, Noah in one, Cole in another, Ava in the other

Julia and David are with Noah

DAVID  
You don't have to be fearless.

NOAH  
I know. I'm not. I'm just not leaving either.

A nurse wheels Noah to the OR, in the hall he sees Ava through the glass of her room

He reaches his hand slightly toward the glass as he passes

MONTAGE - SURGERY

--Surgeons scrubbing in

--Ava being prepped

--Noah staring at the ceiling lights

--Cole staring at the same lights in another room

--Claire clutching a cross necklace in the waiting room

--Julia gripping David's hand tightly

NURSE 1  
Count back from ten

NOAH  
Ten, Nine, Eight

64	CONTINUED:	74. 64
	<p>COLE Seven, Six, Five</p> <p>END MONTAGE</p>	
65	<p>INT. OPERATING ROOM - AFTERNOON</p> <p>Monitors beeping steadily, surgeons working Ava's monitor shifts and the beeping changes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NURSE 1 We're losing sinus rhythm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SURGEON Push epi, Increase oxygen</p> <p>He heart rate spikes dangerously for five seconds Flatline</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NURSE 2 We're losing her</p> <p style="text-align: right;">INTERCUT:</p>	65
66	<p>INT. DANCE RECITAL STAGE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)</p> <p>Eight year old Ava stands center stage in a pale pink tutu Her hair is pulled into a tight bun, ballet slippers soft against the polished wood</p> <p>Delicate piano music is playing through the theater She dances happily In the audience is her father, Michael</p> <p style="text-align: right;">INTERCUT:</p>	66
67	<p>INT. OPERATING ROOM - AFTERNOON</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SURGEON Start compressions. Now.</p> <p>A nurse begins chest compressions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NURSE 1 Charging to 200</p>	67

67 CONTINUED:  
Defibrillator paddles press to her chest

SURGEON  
Clear!

The flatline continues after the shock

INTERCUT:

68 INT. DANCE STUDIO - MORNING (FLASHBACK)

68

Sunlight through tall windows

Little Ava stands in front of a mirror wall practicing her dances

Claire watching

She spins and stumbles

AVA  
Shit

CLAIRE  
Language, Ava

AVA  
Sorry, Mommy. I keep falling

CLAIRE  
It's okay, baby. Try again.

She tries again and lands it perfectly with a smile

INTERCUT:

69 INT. OPERATING ROOM - AFTERNOON

69

The flatline continues

Compressions Continue

NURSE 2  
No response

SURGEON  
Again. Charge.

The defibrillator charges up

NURSE 1  
Ready

69 CONTINUED:

SURGEON

Clear!

They shock her and her body jolts, but the flatline continues

INTERCUT:

70 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

70

Rain tapping against glass

Noah holds up a paper to the window "Still here"

Ava writes and holds up her own paper "Obviously"

Noah writes another page "You ever get tired of me?"

Ava pretends to think about it, then writes "Not yet"

Noah thinks for a couple seconds, then writes "Good. cuz I'm not leaving"

Ava lowers her paper, and nods slowly

Rain keeps falling outside

INTERCUT:

71 INT. OPERATING ROOM - AFTERNOON

71

SURGEON

Clear!

They shock her again, this time the tone breaks

One beep

Then another

NURSE 2

We've got a pulse.

Short pause

SURGEON

Okay, Let's continue

They continue the surgery

72 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - EVENING

72

Claire, David, Julia, and Cole's parents are all sitting together staring into space waiting

Surgeon enters the room

Everyone stands

SURGEON

The procedures were successful.  
They're all stable.

Julia hugs David, and Cole's parents hug

Claire sits down again

73 INT. RECOVERY ROOM - EVENING

73

Cole wakes first

COLE

How'd it go?

NURSE 1

Everything went well. Do you want to stay and wait for her to wake up?

COLE

No. I want to get out of here before either of them wake up if possible.

NURSE 1

Okay

The nurse helps Cole up and out of the room carefully

He exits the room and inhales deeply

He looks back once, then leaves

After a few more minutes, Noah wakes up

He winces slightly as he tries to sit up

The nurse notices

NURSE 1 (CONT'D)

Easy there buddy. Surgery went well.

73 CONTINUED:

Noah looks over to Ava

NOAH  
Her?

NURSE 1  
Still Sedated, but stable.

Noah feels the limitation of his breathing now

DISSOLVE TO:

74 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

74

Days later

Ava lies in bed asleep, but without a ventilator now, just a nasal cannula

Noah's sitting in the chair next to her bed, breathing slowly while reading again

NOAH  
You're missing the good part, Ava.

He keeps reading

DISSOLVE TO:

75 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

75

Soft morning light, monitors humming low, Ava still asleep

Claire and Noah are both there

Claire is asleep, Noah's in another chair looking out the window

Ava starts to wake up

Claire hears Ava and jolts awake

Noah looks over to Ava

CLAIRE  
Ava?

AVA  
W- What... Happened?

Claire immediately grabs her hand

CLAIRE

You're okay. You're okay!

Ava frowns as she remembers the stormy night when she passed out

She looks at Noah, who is now looking at her

AVA

You're here.

NOAH

I told you I'm not leaving

She puts her hand on her chest

Ava takes another deep breath

AVA

Why doesn't it... hurt?

Ava moves her legs slightly, testing her body

AVA (CONT'D)

I can... I can breathe

Ava looks at Noah's face

AVA (CONT'D)

You look... tired.

Ava's eyes drop to his chest and she notices the scar where it's slightly visible above his shirt

Her eyes widen

AVA (CONT'D)

What happened to you?

NOAH

You needed new lungs.

AVA

No.

(pause)

No... That's not- No

Claire squeezes Ava's hand

CLAIRE

Baby

AVA

No.

She realizes what he did and she looks closer at the surgical marks by his collarbone, then back to his face

AVA (CONT'D)  
You didn't.

NOAH  
You needed two donors.

AVA  
You... You can't play though

Ava starts breathing faster now

AVA (CONT'D)  
Why would you do that?! I didn't ask you to do that!

Tears start to spill down her face

She tries to push herself up, and she winces hard

NOAH  
Hey.. Hey, Careful.

He moves closer while speaking

She cuts him off

AVA  
You had everything! You were supposed to leave! You were supposed to go somewhere!  
(pause)  
And now you're stuck... Because of me.

NOAH  
I told you I wasn't leaving, and it's not your fault. I made my choice.

Tears spill down Ava's face

AVA  
You can't play now! You can't play in the championship! You can't play in college!

NOAH  
I know

AVA  
You don't get to decide that!

NOAH

Yeah, I do.

AVA

I don't want to be the reason you  
give up on your dream! You promised  
you wouldn't slow down for me!

NOAH

I'm not slowing down. Just...  
changing direction.

Ava stares at him through her tears

AVA

What if something happens to you?

She starts to panic

AVA (CONT'D)

What if one day you wake up and  
can't breathe either?!

NOAH

Then it happens. But you'll get to  
breathe.

AVA

Why would you do that? You  
shouldn't have done this, Noah.

NOAH

Ava, I told you I wasn't leaving.

Ava takes a deep breath

AVA

It's quiet. It's never quiet.

Claire also starts crying now

Ava looks at Noah, her expression softens

AVA (CONT'D)

Was it worth it?

Noah watches Ava take another full breath

NOAH

Yeah

He finally reaches out and holds her hand

She squeezes back, not letting go

75 CONTINUED:  
He leans toward the bed and hugs her gently

76 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING 76

Ava's in her bed  
Noah's in the corner in the chair  
Claire is sitting there too  
A Nurse is there

CLAIRE  
I'm going to get some food for us  
all

NOAH AVA  
Okay Okay

Claire walks out of the room

Ava sits up

AVA (CONT'D)  
Can you help me get up, please?

NURSE 1  
Yes, careful though

Nurse 1 helps Ava swing her legs off the bed

Ava takes a deep breath

AVA  
You can let go

NURSE 1  
Are you sure?

AVA  
Yes, let go.

Ava tries to stand

She collapses back onto the bed, frustrated

She lays there staring at the ceiling

AVA (CONT'D)  
Why can't I do this?

NURSE 1  
Your body's relearning everything

AVA  
I used to dance  
(pause)  
Then I couldn't stand at all  
(pause)  
Now I'm "better" and I still can't  
even stand

NURSE 1  
It'll take time

AVA  
(to herself now)  
This is stupid... I can breathe...  
Why can't I do anything else?

Noah looks over not knowing if he should try to help

He takes a step toward Ava

She snaps

AVA (CONT'D)  
Sit down.

Noah sits back down

AVA (CONT'D)  
I don't need help with everything!

There's a long silence

AVA (CONT'D)  
Sorry

NOAH  
It's alright

77 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

77

The room is dim, Ava's in her bed, staring at the ceiling

AVA  
(to herself)  
Why can't I stand?

She turns to the window and looks outside

She takes a full deep breath

AVA (CONT'D)  
At least there's that

77 CONTINUED:

She closes her eyes

78 INT. HOSPITAL REHAB HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

78

Ava walking slowly with a nurse and walker, with an oxygen tank rolling beside her

Noah is at the far end of the hall pretending he just happened to be there

AVA

Are you stalking me now?

NOAH

Doctor said you're not allowed to fall.

AVA

(teasingly)

You're not allowed to hover

She takes three more steps with a smile

79 INT. HOSPITAL BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

79

Ava is standing by the sink looking into the mirror

She lifts her shirt slightly to see the scars

She traces the marks

80 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

80

Noah is walking through the hall, slowly

His chest gets tight and his breathing slows

He braces himself against the wall

NOAH

Damn it

A nurse sees and goes up to him

NURSE 2

You need to take it easy

NOAH

I used to run for hours, easily

He slowly walks back to the hospital room

81 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT 81

Ava's asleep in her bed

Noah's sitting there alone

Claire is asleep in a chair

Noah tries to take a deep breath but struggles

He tries again, still struggling

NOAH  
(whispering)  
Come on.

He looks at the window and sees the reflection of Ava in her bed, breathing perfectly

He smiles and closes his eyes

82 INT. AVA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON 82

Claire helping Ava up the stairs

She pauses half way

CLAIRE  
You okay?

Ava nods

AVA  
I don't feel like I'm drowning anymore

83 EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON 83

Noah stands alone on the sideline

He looks onto the empty field

He walks to the line, gets into his stance

He starts trying to run, slow, unsteady

He starts breathing hard immediately

His breathing tightens and he slows down even more

He clutches his side

NOAH  
(to himself)  
Shit

He walks slowly back to the line, takes a second to rest

He starts trying to run again, his breathing is even worse now

He holds his side again

NOAH (CONT'D)  
(to himself)  
I should be able to do this

He walks slowly to the bleachers and sits down

His head fills with the sounds of whistles and pads crashing together

He zones out for a bit, thinking about football

Mason comes over

MASON  
Yo, Noah

NOAH  
Hey, bro

Mason sits next to Noah

MASON  
So... You donated part of your lung?

NOAH  
Yeah.

MASON  
You good?

NOAH  
Yeah.

MASON  
You sure?

Noah Shrugs

MASON (CONT'D)  
You're allowed to be scared, you know

NOAH

I'm not scared, Just gonna miss  
football. I probably won't play  
again.

INT. NOAH'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Noah walks into the kitchen, out of breath

David sees him but says nothing at first

Noah sits down at the table and rests his head in his hands

NOAH

(under his breath)  
This is so stupid

DAVID

I told you you'd regret it.

NOAH

I don't regret it

DAVID

Then what's this about?

NOAH

I miss being able to run and  
everything else, but that doesn't  
mean I regret my choice.

(pause)

You would've done the same if it  
was mom, right?

DAVID

Yes, I would. But that's different.  
You two aren't even together

NOAH

I was going to ask her out right  
before she passed out

DAVID

You were?

NOAH

Yes, but now I just... I don't know  
when to ask her.

84 CONTINUED: 88.  
84

DAVID  
Son, if you're waiting for the perfect time to ask her, it's never going to happen. You just have to go for it when it feels right.

85 INT. CLAIRE'S CAR ON THE WAY TO PT - AFTERNOON 85  
Claire is driving  
Ava's in the passenger seat

AVA  
I hate this

CLAIRE  
I know, but it'll be worth it.

AVA  
I know that... But still

Claire parks the car  
Helps Ava get out of the car  
They walk into Physical Therapy slowly.

86 INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY OFFICE - AFTERNOON 86  
Ava sits in the waiting room  
Claire checks in  
A few minutes later, DOCTOR HANNAH walks out

DOCTOR HANNAH  
Ava Bennett?

Claire helps Ava up  
They slowly walk back with Doctor Hannah

87 INT. CLAIRE'S CAR ON THE WAY HOME - AFTERNOON 87  
Claire's driving  
Ava's in the passenger seat holding her phone

AVA  
Mom, don't you have work tomorrow?

CLAIRE

I do. I can't take you to physical  
therapy

(pause)

Can you see if someone can take  
you?

AVA

I'll text Noah

CLAIRE

Okay

Ava opens the messages app and goes to Noah's contact

AVA (TEXT)

My mom has work tmr 📧

AVA (TEXT)

Can u take me to pt?

She waits a couple seconds

The typing bubble shows up

NOAH (TEXT)

Yeah

NOAH (TEXT)

What time?

AVA (TEXT)

12

NOAH (TEXT)

👉

NOAH (TEXT)

Alr, see u then

Ava puts her phone away and stares out the window

Ava's laying in bed

She swings her legs off slowly

She tries to stand, but falls to the ground

AVA

Shit

She lays there on the floor

She puts her hands on her face and screams into them

AVA (CONT'D)

This is so stupid! I should be able  
to stand!

She lays there a few seconds longer before pulling herself up  
on the bed

She manages to get into bed again

She lays there and starts quietly crying

Across the gap, Noah's light flips on and he looks over to  
Ava's room

Noah sees her on the bed crying and texts her

Her phone lights up and she checks it

NOAH (TEXT)

U ok?

AVA (TEXT)

I'm fine

AVA (TEXT)

I tried to stand and couldn't

AVA (TEXT)

Just being dramatic

NOAH (TEXT)

Oh, ok

Ava glances at her clock and realizes it's 10:43PM

AVA (TEXT)

It's late.

NOAH (TEXT)

Yeah, ik

AVA (TEXT)

Gn

NOAH (TEXT)

Gn

89 INT. NOAH'S CAR ON THE WAY TO PT - AFTERNOON

89

Noah's driving

Ava's in the passenger seat

Noah parks in the parking lot

AVA  
Thanks for bringing me

NOAH  
You need help getting out?

AVA  
I got it

Noah gets out of the car

After Ava gets out he tries to support her as they walk

AVA (CONT'D)  
I said I got it

Despite her words, she leans slightly on him

NOAH  
I know you do... I'm just making  
sure you don't fall

AVA  
(teasingly)  
You're the one we should be worried  
about here

Noah pretends to stumble

NOAH  
Yeah, definitely

Ava laughs

AVA  
(playfully)  
You're so stupid

They walk into the physical therapy office

90 INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY OFFICE - AFTERNOON

90

DOCTOR HANNAH  
Ava! Come on in, we're ready for  
you now

AVA

Thank you

Noah goes to sit down

AVA (CONT'D)

You can come too

Noah looks to Doctor Hannah

She gives him a nod

NOAH

Okay

Noah gets up and walks back with them

Doctor Hannah helps Ava hold onto a bar

She takes a few steps

She lets go of the bar and starts to wobble

DOCTOR HANNAH

Careful, don't let go if you're not ready

AVA

I know. I wish I was ready though

DOCTOR HANNAH

If your body's not ready, don't push it

AVA

Okay

Doctor Hannah helps Ava take a few more steps

The bedroom is empty

Julia walks into the room

She looks around and notices a paper on the floor by the window

JULIA

(to herself)

Right... he took Ava to PT

She walks over and picks up the paper and looks at it

91 CONTINUED:

She flips it over and it says "I think I'm falling for U"  
She stares at it for a few seconds trying to understand

JULIA (CONT'D)

Ava

She lays it face up on Noah's bed and walks out of the room

92 INT. NOAH'S CAR ON THE WAY HOME - AFTERNOON

92

Noah's driving

Ava's in the passenger seat

NOAH

Good job

AVA

Don't.

NOAH

Don't what?

AVA

Don't lie and tell me I did a good  
job

NOAH

But you did-

Ava cuts him off

AVA

No, I fell like 5 times.

NOAH

Okay, do you want to talk about  
something else?

AVA

Can we just listen to the music?

NOAH

Yeah

He turns up the volume on the music a bit

93 EXT. NOAH'S DRIVEWAY - EVENING

93

Noah pulls into the driveway

93 CONTINUED:  
He gets out and helps Ava to her house  
He opens the door for her and helps support her

94 INT. AVA'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING 94

She's struggling and tired

NOAH  
You okay?

AVA  
Yeah

He gives her a look that says I know you're lying

AVA (CONT'D)  
Fine, no.

NOAH  
You want to lay down?

AVA  
Yes

Noah helps her to the steps

NOAH  
One step at a time... Take it slow

Noah supports her as they walk up the steps

They go into Ava's bedroom

95 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - EVENING 95

Noah helps Ava get to her bed

AVA  
Thank you for being so patient with  
me  
(pause)  
And for putting up with my attitude  
all the time

Noah laughs slightly at that

He rolls his eyes

NOAH  
You're welcome

AVA  
(playfully)  
Don't roll your eyes at me!

He shakes his head slightly

NOAH  
Do you want me to stay here for a  
bit until your mom gets home?

AVA  
Please.

Noah sits on the far edge of her bed

AVA (CONT'D)  
Why are you all the way over there?

NOAH  
I don't know

AVA  
Come here

Noah moves closer to her

Ava leans into his side

He puts his arm around her

She puts hers around him

Silence for a few seconds

AVA (CONT'D)  
You gave up everything. You gave up  
your entire life, Noah

NOAH  
I know... I made that choice

AVA  
But I didn't... I wouldn't have

NOAH  
Don't say that.

AVA  
You didn't have to do this

NOAH  
But I did... and I'd do it a  
million times again.

AVA

What if you regret it?

(pause)

Like a year from now?

(pause)

Or five?

NOAH

I won't.

AVA

You don't know that

NOAH

Yes I do.

AVA

How do you know?

NOAH

Because I know what it would be  
like if I didn't do it... And  
that's worse.

There's a long silence before she responds

She looks up at him

AVA

I keep thinking this is all a dream  
and I'm gonna wake up and it's not  
real

NOAH

I promise it's real

AVA

You're different

(pause)

In a good way

NOAH

So are you

Noah walks into the bedroom and sees the paper on his bed

He goes over and picks it up

He stares at the words on the paper "I think I'm falling for  
U"

96 CONTINUED:

He puts the paper in his desk drawer

He sits down on his bed

97 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

97

Ava is alone, laying in her bed

She's clearly been crying, but not anymore

Claire knocks softly, then opens the door

CLAIRE

Hey. Dinner's ready

AVA

I'm not hungry

Claire comes in fully and sits on the edge of the bed

CLAIRE

Talk to me

AVA

I stood for 7 seconds on my own  
last week

CLAIRE

I remember, that was amazing

AVA

I fell five times today, mom

Claire stays quiet

AVA (CONT'D)

Five. And I couldn't get back up  
either, Noah and Doctor Hannah had  
to help me.

(pause)

What if this... What if I'm stuck  
again? What if I can't stand for  
more than 7 seconds?

CLAIRE

Ava-

AVA

Please give me a real answer, not  
some bullshit reassurance that it's  
all going to get better.

Claire tenses slightly, but maintains her composure

CLAIRE

I don't know... But... I do know  
one thing

AVA

What?

CLAIRE

That you breathed a lot today  
without having to think about it.  
(pause)  
You didn't notice that did you?

Ava thinks and her breathing is manual now

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

3 months ago you noticed... You  
noticed every single breath didn't  
you?

AVA

I did.

Claire squeezes her hand slightly

CLAIRE

Come eat. Even if it's just a  
little

Ava holds onto Claire's hand to get up

Claire puts her arm around Ava

They walk together out of the room, slowly, shaky

Noah sits on his bed staring at the cork board which still  
has recruiting letters

He gets up and takes them all down

He stacks them neatly on his desk

He puts his helmet from his desk onto the floor

He reaches into a drawer on his desk and pulls out a printed  
photo of him and Ava in the hospital together as well as the  
note from earlier

He pins those on the cork board instead and then goes back to  
sit down

He stares at the photo and note, and his phone buzzes

He looks at the message

AVA (TEXT)  
U awake?

NOAH (TEXT)  
Yeah

AVA (TEXT)  
Me too

AVA (TEXT)  
Couldn't Sleep

NOAH (TEXT)  
Same

AVA (TEXT)  
Wyd?

NOAH (TEXT)  
Nothing

NOAH (TEXT)  
Just thinking

AVA (TEXT)  
Abt football?

NOAH (TEXT)  
A little

AVA (TEXT)  
Thats ok u know

NOAH (TEXT)  
Ik

AVA (TEXT)  
You're allowed to miss it

NOAH (TEXT)  
I know

NOAH (TEXT)  
I don't regret it tho

AVA (TEXT)  
I know you don't

AVA (TEXT)  
That's what makes it more sad

98 CONTINUED:

He pauses and looks out the window to Ava's room

NOAH (TEXT)  
I'm glad you're still here

AVA (TEXT)  
Me too

AVA (TEXT)  
Gn

NOAH (TEXT)  
Gn Ava

He puts his phone on the charger

He looks out the window, then turns off his lamp

99 INT. CLAIRE'S CAR ON THE WAY TO PT - AFTERNOON

99

Claire is driving

Ava's in the passenger seat

CLAIRE  
How far did you walk yesterday?

AVA  
I didn't walk anywhere alone...  
Doctor Hannah helped me walk down  
the hall and back

CLAIRE  
Did Noah go in with you?

AVA  
Yeah

CLAIRE  
Good... you're getting better, Ava

AVA  
That's what he said too  
(pause)  
But it doesn't feel like I am... I  
feel like I should already be able  
to walk on my own

CLAIRE  
It takes time

AVA  
I know, I wish it didn't

99 CONTINUED:

CLAIRE  
Me too. But it does

She pulls into the parking lot  
Claire helps Ava into the building

100 INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY OFFICE - AFTERNOON

100

Ava sits down with Claire  
Doctor Hannah comes into the room

DOCTOR HANNAH  
Ava, come on back

Claire helps Ava stand and Doctor Hannah helps her walk back  
Ava holds on to a rail in the hall

DOCTOR HANNAH (CONT'D)  
I'm gonna let go of you now  
(pause)  
Hold on to the rail, and walk if  
you can

AVA  
Okay

Doctor Hannah lets go of Ava completely  
Ava takes a few wobbly steps holding on to the rail, smiling

DOCTOR HANNAH  
You're doing amazing! Keep going

Ava keeps walking slowly

DOCTOR HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Okay, stop right there

Ava stops

AVA  
Okay

DOCTOR HANNAH  
Now try to let go of the rail...  
I'll catch you if you fall

AVA  
Okay

100 CONTINUED:

Ava lets go of the rail, and balances on her own for 7 seconds before falling

Doctor Hannah catches her and supports her

Ava grabs the rail again

DOCTOR HANNAH

Good job, that was a huge step up from yesterday

AVA

Thank you

101 INT. DINER - EVENING

101

Noah, Mason, Emma, Nick, and Jess are all sitting together

Emma is across from Noah

MASON

How's Ava doing? With recovery?

Noah's face lights up slightly with the mention of Ava

Emma notices that and stays quiet

NOAH

She's getting better, figuring out how to walk

Mason also notices Noah's face and nudges him

MASON

You two should just make it official already!

Everyone but Emma laughs genuinely

Emma forces a small laugh just a second later

EMMA

Yeah, have you been able to run much since the surgery?

102 INT. NOAH'S CAR ON THE WAY TO PT - AFTERNOON

102

Noah's driving, quietly

Ava's staring out the window

Noah parks and Ava keeps staring out the window

NOAH

You okay?

Tears well up in her eyes

AVA

No. I'm not. I can't do this, Noah.

NOAH

You can

Noah gets out and goes around to open her door

Ava leans toward him and he leans toward her

He puts his arms around her gently

She wraps her arms around him tight and holds on

NOAH (CONT'D)

I got you. It's okay

AVA

Don't let go

NOAH

I won't

They stay like that for a few seconds while she calms down

She wipes her tears and lets go of Noah

AVA

I think I'm ready

NOAH

Good, let's go

They walk into the physical therapy office, Noah supports her  
as they walk

Noah and Ava are walking together

Silence for a few seconds

AVA

Why'd you do it?

He doesn't answer right away

He looks down, then back to her

NOAH  
I couldn't walk away.

AVA  
You had everything

NOAH  
Maybe... But it wouldn't have felt  
like everything  
(pause)  
It would've felt like nothing  
without you.

Ava's expression softens a bit

AVA  
Dumbass.

NOAH  
(tiny laugh)  
Yeah  
(pause)  
But I love you.

Ava doesn't respond right away

She looks at him, finally letting herself believe that  
Her eyes well up slightly

AVA  
I... I love you too. But you're  
still a dumbass.  
(pause)  
My dumbass.

He holds her hand

AVA (CONT'D)  
You stayed

NOAH  
I told you I would.

She squeezes his hand tightly

NOAH (CONT'D)  
I was actually going to ask you  
something before...

AVA  
You mean before I almost died?

Noah lets out a small laugh

103 CONTINUED:

NOAH  
Yeah, before that  
(pause)  
I was going to ask... would you  
want to go out with me?

AVA  
We're literally out right now.

NOAH  
Yeah... I mean, like, officially.

AVA  
(smiles)  
Yes!

She squeezes his hand again

As they keep walking she pulls him down slightly to kiss his  
cheek

He smiles

They keep walking

104 INT. NOAH'S KITCHEN - EVENING

104

David is standing by the sink drinking a glass of water

He glances out the window and sees Noah and Ava walking down  
the street holding hands, and laughing

He keeps looking for a while

Julia walks up behind him and hugs him from behind

Then she follows his gaze out the window

JULIA  
When's the last time you saw him  
this happy?

David takes a second to think before responding

DAVID  
Not in a long time

105 EXT. TRACK - EARLY MORNING

105

Noah's alone stretching

Coach Reynolds approaches

COACH REYNOLDS  
You cleared?

NOAH  
Yeah.

COACH REYNOLDS  
You look lighter.

NOAH  
I am

COACH REYNOLDS  
You don't have to prove anything.

NOAH  
I'm not.

Noah starts jogging

Breathing heavily

He slows but doesn't stop

When he finally does stop, he checks his old time on his phone, then checks his new time

He deletes the old time and locks his phone

NOAH  
I'm done.

Noah's sitting on the bleachers breathing heavily

David walks up to the bleachers

NOAH  
Dad?  
(pause)  
Why are you here?

DAVID  
Wanted to come see how you did...  
(pause)  
How'd it feel?

NOAH  
Slow... Really slow

DAVID  
Yeah

106 CONTINUED:

David sits on the step next to Noah

DAVID (CONT'D)  
After my injury, I used to dream  
every night that I was still  
playing.  
(pause)  
And every time, I'd wake up feeling  
like I lost everything

NOAH  
Do you still?

DAVID  
No... That all stopped when you got  
into football

Noah doesn't respond yet

DAVID (CONT'D)  
I was wrong at the hospital, before  
the surgery

NOAH  
Dad-

David cuts him off

DAVID  
I was wrong, son.  
(pause)  
What you did... That took more guts  
than anything I've ever done.

Noah still stays quiet

David stands up and puts his hand on Noah's shoulder

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Catch your breath and go to your  
classes. I'm heading home

NOAH  
Okay, bye Dad

David walks away, and waves back at Noah once

107 INT. NOAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

107

Noah's laying in bed scrolling through his phone

He comes across a post from a recruiting account with his  
face

107 CONTINUED:

The caption reads "Keep an eye on this one 00"

He clicks on the account and scrolls through posts of other kids his age who still have these opportunities

His eyes drift to his desk where his old recruiting letters are stacked

He looks up slightly to the cork board and sees the picture of him and Ava

He looks back to his phone and unfollows the account and locks his phone

He closes his eyes

NOAH  
(to himself)  
It's fine... I'm fine.

He stays quiet for a few seconds

NOAH (CONT'D)  
Thank you, God. Thank you so much  
for keeping her safe.

108 INT. AVA'S BATHROOM - MORNING

108

Ava standing in front of her mirror alone

Her hand lifts to her chest

She traces the surgical scar through her shirt

She takes a deep breath

109 EXT. BLEACHERS - AFTERNOON

109

Noah is on the bleachers

Takes a deep breath

Mason sits beside Noah on the bleachers

Emma is quietly watching from a distance

MASON  
Noah

NOAH  
Yeah?

MASON

You regret it?

NOAH

No

MASON

You're not playing anymore, man.  
That's gotta be tough

NOAH

It is, but it's worth it

MASON

Ava must be a really special girl

NOAH

She is

MASON

So... are you two like... A thing  
yet?

NOAH

Yeah, I finally asked her out last  
night

Emma's face drops slightly, but she stays quiet and walks  
away

MASON

Congratulations, man! You two  
should come to the football game  
tomorrow. Should be a good one

NOAH

I'll ask her

Ava's laying in bed on her phone

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Ava! Come on downstairs! Lunch is  
ready!

AVA

Okay! Coming!

Ava gets up and walks to her bedroom door to go downstairs

111 INT. AVA'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

111

Claire brings Ava a peanut butter and jelly sandwich with chips

CLAIRE  
Here you go

AVA  
Thanks

Ava starts eating the sandwich and chips

CLAIRE  
Are you hanging out with Noah today?

AVA  
No he's staying late at school. Said he wants to try to jog a little bit or something. His coach is timing him.

CLAIRE  
You better tell him not to push too hard

AVA  
I will, but he knows when to stop

CLAIRE  
Okay... So how are you feeling today?

AVA  
Much better than before

CLAIRE  
Good, you better be nice to that boy. You owe him.

AVA  
I know

112 INT. MORGANTOWN HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

112

Noah is walking slowly through the hall

Emma sees him and walks over

EMMA  
Noah

NOAH

Oh, hi Emma. What's up?

EMMA

That was really nice of you. That girl is lucky to have you

NOAH

Thanks

EMMA

I overheard you and Mason talking earlier... Are you and Ava... together?

NOAH

Yeah, we are.

Emma's face drops slightly for a second before she masks her jealousy with a smile

EMMA

Oh... That's cool. Well I gotta head to class, Bye.

NOAH

Bye

Emma walks to her class

Noah walks toward his and in the hall he passes Cole

Noah nods

Cole nods back

They both keep walking

Ava's sitting on the edge of her bed scrolling through her phone

She opens the messages app and goes to Noah's contact

AVA (TEXT)

Don't push urself too hard tn

NOAH (TEXT)

Did your mom tell u to say that?

AVA (TEXT)

Maybe...

AVA (TEXT)

She also said I have to be nice to  
u cuz I owe u ☒

NOAH (TEXT)

U don't owe me anything, Ava

NOAH (TEXT)

Btw there's a football game tmr  
night. Want to go?

AVA (TEXT)

Do you want to?

NOAH (TEXT)

If u go

AVA (TEXT)

Ok then let's go

AVA (TEXT)

Don't push it tn.

NOAH (TEXT)

I won't, ily

AVA (TEXT)

Say it

NOAH (TEXT)

Say what?

AVA (TEXT)

You know what

NOAH (TEXT)

I LOVE YOU

AVA (TEXT)

Much better, ily too

NOAH (TEXT)

Ur so mean

AVA (TEXT)

☹

Noah tries to run again

Coach Reynolds times him

114 CONTINUED:

He finishes, really slowly

COACH REYNOLDS  
Different Body

Noah nods

COACH REYNOLDS (CONT'D)  
Different race now

NOAH  
Yeah

COACH REYNOLDS  
You know you can't play football  
anymore, right?

NOAH  
I know

COACH REYNOLDS  
But that doesn't mean you can't be  
around the sport. There's plenty of  
other options that would keep you  
involved with football.

NOAH  
Like what?

COACH REYNOLDS  
Sports Medicine, Coaching the  
younger receivers, and there's  
other options too.

Noah nods slightly, considering it

115 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

115

Ava's asleep, the clock reads "6:59AM"

It flips to "7:00AM" and the alarm goes off

Ava wakes up and silences it

She groans and rolls over covering her face with a pillow

AVA  
(muffled by the pillow)  
Stupid-ass alarm

Her phone buzzes

She immediately sits up

115 CONTINUED:

She rubs her eyes and checks her phone

NOAH (TEXT)  
Game starts at 6

NOAH (TEXT)  
U want to leave around 5?

AVA (TEXT)  
Loved "U want to leave around 5?"

AVA (TEXT)  
See u then

116 EXT. NOAH'S DRIVEWAY - EVENING

116

Ava walks from her front door to Noah's driveway

Noah walks out of his house

NOAH  
Ready?

AVA  
Yeah, I've never been to a football  
game in person before

NOAH  
You're gonna love it

Noah opens the passenger door and Ava gets in

Noah goes to the driver's seat and starts driving

117 INT. NOAH'S CAR ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL - EVENING

117

Ava's staring out the window

Noah's driving with his left hand

Noah reaches to hold Ava's hand

She gives his hand a squeeze

They pull into the parking lot

118 EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

118

Noah leads Ava to their seats in the bleachers

Travis and Kenzie are seated nearby

AVA  
Wow, this is huge

NOAH  
Yeah

They sit together and watch the teams warming up  
Noah's phone buzzes  
He check it and finds a message

RECRUITER (TEXT)  
Hey, Noah. Please let us know if  
you're planning on joining our  
football program. We'd love to have  
you here! Reply STOP at any time to  
stop getting these texts.

Noah types back

NOAH (TEXT)  
STOP

He deletes the message thread and locks his phone  
He turns his attention back to the field  
Ava leans her head on his shoulder and closes her eyes  
Travis is laughing about something Kenzie said, then he  
notices Noah and Ava  
He glances over at them, Kenzie follows his glance  
Travis looks back away from Noah and Ava  
Kenzie looks up to Travis

KENZIE  
(whispering)  
She made it

Travis doesn't respond, he takes a sip of his drink and looks  
to the field

The ANNOUNCER starts the pre-game announcements

ANNOUNCER  
Please stand for our National  
Anthem

Everyone stands up

118 CONTINUED: 116.  
118  
*The Star Spangled Banner* starts playing

119 INT. AVA'S ROOM - NIGHT 119  
She stands by her window, without any help  
Noah's in his room doing the same  
They wave  
Ava walks to her bed and gets her phone  
She unlocks the phone and calls Noah  
Noah answers immediately

NOAH (V.O.)  
Hey

AVA  
Hi

NOAH (V.O.)  
You feeling okay?

AVA  
Yeah, I feel amazing compared to  
before

NOAH (V.O.)  
Good, what are you doing tomorrow?

AVA  
Nothing yet... why?

NOAH (V.O.)  
Do you want to go on a walk?

AVA  
Yes, please. I need it

NOAH (V.O.)  
Me too  
(pause)  
And maybe tomorrow night I can keep  
my promise from before?

AVA  
Which promise?

NOAH (V.O.)  
The one about watching Harry Potter  
outside together

AVA  
You still want to do that?

NOAH (V.O.)  
Yeah, of course I do  
(pause)  
Plus, it means I get to spend more  
time with you

AVA  
(teasingly)  
Of course... you can't just do it  
because you actually want to watch  
it

Noah laughs slightly

NOAH (V.O.)  
You're impossible

AVA  
I know.

She looks through the window

Noah rolls his eyes playfully

NOAH (V.O.)  
When do you want to go?

AVA  
Eight?

NOAH (V.O.)  
Eight. I'll be ready

AVA  
Good, I love you

NOAH (V.O.)  
I love you too. Goodnight

AVA  
Goodnight, Noah

She hangs up

Flops down on her bed smiling

She reaches over to her nightstand

Turns off the lamp

120 EXT. STREET - MORNING

120

Ava walks out of her front door without help

She goes to Noah's front door

She knocks on the door

Noah answers it

NOAH

Ava, How are you feeling?

AVA

Better than I have in years

NOAH

Good

AVA

Ready to go on our walk?

NOAH

Yeah, let's go

He comes outside

They start walking side by side

Noah reaches for Ava's hand

She intertwines their fingers

Turns her head to look up at him

She smiles

121 EXT. STREET - EVENING

121

Noah and Ava are sitting on the curb

A car passes by, and they're just watching

AVA

Still the most boring street in  
America

NOAH

It also still has potential

122 EXT. AVA'S BACKYARD - EVENING

122

Noah and Ava are hanging a sheet between two trees

AVA

Noah?

NOAH

Yeah?

AVA

What if this all goes away?

NOAH

Then we'll deal with it, together.

AVA

You're not scared?

NOAH

Of course I'm scared

(pause)

But I'd rather have this... us...  
and risk losing it, than never have  
it at all.

Ava sitting cross-legged on a blanket on the grass

Noah beside her

Laptop buffering the movie plugged into the projector

After a couple seconds the opening credits of Harry Potter  
and the Sorcerer's Stone begin

She breathes evenly

Ava looks at Noah

AVA

You've really never seen this?

NOAH

I've seen clips

AVA

That doesn't count

She nudges him

He nudges back

On the projector the movie is playing

122 CONTINUED:

Noah glances at her instead of the screen  
She notices and turns her head toward him

AVA (CONT'D)  
Watch the movie

NOAH  
I am

She breathes again

They scoot closer

They kiss

He turns back to the screen and puts his arm around her

She rests her head on his shoulder while watching the movie

Claire is in the kitchen watching them through the window

She smiles and closes the blinds

CUT TO:

END CREDITS

CUT TO:

123 BLACK SCREEN

123

Ava and Noah's breathing together

AVA  
Still there?

NOAH  
Obviously.